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JUST "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"—Price 5/- BETTER AND BRIGHTER
OUT! THAN EVER!

The GEM 2^D



Stranded! Read the
Sparkling
Story of Holiday Fun,
Sport and Adventure,
Starring Tom Merry & Co.
of St. Jim's—Inside.

LINE UP HERE FOR FOOTBALLS!



WHO wants to win a Super Football? There are hundreds to be won *free* this month by "Footer-Stamps" collectors.

"Footer-Stamps" are being printed every week in the GEM. They consist of pictures of six different actions on the football field, and the object of this great competition stamp-game is to score as many "goals" as possible by the end of September.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.**

The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"; you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

There are five stamps here, and five more on page 35 to add to your collection. Cut them out and try to score a goal with them, then keep all your stamps until you get some more goal-scoring stamps in next week's issue. If you have any odd stamps left over from the August competition they can be included, too.

If you want to score some other quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "MODERN BOY" and "MAGNET." There are more "goals" waiting in those papers!

"Footer-Stamps" is all the rage—see that you're in it, so that we can send you a football very soon, maybe! Up to 300 more of the 1,000 Footballs offered are going to be awarded in the September competition for the readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month.

Don't send any stamps yet; wait until we tell you how and where at the end of the month. There's nothing to pay, remember! The rules of the offer are on page 35, also.

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best "scores" from overseas readers. There will be a special-closing date for you as well, of course!

FIVE "FOOTER-STAMPS" HERE—FIVE MORE ON PAGE 35.



THE ST. JIM'S HOLIDAY PARTY IS IN THE THICK OF FUN, EXCITEMENT AND SPORT IN THIS LIVELY YARN.



"Now then, all together!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Go it!" The caravanners put their beef into it, and the van moved a couple of inches. Then it settled a little deeper in the mud—stuck fast!

CHAPTER 1.

Joy's of 'the Road'!

"**W**HO wouldn't go caravanning?"

"Oh dear!"
"What a life!"

"Oh cwumbs!"

To judge by their remarks, the St. Jim's caravanners were growing exasperated.

And there was no mistake about it—they were. The caravan was stuck fast.

There had been rain—plenty of rain. The rain had passed, and the weather was bright and sunny again; but the lane the van was following showed the result of the recent downpour. It was a narrow lane; it was uphill; and the mud was deep and thick and sticky and clinging.

Circumstances, the horse, did his best. He pulled and the caravanners shoved. Tom Merry and Manners were at one wheel, Lowther and Blake at another; Herries and Digby had a wheel each; Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pushed behind.

And the caravan did not move.

The wheels had sunk in deep, muddy ruts, and looked as if they had settled there as a permanent arrangement.

The caravanners laboured and made remarks.

"Pway exert yourselves, you

fellows!" called out Arthur Augustus from behind. "Are you exertin' yourself, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ass!" was Tom Merry's reply.

Tom Merry was perspiring with his strenuous exertions, and Gussy's question seemed to him superfluous.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Shove, you ass!" gasped Blake. "Use your biceps, and not your jawbone!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Now then, all together!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Go it!"

The caravanners put their beef into it, and the van moved a couple of inches.

Then it settled a little deeper in the mud.

"Better take a rest," murmured Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry & Co. gathered round the van, gasping. They needed a rest after their latest effort.

Circumstances ceased to pull and looked round at them reproachfully. He seemed to want to know what his masters considered they were up to.

"Blow the van!" said Manners forcibly. "Blow the mud! Blow the road! Blow everything!"

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"And blow you!" said Manners crossly.

"I shall not weply to that."
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By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The St. Jim's caravanners have had many exciting adventures in their travels, but the most exciting are reserved for them when they are stranded!

wemark, Mannahs, as I considah it in the worst of tastes!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "We shall wequiah help to wemove the van. Pewwaps somebody had bettah go for help."

Tom Merry looked round the countryside, in the hope of catching sight of some good-natured labourer in the fields who would lend a hand, but there was no one to be seen.

The lane was a short cut, a good distance from the high road, and the luckless caravanners really seemed to have landed in one of the loneliest spots in Dorsetshire.

There were fields and hedges and trees and hills in the distance, but there was no inhabitant to be seen.

Tom Merry pushed back his straw hat and mopped his damp brow with a handkerchief.

"What a life!" he remarked.

"Patience, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "Aftah all, it's all in the day's work, you know. Pwobably somebody will come along soonah or lahah."

"Talk of angels!" said Monty Lowther. "Here comes somebody!"

A pedestrian turned into the lane lower down from a field path hidden by a high hedge. He came up the steep lane towards the halted van, and the eyes of all the St. Jim's caravanners turned on him at once.

He was a big youth of sixteen or seventeen, very burly for his age, with strongly marked features that were not exactly beautiful. There was something in his rugged face that caused Tom Merry to remark:

"I've seen that chap somewhere before."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass on the newcomer scrutinisingly and nodded.

"Yaas, wathah! I have seen him somewhere."

"He'll lend us a hand, anyhow," said Herries. The burly youth glanced at the caravan and the vanners as he came up, and smiled.

Apparently he saw something amusing in the plight of the St. Jim's vanners.

"Stuck in the mud—what?" he asked, stopping.

"That's it," said Tom.

"My hat! You must be duffers!"

The St. Jim's caravanners began to glare. They wanted assistance, and they would not have objected to sympathy; but they did not want criticism, and were not prepared to receive it politely.

But the burly youth went on without waiting for their replies—which might have been pointed and emphatic.

"Haven't I seen you kids before somewhere?"

"I was just thinking I'd seen you somewhere," said Tom Merry. "Do you happen to belong to Greyfriars School? I think I've seen you there."

The burly youth nodded.

"I'm in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars," he answered loftily. "My name's Coker."

"Coker of the Fifth," murmured Blake; and all the caravanners smiled.

They remembered Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars now.

Coker looked them over.

"I remember now," he said. "You are the kids who came over from St. Jim's to play our juniors—Wharton and his fag cricket team. Isn't that it?"

"That's it," said Tom.

"I've seen you play," said Coker. "You don't play a bad game for fags. Not what I call cricket, of course, but not bad for fags."

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"Bai Jove!"

"And we've seen you play cricket," remarked Monty Lowther. "Not what we call cricket, but not a bad game for a lunatic asylum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't ask for any cheek!" said Coker, with a glare at the humorist of St. Jim's.

"Ahem!" said Tom Merry. "Would you mind lending us a hand, Coker, to get the van out of the mud? We can nearly manage it, and with a little help—"

Coker gave a sniff.

"Don't put it like that," he said. "I'll get the van out of the mud for you if you like, if that's what you mean."

Evidently Coker of the Fifth regarded himself as one of those individuals who are born to command.

"Well, that will do, if you can manage it," said Tom good-humouredly. "Any old thing, so long as we get the old bus moving!"

"I'm your man!" said Coker briskly. "Stand round and take my orders—do exactly as I tell you—and we'll get you going in two jiffies!"

And Horace Coker removed his coat, pushed back his shirt-sleeves, and prepared for work.

CHAPTER 2.

Very Valuable Assistance!

TOM MERRY & CO. looked at Coker.

They were glad of his help—or anybody's help just then; but certainly Coker's method of offering assistance was neither grateful nor comforting.

Still, it was said of old that it is not advisable to look a gift-horse in the mouth, so they gave Horace Coker his head, so to speak.

Certainly, Coker was strong and sturdy enough to be of good use in such an emergency. There was plenty of muscle available, whatever might be said of the brain. Brains were not Coker's strong point, a fact of which he was blissfully ignorant.

Tom Merry & Co. remembered the remarks they had heard concerning Coker at Greyfriars, and they remembered the way he played cricket and football, though they had not had the honour of playing against him.

That remembrance was enough to enable them to "place" him intellectually, as it were. Still, it seemed probable that even an ass like Horace Coker would prove useful in so simple a task as shoving a van out of the mire, as only physical strength was needed.

Coker, having made his preparations, set to work. His first task seemed to be to give instructions, which the experienced caravanners really did not need.

"Now then, get round the van and lay hold!"

"We are wound it already, Cokah!" remarked Arthur Augustus mildly.

"Lay hold of the wheels, you—what's your name?"

"My name is D'Arcy, Cokah."

"You get to the horse's head and pull him. See that he doesn't slack."

"Weally, Cokah—"

"Go it, Gussy!" murmured Blake.

"But I should weally be of more use shovin' behind than pullin' at the horse's head, Blake."

"Never mind; go it!"

"Oh, vewy well."

Arthur Augustus went to the horse's head to keep Circumstances up to the mark.

"Lay hold, you kids!" commanded Coker. "Don't slack!"

"Look here—" began Herries.

"Now then, all together when I say 'Go!' said Coker, taking hold of a wheel himself. "And mind you shove!"

"And mind how you shove!" said Tom Merry. "We're very close on the ditch!"

"Never mind the ditch!" said Coker. "The ditch is all right. I'm doing this job, and it won't go into the ditch. Pull that horse on, D'Arcy!"

"I'm pullin' him like anythin', deah boy!"

"Pull harder, then!"

"Bai Jove! I should be vewy sowwy to pull the poor animal's head off!"

"Rot!"

"Oh!"

"Now then!" sang out Coker, matters being arranged to his satisfaction. "All together—go!"

Coker bent to his task, like Hercules to a thirteenth job. There was no doubt that Coker was a strong fellow. The addition of his strength made all the difference.

The van moved at last—and moved quickly. It was simply unfortunate that Coker had miscalculated a little, and that the van, once dislodged from the mire, lurched over heavily towards the ditch.

"There! She's going!" panted Coker.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out!"

"Great Scott!"

Crash!

A wheel went over the slope of the ditch, and the van lurched towards the hedge.

Two or three caravanners jumped clear just in time as the St. Jim's van toppled over.

Crash! Clang! Clatter! Smash!

A window went as the van crashed on the hedge across the ditch. Crockery inside seemed to be wildly jazzing, to judge by the sounds from the interior of the van.

Smash! Crash! Jingle! Bang!

Horace Coker had a narrow escape of being squashed into the muddy ditch under the van he had so successfully moved. Fortunately, he scrambled clear in time.

With two side-wheels deep in the ditch, the caravan rested on the hedge beyond at an angle of about forty-five degrees.

The sounds that proceeded from the horse indicated that Circumstances did not find his new position comfortable. He was half in the ditch and half out, and struggling frantically, splashing water and mud on all sides.

The juniors surveyed the disaster with feelings too deep for words.

The van was fairly planted now, and certainly the caravanners could not possibly get it out with the assistance of half a dozen Cokers. It had moved at last—there was no doubt about that; but they wished it hadn't.

"Well," said Coker. "Well, of all the dummies!"

"What?" yelled Blake.

"Of all the crass idiots—"

"Are you talking about yourself?"

"I'm talking to you!" roared Coker. "Look what you've done!"

"What—what—what we've done!" said Tom Merry dazedly. "Why, you did it!"

"Don't be a cheeky young idiot! You seem

to have fairly smashed up your things inside, and I can't say I'm sorry for you. Blessed if I ever saw such a set of crass idiots!"

"Well, my hat!"

"You uttah ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, for once excited out of the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. "You crass duffah, you have w'ecked our van!"

"So that's your thanks, is it?" snorted Coker. "Well, you've made a precious mess of things. Not much good trying to help silly kids who are too silly to help themselves. Go and eat coke!"

Horace Coker put on his coat wrathfully and turned away. Evidently, he considered that he had done his best and found it a thankless task. He started up the lane.

That was a little too much for the patience of the St. Jim's caravanners. They were wrecked and stranded, and Coker had done it.

Jack Blake made a jump after Coker, and the other fellows jumped after Blake.

Before the great man of Greyfriars had taken three strides he was collared on all sides by indignant caravanners.

Bump!

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker, in surprise and wrath. "What—the thump— Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—yooop!"

Bump!

"There!" gasped Blake, as Coker of the Fifth

PROFITABLE!

Dentist (to small boy who has just dragged the gas-pad away from his face): "It's all right, little man—don't be frightened."

Boy (indignantly): "I only wanted to tell you to pull out as many as you can; I've been promised a shilling a tooth!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Meredith, 44, Palmerston Road, Rathmines, Dublin.

sprawled on the muddy ground and roared. "Now perhaps you'll stop to think next time before you wreck a caravan."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Shove him into the ditch!" shouted Herries. "He's wrecked us, the silly chump! Shove him in after the van!"

"Good egg!"

"Roll him over!"

Coker staggered to his feet.

"You—you—you ungrateful rotters!" he gasped. "You—you—you—"

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

Coker fled.

CHAPTER 3.

Stranded Caravanners!

"STRANDED, by gum!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What a go!"

Tom Merry & Co. gathered dismally round the upset van as Coker's footsteps died away up the hilly lane.

The St. Jim's van was fairly stuck now, and it was impossible for the juniors to get it out of the ditch.

Blake and Dig released the horse, and Circumstances began to crop the grass beside the lane with a contented air.

Circumstances did not seem to mind. Perhaps the disaster was merely an incident in his eventful career as a caravan horse.

"Well, what the thump are we going to do?" asked Manners.

"Echo answers what?" grunted Lowther.

"We can't move the blessed old bus without help—a good deal of help!" said Tom Merry. "We've got to get assistance. There must be a village somewhere."

"Pewwaps——" began Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass thoughtfully on the slanting van.

"Well?"

"Pewwaps if we got a plank undah it ffrom the othah side, to use as a levah, we——"

"Have you got a plank about you?" grunted Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies, I am not likely to have a plank about me."

"Then don't talk out of your neck, old chap!"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Easy does it," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Mustn't get waxy over an accident. Let's think what's to be done."

"I was thinkin', Tom Mewwy——"

"You exaggerate, old chap," said Lowther. "Your mental processes really can't be described as thinking."

"I warged that wemark as asinine, Lowthah!"

"Why grouse?" said Tom Merry cheerily. "We can't move the bus, and we shall have to get help. Somebody had better stay with the van and guard it while we look for a village."

"If we can find a village we can get some lunch," said Herries, more amicably. "It's past two and I'm jolly hungry."

"Same here," said Dig.

"But where is there a blessed village?" asked Blake, with a desperate glance round the solitary landscape.

"That ass Coker must have been going somewhere. Let's go in the same direction. Who's going to stay with the van?" asked Tom Merry.

There was a unanimous silence. All the caravanners were thinking of a cosy village inn and a cheery lunch, which they felt they deserved after the exertions of the morning. Nobody wanted to be stranded with the "bus."

"After all, it will be all right here," remarked Blake. "There isn't a soul to be seen. We can take the horse and the bike with us, and the village mayn't be far off. The van can look after itself for a bit. It can't get walked off, anyhow."

"And I'm hungry!" observed Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then let's get on," said Tom Merry.

And, having locked the door of the overturned van, the St. Jim's juniors started up the hilly lane, leading the horse and wheeling the bike, and feeling, generally, that the chief thing to be considered just then was lunch.

A tramp of a quarter of a mile, however, revealed the fact that the landscape was not quite so solitary as it looked.

The juniors came quite suddenly upon a cosy little village, with thatched roofs and red chimney-pots glimmering in the sun.

But the most agreeable part of the view was a red-roofed inn, with a swinging sign that announced that it was the Wagon and Horses, and that refreshments could be had.

"Bai Jove! That will suit us!" said Arthur Augustus, with great satisfaction.

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The caravanners marched into the inn.

A plump and smiling landlady met them in the dusky entrance. And in a very short time the caravanners were sitting down in a dusty old raftered room to an extremely substantial meal.

And as the meal progressed frowns disappeared and smiles took their place.

Once more the St. Jim's caravanners felt on good terms with themselves and all the world, and they even agreed that it was not such a bad thing, once in a way, to be stranded.

CHAPTER 4.

Coker is Wrathful!

"ROT!" That expressive word, pronounced in a loud and emphatic tone, reached the ears of Tom Merry & Co. as they were chatting lazily after an ample lunch in the Wagon and Horses. They ceased chatting, and exchanged glances, for they recognised that powerful voice.

It was the voice of Horace James Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars School.

"Cokah, bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

The juniors glanced towards the half-open door. From the dusky passage, outside the voice proceeded, and it continued in bull tones that could have been heard all over the Wagon and Horses.

"Rot! I repeat, Potter, that it's silly rot! It's no good arguing with me, Greene! I say rot, and I mean rot!"

"You talk rot, you mean?" asked another voice.

"Look here, Potter——"

"Easy does it, Coker!" said a third voice. "Don't lift the roof off, old chap! We're not deaf!"

"You're worse than deaf; you're silly!" retorted Coker. "I say it's utter rot! That's my opinion, for what it's worth!"

"And I wonder how much that is?" murmured Monty Lowther.

And the chums of St. Jim's grinned. They found Coker rather entertaining. Evidently the great man of Greyfriars was a little excited over something. Apparently the universe was not being run to his entire satisfaction.

"We've been here," continued Coker, "three days. We've watched them playing cricket—what these benighted villagers call cricket. I couldn't help feeling sorry for them. You've noticed the way that fellow Hodge handles a bat. Like a clothes prop. Pah!"

