

"THE UNSEEN WITNESS!" This Week's Superb Long Complete School
Story of HARRY WHARTON & Co.!

The Magnet ^{K2^D}



*The
Beard that
Wouldn't
Budge!*

The UNSEEN WITNESS!

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not a Pony!

"SNIPEY looks bucked," remarked Bob Cherry. "He do—he does!" agreed Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton & Co. were on the Remove landing, chatting there before going along to the studies for prep.

Caffyn, the new fellow in the Remove, came out of Study No. 1, and crossed the landing as if to go downstairs.

He did not, however, go down. Stopping at the balustrade he looked over into the well of the staircase, with an expectant expression on his face.

It was unusual for the new junior, who was nicknamed the "Snipe" in his Form, to look bright and cheery. Generally his look was rather sullen, and very often discontented and unamiable.

Now, however, his narrow foxy face was bright. He looked, as Bob Cherry said, "bucked."

Taking no notice of the Famous Five he leaned on the old oak balustrade of the landing, looking down.

No member of the famous Co. liked Caffyn. Indeed, their feelings were rather the reverse of that. But Bob Cherry always had a cheery word for friend or foe.

He gave Caffyn a smack on the shoulder. It was a cheery, friendly smack. But Bob had rather a heavy hand, and it elicited a sharp yelp from the Snipe.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" roared Bob.

The Snipe scowled round at him. "Don't thump me, you silly ass!" he snapped.

"Isn't he nice?" said Bob. "Doesn't he encourage a chap to be pally?"

The Co. chuckled.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter

rolled out of the passage, and blinked round the landing through his big spectacles. "I say, seen the Snipe? Oh, here you are, Caffyn, old chap! Has he won?"

"Shut up, you fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Caffyn—"

"Mind your own business!"

"Yah!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Caffyn and looked at Bunter, puzzled. The fat junior's question was rather a mysterious one.

"Has who won what, fatty?" asked Bob.

"Nobby Nick," explained Bunter.

"Nobby Nick!" repeated Johnny Bull. "Who on earth is Nobby Nick?"

"Caffyn's geegee," further explained Bunter.

The Snipe gave Bunter a black look.

"So you've been listening," he snarled.

"If you talk to a fellow in a study, and a fellow is stopping in the passage to tie his shoe-lace, a fellow can hardly help hearing what you say," retorted Bunter. "Think I wanted to hear what you were saying to Skinner? I just happened to stop near the door to—to pick up a pin—I mean to tie my shoe-lace."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Jolly lucky for Caffyn it wasn't a prefect heard him tell Skinner that he had backed Nobby Nick for the three o'clock at Wapshot. Fellows get sacked for that sort of thing."

"The sackfulness is the proper caper in such an execrable case," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"But I say, Caffyn, has he won?" asked Bunter. "I say, you'll get a lot of money if he's got home at five-to-one, and you having a fiver on him. I say, do you think Lodgey will pay, if he's won?"

"Will you shut up?" hissed Caffyn.

"Haven't you seen the evening paper yet?" asked Bunter. "You told Skinner you'd tipped Trotter to bring you the evening paper."

Caffyn turned his back on the Owl of the Remove, and stared down the staircase again.

The chums of the Remove knew now what he was waiting for.

Evening papers, of course, were not delivered for Greyfriars juniors. But a tip to Trotter, the House page, would generally secure one of those valuable publications. And a fellow who had backed a horse to the tune of five pounds was naturally anxious to see the result.

"Worm!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The wormfulness is terrific!" agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Caffyn glanced round again with his unpleasant sneer.

"Any business of yours?" he asked.

"Well, nobody wants to see a man sacked in the Form," said Harry Wharton. "And you'd be turfed out like a shot if Quelch or the Head got on to this."

"Are you going to tell them?" sneered Caffyn.

"Oh, shut up!" growled the captain of the Remove. "I've a jolly good mind to kick you, anyhow; and I jolly well will if you ask me that again!"

"I say, though, it will be corking if Caffyn bags twenty-five pounds," said Billy Bunter. "That's what it will be, you know, five-to-one on a fiver. If Nobby Nick wins, of course."

"If!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, I heard him tell Skinner and Snoop that it was a sure snip," said Bunter. "Nobby Nick's a dark horse, you know. Caffyn told Skinner that he had the tip from a man at the Three Fishers, who knows. It's practically straight from the horse's mouth, ain't it, Snipey?"

"Oh, shut up!"

"You seem to have heard a jolly lot while you were tying your shoe-lace outside Skinner's study," remarked Frank Nugent. "How long does it take you to tie a shoe-lace?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, it's a lot of money! If Nobby Nick romps home it—"

"The if-fulness is terrific!"

Caffyn glanced round again. Though he was anxious to see the result of the race in black and white, he had no doubts. His look showed that he was bubbling with inward satisfaction. With such a sum as twenty-five pounds to draw from Mr. Joe Lodgey, it was no wonder that the Snipe was bucked.

"It's a dead cert, if you want to know," he said. "I've had it from a man who knows the horse and the trainer. Luckily I got my money on in time. I stand to bag twenty-five pounds, and I dare say you'll be civil enough when you see me with it. I stand to win a pony."

"We'll keep the civility till we see you with it, at any rate," grinned Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, you leave old Snipey alone!" said Billy Bunter. "Old Snipey's not a bad chap. I dare say it's your fault that you don't get on with him in Study No. 1, Wharton, and yours, Nugent. You never got on with me when I was in that study."

"You fat chump!"

"Well, you leave Snipey alone," said Bunter warmly. "Snipey's a pal of mine, ain't you, Snipey?"

The Famous Five chuckled. Bunter, at least, evidently considered it worth while to be civil to a fellow who stood to win twenty-five pounds—a "pony."

"You can cackle!" said Bunter disdainfully. "But if you were as decent as old Snipey, you'd do. And why shouldn't a fellow back his fancy—especially if he can get a bookie to take a bet on tick as Caffyn did with Lodgey. Sporting, I call it."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes jolly old Trotter!" said Bob.

The House page came scuttling up the stairs. He reached the landing, jerked a folded newspaper from under his waistcoat, handed it to the Snipe, and scuttled down again.

Caffyn, with a happy grin on his face, unfolded the evening paper.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him rather curiously. They knew many of the shady ways of the Snipe, but they had not been aware before that he "backed his fancy" with a disreputable street bookmaker. Billy Bunter hovered round the Snipe his eyes glistening behind his big spectacles.

The fat Owl certainly was not fond of Caffyn, but if he was going to have twenty-five pounds, that rather altered the matter. Bunter had been disappointed about a postal order, and was in his usual stony state. He was prepared to revise his opinion of the Snipe, and indeed to stick to him closer than a brother, if there really was a pony in the offing.

Caffyn was grinning as he unfolded the rustling paper, and looked for the column where the racing results were given.

A pony was a big sum of money for anybody to win; and Caffyn was very keen on money. He had an allowance from his Aunt Judith, but not on nearly so generous a scale as Aunt Judy's other nephew, Coker of the Fifth. He had a happy anticipation of feeling the crisp banknotes rustling in his fingers when Mr. Lodgey paid over that handsome sum.

But the grin died off his face, as if wiped away by a duster.

He gave a sudden convulsive start, and his narrow eyes seemed almost to pop from his foxy face as he stared at the racing list. The colour drained from his cheeks, leaving him ghastly.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. They pitied the wretched Snipe at that moment. Looking at the paper in his trembling hands, they could see what Edgar Caffyn saw.

WAPSHOT.

Three o'clock.

BONNY BOY, SNAFFLER,
RURITANIA.

Also ran: Peep o' Day, Attila, Catchem, Nobby Nick.

The newspaper fluttered from Caffyn's hands and dropped on the landing. He leaned heavily on the balustrade. There were drops of perspiration on his sallow brow. He wiped them away with a shaking hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. The miserable Snipe deserved what had come to him, but they were not the fellows to rub it in. But Billy Bunter was not silent.

"I say, Snipey, is it all right?" he asked. "I say, has he won?"

Caffyn made no answer. He leaned on the oak, overcome. It was not only the disappointment about the expected "pony." But he had laid his bet with Mr. Lodgey on the "nod," and he had

Scheme after scheme has Edgar Caffyn tried for stirring up trouble between his rich Aunt Judith and her favourite nephew, Horace Coker, of the Fifth—and all have failed with painful results to the schemer. But Caffyn's hopes run higher than ever this week, until . . .

five pounds to pay that frowsy gentleman now that the wretched horse had lost.

"I say—" persisted Bunter.

"Shut up, you fat ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Can't you see the chap's backed a loser?"

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

Caffyn detached himself from the balustrade and moved off slowly towards his study. Bunter blinked after him, in scornful disgust.

"Well, my hat!" he said. "Backing a loser! Might have expected it, too! What does that fathead know about horses? He, he, he! Disgraceful, I call it. You fellows can call it sporting, if you like, but I call it simply disgraceful—a Greyfriars fellow backing horses with a frowsy outsider like Lodgey—"

"Shut up!"

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "You fellows may approve of this sort of thing, if you like, but I can jolly well say—Yarooooooooooooop!"

Bunter finished with a wild roar as the Famous Five all kicked him together. Then they went away to prep, leaving Bunter roaring.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Disagreeable Duty!

HORACE COKER snorted. There was a letter in the rack for Coker of the Fifth, in break, one morning, a few days after the Snipe's disastrous essay to bag a "pony."

The letter was addressed to Horace

Coker in the well-known handwriting of Miss Judith Coker, his aunt and Caffyn's. Coker had quite a genial expression on his rugged face as he slit the envelope. His friends, Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, were with him, and they seemed to look rather expectant. From Coker's pleased expression they judged that he anticipated discovering a "tip" in that letter from Aunt Judy. If there was a tip in it, Potter and Greene were prepared to stand nobly by their pal in disposing of the same.

In point of fact, however, Coker was not thinking about tips. The genial expression on his rugged features was due to the kind regard he entertained for Aunt Judy. Plenty of fellows at Greyfriars were not keen on letters from elderly relatives. But Coker, with all his little faults and foibles, was fond of his affectionate old aunt, and he really did like a letter from her.

But as he looked at the missive the genial expression faded away and he snorted expressively.

"No luck?" asked Potter sympathetically.

He could see that there was no remittance in the letter. He sympathised with Coker, also with himself and Greene.

"Eh, what?" said Coker. "What do you mean?"

"No tip this time!" said Greene.

"Tip!" said Coker. "Who's bothering about tips, fathead?"

"Aren't you?" asked Greene.

"No, ass!"

"What's the trouble, then?" yawned Potter.

As Coker had looked pleased when he got the letter, and annoyed when he opened it, Potter and Greene had naturally attributed these phenomena to the expectation of a tip and the disappointment of not getting the same.

Apparently, however, that was not the trouble. But that there was some trouble was clear from Coker's grim frown and emphatic snort.

"That sneaking snipe!" snorted Coker.

"Eh?"

"That beastly worm, Caffyn!"

"Oh!"

"It's too thick!" said Coker hotly.

"It's a bit sickening, I think! I never wanted that snipe to come to my school. Aunt Judy knew that, and she'd never have sent him here, only the little beast wanted to annoy me by coming, I fancy, and his guardian, that rotter Sarle, backed him up, and—"

"What about a trot in the quad before third school, Greeney?" asked Potter.

As there was no remittance in the letter, Coker's pals had quite lost their interest in it. And they were bored with Coker's cousin, Caffyn.

They had heard enough from Horace about that cousin of his in the Remove. They had heard too much! They did not want to hear any more.

"Let's!" assented Greene.

Potter and Greene walked out of the House. Rather unfortunately for them, Coker walked with them. Coker had not finished talking yet. His friends began to walk rather fast.

"Don't rush!" snapped Coker. "This isn't a foot race, is it?"

Reluctantly, Potter and Greene slowed down. It seemed that they had to have more Caffyn whether they liked it or not.

"That snipe!" went on Coker, whose powerful brain never realised that his family affairs had palled on his friends. "He's made things rotten all round for me this term. A lot of things have gone

wrong, and I can't help thinking that he's had a hand in some of them. There was that trick on the telephone one day last week."

"There's Wingate!" said Potter, spotting the captain of Greyfriars across the quad. "I wanted to speak to him about the footer."

"So did I!" said Greene.

"Never mind Wingate now!" said Coker snappishly. "I'm talking! What fellows you are to keep on interrupting a fellow! I never get a chance to get in a word edgewise! Jaw, jaw, jaw!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a cheery chuckle from a bunch of Removites passing the Fifth Form men.

Coker glared round at Harry Wharton & Co. They had caught his remark, in passing, and smiled—audibly!

"What are you cheeky fags cackling at?" demanded Coker angrily.

"The biggest idiot at Greyfriars!" answered Bob Cherry cheerily, and the Famous Five, laughing, scudded on.

Coker made a motion to pursue. But he remembered that worrying letter in his hand, and stopped.

"Go after them, Coker!" suggested Potter, with a wink at Greene. "The cheek of these fags is getting altogether too thick! Go and mop them up!"

"Do!" said Greene. "Serve 'em right!"

"I jolly well would," growled Coker, "but I'm rather worried about this dashed letter—"

Evidently there was no escape for Potter and Greene. They rather wished that they had not gone to the letter-rack with Coker that morning. Still, no fellow could have foreseen that a letter from Aunt Judy would contain trouble instead of a tip!

"She's an old duck!" went on Coker. "I'm fond of old Aunt Judy! But she does make a fellow tired about that snipe Caffyn! Having him at my school, where I don't want him, all I can do is to keep clear of him, and kick him if he barges in my way. Would you believe it, she came down here one day specially to make us friends! Of course, it led to more trouble. I'm a good-tempered and reasonable fellow, I hope, but—"

"Eh?"

"But there's a limit! I simply bar that snipe! Now, look at what she says."

Coker, in the touching belief that his friends were interested in these family troubles of his, held out the letter for their inspection. Potter and Greene, manfully suppressing yawns, read it.

"Dear Horace,—Your Cousin Edgar has written to me, asking me to send him the sum of five pounds. He says that he wants it for a very particular purpose. It is a very large sum for a junior schoolboy to need; and I have not, of course, the same faith in Edgar's judgment and capacity that I have in yours. Now, my dear, dear boy, I know that you do not like Edgar; it is a constant grief to me that you cannot make friends with him. But in this case I trust to you to carry out my wishes."

"I want you to see Edgar and have a serious talk with him. If you, dear Horace, are satisfied that he needs the money for a necessary and worthy purpose I shall send it to him immediately. I rely entirely upon your judgment."

"Please write to me as soon as you have talked the matter over with Edgar.—Your affectionate aunt,

"JUDITH COKER."

Potter smiled at Greene, and Greene smiled at Potter. In all the wide world, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,410.

Miss Judith was probably the only person who had faith in Coker's judgment and capacity. But she had lots and lots. His headmaster, Dr. Locke, his Form-master, Mr. Prout, his friends and acquaintances in the Greyfriars Fifth, had never seen any sign of these valuable qualities in Coker. Aunt Judith saw them—or imagined she did!

"Well, what do you think of that?" snorted Coker. "Asking a man to go to see that sneaking snipe! And talk to him! I'd rather kick him than talk to him, any day! I jolly well shan't do it!"

Potter glanced across the quad at Wingate. That great man was talking—probably football—with Gwynne of the Sixth, and Blondell and Bland and Fitzgerald of the Fifth. Potter wanted to join that group. Break was brief; and he did not want to waste it all on Coker's family affairs! Greene had the same desire. Really and truly, they preferred football talk with the great men of the Greyfriars football world to the charms of Horace Coker's conversation, and to hearing what he thought of his Cousin Caffyn of the Remove.

"Look here, Coker," said Potter solemnly. "You can't refuse to do as your aunt asks you! Look at the jolly hampers she sends you."

"That's all very well!" grunted Coker.

"And the tips!" said Greene.

"That's all very well, too—but—"

"It's up to you, old man!" said Potter firmly. "It looks as if that kid has got into some trouble, writing home for money like this; and what's wanted is judgment and capacity—"

"That's it," concurred Greene. "A fellow with your gifts, Coker, is bound to—to play up! Put the matter right!"

"See the kid at once," said Potter. "It's a matter of duty! When duty calls to brazen walls, you know—"

Coker looked thoughtful.

"Perhaps you're right," he admitted. "I loathe speaking to the little beast; but, after all, old Aunt Judy is jolly good to me."

"That's right!"

"Lose no time, old fellow, and put the old lady's mind at rest. I saw young Caffyn over by the elms."

Coker crumpled the letter into his pocket.

"Well, I fancy I'll speak to him," he said; and to the immense relief of his friends, Coker strode across to the elms to look for Caffyn there.

Potter and Greene almost shot away to the football group in the quad.

Coker, arriving under the old Greyfriars elms, found Harry Wharton & Co. there, but did not see Edgar Caffyn.

"Here, you fags!" rapped Coker. "Have you seen Caffyn?"

"Often!" answered Bob Cherry. "He's in our Form, you know."

"Don't be a stupid young ass! I mean, have you seen him here? Greene said he saw him here."

"Must have jolly good eyesight, then," remarked Frank Nugent. "He's not here! Most likely frowsting over a fire somewhere."

Coker stared round angrily. Possibly Greene had only fancied that he had seen Caffyn there. Possibly he had only wanted to get rid of Coker! Anyhow, Caffyn wasn't there!

"Well, go and look for him!" snapped Coker.

"What?" ejaculated the Famous Five with one voice.

"Go and find him!" said Coker irritably. "Tell him I want him, and bring him to me; kick him if he won't come, sco!"

"Dear old Coker!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder how many times we've

scragged him, for fancying he can give orders to the Remove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going or do you want a thick ear all round?" hooted Coker.

"We're not going!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Then I'll jolly well—"

Without stopping to state what he would do, Coker of the Fifth proceeded to do it. Or rather, he proceeded to attempt to do it.

Not for the first time in history, Coker of the Fifth discovered that he could not get away with what he planned to do.

Instead of handing out the thick ears that the Removites deserved for their cheek, Coker found himself suddenly grasped and up-ended.

Then, to his painful surprise, he found that his head was tapping on the nearest elm. It was tapping hard.

Tap, tap, tap!

"Whooooop!" roared Coker.

Tap, tap, tap!

"Ow! I'll smash you! I'll— Yarooooop!"

Bump!

Coker of the Fifth sat down—hard—at the foot of the tree. The Famous Five walked away, smiling.

Coker did not pursue them. Coker was gasping for wind, till the bell rang for third school; and he was rubbing his head when he went into class with the Fifth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

"I SAY, you fellows! He, he, he!" "Wherefore the cackle, old bean?"

"Snipey's down on his luck!" grinned Bunter.

"Is that anything to cackle at, you fat duffer?" growled Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he! He hasn't had much luck on the geegee!" chortled Bunter. "I say, he's been trying to borrow money from Skinner and Snoop! He, he, he!"

The Famous Five smiled at that! They did not see anything amusing, like the fat and fatuous Owl, in the Snipe being down on his luck. But it was rather amusing to think of anybody trying to borrow money from Skinner and Snoop of the Remove. Really, he might as well have tried to borrow it of Fisher T. Fish!

Caffyn certainly did look down on his luck. He had looked like that ever since Nobby Nick turned out an "also ran," and also ran away with Caffyn's expected "pony."

He had, indeed, been so unable to hide his worry, that Mr. Quelch had glanced at him sharply several times in Form.

Most of the Remove knew about Caffyn's unhappy speculation in the Wapshot races, owing to Bunter's tattle. So few were left in doubt as to the cause of the Snipe's worry. He had not only lost, but he had lost money that he could not pay.

Few had any sympathy to waste on him. A fellow who was shady ass enough to dabble in betting on races, could take what was coming to him, and that was that!

Skinner and Snoop, no doubt, sympathised; being birds of the same feather. But they were not likely to lend Caffyn money to settle his gambling debts—even if they had it! They were the only friends the Snipe had made at Greyfriars; but they were firmly of opinion that friendship stopped short of the lending of cash.

"Poor beast!" said Bob Cherry, his eyes following Billy Bunter's grinning

stare at the Snipe. Caffyn was lounging in the quad after class, looking as if he had collected mountains of trouble.

"Serve him right!" said Bunter virtuously. "A fellow who dabbles in putrid blackguardism like that—"

"Oh, cheese it! Dash it all, the chap looks fearfully miserable," said Bob uneasily. "Still, I suppose he's not the fellow a chap can speak to—he would only suspect a chap was getting at him."

Johnny Bull grunted.

"Let him stew in his own juice!" he said. "Nothing to do with us!"

And Johnny Bull walked on, and his

gimlet-eye on you in the Form-room this afternoon."

"Hang Quelch!"

"Well, you can't hang beaks, you know," said Bob. "And this is a sacking matter if you're not careful."

"Fat lot you'd care if I was sacked!"

"Well, not a fearful lot, perhaps," admitted Bob. "Greyfriars would be none the worse if you went. But—"

"Leave me alone!" started the Snipe.

"I'll leave you alone fast enough, if you want me to. But look here, if a fellow could help you out—"

Caffyn came to a halt and stared at him. His suspicious, sardonic nature made it almost impossible for him to

"Well, you're an awful ass, and no mistake!" said Bob. "Still, that doesn't help. What about your guardian, Mr. Sarle? Wouldn't he help?"

