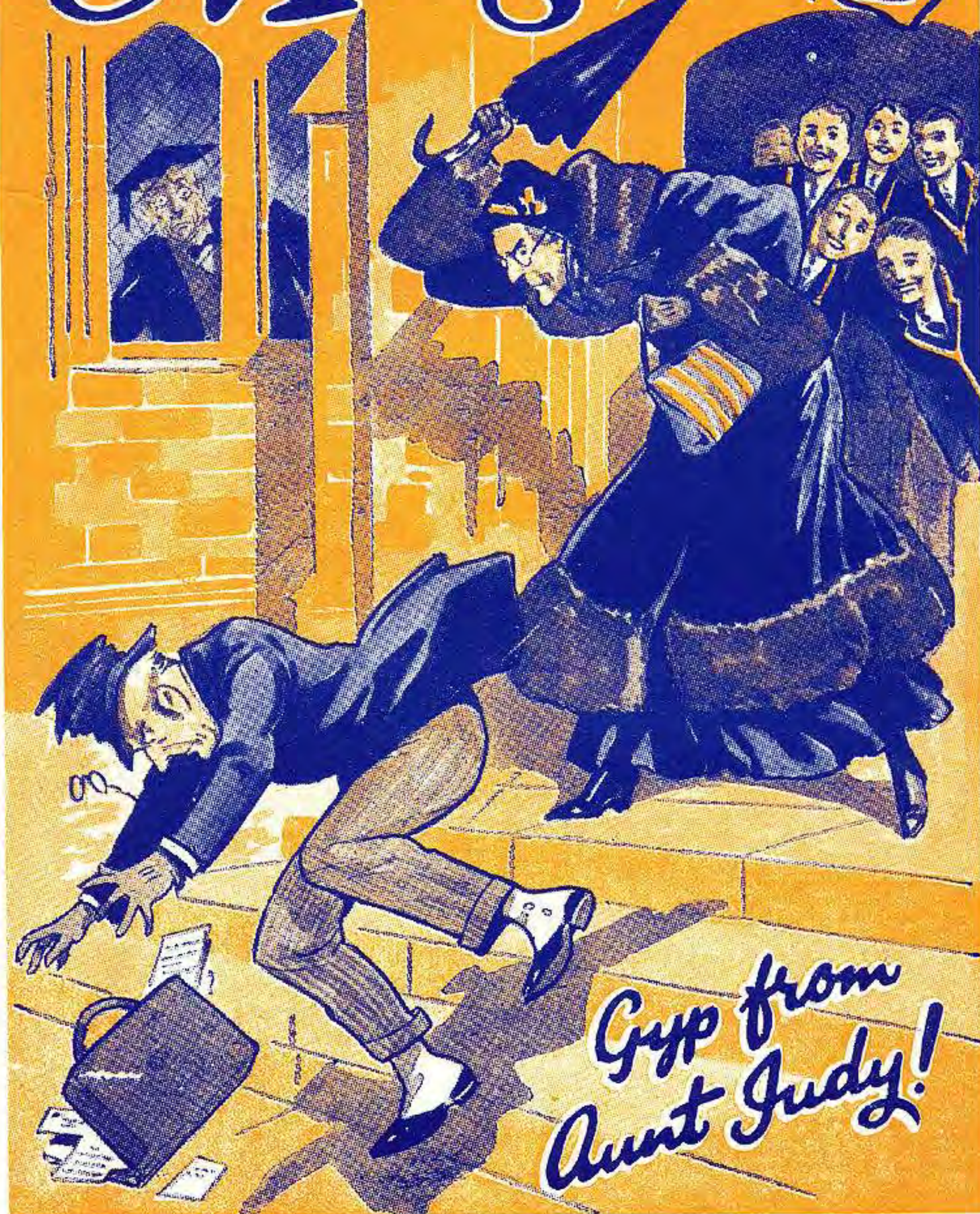


"COKER, THE REFORMER!" Extra-Special School Story of Harry Wharton
& Co. at Greyfriars, By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

The Magnet ^{12^D}



*Gyp from
Aunt Judy!*

COKER the REFORMER!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Caffyn ran hard, with Coker close astern, letting out a heavy foot!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Got Him!

BOB!"

"What the dickens——"

"Go easy, old man!"

Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull all spoke at once. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh chimed in:

"My esteemed, infuriated Bob——"

It was quite startling! Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove, was as good-tempered a fellow as ever the sun shone on. Smiles came much more easily to him than frowns. Seldom, indeed, was his sunny face seen clouded with anger.

Now it was more than clouded. It was thunderous. His brows were knitted, his blue eyes gleamed, his cheeks were crimson with wrath. His chums, walking under the old elms at Greyfriars School, after morning class, stared as they beheld him. Bob, as he came along, was dragging another fellow by the collar.

That fellow was Caffyn, the new boy in the Remove. The Snipe, as the Removites called him, wriggled wildly in Bob's hefty grip. But the weedy Snipe was quite helpless. He wriggled and squealed, but he bundled along resistlessly as Bob hauled him.

"Let go!" howled Caffyn. "You bully, leggo my collar!"

"Bob, old man!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Stop him!" yelled Caffyn.

"What the thump——" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry came to a halt, still grasping Caffyn. He gave him a shake, which changed his frantic squeal into a splutter.