"He isn't a bad bat for a country chap," said Potter.

"That remark, Potter, shows how much you know about batting. And that's nothing—less than nothing, if possible."

"Anyhow, I play in the first eleven at Greyfriars," said Potter testily, "and they wouldn't play you in the Remove team, and you know it."

"And why?" roared Coker. "Because Wingate of the Sixth is jealous of my form——"

"Rot!"

"Because he's afraid of being put in the background by a really first-class cricketer."

"Rats!"

"And because of his ignorance of the game. His utter ignorance, Potter, is proved by the fact that he plays you in the first eleven."

The St. Jim's juniors chuckled. They remembered having seen Potter and Greene of the Fifth at Greyfriars. The two were chums of Coker. How anybody could be chummy with Coker was a deep mystery to the St. Jim's juniors. Perhaps he had his good qualities somewhere. If so, he did not display them on the surface.

"Hodge!" repeated Coker, in tones of deep contempt. "Why, he can't bat for toffee. Look at the way he missed the ball I sent him."

"It didn't go within yards of him. I thought you were aiming at the haystack in the field."

"You silly ass!"

"Thanks! Now, shall we have some ginger-pop?"

"Bother ginger-pop! I'm talking cricket. The cheek of it!" resumed Coker in tones of thrilling indignation. "I offer my services to a village team—I, a Public school chap and a first-class cricketer—and they have the dashed impudence to refuse—rudely!"

"They weren't exactly rude," murmured Potter.

"What did that fellow Hodge say?" demanded Coker. "He said he'd play me, only he was afraid I should brain the wicketkeeper if I batted, and brain the rest if I bowled! Do you call that polite?"

"Ahem!"

"I joined them at practice," continued Coker, "from sheer kindness. I saw that they were a gang of bucolic fumlbers, and I thought I'd give them some tips about real cricket. And that's my reward! One of them actually got in the way of my bat and howled like thunder when he

got a clump with it. What did he expect, I'd like to know?"

"He'd have known what to expect if he'd known you better, old scout. He won't get within range of your bat again—"

"If you're going to talk cheeky rot, Potter—"

"I'm going to have some ginger-pop when you've done blowing off steam, old top. Never mind the Tatcham cricketers. After all, we didn't come here to play cricket."

"But they've actually refused my offer to play for them in the next match—rudely!" said Coker.

"That's what I can't get over. I feel that it's up to me to teach that fellow Hodge a lesson!"

"Oh, let him rest!"

"I won't interrupt their game," said Coker considerably. "It isn't cricket, but they call it cricket, and I'll let 'em finish. Then I'll drop on Hodge—"

"Look here—"

"And thrash him—"

"He's rather a hefty chap, Coker."

"If you think I can't thrash him, Greene—"

"Well, I don't see any need to row with the chap," said Greene pacifically. "We're on a walking tour here, not a fighting stunt. Let him alone."

"We've been long enough here in Tatcham," said Potter. "Let's get on our way this afternoon—"

"We're staying here some days," said Coker.

"Oh!"

"I'm going to lick Hodge!"

"Oh!"

"Then I'm going to mop them up at cricket,"



Coker, feeling decidedly groggy, tottered to the attack. But Hodge did not hit him again. He took the Greyfriars Fifth Former in his grasp, swept him off his feet, and sat him down with a bump on the green!

CHAPTER 5.

Coker on the Warpath!

HARRY HODGE tucked his bat under his arm and came off the pitch.

Most of the village cricketers followed him; the practice was over.

Coker & Co. had been looking on—Coker very grimly and his comrades rather uneasily.

Wrathful as he was, Horace Coker would not interrupt the cricket. Now that it was over, however, he strode to intercept the captain of the Tatcham crowd.

He pushed his way through the Tatcham fellows and met Hodge face to face.

Big and burly as Horace Coker was, Hodge had the advantage of him in that respect. He was bigger and burlier, and he looked at Coker from a superior height, with a good-natured grin.

"Stop!" said Coker.

Hodge stopped.

"What be you wanting?" he inquired.

"You've checked me," said Coker.

Hodge's grin widened.

"I'm going to lick you!"

"You can't do it, kid," said Harry Hodge good-naturedly. "But if I've hurt your feelings I'm sorry. I was only joking. But you can't play cricket, you know!"

"Where I come from," said Coker, "we play cricket—play it, you understand! I was going to give you silly fumlbers some tips about the game. Now I won't!"

"Never mind," grinned Hodge. "You've taught us already how to bowl at a haystack, if we want to."

There was a chortle from the Tatcham fellows, and the crimson in Horace Coker's ruddy face deepened.

"You cheeky cad!" he roared.

"Look here——"

"Put up your hands!"

"Coker, old man——" urged Greene.

"For goodness' sake don't let's have a row here," implored Potter.

Coker did not heed. He was prancing up to the big Tatcham fellow with his hands in the air and a very warlike expression on his face.

Harry Hodge gave ground. It was pretty clear that he was not afraid of Coker; but he did not want trouble with the wrathful Horace.

"Now, look here——" he began.

Clump!

One of Coker's windmill fists dabbed on Hodge's nose, and cut short his expostulations.

Then Hodge's hands came up fast enough.

"Well, if you will have it!" he said.

And he sailed in.

What followed was extremely interesting to behold. It may have been interesting to behold, but it certainly was not enjoyable to undergo. At all events, Coker did not look like a fellow who was enjoying himself. Horace James had bitten off more than he could conveniently masticate.

The big Dorsetshire lad simply walked over him.

On the point of science they were about equal. Coker prided himself on being a boxer. But Coker prided himself on many things without adequate grounds. As a matter of fact, what he did not know about boxing would have filled many volumes. Hodge was equally unacquainted with the scientific side of the noble art of self-defence. So it was a matter of hammer and tongs.

At hammer and tongs Coker was quite good, if

he was not outclassed; but on the present occasion he was very much outclassed.

Hodge was bigger and heavier, and longer in the reach. Work in the fields in the open air had given him muscles of iron.

Coker, much to his surprise, found himself facing a sort of human tank.

But he stood up gamely.

Coker lacked many things, but he did not lack pluck. He had plenty of that—heaps of it. And he stood up to the big fists that beat like flails and came on again after he was beaten—if he had only known it.

The Tatcham crowd were grinning round, and the St. Jim's juniors were interested spectators. Nobody supposed for a moment that Coker had a chance of victory; but the spectators could not help admiring his pluck and determination.

Twice Coker had been down, and up again. A third time he went down, and lay gasping.

Potter ran to help him.

"Chuck it, old man!" murmured Potter.

Coker spluttered.

"Do you think I'm licked, you ass?"

"I know you are, old top!"

"That only shows what a silly chump you are, George Potter!"

"Look here, old chap, he's too big for you," expostulated Greene.

"Oh, don't talk rot!"

Coker sat up dizzily.

"Bai Jove! That uttah ass has got plenty of

A STRIKING TYRANT!

Mr. Latham: "A tyrant is a ruler that is hated and feared. Now, Trimble, give me a sentence with the word in it."

Trimble: "The teacher struck the pupil with his tyrant!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to V. Baxendale, 1, Vincent Street, Openshaw, Manchester 11.

pluck!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "He's goin' on, bai Jove!"

"Silly ass!" commented Blake.

The Fifth Former of Greyfriars staggered to his feet. He was feeling decidedly groggy, but he was game to the last.

"Come on!" he gasped.

Harry Hodge kept his hands down.

"Oh, drop it!" he said. "Can't you see you're licked?"

"Come on, you cheeky rotter!"

Coker tottered to the attack. Hodge did not hit him again. He did not need hitting. He took Coker in his powerful grasp, swept him off his feet, and sat him down with a bump on the green.

There was a howl of laughter as Coker bumped and roared.

Then Harry Hodge walked away with his friends, leaving Coker gasping.

"Ow! Oh! Ah! Yoop! Grooogh!" spluttered Coker dazedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and Greene, grinning, helped up the Greyfriars champion.

Coker leaned heavily on them, breathing in jerks. He blinked round in search of Harry Hodge, whose tall form was disappearing down the village street.

"Ow! Where is the chawbacon I was licking?"

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"If you mean the chawbacon who was ficking you, he's gone!"

"Oh, the rotten funk!"

"Eh?"

"I was just going to finish him off!" gasped Coker. "Fancy a fellow running away like that!"

"Running away?" said Greene blankly.

"Still, perhaps he's had enough," said Coker generously. "He put up a good fight, and I don't want to be hard on him. Come on! I want to get my nose bathed, and there's something the matter with my eye. That chap was rather hefty; and it wasn't an easy job licking him, I can tell you!"

And Coker walked off with his friends, who did not speak.

Coker of the Fifth had taken their breath away.

CHAPTER 6.

No Go!

"**B**AI JOVE! That fellow Cokah takes the whole cake!"

That was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's opinion, and his chums fully agreed. Having been completely licked in the scrap, Coker had walked off with the happy conviction that he was the victor; and it was very like Horace Coker, and very entertaining.

"Now, about that blessed old bus," said Tom Merry. "I dare say there's a wheelwright in the village, and he can help us. We'll leave the horse and the bike at the inn, and come back for supper—what?"

"Good!" said Blake. "I dare say Circumstances won't mind being stranded as long as the oats' hold out. Let's look for the wheel jockey."

The caravanners strolled down the village street, which was dotted with straggling cottages and a few little shops.

A red glow from a dark interior announced a forge, and they decided to ask for the help they needed with the van.

A powerful young fellow in a black apron was handling a big hammer when the juniors looked in.

He glanced at the juniors and smiled.

"Bai Jove! That's Hodge!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

Harry Hodge was out of flannels now, and in his working clothes. He looked more hefty than ever as a blacksmith, and the juniors could not help smiling at the idea of the Greyfriars Fifth Former tackling him in a fight.

"Anything I can do for you?" asked Hodge civilly.

Tom Merry explained.

Hodge listened, and nodded.

"That's all right," he said. "Feyther and me, we're the only smiths and wheelwrights for miles around. If there's any damage to your caravan, sir, we can mend it for you."

"I think one of the wheels is a bit awry," said Tom. "But the trouble is getting it out of the ditch."

"Feyther and me'll come along when we've done a job we're on now, if you like."

"Thanks! We'll wait, then!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The St. Jim's juniors waited at the entrance to the forge.

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The elder Hodge came in with a horse to be shod, and the juniors watched the operation with interest.

After it was over they started with the two smiths for the spot where the caravan had been left.

The St. Jim's caravan was still as they left it—with two wheels deep in the mud of the ditch, slanting across to the hedge.

Harry Hodge whistled as he looked at it, and his father blinked at it seriously.

"What about getting it out?" asked Tom.

Mr. Hodge nodded slowly.

"I could borrow some horses from the farm and pull it out," he said. "The question is—what's the damage? I'll see!"

The blacksmith made an examination of the sunken side of the van, and shook his head.

"There's a bad twist there!" he said.

"But you can mend it?" asked Blake rather dismally.

"Oh yes, when I get it to my shop! I'll manage it somehow," said the blacksmith. "It will have to go on three wheels there! Then I'll get that wheel off, sir, and tackle it!"

"How long will it take?"

"Can't say exactly; but you might have it in two or three days."

"My hat!"

The caravanners looked at one another.

Evidently the little village of Tatcham was to be their headquarters for a few days, owing to the never-to-be-forgotten assistance rendered by Horace Coker of Greyfriars.

Their feelings towards Coker at that moment were not exactly kind.

"In a hurry to get on, sir?" asked Harry Hodge.

"Well, not exactly," said Tom Merry. "We've got a good bit of the vacation in front of us. All serene; it can't be helped! We'll see about putting up in the village for a few days."

"You can leave it to us, if you like," said Mr. Hodge. "We'll have it in the shop before dark, somehow."

"Thank you!"

And, leaving the caravan in charge of the two smiths, Tom Merry & Co. walked back to the village.

The westward journey of the caravan had been interrupted; but it could not be helped, so they took it as cheerfully as possible.

The caravanners arrived at the Wagon and Horses, where they found it easy enough to engage rooms for their stay in Tatcham.

Few visitors came to that out-of-the-way spot, and they had the inn to themselves, excepting for the Greyfriars walking party and the natives who came in.

At supper the St. Jim's juniors had the pleasure of seeing Coker & Co. again.

Supper was served at a big table in the old raftered room, and the St. Jim's juniors and the Greyfriars seniors sat down to it together.

Horace Coker eyed them rather morosely. He was not looking his best.

Harry Hodge had not hit as hard as he could have hit, but he had certainly hit hard; and Coker's rugged features showed the results. They looked more rugged than ever. His nose, especially, was a thing of beauty and joy for ever, as Monty Lowther poetically remarked.

"You kids staying here?" Coker asked rather gruffly across the table. He seemed to think it

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

What is a pedestrian crossing? A pedestrian crossing is a dash between two dotted lines!

The Government want £400,000,000 next year. So do I. The difference is the Government will get it!

Then there was the mathematician who was always squaring his shoulders. One!

Well, what will happen first thing to-morrow? It will surely dawn upon you!

I hear P.-c. Crump, of Rylcombe village, has been shaping nicely as an emergency wicket-keeper for the village XI. So now he's running them out instead of running them in.

'Nother: "Might I suggest the expression be a little less severe?" asked the photographer of Gore's uncle. "No!" snapped Gore's uncle. "This portrait is for my nephew, and if he sees me looking pleasant he will write for more money!"

See if you can count up to 48 in 11 seconds. I'll have the next joke ready by then.

rather a nerve for anybody to stay at the inn without his lordly will and pleasure being consulted.

"Oh, yes!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"Aren't you caravanning?"

"We were—until a stray lunatic shoved our van into a ditch. Now we've got to wait while the wheel's mended."

"So it's damaged, is it?" said Coker. "I must say it serves you right for your crass idiocy! I tried to help you; but there's no helping born idiots."

"Don't give Coker any of that pic, Potter!" said Monty Lowther.

Potter stared at him.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"You heard what he said—there's no helping born idiots!"

Potter grinned.

Horace Coker held up a substantial finger and shook it at Monty Lowther.

"I don't want any fag cheek!" he said warningly. "I may as well mention that I don't stand anything of that kind. If you ask Wharton or Cherry of Greyfriars they'll tell you how I keep fags in order!"

News: Waiters in a large city had a sit-down strike. It was two days before the customers noticed any difference in the service!

Then there was the bootmaker who changed over to a hatter, and made headway.

Story: "Good-morning, sir!" said the visitor to the Rylcombe resident. "You have won £2,000—£3 a week for life, a world cruise and a pet dog!" "What breed?" asked the Rylcombe resident suspiciously.

A famous actor gave some workmen who had been renovating his house free tickets for the Saturday evening to see his play. The next week he was surprised to find an item on the wage sheet: "To four hours' overtime, Saturday night, eight shillings."

Mr. Railton says good cricketers are born, not made. Runs in the family, so to speak!

Then there was the chap who sowed a packet of giant grass seed and raised a crop of giant blackbirds. Believe it or not!

Here it comes: "You'll soon understand this new steam gauge," said the engineer in the big liner to the new hand. "You see, this 'O' stands for 'Off,' and this 'O' stands for 'On'!"

Selling a boater hat these days is not easy, states the Rylcombe hatter. The last straw!

Can't miss this one out: Lord Conway, Gussy's elder brother, was driving Tom Merry's guardian, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, with a party. "I can't remember the exact name of the village where my friend lives," said Miss Fawcett. "But you can't possibly miss it—there's a notice-board outside saying '30'."

The lights are green, chaps!

The St. Jim's juniors chuckled.

Whatever Coker did in term-time at his own school, it struck them as queer that he should suppose that he could give orders to a party of almost strangers at an inn. But Horace Coker evidently fancied himself as monarch of all he surveyed wherever he found himself. It was a case of Coker first and the rest nowhere—in Coker's opinion.

But Coker's opinions generally were peculiar to himself.

"Well, what are you grinning at?" demanded Coker abruptly.

"Bai Jove! I wasn't gwinnin', Cokah! I was smilin'! And if you are curious on the subject, I will mench that I was smilin' at a silly ass!"

"At a howling clump!" said Tom Merry.

"At a blithering jabberwock!" said Blake.

Coker half-rose from his seat.

"For goodness' sake," grunted Potter, "don't kick up a shindy in the dining-room, Coker! We're fed up!"

"I'm not going to be checked by fags!" snorted Coker.

But he sat down again, and did not condescend

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to bestow any further attention upon Tom Merry & Co.

After supper the chums of St. Jim's walked down to the forge to see how the caravan was getting on; and they did not see Coker again till the next morning.

CHAPTER 7.

A Sporting Offer!

TOM MERRY & CO. spent the following morning in rambling around the village of Tatcham and punting on the stream near the village.

But they did not forget the "old bus" at the village forge, and when they came back to dinner they looked in at Mr. Hodge's place to see the caravan.

The St. Jim's van was in the yard next to the forge, propped on three wheels, the fourth being off, and Harry Hodge at work upon it.

The young smith grinned a welcome to the caravanners.

Tom Merry & Co. chatted with him for a few minutes; they rather liked the sturdy young smith, who seemed to be a good workman as well as a good cricketer.

