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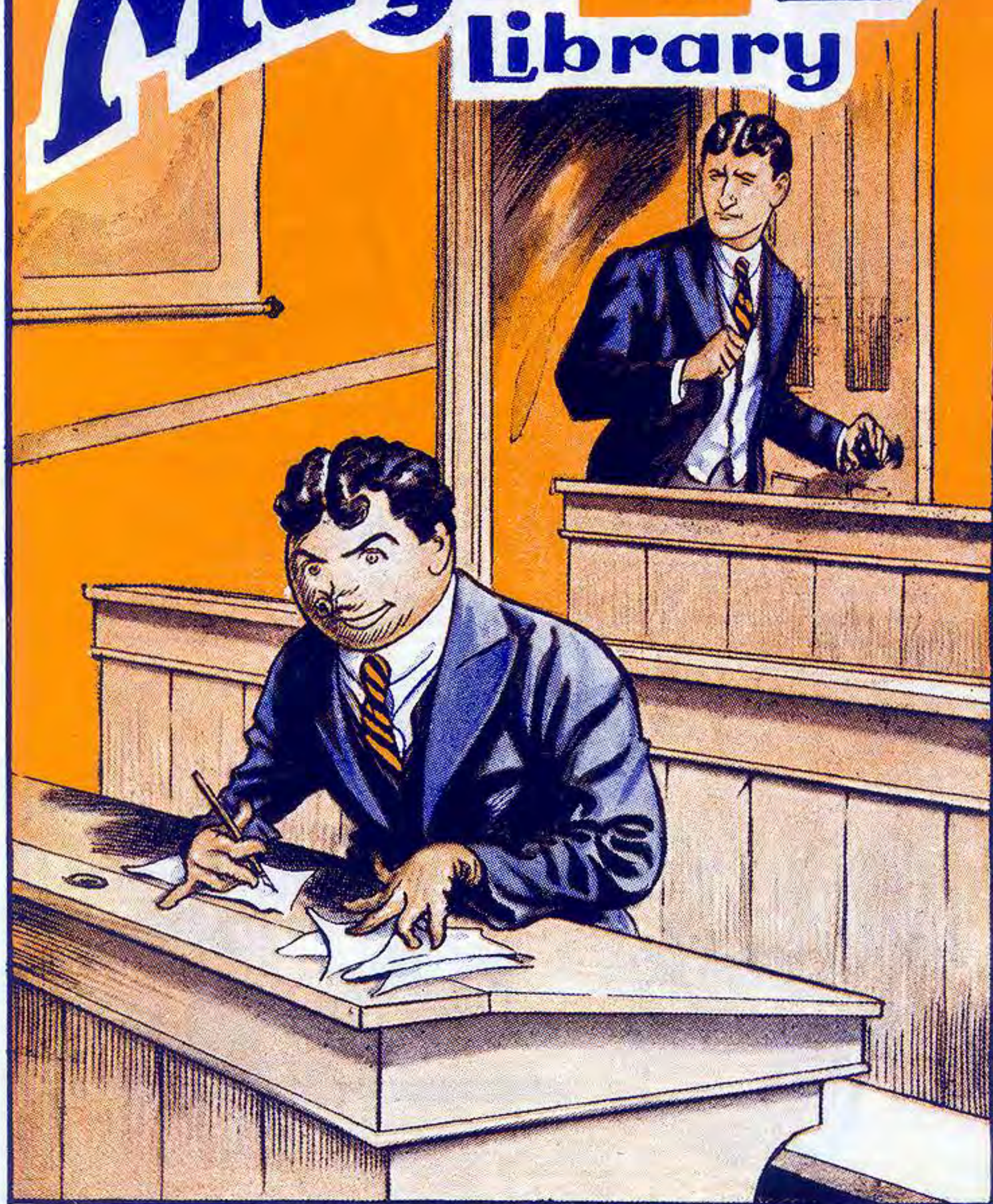
(MEET HIM INSIDE!)

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The Magnet 2^d

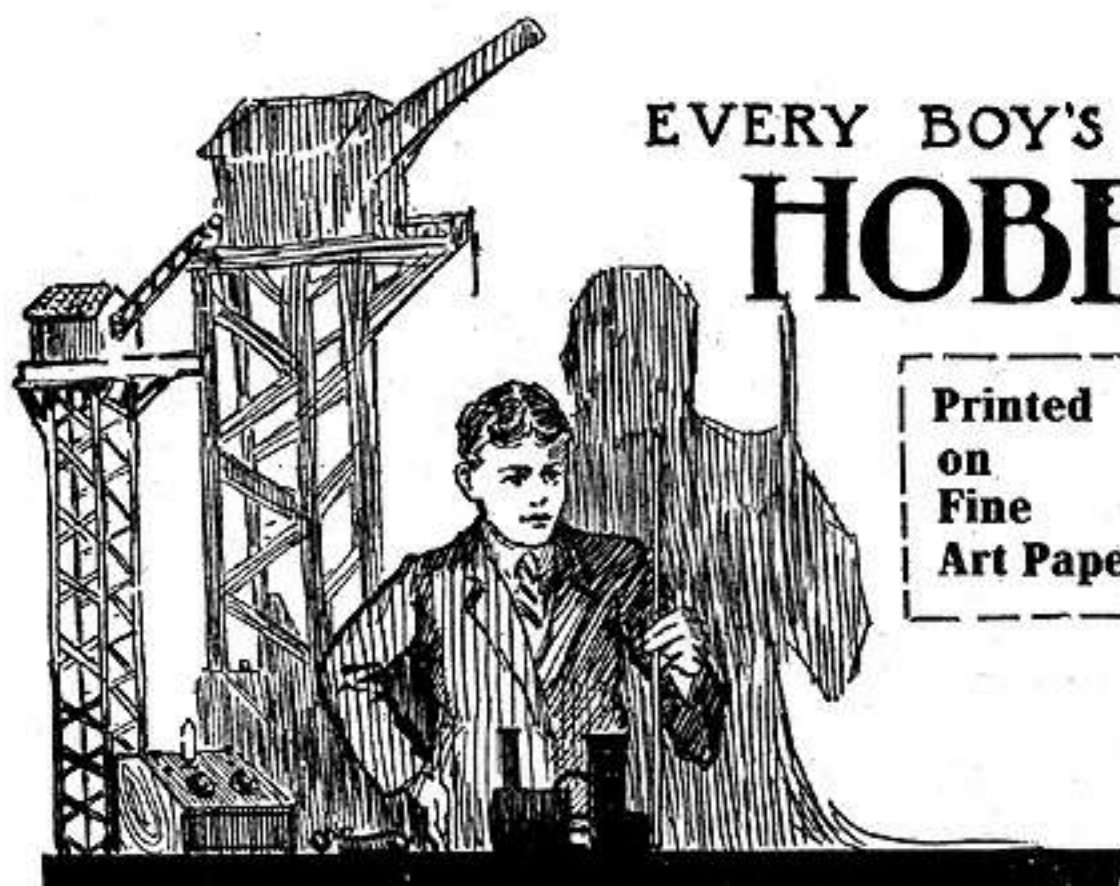
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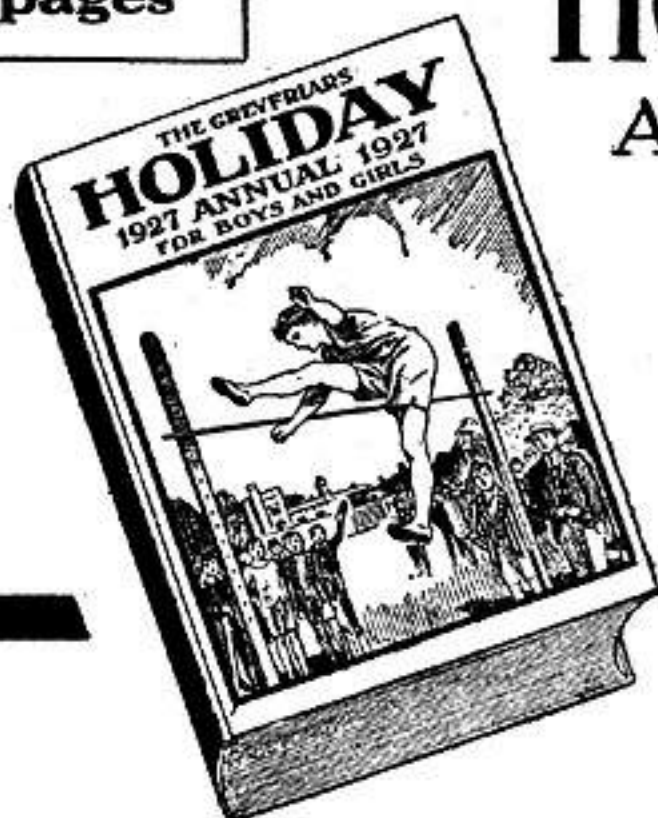
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BRAVO, COKER! The one and only prize duffer of the Fifth at Greyfriars—Horace Coker—sets out to take a Sixth Form prefect down a peg or two. And the great Horace succeeds in a manner that is just as astonishing to him as it is to the rest of Greyfriars!



BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

A Rollicking Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., and Coker of the Fifth, at Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Walker's Peril!

"COKER!"

"Coker, old chap—"

"For goodness' sake—"

"Don't do it, old man!"

Potter and Greene, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, spoke in pleading tones. In fact, their tones were beseeching. They spoke almost with tears in their eyes.

Coker of the Fifth, to whom their beseeching remarks were addressed, wore a lofty frown.

He did not seem to be moved by the pleading of his chums. When Horace Coker, of the Greyfriars Fifth, had made up his mind, he had made it up! In the intellectual line, Coker's mind may have left something to be desired; but at least it did not lack firmness.

"You see, Coker—" urged Greene.

"You see, old man—" pleaded Potter.

Potter and Greene were "going it" alternately, exerting all their eloquence upon Horace Coker. Coker's grim frown showed that they were exerting it in vain. Coker was adamant.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove, sauntering in the quad after class, came on the three Fifth-Formers, and paused to look on. They looked on just as if they regarded Coker of the Fifth as a cheap entertainment, like a Punch-and-Judy show. As indeed they did.

Coker did not heed them.

Fags of the Lower Fourth were far beneath the notice of Coker. He knew that they existed, of course, at Greyfriars. But their existence was far too trivial a thing for the great Coker to take any heed of it.

"It's no good talking, you men," he said to Potter and Greene. "I've settled it."

"But—" said Potter.

"But—" said Greene.

"Walker of the Sixth has asked for it," said Coker. "Who's Walker? Who is he. I'd like to know?"

"Well, he's a Sixth Form prefect!" said Potter.

"I don't think much of the Sixth!" said Coker.

"Hem!"

"I don't think much of the prefects. Scratch lot, in my opinion. But prefect or not, Sixth-Former or not, Walker isn't going to treat me as he chooses.

I wouldn't stand cheek from Wingate, and he's captain of the school. I never stand cheek!"

"But—"

"Walker!" repeated Coker, with infinite contempt. "Who's Walker? Who's James Walker, of the Sixth Form, to give orders to me? Just as if I were a fellow of no consequence, like you chaps, for instance."

"Oh!" said Potter and Greene.

"I'm not standing it!" said Coker, in a tone of finality. "It's up to me to make that clear. I'm going to hit Walker. It will really be for his own good, you know—it will teach him not to be sidey. All the Sixth are too sidey,

fellows had felt the weight of his official ashplant more often than they liked. Harry Wharton & Co. had had trouble with him many a time and oft. Coker of the Fifth was generally to blame when he found trouble; but on the present occasion it was possible that Coker was mixed up in a row without being to blame—barely possible.

Nevertheless, it was obviously up to Coker's comrades to restrain him if they could, for his own good.

Hitting a prefect was an awfully serious matter.

For a junior it meant a Head's flogging; for a senior, it was quite likely to mean the "sack."

Coker seemed regardless of such considerations. His chums naturally, could not be so regardless. They did not want to see old Horace "bunked" from Greyfriars. Coker's study, which Potter and Greene shared, was a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of plenty. Coker had heaps of money, which he spent lavishly, with a royal generosity. With Coker bunked, lean times would be in store for Potter and Greene.

That, perhaps, was the chief consideration; but, besides that, Coker's chums really were concerned about him personally. In his own way, he was a good chap. Certainly, his way required getting used to. Apart from the prospect of famine conditions in the study, Potter and Greene really did not want to see old Coker booted out of Greyfriars.

"Coker, old man," said Potter, "think it over! You really can't punch a Sixth Form prefect! It isn't done."

"It's going to be done."

"Walker will report you to the Head."

"Let him."

"Dr. Locke will come down heavy."

"Rot."

"It's the sack, old man," said Greene, almost tearfully.

Contemptuous snort from Coker.

"I fancy Dr. Locke will think twice before sacking me," he said. "There are some fellows in every school who can't be spared—fellows whose presence gives a school a leg-up."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Potter.

Greene only stared.

Coker, evidently, regarded himself as one of those indispensable fellows to

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as you know. They think themselves the salt of the earth. It will give the whole mob of them a bit of a jolt when I hit Walker in the eye in open quad."

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned and looked at one another.

Coker of the Fifth, evidently, was on the warpath.

Coker was one of those fellows who are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. If trouble did not come Coker's way of its own accord, Coker was sure to go about hunting for it.

But on the present occasion Coker seemed bent on collecting trouble of a more serious nature than usual.

The chums of the Remove could sympathise with his desire to hit James Walker in the eye or anywhere else. Walker of the Sixth was a rather overbearing fellow, not exactly a bully, but very much inclined that way. Remove

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whom he alluded. Upon what grounds he held this belief was a deep mystery. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry murmured to Harry Wharton. "Here comes Walker of the Sixth! Look out for fireworks."

The chums of the Remove glanced round.

James Walker, of the Sixth Form, was strolling along under the elms, his ashplant tucked under his arm, his glance and manner lofty and important, as became a prefect of the Greyfriars Sixth.

Coker's eye fell upon him.

"Here he is," said Coker. "Now, if you chaps don't want to be mixed up in it, you'd better clear, see?"

"Coker—" pleaded Greene.

"Chuck it!" said Coker.

"For goodness' sake, Coker—" beseeched Potter.

"Dry up, old man!"

Coker made a movement to intercept Walker of the Sixth on the path under the elms.

Potter and Greene exchanged a hopeless look.

They had done all they could; they had exerted all their eloquence; and they had only wasted their sweetness on the desert air, so to speak. Coker was beyond control. And certainly—most certainly—Potter and Greene did not want to be "mixed up" in such an episode as the punching of a Sixth Form prefect. They did not want to be, and they did not mean to be. As Coker moved off towards James Walker, Potter and Greene moved off in the opposite direction, with considerable speed.

Coker was left to his own devices.

Potter and Greene vanished into the Cloisters. Horace Coker moved on grimly towards Walker of the Sixth, a grim frown on his brow, and vengeance in his glance. Walker glanced at him with a careless eye as he came along—little dreaming of the imminent danger that threatened that eye!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Remove to the Rescue!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked on almost breathlessly.

They knew Coker of the Fifth of old; they knew he was every imaginable kind of an ass. But this seemed very "thick," even for Coker. In many ways there was little love lost between the Fifth and the Sixth Forms—the Fifth, being seniors themselves, did not feel disposed to bow the head to the great men of the Sixth as mere juniors did. And of all the Fifth, Coker was the one who displayed least respect for the top Form, and made most loudly known his disregard for the prefects. Indeed, Coker's cheeky attitude towards the Sixth had led to some talk of a "prefects' beating" for Coker—which really was what he was asking for, though he did not seem to be aware of it.

But between ordinary cheek and punching a prefect there was a great gulf fixed.

Horace Coker's cheek might or might not lead to a beating in the prefects' room. Punching a prefect was absolutely certain to lead to a stern interview with the Head—almost certain to lead to the utterance of the dread words, "You are expelled!"

Yet Coker, regardless, was marching right on to his fate.

"The prize ass!" murmured Bob Cherry, as Coker passed them, lofty,

regardless, disdainful, on his way to intercept Walker of the Sixth. "He can't really be going to punch Walker."

"Looks like it!" said Frank Nugent.

"The lookfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with his dusky grin. "It will be the esteemed chopper for the estimable and ludicrous Coker."

"No doubt about that, if he's dummy enough to punch a prefect in the quad," said Johnny Bull. "Why, the Head may be looking out of his window at this very minute."

"Or his Form master, old Prout," said Nugent.

"Or anybody," said Harry Wharton. "Coker doesn't seem to care! Potter and Greene really ought to keep a chain on him, for his own sake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," said Bob Cherry. "Let's keep on to this. If this is the last time Coker is going to do a funny turn at Greyfriars, we don't want to miss it. This way for a front seat."

And the Famous Five, chuckling, followed Coker.

Five or six other fellows, attracted by the sight of Coker's warlike looks, gathered towards the spot. Billy Bunter of the Remove rolled up, blinking excitedly through his big spectacles—Vernon-Smith came next, and then Hobson of the Shell, and Temple of the Fourth, and five or six more fellows. Everybody who was in the offing, in fact, rolled up to take a front seat, as Bob Cherry expressed it.

Coker did not heed.

He planted himself in the middle of the path under the elms, directly in James Walker's way, and Walker had to halt, or to walk into Coker. Coker was rather a heavy and hefty fellow to walk into, so James Walker halted.

He stared at Coker in surprise.

When a Sixth Form prefect took his walks abroad, the Lower School were expected to keep respectfully out of the way, and even the Fifth were supposed to be circumspect. Blocking up a prefect's path with an aggressive glare was not circumspect or respectful. Walker saw that Coker was cheeky, as he had often been before; but certainly he did not guess that Coker intended to hit him in the eye! Such a thought was not likely to cross the mind of a Sixth Form man who had attained the rank of prefect.

Walker sought to crush Coker with a glance.

That glance, which would have sent a fag scudding away, had no perceptible effect on Coker. He stood planted in Walker's path like a sturdy British oak, and Walker could not proceed without walking round him—and it was, of course, miles beneath a prefect's dignity to circumnavigate a cheeky Fifth-Former. So Walker spoke.

"Coker, get out of the way!"

Snort, from Horace Coker.

"What do you want?" demanded the puzzled Walker. "What are you stopping me for, you ass?"

Coker raised a hand.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Eh! Are you potty?" asked Walker, in wonder. "I'm Walker of the Sixth. Wandering in your mind?"

"Who are you, to give orders to a Fifth Form man?" further inquired Coker. "Let's have this out! Yesterday you told me not to raise my voice in the corridors."

"I remember," assented Walker.

"This morning you told me that if I shoved past a prefect in the quad I should get into trouble."

"So you will!" agreed Walker.

"When I told you to go and eat coke you ordered me into the House. Did you or did you not?" asked Coker categorically.

"Just so," assented Walker.

"I didn't go," said Coker; "and you said you would report me at the next meeting of the prefects."

"So I shall."

"For a prefects' beating!" said Coker. "That's it."

Coker breathed hard, his eye gleaming with the light of battle.

Fifth Form fellows at Greyfriars could not be told to "bend over" by the prefects, like Lower boys. They were immune from the official ashplant. When a Fifth Form man kicked over the traces, it was the rule to inquire into his conduct at a general meeting of the prefects—a most important and awe-inspiring function. The prefects had the power to sentence him to a prefects' beating. Such a punishment was rarely administered—the Fifth generally kept within a certain limit. But there it was—any Fifth Form man was liable to a prefects' beating, in extreme cases.

The bare thought of it moved Horace Coker's ire.

What he would have done had a beating been administered can scarcely be imagined. The mere thought of it had stirred him to hit Walker. Coker was not a fellow to be threatened with impunity.

"Well," said Coker, after a pause, "I give you a chance to apologise."

"What?"

"Apologise."

"Mad?" inquired Walker pleasantly.

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

"That does it!" he said. "Put up your hands, Walker! I'm going to hit you!"

James Walker jumped back.

He was not exactly alarmed—though, as a matter of fact, he was scarcely up to the hefty Coker's weight, Sixth Form man as he was. But a "scrap" in the quadrangle was, of course, impossible for a man holding the position of prefect.

"You potty ass!" he ejaculated. "Hands off! Why, I'll—I'll—I'll take you to the Head if you give me any more lip!"

"Look out for your eye!" said Coker.

He advanced on Walker with his hands up, his eyes gleaming over them. There was no doubt about Coker's intentions.

Plenty of fellows at Greyfriars would have liked to punch Walker of the Sixth in the eye. Nobody but Coker thought of doing it. It was a case of fools rushing in where angels feared to tread.

Walker backed farther away,

Coker followed him up.

"Lend a hand here," murmured Harry Wharton to his chums. "We don't want Coker sacked! Collar him!"

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry.

Really, it was kind of the Famous Five. They had had their own rubs with Coker, who prided himself on having a short way with fags. But seeing Coker thus rushing upon destruction, they resolved to save him from himself—possibly attracted also by the prospect of rolling the great Horace over in the quad.

There was a sudden rush of five Removites, as Coker advanced upon the startled prefect.

It came only just in time. A few moments more and Coker would have been upon his enemy, hitting out right and left.

At the psychological moment five pairs of hands were laid on Horace Coker, and he was up-ended in the twinkling of an eye.

Bump!

Coker was lying in the quadrangle before he knew what was happening. He smote the earth so suddenly that it seemed to him that the solid globe had risen to meet him.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

"Sit on him!" roared Bob Cherry, as the Fifth-Former began to struggle wildly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, Bunter, you sit on him!" shouted Johnny Bull. "Your weight will do it."

"I say, you fellows—"

"This way, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was pushed forward, and he sat down on Coker's chest as the Fifth-Former sprawled on his back. There was a gasping howl from Horace Coker.

"Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

James Walker stood looking on, breathing very hard. Some of the fellows noticed that his face had gone a little white, and grinned at one another as they noted it. As a matter of fact, Walker had had a narrow escape. The consequences to Coker would have been awfully serious; but there was no doubt that Walker would have crumpled up under Coker's attack, and would have been most ignominiously licked. It was not only his dignity as a prefect that made James Walker desire so keenly to keep out of a scrap with Coker.

