

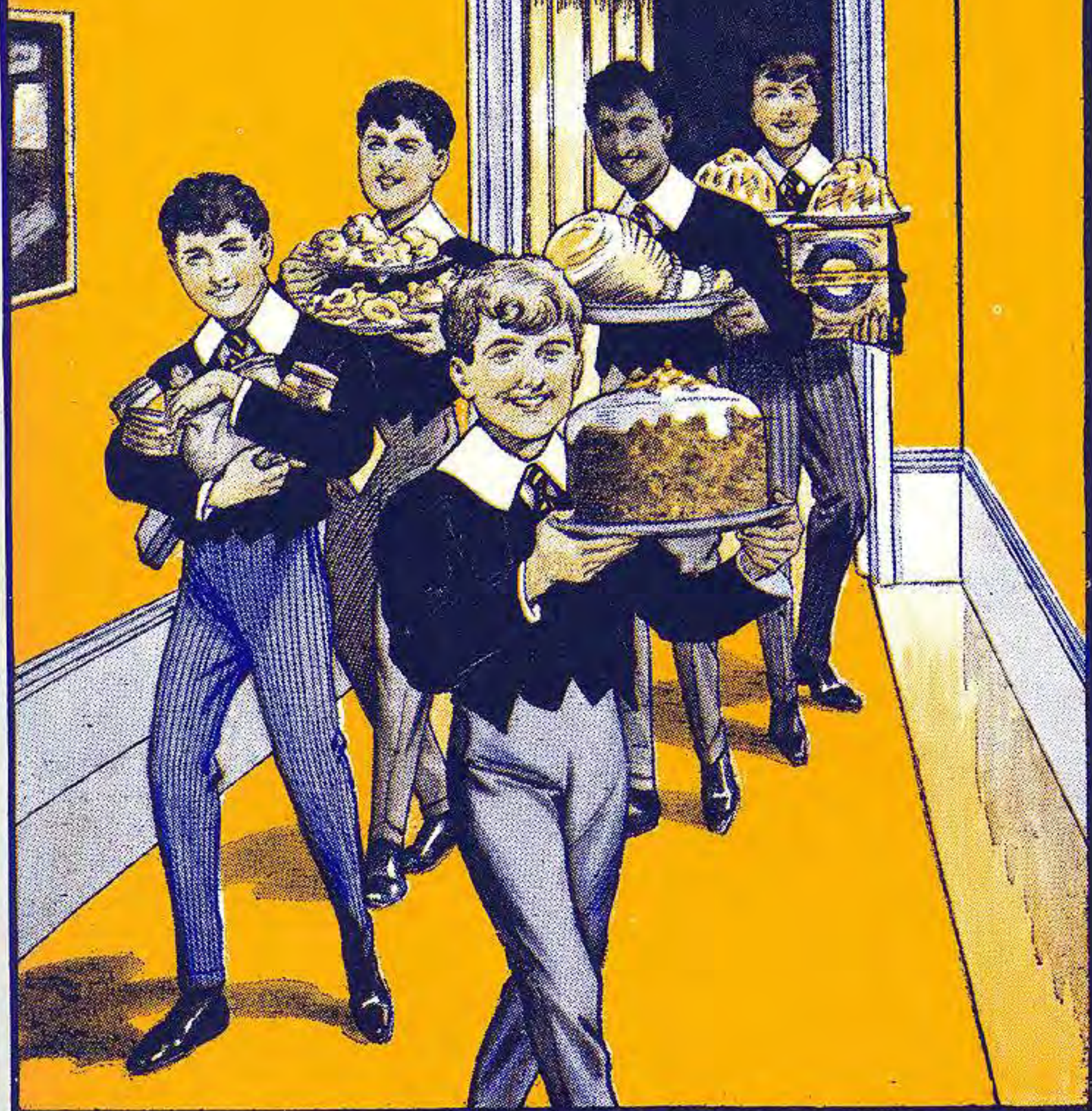
THE 1927 "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" NOW ON SALE—6^s/-

No. 981. Vol. XXX. Week Ending December 4th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d

Library

EVERY
MONDAY



THE GRUB RAIDERS!

How Harry Wharton & Co. got even with Horace Coker of the Fifth Form! (Read the amusing long complete school yarn of Greyfriars—inside.)

A MATTER OF OPINION! Horace Coker, of the Fifth, thinks it is high time Harry Wharton & Co., of the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars, were put in their proper place! On the other hand, Harry Wharton & Co. decide it is time that they put the mighty Horace in his proper place! And these opinions lead to strife—for Coker!

Coker on the War-Path!



By
FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Tempter!

UP against it?" Billy Bunter grinned as he asked that question.

He blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 1, in the Greyfriars Remove, through his big spectacles, and seemed entertained.

There were five juniors in the study, and, judging by their proceedings, they were certainly "up against it" financially.

Harry Wharton had laid a threepenny-piece on the study table. Frank Nugent had added thereto an equal sum in coppers. Bob Cherry contributed a halfpenny. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was shaking his dusky head dolorously, and Johnny Bull was going through all his pockets, one after another, apparently in search of some coin that might have been overlooked. And the search was not successful.

The Famous Five did not heed Bunter. Much more important things than William George Bunter occupied their minds.

"That's the lot!" said Harry Wharton ruefully.

"The lotfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Singh.

"I say, you fellows——" began Bunter.

"Shut up, old fat bear!" said Bob Cherry.

"But I say——"

"Cheese it!"

Johnny Bull finished the search of his pockets.

"Nix!" he said laconically.

"Can't be helped," said Wharton.

"It's tea in Hall to-day, unless we can plant ourselves out along the passage."

"I say, Wharton——"

"Perhaps Bunter's come to ask us to tea?" remarked Johnny Bull with deep sarcasm.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY. - No. 981.

"Right on the nail!" said Bunter. "That's exactly what I've come for, you fellows."

The Famous Five gave Bunter their attention at last. In the circumstances, the fat junior was, for once, worthy of the attention of the heroes of the Remove.

"Toddy sent you?" asked Bob Cherry. "Good old Toddy! If Toddy's standing a spread in Study No. 7, you chaps, we'll go. Never shall it be said that this Co. turned down a study spread."

"Hear, hear!"

The faces of the Famous Five brightened considerably. Tea in Hall was a last resource in hard times—a very last resource. A study spread was ever so much more attractive.

"I say, you fellows——"

"You needn't say any more, old fat man. We'll come!"

"Yes, rather!"

"It's jolly decent of Toddy," said Nugent.

Bunter snorted.

"It isn't Toddy," he said. "There's nothing doing in Study No. 7."

"Then who sent you?" asked Bob.

"Nobody!"

"What?" exclaimed the chums of the Remove with one voice.

"I'm asking you to tea!"

"You?"

"Little me!" said Bunter.

"You—you—you——" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

As the Famous Five were severely up against it, and the combined funds of the Co. amounted only to the moderate sum of sixpence-halfpenny, they might have been expected to accept Bunter's offer with gratitude. The prospect of tea in the study was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream, owing to the financial shortage, and they might have been expected to smile sweetly on the Owl of the Remove, and to render their best thanks.

But they didn't.

They glared at him.

"You frabjous ass!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Is this a time to be funny, you born idiot?"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Roll away before I roll you!" snapped Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Scat!"

But William George Bunter did not scat.

"I say, you fellows, I mean it!" he asserted. "I'm asking you to a spread. A top-hole spread. Honest Injun!"

"Gammon!"

"Rats!"

Obviously there were five doubting Thomases in Study No. 1.

"Has your postal-order come at last?" inquired Johnny Bull, still in a sarcastic vein.

"Nunno! I'm expecting it by every post," said Bunter. "But, as a matter of fact, it hasn't come. But I'm asking you to a spread. What do you think of a six-pound cake——"

"Eh?"

"Three kinds of jam——"

"Oh!"

"Preserves, jellies, cream-puffs, ham, and tongue——"

"I shall slay that fat jabberwock, if he makes my mouth water like this!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Of course, I thought of my old pals at once," said Bunter, blinking at them. "I shouldn't care for the feed without my old friends round me. You're up against it, and I'm offering you a stunning spread. Friend in need, you know."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter.

It was not uncommon for Bunter to ask fellows to a feed. If the invitation was accepted, it was generally followed by a request for a temporary loan. To accept an invitation from Bunter was to stand a feed for oneself—and Bunter!

So Bunter's kind invitations were not much sought after in the Greyfriars Remove.

[Copyright in the United States of America.]

"Look here, you fat duffer," said the captain of the Remove, "what's this game? We're all stony, so what's the good of you asking us to a spread?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I mean it!" hooted Bunter. "I want my friends round me, and you're my pals, ain't you?"

"Well, I never knew it before," said Harry. "But I dare say we could manage to be pally for the occasion. But where's the spread?"

"That's what I'm coming to," said Bunter. "You fellows can handle Coker—"

"Coker of the Fifth?"

"Yes. If he cuts up rusty, you can handle him all right. Coker's a beast, isn't he?" said Bunter argumentatively. "He's always butting in. He kicked me yesterday. He says that the Remove are all cheeky fags. Well, you fellows wouldn't mind handling Coker, if he gave any trouble?"

"Not at all," said Bob. "But what on earth has Coker of the Fifth got to do with it?"

Bunter coughed.

"Well, you see—"

"We don't see at present."

"The—the spread—"

"Well?"

"It's in Coker's study in the Fifth!"

"What?"

"Coker's gone out with Potter and Greene. He won't even know who bagged it, very likely. But if he finds out and cuts up rusty, you fellows can handle him. See? Safe as houses!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"You—you fat villain!" roared Bob Cherry. "Are you asking us to join in a grub raid on the Fifth?"

"Well, Coker's a beast, ain't he?" demanded Bunter. "Isn't he always meddling and making an ass of himself? He's cheeky! One good turn deserves another, you know. He kicked me. Well, I confiscate his feed. The prefects confiscate feeds sometimes. Well, then, we punish Coker of the Fifth for—for his cheek, you know, by confiscating his feed. See? I can tell you it's a ripping feed—I saw Coker doing the shopping. A six-pound cake—"

"You fat villain!"

"Three kinds of jam—" said Bunter temptingly.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

On that keen December day they were hungry. Tea in Hall was not attractive; neither was it yet time for tea in Hall. Coker of the Fifth, undoubtedly, had many unpleasant manners and customs, and he was generally at war with the heroes of the Remove. Coker prided himself on having what he called a short way with fags. Ragging Coker was what the Removites regarded as a harmless and necessary entertainment. But—

It was a temptation.

But, greatly to the credit of the Remove fellows, they resisted the temptation.

"It would serve Coker right," said Bob Cherry, musingly. "He's cheeky. He's a swanking ass. But—"

"Preserves and jellies—" urged Bunter.

"But—" said Nugent.

"Ham and tongue—"

"We haven't come down to grub raids yet," said Harry Wharton, shaking his head. "If Coker had got our rag out—but he hasn't."

"If he'd done anything lately to be punished for!" sighed Bob Cherry. "But—I suppose we can't very well

punish a chap in advance for what he may do next week?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's kicked me!" roared Bunter.

"That isn't a fault—that's a merit," said Bob.

"Why, you beast—"

"Can't be done!" said Harry Wharton, nobly putting the temptation aside. "It would serve Coker right—but we can't raid grub like Bunter."

"No fear!"

"I say, you fellows, don't be silly asses!" urged Bunter. "Look here, you fellows, back me up in this, and I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take you all home with me to Bunter Court for the Christmas holidays. There!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" said Bob Cherry, looking round. "It's settled that we don't raid Coker's grub. There's a limit—which is lucky for Coker, and unlucky for us. Bunter can take his giddy invitation along to some outsiders like Skinner or Snoop, or Fishy—"

"They'd funk it!" said Bunter. "I'd have asked them first, but for that—I—I—I mean I—I wanted you to come, because you're my old pals—"

"Bunter's a fat toad to think of it," went on Bob. "We turn down Bunter's invitation, and I think we're called upon to show Bunter what we think of him for supposing for a single moment that this Co. would join him in a grub raid. Every fellow who thinks that Bunter ought to be kicked will signify the same in the usual manner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter turned to flee as the Famous Five made an advance all along the line, as it were.

He turned, as it happened, just at the right moment.

Five boots were planted on Bunter's tight trousers, and the yell that came from William George Bunter rang from end to end of the Remove passage.

"Yooooop!"

Bump!

Bunter rolled in the passage. And Harry Wharton & Co., chuckling, left him rolling and went down to the quad to punt a footer about till the bell should ring for tea in Hall.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Just Like Coker!

"CHEEK!"

Coker of the Fifth frowned as he made that remark.

Coker looked indignant.

Potter and Greene of the Fifth, who were strolling in the quad with Horace Coker, glanced round carelessly to observe the "cheek" that had moved the ire of the great Coker.

They were not very keenly interested, as a matter of fact. Coker of the Fifth was a fellow with a very strong sense of duty, as he regarded it. Other fellows regarded him as a meddlesome ass. Certainly Coker "butted" into matters that did not concern him, urged on by his sense of duty, or his asinine meddlesomeness, whichever it was. He did so often, and when he did so he expected the support of his chums. He had, as he often stated, a short way with fags. Fags did not like or appreciate Coker's short way with them, and some of them—especially the Famous Five of the Remove—had developed a short way with Coker! Hence much trouble.

So as Horace Coker, in indignant tones, ejaculated "Cheek," Potter and Greene only supposed that it was some

more of Coker's "rot." They did not say so, of course. Coker was far from suspecting that his bosom pals regarded his ideas as all rot. Potter and Greene would not have told him so for worlds. They liked old Coker. And they had been with him when he did his shopping that afternoon. There was a feast of the gods coming along in the study in the Fifth Form passage. Obviously, it was no time to tell Horace Coker what they really thought of him.

Looking round as they strolled under the leafless elms, Potter and Greene failed to see what had caused Coker's indignant ejaculation.

Something, evidently, had come between the wind and his nobility, so to speak. But they could not see what it was.

Wingate of the Sixth was walking with Gwynne on the path under the elms; but that, they supposed, could not be considered cheeky, even by Coker. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were playing leap-frog over by the cloisters—but that was not cheeky; unless it was cheek on the part of mere juniors to exist at all. Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell were having a little argument under the library window; but Shell fellows had a right to argue as much as they liked, even when Horace Coker of the Fifth was taking his walks abroad. Five or six Remove fellows were punting a footer about near the House; but they were nowhere near Coker.

So Potter and Greene waited for Coker to explain; not because they were interested in his views, but because they could not help it. A fellow could not chum with Coker without taking Coker's chin-wag along with him; in such matters Horace had to be given his head.

"Cheek!" repeated Coker emphatically. "What is Greyfriars coming to, you chaps?"

"The Christmas holidays!" suggested Potter.

"What?"

"We're coming to the Christmas holidays pretty soon," said Potter, with great gravity. And Greene turned away his face to smile.

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"Oh!"

"Look at those Remove fags!"

Potter and Greene looked. Harry Wharton & Co. seemed to be rather enjoying themselves with the footer in the keen, cold air. Their faces were pink with the exercise and the keen wind, and their voices rang out merrily. Potter and Greene looked at them with indifference; Coker with lofty condemnation.

"Punting a footer in the quad!" said Coker. "Close under the House windows, too! Against all the rules!"

"Dear me!" said Potter.

"A fellow coming along might get that footer buzzed right in his chivvy," said Coker. "It happened to me once, in fact. I don't like accidents of that sort."

Potter and Greene smiled. They wondered whether it had been an accident on the occasion to which Horace Coker referred.

"It's not a laughing matter!" said Coker sternly.

"Oh! No! Certainly not," agreed Potter. "Awful nerve, in fact. These Remove kids are—hem—cheeky!"

"Wingate of the Sixth could see them, if he took the trouble to look round," went on Coker. "He's head prefect, and he's taking no notice. Letting them rip, you know!" Coker sniffed.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

"Perhaps he doesn't think it matters!" suggested Greene. "So long as they do no damage, you know."

Snort from Coker.

"Well, I'm not letting them rip," he said. "It's a prefect's duty to drop on them, and confiscate that football till the end of the term."

"But you're not a prefect, old chap."

"I'm quite aware, Greene, that the Head refuses to appoint prefects from the Fifth Form," said Coker. "I'm not responsible for Mr. Locke's failure to do the sensible thing."

"Oh!"

"I'm going to stop those cheeky fags," said Coker calmly. "I can't allow the rules of the school to be flagrantly disregarded in this way. It's up to me to keep order."

"Oh, dear!" murmured Potter.

It was Coker's great characteristic again—his strong sense of duty, or his asinine meddlesomeness. Once more the great Horace was going to hunt for trouble.

"Oh, let them alone," said Greene. "What do they matter anyhow?"

"I'm surprised at you, William Greene. Those fags do not matter at all; but principle matters a lot. It's the principle of the thing. Look at Wingate—going into the House now, and taking no notice of them all."

"Let's do the same."

"Don't be a silly ass, Greene. Come along—I'm going to put a stop to this."

And Coker started towards the cheeky Removites, his long legs taking great strides, his lofty brow wearing a frown of majestic wrath.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance.

They did not follow Coker.

Coker was counting on their support as a matter of course. But Potter and Greene were not looking for a shindy with a mob of fags. As Coker strode away towards the happy Removites, Potter and Greene walked off quickly in the opposite direction. If Horace wanted a shindy with the Remove, he could have it—all to himself. Potter and Greene were not taking any.

"Stop that!" shouted Coker, as he arrived on the scene.

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped punting the footer, in sheer amazement. They stared blankly at Coker.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Did you speak to us, old bean?"

"Stop that at once," rapped out Coker.

"Stop what?" asked Wharton.

"Punting that footer in the quad. It's against the rules, and you know it," said Coker, frowning.

"My only hat!"

"You cheeky chump!" roared Johnny Bull. "Can't you mind your own business, Coker?"

That, unfortunately, was exactly what Coker of the Fifth couldn't do. At all events, he never did.

He raised a commanding hand.

"Stop it at once. Give me that footer."

"Give you our footer!" repeated Harry Wharton, almost dazedly. Coker of the Fifth was always a high-handed fellow, and the heroes of the Remove knew all about his short way with fags. But, really it seemed rather too rich, even for Horace Coker.

"Yes, at once."

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Frank Nugent indignantly. "Do you think you're a prefect?"

"Silence!" rapped out Coker.

"Bump him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hold on," said Bob, with a glimmer

in his eyes. "Let's give him the footer. He's asked for it."

Bob stepped to the football which lay on the ground near him. Coker smiled. Perhaps he had not expected his lofty commands to be obeyed so readily, especially by so cheeky and independent a young gentleman as Robert Cherry. And he wondered why the other cheeky fags were grinning. He soon learned.

Bob Cherry did not pick up the football and hand it humbly to Coker, as the great man of the Fifth expected.

What happened was unexpected—by Coker.

Bob's foot suddenly shot out, and the ball flew from his toe. If that rapid kick had been taken at goal, Bob would have scored. It really was a good shot. Crash!

"Yoooooop!" roared Coker, taken entirely by surprise as the muddy footer squashed his nose.

"Goal!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

Coker of the Fifth sat down with a heavy concussion. And the chums of the Remove, with a roar of laughter, chased after the ball, and left Coker sitting.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"HA, ha, ha!"
"On the ball!"

Coker sat and spluttered.

His face was smothered with mud, and his nose—a prominent feature—felt as if it had been pushed through the back of his head. A hefty kick, at short range, was no light matter; Horace Coker had received a severe jolt. He sat and spluttered for several minutes; scarcely able to believe that this thing had happened—that it could have happened. When Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, was flogged by a mob of cheeky fags, it was time for the skies to fall. But the skies remained where they were, unmoved; it was Horace Coker who had fallen, and great was the fall thereof.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Coker.

He struggled to his feet at last, gasping for breath, and dabbing mud from his features. At a little distance, Harry Wharton & Co. were punting the footer just as if Coker had never ordered them to stop—just as if Coker didn't exist, in fact. They seemed to suppose that they had finished with Coker.

But they hadn't. Coker was a stickler, especially when his sense of duty was going strong. He cast a glance round for Potter and Greene, only to discover that his faithless chums had vanished from view. But Coker did not care for odds. He had no doubt that he could deal with these unruly fags. Many painful experiences had failed to convince Coker to the contrary.

He rushed after the juniors.

"Stop that at once!" he roared. "You hear me?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that that cheeky kid again?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Run away, Coker!"

"Go home!"

Coker did not go home. He charged right into the merry crowd of juniors, sprawled over the ball and grasped it. He jammed that football firmly under his arm, heedless of the mud that was transferred from it to his coat. And he stood prepared to defend the prize.

Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round him.

"You silly fathead!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Give us our ball."

"Hand it over, you ass."

"My esteemed fatheaded Coker—"

"Cut off!" said Coker loftily. "I've stopped you! This ball is confiscated till the end of the term."

"Eh!"

"What?"

"Kik-kik-confiscated!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"Exactly! Now cut off!" said Coker.

The Famous Five stared at him. That Coker—even Coker—should take it upon himself to confiscate a footer, just as if he were a master in the school, came as a surprise to them. They had supposed that there was a limit, even for Coker. Apparently there wasn't.

"Scrag him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Roll him over!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"The scragfulness is the proper caper," ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Collar the cheeky rotter altogetherfully."

"Come on!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. He waved his excited comrades back.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Bob wrathfully. "What do you mean? Are we going to let that cheeky Fifth Form cad bag our footer?"

"Yes."

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered the Co. in an astonished chorus.

Harry Wharton smiled and closed one eye at his astonished and enraged comrades.

"Leave this to me," he said.