They were about to leave when Horace Coker strode into the yard.

Harry Hodge looked at Coker rather curiously. His first impression was that Coker had come there looking for more trouble, and he did not want to interrupt his work to pitch Coker out.

But the great Horace—fortunately for himself, perhaps—was quite genial.

"Good-morning, Hodge!" he said cheerily, only deigning to cast a frowning glance for a moment at the St. Jim's juniors.

"Good-morning!" said Hodge.

"We had a bit of a tussle yesterday," said Coker affably.

"We did!" agreed the smith.

"No malice, I hope?" said Coker. "None on my side, I assure you!"

"None on mine," said Hodge.

"That's good! I like a chap who can stand up to a licking and not bear malice afterwards!" said Coker hastily.

Harry Hodge blinked at him.

He did not quite understand the drift of Coker's remark, which made the St. Jim's juniors smile. However, Coker appeared to be quite cordial, and the smith was willing to let it go at that.

"Busy?" asked Coker, as genial as ever.

"Yes; mending a wheel."

"Now, about cricket, Hodge!"

"What about cricket?" asked the blacksmith, with a smile.

"You play a sort of game in this village!" remarked Coker.

"We play cricket."

"Yes, I know you call it cricket! Not quite what we call cricket at Greyfriars. Still, you're at liberty to call it cricket." Coker was being courteous now—the Coker brand of courtesy. "You passed some remarks on my cricket when I joined you at practice. Don't think I'm annoyed. I'm not. I can make full allowance for your ignorance of the game!"

"Oh!" said Hodge.

He gave Coker a rather long look, and then turned to his labours again.

It really did not matter much if Coker ran on; he could go on mending the caravan wheel while

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Horace talked. Harry Hodge had the patient good-temper which often accompanies great physical strength. Which, again, was rather fortunate for Horace Coker.

"I admit I was a bit cross yesterday," said Coker frankly. "I really shouldn't have pitched into you otherwise, Hodge."

"No harm done."

"I was afraid I'd hit you rather hard."

"Not at all."

"Well, so much the better; I'm rather a hard hitter when I get angry, and I was rather afraid that I had laid you up."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the caravanners; they simply could not help it.

The bare idea of Horace Coker having laid up the local Hercules was too much for them.

Coker stared round at the juniors.

"What's the row about?" he demanded. "You shut up! I don't allow cheeky fags to cackle at me, I can tell you! Now, Hodge, I'm going to make you a sporting offer."

"Are you?" said Hodge in surprise.

"Yes. You think you can play cricket."

"Well, I certainly think so," assented the young smith.

"I don't blame you," said Coker blandly. "You've never seen real cricket played, so how are you to know? Now, I'm going to make you an offer. You play games on Saturday afternoon, I believe? I'm going to get a team of Greyfriars fellows here, and play you. See? Of course, we shall lick you easily; I don't make any secret of that. I don't suppose you'll take a single run in either innings. But you'll see some good cricket. Got that?"

"My word!" said Harry Hodge.

"Now, what Saturday will suit you?" asked Coker.

Coker had settled in his mind that the match was going to take place. Apparently he did not consider it necessary for it to be settled in the Tatcham captain's mind, too. But Harry Hodge only smiled.

"If you can make it this Saturday, so much the better," continued Coker. "You see, my friends and I are on a walking tour in Dorsetshire, and we don't want to waste too much time in this benighted hole!"

"This what?"

"Benighted hole!"

"Do you mean this village?"

"That's it!"

Hodge looked at Coker across the damaged wheel.

Coker was smiling genially, and evidently had his best manners on. What his worst manners might possibly be like the young smith could not guess.

"We want to get on," went on Coker cheerily, "but that match must come off first. Can you make it this Saturday? If you've got a match on with some other blessed stick-in-the-mud village, you can put it off, of course."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, almost overcome. "I wonder that Cokah isn't lynched every day at Gweyfwahs!"

"I wonder that chap doesn't punch his nose," growled Jack Blake. "I know I would!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

But Harry Hodge did not punch Coker's nose. He only looked at him with curious interest.

"If we had a match with some other village, I'm afraid we couldn't put it off," he said; "but as it happens, we haven't. I'll speak to the other fellows, if you like, and see if we can fix it up."

"Oh, they'll agree!" said Coker. "You don't get a chance every day of playing a Public school eleven."

"Do your friends play cricket like you?" asked Hodge.

"Well, not all of them—some of them are not quite up to my mark, of course. I'm rather unique at Greyfriars, for my cricket."

"I think you must be, from what I've seen of it."

"As I said, I don't make any secret that you won't have the ghost of a chance," said Coker pleasantly. "Still, it will be an experience for you to meet players of my calibre—quite a new experience."

"That's quite true!"

"I'm sure it won't, if your friends play cricket like you!" answered the smith.

"You're beginning to tumble to my quality as a cricketer—what?" smiled Coker. "That does you credit! Well, ta-ta! I must get along to lunch."

And Coker walked out of the yard, quite satisfied.

Harry Hodge glanced at the caravanners, who were grinning.

"You know that chap?" he asked.

"Oh, yes!" answered Tom Merry. "We play a junior team of cricketers at his school. They're not like Coker, though; they can play!"

"I shouldn't have thought anyone played cricket like that chap."



"Give him some more!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Sock it to him!" Swipe, swipe, swipe! Horace Coker rolled on the landing in a dazed condition, with the juniors' pillows crashing on him. He had woken up the wrong customers!

"Then it's a go?"

Harry Hodge reflected, smiling a little.

"After all, it will be as good as practice," he said at last. "I don't see why not. Yes, I'll arrange the match, if you like."

"As good as practice!" repeated Coker. "I don't quite see what you mean, Hodge."

"Never mind, we'll play," said the smith. "Start at two—will that suit you?"

"Certainly."

"Then you can get your team together, and we'll try to give you a good match," said Hodge. Coker grinned.

"Put your beef into it!" he said. "You won't have an earthly; in fact, I don't think the match will take an hour. I don't mind telling you that."

"Never heard of anybody who does. Yes, there's Grandy of the Shell at our school; he's a bit like Coker at cricket. Never heard of anybody else. But if he gets together a team of Greyfriars men you will want to pull up your socks," said Tom. "They're not all duds like Coker. We'll jolly well come along and see the match."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. walked along to the inn to lunch, and had the pleasure of Coker's company there.

Potter and Greene were being informed at lunch of the arrangements their friend and leader had made, and they did not seem so satisfied as Coker.

"We don't want to hang out here over the week-end!" Potter said rebelliously.

"We do!" Coker assured him.
 "We came on a walking tour!" grunted Greene.
 "A little cricket makes a variety."
 "We've got a lot of Dorset to do yet—the Vale of Blackmoor, and—"
 "The Vale of Blackmoor can wait!"
 "And Cranborne Chase—"
 "Bless Cranborne Chase! I'll get a lift into Shaftesbury after lunch and phone from there," said Coker. "The phone here is out of order. I've got to ring up a good many fellows as soon as possible, and get them to come; there isn't a very long notice, as to-morrow's Saturday."
 "Do you think they'll come?" asked Potter.
 "Of course!"
 "Well, I don't."
 "You're rather an ass, George Potter! I've told you that before!"
 "Br-r-r-r!" said Potter.

Coker & Co. lunched in silence after that. Evidently Coker was leader of the walking party, and his word was law.

It was probable that Coker was standing the expenses of the tour; on no other theory could the St. Jim's juniors account for the curious circumstance that his comrades did not fall upon him and slay him.

The caravanners were sunning themselves outside the inn after lunch when Coker came out and entered a car he had hired and drove away.

He was off to the ancient and historical town of Shaftesbury to use the telephone—to call together the merry men who were to mop up the Tatcham cricketers.

The caravanners could not help wondering what luck he would have.

Coker was full of confidence, and never doubted; but it was an interesting question, to say the least, how many fellows would be willing to walk on to a cricket field with the egregious Coker as their captain.

CHAPTER 8.

A Surprise for Coker!

"**W**HERE are you, you chaps?"
 It was Coker's voice.

Tom Merry & Co. were having tea on the balcony of the inn in the pleasant afternoon sunshine.

Potter and Greene had joined them there. Potter and Greene were a little lofty, as Fifth Formers and seniors; but they were bored almost to tears hanging about the inn, waiting on the pleasure of the lordly Coker, and they subdued their Fifth Form loftiness a little for the sake of the company.

Their talk ran a good deal on Horace Coker, absent just then at Shaftesbury.

The remarks they made about him were not flattering. According to Coker's chums, Horace was a pig-headed, obstinate ass, who did not even know enough to go in when it rained. This friendly and candid opinion Potter and Greene expressed with great frankness and at considerable length. Potter even remarked that he had a good mind to "hoof" on to Blackmoor without waiting for Coker, and Greene said it would be a good idea.

But they didn't do it, which strengthened the caravanners' suspicion that the egregious Horace was footing the bills on that walking tour.

Coker was still the subject of Potter and

Greene's remarks—the juniors listening politely—when his voice was heard inquiring for his chums.
 "Where the thunder—? Oh, here you are!"

Horace Coker came out on the balcony. His rugged face was flushed.
 "Hallo! Got back?" yawned Greene.
 "Can't you see I've got back? Any tea going?"
 "Here you are!"
 "What are those dashed fags doing here?"
 "Standing us tea!" grunted Potter. "If it won't give you a fit, you might be civil for once! Have you done your phoning?"

"Yes," growled Coker, putting down his teacup, "I've done it! And a precious fix it's left me in! I never even dreamed that there were so many thundering fools in my Form at Greyfriars! Here I have arranged to play a cricket match to-morrow with a set of country joshins, and I'm left in the lurch! What do you think of that?"

"Not really?" murmured Potter, with a wink at Greene.

"Yes, really. You'd hardly believe it," said Coker in tones of deep and indignant exasperation. "I got on the phone first to Hilton's place. He's got Fitz and Smith major staying with him; that would have been three. And what do you think Hilton said?"

"Well, what did he say?"
 "He said the vacation at Greyfriars had only come just in time to save me from being slaughtered by the Fifth, and that if he saw me during the vacation he was afraid he wouldn't be able to resist slaughtering me! The cheeky rotter! Why, you thumping asses, what are you cackling for?" roared Coker, in great wrath.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem! Go on, Coker! Didn't you phone to Hobson of the Shell?"

"Yes, I did. I had to wait, but I got through to the cheeky young cad! I asked him first if he had anybody with him, and he said Hoskins and Stewart. I told him I had a match on, and was short of men, and would be willing to play some fags. I couldn't put it nicer than that, could I? I said I could even find a place for that potty idiot Hoskins. I expected a grateful reply, at least. And Hobson simply said: 'Go and eat coke!' That, you know, to me—me, you know! Why, I'll strew the quadrangle with him next term!"

"And is that all?"
 "Well, I thought a bit, and remembered that I'd heard that Gwynne and Wingate of the Sixth had gone to a summer place in the Vale of Blackmoor. Luckily, I found the number and rang them up, and got on to Wingate. I told him what was wanted, and said I'd be glad to play him. I thought I'd better mention right away that I was going to captain the team; it wouldn't have done to have any misunderstanding about that."

"And what did old Wingate say?"
 "Nothing; he rang off. I tried again and again and couldn't get an answer. He actually rang off deliberately, from sheer cheek."

Coker gulped down his tea.
 "Bai Jove! What a tale of feahful woe!" murmured Arthur Augustus; and the St. Jim's juniors suppressed their merriment as well as they could.

Potter and Greene contrived not to cackle any more. They simply dared not, with Coker's fiery eyes on them.

Coker plainly did not regard it as a laughing matter.

"So it's all off," said Potter, after some



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 8. Outrage on a Governor!

TOM MERRY was asked by the Head to carry a sealed envelope to Wayland Station, there to await the 3.20 train, in which Sir Malcolm Bevis, a Governor of St. Jim's, would be passing through. When Sir Malcolm looked out of the window, he glimpsed a St. Jim's junior—and next moment an overripe tomato, hurled with deadly aim, smashed over his features. The governor recollected that the junior had an improvised mask, but he was wearing a cap with an ink stain on one side, and a silver Scouts' badge on the lapel of his jacket. Both cap and jacket were identified as Tom Merry's. With the most serious consequences hanging over Merry's head, "Detective" Kerr resolved to investigate.

KERR: Now, Merry, you say you actually did not go near Wayland Station yesterday afternoon, after all?

MERRY: No. I did not.

KERR: Why didn't you tell the Head that?

MERRY: I have done so. But I'm afraid he doesn't believe me.

KERR: Naturally, he won't, unless you tell him where you really did go. You admit you set out for the station, with the sealed letter, to meet the 3.20 train. But you didn't arrive at the station?

MERRY: No.

KERR: Then somebody wearing your cap and jacket must have thrown that tomato at Sir Malcolm Bevis?

MERRY: Fairly obviously. The cap with the ink stain is my old one, and so is the jacket with the Scouts' badge attached. I toggled up in my best to meet the governor, but any fellow could have got my old clobber in the Shell dorm.

KERR: But why won't you explain why you didn't turn up at the station? Surely somebody saw you, wherever you went, and can act as witness to prove an alibi—

MANNERS (interrupting): Perhaps I'd better speak here, Kerr. Just lately, my minor, Reggie, has been in trouble with Joey Banks, the bookie. Banks has threatened to come up to the school and expose Reggie to the Head. By sheer

internal struggles. "We may as well get on with our walking tour."

"Don't be an ass, Potter! I've fixed up now to play these rural joskins to-morrow."

"You can't play them without a team, you know," murmured Greene.

"When I say a thing's going to be done," said Coker, "it's going to be done. That's me!"

"But how—"

"We're three," said Coker. "You two fellows can play cricket—not my style, but a fairly good game. I may say that I'm equal to any two ordinary players; I've no use for false modesty.

chance, as Tom was going to Wayland yesterday afternoon, he met Banks. Banks, knowing Tom by sight, asked if Reggie's friends—that's us—were going to do anything about his gambling debts. Tom, trying to find out the strength of it, for my sake, wasted valuable time, and when he had got rid of Banks it was too late to meet the 3.20. It's because Tom is too decent a chap to get back on a chum that he can't tell Dr. Holmes just where he was and what he was doing.

MERRY: If you can help, Kerr, go ahead. My luck was out yesterday—coming back I was caught in a sudden downpour, and I had to change everything when I came in.

KERR: Do you remember any junior asking to use the prefects' telephone, Kildare—about two o'clock yesterday afternoon it would have been?

KILDARE: Why, yes, Kerr. Racke of the Shell said he had an urgent message. I left the room while he telephoned.

KERR: Thanks, Kildare. I think I can guess what Racke's message was about.

KERR: Oh, Racke, why did you telephone the Green Man at Rylecombe yesterday afternoon?

RACKE: How do you know I did, Kerr?

KERR: How else could you have got Joey Banks to intercept Tom Merry on his way to the station?

RACKE: So you think I arranged it all? What utter rot! You're overreaching yourself this time, Mr. Detective Kerr.

KERR: Possibly. But I imagine you overheard Dr. Holmes giving Merry his instructions, got hold of Merry's cap and jacket, and threw that overripe tomato at Sir Malcolm Bevis, hoping to get Tom Merry expelled. I know you hate Merry.

RACKE: I certainly do hate Merry. But you forget, Kerr, that the mere fact that I hate Merry doesn't prove a thing.

KERR: That's true. Where were you at 3.20 yesterday afternoon, Racke?

RACKE: Very clever, aren't you? I was on the River Rhyl, with Crooke and Mellish. We had a grand afternoon, and I never once got out of the boat. So I've two witnesses to prove I couldn't possibly have been near Wayland Station when the tomato was thrown at Sir Malcolm Bevis!

KERR: Everybody is innocent until he's proved guilty. I'll bring Tom Merry along—I think he'd like to talk to you!

(How did Racke give himself away? See solution on page 33.)

That's as good as four, then. I shall have to pick up seven players somewhere. Not that I need a full eleven, if you come to that. I'd play these joskins four or five men short and still wallop them to the wide. Still, I admit that we three couldn't very well walk on a field to play the match with them. Somehow or other I've got to get together some men. Can't either of you silly asses make a suggestion?"

"I suggest cutting the whole thing."

"Don't talk rot, Potter. That's your chief fault. You talk such awful rot!"

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"Ask the landlord to play," suggested Potter sarcastically. "And perhaps the landlady would lend a hand."

"Look here, you silly chump—"

"Well, we'll play if you raise an eleven of any sort," said Potter resignedly. "But I'm blessed if I see where you're going to dig them up."

Coker reflected.

His chums went on with their tea, and Tom Merry & Co. regarded Horace Coker smilingly.

The great Coker was certainly in a difficulty—owing to the failure of his schoolfellows to rally round and follow his glorious lead.

Coker gave a sudden start.

"By gad! I've got it!"

"Got what?" yawned Greene.

"The eleven!"

"In your waistcoat pocket?" asked Potter humorously.

Coker raised his hand and pointed at the astonished caravanners.

"There you are!" he said.

"Eh?"