"The—the potty idiot!" gasped Walker. "Why, I—I'll—"

"Funk!" roared Coker, struggling frantically under the juniors. "Rotten funk!"

"Shut up, old man!" said Bob Cherry. "We're doing you a good turn, old pippin."

"I'll smash you!"

"You'll be bunked if you whack a prefect, you ass."

"I'll pulverise you!"

"Is that what you call gratitude for fellows doing you a good turn, Coker?" asked Wharton.

"I'll spifficate you!"

Coker made a desperate effort, and almost succeeded in hurling off the Removites. But he was squashed down again, and the grinning Bunter planted himself a little more firmly on Coker's chest.

"Cut off, Walker!" chortled Vernon-Smith. "Go while the going's good, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Walker scowled at the Bounder.

"Take a hundred lines, Vernon-Smith!" he rapped out.

"Let me get at him!" roared Coker. "Let me get my hands on the cad! I'll give him bullying the Fifth. Lemme gerrat him!"

"You're safer where you are, old scout," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Gerroff!"

James Walker turned away, and, instead of continuing his stroll under the elms, walked off rather quickly towards the School House. A chuckle from the juniors followed him. Sixth Form prefect as he was, great man as he was, Walker preferred to be off the scene when Coker was released by the kind-hearted juniors who had saved him from himself.

Walker disappeared into the House.

"Let him rip, you fellows," said Bob Cherry, chuckling. "Roll off, Bunter! You can shift, Coker."



The juniors laid hands on Horace Coker, and he was up-ended in the twinkling of an eye. Bump! He smote the earth so suddenly that it seemed to him that the solid globe had risen to meet him. "Here, Bunter, you sit on him!" shouted Johnny Bull. Billy Bunter was pushed forward, and he sat down on Coker's chest. There was a gasping howl from Horace Coker. "Grooogh!"

(See Chapter 2.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker sat up breathlessly as the juniors released him. He was dusty and untidy, and his face was crimson, and he gasped for breath. And he was in a towering rage. He staggered to his feet, bursting with fury. The celebrated wrath of Achilles was as moonlight unto sunlight; as water unto wine, compared with the wrath of Horace Coker at that moment.

Harry Wharton & Co. drew together, grinning, expecting Coker to charge them like a bull. They were quite prepared to handle him if he did. The wrath of Coker, terrific as it was, had absolutely no effect on the cheery chums of the Remove.

Coker, for a moment or two, seemed about to charge. But it was Walker of the Sixth that he wanted, not the heroes of the Remove. He glared round for James Walker, and spotted him just disappearing into the House.

Coker rushed in pursuit.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's after Walker!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Coker," shouted Harry Wharton, "stop! You ass, stop!"

"Stop him, somebody."

But Coker was gone. He vanished through the big doorway of the House, obviously on the trail of Walker and vengeance. The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, he wants it bad, and he's bound to get it!" said Johnny Bull philosophically. "Let him rip."

And Harry Wharton & Co. let Coker "rip"—all the more as there was nothing else to be done.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Come-down for Coker!

MR. PROUT gasped.

The master of the Grey friars Fifth stared from his study window into the green, sunny quadrangle with a fixed stare of shocked amazement.

Far in the distance, half-hidden by the elms and by a gathering crowd of Lower boys, some sort of a struggle was going on.

Mr. Prout did not see the details of the affair, but he was aware that Coker of the Fifth was mixed up in it.

Coker, of his Form, was one of the most troublesome pupils on Mr. Prout's hands. His attainments in class were in inverse proportion to his opinion of himself and his abilities. An obtuse fellow was trouble enough. An obtuse fellow who firmly believed himself to be the brightest man in the Form was too much trouble. Added to that, Horace Coker's sense of his own importance made him forgetful of the respect due to his Form-master. Taken altogether, Coker of the Fifth was not the fellow to make any schoolmaster feel that the scholastic life was really worth living.

The fact that Coker was mixed up in a shindy in the quad did not surprise Mr. Prout. This was the sort of thing

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to be expected from Coker. But when Walker of the Sixth hurriedly departed from the scene, and walked to the House with accelerated steps, Mr. Prout divined that Coker had been having trouble with the prefect. And when Coker came speeding across the quad towards the House, with flaming wrath in his crimson face, Mr. Prout's eyes fixed on him, from the study window, startled and shocked. This was outrageous, even for Coker. Obviously, he was in pursuit of Walker; he was pursuing a Sixth Form prefect with hostile intentions.

No wonder Mr. Prout gasped.

Coker had often been near the limit, and now he was on the very edge of it.

"Scandalous!" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

He whisked round from his study window, strode across the room, and strode out.

With a heavy, ponderous tread, Mr. Prout headed for the door of the House.

In the hall he came on Walker of the Sixth. James Walker was lounging there with an assumption of ease of manner, but he really was very conscious of the fact that he had shown a lot of haste in getting out of Coker's neighbourhood.

He did not know that Coker was rushing in pursuit; but he knew it a minute later.

A burly form and an excited face appeared in the doorway. Horace Coker rushed in.

He glared round and saw Walker; he did not even see his Form-master in the excitement of the moment. He rushed across at Walker.

Walker's heart thumped.

True, Coker would be "sacked" if he blacked Walker's eye. There was little doubt about that, if any. But a black eye was a black eye. The sacking of Coker would not cure Walker's eye; it would have to pass through the usual series of prismatic shades before it was well again. And the unpleasant fact was that Coker, though only a Fifth Form fellow, was quite able to black Walker's eye if he liked. If the dignity and greatness of the Sixth did not protect Walker, his hands could not do it; he was not a match for the hefty, reckless Coker. In point of fact, also, he did not possess Coker's unlimited pluck. No doubt he was hefty enough to have stood up to Coker and given a good account of himself. But he felt a sort of inward sinking at the idea which was very unpleasant indeed.

Walker—thinking either of his dignified position or else of the danger to his eye—backed quickly behind Mr. Prout.

Fortunately, Mr. Prout was ready and willing to intervene.

He was there, in fact, to intervene.

His ample form was a complete defence for Walker of the Sixth. Mr. Prout was a stout gentleman, and it was quite a healthy little exercise to walk round him.

Coker, rushing on, round Mr. Prout in his way. Even Coker stopped at that. He had reached the point of punching a prefect, but he had not quite arrived at the stage of punching a Form master. He halted in time, just before butting into Mr. Prout's extensive form.

"Coker!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Oh! Yes, sir?" stammered Coker.

Walker—safe behind Mr. Prout—endeavoured to assume an ease of manner. He did not succeed very well.

"Can I believe my eyes, Coker?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"Eh? I—I hope so, sir," said Coker.

"Is it possible that you were about to lay hands upon a Sixth Form prefect?"

"Um!"

"Walker! Keep back!" said Mr. Prout. "I forbid you to be drawn into a disgraceful fistical encounter! Remember that you are a Sixth Form prefect!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Walker.

On any other occasion Walker of the Sixth might have wanted to know who the dickens was Mr. Prout, to give a Sixth Form man orders. On the present occasion he was prepared to obey any order of that kind from the Fifth Form master.

"Coker! Answer me! You were about to attack Walker?"

"I was going to hit him, sir!" admitted Coker.

"Incredible!"

"He's cheeked me, sir!" said Coker.

"What—what?"

"Cheeked me, sir!"

There was a chuckle from some fellows looking on. Only Coker would have looked on the remarks of a Sixth Form prefect as "cheek." Coker had his own way of looking at things.

Mr. Prout raised his hand.

"Coker! It is fortunate for you that I have stopped you before you carried out your reckless intention. Had you struck Walker I should have taken you to Dr. Locke at once, and demanded your instant expulsion from the school."

"What?" demanded Coker.

"I warn you, Coker, that your obstreperous, reckless conduct cannot be tolerated at Greyfriars!" said Mr. Prout sternly. "I warn you that if you should ever so far forget yourself as to strike a prefect you will be expelled from Greyfriars!"

Mr. Prout stepped aside.

Walker felt a twinge of uneasiness as he was left thus unprotected. But he no longer needed protection.

Even into Coker's solid intellect a glimmering of the actual state of affairs had penetrated. He realised that Mr. Prout was in earnest; that he was somehow mistaken in regarding himself as one of those indispensable fellows whom a headmaster would think twice about "bunking." It even flashed into his mind that his Form master would be rather pleased than otherwise to be "shut" of him.

He stood, crimson and wrathful, but no longer thinking of administering corporal punishment to a cheeky prefect.

"Bear that in mind!" said Mr. Prout. "You hear me, Coker?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" stuttered Coker.

"You have an excitable temper and a reckless disposition, Coker," said Mr. Prout. "You must learn to keep both in control."

"Really, sir—"

"Silence! I am extremely disinclined to cane a Fifth Form boy," went on Mr. Prout. "I have a sense of the dignity of a senior Form, if you have not, Coker. But it may come to that."

"C-c-cane me!" stuttered Coker.

"I trust that I shall not be compelled to do so!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Do not utter ridiculous ejaculations, Coker. On this occasion I shall not cane you. I shall endeavour to impress a sense of discipline upon your unruly mind by detention and extra study."

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

"You will be detained for all the holidays this term," said Mr. Prout.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Every Wednesday and Saturday, Coker, I shall set you a special detention task, which you will perform in the Fifth Form room. As you are an extremely backward boy this will be for your ultimate good."

"Oh!"

"You will now express your regret to Walker of the Sixth for your unruly and disrespectful conduct."

Walker grinned.

Coker of the Fifth was being taken down now with a vengeance. Twenty fellows at least were looking on, among them Potter and Greene. Coker's pals were smiling. Pally as they were with Coker, Potter and Greene were undoubtedly of opinion that old Horace thought a great deal too much of himself, and that it would do him good to be taken down a peg or two. Mr. Prout was taking him down a good many pegs at one fell swoop.

Coker stuttered. He could scarcely believe that his Form master was in earnest. For him—Coker—to apologise was unimaginable. If it came to that, it was time for the skies to fall. Apologise to Walker, instead of hitting him in the eye! It was incredible!

"Do you hear me, Coker?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Coker.

"Apologise to Walker at once!"

"I—I can't!"

"What?" boomed Mr. Prout.

"I can't, sir! Impossible!"

"Upon my word! Coker, follow me to the Head! Greyfriars shall be relieved immediately of the presence of an unruly and disobedient boy, an example of rebellion to the whole school. Follow me!" thundered Mr. Prout.

He swung away towards Dr. Locke's study. Coker stared after him, without moving.

"Follow me!" hooted Mr. Prout over his shoulder.

"I—I—I—I'll tell Walker I'm sorry, sir!" stuttered Coker. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but Coker realised that there was no help for it. He had, so to speak, bitten off more than he could chew; but he did not want to be bunked from Greyfriars. Very much he did not want that.

Mr. Prout revolved again on his axis. He fixed his stern eyes on Horace Coker.

"Very well! I will give you a last chance."

Coker spluttered.

"Walker! I—I—I—"

"Speak up!" said Walker, with a sneering grin. "Get it out."

"I—I—I—" Coker seemed unable to get the words out. "I—I—I'm sorry!"

"Very well! I accept your apology," said Walker. "Don't let it occur again, that's all!"

And Walker strolled away.

Mr. Prout gave Coker a last frown.

"Very well!" he said. "Bear in mind, Coker, what will happen if you should again be guilty of such reckless and iniquitous conduct."

And the Fifth Form master rolled away to his study.

Coker stood, with a crimson face, surrounded by faces that were grinning.

"Oh what a fall was there, my countrymen!" murmured Peter Todd, of the Remove, and there was a laugh.

Coker turned and tramped away. Pride had gone before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall; and Coker of the Fifth was only anxious now to hide himself from the public eye.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Asks For It!

"I SAY, you fellows."

"How did Bunter know that Franky had had a cake from home?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had one

into No. 1 Study to tea, after the exciting episode of Coker of the Fifth, and the sudden and dramatic collapse of Coker's defiance of prefectorial authority. Serious as the matter was, from Coker's point of view, the Famous Five were smiling over it, evidently seeing in it something of a comic nature that was lost on Coker himself.

Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, were guests in No. 1 Study, where there was a cake of imposing proportions. It had arrived for Frank Nugent that day, and Nugent, of course, was "whacking it out" with his friends at tea-time.

Billy Bunter was not one of his friends; but Bunter had arrived as the Famous Five started on the cake, and stood blinking in at the doorway, through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really, Cherry," said the Owl of the Remove. "I knew that Franky wanted me to come and take a whack in the cake. Didn't you, Franky?"

"Not at all."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Shut the door after you, Bunter," said Johnny Bull, with a grin.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

chumming up with the Sixth?" asked Bob, with a chuckle.

"Exactly. At least, I'm going to tea with Walker. I've been to tea with him before, you know. Sixth-Form fellows ask me to tea!" said Bunter loftily. "Fellows like you are never asked. Walker had me to tea once when his uncle came, to show off my ventriloquism."

"Hard cheese on his poor old uncle."

"It was to entertain his uncle, fat-head. You fellows know what a clever ventriloquist I am. If you've done with that knife, Cherry, I'll cut myself another slice of cake."

"I haven't done with it."

"Never mind, I can break off a chunk—that's all right. You don't mind, Franky?"

"It doesn't seem to matter whether I do or not," said Frank Nugent. Bunter had already broken off a "chunk" about a third the size of the whole cake.

"Better leave a little room, if you're going to tea with Walker," suggested Harry Wharton. "You might leave a little of the cake for us, too, if you don't really mind."

you sat on him!" grinned Bob Cherry. "My mistake, of course."

"Of course," assented Bunter. "I consider that I saved Walker from a licking. Between ourselves, he's a bit of a funk?"

"Are you going to tell him that, when you go to tea?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, fancy Wingate or Gwynne letting Coker play the goat like that!" said Bunter. "Even Loder of the Sixth, or Carne, wouldn't have stood it. Walker's a bit of a funk."

"Looks like it," said Bob. "Wingate of the Sixth would have handled Coker fast enough, and made him sorry for himself. I daresay Coker would have got himself bunked; but Walker would have gone through it, if we hadn't chipped in."

"If I hadn't stopped Coker, you mean," said Bunter. "Well, in the circumstances, Walker can't refuse to be decent, can he? Think of what a fool he would have looked, if Coker had thrashed him in the quad, before a lot of fellows. More likely he would have bolted, with Coker after him—and the chaps would never have let him

ALL THE WINNERS!

RESULT OF "BOUNDARIES" COMPETITION No. 6.

The First Prize of £2-2-0 for the best "last line" sent in, has been awarded to: H. Walton, 4/107, George Street W., Birmingham, for the following:

Percy Perrin was well to the fore
In some wonderful tussles of yore;
He is still going strong,
So to Leyton we'll throng,
"Two 'P's' mean more 'Queues' I am sure."

The six prizes of 10/6 each have been awarded to the following:

James R. Cannon, 88, E. Claremont Street, Edinburgh; A. Cooper, 74, Murray Street, Shoreditch, London, E.1.; W. Ford, Royal National Hospital, Ventnor, I.O.W.; Miss N. Hellon, School House, Vaughan Rd., New Brighton; R. W. Riddick, 23, Bath Road, Melksham, Wilts.; George W. Woodland, 24, Whitehorse Road, W. Croydon.

"What are you cackling at now?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Your little joke, old man. He, he, he." Bunter rolled up to the study table. "I say, that's a jolly good cake. Not like the cakes I get from Bunter Court, of course."

"Hardly!" said Bob. "This is a real cake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll help myself—don't trouble, Franky," said Bunter, and he helped himself liberally. "Good—quite a good cake, in its way! I like more fruit in a cake, and ice on top; but of course your people aren't rich, are they? Everybody can't employ a first-class cook regardless of expense. Still, it's a good cake."

The juniors grinned. They were accustomed to William George Bunter's pleasant little manners and customs, and to his polished style of expressing his thanks for a feed.

"I thought I'd drop in to see you fellows," went on Bunter, with his mouth full.

"You mean, to see the cake?" asked Bob.

"But I'm really going to tea with Walker of the Sixth," said Bunter, unheeding.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, are you

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"So you're going to tea with Walker?" said Bob Cherry. "Hadn't you better make sure you're not late? Prefects don't like to be kept waiting."

"Better hurry up," agreed Johnny Bull. "Even a fascinating fellow like you, Bunter, isn't asked to tea in the Sixth every day, you know. Better be early."

Bunter gobbled cake.

"I haven't exactly been asked, this time," he said. "But in the circumstances, I think I shall go. I saw Walker's fag getting some stuff in at the tuck-shop. He's having somebody to tea."

"And you're going without being asked?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"Well, after all I've done for Walker, I think he's bound to make me welcome," said Bunter. "Don't you think so?"

"Great pip! What have you done for Walker?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know! Didn't I stop Coker of the Fifth from hitting him in the eye, in the quad?" demanded Bunter warmly. "Didn't I floor Coker and sit on him, and give Walker time to clear?"

"I fancied we floored him, before

hear the end of it. I saved him from all that. There's such a thing as gratitude."

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton.

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. That fat and fatuous youth was never very bright. But really, even Billy Bunter ought to have been a little brighter than this.

Walker of the Sixth, certainly, had not shown up to advantage in the scene in the quad. A good many fellows were laughing or shrugging their shoulders over it. It was absolutely certain that Walker would not want to be reminded of the incident; he would want to forget it, and to have it forgotten by others, at the very earliest possible date. Possibly he was grateful to the Removites for their intervention—possibly, but not very probably. It was far more probable that Walker would feel annoyed with the fellows who had seen him show something like a white feather. The most judicious thing they could do, for some time to come, was to keep out of his way.

But such considerations were lost on Bunter. He felt that he had a claim on Walker. That was enough for Bunter.

Having gobbled up his huge chunk of cake, Bunter reached out for some more. Although he was counting on tea in a Sixth-Form study, he sagely considered that a bird in the hand was more valuable than one in the bush. But there was a sudden rap, and a yell, as Bob Cherry caught a set of fat knuckles with the handle of the knife.

"Yow-ow! Beast! Ow!"

"Give it a miss," said Bob. "You've had nearly half Franky's cake—and if you want more, you can roll along to Walker. Walker may be glad to see you—perhaps."

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"If you're going to be mean about the cake—" sneered Bunter.

"We are—what's left of it," said Nugent.

There was not much left of the cake now, large as it had been. Billy Bunter had had the lion's share, and a little over.

Bunter eyed the remnant discontentedly. He never liked to leave a festive board so long as a fragment of a feast remained.

His fat paw stole towards the cake again, and Bob Cherry brandished the knife. The fat paw was jerked back very suddenly. Bunter gave Bob Cherry a wrathful blink, and then gave a fat little cough. That fat little wheezy cough was always the preliminary to some of Bunter's ventriloquism, but the chums of the Remove did not notice it at the moment.

"You're rather mean, Bob!"

Bob spun round towards Harry Wharton, whose voice fell unexpectedly on his ears with that remark.

"What?" he exclaimed.

Wharton stared at him.

"Mean, am I?" exclaimed Bob wrathfully. "The fat brute's had half the cake! Look here, Wharton—"

Wharton did not look there. He jumped up, and seized Billy Bunter by the collar.

Bang!

Bunter's head smote the study door with a loud concussion. There was a wild roar from Bunter.

"Yaroooooh!"

Bang!

"Whoop! Yaroooo! It was only a joke!" yelled Bunter. "Leggo! Ow! Can't you take a joke? Ow-ow-ow!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It was Bunter, was it? Some of his giddy ventriloquism, by gad! Why, I'll I'll— Hold him a minute till I can get at him!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter tore himself away from Wharton, and made a frantic jump for the passage, as Bob rushed at him.

But Bob Cherry's boot reached him, and accelerated his journey through the doorway. There was a heavy bump in the passage.

Billy Bunter landed there in a heap, and sprawled and roared. It was often that such results followed Bunter's ventriloquial tricks; his weird gift earned him more kicks than halfpence, so to speak, in the Greyfriars Remove.

"Ow, ow, ow!" roared Bunter, as he sprawled.

Slam! The door of Study No. 1 closed on the Owl of the Remove. He sat up in the passage, and was still roaring when Peter Todd came along from the stairs. Peter paused to stare at his fat study-mate.

"What's this game?" he demanded. "Sitting on the floor to do vocal exercises?"

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"Ow! Wow! I've been kicked!" yelled Bunter.

"Good!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "Look here, Peter, you oughtn't to let them kick a chap in your own study! It's letting down the study. I say, Peter, you go in and lick Bob Cherry! I'll hold your jacket!"

Peter surveyed his fat study-mate with a grin.

"Dear man," he said, "did Bob Cherry kick you?"

"Ow! Yes."

"Only once!"

"Wow! Yes! Ow!"

"That was a mistake," said Peter gravely. "Once wasn't enough! He might have taken the trouble to kick you twice; but some fellows are lazy. Never mind; I'll give you the other."

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

He squirmed away just in time to escape Peter's boot, and fled for the stairs. Peter walked on cheerily to Study No. 7; not having the least doubt in his mind that if Bunter had been kicked out of Study No. 1 he had asked for it. Billy Bunter, in a state of great indignation, rolled away down the stairs, and headed for the Sixth Form passage. He felt a much-injured youth; but there was consolation in the prospect of tea in the Sixth.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Black Ingratitude!

JAMES WALKER, of the Sixth Form, was not looking in the best of tempers.

Even Bunter, had he observed Walker's face just at that moment, would have realised that this was not a time to come to tea with Walker.

The prefect had a very uncomfortable feeling that he had not shown up well in the dispute with Horace Coker.

Certainly Coker had been made to climb down and apologise, but that had been through the intervention of Mr. Prout. Walker's prefectorial authority had utterly failed; he had been, personally, disregarded and contemned, in the sight of all Greyfriars. It was most discomfiting for a prefect, whose authority largely depended upon the estimation in which he was generally held.

He was not satisfied with himself or things generally; and his feelings towards Coker were very bitter indeed. He consoled himself by the prospect of making things very rough for Coker. He was going to teach that fatheaded and obstreperous fellow a series of severe lessons, now that Mr. Prout had brought him to order.