"Look here—"

"Order! Leave it to me, I tell you," said the captain of the Remove.

His chums understood that something was "on," though they could not guess what it was. The captain of the Remove was about the last fellow at Greyfriars to put up with high-handed interference from a Fifth Form man. Yet apparently he intended to take this "lying down." However, the Co. were accustomed to following Wharton's lead, and they could guess that he had some object in view.

Wharton turned to Coker of the Fifth, who was grinning victoriously. Coker's short way with fags seemed to be turning out successfully for once.

"Let's have this plain, Coker," said the captain of the Remove. "You've bagged our football."

"Confiscated it," said Coker loftily.

"Just as if you were a prefect, or a master."

"Just!" said Coker coolly.

"You're keeping that footer?"

"He's jolly well not!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Shut up, old chap! You're keeping that footer, Coker?"

Coker nodded serenely.

"I'm keeping it till the end of the term," he said. "It's a lesson to you fags to keep the rules and to obey orders when they're given to you by a senior."

"Who are you to give orders?" shrieked Nugent.

"I'm not arguing with fags," said Coker contemptuously. "I'm confiscating this footer. That's all."

"We only want to know, you know," said Harry Wharton, with a meekness that might well have astonished any fellow that knew him. "You've confiscated our footer, Coker?"

"Yes!"

"You won't give it back to us?"

"No!"

"Then that's that!" said Wharton. "It can't be helped, you fellows."

"Can't be helped!" yelled Bob Cherry. "What the merry thump do



Horace Coker grasped the football and jammed it firmly under his arm, heedless of the mud that was transferred from it to his coat. Then he stood prepared to defend his prize, whilst Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round him. "You silly fathead!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Give us our ball!" "Cut off!" said the Fifth-Former loftily. "This ball is confiscated till the end of the term!" "Kik-kik-confiscated!" stuttered Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 3.)

you mean? I suppose we can scrag Coker and take it off him, can't we?"

"Certainly not!"

"Not!" gasped Bob.

"I'm surprised at you, Cherry!" said the captain of the Remove severely. "Don't you understand that it's Coker—Coker of the Fifth? Coker has confiscated our football. It isn't for us to object."

"Mad?" asked Bob blankly.

"Jolly sensible kid, I think," said Coker approvingly. "I'm glad to see that you're learning to toe the line, Wharton. I've taken a lot of trouble to teach you Remove kids manners. I'm glad you're learning."

"It's awfully good of you, Coker," said Wharton meekly.

Coker gave him a suspicious look. This meekness on the part of the captain of the Remove was so very novel that it really seemed too good to be true. Certainly it was right and proper for a Lower Fourth fellow to regard Coker with awe and treat him with slavish respect. It was right and proper; but it had never happened before.

But there it was—it was happening now. The captured footer reposed under Coker's arm, and the captain of the Remove evidently meant to leave him in peaceful possession of it. It was a great victory, all the more gratifying because it was rather unexpected. Coker of the Fifth almost gloated.

"Well, that's all!" said Coker.

"Thank you!" said Wharton still meekly.

Coker turned to stride away. Four members of the famous Co. made a movement at once. Wharton waved them back.

Horace Coker departed in peace, the captured football under his arm and a cheery grin on his muddy face.

He looked for Potter and Greene.

They would be surprised, he knew that, when they learned how successful he had been. He was rather anxious to see the look on their faces when he showed them the captured ball.

He was some little time finding Potter and Greene. Those two youths had placed a considerable distance between themselves and the shindy, resolved to let the great Coker have that entertainment all to himself. But he ran them down at last in the gym.

"You fellows didn't back me up!" said Coker, eyeing them severely.

"Hem! You see—" murmured Greene.

"We knew you wouldn't want any help in handling a gang of fags," said Potter blandly.

"Quite so!" said Coker. "As it happens, I didn't. I'm bringing those cheeky young scoundrels to heel. I've a short way with fags."

Potter stared at the football.

"What's that?" he asked.

"I told you, I think, that I was going to stop their disorderly game and confiscate the football," said Coker calmly.

"You—you did! But—"

"Well, here's the football," said Coker carelessly. "I fancy I know how to deal with fags. I fancy I'm the only senior at Greyfriars that can really handle the Remove. I've got them into pretty good order now; they'd feed out of my hand."

Potter gasped.

"They—they—they really let you take their footer?" he stuttered.

"They didn't let me; I took it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Confiscated it," said Coker loftily.

"I shall let them have it back at the end of the term, of course. That is, if they behave themselves and ask for it civilly, of course. I sha'n't stand any cheek."

"But I don't catch on," said the astonished Potter. "Is it a jape?"

"What?"

"They must have been pulling your leg somehow!"

"Don't be an idiot, George Potter, if you can help it!" said Coker crushingly. "I've confiscated the football—and here it is! Facts speak for themselves, I suppose?"

There was no doubt about that. There was the football—confiscated! The Remove fellows, evidently, had obeyed the lofty Coker's commands, just as they might have obeyed Mr. Quelch, their Form master. It was amazing—but there it was! Coker's short way with fags had been successful—Coker's majestic authority had been recognised and acknowledged by the very last fellows who might have been expected to recognise and acknowledge it. And Potter and Greene could only wonder what it meant.

Coker did not wonder.

Like Cesar of old, he had come, and seen, and conquered. Cheeky fags had realised that he was a fellow to be obeyed. That was all there was about it. Coker did not see anything to wonder at.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sauce for the Gander!

HARRY WHARTON smiled cheerily as Coker of the Fifth disappeared in the distance with the confiscated football.

His comrades did not smile.

They glared.

Harry Wharton was undisputed leader of the famous Co. But never had the Co. been so near to mutiny.

"You frabjous ass!" exclaimed Bob
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

Cherry, when the Fifth-Former was gone. "What do you mean?"

"Is it a jape?" demanded Nugent.

"The japefulness does not seem to me to be terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Is the esteemed Wharton balmy in his excellent crumpet?"

"Let's go after him and scrag him and get that footer back!" growled Johnny Bull. "Are we going to let that swanking ass play at being a prefect?"

"Look here, Wharton, what's the game?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You don't catch on?" he asked.

"Blessed if I do!" grunted Bob Cherry. "You've knuckled under to Coker of the Fifth. The Remove will chip us for this."

"We shall never hear the end of it if we let Coker keep that footer," said Johnny Bull morosely. "Even Bunter and Fishy will jeer at us."

"I'll put it into words of one syllable, suited to your limited intellects," said the captain of the Remove cheerily. "There's no end of a spread in Coker's study. You remember what Bunter told us—"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Lots! We can't go grub-raiding, like Bunter. It's rather below the dignity of this Co. All the same, we're stony, and we don't want to take tea in Hall. One good turn deserves another, you see. Coker has confiscated our football. We are going to confiscate Coker's spread."

"Oh!"

"I—I see!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Time you did!" said Wharton politely. "We're not grub-raiders, like Bunter, I hope. Confiscation is a different matter. As the matter stands now, we're morally justified in confiscating Coker's grub."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!" chortled Bob. "One good turn deserves another."

"What is saucy for the goose is also saucy for the gander!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Our esteemed and ludicrous captain is a great man!"

"Catch on now?" grinned the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter. Undoubtedly the chums of the Remove caught on now. To raid Coker's spread in the style of Billy Bunter was quite impossible for the Famous Five—miles beneath the dignity of the leaders of the Remove. To confiscate it, in return for the confiscation of the footer, was quite another matter. If Coker of the Fifth could assume the powers of confiscation, so could Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove.

"Glad you see the point at last," yawned Wharton. "Coker can keep that old footer, if he likes. I dare say his spread is worth as much. I've an idea that it's worth about twenty times as much!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Exchange is no robbery. If we get the benefit of the exchange, that's Coker's look-out. He asked for it. We didn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" added Wharton. "May as well get busy. It's close on tea-time."

And the Famous Five, quite reconciled now to the loss of the old footer—hurried into the House.

What time Coker of the Fifth was astonishing Potter and Greene in the gym with the tale of his amazing success in

dealing with cheeky fags, Harry Wharton & Co. got busy in Coker's study in the Fifth Form passage.

Coker's study cupboard was locked. Possibly Coker had noticed that Billy Bunter had been watching him shopping. If he had, no doubt he had considered it safer to lock up his good things. In ordinary circumstances, the chums of the Remove would not have dreamed of breaking the lock on any fellow's cupboard. In the present circumstances, they did not hesitate for a moment. Grub-raiding was one thing. Confiscation was another. Coker had started the confiscation, and he had no reason to complain if the merry Removites adopted it, and carried it on. What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander.

Crash!

The lock on the study cupboard was not particularly strong. Had it been very strong indeed, it would hardly have resisted the terrific swipes it received from Coker's poker, wielded by Bob Cherry's hefty hand. The lock went into small pieces. The cupboard door was also a little damaged. That could not be helped. It was Coker's fault, for having locked up goods liable to confiscation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ripping!"

The cupboard door was open, and the cupboard inside was fairly stacked with good things. Probably Coker had received a recent remittance from his affectionate Aunt Judy, or his almost equally affectionate Uncle Henry—perhaps from both, for certainly that stack of excellent provender must have run into pounds.

"Tip-top!" exclaimed Johnny Bull heartily. "I say, I'm rather glad Coker confiscated that footer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! What a stack!" said Nugent. "Blessed if I think we can carry the lot!"

"Must!" said Wharton. "Coker took all our football—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We take all his grub in exchange. Exchange is no robbery."

"Don't leave a jolly old crumb," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Coker never left us a crumb of the footer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The raiders—or, rather, confiscators—proceeded to load themselves. Cakes and jam, tarts and cream-puffs, jellies and preserves, ham and tongue, all sorts of good things, were handed out of the cupboard. Every member of the Co. was fairly loaded when the whole stack had been transferred.

"This will mean a Form spread!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We'll ask all the fellows."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Come on!" said Wharton. "We don't want to meet Coker coming in. We're rather too heavily laden for a scrap. I dare say Coker would cut up rusty, though we're only following his example."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving scarcely a crumb to mark the spot where that gorgeous spread had reposed in Coker's cupboard, the Famous Five marched out of the study. They walked rather quickly down the Fifth Form passage. They did not want to run into any of the Fifth just then.

"Hallo, what's this game?" Fitzgerald of the Fifth looked out of his study and stared at the laden Removites.

"Cut on, you chaps," said Wharton hastily

"Here, stop!" shouted Fitzgerald.

"It's all right," explained Wharton, as his comrades hurried on. "It's not a raid, Fitzgerald!"

"It looks jolly like it!" said the Fifth-Former.

"It's a confiscation!"

"Eh?"

"A game that Coker's started," explained Wharton. "He's confiscated our football, just as if he was a prefect. We're confiscating his grub, just as if we were prefects. See? He doesn't approve of Remove fellows punting a footer in the quad. We don't approve of Fifth-Form men stuffing in their studies."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fitzgerald.

Wharton followed his comrades.

Hilton of the Fifth came into the passage just as the juniors were leaving it. He stared at them.

"Here! Stop! What— Yaroooh!" roared Hilton, as Bob Cherry smote him with a six-pound cake.

Hilton of the Fifth sat down quite suddenly, and the Famous Five hurried on. A minute later they were in the Remove passage. The sight of the five juniors coming into the Remove quarters loaded with plunder, drew general attention upon them at once.

"Hallo! Been robbing the tuck-shop?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"I hear that you let Coker of the Fifth confiscate your footer," sneered Skinner.

"Exactly!" said Wharton.

"You did!" yelled Bolsover major.

"Yes; and we've confiscated his grub in return. We couldn't raid it without provocation. Coker supplied the provocation at the right moment," explained the captain of the Remove. "Coker's always the right man in the right place."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tons of stuff!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "Roll up in your thousands. All are welcome!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll up, Bunter! Enough even for you!"

"Hurrah!"

The plunder was borne into Study No. 1. It covered the study table when it was stacked there. Coker of the Fifth, who was a lavish fellow, had done himself uncommonly well, when he had laid in that tremendous spread.

Obviously, Aunt Judith must have shelled out very generously. Quite unaware of the fact, Aunt Judith had the distinction of standing a handsome spread to the Remove. Fellows rolled up on all sides.

The Bouncer and Squiff and Tom Brown, Peter-Todd and Hazeldene and Billy Bunter, found room in Study No. 1 with the Famous Five. Bolsover major and Skinner and Snoop occupied the doorway. Outside, in the passage, there was an overflow meeting. Stott and Wibley and Micky Desmond, Fisher T. Fish and Mark Linley and Newland and Penfold; in fact, almost all the Remove, rolled up to share in the plenitude of good things.

The Famous Five handed them round generously. They could afford to be generous. There was no doubt that that spread, tremendous as it was, had been obtained on very cheap terms. The old footer, now in Coker's possession, was a mere song in comparison.

The spread was very soon going strong. And it was accompanied by chuckles and chortles. The fact that the spread was stood—unconsciously and unintentionally—by Coker of the Fifth—seemed to add to the enjoyment of the Removites. And there were loud



Harry Wharton & Co. backed up as one man to resist the Fifth Form invasion. Never before had Study No. 1 been the scene of such a conflict. Three or four Removettes piled on to every member of the invading party, and Coker & Co. found their hands more than full. Billy Bunter, however, went on with the feed regardless! (See Chapter 5.)

cheers and laughter when Bob Cherry proposed the health of the founder of the feast—Coker of the Fifth. And the health was drunk with enthusiasm in Coker's ginger-beer.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

HORACE COKER walked up the Fifth-Form passage, with his nose rather in the air. It was not a very handsome nose, in its most palmy state; and since a footer had crashed on it, it looked less handsome than ever. But Coker held it well in the air. Coker was very pleased with himself, and the elevation of his rugged nose showed the fact. Coker was always lofty; now he was loftier than ever. He had reason for it. Even prefects of the Sixth Form were not always successful in keeping the Remove in order. Coker had been successful. Coker had said "Do this!" and they had done it. Coker, in his own estimation at least, was a great man. He had told Potter and Greene that he would stop those cheeky fags punting a footer in the quad, and confiscate the offending footer. He had kept his word. Coker, like the classic gentleman of old, was in a mood to strike the stars with his sublime head. Potter and Greene followed him to his study.

They were surprised at Coker's success; but they were not thinking about it so much as Coker was.

Another matter—which seemed to them more important—occupied their thoughts.

That was the supply of good things in the study cupboard. There was to be a spread of unusual proportions in Coker's study that afternoon—at all events, that was the arrangement. That the spread was already taking

place, in quite another study, was as yet unknown to Coker & Co.

It was tea-time now, and Potter and Greene were thinking about the spread. They were willing to admit that Coker was a great man—that he had a masterly way, with fags—anything, in fact, so long as the subject was dropped, and they got to the spread in the study. Coker, who was an ass in all other things, was no ass when it came to standing a spread. In that line Horace Coker excelled; on that one subject, Potter and Greene gave him their unstinted admiration. Coker played cricket and football in a style calculated to make the angels weep. He talked too much; and he always talked rot. But at standing a study spread, Coker was the "goods," so to speak.

"Ask some of the fellows, you men," said Coker, stopping in the study doorway. "No end of tuck, you know—let's have a few men in."

"Good!" said Potter heartily.

"Fitz, and Tomlinson, and Smith major," said Coker. "Don't ask Blundell—I can't stand fools! I know we're told to suffer fools gladly; but there's a limit, and Blundell's the limit."

"Is he?" ejaculated Potter. Blundell was captain of the Fifth, and generally considered anything but a fool. He was well up in his Form, he was a good footballer, and generally played in the First eleven.

"He is," said Coker. "He's refused me a place in the Form team. He told me I couldn't play football."

"Oh!" murmured Potter.

"Not that the Form team amounts to much," added Coker. "You fellows play in it. Anybody would think from that, that Blundell was pretty easy to satisfy, wouldn't they?"

"Would they?" gasped Greene.

"Yes. Crass ass, you know," said Coker. "Leave him out—he makes me tired. Bring along Fitz and Tomlinson and Smith major."

"Right-ho!"

Potter went up the passage, and Greene down it, to gather the guests. Coker went into the study.

About a second later, there was a roar of wrath in Coker's study.

Coker had spotted the state of his cupboard.

He strode across the room, and stood staring at it. He stared as if he could hardly believe his eyes. Indeed, he hardly could.

"By gum!" gasped Coker.

He was still staring at the cupboard, with fury gathering in his brow, when Potter and Greene came in with the three guests.

Coker turned round to them.

"Anything up?" asked Tomlinson, quite startled by the expression on Coker's face.

"Look!"

Coker pointed to the cupboard.

The door of the cupboard, considerably damaged, swung wide open. And the cupboard itself was in the same state as that of the well-known Mrs. Hubbard's. It was quite bare.

"Why—what—" ejaculated Greene.

"The—the-grub's raided!" spluttered Coker. "Lock smashed—cupboard burst open. A regular burglary!"

Fitzgerald grinned. He had had an inkling of what was to be expected in Coker's study. But the other fellows looked serious. They had come there for a spread. Obviously, there was no spread to be anticipated now. That was a serious matter.

"Who on earth's done that?" exclaimed Potter, in great wrath.

"Bunter, perhaps," gasped Coker.

"I remember the fat little beast was watching me in the school shop—"

"Bunter wouldn't have the nerve."

"I—I'll smash him—I'll spifficate him—whoever it was!" gasped Coker. "My grub—all gone—my cupboard burgled—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

you fellows come with me—we've got to find out who did this."

"I fancy Study No. 1 in the Remove could tell you," said Fitzgerald. "I seem to remember seeing Wharton and his gang in the passage a little while ago. I didn't know you were asking me to the spread, then, Coker, or—I—I mean—"

"Wharton!" ejaculated Coker. "Oh, no! It wasn't that lot—I've got that lot in order! Only half an hour ago I stopped them from ragging in the quad, and confiscated their football."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fitzgerald. "What are you cackling at?" hooted Coker. "Here's the football, you cackling ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up! Look here—"

"They may have confiscated your grub in return for the giddy confiscation of the footer!" roared Fitzgerald.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"In fact, Wharton said something of the kind—"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Potter. "I know there was something behind it. I—I say, this looks rather rotten, for tea."

"We're going to get the stuff back, of course," hooted Coker. "Do you think I'm going to let Remove fags raid my study. Follow me!"

Coker strode away, red with wrath. This time his comrades followed him. Such a spread as Coker had laid in was not to be given up without a struggle. If there was still time to recover the good things, Potter and Greene were prepared to back up Coker to any extent in their recovery. Tomlinson and Smith major and Fitzgerald followed on. As they had been asked to the spread, it became a personal matter, and they agreed that Remove fags could not be allowed to cheek the Fifth in this way.

Coker led his flock into the Remove passage.

There was a shout at once, from the merry feasters gathered round the table of Study No. 1.

"Cave!"

"Here comes Coker!"

"Ware the Fifth!"

"Back up, Remove!"

"You young rascals!" roared Coker, rushing into the study. "You cheeky young scoundrels! Go for 'em, you men—mop up the whole mob!"

"Back up, Remove!"

"Down with the Fifth!"

The feast stopped at once. The Remove fellows backed up as one man to resist the Fifth Form invasion. Never before had Study No. 1 been the scene of such a conflict. Coker & Co., rushing valiantly on, found themselves up against nearly all the Remove. Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish found pressing engagements elsewhere. But the rest of the Remove backed up as one man. Of all the feasters, only one was still feasting—that was William George Bunter. While the battle raged in the Remove study, Billy Bunter was going strong with the grub, regardless.

It was a terrific scrap.

Five hefty seniors were good for a good many juniors in a struggle. But they were not quite good enough for the whole mob of the Remove.

Three or four juniors piled on to every member of the invading party, and the invaders found their hands more than full.

Coker, who never counted odds, rushed recklessly on, with a terrific rush

that carried him right into the study. There Coker was up-ended, and three or four juniors sat on him. Billy Bunter glanced round for a second in alarm. But Coker had almost vanished under the breathless juniors, sprawling over him; and Bunter turned back to the spread.

Out in the passage, Potter was on his back, with Vernon-Smith sitting on his chest, and Squiff on his neck. Greene, backing up against the wall, defended himself heroically—but in vain. Tomlinson was rolling over in the grasp of many hands. Fitzgerald was rolled down the Remove staircase, and when he reached the lower landing, he decided to continue the homeward journey on his feet. Travelling on his neck was too painful. Smith major followed him down the stairs, with arms and legs wildly flying; and Smith major also decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and disappeared from the exciting scene.

"Keep off!" gasped Greene, as more punches than he could count rained on him from all sides. "I—I say, I'll clear! Keep off! Let a chap pass! Keep off, Cherry, you young ruffian—Yaroooh!"

Greene went down.

"Roll him away!" roared Bob.

"Hear, hear!"

"The rollfulness is terrific."

It really was terrific for William Greene of the Fifth. He hardly knew what was happening to him, before he reached the lower landing. He reached it, feeling as if he were in several pieces. Fortunately, on picking himself up, he found that he was still in one piece. He limped away, spluttering for breath. Coker & Co. had woke up a hornet's nest; and not for a dozen spreads would Greene have put his head into that hornet's nest again. As he limped away, he heard a crash on the landing behind him. It was Potter following him down.

"Come back and have some more!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the Fifth Form men did not come back. Obviously they did not want any more. It was not good enough.

"Now for Coker!" chuckled Wharton.

From Study No. 1 came sounds that resembled the roaring of the celebrated Bull of Bashan. Coker was making himself heard. He struggled wildly, but he struggled in vain under the juniors who pinned him to the floor of Study No. 1. Coker, as usual, had not counted odds. But the odds were there, all the same, and they were too much for Coker.