Bob was anything but a bully. He was twice as strong as Caffyn, but he was not the fellow to use his strength against a weaker fellow. Now, however, the Snipe was getting the full benefit of it. Bob shook him a good deal like a terrier shaking a rat.

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"What the dickens has the Snipe done this time?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I spotted him at it!" roared Bob.

"At what?"

"Look at that!"

In his left hand Bob held up a catapult. It belonged to the Snipe, and Bob had evidently taken it from him.

"He was catapulting Gosling's mastiff!" hooted Bob. "Might have knocked out the poor beast's eye, for all he cared. Of course, the dog was on the chain, or the miserable worm wouldn't have dared go near him. I'm going to smash him into little pieces!"

"Urrggh! Leggo!" gurgled Caffyn.

"Worm!" growled Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton looked at the wriggling Snipe, in contempt, mingled with wonder. How any fellow could derive amusement from tormenting animals was a mystery to Wharton's healthy mind. He simply could not understand it. But he knew that it was a favourite amusement of Snipe's. The catapult was the Snipe's favourite weapon. He was very skilful in the use of it, and any defenceless creature was likely to become his victim.

"Better take him to Quelch," said the captain of the Remove. "He would get six for having a catapult at all."

"Sneak!" snarled Caffyn.

Bob shook him again, and he spluttered for breath.

"If the weedy rotter could put up his hands," said Bob, "I'd give him the thrashing of his life. But he can't—and won't! He can't do anything, except slack, and frowst, and smoke cigarettes, and play dirty tricks. One of you fellows cut in and get a fives bat. I'm going to whop him till he can't crawl."

"Let me go!" squealed Caffyn.

Shake!

"Urrggh!"

Caffyn made a desperate effort. The prospect of a whopping from a fives bat, wielded by Bob's hefty hand, inspired him with unusual energy. He wrenched himself away, and his collar

tore out and remained in Bob's grasp as the Snipe bounded away.

The instant he was released, he flew.

He dashed through the trees, spun round into Elm Walk, and headed for the open spaces of the quadrangle, like a hunted hare. Caffyn was no sprinter, as a rule, but terror seemed to lend him wings. His feet seemed hardly to touch the ground as he fled.

Bob stood for a second, staring at the torn collar in his hand. Then he gave a roar of wrath.

"After him!"

He dashed in pursuit. After him ran the Co., not so much bent on capturing Caffyn as on preventing Bob from damaging him too much when caught. Bob's temper was boiling, and looked like boiling over.

But brief as was the Snipe's start, he was making the best use of it. He fairly flew. Fast as Bob ran, the terrified Snipe flew faster. The Elm Walk led into the quad, where there were plenty of fellows about, and Sixth Form prefects walking in state. Caffyn generally liked to keep clear of prefects, and certainly would not have liked Wingate or Gwynne or Sykes to hear that he had been catapulting a chained dog. But anything or anybody was better than Bob Cherry in his present fiery mood. He would have been glad to run into a Sixth Form prefect at that moment.

And no doubt he would have made his escape, had the way been clear.

But it was just then that the spirit moved Billy Bunter to roll into the Elm Walk.

Billy Bunter had been looking for the Famous Five. He had something to tell them about a postal order that he was expecting. Having learned that Smithy had seen them walk past the elms, the fat Owl of the Remove was repairing thither in quest of them. It was rather an unfortunate moment for Bunter to choose.

For as he rolled into the path under the elms Caffyn came shooting along like a stone from his own catapult.

Bunter did not even see him before he crashed. Caffyn saw Bunter—too late. He was going too fast to stop.

In a split second they were mixed up on the path.

Billy Bunter felt as if a runaway car had hit him. He landed on his podgy back, gasping. Caffyn landed on Bunter.

If Bunter's bump on the solid earth had left any wind in him, Caffyn's weight knocked it out.

The fat junior gurgled horribly.

"Ooooo! Ooooo! Wooooh!"

Caffyn, dizzy from the shock, rolled off Bunter. He scrambled breathlessly up. He was hardly on his feet when Bob Cherry's grasp closed on him again.

"Urrrh!" came from Bunter. "I say, you fellows—wrrrrgh!"

But the fat Owl gasped unheeded. Caffyn, captured once more, was dragged back headlong through the trees. He squealed with apprehension as he went, in the midst of the Famous Five, and Billy Bunter was left to gasp and splutter on his lonely own.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Nabob's Wheeze!

"MY esteemed chums—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The dusky nabob had picked up Caffyn's catapult, which Bob had thrown aside when he rushed after the Snipe. Bob had Caffyn by the ear now, which was not likely to break loose, however great the efforts of the prisoner.

"Who's getting that fives bat?" snapped Bob. "I can't hold this wriggling worm for ever!"

"Will you let me go?" squealed Caffyn.

"After you've had your gruel, not before!" answered Bob.

"My esteemed and idiotic chums, an absurd and terrific wheeze has occurred to my asinine brain," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "As the venerable poet remarks—"

"Oh, blow the poet!" grunted Bob.

"I want a fives bat, not poetry."

"But the venerable and idiotic poet remarks—"

"Fathead!"

"He remarks—"

"Cheese it!"