"These kids can play cricket, after a fashion. I'll take them on."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Take us on!" ejaculated Blake.

Coker nodded. His face was quite clear now.

"That's it," he said. "Of course, you're only fags; but I've seen you play a fag team at Greyfriars, and you play a fair to middling game—for kids. I'll take you into my eleven. You don't amount to much, but you can play these bumpkins. It's a go!"

"Well, my hat!"

"Hold on!" remarked Tom Merry. "It isn't quite a go, Coker!"

"What?"

"You see, we wouldn't be found dead in your eleven!" explained Tom Merry kindly. "You fellows finished? Come on, we'll see how the van is getting on."

"Yaas, waiyah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. walked off the balcony, leaving Horace Coker staring.

CHAPTER 9.

Nothing Doing!

TOM MERRY & CO. did not see Coker again that evening.

They learned from Potter and Greene that the great Horace had gone on a fresh telephoning expedition.

It was fortunate that Coker was well provided with that useful article cash, for he was putting himself to a big expense in trunk calls.

The St. Jim's juniors were gone to bed when Coker returned to the inn. But that his new set of trunk calls had been paid for in vain was proved by what happened next.

There was a heavy thump at the door of the room in which Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were sleeping the sleep of the just.

Thump, thump!

"What the dickens—"

"Who's there?"

The door opened.

"Only me!" came the voice of Coker in the darkness. "I think this is your room, Merry."

"What have you woke us up for, you chump?" yelled the captain of the Shell in great wrath.

"I've got something to say to you—"

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"Get out!"

"I want to tell you—"

"Keep it till morning, you fathead!"

"It won't keep till morning; it's got to be settled now," explained Coker. "I've been on the phone to a dozen chaps, but they're all too slack to come along and play cricket here for the credit of Greyfriars. There's nothing for it but playing you kids to-morrow."

The Terrible Three sat up in their beds, breathing hard.

It was nearly eleven o'clock, and they wanted to sleep. The importance of the matter, which Coker fully realised, was quite lost on them; but they did not care twopence, or a smaller sum, for the egregious Coker or his egregious cricket match, especially in the middle of the night.

But Coker ran on cheerily:

"Sorry to wake you up, but it's got to be settled. Can I depend on you for to-morrow?"

"You can depend on us for a taumping good licking if you don't get out!" roared Manners.

"Don't talk rot! You see, it's the only way. Don't think I want to play a set of silly fags in my eleven. I don't! But there's nothing else to be done. I've hired the things for you, as I thought you wouldn't have your bags with you caravanning. I've brought the whole lot in the car from Shaftesbury."

"You can send them back again."

"I'm going to, after the match, of course. I've only hired them. I shall want you to turn out for practice in the morning—see?"

"Will you travel off?"

"Ten o'clock sharp, on the village green," said Coker.

"Buzz off!" howled Lowther.

"Mind, it's got to be settled!"

"Pillows!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Eh? What do you mean—pillows?" asked Coker, in surprise.

Horace Coker quickly discovered what Tom Merry meant.

The Terrible Three turned out of bed, grasping their pillows. They could not see Coker in the dark, but his voice showed them the direction to take.

Three pillows swiped at Horace Coker at the same time and landed on him, and Coker went spinning.

"Yaroooh!"

"Give him some more!"

"Sock in to him!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Horace Coker rolled out on the landing in a dazed condition, with pillows crashing on him.

He sprawled on the landing and gasped.

"Wha-a-at you—you— Groogh! Ah! I'll— Yow-ow-ow!"

The Terrible Three returned to their room, and Tom Merry turned the key in the lock.

"Now we can get back to bed," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three turned in again. A minute later there was a shake at the door-handle, and Coker's voice came through the keyhole.

"Merry, you cheeky young sweep—"

"Good-night!"

"I'll smash you!"

"Ta-ta!"

"I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Snore!

Horace Coker gave it up at last and retired, and the chums of the Shell slumbered once more, undisturbed till morning.

Coker had apparently discovered that the important matter would keep till the morning, after all.

In the morning the caravanners met him at the breakfast-table.

He was looking very morose, and did not deign to greet them—in fact, it was only by the exercise of great self-control that Coker did not charge the Terrible Three on the spot and begin a battle royal round the breakfast-table.

After breakfast he joined the caravanners as they were leaving the inn.

"Now, look here, you kids," he said as patiently as he could, "I want you to turn up for cricket practice this morning—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'm going to give you some coaching."

"Wats!"

"It's understood that you're playing for me this afternoon—"

"Give us a rest, Coker!" implored Monty Lowther.

"Do you refuse?" roared Coker.

"I think we've refused already," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You're not exactly the sort of cricket captain we want to play for, Coker. You're too funny, you know."

"If you want a hiding, Merry—"

"Ass!"

"I must remark, Coker, that I regard you as an uttali ass!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely. "P'way wun away and play!"

Coker squared his jaw.

"You'll play in my eleven this afternoon, or I'll jolly well give you a thrashing all round!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, which is it to be?" demanded Coker truculently.

"I think it had better be the thrashing!" grinned Herries.

"Mind, I mean what I say!"

"So do we, old top!"

Coker wasted no more time in words. It was time for action, and Coker proceeded to action. He did not seem to have any doubts about his ability to thrash seven fags.

He rushed at the caravanners, and the next moment he was swept off his feet and landed in the inn yard with a heavy thump. He was still there, trying to get his second wind, when the caravanners strolled down the street.

CHAPTER 10.

Backing Up Coker!

THE caravanners came in to dinner in cheerful spirits after a ramble round the country.

The St. Jim's caravan was to start again on Monday morning, and until then the caravanners had to kill time, but they were killing it very agreeably.

They were in the country made famous by Thomas Hardy, and they were not sorry to spend a few days looking about them. They enjoyed their dinner, not at all discountenanced by the frowns they received from Horace Coker farther up the table.

Potter and Greene did not look happy. They were bored at the inn, and they had been subjected to Coker's conversation all the morning, which did not conduce to happiness. They wanted to get on with their walking tour; but



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:

JACK BLAKE.

JACK BLAKE is Yorkshire born, and he professed a dislike of astrology. "Leave me out, Skimmy," he said, gently but firmly. "I believe that one day is just as good as another—and as for lucky stars and things, that's all rot!" "Ah, my dear Blake," I replied, "you betray your birth month by your speech. As a test, give me your birthday—I will do the rest."

Against his will, but simply because his chums seemed eager to see my delineation, Blake admitted himself as one of the Leo subjects (Leo, The Lion, July 23rd to August 23rd), under Jupiter. Ruggedness of character is the chief feature of this type, independence of thought and sturdy loyalty to his own cause being strongly indicated. Straight dealing is Blake's method—it would, I think, be impossible for him to do anything underhanded. He should achieve distinction in his work, provided he takes up something where his forthrightness will be appreciated at its full value.

"It's very decent of you to take all this trouble, Skimmy," said Blake, when I had finished. "But you'll excuse me if I still say quite bluntly that I don't believe a word of it. I prefer to take things as they come—and for that reason I don't take notice of compliments any more than I do of criticism. I admit I'm rugged—yes, there are a lot of us like that up in Yorkshire!"

for good reasons they could not go on without Coker, and Coker seemed a fixture at Tatcham.

Potter and Greene felt their patience wearing thin, but they were still as patient as possible.

Coker was moody.

He was booked for a cricket match that afternoon, and he was without a team. He had taken it for granted that the team would be forthcoming—that his only difficulty would be in selecting his men from the many claimants. And there weren't many claimants.

Every Greyfriars fellow he had got on to by telephone had declined, without thanks, to play for him; and the St. Jim's caravanners, his last resource, had refused, and were evidently not to be thrashed into compliance.

Once more Coker had bitten off more than he could chew, and he writhed inwardly at the thought of the Tatchamites' smiles when he failed to turn up for the match.

It was borne in upon Coker's mind that his methods of recruiting for his eleven left something to be desired, so far as the caravanners were concerned.

And, with great efforts, Coker succeeded in subduing his loftiness, and after dinner approached Tom Merry & Co. with quite a civil manner.

"Just a word with you fellows," he said.

The caravanners smiled.

"I'm in a rotten fix for this afternoon," continued Coker, in his new vein of civility. "I'm fixed for a match, and I've got only two men. I'd take it as a great favour if you fellows would play for me."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry.

"I put it to you, as cricketers and sportsmen," said Coker, making a still greater effort. "You can't refuse."

The caravanners exchanged glances.

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When Coker put it like that it was rather more difficult to refuse, little as they desired to figure on the cricket field under his egregious captainship. They would have welcomed a game of cricket that afternoon without Coker, but with him it was a different matter.

"Stand by me," said Coker. "After all, you like the game. It's glorious weather for cricket. I've hired all the things you want, and I've got them here."

"Aheh!"

"You see—" murmured Tom Merry.

"I put it to you as sportsmen. Stand by me and see me through," said Coker.

"Bai Jove! I don't see how we can vewy well wefuse Cokah, in the circe, deah boys," murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It will be wathah widiculous to play undah Cokah's lead, but—"

"What?" roared Coker.

"It will be wathah widiculous, Cokah, but—"

Coker suppressed his wrath.

"Stumps will be pitched in half an hour," he said. "I shall look a fool if I don't turn up with a team. Be sportsmen!"

Tom Merry looked round at his comrades, and there was a general nod of assent.

Coker was so civil, and so evidently at the end of his tether, that the St. Jim's caravanners could not help taking compassion on him.

"Oh, all right!" said Tom Merry at last. "We'll play if you like, Coker."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's a go!" said Blake. "After all, it will fill up the afternoon."

Coker breathed more freely.

"You'll play, then?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Done!" Coker looked at his watch. "No time for any practice before the match now. That's a pity. I wanted to give you some coaching. I might have licked you into shape a little even in one morning. For goodness' sake, do your best in the match, and don't disgrace me more than you can help."

Coker was the old Coker again.

"We've got no flannels with us," said Tom Merry shortly, half-regretting that he had promised, now that Coker was Coker again.

"That doesn't matter, the villagers don't go in for style," said Coker. "They won't all be in flannels. Come along and see the bats I've hired, and the other things, and pick out what you like."

"All right!"

A little later Coker led his flock out of the inn with a smile of satisfaction upon his face.

He did not think very much of his team, certainly; in fact, he had mentioned several times that it was rather a come-down for him to be playing for a gang of fags; but he considered that almost any team was bound to do pretty well under his leadership.

He explained his views to his recruits as they went on the green.

"What I want," said Coker, "is stonewalling—plenty of it. I shall open the innings, and I want you kids to keep it alive as long as possible while I score. Don't trouble about trying to make runs. You can leave that to me. See?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Simply keep your end up. I shall be first in, and not out at the finish," explained Coker. "I don't say you're not to take a chance, if you see

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Down came the ball from Horace Coker, and next moment caught him a fearful crack on the head. "Yow-ow!" roared Coker.

it; but, generally speaking, you can leave the run-getting to me. I simply want you to keep your wickets up as long as possible, so that I shall have a chance of making a century in each innings. That's how the matter stands."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tom Merry.

"As for the bowling," continued Coker, "you won't be wanted for that. I shall whack it out with Greene and Potter. Be as lively as you can in the field. I shall give you plenty of easy catches, and for goodness' sake don't muff them all."

The St. Jim's juniors blinked at Coker. They really did not know what to say in reply to this. So they said nothing—only feeling inclined to kick themselves for having agreed to play for Coker at all.

But it was too late to think of that. Their word was their bond.

Harry Hodge and his merry men followed them on to the ground. The young smith seemed rather surprised to find Coker there with a team at all.

"You fellows playing, then?" he asked.

"We've agreed to play for Coker," said Tom Merry. "There couldn't have been a match, otherwise."

"I see," said Hodge, with a smile.

"I'm playing a man short, Hodge," said Coker carelessly. "That doesn't make any difference."

"Fair play's a jewel," answered Harry Hodge. "I'll ask a man to stand out."

"You needn't."



There was a terrific howl from Herries, as the leather
herries, dancing. "I'm brained! Yaroooh!" As a bowler
is not a success!

"I will, all the same."

"Now look here, my dear chap," said Coker impatiently, "don't you give up any advantage. I've already told you that you haven't an earthly, anyway!"

"We shall see!" grinned Hodge.

The first "knock" fell to Coker's team.

"You'll go in with me, Potter," said Coker.

"Right-ho!" yawned Potter. "Am I going to have the bowling?"

"Certainly not! This match practically depends on me personally, and it's my object to get all the batting possible. You're simply to keep your end up as long as possible. You'll follow Potter in, Greene."

"More likely follow you, old top!"

"Don't be a silly ass! Come on, Potter!"

The two Fifth Formers of Greyfriars went to the wickets. Harry Hodge and his men came on to the field—only ten of them. Hodge himself took the ball for the first over, and Coker stood up to face the bowling with an air of serene confidence.

His attitude at the wicket was worthy of a county cricketer at his best—in Coker's opinion. But it did not impress the beholders in the same way.

"If that chap knows how to bowl," remarked Blake, "I give Coker one ball, and no more."

"Yaas, wathah!" grinned Arthur Augustus.

The caravanners looked on, with smiling faces. It was pretty clear that the Tatcham captain

knew how to bowl, and, still more, that Horace Coker did not know how to bat.

"Here she comes!" murmured Digby.

The ball whizzed down. Coker made a mighty swipe at it—or rather, at where he supposed it to be.

But it wasn't there! Where it was, Coker didn't know—till a crash on his wicket enlightened him.

Coker blinked round at his wicket. The middle stump was gone, leaving the wicket with a toothless look.

He blinked, and blinked again.

Potter grinned at him along the pitch. From the spectators came a howl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gad!" said Coker dazedly "Out! By gad!"

And after another incredulous blink at his wrecked wicket he walked off the pitch like a fellow in a dream.

CHAPTER 11.

Something Like Cricket!

GRINNING faces met Coker of the Fifth as he came off the field.

The St. Jim's juniors did not want to hurt Horace's feelings, but they could not help grinning. The result of Coker's innings, after Coker's talk on the subject, was too much for them.

Greene went in to take his leader's place.

Coker stared after him as he went, gloomily.

"What price duck's eggs?" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Cheap to-day!" grinned Blake.

"Poor old Coker!"

Horace Coker glanced at the waiting batsmen. It seemed to take him quite a long time to recover from his astonishment at the result of his innings. He could not understand it yet.

"You—you kids saw that?" stuttered Coker at last.

"We did!" chuckled Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Jevver see such a fluke?" asked Coker.

"Such a what?"

"Fluke! Fancy a bowler of that calibre taking the wicket of a batsman like me!" said Coker.

"Such things do happen. In fact, I've known them happen before!"

"I'll bet you have!" grunted Herries.

"Cricket is full of such flukes!" said Coker thoughtfully.

"Why, I was bowled once by Cherry of the Remove at Greyfriars! Me, you know! But it's no good grousing. After all, there's a second innings to come."

"You're going to do differently in the second innings?" inquired Manners.

"Eh? Yes, of course! Don't be an ass! Flukes like that don't happen twice in the same game."

"I wathah think they do, Cokah, when you are battin'!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Don't be a cheeky young ass, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove!"

"This innings is a goner!" said Coker gloomily. "Potter won't be able to stand up to the bowling, I'm afraid—or Greene. Of course, that ball was a fluke. But—"

"They're standing it all right, so far!" remarked Tom Merry.

In fact, Coker's gloomy prognostications for his chums were rather groundless. The Tatcham

bowling was good; but the two Fifth Formers of Greyfriars knew their business—being players of a calibre very different from Horace Coker's. Potter had fifteen runs to his credit when he was caught out, and Tom Merry took his place. And Greene had fourteen when he was stumped.

Coker was pleased to see the runs pile up; but somehow he did not seem wholly pleased. His chums' success contrasted a little with his own inglorious display. And when he mentioned the "fluke" to Potter and Greene, when they were out, both of them replied tersely: "Rats!"—which caused a little argument.

"Still, we've got twenty-nine!" said Coker. "With what I shall knock up in the second innings, that ought to see us through. Of course, these fags won't do much. I never expected them to."

But again the great Coker's expectations were falsified.

Tom Merry was doing well, and Blake, at the other end, was backing him up manfully.

To Coker's increasing astonishment, the two juniors of St. Jim's made the running in great style.

The score was fifty when Blake came out, bowled by Hodge, and Monty Lowther went in.

Still, to Coker's astonishment, the run-getting went on.

Coker rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Look at the way Merry bats!" he remarked. "Rotten! Not my style at all! But he's getting the runs!"

"He is!" smiled Potter.

"Of course, the bowling's rotten; that accounts for it!"

"It was good enough for you, Coker!"

"That was a fluke, as I've told you."

"Yes, you've told us so!" agreed Potter, with a wink at Greene. "And, of course, what you say is so, and there's an end—what?"

"Exactly!" agreed Coker.

Whether the bowling was bad, or the batting good, certainly the St. Jim's innings went on in good style.

By the time Tom Merry & Co. were finished, the score stood at a level hundred.

Coker gave the St. Jim's batsmen a gracious smile at the close of the innings.

"Jolly good!" he said.