"Lemme gerrup!" Coker was bellowing, as the Famous Five came back breathlessly into the study. "I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I'll spifficate you! Gerroff my head! Gerroff my legs! Oh crumbs! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear old Coker!" said Bob Cherry. "What did you come for, Coker?"

"You young rascal, you know what I came for!" gasped Coker. "You've got my grub—"

"That's confiscated."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've got our football, you know," chuckled Nugent.

"I—I—I—" spluttered Coker.

"Still, we'll let Coker have some of the grub," said Bob Cherry. "Pass me that jam-pot!"

"Keep off!" shrieked Coker.

Bob Cherry did not keep off. He ladled out jam over Coker's excited face

amid yells of laughter from the Removites. Coker struggled and wriggled and roared. But Bolsover major held one of his arms, and Hazeldene held the other. Tom Brown sat on his waistcoat, and Wibley and Russell and Ogilvy were standing on his legs. Coker really had no chance.

Three pounds of jam adorned Coker's features, and Coker's aspect was quite extraordinary when Bob had finished. Study No. 1 rang with laughter. Quite a large quantity of the jam had gone into Coker's mouth as he opened it wide to roar. Coker had intended some of the jam to go that way; but he had not intended to take it aboard in bulk, so to speak. And the jam in Coker's mouth was followed up by a handful of sardines. Coker left off roaring then, and spluttered. He could only splutter. Often and often had Coker's short way with fags led to trouble. But it had seldom led to such trouble as this for the hapless Horace.

"Cave!" came a howl from the passage. "Form master!"

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

In the excitement of the moment, the Removites had almost forgotten the existence of Form masters. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had not been allowed to forget their existence, however. The terrific din in the Remove passage reached him, even in his study at a considerable distance. The Remove passage was never very quiet. But the uproar now constituted a record.

There was a pattering of feet in the passage as fellows cleared off at the approach of the Form master. But there was no clearing off for the fellows who were handling Coker in Study No. 1.

"Boys!"

Mr. Quelch, with a thunderous brow, stood at the doorway of Study No. 1, staring at the scene. And Harry Wharton & Co. let Coker go, and stood at attention very respectfully. Coker, breathless, winded, bewildered, and swimming in jam, sprawled on the floor and spluttered.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Nothing for Coker!

"WHARTON!"

"Hem! Yes, sir."

"What does this mean?"

"Hem!"

"This disgraceful disturbance can be heard all over Greyfriars!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Probably the Head himself has heard it."

"Oh, sir!"

"Disgraceful, indeed!" boomed a fruity voice in the Remove passage, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, appeared behind Mr. Quelch at the doorway. "Outrageous! Unspeakable!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips with annoyance. Interference from another Form master, in matters concerning his Form, was deeply irritating to him. But obviously Mr. Prout had been disturbed by the uproar, and had come along to inquire.

"Pray leave the matter in my hands, Mr. Prout," said the Remove master, with some acerbity. "I can deal with my own Form."

"I have no desire to interfere, sir!" boomed Mr. Prout. "But I must point out, sir—you must allow me to point out, Mr. Quelch—that this outrageous uproar has seriously disturbed me. I may mention—I am bound to mention—"



With a rush, Horace Coker came round the bend of the lane, at top speed. "Got you!" he gasped. Harry Wharton & Co. jumped out of the way, but the gentleman in black did not jump. He stood where he was, looking puzzled. The next second, Coker had rushed him down, and he went whirling over in the lane. (See Chapter 7.)

that no disturbance of this kind ever occurs in my Form, Mr. Quelch."

"Really, Mr. Prout—"

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

"A Fifth Form boy is present," said Mr. Quelch sharply. "Apparently it is his presence here that has caused the disturbance."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Prout, taken aback.

"Wharton! Tell me what this means at once!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Coker knows, sir," said Wharton meekly. "He came here with some more of the Fifth. We—we didn't invite them, sir!"

"The invitableness was not terrific, esteemed sahib!" murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"We weren't pleased to see them, sir, at all," ventured Nugent.

"Not at all, sir," said Squiff. "In fact, they interrupted us at tea."

"Coker! What are you doing here?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Groooh!"

"Answer me, boy!"

"Ooooooh!"

"Perhaps you had better speak to Coker, Mr. Prout, as he belongs to your Form," said Mr. Quelch, with bitter politeness. "He appears to be the cause of the disturbance. Certainly he has no business in a Remove study."

Mr. Prout bit his lip hard. He was intensely annoyed. Mr. Prout was just a little given to interfering, and, though he would not have admitted it, even to himself, he was rather pleased by so good a pretext to butt into the passage occupied by Mr. Quelch's Form. The discovery of a Fifth-Former there, apparently the cause of the disturbance, was rather a "facer" for Mr. Prout. Naturally it annoyed him.

"Coker," he boomed, "stand up! Get on your feet at once, you absurd

boy. Coker, what are you doing here? Answer me!"

"Groooh!" Coker staggered to his feet, and tried to answer. But jam and sardines choked his utterance. "Oooooh! Groooh! Ugh!"

"Will you speak?" thundered Mr. Prout.

"Mooooooh!"

"You stupid boy—"

"Oooooh! I—I'm trying to speak!" gasped Coker. "Those—ooch!—those young scoundrels have stuffed jam and things into my mouth— Oooooh! Gug-gug! I—I came here—ooooh! These young villains raided my study—groooh!—and collared my grub—ow! I came after it—"

Mr. Prout's brow cleared. This member of his Form was, after all, not to blame; so he was able to turn the tables on Mr. Quelch.

"Ha! It appears that a raid—or, rather a robbery—has taken place!" boomed Mr. Prout. "These boys of your Form, my dear Quelch, have taken property—hem!—comestibles, belonging to Coker of my Form. I presume that Coker was entitled to attempt to recover his property, Mr. Quelch?"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips again.

"Is Coker's statement correct, Wharton?"

"Hem! Yes, sir."

"You have taken comestibles from Coker's study?"

"Yes, sir."

"He admits it!" boomed Mr. Prout. "You will observe, my dear Quelch, that Coker is not to blame. He could hardly be expected to submit—"

"Wharton, I am surprised and shocked!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I should never have supposed you capable of such things! You admit that you have taken—I may say purloined—articles from Coker's study—"

"No, sir! We confiscated them."

"You—you what?"

"Confiscated them, sir," said the captain of the Remove calmly. "If you'll allow me to explain, sir—"

"I am waiting for you to explain!" snapped the Remove master.

"Coker confiscated our footer this afternoon, sir," explained the captain of the Remove, with great meekness. "We confiscated his spread in return. We thought we had as much right to confiscate things as Coker."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He fixed his eyes on Horace Coker.

"Coker, did you take a football from these boys?"

"Certainly, sir," said Coker at once. Coker was not the fellow to deny his actions, especially when his actions were creditable, and performed from a sense of duty.

"And why?"

"The young rascals were punting it in the quad, sir, against the rules. I considered it my duty to stop them, and confiscate the footer. I did so."

Mr. Quelch gazed at Coker, at a loss for speech. The Removes smiled at one another. Coker of the Fifth might consider it his duty to keep the Remove in order. It was not likely that the Remove master would agree with him on that point. Mr. Quelch was persuaded that he could manage his Form without any assistance from the Fifth.

"You—you—you have actually taken a football from these boys belonging to my Form?" stuttered Mr. Quelch at last.

"Certainly, sir."

"Where is the article now?"

"In my study, sir."

Mr. Quelch turned to the Fifth Form master, whose face was quite interesting in its expression.

"You see how the matter stands, Mr. Prout. This boy belonging to your Form has interfered with the Remove in the most unjustifiable manner, and taken away an article belonging to them. He has assumed the rights and powers of a Sixth Form prefect. I do not justify these juniors in retaliating upon Coker in his own reckless and lawless manner. But you will acknowledge that this member of your Form is the cause of the whole trouble."

Mr. Prout gasped. Really, he wished that he had not been in quite so great a hurry to come to the Remove passage and render Mr. Quelch unasked-for assistance in managing his Form. His wrath turned upon Coker's devoted head.

"Coker," he gasped—"Coker, do you actually dare to say that you interfered with these Lower boys as if you were a prefect? That you had the ridiculous audacity to confiscate an article belonging to them?"

"Certainly, sir," said Coker. "You see—"

"Go to your study at once, Coker! I shall deal with you later!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"You see, sir—"

"Not a word more! Go!" thundered the Fifth Form master.

And Coker, jammy and dismayed, went. Mr. Prout trod heavily away in his wake, leaving the Remove master to deal with the cheery Removites.

A faint smile, for a second, flickered over Mr. Quelch's face as the Fifth Form master retreated. Mr. Prout had received a lesson on the subject of interfering with another master's Form—a much-needed lesson, in Mr. Quelch's opinion. But the Remove master's face grew stern again as he fixed his glance upon the Removites in Study No. 1.

"Wharton, it appears that Coker of the Fifth Form was chiefly to blame for this disturbance. I cannot hold you blameless, however. You should not have taken the law into your own hands in this way. You will—hem!—take a hundred lines!"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

And Mr. Quelch walked away.

The Removites were silent till he was gone. Then there was a chuckle.

"A hundred lines!" said Bob Cherry. "Cheap!"

"The cheapfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Quelch had to give me something," he said. "I wonder what Prouty will give Coker? Poor old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, this ham-and-tongue is prime!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, I hope Coker will get licked for interrupting the spread! Anyhow, we've still got the tuck. Coker won't come back for it now."

"Ha, ha, ha! Not likely!"

"Go it!" said Bob. "Let's get it finished before we hear from Quelch on the subject."

"Yes, rather!"

And the feast in the Remove passage was resumed, after the exciting interlude. Many hands make light work, and Coker's good things, large as the supply was, vanished at great speed. Billy Bunter was finishing the last slice of cake, when Wingate of the Sixth came up to the Remove passage, with a smile on his face.

"Wharton, you are to hand over to me what you have taken from Coker's study—what is left of it, I mean. Mr. Quelch desires me to return it to Coker."

"Certainly, Wingate! Here you are."

With a grave face Wharton gathered up a handful of crumbs from the study table. He held them out to the captain of Greyfriars.

Wingate stared at them.

"What—" he began.

"That's what's left," explained Wharton.

Wingate burst into a laugh and walked away. He did not take the handful of crumbs with him. What was left of Horace Coker's great spread was not worth carrying back to Coker.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Man in Black!

"EXCUSE me, young gentlemen!" Harry Wharton & Co. stopped politely.

It was the following afternoon, and the chums of the Remove were taking a walk down to Friardale in the keen, frosty air. Five faces were smiling cheerily as the juniors swung along Friardale Lane. For the Famous Five were aware that Coker of the Fifth had left Greyfriars a minute after them, and they were aware that the great Coker was following on their track.

After what had happened in the Remove passage the previous day, anyone might have supposed that Horace Coker had had enough—that is, anyone who did not know Coker.

Coker of the Fifth was very far from having had enough. Like *Oliver Twist*, he was asking for more.

But Coker was being strategic now.

Even Coker's powerful brain realised that tackling these cheeky fags in the Remove passage or in the school quad was asking for more trouble than he was prepared to handle. Having woke up one hornet's nest, Coker did not want to wake up another. Hence his present strategic movements. These juniors had to be punished for their cheek—that went without saying. But Coker did not think of handling the whole Remove all at once. He had had some, so to speak.

When Harry Wharton & Co. started on that little walk down to the village, however, Coker saw his opportunity. He followed on.

In a quiet spot in the country lane he was going to deal with them—out of sight and hearing of the rest of the Remove. He was going to thrash them as they deserved, without waking up another hornet's nest.

Coker's intention—strategic as he was—was perfectly plain to the cheery chums of the Remove. Hence their smiles as they strolled along the winding lane to the village. Coker was going to get them all to himself in that quiet lane. It did not even occur to Coker that the Famous Five had no objection. Five sturdy juniors felt quite equal to the task of handling even the hefty Horace Coker of the Fifth Form. They felt equal to handling him with ease, in fact. So the fact that the avenger was on the trail only made them smile.

Once or twice the juniors glanced back, and spotted Coker's burly form through gaps in the hedges and trees. Coker was not aware that he was spotted. He would have expected the juniors to scatter and run if they spotted him. Instead of which they walked on cheerily, quite willing to be

overtaken as soon as the great Horace put on speed.

As they turned a bend in the lane half-way to the village, a gentleman coming up from the direction of Friardale stopped and addressed them. The Famous Five stopped. The stranger was a rather slightly built man, dressed in black, with a rather large hooked nose, which was adorned by a pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez.

"Excuse me, young gentlemen! Can you tell me if this is the road for Greyfriars School?" he asked.

"Right!" said Harry Wharton. "Keep straight on, sir, and you'll see the school in ten minutes."

"Thank you very much!"

"Not at all," said the captain of the Remove politely.

The man with the hooked nose did not walk on at once, however. He scanned the juniors with a pair of very keen greenish eyes over his glasses.

"Perhaps you young gentlemen belong to Greyfriars?" he asked.

"Yes; we're Greyfriars chaps," said Harry.

"Perhaps one of you is Master Coker?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Coker!"

The Famous Five looked at the gentleman with the hooked nose with a new interest. Obviously he was going to Greyfriars, and apparently he was going there to see Coker of the Fifth. He could not have known much about Horace Coker, however, if he supposed that a junior of the Lower Fourth might be Horace. Coker of the Fifth was at least a head taller than any of the Lower Fourth fellows.

"No," said Harry, with a smile. "We're juniors, sir. Coker is a senior in the Fifth Form."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

There was a sound of rapid footsteps behind the juniors. The bend of the lane, with a clump of thickets at the bend, quite hid them from the sight of the pursuer, and Coker was putting on speed, doubtless anxious lest his victims should escape. Coker did not know yet that he was the fellow who should have been thinking of escape.

"Here he comes!"

With a rush Horace Coker came round the bend of the lane at top speed. He was upon the juniors as soon as he saw them, and did not even notice the gentleman in black.

"Got you!" gasped Coker.

And he rushed on like a bull.

Harry Wharton & Co. scattered from the rush; nobody wanted to receive Coker at the charge. They jumped out of the way; but the gentleman in black did not jump. He stood where he was, looking very puzzled. The next second Coker had rushed him down, and he went whirling over in the lane. Coker was in too great a hurry to stop, and only the gentleman in black was left in his way as the juniors scattered. The collision was inevitable. It did not hurt Coker. He was twice the weight of the hooked-nosed gentleman. But the latter seemed to be hurt, judging by the wild yell he let out as he was strewn along the lane.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The gentleman in black lay gasping for breath. Coker halted, gasping also, and stared at him. He realised that he had charged over a perfect stranger.

"Sorry!" gasped Coker.

"Ow! Oh dear! You young scoundrel!"

"Oh, can it!" snapped Coker. "What did you get in the way for, you duffer? Sorry, and all that! But it's your own fault!"

"Ow! Oh! You——"

The hooked-nosed gentleman sat up. His face was crimson with rage, and his eyes fairly blazed. The juniors had taken him, at a careless glance, for a very quiet and sedate man on his looks. It was evident now that he had a very bad temper. Certainly what had happened might have made even a good-tempered gentleman feel cross and annoyed. But the man in black was looking absolutely evil and savage as he scrambled to his feet.

But Coker did not heed him.

He had come there to deal with Harry Wharton & Co., not to waste time on a stranger who unfortunately got in his way.

He turned on the juniors.

"You young rotters! I've got you!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, old bean!"

"Have you got us or have we got you?" grinned Bob Cherry.

Coker rushed at Bob, who was nearest. He collared the cheery Bob, and Bob closed with him. The next moment the other four juniors had closed in on Coker and grappled him on all sides.

Crash!

Coker came down in the grasp of five pairs of hands, and smote the ground with a mighty smite.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump him!"

"He's got us!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"He's got us, and we've got him!"

"The godfulness is terrific!"

"Give him beans!"

Coker of the Fifth struggled frantically. Whether he had got the chums of the Remove, or whether they had got him, Coker undoubtedly seemed to be getting the worst of it. It was borne in upon his mind that, hefty as he was, he was not able to handle five Remove fellows. On the other hand, they handled him. Coker seemed all arms and legs as he whirled and struggled and strove in the midst of the grinning juniors.

The man in black had got on his feet now, still gasping. He fielded his silk hat, and picked up his cane. His hard, cold face was still savage in its expression, and his greenish eyes glinted. But Coker and the juniors did not heed him at all—they had forgotten his existence. All of them were very busy.

"Bump him!"

Coker of the Fifth, still resisting frantically, was swept off the ground in the grasp of the five Removites.

For a moment he remained suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between the heavens and the earth.

Then he smote the ground again.

Bump!

"Whooooop!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another!"

"Yow-ow-ow! I—I—I'll——"

Bump!

"Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Ow! Wow, wow!"

Coker sprawled breathlessly on the ground. As he sprawled, Bob Cherry jammed his hat down over his ears, and Johnny Bull shoved a handful of grass and roots down the back of his neck. Then the Famous Five left him to sprawl, and walked on cheerily towards

YOU'VE SEEN ALL OTHER ANNUALS—NOW BUY THE BEST!

A UNIQUE NEW BOOK.



Printed
on
fine
art
paper.

PRICE
6/-
each.

360
pages.

THE OLD FAVOURITE.



The Best are these two Books—obtainable everywhere. If you want a wonderful feast of fiction, you'll find it in the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL." If you want a book which tells you ALL ABOUT your Hobbies you needn't look further than Every Boy's "HOBBY ANNUAL."

Bargain Books at Bargain Prices!

the village. They were finished with Coker. If Coker was not finished with them, he was welcome to follow on and ask for more.

But Coker for the moment was not thinking of asking for more. He was thinking of getting his second wind, so far as he was thinking at all. His wild gasps and splutters followed the Famous Five as they walked on, till they were out of hearing.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Coker Catches It!

COKER of the Fifth sat up. He sat up and spluttered. He hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. He was in a state of great bewilderment. He had followed the Famous Five from the school for the purpose of administering punishment. Punishment had been administered, but Coker seemed to have got it. It was not at all according to plan, and Coker was quite bewildered and flurried.

As he sat and spluttered he did not notice the man in black. He was not aware that that gentleman's eyes were glinting at him savagely. The man with the hooked nose watched the juniors out of sight, and then he took a business-like grip on his heavy Malacca cane, and came over towards Horace Coker. The collision and the fall had hurt him, and there was vengeance in his looks. Coker was made suddenly aware of his presence by the descent of the cane across his broad shoulders.

Whack!

Coker gave a wild yell.

"Why—what—what——"

Whack, whack!

"You silly idiot, wharrer you at?" roared Coker.

He sprang to his feet, and jumped away, glaring at the man in black as if he would eat him.

"You young ruffian!" gasped the hooked-nosed man. "You young hooligan! Take that—and that—and that!"

He followed Coker up, lashing out with the Malacca. Coker took the whacks because he could not help it, retreating as he took them.

"You silly idiot!" gasped Coker.

"Take that!"

"Keep off!" yelled Coker.

"And that!"

Coker dodged and jumped and hacked, but the savage-faced man followed him up, his sharp eyes glinting evilly. He seemed to find solace in lashing at Horace Coker with the heavy cane. Coker caught most of the blows on his arms—and they hurt.

"Will you keep off?" yelled Coker.

"Take that, you young scoundrel!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And that——"

Coker of the Fifth dodged again.

"Keep off, or you'll get hurt, you fool!" he bawled.

Coker was a reckless fellow, and a heavy-handed fellow. He had, as was well-known, a short way with fags. But Coker was not the fellow to hit a man old enough to be his father, and with really creditable forbearance, he tried to dodge away from the infuriated gentleman with the hooked nose.

But the man was in a savage temper—an evil temper. He followed Coker up ruthlessly, lashing at him with a savagery quite out of proportion to the damage he had received. It was no wonder that Coker's patience and temper gave out.

"Will you stop it?" he roared.

"Take that!"

Coker had to take it; but he rushed right at the angry man, and the next moment he had grasped him, and torn away the cane from his hand. The Malacca went whirling over the tree-tops, and Coker whirled the hooked-nosed man over, and sat him down with a heavy bump.

"There, you ill-tempered old donkey!" gasped Coker.

"I—I—I—"

"Oh, shut up!"

A stream of savage words came from the angry man sitting on the earth; words that were rather new to Coker's ears. He glared at the man in angry disgust.

"Why, you rotter," he exclaimed, "what the thump do you mean by swearing at me! Shut up! By gad, if you don't shut up, I'll jolly soon shut you up, you blackguard!"

And Coker took a grasp on the man's collar, and rolled him over, and jammed his angry face into a puddle on the road.

"Groooooogh!"

"Now cheese it!" snapped Coker.

"Ooooooh!"

Coker released the man in black, and he sat up with his face streaming with muddy water. Coker burst into a chuckle.

"You asked for it!" he remarked.

And, turning his back on the infuriated man, Horace Coker walked away towards Greyfriars. He had decided not to follow the Famous Five any further. Even Coker was able to realise that it was useless to run those cheery youths down and receive another bumping.

He was feeling rather breathless and considerably hurt as he walked in at the gates of Greyfriars. Those savage lashes of the cane had hurt Coker much more than the bumping he had received from Harry Wharton & Co. He rather regretted that he had not handled the man in black a little more severely.

Potter and Greene met him as he came in. They smiled at the dusty and rumpled aspect of Horace Coker.

"Been looking for trouble, old bean?" asked Potter.

"And finding it!" grinned Greene.

Coker frowned at his chums. He did not see anything to cackle at.

"I've been dealing with those cheeky fags," he said coldly.

"Slain them?" asked Potter blandly.