Still, he had an uncomfortable feeling that he had been made to look ridiculous, and that he had handled the situation in a very ineffectual manner. He was conscious that his heart had failed him a little at the imminence of a personal encounter with Coker, and he dreaded that other fellows had seen it or divined it. Making Coker sit up would be a consolation, but even that would not mend the damage done to Walker's self-esteem.

Loder and Carne, his pals in the Sixth, had come in to tea. They were very civil and polite, as befoved fellows asked to a handsome spread by a friend. But Walker detected lingering smiles on their faces, and noticed that their eyes met occasionally with an ironical expression.

He knew very well that they were laughing at him in their sleeves, and he felt resentful and humiliated. They

were his guests; but he did not feel much like a hospitable host. Indeed, he would have given a good deal to knock their two heads together, guests as they were.

That, however, was impracticable, and Walker could only pretend not to notice anything, and affect to have forgotten an incident which he knew both of them were thinking about.

Loder and Carne probably expected Walker to make some allusions to the Coker affair. As he did not do so, Carne brought up the subject. The cynical philosopher has told us that there is always something in our misfortunes pleasing to our friends. Undoubtedly that was true with friends like Loder and Carne.

"Cheeky cad, that Fifth Form man Coker!" Carne remarked, slightly closing one eye at Loder across the table.

"Regular hooligan!" said Loder. "I'm glad you didn't allow yourself to be drawn into a scrap with him, Walker."

Walker tried not to blush, but he felt the crimson coming into his cheeks, in spite of himself.

"Well, a prefect can't go about scrap-ping like a fag," he said. "The Head would jolly soon be down on him!"

"Right as rain!" agreed Carne. "It isn't done, of course. But it must have been frightfully hard for you to keep your temper as you did."

"I think the fellows all admired Walker's self-control," said Loder. "I thought it splendid!"

"It's what the Head would expect of a man he appoints prefect," said Carne, with a nod. "Really the right thing. I hope I should be able to do the same in Walker's place."

"Same here," assented Loder. "I don't feel at all sure, but I hope so. It's an example to all the prefects of really discreet conduct in a difficult situation."

Walker breathed hard, and poured out tea. Between his two friends thus pleasantly lunging at him from either side, he was not happy. It was at that agreeable moment that a tap came at the door, and it opened, disclosing the fat face and large spectacles of William George Bunter of the Remove.

Walker stared across at him.

"What do you want, Bunter?" he snapped.

His manner was not encouraging, even Bunter could see that. But Bunter could also see the handsome spread on the table, and his extensive mouth watered as he saw it. He grinned his most ingratiating grin, as he rolled into the study.

"I—I say, Walker, I—I thought I'd look in," said the fat junior.

Walker only stared.

"The fact is," went on Bunter, "I've been disappointed about a postal-order. There's no tea in my study."

"What?"

"After the way I stood by you, you know, I thought you'd like to see me," said Bunter. "I don't mean that I've come to tea—"

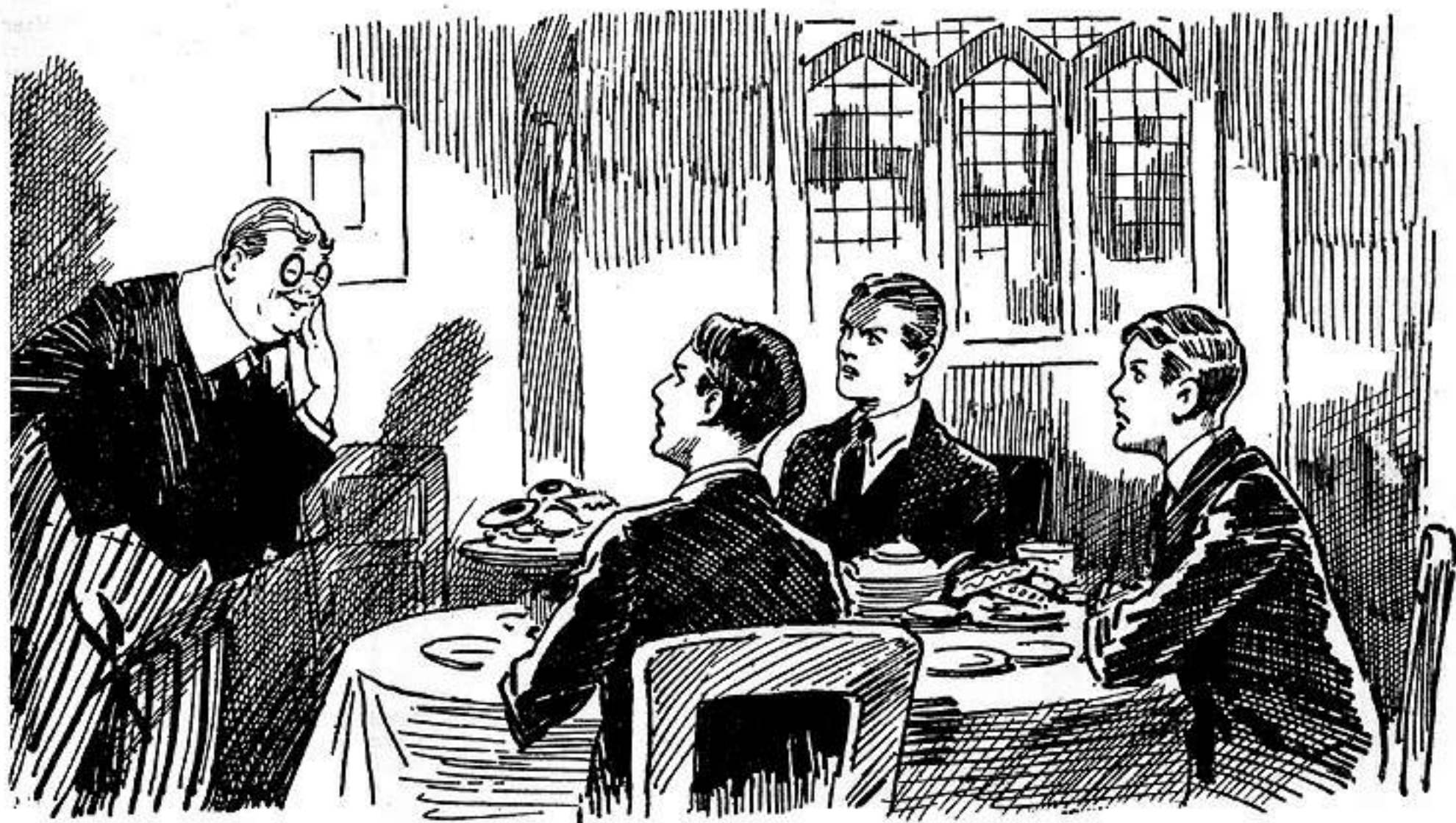
"Come to tea!" repeated Walker.

"But if you liked to ask me I wouldn't say no," said Bunter. "If that cheeky cad, Coker, gives you any more trouble, I'm jolly well ready to chip in again, Walker! Rely on me."

Walker gasped.

Certainly he had been in need of Mr. Prout's intervention. But really it was rather startling to be offered the protection of a Lower Fourth fag.

"Cheeky rotter, isn't he?" went on Bunter. "I've had a lot of cheek from Coker myself! I jolly well kept him



A tap came at the study door, and it opened, disclosing the fat face and large spectacles of William George Bunter. Walker stared across at him. "What do you want, Bunter?" he snapped. The Owl grinned his most ingratiating grin as he rolled into the study. "I—I say, Walker, I—I thought I'd look in," he said. Walker only stared. (See Chapter 5.)

safe while you got away, didn't I, Walker?"

Loder and Carne grinned.

Walker was far from being willing to admit that he had "got away" while Horace Coker was being held by the Removites.

The expression that was growing on Walker's face would have terrified any junior who had seen it clearly. But Bunter was short-sighted, and his big spectacles did not seem to help him much. He rattled on happily.

"If that boulder goes for you again, Walker, rely on me. I—I say, shall I sit down, Walker?"

Walker rose to his feet.

"You—you—you—" he gasped.

"Loder, chuck that ashplant over here!" Bunter started.

"I—I say, Walker—"

Walker grasped the ashplant. He pointed to a chair.

"Bend over!" he roared.

"Wha-a-at? I—I say, Walker—"

"Bend over that chair!" roared Walker.

Bunter blinked at him in alarm and dismay.

"I—I say— What's the row, you know? I jolly well stood by you when Coker was going to hit you—you know I did! Why, you'd have been jolly well punched if I hadn't held Coker while you scooted into the House. I sat on him and kept him down while you bunked— Yaroooooh!" yelled Bunter, as Walker gripped him by the back of the collar and bent him forcibly over the chair.

Whack, whack, whack!

The ashplant rose and fell with terrific energy.

Wild yells from Billy Bunter rang through the study.

Whack, whack!

Walker was laying it on with great energy. Such black ingratitude for the services of Bunter had rendered was surprising—to Bunter. It was still more painful than surprising. The Owl of the Remove squirmed and wriggled and roared under the whacking ashplant.

"I say, you fellows, stop him!" he yelled. "Yarooooh! 'Tain't my fault you showed the white feather, Walker— Yarooooh!"

Whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow! After all I've done for you— Yarooooh! Why don't you go for Coker instead of me? Yow-ow-ow! 'Tain't my fault you're a funk, hiding behind old Prout! Wow-wow-wow!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Whoop! Help! Fire! Murder! Grooooooh! Ow!"

Walker tossed the ashplant into a corner, picked up Bunter by the collar and swung him to the door. William George Bunter went spinning into the Sixth Form passage.

Walker slammed the door after him, and Bunter's frantic howls died away in the passage. Walker returned to the table with a crimson face, breathing hard.

Loder and Carne winked at one another, but Walker looked so furious that they made no remark. They did not want a row with Walker to put a stop to the spread. Tea in Walker's study went on in a rather thundery atmosphere, without the presence of Bunter of the Remove.

Billy Bunter, squirming his painful way back to the Remove passage, groaning as he went, had quite given up the idea of tea with James Walker of the Sixth.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Let Down!

"TYRANNY!"

"Yes, old chap."

"Sheer tyranny!"

"Just that! What about tea?" asked Potter.

Coker of the Fifth, probably, regarded that question as frivolous. At all events, he did not heed it or answer it.

Horace Coker was reclining, not to say sprawling, in the study arm-chair in No. 3 in the Fifth Form passage. It was days since the trouble had occurred

with Walker of the Sixth, and those days had been unhappy ones for the great Coker.

His hands were shoved deep into his pockets, his long legs sprawled over the rug, a deep frown corrugated his brow. Coker looked like a fellow who was up against it, as indeed he was.

For days now he had suffered under the petty persecution of James Walker of the Sixth. Walker was rather given to bullying the fags, but never before had he troubled the Fifth very much. Now he seemed to be making it his mission in life to rag Coker.

Any other fellow in the Fifth would not have stood it. Coker, least disposed by nature of all the Fifth to stand it, found that he had to stand it, owing to the peculiar circumstances—brought about by himself, as his chums carefully pointed out to him.

There had been a time when Walker of the Sixth steered clear of Coker of the Fifth, desirous of avoiding trouble with that hefty youth. Matters were changed now. Coker had forced the trouble and placed himself hopelessly in the wrong, and Walker was now sure of the support of Coker's Form master, backed by the Head. Coker, with the shadow of the sack hanging over him, knew that he dared not hit Walker. He had never realised it clearly before, but he realised it now. He knew that whatsoever Walker did "at him," he dared not hit Walker, because Mr. Prout would have marched him to the Head to be expelled immediately afterwards.

Coker having thoroughly digested and assimilated this piece of knowledge, found himself in a very painful position. Walker was "taking it out" of him ruthlessly, being safe now in doing so. Once upon a time Walker had steered clear of Coker, never knowing what might happen with so hefty and reckless and unreflecting a fellow. Now he sought him out to worry him, knowing that Coker had condemned himself beforehand, as it were, placing himself

utterly in the wrong in the eyes of authority.

Walker felt secure now from Coker's heavy fists; indeed, at times it seemed to Coker that the bully of the Sixth wanted him to hit out, so that he could have the satisfaction of seeing him sacked.

So now, instead of Walker prudently avoiding Coker, as of old, Coker found himself trying to avoid Walker, which was a great change. The old order had changed, giving place to the new.

And that was not all.

Coker was detained for all the half-holidays of the term. Such was Mr. Prout's sentence, rigidly enforced.

Potter and Greene agreed, rather hypocritically, that it was hard cheese. As a matter of fact, Potter and Greene considered that Coker had got off rather lightly with detentions.

When Saturday came round, Coker had to sit in the deserted Form-room, with only Livy to keep him company.

Coker hated Titus Livius with a deadly hatred. The Carthaginian War bored and bothered him. Really he did not want to know anything about those alarms and excursions in ancient Italy. But Mr. Prout had selected Livy as a detention task, and Coker seemed doomed to learn lots and lots about the Carthaginian War before the term ended.

One detention was more than enough for Coker, and when Wednesday came he sat down to his task with a heavy heart and a glooming brow. Fed up with Livy—fed up to the chin, as he pathetically told Potter and Greene afterwards—Coker walked out of the Form-room, taking the risk of breaking detention.

Whereupon Walker of the Sixth appeared from nowhere in particular and ordered him back to the Fifth Form-room.

It dawned upon Coker that his enemy was keeping an eye on him, to see that he did not dodge detention.

Walker ordered him back, and he went. Never had the temptation been so strong to hit Walker in the eye. But the prefect had only to call Mr. Prout. Coker was hopelessly in the wrong again. With a heavy heart and a furious face, Coker went back to detention, Walker following him as far as the Form-room door with a sarcastic and triumphant grin.

The matter did not end there. Coker's transgression was duly reported to his Form-master, and Mr. Prout talked to Coker for a quarter of an hour on the subject, and warned him that if such conduct occurred again he would be severely caned, senior as he was.

Now it was Friday, and the next day another half-holiday was due. Coker, sprawling in the study armchair, contemplated the prospect with dismay and wrath, and confided his woes to Potter and Greene. It was, he said, tyranny, sheer tyranny. As it was tea-time, Potter and Greene were thinking more about tea than about tyranny, but they listened as sympathetically as they could to Coker. Tea in the study depended largely upon Coker. When Horace did not stand the tea, there was generally a rather thin time for Potter and Greene.

Indeed, Potter had remarked—not in Coker's hearing—that old Horace, with all his faults, had three very attractive qualities—L, S. and D. These attractive qualities kept Coker's chums faithful to him in his adversity.

"You see, a fellow can't give up his half holidays," said Coker argumentatively. "It's impossible, whatever old

Prout may think. Suppose a fellow was in the footer."

"But you're not in games, old fellow," said Greene.

"That's because Wingate is a silly owl, and doesn't know a fellow's form, and can't see a good footballer right under his nose," said Coker.

"Hem! Yes. Hem!"

"Footer or no footer, a fellow can't be bunged into a Form-room every half-holiday. What about my motor-bike?"

"It's getting a rest," said Potter. "Prouty may have saved you from some fearful accident by detaining you, Coker. You know how you ride a motor-bike!"

If this was intended for comfort it failed. Horace Coker gave an angry snort.

"Don't be a silly ass, George Potter!"

"Hem!"

"It's tyranny—sheer tyranny!" growled Coker. "I'm jolly well not being kept in to-morrow afternoon, I know that. I'm jolly well going out on my jigger!"

Potter and Greene exchanged glances. It was getting past tea-time, and they were hungry. But it seemed futile to speak to Coker about tea in his present mood. They debated in their minds whether they should cut down to tea in Hall while there was yet time.

"It's rotten," went on Coker, full of his grievances, and blissfully unconscious of the problem that was exercising the minds of Potter and Greene. "Old Prout sticks himself in his study on a half-holiday, and smokes that beastly pipe of his, and he would never notice whether a fellow cut detention or not. But that cad Walker has taken to watching me like a blinking detective. What are you staring at the clock for, Potter?"

Potter was staring at the clock, calculating that there was just time left to get down to tea in Hall. However, he shifted his gaze from the study clock to Coker.

"I shall hit Walker some day, I know I shall," said Coker. "But if I do, will Prout believe that I was driven to it? Of course he won't! It means the sack."

"Better not hit him," said Greene, with a nod. "We—we should miss you if you were bunked, Coker."

"Well, I don't see how you fellows could get on without me," said Coker. "I'm thinking of Greyfriars, too. Prout doesn't understand my value to the school; and, according to him, the Head doesn't understand it, either. These schoolmasters are an ignorant lot!"

"Hem!"

"I'll tell you what," said Potter, as if struck by a sudden brilliant idea. "Let's have tea, and talk it over, over tea—see?"

Coker gave him a chilly stare.

"Blow tea!" he answered.

"Oh!"

"What the thump does tea matter? Talk about Pontius Pilate fiddling while Carthage was burning!" said Coker scornfully.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Wasn't it Nero who fiddled while Rome was burning?" gasped Greene.

"No, it wasn't! You don't know much about history, Greene."

"Oh!"

"But never mind that. I've no time to give an ignoramus history lessons now," said Coker moodily. "The question is, what's going to be done? I've put in two half-holidays at Livy, and I'm fed-up. Look at the weather! It's going to be ripping! Sticking in a Form-room mugging up rotten Latin! I'm going out on my motor-bike to-morrow."

"But you can't, old chap," said Potter soothingly.

"I'm going to, and chance it. Prout won't even know. He squats in his study smoking on a half-holiday, or else rolls along to Masters' Room and bores the other masters with his chinwag. It's only that Sixth Form cad Walker watching me, and I've thought it out. I want you fellows to stand by me like pals. You keep Walker busy."

"Eh? How?"

"What about screwing him up in his study?"

"Eh? Screw a prefect up in his study?"

"Yes, or collar him suddenly and rush him away to the wood-shed, and lock him up for the afternoon."

"Great Scott!"

"Something of the sort—what?" said Coker, looking at his dismayed chums. "You can take care of Walker for the afternoon, while I get out on my jigger—see?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Greene.

"I'm playing footer to-morrow," said Potter mildly. "The first eleven are playing Lantham, and I'm in Wingate's team."

"Never mind that."

"Never mind it?" gasped Potter.

"No. Wingate can put in another man, I suppose."

Potter stared almost dazedly at Coker. He was aware that Horace Coker regarded his own affairs as being the only affairs of any real consequence in the universe. But really this was rather thick, even for Coker.

"Greene couldn't do it without your help," said Coker. "It will take the two of you to handle Walker."

"Handle a prefect!" murmured Greene. "I don't think! I don't want to be sacked, or detained for a term's holidays, thanks!"

"That's settled," said Coker. "I expect it of you. England expects every man to do his duty, you know. Play up—what?"

"Can't be done, old man," said Potter. "You really asked for it, you know. Walker couldn't worry you like this if you hadn't got old Prout down on you. You must stand it somehow."

"I've already mentioned that I'm not going to stand it."

"Hem!"

"What I say I mean," said Coker. "Now, you fellows are my pals, and I expect you to back me up. Are you going to do it?"

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. They did not want to quarrel with Coker, especially as it was now too late for tea in Hall. But there was a limit.

"Yes or no?" snorted Coker.

"Can't be done, old man. Be reasonable," urged Potter.

Coker frowned darkly.

"If you funk it, say so!" he snapped contemptuously. "Are you going to bag Walker, and keep him safe while I get out to-morrow, or are you not?"

"No!" hooted Potter, driven to a plain reply at last. "We're jolly well not going to do anything of the kind!"

"No jolly fear!" said Greene, with equal emphasis.

Coker started to his feet.

"Then you can jolly well get out of this study!" he roared. "I'm fed-up with you! Get out!"

"It's our study, isn't it, as well as yours?" bawled Potter.

It was obvious now that there was going to be no tea in Coker's study for Coker's chums, and Potter was at the end of his patience.

"Is it?" sneered Coker. "Well, perhaps it is. But if you're not backing

me up, out you go. Don't I keep on telling you that I'm fed-up with you?"

"You silly fathead—"

"What?"

"Silly fathead!" bawled Potter. "You jolly well deserve all you've got, if you want my candid opinion."

"And a little more," said Greene.

Coker glared at them. This was a little too much! In the hour of adversity his own familiar friends were raising the heel against him!

Horace Coker did not speak again. He made a jump for a cricket-stump that stood in a corner of the study, and another jump for Potter and Greene.

It was their study, as well as Coker's, that was certain. Nevertheless, Potter and Greene did not stand up for their undoubted rights. Coker and the cricket-stump looked too dangerous. There was a jam in the doorway as Potter and Greene backed out together in a great hurry. There was a yell from Potter as a lunge of the stump caught him on the watchchain. Then they were gone.

Potter and Greene shared a rather meagre tea with Tomlinson of the Fifth. Over that spare meal they discussed Coker, and the discussion was marked by great virulence. They agreed, and Tomlinson agreed, that Coker had got what he had asked for, that it served him right, that he deserved a great deal more, and that they hoped he would get it.

Meanwhile, Coker, once more ensconced in the study armchair, regardless of tea-time, was thinking out his problem. His comrades had failed him, and he was done with them, and he had to think out some other resource. The matter was serious; from Coker's point of view, a crisis had been reached in the history of Greyfriars.

With a gloomy brow, Coker thought and thought over his problem, trying to find a way out. Never since he had scraped out of the Shell into the Fifth had Coker's mighty intellect been given so much hard exercise.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bright!

"ALL hands repel boarders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry gave the warning in the Remove passage after tea. It was called forth by the sight of Coker of the Fifth coming up the Remove staircase with a frowning brow.

Naturally it was taken for granted that Coker of the Fifth had come with hostile intent. Coker had nothing to do with the Lower Fourth, excepting that, having a short way with fags, he sometimes came into collision with those spirited young gentlemen. Harry Wharton & Co. had had little to do with Coker since the occasion when they had generously tried to save him from himself in the affair with Walker of the Sixth. Coker, busily occupied with more important matters, had been content to frown at them from afar. Now he was frowning close at hand, and Harry Wharton & Co. did not doubt that he had come for trouble.

Trouble was ready for him. Indeed, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars they thrived on trouble.