"Not bad—what?" assented Blake.

"I mean jolly good for Lower School fags, like you kids. You can't bat—what I call batting, you know. I'm sure you don't mind my saying so. But you've done well enough against those joskins, as it turns out. They couldn't bowl, so that made it even!"

"You silly fathead!" snorted George Herries. "The bowling was jolly good!"

"You don't know good bowling when you see it, kid! How should you—a Fourth Form fag? Still, I'm glad I played you; you're quite good enough for stop gaps!"

Which was apparently the Coker method of expressing gratitude.

When the Tatcham team's innings started, Coker led his merry men into the field, impressing upon them very seriously what he wanted of them. He didn't want any bowling from them; he could manage that himself, with the help of Potter and Greene. They were to be as smart as possible in the field, and take the easy catches which would result from his bowling.

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There were several of the caravanners who could have put in some good bowling, but Coker was captain, and the captain's word was law.

Coker took the ball himself for the first over, with Harry Hodge at the wicket.

It proved to be a wide—so wide that some of the onlookers wondered whether Coker was aiming at the wicket or at a neighbouring haystack. But the next ball came nearer home, and Harry Hodge leapt out to it.

The ball flew on its journey; but it was not one of the easy catches Coker had promised his followers.

It was a boundary, and Hodge only smiled instead of stirring from his wicket.

Coker gave his field a severe look.

"For goodness' sake keep your eyes open!" he called out. "Don't throw the game away!"

"Who's throwing it away?" roared Blake.

"You are! You ought to have caught that!"

"It was yards off, you ass!"

"It shouldn't have been! A fieldsmen is supposed to have some speed in him. Don't go to sleep again!"

"You uttah ass, Cokah—"

"Shut up! Give me that ball, Lowther!"

Monty Lowther had retrieved the ball. He gave Coker an easy catch; but no catch was easy to Coker. It was his chin he caught the ball with, and he gave a roar.

"You clumsy young ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you play silly monkey tricks here, Lowther—"

"I'm leaving that to you, old top!" answered Lowther. "Get on with the monkey tricks; we're waiting!"

Coker glared; but he turned to the bowling-crease again.

Harry Hodge smiled as he waited for the ball.

Coker took a great deal of trouble with that ball, and turned himself into a sort of catherine wheel as he let it fly.

There was a terrific howl from Herries, who was fielding at silly point, and he was seen to clap his hand to his head and dance.

"Yow-ow-ow-woop!" roared Herries. "I'm brained! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Poor old Hewwies!"

"Yoop!"

Coker stared at Herries. How the ball got to Herries was a mystery to him; but Coker's bowling always was mysterious.

Herries made a rush towards the skipper; and there would certainly have been trouble on the field had not two or three other fieldsmen grasped the enraged junior and stopped him.

"He's nearly brained me!" shrieked Herries. "He must have done it on purpose. He couldn't be idiot enough to send a ball at me by accident, could he?"

"Coker's idiot enough for anything!" gasped Blake.

"I'm going to punch him!"

"Shush!"

"Order in the field there!" roared Coker. "Where's that ball? Send in that ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Easy does it, Herries—"

"Pway contwol your feelings, deah boy—"

Herries gave a furious snort.

"I'm going off!" he said. "Look at that bump! Ow! I'm not going to be brained by a dangerous lunatic! I'm off!"

And George Herries marched off the field, rubbing his head.

He had had enough of fielding while Coker bowled. Really, it required some nerve to stand up to Coker's bowling—for everybody but the batsman.

When Coker resumed the interrupted over, the fieldsmen fielded deep—very deep.

Coker seemed booked for a series of surprises that afternoon, for his masterly bowling had no effect whatever upon the Tatcham batsmen.

The runs went up in jumps; and if the rules of the game had allowed Coker to bowl all the time, the Tatcham total would have reached an astounding figure.

But Potter and Greene, as change bowlers, did fairly well, and the wickets fell slowly.

In the field, too, there was some good work; it was Tom Merry who caught Hodge out, from Potter's bowling, and Arthur Augustus caught out another man.

When Coker was fielding, the Tatcham bats always knocked the ball in his direction—knowing it was quite safe there.

When the home score reached a hundred for three wickets, Coker spoke to the team very severely.

"You're throwing this game away!" he said. "I've given you catches that a blind man couldn't miss; but you've never made a single catch from my bowling! For goodness' sake look alive!"

"You cwas ass, Cokah—"

"I knew you were only a set of silly fags!" added Coker. "I make allowances for that. But put your beef into it—don't stand around like a lot of grazing cows!"

"Will you give us some bowling?" asked Tom Merry patiently.

Coker shook his head.

"Couldn't trust you kids with the ball! Now, look alive, I'm going on again."

Coker went on again.

His bowling was entertaining, to say the least. When he was not giving wides, he was giving boundaries. Quite a crowd had gathered on the village green to watch that remarkable game, and Coker's efforts were followed every time by roars of laughter.

Tom Merry & Co. were not looking good-humoured now. They felt keenly the ridiculous side of the matter—which was also very plain to all the onlookers.

And at this rate it looked as if the Tatcham innings might last till dark.

The St. Jim's juniors would have been glad enough to get off the field and hide their blushes at the inn; but under Coker's masterly leadership the innings was not likely to end, unless the Tatcham skipper declared.

The runs were piling up at a merry rate, and no one was surprised when the board registered two hundred.

At that figure Harry Hodge declared the innings closed, and his smile indicated plainly enough that he did not expect Tatcham to have to bat again.

There was a short rest for tea, and then Coker's second innings began. And when he warned his followers once more that what he wanted was stonewalling, and plenty of it, it was only by the exercise of really remarkable self-control that his followers refrained from massacring him on the spot.

(Continued on next page.)



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CHAPTER 12.

Fed Up!

“MIND what I’ve said—”

“Oh, dry up!”

“Stick to stonewalling!”

“Rats!”

“And leave the game to me—”

“Fathead!”

“Is that the way you talk to your captain?” roared Coker, in great wrath.

“Yes, when we’re captained by a born idiot!” retorted Tom Merry. “We were silly asses to play for you. For goodness’ sake stop gassing, and get it over, and let’s go and hide ourselves!”

“Yaas, wathah!”

Coker grasped the cane handle of his bat as if minded to administer corporal chastisement on the spot. But he refrained, and marched out to the wicket, Potter taking the other end.

Tom Merry & Co. looked on with grim faces. They would have laughed at Coker’s cricket as heartily as any of the spectators if they had not been playing for him. As it was, they felt that they shared that ridicule, which was not pleasant.

Horace Coker took up a stand at the wicket a good deal like Ajax defying the lightning. He meant business this time, and he did not expect any repetition of the remarkable fluke that had happened before.

And though Coker did not expect it, it came along.

Harry Hodge sent the ball down, and Coker delivered a mighty swipe which would certainly have sent the leather on a long journey—if it had touched the leather.

But the bat swept an empty circle in the air, nearly overturning the batsman, and the off-stump was whipped out of the ground at the same moment.

There was a yell of laughter at once.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Bai Jove, that uttah ass has scored anothah duck’s-egg!” exclaimed Arthur Augustus. “Give him a gwoan as he comes off!”

And Coker was greeted with a deep and dismal groan as he joined the waiting batsmen.

He looked dazed.

“Did you ever?” he gasped to Greene.

“No, I never did!” grunted Greene. “But you have, often!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Just imagine it!” said Coker. “A batsman of my form! Did you ever see such cruel luck? It isn’t as if the bowling was good. It’s rotten—so rotten that you’re able to stand up to it, Greene. Such a coincidence is simply extraordinary. Two amazing flukes like that in the same game! Who’d have thought it?”

And Coker rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

Greene went to the wicket, but did not remain there long. Coker’s wonderful captaincy was not of the kind to encourage a team, and as victory was out of the question, his followers were not putting much heart into the game now. It really did not seem much use.

The rest of the innings petered out dismally.

Only forty runs were taken, and mostly by the St. Jim’s juniors, and the great Coker match ended with a win for Tatcham by an innings and sixty runs, a margin which made the home cricketers grin widely.

“You lads played a great game,” Harry Hodge said to Tom Merry. “You’d have given

us a better tussle if you hadn’t been so handi-capped.”

But Horace Coker’s view was quite different.

He explained his views to his followers, not seeing the danger signals in their grim looks.

“I’ve played with rotten cricketers before,” said Coker, with lofty scorn; “but such a crowd as you lot I’ve never seen! You ought to be playing marbles! Cricket! I was a fool to play you! I see that now! Catch me playing a gang of fumbling fags again in any circumstances whatever!”

“You frabjous chump!” began Tom Merry, in measured tones.

“You cwass ass—”

“You howling jabberwock—”

“Clear off!” said Coker loftily. “I’m ashamed of you! Don’t have the cheek to speak to me again! I wonder you’ve got the nerve to look me in the face! Pah!”

And Coker turned loftily on his heel.

“Collar him!” gasped Blake.

“Scrag him!”

“Mop him up!”

“Lynch him!”

Seven infuriated youths rushed on Horace Coker as one man.

The great and lofty Horace, seized in seven pairs of hands, spun round, and landed on the grass with a howl.

“Yah! Yaroooh! Leggo! Oh!”

Coker of the Fifth struggled wildly in the grasp of his exasperated team. But his struggles availed him not.

Coker had to go through it, and he went!

He was bumped and bumped again, and yet again. He was rolled over, and bumped once more. His cap was jammed down his neck and his bat after it.

By the time the St. Jim’s juniors thought he had had enough, Horace Coker was feeling as if he had had five rounds with Tommy Farr, the boxer.

He was left gasping in the grass as the indignant cricketers walked off at last, feeling somewhat solaced.

Potter and Greene left him there. They were fed up with the great Horace, and the great Horace lay and gasped, and floundered and spluttered, till at last he picked himself up and crawled wearily away.

The next morning Coker & Co. left the Wagon and Horses, resuming their walking tour.

Horace Coker shook his fist at Tom Merry & Co. as he started, and Potter and Greene grinned.

There was a plentiful lack of sympathy for Horace on the part of his chums.

“Bai Jove!” remarked Arthur Augustus D’Arcy as the Fifth Formers of Greyfriars disappeared. “We have met some queeah chawactahs duwin’ our cawavannin’, but I weally hope and twust that we shall not meet anybody like Cokah again! I weally feel that I could not stand any more Cokah!”

Tom Merry & Co. were not destined to see any more of Coker. But there were other adventures in store for the caravanners when the St. Jim’s van rolled on through the pleasant West Country.

(Next Wednesday: “RIVALS OF THE ROAD!”)

FINING A FARMER EIGHTEEN APPLES AS PUNISHMENT HAS A MORE FRUITFUL OUTCOME THAN FRANK RICHARDS & CO. EXPECT!

SCHOOLBOY JUSTICE!



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The chums of Cedar Creek take the law into their own hands in punishing a heavy-handed farmer. But only Frank Richards' pluck saves them from the painful consequences of schoolboy justice!

The Woes of Chunky!

"YOW-OW-OW!"

"Hallo, Chunky! What's the trouble?"

"Wow-wow!"

Chunky Todgers was dolorous and mournful. Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc, the three chums of Cedar Creek School, came upon the chubby youth in the school playground, uttering sounds of woe.

Chunky was bent almost double, apparently with pain, and his usually cheery and chubby face was contorted into weird expressions. He blinked dismally at the three.

"What on earth's the matter?" asked Frank Richards.

"Woop!"

"Gunter been pulling your fat ears again?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Nunno! Yow-ow!"

"Been eating too much maple sugar?" asked Beauclerc, with a smile. "You should draw a line, Todgers."

"It isn't that. I never get enough," said Chunky. "It's that horrid beast Grimm!"

"Grimm?" repeated Frank Richards. "Who's he?"

"Of course, you don't know," said Chunky rather loftily. "You're a new fellow here. Everybody knows old Grimm—blow him! All about an apple—Yow-ow!"

"You've been raiding old Grimm's apples?" grinned Bob Lawless.

"Well, they looked so tempting," said Chunky Todgers. "He's got crowds of them—millions!"

"But they're his, not yours."

"Well, one wouldn't make any difference," said Chunky. "I simply got into the tree and sampled them. Old Grimm didn't know. I'd eaten seven when he came up; he only saw the one in my hand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who is Grimm?" asked Frank Richards.

"He's a fruit farmer," said Bob Lawless. "His farm's the other side of the timber, towards Thompson town. He raises apples for export. I suppose you know British Columbian apples are the best in the world?"

Frank laughed.

"We grow some rather good ones in England," he remarked. "But what has Chunky to do with Grimm's apples?"

"Nothing—except to scoff them when he gets a chance. Old Grimm is a Galician emigrant and talks queer English, and he has the temper of an Iroquois Indian full of firewater. He keeps a cattlewhip for fellows who go on his land," said Bob. "He's a bit of a beast really, and we generally give him a wide berth."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Well, you had the apples, Chunky, and you must balance that against the licking," said Frank.

"Yow-ow! The awful beast had me treed, and I couldn't vamoose," groaned Chunky. "He sat down on a log to wait for me to come down. I couldn't stay up, as I had to get back for afternoon lessons. He just sat there with his whip across his knees and grinned at me and waited for me to climb down. I—I had to chance it. And he chased me along the Thompson trail for about a quarter of a mile, letting out with his whip!"

"Serve you right for bagging his apples," said Bob. "Keep your paws from picking and stealing, you know."

Chunky Todgers snorted.

"Any other farmer in the section wouldn't mind," he growled. "It's because he's foreign trash. Yow-ow!"

And Chunky wriggled painfully.

"Look here!" he added; and he rolled back his shirt and showed his shoulders, on which lay the red marks of the cattlewhip.

Frank's brow darkened as he looked.

"Dash it all, that's too bad!" he exclaimed. "The man must be a rotten beast!"

"It's brutal!" said Beauclerc, frowning. "That kind of thing wants stopping. It would do Grimm good to get a dose of it himself!"

Bob Lawless burst into a sudden chuckle.

"I'll tell you what! We'll fine old Grimm for assault and battery on Chunky."

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"Fine him?" said Frank. "How are you going to do that?"

"We'll fine him eighteen apples, the fine to be paid to Chunky Todgers as compensation for damage," explained Bob. "That's fair."

Chunky Todgers' doleful face brightened up.

"That's a jolly good idea!" he exclaimed. "You always did have jolly good ideas, Bob! And, look here, I'll let you fellows have some of the apples."

"Rats! We don't want Grimm's blessed apples! It's a fine, and we're going to administer the sentence," said Bob. "You fellows game after school?"

"Yes, rather!" said Frank at once.

"Quite!" said Beauclerc.

"So cheer up, Chunky, and think of the feed you're going to have when the fine has been levied," said Bob consolingly.

And Chunky Todgers did cheer up. He looked quite happy and bright in class that afternoon, though he occasionally twisted very uncomfortably on his form.

"Treed!"

AFTER school that day there were three fellows at Cedar Creek who were not thinking of taking the homeward trail immediately. Bob Lawless' peculiar scheme of fining the heavy-handed Galician farmer had to be carried out first. The chums of Cedar Creek felt that they were quite justified in inflicting that punishment upon Mr. Grimm.

Certainly Chunky Todgers had been in the wrong, in the first place, for raiding Mr. Grimm's orchard. But any other farmer in the district would willingly have spared a few apples from an overflowing orchard for the asking.

Be that as it might, Mr. Grimm certainly had no right to leave the marks of his cattlewhip on a Cedar Creek fellow, and the chums felt that retaliation was justified.

After school was dismissed by Miss Meadows, Frank Richards and his chums sauntered away towards the timber. Beyond the wood was the Thompson trail, which ran southward from the town, past the borders of Grimm's farm, and far away over the plain towards Kamloops and the distant railway.

It was a dry, sunny day, and the trail was hard as iron and thick with dust. The three schoolboys sauntered along the trail, shaded here and there by big trees, and reached the Grimm clearing.

The farmhouse could be seen in the distance, surrounded by wide expanses of well-cultivated land. The Galician emigrant, for all his crusty temper and heavy hand, was a good farmer, and his orchard was one of the best between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific.

"Here we are!" announced Bob Lawless. "Don't go near the gate; we'll get over the fence. No need to leave our cards on Grimm."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"There's a rail loose here," said Beauclerc.

"Good!"

Bob Lawless dragged the loose fence-rail a little farther aside, and the three squeezed through. Keeping carefully out of sight of the farmhouse, they sudded to the orchard, closely planted and thick with fruit.

"Safe as houses!" said Frank, as he stood

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among the clustering trees. "We shan't be spotted here. Grimm will never know that he's been fined."

"All the better!" grinned Bob. "He might come along and complain to Miss Meadows. That would mean trouble. He's complained at the school a dozen times before now, and it always makes Miss Meadows mad."

"This tree will suit us," remarked Beauclerc.

"Give me a bunk up!" Frank Richards was quickly in the apple-tree.

Bob Lawless followed, with a hand from Frank above.

"You stand there and catch them, Beau."

"Right-ho!"

There was the sudden bark of a dog through the trees, and Bob Lawless uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"By gum, we're spotted!"