"Don't be a silly ass, Potter! I've thrashed them—at least, I was thrashing them, but— The fact is, they're rather hefty little beasts, and I made rather a mistake in handling the whole gang at once. Of course, I can lick any number of fags. But it's a bit undignified to tussle with them. They had the cheek to put up a fight!"

"Not really?" asked Potter.

"Yes, really!" said Coker unsuspiciously. "Greyfriars is coming to something, when Lower Fourth fags have the neck to scrap with a Fifth Form man—what!"

"Who'd have thought it?" said Potter solemnly.

He winked at Greene with the eye that was farthest from Coker.

"Of course I sha'n't let it drop at this," said Coker. "But I shall avoid an undignified scuffle. A fellow of the Fifth has to consider his dignity a bit, you know. They've got to be licked. But I've decided to take them one at a time, and lick them separately—see?"

And Coker walked on to the House for a wash and a brush-up, which he felt that he needed. He left Potter and Greene grinning. Obviously, Coker had discovered that in handling the Famous Five of the Remove he had bitten off

a little more than he could comfortably masticate. He was still going to thrash them as they deserved; that, of course, was a settled thing. But, for reasons of personal dignity—or other reasons—he was not going to handle them all at once, any more. Undoubtedly, Horace Coker was likely to have more luck if he dealt with the heroes of the Remove one at a time.

When the bell rang for classes that afternoon, Coker came on the Famous Five in the Form-room passage.

They smiled at him cheerily.

"Have some more, Coker?" asked Bob Cherry politely. "There's a few minutes before classes, and we're quite at your service."

"Quite!" smiled Frank Nugent.

"The quietness is terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Coker."

Horace Coker frowned portentously. He resisted a strong impulse to hurl himself on the heroes of the Remove. Even Coker seemed to be learning, at long last, that discretion was the better part of valour.

"By the way, have you done with our footer?" asked Wharton. "We've done with your spread!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker repressed his majestic wrath, and walked on to the Fifth Form-room. And the Famous Five chuckled and went into the Remove-room, quite satisfied with the outcome of their little trouble with Horace Coker.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor for Coker!

TROTTER, the page, tapped at the door of the Fifth Form-room, and looked in. Mr. Prout glanced round, with a ruffled brow. Mr. Prout did not like interruptions in lesson-time. On that point the Fifth Form did not agree with him. They looked at Trotter with approval. A rest from Latin prose was very welcome to the Fifth.

"What is it, Trotter?" asked Mr. Prout majestically. "You may come in."

Trotter came in.

The Fifth Form did not hear what he said to Mr. Prout, but they hoped that it was a message from the Head calling Mr. Prout away from the Form-room. And they hoped that the Head would keep Mr. Prout a long, long time. But the Fifth were disappointed.

Mr. Prout gave a little grunt, and turned to his class.

"Coker!"

"Yes, sir," said Coker.

"A gentleman—a Mr. Poynings—has called to see you. Doubtless it is by inadvertence that he has called during class. You are acquainted with the name, I presume?"

"Poynings, sir?" said Coker, wrinkling his brow. "I think I know the name, sir."

"The gentleman states that he is secretary to your uncle, Mr. Henry Coker, and has called to see you on Mr. Coker's affairs."

"Oh, yes, I remember," said Coker. "I don't know the man, sir, but I've heard his name; my uncle mentioned him in a letter."

"I think you had better see him, Coker, as he has doubtless come a considerable distance," said Mr. Prout.

"Certainly sir."

Coker looked quite bright. Probably he was not very anxious to see Mr. Poynings, whom he did not know. But he was quite keen on getting away from Latin prose.

"You will make the interview as brief as possible, Coker, and return to your class," said Mr. Prout.

"Oh, certainly, sir."

Coker of the Fifth left the Form-room, followed by rather envious glances from his Form-fellows. Nobody there knew Mr. Poynings; but any fellow in the Fifth would have been quite pleased to accompany Coker to the visitors' room to make his acquaintance.

"Lucky bargee!" murmured Potter.

"Fool's luck!" said Greene.

And the Form-room door closed on Horace Coker, and the Fifth Form continued Latin prose without him.

Coker walked away cheerily down the corridor.

He had not the faintest idea why Mr. Poynings had called upon him, but he was very glad that he had called. He did not know the man at all, but he felt that he must be quite a tactful chap, to butt in during class.

He arrived at the visitors' room, and strode in with his heavy tread. A man with a hooked nose, dressed in black, was seated by the fire, and he rose to his feet as Coker came in, and turned towards him.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"Good gad!" said Coker.

The recollection was mutual.

"You!" exclaimed Coker.

The man with the hooked nose compressed his lips hard. His face, for a moment, expressed a mixture of feelings. Obviously it had not occurred to him that the fellow he had caned, in Friar-dale Lane, was Horace Coker. And Coker certainly had not had the faintest idea that the man whose face he had swamped in a puddle was his Uncle Henry's secretary.

Mr. Poynings had cleaned himself after his encounter with Coker. There was no trace of mud about him now. Doubtless that accounted for his delay in arriving at Greyfriars; for he had been on his way to the school when he had met Harry Wharton & Co.

"You!" repeated Coker.

Mr. Poynings breathed hard.

"Am I to understand that you are Master Coker—Horace James Coker?" he asked acidly.

"That's me," said Coker. "And you're Poynings, the secretary that Uncle Henry's mentioned in his letters to me."

"Quite so."

"Oh!" said Coker, eyeing him grimly. Coker had not forgotten the spiteful lashes of the Malacca cane. Still less had he forgotten the picturesque flow of language from the man in black.

His look expressed grim disapproval of his uncle's secretary. Coker was not a fellow to conceal his thoughts, or his likes or dislikes.

Mr. Poynings coughed.

"I had no idea—" he began.

"I suppose you were coming to Greyfriars when I met you," said Coker, gruffly.

"Yes, Master Horace."

"Well, now you're here, what do you want? Has my uncle sent any message?" asked Coker.

Mr. Poynings coughed again.

"Not precisely," he answered. "If

ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PRICE 2!



"I order you off my premises!" said a harsh voice. There was a sudden flash of light, as Johnny Bull switched on his electric torch, which revealed the inhospitable occupant of the bungalow. The flash of light was followed by a startled, savage exclamation from the man within the door, and a general exclamation of surprise from Harry Wharton & Co. (See Chapter 10.)

you will be seated, Master Coker, I will explain the matter."

"I'll stand," said Coker.

"I may take a little time——"

"You won't!" said Coker, with the same grimness of manner. "Cut it short, Mr. Poynings!"

A faint flush came into the cheeks of the man in black. Coker already knew—he had good reason to know—that Mr. Poynings had a bad and evil temper. But the man was keeping it well under control now. Apparently he did not want to get on the wrong side of his employer's nephew.

"I trust, sir," he said smoothly—"I trust that you are feeling no ill-will in consequence of that unfortunate encounter a short time ago. I was then, of course, quite unaware of your identity. You will recall that you knocked me over and hurt me considerably, and if I lost my temper——"

"No if about it," said Coker. "You did!"

"There was some excuse, surely——"

"Plenty of excuse for cutting up rusty, and even for pitching into me," said Coker. "But no excuse at all for swearing like a bargee. I fancy Uncle Henry wouldn't keep his secretary long if he could have heard you."

"I admit that I was very much perturbed——"

"You may as well admit that you acted and spoke like a rotten blackguard!" said Coker coolly. "That's the fact, you know."

Mr. Poynings breathed hard again.

"I offer an apology," he said.

"That's all right," said Coker. "Naturally, you apologise. That's all right. But you are a blackguard, all the same. The less I have to say to you the better I shall like it! Now, what's the business?"

Mr. Poynings sat down again. Coker did not follow his example. He remained standing, with his eyes grimly on the man in black. He did not like the man, did not approve of him, and had no politeness to waste on him.

"Why have you called?" he asked.

"In the first place, Master Coker, to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance——"

"You've made it, if it's a pleasure to you," said Coker. "It's no pleasure to me. What else?"

"Really, Master Coker, you seem determined to meet me in a hostile spirit."

"You've got it," assented Coker. "I've no use for a man who swears like a trooper. But get on with it!"

The greenish eyes glinted over the pince-nez. But Mr. Poynings kept his temper well now.

"I will come to business," said Mr. Poynings. "I am your uncle's secretary, Master Coker. Your uncle is kind enough to treat me with very great confidence."

"Then he hasn't heard you talk when you've lost your temper," commented Coker. "But get on!"

"I have only recently entered the service of Mr. Henry Coker; but I am

very much attached to my employer, sir, and perfectly devoted to him. I respect Mr. Coker very much, sir, also his sister, Miss Judith Coker—the most estimable lady I have ever known, sir."

Horace Coker thawed a little. He was deeply and affectionately attached to his Aunt Judy.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "But I don't quite see why you've called on me, if you haven't a message."

"You are thinking of going home for Christmas, Master Coker, to your uncle's house?"

"Not thinking of it," said Coker; "it's settled. Aunt Judy will be staying for Christmas with her brother, and I always spend Christmas with Aunt Judy. Never miss it. I wouldn't."

"That is extremely dutiful of you, Master Coker, for you must receive many invitations from your school-fellows to places where there is younger and brighter society."

"I get asked sometimes, of course," said Coker; "but that makes no difference. I like going home to Aunt Judy for Christmas. You see, I'm fond of her. She's been jolly good to me!"

Mr. Poynings eyed him over his gold-rimmed glasses.

"You are thinking of taking friends home with you, sir?"

"I generally take one or two pals home for the hols," said Coker. "Potter and Greene, of my Form, are coming with me for Christmas."

(Continued on page 17.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

OFF FOR THE HOLLERDAYS!

(Continued from previous page.)

Jolly & Co. came stumbling after, carrying their own luggage and the Head's as well.

The little station presented quite an animated appearance. All was scurry and bustle and confusion. Porters rushed hither and thither, shouting, "Buy your leave!" "Mind your box, please!" St. Sam's fellows were pouring on to the platform in a noisy, clamorous crowd. The Christmas spirit, was in the air, and everybody was bright and merry and jolly—inclining Jolly and Merry and Bright.

Merry had bought the tickets—three singles to Merry Magnus, in Cornwall. It was significant that he had not bought one for the Head!

Tranes came and went, and the happy crowd on the platform was gradually swallowed up.

The Head began to fidget, and stamp his feet.

"When's our trane coming?" he asked impatiently.

"Here she comes, sir!" said Jack Jolly, as a Puffing Billy came snorting into the station. "Are you travelling first-class, sir?"

"Of course!" snapped the Head. "You don't suppose an important personage like me would travel in a cattle-truck, do you?"

Jack Jolly ran along the platform,

and found a first-class smoker for the Head.

"Ah! This will do fine!" said Dr. Birchmell.

He hopped in, and his portmanteau was bundled in after him.

"You boys will travel third-class, you understand," he said, leaning from the window. "I am not a snob, but I object to being seen in the same carriage with a parcel of fags!"

"Quite so, sir!" said Jack Jolly meekly. "This way, you fellows! Here's a third next door."

"Buck up!" said the Head.

The juniors scrambled into the carriage, under the gaze of the Head. But, instead of heaving their portmanteaus and things on to the rack and sitting down and making themselves comfortable, Jack Jolly & Co. dashed right through the compartment, threw open the opposite door, and jumped out on to the line.

The Head did not witness this little manoeuvre. He settled himself in a corner seat and puffed at his pipe, little dreaming that the juniors had left the trane. The latter gathered speed, and went galloping out of the station, to disappear in a cloud of dust.

Jack Jolly & Co. watched it out of sight; then they larked and larked till they became almost historical.

"Poor old Birchmell!"

"He'll have several sorts of a fit when he finds he's in a non-stop to Glasgow!"

"And he thinks he's bound for Merry Manner! He, he, he!"

Jack Jolly & Co. staggered on to the platform, dubbed up with mirth. By a clever ruse they had ridded themselves of the unwelcome company of the Head. They had lured him into a non-stop to Glasgow, which was hundreds of miles away from Merry Manner, in Cornwall.

What the Head would say when he discovered that he had been dished, diddled, and done was a matter for speculation. Certainly he would pour out the viles of his wrath on the heads of Jack Jolly & Co.

But those cheeky youths were not worrying. Probably the Head would have forgotten the unforchunitt incident by the time St. Sam's assembled for the next term.

"Here's our trane!" cried Jack Jolly.

It was the Flying Cornishman this time, and our heroes boarded it in grato glee.

The guard waived his flag, the whistle shrieked, and away went the express, galloping at top speed over hill and dale. And on board were three of the cheeriest schoolboys you ever saw, looking forward with grate eagerness to a Right Merry Christmas at Merry Manner!

THE END.

(Look out for "The Ghost of Merry Manner!" next week's humorous yarn of the chums of St. Sam's.)

Do You Know That?

Interesting Tit-Bits

for the Footer Fan!

"Tucker" Mordue, the new centre-forward of Sheffield United, is an adept at the handball game of fives, and is ready to challenge any professional footballer at this game.

Frank Barson, the Manchester United centre-half, thinks we have reached the football limit in speed, and that if the rules are altered to reduce the number of stoppages still further the players won't be able to stand it.

When Everton inquired recently about the price which Partick Thistle wanted for their centre-half, Gibson, the reply was "Ten thousand pounds." Twenty years ago a transfer fee of one thousand pounds created a tremendous sensation. It was paid by Middlesbrough for Alf Common.

This season, in the International match against Wales, Scotland played two amateurs in her team. This was the first time for twenty years that there had been two amateurs in a Scottish International side.

Queen's Park Rangers could place in the field a complete half-back line of men who have previously been associated with the Brighton and Hove Albion club.

In the last twenty-two International matches England has played seventeen different centre-forwards. In the same number of games Scotland has only played four different leaders of the attack.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

Stanley Davies, the West Bromwich Albion forward, has played for his country—Wales—in five different positions in their International teams, and once, when the goalkeeper was injured, he gave a fine display in goal.

Billy Hole, the Swansea Town outside-right, served during the War on Admiral Beatty's flag-ship, H.M.S. Lyon, and went through the Battle of Jutland.

Charlie Walters, the centre-half-back of Fulham, ought certainly to be a "learned" player. He was born at Cambridge, and now lives at Oxford.

The groundsman of Swindon Town is seventy-seven years old, and is still going strong.

When Newport County recently visited Southend the party had to dash away from the ground quickly in order to catch their train. In the hurry a director of the club was left behind, and it was not until too late that his absence was noticed.

An amateur team in Lancashire has a goalkeeper who stands six-feet-nine, but it has not yet been decided to move the cross-bar to prevent him bumping his head against it. The tallest goalkeeper in big football is Iremonger, of Lincoln City. He is six feet four and a half inches.

The whole of the players of the Preston North End club visit a local

golf links every Wednesday morning as a part of their training.

Three brothers named Keetley have played shoulder to shoulder in some of Doncaster Rovers' games this season, their positions being inside-right, centre-forward, and inside-left. This is a unique record; for, although three brothers have played with the same team before, they have never played next to each other in this fashion.

George Lathom, the Cardiff City trainer, is a friend to all footballers in the district. He is always ready to treat junior players' hurts, and recently cured a Rugby player after doctors had declared he would never be fit to play again.

William Gillespie, Ireland's captain, and of Sheffield United, is of the opinion that League football is distinctly superior to that obtaining a few years immediately following the War, and now little, if any, inferior to the standard seen in 1923-24.

It is estimated that fully one-fifth of the players in the Scottish League are Glasgow-born men. There is at least one Glasgow native in almost every Scottish First Division team.

Doncaster district referees agreed to accept half-fees for engagements during the coal strike.

Jack Sharp, who used to be known as "Jack of Both Games"—being an English International at both football and cricket—has a son who is also now doing well in both the winter and summer games; but, whereas Jack senior was an ornament of the Soccer code of football, it is the Rugger code that young Jack plays under.



(Continued from page 13.)

Mr. Poynings coughed.
"That is the matter I am coming to, sir. Doubtless, you are not aware that your Uncle Henry is not in his usual state of health?"

"He's told me that he's rather seedy lately," said Coker, looking a little anxious. "Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Your aunt is a little anxious about him, sir. You will, I am sure, excuse the liberty I take in speaking," said Mr. Poynings. "But it does appear to me that it would be more pleasant for you, Master Coker, to spend your Christmas holidays elsewhere."

Coker stared at him.

"You think so?" he ejaculated.

"I am sure of it. You see—"

"I see that you've got a thundering cheek, Mr. Poynings! If Uncle Henry's seedy, he will be jolly glad to have me to cheer him up!" said Coker. "I'm going, anyway. Anything else?"

"Of course, I have no right to speak to—"

"Has that only just occurred to you, Mr. Secretary?" asked Horace Coker sarcastically.

"But a sense of duty to my employer and—"

"Your duty is to mind your own business, Mr. Poynings! I'm going to Hollywood House for Christmas!"

"I will speak more plainly, Master Coker. In the present state of your uncle's health, and in your aunt's present state of anxiety, the presence of noisy schoolboys in the house is likely to do harm. It would be much more judicious for you to spend your Christmas holidays elsewhere with your schoolboy friends."

"My hat! Did my Uncle Henry say so?"

"No."

"Or my Aunt Judy?"

"No. But—"

"Then it's only your opinion," exclaimed Coker disdainfully. "Of all the thumping cheek, I think this takes the cake! I understand that my uncle employs you as a secretary?"

"That is correct, Master Coker."

"Has he handed over the management of his family affairs to you?" demanded Coker hotly.

"Ahem! No. But—"

"It's just pure, unadulterated cheek on your part—what?" exclaimed Coker. "It takes the bun, and no mistake!"

"My dear young sir—"

"Nuff said!" interrupted Coker ruthlessly. "I've had enough of your dashed impudence, Mr. Poynings! Cut it short!"

The secretary's eyes gleamed over his glasses.

"Blessed if I ever heard of such a thumping neck!" exclaimed Coker. "Giving me advice—dictating to me, by Jove! I fancy that my uncle and aunt don't know that you've come here to-day to talk this cheeky rot to me, Mr. Poynings! I warn you that I shall jolly well mention it to them when I go home for Christmas! I shall advise my uncle to get a new secretary. So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

Mr. Poynings smiled slightly.

"Mr. Coker is hardly likely to take the advice of a schoolboy upon such a subject!" he remarked.

"That's all you know!" retorted Coker. "Anyhow, I'm fed-up with you, Mr. Poynings! You can cut!"

"Then you are still decided to go to Holly House for the Christmas holidays with your school friends?" asked Mr. Poynings.

"Yes, rather!"

"Perhaps you will reflect over what I have said."

"I shall do nothing of the sort! I look on it as like your confounded cheek to chip in!" said Coker hotly. "Blessed if I ever heard anything like it! I'm going home for Christmas, and I'm taking Potter and Greene with me. And that's that!"

With which Horace Coker turned on his heel and walked out of the visitors' room. He was fed-up with Uncle Henry's secretary, and did not leave any doubt on that subject.

Coker's face was flushed as he returned to the Fifth Form room. He was surprised, and he was deeply annoyed, by the visit of his uncle's secretary, and its reason. If Coker had needed confirming in his intention to go home to Hollywood House for Christmas, he was confirmed in it now. Opposition always had that effect on Horace Coker.

Mr. Poynings was left to show himself out. Coker dismissed the man from his mind with contemptuous indifference.

"News from home—what?" murmured Potter, as Coker dropped into his place in the Fifth. "Hamper from Aunt Judy—what?"

Coker shook his head.

"No. Only a cheeky cad butting into my personal affairs!" he answered.

"Eh?"

"My uncle's secretary—thinks I'd better not go home for Christmas, because Uncle Henry's seedy!" breathed Coker. "Cheek! I told him off pretty plainly! I'm going, and you fellows are coming. I'm going to advise my uncle to sack him when I get home!"

Potter smiled.

"Sorry I didn't kick him now!" added Coker thoughtfully. "Never heard of such a neck!"

"Silence in the 'class!" said Mr. Prout.

And Horace Coker had to bottle up his indignation until classes were ended.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Wet!

"RAIN!"

"And wet rain!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The wetfulness of the esteemed rain is—"

"Terrific!" groaned Bob.

There was no doubt that the rain was wet—very wet. It came on suddenly, and it came on hard. And Harry Wharton & Co., who had not even their overcoats with them, let alone an umbrella, groused in chorus.

It had been quite a fine afternoon. Cold it certainly was, but that did not worry the chums of the Remove. It was a half-holiday, and they had walked over to Cliff House for tea with Marjorie & Co.; and they had had a very pleasant tea in the school-room of Cliff House. It was still fine when they walked away from Cliff House, and they had started back to Greyfriars by way of the path over the cliffs. And then—miles from everywhere, as Bob Cherry expressed it—the rain came on. It came on suddenly, it came on hard, and it came on wet.

The juniors were on the cliffs, a good mile from Cliff House, and three or four miles from Greyfriars. They had expected to have a pleasant walk back, and arrive at the school as the winter dusk was falling. The walk back did not seem likely to be very pleasant now.

"Oh dear!" mumbled Nugent. "And no shelter for miles."

"Trot!" said Harry Wharton.

And the Famous Five trotted.

Thick clouds overcast the sky, and it was dusky on the rugged paths over the great stretch of cliffs. And the rain came down harder than ever. The juniors stopped at last, and backed up against a big rock which sheltered them a little.

"It's too thick," said Harry Wharton.

"The thickfulness is terrific," remarked Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed shelter is the proper caper."

"No blessed shelter for miles!" mumbled Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed chum, I thinkfully remember that there is an excellent and ludicrous bungalow," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "If I am not mistakefully misguided, it is a little farther along the path."

"I remember it," said Bob Cherry.