"He remarks," persisted the nabob imperturbably, "that the punishment should be made to fit the crime. These are the venerable and ludicrous words of the esteemed poet O'Sullivan."

"Gilbert, you ass!" said Bob. "Sullivan was the tune merchant. Never mind Gilbert and Sullivan now. I want a fives bat. A cricket stump would do."

"Leggo my ear!" yelled Caffyn.

Bob's finger and thumb were like a pair of steel pincers on the Snipe's ear. He did not relax that pincer-like grip.

"You shut up," said Bob. "If you bolt again, you'll leave an ear behind you instead of a collar! I'm not letting go!"

"You rotter—you—"

"Shut up!"

"My esteemed and absurd Bob, perhaps you remember the idiotic lines of the venerable Gilbert O'Sullivan—"

"I remember them, ass!" said Bob. "Bother them, fathead, and bother you, chump! Perhaps a kicking will do for Caffyn."

"Leggo!"

"My object all sublime,
I shall achieve in time,

To make the punishment fit the
crime!

The punishment fit the crime!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh recited those well-known lines, heedless of Bob's impatience. The other fellows grinned. Bob snorted.

"Finished gabbling?" he demanded.

"Now—"

"But I am about to expound a terrific and ludicrous wheeze!" said the nabob reproachfully. "The disgusting Snipe ought to be punished according to his crime! He has catapulted an animal! Let us proceed to punish the execrable Snipe catapultfully."

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Bob.

"Inky!" exclaimed Wharton.

The juniors stared at Hurree Singh. They were prepared to whop the Snipe with a fives bat, or to kick him vigorously. But they were certainly not prepared to pelt him with stones from a catapult. No doubt he deserved it, considering what he had done; but it was not a punishment that could be inflicted. They were not Caffyns!

From the Snipe came a howl of sheer terror.

"Don't you dare! I'll go to Quelch—I'll go to the Head! I'll—"

"You'll shut up if you don't want me to twist your ear!" said Bob Cherry.

"You're dead in this act! Look here, Inky, don't you be a goat! Think we can buzz stones even at a beast like Caffyn?"

"My dear and esteemed ass, the thinkfulness is terrific!" answered the nabob

Hot-headed, aggressive, and overbearing—Horace Coker is all these and then some! But he's a man of his word. He's resolved to take on the task of reforming his rascally cousin Edgar Caffyn. Can he do it?

of Bhanipur; but at the same time he winked at the chums of the Remove, with the eye that was turned away from Caffyn.

Then they understood. The dusky nabob's game was to pull Caffyn's leg, as a warning to him to leave catapulting alone.

As soon as they understood that, the Co. joined in the game, as it were, at once. They played up automatically, opposition giving place to hearty endorsement.

"Jolly good idea!" said Johnny Bull.

"Good egg!" assented Nugent.

"Leave it to you, partner!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, all right!" said Bob. "Leave it to Inky! After all, the punishment ought to fit the crime! It's a ripping idea, though a bit tough on the jolly old criminal."

"Don't you dare!" shrieked Caffyn.

"The esteemed criminal is not allowed to give an opinion," remarked the nabob gravely. "Take him along to a quiet spot, my idiotic friends, and I will handle the catapult. I will select some nice sharp stones—"

"Yaroo!"

"Don't yell before you're hurt, you funk!" grunted Bob. "You'll want all your breath to yell when you get what you gave that poor old bow-wow!"

"Leggo! Oh, help! Let me go! Oh!"

Caffyn struggled, but not very strenuously. He did not want his ear to come off like his collar. Led by that ear, he stumbled along with the Co., to

the most secluded spot between the elms and the old school wall.

There he was planted with his back to the wall, and his arms were grasped, and held in a grip of iron by Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull.

His pimply face was white with terror. As an habitual handler of the catapult, Caffyn knew what a terribly dangerous weapon it was. He knew that people had been blinded by an unlucky missile from such a weapon. He coolly took the chance of that in pelt-ing his victims. But to take the chance himself was quite another matter. He howled with terror.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stood in front of him, fitting a pebble to the catapult. Caffyn panted, against the wall facing him.

"You'll be sacked for this!" he howled. "You know that fellows ain't allowed to use catapults in the school—"

"Fat lot you care about that!" snorted Bob.

"Whoever is saucy to the goose must be saucy to the gander, as the English proverb remarkably observes!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Keep your head steady, my esteemed Snipe! I do not want to miss your nose, and knock out one of your absurd eyes."

Caffyn gave a fearful yell at the mere suggestion. The perspiration trickled down his pallid face.

"Let me go!" he squealed. "I—I—I'll never catapult again! I'll—I'll throw the thing away! I—I'll never touch a dog or a cat again! I swear—"

"You won't swear here," said Bob.

"We're respectable, if you're not!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't you see the joke of it, Caffyn?" asked Wharton. "This is quite as funny as catapulting Gosling's dog, or old Coote's horse. You thought that funny, didn't you? Well, then, this is where you laugh!"

Edgar Caffyn did not look like laughing.

"Careful, Inky!" said Johnny Bull. "Don't get one of us instead of Caffyn. That would be too much of a joke."

"The carefulness will be terrific!" assured the nabob. "Will you have the absurd goodness to keep your idiotic napper still, Caffyn?"