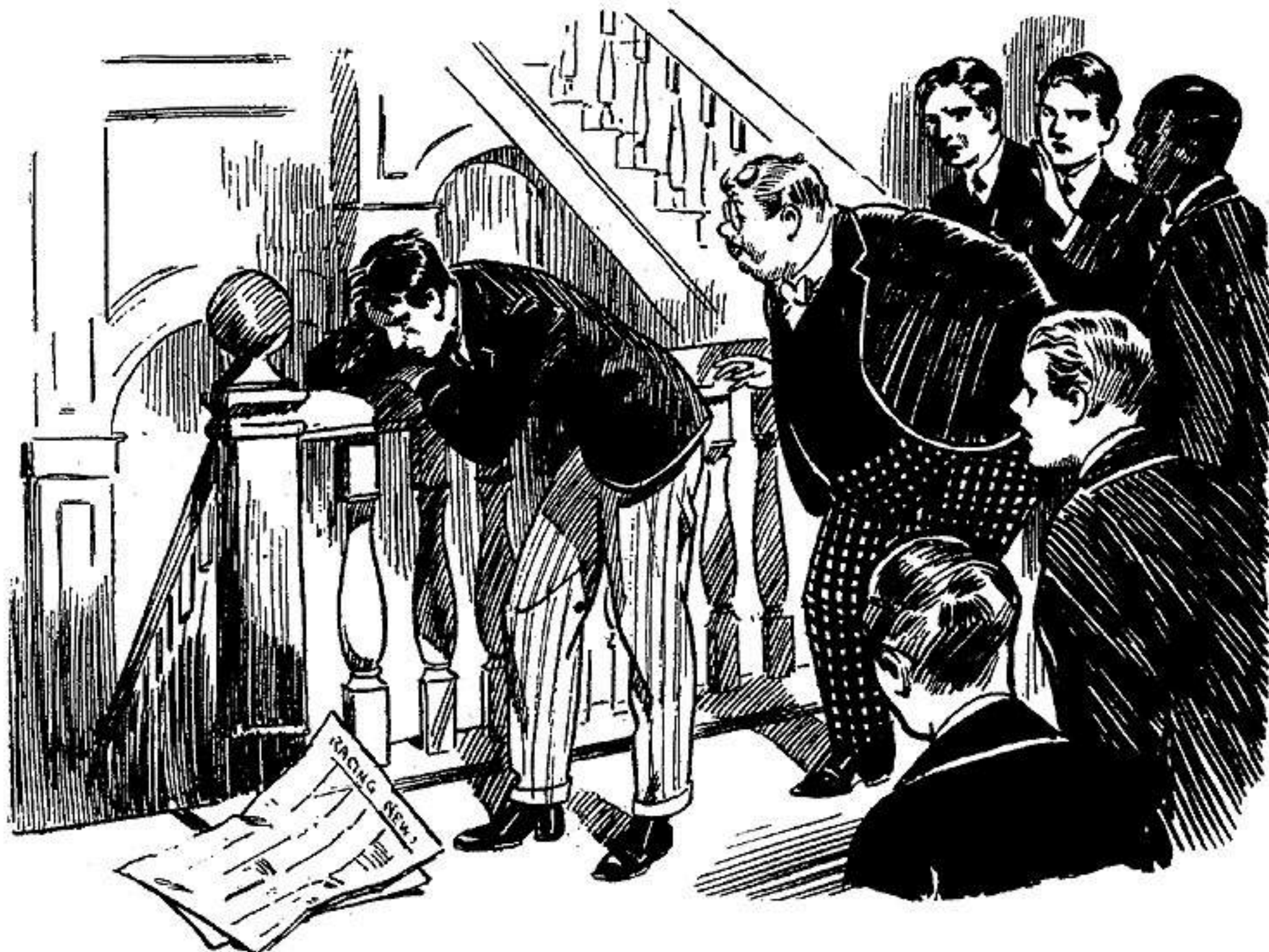
"Not with money. Easier to get blood out of a stone than money out of old Sarle."

"Nice man!" said Bob. "I don't want to barge in, of course; but—"

"I'd be jolly glad if you could give me any advice! Goodness knows I need it!"

"Well, there's your cousin Coker, in the Fifth. He's got plenty of money. I know you bar one another, but, dash it all, you're relations."

"Catch me letting him know a thing



The newspaper fluttered from Caffyn's hands, and he leaned heavily on the balustrade. Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. The miserable Snipe deserved what had come to him, but they were not the fellows to rub it in. But Billy Bunter was. "I say, Snipey, is it all right?" he asked. "I say, has he won?"

friends went with him. But Bob Cherry dropped behind, and finally walked over to Caffyn. Unpleasant and sneering as the Snipe was, Bob hated to see a fellow looking so dismally down on his luck. Certainly he had his own opinion, and a strong opinion, of Snipe's conduct. But he was not the fellow to rub it in when the wretched punter had come a "mucker."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob cheerily.

The Snipe gave him his sidelong, unpleasant look.

"Want anything?" he snapped.

"Nothing!"

"Take it and go, then!"

"Wrap it up for me!" suggested Bob humorously.

Caffyn scowled and turned to slouch away. Bob, cheery as ever, walked by his side.

"Look here, Caffyn, old top," he said seriously, "you've been playing the giddy ox, but if you're wise, you won't make such a show of it. I saw Quelch's

believe that Bob was in earnest. But the kind and cheery good faith in Bob's ruddy countenance was not to be mistaken, even by the doubting Snipe.

His hard, unpleasant face softened a little.

"I suppose you mean that," he muttered. "I—I say, I'm in a fearful hole! That man Lodgey is threatening to come up to the school if I don't pay him."

Bob Cherry whistled. If that was the case, it was no wonder that the Snipe looked fearfully worried.

"I say, that means the chopper," said Bob. "The man's a rotten cur to make bets with a schoolboy; but if you lose you can't expect him to let you off paying, I suppose. Can't you raise it—a bit here and there? If five bob's any good—"

Caffyn laughed angrily.

"I want five pounds. I've got nothing—nothing. I've had some bad luck before this. I'm stumped! And—" He broke off miserably.

like this to report to Aunt Judy!" said Caffyn bitterly.

"He wouldn't," said Bob earnestly. "Coker's a fathead and a duffer, and a born idiot, old bean, but—he'd be hanged, drawn, and quartered before he would sneak or tell tales about anybody."

Caffyn laughed scornfully. He judged others by himself, which gave him a very low opinion of human nature.

"Well, there's your Aunt Judy," suggested Bob. "She ladles out lots of whacking tips to Coker, I hear. I've seen her; she's a good old sort."

"That old cat!" said Caffyn.

Bob coloured uncomfortably.

Certainly Caffyn was not a nice fellow to talk to. His school fees were paid by the relative whom he described as an "old cat," and he drew his allowance from her. Mr. Sarle was his legal guardian, but he was dependent on his aunt.

a crumpled letter, and tossed it to the Snipe.

Caffyn read it eagerly enough. He realised that there must be some reference to himself in it, or Coker would not have been there. He had even a glimpse of hope that Miss Judith might have sent the required fiver through Horace's hands.

But the letter made him scowl blackly, and grit his teeth! Aunt Judy's sublime faith in Horace's capacity and judgment was, perhaps, a little absurd; but it was only enraging to Caffyn. Evidently, too, she had faith that he would deal fairly and squarely by a fellow he disliked. That was rather a tribute to Coker. And the fact that she consulted Coker, showed how little trust she placed in Master Edgar.

Caffyn threw the letter on the table with a bitter and evil look. That fiver for which Mr. Lodgey was so impatiently waiting, depended on Coker's decision. It was intensely exasperating.

Bitterly as he disliked Horace, the Snipe knew that the fathead of the Fifth would be fair and square. Had he been able to give a good and decent reason for wanting five pounds, Horace would have told Miss Coker so, and all would have been well.

But what could he say? Coker, assuredly, would never utter a word in his favour if he learned that it was a gambling debt that had to be settled.

The Snipe knew Coker's opinions about such things. He knew that he had "rowed" with Hilton and Price in the Fifth, simply because he disapproved of their sporting speculations, and could not possibly mind his own business! It was said that he had ducked Angel of the Fourth in the fountain in the quad, because he had spotted that sportsman with a racing paper! What Coker thought on this subject was right and just; and it never occurred to him to keep his views to himself.

"Well?" rapped Coker, irritated by the Snipe's silence. "I don't want to hang about in a fag's study. Can't you speak? What do you want the fiver for? If you've run up a bill at the school shop, you're a young ass—but I'll see that it's paid, if that's it."

The Snipe caught at the idea.

"Well, that's it," he said, "I—I've been a bit extravagant, and—and Mrs. Mimble wants her money, and—and—"

"Oh, all right!" said Coker. "Thank goodness it's no worse! I fancied it might be bills for cigarettes, or something worse than that; and if it had been, you wouldn't catch me saying a word for you. If you've been spreading yourself on tuck you can't pay for, all right! You're a silly young ass, but there's no harm in it. I'll drop Aunt Judy a line."

Caffyn sat up in the chair, his face brightening, breathing more easily. It seemed odd to him that Coker's dislike of him did not make him suspicious.

But there was absolutely no suspicion in Coker's nature. He did not even suspect that Caffyn aimed to cut him out of his place in Aunt Judith's will, and had designs on the fortune that had always been supposed to be coming to Horace some day.

Indeed, Coker's relaxed expression showed that he was pleased! He really wanted to think the best he could of his cousin! And he had not expected the matter to be so harmless as this.

He slipped from the study table. The Snipe's eyes gleamed. Had he really got away with it, at the cost of one untruth? He was prepared to utter dozens if necessary.

"You—you'll tell Aunt Judy?" he muttered.

"Yes—and I'll jolly well speak to Mrs. Mimble, too," said Coker. "I can't understand her being such a fool as to let a Lower boy run up a bill to the tune of five pounds. The Head wouldn't allow it, if he knew. Even Fifth Form men don't run up bills like that. I'll jolly well tell her plainly not to let it happen again."

The Snipe caught his breath, as Coker turned to the door. Coker believed that he owed the money to Mrs. Mimble at the tuckshop! And he was going to speak to Mrs. Mimble about it! He owed Mrs. Mimble nothing!

"Hold on!" panted Caffyn. "Wait a minute, Horace!"

"I've told you not to call me Horace!" snapped Coker.

"I—I don't want you to go to Mrs. Mimble," stammered Caffyn, "I—I shall be careful not to run an account up again. No need for you to speak to her about it."

Coker stared at him.

"I shall certainly speak to her about it," he snapped. "I've a jolly good mind to speak to your Form-master, too! But I won't do that! I shall certainly tell Mrs. Mimble that it must not happen again."

"I—I won't let it happen again—"

"You've done it once," snapped Coker. "And it was jolly careless of Mrs. Mimble to let you do it. I can't understand it. I shall give her a jolly plain talking-to, I can tell you."

"I say—"

"That's enough."

Coker tramped to the door. The Snipe panted. If Coker went to the school shop about this, he would learn at once, from Mrs. Mimble, that Caffyn owed her nothing! And evidently he meant to go.

"Hold on!" panted Caffyn. "Look here, I—I'd better tell you! It's not Mrs. Mimble that—that I want the money for."

Coker spun round.

"It's not?" he roared.

"N-n-no!"

"You said it was!"

"Well, it isn't!" hissed Caffyn.

"Well, you lying little beast!" gasped Coker. "Taking a fellow in! What did you tell me that silly lie for, then?"

"I—I want the money for—for something else, and—and I'd rather not tell you my affairs!"

Coker surveyed him grimly.

"Smokes?" he asked.

"No!"

"Backing horses, like that cad Price?"

The Snipe gritted his teeth.

"Not that I care!" said Coker. "I don't want to know anything about your rotten rascalities. I know the sort of snipe you are. Look here, I want to get out of this smoky hole. Are you going to tell me, plainly, what you want the money for? If it's anything decent, I'll drop Aunt Judy a line at once, and tell her so! If it's something you can't explain, I shan't! Think I'm going to ask my aunt to send you money to pay for smokes, or back horses?"

"I—I've been borrowing some money in the Remove—"

"I'm not taking your word! Give me the names of the fags you've borrowed of and we'll see."

Even Coker was not likely to accept the Snipe's statement without proof now. Caffyn made no answer.

"I'm waiting!" snorted Coker.

No reply.

"Another lie?" sneered Coker. "I expected that! I suppose you couldn't tell the truth, if you tried. Well, I'm going to answer Aunt Judy's letter, but I fancy you won't get that fiver."

He turned to the door again. Caffyn,

white with rage and chagrin, leaped from the armchair.

"You rotter! You rotter! You're going to make out to Aunt Judy that I've been doing something shady—you're going to tell her—"

Caffyn got no further. With a red and wrathful face, Horace Coker strode at him, grasped him, and smacked his head right and left.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

"L EGGO! Ow! Wow!"

"Take that!"

"Ow! Wow!"

"And that—and that—"

"Whooo-hooop!"

Coker pitched the Snipe back into the armchair. Caffyn sprawled there, panting, his eyes glittering like a rat's.

Horace glared at him.

"You snipe!" he said. "You worm! I suppose you can't even understand what a decent fellow is like! So you fancy I'm going to run you down to Aunt Judy, do you? As if I'd tell her what you've been up to, you little beast! Do you still think so? I'll jolly well smack your head again, if you do."

Caffyn, did still think so! But he did not say so! His head was spinning from Coker's hefty smacks, and he did not want any more.

"Horrid little beast!" went on Coker. "Think I don't know that you send all sorts of tales to your precious guardian, that he reports to Aunt Judy, about me? Lot of good may it do you! Mischief-making little beast! But if you think I'd play the same rotten game, I'm ready to knock the idea out of your head."

The Snipe panted.

"I suppose you can't even take a decent chap's word!" went on Coker. "My hat! What a snipe! Well, look here!"

Coker sat down at the table in Study No. 1.

He drew a sheet of paper towards him, and dipped Harry Wharton's pen into the ink.

Caffyn watched him, wondering what he meant to do. He soon saw. Coker was writing a letter. It ran:

"De— Aunt Judy,—I've seen Caffyn, and he referees not to tell me about his affairs. More affectionate nephew,
"HORACE."

Coker looked for an envelope, addressed it to Miss Judith Coker at Coker Lodge, and stamped it.

Caffyn watched him as he folded the letter, slipped it in, and sealed the envelope. There was a bitter sneer on his thin face.

All this, in the Snipe's belief, was a transparent trick to delude him as to Coker's real intentions. Coker was going to pretend to post that letter. In reality, he was going to throw it into his study fire, and write quite another! Of that the Snipe had no doubt.

"That's my answer to Aunt Judy!" said Coker. "Now you can see for yourself, you snipe, that I've told her nothing at all! Satisfied now?"

"Yes—if I saw you post the letter!" sneered Caffyn, as the Fifth Former picked it up from the table.

Coker started.

"Great pip! You awful little rotter!" he gasped. "Do you think I'm gambling? My only hat!"

He stared at the Snipe, more in wonder than anger. Then he threw the letter on the table again.

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"Get out of that chair!" he snapped. "Shan't!"

Coker grasped his collar, and hooked him out.

"Now take that letter in your paw!" he snapped.

"What for, you fool?" hissed Caffyn.

"You're going to post it!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Come with me, you miserable snipe, and I'll see you drop it in the school box!" said Coker. "Then perhaps you'll believe that it's posted, if your putrid little mind can believe anything!"

In sheer wonder, Caffyn left the study with him.

They went downstairs together, the letter for Aunt Judy in Caffyn's hand.

Even yet he did not quite believe that Horace Coker had no intention and no desire to make capital out of the matter.

But he had to believe when Coker marched him to the school letter-box and the letter was dropped in.

"Satisfied now?" hooted Coker.

The Snipe could only blink at him.

"Now clear off, you snipe!" added Coker.

And he gave Caffyn a parting kick and tramped away, glad to have done with him.

Caffyn went back slowly to his study.

His cousin Coker knew now, or as good as knew, why he wanted the money. But the Snipe had to realise that he need not fear that it would reach Aunt Judy's ears from Horace. He would not have lost such a chance himself; but Coker disdained anything of the kind.

He was safe in that quarter, so far as that went. That was a relief. But the difficulty remained. Coker, now that he knew, only regarded him with more contempt and aversion than before, and certainly would not help him out. That letter to Miss Judith would do him no harm—but it would do him no good. The fiver would not come now!

That was a certainty—and Aunt Judy had been his only hope! It was useless to think of writing to Mr. Sarle.

The solicitor was very keen to help him in his campaign against Coker, but he would not part with money. Indeed, he would be angry, bitterly incensed, if he learned of Caffyn's folly. Mr. Sarle was not a good man, but he was a cautious man. He relied upon Caffyn to play his game at Greyfriars with the utmost caution. He would be fiercely angry and exasperated if he learned that his ward was in danger of the "sack." Even if there had been a chance of getting the money from Mr. Sarle, Caffyn would not have dared to tell him.

But what was he to do?

It looked as if he had to take Bob Cherry's tip and defy Lodgey to do his worst. He shivered at that idea.

But it looked like the only way.

Smoking cigarette after cigarette in the study, the Snipe thought it over and over, and gradually a plan formed in his mind for dealing with Mr. Joe Lodgey. Defying the man, as Bob suggested, was far too straightforward a way to recommend itself to the tortuous mind of the Snipe. But from that original idea, Caffyn's cunning mind worked on—till he thought he had worked out a way of dealing with the sharper of the Cross Keys.

By that time he had smoked himself sick, and the study was reeking.

There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and the door was thrown open. Wharton and Nugent came in.

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They stopped and coughed.

There was generally a scent of cigarettes in Study No. 1 since Edgar Caffyn had come to Greyfriars School. But on this occasion it was more like a fog.

Wharton's eyes glinted at the Snipe.

"Look here, this is too thick!" he exclaimed angrily. "Stop it, you smoky little beast! Do you hear?"

"I'll please myself about that!" sneered the Snipe.

"Do you think we're going to have this study like a tap-room?" roared Frank Nugent.

The Snipe shrugged his shoulders.

Wharton went to the window and threw it wide open. Then he grasped the Snipe, jerked him out of the arm-chair, and pitched him through the doorway. Taking up a box of cigarettes from the table, he pitched it after the Snipe, and cigarettes scattered all over the passage.

"Now get out, and keep out!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"I'm fed-up with this!"

Caffyn scrambled up in the doorway.

"I'm coming into my own study!" he hissed.

"You'll be kicked out if you do!"

"I'll call Quelch!"

"Do! He would like to sniff this smoke!"

Caffyn did not call Quelch! He gathered up the cigarettes in rather a hurry, lest Quelch should happen that way. He slouched up the passage to Skinner's study, where he was able to smoke in peace.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Rascal's Rough Work!

MR. JOE LODGEY stood under a tree in Friardale Wood and waited, chewing a black cigar while he waited.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars School, and a fellow who wanted to slip away quietly and see Mr. Lodgey had no great difficulty in doing so. And a fellow who did not want to see him, but had to, slipped away, and was now skulking through the wood towards the old oak under which Mr. Lodgey stood.

Lodgey frowned at the sight of Edgar Caffyn coming through the trees. He was deeply annoyed with Caffyn, and meant to deal firmly with him. Lodgey had, in fact, been rather deceived in Caffyn.

He knew that he was cousin to the wealthy Fifth Former, Coker. He knew that he was nephew of a rich old lady who paid his fees at the school. He had been glad, therefore, to get the Snipe into his clutches, and encourage him to "back his fancy." He had been only too glad to oblige him by letting him bet on credit. It had never even crossed Lodgey's mind that the fellow would, or could not, pay if he lost.

Accustomed to "doing" others, Joe Lodgey had a deep dislike of being "done" himself.

And there was something to be said for Lodgey. He carried on an illegal business of street bookmaking, and he was so unscrupulous that he was prepared to deal with schoolboys in that unsavoury business. But in dealing with sporting fellows at Greyfriars, he had found it pay to be "square." His gains so far exceeded his losses that he could afford to pay occasional losses; otherwise even foolish fellows like Hilton or black sheep like Price would have had nothing more to do with him.

On these rather slender grounds, Mr. Lodgey regarded himself as an honest man. Had Nobby Nick won, he would have paid Caffyn—though it was true

that he had the best of reasons for believing that Nobby Nick wouldn't. In fact, he would not have taken a bet at such a figure had he not been certain that Nobby Nick would totter in at the tail of the field.

Nevertheless, as a man who paid when he had to, Lodgey felt very sore and aggrieved at not being paid. He was also annoyed with himself for having been deceived in Caffyn. A fellow could have wealthy relatives without being wealthy himself, as Mr. Lodgey realised now.

Anyhow, he was going to be paid, or he would make the young rascal squirm for it!

Caffyn's manner, as he came skulking up, was not that of a fellow who was going to pay. Lodgey saw that at once, and his beery brow grew darker and darker.

"I've been waiting!" he snapped. "This 'ere's the fourth time I've waited for you, young Caffyn! I've had enough of it, see? Pay a man what you owe a man, and done with it!"

Caffyn breathed hard.

He had made up his mind; but he had little courage. It was only as a last, last resource that he had resolved on this. He was afraid of what Lodgey might do—and even if the sharper did not go up to the school, he did not like the look of the stick under his arm. It was a lonely spot, too—such characters as Joe Lodgey had to be seen in lonely spots.

"I can't pay you!" Caffyn blurted out.

"You mean, you won't!"

"I can't!"

"All right!" said Mr. Lodgey. "We'll see what your 'eadmaster has to say about it, that's all!"