There was a heavy tread under the trees. A dog frisked into sight, barking, and he was followed by a heavily built man with a bearded, stolid face. His eyes, a pale blue in colour, glinted at the sight of Beauclerc. He did not see the other two for the moment.

"Ach! So I catch you vunce more!" he shouted. It was evident that the Galician had not quite mastered the language of the country. "I catch you vunce more in mine orchard, you rasgal!"

"Hop it, Cherub!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Beauclerc made a jump for the tree. Bob's hand caught him above, and he was dragged into the lower branches. It was the only way of escape. Mr. Grimm's cattlewhip was lashing behind him, and the thong curled round the trunk with a loud crack as Beauclerc eluded it.

The fruit farmer stood under the tree glaring up at the three schoolboys in the branches.

"Ach! Tree of you!" he exclaimed. "Gum down!"

"Catch us!" said Bob.

"Vill you gum down?" roared Mr. Grimm.

"I guess not."

"You rasgals!"

"Rats!"

Mr. Grimm cracked the whip with savage energy. But the schoolboys perched in the thick branches above his head were out of reach, and they grinned down at him. They were cornered, but they were not caught.

"Treed, and no mistake," murmured Bob Lawless. "That old Injun means business. I don't want to get near that whip."

"Same here," said Frank.

"If you not gum down I gum up after you!" roared the Galician.

"Do!" grinned Bob.

"I tink you belong to te school, isn't it?" snorted Mr. Grimm. "I goes to speak to Miss Mettows apout dis."

"What school?" asked Bob innocently.

"Ach! I gums and fetches you!"

"Go ahead!"

Mr. Grimm strode towards the trunk, as if with the intention of climbing. Bob Lawless loosened one leg from the branch he was standing on with the evident purpose of greeting the farmer with his boot. Mr. Grimm changed his mind.

"Franz!" he roared.

"Hallo!"

"Pring te ladder here!"

"I'm coming!"

A farm-hand came through the trees with the ladder, used in picking fruit.

Mr. Grimm took it from him and set it up against a low bough of the tree. The farm-hand grinned and went back to his work.

"Now you looks out, I tink!" exclaimed Mr. Grimm.

Bob Lawless whistled softly.

"He's coming up, you chaps," he murmured. "I don't like the idea of the whip at close quarters."

Mr. Grimm mounted the ladder, his eyes on the schoolboys above, and the heavy whip grasped in his gnarled right hand.

Frank Richards, swinging to a higher bough with his hands, freed his feet and kicked at the ladder.

Slash!

The whip curled round his legs and he gave a yell of pain. But his boots crashed on the ladder and sent it flying.

"Ach! Ach! Oh!"

Mr. Grimm jumped clear just in time, and landed on the ground and sat down heavily. The ladder crashed over.

"Ha, ha! Well kicked!" shouted Beauclerc.

"Ach!"

"Try it again!" yelled Bob Lawless.

But Mr. Grimm did not try it again; he had had enough of that. He sat on the ground gasping for breath, and pouring out a stream of remarks in his native language which the chums could not understand. Perhaps it was just as well for their youthful ears that they could not.

Running For It!

MR. GRIMM picked himself up at last, snorting. He did not set up the ladder again, and he did not attempt to climb the tree. He had had enough of that. He sat on a log a few yards away, placed his whip across his knees, and watched the apple-tree with a grim expression, a good deal like a bulldog.

After a few minutes he took out a pipe and began to smoke. Evidently the farmer had settled down to watch.

Frank Richards and his chums exchanged looks of dismay. They were safe where they were so long as they could stay there. But they could not stay there indefinitely. Frank and Bob had a long ride home before them, and Beauclerc's home was at a distance. There would be anxiety at home if they did not turn up by dark.

"My hat!" said Frank Richards, when half an hour had passed. "How long is the beast going to watch us?"

Bob Lawless groaned dismally.

"He's settled down to it, I guess. He knows we can't stay here all night."

Mr. Grimm refilled his pipe, relighted it, and went on blowing out clouds of smoke. He grinned sourly once or twice as he glanced up at the treed schoolboys. He had only to wait and he was sure of his victims. And evidently he was prepared to wait till they fell into his hands.

"Oh crumbs!" said Frank Richards. "We shall have to make a break somehow. The sun's going."

"We can't stay here all night," said Bob, with a nod. "We shall have to chance it and run. Get some apples."

"Oh, bother the apples!"

"Ammunition, I mean!"

"Oh, good!"

The three speedily gathered in a dozen big

apples. Mr. Grimm watched them, and his eyes glittered. He could not save his apples, but he could visit condign punishment on the raiders as soon as they came within reach. And he waited.

But the schoolboys were not gathering the apples to eat.

"Fire!" shouted Bob suddenly.

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

"Ach! Ah! Oh!" yelled Mr. Grimm.

The first apple knocked his big stetson hat off, the second caught him under his bearded chin, and the third landed on his chest. The farmer rolled back over the log, and for a moment only his big, heavy boots could be seen.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the tree.

"Ach!"

The farmer scrambled up, red with rage, and brandished his whip at the schoolboys above.

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"HOLIDAY ANNUAL,"
 CHUMS! IT'S PACKED WITH
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"Ach! I skins you alive!" he roared. "Oh! Ah! Ach!"

Biff! Biff! Biff!

Apples, well aimed from above, fairly rained on the farmer. He dodged them frantically; but as fast as he dodged one, another caught him, and he fairly hopped.

"Go it!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you rascals! I skins you alive!" yelled the unhappy Mr. Grimm as he dodged.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fusillade was too hot for Mr. Grimm, obstinate as he was. He beat a retreat through the trees, out of range, and stopped when the whizzing apples fell short. There he took up his stand again, grasping his whip, and breathing wrath.

"Now's our chance!" murmured Bob. "We can run faster than that old hobo!"

Frank nodded.

"We've got to race him to the fence," he said. "If he catches us, we've got to tackle him, that's all!"

"Good!"

There was a last whizzing of apples, keeping the furious farmer at a good distance, and then the three schoolboys suddenly dropped from the branches to the ground. In an instant they were speeding through the orchard to the fence.

The flight was so sudden that for a moment or two Mr. Grimm stood where he was. But he was quickly in pursuit. As they dodged among the trees the chums of Cedar Creek heard his loud tramping on their track.

"Gum pack!" he was roaring. "Gum pack, and I skins you alive!"

"Put it on!" panted Frank.

They were out of the orchard now, and running for the fence on the trail. Tramp, tramp, tramp, came the heavy footsteps behind them. But the schoolboys had a good start, and they were fleet of foot. They reached the fence a dozen yards ahead of the farmer.

Bob plunged through the gap where the loose

rail was pulled aside, but he had to squeeze through. By the time he was clear, Mr. Grimm was on the scene.

There were loud yells as his whip rang and sang round Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc. "Go for him!" shouted Beauclerc. "I'm not standing this."

Lash, lash, lash!

The big farmer was a dangerous customer to tackle. But it was that or a terrific thrashing, and the chums did not take long to make up their minds. They jumped at him together, and Bob Lawless came shoving through the fence to help.

"Ach! I skins you—ach—"

Crash!

Mr. Grimm, with three pairs of hands grasping him, went over on the grass with a roar. He was still lashing out with the whip, and Frank Richards caught it across his face. He grasped the whip and wrenched it away from the farmer.

"Give him some of his own medicine!" panted Bob.

"You bet!"

"Ach! Ach! Oh!" roared Mr. Grimm, as Frank laid the whip on with terrific energy.

He struggled desperately, almost foaming with fury.

"Franz! Bill! Tom!" he yelled.

Whack, whack! Whack!

The Galician rolled away and fairly fled, still yelling to his men.

"Come on!" gasped Beauclerc. "We don't want to interview Franz, Bill, and Tom!"

"Ha, ha! No fear!"

The chums of Cedar Creek plunged through the gap in the fence one after another. Frank Richards tossed the whip away among the trees.

"Put it on!" grinned Bob breathlessly. "We shall get scalped if Grimm gets hold of us after this!"

The farmer's bull-voice could be heard shouting on the other side of the fence. The farm-hands had come up, and he was making for the gate farther down, evidently to lead a chase up the trail.

Frank Richard & Co. did not delay. They ran their hardest up the trail, and the dusty road fairly flew under their feet.

At the Risk of His Life!

CLATTER, clatter! Tramp, tramp!
"Look out!" panted Bob. "That's the Thompson wagon, going top speed, too! Get aside!"

Ahead of the three running schoolboys the hard, sun-baked trail wound past a thick clump of timber. From beyond the timber came the clattering of wheels and the heavy tramp of dashing hoofs.

It was the store-wagon from Thompson town, and the pace at which the horses were travelling showed that the driver was late and anxious to get in at Cedar Creek camp before sundown.

The chums could not see the wagon yet, though it was not more than fifty yards away, the thick timber hiding it from their sight. They heard the heavy rumbling of the wheels on the baked mud, the tramp of the hoofs, and the crack of the driver's whip. They drew to the side of the trail to let the wagon pass.

Frank Richards was looking up the trail, at the bend round which the clattering horses would appear in a few moments. His face suddenly

became pale, and he uttered a startled exclamation:

"Good heavens!"

The next instant he was dashing up the trail at frantic speed towards the bend by the timber.

"Hallo! What's up?" exclaimed Bob.

Bob and Beauclerc had been looking back in the direction of Grimm's farm. They stared after Frank in astonishment. But the next moment they saw what it was.

In the bend of the trail a child had started crossing the road, with a bunch of wild flowers in his little hand, evidently in complete disregard of the still unseen wagon.

Bob caught his breath.

"Cherub!" he gasped. "He—he'll be killed!"

He started running, with Beauclerc at his heels. But they were too far away. They knew all would be over before they were near the spot. All depended on Frank Richards, who had seen the little fellow's peril first.

He was running hard—the hardest he had ever run.

The wagon had not yet reached the bend; it was still out of sight. It would come sweeping round the timber clump, with two horses at a gallop and the heavy wagon thundering behind, and the child was in the centre of the trail. The driver could not see him till it was too late.

Could Frank reach him in time? It seemed leagues to reach him, though it was only fifty yards. The schoolboy fairly flew over the rough ground.

The little boy—he was not more than four—had seen him, and was standing looking at him with wide-open, blue eyes, his little back to the oncoming wagon from Thompson.

It passed like a flash now. Frank, with a final bound, reached the startled child and grasped him by the arm.

Round the bend of the trail swept the wagon, with its two powerful horses crashing up the dusty road. It was fairly upon Frank as he grasped the child.

Down the trail Beauclerc and Bob came to a frozen halt, their hearts in their mouths, stricken with fear for their chum.

It seemed to Frank that the snorting nostrils of the horses were right upon him as he grasped the child and leaped for the side of the trail. One leap, another, the child in his arms—it was all he had time for. He plunged headlong into the grass on his face as the wagon thundered by.

For one moment a thrill of horror was upon him. He fully expected the dashing hoofs, the heavy wheels to grind over his legs.

But the wagon thundered past. His last desperate leap aside had carried him farther than he had hoped, and the driver, seeing him and his fearful danger, had succeeded in swerving a little away.

The heavy wheels ground past, only a few inches from his boots, as he lay on his face in the grass beside the trail. The heavy wagon went on down the trail, the driver shouting something Frank did not catch.

He raised himself on his knees, feeling sick and giddy. He had leaped out of danger—only just!

The child was blubbing, frightened, though not hurt.

Frank drew himself to his feet, panting, dusty from head to foot, his face red and white by turns.

Bob and Beauclerc reached him, panting. The store wagon was already vanishing down the road.

"Frank!" panted Bob.



It seemed to Frank Richards that the snorting nostrils of the horses were right upon him as he grasped the child and leaped for the side of the trail!

Frank Richards pulled himself together. He laughed, a little hysterically.

"My hat! That was a close shave, you fellows!" he said, his voice husky. "I—I thought I was fairly under it!"

"You jolly nearly were," said Bob Lawless. "Oh, Franky, old chap, you—you ass! You might have been killed!"

"The kid would have been," said Franky simply.

"I guess so. The kid oughtn't to be out on the trail alone!" growled Bob. "Hallo, dry up, young'un! Nothing to howl about now!"

The kid was howling loudly, however. The fall in the grass as Frank Richards pitched him out of danger had shaken him, and he was frightened and humped.

"Hallo! Look out!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

He pointed down the road. Within a dozen yards of them Mr. Grimm was charging up the trail at full speed. The chums had forgotten the farmer for a moment.

"Vamoos!" said Bob.

"But the kid—" said Frank, hesitating.

Bob grabbed his arm.

"Come on, you duffer! The kid's all right now. Do you want to be skinned? We can't tackle four of them, can we?"

"Stop!" bawled Grimm.

"Rats!"

The three schoolboys ran for it. Mr. Grimm came charging on like a bull, but Frank, looking back as they rounded the timber clump, saw that the farmer had stopped where the child was standing.

"All serene!" said Bob. "Old Grimm will see to the kid. He must belong to the place, I should think; there's no other homestead near here. Put it on! We don't want to be trailed to Cedar Creek!"

The chums ran on, and did not stop until a mile

had been covered. There was no sign of further pursuit, and at last they dropped into a walk.

"We're well out of that!" said Bob, gasping. "Old Grimm meant business! Do you think he knew we were Cedar Creek fellows?"

"Pretty certain to guess," said Beauclerc.

Bob grunted.

"That means he'll drive over to the school and complain in the morning, and we shall be in Miss Meadows' black books."

"He mayn't be able to identify us," remarked Beauclerc. "We're not called upon to give ourselves away. I don't suppose he will be able to pick us out of thirty chaps."

Bob Lawless brightened up.

"Right you are! Not a word about this. Let's get home."

Vere Beauclerc left his chums to walk home through the wood, and Frank and Bob caught their ponies in the school enclosure and rode home to the ranch.

It was pretty certain that Mr. Grimm would guess that the raiders belonged to Cedar Creek School, and that he would come with a complaint to the schoolmistress. But the chums had a slight hope of escaping identification, and, at all events, they did not intend to worry about the morrow.

"Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof," Bob remarked; and Frank Richards agreed with him, and they rode home to the Lawless Ranch in cheerful spirits.

Happy Anticipations!

CHUNKY TODGERS was on the look-out for Frank and Bob when they arrived at school next morning. The plump youth was very keen to learn whether the chums had succeeded in imposing that "fine" upon the crusty Mr. Grimm.

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"Got 'em?" he asked eagerly, as Frank and Bob came in at the school gate, where Vere Beauclerc joined them.

"Got what, fatty?"

"The apples, of course!"

"Nix!"

"Oh, I say!" murmured Chunky. "Didn't you go?"

"I guess we did, and I guess we had a row with old Grimm," said Bob. "And I guess we'd better say nothing about it, as we've got to keep it dark—see? You'll have to do without your apples, and I hope we shall be able to do without a row with Miss Meadows."

"Well, you fellows are duffers, and no mistake!" said Chunky disconsolately. "I was expecting those apples, you know."

"Blessed are those that don't expect!" grinned Bob. "Mind you don't let on that we started for Grimm's farm yesterday. I expect Grimm here to-day."

"Oh scissors!" said Chunky.

The school bell rang, and the Cedar Creek fellows went into the school-room. The chums took their places as usual in Miss Meadows' class.

That morning they were doing "History—British and Canadian," as it was called in the school curriculum. But it is safe to say that three in the class, at least, were thinking more of Farmer Grimm and his expected visit than of "History—British and Canadian."

Even the thrilling story of Wolfe, on the Heights of Abraham, and the glorious death of that great leader, and his no less great rival, Montcalm, didn't quite hold the attention of the anxious trio.

Miss Meadows' eye was on them more than once, and she caught Bob Lawless several times in the act of trying to see out of the window, a difficult task, as the window was well above his head.

"Lawless!" she rapped out suddenly.

Bob jumped.

"Yes, ma'am?"

"I was asking you a question, Lawless. Kindly give me at once the name of the French general at the Battle of Quebec."

"Grimm, ma'am."

"What?"

The whole class stared at Bob, whose face became like unto a ripe beetroot in hue.

"I—I mean Wolfe, ma'am!" stammered Bob.

"You mean what?"

"Montcalm, you ass!" whispered Frank.

"Montcalm, you ass!" repeated Bob aloud, in so great a flurry that he was not quite sure of what he was saying.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank, as Bob made that unfortunate reply to Miss Meadows.

The "schoolmarm" stood petrified.

"Lawless!" she gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the whole class.

"Silence! Lawless, how dare you use such expressions."

"Sorry, ma'am," gasped Bob. "I didn't mean—I—I never meant—"

Miss Meadows looked at him fixedly. She really doubted whether Bob Lawless was in his right mind.

"Lawless!"

"I—I—" stammered Bob. "I was thinking of something else, ma'am—I'm sorry—"

There was a sound of wheels without, and the

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interruption came very fortunately. Black Sam put his head in at the school-room door.

"Miss Meadows!"

The schoolmistress turned to the black servant, and Bob dropped into his seat with a gasp of relief.

"That's Grimm, ten to one!" said Vere Beauclerc in a whisper. "Mind you look as innocent as you can when he comes in."