The Famous Five were chatting by the passage window after tea, with Verdon-Smith and Peter Todd and Squiff and other fellows. They were talking footer, but footer was dropped at once as Coker appeared. The merry



"I order you to stand up and answer me, Coker!" said Walker, between his teeth. "By gad, if you don't do as you're told, I'll knock you over that desk!" If Coker had heard—which was doubtful—he heeded not. Walker clenched his hand. Smack! It was a terrific smite, much harder than Walker really intended, but his rage carried him away. It had an unexpected effect on the victim. The seated figure rolled over helplessly, as if stunned. (See Chapter 9.)

Removites lined up to receive Coker with all honours.

Horace Coker came tramping up the stairs and tramping across the landing, looking about him, with a gloomy brow. What he wanted, if he wanted anything, he had no time to state. Certainly he did not want what he immediately received—which was a cushion, hurled by Smithy with deadly aim, which struck Coker just between wind and water, so to speak, and curled him up.

Bump!

Coker sat down in great surprise. For the moment he did not know what had hit him.

"Collar him!"

There was a rush.

Removites swarmed round and over Coker. Hands grasped him on all sides, and he struggled and roared.

"Roll him down the stairs!" shouted Squiff.

"Boot him out!" yelled Nugent.

"Give him beans!"

"Give him the frog's march along the passage!" shouted Johnny Bull. "This way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hands off!" roared Coker. "You silly young asses—yaroooh—I'll smash the lot of you—yooop—leggo—groogh!"

"Yank him over!" chortled Smithy.

"Roll him over!"

"Yow-ow-woooop!"

"Hold him while I get a fives bat!" shouted Peter Todd. "Let's give him six!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow, ow! Leggo!" roared Coker frantically. "I'll pulverise the lot—I'll spiculate you! I—I—I—I—I'll mop up

the whole passage! Wharrer you up to? Can't a fellow come up to speak to you? Yaroooop!"

"What?"

"Oh!"

"Hold on a minute!" gasped Wharton. "Let him speak! Did you come up here to speak to us, Coker?"

"Ow! Yes! Groogh!"

"You weren't on the war-path?"

"Ow! Wow! No!" spluttered Coker.

"Our mistake," said the captain of the Remove blandly. "We thought that you were!"

"Ow! Groogh! You cheeky fag—leggo! Ooooh!"

"Mop him up, all the same!" said Tom Brown. "We don't want Fifth Form men swanking in our passage!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The mopfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No, you chaps! If old Coker came on a visit, let him rip. Your own fault, Coker; you're always looking for trouble. So how should we know you didn't want it this time?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker was released. In a considerably rumpled and untidy condition, he picked himself up and stood gasping for breath and glaring at the Removites. According to his statement, he had simply come up to the Remove passage to speak to somebody; but he looked powerfully inclined now to run amok, hitting out right and left. It was not the odds that stopped Coker—that great man never counted odds. But for

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reasons of his own he restrained his just wrath.

"You silly little idiots!" he gasped. "Jumping on a man as soon as he puts his nose into your passage!"

"You silly big idiot!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Why the thump did you put your nose into our passage? It's not a feature that anybody could possibly want to see."

Coker breathed hard.

"I came here to speak to you, Wharton."

"Go ahead!" said the captain of the Remove. "No charge! Do you want some help with your Latin? I hear you've been doing a lot of Livy lately."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be a cheeky little ass! Let's get into your study; I don't want to tell my affairs to a mob of fags!"

Coker's tactful way of putting it made the "mob of fags" look extremely disposed to collar him again. But the captain of the Remove waved them back. Coker was generally, if not always, on hostile terms with the Lower Fourth; but he was well-known to be rather "under the weather" at present, and Wharton felt that consideration was due to a man who was down on his luck. He waved back the Removites, and led Horace Coker into Study No. 1. Bob and Nugent, Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull followed them in, and the door of that celebrated study was closed on the rest of the Remove.

The Famous Five wondered what Coker wanted. Except in the way of ragging, they had little or nothing to do with any Fifth Form man. Wharton's playful suggestion that he wanted help with Livy was, of course, only a jest; even Coker was not likely to come to the Lower Fourth for help with the classics.

Coker put his collar and tie straight and dusted his trousers and got his second wind, the chums of the Remove watching him smilingly. Then the great man of the Sixth condescended to explain.

"You kids—" he began.

He was immediately interrupted.

"Us what?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"You fellows—" amended Coker hastily.

"Us Remove men, you mean, no doubt?" asked Nugent.

Coker breathed hard and deep.

"You Remove men," he conceded unexpectedly—"you Remove men know that I'm under detention for all the half-holidays this term. That old prize ass, Prout, handed it out to me because I was going to hit a prefect."

"We did our best for you!" grinned Nugent.

Coker's eyes glittered, as he remembered how the Removites had done their best on that occasion. But Coker was exercising unusual self-restraint now, and he did not break out. Coker, indeed, seemed to have learned a lot lately in the way of self-restraint.

"I've got to get out to-morrow," he said. "I'm going out on my motor-bike. I arranged long ago for a spin with a fellow I know at Lantham, and, of course, I'm not going to cancel an engagement."

"Not even if you're under detention?"

"Certainly not."

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled. Clearly, Coker was going to butt into more trouble, as if he hadn't enough on his hands already. It was his own business, however, and they did not quite see how it concerned them. Their looks indicated as much, and Coker hastened to make the matter clearer.

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"Old Prout would never know if a fellow bolted—it wouldn't even occur to him that a man would have the nerve. Lofty old josses, you know. But that cad Walker watches me like a cat. If I get out of the Form-room to-morrow afternoon, he will be on me at once, and will call Prout if I don't chuck it! I've asked Potter and Greene to collar Walker and lock him up somewhere for the afternoon—"

"Ye gods!"

"They've refused!" said Coker.

"Well, I suppose they're not quite potty," said Wharton. "If you've come here to ask us to do it, you can take the answer as read. We refuse, too."

"Yes, rather!"

"The refusefulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Coker."

"Don't talk rot!" said Coker. "I know you Remove kids can't handle a prefect. It isn't that. But I want you to help me out in another way. My own pals have let me down. It's a bit of a come-down for a Fifth Form man to come to fags for help; you needn't remind me of that. I know it. But what's a man to do when his pals let him down?"

"You put it so tactfully!" murmured Bob; and his comrades chuckled. Coker, really, did not err on the side of tact.

"The tactfulness is terrific."

"Well, that's how it is," said Coker. "I've heard that when you were detained once, Wharton, you rigged up a dummy to leave in your place while you bunked. That's the idea. That cad Walker comes along to the Fifth Form-room and squints in at the door while I'm there, to make sure I haven't cleared. Well, if he sees a chap sitting at my desk, he won't think it's a dummy—he will think it's all right. But that isn't all. In case he calls out or speaks to me, he might get suspicious if I didn't answer. That's where Bunter comes in."

"Bunter?"

"Yes—that fat little beast is a ventriloquist. I've kicked him lots of times for playing rotten tricks of that sort. My idea is for Bunter to sneak into the big cupboard in the Fifth Form-room, and if Walker speaks at the door to answer in my voice—he can imitate anybody's voice, the tricky little scoundrel. You remember the fuss there was once when he locked himself in the Head's study and imitated the Head's voice. He could do it on his head."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Coker. Coker was not generally supposed to be a bright fellow, or a fellow overflowing with ideas. But necessity is the parent of invention. Deep cogitation had evolved this plan from the depths of Coker's somewhat slow-going intellect. It had to be admitted that, under the spur of necessity, Coker was unusually bright.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry at last.

"Coker's woke up, and no mistake," said Johnny Bull. "Why, it's a jolly good wheeze!"

"Naturally—it's mine," said Coker. "So now you understand. You chaps have played this trick before, and I want you to rig up a dummy in my clothes—I don't mind admitting that you're a bit more handy at that kind of fag game than I am. I've got to get off soon after dinner to-morrow—you can rig up the dummy and leave it there,

and Bunter can stick in the big cupboard. I'll stand you all five shillings all round for your trouble. See?"

"Dear old Coker!" said Bob.

"You can stand Bunter five shillings, if you like," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "I dare say he will take it—in fact, I know he will. We don't want your silly shillings, fathead!"

"I don't want you to fag for me for nothing," said Coker loftily.

Wharton pointed to the door of Study No. 1.

"See that door?" he asked.

"Eh? Yes. What about it?"

"Get on the other side of it."

Coker knitted his brows.

"I—I—I mean—" Once more the necessity of self-restraint was borne in upon Coker of the Fifth. Obviously, he could not deal with these cheeky fags now as they deserved. "I mean, I'll be glad if you'll oblige me in this. I'll take it as a favour."

"That's better," said Harry. "If you're asking us to do you a favour, Coker, we'll do it. I suppose it's no good suggesting that you'd better stick to your detention and not take the risk."

"No good at all—I'm going out on my jigger. I'm fed up with detentions, and I've made up my mind about that."

"Well, if you're cutting detention, we'll do our best to save you from getting the chopper afterwards, if it comes to that," said Harry. "Walker has been piling it on to you, I know. We shall want a suit of your clothes—we can manage the other things ourselves. Shove the clobber into your locker in the Form-room, and leave it unlocked. We'll work the oracle after dinner to-morrow."

"Good! Where's Bunter?"

"You'll find him in Study No. 7. Bunter will play up all right if you tip him."

Coker turned to the door. He turned back.

"Much obliged!" he said.

Then, having thus astonished the Removites by acknowledging the obligation, he left the study.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another with smiling faces.

"Rather a cheek to ask us," said Nugent. "But we'll help him if we can. Poor old Coker is awfully down on his luck these days."

"It will be rather a lark," said Harry. "Why can't Walker let him alone, too? Walker's a good deal of a cad."

"Well, he showed the white feather when Coker went for him," grinned Bob Cherry. "He isn't likely to forget that in a hurry."

"We'll help him out, and spoof Walker," said Johnny Bull. "Why shouldn't poor old Coker have his afternoon out? Of course, he asked for all he's got, but old Prout ought to remember that Coker isn't really responsible for his actions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And so it was settled.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Coker II!

WALKER of the Sixth glanced at Coker from the Sixth Form table, at dinner the next day, with a sarcastic grin.

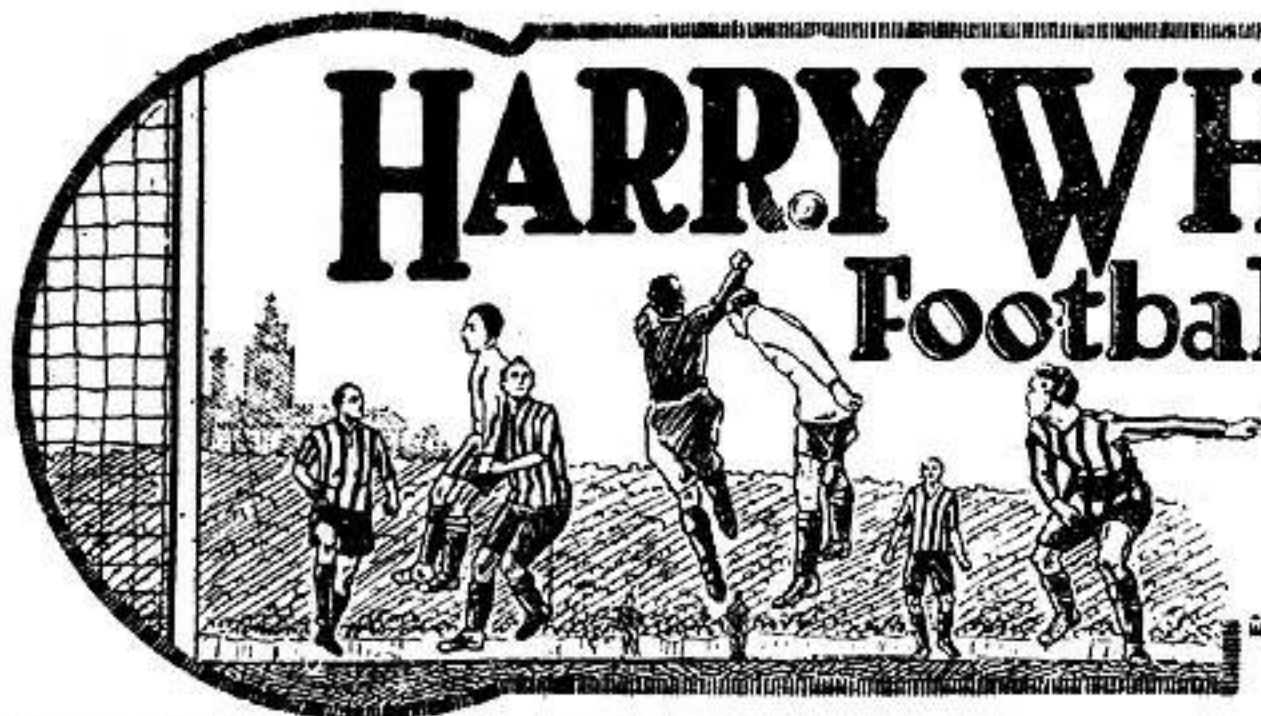
It was a half-holiday that day, Saturday; and it was the third half-holiday that Coker was to spend under detention. (Continued on page 17.)

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ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PAGE 2:

HARRY WHARTON'S

Football Supplement



No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In it all phases of football will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost football authorities in the land. Readers may, therefore, rely upon the facts, figures, etc., mentioned from week to week in this supplement as being authentic. **HARRY WHARTON, Editor.**

No. 4 (New Series). Vol. 1.

September 25th, 1926.

To SHAKE or NOT to SHAKE!

IN big football, as you know, it is the usual custom for the other players of the team to dash up to the scorer of a goal and shake him by the hand by way of congratulation. Perhaps you didn't know, though, that there are some big professional clubs which forbid this kind of thing on the field. The players of West Bromwich Albion, for instance, never shake hands with the scorer of a goal. Thus it will be seen that even on such a simple matter there is difference of opinion. Let us examine it for a minute or two.

In the first place it is obvious that the actual scorer of a goal often deserves much less congratulation on his effort than does the man who makes the goal scoring possible. How often do we see an inside forward perform a wonderful dribble, tie the defenders into a knot, as it were, and then slip the ball to the centre-forward who has only to kick it to score a goal.

So far as the players are concerned, however, they usually show that they appreciate the effort of the man who did the real work for the goal. Once last season I saw Jimmy Dimmock get a goal for the Spurs. One or two of his colleagues wanted to shake hands with him, but Dimmock himself ran over to Thompson, the outside-right, and shook his hand, for it was really Thompson who did the good work, and merely left Dimmock an easy chance to finish off with a goal.

It can also be argued that if players are going to congratulate the man who does a bit of good work and scores a goal, then they ought also to shake the hand of a man who does a good bit of work and prevents a goal being scored. The goalkeeper, for instance, who makes a fine dive and completes a wonderful save is helping his side just as much as the man who makes a wonderful shot and scores a goal. I have often seen a goalkeeper patted on the back by one of his pals, but there is this difference between a fine effort which ends in a goal and a fine effort which prevents a goal—that when a goal is scored the game is temporarily held up, and there is time for congratulation. Unless the play is stopped it would be absurd for fellows to go dashing about the field shaking hands with each other while the opponents were getting on with the game.

But we don't want to see this congratulation business carried to excess. I have seen professional players almost carry a pal back to the centre after he has scored a goal in a big game. I have seen grown men kiss a goal-scorer on the field. Now that certainly ought to be banned. It doesn't come under the heading of the things done by grown men.

GOAL KICKS!

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR have the biggest banking account of any club in the country, but perhaps we shouldn't be surprised at this seeing that they have Mr. Cox on the board of directors.

In the hope that their luck will turn again, Notts County are this season reverting to their old playing colours of black and white striped shirts. The pet name for the county is "Lambs," but they look more like tigers in this get-up.

One of our office-boys is always boasting that he is a very good outside-left. The other office boy says that the proper position of the boastful one is left outside. At the moment of writing they are in a corner of the room giving each other straight lefts.

What Great Britain did yesterday, even in football, the rest of the world is doing to-day. The Sparta club has just bought the services of a player named Silny from the Slavia club, the amount of the transfer fee being fifty thousand crowns in Czecho-Slovakian currency.

Here is one you can try on your friends. Why can't the Middlesbrough club get out of debt? This is the reply: Because every day they admit Owen Williams.

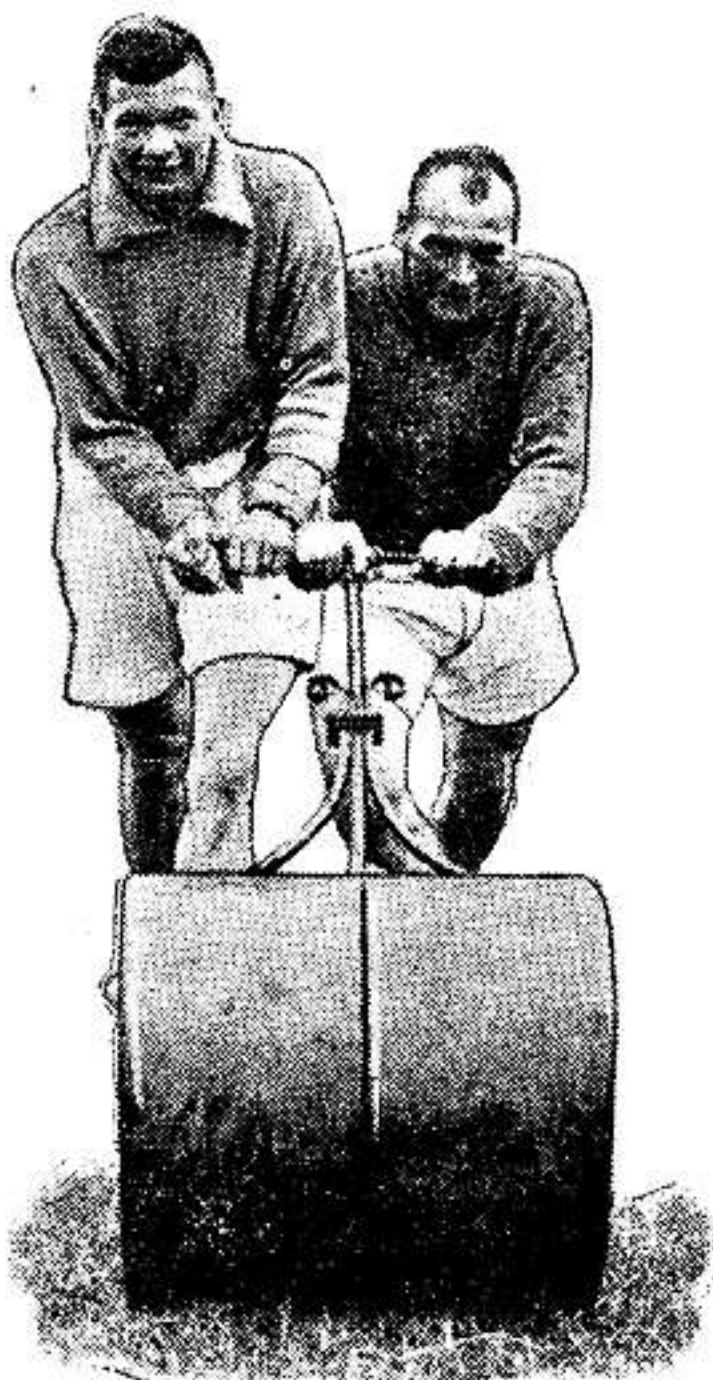
Exchange is no robbery, so there is no need to argue about Halifax Town having got Coventry's goalkeeper, Best, and Coventry having got Newton, the Halifax goalkeeper. But surely Halifax people must be right when they declare they have got the Best of the bargain.

It is calculated that the mining industry has provided a greater number of good professional footballers than any other one trade. We can scarcely be surprised at this, because after all there isn't a great deal of difference between getting coals and getting goals.

The struggle to avoid relegation from the First Division looks like being very keen again. All the clubs try to avoid this fate because they know that the sentence for failure is generally several years' hard labour in the Second Division.

The Derby County football club sprang out of a Derby cricket team because it was considered necessary "to keep the cricketers together during the winter months." The football not only kept them together but kept them warm as well.

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D. Rodger (left) and F. Reed, of Chelsea F.C., putting in a bit of extra training with the roller.

The ART of TEACHING FOOTBALL!

BY TOMMY CAIRNS

The famous Scottish International of Glasgow Rangers.

ONE of the surest things which can be said about modern footballers, is that there are not really enough players of a sufficiently high standard. Never a week goes by without this point being emphasised, for we have managers dashing here, there and everywhere, looking for the right sort of men, and clearly in all too many cases, failing to find them. I scarcely ever pick up a newspaper without finding that half a dozen or more managers of clubs in England have spent the week-end in Scotland, looking for players. For their part managers of Scottish clubs sometimes take a trip to England when they are particularly desperate, and as everybody knows, each manager has a small army of scouts in the highways and byways, ever on the lookout for the right sort of footballer.

"IT IS SO SIMPLE."

As it is so obvious that the ready-made material cannot be picked up under every stone, there would seem to be only one alternative—young lads must be secured and taught the game. This sounds a very excellent idea, and from the way some people discuss it, you would imagine that all that is necessary is to take a few lads, put them under an efficient coach, and in a few years' time you would have a team.

which would beat the band. But before going on to discuss some of the ways in which the young footballer might be taught, let me point out why the idea does not work out nearly so well in practice, as it sounds in theory.

SAME TREATMENT, DIFFERENT RESULTS.

I am going to lay it down as a principle, that in the majority of cases the footballer who rises to the top of the tree is not the footballer who is made by coaching, but who is, what we call, for lack of a better term, the born player. To make my point clearer, let us imagine that the coach of this or that team is given half a dozen lads who at the age of fifteen, say, show very real promise. I will let the coach take these half-dozen lads under his wing, and put them through football education for three or four years. At the end of that time, what shall we find? This—I guarantee—that one of the lads has left his companions far behind, and is ready to go into a first-class side. The others will have improved to a certain extent, but it will have become obvious that they can never be really great players. Really, it all boils down to this: you can teach a lad a lot of things about football, but the last yard—the touch of genius, which raises one lad above his colleagues—must come out of the player himself.

MANAGERS WHO DECEIVE THEMSELVES.