"With all your faults we love you still!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a ripping wheeze, and I'm glad Inky thought of it," said Bob. "It will do Caffyn no end of good! He will see the error of his ways—if Inky leaves him an eye to see with, of course."

Howl, from Caffyn.

"It's a great idea making the punishment fit the crime," went on Bob. "It ought really to be law. Fellows do rotten cruel things because they're too dense to understand what they're doing. For instance, the thickest-headed country squire would never hunt foxes if he'd been hunted himself, and knew what it was like."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And the brutes who find amusement in shooting birds," said Bob. "Think what a lot of good it would do them to be peppered with shot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Inky! Leave Caffyn one eye, if you can, so that he can see what a rotter he is!"

Caffyn shrieked.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was taking deadly aim! That was all he was going to do, as a matter of fact. But Caffyn was not aware of that, and he howled and yelled and shrieked

Suddenly he broke away from the grasp on his arms. He was not aware that the juniors considered that the game had gone far enough, and that he had had a sufficient lesson. Tearing himself loose, he bolted.

"Stop him!" roared Bob, without making a movement, however.

"Collar him!" yelled Johnny Bull, also standing still.

Caffyn tore on, unpursued, but fancying that the whole Co. were whooping at his heels. He panted, he puffed, and he blew and flew!

"After him!"

"Get him in the back of the neck, Inky! Land it right in the back of his neck!" yelled Nugent.

The nabob grinned. He was already breaking Caffyn's catapult into small pieces. But the fear of a sharp stone crashing into the back of his neck drove the Snipe on in more frantic flight. Gurgling for breath, he vanished from view, going uncommonly strong.

A roar of laughter followed him as he went.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Caffyn did not stop till he reached the House, and bolted in. Harry Wharton & Co. laughed, as they sauntered away, at a much more leisurely pace, from the spot where the Snipe had never been in any danger at all, if he had only known it.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Horace!

SNORT!

Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, coming into their study, wondered for a moment whether, in some mysterious way, a grampus had got in there.

But it was no grampus.

It was their great chief and leader, Horace Coker, sitting on the edge of the study table, his long legs stretched out, knitting his rugged brows over a letter.

"Got a cold, old bean?" asked Potter.

Coker looked up.

"Eh! No! Why?"

"Sounded rather like a foghorn," said Greene.

"Don't be a silly ass, Greene!" said Coker. "I say, I've had another letter from my Aunt Judy—about that snipe of a cousin of mine, Caffyn, of the Remove! Come in! I'll tell you men about it."

Potter and Greene were coming in, but at that announcement they came to a dead stop. They backed.

"Oh!" said Potter. "I—I—was that Fitz calling, Greeney?"

"Yes. Come on!" said Greene.

Coker stared after his friends. They were gone, almost like ghosts at cock-crow—whether Fitzgerald had called them or not.

"Look here, you men!" shouted Coker.

But answer there came none, save the closing of a door farther up the Fifth Form passage. Horace Coker snorted again, more emphatically than before.

It was annoying! He was worried and bothered by his Aunt Judith's letter. He had been going to tell Potter and Greene all about it—ask their advice—disregard it, and tell them what asses they were! Such were the usual delights of Coker's conversation.

Potter and Greene had had some! They did not want any more! They were fed-up with Coker's cousin, Caffyn, right up to the back teeth. Coker stood handsome spreads, and they could stand Coker. But they could not and would not stand Caffyn. They had heard enough about him—too much, in fact!

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That was why they had faded so suddenly out of the picture.

Deprived of friends to bore with his family affairs, Coker, having snorted, turned to the letter again.

It was quite a nice letter. It showed what a nice old lady Miss Judith Coker was. She was fearfully fond of her elder nephew, Horace, and had only a sense of duty towards her younger nephew, Edgar Caffyn.

Which was natural enough, for Coker was a good fellow, though a very aggressive and obstreperous one. And Caffyn was a very bad fellow indeed.

Coker regarded her as a dear old soul. Caffyn considered her an old cat. And simple soul as Miss Judith was, she was no fool, and had a pretty accurate idea of the facts.

Certainly she did not know what a thoroughly "bad hat" Edgar Caffyn was. Even Coker did not know that, deeply as he loathed the Snipe.

Coker would not have believed, had he been told, that his Cousin Caffyn was plotting and scheming to cut him out with Aunt Judy; and get that wealthy old lady's will altered. At least, he would have wanted a lot of evidence to believe it. Caffyn was ready to believe that very thing of Coker, without any evidence at all, judging others by himself!

Snort!

For a third time Horace Coker understudied a grampus cast ashore. Much as he liked and respected Miss Judith, she worried him.

What the dickens was a fellow to think and do when he got a letter like this:

Dearest Horace,—Now that Edgar has been nearly a term at your school, I am greatly disappointed that you have not become on more friendly terms with him. Mr. Sarle, as his guardian, is very much distressed also. Dear Horace, I am going to ask you a favour. I know, my dear boy, that Edgar has not your noble nature, your kind heart, your great capacity, and many gifts. But cannot you endeavour to make him more like yourself? Take him in hand. Advise him. See him often. Help him. He is not, I fear, a very good boy; but with such an example to follow, I am sure that he will improve. For my sake try.