He stepped into the footpath from under the oak. Caffyn's heart almost died within him as the sharper made a stride in the direction of the distant school.

"Stop!" he panted.

Lodgey looked round, with a sullen sneer.

"Got anything more to say afore I see your schoolmaster?" he jeered.

"Yes," panted Caffyn. "Listen to me! I should be expelled—I know that! But you wouldn't get any money."

"I'm losing that, anyhow; but I'll make a young swindler pay for it, some'ow!" said Lodgey.

"Very likely the Head would telephone to the police if you owned up to making bets with me!" faltered Caffyn.

Lodgey looked at him grimly.

"I'll chance that!" he jeered.

"That's not all!" Caffyn took his courage in both hands, as it were.

"You'd better hear me, Lodgey. I'm not the only fellow at Greyfriars you've had dealings with. I know some of them—Angel of the Fourth, Hilton and Price of the Fifth, and Skinner, too. And there's others!"

"And what about that?" asked Lodgey, with an ugly look.

"This much!" said Caffyn. "You show me up at the school, and I'll knock your business there on the head for you. I'll tell Dr. Locke the name of every fellow I know you've dealt with."

Mr. Lodgey stopped dead.

As a matter of fact, he had no real intention of going to the school—he dared not! Not for large sums would the frowsy and disreputable sharper have stood under the clear, steady gaze of Dr. Locke. Moreover, it would have meant the end of his business with the Greyfriars "sportsmen." Even Price would have been afraid to deal with him again after that.



"I'll tell you this much, Lodgey," said Caffyn. "I'm not the only fellow at Greyfriars you've had dealings with! There's Angel of the Fourth, Hilton and Price of the Fifth, and Skinner, too! You show me up at the school, and I'll tell Dr. Locke the name of every fellow I know you've dealt with!"

But this threat from a junior school-boy roused Lodgey's deepest ire.

"You'd give coveys away what have never done you any 'arm!" he exclaimed.

Caffyn breathed more freely. Savagely angry as the sharper was at his threat, that reply showed that it was efficacious.

"Yes, I would!" he snapped. "I'd do that, or anything else, if I were up for the sack myself. So you'd better look out!"

Mr. Lodgey gritted his tobacco-stained teeth.

"I ain't going to the school," he said quietly. "I ain't getting coveys landed like that!"

Caffyn grinned. He had won!

"But if I ain't getting my money, and ain't showing you up to your school-master, I'll take it out of your 'ide!" said Mr. Lodgey savagely.

He slipped the stick from under his arm into his hand, and made a jump at Caffyn.

But the Snipe was wary and watchful. He darted away down the footpath like a startled hare.

"My eye!" gasped Lodgey.

He rushed after the fleeing Snipe, lashing with the stick. Twice it lashed across Caffyn's shoulders before the beery ruffian's breath failed him and he was left behind.

Caffyn, yelling, ran on. Lodgey stood in the footpath panting, flourishing his stick, and shouting threats.

The Snipe realised that he was no longer pursued. He stopped, gasping for breath, and looked back.

He was well out of reach, and Lodgey was winded. His eyes glittered as he drew from his pocket a catapult and a handful of stones. His shoulders ached

where Lodgey's stick had landed. He knew now that Lodgey dared not go to the school; he had nothing to fear from him but personal violence, and he was out of reach of violence.

With glittering, malicious eyes, the Snipe took aim with the catapult. It was rather a favourite weapon of his, though strictly forbidden at the school, and he was skilful in its use.

Lodgey did not even see what he was doing, till a whizzing stone, coming almost like a bullet, crashed into his beery face.

The sharper uttered a yell of pain as he clapped his hand to his cheek, where the skin was cut by the sharp stone.

As he did so, Caffyn sent another shot, catching him in the neck, again cutting the skin.

Spluttering with rage and pain, the sharper of the Cross Keys rushed down the footpath at him.

A third shot caught him on the nose, and it spurted red. Caffyn, in his malicious recklessness, cared nothing for the deadly damage he might have done. There was no constable at hand to take him into custody, and that was enough for the Snipe.

Having delivered the third shot, he thrust the catapult back into his pocket, and ran for his life.

For ten minutes or more, the enraged sharper panted after him, gurgling for breath. But he did not get near Caffyn, who jumped down into Friardale Lane from the wood, and ran for the school. When Mr. Lodgey at last took his way back to the Cross Keys, rubbing his cut face, his only comfort was to tell himself what he would do to Caffyn if he came on him some day in a nice, lonely spot, with a nice thick stick in his hand!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Warm for Wibley!

"H A, ha, ha!"
"Good old Wib!"
"Go it!"

William Wibley of the Remove was "getting the hands."

The Rag echoed with laughter and applause.

A crowd of the Remove and the Fourth watched. William Wibley, and Wib, who liked admiration, was enjoying himself.

Anyone looking in at the door of the Rag just then would hardly have known that it was Wib performing. Wib was giving one of his "impersonations."

Wibley had a sort of elastic set of features, that could be twisted into almost any shape. They were not beautiful—Wib's best friend would have admitted that—but they were useful.

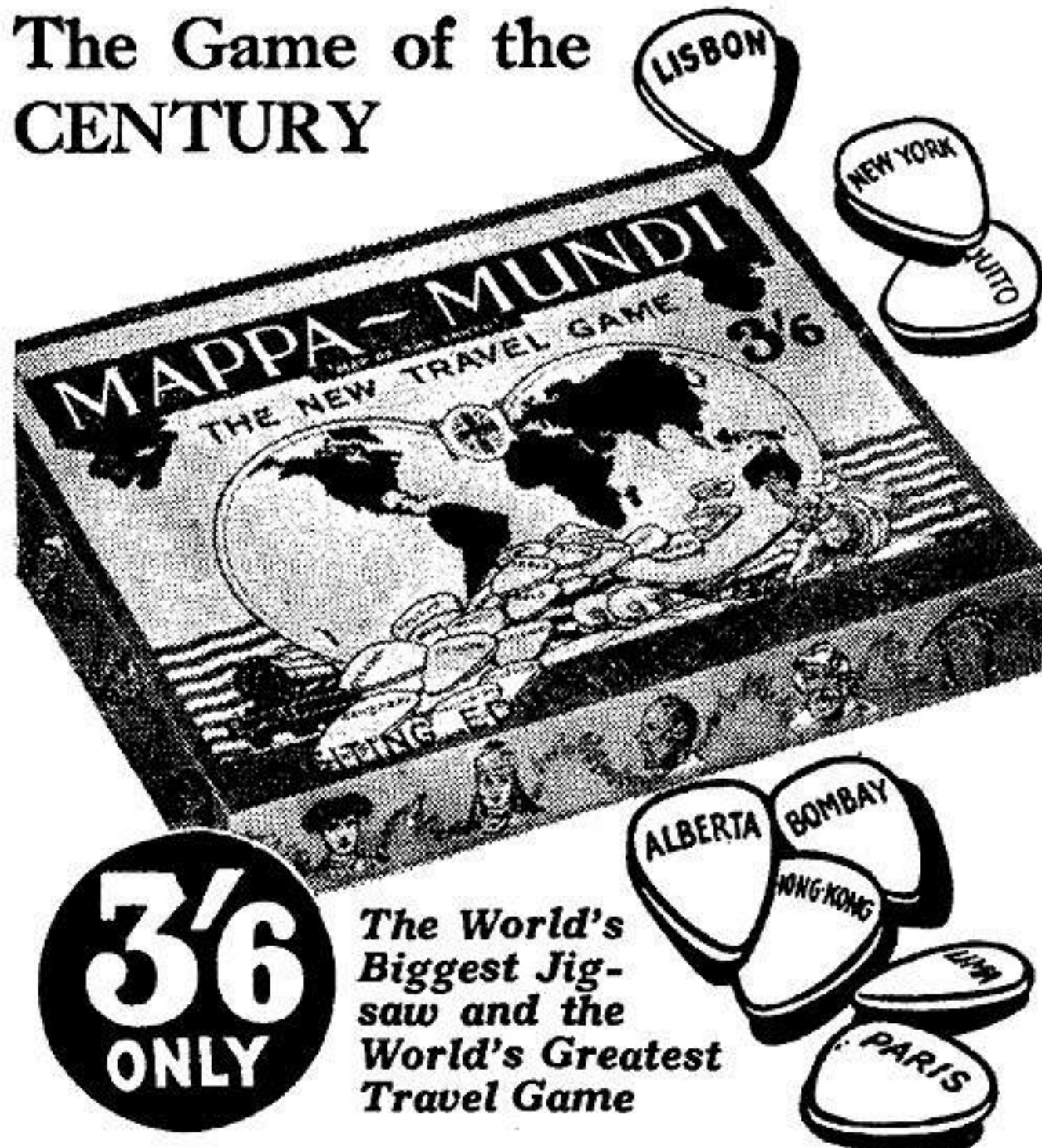
At making-up, Wib had no equal in the Remove Dramatic Society. Harry Wharton, once the chief of that society, had cheerfully yielded first place to Wibley. At such things, Wib could play his head off.

As cheeky as he was skilful, Wibley would imitate and impersonate anybody. His favourite subject was Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, who was hardly bigger than Wibley. Wib could "do him" to the life. But at the present moment Wib was bringing off something more ambitious. He was "doing" Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

Prout was a majestic gentleman, an imposing gentleman. But he was not tall, his development being chiefly lateral. Elevators in Wib's boots lifted him to the required height. An enormous amount of padding gave him the

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required width. He had an old suit of Prout's, which the Fifth Form master had given to a servant when discarded, and which Wib had bought cheap. He had picked up a gown at Mr. Lazarus' in Courtfield.

A false scalp fixed on his head gave him Prout's scanty fringe of locks surrounding a bald spot. His face was made up so wonderfully that Prout, looking at him, might have supposed that he was looking in a mirror. And he had Prout's manner to the life.

He rolled majestically in the Rag, as Prout was wont to roll in Masters' Common-room. It really was entertaining, though scarcely respectful towards a member—an important member—of Dr. Locke's staff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley adjusted a pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez, in the manner of Prout, and stared at the laughing juniors.

"You are laughing!" he ejaculated, in a quite good imitation of Prout's rich, fruity voice. "Is this respectful? Upon my word! Are these the manners of Greyfriars boys? Bunter, you are laughing!"

"Ho, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"I shall report this to your Form-master!"

"He, he, he!"

"Caffyn, you have been smoking! Does Mr. Quelch allow his boys to smoke? Disgraceful! Indeed, unprecedented! You actually smell of tobacco, sir! I shall acquaint your Form-master with this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. It was Prout all over!

Caffyn scowled.

"Take that scowl off your face, sir!" boomed Wibley-Prout. "Take it off at once, sir! Do you hear me? How dare you glare in that manner at a member of Dr. Locke's staff! Upon my word, if you were in my Form, Caffyn, I should cane you severely—most severely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, can it!" snarled Caffyn. "You'd look pretty blue if a master came in and caught you playing tricks like that, Wibley, you fool. I'd like Prout to see you making game of him in this style."

"Shut up, Snipe!" called out several voices.

The door of the Rag opened.

Horace Coker looked in.

The roars of laughter from the Rag had drawn his attention and he had looked in to see what was up.

It was, of course, absolutely no business of Coker's what went on in the Rag—a room that belonged entirely to the Lower School. Prefects sometimes looked in if there was too much noise. It was one of Coker's little ways to assume authority as if he were a Sixth Form prefect, instead of a Fifth Former and nobody in particular at all.

"Now then, what's all this row?" demanded Coker in his most aggressive manner. "Can't you fags ever keep quiet? Oh, I didn't see you, sir!" added Coker, in confusion, as his eyes fell on Wibley, whom he took, without the slightest doubt, for his Form-master.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled all the Rag, and even Caffyn grinned at Coker's mistake.

Wibley played up at once.

"Coker!" he rapped. "Coker! Come here, sir!"

Coker, about to retreat from the Rag, rather unwillingly advanced. More than once Prout had pointed out to him that he was not a prefect, and that it was not for him to keep juniors in order. This, in Coker's opinion, was only Prout's rot—and he did not want any more of it.

"Yes, sir!" he mumbled. The juniors gazed on in sheer delight. It was vastly entertaining to see Coker mistaking Wibley of the 'Remove' for Prout. Wibley was the fellow to make the most of that little error.

"Coker, this is a junior room. What are you doing here? Have you come here to play with Lower boys, Coker?"

Coker crimsoned with wrath at the bare idea of playing with Lower boys. Coker, as a senior and a Fifth Form man, would not have been found dead with Lower boys.

"No, sir!" he gasped. "I—"

"Have you come here to play marbles?"

"Mum - mum - marbles!" gurgled Coker.

"I shall not allow a boy in my Form—a senior Form—to play marbles with small boys, Coker."

Coker's face was simply excruciating. It made the juniors shriek. Amazed and enraged as he was, Coker wondered how they ventured to yell so hysterically in the presence of a beak.

"Turn out your pockets, Coker!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I shall confiscate your marbles!" boomed Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's face rivalled the hue of a beetroot. Did Prout really suppose that he—Horace James Coker—had marbles in his pockets like a small fag?

"I—I—I—" stuttered Coker.

"Place your marbles on the table at once, Coker!"

"I haven't any marbles!" shrieked Coker. "Do you think I play marbles?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do not raise your voice to me, Coker! How dare you raise your voice in addressing your Form-master! I understand that you already have a detention for Wednesday for impudence to the French master. Do not venture to be impudent to me, sir! Unwilling, reluctant, as I should be to cane a senior boy, I shall not hesitate to do so, Coker, if you are guilty of impertinence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It might have been Prout speaking! Coker gasped.

"I—I—I—" he stuttered.

"Do not stutter, Coker! Speak slowly and you will easily avoid stuttering."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You are an obstreperous, unruly boy, Coker! You should not have barged in here—ahem!—I mean intruded where you have no business. Cannot you learn to attend to your own affairs, Coker?"

"Look here, sir—" gasped Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He does it well!" said Caffyn. The Snipe saw a chance to get his own back on William Wibley. "Jolly good, Wibley! Anybody would think it was Prout!"

Coker jumped.

"Shut up, Snipe!" roared a dozen voices.

"You silly ass—"

"You sneaking duffer—"

"Shut up!"

Caffyn grinned unpleasantly and shut up. There was no need for him to say more. Coker was staring at the supposed beak with a deadly stare. He knew of Wib's stunts, though he had forgotten them. He was already surprised by Prout's presence in the Rag, and the uncontrolled merriment of the juniors in the presence of so majestic a gentleman. Caffyn's words were enough to enlighten him, as they had been intended to do.

"Wibley!" repeated Coker.

"You snipe, Caffyn—"

"You've spoiled a topping joke—"

"Kick him!"

"Wibley!" repeated Coker. His voice rose to an enraged roar. "That young scoundrel playing his tricks again! I knew it wasn't Prout—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At least I didn't really think it was—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Draw it mild!" exclaimed Wibley hotly and speaking in his natural voice. "You jolly well did think I was Prout, and you jolly well know it! If that Snipe of a cousin of yours hadn't given me away I'd have caned you, too, and you'd have thought it was Prout; and I can jolly well say— Yoooooop!"

Wibley broke off with a wild yell as Coker leaped on him.

Crash!

Wibley went down on the floor of the Rag, with Coker sprawling over him.

"Yarrah! Rescue!" yelled Wibley frantically.

"Collar him!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Bag the bargee!"

"Sorag him!"

A crowd of juniors rushed to the rescue.

Wib needed rescuing; he was powerless in the grasp of the burly, beefy Coker, and Horace was thumping him right and left.

With a dozen fellows clutching at him, however, Coker still clung to Wib, who uttered a series of fearful yells.

His false scalp came off, his make-up smudged all over his face, his gown tore to tatters, his coat split up the back. The Remove impersonator's outfit looked like needing a lot of repairs before he played the part of Prout again.

With a combined effort the Removites dragged Coker off; they rolled him to the door and hurled him out.

Coker's state when he got out was not enviable; but Wib's was worse—much worse. Wibley was a wreck—an utter wreck!

"Urrrrrgggh!" gurgled Wibley.

"Poor old Wib— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wurrrrgggh!"

"Never mind, old chap," said Bob Cherry consolingly. "It was no end of a funny finish!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrrrrgh!"

The hapless Wibley did not see anything funny in the finish. He was feeling as if he had been under a lorry. And his outfit was in tatters. But the rest of the fellows saw something funny in it, and the Rag rocked with laughter, while Wibley gurgled and guggled as if he would never leave off gurgling and guggling.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Pulling Coker's Leg!

BILLY BUNTER chuckled.

"He, he, he! Not really?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, really!" answered Caffyn. "That fool Coker!"

"He, he, he! Of course, anybody could take Coker in!" chuckled Bunter. "But mean to say that Wib will actually have the cheek to go down to the Form-room got up as Mossoo?"

"He's got nerve enough for anything."

"Yes, that's so. But—he, he, he!"

"Besides, it's safe enough, as Monsieur Charpentier has gone out. I saw him clear off ten minutes ago."

"Safe as houses, then! He, he, he!"

Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, was about the last fellow in

the world to listen to what was not intended for his ears.

On this occasion he could not help it. Coker was leaning on one of the ancient Greyfriars' elms, his hands driven deep into his pockets and a moody frown on his brow.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and Coker was booked for a French detention.

Coker did not like it.

Coker's French was about as good as his English, so it did not, naturally, satisfy Monsieur Charpentier. Coker, however, was quite satisfied with it.

He thought French rot, anyway. He never could quite understand why those silly foreigners couldn't talk plain English! In an injudicious moment he had revealed that opinion to Mossoo.

Detention followed. Mossoo had a rather mixed detention class that afternoon, and Coker was the only senior in it. That added to his distaste. Detention was bad enough in itself, but detention in company with juniors of the Shell, the Fourth, and even the Remove, was like insult added to injury.

Coker, therefore, was glooming when the fat Owl of the Remove and Edgar Caffyn came by.

Billy Bunter did not see Coker there, in the shadow of the tree. The short-sighted Owl hardly saw the tree, let alone Coker. If Caffyn saw him he gave no sign of it. He certainly did not look towards him, and appeared to be totally oblivious of him.

Every word he uttered reached Coker as Caffyn walked by at a little distance with Bunter.

Coker glared after them when they had passed.

No earthly consideration would have induced Coker to play the eavesdropper. But he could not help hearing words uttered in his hearing.

Now he knew!

That young scoundrel, Wibley, who had "played Prout" a few evenings ago in the Rag, was at his tricks again. Monsieur Charpentier had gone out, apparently forgetful that he was detention master that afternoon—which was nothing new. He had done that before more than once, and on such occasions the detention class had rejoiced in their good luck.

And that iniquitous young villain, Wibley, was taking advantage of these circumstances to play another trick—on Coker!

He was going to make up as Monsieur Charpentier, and take the detention class, the juniors in the joke, very likely, Coker the victim of it!

Horace breathed hard and deep.

He had seen Wib make up as Mossoo and laughed over it. The young rascal did it remarkably well, and made himself into a twin of the French master. But Coker did not laugh now. As the intended victim of the jape, it was not a laughing matter for Coker.

"By gum!" breathed Coker. "By gum! I'm jolly glad I heard that! I should never have spotted him, very likely. He's a clever young scoundrel, and does it well. By gum, I'll make him sit up if he tries taking me in! I'll make him squirm!"

Coker detached himself from the Elm and walked slowly towards the House. It was nearly time for the detention class in Class-room No. 10. He passed Potter and Greene, going down to a Fifth Form pick-up, and they gave him sympathetic grins. They were sorry for old Coker, but, at the same time, they were rather glad that he was usefully occupied, and would not be trying, as usual, to barge into the footer.

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"Seen Mossoo about?" called out Coker.

"Yes. Saw him talking to Quelch a few minutes ago," answered Potter. "You'd better cut in."

"Talking to Quelch!" repeated Coker. "His own Form-master! Well, he's got a nerve on him, and no mistake!"

Potter and Greene blinked at this. Coker's remark seemed to indicate that he was wandering in his mind.

"It's not Mossoo at all!" explained Coker. "Mossoo's gone out. It's that spoofing young scoundrel, Wibley of the Remove. I've found that out. I told you how he was larking as Prout the other day. Now he's larking as Mossoo!"

"I say, it looked like the genuine article!" said Potter, with a stare. "I hardly think—"

"Oh, quite!" said Coker satirically. "You hardly do, Potter. Hardly ever!"

And Coker marched on to the House. Potter could doubt his information if he liked. Coker did not doubt it. Had he not heard a Remove fellow give the thing away, speaking in his hearing without knowing that he was there?

It did not occur to Coker's powerful mind that Caffyn had, in point of fact, known that he was there, and deliberately spoken in his hearing to pull his unsuspecting leg.

That was to occur to Coker later!

Outside Class-room No. 10 he found a little crowd gathering. It was a mixed lot. Hobson of the Shell was there, and Temple and Fry of the Fourth, and Frank Nugent and Bob Cherry of the Remove. Several other fellows of all three Forms came up.

Coker eyed the Remove fellows.

Whether Wibley had told them of the joke that was on, he could not determine. They were not looking very cheery. They looked, in fact, like fellows under detention who would rather have been out of doors—as, indeed, they were. Still, as Caffyn evidently knew, it was probable that other Remove fellows knew.

"Waiting for Mossoo?" asked Coker sarcastically.

"Just that," said Bob Cherry. "You got it, too, Coker? Rotten, isn't it?"

"You don't happen to know that Mossoo's gone out—what?" asked Coker, still sarcastic.