There are doubtless plenty of coaches and managers who will not agree with this summary of the position. These managers and coaches, having discovered a young player who develops into a top-notch, like to sit back and pat themselves on the back as very clever fellows. They point proudly to the lad who makes his name, and they tell how they found him in the rough, and moulded the finished article. But how many youngsters of promise have failed to develop into the finished article. There is no system of teaching football which has yet been invented—or will ever be invented—which will put the touch of genius into the player.

THE MYSTERY OF DEVELOPMENT.

One might even go further and say that nobody can really tell just when a player will develop. Are there not scores of cases within memory, of players who have been allowed to go from one club to another, because, in the opinion of the former club, they had not it in them to develop. And then, suddenly, without warning, as it were, and certainly without any apparent cause, these players have developed to an amazing extent. When you can pick out the youngster who is certain to develop, and when you can tell exactly when the limit of development will be reached, then the big problem of finding footballers in sufficient numbers to meet the demand will be solved. Personally, I doubt if that will ever come. Anyway, the coach who can do it will be worth his weight in Treasury notes.

WATCHING THE MASTERS.

I am not going to be dogmatic on this point, but I very often feel that the youngster who has it in him to develop at football, will receive a great deal of help from the intelligent watching of the men who have "got there." Directors of certain Scottish clubs have adopted this idea with marked success. They have found the youngsters, but instead of trying to push them along at a great pace with the aid of the coach, they have had patience, and given the lads seats in the stand week after week to watch the masters of the game.

TACTICS CAN BE TAUGHT.

I am tempted to emphasize this side of the teaching of the business, because I am convinced that the intelligent young watcher will pick up quite a lot of ideas on what might be called general tactics as distinct from individual tricks. When we get right down to it, tactics are the things on which results turn, and I believe that a greater measure of success can be achieved by teaching young players lessons on tactics, than in the actual teaching of the individual art. One of the great dangers of trying to teach

WHO'S FOR A DIP?

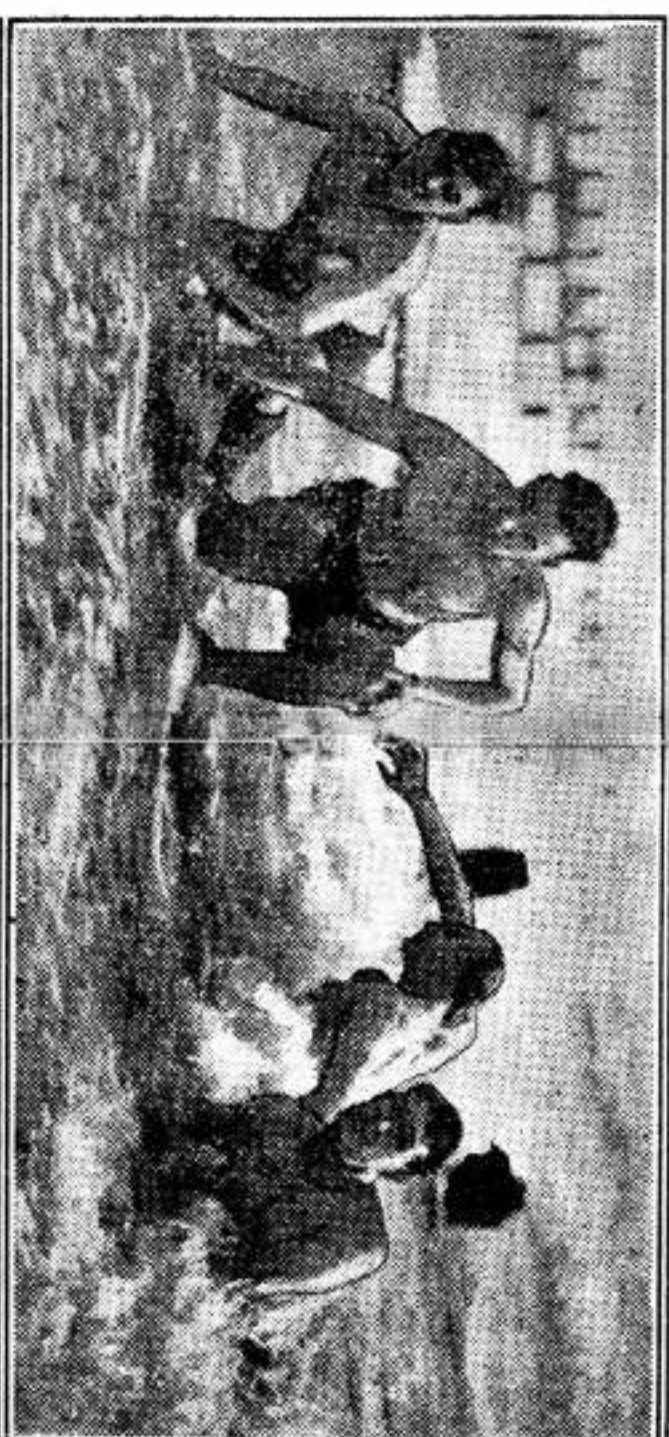


Photo shows Penn, Prouse, Pape and Dyer of Fulham, enjoying a dip in the briny.

young players is the tendency to destroy individuality. The young player with ideas of his own, should be encouraged to develop those ideas along lines which will enable him to turn them into effective use for his side.

LIKE PEAS IN A POD!

Here let me put in a word to the follower of football. It is about the way he treats the young player. I am afraid that the average watcher does not look too kindly on the youngster who comes into the team with ideas of his own; he is told in no uncertain language to play the game according to generally accepted methods. I have known plenty of players of the budding genius type completely spoilt after getting into a first-class team because the supporters of that team have not allowed the lad to develop along natural lines. You are bound to have "samey" football unless you encourage unorthodox play. Equally, managers and coaches who try to do too much by coaching, merely turn out a lot of players who are like peas in a pod—exactly all alike.

Thomas Cairns

THOUGH it is undoubtedly true

that in some ways football has changed in recent years, it is equally true that nothing has happened to change what might be called the deep-rooted habit of the players. In one direction there has certainly been no change—unless it is to strengthen a habit. I refer to the success which, in a general sense, continues to attend the efforts of the teams playing at home. There are exceptions, of course, but it is still true that home teams emerge victorious by a big majority. On one Saturday last season every one of the First Division teams playing on its own ground bagged both the points at stake, and on the same day there was a preponderance of wins by home teams in other sections of the League.

EFFECT OF THE CROWD.

This question of why teams win has been discussed from time to time, but, speaking as a player with experience, I am not so sure that in regard to it we have always succeeded in hitting the nail on the head. So I want to discuss here one or two little things connected with home victories which have escaped



Photo shows Penn, Prouse, Pape and Dyer of Fulham, enjoying a dip in the briny.

attention. The first answer to the question of why home teams win, as given by the man in the street, is that the players on one side are so encouraged when playing before their own supporters that they are inspired to greater efforts and to eventual victory. In like manner the men playing from home miss the inspiration which comes from the shouts of the onlookers.

SYMPATHY DOES HELP.

Now I am not going to argue that it isn't nice to get a friendly cheer when you do something good, and to get sympathetic cries of "lad luck," if things happen to go against you. These things do help, and it is without doubt true that many a side, playing before its own supporters, has been inspired to a great effort by the encouragement of the crowd and has brought off a victory or saved the game when things looked bad. But though the onlookers do wield an influence, I am quite certain that we have not, in this idea, the complete answer to the question of why home teams win. I believe that we have to go deeper than that—into what might be called the human element.

WHY TEAMS WIN AT HOME!

Contributed by J. HILL,

The clever Burnley and English International centre-half.

"FORM" LEFT AT HOME.

In the first place, there is no getting away from the fact that certain individuals almost invariably play better when they are at home than when they are away. For this state of things there are several explanations. Some players are several explanations. Some players just don't seem to be able to put quite the same heart into it when they are not playing in front of their friends. There are half-backs who don't tackle with the same grim determination away as at home, and there are forwards who don't hustle the defenders as much when they are on foreign soil as when they are playing on their own particular cabbage patch. Don't let it be imagined that I am suggesting that there are players who deliberately or consciously fail to put forward the same effort away as at home. There is nothing deliberate about it. The things just happens and it would seem that some players find it impossible to shake off the feeling of strangeness when they are in the other club's back garden.

OUT OF SORTS.

I suppose the average supporter of football would say that the players ought to get used to travelling about from one end of the country to another. So far as the travelling goes we don't feel it very much, but you may take it from me that there are types of men who find it physically impossible to get completely accustomed to strange beds, strange food, and the other strange things which of necessity come their way when they are not at home. These fellows don't actually feel ill when they spend a Saturday morning at some strange town, but they do feel out of sorts; not quite up to the top mark in physical fitness, and their play suffers to a corresponding degree. The falling off may be ever so slight, but a falling off there is, and in those days of equality it only needs one or two men to be a trifle below their best for defeat to come to the clubs for which they play.

UNIFORM GROUNDS WANTED.

Sometimes, it is said that home teams win because they are more familiar with the pitch than their visitors. There is a lot in this, especially in view of the fact that the actual playing area of the big grounds differs so much in size. It strikes me as one of the mystery points of football that after all these years there is no hard and fast rule as to the actual size of the pitch on which first-class matches shall be played. There is a maximum and a minimum size, of course, but between the biggest and the smallest grounds in the country there is certainly enough difference as to make the game almost a different one. The clubs which play on a small pitch seem lost when they come to play on one of maximum size, and equally those which are accustomed to the wide grounds feel all crowded together on a small playing area.

FAMILIARITY MAKES FOR VICTORY.
Then the surroundings of the big grounds are so different too. When I am playing at Burnley, I am not conscious of the situation of the stands, but I do know that knowledge of my surroundings helps me to place the ball more accurately than when everything around me is strange, and when I have no familiar "landmarks" as it were. Some grounds have stands nearly all round them; compact little enclosures which give you the feeling that no matter how gently you kick the ball it will go out of play. Other pitches give you such an impression of vastness that



J. HILL.

HUDDESFIELD'S BIG SECRET.

Perhaps, after all, however, the real reason why home teams win is because home teams have established a reputation for winning. I don't suppose any team ever plays a big League match or cup-tie on its own ground without the players feeling confident they will win. When they are away, they hope they will win, but they are not so sure. And confidence begets success. Huddersfield have won the championship three times. Their away victories are the secret of their continued success. I should say that these Huddersfield men, having won several ties away from home, have got it fixed firmly in their minds that it is as easy to win on the other fellows' pitch as their own. And feeling like that they do win.

Jack Hill

Tricks of the Trade!

No. 4—Syd Puddefoot, the Blackburn Rovers and English International Inside-right.

NO footballer ought to be called Puddefoot. The name itself is a handicap, because it doesn't suggest a real footballer. But, believe me, Syd Puddefoot is a real footballer, and you would have to go a long way before coming across a fellow with a more interesting record or a wider experience than the inside-right of Blackburn Rovers. He came out as a centre-forward with West Ham United, and as a centre-forward his chief worry was the old off-side rule. Then he went to Scotland for a spell, and there he played at outside-right very often, doing good work there, too.

Later he returned to England, ostensibly to lead the attack of Blackburn Rovers. Early last season, however, somebody at Blackburn had an inspiration. They put Puddefoot at inside-right, and before many weeks had passed this one-time centre-forward was playing for England in his new position.

A HAPPY RESULT!

This brief story of Puddefoot's changes shows that he is the real footballer, and I cannot think of any other player who so quickly realised the possibilities of the change in the off-side rule. He invented what was practically a new game for the inside-right. At first the supporters of Blackburn did not fully appreciate this new game which Puddefoot was playing. They thought that he was not helping the team as much as he might because he was not scoring goals himself, but in due course the colleagues of Puddefoot began to understand his new game, and success for the Rovers was the result.

HOW IT'S DONE!

Eddie Harper, the Blackburn

Rovers' centre-forward, got a big sack of goals last season—43 of them in League matches alone, but when I asked Harper how he managed to do so well he immediately paid tribute to the tricks performed by his colleague Puddefoot. "It is easy to score goals with a fellow like Syd making the openings," said Harper. "He draws the defenders away from me by his tricky dribbling, and then slips the ball through. All that I have to do in the first place is to get into the right position to receive the pass, and in the second place to shoot straight when the ball comes to me."



S. C. PUDDEFOOT (Blackburn Rovers).

TYING UP THE DEFENCE.

Puddefoot is a master dribbler, and a master diddler. It can be said of him that the only way he doesn't go when he has the ball at his toe is the way his opponents expect him to go. It is a part of his game to be in the wrong position. Watch him at work. He is right back among the half-backs of his team, or, at any rate, farther back than the rest of the forwards. The minute a ball comes his way, however, Puddefoot is all activity. He works his way in and out, having as complete control as if the ball was stuck to his boots with seccotine. Sometimes in his dribbles he will go right over to the position which is usually occupied by the inside-left. But at the right moment, when he has got the defenders into such a tangle that they scarcely know where they are, he will slip the ball through and Harper will get a goal.

A GLUTTON FOR WORK!

But although in a way it can be said that Puddefoot is as useful to his team as a fourth half-back, it can never be suggested that he does not do his duty as a forward. He is back with the halves when he is wanted there, and up with the forwards when it is necessary that he should be up.

Apart from his close dribbling, one of the big secrets of Puddefoot's success is that he fully appreciates the use which can be made of the inside of the boot as distinct from the toe. He doesn't so much kick the ball when making a pass as push it to his man with the inside of his boot—and it goes along the ground. Also, he is a great advocate of the forward pass—the ball which either the outside-right or the centre-forward can take in his stride. "I never ask my wing man to turn back for the ball if I can help it," he said to me the other day.

BEHIND the Scenes!

Looking into the dressing-room of a big club.

By "Paul Pry."

I DON'T suppose many of my readers have been allowed to poke their nose into the dressing-room of a big football club. This is a privilege reserved for the few, but it is an interesting experience, and here I am going to tell you what you may expect to find if you are ever allowed to take a peep behind the scenes.

In a few years I have seen a great change come over the dressing-rooms of the big football clubs. In the old days it was no uncommon thing for the players to be so huddled together in a small room that they had to change their things in relays, so to speak; there wasn't room for them all to be taking off their things at the same time. Now, however, the big clubs have spacious rooms for their players, with every possible convenience. When I tell you that, attached to the dressing-rooms of the Aston Villa Club there is a room in which there is an X-ray apparatus, and another room for an expert masseur, you will realise that the player of to-day is well-cared-for—that he is molly-coddled, in fact; but I have nothing to do with that argument here.

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THE TRAINER'S EAGLE EYE!

Right through the week—except Sundays and Mondays, which are usually days off—the dressing-rooms and the gymnasium are busy places. As a rule the players turn up each morning at ten o'clock, and they very quickly strip into shorts and a sweater, with running shoes, if the morning is to be spent in sprinting, or football boots if ball practice is the order of the day.

Each morning the trainer runs the rule over the players under his control. Their trainer usually has little room of his own, and if you poked your nose into it you might think it was a chemist's shop. There are all sorts of bottles on the shelves, and in a little cupboard there are rolls and rolls of bandages. Two or three mornings a week the doctor calls in, too, and the trainer reports a bad bruise or a sprained ankle, or any other ailment from which a player may be suffering. I may add that the trainer has frequently to be most careful in running the rule over his players, for many fellows are so keen to turn out in a certain match that they will try to hide the fact that they have had an injury.

PRELIMINARIES!

On match days it is the usual custom for the players to be ordered to report in the dressing-room at least half an hour before the game is due to start. And in that half-hour the trainer has a busy time. Quickly the players strip, and every one of them has a rub down before going on to the field. Usually the twelfth man takes a hand with this rubbing business, but if any player has a muscle which requires special attention he comes earlier than the rest and probably gets a quarter of an hour's massage from the trainer. Bandages and kneecaps are fixed in their places, and there is a special hustle if at the last moment the manager thinks it would be advisable for the fellows to have shorter studs or strips of rubber on their boots.

AFTER THE "BALL" IS OVER.

There is another hustle at half-time, especially if the weather conditions necessitate the players having a change of clothing.

At the end of the match the various baths attached to every up-to-date dressing-room are freely used by the players. There is usually a big bath like a miniature swimming-pool, into which several players can take a plunge at once. Then there are warm and cold shower-baths, a quick rub-down, and the players go off to the train or their respective homes.

COKER, THE REBEL!*(Continued from page 12.)*

detention, with no company but that of Titus Livius—dreary company for a fellow who had no taste for Latin classics.

Walker was feeling quite bucked about it.

He had not forgotten yet—he had not been allowed to forget—how he had taken refuge behind Mr. Prout when Coker was on the warpath. Coker's obstreperous recklessness had been sternly checked; it had been emphatically borne in upon his mind that punching a prefect was a pleasure severely denied to Fifth Form men.

But Walker was still painfully conscious that he had made a very poor show in the affair, and conscious that other fellows were conscious of it. His dear friends, Loder and Carne, often made delicate allusions to it. He had read, or thought he had read, contempt in the glance of Wingate, the captain of the school. Cheeky fags had yelled from

senior had any scheme for bolting from detention, he was quite certain to find James Walker like a lion in the path.

After dinner, Coker disappeared from view. Walker did not bother about him till it was time for his detention, which began at two-thirty.

So he was not aware that Coker was looking to his motor-bike, preparing his famous jigger for a spin. Neither was he aware that Hobson, of the Shell, good-naturedly lending a hand to the fellow in adversity, had agreed to get the motor-bike out of the gates, and to wait with it on the Lantham road for Coker.

All Coker had to do was to slip out quietly, leaving the dummy in his place in the Form-room, join Hobson on the Lantham road, and take over the jigger, and zug-zug away as free as a bird. Hobson had agreed to meet him in the same place at six o'clock, on his return, and take charge of the jigger again, while Coker quietly slipped back into the Form-room, ready to see Mr. Prout when his detention ended at six-thirty.

handy at this kind of thing, as Coker handsomely acknowledged.

The clothes were stuffed out with various things, into a resemblance of Coker's figure. The result was not graceful, certainly; but had it been graceful, it would have been unlike Coker.

An old Rugby footer was the nucleus of the head; this was adorned with a wig the colour of Coker's hair. Coker's hair rather resembled an unruly mop, and so did the wig, so that was all right.

A cardboard mask, skilfully tinted, formed the face for the old footer. It could not be said that the face resembled Coker's much. But as the dummy was to be sitting with its head bent over Coker's detention task, the face would be in the shadow.

The juniors worked quickly and well. In quite a short space of time, Coker

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behind corners. "Look out, Walker—Coker's coming!" and fled unrecognised.

Walker's consolation was to "take it out" of Coker. No half-holiday engagement was important enough to keep Walker from seeing that Coker sat out his full period of detention in the Fifth Form-room every Wednesday and Saturday. Had Wingate offered him a place in the first eleven that day to play Lantham, Walker would have hesitated to accept it, as he would have had to leave Coker unwatched. But Wingate did not think of playing Walker, anyhow. Loder and Carne were both in the eleven, so Walker was deprived of his usual company for the afternoon. That left him quite free to keep an eye on Coker.

Coker, at the Fifth Form table, caught Walker's eye, and gave him a grim look in return.

It seemed to Walker, too, that he caught a mocking gleam in Coker's eye, which made him all the more determined to see that Coker served his sentence that afternoon. If the detained

There was risk in the scheme, that was certain; the result was likely to be serious if Mr. Prout, already deeply incensed, discovered that Coker had broken detention. But that risk Coker was determined to take—only taking all the precautions he could along with it.

While Coker was busy with his jigger after dinner, and Walker was chatting on the Sixth-Form green with Loder and Carne, Harry Wharton & Co. were also busily engaged.

The chums of the Remove had thrown themselves heartily into the scheme.

It was rather a "lark" in its way; moreover, as Coker was absolutely determined to take the risk, they felt that it was up to them to save him from the consequences if they could. He had descended from his lofty perch, so to speak, to ask them a favour. So they played up cordially.

There was nobody about the Form-room passages after dinner, and it was easy for the Famous Five to slip into the Fifth Form room unobserved.

There, they disinterred Coker's suit of clothes from the locker; the rest of the required articles they had brought with them. As members of the Remove Dramatic Society, they were rather

the second was finished, and the various parts of him skilfully secured together.

All was now ready, and it was a quarter past two. The dummy was hidden in the big-walled cupboard, and the juniors stealthily departed.

At two-thirty, there was a heavy tread in the Form-room passage, and Mr. Prout entered the Form-room, followed by Coker. It was Mr. Prout's custom to plant the detained fellow at his desk with his task, and then leave him, returning at half-past six to release him from detention.

Mr. Prout's plump brow wore a frown.

"There is your task, Coker!" he said. "I trust you will make better progress this afternoon. You are a backward boy, Coker."

Coker did not answer.

Mr. Prout gave him a severe glance, and went out of the Form-room with his ponderous tread.

He retired to his study, to his pipe and newspaper, and dismissed Coker from his mind. So far as Mr. Prout was concerned, Coker had nothing to fear. It was in Walker's direction that his peril lay.

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About a minute after Mr. Prout had gone, the Fifth Form door opened again, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry came in. The other members of the Co. were not needed now, and they were keeping off the scene—keeping an eye on Walker, who was still on the Sixth Form green. If Walker started for the house, Nugent was to whistle under the Fifth Form windows. Walker was not, however, likely to give Coker a look-in yet. Loder and Carne had gone down to Big Side for footer, and Walker was deep in a novel, in a deck-chair, on the Sixth Form green.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are again!" grinned Bob, as he came in with the captain of the Remove.

Coker rose from his desk.

"Bunter coming?" he asked.

"Yes. He's blowing your five bob in the tuck-shop now," said Bob. "That won't last long."

"Right-ho."

The dummy was taken out of the Form-room cupboard, and Coker grinned as he looked at it. It was placed at the shadiest desk, in a corner of the Form-room where the light did not fall.

Coker watched the two juniors, as they arranged it, with interest. The dummy looked remarkably life-like, sitting at the desk, leaning over the detention task, with Coker's books to right and left.

A hand, made of a stuffed glove, chalked white, held a pen, in a really remarkable, life-like manner—so long as the figure was in the shade, and not observed too closely.