"It's one of the new bungs they let to summer visitors—jolly lonely, too. Hillcrest Bungalow, I think it's called. But it will be shut up now, Inky; the holiday bungs are all locked up in the winter."

"There might be some esteemed shed or coal-cellar which would be better than this rascally and execrable rain," suggested Hurrec Singh.

"Something in that," agreed Harry Wharton. "Now I think of it, the bung can't be far away; it's in a jolly lonely place on the cliffs. Let's sprint for it. We can't get much wetter."

"Let's!" agreed Nugent.

And the hapless juniors, dripping with rain, left the rock, and started again, with a faint hope of getting shelter at the lonely bungalow.

They tramped on with bent heads, their collars turned up, in the pouring rain. For once the cheery spirits of the Famous Five almost failed them. But they tramped on doggedly through the rain and the thickening dusk.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the giddy bung!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.

A light gleamed through the dusk.

"Somebody there," said Wharton, brightening up considerably. "They can't refuse us shelter in a downpour like this."

"Not likely," said Johnny Bull.

"Put it on!"

The juniors hurried on towards the lonely bungalow.

It was a small building, built partly of wood and partly of native stone. The windows were protected by outside wooden shutters, all of which were closed. A single chimney sent up a thin spiral of smoke into the rain. The light that the juniors had seen gleamed from a fanlight over the door of the bungalow. If any of the rooms were lighted, the wooden shutters at the windows hid the light.

Wharton opened a little garden gate, and the drenched juniors tramped up a sanded path to the porch of the bungalow. It was a tiny porch, but they were glad enough to squeeze into it.

Harry Wharton knocked at the door. The shelter of the porch would have satisfied the juniors; they felt rather diffident about "butting" into a stranger's house in their present wet

and muddy condition. But the light showed that the bungalow was occupied, and it was only civil to knock and ask permission to shelter in the porch.

Knock!

The juniors heard a movement in the house, and a moment later, to their surprise, the light was extinguished.

The light in the fanlight was blotted out instantly. In the gloom of the porch the Famous Five blinked at one another. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"We've alarmed them, whoever they are," he said. "This is a jolly lonely spot, and they may have had trouble with tramps."

"They don't mean to open the door, anyhow," remarked Nugent.

Nugent was right.

After that one hurried movement within there was no sound from the bungalow, and the door did not open. But for the fact that they had seen a light and heard a movement, the juniors would have supposed that Hillcrest Bungalow was deserted—shut up for the winter, like the other summer bungs nearer to Pegg. It was, indeed, odd enough that it should be occupied, in December, in that wild and lonely spot, exposed to the fierce winds of the North Sea.

"Dash it all, it's queer," said Harry. "I'd better knock again, and let them know that we're not a gang of dangerous characters, anyhow."

And he knocked loudly with the copper knocker that adorned the door of the bungalow.

There was no answer, no movement from within. Darkness and silence reigned, and the juniors were more and more puzzled. Even a nervous occupant of the lonely bungalow might have opened the door on the chain; but it was rather difficult to suppose that a man afflicted with nerves had chosen that wild and desolate spot for his residence.

"I've got it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. "The bung isn't occupied—none of these bungs ever are in the winter. It's some jolly old tramp who has taken up his quarters here."

"Oh, that's it!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "I say, we'd better drop in at the police-station on our way home, and mention it. The fellow may set fire to the place, or something."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! They're coming!"

There was a sound of unlocking.

"My hat!" breathed Wharton.

It came into his mind that the occupant of the bungalow had been close inside the door and had heard Bob's exclamation, and Johnny Bull's suggestion of a call at the police-station. If he was only a harmless and nervous householder, doubtless he did not want a visit of investigation from the Friar-dale policeman.

The door opened a few inches, and there was a rattle of a chain. The chain was still on the door, and the juniors could not have pushed it farther open if they had desired to do so.

"Who are you?" asked a sharp, angry voice. "What do you want?"

In the deep gloom and the shadow of the porch the juniors could not see the speaker; they could make out only a glimmer of a face and a gleam of angry eyes.

"We're schoolboys caught in the rain, sir," said Wharton civilly. "If you don't mind our taking shelter here—"

"I do!" snapped the unseen man. "Go on your way!"

"It's pouring with rain—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

"Go on your way! If you hang about my house I will set my dog on you!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Gammon!" said Johnny Bull. "You haven't a dog, or we should have heard from him already. And we're jolly well not going on. We're going to shelter here out of the rain, and you can like it or lump it. See?"

"Surely you do not mind if we stand here till it passes over, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"I order you off my premises!" said the harsh voice.

There was a sudden flash of light. Johnny Bull remembered that he had his electric torch in his pocket, and he had taken it out and flashed the light, to see the face of the inhospitable occupant of the bungalow. The flash of the electric torch was followed by a startled, savage exclamation from the man within the door, and a general exclamation of surprise from Harry Wharton & Co.

Slam!

The door slammed shut. But they had seen the man, and they had recognised him. His large, hooked nose was not easily forgotten. It was the man in black whom they had met in Friar-dale Lane a few days before—the man who was going to Greyfriars to see Coker.

"That merchant!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"My hat! That Johnny!"

"The rotter!" said Bob. "What harm are we doing, sheltering in his twopenny-halfpenny porch out of the rain? We're jolly well staying on till the rain stops."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

And the juniors stayed. The rain was still coming down in torrents, and they had no intention of plunging through the downpour at the behest of the inhospitable man with the hooked nose. There was not much room for five fellows in the little wooden porch, but at least they were out of the rain. They stamped their feet to keep them warm and waited dismally.

The lamp had been relighted in the lonely bungalow; the light gleamed from the little oblong pane in the porch over their heads. Once or twice they detected a sound of the man inside moving. But he did not approach the door, and they did not hear his voice again. Apparently he was alone in the bungalow, and did not want company. But the Famous Five did not give him much thought. They were too thoroughly wet and uncomfortable to think much about anything but their discomfort.

It was an hour before the rain ceased to fall heavily, and by that time the winter nightfall had quite set in. It was still raining; but it was useless to wait, and a light shower could not make the heroes of the Remove much wetter than they were already. Cold and stiff and uncomfortable, the Famous Five emerged from the porch, and tramped away by dripping paths, with two or three miles before them, and the prospect of arriving at Greyfriars an hour late for calling-over.

— — —

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Strategy!

"I SAY, you fellows! He, he, he!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

Billy Bunter chuckled. Horace Coker roared. A dozen other fellows grinned. Five fellows who came,

drenched and dripping, into the House out of the rain that beat down upon the Greyfriars quadrangle did not grin or chuckle. Harry Wharton & Co. failed to see anything to chuckle at.

"My only hat! Wet?" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Damp?" chortled Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth Form.

"Moist?" chirruped Hobson of the Shell.

"Oh, rats!" growled Harry Wharton. "We were caught in the rain."

"You look it!" said the Bounder solemnly. "Looking at you, I guessed something of the kind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You haven't been for a swim with your clothes on?" chortled Coker of the Fifth.

"We've been refused shelter by an inhospitable beast," said Bob Cherry, "and we're jolly wet! Let's have a look at that fire!"

Coker of the Fifth was shutting off a great part of the big log fire in the Hall with his ample person. The big Fifth-Former showed no disposition to shift. Coker was not an unfeeling fellow by any means, but he was too great a man to shift on account of a Lower Fourth fellow. He stood immovable.

"Better go and towel yourselves!" he grinned. "Better get a wash, too! You look muddy!"

"Give a fellow a look at the fire!" said Wharton.

"You're a bit too dirty to come near a respectable chap, Wharton! Keep your distance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five glared at Coker. It was true that they were drenched with rain and fairly smothered with mud. They had hurried home by short cuts, and short cuts across fields in a heavy rain were liable to be a little thick with mud. Harry Wharton & Co. had gathered a considerable amount. But they did not see anything of a humorous nature in that circumstance.

"Shift him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Keep off!" roared Coker, in alarm. "Don't you touch me, you dirty young rascals!"

But the dirty young rascals did touch Coker, and the great man of the Fifth rolled on the floor, with the five muddy juniors rolling with him. And after a roll or two Coker had as much mud as any member of the Co.

"Here, you young sweeps!" Wingate of the Sixth came up. "Chuck that! You're to report to Mr. Quelch at once for missing call-over!"

"Right, ho, Wingate!"

The drenched quintette made their way to Mr. Quelch's study. The Remove master was looking very severe. But his severe features relaxed as he saw the drenched and dripping state of the heroes of the Remove.

"Bless my soul! What—"

"Caught in the rain, sir!" said Bob Cherry dismally.

"Go and change your clothes at once before you catch cold," said Mr. Quelch.

And the dripping juniors trailed away.

They felt a little better when they had whipped off their wet clothes and rubbed themselves into a glow with rough towels. They came down to the Remove passage after changing, looking much more cheerful. Billy Bunter met them in the Remove passage with a fat grin.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Scat!"



"Bend him over, you fellows!" cried Harry Wharton. Innumerable hands bent Coker over. He resisted desperately, but he resisted in vain. He was bent over and held in a favourable position for a licking. "Keep clear, you chaps!" said the Remove captain, swinging up Coker's stick in readiness. (See Chapter 12.)

"Coker's awfully waxy!" grinned Bunter.

"The waxfulness of the esteemed Coker is like the idle wind, which we regard not," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But, I say——"

"Cheese it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I was going to tell you——" roared Bunter.

"Rats!"

"Coker, I tell you——"

"Blow Coker!"

Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh and Bob Cherry went on up the passage to their own studies, and Wharton and Frank Nugent stopped at Study No. 1. Billy Bunter grabbed at Wharton's sleeve.

"I say, Wharton——"

"Cut off!"

"I jolly well won't tell you now!" hooted Bunter.

"Thanks!"

"Beast!"

Wharton and Nugent went into their study, leaving Billy Bunter snorting. The two juniors got on to their prep, wasting no further thought on the Owl of the Remove. Apparently William George Bunter had something to impart, but the chums of the Remove were not curious to hear it.

There was a thoughtful look on Harry Wharton's face when he had finished his prep, and sat waiting for Frank to finish. Nugent laid down his

pen at last, and looked at the captain of the Remove with a smile.

"Penny for them," he said.

Harry Wharton smiled too.

"Well, I was thinking," he said.

"It's jolly queer about that man in the bungalow, Frank."

"I thought the same," said Nugent. "Jolly odd for a man to take a lonely bung on the cliffs like that in the middle of the winter—all alone, too. Bit of a misanthrope, I should think."

"It's the man who came to see Coker the other day," said Harry. "Coker biffed him over in the lane when he was ragging us. I've heard that he called on Coker that afternoon and got Coker's rag out. You know what Coker is when his rag's out—he tells the whole wide world all about it."

Nugent laughed.

"I've heard about it," he said. "I remember now hearing the man's name—Poynings, I think."

"That's it," said Harry. "A dozen fellows have heard Coker talking about it. This man Poynings is his uncle's secretary, and he came down to the school to see Coker and persuade him not to go home for the Christmas hols. for some reason. That seems rather odd in itself; but what is oddest is the man being at that lonely bung. He must have taken Hillcrest from the estate agent, or he couldn't have been there at all. But what on earth is he doing staying in that lonely place—

when he's secretary to Coker's uncle and lives at Coker's uncle's house?"

Nugent looked puzzled.

"It's queer," he said. "May be on holiday or something. People take those seaside bungs for holidays—in the summer."

"Not in the winter, though," said Harry. "There's something fishy about that fellow, Frank. He was trying at first to keep it dark that there was anybody in the bung at all; you remember he put out the light. And the way he tried to push us off in the rain-storm; even a Hun wouldn't be so inhospitable unless he had a special reason. Poynings was trying to keep it dark that he was there at all."

"Looks like it," agreed Frank. "Looks jolly fishy—just as if the man were in hiding."

"That's how it struck me," said the captain of the Remove. "Only it can't be so—it's only a few days since he called at Greyfriars, and—I suppose he must be a respectable man, as he's secretary to a rich old codger like Coker's uncle. But it's jolly queer—and I believe he's a bad hat. Still, it's no business of ours, I suppose."

"No fear!"

And prep being over, the chums of the Remove left the study, to go down to the Rag. Both of them were thinking, however, of that strange encounter at the lonely bungalow, and the peculiar proceedings of the man in black.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

Still, it was, as Wharton had remarked, no business of theirs, and they dismissed the matter from their minds at last.

Billy Bunter rolled up to them in the Rag.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Don't!" suggested the captain of the Remove.

"Don't what?" hooted Bunter.

"Don't say! Don't say anything! You talk too much, you know."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came into the Rag, and Wharton and Nugent joined them. Billy Bunter blinked at them morosely through his big spectacles. Bunter had something to say—he generally had! And nobody wanted to hear it—which was not uncommon.

When the Remove fellows went up to their dormitory, Billy Bunter gave the Famous Five a reproachful blink.

"I jolly well sha'n't tell you now," he said.

"Good!"

"Thanks, old fat bean!"

"The thankfulness is terrific!"

"All right!" hooted Bunter. "You can jolly well bag a licking all round. Serve you jolly well right, if you ask me."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's going to give us a licking all round?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, showing some signs of interest at last.

"That's telling!" said Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"I know what I know," said the Owl of the Remove mysteriously.

"And that's precious little," remarked Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"If you only know Coker's little game," said Bunter. "I'm not going to say anything. I was going to warn you fellows. Now I won't."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Isn't Coker satisfied yet? And what's the jolly old game?" yawned Bob, as he kicked off his boots.

"I'm not going to tell you anything, Cherry," said Bunter, evidently in a state of offended dignity. "I may have heard Coker talking about it to Potter and Greene, and I may not. I may know all about it, and I may not. I'm not telling you anything. You can

jolly well bag a licking all round, one after the other, and serve you jolly well right."

"One after the other?" said Harry Wharton, staring at the Owl of the Remove. "What are you babbling about, Bunter?"

"After your rotten bad manners, Wharton, I decline to tell you anything," said Bunter. "Coker may have told Potter that he was going to keep his eye on you fellows, and catch you one at a time, and he may not. He may have said that he was going to catch you, with a cane, and wallop you one at a time. I'm not telling you anything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean it," said Bunter loftily. "I was going to tip you the wink. Now I won't!"

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

Billy Bunter sniffed, and rolled into bed, still in a state of offended dignity, and determined not to put the Famous Five on their guard. It did not seem to dawn on his fat brain that he had already told them all that he had to tell.

"So old Coker's taking to strategy in his old age," chuckled Bob Cherry. "He's found us rather too much to handle in a bunch, and he's going to interview us one at a time—with a cane! Dear old Coker."

"I think I can see him catching us napping!" said Harry Wharton laughing.

"The napfulness will not be terrific."

"I think we shall be wide awake," said Harry. "In fact, if he's looking for a chance to interview us one at a time, we may as well give him a chance, tomorrow."

"Eh! Coker's a bit hefty for one of you fellows to tackle on his lonesome," said the Bounder.

"But some other fellows might turn up at the giddy psychological moment," said the captain of the Remove. "Coker might possibly walk into a trap—and wake up a hornet's nest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

And after lights out in the Remove dormitory, there was some discussion before the Remove went to sleep, on the subject of Horace Coker. The great Horace had evidently learned that the Famous Five were a little too hefty for him to deal with, in bulk, as it were. Even Coker of the Fifth could see—after a time—anything that was absolutely obvious. Coker was adopting strategy. But the heroes of the Remove could be strategic, also. It remained to be seen whether the strategic Coker would score a success, or whether he would be out-manceuvred by the merry Removites. The impression of Harry Wharton & Co. was that he would.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Change in the Programme!

HORACE COKER'S eyes glinted. They fixed upon Harry Wharton, of the Remove, as they glinted.

It was the following day, and classes were over at Greyfriars, and the winter dusk was falling on the old quadrangle and the grey old buildings.

Coker was walking in the quad on his own. Potter and Greene had missed him somehow after class. Probably they would find him again by tea-time. In fact, it was certain they would. When Coker stood tea, they stood Coker. But for the present, they had somehow or other missed him; and

Coker was taking a little stroll on his lonesome own, with his great thoughts bottled up for want of hearers.

He frowned as he saw Wharton—and frowned again as he saw him again. Wharton, certainly, did not seem to notice Coker. But he crossed Coker's path once, he crossed it twice, and he crossed it a third time, just as if he really desired to draw the attention of the great Horace. Perhaps he did.

Coker's eyes glinted at Wharton, as the junior, at last, started off on a walk towards the Cloisters. Coker's powerful brain did not work quickly. But it worked. It was borne in upon Coker's mind that this was the opportunity he had been asking.

Wharton—all by himself—was going into the dusky Cloisters. Very likely going out of bounds by way of the Cloister wall, Coker thought—anyhow, there he was, sauntering away into the loneliest and most secluded spot within the precincts of Greyfriars. The old Cloisters were always rather solitary; after dark they were absolutely deserted. It was Coker's chance at last. And Coker started on the trail of that reckless junior, with his stick under his arm.

Let it not be supposed for a moment that Coker was a bully, or a fellow to bear a grudge. Nothing of the kind. Coker would have punched any fellow who had called him a bully; and he would have been quite disgusted at being supposed capable of nourishing a grudge, especially against so negligible a person as a Lower Fourth junior. Any other big senior who had followed a junior into a lonely spot for the purpose of thrashing him, might have been suspected of bullying and bearing grudges. Not Coker! Coker always acted from the loftiest motives. If his conduct happened, at any time, to resemble that of a fellow who acted from rotten motives, it was merely one of those cases of accidental resemblance that do occur occasionally.

Nothing would have induced Coker to bully a junior like, for instance, Loder or Carne of the Sixth. Nothing could have induced him to nurse malice like Angel of the Fourth, or Skinner of the Remove. Coker was incapable of such things. He was going to thrash the Famous Five of the Remove because they deserved it, and it was for their ultimate good. Fags had to be taught to respect their elders and betters. He was going to thrash them singly because, when they were taken in the bunch, they had the unparalleled impudence to resist. Scrapping with fags was miles beneath the dignity of Horace Coker.

A good thrashing all round was exactly what that cheeky set of juniors wanted; what they had asked for—in fact, begged and prayed for. There was no question of a grudge. Coker would have despised the bare thought of such a thing. He was acting from a sense of duty, from a sense of the dignity of the Fifth Form—from all sorts of high-minded motives. Possibly a junior who was thrashed might feel no better if the thrasher acted from a high motive than if he acted from a low motive. From the point of view of the thrashee, so to speak, it came to much the same thing. But Coker's conscience was clear, and that was the important point. What the thrashed junior thought was a matter of the most trivial kind.

So Horace Coker, with his stick under his arm, walked on the trail of Harry Wharton, with vengeance in his eye.

He was glad that he had a stick with

Here's a Topping Christmas Gift!

The CHAMPION ANNUAL is a wonderful big budget of the most thrilling, nerve-tingling adventure yarns you've ever read. There is a one-act play, and a host of useful hints as well. Make sure you get it for Christmas!

6/- net.



him. Punching a junior was rather like bullying. Smacking him was a little undignified. Giving him "six" was the right and proper thing, in the manner of a prefect—and Coker, of course, would have been a prefect if Dr. Locke had known how to manage a school as well as Coker could have taught him.

Harry Wharton did not look back as he wandered into the lonely, dusky Cloisters.

Coker followed him cautiously, afraid that the junior might dodge away into the shadows; but Wharton showed no sign of dodging.

No doubt he heard sounds of pursuit, in spite of Coker's caution, and knew that the great man of the Fifth was on the trail.

The captain of the Remove disappeared into the Cloisters, and Coker grinned as he followed him in.

Under the old stone arches the junior was scarcely to be seen, but Coker heard his footsteps ahead.

He chuckled softly.

Wharton, for whatever reason, was going on right to the end, near the old tower—absolutely the loneliest spot in all the school precincts—just as if he were playing into Coker's hands. Very likely going to break bounds—a matter in which Coker would have interfered, anyhow. Coker of the Fifth never minded his own business, but he was always prepared to mind anybody else's.

Wharton stopped at last and looked round him in the silent old Cloister. Coker came on with a rapid stride.

"Hallo! Who's that?" called out the junior, as the burly figure of Horace Coker loomed up in the dusk.

"You young rascal!"

"Coker, what?" smiled Wharton.

"Exactly!"

Coker slipped the stick from under his arm into his hand and came nearer. There was a cheery grin on his rugged face.

"Ready?" he asked.

"That depends," said Harry. "Ready for what?"

"For a licking!"

"Not quite, thanks," said Wharton. "There's one thing you can do for me, Coker, if you'll be so kind."

"Well, what's that?"

"Take your face away. Your features worry me!"

Coker breathed hard.

"I've had a lot of cheek from you and the other fags, Wharton," he said. "I think I've mentioned that I'm going to take it out of you. You can cheek some seniors; you can't cheek me. I've rather a short way with fags."

"Go hon!"

"Bend over!" said Coker in a magisterial manner.

"Bend over?" repeated the captain of the Remove.

"Yes. Sharp's the word! I'm going to give you six!" said Coker. "If you give me any more back-chat I'll make it a dozen! See?"

"And suppose I don't bend over?" asked Wharton cheerfully.

"In that case, I shall take you by the collar and thrash you till you do," exclaimed Coker. "I'm going to get the whole mob of you into order, you know, and I'm beginning with you as the ringleader. Now, are you going to bend over, Wharton?"

"I think not."

"Last time of asking!" snapped Coker. "Bend over."

"Bow-wow!"

Horace Coker wasted no more time in words. He rushed at the junior and grasped him by the collar.

Harry Wharton returned grasp for grasp. But the Lower Fourth junior would not have had much chance against the big Fifth-Former. He shouted as he struggled.