Bob's face brightened.

"Has he? What jolly good luck! Look here, you men, if Mossoo's gone out and forgotten us we can chance clearing off."

"Jolly well not chancing it till I'm sure!" said Cecil Reginald Temple. "Did you see him go out, Coker?"

"No; but I jolly well know he's gone, and I fancy these Remove kids know it as well as I do!" growled Coker.

"Blessed if I knew!" said Frank Nugent.

"You haven't heard anything from Wibley?" jeered Coker.

"Wibley? No. I believe Wibley's playing football," said Frank. "What do you mean about Wibley?"

"You'll jolly soon see what I mean," said Coker darkly. "Wibley isn't playing football. He's playing the giddy goat, and I'm the man that's going to make him sorry for it, see?"

The juniors stared at Coker of the Fifth. What he was driving at was a mystery to them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Mossoo!" said Bob. "You ass, Coker, he hasn't gone out. Here he is!"

"Is he?" grinned Coker.

He glared at the dapper figure that came whisking up the corridor.

It was the French master to the life—
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his neat figure, in his well-fitting frock-coat, his pointed black beard, his waxed moustaches.

If it was not the genuine Mossoo it was his twin. But Coker knew all about that. He had seen Wibley made up as Mossoo, and knew that there was not a pin to choose between them.

The juniors, at all events, had no doubts. Whether it was Monsieur Charpentier or not, they believed that it was, and stood respectfully aside for the French master to let them into the class-room.

Coker did not stand respectfully aside. He glared at the dapper little gentleman. He looked exactly like Mossoo. So had Wibley looked exactly like Prout the other day in the Rag!

"Here!" hooted Coker. "You little spoofing rotter!"

"Mais—but what?" The French master fairly bounded in his amazement. "Vat you say, Cokair? Vat is zat? Mon Dieu! You sally say—"

"Oh, keep it up!" jeered Coker. "You talk just like Mossoo, just as you talked just like Prout. I know you, you cheeky little rat!"

"Vat? Vous osez—you dare! You say to me— Mon Dieu! I trash you ze Head for zis, Cokair! Mauvais garcon— Ceil! Zat you take off ze hands!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier in horror and amazement, as the burly Coker grasped him.

Bang!

The juniors gazed on in utter horror and astonishment as Coker of the Fifth banged the head of the French master on the door of Class-room No. 10!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Genuine Article!

BANG!

It was quite a loud bang! It startled the juniors gathered outside the French class-room as if it had been the bang of a cannon.

A terrific yell peeled from Monsieur Charpentier.

It rang down the corridor and far beyond.

For a second or two the juniors stood transfixed. It seemed to them that Horace Coker had gone mad—stark, staring, raving mad! But as Coker prepared for another bang they recovered a little and hurled themselves at him.

Grasping Coker on all sides, they dragged him back from Mossoo. Coker had to let go in the grasp of so many hands.

He staggered across the passage, struggling, the juniors clinging to him like cats. Monsieur Charpentier staggered against the class-room door, gasping for breath, clasping his head with both hands and blinking wildly at Coker. Like the juniors, he supposed that the Fifth Former had taken sudden leave of his senses. Otherwise, there was no accounting for his amazing action in banging a master's head on a door!

"Let go!" roared Coker, resisting valiantly. "I'm going to smash him! I'm going to spifficate the cheeky little beast!"

"You're jolly well not!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Hold him!"

"Grab him!" panted Hobson.

"You've done too much already, you mad ass!" said Temple. "For goodness' sake, keep hold of him! He's as strong as a horse!"

"He'll be sacked for this!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Sent to a lunatic asylum, I should think!" said Fry.

"Will you let go?" roared Coker.

"No jolly fear!"

"Zat you hold him!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "C'est un fou—it is one madman, n'est-ce pas! He go out of his head viz himself! Mon Dieu! He is vat you call on his onion." Probably Mossoo meant off his onion.

"Leggo!"

"Hang on!" panted Bob, as Coker swayed and strove.

There was a sharp step in the corridor. Mr. Quelch came hurrying up, his gown flying behind him in his haste. After him rolled Mr. Prout. The two masters had evidently heard Mossoo's frantic yell.

"What is this disturbance?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What?"

"Coker!" boomed Mr. Prout. "Coker—do I see you engaged in horseplay in the corridors with Lower boys—"

"Monsieur Charpentier! Are you hurt?"

"Mon Dieu! I am almost keel!" gasped the French master. "Zat Cokair, he bang me ze head on ze door—"

"Wha-a-at?" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"He seize me, and bang me ze head—bang! Bang!" gasped Mossoo. "I zink he is mad—verree mad—"

"Coker!" Prout boomed. "Coker! Is it possible that you have laid hands on a master—on a member of Dr. Locke's staff?"

"No!" roared Coker.

"Mon Dieu! All zese garcons zey see, viz zeyr eyes—"

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

"'Tain't Mossoo!" roared Coker. "I say it ain't Mossoo at all! Think I'd bang a master's head? I ain't potty, I hope."

"Ciel!"

"Aren't you mad, Coker?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"I'll smash you!"

"But it's Mossoo—you know Mossoo as well as we do—what on earth do you mean?" howled Frank Nugent.

"He is out of his senses!" boomed Prout. "Hold him fast—"

"The boy must be insane!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "Is it possible that he does not know Monsieur Charpentier by sight? In that case he is insane."

"'Tain't Mossoo!" bellowed Coker. "It's a Remove kid playing tricks, and that's why I jolly well banged his head."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Oh crikey!"

"It's Wibley!" shrieked Coker. "Now let go, you young scoundrels! I believe most of you knew that it was Wibley all the time."

"Great pip!"

The juniors released Coker.

He was not, after all, mad—at all events, no madder than usual! He fancied that Mossoo was Wibley got up as Mossoo! And they all turned and stared at the French master.

So skilful was Wib in his extraordinary impersonations that they would not have been surprised if it had turned out that Coker was right! They had seen Wibley look exactly like this, anyhow.

Coker, released, panted for breath. Only the presence of his Form-master kept him from charging at the French master again. Monsieur Charpentier waved his hands wildly.

"Zat you keep off, you mad vun! Mon Dieu! Go away viz you!"

Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch stood rooted. Coker's conduct was amazing; his explanation more amazing still to the masters if not to the schoolboys.

"Coker! What—what—what—"

Prout barely articulated.

"Think I'd lay hands on a master,



With a crowd of fellows clutching at him, Coker still clung to Wibley, who uttered a series of fearful yells. His scalp came off, his make-up smudged all over his face, and his coat split up the back. The Remove impersonator's outfit looked like needing repairs before he played the part of Prout again! "Urrrrgggh!" he gurgled.

sir!" gasped Coker. "Not likely! I knew it was young Wibley got up as Mossoo, that's why I collared him and banged his head! Like his cheek to play games like this! You see, sir, I heard a couple of Remove kids talking about it—about the trick Wibley was going to play on the detention class, and so I wasn't going to be taken in! I banged his head for his cheek—and he's got the nerve to make out still that he's Mossoo—"

"Mon Dieu! Je ne comprends pas! Je—"

"Oh shut up!" roared Coker. "Think you're going to make Mr. Prout believe you're Mossoo now I've told him you're Wibley!"

"Mais je suis Henri Adolphe Charpentier!" shrieked the French master.

"Shut up, you cheeky young rotter!"

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Have you not intelligence enough to see that that is Monsieur Charpentier?"

"Cannot you see, Coker?" boomed Prout.

"Nothing of the sort!" said Coker. "He's got up—he's jolly clever at the game! He's taken me in more than once! He'd have taken me in this time, all right, if I hadn't heard Caffyn tell Bunter about it. Look here, I'll jolly well prove that he's not Mossoo."

Coker made a sudden stride and a sudden grab at the little pointed black beard of the French master.

He grabbed it, to grab it off!

When the false beard came off in Coker's hand, even Quelch and Prout would have to admit that this was not the genuine Mossoo.

Coker tugged.

Monsieur Charpentier shrieked wild—

"M-my hat! It's fixed on jolly tight!" stuttered Coker in amazement.

"Zat you leaf go! Help! Ma barbe! He drag me ze beard from me by ze roots!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier.

"Coker—you mad idiot—"

"Coker—stop—"

"Collar him!"

But Coker did not need collaring this time! It dawned on him suddenly how it came to pass that the black beard was fixed on so tightly! It was because it grew on the French master's chin!

It was not a false beard at which Coker was tugging! It was a real beard!

Numbed with horror, as he realised that, Coker let go. Monsieur Henri Adolphe Charpentier, frantic with pain, danced like a hen on hot bricks. He danced, he hopped, he howled, and he yelled.

Coker gazed at him, dumbfounded.

Even into the solid brain of Horace James Coker it penetrated that this was not William Wibley of the Remove on one of his impersonating stunts, but the genuine Monsieur Charpentier! It was the French master's head he had banged—the French master's beard he had tugged! Overcome with horror and dismay, Coker tottered, speechless.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Good Old Mossoo!

"WELL, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

Nobody else spoke. Mossoo was still spluttering and yapping. But a dead silence descended on the rest.

Horror was on all the juniors, almost as much as on Coker! What was going to happen now? It was, of course, the sack for Coker of the Fifth! Nobody had ever banged a master's head at Greyfriars School before; but it was pretty certain what would happen to a fellow who did!

Prout broke his grim silence.

"Coker! You incredibly stupid boy!"

"I—I thought—"

"You inconceivably stupid and obtuse fool—" Prout was letting himself go with a vengeance. "You—you—"

"I—I believed—"

"If you please, sir," said Bob Cherry, moved to put in a word if he could for the hapless Horace. "That chap Wibley in our Form is awfully clever at making-up, and Coker really thought—"

"Silence, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Coker!" boomed Prout, purple with rage. "You have laid hands on a master! You have assaulted Monsieur Charpentier! I shall take you immediately to Dr. Locke! You know what to expect! Come!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Follow me!" boomed Prout.

"I—I say, sir!" gasped Coker. "I—I was taken-in! I distinctly heard that snipe Caffyn tell Bunter that that young ass Wibley was making-up as Mossoo to spoof the detention class—"

"Follow me!"

"If he'd told me so, of course, I shouldn't have believed him," groaned Coker. "But I heard him speaking as

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(Continued from page 13.)

he passed me in the quad, and he said—

"Follow me!"

"Oh, you awful ass!" breathed Bob. "Can't you see that Caffyn was pulling your silly leg? Of course, he meant you to hear him and make a fool of yourself!"

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

"Follow me!" boomed Prout.

"Coker's had his leg pulled, sir," said Nugent. "He's such a silly ass, any fellow could make a fool of him, and if—"

"Silence, Nugent!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Follow me!" roared Prout. "Coker, do you desire me to take you to your headmaster by the collar, sir, like a recalcitrant Lower boy? I shall assuredly do so, Coker, if you do not follow me instantly!"

"I've been taken in!" gasped Coker. "That young villain Caffyn—Oh crumbs! I see it all now! He knew I was there all the time—"

"Follow me!"

Coker tottered after his Form-master in the lowest of spirits. He knew now that the Snipe had made a fool of him; too late for the knowledge to be of any service. It was easy to make up his mind to smash the Snipe into small pieces next time he saw him. But it looked as if he was never likely to see him again at Greyfriars!

The Snipe had fairly knocked him out at last! Sacked for attacking and assaulting a master in the school! What would Aunt Judy think of that?

Bob Cherry turned an imploring look on Monsieur Charpentier, who was rubbing his head with one hand and caressing his beard with the other.

Every fellow there was sorry for Coker, and the matter was much too serious for laughter. There was one slim chance for Coker—the fact that Henri Charpentier was a kind-hearted, forgiving, generous little gentleman. Certainly a man had to be fearfully kind-hearted and forgiving to speak a word for a fellow who had banged his head and pulled his beard! But Bob hoped for the best.

"Mossoo," he breathed, "if you'd speak a word for Coker—"

"Moi!" ejaculated Monsieur Charpentier.

"You see, sir, he didn't know it was you—"

"C'est un drole!"

"He thought it was Wibley playing tricks, sir, and—of course, he thought that would be very disrespectful of Wibley!" said Bob diplomatically. "He's a born idiot, sir, but he wouldn't have touched you for a million pounds if he had known—"

"But how he zink?"

"He did, sir!" said Bob. "You heard what he said! Oh, sir, it's asking a lot, I know, but just a word from you—"

Monsieur Charpentier paused. He had a bump on his head and a pain in his chin. He had also a pain in his

dignity; but that had passed, since he understood that Horace Coker had handled him under a misapprehension.

He paused—but only for a moment! Then he whisked after Prout and Coker down the corridor. Mr. Quelch had gone, but the slow and majestic Prout had not yet reached the corner.

"Monsieur Prout!" Mossoo overtook the Fifth Form master and caught him by the arm. "Stop, je vous prie!"

"I am taking this boy Coker to the headmaster, sir!" boomed Prout. "Perhaps you had better come also to explain—"

"Mais non—non! Zat Coker he is vun duffair—he mean not to lay ze hand on me—take him not to ze Head, sair!"

Coker blinked at Mossoo. He had a gleam of hope. For once Coker said the right thing.

"Oh, sir," he exclaimed, "I'd never have dreamed of touching you if I hadn't been fooled! I'd have cut my hand off sooner, sir."

"Oui, oui, je comprends!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "It is all vun mistake, zough how you are so silly to make zat mistake, je n'en sais rien—I know not! Mais, Monsieur Prout—"

"Are you prepared, sir, to pardon this boy of my Form after what he has done, sir?" boomed Prout. At the bottom of his plump heart Prout was glad. He did not want a Fifth Form man sacked if he could help it.

"Mais oui! Certainement!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "I beg you—I implore you—mon cher monsieur, I will veep—"

"Pray do nothing of the kind, sir!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "If you seriously intercede for this foolish, ridiculous, obstreperous boy I will certainly consider a lesser punishment—"

"Zat you pardon him, sair! I pardon him from ze heart!" said Monsieur Charpentier.

"You hear that, Coker?" boomed Prout. "I trust, sir, that you will show some acknowledgment of Monsieur Charpentier's kindness, of his generosity!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Coker. "I beg Mossoo's pardon, sir! I'd never have dreamed—"

Prout paused.

"Very well!" he said. "Owing entirely to Monsieur Charpentier's intercession, Coker, I will allow the matter to pass. You will take an imposition of a thousand lines! You may go into detention."

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Coker.

Prout rolled away, rather glad on reflection, that he was not under the painful necessity of marching a boy in his Form to the headmaster for the sack. Coker blinked at Mossoo.

"You're awfully good, sir!" said Coker, with genuine gratitude. "I've been cheeky to you sometimes, sir! I'm sorry! Let me ever hear a fellow call you Froggy again! I'll smash him!"

Monsieur Charpentier smiled faintly.

"Zat you go into ze class-room!" he said.

And the detention class, after that wildly exciting episode, went into Class-room No. 10 for their hour's detention. And for once Coker of the Fifth was as attentive to the French master as if he loved the French language instead of loathing it. But while grateful and respectful to Monsieur Charpentier, Coker was thinking quite other thoughts of Edgar Caffyn—and he made some muttered remarks which told the other detained fellows very plainly what was to happen to the Snipe when Coker got out.

Nobody in Class-room No. 10 envied Caffyn his next meeting with Horace Coker.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hunting the Snipe!

HARRY WHARTON and the rest of the Co. were waiting for Bob and Nugent when they came out of detention.

"Seen the Snipe?" asked Bob, as he joined his friends.

"Blow the Snipe!" answered Johnny Bull. "Let's get along to the footer now you're done with Froggy."

"I want to see him—"

"Rot! Come on!"

"Fathead!" said Bob. "He's been playing one of his rotten tricks on Coker, and jolly old Horace is going to strew the churchyard with his hungry bones if he collars him."

"Let him!" said Johnny. "The more Caffyn's thrashed the better for him!"

"The betterfulness is terrific," agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Bob shook his head.

"Coker's boiling!" he said. "That silly ass pulled his leg and got him jolly near the sack; and Horace is going to slaughter him in pieces of the smallest size! I want to tip Caffyn to give him a wide berth till he's had time to cool down. He went up to his study for a fives bat as soon as we got out of detention."

"Five bats are good for snipes!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, he's a weedy snipe, and Coker may break him up if he begins on him in his present temper. I'm going to tip him to keep clear."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If you want him most likely you'll root him out in Skinner's study. That precious crew will be there if they've got any smokes."

"I'll look."

Bob hurried up to the Remove passage.

He thumped at the door of Study No. 11. The fact that it was locked seemed to hint that cigarettes were going within.

"Who's there?" called out Skinner.

"Little me! Is Caffyn in the study?"

"Yes! Do you want to see a hippopotamus, Caffyn? Cherry's at the door if you do!"

A laugh in Study No. 11 followed Skinner's remark. Bob thumped on the door again.

"Caffyn!" he shouted.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" came the Snipe's voice.

"I've come here to give you a tip, you ass! Do you want it or not?" hooted Bob. "Your Cousin Coker will be after you in a minute or two with a fives bat. If he finds you here a study lock won't stop him! He knows the rotten trick you played on him, making him pitch into Mossoo, and he's boiling over! If you've got any sense you'll lie low till he quieters down. That's all!"

With that, and another thump on the door, Bob Cherry stalked away, leaving Edgar Caffyn to act on his "tip" or not, as he thought fit.

In Study No. 11 Skinner and Snoop and Stott grinned over their cigarettes. But Edgar Caffyn did not grin.

He threw his cigarette into the fire and rose to his feet, with an extremely uneasy expression on his face.

"What's the big idea?" yawned Skinner. "What have you been doing to that fathead Coker this time, Snipe?"

"Nothing, but—"

The Snipe paused, with a worried

look. He had hoped, but hardly ventured to believe, that Coker would fall into the palpable trap he had laid for him. Coker, certainly, was ass enough for that, or anything else. If he actually had handled a Greyfriars master in the belief that he was Wibley of the Remove in one of his disguises, it was the sack, short and sharp. Caffyn hoped for the best—or, rather, the worst! That Coker actually had fallen into the trap and made an egregious fool of himself, but that the kind-hearted French gentleman had forgiven the fathead of the Fifth, naturally did not occur to Caffyn.

He hoped to hear, later in the afternoon, that there had been some terrific shindy in the detention class, and that Coker was going—or gone!

Instead of which, he received the news, shouted through the door by Bob Cherry, that Coker was "wise" to his

trickery, and was looking for him with a fives bat!

"That ass Cherry said something about him pitching into Mossoo!" said Snoop. "Your cousin's sacked, if he's done that, Caffyn."

"He's fool enough!" remarked Stott. "Quite!" agreed Skinner. "But if he was sacked he wouldn't be looking for Snipey with a fives bat."

Caffyn breathed hard. Something, it seemed, had gone wrong—as something so often did with his wily schemes!

He glanced round at his smoky comrades.

"Look here, if that brute comes barging up here, you fellows will stand by me?" he asked.

They did not look like it!

"Coker's a hefty brute!" said Snoop. "I'm not looking for scraps with the beefiest brute in the Fifth, thanks."

"Well, we can keep the door locked!"

"Coker's got a shoulder like an ox! That lock wouldn't stop him," said Snoop. "Better lie low, as Cherry advised you, if you've been getting his rag out."

"I've done nothing, of course—" "Oh, of course not!" said Skinner, with a wink at Snoop and Stott. "You never have, old bean. You haven't put in all your time since you've been at Greyfriars manufacturing trouble for that hot-headed ass! No!"

Snoop and Stott chuckled. Skinner threw away his cigarette and strolled to the door.

"You men coming out?" he asked. "It's getting a bit thick here."

Skinner unlocked the door and left the study. Snoop and Stott followed him.

Caffyn gritted his teeth. So far from backing him up, if the
(Continued on next page.)



Our Soccer specialist is at your service, chums. If you want an expert opinion on any point connected with the great winter game, write to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CLEAN FOOTBALL!

THERE is an old saying to the effect that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." In going through my latest batch of letters from MAGNET readers, the thought came to me that I was being tempted to rush in on a topic which might lead me into a lot of trouble.

An Ilford reader asks for my opinion as to whether amateur or professionals play the cleaner football, generally speaking.

This reader goes to watch Ilford—an amateur club—at times, and mixes this with an occasional look on at matches in which West Ham United are concerned. He goes on to express the opinion that amateurs play the cleaner football, and asks me if I agree. It is a difficult subject, and one on which I hesitate to express a definite opinion. I have seen amateur games in which there has been a fair amount of rough and unfair play. I have seen professional games in which there has scarcely been a foul from start to finish. It is also true, of course, that I have seen "pro" games in which the play has been anything but clean. There is one thing which can be said on this subject, and which should be remembered.

Roughly speaking the professionals, playing big League matches and important cup-ties, have more at stake than the amateurs.

By that I mean victory is much more important. And there cannot be the slightest doubt that there are professionals who, in their enthusiasm to see their team through to victory, often succumb to the temptation to put in a bit of the rough stuff.

My correspondent, however, makes one statement with which I do not agree. He says his conclusion is that amateur football is cleaner because the players in amateur games play for the love of the sport.

On that point I suggest, very strongly, that the "pro" player

loves the game just as much as the amateur, and gets as much enjoyment out of playing.

For many years I have mixed with professional footballers, and I know that those who get to the top of the football ladder have a real love and enthusiasm for the game. If they hadn't, they certainly would not get there.