Undoubtedly, anyone looking across from the Form-room doorway, would have been deceived into thinking that a fellow was sitting at the desk in that shady corner. And one of Coker's brightest neckties—Coker was rather loud in ties—had been selected to indicate at a glance that it was Coker.

"Good!" said Coker. "I say, you kids are really clever at this sort of thing."

This was exceedingly gracious of Coker. Praise from the great Horace was praise indeed.

"All serene, you see," said Harry.

"You can cut as soon as you like."

"Where's that fat brute Bunter?" growled Coker. "I want to see him on

the spot before I go. Find him and send him in!"

"Right-ho."

The two juniors left the Fifth Form room, and Coker waited impatiently. A few minutes later, Billy Bunter appeared.

The fat junior had a shiny and well-fed look, and there was a smear of jam on his fat face. Dinner was quite recent, but that had made no difference to Bunter; Coker's five-shilling "tip" had already gone over the counter of the school shop, and refreshments, liquid and solid, to the exact value of five shillings had been stowed away inside Bunter.

"You fat rotter!" growled Coker.

"You've kept me waiting."

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"Get into the cupboard."

Coker opened the big door of the wall-cupboard. Billy Bunter blinked into it, and grunted.

The Owl of the Remove had joined up gladly for the scheme. Five shillings was five shillings; and Bunter was always glad, too, of a chance to show off what a clever ventriloquist he was.

But the five shillings was gone now; and Bunter was beginning to reflect that he would have a rather dull afternoon shut up in the Fifth Form room by himself.

However, he rolled into the spacious cupboard.

"You know what you've got to do," said Coker. "If that cad Walker looks in without speaking, say nothing. If he calls out to me—to that dummy, I mean—you answer him, making him think it's me speaking. You can imitate anybody's voice."

"You can't teach me anything about ventriloquism," said Bunter, disdainfully. "Can it?"

Coker clenched a heavy hand.

But he unclenched it again. It was not an appropriate moment for treating William George Bunter as he deserved.

He proceeded to close the door of the big cupboard.

"I say, Coker—"

"Well?" rapped out Coker. "I've got no time to waste—that cad Walker may come along any minute! What is it?"

"Just a minute, old chap. I've been disappointed about a postal order," explained Bunter.

"What?" breathed Coker.

"I was expecting a postal-order this morning," said Bunter, blinking at him from the cupboard. "There's been a delay in the post, and it hasn't come. Could you lend me five bob, Coker?"

"I've tipped you five bob, you fat rotter!"

"I'm not alluding to that," said Bunter, with calm dignity. "I'm asking you to make me a small loan, as a friend. I shall, of course, hand you the postal-order immediately it comes. It will be for five shillings."

Coker breathed deep.

"You fat fraud! I'll stand you another five bob, if you like! Now shut up!"

Five shillings passed into Bunter's willing palm; and Coker closed the door on him. Coker had plenty of money, and he realised that if he did not repeat the tip he could not count upon the elusive Owl of the Remove. The door was left a few inches ajar, to allow Bunter air and a space to keep watch. Bunter sat down on a box in the cupboard with a fat grin on his face. He had had one feed, and he had the prospect of another when his duty was done, so Bunter felt content.

That little matter arranged, Coker

proceeded to the Form-room door, and glanced cautiously into the passage.

Nobody was about, and he tiptoed cautiously out, closing the door behind him. By devious ways Coker made his way out of the House at the back, and dropped over a wall into a lane. Five minutes later he had joined Hobson on the Lantham road, and taken over the motor-bike. And then Coker forgot detention, and Mr. Prout and Walker, and all unpleasant things, as he went careering along at a reckless speed, carrying terror wherever he went.

Coker was miles away from Greyfriars, when there was a step in the Form-room passage, and Walker looked into the Fifth Form room.

Bunter, hidden in the wall-cupboard, blinked at him in interested silence.

Walker of the Sixth glanced into the room, spotted the studious figure bending over the desk in the shady corner, and grinned. He shut the door and walked away without speaking, but still grinning. Coker was safe—at least, so Walker believed.

Bunter, in the Form-room cupboard, grinned, too. James Walker returned to the deck-chair on the Sixth Form green and his novel, and had read several chapters before he thought of giving Coker another look in.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Death of Coker!

BILLY BUNTER yawned.

It was a warm afternoon; and it seemed a little stuffy in Bunter's rather close quarters. In half an hour William George Bunter was quite tired of his vigil, and he began to reflect that he was putting in a lot of trouble for a very slight consideration. Coker was getting his valuable services very cheap, Bunter considered. Moreover, he was growing hungry again, and there were five shillings in his pocket.

But even Bunter was not without some sense of honour, and he hesitated to leave his post. He began to consider whether he could take a walk—say, as far as the tuckshop—and then return and resume his watch. Surely there would be no harm in that!

He was yawning deeply and toying with this idea, when the door of the Fifth Form room opened, and Walker of the Sixth looked in.

Bunter sat up and took notice at once.

Walker stared across the Form-room to the bent figure at the desk, in the shady corner, Bunter watching him from the narrow space where the cupboard door stood ajar.

Possibly Walker was surprised to see Coker still in that studious attitude, apparently poring deeply over his task. No doubt he had expected to see him yawning, or to hear him grousing.

"Hallo! Getting on with it—what?"

Walker called across the room.

He did not hear the little fat cough in the cupboard, which was the Greyfriars ventriloquist's preliminary to business.

"Yes! Don't interrupt me please!"

That voice was Coker's to the very life. Bunter, who could do nothing else, could ventriloquise. Coker's voice was not musical, but it was distinctive—according to Potter, it was something between a growl and a bark, and more unmusical than either.

Walker, evidently, had not the slightest suspicion. He was only surprised at getting a civil reply.

"Oh, you don't want to be interrupted, don't you?" he sneered. "Taking to

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swotting like a duck to water, I suppose?"

"I've got to get this done, Walker. If you interrupt me I shall complain to Mr. Prout!"

Walker bit his lip. Coker—if it was Coker—was quite within his rights there, and certainly Mr. Prout would not have approved of the prefect interrupting Coker at his detention task.

"Well, look out!" growled Walker. "I'm keeping an eye on you! You step outside this Form-room and see what will happen!"

And Walker stamped out and slammed the Form-room door behind him.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

The watchful prefect had been completely fooled. He had not the slightest doubt that it was Coker who was sitting there and that Coker had spoken to him. Undoubtedly Coker's scheme was a bright one—so long as the Greyfriars ventriloquist remained at his post and played up.

But Bunter was growing more and more dubious about remaining at his post.

It was not near tea-time yet, but Bunter wanted his tea. The temptation grew stronger and stronger.

"After all, I sha'n't be long!" the Owl of the Remove argued to himself. "I can cut down to the tuck-shop, and get back before that cad Walker comes spying again. I'll chance it!"

Having decided to chance it, Bunter rolled out of his hiding-place and out of the Form-room.

He lost no time in getting out of the School House. As he started for Mrs. Mimble's shop in the distant corner behind the elms, he noted that Walker of the Sixth was sprawling with his novel in the deck-chair on the Sixth Form green.

Walker was safe for a time—at least, Bunter hoped that he was. As soon as he was seated on a high stool at Mrs. Mimble's counter Bunter forgot all about James Walker and everything else, so long as the five shillings lasted.

Somewhere or other, miles and miles away, Coker was careering on his motor-bike, equally oblivious of Walker.

But James Walker, having come to the end of his novel, yawned and rose from his deck-chair, and remembered Coker.

He strolled into the House to give Coker another look-in; after that, intending to walk down to Big Side and see how the match was getting on. But he meant to see first that Coker was still at detention; there was no mercy for Coker. It was quite likely that he had bolted, in which case Walker would have the pleasure of reporting him to Mr. Prout as a breaker of detention. In point of fact, Walker would have preferred to find that Coker had bolted; in his opinion, a flogging would have done Coker good.

He strolled along to the Fifth Form room, and threw the door open.

He frowned as he stared across at the studious figure in the shady corner. Coker—at least, Coker II.—was still hard at it. He seemed to be poring over his task like the veriest swot at Greyfriars.

"Still going it?" sneered Walker.

This time there was no reply. The Greyfriars ventriloquist was no longer on the scene.

"Rather a new departure for you sticking to your work!" jeered Walker, entering the Form-room. "A dodge for getting round Mr. Prout—what?"

Not the slightest notice was taken of Walker's words. He was treated with utter contempt by the silent figure in the corner.



Mr. Prout's frowning brow grew black, as he carried the "body" into the light of the Form-room window. There he placed it on a form, propped against the wall. The head hung over one side, and the hair was nearly detached by the handling of the "body." No more evidence was needed to prove that it was a stuffed suit of clothes that Mr. Prout had picked up. "A—a—an effigy!" gasped Mr. Prout, at last. "A—a—a dummy!" stuttered Walker. (See Chapter 11.)

Walker's eyes glittered.

"Have you been out of the Form-room, Coker?"

Silence.

"Answer me!"

Not a word or a movement. Coker II. seemed absolutely unconscious of the prefect's presence, as indeed he was. Walker's face flushed with rage. Coker had been reduced to submission; he had been "ragged" again and again without venturing upon any reckless retort. Walker had flattered himself that he would soon have the burly Fifth-Former in a state to feed out of his hand! And now Coker, apparently, was adopting an attitude of contemptuous disdain, ignoring Walker with utter scorn.

The prefect came over to the desks, his eyes gleaming at the silent, unregarding figure. The days were past when Walker had taken care to avoid close quarters with Coker. Now the certainty of the "sack" hung over Coker if he ventured to "punch" the prefect; and Walker would have been so pleased to see Coker barked from Greyfriars that he considered it worth while taking a punch for that purpose, if Coker was ass enough to hit him.

He came along the desks to Coker II. with his most unpleasant and bullying manner.

"Look here, you cheeky cad," he said. "I've spoken to you, and I expect an answer—see? Stand up!"

That order was disregarded.

"Stand up!" roared Walker. "I order you, as a prefect, to stand up! Do you hear me, Coker?"

If Coker II. heard—which was doubtful—he heeded not. He did not even turn his head to glance at Walker; he made absolutely no movement whatever.

Walker clenched his hand.

"I order you to stand up and answer me, Coker," he said, between his teeth. "By gad, if you don't do as you're told, I'll knock you over that desk!"

The total and contemptuous disregard with which that threat was treated was too much for Walker. With all the force of his arm he smacked the bent head over the desk.

Smack!

It was a terrific smite, much harder than Walker really intended, but his rage carried him away.

It had an unexpected effect on the victim. The seated figure rolled over helplessly, as if stunned, and rolled heavily under the desk.

Walker jumped back and put up his hands. He fully expected Coker to squirm up from under the desk and come at him with clenched fists. But his alarm was groundless.

The figure stretched under the desks made no movement. It lay where it had fallen, deep in shadow, motionless, rigid. Walker, his alarm over, peered down at it.

"Coker, you silly rotter, stop that shamming and get up!"

No reply; no movement. A feeling of vague uneasiness came over James Walker. Coker really was not the fellow to "sham"; but why was he lying so still and lifeless there? What—what did it mean? Walker felt a queer throb at his heart. What was the matter with the fellow? He had not hit him very hard—at least, he had not intended to hit him very hard. Coker was doing this to frighten him.

"Coker, get up! Do you hear? I—I'll help you! I never meant to hurt

you. Get up! For goodness' sake, get up!"

Walker's voice was scared now. The stillness and rigidity of the huddled figure under the desks had something terrifying for him. He approached to bend over the fallen figure, and backed away again in sheer funk. Then he made an effort, and reached down past the form and put his hand on the breast of the huddled figure, to feel if the heart was still beating.

He drew his hand away quickly. There was not the slightest pulsation of life.

"Good heavens!" breathed Walker.

He staggered against the wall, white as a sheet, scarcely breathing. He knew now that there was no life in that still, huddled figure. And as he tried, with reeling brain, to think out the consequences of this awful happening, the fat figure of Billy Bunter rolled in at the Form-room door.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Awful!

BILLY BUNTER gave a jump at the sight of Walker leaning against the wall in the shady corner of the Form-room, close to Coker's desk. Coker II. had disappeared from view. Bunter did not see the still figure sprawling, huddled, under the desks. The Greyfriars ventriloquist realised that he had stayed a little too long in the tuckshop, and returned to his post a little too late for business.

"Oh, crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

Walker stared across at him with a ghastly face. He did not trouble to ask himself how it was that a Remove junior had happened into the Fifth Form-room. He saw in Bunter a witness of what he had done. His heart almost died within him. But for that he might have sneaked quietly away, and no one would have known that he had been there. They might have supposed that Coker had fallen into a fit, or something. So far, remorse was not hurting Walker. He was so terrified at the possible consequences of his action that he had no leisure to think about anything or anybody but himself.

"Bunter!" he gasped.

Billy Bunter, under the impression that all was discovered, was backing towards the doorway. Walker signed to him almost frantically to stop.

"Bunter, come here!"

Bunter backed further off, in alarm. He did not understand the awful look on Walker's face, but it scared him.

"Bunter, old chap! I say, don't run away, and—and tell anybody! It was an accident. I—I never meant to hurt him," babbled Walker, hardly knowing what he was saying in his terror. "Keep it dark, for—for the present, at least! Don't be afraid. I'm not going to touch you! For goodness' sake, Bunter, not a word outside this room, till—till I've had time to think!"

Bunter blinked at him in utter bewilderment.

Unless James Walker of the Sixth had suddenly gone insane, Bunter was at a loss to account for his words.

But he stopped. It was clear, at least, that he had nothing to fear from Walker. The bully of the Sixth was actually pleading to him. He was beseeching Bunter!

"It was an accident, a sheer accident," groaned Walker. "He—he must have had heart-disease, or something, to go off suddenly like that! I hardly

touched him—just a slight smack—a mere slap!"

Bunter's eyes opened wider behind his big spectacles. He discerned, now, the huddled figure under the desks, and realised that Walker, taking it for Horace Coker, had hit it and knocked it over. It dawned upon his fat mind that Walker still believed it to be Coker.

He grinned. He could not help grinning.

But to Walker, at that fearful moment, his grin seemed horrible.

"Do you understand?" gasped Walker. "Mind, keep it dark, till—till I've thought it out. Of course, you understand that it was an accident."

"You hit him?" said Bunter.

"Just a touch—a mere peck—nothing at all! But—but he fell, and—and perhaps he struck his head on the leg of the desk. Oh dear!" Walker covered his face with his hands. "What am I going to do? Oh, what can I do? This means ruin to me!"

Bunter suppressed a fat chuckle. Walker, no doubt, had forgotten what had happened in his study on the occasion when Bunter had come to tea with him. Bunter had not forgotten. The Owl of the Remove raised a fat forefinger and pointed it at Walker.

"You hit Coker, and he fell down dead!" he exclaimed.

Walker shuddered.

"Don't—don't! He—he fell down, that's all! I scarcely touched him."

"Tell that to the Marines!" said Bunter scornfully. "Why, I heard the whack as I came up the passage! That's why I came in."

An attachment to veracity had never been one of Bunter's weaknesses.

"I—I—well, a—a fellow had to defend himself," stammered Walker. "You—you know Coker—reckless ruffian. He sprang at me!"

"Sprang at you?" gasped Bunter.

"Like a tiger!"

"Oh crikey!"

"What could I do?" gasped Walker. "He sprang at me savagely, and I—I had to defend myself. I—I merely pushed him off." He panted. "Look here, Bunter, you bear me out in this, and—and I'll make it worth your while."

"Wha-a-t?"

"You—you saw him spring at me," panted Walker. "See? I'll be your friend for life, if you'll stand by me this time, Bunter, old chap. A—a prefect can do a lot of things for a junior. Bear me out in this, like a good fellow. You know exactly what happened; I've told you! He sprang at me like—like a savage tiger, and—and— You understand?"

Whether Bunter would have succumbed to bribery and corruption had Horace Coker really lain lifeless under the desks, may be doubtful. In the circumstances, he was not likely to succumb. He was not likely to bear witness that a stuffed dummy had sprung at Walker like a tiger. Obviously it was only a matter of time—a short time—before the facts came to light, for it was getting towards six o'clock, and the genuine Coker was due in the Form-room at six.

Bunter's fat forefinger rose again accusingly.

"Do you think I'm going to tell lies for you?" he exclaimed, with deep scorn. "Yah!"

"Bunter, I—I tell you—"

"I'm going to tell all the fellows!" exclaimed Bunter. "I'm jolly well going to tell all Greyfriars that you've confessed that you've—"

"Stop!"

"You've killed him, haven't you?"

said Bunter. "Well, you'll be hanged, of course—"

"Ow!"

"And a jolly good riddance for Greyfriars, too. Giving a chap six when he comes to tea with you in a friendly way! Yah!"

The Owl of the Remove backed to the door.

"Bunter!" gasped Walker.

Bunter did not heed. He backed off. Walker made a desperate rush after him, to stop him while there was yet time. Somehow or other Bunter's tongue had to be silenced before he could spread the news—silenced until Walker had had time to think out the awful situation, at least.

"Stop!" panted Walker, rushing frantically in pursuit.

Bunter jumped out of the Fifth Form-room with the activity of a kangaroo. He sped down the passage as fast as his fat legs could carry him, and Walker rushed after him.

"I say, you fellows," yelled Bunter, as he arrived breathless at the door of the School House and found the chums of the Remove chatting there—"I say, Walker's after me—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"He's killed Coker!"

"What?"

"Knocked him over in the Form-room!" gasped Bunter. "He thinks—I mean, he owns up he's killed him! He wants me to keep it dark!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at Bunter. The next moment James Walker was on the scene, gasping in haste. Billy Bunter promptly dodged behind the captain of the Remove.

"Keep off!" he roared. "I say, you fellows, keep him off! He's killed Coker, and he wants to kill me! Help!"

"Great pip!"

"What the thump—"

Walker of the Sixth stopped, with a haggard brow. It was all up now—all up with a vengeance. There was only one resource left to Walker—to hurry to Mr. Prout and tell his story first—to make the best show he could before the terrible story was told from other sources. Walker, without a word, turned away and hurried to Mr. Prout's study.

Bob Cherry caught the Owl of the Remove by a fat shoulder.

"You fat duffer! What's happened—what?"

"He, he, he!" gasped Bunter. "Walker—he, he, he!—he knocked Coker over—he, he, he!—he thinks he's dead—he, he, he!—the dummy, you know—he, he, he! He's frightened out of his silly wits! He, he, he!"

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"He wanted me to keep it dark!" gasped Bunter. "Told me that Coker sprang at him like a tiger—like—he, he, he!—a tiger! That dummy in the Form-room, you know—he, he, he!—sprang at him like a tiger!"

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

"What's the jolly old joke?" asked Peter Todd, coming along.

Billy Bunter explained again, with tears of merriment rolling down his fat cheeks. Peter roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, this is too jolly rich!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The richness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton glanced at his watch. "Jolly near time Coker was in. Hobson's gone to take his bike off him. I say, this will bowl Coker out!"

"He, he, he! Sprang at him like a tiger!—that stuffed dummy! He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter.

TO SAVE HIS CHUM!

When Vernon-Smith, commonly known as the Bounder, kicks over the traces he goes the whole hog, and practically asks for the sack. But Redwing, his chum, is determined to save the Bounder from his folly, although to do so Redwing runs the grave risk of expulsion himself. Mind you read this grand yarn, boys, in next week's



MAGNET
entitled:

“CHUMS—THROUGH THICK AND THIN!”

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

“Ha, ha, ha!”

And the Remove fellows roared again, what time James Walker, with a white and woeful face, was telling his startling story to the master of the Fifth.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Fatality!

MR. PROUT gave a start and a snort.

In the pleasant warmth of the study he had fallen asleep in his chair. His newspaper lay on his plump knees, his mouth was a little open and his eyes closed, and a gentle snore echoed through the study.

From that pleasant doze the Fifth Form master was suddenly aroused. His study door flew open, and Walker of the Sixth hurried in.

“Mr. Prout!”

The Fifth Form master blinked sleepily and angrily at Walker through his pince-nez. He did not like being awakened suddenly—in fact, he did not like being awakened at all. And he was an elderly gentleman who did not approve of hurry and fluster and excitement. And James Walker was wildly flustered and excited and in a great hurry.

“What is it, Walker?” exclaimed Mr. Prout. “Why do you disturb me like this? What—?”

“Coker, sir—”

“Bless my soul!” Mr. Prout sat up-right in his chair. “Is that troublesome boy giving more trouble? Has he broken detention again?”

“He—he—” Walker stammered. He had not, as Mr. Prout supposed, come there to complain of Coker. The matter was more serious than that.

“Even so, you need not have disturbed me so suddenly, Walker,” said

Mr. Prout crossly. “However, now you are here, tell me what it is. Has Coker left the Form-room without permission?”

“No, sir. He—he’s still there.”

“Then what is the matter?”

“I—I—”

“Upon my word, Walker!” Mr. Prout, realising that the matter was something out of the common, adjusted his spectacles, rose to his feet, and blinked at the prefect. “Has something happened to Coker? Whatever do you mean?”

“He—he—he’s dead, sir!” babbled Walker.

“Eh?”

“I hardly touched him—”

“What?”

“He attacked me, sir—savagely!” gasped Walker. “He struck me several times—terrible blows! I simply defended myself. I—I—”

Mr. Prout stared at him dazedly.

“Are you in your right senses, Walker? What do you mean? How dare you tell me this absurd story?”

“It’s true, sir!” groaned Walker. “Goodness knows I never meant to hurt him! I—I looked into the Form-room, sir, to see whether he was still there—you remember, sir, he broke detention once, and I saw him and told you—”

“Yes, yes; but—”

“He was there, sir, working at a corner desk, and I spoke to him—a civil word or two, sir—and—and he answered me with fierce abuse, sir, calling me all sorts of names, sir!”

Walker hardly realised that he was lying, so strongly did he feel that he had to make out the best case possible for himself. A dead body in the Form-room was a thing not easily explained away, and James Walker felt justified in using up all his inventive faculties in explaining it.