"Mass' Grimm want to speak to missy," Black Sam was saying, and Miss Meadows signed to him to admit the unexpected caller.

The class wondered what it meant. Mr. Grimm had been at the school before, more than once, to make complaints; sometimes with and sometimes without grounds. They wondered what was the matter now, excepting Frank and his chums—they knew!

The three chums sat very quietly, assuming the nearest expressions they could to dove-like innocence. All depended now upon whether Mr. Grimm recognised them or not. They hoped sincerely that the crusty Galician would not be able to pick them out from the class.

There was a heavy tread and the big farmer came striding into the room. All eyes were upon him. Miss Meadows nodded to him and eyed him with cold questioning. She was a little tired of Mr. Grimm's complaints, as a matter of fact.

But oddly enough the farmer did not look quite so crusty as usual. His dark-bearded face was almost good-humoured in expression. He carried a large and heavy bag in his hand. What it contained and why he had brought it into the school-room puzzled the class.

"Looks quite chirpy," murmured Frank Richards. "He's looking forward to seeing us called over the coals."

"Quiet!" whispered Bob.

"Well, sir"—Miss Meadows' voice was cold and clear—"I presume you are aware that you are interrupting lessons?"

"Ach! Yes."

"Will you kindly state your business briefly?"

"Ach! Yes."

Mr. Grimm deposited his heavy bag on the plank floor, removed his stetson hat, and puffed and blew a little. His eyes wandered over the class, and then returned to the quiet, sedate schoolmistress.

"Ach! I haf come, Miss Mettows, to see tree poyts tat gum to mine farm last efening to take te apples from mine orchard."

Miss Meadows compressed her lips a little.

"Three boys of his school, Mr. Grimm?"

"Ach! Yes."

"You are sure?"

"Ach! I tink so, Miss Mettows."

"Very well. Kindly point out the three boys if they are here."

"Ferry goot, Miss Mettows."

The big farmer came along the class, his eyes glittering at them.

"Now for the merry ordeal!" whispered Frank Richards. "Sit tight!"

And the chums sat tight and hoped for the best. But it was as much as they could do to keep up their expressions of simple innocence when Mr. Grimm halted before the three and raised a thick, stubby finger to point at them.

"Ach! I haf found dem."

"Richards, Lawless, Beauclerc! Stand out before the class!" said Miss Meadows.

And the three stepped out grimly.



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PEN PALS COUPON

10-9-38

A Slight Surprise!

MR. GRIMM eyed the three schoolboys and stroked his beard. He was quite sure of the three.

"Ach! Dey are te tree!" he declared. "Dey come to mine orchard to take mine apples, and dey pelt me from mine own tree, isn't it?"

"Is that the case, Lawless?"

"Ahem!" murmured Bob.

"We did it, Miss Meadows," said Frank boldly.

"But we were justified. We were fining Mr. Grimm in apples for laying his whip about a chap!"

"Nonsense, Richards!"

"Ahem!"

Evidently Miss Meadows did not consider that a committee of three were empowered to fine Mr. Grimm in apples and execute the sentence themselves. As a matter of fact, Frank did not expect her to.

"So you took Mr. Grimm's apples?" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"Well, no; only those we shied at him, ma'am," said Bob.

"Ach! Dey pelted me wiz mine own apples, isn't it?" said Mr. Grimm, shaking his head seriously.

"One hit me on te nose, I tink."

"You were in Mr. Grimm's orchard?" asked Miss Meadows.

"Ye-es."

"You went there to take his apples?"

"Yes, because—"

"Never mind why. You did so?"

"Well, yes."

"And you pelted Mr. Grimm with his own fruit?"

"Ahem! Yes."

"Mr. Grimm is quite right in complaining, in that case," said Miss Meadows severely. "I am

sorry, Mr. Grimm, that this has happened, and the boys will, of course, be punished."

"Ach! Punished, Miss Mettows?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Ach! But it is not tat I vish dose poy to be punished tat I haf gum to see you dis morning, isn't it?" exclaimed Mr. Grimm.

Miss Meadows looked at the farmer in astonishment.

"You do not wish them to be punished?" she exclaimed, while Frank Richard & Co. regarded one another in blank wonder.

"Ach! No!" exclaimed Mr. Grimm. "Not at all, Miss Mettows. I haf gum here dis morning to find dem, so tat I can tank dem wiz all mine heart."

"Mr. Grimm!"

"Mad as a hatter!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Frank Richards, forgetting where he was for the moment.

"You—you do not wish to complain, Mr. Grimm?"

"No, no!"

"You have come here to thank these boys?"

"Ach! Yes."

"To thank them for robbing your orchard and pelting you with apples?" exclaimed the astounded schoolmistress.

Mr. Grimm grinned slightly.

"No, no! I gum to tank dem for safing the life of mine leedle poy—mine poor leedle Josef."

"Great Scott!" murmured Bob Lawless. "He's been filling up on tangle-foot—so early in the morning, too!"

"I vill explain," said Mr. Grimm. "Perhaps I do not make mineself quite clear, Miss Mettows?"

(Continued on page 36.)

THE FAT BOY OF THE BENBOW MAKES A GOOD MEAL OUT OF A SCHEME OF REVENGE!

TUCKEY TOODLES' TUCK-IN!

By Owen Conquest

Toodles Objects!

"HUH!"

Tuckey Toodles made that grunt as Rodney of the Fourth came into Study No. 8 with a bundle of books under his arm. There was a frown on Tuckey Toodles' plump brow, and there was a lofty aloofness in his manner.

Dick Rodney did not seem to observe it, and did not seem even to notice Tuckey's ejaculation. He deposited the pile of books on the study table and turned to the door again.

"Huh!" repeated Toodles, more loudly than before.

Rodney glanced at him.

"Hallo, Toodles! Got a cold?"

"I have not got a cold, Rodney," answered Toodles.

"What are you grunting about, then?"

"Look here, Rodney, what are you up to?" demanded Toodles.

"Fetching my things in," said Rodney.

"I can see that. I want to know what you're fetching your things into my study for?" said Toodles warmly. "This isn't a warehouse!"

"Drake's asked me to share this study with

The net result of Vernon Daubeny's plotting to cause trouble for Jack Drake and his new chum is—a good tuck-in for Tuckey Toodles!

him," explained Rodney. "I didn't get on very well in Study No. 2 with Croft and Hooke. I'm glad to make the change. This is a really comfy study."

"It's my study as well as Drake's!" hooted Tuckey Toodles.

"Yes, that's a drawback—"

"What?"

"But it can't be helped. I shall have to make the best of that."

"Why, you—you cheeky ass!" gasped Toodles. "Look here, my permission hasn't been asked!"

"Didn't Drake mention it to you?"

"He mentioned it. He didn't ask my permission. He didn't seem to think it was necessary!" grunted Toodles.

"Well, it wasn't, if you come to that," said Rodney cheerfully. "Never mind; I'll ask it, old top. Will you grant your gracious permission for me to dig in this study along with Drake?"

"That depends," said Tuckey. "This has always been a rather select study, Rodney. I don't know about having a chap who pays half-fees in it. I'm not a snob, I hope, but a fellow has to draw the line somewhere. It's all very well for Drake

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to pal with you now he's hard-up. But I haven't said I'd pal with you."

"Not needed, old scout. I shouldn't let you."

"You wouldn't let me?" exclaimed Toodles.

"No fear! I'll put up with you if I can," said Rodney. "If I find I can't, I'll fire you out—"

"Fire me out of my own study!" howled Tuckey Toodles. "Why, you—you cheeky chump! Let me see you fire me out of my own study!"

"Certainly!"

Rodney made a stride towards the plump junior, and Tuckey promptly dodged round the table.

"Here, hands off!" he exclaimed. "Wharrer you up to, you dummy?"

"I'm going to let you see me fire you out! You asked me!"

"I—I don't want you to— Keep off, you beast! You get out of my study!"

"Right-ho! I'll let you off this time, but don't be cheeky again!" said Rodney, laughing.

Tuckey Toodles assumed a commanding attitude and pointed to the doorway with a grubby finger.

"Leave my study!" he said, with dramatic dignity.

"Just going."

And Rodney left.

"Here, take your books with you!" shouted Toodles.

The new junior did not heed

"Well, he's gone, anyway," said Toodles, with satisfaction. "Cheeky ass, coming into my study without asking me, just as if I were a fellow of no importance! Let me catch him here again!"

And Tuckey slammed the door.

It opened again a minute later, and, to Tuckey's surprise and wrath, Dick Rodney came in, with more books in his hands. Tuckey had supposed that Rodney had gone for good. That supposition, evidently, was ill-founded. The "moving job" was still in progress.

"Why, you—you—" stuttered Toodles. "You're back again!"

"Yes, here I am, my fat tulip!" said Rodney. "You can come and lend me a hand with my bag, if you like."

"You're not bringing your old bag here, young half-pay! I've told you to get out!" roared Toodles. "It was like Drake's cheek to say you could come here! I won't have you! I'm rather particular whom I have in my study!"

"Lucky for you, I'm not, or I shouldn't be able to let you stay! You might put those books on the shelf while I'm gone for my bag."

"I—I—I—"

But Rodney was gone.

Tuckey Toodles breathed wrath. There was no doubt that he was being treated like a fellow of no importance—no doubt at all. But Tuckey was not to be treated so with impunity. He gathered up a double handful of the books—not to place them on the shelf. With great vigour he hurled them into the passage outside.

"Yoop!" came a sudden roar from the passage.

"He, he, he!" chortled Toodles. "Is that

you, Rodney? Serve you right! Why—what—Hullo, Drake, old chap!"

Jack Drake glared into the study.

"What are you chucking books at me for?" he roared.

"I—I didn't! I—I was chucking them out, old fellow! They're only Rodney's rubbish!"

"You're chucking Rodney's books out?" exclaimed Drake.

"Yes. I've decided not to allow that fellow to dig in this study!" said Toodles, with dignity.

"You've decided, you fat chump! I've asked him to!"

"Like your cheek!"

"What?"

"Here, you keep off, Drake! I don't want to row with you," said Tuckey, jumping back. "The fact is, Drake, I don't like your friends. I'm going to put up with you and treat you well, though you're hard-up and a poor beast now, but I'm not going to have your low pals planted in my study! It can't be expected. This study has always been very select. I can't allow—Yaroooh!"

Drake of the Fourth seized the plump Tuckey by the collar and shook him. Still shaking him, he conveyed him to the door.

"Leggo!" yelled Tuckey.

Bump!

Tuckey Toodles landed in the passage.

"Now, I give you one minute to clear off!" said Drake wrathfully. "If you don't want to feel the weight of my boot—"

Toodles didn't. He bolted down the passage and round the mainmast of the old Benbow. And Tuckey remained off the scene while Rodney conveyed the rest of his property to Study No. 8 and disposed it about the study with Jack Drake's assistance.

From Foes to Friends!

"WE shall get on all right here, Rodney," said Jack Drake brightly.

"What-ho!" assented Rodney.

Drake's face was very bright.

Both Drake and Rodney still showed very plain traces of their late fight, and they were still feeling the effects of it. It amazed the Fourth Form of St. Winifred's to see them on chummy terms so soon after their fierce fight. But there was no doubt that they had become very great friends, and were likely to remain so.

Study No. 8 looked very comfortable and cosy. From the window a wide view was obtained of the rolling Chadway and the woods along the banks.

Rodney's property had been disposed of, and the chums of the Fourth were getting tea in the study. Drake had brought in supplies from the canteen amidships, while Rodney boiled the little kettle on the oil-stove. The supplies for the study tea were not on the magnificent scale Drake had been accustomed to in his prosperous days. But somehow he liked better a frugal tea with Dick Rodney than the old-time spreads on a lavish scale with Daubeny & Co., the bucks of the Shell.

"How's your nose, old chap?" Drake inquired.

Rodney grinned.

"It still feels a size too large," he replied. "I needn't ask how your eye is; it's a beauty."

"No harm done, after all," remarked Drake. "Let's have tea."

"What about Toodles?"



With great vigour, Tuckey Toodles hurled Rodney's books into the passage—and Jack Drake was just in time to catch them in full flight! "Yoop!" he reared.

"He'll come in when he knows there's something to eat. Never mind Toodles."

The two chums sat down to tea.

"We'll begin sapping after tea—what?" asked Drake. "I've wasted a lot of time; I meant to sap no end when I came back. But there were all sorts of difficulties in the way. I started, but—"

Rodney smiled.

"Slow and steady does it," he said. "You started swotting first night of term, when everybody was taking it easy, and the chaps ragged you; then you let up and took it easy, when everybody was settling down to work. Not a good system, old chap."

Drake made a grimace.

"I'm afraid it's my way," he said. "I've never had to sap before. But—but I mean business this time. No more playing the goat for me. I never really liked it, either. I haven't even that excuse; it was just foolishness. I couldn't swot while I was thick with Daub & Co. But there won't be any more of that."

"You're not friendly with them now."

"They've chucked me over now they know the pater's come a cropper," said Drake, with a curl of the lip. "It wouldn't be much loss. I don't care much for anything so long as I bag the Foundation Scholarship. The mater will be no end pleased if I do."

"It means sticking to work steadily," said Rodney. "Working in fits and starts won't be much good."

"I tell you I'm turning over a new leaf—really. I wish I knew exactly what the dashed paper would be like."

"So do a good many fellows," said Rodney, smiling. "I've been looking over some of the old

papers from last year and the year before, the other day."

Drake started.

"You're not entered, are you?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, no! I was looking them over"—Rodney coloured—"on your account! I thought we'd very likely make it up, you know—at least, I hoped we would—and I thought it would be useful to you to look out some of the parties."

"You're an awfully good chap, Rodney! While I was rowing with you—" muttered Drake remorsefully.

"That's all over now. It's pretty well known that there'll be a paper on Horace," said Rodney. "That's rather a corker for a Fourth Form chap. So far as I've seen, there isn't any Fourth Form chap here will be able to touch it, unless it's Estcourt."

"Or me, I hope."

"Or you, of course. Horace is rather stiff for the Fourth, and the exam is open to the Lower Fifth. But I'll help you; I've done Horace out of classes."

"What on earth for?"

"Well, I like it."

"Oh, my hat!" said Drake.

Rodney laughed.

"It's only a question of working," he said. "I'll help you, and you'll pull through."

There was a tap at the door of Study No. 8, and it opened. Vernon Daubeny of the Shell entered the room. Drake rose to his feet. His eyes glittered as they were fixed upon his former friend.

It was a good thing for Drake that the bucks of St. Winifred's had thrown him over—and he knew it. But the process had, naturally, not been a pleasant one; no fellow could be expected to enjoy it. To be dropped like a hot potato because he was poor was far from agreeable, even if those who dropped him were not worth a second thought.

"What do you want?" asked Drake sharply. "You know well enough that you're not welcome in this study, Daubeny."

The elegant buck lounged gracefully in the doorway. His glance passed Rodney, ignoring his presence. Daub had not forgotten his encounter with the new junior on Rodney's first day on the Benbow.

"I've looked in—" he began.

"Look out again!"

"It's about Toodles."

"Toodles! What the dickens do you mean?" exclaimed Drake testily.

Daubeny smiled in a rather evil way.

"Toodles has told me what's happened here," he said. "As junior captain of St. Winifred's, I'm bound to interfere."

"I don't know what you're driving at."

"I'll explain, then. You've turned young Toodles out of the study and taken in a fellow he doesn't like. That's got to stop."

"Got to?" exclaimed Drake angrily.

Daubeny nodded.

"Yes, got to!" he said. "I can't allow it."

"Toodles isn't turned out. He was bumped for being cheeky. He can come back when he likes. He would be here now if he knew we were having tea," said Drake. "There's room for three here, and Rodney's staying."

"I'm afraid I can't allow it."

"Can you stop it?" grunted Drake. "You're welcome to try!"

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"As junior captain—"

"Oh rats!"

"If you don't toe the line, Drake, I shall have to appeal to Lovelace, the captain of the school," said Daubeny. "Rodney can't shove himself into Toodles' study without Toodles' consent. I've taken up the matter for Toodles, as in duty bound."

"You mean you're making it an excuse because Rodney thrashed you the day he came to St. Winifred's."

Daubeny flushed.

"I've given you my orders!" he said abruptly, and he turned to leave the study. The plump figure of Tuckey Toodles loomed behind him, blinking into Study No. 8.

"Hallo, Toodles! Trot in!" exclaimed Drake, with a laugh. "We're having tea; you're fond of sausages."

The frown disappeared as if by magic from Tuckey's face.

"Now you're talking, old fellow!" he said. "I'll come to tea as you're so pressing. I don't mind about Rodney—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Rodney.

Daubeny scowled.

"Toodles," he exclaimed, "you—"

"It's all right, Daub—"

"You're coming to tea in the Shell, kid!" said Daubeny.

"Oh!"

Drake looked on grimly. Daubeny was not inclined to give up the pretext he had found for interfering in the affairs of Study No. 8. But Tuckey Toodles was a rather uncertain ally.

All Tuckey's wrath and indignation vanished at the offer of a feed. But that did not suit Vernon Daubeny at all.