I am sorry that I cannot oblige this correspondent—or others who make the same request—in securing the autographs of well-known players. If I started to do this, and obliged one or two MAGNET readers, I fancy I should be so inundated with requests that I should find all my time taken up. Every day there arrive, at the headquarters of the big football clubs, quite a number of autograph books. When I looked into the Arsenal dressing-room not long ago I saw a big table covered with these books. And the demand on the Arsenal players has reached such proportions that many of the books are now sent back with a polite printed note to say that it can't be done. Sorry.

DRIBBLING!

A YOUNG Nottingham player—A. Walker—whose position is on the wing, asks me for some hints on dribbling, and in reply I may be able to give a hint or two which will be of help to others. The successful winger must be able to dribble. That is obvious. There is no short cut to efficiency in this connection. Success can only be achieved by practice.

There is one good thing about learning to dribble, however, it can be done individually. Stanley Matthews, the young outside-right of Stoke City who has been "capped" for England this season, is a fine dribbler, and those who watch him cannot fail to notice how closely he keeps the ball to his feet.

He tells me that he did his practice in the dribbling art by placing sticks in the ground a few yards

from each other, and, taking the ball out by himself, dodged in and out of these stakes.

If my correspondent would do this, I think he would find himself gradually getting more complete control of the ball, and control is, of course, at the root of dribbling success.

In starting on this practice, it will be found advisable not to take out a ball which is tightly blown up. Let a little of the air out, so that the ball is softer than usual. A softer ball is easier to control, because it doesn't bounce away from the foot so readily. I know that George Hunt, the centre-forward of Tottenham Hotspur, did a lot of dribbling with a slightly deflated ball in his earlier days. As efficiency comes the fully inflated ball can be used. This dribbling round stakes in the ground not only develops skill in that direction, but also helps to cultivate the body swerve, which is also very useful in rounding an opponent.

"When I get near goal I always seem to shoot straight at the goalkeeper," is a plaintive message from another reader. There are lots of quite good footballers who fail to score with easy openings because they suffer from the same complaint; they shoot straight at the goalkeeper.

From my experience I should say that the main reason for this is that the player with the ball at his toe, and the goal in front of him, takes his eye off the ball to look at the goalkeeper. Many players shoot straight at the goalkeeper because they "send him a post-card" as to where they intend to play the ball, and the goalkeeper thus gets into position.

To take a glance at one part of the goal and then shoot the ball at another part is the best way—but it is easier said than done.

A South Norwood reader—Eric Wright—wonders whether he ties his boots correctly. I can tell him how the experts do it. With a long football boot lace, the boot is done up in the ordinary way. The lace is then crossed at the top, taken under the instep, round the ankle to the top of the boot at the back, crossed again and then brought round to the front to be finished off. By connecting the lace in this way, additional stability is given to the boot.

In reply to James Astill the biggest attendance at any match in England bar Cup Finals is 84,569. That number of people paid to see Manchester City play Stoke, at Maine Road, Manchester, in the sixth round of the Cup on the third of March last season. "LINESMAN."

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hefty Horace started handling him, his smoky friends did not mean even to await Coker's arrival on the spot. They preferred to be off the scene when Horace barged in.

The Snipe peered out into the passage. It was clear, so far. If Coker was hunting for him he was not yet drawing near the Remove studies.

In a rather palpitating state, Caffyn left Study No. 11 and went along to the Remove staircase. He kept a watchful and wary eye about him as he went down the stairs and left the House.

In the quad he came on Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, in a chuckling group. Temple was telling the fellows about Coker's amazing proceedings at the door of the detention class-room. Caffyn paused to listen. Cecil Reginald Temple spotted him and called out.

"Ware Coker, Snipey! He's after you!"

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Caffyn scowled and slouched away. A loud voice came to his ears as he passed by the elms. It was the voice of Horace Coker, talking to Fitzgerald of the Fifth.

The Snipe glanced round swiftly.

Coker was standing there with his back to him. Having no eyes, of course, in the back of his head, Coker did not see him. Fitzgerald, who was facing Coker, saw him and grinned.

"Yes, grin!" hooted Coker. "I tell you, I might have been turfed out! All through that sneaking little Snipe pulling my leg! Look here, you grinning ass, have you seen him anywhere? I've got this fives bat ready for him! I'm going to smash him! I'm going to crack this bat on him! See? If you know where the little beast is, Fitzgerald—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fitzgerald.

Caffyn, walking almost on tiptoe, was passing on, behind Coker, heading for the gates. A walk out of gates to be prolonged till calling-over, seemed an attractive idea to Caffyn, with Coker in this vengeful mood.

"What are you sniggering at, you Irish ass?" roared Coker.

"Faith, and ye'd make a stone image snigger, Coker, old boy!" chuckled Fitzgerald. "Sure, I'm glad intirely ye're not sacked for handling Mossos—you're as good as a tonic, ye are."

Coker snorted, and turned to stamp away.

As he did so he sighted Caffyn. Then he realised what Fitz had been laughing at.

"Why, there he is!" roared Coker. "Sneaking past behind a fellow! Here! Stop! I want you! I'm going to smash you! I'm going to pulverise you!"

If Coker expected that to stop Caffyn he was disappointed. The Snipe broke into a run and dashed out of gates. After him went Coker, raging.

A dozen fellows saw them go and roared with laughter as they went. But it was no laughing matter for Edgar Caffyn. He gave one terrified glance back at Horace Coker barging in fierce pursuit, fives bat in hand, and fairly flew. After him flew Coker, on vengeance bent.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

"OH!" panted Caffyn.

The Snipe had cut out of Friardale Lane into the wood.

In the woodland paths it was easy to dodge Coker; at least, Caffyn

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hoped so. Since entering the wood he had passed nobody except old Joyce, the wood-cutter, ambling about slowly on his ancient limbs, marking out trees for cutting. Now he was speeding along a footpath, with Horace far out of sight behind. But he came to a sudden halt at the sight of a horsey-looking man with a bowler hat tilted on one side of his head, leaning on an old oak by the path. It was the spot where he had met Joe Lodgey a few days since; and it was Mr. Lodgey who was leaning on the tree smoking a black pipe, with his stick under his arm.

Probably enough the sharper was there waiting to keep some appointment with some other Greyfriars-fellow. He looked round quickly at Caffyn, and the glimmer that came into his eyes at the sight of him was startling. He made a step towards the Snipe, and Caffyn turned and raced back along the path like a deer. Coker was dangerous enough to meet, but not to the same extent as the incensed Mr. Lodgey.

Indeed, the sight of Lodgey in the lonely wood alarmed Caffyn so much that he almost forgot his cousin, Coker!

He fairly flew back the way he had come.

He turned from the footpath into another, and then into another, and then, as he spun round the corner, there was a sudden crash.

He had met Coker!

But for that alarming apparition of Lodgey under the oak-tree, Coker of the Fifth certainly would have seen nothing of Caffyn till calling-over. As it was, the Snipe ran fairly into his arms.

"What the dickens!" gasped Coker, as he staggered back from the shock. "Who the thump— Oh! You!"

He grasped Caffyn.

"Let go!" yelled the Snipe, in terror.

In his fear of Lodgey, he had forgotten Coker! Now, in his fear of Coker, he forgot Lodgey! He squirmed and struggled in the Fifth Former's hefty grip.

"Got you!" said Coker, with grim satisfaction. "Now, you sneaking snipe—"

"Let go!"

"I'm jolly well going to give you the whopping of your life!" said Coker. "I'll teach you to pull my leg, you little beast! Think I don't know that you spun that yarn to Bunter specially for me to hear? If Mossos wasn't such a decent little ass, I should have gone to the Head to be sacked, or flogged, at least! That's what you wanted, wasn't it?"

"I never—"

"Oh, don't tell any lies!" said Coker contemptuously. "What's the good? You sneaking little tick, why can't you leave a fellow alone? I'd leave you alone fast enough, if you'd keep clear of me. Well, I'll jolly well teach you to keep clear of me, see, and stop your rotten tricks."

Caffyn struggled frantically.

But he was powerless in Coker's hefty hands.

The Fifth Former bent him over a log by the footpath and held him there with a grip of iron on the back of his collar.

With his right hand he wielded the fives bat.

Whack, whack, whack!

Caffyn wriggled and yelled and roared.

He deserved a thrashing—there was no doubt about that—but that knowledge was no comfort to him.

The Snipe had had more than one

whopping since he had been at Greyfriars School. But this one was rather a record.

Coker, justly incensed, laid it on hard.

A fellow who had had a narrow escape of the sack had cause to feel indignant. And Coker's idea was that a "jolly good whopping" would teach the tricky Snipe to stop his treacherous tricks.

So he gave him that jolly good whopping.

Caffyn's howls rang far through the wood, waking all the echoes. Old Joyce, the wood-cutter, stopped in his leisurely occupation, at quite a distance, to listen and wonder what the row was about. Mr. Lodgey, in another direction, heard and listened.

Caffyn was not thinking of either of them. He was only thinking of the fives bat, in a heavy hand, whacking on his trousers.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow! Wow! Stop it! Yarooop! Help!" yelled Caffyn frantically. "Oh crikey! I'll tell Quelch! I'll tell the Head! Yarooop!"

Whack, whack!

"Ow! Oh! Wow!"

"I believe you'd like to see me sacked," said Coker grimly. "Let you care for the school. A snipe like you wouldn't understand, I dare say, that a school can't spare fellows of my sort. You're always playing some sneaking trick or other to land me into a row. Well, you've got to stop it—see?"

Whack!

"Wow!"

"If that measly lawyer, Sarle, your guardian, puts you up to it, you'd better drop him a line and tell him what you get for it," said Coker.

Whack, whack!

"Yarooop!"

"You can howl!" said Coker. "If you were big enough, I'd make you put the gloves on, and take the thrashing of your life! As it is—"

Whack, whack!

"Yooop!"

"I'll see what I can do with a fives bat."

Whack, whack!

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Leggo!" shrieked Caffyn, squirming and wriggling. "I'll leave you alone! I'll do anything! Stop it!"

"I dare say you will, when you've had a few more," grinned Coker.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Even Coker, at length, thought that the Snipe had had enough. He pitched him, howling, into the grass, and slipped the fives bat into his pocket.

The Snipe lay wriggling and squirming, panting with rage and pain. His eyes gleamed up at Coker like a snake's.

"I fancy that will do," said Coker. "Let it be a lesson to you, you snipe! Keep your distance! No more of your tricks—see? There's plenty more where that came from, if you ask for it. And my tip to you is, don't ask for it. You'll get it if you do!"

And Coker stalked away, leaving the Snipe of the Remove wriggling and groaning in the grass.

The Fifth Former took a short cut through the wood to Friardale Lane, and walked back to Greyfriars, feeling satisfied.

After that rather severe lesson, he considered it probable that the Snipe would learn to steer clear. And if he did not, Coker was prepared to repeat the lesson at any time, and to any extent.

He was feeling quite cheerful as he walked in at the school gates. Potter



"Are you prepared, sir, to pardon Coker, after what he has done?" boomed Prout. "Mais oui! Certainement!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "I beg you, mon cher monsieur, I will veep—" "Pray, do nothing of the kind, sir!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "If you seriously intercede for this foolish boy, I will certainly consider a lesser punishment than taking him to the Head!"

and Greene met him in the quad, and they eyed him rather curiously.

"I hear you've been ragging Froggy," remarked Potter. "What have you been up to now, old bean? And what the thump have you got a fives bat sticking out of your pocket for?"

"Fitz says you cleared off after that fag cousin of yours," said Greene.

"I did," said Coker calmly. "I caught him in Friardale Wood, too, and gave him the whopping of his life."

"His Form-master may have something to say about that," remarked Potter.

"If Quelch doesn't know what a sneaking snipe he is, I'm ready to tell him," answered Coker. "I'm not bothering about Quelch. You fellows ready for tea—if you've finished the fozzling you call footer."

Coker & Co. went in to tea. When a little later Harry Wharton & Co. came off Little Side, Billy Bunter met them with a broad grin on his fat visage.

"I say, you fellows, Coker's been whopping the Snipe!" chuckled Bunter. "I heard him tell Potter and Greene that he caught him in the wood, and half-killed him. He, he, he!"

"Well, he asked for it," said Bob Cherry. "And I gave him the tip to keep clear of Coker till he cooled down. Where's Caffyn now?"

"He hasn't come in," grinned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, let's go down to the gates and see him come in! He, he, he!"

"Fathead!" answered the Co. with one voice; and they went on to the House.

They were not interested in Caffyn,

and what he might look like after a whopping from Coker.

Bunter, however, was. The fat Owl rolled down to the gates, where he stood, blinking into the road through his big spectacles, on the watch for Caffyn to come in. But the Owl of the Remove little dreamed of what he was to see when Caffyn came.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Lodgey Hits Too Hard!

CAFFYN lay gasping and groaning in the grass by the footpath after Horace Coker had disappeared through the trees.

The Snipe was not, as a matter of fact, much hurt. The whacking had been hard and heavy, but there were plenty of fellows at Greyfriars who would have laughed at the idea of making a "song and a dance" about it. But Caffyn never could bear pain, even a little, though he often found pleasure in inflicting it. He lay for long minutes, gasping, groaning, spluttering, muttering dire threats of vengeance on his burly cousin, snarling a good deal like an ill-conditioned dog.

He did not stir till there was a sound of rustling in the thickets, telling that someone was approaching.

Then he bounded up, the idea in his mind that Horace Coker might be coming back to give him a few more.

But it was a figure nothing like Coker's that pushed through the trees into the footpath. It was a slovenly, slouching figure, with a bowler hat tilted on one side of a greasy head—the figure of Joe Lodgey.

Caffyn gave a squeal of alarm and leaped away. He caught his foot in a root in his hurry, and pitched headlong.

Lodgey was on him the next moment. As Caffyn scrambled up, the ruffian grasped him by the collar.

"Let me go!" shrieked Caffyn.

The look on the beery face struck terror to his soul.

This was the man he had refused to pay, whose rascally dealings he had threatened to expose, and whom he had catapulted. There were still marks on the beery face left by the sharp stones from the catapult.

Only too well Caffyn knew that what he had received from the angry Coker was a mere nothing to what he might expect to receive from Joe Lodgey. Lodgey's look told him that very plainly, and every vestige of colour drained from his pasty face as he struggled feebly to escape.

"No, you don't!" said Mr. Lodgey, grinning savagely. "My turn now, Mister Clever Caffyn! Catapulting a man—what? Might have knocked an eye out for all you cared—eh?"

"I—I—I— Oh, let me go!" panted Caffyn.

"Yes, I'll let you go," agreed Mr. Lodgey. "When I've laid this 'ere stick about you till my arm aches, then I'll let you go, and you can 'op it! Not till then, you young scoundrel—you!"

"I'll have you locked up! I'll have you prosecuted—"

"Will you?" said Mr. Lodgey. "I don't think! I don't fancy you'll be keen to tell your 'eadmaster about knowing me at all, Mister Caffyn! But you ain't catapulting a man and getting

away with it, safe and sound, anyhow I got you!"

"Help!" yelled Caffyn wildly.

Coker had pinned him over a log and whacked him. But Coker's whacking was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared with what was coming now. As the sharper of the Cross Keys tightened his grip on the Snipe's collar the wretched fellow yelled frantically for help, in the faint hope that Horace might yet be within hearing.

He was Coker's bitter and unscrupulous enemy. He had sought in every way to injure him. But he knew that Coker, had he known what was happening, would have rushed to the rescue at once, heedless of Lodgey's knuckly fists, and of his thick stick. But Coker was already far away—far from the sound of the wretched Snipe's yelling. There was no help for the Snipe from his Greyfriars cousin.

"Owl away, you little cur!" said Mr. Lodgey. "There ain't nobody to 'ear you, not in this 'ere wood. I 'eard you 'owling, you young rascal, and that was what brought me 'ere. You got a 'iding from somebody, I reckon, and I ain't got no doubt that you asked for it, too. But you're going to get a worsen one now, you'll see."

The stick flew into the air, in Lodgey's right hand. As it came down, with a heavy lash, Caffyn made so desperate an effort that his collar tore out in the ruffian's hand.

Leaving the collar in Lodgey's grubby fingers, he sprang away, and the descending stick missed him by inches.

"By gum!" gasped Lodgey.

He leaped after Caffyn, who was trying to run. Once the Snipe was out of reach, he had no chance of catching him, as he knew by his former experience. His clutch missed Caffyn by an inch or less, as he grasped at his shoulder. Caffyn bounded desperately on, the ruffian panting after him.

The stick whistled through the air and struck

Lodgey, in his excitement and rage, did not intend to do so much damage as he actually did. The idea in his beery mind was to knock the running Snipe over and pin him before he could scramble up again. Caffyn was already getting out of reach, and there was no other way of stopping him.

But the next moment the ruffian wished that he had not stopped him in that drastic manner.

Crack!

The descending stick struck Caffyn full on the head, protected only by his school cap. He pitched forward into the grass and lay motionless.

Lodgey stumbled over him before he could stop himself.

Caffyn did not stir.

"By gum!" panted Mr. Lodgey. He steadied himself, and stared down at the motionless figure, face down in the grass. "By gum! 'Ave I 'urt him?"

As he stared in alarm at the stunned schoolboy, footsteps came along the woodland path. Mr. Lodgey glanced round apprehensively. He had hurt Caffyn, that was clear; the boy lay stunned and senseless at his feet. Police and prison loomed before the scared rascal's eyes, if there had been a witness to his brutal action.

And there was a witness!

Old Joyce, the woodcutter, came pottering up the footpath. The old man had heard Caffyn's cries, but his ancient limbs did not move quickly, and he reached the spot after Lodgey. He

came pottering up just in time to see Caffyn fall under the blow from the stick.

Lodgey stared at him. Then he looked down at the senseless boy. Old Joyce came pottering on.

"You've killed him!" panted the old man.

"Don't be an old fool!" snarled Lodgey. "He's only shamming. And it was an accident, too—I never meant—"

He broke off and swung away.

Caffyn lay stunned, and what the extent of the injury might be Lodgey did not know. But he knew that it behoved him to get off the scene as quickly as he could.

That he would be arrested, and sent to prison for such an act, he did not need telling. Caffyn could not have kept the matter secret if he had wanted to. Old Joyce had seen him; there was a witness—and that settled it for Mr. Lodgey.

He left the spot with hurried steps, and broke into a run; and as soon as he reached the Cross Keys Joe Lodgey hastily packed a bag and took the first train out of Friardale. He did not intend to honour that village with his presence again till he knew how matters had turned out with Edgar Caffyn.

Old Joyce dropped on his knees beside the senseless boy and lifted his head, from which the cap had fallen into the grass.

Caffyn's eyes were closed, his face white as chalk. A thin crimson trickle ran from under his hair.

He was stunned, and there was no sign of returning consciousness. The old woodcutter looked at him helplessly. There was no aid nearer than the village, and in the winter the wood was lonely; no one was likely to hear a call. As for carrying Caffyn, the ancient woodcutter could not have carried him a dozen yards, let alone the mile to the village.

There was only one thing that Joyce could do.

He made the boy as comfortable as he could in the grass, resting his head on a bundle of twigs. Then he hurried away for Friardale as fast as his ancient limbs could carry him—which was far from swiftly. But it was all he could do—nothing more could be done for Caffyn till help could reach the spot.

Mr. Lodgey was in his train by the time old Joyce pottered, breathless, into Friardale.

Meanwhile, Caffyn lay senseless in the grass of the footpath. For full ten minutes after the woodcutter had disappeared he lay as he had been left, like one dead.

Then a moan escaped his colourless lips. He stirred.

A shudder ran through him. His eyes opened, and he stared about him wildly. Recollection of what had happened came back with a rush. He gave a whimper of fear and tried to rise.

He sank back again, his head spinning.

But the fear that Lodgey was still in the wood, that he might appear at any moment, nerved him to an effort. He crawled to his feet, holding on to a tree. He dabbed his wet forehead and shuddered at the sight of the crimson stain on his fingers.

His one thought was to get away—to get away before that horrible ruffian came near him again.

With aching head and dizzy sight, he tottered up the footpath, groaning as he went. Slowly he moved on, tottering and swaying, and emerged at last

from the wood into Friardale Lane, within sight of the grey old tower of Greyfriars. As he clambered down the grassy bank into the lane he fell and rolled helplessly into the road. He was utterly spent.

He heard a shout and hurried footsteps. As in a mist, he saw the face of Wingate of the Sixth bending over him.

"Caffyn! What's happened? Here, lend a hand, Gwynne—he's all in!"

Wingate and Gwynne were walking in the lane when Caffyn rolled down the bank. In utter amazement at seeing a Greyfriars junior in such a state, they picked him up.

"He's had a crack on the head," said Gwynne. "Look!"

Wingate stared at the big bruise on the junior's head, and the trickle of blood.

"Is it possible?" he breathed. "That mad fool, Coker, I heard, was after him with a fives bat! Is it possible—"

He broke off.

"No fear! As if Coker would—"

"He's fool enough for anything, I believe. I heard that he handled the French master this afternoon. Anyhow, this kid's been knocked out—let's get him in!"

Caffyn was past speaking. The two stalwart Sixth Formers grasped him by the arms, and half-walked, half-carried him to Greyfriars.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter burst into Study No. 1, in the Remove, almost like a bombshell.

"I say—" he spluttered.

Then he stopped! Study No. 1 was empty, and the fat Owl of the Remove was wasting his sweetness on the desert air.