Mr. Prout gazed at him dazedly. The plump gentleman’s brain worked a little slowly, and he had hardly grasped, as yet, the awful fact that Coker was dead.

“He abused me frightfully, sir, and—and spoke disrespectfully of you, sir!” gasped Walker. “He called you an old fool, sir!” Walker felt that this was a convincing touch, and he saw his success in the angry flush that mounted to Mr. Prout’s plump countenance.

“Bless my soul! You are sure, Walker?”

“Quite, sir! He called you other disrespectful names; fairly made my flesh creep, sir, to hear him. I crossed the room to speak to him, to urge him to speak more respectfully of his Form master, sir. I was sure that that was what you would approve of—”

“Quite so, Walker.”

“He immediately jumped up from the desk, sir, and sprang at me like—like a tiger!”

“Upon my word!”

“He struck me several times, sir, before I could push him off. I gave him quite a gentle push; but he fell over the form and—and fell under the desk. I think he must have struck his head on the iron— He—he—he did not move again, sir.”

“Walker!”

“It’s awful, sir!” groaned Walker. “I—I’m sure you’ll bear me out, sir, that I was not to blame, knowing Coker’s violent nature yourself, sir.”

Mr. Prout gasped.

“Do you mean to tell me, Walker, that a boy of my Form is seriously injured?” he stuttered.

“Worse than that, sir. I—I felt his heart, and—and—and—” Walker’s voice trailed off.

“And what?” stuttered Mr. Prout.

“It wasn’t beating, sir.”

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"Good heavens!"

Mr. Prout stared at Walker as if mesmerised. Even yet it was difficult to realise what the fellow was telling him. Coker—Horace Coker—a Fifth Form fellow—lying in the Form-room lifeless—really it seemed too terrible to be true.

"Impossible!" stuttered Mr. Prout at last. "Impossible, Walker! He may have fainted—"

"I wish it were only that, sir!" groaned Walker. "But you'll bear me out with the Head, sir, that I was not to blame—"

"A—a fit, or seizure, perhaps—"

"His—his heart didn't beat, sir! You'll stand by me in this, sir, at the—the inquest—"

Mr. Prout jumped as if electrified.

"Inquest!" he stammered.

"There's bound to be an inquest, sir," said Walker, with a groan. "Of course, it will come out that he had a weak heart, or something. I scarcely touched him. His own rage brought it on, I think, sir, really; he was foaming with rage as he sprang at me—"

"It is impossible! Nonsense—nonsense!" hooted Mr. Prout. "I shall not believe that so terrible a thing has happened, except from the evidence of my own eyes. I will go at once—"

Mr. Prout did not finish; he brushed past Walker and hurried out of his study, in a state of great alarm and perturbation.

"Follow me, Walker!" he rapped out over his shoulder.

The unhappy bully of the Sixth followed him. Mr. Prout whisked away rapidly towards the Fifth Form-room, Walker almost limping after him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry peered round a corner of the Form-room passage and whispered to his comrades. "There they go—to gather up the giddy slain! Come on!"

Five grinning juniors trod lightly on the track of Mr. Prout and Walker of the Sixth. After them came several more—Peter Todd and Bunter and Vernon-Smith and Squiff and Temple of the Fourth. The story of the "tragedy" in the Fifth Form-room was already spreading among the juniors.

Fortunately, Mr. Prout did not think of looking back. Had he done so, he would doubtless have been surprised to see a mob of grinning juniors on his trail, especially in such tragic circumstances.

He tramped into the Fifth Form-room with his heavy tread. Walker limped in after him.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed as far as the doorway. They could not venture into the Form-room in the august presence of Mr. Prout.

The Form master blinked round the room.

"Where is he, Walker?" he rapped out. "I do not see Coker! He does not seem to be here."

"In—in the corner, sir," quavered Walker. "He—he fell under the desks, sir. I—I haven't moved the—the body, sir."

"The body!" breathed Bob Cherry outside the door; and the juniors found it exceedingly difficult to suppress their chuckles.

Mr. Prout gave an angry snort. A fainting fit seemed much more probable to him, and he was not going to believe in a "body" till he saw one. But he gave a violent start at the sight of the still form stretched under the desks in the dusky corner, dim in the shadow. There was something exceedingly lifeless about that still figure.

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"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout faintly.

Walker remained at a little distance, shivering. He had a natural disinclination to approach the body.

"Coker!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, peering under the dusky desks through his glasses. "Coker! My poor boy! Are you seriously hurt? Answer me, Coker, if you are able to speak!"

There was no answer. Evidently the still form under the desks was quite unable to speak.

"This is—is terrible!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Walker, come here and help me—raise him up. Give him air—"

Walker shuddered.

"I—I daren't touch it, sir—"

"Nonsense!" boomed Mr. Prout. "Obey me at once! Are you a coward, sir? Assist me immediately, Walker."

Thus adjured, James Walker limped to the spot. Mr. Prout stooped and grasped the still form by the shoulders. Walker shuddered and backed away again; and Mr. Prout lifted the body—the head sagging forward on the chest as he did so in a very lifeless manner.

Mr. Prout exerted all his strength to lift Coker's heavy body, and almost tottered over as he found it unexpectedly light. Coker of the Fifth was a heavy-weight; Coker II. was not nearly so heavy as he looked.

"Oh! Bless my soul! What—"

It was at that moment that suspicion flashed into Mr. Prout's mind. The body in his arms was undoubtedly lifeless—Walker was right so far. But it felt more like a sack of clothes than the human form divine. Black and blacker grew Mr. Prout's frowning brow as he carried the "body" into the light of the Form-room window.

There he placed it on a form, propped against the wall. The head hung over on one side, and the hair—nearly detached by the handling of the "body," hung down from the head by a single wire. No more evidence was needed that it was a stuffed suit of clothes that Mr. Prout had picked up.

Mr. Prout stood gazing at it blankly. Walker gazed at it, too, with dumb-founded amazement. In the clear light from the window he could see that it was a dummy—especially as the hair now was obviously a wig, and the head nothing more nor less than an old footer.

Walker, scarcely able to believe his eyes, gazed and gazed at Coker II. as the remarkable object sprawled against the desk.

"A—a—an effigy!" gasped Mr. Prout at last.

"A—a—a dummy!" stuttered Walker.

"A piece of trickery!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"That—the villain Coker—" gasped Walker. All Walker's terrors had evaporated now; there was going to be no inquest, no stern inquiry into the causes of the sudden decease of Coker of the Fifth. Obviously Coker of the Fifth was somewhere else, and had left this dummy in his place to deceive the prefect's observing eye. Walker understood that now. His terror turned to rage as he understood it. That villain Coker—

"It's a—a trick, sir!" hooted Walker. "Coker's broken bounds, sir—he's broken detention, and rigged up this dummy—he—"

Mr. Prout's eye turned on Walker with a baleful glare. He had been deeply alarmed, and his alarm, like Walker's, had turned to wrath—but it was Walker who was the object of his wrath.

"Walker!" he thundered. "This—"

this is the—the thing—the effigy—you fancied to be Coker, and which you struck—"

"I—I took it for Coker, sir! It's a trick!"

"This—this effigy sprang at you like a tiger, according to your statement to me—"

"Oh!"

"This—this effigy struck you several fierce blows—"

"Oh, dear!"

"This effigy abused you, and applied opprobrious epithets to me—called me, sir, an old fool, according to your statement!" boomed the enraged Fifth-Form master. "What do you mean, Walker? Do you expect me to believe your statements now?"

Walker stuttered.

"Poor old Walker's number's up, with Prouty!" murmured Harry Wharton, outside the Form-room, and there was a chuckle. Evidently James Walker had told the tale not wisely but too well.

"Walker! Believing that you had struck this boy—I—I mean Coker—so severely as to cause him injury, you lied to me, sir—you uttered a string of outrageous falsehoods!" thundered Mr. Prout. "Do you dare to repeat to me, sir, that this—this effigy talked, and moved, and attacked you? Do you dare to repeat it, sir!"

"Nunno!" gasped Walker. "I—I meant—I—I—" He stammered away into dismayed silence. Really, it was a little difficult to explain.

"Walker! I am surprised—shocked—disgusted! You—a prefect of the Sixth! On your own admission, you struck Coker without provocation—believing this—this effigy to be Coker, you struck him—and you could have received no provocation from an—an effigy, sir. Do you dare to say that you received the slightest provocation, sir, from this—this stuffed effigy?"

Walker could only gasp.

"It is clear to me now, Walker, that you have a personal animus against a boy of my Form—and I should not be surprised, Walker, to learn that Coker had great provocation, on the occasion when I punished him so severely for threatening you. You have told me falsehoods concerning him—you have struck him—struck this effigy which you believed to be him—unprovoked! You are a rascal, sir!" thundered Mr. Prout. "You are a bully, sir—that is the word! A bully—and that unfortunate boy, Coker, was probably quite in the right to resent your conduct. I shall rescind Coker's punishment, and I shall report you to the Head, Walker."

"Oh, sir!" babbled Walker. "I—I—I—"

"Pah!"

With a snort of contempt, Mr. Prout swept past the dismayed prefect to the door. There he turned to discharge a Parthian shot, as it were.

"I shall rescind Coker's punishment, Walker, although he has broken detention this afternoon. I am convinced, by what has happened now, that you provoked him into unruly conduct. I shall never believe another word you utter concerning him—do not come to me again, sir, to say that Coker has threatened you! And I shall give my support, sir, to this boy belonging to my Form, if you should venture to carry your tales to the Head, sir."

With that, Mr. Prout swept out—so majestically, that he nearly canonized into the mob of juniors in the passage. He gave them a glare and

(Continued on page 28.)

A RACE FOR LIBERTY! In his eagerness to get at grips with his rascally cousin, Tommy Comber finds that he has bitten off more than he can chew, and comes perilously near being recaptured and sent back to the reformatory ship *Bellerophon*!

The Boy with the Million-Pound Secret!

By
DAVID GOODWIN.



A Shock for Chuffer!

"I DON'T think you'll find him," said Dan. "He's cleared out since you escaped."

"Won't I? Well, I bet I get some news of him, anyhow! Nobody'll know me. I'll go alone, though."

Dan was disappointed. But Tommy stuck to it.

"You belong in Gravesend, Dan; you oughtn't to be seen with me there; folks'd be asking who I am. I'll go over by the ferry steamer. But you might bring the motor-boat to the old beacon on Northfleet Marshes, up above the town, about moonrise, and pick me up again."

"I'll pick you up—unless the police have done it first!" said Dan dubiously. "You're a fool to go! I wish you'd tell me what it is you're up to!"

"You're safest not knowing, old chap," said Tommy; "don't want to get you into trouble. And I can't tell myself till I get there."

They had some dinner in town, and in the evening Tommy parted from his chum and took the steam ferry across to Gravesend. But before he left Tilbury he looked in at a draper's shop, and bought a half-yard of black silk and some strong black tape. He stowed these in his side-pocket.

It was nearly dusk when he landed at Gravesend. Many a time he had come here by boat from Curlew Island. It was in this very town that he had been arrested. But, thanks to O'Hara, nobody in the place could possibly recognise him now.

Chuffer Foss, Tommy's cousin, was said to have left Gravesend. But Tommy doubted it. By this time, anyway, he might have come back. And wherever he might be, Tommy believed he could get on his track.

Chuffer Foss! If there was ever a face that kept Tommy awake at night and that came into his dreams, it was Chuffer's big, flabby countenance and sharp, shifty eyes. He owed his imprisonment to Chuffer. Perhaps Uncle Joe owed his death to him.

Chuffer had always hated Tommy. He had accused Tommy of currying favour with Uncle Joe, which was not true. And Tommy was so handy with his fists that Chuffer, though half as big again and three years older, had been given a good licking for it.

Chuffer, sneaking and spying around Curlew Island, had found out that there was some secret of Uncle Joe's that might be worth money. Then Uncle Joe was found dead, and Tommy was arrested.

There was no evidence against Chuffer, though. But there was plenty that looked very black against Tommy. And at the trial Chuffer had gone into the witness-box and told lies, on oath. He had sworn that Tommy had asked him to share in robbing Uncle Joe, who had plenty of money. And that Chuffer had laughed, and said he thought Tommy was joking. That evidence of Chuffer's just helped to put the lid on it. Tommy was found guilty of robbing the safe—for some of the money was actually found on him. He couldn't explain how he came to have it.

Many a night, swinging in his hammock among the other prisoners on the *Bellerophon*, Tommy had dreamed of meeting Chuffer Foss again.

HOW THE STORY OPENED.

TOMMY COMBER, sentenced to three years' detention aboard the reformatory ship *Bellerophon* for being concerned in the murder of his uncle.

JOSEPH COMBER, a clever chemist, inventor of a powerful high explosive named *Comberite*.

CHUFFER FOSS, Tommy's cousin, a ne'er-do-well, whose false evidence did much to prejudice the innocent Tommy's chances of acquittal.

DR. SHANE O'HARA, a skilful surgeon, who shelters the fugitive from the *Bellerophon*, and fakes his features so that Tommy's own pal,

DAN BENNET, doesn't recognise him until Tommy makes known his identity.

MERVYN HAYNES, a friend of O'Hara's.

In return for the service O'Hara has rendered him Tommy—who knows the secret of *Comberite*—is asked to make this valuable explosive for the doctor and his friend, Tommy himself to take a third share in the partnership. Tommy agrees to the proposal. He meets Dan—who, incidentally, thinks O'Hara and his friend a pair of rogues—and asks him to join him in preparing *Comberite* on Curlew Island, which formerly belonged to Joseph Comber. Dan jumps at the chance. Then Tommy, whose determination to discover his uncle's dastardly assassin grows with every passing day of liberty, announces his intention of going over to Gravesend to look for Chuffer, whom he suspects of having had a hand in the crime.

(Now read on.)

He went to the back street where Chuffer lived, but found the house apparently shut up. It seemed to be no go. He thought he would go and inquire down at the waterside.

And at that very moment he saw Chuffer coming along the street towards him. Chuffer himself—as large as life!

Tommy felt a thrill run through him, and he held his breath. Chuffer looked at him sleepily, and passed straight on, taking no notice. He did not know Tommy from Adam.

When he had gone by Tommy turned quietly, and followed.

"There's a good time coming!" said Tommy to himself, under his breath. "Oh, gee-whizz, there's a good time coming by-and-by, Chuffer!"

He wanted Chuffer alone—quite alone. That might be a bit difficult. Probably Chuffer was going to one of the public-houses near the waterside, his usual haunt. But sometimes Chuffer walked over to Southfleet in the evenings to see some friends of his. They were lime-burners, and a pretty tough lot, as Tommy knew.

The fact was that Chuffer was living in Southfleet village altogether now, instead of Gravesend, but Tommy didn't know that. However, when he found Chuffer was heading out of the town and up the hill along the country road, Tommy knew that his luck was in.

He followed Chuffer, keeping carefully back and out of sight.

Already it was nearly dark.

Tommy was doing an uncommonly dangerous thing; Dan would have told him he was foolish. But he didn't care for that. He felt he had got to do it. Chuffer had roused him up and made him see red. He was not quite certain what he intended doing, but he had got a plan in his head over since leaving Tilbury.

As he walked along in the dark, always keeping Chuffer's form in sight ahead, he took the piece of black silk from his pocket, and slit off a square of it with his penknife. He bored a hole in each top corner of the square, and passed the strong black tape through.

Presently he halted for a few moments, and tied the thing firmly round his head. It made quite a useful black silk mask, hiding all the lower part of his face, and coming right up underneath his eyes. His forehead was hidden by his cap. He had no intention of letting Chuffer

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Poss get wise to what he looked like. He knew he could take care of himself.

Chuffer was taking the short cut—the fieldpath at the top of the chalk-pits. It was very dark, but once or twice a long, bright beam of light played for a moment or two on the town and the woods and the chalky fields, and then went out again. This ray of light seemed to come from a bright moving spot, down on the dark river.

Tommy knew what it was. A torpedo-boat, passing slowly up the river, was apparently practising with her searchlight and flashing it about the banks. It was rather a nuisance. He didn't want any light; he preferred everything to be as dark as possible.

They would stop it soon; probably it was some young officer larking about. Now the searchlight was playing on the Essex shore, away across the river—not very distant from where the Bellerophon lay at anchor at Black Point. Then the light went out altogether.

Chuffer was still tramping along the path ahead. And Tommy, quickening his own pace, silently came up behind him.

Better perhaps if he had given it up and gone back. But Tommy, who had been hunted himself, was now the hunter. The sight of Chuffer was too much for him. As the Scots say, the heather was on fire inside his stomach.

He gave a low whistle, and Chuffer halted in surprise, just at the brow of the chalk-pit, looking round to see where the whistle came from.

And then Tommy, standing behind him, but without touching him, spoke in his natural voice—the voice of Tommy Comber. It seemed to go through Chuffer like a sharp knife.

"Well, Cousin Chuffer," said Tommy quietly, "what about it?"

When Chuffer heard that voice behind him he leaped quite two feet into the air, as if he had been shot. Then he spun round and jumped backwards again, as he found himself facing that masked figure which was moving towards him.

With a howl of terror Chuffer pulled a heavy revolver out of his pocket quick as a flash, and pointed it straight at Tommy's chest.

"Keep off!" he gasped. "Stop there! If you try to touch me I'll shoot you dead! I swear I will!"

Tommy did stop. The last thing he had ever thought of was that Chuffer would have a pistol about him. And Chuffer was evidently in such a state of blind terror that he was more likely to blow a hole through Tommy than not—even without knowing it.

But the next moment Chuffer's terror changed to triumph, when he saw that the boy, though masked, was unarmed.

"By gosh," he cried, "I've got you! Take that thing off your face, Tom Comber! This is your finish! I got you!"

Chuffer certainly had got him.

Tommy stood stock-still, watching from above his mask.

"You were after me, were you?" hissed Chuffer, keeping the pistol levelled. "You young gaol-bird! You think you've beat 'em all; but I've beaten you! By gum, I'll wing you through the leg! I'll make sure o' you!"

Suddenly, even as he was speaking, the searchlight from the river came sweeping along the hill, and stopped right upon the two of them, showing them up in a bright white circle of light like a pair of figures in a magic-lantern,

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Tommy with his masked face and Chuffer with the pistol levelled.

The light made Tommy start, and Chuffer gasped, half-blinded. Tommy made a spring, and his fist caught Chuffer under the jaw and sent him staggering, the pistol flying from his hand.

The next moment they had grappled, and, locked in each other's arms, they toppled over the edge, rolling over and over down the steep face of the chalk-pit in the glare of the light, the pistol skipping down the hill beside them.

In the Chalk Pit!

CHUFFER'S first impression was that the world had come to an end, having split through the middle in a blaze of light, and that he was falling right through it into Australia, bumping himself badly on the way. It seemed as if he would never stop. He had let go of Tommy, and was now clutching at tufts of grass and lumps of chalk as he rolled down the slope.

Being the heavier of the two, he reached the bottom first, arriving like a spread eagle, on his face, and Tommy landed on top of him with a bump and a squelch.

"Ouch!" gasped Chuffer.

"Gur-r-r-r!" said Tommy, who didn't know himself quite where he was. But finding the large, soft substance underneath him was Chuffer, he took steps to keep him there. He pinned Chuffer down with all his force, and freeing one hand, clutched at the silk mask, which had come away and was hanging by its tape from one ear.

The one thing Tommy didn't want to lose, next to his liberty, was the mask; he had no idea of letting Chuffer see his features in their native beauty as altered by Doctor O'Hara. And he hadn't counted on this rough and tumble, nor on the beastly glare of light which was on them both. With one quick movement he hitched the tape round his other ear and got the mask into place again.

But that moment was nearly fatal, for while he was doing it Chuffer gave a great heave underneath him and all but threw him off. There was a fresh struggle. Suddenly Tommy caught sight of the revolver lying on the ground a yard or two away, and Chuffer's arm stretched out trying to reach it.

"No you don't!" said Tommy, and quick as a flash he made a spring and snatched up the pistol himself. He rolled over, sitting up, and faced Chuffer with it.

"Now then," said Tommy. "I hold the giddy ace of trumps!"

"Don't shoot!" gasped Chuffer, turning deadly white. "Don't—don't shoot!"

Just then the searchlight switched away and went out entirely, leaving them both in darkness.

"Where was Moses!" exclaimed Tommy.

For a moment the sudden change bewildered them so much that neither could do anything; it was like being plunged into a pit of blackness. But Tommy's eyes were quick, and focused themselves first, making out Chuffer's big dim figure in front of him.

"If you move, you're done!" said Tommy fiercely. "Up with your hands, you fat-faced swab! Stick 'em right out in front of you on the ground, where I can see them."

"Yes, yes!" whined Chuffer, and Tommy could see his hands pushed

out like two white blobs, both of them shaking, as he squatted in front of his cousin. "Don't fire!"

"Why, you don't mean to say this blessed thing is loaded, is it?" asked Tommy blandly. "Just a bit of bluff, eh? No cartridges in it? Quite all right if I pull the trigger?"

"No, no!" gasped Chuffer, trembling, "it's loaded, there's six c-c-c-cartridges in it! Six b-b-b-bullets!"

"Six b-b-b-bullets, eh?" said Tommy. "One'll be plenty, Chuffer."

"My goodness, you aren't goin' to shoot me!" blubbered Chuffer. "Tommy, you won't s-s-s-shoot me!"

Tommy had no more idea of shooting Chuffer than of shooting the moon. It is queer how a coward always cries out before he is hurt.

"You'll be hanged if you do!" gasped Chuffer.

"I'll be blowed if I don't," retorted Tommy. "Don't get in such a scare, you quivering lump of jelly," he said grimly. "Do you suppose I'm such a moke as to kill you? You wouldn't have killed me, just now, would you?"

"No!" cried Chuffer. "I swear I wouldn't. I never dreamed of such a thing!"

"Of course not. You were going to make a bit of a hole in me somewhere, that's all—so I wouldn't give any more trouble an' could be made a prisoner of, eh? Wing me, you called it. Well, I mean to say—nothing could be fairer than that! I wasn't complaining. I'll just wing you, while I'm about it, Chuffer. Where will you have it?"