"Show up, you fellows!"

"This way!" bawled the voice of Bob Cherry.

"On the ball!"

"Collar him!"

There was a sudden rush of footsteps.

The dusky Cloisters, which had seemed quite deserted and silent as the grave, were suddenly peopled with juniors. From the shadows on all sides Removites rushed on Coker.

"Why, what—what—" stuttered Coker.

Six or seven pairs of hands were on him the next moment. Coker's stick was grabbed from his grasp, and the great Horace went over with a crash on the stone flags.

Removites sprawled over him.

"You young villains!" roared Coker, struggling wildly.

"Collar him!"

"Sit on him!"

"Down with Coker!"

Coker struggled frantically. His brain was in a whirl. Where all these juniors had sprung from all of a sudden in the lonely Cloisters was a mystery to him. His powerful intellect had not grasped the fact that he had been led into a trap.

(Continued on page 26.)

Good News!



"Let's see the COLOURS!"

THESE boys are all aglow with excitement over The New Meccano in Colours. The Plates enamelled in red and the Braced Girders in green, in combination with the shining steel Strips and bright brass Gear and Pulley-Wheels, give a wonderful appearance to Meccano Bridges, Towers, Cranes, and the hundreds of other real engineering models that only Meccano can build.

The principle of the Meccano system is the same as before—just as fascinating and ingenious—but the new colours are a fine improvement.

Send for the New Meccano Book in Colours

The New Meccano Book tells you all about it—in colours.

This Book will be sent you free if you send a postcard to Meccano Ltd., Dept. 35, Binns Road, Liverpool, and mention the names and addresses of three chums. Ask for the book about NEW Meccano in Colours.

PRICE LIST OF NEW MECCANO OUTFITS

No.	00	Outfit.	-	-	-	-	Price	3/6
No. 0		"	-	-	-	-	"	5/0
No. 1		"	-	-	-	-	"	8/6
No. 2		"	-	-	-	-	"	15/0
No. 3		"	-	-	-	-	"	22/6
No. 4		"	-	-	-	-	"	40/0
No. 5		"	(carton)	-	-	-	"	55/0
No. 5		"	(cabinet)	-	-	-	"	85/0
No. 6		"	(carton)	-	-	-	"	105/0
No. 6		"	(cabinet)	-	-	-	"	140/0
No. 7		"	(cabinet)	-	-	-	"	370/0

THE NEW MECCANO

MANUFACTURED BY
MECCANO LTD : BINNS RD : LIVERPOOL

BURNED SLICK ON THE DRAW! They'd just as soon draw a bead on a stranger as look at him down at Wolf Point, as Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake soon discover! And these gunmen are likely to be Locke and Drake's close neighbours while the celebrated detective is engaged on his latest case—

The MYSTERY of FLYING V RANCH!



The Opening Chapters of a Thrilling Wild West Mystery Story, featuring **FERRERS LOCKE**, Detective, and his Clever Boy Assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

CHAPTER ONE.

The Man from the Flying V.

WAAL, I guess I've come a few thousand miles to see yuh, Mister Locke, and, by cripes, I'm real glad to hev hitched up with yuh at last! Say, it's sure a long trail from th' Flying V ranch, Texas, to Baker Street, Lunnion, but here I am, all fine and dandy!"

Ferrers Locke, the world-famous detective, smiled, and indicated a chair for his visitor.

"I received your letter this morning, Mr. Herman. Will you sit down?"

"Sure!" drawled the other.

He was a tall, gaunt man, with sun-tanned features and level grey eyes. A stiff linen collar, several sizes too large and adorned with a vivid flowing tie, encircled his scraggy brown neck. He was clad in a roomy and ill-fitting lounge suit, the trousers ends of which came well down over a pair of bright yellow shoes.

He looked acutely self-conscious, and, digging at his collar with a lean forefinger, burst out:

"Say, mister, these glad rags hev sure got me real locoed! When I left the Flying V I was aimin' to come in my ridin' pants and shirt! But, say, them cattle-wallopers sure luffed fit to burst their blamed hides, drat 'em! Say, if I look as crazy a hombre as I feels, that blamed tailor in Third Avenue, Noo York, is sure gonna get a scare from me when I arrives back! But, say, let's get right down to tin-tacks! Yuh've got my letter, then?"

"Yes," replied Ferrers Locke. "Posted yesterday evening in Southampton. You merely stated that you wished to see me to-day, urgently!"

"Yep, that's right! Yuh'll 'souse any flapdoodle spellin' in that letter, but I ain't a hombre what's great shakes with a pen! Waal, I guess urgent is the word, Mister Locke! Men's dying right now out there on the Flying V, and I'm here to ask yuh to come and stop it! Say, we alone?"

"Why?"

The other squinted carefully round the room, then, in a low voice, he said: "Mister, I've gotta story to tell, and in the telling of it there maybe lurks death for me! I ain't afeard of death, but I wanna be sartain that there ain't

no ears but your'n lis'ening to what I'm aiming to say! Get me?"

Ferrers Locke nodded, and pressed a bell on his desk. A moment later his boy assistant, Jack Drake, entered the room.

"Sit down, Jack!" murmured the detective; then, turning to the visitor, he added: "This is my assistant. He is absolutely in my confidence, and I should like him to hear what you have to say. With the exception of ourselves no one can possibly overhear you, and we shall be undisturbed till I care to ring!"

"As you say, Mister Locke," was the reply. "With your ga'rantee, th' lad can lis'en, and welcome! Waal, say, it's like this! My name's Hank Herman, and I owns the Flying V ranch. Next to me is Jake Peter's ranch, the Double R; and on t'other side o' me the Bar 8 ranch, owned by Cal Jefferson. Ol' Silas Caister owns the fourth ranch; and I reckon that accounts for all th' territory for a few hun'erd miles around! Waal, say, up to 'bout a year ago everything was dandering along fine. Good round-ups of good cattle; no shootings, no rustlings, no nothing! Peace an' plenty in th' land, as 'twere, and everything as fine as a schoolmarm's picnic. Waal, most 'bout a year ago five hun'erd steers was rustled off'n Jake Peter's ranch. My, he hit the trail for the sheriff like as though a blamed sidewinder had bitten him!"

He paused, and drew a deep breath.

"We fair honeycombed th' country with five separate and distinct posses, but not a sign of nuthing, nowhere," he continued. "Then, 'bout a month later, Cal Jefferson's foreman and a cow-hand was shot dead when ridin' on a buggy to Wolf Point, the nearest township, for th' mail! Say, that was a senseless shootin', for them lads never done no harm to nobody! Then ol' Caister, of th' Caister Ranch, lost over a hun'erd head of cattle one night, and not a sign nowhere! 'Sides that, he had three fellers shot dead! My, a Mexican gunman wouldn't hev shot from outa th' dark like them fellers did what killed them three!"

"They were probably shot in defendin' the steers," said the detective.

"Nosir, they was not! They was up at the bunkhouse, and nowhere near the steers! Playing cards they was, and

shot from the window by some hombres outside! Waal, to get on, we've all hed trouble! Me, I've hed my nevvie shot and four men. Done in cold blood, mister, and the death-roll numbers nigh on thirty now! Say, this ain't no case of plain cattle rustling! Nosir, it sure is not; and for why?"

The speaker paused dramatically, then slapped a small piece of pasteboard, about the size of a visiting-card, on to the table.

"That's for why, mister! Say, what yuh make of that?"

Ferrers Locke picked up the card. It was entirely bare of lettering, but on one side was a rough sketch of a wolf's head, with bared fangs.

"After ev'ry shootin'," went on Hank, without waiting for Locke to answer, "a card like that is left, either on th' body or is pinned to the wall of the bunkhouse! Say, why? When my nevvie was shot I found that blamed card sticking to my door th' next mornin'! Waal, things got so bad that we all put our heads together for to trap this hombre what was pulling this stuff! But, say, that guy was sure wise to us! He warn't walking into no traps, and I'm tellin' yuh, mister, that not one of us has ever see'd either him or his men! Nosir, not a shadder of 'em! That guy knows our plans! Once us ranchers held a secret meeting, and on'y us and the sheriff was there. We decided to send Cal's son to Dry Spring for Sheriff Tyler, a feller what never had failed to bring in his man! Say, Cal's boy was shot stone dead that night, and Tyler was plugged through the forehead first night in our territory after he'd come in disguise, as we telled him by letter!"

"Have you any idea at all as to the motives of the man who is behind these attacks?" asked the detective.

Hank spread out his hands in a hopeless gesture, and shrugged his shoulders wearily.

"Nope! We hev not!" he replied. "Guess there don't seem no sense nor reason in it! If on'y we could spot the guy, or even get a cloo; but there's nuthin'—jest nuthin'!"

The detective was silent for a few moments.

"You mentioned something about riskin' death by being here?" he said, at length.

"Yessir, I did! We met again in secret, us ranchers, and decided to appeal to yuh! I was to come and see yuh and ask yuh if yuh'll find this guy for us! Waal, I'm figurin' that, seeing as how this hombre sure knows our plans, it's quite on th' cards that he'll be laying for me same as he laid for Cal's boy! What I mean to say is this, mister. If he knows—and he sure seems to know everything—that I hev come here to ask yuh to take charge of this case, then yuh or me, or both of us, is liable to stop a blamed bullet any minit! See?"

Ferrers Locke smiled faintly.

"Yes, I see," he replied. "And what exactly is your proposition to me?"

"Mister," said Hank hoarsely, "if yuh'll come out to th' Flying V, and brand and hogtie this maverick for us, waal, yuh sure can name yu'r own price! Say, we've heard of yuh, hev us ranchers, and if there's one feller what can handle this job, then that feller's yuhself!"

The detective bowed gravely. There was no mistaking the sincerity in the other's voice.

"I'm interested," he said. "Is there anything else you can tell me about this mysterious gunman?"

"Nopce!" Hank shook his head. "I reckon we know nuthin', 'cept that these gosh blamed things jest happen! Say, mister, there is one thing! We've sure found steers with their throats torn same as by a wolf! Nary a bit o' th' carcass eaten at all. Jest the throat torn plumb right out, and the pore critters stone dead!"

"And, I take it, the card bearing the wolf's head is left at the scene of these outrages?"

Hank nodded.

"Yep, most ev'rytime! Say, there don't seem no sense nor reason to it! Mister, are yuh on?"

Ferrers Locke tapped thoughtfully on his desk with a pencil, and Drake eyed him shrewdly.

"Mister Locke," went on Hank pleadingly, "yuh're sure not aiming to say 'No' after I've come all this blamed distance to find yuh! Say, th' boys is 'pecting yuh, and I'd feel real low down and onery to tell 'em yuh'd turned us down! Mister, name yu'r price!"

"It's not a question of price which makes me hesitate," said the detective. "I just want to be sure that this is not just an ordinary case of cattle rustling with a few trimmings to it. These shootings you speak of might easily have been done by the rustlers in order to terrorise your men!"

Hank jumped to his feet and crashed his scraggy—but hard as iron—fist down on the desk.

"Nosir, that it's not!" he snapped. "By gosh, if it were on'y rustlers we could sure smell 'em out! There's one man behind all this, and it's him we want! We wanta know his game! We want that hombre corralled well an' good! Say, me, nor Silas, nor Cal, nor Jake, ain't gotta en'my in th' world, 'cept this gosh blamed Wolf, and, by cripes, we'll give ev'ry head o' cattle we've got to hev him at th' foot of a tree with a running noose round his neck!"

"Look here, Mr. Herman!" remarked Locke, after a pause. "I'll tell you what I'll do! Give me till this afternoon to consider the case carefully. I will ring you up at your hotel, and let you know my decision. I have a lot of work on hand just now, but, I may say, the case appeals to me!"

"Waal, I'm located at a saloon called

th' Charing Cross Hotel," replied Hank slowly. "And I reckon yuh'll get me there most any time, mister! I'll be vamoosing right now, but I'll be real pleased to hear yuh say yuh'll come!"

"I will let you know as soon as possible," replied the famous detective. "But, in any case, I can assure you that your journey will not have been in vain. If I find that I cannot handle the case, I will give you letters of introduction to one or two good men, one of whom, I am sure, will be pleased to handle the case!"



FERRERS
LOCKE
IN TEXAS!

"We want you, mister!" replied Hank gruffly. "And I'll be real anxious till I hear from yuh! Waal, good-bye!"

He shook hands with Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, and took his departure, obviously somewhat disappointed at the result of his visit.

"Well, my lad, and how would you like a trip to Texas?" asked Locke, when he and his assistant were alone.

"I'd like it no end, guv'nor!"

"H'm! Well, we'll see!" grunted Ferrers Locke. "It seems a peculiar case."

Fang of the Wolf!

IT was exactly half an hour later when the telephone-bell trilled shrilly in Ferrers Locke's office.

He picked up the receiver, and, in response to his "Hallo!" a voice said: "Charing Cross Hospital speaking! A man has been knocked down by a car. He has been brought here, and is asking for Mr. Ferrers Locke!"

"It is Locke speaking. Who is the man?"

"He gives his name as Herman!"

The detective started.

"Is he badly hurt?" he asked quickly.

"Yes; he wants you urgently!"

"Right! I'll be along at once!" snapped Ferrers Locke.

Replacing the receiver, he jumped to his feet, and, within a few minutes, his high-powered car was swinging towards Charing Cross Hospital.

Reaching the building, he was ushered up into a ward. A doctor and nurse were bending over Hank, who was lying in bed, his face pale and drawn beneath the tan. At sight of Locke his eyes lit up and his bloodless lips twisted into a faint smile.

"He wants to see you alone, Mr. Locke. You can have just five minutes with him!"

The detective nodded, and the doctor and nurse withdrew. Then, drawing up a chair, Ferrers Locke sat down by the side of the bed.

"I'm real—real glad yuh've come, mister!" whispered Hank jerkily. "Say, they've gotten me, jest—jest like I figured they would!"

"Who? You mean the Wolf?"

"Yep! Him, or—or his agents!"

"But how do you associate him with your accident? Tell me what happened!"

Hank grinned mirthlessly, then went on in a stronger voice:

"Mister, I sure ain't spilling no school-marm's fancies when I tells yuh it warn't no accident. I—I was jest crossing th' road to my hotel when, by gosh, a—a blamed car what I'd kinda noticed crawling 'long near the sidewalk, sud'nly whipped up speed and ketched me fair an' square wi' th' off mudguard. Say, did she stop? Nosir, yuh betcha life she didn't! She sure kept right on! Waal, thet don't prove nuthin'; but, say, on th' bonnet of—of thet car was fixed a—a mascot! On th' ra-ra—"

"Radiator?" suggested Locke.

"Yessir, thet's him! On th' radiator was fixed a mascot! Gee, I guess I was sure dead from th' neck up for not connectin' that mascot with the Wolf!" His voice sank, and he whispered hoarsely: "Mister, thet mascot was shaped like a wolf's head—ay, a wolf's head wi' bared fangs! Like as two peas to th' wolf's head on th' cards us fellers hev found way back in th' Flying V country!"

"Go on!" said Ferrers Locke grimly.

"Once, mister, I read in a readin'-book sumthin' about a thing called coincidence—"

"Coincidence?"

"Yessir, that's him, coincidence! Waal, yuh can take it from me, mister, that this warn't no coincidence! Nosir, she shure warn't! Th' hombre in that car was lyin' for me, an', by gosh, he got me! Th' doctor telled me that th' perlice will sure rope in that guy, an' say, I wunner if they hev?"

"I'll find out, if you'll excuse me a second!" remarked Ferrers Locke, rising to his feet. "I may say, Mr. Herman, that I'm beginning to feel that this is a bigger case than it at first appeared!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

He left the ward, and returned a few minutes later.

"I have seen the doctor," he said, resuming his seat, "and he has granted me a further five minutes with you! I have also rung up Scotland Yard, and the car which knocked you down—a long, low, aluminium car—has been discovered in a side street near Victoria Station, abandoned!"

"No sign o' the coyote what was drivin'?" inquired Hank ruefully.

"No," replied the detective. "But," he added grimly, "Scotland Yard informed me that the mascot of the car had been unscrewed and was missing when the car was found!"

"An' don't that prove it, mister?" cried Hank excitedly. "Don't that prove that sumthin' hangs to that wolf's head mascot? Gee, if on'y I'd guessed when I see'd the car crawlin' 'long! But, say, I reckon th' fang o' th' Wolf is long, mister, to strike here, plumb in th' centre o' Lunnun!"

The detective nodded, and said slowly:

"Yes, the fang of the Wolf must indeed be long to strike in the heart of peaceful, law-abiding London."

"An' what yuh figure to do now, mister?" inquired Hank anxiously. "Aw say, cain't yuh see this thing goes plumb deeper'n onery cattle rustlin'?"

Ferrers Locke thoughtfully rubbed his chin as suddenly he jumped to his feet.

"Yes, you're right! It goes much deeper than that!" he declared, and there was a light of battle in his steely grey eyes. "Well, I'm on. I'll handle this case, and find this Wolf for you!"

"Gee!" muttered Hank delightedly. "That's shore th' goods, mister. Jest bring him in! That's all, mister—jest bring him in! Us fellers'll do th' rest!"

The Gunman of Wolf Point!

FERRERS LOCKE and Jack left Waterloo Station that night en route for Southampton, where, by wire, the detective had booked two berths on the s.s. *Artemia*, which was sailing for New York at midnight.

Hank's injuries had not proved so severe as was at first thought, and he was being well cared for at Charing Cross Hospital. Ferrers Locke and Jack had spent an hour with him during the afternoon, and had drawn up a rough plan of campaign.

The detective and his assistant were to go to the Flying V ranch, posing as an Englishman and his nephew who were desirous of learning the essentials of ranching, with a view to purchasing a ranch somewhere in Texas.

They were armed with letters of introduction from Hank, these letters to be shown only to Silas Caister, Jake Peters, and Cal Jefferson. These were the only men in the secret of Locke's identity. For the benefit of Hank's foreman, Locke had a letter from Hank instructing the foreman and his man to show Mr. Henderson—the name the sleuth was assuming—and his nephew the various points connected with the running of a ranch, and to treat them as guests of Hank till the latter should return.

"It would be fatal," remarked Ferrers Locke, as the train thundered through the night, "to underestimate the intelligence of this mysterious Wolf. These level-headed ranchers are no fools, and a man who can cover his tracks as he has done is possessed of more than ordinary intelligence and ingenuity."

"I wonder what his name is?" mused

Jack. "There's one thing certain, and that is that if he knows we're bound for the Flying V, he'll have a pot at us between here and there."

"Yes, it's possible," replied Locke. "On the other hand," he added grimly, "he might wait till we get there and then see about removing us. I have a feeling, Jack, that this is going to be as tough a proposition as we've yet tackled."

The journey, however, proved uneventful, and about a fortnight later Ferrers Locke and Jack descended from the train at the little wayside station of Three Hills, the nearest point at which the railroad approached to the Flying V country.

A man who combined the duties of station-master, head telegraph clerk, and ticket-collector, volunteered the information that they could get the mail coach as far as Wolf Point, and, two hours later, they arrived at that dust-ridden little township.

A group of loungers, outside the one ramshackle hotel which Wolf Point boasted, watched with interest as they descended from the coach.

"Can you tell me if there is a livery stable about here?" asked Locke of one of the men.

The latter was a lean, wiry-looking fellow, with face tanned the colour of leather. Two full gun-holsters swung low, almost to his knees, and two cold blue eyes took stock of Locke and Jack in a slow, calculating manner, which had in it more than a hint of insolence.

"I asked you a question," snapped the detective.

"Sure, I heard yuh, stranger," drawled the gunman. "Say, lemme ask yuh one. Where've yuh blown in from?"

For a long moment the two men stared steadily into each other's eyes, then Ferrers Locke said coldly:

"That is entirely my own affair."

"Aw, is thasso?" drawled the other, but an angry light leapt for an instant into his eyes, then, turning to the rest of the loiterers, he sneered: "Fresh guy, ain't he?"

"He sure is, Bud!" replied one, whilst the others laughed ramblingly.

With a sign to Jack, Ferrers Locke picked up his suitcase and pushed past the gunman towards the hotel doorway. But the latter stretched out a hand and, gripping the detective's arm in a clutch which told of the strength in the lean fingers, drawled:

"Jest a minit, stranger!"

"What do you want?" demanded Locke with ominous calm.

"I jest wanna inform yuh thet Wolf Point cain be plumb unhealthy for strangers who's middle name is sass! Get me?"

"Yes, I get you!" snapped Locke, putting down his suitcase. "And let me tell you something. You can keep that rough stuff for some poor simp who'll stand for it. Take your hand off me!"

The gunman grinned slowly, mirthlessly.

"Gee, stranger!" he murmured. "Yuh're sure askin' fer what's comin' to yuh!"

His hand released his grip on Locke's arm and snaked for his gun. Within the fraction of a second he had whipped it from the holster, and it was jammed into the detective's chest. And still that mirthless smile curled his thin lips.

"Waal, how's thet feel, stranger?" he drawled.

"Steady, Bud!" warned one of the loungers. "Don't het up no trouble that away!"

"Aw, shet yu'r face!" snarled the gun-

man. "I'm aimin' to larn this feller a lesson!"

Jack had put down his suitcase, and he took a careless step forward.

"Stay jest right where yuh aro, son!" gritted Bud. "I've gotta 'nother gun!"

Jack halted. Locke glanced at him from the corners of his eyes, and for an instant their gaze met. But in that instant had passed a look of understanding.