"Your affectionate aunt,
"JUDITH COKER."

Snort!

Again came the grampus-like sound. Coker crumpled that letter into his pocket. He was fed-up.

It was simply sickening that Potter and Greene had deserted him. He wanted to tell somebody—anybody—what he thought about all this. Nobody wanted to hear, unfortunately.

"Snipe!" growled Coker. "Rotter!"

He was, of course, thinking of Caffyn, and of the utter impossibility of having anything to do with him, or getting any good out of him. Aunt Judy was a dear old soul, but women had no sense! Coker, of course, had lots and lots! He was quite unaware that his intellect could have been parked in a nutshell, leaving room for the nut.

"Cad! Snipe!" said Coker. He seemed to find some comfort in addressing the desert air. "Rotter! Worm! Sneaking Snipe!"

He tramped angrily out of the study.

What was a fellow to do?

In that very letter Aunt Judy had enclosed one of her generous tips—a whole fiver! In Coker's study was a magnificent hamper! It was surely up to him to oblige the dear old soul if he could!

But he couldn't! He didn't want to touch the Snipe with a barge-pole. Besides, the little beast was always playing some rotten trick or other on him, and all Coker wanted with him was to kick him. Hard!

"Putrid rotter!" growled Coker, as he went down the passage.

"What the dooce!" ejaculated Hilton of the Fifth. He was standing in the doorway of his study, and Coker growled out those epithets as he came abreast. "You're frightfully complimentary, old bean!"

"Eh?" Coker stared at him. "What do you mean, you ass?" He tramped on, leaving Cedric Hilton staring.

"Rotten blighter!" grunted Coker, on the landing, as he crossed towards the Remove quarters. He was going to see Caffyn!

"Same to you, and many of them!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove, who was coming out of the Remove passage. He fell into the same mistake as Hilton.

When a fellow marched up to a fellow and ejaculated "Rotten blighter," what was a fellow to think? Smithy naturally did not guess that Coker was merely thinking aloud about his relatives!

Coker glared at him. He was in no mood to take cheek of a junior.

"What's that?" he yapped. "You cheeky young tick, do you want me to up-end you along that passage?"

"Yes!" answered the Bounder cheerfully. "Go it!"

As there were half a dozen Remove men at hand, the Bounder had no objections. Every man up and down the passage was ready to lend a hand with a Fifth Former who barged in—keen on it, in fact!

Coker's eyes gleamed. Unwillingly, impelled by a feeling that he ought not to disregard the wishes of his kind Aunt Judy, he was going to speak to Caffyn in his study. But it did not improve his temper. It had the opposite effect. He was, in fact, just in the mood to give beans to any cheeky junior who gave him "lip."

So he strode at the Bounder.

"Rescue, Remove!" yelled Smithy, as Horace's hefty grasp closed on him.

There was a rush of feet in the passage.

Somebody was up-ended! But it was not Smithy! It was Coker! Harry Wharton & Co., a moment before, had been talking football in a cheery group outside Study No. 1. Football "jaw" ceased immediately, and they transferred their attention to Horace Coker.

In the games study at the end of the Fifth Form passage a number of fellows of that Form were gathered. They stared round, as the door flew suddenly open. They stared still more when a breathless, gasping, panting figure, with ruffled hair and torn collar and split coat, rolled headlong in, and sprawled on the floor at their feet.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Blundell of the Fifth.

"We've brought home your tame lunatic!" said Bob Cherry affably. "My tip to you is to get him a strait-jacket."

And the Removites slammed the door of the games study and departed. They departed chuckling. In the games study the Fifth Form men chuckled. Coker did not chuckle, he gurgled!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tarry!

QUELCH!"

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth boomed.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, sighed.

The Remove master was seated by his open study window. Dusk was falling on the old quadrangle, but there was still a red gleam of sunset. The spring air was mild and pleasant.

Quelch was taking a little rest after his labours with the Remove that day. He really needed it, after dealing with that Form. Prout rolled into his study with elephantine tread, and boomed.

Quelch did not even want a chat with Prout. And it was not for a chat that Prout had come. He had come in wrath.

Standing before the open window Prout fixed his eyes on Mr. Quelch. He continued to boom.

"I have seen the Head!" boomed Prout. "I am not satisfied, Quelch! A boy of your Form—the boy Caffyn—played a treacherous, a dastardly trick

wicked, as to plot deliberately against another boy his own relative. I need hardly tell you, however, that I shall keep him under very close observation."

"I am not satisfied!" boomed Prout. "The boy, sir, should be sent away, if not actually expelled! Dr. Locke has taken far too lenient a view. The outcome of that wretched trick might have been terribly serious for a boy in my Form. I think, Mr. Quelch, that I have a right to ask you to place the matter in that light before the Head!"

Mr. Quelch was silent.

"I am bound to say," resumed Prout—"I am bound to say—Yarooooop! Whooo-hoop! Groooooogh!"

Prout broke off, with a fearful spluttering yell, as something hurtled through the open window, from the

missile had been hurled. But there was no doubt that the fellow who had hurled it had whipped away the instant it left his hand, and vanished in the deepening dusk. Even had he been still there, Mr. Quelch would hardly have spotted him, looking out of the lighted window into the deep dusk. But he was gone.