"No, no!" squealed Chuffer, squirming.

"What d'you mean—no?" said Tommy grimly. "You're in my way. Why shouldn't I do the same to you as you'd have done to me?"

"I was only k-k-k-kidding!" moaned Chuffer.

"Do you think I'm kidding?" said Tommy between his teeth, leaning forward. "Do you think a month on the Bellerophon, where you put me, gives a fellow a taste for kidding? The Bellerophon—where you'd shove me back to-night, if you held this bit of iron here, instead of me!"

"I wouldn't!" panted Chuffer. "I wouldn't, if you'd only let me alone! Lemme go away quietly, and I'll never say a word; on my oath I won't!"

"Let—you—go?" said Tommy slowly, his eyes on Chuffer's face, for they could see each other plainly now, though all that was visible to Chuffer was the silk mask, and the shining eyes above it. "Do you really think, my dear cousin Chuffer, that you're going to get away with it? D'you know how many hours I've laid in my hammock, lookin' forward to the time when I'd meet you again an' give you a welcome? What d'you think I took the risk of breaking out of the Billy Rough Un for, and being hunted and starved and shot at—but for the off-chance of a meetin' with you—the pleasure of finding you alone?"

Chuffer looked into Tommy's eyes. Then he seemed to go all to pieces.

"Mercy!" he gasped.

"Mercy?" said Tommy, and there was no mercy in his voice. "What mercy did you show Nunks, you coward? What pity did you show my Uncle Joe, the best friend ever a fellow had. You killed him!"

"No! No!" said Chuffer wildly. "Tommy, it isn't true! I didn't know you thought that! I'd nothin' to do with it! I swear it. If you shoot me



The light made Tommy start, and Chuffer gasped, half-blinded. Next moment Tom sprang, and his fist caught Chuffer under the jaw, sending the pistol flying from his hand. (See page 24.)

right now, I can't say different. I never did it!"

Wildly as Chuffer spoke, there was something in his tone that nearly convinced Tommy, who had never felt certain about this. Instinct told him that Chuffer, cornered as he was, for once in his life, was speaking the truth—or some of it.

"Listen then, you scoundrel," said Tommy fiercely. "I'm here to get the truth out of you, and I'll tell you what you did do! You were in it. That money of uncle's that was found on me—you got hold of me and put that money in my pocket while I was asleep, the night the job was done."

"I—I didn't! I never—"

"You did, for it was you who set the police after me at Gravesend next morning, so they arrested me and found the money on me—and when they put you in the witness-box you swore that I told you I was after Uncle Joe's money, and meant having it!"

"Tommy, it isn't so!" cried Chuffer desperately. "I didn't—I never meant to—"

"You're lying again!" said Tommy savagely. "But now I've got you, and I'll give you just one chance! You know who it was killed Joseph Comber—you can save yourself if you tell me! Quick—quick—who was it?"

Chuffer was so paralysed with fear, as Tommy pressed upon him, that he stammered and gasped.

"Don't! Tommy, I'll tell you—"

Zit! The searchlight's ray flashed out from the dark river again, wavered, and lit up the chalk pit, making Chuffer wince.

"Out with it! His name!" said Tommy fiercely.

At the same moment two or three sharp voices suddenly called out, from the road just above.

"Hallo! Who's that down there? Hi!"

The voices acted on Chuffer like an electric shock. He made one bound backwards out of Tommy's reach, yelling aloud as he threw himself flat behind a bush.

"This way—quick!" screamed Chuffer. "It's Comber, the runaway convict! Ten pounds reward! After him!"

There was a second's pause, and then a rush.

Tommy did the only thing possible for him. He made one dash for it, bolting out of the circle of light as quick as he could. He couldn't do anything with Chuffer now. He thought he caught a glimpse of a policeman's helmet as two or three dark figures came running down into the pit.

Tommy plunged through a clump of bushes and doubled like a hare. He threw away the revolver as he ran. If there were any shooting done it wouldn't be by him. The last thing he wanted was to shoot anybody; and if there was an accident it would only be ten times worse for him when he was caught. He had got out of the light now, and was bolting for a narrow path between two

banks below the pit. He had left the pursuers away above him, and for the moment they had lost sight of him.

"There he goes!" yelled Chuffer's voice. "Hi, below there! Stop him! Grab him!"

The Torpedo-Boat.

TOMMY saw there was somebody coming up the path that he was making for—a big, dim figure in a soft hat, who barred the way. Tommy had no time to turn, and there was no room to dodge.

"Hi!" roared the dim figure, flinging out his arms to grab the fugitive.

Tommy launched himself head first, like a young ram. His head struck full on the stranger's waistcoat.

"Yoop!" gasped the man, and doubled up like a jack-knife, landing on his back on the path. Tommy staggered at the shock and nearly fell, recovered himself just in time, and sprinted off through the darkness as though demons were after him.

He had got a start, but it was not likely to be much good. The whole countryside would be up and joining in the pursuit. He turned this way and that, uncertain at first which way to go. After covering four or five hundred yards he halted and crouched under a patch of brambles to listen. He could hear the shouting of voices and running feet; his pursuers had separated, and if

he went ahead blindly he might run into one of them.

He found he had lost his mask. It had fallen off when he butted the man who tried to grab him. That would very likely not save him now if they got hold of him.

Tommy gave a groan. He had done a mad thing in coming here after Chuffer; taken a deadly risk. Yet he felt it had been a risk worth taking—another moment or two and he would have got all he wanted out of Chuffer. Now he was up against capture and the Bellerophon again.

The searchlight was wavering all over the place now. It even lit for a moment on the patch of brambles where he was crouching, and he lay still as death; but the ray passed on again, raking the hillside slowly. It had just missed him.

"That beastly light!" muttered Tommy. He wondered now what it meant, and if it were looking for him. It seemed like it. Had the authorities "got wise" to him? Had somebody tracked him to Tilbury and Gravesend? He wondered if he had fallen into a trap.

Directly the light was away again he resumed his flight. He heard the noise of the chase above him on the slopes, and he ran in the opposite direction. There were only two places to make for—the woods up on the hill, and the salt-marshes down by the river at Northfleet. He chose the marshes, and made for them as fast as he could lay his toes to the ground.

The Northfleet saltings jut out into the river in a wide headland, all cut up in muddy creeks. Tommy had often landed on them from a boat, but he did not know his way to them very well from the shore. He might have got right away if it hadn't been for the abominable searchlight that touched him up again and betrayed him to his pursuers for a moment, so that they all came rushing down to cut him off before he could get on to the marsh.

It was extraordinary that the searchlight didn't stick to him and follow him all the way once it had got him. But Tommy guessed that whoever was working the light was too far away to see him plainly; what it did do was to give him away to the hunters. Tommy only just reached the marsh ahead of one of them who had got a long way in front of the others.

"Whoop! Tally-ho!" yelled the pursuer. "Here he is! I've got you, you young beggar!"

The man was not fifty yards behind him, and was overhauling him at every stride. Tommy strained every nerve. Right in front of him was the first of the marshy creeks, left half empty by the tide. It was a terrific jump to take into the dark; but Tommy launched himself into the air with all the force left in his body, his feet touched the far bank, he lurched, staggered, and went on again.

Slosh!

His pursuer followed him, jumped short, and fell with a howl into the black mud that filled the creek, floundering like a hippopotamus.

"Stay there and wallow in it, you hog!" panted Tommy, as he dashed ahead again. "Might let a chap alone who's runnin' for his life!"

He had got the advantage now, for he knew the salt-marsh like a book. Doubling and twisting, jumping creek after creek, he threaded his way across

rapidly till he reached the Point, where the black beacon stood up as a mark for ships. And here he crouched flat.

There was no boat in sight. The dark tide was swirling by, there was no way off the saltings except by water. On the landward side he was cut off, for the pursuers had reached the man who had fallen into the creek and were hauling him out. As soon as that was done they came along after Tommy, for they had got him cornered, with water on three sides of him. In fact, they were already making their way out across towards the beacon at the Point.

Tommy looked up and down the tide-way, with despair at his heart. Had Dan failed him? It was not yet the hour; he was too early. Would he have to swim for it? The river was a mile wide, and the tide running like a sluice. He might hide in one of the creeks; but the rising water would soon drive him out of it, and the pursuers were bound to find him. There was the searchlight, too. Luckily, it seemed to have missed him altogether now, and was sweeping to and from on the hills at the back, its ray passing high over his head. But at any moment it might show him up like daylight. The hunters were coming nearer. He could hear their voices shouting to each other.

And then, as Tommy turned his eyes eastward, he saw the moon rising like a shining silver ring over the trees on

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the Purfleet shore. He crooked his fingers in his mouth and whistled.

As the shrill note, like the cry of a curlew, rang out across the water he heard an answering noise, faint and muffled.

Chug-chug! Chug-chug-chug!

It was the engine of a motor-boat.

Tommy sprang up and ran to the water's edge, peering through the gloom. He could see nothing. He whistled again, sending a piercing call across the river, and caught sight of something that moved swiftly, approaching the Point.

"Dan! Dan!" he cried.

"Hallo!" hailed a voice. "Coming!"

"Quick—quick!" cried Tommy.

"They're after me!"

He waded out through the mud and water. The hunters were getting very close, barely two hundred yards away, hurrying across the saltings. The motor-boat swung swiftly in towards Tommy and checked smartly; he flung himself in over the gunwale, panting, and nearly fell on top of the engine.

"Away out of it! Let her rip!" he gasped.

Dan did let her rip. Without a word he thrust his helm hard a-port, opened his throttle, and steered out into mid-stream. The pursuers had caught sight of him.

"Stop, there, that boat!" they shouted furiously. "Stop!"

"Stop your faces—cork 'em up!" murmured Dan cheerfully, turning out across the tide. "Lie down in the bottom, kid! They can't see anything!"

There was a chorus of rage and disappointment and strong language behind them where the baffled pursuers were dancing on the marsh at the water's edge.

"Get the boat out!" cried a voice. "Follow 'em!"

"There's a boat in the big creek near the beacon!" said Dan. "They'll shove her out!"

"Gosh, I wish I'd known that!" said Tommy, lying flat in the bottom of the boat. "I'd have got hold of her myself!"

"It don't matter," said Dan calmly. "She's only a heavy ship's boat. They can no more catch us with oars than they could catch the giddy moon yonder. By the way, it's lucky she's giving no light. Let 'em go for a row by all means, if it amuses them. What in thunder have you been up to?"

There was no time to give Dan the story, but Tommy told him roughly in a few words what had happened.

"Blazing young fool!" said Dan.

"Did any of them see your face?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Well, that wouldn't have saved you if they'd nabbed you after you'd been fooling with Chuffer. You'd never have got away with it. They weren't near enough to spot me, so all's well that ends well. Only the sooner you're out of this craft the better. I'll land you a couple of miles up-stream on the other bank; you can get a train to town, and we'll meet in a safe place to-morrow."

They were well away from Northfleet Point by now, and there was no further fear of being overtaken. Tommy sat up on the thwart.

"You've pulled me out of the giddy soup, Dan," he said. "I'd never have been able to swim all the way across in my clothes, but I'd have tried it. And you can call me a fool, but I precious nearly got what was worth all the risk. There's that light again!" he added, as the searchlight flashed overhead. "It's given me more trouble than anything else. What is it?"

"Torpedo-boat," said Dan. "She's patrolling up and down Long Reach. That's what made me late. I lay up in a creek and dodged her."

"What's she looking for?"

"You, I expect," said Dan, as he put his helm over again quickly and turned away. "It seems like somebody's got on to it that Tommy Comber is in the neighbourhood, and they're watching the shipping to see he doesn't get away. I thought the T.B. had chucked it and gone down the river again. Hope to mercy he doesn't spot us."

And as he spoke the searchlight swept the water and halted upon the buzzing motor-boat and its two passengers, illuminating them in a blinding white circle. The torpedo-boat was not two hundred yards away.

"That's torn it!" said Dan through his teeth.

A sharp, commanding voice, coming through a megaphone or speaking trumpet, hailed them:

"Motor-boat, ahoy! Heave to instantly!"

Tommy had been through more than he could stand. The chase had exhausted him, and this put the lid on it.

"Scoot for it!" he gasped, his nerve giving way. "Full speed ahead!"

(Continued on page 28.)



AN A.I. PUZZLE!

BEFORE switching over to matters more directly connected with the MAGNET, I feel it incumbent upon me to bring to your notice the wonderful Free Gift which will accompany every copy of our grand companion paper, the "Gem," this week. Free Gifts are always acceptable. Indeed, they help to make the world go round, and they certainly give an additional popularity to a paper read the world over by girls and boys. Now, the "Gem" this week celebrates its second Free Gift number with a top-hole puzzle, which is aptly styled

FUN WITH FOOTBALLERS!

I expect that brings a wrinkle to your brow. Well, although I am the last person in the world to wish to see cheery faces wrinkled in perplexity, I do think that the present case is an excusable exception. This puzzle is certainly the goods! Sixteen popular footballers form the basis of it; and with these fellows readers will while away many of their leisure moments. To some, the puzzle may take a long time to solve. Other chaps may never solve it until they see the solution. But in either event this novelty will make a great appeal. And the solution of it will be given in the following week's "Gem," complete with diagrams. Now, you fellows, you really must step in and make sure of this Free Gift. Don't forget the "Gem" is on sale Wednesday. 'Nuff said!

SAYING THE WORD!

The months of July and August have seen a large number of new readers buying the MAGNET. In most cases these new readers—at least those who have been kind enough to drop me a line—have informed me that they became readers because pals of theirs recommended the MAGNET as a "suitable twopennyworth." And, without exception, these newcomers to our happy band declare that it is amazing to think that such a good story-book has been passed over for so long. Again, without exception, these new readers say that they long for Monday to come round; for it means the MAGNET. All this is very gratifying to me; for I have often remarked in this column, that if every reader of the MAGNET told his pal what a fine paper the MAGNET really is, we should hit the skies with our circulation, in a manner of speaking. My best thanks go to the fellows who have taken me at my word and enrolled a new reader-chum, and I would urge other chums to do likewise. After all, it is so easy to recommend something that is good, and very pleasant to hear a new pal say: "Jove, you have done me a good turn!" Look at it in that light, chums, and just say the word.

For Next Monday.

"CHUMS—THROUGH THICK AND THIN!"

By Frank Richards.

This story for next week deals with the Bounder and his pal, Tom Redwing—always a happy combination in the hands of Frank Richards. You'll like the way Tom stands by the Bounder, as also will you sympathise with old Smithy, for his past comes up against him and tempts him to kick over the traces.

"THE BOY WITH THE MILLION-POUND SECRET!"

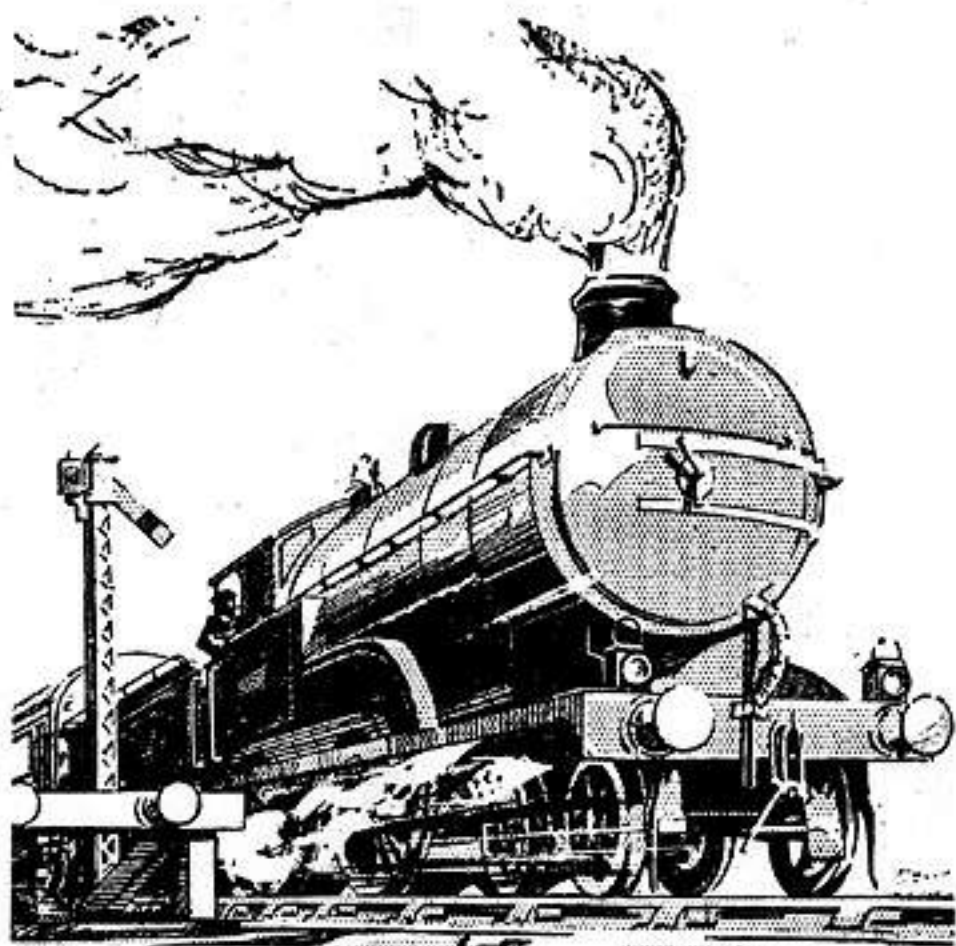
By David Goodwin.

Little need for me here to urge you to read next week's instalment of this fine yarn. David Goodwin hits the bulls-eye every time.

FOOTER!

And don't forget this special four-page supplement, you footer fans. It's better than ever.
Chin, chin!

YOUR EDITOR.



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Every part of the Bing Miniature Railway systems is a working model, exactly to the smallest detail. There are Electric, Steam, and Clockwork Engines, Rolling Stock, Tracks, Points, Sidings, Buffers, Signals, Signal Boxes, Stations, Bridges, Tunnels, etc. At a moderate cost you can purchase a whole table railway service or build one up from separate parts. See them at your nearest dealers to-day and ask for the *FREE* Bing Catalogue. It illustrates the complete range of Bing Railways, Vertical and Horizontal Stationary Engines, Cinemas and Magic Lanterns. In case you cannot get your copy write to address below.

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COKER THE REBEL!

(Continued from page 22.)

they scattered, and Mr. Prout swept away in towering wrath to his study. Walker, in the Fifth Form-room, stood rooted to the floor, utterly dismayed.

Grimacing faces looked in at him from the doorway.

"I say, you fellows—sprang at him like a tiger, you know!" cackled Billy Bunter. "That stuffed dummy—he, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Horace Coker, coming along the passage cautiously—having gained a cautious access at the back of the School House on his return—was surprised to find a chuckling crowd on the spot.

"What the thump—" began Coker. He stared at the juniors, and then at the furious face of Walker in the Form-room.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated. "The game's up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All serene, Cokey, old man!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Right as rain, old pippin! Walker's taken the knock."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The knockfulness is terrific."

And half a dozen voices explained to Coker of the Fifth, all at once, the strange happenings in the Fifth Form-room that afternoon, while he had been careering at large on his motor-bike.

Coker listened in amazement, and then in great satisfaction. His luck was in after all. The stuffed dummy in the Form-room had not exactly served its intended purpose; but it had served Coker better than he had dreamed when he had propounded that brilliant scheme.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Coker. "So I'm all right with Prouty, am I? And detention's off, is it? And Prouty's done with Walker, is he? I fancy I can hit him in the eye now, and it will be all right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker strode into the Form-room with a war-like look. Walker of the Sixth, prefect as he was, Sixth Form man as he was, did not wait for him. He dodged round the desks, and dodged out of the Form-room, and plunged through the crowd of yelling juniors, and disappeared, followed by roars of laughter.

Horace Coker, on second thoughts, proverbially the best, did not seek out Walker of the Sixth and hit him in the eye. He decided to keep on the safe side, as it were, which was just as well for Coker. But neither did Walker seek out Coker of the Fifth any more—the happenings of that afternoon had deprived him of the whip-hand. So far from having the support of Coker's Form-master now, Walker realised that Mr. Prout was going to take Coker's side in any dispute that came before the Head.

And so—as of old—Walker dropped into the way of avoiding Coker—giving the hefty Horace as wide a berth as he could; and when he was unavoidably brought into Horace's way, he was remarkably civil. All of which Coker really owed to the heroes of the Remove, though he never seemed to remember it.

THE END.

(Now you can look forward to a fine long complete yarn, featuring Vernon Smith, better known as the Boulder, and his pal, Tom Redwing. Note the title: "Chums Through Thick and Thin!" and make certain of this story for next week, boys, by ordering your MAGNET now.)

THE BOY WITH THE MILLION-POUND SECRET!

(Continued from page 26.)

"No earthly!" replied Dan. "She can make rings round us, and she has guns. When the Navy challenges, there ain't anything to do but obey."

"I'm done, then! I'm goin' to dive for it! Try an' draw them off while I'm swimmin'—"

"Stay where you are and don't be a giddy fool!" whispered Dan. "Think you can swim away from that light now? If they see you go overboard you're for it! We must bluff 'em."

"Gosh! You can't bluff the Navy!" protested Tommy.

"It's a mighty thin chance, but it's the only one. They don't know your face, do they? Remember your name's Paddy Roche. You'll have to talk Irish."

"Oh, scissors! I can't talk Irish!" said Tommy desperately.

"You've jolly well got to," said Dan calmly. The tighter the place, the calmer Dan always became, and when extra calm he was dangerous. He had stopped his engine at the first command. The torpedo-boat came swinging round them in a circle, looking like a grim black shark, with a feather of white spray leaping up in front of her, and stopped dead, keeping the searchlight trained on the motor-boat. Tommy could see a group of men standing around something that looked like a gun.

"Two lads in her, sir," called out a gruff voice, evidently the coxswain. "Looks like the goods."

"Come alongside here, that motor-boat," hailed the officer, "and quick about it!"

(It looks as if young Tommy is in for a rough passage. Will his disguise deceive the lynx eyes of the Navy? Mind you read next week's thrilling instalment, chums.)

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