"Say, stranger, jest watch my trigger finger," crooned Bud. "I'm sure aimin' to see jest how hard I cain press wi'out shootin'. Say, if I'm miscalculatin' any, yu're sure gonna be unlucky. I figure thet—"

He got no farther, for without warning, Jack whipped into action. He crashed full into Bud, and at the same instant Locke hurled himself to one side. The automatic exploded, the bullet burying itself in the dust. The gunman staggered and fell heavily, with Jack on top of him. Half-winded, he lay for a moment glaring up at the boy, his eyes full of a cold fury. There was something terrible in that cruel, merciless glare, and Jack realised, with a peculiar thrill, that he was looking into the eyes of a killer.

His hand groped swiftly along the gunman's leg until he felt the butt of the second gun. His fingers closed on it, and, whipping it out, he sprang to his feet. Ferrers Locke had picked up the other gun, and was holding it carelessly in his hand, although his eyes never strayed for more than the fraction of a second from the group of loungers who had become strangely silent and tense.

Slowly Bud got to his feet. Slowly and deliberately he dusted himself down. Then he spoke, and his voice was harsh and strained.

"Mister," he said, "gimme thet gun an' I'll giv' yuh an hour to get outa Wolf Point alive! Yuh an' th' kid!"

"Thanks!" replied Locke. "But I shall stay here just as long as I like! As for your gun, here it is!"

With a rapid movement he emptied the chamber of the automatic and threw it at Bud's feet, slipping the shells into his own pocket. Jack did the same, and the gunman stooped and picked up his two empty guns. Slipping them into his holsters, he gritted:

"Strangers, yuh've shore signed up wi' death! I'll come a-shootin' afore daylight t'morrow!"

Without deigning to reply, Ferrers Locke picked up his suitcase, and, with Jack, entered the ramshackle hotel.

A low growl came from the loiterers, but not one of them offered the slightest hint at any further molestation.

The Second Encounter!

A SLOVENLY individual, in dilapidated carpet slippers, and in his shirt-sleeves, shuffled forward to meet the detective and Jack.

"Kinda tho't there was gonna be sum shootin'!" he grinned, displaying a row of broken, tobacco-stained teeth. "Guess when Bud gets busy, us hombres shore dive fer cover!"

"Oh, so you saw that little affair, then?" remarked Locke casually.

"Shore!" drawled the other. "See'd it from th' crack in th' doorway! Stranger, I guess yuh trod blamed near th' trail what leads to th' cemet'ry! Gosh, Bud won't fergit, neither!"

"Who is he?" inquired the detective, with an air of indifference.

The man shook his head and leered knowingly.

"Guess thet's what's fair ticklin' to



From somewhere close at hand there sounded a vicious report of a gun. Crack! With a wild piercing cry, the gunman spun round. Then the gun dropped from his nerveless hand and he crashed to the ground. (See Page 26.)

death a heap o' fellers round this way! Jest drifted in casual one night from jest nowhere! But say, he's th' slickest guy on th' draw what ever plugged a bullet in Wolf Point! Gee, he's gone fer his gun and fired 'fore most guys hev groped fer theirs! Stranger, he's quicker'n lightning is that guy!"

Locke nodded. He did not wish to appear unduly inquisitive, and contented himself with saying:

"Well, all we want here is a wash and brush-up and some grub! Is there a livery-stable about here where we can hire a couple of horses?"

"Yep, shore; jest down th' street a lil' way. Ol' Crib Smithers'll fix yuh up. Goin' ridin', stranger?"

The question came with ill-concealed curiosity, but Locke answered affably:

"Yes; were going out as far as the Flying V!"

"Aimin' to see ol' Hank Herman, maybe? Say, he ain't at home!"

The detective knew perfectly well that anything he told the fellow, who seemed to be the hotel proprietor, would soon travel round Wolf Point. So he answered without hesitation:

"Yes, I know he is away. My nephew and I are going to stay there, with his permission, in order to learn ranching. I'm thinking about taking a ranch if the life appeals to me!"

"Aw, that's fine, mister! Reckon I didn't quite ketch your name!"

"Henderson!" replied Locke, smiling in spite of himself.

"Waal, I'm real glad yuh ain't aimin' to stay here, Mister Henderson, an' that's a fact," replied the other. "Say, us don't want no shootin' here, an' it's shore honest to goodness fact thet Bud will come a-gunnin' fer yuh! Other-

wise, o' course, I'd be real glad to hev yuh!"

"Thanks! That's awf'ly good of you!" replied the sleuth dryly. "Well, with your permission we'll have a wash and some grub!"

"Shore, come this way!" responded the man, having now learned all that he could.

He led the way to a primitive wash-house situated at the rear of the premises, and, after fishing a bar of yellow soap and a half-washed towel from out of a cupboard, he left the detective and Jack to themselves.

They enjoyed the luxury of a good cold water wash, and, as he dried his face vigorously, Locke murmured:

"I rather fancy that gunnian tried a frame-up on us, Jack! We'll discuss nothing here, however! Keep your eyes open. I think there'll be trouble before we get out of Wolf Point!"

The slovenly individual stuck his head in at the door.

"Grub's ready, gents!" he announced; then added: "Say, yuh shore use some soap, misters! Ain't much left o' thet bar I give yuh!"

"No; we like a good wash occasionally!" commented Locke. "Most Englishmen do!"

"Huh! So yuh Britishers, hey?" replied the other. "I kinda reckoned yuh were!" And with this additional bit of information he led the way to a long, low-ceilinged, smelly dining-room.

The food—consisting of soup, meat, potatoes, cabbage, and chunks of bread and cheese—was tolerably well cooked, and Ferrers Locke and Jack fell to with gusto.

It was late by the time they had

finished, and as he handed them the bill, the hotel proprietor remarked:

"Reckon yuh'll never make th' Flyin' V till t'-morrow, gents!"

"Oh, we don't mind ridin' at night!" remarked the detective amiably. "May we leave our baggage here, and the ranch buggy will call for it?"

"Shore! Say, Bud's hangin' around!"

"Is he?" grunted Locke. "Well, as long as he just keeps hanging around there's not much harm done!"

"I've heard fellers say thet Britishers is plumb locoed," remarked the other plaintively, "and, by gosh, I believe them! Say, don't yuh get what I mean? 'That hombre's waitin' around with a gun!'"

"How extremely interesting!" murmured Locke. "Well, come on, lad, we'll see if we can get a couple of horses at the livery-stable!"

Together he and Jack sauntered through the doorway of the hotel. As the door closed behind them the proprietor of the shanty streaked for the window, and glued his nose to the pane.

Darkness had fallen, the semi-darkness of a starry Texas night, but two large illuminated hotel signs lit up that part of the dusty street as though it were daylight.

Men were lounging around the doorway and against the hitching-rail. They turned and stared at Locke and Jack as the latter emerged from the hotel, and their rumble of conversation died away.

Ferrers Locke's right hand was in his jacket-pocket, his fingers curled round a small automatic. Jack was similarly

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 981.

armed, and his hand, also, was stuck casually into his coat-pocket.

As though unconscious of the curious and sullen stares, Locke and Jack turned down the street in the direction of Crib Smithers' stables. Then, from out of the darkness beyond the artificial light of the illuminated signs, appeared the figure of Bud. Straight towards Locke and Jack he came, with grim, deliberate tread. His hands hung loosely at his sides just above where the butts of his guns showed out of their holsters.

At a distance of five yards from them he halted. His head was thrust forward, and his voice came in harsh, metallic accents:

"Stand jest right where yuh are!"

The Fatal Shot!

THE crowd scattered and dived for cover leaving the detective and Jack standing alone. Locke's finger tightened on the trigger of his automatic. Both he and Jack could have shot the gunman where he stood. It was questionable whether either could have registered a fatal hit by firing from the pocket, but the distance was too short to have missed altogether.

"Put yu'r mitts up pronto!" gritted Bud.

Anxious to play the game out to the end, Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"No!" he said emphatically.

Like lightning, so quick was the movement, Bud's left hand whipped up, and he had Locke and Jack covered.

"I'm countin' three!" he snapped. "Then I fires!"

"Steady, Jack!" murmured Locke.

"One!"

The word fell tonelessly from the gunman's lips.

"Two!"

Ferrers Locke's finger increased its pressure on the trigger of his automatic.

"Th—"

The word was never finished. From somewhere close at hand there sounded a vicious report of a gun.

Crack!

With an expression of dismay on his features the gunman spun round. The gun dropped from his nerveless hand, and he crashed to the ground.

Ferrers Locke and Jack darted forward. The detective raised the man's head, and for a moment the fast-glazing eyes flickered open. He looked up at Locke, and chokingly fought for speech.

"I'm done!" he whispered. "Jest th' law of th' Wolf!"

"What do you mean, man?" demanded Locke hoarsely.

"I—I means thet—"

The words died away in a groan. A trickle of blood drooped from the corner of his mouth, and his head fell back with a jerk. Bud was dead.

Locke rose slowly to his feet. Men had gathered round in a silent, staring crowd.

"Who fired that shot?" asked Locke quietly.

"Reckon I did, mister!" replied a voice gruffly. The crowd parted as a grizzled, bearded man elbowed his way through and stood by Locke's side looking down at the dead gunman.

(Whoever this newcomer is he has certainly arrived at the right moment. Mind you make his acquaintance in next week's long instalment of this amazing new serial, chums.)

"COKER ON THE WAR-PATH!"

(Continued from page 21.)

Half the Greyfriars Remove seemed to be there. All the Famous Five were grappling with Coker, backed up by Peter Todd and Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing and Hazeldene and Squiff, and five or six more fellows. Horace Coker simply had no chance.

He was fairly flattened out on the stone flags, and the juniors sat on him and kept him there. Coker's struggles ceased, and his angry and indignant voice died away in gasps.

"Got him!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

"Gooooorrrrooooo!" spluttered Coker. "Gerroff! Oooooch!"

"Where's that stick?" asked Wharton cheerfully.

"Here you are!" chuckled Nugent.

Harry Wharton grasped Coker's stick.

"Are you ready, Coker?" he inquired.

"Grooooo!"

"Bend over!" said Wharton, amid yells of laughter from the Removites. "Lift him up and let him bend over, you men!"

Coker was dragged up. He began to struggle again, but there were so many hands on him that his struggles were quite useless. There was hardly room on Horace Coker for all the hands that grasped him. He stood swaying and gasping in the midst of the hilarious crowd of juniors.

"Are you going to bend over, Coker?"

"You cheeky young scoundrel!" roared Coker.

"Will you bend over?"

"No!" shrieked Coker.

"Then I shall have to take you by the collar and thrash you till you do," explained Wharton.

Coker spluttered with wrath. This repetition of his own words made the juniors yell with laughter; but Coker saw nothing to laugh at. He spluttered with rage.

"I'm going to got the whole mob of you into order," went on Wharton. "I'm beginning on you, Coker, as the ringleader."

"Now, are you going to bend over?"

Evidently Coker wasn't. He struggled and spluttered and gasped.

"Bend him over, you fellows," said the captain of the Remove.

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob.

Innumerable hands bent Coker over. He resisted desperately, but he resisted in vain.

"Keep clear, you chaps!"

Wharton swung up Coker's stick.

That stick had been brought to the spot to administer a thrashing.

Whack!

Coker roared and raved. His struggles were terrific. He—Coker of the Fifth—Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, the great Coker, was being licked! He was getting "six" from a

junior of the Lower Fourth! It was amazing—incredible—unnerving! Coker could scarcely believe that it was not some fearful dream. But it felt real!

Whack!

"Oh! Ow! You young villains! Yoooooop!"

Whack!

The last of the six rang and echoed through the cloisters, but not so loudly as the fiendish yell that followed it.

"Yaroooooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's six!" said the captain of the Remove. "I hope this lesson will not be lost on you, Coker. I trust that it will do you good!" Wharton was speaking in the ponderous style of Mr. Prout. "You are an obstreperous fellow, Coker—an unruly fellow. You have given me a great deal of trouble. But I shall not be sorry if this leads you to amendment in the future! I shall expect better things of you, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"You—you—you— Ow! Wow!" spluttered Coker.

"Give him a few more!" yelled the Bounder.

"I think Coker's had enough; but I'll ask him! Have you had enough, Coker?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Kindly answer my question, Coker. Otherwise I shall proceed to administer further castigation."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young villain—yes!" gasped Coker, as Wharton lifted the stick. "Oh! Ow! Yes! Grooooo! Yes!"

"Then you may go, Coker, and remember that I look for a considerable improvement in you in the near future!" said the captain of the Remove, amid yells of merriment.

Horace Coker was released. He clenched his hands to rush on the yelling juniors.

"Now dribble him back to the House!" said Wharton.

"What-ho!"

"On the ball!"

Coker changed his mind about rushing at the Removites. He did not want to be dribbled back to the House. He started off at a wild run. Had anyone told Coker an hour before that he would ever have been running for his life, with a mob of juniors yelling in pursuit, Coker would have laughed the idea to scorn. Yet that was exactly what was happening now. He ran, and he ran hard—he came out into the quad like a racer, and streaked for the House leaving the Removites yelling behind.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Oh dear! Coker will be the death of me yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Coker!"

In the Remove passage that evening there were sounds of merriment. In Coker's study there were also sounds—loud sounds—but they were not of merriment. They were sounds of woe and wrath. The celebrated wrath of Achilles, to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered, was a mere jest compared with the wrath of Horace Coker. And the heroes of the Remove passed it by like the idle wind which they regarded not.

THE END.

(Now look out for "Missing From School!" next week's grand long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. and Horace Coker, of Greyfriars. It's a winner all the way!)

Don't miss reading the
TWO NEW NUMBERS
of the

"SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY"
ON SALE FRIDAY!

TO & FROM YOUR EDITOR

WHEN?

A READER from Gosport wants to know when we are going to have our Christmas Number. He doesn't give me his address, so I can only answer him through this Chat. Well, my chum, you'll be pleased to learn that our Christmas Number will be on the market in a fortnight's time. It'll be a bumper twopennyworth, take it from me. If you are wise you'll give an order for your MAGNET in good time, as there's bound to be a rush to secure it. Glad you liked the Indian series!

GOOD OLD DICKY!

A very breezy letter reaches me from a Liverpool chum who waxes enthusiastic about the first of the new series of Dicky Nugent shockers. He hopes it will be as good as its predecessors. By the time he sees this par my chum will have read something like three of these quaint Nugent yarns, and I feel sure he will admit that they are even better than the tales that amused him so much in the old days. If A. B., of Liverpool, writes to me again on this subject I shall be pleased to reply to him in a letter.

For Next Monday:

"MISSING FROM SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards.

That's the title of the next long complete story of your old favourites, Harry Wharion & Co. and Horace Coker, of Greyfriars. It's well up to standard, and I strongly urge you chaps to read it!

"THE MYSTERY OF FLYING V RANCH!"

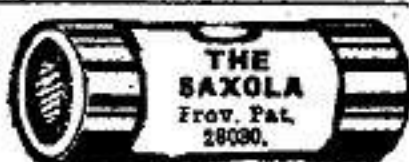
How do you like the opening chapters of this quick-action serial, chums? A postcard stating your views will be very acceptable. Meantime, look out for next Monday's grand instalment.

"THE GHOST OF MERRY MANNER!"

You'll enjoy Dicky Nugent's next story of Jack Jolly & Co. no end. Don't miss it whatever you do.

YOUR EDITOR.

A NEW PATENT POCKET INSTRUMENT THAT ANYONE CAN PLAY



Saxophone, Cornet, Clarionette, etc., imitated. Several players in harmony get wonderful jazz effects. How to ramp accompaniments to your tune, also how to learn voice production. See instructions given with each Saxola. May be had at all music stores, or direct from the makers. Post free, 8d. each. Better quality, 1s. 2d.

FIELD'S (Dept. 10), Bankfield Road, HUDDERSFIELD.

PEA PISTOLS

25 Shot Automatic Repeater, 2/3; "Bully Boy," 15 Shots, 1/9; "Broncho Bill," 10 Shots, 1/3. Each in box with supply of ammunition. Post free in Great Britain. Extra ammunition, 3d. per packet. Colonial post, 9d. extra on 25 shot. 3d. extra others. Cash returned if not satisfied.—THE ROMILLY MAIL ORDER CO., 20, Romilly Road, Finsbury Park, N.4.



HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete Course In ONE MONTH.

Without appliances—drugs—or dieting. THE FAMOUS CLIVE SYSTEM NEVER FAILS. Complete Course 5/- P.O. post free, or further particulars, stamp. P. A. CLIVE, Harreck House, The Close, COLWYN BAY.



JERUSALEM PACKET FREE!

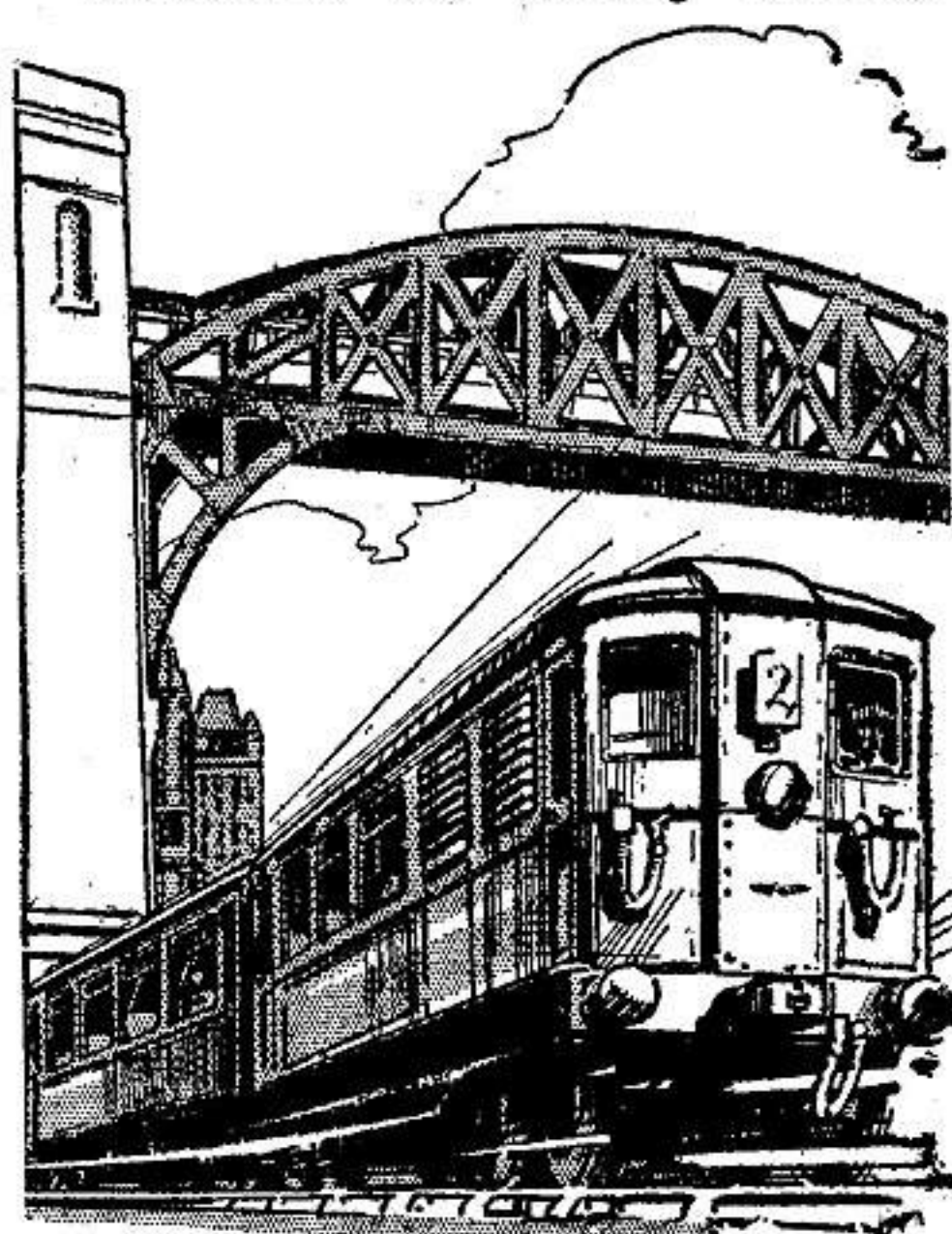
I present this month, with the Season's greetings, a collection rich in stamps of countries around the Holy Land. It includes: Palestine, Lebanon (Cedar Tree), Azerbaijan (quaint views), Syria (Ruins), Mesopotamia, Sudan (Travellers across the Desert), Morocco (Tower of Rabat), and many other fine varieties. Ask for Approvals.

VICTOR BANCROFT, MATLOCK.

£2,000 WORTH CHEAP PHOTO MATERIAL. — Samples catalogue free; 12 by 10 Enlargement, any photo, 8d. — HACKETT'S WORKS, July Road, LIVERPOOL.

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free. — FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.

—correct in every detail



BING ELECTRIC TRAINS

Bing Engines are perfectly constructed miniatures built by engineers. You can buy a whole system or build one by buying separately Engines, Rolling Stock, Tracks, Signals, Tunnels, Stations, etc. Call to-day at your nearest toy shop and ask for your copy of the complete Bing Catalogue of models. In addition to trains it illustrates Bing Magic Lanterns and Cinemas, Tractors, Stationary Engines, Dynamo Plants, Steam Rollers, etc., etc. In case of difficulty write to address below.



Look for this Brand Mark on all metal toys.



Send for free booklet

to
Bing Advertising Department 8,
Lincoln House, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1.