He turned out of the doorway and rolled hurriedly up the passage to Study No. 13. A cheery buzz of voices from that apartment told that the Famous Five were teeing there.

Bunter hurled the door open, and did his bombshell act over again. He burst in headlong.

"I say, you fellows!" he howled breathlessly.

"You silly ass!" hooted Johnny Bull.

Study No. 13 was rather crowded. Besides the Famous Five, Mark Linley and little Wun Lung were there, and Lord Mauleverer and the Bounder were guests to tea. Johnny was rather near the door, which banged on his elbow as Bunter hurled it open and rushed in.

As Johnny was raising his teacup to his lips at the moment the result was rather disastrous!

Hot tea shot over Johnny's trousers, and he jumped up, hooting.

"I say—" bawled Bunter.

"You clumsy ass!" roared Johnny Bull. "Look what you've done! I'll jolly well bang your silly head on the door! I'll—"

"Beast! I say, Caffyn—" gasped Bunter. "I say, I came to tell you fellows the news! He's been fearfully injured—"

"Chuck it!"

"I saw him come in, covered with blood—"

"Ring off!"

Wingate and Gwynne were carrying him in! He could hardly put a foot to the ground. White as chalk, and streaming with blood—"

"Kick him!"
 "Beast!" hooted Bunter indignantly
 "Is that the way you thank a chap for coming up to tell you? I say, they've brought him into the House and taken him to the House-dame's room. They're sending for a doctor. I heard Quelch tell Mrs. Kebble he would phone at once!"

Bunter paused, gasping for breath. He blinked at the tea-party in Study No. 13, apparently expecting general excitement. But there wasn't any. The juniors knew their Bunter too well. The tea-party went on with their tea, and Johnny Bull went on mopping his trousers.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"Chuck it, old fat man!"

"That poor old Snipe is lying—"

"He generally is!" remarked the Bounder. "He tells as many as you do, Bunter!"

"I mean, he's lying at death's door, and—"

"And you're lying at a study door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's true!" yelled Bunter.

"How can it be true when it's you that's telling us?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Be reasonable!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter, with a snort, rolled off to tell his thrilling news in some other study. The tea-party chuckled. But Harry Wharton's face was a little grave.

"I suppose that fat ass is gammoning, as usual," he remarked. "But—I hope Coker didn't go too hard and heavy with that fives bat! He's such a blithering idiot—"

"Most likely never caught Caffyn at all," said Vernon-Smith.

"Anyhow, he never hurt him," said Bob. "That's Bunter's rot! As if Coker would damage a fellow! Might have given him a good whopping."

"Well, he's such a howling ass!" said the captain of the Remove slowly.

"Look what he did this afternoon! I think I'll go down and see whether anything's happened to Caffyn."

Tea was nearly over in Study No. 13. Through the open doorway the juniors could hear Bunter's excited squeak up the passage, telling the tale. There was a buzz of voices, and several fellows went along to the stairs. Harry Wharton & Co. finished their tea rather quickly and went down. That Coker could intentionally have done Caffyn any real injury was impossible; but a fives bat was a hefty weapon in a heavy and reckless hand, and an accident might have happened.

Downstairs, the juniors very soon learned that something serious had taken place.

Bunter, at the gates, had been the first to see Caffyn come in, half-carried between Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth. But a score of fellows had seen him led into the House, and seen the state he was in.

The Famous Five found the House buzzing with it.

"Banged on the napper!" Temple of the Fourth was saying. "Somebody must have got him with a stick—"

"Or a fives bat!" said Fry significantly.

"Coker wouldn't—"

"Looks as if he did!"

"Landed a whop in the wrong place!" said Hobson of the Shell, with a nod. "Coker all over!"

Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to the House-dame's quarters. From what they heard, it seemed that Caffyn had been taken there.

But they were not admitted. Mrs. Kebble spoke to them at the door, and they had a glimpse of the Snipe lying on a sofa, with his head bandaged. There was a stain on the bandage, and the narrow face was like chalk. It was plain that the Snipe had been hurt.

"Nothing serious—no, no!" said Mrs. Kebble. "A bad bruise, that is all; and the doctor is coming. Please go away now!"

"But who—" asked Harry.

"Master Caffyn has not been able to tell anything yet."

Mrs. Kebble shut the door, and the juniors departed.

Their faces were very grave now.

A crowd of fellows had seen Coker start in pursuit of the Snipe, fives bat in hand, and had laughed at the sight. But it looked as if it was not a laughing matter now.

"Let's go and see Coker!" said Harry. "Bunter said he heard him tell Potter and Greene that he had whopped Caffyn in the wood. If he did—"

Bob Cherry whistled.

The chums of the Remove went along to the Fifth. Coker & Co. were at tea in their study. Coker's powerful voice could be heard as they approached, laying down the law, as usual. Football was the topic—one of the many subjects on which Coker believed himself to be an authority.

He broke off and glared as the juniors looked in.

"You fags want anything?" he snapped.

"Did you catch Caffyn?" asked Harry quietly.

"Is the Snipe whining about his whopping?" asked Coker scornfully.

"Well, I gave him something to whine about!"

"Then you did get him?" asked Bob.

"Eh—yes!"

"You whopped him with a fives bat?" asked Nugent.

"Yes! And I'll give you fags some of the same if you barge into my study!" answered Coker.

The Famous Five exchanged glances.

"My esteemed and idiotic Coker—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Get out!" said Coker.

"Is anything up?" asked Potter.

"Well, yes, rather! Caffyn's been badly hurt," said Harry. "They're getting the doctor to him!"

Coker jumped.

"Getting the doctor! My hat! Can't the sneaking little snipe take a whopping without getting the doctor? Well, that's the limit!"

"You blithering fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "He's all bandaged up in the House—dame's room! He's had a fearful crack on the head!"

"Don't be a silly little duffer!" said Coker. "I whopped him on his bags, not on his head! Think I'd knock a kid on the head with a fives bat? Mad?"

"Well, somebody's knocked him on the head!" said Harry.

"Don't tell that rot to me!"

Coker got up from the table and stepped across to the bookshelf, where the fives bat lay. Harry Wharton & Co. retired from the study before he could get into action. It was no time for a shindy with Coker.

Horace kicked the door shut after them.

"Cheeky little ticks!" he grunted.

"What they want is a jolly good whopping all round, the same as I gave Caffyn! What are you blinking at me like boiled owls for?" he added, as he observed that Potter and Greene were looking at him curiously and uneasily.

"What on earth have you been doing, Coker?" asked Potter. "If that kid's really hurt after you laid into him with a fives bat—"

"Don't be a fool, Potter!"

"But Wharton says—" began Greene.

"Don't be an idiot, Greene!"

The subject dropped. Coker resumed tea and the topic of Soccer, evidently quite at ease in his mind. Potter and Greene were far from feeling at ease. And they were not surprised when, about half an hour later, Mr. Prout's heavy tread was heard in the passage and the Fifth Form master looked in.

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

"Yes, sir!"

"Follow me! Dr. Locke requires you!"

Coker blinked.

"But it's all right about Mossoo, sir," he said. "Mossoo looked over that—that mistake, sir—"

"This matter does not concern Monsieur Charpentier, Coker! It concerns your relative, Caffyn of the Remove!" said Mr. Prout.

"Oh!" said Coker. "Well, the Snipe said he would complain, but I'm surprised at the Head taking any notice of him!"

Mr. Prout gave him a strange look.

"Do you admit, Coker, that you laid hands on the boy this afternoon in Friardale Wood?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir! I whopped him with a fives bat, because—"

"You may make your explanation, if you have one to make, to your headmaster!" said Mr. Prout dryly.

"Follow me at once!"

Coker, rather bewildered, followed Prout. Potter and Greene looked at one another.

(Continued on next page.)

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"What has that howling ass done?" asked Greene.

"Goodness knows!" said Potter. "He might have done anything—he's idiot enough!"

They went down, and soon learned what Coker had done, or was supposed to have done. The whole House was buzzing with it. And all the fellows were asking one another whether Coker of the Fifth would be just sacked, or whether he would be taken away from Greyfriars in the custody of a police-constable!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

False Evidence!

EDGAR CAFFYN lay on the old leather sofa near the fire in the House-dame's cosy room, silent, with eyes half-closed.

Dr. Pillbury had come and gone, and the injured junior lay with bandaged head that ached and ached. But the ache in his head did not prevent the Snipe from thinking. He was not, after all, badly hurt; he had a big bruise, a slight cut, and a headache, and the doctor recommended that he should remain where he was, to rest, for a couple of hours, and then be taken to his dormitory. Caffyn was glad to hear that he was not considered bad enough to go into "sanny." He was thinking, thinking, as he lay there, and there was a glitter through his half-closed eyelids.

So far he had not been questioned.

At first he had been unable to speak. And when he was able to speak, he did not choose to do so until he had had time to reflect.

Any other fellow would naturally have explained what had happened as soon as he was asked. But that was not the way of the Snipe of the Remove.

He was going to say what suited him best.

At last—at long last—he thought he saw his way clear. Half Greyfriars had seen Horace Coker hunting him, fives bat in hand. A crowd had seen the fathead of the Fifth chase him down Friardale Lane.

No eyes, so far as Caffyn knew, had fallen on what had happened in the wood. Who was to know that Lodgey, and not Coker, had done this?

Coker had thrashed him with the fives bat, and left him howling in the grass. He could not deny that much. Who could tell—who could guess?—that another had come on the spot when Coker was gone, and delivered the blow that had stunned him?

Of old Joyce, Caffyn knew nothing. He had lain senseless when the old woodcutter came up. He had not recovered consciousness till long after the old man was gone. He had seen the woodcutter in the wood, earlier in the afternoon, that was all. He did not even remember his existence now.

Coker had done this! That was Caffyn's malicious thought. Lodgey, it was certain, would not talk of what he had done; he would be only too glad to be left out of the affair, since he was likely to be tried and imprisoned if it came out that he had struck the blow.

Caffyn had nothing to fear from Lodgey in that respect. He knew nothing about old Joyce. It rested with him to say what he liked.

Everybody knew that Coker had followed him with a fives bat. He had been attacked in the wood and stunned. What did it look like?

The Snipe would have told that

falsehood, if only in revenge for the thrashing Coker had given him. But he had a more powerful motive.

It would finish Coker with Aunt Judy!

What would she think, and say, and do, when she learned that Horace had been expelled for a brutal attack on his cousin, inflicting serious injury, for which he might have been taken into custody by the law?

Already, Caffyn knew, fellows were wondering what that ass, Coker, had done to him. He had caught a word here and there. The impression was already abroad that that ass, Coker, had gone over the limit. What else, in the circumstances, were they to think—knowing nothing of Caffyn's connection with Lodgey, or the sharper's presence in the wood that afternoon?

Caffyn lay and thought it out.

It was safe—safe! Mr. Sarle had advised him, above all, to be safe—to take no risks that he could avoid. But he could see no risks here. If he said that Coker had done it the matter was settled.

By the time the Head came in, with his Form-master, the Snipe had quite decided what he was going to say.

The two masters stood by the sofa, with compassionate eyes on the junior's pallid face.

"Caffyn!" said the Head quietly. "Dr. Pillbury has told me that you may be questioned now; and I should be glad if you would make an effort to answer. A few words will suffice. Who struck you down in the wood? You will understand, my dear boy, that the police must be informed."

"Oh, no, sir!" said Caffyn. "Not the police, sir, for a Greyfriars fellow."

The Head gave a violent start.

"Caffyn! You are not saying that it was a Greyfriars boy who inflicted this brutal injury upon you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good heavens!" breathed the Head.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes were fixed on Caffyn.

"Take care what you say, Caffyn!" said the Remove-master. "Such an accusation is very serious."

"I'd rather say nothing, sir!" said Caffyn, in a feeble voice. "I don't want to be a sneak, sir."

The Head made a gesture.

"This affair is much too serious for considerations of that sort, Caffyn," he said, rather sharply. "If such a ruffian can be found in this school, he will be expelled with ignominy immediately, and it will be left to your relatives to decide whether to prosecute him. But I find it hard to believe that any Greyfriars boy can have committed such an act. What is his name?"

"I—I don't think Horace meant to hurt me so much, sir!" murmured Caffyn. "But he is so big and strong and reckless—"

"Horace? Whom do you mean? A Remove boy?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I think Caffyn is alluding to his cousin, Coker, of the Fifth Form, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Is that the case, Caffyn?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Tell me precisely what happened, Caffyn!" said Dr. Locke.

"Horace was annoyed with me, sir—he thought that I had played a trick on him," said Caffyn. "Cherry warned me to keep out of his way, so I went out of the gates. He followed me to the wood, and caught me there."

"And then—"

"I—I hardly know what happened, sir! He pitched into me with a fives bat, and that is all I remember."

An instinct for caution kept the Snipe

from making too definite a statement. But he had said enough.

The Head's face set like iron.

"Mr. Quelch, perhaps you will request Mr. Prout to come here, and bring Coker with him."

"Certainly, sir."

The Remove-master left the House-dame's room. Dr. Locke sat down in a chair Mrs. Kebble placed for him, to wait.

The Snipe closed his eyes. He was afraid that the Head might discern the malicious triumph that gleamed in them.

He had won his game now.

When the door reopened he caught a distant buzz of voices. A crowd of fellows had followed Prout and Quelch and Coker down the corridor, eager to learn what they could of what was going on.

Billy Bunter's excited squeak came to his ears.

"I say, you fellows, Coker's going to be sacked for braining poor old Snipey! I say, I wonder if they'll send him to choky!"

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

The two Form-masters came in, followed by Horace Coker. The door was shut, much to the disappointment of the mob outside. Dr. Locke rose to his feet, and fixed a look on Horace Coker that made even the fathead of the Fifth feel a cold chill run down his spine.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Hollow of His Hand!

"**C**OKER!" said Dr. Locke, in a deep voice.

"Yes, sir!" faltered Coker.

The Head pointed to the bandaged junior on the sofa.

"Caffyn states that it was you who attacked him in Friardale Wood, Coker. Do you deny this?"

"I shouldn't call it attacked, sir!" answered Coker. "That's putting it rather strong. I thrashed him."

"You admit it?"

"Certainly, sir, and I'll tell you why I—"

"You need not tell me why, Coker! That is immaterial! I desire only to know, beyond doubt, whether you committed this act of brutality."

Coker reddened.

"That's putting it strong, sir, for whopping a fag," he answered. "I've batted fags before this, and—"

"You admit having used a weapon?"

"A—a—a weapon! No fear! I gave him about a dozen with a fives bat. That's all."

The Head's face grew grimmer and grimmer. Mr. Quelch looked searchingly at Coker. Mr. Prout snorted.

"I could never," said Dr. Locke, "have believed that any boy could be so brutal, so callous. I am glad, at least, that you tell the truth, Coker! Yet I wonder that you dare to stand in the presence of your headmaster and confess that you struck down a school-fellow, and left him lying stunned and senseless in a lonely place, without help or—"

Coker almost fell down.

"Who did?" he shrieked.

"You have admitted that you did."

"I—I—I haven't!" spluttered Coker. "Nothing of the kind! Stunned! Rot! You can't stun a fellow by whacking him on his bags!"

"Caffyn was stunned, and lay senseless for a long time before he was able to crawl away," said the Head sternly. "He could not have reached the school but for the fact that two prefects saw him in the lane and carried him in."



As Caffyn clambered down the grassy bank into the lane, he fell and rolled helplessly into the road. Then he heard a shout, and in a mist, saw the face of Wingate bending over him. "Caffyn!" gasped the captain of Greyfriars. "What's happened? Here, lend me a hand, Gwynne—he's all in!" Gwynne came racing up.

"Who's told you so?" gasped Coker. "It's not true! Don't you believe a word that snipe says, sir! He's a born liar! I'd like to see the prefects who brought him in, that's all."

"Wingate and Gwynne, of the Sixth Form, brought him in, Coker, and have made their statement to me."

"Wingate!" gurgled Coker. "And—Gwynne! Blessed if I catch on! I suppose that sneaking Snipe told them lies, and took them in, sir."

"Are you unaware, Coker," boomed Prout, "of the extent of the injury inflicted on this boy?"

"He's not injured, sir," answered Coker.

"Wha-at?"

"Thrashing a young rotter on his bags doesn't injure him. I've had worse lickings than that when I was a fag!" exclaimed Coker. "If he says he was injured, it's just some more of his lies."

The three masters exchanged glances. Then they concentrated all their glances on Coker's flushed face.

"Apparently," said the Head, "you are unaware of what you have done, Coker, unless you are attempting to deceive me. The school doctor has examined Caffyn."

"Has he, sir?" said Coker cheerfully. "Then he jolly well knows that there's nothing the matter with him, and that the little beast is only malingering."

"There is a large bruise and a cut on Caffyn's head, and he was only semi-conscious when he was brought in, Coker. Are you so foolish as to suppose that he would be lying here in bandages if there was nothing the matter with him?"

Coker's bewildered eyes turned on the Snipe.

It was driven into his obtuse brain that Caffyn really was injured. But that only added to his bewilderment.

"There is nothing more to be said,

sir, I think," boomed Prout. "This aggressive, obstreperous boy—"

"I didn't!" roared Coker. "If he's really injured, I never did it! Think I'd knock a kid on the head with a fives bat? I came jolly near licking young Wharton for saying something of the kind. I whacked him on his bags. Ask him?"

"Wha-at?" stuttered the Head.

"He can speak, I suppose!" hooted Coker. "Why don't you ask him whether I cracked his silky nut or not? He can tell you that I didn't."

"He has told us that you struck him down, Coker!"

Coker staggered.

"He—he—he's told you?"

"I'm sorry, Horace," murmured the Snipe. "I know you couldn't have meant to hurt me so much, but you were in such a terrible temper. I had to tell my headmaster."

Coker blinked at him.

"You little beast!" he gasped. "Tell the Head what happened! You pulled my leg, and got me into a row with Mossoo, and I whopped you on your trousers with a fives bat for doing it. That's all, as you jolly well know."

Caffyn did not answer, but he pressed his hand to his bandaged head. That bandaged head was a sufficient answer.

"I never did it, sir!" panted the hapless Coker. "I admit I whopped him, and I'd do it again. He was all right when I left him, only yelling."

"You left him senseless, Coker."

"I didn't!" shrieked Coker. "He was howling like a hyena when I left him. He could be heard all over the shop. He must have banged his head afterwards if it was really banged at all. Very likely banged it on purpose, just to get me into a row."

"Silence, you absurd boy!" rapped the Head. Coker's last suggestion was a little too much for his patience. "I

am willing to believe that, in your insensate temper you inflicted more injury than you intended, or perhaps realised at the time—"

"I didn't! I—"

"Silence! I repeat—"

There was a tap at the door, and Trotter, the page, looked in.

"If you please, sir, the telephone—"

"You may take the call, Trotter," said the Head.

"Please I've took it, sir," said Trotter, "and it's Mr. Tozor, sir, the plecceman at Friardale, sir, says he would like to speak to you very important, sir."

"Dear me, I cannot speak to Mr. Tozor now! Ask Mr. Tozor if he will kindly hold the line for a few minutes."

"Yessir."

Trotter closed the door and departed. "This scene need not be prolonged," said Dr. Locke, in an icy voice. "I regret, Mr. Prout, that I am under the necessity of expelling a boy in your Form—"

"You have no other choice, sir!" boomed Prout. "I consider—"

"Coker," went on the Head, without waiting to hear what Prout considered, "you will be sent home immediately. Your Form-master will take you to the railway station in half an hour. You will be ready. A full explanation will be sent to Caffyn's guardian, Mr. Sarle, who will decide whether to take further and more drastic measures. Go!"

"I never—"

"Go!" boomed Prout.

Coker almost tottered away. Dr. Locke and Mr. Prout followed. Mr. Quelch remained for a moment, looking down on Caffyn with scrutinising eyes. Perhaps there was some lingering doubt in the Remove master's mind. But he said nothing, and after that one searching look he followed the other masters.

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Caffyn was left to the kindly care of Mrs. Kebble, who probably could not have felt so kindly disposed towards him had she known him a little better. The Snipe lay with half-closed eyes, gloating inwardly.

He had done it! He had got away with it! He had won his treacherous game! He was no longer sorry that Lodgey had caught him in the wood and knocked him on the head. It was worth a knock on the head for this. He had succeeded at last! He had his rival for Aunt Judy's money-bags in the hollow of his hand.

But had he?

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Surprise!

"I NEVER—"

"Chuck it!"

"I tell you I never—"

"Rats!"

"The sneaking snipe banged his head on purpose to fix this on me!" bellowed Coker.

"You silly ass!"

"I can see him doing it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I tell you fellows I never—"

"Then who did?" asked Wingate of the Sixth gruffly.

"I know I didn't! I never—"

"Coker!" The Head's deep voice broke in. On his way back to his study, he came on Horace Coker, wildly excited, the centre of a crowd, almost hysterical in his frantic asseverations that he had never done it. "Coker! Go to your dormitory at once, and pack your box!"

Coker stared round.

"I never—" he gasped.

"Enough!"

Dr. Locke passed on. But Horace Coker did not go and pack his box. He remained where he was, still bawling.

The Head went into his study.

The receiver was off the telephone. Mr. Tozer, the village constable, was still waiting patiently at the other end.

Somewhat wearily, for he was deeply disturbed by the scene in the House-dame's room, Dr. Locke took up the receiver.