"Prout!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

He stopped and gave the Fifth Form master a hand to rise. A few moments ago the booming Prout had irritated him. Now he was deeply concerned.

Prout staggered up, with the assistance of the Remove master. He stood unsteadily, gurgling and guggling. Sticky tar trickled down his portly countenance, down his neck, into his collar.



The Fifth Formers stared round, as the door of the games study flew suddenly open and a breathless, gasping, panting figure, with ruffled hair, torn collar, and split coat, rolled headlong in. "We've brought home your tame lunatic, Coker!" said Bob Cherry affably. "My tip to you is to get him a strait-jacket!"

on a boy of my Form! I am not satisfied to let the matter pass."

"It is for the Head to decide, Mr. Prout!"

"An unscrupulous young rascal!" boomed Prout.

Mr. Quelch nodded. He could not help sharing Mr. Prout's opinion of Caffyn of the Remove.

At the same time he did not want an expulsion in his Form; and he was relieved that the Head had decided otherwise.

"You know what was done!" Prout was red with wrath. "The boy Caffyn abstracted a banknote belonging to me, and by a cunning trick placed it in Coker's possession! What excuse can be found for such an act?"

"Dr. Locke has weighed the matter, sir, and decided to accept Caffyn's explanation—that it was a foolish, unthinking practical joke."

"Is that your opinion?" snorted Prout.

Mr. Quelch paused.

"I hope and trust that it is so," he said at last. "I am loth to believe that Caffyn could be so base, so

dusk outside, and landed on his plump and portly features.

He staggered back, gasping, and sat down, with a bump that shook the Remove-master's study.

Mr. Quelch started to his feet.

"What—" he ejaculated.

He gazed at his colleague in horror.

Prout sat and spluttered. His face was black—with tar! Black tar, of the deepest dye, splashed over his features, over his plump chin, over his prominent nose, over his majestic brow. A burst bag had fallen beside him. The tar had evidently been poured into the bag, for use as a missile. It burst as it struck, letting loose the tar! With startling suddenness Mr. Prout had been transformed into a negro.

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Prout.

Some of the tar trickled into his mouth as he gurgled. He choked and spluttered wildly.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

He spun round towards the window. It was through the open study window that that extraordinary

"It—it—it is tar!" gurgled Prout. He dabbed at his face, and his fingers came away black and sticky. "Tar! Good heavens! I—I—I am smothered with—tar!"

"It was hurled from the quadrangle!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "But who—who could have—"

"Urrgh!"

Mr. Quelch leaned from the window. The bell had begun to ring for lock-up, and most fellows were already in the House. But some were not in yet; and Mr. Quelch spotted the stalwart figure of Wingate of the Sixth passing along the path under the study windows.

"Wingate!" he called.

The Greyfriars captain looked round. "Yes, sir!"

He came up to the window. Then he gave a jump as he sighted Prout's face within. Instead of looking at Mr. Quelch he gazed at Prout, fascinated.

"Has—has anything happened, sir?" he stuttered.

It was rather a superfluous question

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—it was only too clear that something had happened to Prout.

"Yes, Wingate! A—a—a package containing tar was flung in at this window, hardly two or three minutes ago, whether aimed at Mr. Prout or at me, I cannot say. It struck Mr. Prout! Wingate, please take measures at once to ascertain what boys are still out of the House—call the other prefects, and let all names be taken as the boys come in."

"Certainly sir!"

Wingate hurried away.

"Let me assist you, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, as Prout staggered blindly to the door; and he took the Fifth Form master's portly arm and led him away. What Prout chiefly needed was rubbing and scrubbing; but to get him to his room, where he could rub and scrub, Quelch had to take him up the staircase.

That could not be done without revealing Prout's tarry countenance to the public view. Billy Bunter was the first to sight him, and he gave a startled squeak.

"Oh crikey!"

"Silence, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked after the two masters through his big spectacles. They were still in hearing when the fat Owl's excited squeak was heard again.

"I say you fellows! Look at Prout! He, he, ho!"

Plenty of fellows were looking at Prout! Most of them were grinning as they looked! Prout was undoubtedly, at the moment, an interesting sight. Loud chortles followed him as he disappeared.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Awkward for Coker!

"COKER!"

"Eh?"

"Stop!"

"Can't stop!" said Coker.

"Stop at once!" rapped Loder of the Sixth.

"Look here!" hooted Coker. "What do you want? I'm all tarry and sticky, and I've got to get a wash!"

Coker was surprised by the buzz that followed his words.

He had not yet heard of Prout!

Coming in from the quadrangle Coker had a red and wrathful face, and stains of tar on his hands and clothes.

Those stains would probably have been observed at any time, for they were prominent enough. Now they were immediately and inevitably spotted, with keen eyes open for any fellow who had tar about him.

The whole House was buzzing with the story of what had happened in Quelch's study. Dozens of fellows had seen Prout's tarry countenance. At the doorway two prefects—Loder and Gwynne—stood taking the names of fellows who came in.

A dozen or so had not yet come into the House, and as they arrived in ones or twos they were nailed by the prefects. But when Horace Coker appeared, interest in the others faded away at once.

Every eye was glued on Coker, and every fellow took it for granted at once that there was no need to look further for the man who had buzzed a bag of tar in at Quelch's window.