G.W. BRAKE VAN
Price 4/-

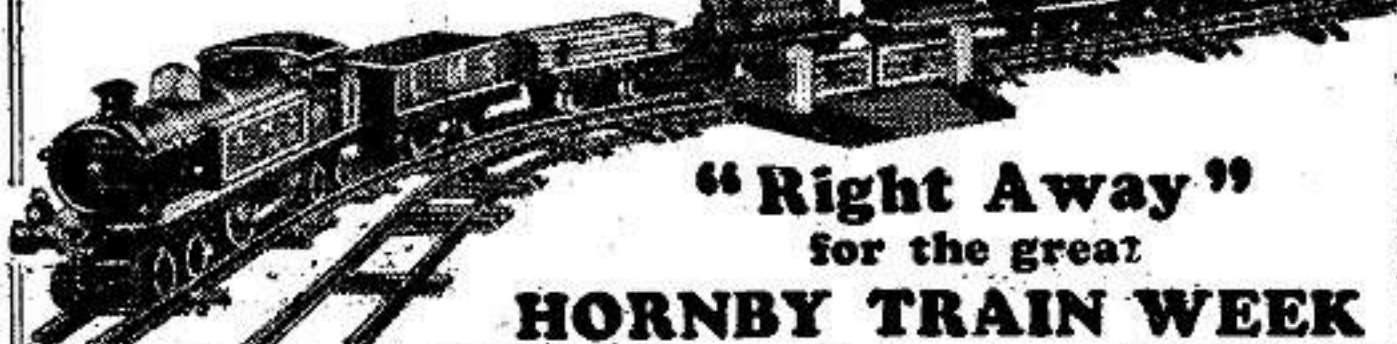


G.W. No. 1 LUGGAGE VAN
Price 4/-



Send for this fine Book
You must get a copy of this fine Book of forty-eight pages, beautifully printed in full colours. It tells you all about Locomotives, Railway Brakes, Signals, Etc. The Hornby Book of Trains only costs 3d. and may be obtained either at the shops or direct (post free) from the Hornby Train manufacturers, Meccano Ltd., Dept. (J), Binns Road, Liverpool.

BRITISH AND GUARANTEED



"Right Away"
for the great

HORNBY TRAIN WEEK

The line is clear and the signal down! The green flag is waving, so: "Right Away!" This is Hornby Train Week! All over Great Britain the shops and stores are making special displays of the British-made Hornby Trains. Come along, boys! There is a fine Hornby Train waiting for you! You can buy Hornby locos—the most efficient locomotives ever produced—from 10/6 upwards, and complete Hornby Train sets from 17/6 upwards—all superbly enamelled and finished in the correct colours of the leading railways. Naturally, the more you can afford the more complete will be your Hornby Train system. You can build it up by degrees until you have a real miniature railway track, perfect in every detail.

PRICE LIST OF COMPLETE TRAIN SETS

Series M. No. 1 Passenger Set	7/6	No. 1 Tank Goods Set	25/-
" " " 2 Goods Set	9/-	No. 2 Tank Goods Set	45/-
" " " 3 Goods Set	15/-	No. 2 Tank Passenger Set	45/-
No. 0 Passenger Set	24/-	Metropolitan Train Sets	
No. 0 Goods Set	17/6	No. 2 (4-volt Electric)	95/-
No. 1 Passenger Set	27/6	No. 3 (Clockwork)	55/-
No. 1 Goods Set	21/-	Riviera "Blue" Train Sets	
No. 2 Pullman Set	60/-	No. 1 (4-volt Electric)	85/-
No. 2 Goods Set	37/6	No. 2 (Clockwork)	70/-

HORNBY CLOCKS WORK TRAINS

Manufactured by MECCANO LIMITED :: BINNS ROAD :: LIVERPOOL.

COLLECTOR'S OUTFIT FREE

A Splendid Offer for Stamp Collectors! Pocket Wallet and Perforation Gauge, Watermark Finder, 60 All Different Stamps, Stamp Hinges, British Colonials, etc. Send postcard requesting Approval and Lists.

LISBURN & TOWNSEND, LONDON ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

5/-
Down

Is all you pay before delivery for a superbly made No. 601 Hornless Gramophone or a No. 604 Mead with gigantic richly coloured horn, solid oak cabinet, large motor and loud sound reproducer. Sent (with 30 tunes) carriage paid on 10 DAYS' FREE TRIAL. Mahogany Cabinet Models, handy Portables and Inlaid Table Grams at low factory prices. Write to-day for art catalogue.

Mead
Co. Dept. (N.4) Birmingham.

No 605
37/6
CASH TO
RECORD
BUYERS



300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Abroad 1/-), including Airpost, Triangular, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.

FOR XMAS Parties, Theatricals, Fancy Dress, etc. Original and instructive Disguise Outfit. Price 3/- each, complete, post free.—MILTON, 24, Station Parade, Norbury, LONDON, S.W.16

CUT THIS OUT

"MAGNET" PEN COUPON. VALUE 3d.
Send 3 of these coupons with only 2/9 (and 2d. stamp) direct to the FLEET PEN CO., 119, Fleet Street, E.C.4. By return you will receive a handsome lever self-filling FLEET FOUNTAIN PEN with solid gold nib (fine, medium, or broad), usually 10/6. Fleet price 47/- or with 5 coupons only 2/9.



EVERYTHING FOR HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS

Machines from 8/6 to £16 and upwards. Acetylene, Electric, and Gas Lighting Sets, and all other Accessories for Home Cinemas of all sizes. Sample Film, 1/-, post free. 1,000 ft. length, 7/-, post free.—FORD'S (Dept. U), 13, Red Lion Sq., London, W.C.1. Entrance Dane Street

OUTFIT FREE.—Duplicate Album, Watermark Detector, Perforation Gauge, Mounts, Trans., Envelopes, Pocket Good Stamps—Free and Post Free to genuine Approval applicants.—HORACE MILLER & CO., WHITSTABLE, KENT.

THE AUTOMATIC PEA REPEATER

The most reliable pea pistol, black heavy model, 25 shots at one loading, each in box with ammunition, post free 2/3. Also the popular TRIUMPH 17-shot pea repeater, post free 1/3.—R. DILNOT, (Dept. T), 125, Chiswick High Road, London, W.4.



£1 'Lucky Jumble' Parcels 2/6

To advertise our goods we offer "Lucky Jumble" Parcels for 2/6 each (postage or carriage paid) for a short time only. Many contain goods to the value of £1 and over—Wireless Sets and Accessories, Watches, Clocks, Opera Glasses, Cameras, Gramophones, Musical Instruments, Jazz Outfits, Footballs, Attaché Cases, etc., etc. **VALUE IN EVERY PARCEL.** Only one parcel to one address; sent only to readers in U.K. Money refunded if not satisfied. No favouritism. Mail Orders only. HAYNES BROS. & CO., Burton Bldg., London Rd., LIVERPOOL.

BLUSHING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, SHYNESS, TIMIDITY,

Simple 7-day Permanent Home-Cure for either sex. No Auto suggestion, drill, etc. Write at once, mention "M.G." and get full particulars quite FREE privately. U.J.D., 12, All Saints Road, ST. ANNES-ON-SEA.

100 DIFFERENT STAMPS FREE

WAR, REVOLUTION & PEACE issues, many unused and catalogued at over 8/-, together with a fine metal watermark detector and printed instructions, post free to all genuine applicants for my famed Approvals. B. WILKINSON, Provincial Buildings, COLWYN BAY.

OFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

An Egg-sitting Narratif
of St. Sam's.

Dicky Nugent



BASH! Crash! Smash!

A terrific din proceeded from the Head's study. That sacred apartment was generally as still as a tomb. For Dr. Birch-

email, the headmaster of St. Sam's, was of quiet and studious habits. He would sit buried in a book for hours, keeping as much as an oyster. He had seldom been known to burst into song, or to dance the Charleston round his study, or to do anything which was likely to disturb a breath of the peace. Dr. Birch-

email was one of your strong, silent men. But he was breaking his usual silence now with a vengeance—or else with a

coke-hammer. Biff! Bang! Wallop! The din was truly deafening. It could be heard from one end of St. Sam's to the other.

Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, heard it far away in his study, and he sprang to his feet in blank astonishment.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "What's going on in the Head's study? I wonder? That din is dreadful! By comparison, Babel's babble was a mere bubble. It would almost seem as if the Head had got the workmen in."

Mr. Lickham rushed around to the Head's study. He wrapped on the door, but his modest rat-tat was drowned in the uproar. So the master of the Fourth turned the handle and stopped into the apartment.

A startling scene met his gaze. The Head was in his study. His gown and mortar-board were cast aside, his coat was off, and his sleeves rolled up. He held in his hand a holly hammer, with which he was doing grave excavation. He had smashed all the pictures on the walls, and the carpet was strewn with broken glass.

"The Head was now turning his attention to his ornaments on the mantelpiece. He wielded the hammer with grating vigor, and the inspiration streamed down his rinkled face.

"Ye fishes and little gods!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "What's the little game, sir? Has it come at last—the insanity which me and the other masters have feared for some time past? Is it an insane frenzy which has caused you to wreck your own study?"

The Head paused, mopping the inspiration from his brow. Hammer in hand, he turned to Mr. Lickham. That gentleman backed away in alarm.

"Don't be startled, my dear Lickham," said the Head reassuringly. "I'm the Master Library—No. 981.

"I ain't nobody's darling!" It's a hundred to one that the revered (?) head of St. Sam's sings that plaintive song in his sleep, for no one at St. Sam's knows anxious to be in his fascinating(?) society over the Christmas holidays!

not going to commit assault and battery on you.

"But—wherefore this thumpiness?" gasped Mr. Lickham. "Why are you smashing up the happy home, sir?"

The Head grinned. "Dear man," he said, "had you forgotten that it's Breaking-up Day?"

Mr. Lickham stared. "I always run amuck with a hammer on Breaking-up Day," explained the Head. "Whenever there's any breaking-up to be done, I always like to do my bit. What have you broken to-day, my dear Lickham?"

"Only a few canes on the backs of my pupils," said the master of the Fourth. "I have also broken a record in getting from my study to yours. I thought something terrible was going on. It sounded as if some fiendish atrocious was being committed. I am relieved to find it is only one of your high-spirited lads."

"Boys will be boys," said the Head gaily. "If you would like to join me, Lickham, in my Breaking-up Day recreation, I can lend you a hammer."

"I think you have done enough damage for the present, sir," said Mr. Lickham, glancing round the wrecked study. "This place looks as if it had been riddled by the Vandals!"

The Head chuckled as he donned his gown and mortar-board.

"Dulce est desipere in loco," he said. "Who is she, sir?" asked Mr. Lickham in perplexity.

"It's not a female!" said the Head, prized at your ignorance. It means, 'It is pleasant to play the fool on occasion.' But we will now put all jokes on one side, and switch on to something very serious, namely, the Christmas Yack. Take a pew, Lickham. Sorry I haven't a cigar to offer you, but that will may offer me one of yours, and that will atone for my lack of hospitality."

Mr. Lickham made a grimace, and passed his cigar-case.

"Don't set your beard alight, sir,"

he cautioned, as the Head helped himself to a weed.

The Head bit off the end of his cigarette with the dexterity born of long practice. Then he settled himself in the armchair and puffed away placidly, regarding Mr. Lickham through a haze of cigarette-smoke.

"What are you going to do with yourself during the yack, Lickham?" he inquired.

"I am going to stay with an elderly aunt, sir, down in Summerseat."

"Hm! Will there be any golf, or shooting, or fishing?"

"No, sir. My aunt is quite alone, and an invalid. She neither golfs, shoots, nor fishes."

The Head seemed disappointed.

"Will there be a Christmas dinner—turkey, and plum-pudding, and mince-pies, and so fourth? And a bottle of 1066 port to assist its digestion?"

Mr. Lickham shook his head.

"My aunt is a vegetarian, sir. Her Christmas dinner consists solely of fruit. As for port wine, she would be shocked and disgusted at the mere mention of such a thing! I shall live very frugally, indeed during the holidays."

"In that case," said the Head, "you can count me out. I was going to honor you with my company, Lickham, during the Christmas yack. But in the circumstances, it can't be done, even if you go down on your hands and knees to me, Lickham, and beg me with tears in your eyes to come with you, will I consent?"

Mr. Lickham did not go down on his hands and knees, and his eyes remained dry. Instead of being feebly cut up about it, he seemed greatly relieved that the Head was not going to join him. Dr. Birchmail jerked his thumb towards the door.

"You can buzz off, Lickham," he said tartly. "I have nothing further to say to you. Will you send Burleigh of the Sixth into our presence with him. We desire to have an audience with him."

Whenever the Head rode the high horse he always spoke as if he was a royal personage.

Mr. Lickham departed, and in a few minutes Burleigh of the Sixth arrived. He looked a picture of health and strength, framed in the doorway.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Burleigh.

The Head nodded.

"Squatty-woo, dear boy! What time does our trane go?"

Burleigh blinked at the Head in astonishment.

"I—I don't quite follow you, sir!"

"No, you don't follow me, Burleigh. We both depart together. I'm looking forward to a charming Christmas at Burleigh Towers. Your father, Sir Armstrong Burleigh, is a dear old friend of mine. We were at Borsal—I mean Oxford—together. We shared each other's sorrows and joys, ups and downs,

and kicks and he-pence. Your father will be awfully bucked to see me again, after this long lapse of years. So tell me the time of the trane, and we'll toddle fourth together."

"Well, of all the cheek—" muttered Burleigh under his breath.

Then, in his paternal voice, he added:

"I am not spending Christmas at Burleigh Towers, sir. The fact is, my father has had to give up the Towers. He's one of the new poor—hard hit by taxation, and all the rest of it. He is now living in a hovel in the East-End of London, where I shall join him for Christmas. It won't be much of a Christmas, I'm afraid. No turkey and plum-pudding, no mince-pies and red cakes. My father is in such a bad way that he's living on parish's food. In other words, the local guardians are feeding him."

These revelations caused an abrupt change of manner on the part of the Head. From being jolly and jantial, he became snappy and savage.

"Miserable pauper!" he cried, pointing to the door. "Get out of my study! And when you see your father tell him that unless your next term-fees are paid in advance, I shall soo him for jib!"

Burleigh quitted the study, dabbled up with farther.

"He, ha, ha! That was a jolly clever piece of bluff on my part. If I hadn't pitched that yarn to the Head we should have had the old buffer at Burleigh Towers for Christmas, and that would have put a damper on everything."

And Burleigh strolled away, leaving the head to solve the problem—the very urgent problem—of where to spend the Christmas yack.

The Head took off his mortar-board and stroked his bald locks in perplexity. Then he put on his thinking-cap, and made his way slowly and thoughtfully to a certain study in the Fourth Form passage, which was occupied by Jack Jolly, Merry and Bright, the flashing heroes of the Fourth.

II.

"TROT in, old bean!"

Jack Jolly called out the inviolable cheerily in response to a sharp rat-tat on the study door.

It was the dignified and majestic figure of the Head that trotted in, and Jack Jolly turned pink.

"Oh, crums! I—I'm awfully sorry, sir!" he faltered. "I shouldn't have said 'old bean' if I'd known it was you. I should have said 'Dear old frook'!"

The Head chuckled in his beard.

"Don't apologise, Jolly," he said, becoming at the three juniors. "I just dropped in to see if you were ready."

Jack Jolly & Co. looked at each other, and then at the Head.

"Ready for what, sir?" asked Jack Jolly.

"Why, for the trip to Jolly Court, of course!"

The three chums were fairly flabbergasted. They blinked helplessly at the Head.

"We—we're not going to Jolly Court, sir," faltered Jack Jolly.

"Then where do you propose to spend the Yackation?"

"At Merry's place, sir—Merry Manner."

The Head rubbed his hands with grating satisfaction. He had heard of Merry Manner. It was one of the few remaining mansions of Old England which had not been mysteriously buried and raised to the ground. It was an old, rambling, ramshackle place, of Tudor design; and it had weathered the storm since the days of Queen Victoria.

"Good!" murmured the Head. "I prefer Merry Manner to Jolly Court."

"Then, raising his voice, he added: 'I can see that you are rather mistified, my dear boys. The fact is, I have decided to spring a joyful surprise on you. Lissen! Your headmaster, throwing aside his dignity for once, and descending from his lofty perch, is coming to spend Christmas with you at Merry Manner!'"

If the Head expected Jack Jolly & Co. to walk round the study, and crow with delight, he was disappointed.

The Head's "joyful surprise" had anything but a joyful effect on the juniors. Their jaws dropped, their faces fell, their hearts sank into their boots.

Jack Jolly groaned orally.

"What's the matter, Jolly?" asked the Head. "Have you got a pain?"

"Nunno, sir!"

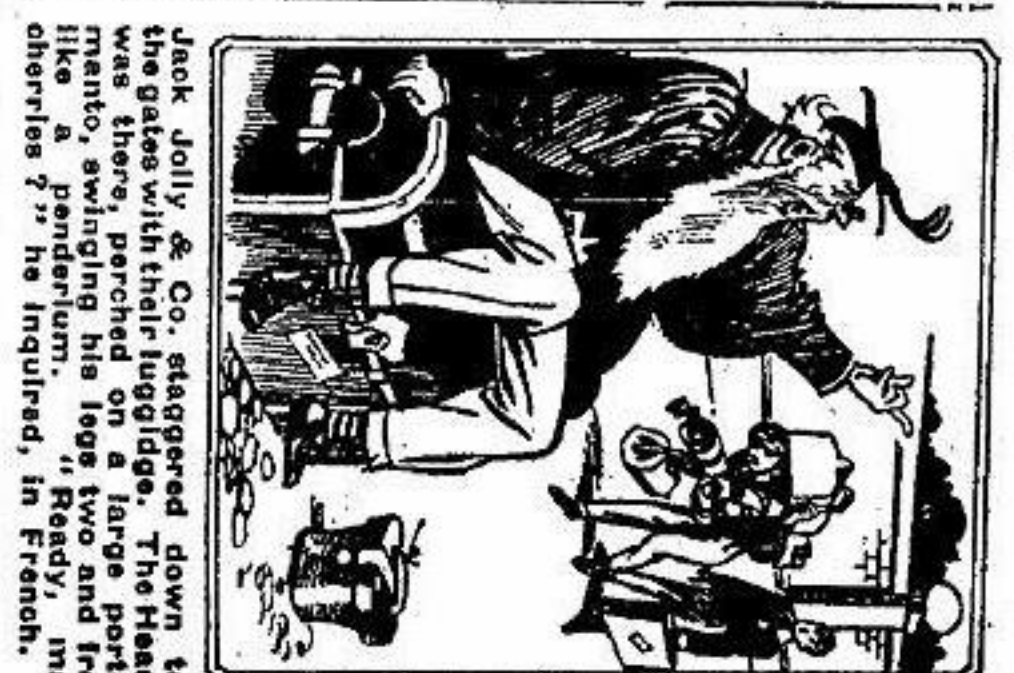
"Are you delit—delit—you and your chums—at the prospect of having your headmaster's society during the yack? Not many Heads, even in these democratic days, when dukes and dinstmen are on an equal status, would be so kind and considerate as to spend the Christmas holidays with a parcel of lads. Why don't you clap your hands, and cheer, and dance round the study?"

Jack Jolly & Co. obeyed; but their hand-clapping was half-hearted, their cheers faint and feeble, and their dance a miserable shuffle.

To tell the truth, our heroes felt far from happy at the prospect of the Head joining them at Merry Manner. They had quite enough of the old buffer during the term; and they felt it was awful cheek for Dr. Birchmail to invite himself down to Merry's place. He was bound to be a wet blanket and a beastly killjoy, and his presence would take all the gull off the gingerbread.

Mr. Lickham had succeeded in putting the Head off; and so had Burleigh of the Sixth. But a mere fourth-former like Merry simply dared not cross the Head's wishes. If Merry had even hinted that he didn't want the Head's company he would have been sacked from St. Sam's on the spot.

"Well, my puppies," said the Head



Jack Jolly & Co. staggered down to the gates with their luggage. The Head was there, perched on a large portmanto, swinging his legs two and fro like a penderium. "Ready, ma cherries?" he inquired, in French.

"What time does our trane go?" I پرسون you are going by trane, and not in a Rolls-Rice."

"Trane goes at four, sir," said Merry in lifeless tones.

"Right-o! I'll go and pack my traps, and be waiting for you down at the school gates at half-past three. So long, kiddies!"

And the Head hurried away. When he had gone there was quite a storm of indignation from Jack Jolly & Co.

"What awful nerve!"

"This will put the kybosh on our Christmas holiday!"

Merry was looking quite savage.

"I don't know what my pater will say when the Head turns up at the Manner," he said. "My pater's very particular when it comes to his roof. And old Birchmail looks so much like a Burgle Bill that the pater will be worried to death about the family place."

Jack Jolly nodded.

"Pity we can't shake the old buffer off," he said. "Isn't there some way of giving him the slip?"

The juniors sat rapped in thought for some minutes; and then Bright had a brain-wave. He whispered something to his chum, and they went into peels of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The very thing!" chorried Jack Jolly. "It ought to work like a charm!"

Grimacing all over their faces, the three chums proceeded to pack their belongings. Trunks and portmantoes and suit-cases were dragged out from the cupboard, and clothes and boots and books were rained and crummed inside.

When the packing was finished it was time to be off.

Jack Jolly & Co. staggered down to the gates with their luggage. The Head was there, perched on a large portmanto, swinging his long legs two and fro like a penderium.

"Ready, ma cherries?" he inquired in French.

"Yesir!" consused the three chums. "Off we go, then!"

The Head gave a few last instructions to Fossil, the porter, to see that the school was locked up safe, and that all the valleys were secured in the strong-room; then he set off for the station, with his long, lopping stride. Jack

(Continued on next page.)

The MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 981.