"Mr. Tozer! I regret very much having kept you waiting," he said, in his courteous way, "are you there, Mr. Tozer?"

"Yessir!" came back the voice of the Friardale police force. "I thought you'd be anxious to know about it, sir, so I rung you up, sir. I ain't found Master Caffyn, sir, but I 'ope he has got back to the school?"

"Caffyn is here, Mr. Tozer," said the Head, in astonishment. "Am I to understand that you know anything of what has occurred?"

"I 'ope so, sir!" said Mr. Tozer. "I got arter Lodgey, sir, as soon as Mr. Joyce told me what had happened."

"Wha-a-t?"

"If Master Caffyn's got back, sir, I s'pose he's told you what's 'appened," said Mr. Tozer. "Lucky, Joyce seed Lodgey at it, and he's a witness, sir, and Lodgey's safe for six months when we get him."

Dr. Locke blinked at the telephone. All this was a mixture of Greek and Hebrew to him.

"I—I fail to understand—" he gasped.

"Ain't Master Caffyn told you, sir? I s'pose it was Master Caffyn, sir—I found a school cap with his name in it, and a bloodstain on it, sir, when Joyce took me to the place where he said he saw a Greyfriars boy knocked down—"

"Yes, yes, yes, it was Caffyn who was

knocked down in the wood, Tozer. But—but what do you mean about—about Lodgey?"

"It was Lodgey knocked him out, sir."

"Lodgey!" gasped the Head.

"That loafing 'orse-dealer, sir, at the Cross Keys," said Mr. Tozer. "I dunno why he did it, but Joyce saw him. I been round to the Cross Keys, but he's gone. Took the first train up, he did. But I've been on the phone, sir, and they'll get him all right at Courtfield or Lantham! At least I 'ope so."

Dr. Locke passed a hand over his brow.

"Joyce! You mean the woodcutter, I suppose? Am I to understand that he witnessed what happened in Friardale Wood this afternoon?"

"Yessir! From what he tells me, he 'eard a 'owling and a yelling, like somebody being hided, sir, and he went to see what was up, and saw Lodgey knock the lad on the head with his stick—"

"Good heavens!"

"The boy being stunned, sir, old Joyce couldn't do anything for him, and he came as quick as he could to the village to fetch me. But the lad was gone when I got there, sir. All I found was his cap."

The expression on Dr. Locke's face was extraordinary.

"Is it certain, Mr. Tozer, that it was

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

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

Many thanks to all the readers who have sent me congratulatory letters on the subject of our stories. You may be sure that I will always make a point of seeing that the standard of MAGNET stories remains as it is at present. You'll find evidence of this is:—

"THE FIFTH FORM MYSTERY!"

By Frank Richards,

when you read it next Saturday. The MAGNET, as you all know, specialises in the finest schoolboys' fiction published, and it is a constant wonder to my readers how Frank Richards manages to keep up such a splendid standard of work week after week. There's one thing you can all say, and that is that Frank Richards never lets you down. Neither do I, and when I tell you that next week's yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. is an absolute top-notch you'll know that I am not "talking out of my hat." Regular readers of the MAGNET have already got a standing order for the good old paper with their news-agent, and I should like to advise new readers to follow their example. Nothing is more annoying than to find that the MAGNET is "sold out"—and there is every chance that it will be, unless you order your copy in advance.

There'll be another interesting "Greyfriars Herald" supplement in next week's issue, together with more stirring chapters of Geo. E. Rochester's brilliant yarn of modern piracy, "Linesman's" answers to readers' footer queries, and another little chat with me.

Don't forget that your own Frank Richards has a really topping series of stories now running in our famous companion paper, the "Gem." I want every one of you to read about the "Pals of Packsaddle School," otherwise you'll be missing a rare treat! YOUR EDITOR.

the man Lodgey who attacked Caffyn? Are you assured that Joyce saw the occurrence, and that the assailant was Lodgey?"

"Eh? Oh! Yes, sir! But I s'pose Master Caffyn's told you. I s'pose he can speak, if he's got back to the school," said the puzzled Mr. Tozer.

The Head did not reply to that. He stood for some moments in deep and troubled thought. Then he spoke into the telephone again.

"Will you request Mr. Joyce to come up to the school, Mr. Tozer, so that I may hear from him precisely what he saw?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Dr. Locke rang off. He sent for Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout. The three masters were in very earnest consultation when old Joyce arrived, and was shown in. And although much more than the half-hour had elapsed, Coker of the Fifth was not gone! The Snipe, gloating over his success, was destined to learn that he had counted his chickens too early, and that there is many a slip twixt cup and lip!

"Didn't I say so?" roared Coker of the Fifth, in Hall that evening.

It had to be admitted that Coker had said so.

Hardly anybody had believed him.

If ever a fellow took the deepest and most thorough-going care to land himself in trouble and misunderstanding, that fellow undoubtedly was Horace James Coker, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

He had whopped Caffyn with a fives bat in the wood. Who was going to believe, or even imagine, that somebody else had come along immediately afterwards, and added the additional damage, which Caffyn declared to be a part of Coker's handiwork?

But all was clear now.

Joyce's evidence was irrefragable. And Lodgey was in flight from the police! A warrant was out for him!

Lodgey had done it! Coker hadn't! Fellows congratulated Coker, though they told him at the same time that he had asked for all this. Everybody was glad that Coker was cleared of such a charge. And everybody had something to say about the Snipe.

It was generally expected that the Snipe would be sacked for his lying. But there was a doubt, and he was given the benefit of it. He had been knocked down from behind, and it was possible, at least, that he had not seen his assailant, and had fancied that it was Coker who had come back to give him another lick! On that possibility the Snipe scraped through, though the Head eyed him very grimly and dubiously, and his Form-master with unconcealed contempt. He knew how narrowly he had escaped; but he had escaped; and perhaps the open scorn of all the other fellows was a sufficient punishment for him.

A harder punishment was the failure of the scheme which, of all his wily schemes, had seemed the surest winner. He was not, as he had confidently believed, at the end of his campaign. He was back at the beginning! Which was not very encouraging for the Snipe of the Remove!

THE END.

(Be sure to read the next yarn in this popular series dealing with the feud between Horace Coker and the schemer of the Remove. It's entitled: "THE FIFTH FORM MYSTERY!" and you'll find it in next Saturday's bumper issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy NOW!)



THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Nursing a feeling that little has been done for him since the War, Ulverst, the greatest U-boat commander Germany ever had, decides to wage war against the world. In consequence of this, he seeks out his old chief petty-officer, Wesel, and asks him to turn pirate. Down on his luck, Wesel readily agrees. Boarding a twin-engined amphibian monoplane, piloted by Ulverst, he is taken out over the North Sea to Ice Rock, the lair of the Sea Spider, the strangest steel craft ever constructed to move beneath the seas—and the most deadly. After showing Wesel over the Spider and introducing him to his brother officers, Ulverst informs his men that he intends to sink the Minneapolis, a thirty-five thousand tons vessel bound for Cherbourg from New York with five hundred thousand pounds' worth of bullion aboard.

(Now read on.)

A Council of War!

NO man, no matter how unimaginative he might be, could fail to have been impressed by the cavern workshops of Ice Rock.

In electrically illumined caves, mechanics, fitters, and engineers worked at lathes and benches, their dungaree-clad figures, the black belting of the motors, and the dark metal of the machines given a strange and grotesque setting by the black and glistening walls of rock.

In the power-house, a vast and smooth-floored cave, two great turbines hummed and steamed as they drove the dynamos which supplied the lighting and power of the island rock.

In another cavern, stripped to the waist and weirdly Dantesque in the leaping flames from open doors, men sweated and toiled at a great blast furnace, melting down scrap metal and ore to be turned into castings.

"But what is all this for?" demanded Wesel. "What work are these men engaged upon?"

"They are making duplicate and triplicate parts for the Spider," explained Ulverst. "Others, working from drawings and blue prints made by Dubowsky, are building machines for experimental purposes. Always there is something to be done, Wesel. We are never idle."

No, never idle!

Far though it was from the haunts of men, Ice Rock, rising sheer and stark from out of a grey and desolate waste of waters, was a humming hive of industry.

And to what end?

To no other end than piracy upon the High Seas.

"These men here," said Ulverst, "are, every one of them, men who, rightly or wrongly, consider the world has treated them ill. Each has his own particular grievance against this modern civilisation of ours. Some, frankly, are fugitives from justice—or from what the world calls justice!"

He laughed gratingly, then resumed:

"There are others, capable men who could find no job in their own par-

ticular sphere, and who, rather than starve in the gutter, have thrown in their lot with us. And I tell you, Wesel, not one of them will ever regret having done so. For when the time comes for us to abandon Ice Rock every man in our service will leave here with wealth beyond his wildest dreams. For every man, no matter whether his work lies ashore or aboard the Spider, has an equal share of all booty we take."

In his quarters that night Ulverst held a meeting of his officers to discuss the forthcoming attack on the American bullion liner Minneapolis.

Including Wesel, Braden, Zutloss, and Rahl, there were present at the meeting Chief Petty-Officer Dorok and Coxswain Versk, two silent and taciturn men, but two in whom, it soon became apparent to Wesel, Ulverst had the greatest of confidence.

Dubowsky was not present. Now that he knew where the Spider was going, he was interested in nothing but the actual working of her.

"The Minneapolis has already sailed," said Ulverst, spreading out a chart on the table. "By leaving here at noon to-morrow, and taking the passage between Iceland and the Faroe Islands, we should intercept her at dawn, forty-three hours later, three hundred and seventy-five miles south-south-west of Cape Clear."

He handed Braden a slip of paper covered with figures.

"Will you please check these reckonings?" he said.

Braden did so, carefully and laboriously.

"Yes, that is correct," he confirmed at length. "We should fall in with the Minneapolis three hundred and seventy-five miles south-south-west of the Irish coast, forty-three hours after leaving here."

"Our mode of attack," went on Ulverst, "will be as usual. We will surface, and if there is no danger, we will remain on the water until we sight the Minneapolis. If, however, there is any other shipping about, we will submerge and cruise at periscope depth. On sighting the Minneapolis, we will

dive and take up firing position directly beneath her hull. One torpedo should be sufficient."

"Yes, only one will be needed," nodded Torpedo-Officer Zutloss, a white gleam of perfect teeth showing in a quick smile.

"Having torpedoed her," continued Ulverst, "we will hold her until her passengers and crew have cleared away in their boats. Then we will let her sink and go down to the ocean floor beside her where we will put our divers out to loot her."

He looked inquiringly at his officers.

"Is that agreed, gentlemen?"

With brief word and nod they gave their affirmation.

"Then that will be all," said Ulverst. "We sail at noon to-morrow. Every man will be aboard and at his post one hour before that time!"

Southwards!

THE Spider was going out!

Rumour had now been confirmed as definite fact.

That night in the main cave all except the crew of the Spider embarked on a wild and drunken carousal which would not end until the early hours of the morning!

For no work, except such as was absolutely necessary, would be done now upon Ice Rock until the Spider had gone.

Before turning in, Ulverst, accompanied by Wesel, paid a brief visit to the main cave. Unobserved, they stood in the shadows listening to voices raised in thunderous song:

"We sail against the Englander,
We sail against the Yank.
We sail against the dago ships
Beyond the Dogger Bank!"

"Why do you permit this?" exclaimed Wesel, viewing with faintly concealed disgust the drunken and hilarious men. Ulverst shrugged his shoulders.

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"Because it is the only excitement the poor devils get!" he replied.

Yes, the only excitement!

Cut off from the world, and all it had to offer, the sailing of the Spider was always a great event for the men on Ice Rock.

Until the early hours of the morning the carousing went on; then slowly the hubbub died away, and many a man slept where he sat, his head pillowed on arms asprawl on the table.

With the morning, they congregated about the foot of the path which led upwards to the cave which gave access to the Spider.

Here, with gruff word and handshake, they bade farewell and bon voyage to the leather-jacketed crew of the Spider as the latter passed through their midst.

One hour before noon, as Ulverst had commanded, every man of the crew of forty was aboard the Spider and at his post. Those who were left behind commenced a scramble to the highest point of the black and precipitous cliffs which rose stark and forbidding from out of the grey and lonely sea.

Ulverst, the collar of his short and belted leather jacket turned up about his neck, completed a tour of the Spider and then returned to the control-room.

"Close all hatches!" he said harshly.

The hatches were closed and a deathly stillness reigned throughout the Spider.

Ulverst glanced at his watch.

The minute hand was creeping to the hour of noon. Steadily he stared at it, then moved forward to his voice-tube, which connected with the main engine-room.

"Clutch up!"

Stridently his voice rang through the stillness.

"Slow speed ahead!"

A dull, vibrating rumble echoed through the Spider. Her great legs trembled, and slowly she heaved her wet, glistening belly from off the rocky floor awash with water. Then, with movement horrible and awe-inspiring, so lifelike was it, she commenced to crawl forward.

Steadily the water mounted about her as she crawled along the rocky floor and down its sloping length, making towards where it emerged on to the ocean bottom, sixty fathoms beneath the sea.

On she went, moving like some huge, nightmarish creature of flesh and blood.

Higher and higher mounted the water, slowly engulfing the Spider. Then, at last, she disappeared, crawling her way down and down to the ocean floor and leaving behind a strange emptiness in her great, cavernous lair.

It was now twelve minutes past noon.

From the men grouped on the cliff-tops of Ice Rock there came a sudden, ragged cheer. They could not see the Spider. Could see nothing save the grey and desolate expanse of unbroken sea, stretching far to southwards, to merge with the haze and murk of the distant horizon.

But they knew that somewhere beneath that cold and lonely sea the Spider was crawling away from Ice Rock in search of her prey.

They cheered her on her way. But in each heart was the unuttered question:

What would happen to her out there? Would she ever return?

It was when Ice Rock lay half a mile astern that Ulverst gave the order to

blow the ballast tanks and rise from the ocean bed to thirty fathoms.

"It is necessary for us to cruise at depth so as to avoid striking submerged ice," he said to Wesel, as the rumble of the crank gear died away, to be replaced by the hiss of compressed air driving the water out of the tanks.

Under the lift of her hydroplanes and the buoyancy of her emptying tanks, the Spider rose from the ocean bed and mounted through the water until the depth gauge steadied at one hundred and eighty feet.

Then came the muffled hum of the electric motors and the Spider commenced to move forward, the pointer on the gleaming speed dial, in front of Ulverst, creeping steadily to fifteen knots.

Throughout the short remaining hours of the afternoon she drove steadily southwards, and when dusk was creeping in across the cold and desolate sea, Ulverst gave the order to rise to periscope depth.

"We will surface for an hour and let some air into the boat," he said to Wesel, "for we have a long night ahead of us, and we must cruise under water because of the snowfields."

Through the telescopic lens of the twin periscopes he swept the wide stretch of darkening and desolate sea.

"There is always the chance of a stray whaler being about," he said grimly, "and I am taking no chances."

The periscope, however, showed the sea within their range to be deserted, save for slowly drifting fields of snow; and Ulverst's voice rang out:

"Surface! Blow tanks seven and eight!"

Again came the hiss of compressed air and the faint drone of the hydroplane motors.

Then, like some strange primeval monster of the sea emerging from out the depths, the bows of the Spider appeared above the surface and the squat bulk of her look-out tower broke water.

"Open the hatch!"

In response to Ulverst's command, the hatch was thrown open and a stream of icy-cold water poured down into the Spider.

Muffled in leather jacket, oilskins, and seaboots, Ulverst, accompanied by Wesel and First-Watch-Keeping Officer Braden, mounted to the look-out tower.

Taking his glasses from their case, Ulverst pressed them to his eyes and long and earnestly swept the silent and surrounding sea. Satisfied that the Spider was the only craft on that dreary and desolate waste of waters, he returned his glasses to their case, and, stepping to the voice-pipe, gave the order:

"Blow all tanks!"

Gurgling, the last of the water was forced from out the ballast tanks, and the Spider heaved herself up to ride on the surface, a strange and nightmarish thing in the grey and shadowy half-light of the Arctic dusk.

"Clutch up the Diesel engine!" ordered Ulverst.

From below, through the tube connecting with the look-out tower, came the voice of the engineer:

"Oil engines ready, sir!"

"Port and starboard engines slow ahead! Increase speed to twenty knots!"

Below, the powerful 5,000 h.p. oil engines rumbled into life, sucking down the ventilation shaft the air which was

their life blood, and from the blunt bows of the Spider the dark and oily sea began to surge away in creaming foam.

Wesel, his folded arms resting on the top rail of the steel weather screen, drew in great lungfuls of the bitter cold air.

He knew from long experience on the U-boats just what a night below the water could mean. And he drank in the raw air as though to lay in a store of it against the time when, fathoms deep, the air in the Spider would become vitiated and exhausted.

Ulverst joined him at the rail, and for a time the two men stood side by side in silence, gazing ahead at the great, drifting fields of snow which merged with, and were lost in, the creeping shadows of the deepening dusk.

It was Ulverst who spoke first, and he did so with a sidelong glance at his companion.

"Any regrets?" he asked quietly.

Wesel shook his head.

"None," he returned.

During the next hour little more passed between them, for they and Braden were joined on the look-out tower by Chief Petty-Officer Dorok, and Dr. Valendorf, who came up for a breath of fresh air.

"For the sake of his health," laughed the latter, "I have been trying to persuade Dubowsky to come up. But he prefers the warmth below, and hopes you will not keep the hatches open too long, Herr Ulverst."

"An hour, whether he likes it or not," returned Ulverst.

At the end of an hour, during which time the Spider had cruised steadily southwards at twenty knots, Ulverst straightened up from the weather rail.

"Well, gentlemen," he said crisply, "we will now submerge."

Dorok and Dr. Valendorf went below, and the top covering hatch of the look-out tower was closed. Snapping down the switch which controlled the lighting of the now darkened and enclosed tower, Ulverst stepped to the voice-pipe.

"Flood!" he ordered. "Take her down to thirty fathoms!"

From below came the whine of the valve gear; then the report:

"All main vents open, sir!"

Slowly the Spider began to sink as the water came rushing into the ballast tanks, and higher and higher the oily sea mounted about the squat tower.

Then silently the Spider dived beneath the sea, and only a swirl of water and a few air bubbles marked the spot where she had disappeared down into the depths.

The Underseas!

THE Arctic dusk had deepened into night over a cold and desolate sea, and, thirty fathoms deep, the Spider drove steadily southwards through the eternal night of the underseas, her great, luminous eyes picking out her course in a shimmering golden ray.

In her dimly lighted interior nothing broke the stillness, save the muffled hum of the electric motors, running at half-speed.

Beside the wheelsman in the control-room stood Second Watch-Keeping Officer Falze, his eyes on the gyro compass which was steady at 187 degrees.

Occasionally he would lift his gaze to

the gleaming tangle of pipe-lines, voice-lines, pressure tubes and wheels, his eyes seeking the engine gauges.

How still everything was down there in the depths. How remote and far away seemed the world. Even the drone of the quietly running motors seemed to merge with the oppressive silence and accentuate that awful feeling of confinement which, if not kept at bay, could develop into blind and unreasoning fear.

Every bulkhead door was open for the better circulation of the air which already was becoming heavy and fatiguing, and occasionally from aft there would come to Falze's ears the disjointed mutter of some member of the crew tossing in restless sleep.

At 4 a.m. Wesel, sea-booted and fully dressed, entered the control-room to take over the morning watch.

"Anything to report?" he asked.

"No; nothing," replied Falze.

"How is she steering?"

"One hundred and eighty-seven degrees."

Wesel grunted and glanced at the level indicator as Falze, wearily and thankfully, went off to seek his bunk.

The wheelsman, having been relieved, Wesel turned to the log which had been entered up by Falze.

12.00.—Carried out inspection to bilges. No increase.

12.35.—Faint noise overhead. Breaking ice?

1.30.—Turned on oxygen for fifteen minutes.

2.00.—Carried out inspection to bilges. No increase.

2.55.—Versk reports moisture trickling down walls of look-out tower. Tightened hatch.

3.00.—Turned on oxygen for fifteen minutes.

3.20.—Inspected look-out tower. Leakage stopped—

Wesel paused suddenly in his reading and raised his head. A silence like that of death had descended without warning on the Spider, and the gyro-compass was beginning to swing.

For one fleeting instant Wesel was at a loss as to what had happened. Then in a flash came realisation.

The electric motors had stopped!

With an oath Wesel leapt to the voice-pipe.

"What is wrong with you back there?" he shouted. "What is the matter with the motors?"

It was Second Engineer Stuxberg who answered:

"A defect has developed in the oiling system. Our main port bearing is heating up."

"How long will you want?" rasped Wesel.

"Thirty minutes—no more!"

Wesel stepped back and gripped the cord of the alarm bell. Next moment, throughout the Spider, there echoed the brazen deafening clang of the alarm.

"All hands to diving stations!" shouted Wesel, as sleepy-eyed men vacated their bunks, and, struggling into their reefer jackets, converged on the control-room.

Ulverst, roused by the reverberating clamour of the bell, was at Wesel's side before the last echoes had died away.

"What is the matter?" he cried.

"What has happened?"

"Motor trouble," replied Wesel laconically. "It is nothing serious. We are ready to take her down to the ocean bed until she is able to get under way again."

"Carry on, then!" affirmed Ulverst. "I will see Rahl."

He quitted the control-room, knowing that by this time the senior engineer would be with the motors.

"Flood all tanks!" Wesel's voice rang out in the stillness to the waiting men.

"Take her to the bottom slowly!"