"Come on, kid," he said kindly.

Tuckey's hesitation disappeared. There was a frugal tea in Study No. 8; but Vernon Daubeny's study was a land flowing with milk and honey. Tuckey resumed his lofty frown.

"I'm coming," he said. "As for you, Rodney, you can clear. I'm not having you in my study. I'm not a snob, but I draw the line at half-pay chaps. I think it's rather good-natured of me to put up with Drake, in the cires; but you're a chap that no fellow could stand. You don't mind my mentioning it, do you?"

And Tuckey Toodles trotted away with the elegant knut of the Shell.

A Pig in Clover!

"GET out!"

Torrence of the Shell made that remark as Tuckey Toodles rolled in after Daubeny, in the Shell study forward on the Benbow.

"Buzz!" said Egan.

Daubeny intervened hastily.

"Toodles has come to tea," he said.

"Oh, I know—I didn't suppose he'd come for anything else," said Egan. "Kick him out!"

"Look here, Egan—" roared Tuckey indignantly.

"Shut up, Egan! Toodles is a visitor," said Daubeny hastily. "I've asked him to tea."

Daubeny's chums stared at him. As a rule Daubeny's word was law among the bucks of St. Winifred's. But there were exceptional occasions, and this was one of them. The fat and grubby Toodles was not "persona grata" among Daub's knuity followers.

"Then you're an ass," said Egan. "What do you want the grubby boulder for? Chaps who come to tea here are supposed to wash."

"I have washed!" howled Tuckey. "And I jolly well won't stay now. Yah!"

"Yes, you will, old chap," said Daubeny. "Egan's only jokin'."

"I'm not joking!" growled Egan.

"Yes, you are—shut up, I tell you! The fact is I'm standing up for Toodles' rights," explained Daubeny. "Drake has let Rodney into his study, and Toodles objects. As junior captain I'm bound to take the matter up and see that Rodney is turned out."

"No reason why that grubby frog should feed here, that I can see."

"Shut up, Egan!"

Egan grunted. But no more was said, and Tuckey Toodles, who did not suffer from a thin skin, sat down at the tea-table. His chubby, grubby face beamed over the well-spread board. Tea with Daub was more attractive than tea with Drake and Rodney; and though Tuckey's welcome was a little uncertain, the spread was certainly good. Daubeny & Co. were accustomed to the best that the canteen could supply, and plenty of it.

Unheeding the frowns of Egan and Torrence, Tuckey Toodles started operations on the supplies.

In that line Toodles had no equal on board the Benbow. His table manners possibly left a little to be desired. But there was no fault to be found with his appetite, or his appreciation of the good things before him.

For once, Tuckey had to be given his head in that expensive study. If he were displeased, Daubeny's little scheme for causing trouble in Study No. 8 would inevitably fall to the ground.

Perhaps Tuckey realised that his footing in that expensive study was somewhat precarious, and intended to make hay while the sun shone. At all events, his gastronomic performances were marvellous. It was a case of the race to the swift; and the supplies disappeared from the table at an alarming rate.

Tuckey Toodles grew sticky and shiny, and began to breathe with some difficulty.

Torrence and Egan did not conceal their distaste for his company; and Daubeny found it difficult to keep up his polished politeness and hospitality. It was only his bitter animosity towards Study No. 8 that enabled him to come through the ordeal with a smiling face.

Tuckey was the most cheerful person present. He was in high good-humour, and he talked affably—with his mouth full.

"I say, Daub, this is really ripping of you," said Tuckey affably. "Did you say there was another cake?"

"I—I'll look," murmured Daubeny. "Yes, here you are." He handed a cake from the cupboard.

"Thanks, old chap!"

Tuckey Toodles put the whole cake on his plate, apparently thinking it less trouble to take in his supplies in bulk.

Torrence and Egan watched him as if mesmerised.

Even Tuckey slowed down as he travelled through the cake. But it disappeared at last.

"I'm going!" remarked Egan suddenly.

He left the study, and Torrence followed him. The two knuts were in a state of high displeasure and disgust.

Tuckey blinked after them.

"What's up, Daub?" he inquired.

"N-n-nothing."

"If your friends don't like my company—" began Tuckey Toodles, with a great deal of dignity. He could afford to be dignified now, and he was prepared to shake the dust of Daub's study from his feet with hauteur. His cargo space was very nearly crammed.

"Not at all, old top!" said Daubeny. "They—they've got an engagement—they're goin' to see Tomlinson of the Fifth. Try the coconut ice, kid."

"Thanks, I will—just a little. Not more than half a pound, old chap."

"Oh!"

"Jolly good!" said Tuckey, with his mouth full of coconut ice. "I say, you do a fellow well, Daub—I'll often come to tea with you, if you like."

"Oh!"

"I'll try that coconut ice again, if you like."

"Certainly. Mind, you're goin' to stand up for your rights, Toodles," said Daubeny. "I'll support you, as junior captain. That fellow Rodney shan't be allowed to shove himself into your study."

"I should jolly well think not," said Toodles. "A boulder whose people only pay half-fees for him, you know."

"A cheeky cad!" said Daubeny.

"Yes, rather! You remember how he handled you the day he came here; fairly knocked you into a cocked hat, didn't he, Daub?"

Daubeny murmured something beneath his breath.

"Like his cheek, wasn't it?" said Tuckey. "Your nose looked awfully queer for days afterwards, old chap."

"D-d-did it?"

"Oh, yes, rather! It really isn't quite straight now," said Toodles. "He was chasing me round my study to-day. Of course, I didn't run away from him like you did, Daub."

"You—you—ahem—"

"I've got plenty of pluck," said Toodles.

Daubeny breathed hard.

"If he goes for you again," said Tuckey, "you call me. I'll protect you, Daub."

"Oh!"

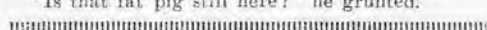
Tuckey Toodles cast a last glance over the table. It was bare; the last of the coconut ice had vanished, and Vernon Daubeny did not seem to be intending to produce anything more in the way of comestibles. Tuckey Toodles rose to his feet at last, with some difficulty, breathing in a rather stertorous manner.

"Thanks awfully, old chap," he said.

"Not at all," said Daubeny. "Pleasure."

Egan looked in.

"Is that fat pig still here?" he grunted.



DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: Racke's slip was in stating that with Crooke and Mellish he had had a grand afternoon, and that he, Racke, had never once got out of the boat. If they had remained in an open boat on the Rhyl during the sudden downpour which drenched Tom Merry, they would have called it anything but a "grand afternoon"—and nobody, certainly, would have remained in the boat if it were at all possible to land! Taxed, Racke admitted his guilt—and as he owned up, he got off with a severe flogging. So Tom Merry was exonerated—without young Reggie's escapade coming to light, after all!

"Shut up, Egan!"

"Oh, rats!"

Egan walked on.

"If that's how your friends speak to me, Daub—" began Tuckey Toodles, with great heat.

"Only Egan's little joke," said the hapless Daub.

"I don't like such jokes," said Toodles with dignity. "If I'm not welcome in this study—"

"Welcome as the flowers in May, old son. I—I've got some Turkish delight in the cupboard—"

"I don't know that I care for Turkish delight," said Toodles morosely.

"Try some, old chap."

Tuckey Toodles found that he did care for Turkish delight, and he finished the box.

"Goin' to do your prep now?" asked Daubeny, as the overpowering visitor prepared to take his leave at last.

"Yes, old chap. I say, you drop in presently and see that that cad Rodney doesn't land himself in the study."

"I will. I'll ask Lovelace to step in," said Daubeny. "As captain of the school, he's bound to uphold me in the matter."

"That's right. We'll jolly well dish Rodney."

"Good!"

And Tuckey Toodles rolled away at last.

A Shock for Daubeny!

JACK DRAKE and Rodney were at work in Study No. 8 when Tuckey Toodles arrived there. The grubby junior rolled in and acknowledged Rodney's presence with a scornful sniff.

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"Hallo, Tuckey!" said Drake, with a smile. "Time you started," he began.

"What's Rodney doing here?" demanded Tuckey.

"Prep," said Rodney.

Tuckey Toodles frowned.

"I've told you—" he began.

"Dry up!" said Drake.

"Daubeny is coming in soon," said Tuckey Toodles. "He's upholding my right. He'll see fair play."

"Bother Daubeny!"

"He's bringing Lovelace of the Sixth with him!" grinned Tuckey Toodles. "You can't defy Lovelace!"

"Look here, you young ass—"

Tuckey waved a grubby hand haughtily.

"I don't want any arguing," he said. "My friend Daub's going to see me through. I don't consent to Rodney sharing my study! That's flat, and that settles it!"

And Tuckey Toodles sat down to his prep. Drake and Rodney exchanged glances, Rodney with a smile, Drake looking rather exasperated. It was only too probable that Tuckey's claims would be upheld if the captain of St. Winifred's was brought into the matter. Tuckey Toodles had to be placated somehow. And the most simple method was futile now, for Tuckey was evidently filled up to the chin, and would not be amenable to reason until he was hungry again. And even Tuckey Toodles could hardly get hungry again for a few hours.

Tuckey blinked triumphantly at the two juniors across the table. He felt himself master of the situation.

"You ought to have asked me," he said at last.

"Rats!"

"This sort of cheek is what no fellow would stand," said Tuckey. "My friend Daub is quite indignant about it."

"You silly ass!" growled Drake. "Can't you see that Shell cad is only making use of you to make trouble here?"

"I decline to hear anything against my friend Daub. He's stood me a jolly good feed," said Tuckey.

Dick Rodney took a letter from his pocket. Tuckey Toodles' expression changed as he saw the new junior take a pound note from the envelope.

"Had a remittance, old fellow?" asked Toodles.

"Only a pound," said Rodney.

"Not like the remittances I get," said Toodles.

"If you want that note changed I wouldn't mind taking it to the canteen and asking old Capps."

"Thanks awfully!"

"Not at all. By the way, Rodney"—Tuckey's manner was quite friendly now—"I happen to be rather short of tin to-day."

"A rich fellow like you!" ejaculated Rodney.

"Well, even a wealthy fellow runs out of tin sometimes," said Toodles fatuously. "I don't often borrow money—"

"My hat!"

"Eh? What did you say?"

"N-n-nothing! Go on!"

"I don't often borrow money," said Toodles, with dignity. "But if you like to lend me ten bob till I get some money from the bank, I should be obliged."

"I'm afraid—"

"I suppose you can trust your own studymate with a little loan, Rodney?"

"Eh? But you're not my studymate."

"My dear chap, you don't mind my little jokes,

●●●●● MORE "FOOTER-STAMPS" AND THE RULES! ●●●●●

Have You Seen Our Stupendous Offer On Page 2 ?

RULES—Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive. All claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given later). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "CHAMPION," "THRILLER," "MODERN BOY," "MAGNET," "WILD WEST WEEKLY," "BOY'S CINEMA," "TRIUMPH," "SPORTS BUDGET," and "DETECTIVE WEEKLY.")



do you? The—the fact is, what I really meant to convey was that I should be delighted to have you in this study."

"You really meant that, did you?"

"Yes, exactly!"

"Then you had a jolly queer way of expressing your meaning."

"Only my humorous way, old fellow," said Tuckey. "Did you say I could have ten bob?"

"I'll lend it to my studymate," said Rodney, with a grin—"not to anybody else."

"Done!" said Tuckey. "I'll go and change it now—"

There was a knock at the door, and it opened. Tuckey Toodles slid the pound note into his pocket. Daubeny and Lovelace entered the study together. There was an evil grin on Daubeny's face; Lovelace was looking impatient. The head prefect of St. Winifred's had been dragged away from a little party in his study to attend to this unimportant affair among the juniors.

"Now, what's the row?" asked Lovelace.

"What row?" asked Drake.

"Daubeny says that Rodney's landed himself in this study against Toodles' will. Toodles has a right to object. If he doesn't consent, Rodney will have to go back to his own quarters!" rapped out Lovelace. "You know that very well. Now, then, Toodles—"

"I don't object!" squeaked Toodles.

"What!"

"I—I want Rodney to be here."

Lovelace gave a grunt of annoyance.

"Then what the thump have I been lugged here for?" he exclaimed. "What the dickens do you mean by it, Daubeny? You said that Toodles had appealed to you as junior captain, and—"

"So he did!" howled Daubeny, with a furious look at the grubby, chubby Tuckey. "He told me—"

"Only a little joke, Daub," said Tuckey Toodles, with his grubby paw clutching the pound note in his pocket. "I was only pulling your leg, old chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Daubeny's face was a study in itself. Lovelace uttered an impatient exclamation

"You young ass, Daubeny!" he snapped.

"I—I—I—" stuttered the enraged Daubeny.

"I—"

"You'd better be a bit more careful next time! I don't like having my time wasted for nothing!" growled Lovelace; and he quitted the study.

Daubeny glared at the Fourth Formers. Drake and Rodney were laughing, greatly entertained by the way the tables had been turned upon the Shell fellow.

Tuckey Toodles gave him a nod and a smile.

"All serene, Daub!" he said. "I find I can get on all right with Rodney—quite a decent chap in his way! You needn't interfere. The fact is, Daubeny, you're a jolly good deal too interfering!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Daubeny.

"What do you want to come making trouble in a fellow's study for?" said Tuckey Toodles. "Dash it all, it's bad form!"

"You little cadgin' fat rotter!" roared Daubeny.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're going to call me names, Daub, you can leave this study!" said Tuckey Toodles loftily. "I'm surprised at you! The fact is, Daub, you're not a fellow I could like!—You're vulgar!"

And Tuckey waved a grubby but commanding hand towards the door.

Daubeny did not immediately depart, however. He made a jump at Tuckey Toodles. There was a roar from Tuckey as the exasperated Daub's grasp closed on him.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Yoop! Help! Rescue! Yaroooh!" roared Tuckey.

"I'll slaughter you, you beastly little cadger!" hissed Daubeny.

Drake and Rodney jumped in. In a second more their grasp was on Vernon Daubeny, and he was dragged away from Tuckey Toodles.

"Outside!" grinned Rodney.

Bump! Vernon Daubeny landed in the passage and sprawled there, gasping. And Tuckey Toodles, rushing forth victoriously, bestowed a kick on the chief of the bucks as he fled.

(Next Wednesday: "THE SHADOW OF DISGRACE!")

SCHOOLBOY JUSTICE!

(Continued from page 29.)

"You certainly do not," said Miss Meadows dryly.

"Dose tree poy's gum into mine orchard, and I goes after dem, isn't it?" said Mr. Grimm. "I chases dem on te trail mit mine big whip, I tink, and den"—the farmer's voice trembled a little—"den comes tat big wagon from Thompson, mit horses going full speed, and mine leedle poy Josef is in te trail. I stops viz me dead, tinkin' tat Josef is killed. Miss Mettows, mine leedle poy he was right in front of tat wagon. Ach!"

His voice broke.

"My hat!" murmured Frank.

He understood now. The child whose life he had saved on the Thompson trail was the son of the Galician fruit farmer. That was why Mr. Grimm had come to Cedar Creek that morning.

Bob Lawless squeezed his arm ecstatically. He understood, too. Mr. Grimm was making his meaning clear at last. Miss Meadows was listening with great interest now.

"I was too far away to help," resumed Mr. Grimm, "but I sees it all, Miss Mettows. Vun of dose poy's—tat poy"—he pointed to Frank Richards—"he run in front of te hosses, and he save leedle Josef, and I tink for a moment tey are both killed. Ach! But when te wagon pass, I see it is all right. I came up ferry fast, and dose poy's tink I am still after dem mit mine whip, and dey vamoose. So dis morning I drive in mine cart to find dem."

"I understand," said Miss Meadows.

"I forgive dem mit all mine heart," said Mr. Grimm. "If they shall want some apples, mine orchard it is open to dem always. Mine leedle Josef, I lose him if tey have not gum to take mine apples. And dis poy—give me your hand, mine poy!" He grasped Frank Richards' hand and wrung it, with a grip that nearly made Frank yell. "Mine poy, I neffer forget. I tank you from mine heart tat you haf risk your life to safe mine leedle Josef!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Frank.

"And here," continued Mr. Grimm, opening the big bag on the floor, "here is plenty of apples vich I haf brought for you, mine poy. Dey are a present from Karl Grimm, and as many more as you shall effer vish. Giff me your hand once more, praye poy!"

Frank crimsoned.

"I—I yanked the child out of the way, ma'am!" he stammered. "I—I didn't know he belonged to Mr. Grimm. Of course, it wouldn't have made any difference if I had. It was nothing."

"It was a great deal to the child and his father, Richards. You may go back to your places, my boys."

Which was very agreeable to the three.

Chunky Todgers stood up in his place, his fat face beaming. The sight of the big bag of apples had brought joy to Chunky's heart.

"Three cheers for Frank Richards!" he shouted.

And Cedar Creek gave them with a will, and Miss Meadows only smiled at that unusual demonstration in the school-room. After lessons Chunky made a bee-line for the bag of apples, and was happy.

(Next Week: "A COCKNEY IN CANADA!")

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