There had been keen curiosity on the subject. It was an unheard-of action—it amounted to an assault on a member of the staff. Few fellows had nerve enough for such a proceeding, even if they were reckless enough. Some Remove fellows thought of Smithy, who was the man for such a deed; but the Bounder was in the House, in the waiting crowd at the doorway.

Others had already thought of Horace Coker, whose worries and troubles with his Form-master were endless. Everybody knew that Coker was, at least, ass enough to perform such a deed as this. On the other hand, Coker had of late been rather in favour with Prout—ever since the incident of Prout's missing banknote.

Prout, feeling that he had wronged Coker in that matter, had been unusually patient with the fathead of his Form; and, so far as appearances went, all was calm and bright. Still, with a duffer like Coker, you never could tell. So a number of the fellows were already wondering whether the reckless culprit was Coker.

There was another theory, however, that the bag of tar had been intended for Quelch, and had been chucked in by a Remove man. After all, it had been whizzed into Quelch's study.

The matter was wrapped in mystery—until Coker came in. Then the mystery cleared up all of a sudden, and there was certainty. Tarry stains on any fellow, at that moment, settled the matter.

Loder stepped to one side of Coker, Gwynne to the other. The whole crowd stared at him. Coker snorted angrily. Even Coker of the Fifth hesitated to storm his way through Sixth Form prefects; but he was very angry and very impatient.

He glared at Loder, and he glared at Gwynne.

"Look here," hooted Coker, "what's up? I'm all sticky—"

"I can see you are!" said Gwynne dryly.

"Look at my hands—sticky all over." "I expected something of the sort!" grinned Loder.

Coker stared at him.

"Blessed if I see why you should!" he snapped. "Talking out of your hat, or what? Look here, I've got to get this sticky muck off—"

"Coker's got no objection to publicity," remarked the Bounder, with a chuckle. "He doesn't mind fellows knowing what he does."

"The blithering ass!" said Bob

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Cherry. "What on earth did he do it for?"

"The blitherfulness of the esteemed ass is terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"I guess Coker's the guy to ask for it!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"You'd better come with us, Coker!" Gwynne was saying. "The Head wants you."

"What rot!" said Coker. "What does the Head want me for, I'd like to know? I can't go to the Head all sticky like this!"

"You can!" grinned Loder. "And you will!"

"I shall have to get a wash first!" roared Coker. "Think I can go and see Dr. Locke with tar all over me?"

"Exactly!" said Gwynne. "Come on!"

Coker glared at them in amazement and anger. Mr. Quelch came hurrying up.

"What——" he began. His gimlet-eye spotted the tar. "Then it was you, Coker?"

"Eh? What was me?" demanded Coker, bewildered. "Have all the fellows gone mad, or what? What are they all staring at?"

"He doesn't know!" murmured Frank Nugent, and there was a chuckle among the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, he was an awful ass not to clean it off before coming in!" grinned Billy Bunter. "Fancy walking right into the House with tar on him, after chucking tar at Prout!"

"Coker all over!" said the Bounder.

"That's the kind of brain Coker's got!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Coker," said Mr. Quelch, "go to Dr. Locke's study at once!"

"I'm all sticky——"

"I can see that, Coker," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "And Dr. Locke must see you in the same state."

Coker gasped.

"Go at once!" snapped the Remove-master.

"But I can't go to the Head like this!" gasped Coker. "Look at the state I'm in, with this filthy tar sticking to me——"

"Gwynne! Loder! Take Coker to the Head's study."

"Certainly, sir!"

Coker, red and angry and bewildered, was marched away between the two prefects. He left the crowd of Greyfriars fellows in a buzz behind him. Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, gave one another hopeless looks.

"He's done it this time!" murmured Potter.

"He has!" agreed Greene. "But what the thump did he want to tar Prout for? The old scout's been jolly decent to him."

"What does he do anything for?" sighed Potter. "Everything he does is more or less idiotic!"

"Yes, that's so!" agreed Greene.

"Has anything happened, you fellows?" Edgar Caffyn came down the staircase and glanced over the banisters at the crowd below.

Harry Wharton gave a little start at the sound of his voice, and looked up quickly. His eyes fixed very keenly on the Snipe.

A vague suspicion was in his mind. But Caffyn had come down from the studies, and the bag of tar had been buzzed by some fellow out in the quad. True, a fellow might have left a back window open, and got in that way instead of coming in at the door. The Snipe was revengeful, and it was well-known that Prout had demanded that he should be expelled, for his trickery with the missing banknote. The captain

of the Remove looked at him searchingly. Bob Cherry, noting the expression on his face, grinned.

"Thinking of Snipey?" he asked.

"Well, yes," said Harry slowly. "You see——"

"But old Coker's got the tar on him. He can't have tarred himself just to help Snipey with his tricks."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No; I forgot that. I suppose Caffyn had nothing to do with it—but I don't trust the fellow an inch."

Several fellows were answering Caffyn's question, and he did not heed Wharton or Bob.

"Coker's been tarring his Form-master!" said Temple of the Fourth.

"Chucking tar all over poor old Prout!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "You ought to have seen him! Black as a nigger!"