There came then the gentle whirr of opening valves, and slowly the Spider settled lower and lower in the depths until a faint jar told that she had struck the ocean bottom.

"Close all vents!" ordered Wesel.

"Stand by the regulating tank!"

The regulating tank was a tank capable of holding fifty tons of water, and, when filled, acted as an anchor,

Then slowly she commenced to crawl forward along the ocean bed.

"Wesel, take the look-out window!" commanded Ulverst; then to the engine-room: "Half speed ahead!"

The lumbering gait of the Spider increased; and next came the order:

"Full speed ahead!"

Quivering like a live thing, her glaring eyes cleaving a golden path for her through the dark and eerie depths, the crawl of the Sea Spider gradually developed into a horribly lifelike run.

As though she were some huge and hideous monster of the undersea, she scuttled along the ocean floor, now mounting some shelving ridge, now descending into the inky blackness of uncharted depths, peopled by strange and ghostly denizens of the deep which swooped and swirled momentarily into the glare of her eyes and then were gone.

"Ulverst!"

A cry from Wesel brought Ulverst in two strides to the look-out window. Pressing his face close to the glass, the latter peered out into the depths ahead, then caught his breath.

Unbelievable and incredible though it was to human eyes, the Spider, at ninety fathoms below the sea, was approaching a great ghostly forest of white trees, thick with black and waving foliage.

"C o r a l!" ejaculated Ulverst. "Mein geist! To find it here!"

"Coral!" repeated Wesel wonderingly.

Ulverst turned to him.

"Yes, that is what it is," he replied, "and what appears to be foliage is great masses of seaweed. There are many such dead beds as this on the ocean floor, but I've never encountered one so far north. Proof, indeed, Wesel, that these were once warm, tropic seas!"

He broke off as, with a dull crunch audible to those inside its great steel belly, the Spider crashed its way into the fringe of this vast forest of coral which, throughout the ages, had stood undisturbed down there in the dark and silent depths.

It took upwards of an hour for the Spider to smash its way through the white and

spectre-like belt; and throughout that time Wesel stood fascinated at the look-out window, watching the great, pallid trunks looming up in the glare of the Spider's eyes to vanish into nothingness as the sea creature of solid steel passed relentlessly on, sweeping them from its path with great, blunt nose, and crunching them to fragments beneath the weight of its gigantic legs.

Once, held fast and cruelly pierced by the stalactite-like coral, Wesel saw the long, black, wooden hull of a vessel, low-pooped and high of prow. And he marvelled anew, for his knowledge of sea lore was sufficient to enable him to realise that this submerged wreck was that of an old-time Viking galley.

Stolid and unimaginative though Wesel was, he found himself wondering what her tragic story had been, and how those who had manned her had died.

Like many of the U-boats in the



The Sea Spider crashed its way into the fringe of coral which, throughout the ages, had stood undisturbed down there in the dark and silent depths!

keeping the Spider steady on the ocean bed and preventing either sway or drift.

Hurriedly, Ulverst entered the control-room.

"There is a break in one of the oil pipes!" he informed Wesel. "It means draining the sump and fitting a new pipe. It will be a longer job than Stuxberg at first thought. We had better keep moving!"

He stepped on the voice-pipe connecting with the main engine-room.

"Clutch up the crank drive!" he ordered.

A moment of silence, then through the voice-pipe came the response:

"Crank drive ready, sir!"

"Slow speed ahead!"

Following Ulverst's order, the stillness was broken by the rumble and suck—rumble and suck—of the engines driving the crank gear and quiveringly the Spider heaved herself up on to her great, massive legs of steel.

recent days of War, there must have come a day when she had sailed from her home port, out into the grey and shrouding mists of the horizon, never to return. None save those who sailed aboard her could have known what her end had been. She was just one more ship which had paid the toll of the sea. And now, after long centuries and countless years, the eyes of man were beholding her grave.

Ay, beholding it and bringing desecration. For when the Spider had passed all that remained of the last resting-place of that dead galley was riven coral and rotting, encrusted wood swirling upwards to the surface of the cold and night-enshrouded sea.

At last the strange and eerie forest of coral was left behind and the Spider continued its ungainly way over seaweed-covered rock embedded in the black mud of the ocean floor.

At dawn, with motors repaired and working smoothly the Spider broke water and surfaced. Hatches were thrown back, and gratefully officers and crew drew in the cold, fresh air of morning which came flowing down the ventilation shafts.

In the look-out tower Ulverst handed over to Braden.

"Keep a good look-out and order an instantaneous crash dive should you sight any hull," he said. "We are running at full speed under Diesels. Keep her going at that, for the breakdown last night has cost us time."

He inhaled deeply, leather-clad arms extended.

"Donnerwetter!" he breathed. "But it is only we of the underseas, Braden, who can appreciate to the full the clean fresh air of Heaven."

Then, turning, he went below to breakfast, leaving Braden wondering at this almost reverent reference to the One from whose ways Ulverst, pirate and sea-wolf, had long since turned.

Prey of the Spider!

THROUGHOUT the day the Spider drove southwards, submerged to periscope depth only, for the danger zone of ice and snow-fields had long since been left behind.

With the night she surfaced, and her mighty Diesels, charging the batteries of her electric motors, kept her tearing onwards through the heavy seas, her blunt bows throwing up flying spume and lashing spray from out the roaring surge.

Behind the steel weather screen the bridge watch crouched in streaming oil-skins, whilst the watch below stood ready to spring to diving stations should the necessity arise.

In the darkness of the open sea, however, there was little likelihood of a dive being necessary; for the Spider

was showing no lights, and even had she been running under navigation lights there were few to see her and none at all to question the mission upon which she was bound.

An hour before the dawn she again submerged, and the clamour of her hot Diesels gave way to the drone of the electric motors.

Bent over the chart-table in the control-room stood Ulverst, Wesel, and Braden, compass readings and speed gauge readings in front of them.

"Forty minutes, gentlemen," said Ulverst, glancing at length at his watch and straightening up, "and we should be directly in the path of the Minneapolis."

Neither Wesel nor Braden answered. Very close upon them now was the thing they meant to do. They would not shirk it—there was nothing of that in the make-up of either of them—but no seaman, whatever he may be, can think unmoved of a gallant ship going to her doom.

Long before mid-morning, unless something strangely unforeseen occurred, the 35,000 ton liner Minneapolis, of the American Green Star Line, would have fallen a prey to the Spider, and be lying with shattered hull fathoms deep on the ocean floor.

Dawn, creeping from out the east over the dreary waste of waters, found the Spider in position and cruising at periscope depth, her motors running at just sufficient speed to keep steering way on her.

Every man aboard her was standing tense and expectant at his post. Even Dubowsky had quitted the ward-room, and, muffled in a great fur coat reaching almost to his ankles and a round fur cap, he was standing beside Ulverst at the periscope.

"Can you sight her yet, Ulverst?" he inquired eagerly, as the minutes dragged on and in the growing light of morning the dividing line between sea and sky became clearer and more vivid in the periscope field.

"No," returned Ulverst shortly, moving the periscope handle in order to sweep the horizon.

"I hope our position is correct," chattered Dubowsky. "Are you sure we haven't made a mistake, Ulverst?"

"I have made no mistake," returned Ulverst harshly. "We are cruising directly in the track of the Minneapolis."

Nervously Dubowsky rubbed his hands.

"I hope so—I hope so!" he ran on. "It would be dreadful after coming all this way to make a mistake and miss our quarry."

Face livid and eyes blazing, Ulverst wheeled from the periscope.

"We have made no mistake, I tell you!" he shouted. "Shut your mouth will you, you drivelling fool?"

Dubowsky shrank from the fury in the commander's eyes.

"I was only asking," he whined. "I know there is no mistake—"

Roughly Ulverst cut him short, turning again to the periscope.

But Dubowsky's words had sown uneasiness and doubt in the heart of Ulverst—an uneasiness which grew to be a very lively fear as the minutes dragged slowly on into an hour, with still no sign of the ship for which they were lying in wait.

Once into the field of the periscope there came the masts, smokestack, and hull of a large vessel, bows on. But it was only a freighter of the German Line, and it was allowed to pass unmolested on its way, 3,000 yards to starboard of the Spider.

Save for a tightening of his thin lips and a hardening of his eyes, Ulverst's face showed nothing of the awful, carking doubt at his heart, nor did he appear conscious of the malicious grin with which Dubowsky was regarding him.

As though moved by a common impulse, first Wesel and then Braden moved to the chart table and checked the bearings. And Wesel, meeting Ulverst's eyes as the latter turned for a moment from the periscope, nodded reassuringly.

Yes, the bearings were correct. Where then was the bullion liner, Minneapolis? Suddenly Ulverst tensed, his hand tightening on the periscope handle.

Far away on the grey horizon had appeared a smoke smudge, and, as he watched, there merged gradually into view the smoke-stacks, decks, and hull of a great liner.

"It's her!" he rapped. "I'll wager on it! Wesel!"

He stepped back from the periscope, and Wesel, taking his place, peered long and earnestly into the reflector mirror.

The liner was coming up hand over fist on the starboard bow of the Spider, and, at three thousand yards, the green star on her black, forward smoke-stack was plainly visible.

"Yes, she's the Minneapolis all right!" affirmed Wesel grimly, relinquishing the periscope to Ulverst, who commenced to give harsh, metallic orders.

"Wheel, hard, a-starboard. Both motors half speed. Centre vertical torpedo tube ready!"

Slowly the Spider swung round, manoeuvring for position directly in front of the Minneapolis which was overhauling her.

"Steer ninety-four degrees. Hold her at that. Both motors full speed. Prepare to flood!"

(Look out for further exciting chapters of this powerful story of modern piracy in next week's grand issue of the MAGNET, boys.)



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THE ST. SAM'S MARATHON!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Reddy?" asked Burleigh, of the Sixth Form at St. Sam's, glancing at the fellows lined up outside the gates of the school for the Junior Marathon.

"Reddy, I, reddy!" grinned Jack Jolly, the kaptin of the Fourth, who was one of the most fancied competitors for the race.

"Then—"

Burleigh was about to say "Go!" Before he could get the word out, however, there was an unlooked-for interruption.

To the astonishment of the runners and of the crowd that had assembled to watch the start, a weird-looking old crook of a motor-bike came snorting and rattling out of the gates, bearing in its saddle a distinguished-looking gentleman wearing a gown and mortar-board.

It was Dr. Birchmell—and the fellows' surprise at seeing their majestick headmaster riding a motor-bike was doubled when they noticed that he carried under his right arm a long spear which usually adorned one of the walls of Big Hall!

"What the merry dickens—" gasped Burleigh.

"Half a minnit, Burleigh!" called out Dr. Birchmell. "Is Merry of the Fourth among the starters?"

Burleigh nodded like one in a dream.

"Yes, sir, he's over there. But what—"

"Good!" grinned the Head. "That being so you may get on with the washing. I am going to follow the race on this old jigger, Burleigh, and I only mentioned Merry because I have a partikular fancy for his chances to-day."

"But why are you carrying that wackin' grate spear, sir?" asked Burleigh wonderingly.

The Head laughed gaily.

"Ah, I thought that would puzzle you, Burleigh. It looks misterious, I know, but the eggspianation is quite simple. The fact is, I have only just finished my dinner, and as I don't possess a toothpick at the moment I am taking this along with me instead!"

"By gum!" mermered Burleigh.

"But don't let my toothpick hold up the race," added the Head, with biting wit. "Get things going at once, Burleigh. I am anxious to see how young Merry shapes."

Some of the fellows wondered, as they prepared again for the start, why Dr. Birchmell was so deeply interested in Merry on this partikular afternoon. It didn't occur to them that Major Merry, that cheery junior's pater, was very keen on seeing his son win the marathon, and had promised the Head a handsome reward if the junior pulled it off. Yet such was the case; and this, as they were soon to learn, was the reason for the Head turning up with the weird trappings he had brought with him!

"Go!" yelled Burleigh at last.

Like unleashed hounds, the marathon runners bounded off the starting-line. Immejetely afterwards, with an ear-splitting roar, the Head's motor-bike started off behind them.

It was a trying jorney Dr. Birchmell had to make that afternoon. The race took the runners

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"Go West, Young Mauly!"

Says PIET DELAREY

You fellows who look on Lord Mauleverer as the Languid Lord or the Sticker of the Remove and nothing more, should have seen him as I saw him one bright day last week. You would have had your eyes opened. Mine were!

He looked languid and slack enough when I first spotted him walking across the footpath to the lane, certainly. Then he spotted the bull!

Mauly should have known better than to have entered the field at all, for there was a warning notice posted up about the bull. But it wasn't much good crying over spilt milk, and Mauly didn't make that mistake. He just took one look at the bull as it thundered over the turf towards him and then jumped for his life, with a jump that would have gained him first prize in any junior long jump contest!

Good as it was, however, that jump



and succeeded in reaching the other side of the hedge.

No sooner had I stood upright again than I spotted Mauly coolly lowering himself into the lane from the top of the hedge! He had chosen the exact moment that the bull reached the hedge to jump off his ferocious mount—and timed it beautifully!

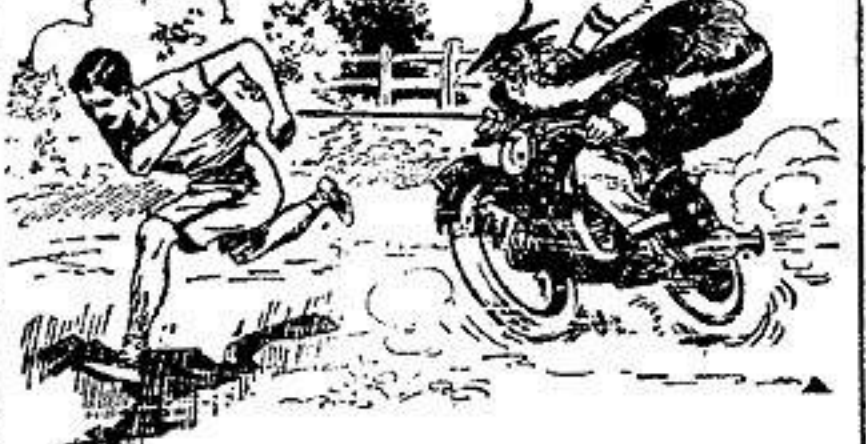
Abraham Lincoln's advice to the youth of his day used to be "Go West, young man!"

Judging by the amazing exhibition I saw, Buffalo Bill wouldn't have a thing on Lord Mauleverer and old Lincoln's advice fits in admirably.

Go West, young Mauly!

SOL-FA-OR SOFA?

Lord Mauleverer is studying tonic sol-fa. We suppose he'll start with the usual "dohs!"



determined that you shall win this race, Merry—and win it you shall, by hook or by crook—or perhaps I should say by spear in the rear! Get a move on!"

So Merry went all out to win the race. And the Head, by following him closely on his motor-bike and giving him a jowdicious prod or two or three, soon sent him well to the four.

At last the spires and turrets and battlements of the old skool came into site once more, and, amid deffening cheers, Merry of the Fourth breasted the tape—an easy winner!

"Hooray! The race goes to your son, my dear major!" remarked the Head, as he dismounted

and joined Merry's pater. "But the honners, I fancy, go to me! Spare the spear and spoil the child is a motto I have always believed in, and—"

"Grate pip!" interrupted Major Merry, his eyes nearly popping out of their sockets. "Do you mean to tell me, sir, that you made my son win the race by prodding him with that fearsome instrument of war?"

"Just that!" smiled Dr. Birchmell. "And now, my dear major, I shall eggspat the handsome reward you promised me."

Major Merry's face seemed to turn purple, and a grate noddid vain stood out on his forehead as he gazed at his punctured young hopeful.

"Reward!" he snorted. "Yes, you shall have your reward, sir! I am a man of my word, and I'll give you the reward right enuff! Here it is!"

He pressed two copper coins into the Head's open palm. And then, before Dr. Birchmell had time to say "Thank you saddy!" Major Merry grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and shook him till the Head's teeth rattled like dominoes and finally sat him down in the middle of a big puddle!

"There!" he panted. "That's something extra that I didn't promise you, but I assure you you're welcome to it! Spear, indeed! Pah!"

Potter and Greene plead: LET'S SAVE COKER'S DOG!

The axe has fallen, chaps! Failing a last-minute reprieve, poor old Coker's dog Pedro is going to be sent to Aunt Judy. What are you going to do about it?

Coker has had it for only a couple of days, but the bond of sympathy that has developed between them in that short period is of the firmest possible kind. Coker will simply break his heart if they part—for an hour or so, anyway!

He called it Pedro because he said it reminded him of a famous detective's bloodhound. It reminded us more of a tripehound, but that's only a matter of personal opinion, of course.

Pedro is an awfully affectionate pet. It's true that his affectionate ways take strange forms. Sometimes he'll playfully tear a piece out of one's trousers, and sometimes

"WAKE UP, YOU GUYS!"

Yawps FISHER T. FISH

If Greyfriars were in the U.S. it would be placed right inside a museum of curiosities. Yes, siren! This sleepy old shebang would surely give any 100 per cent American a pain in the neck. I'll tell the world!

Imagine a school where not a single bozo is paying his own fees by selling vacuum cleaners, typewriters, and books to the others! Imagine a school where they don't even organise the cheering at their games! Imagine a school where scarcely a guy gets killed at football! Sounds impossible, huh? But that's what it's like at Greyfriars!

Say, what you Rip van Winkles want is waking up!

Start reforming by introducing the features I've just mentioned. Having got those going, see if you can't bring things up-to-date in the classroom. In the U.S. students are taken to big stores to study salesmanship, to the "movies" to study their reactions to drama, and to the underworld to study crime. Get going on these lines at Greyfriars—and give slick guys like me a break!

If a move in the right direction ain't made soon I guess I'll bust, and you wouldn't like my scattered pieces to be on your heads, would you? I'll say not!

Whoopce! Hear me holler!

Wake up, you guys!

Answer to Correspondent

"CURIOUS" (Remove).—Who has scored the greatest number of goals at Greyfriars this term?"

The answer may surprise you, "Curious." The most prolific goal-scorer this term is Coker—and his record is all the more remarkable when you consider that his goals have all been scored against his own side!

he'll chew one's cap to pieces. It's all done in the most affectionate spirit—or so Coker says.

We must confess that at times his presence is a little inconvenient. For instance, Coker let's him eat off our plates, of which habit we don't altogether approve. And apart from that he eats any food we may have intended to put on those plates for ourselves—but then dogs will be dogs, won't they?

There is also, by the way, the slight additional difficulty that if Pedro is left in the study, we dare not go anywhere near it without Coker to protect us. Little difficulties like this are unavoidable, naturally.

Are we indignant at the Head's ban on Pedro? Why ask the question? Don't we always back up our leader?

Anyway, who's going to do something to get the Head to change his mind?

Volunteers for this great work will oblige us awfully if they come and see us first.

We'll smash them!

BRIGHT IDEA!

Temple of the Fourth is booked to move the proposition "That Overeating is a Crime" at the Fourth Debating Society. He has asked us if we can think of a weighty argument in support of the idea.

We're going to suggest Bunter!

A RIVAL FOR BOLSY?

Russell tells us that the new clock Ogilvy has bought for Study No. 3 has the ugliest dial he has ever seen.

Better not tell Bolsover major. He may feel jealous.

CONUNDRUM

Q. What popular novel describes the Third Form master's action when he lost sixpence in the quad, last week?

A. "The Bending of a Twig."

EXACTLY!

Young Tubb of the Third ruined his chances in the Junior Cross-country Race by eating half a pound of Mrs. Mimbles' Home-made Stickjaw before the start.

He couldn't run for toffee!

CUTE COMMENT!

Tom Brown is very dissatisfied with the decrepit old boat he obtained in exchange for his quite serviceable bicycle.

We said at the time that his barque would be worse than his bike!

"Potato skins in themselves are an excellent food," says Alonso Todd.

Since re-reading his pot book, "The Story of a Potato," Lonzy has even learnt to respect a potato's peelings!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT? GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



A papier-mache dragon manufactured by Wun Lung, was a big success in a very free version of "The Forty Thieves," produced by William Wibley with the Remove Dramatic Society. Wun Lung crawled about in the dragon, belching magnesium fire. He certainly set the audience "on fire!"

When "speeding" on his motor-bike, Horace Coker wears a huge pair of goggles. They don't seem to help him much, though—at any rate, P.-c. Tozer complains he had to skip for his life when Coker "passed through" Friar-dale. Coker's "pass out" nearly made Tozer "pass out"!

Herbert Vernon-Smith is subject to perverse "moods" when Remove Form Room through ill-he would quickly quarrel with his best friend. Tom Redwing, loped "Quelch" would take the only true pal "Smithy" has the morning off following an ever had, is wise enough to leave accident to his arm, but they were his chum alone till he came round. Mr. Quelch turned At any time, a word against y—and cased them with his Redwing will rouse "Smithy's" wand arm for neglecting their are!

The gentle-natured Alonso Todd has a piece of seaweed hung up in his study, from which he attempts to foretell the weather. When Skinner referred to "that weed and his seaweed" in the hearing of "Lonzy's" Cousin Peter, some extremely "stormy weather" blew up—for Skinner!

Marjorie Hazeldene of Cliff House is a skilled knitter. She won a competition in aid of charity by knitting a jumper and skirt. Her brother, Peter Hazeldene, "jumped" when he had to escort her to receive the prize—though, secretly he was quite "bucked"!