"Black but not comely!" said the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, he's the fellow to ask for trouble, and no mistake!" said Caffyn, with a whistle. "Where is he now?"

"Prefects taken him to the Head!" answered Vernon-Smith. "It will be the boot for Coker this time. I fancy his people will send him to a home for idiots. That's the place for him."

Caffyn laughed.

Leaning on the banisters he listened to the talk of the excited crowd of fellows. Judging by the talk, not a fellow there entertained the slightest doubt that Coker of the Fifth had tarred Prout. There was a malicious gleam in the eyes of the Snipe. This would be good news for his estimable guardian, the legal gentleman, Mr. Sarle, who had been growing rather impatient to hear favourable news from Greyfriars.

Loder of the Sixth came from the direction of the Head's study, glancing about as if in quest of someone.

"Is Caffyn of the Remove here?" he called out.

The Snipe gave a start, and the grin faded from his face. A prefect was calling for him—why?

"Here he is!" said someone.

Loder looked up at the Snipe.

"You're wanted, Caffyn! Follow me!"

"But—but what——" stammered Caffyn.

"Follow me!"

The Snipe's knees almost knocked together as he followed Loder. A guilty conscience needs no accuser, and the schemer's heart was heavy with dread as he trod behind the prefect down the corridor to the Head's study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

DR. LOCKE sat at his writing-table, in his study, with a grimly frowning brow, when Coker of the Fifth was marched in.

The tarring of Prout had been reported to him; but he had not seen the Fifth Form master, who was still busy with hot water and soap, desperately rubbing and scrubbing to get rid of the tar. That the culprit had been promptly detected and captured the Head could hardly doubt, as he saw the sticky tar on Coker's hands and clothes. There was even a smear of it on his nose. Coker, evidently, had been handling tar, and a fellow who had been handling tar, was a fellow who was very much wanted just then.

Grimmer and sterner grew the Head's brow, as he gazed at Coker.

That great man stood before him, tarry and sticky, red and angry and bewildered. Coker's brain, never fearfully clear, was in a state of confusion at these strange happenings.

"It was you, Coker!" said Dr. Locke, in a deep voice.

"What was me, sir?" articulated Coker. "Has anything happened?"

"Coker was out of the House?" asked Dr. Locke, glancing at the prefects.

"Yes, sir!" answered Gwynne. "We stopped him as he came in, after Wingate told us——"

"We thought you'd better see him as he is, sir!" said Loder.

"Quite so!" said the Head. "Have you anything to say, Coker?"

"Eh? No. Only that I'd like to go and get a wash," answered Coker. "I'm all sticky with tar!"

Dr. Locke gazed at him.

"Why have you done this, Coker?"

"I couldn't help it, sir!" said Coker.

"You could not help it!" exclaimed the Head.

"No, sir! I suppose you don't think I got all sticky like this on purpose!" ejaculated Coker.

"I am not alluding to that, Coker! I am asking you why you committed this ruffianly, stupid, insensate outrage!" Coker blinked.

"Wh-a-a-t?" he stuttered. "I haven't done anything that I know of. Looks to me as if everybody's gone potty. Has anything happened?"

Gwynne and Loder looked curiously at Coker of the Fifth. Dr. Locke eyed him very grimly.

"I hardly understand you, Coker! You can scarcely fail to be aware of what has happened to Mr. Prout, since you were guilty of the outrageous attack on him."

Coker jumped.

"Prout! Has anything happened to Prout, sir? I don't know anything about it. I haven't seen him since Form."

"Coker!" said the Head in a deep voice.

"But I haven't, sir!" exclaimed Coker. "If anything's happened to Prout, sir, I haven't heard about it yet. I suppose that's what all the fellows were buzzing over. I fancied something was up! But——"

"A bag of tar was flung at Mr. Prout, Coker, as he was standing at another Form-master's window!" said the Head sternly.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Mr. Prout was smothered with tar, and——"

"Oh crikey!"

"And you have come in from the quadrangle with stains of tar on your person!" said the Head. "If you have anything to say I am prepared to hear it!"

Coker almost tottered.

"I never did it, sir! Never even heard of it till this minute? It was the same rotter, I suppose——"

"What?"

"The same tick that tarred me!" yelled Coker excitedly. "I wondered who it was—I'd have smashed him, only he dodged away in the dark——"

Dr. Locke raised his hand.

"Coker, do you deny that you threw the tar at Mr. Prout?"

"Yes!" roared Coker. "Of course I do! As if I'd play such a dirty trick on my own beak, too!"

"Then how do you account for the tar on your person?" demanded the Head.

"Eh? That's easy enough!" said Coker. "It was chucked at me, same as you say it was chucked at Prout!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

He blinked over his glasses at Coker. Gwynne stared and Loder grinned. Loder's idea was that he had never heard quite such a lame story as this.

Coker, tarry, sticky, gurgled with indignation. Dr. Locke's eyes, fixed on his excited face, were very penetrating.

"What were you doing in the quadrangle, Coker?" asked the headmaster of Greyfriars at last.

"Looking for young Caffyn, sir!" explained Coker. "He's a Remove kid, my cousin, sir—"

"Was Caffyn in the quadrangle?"

"A fellow told me he had seen him go out of the House, sir, and I went out," said Coker. "That was a good half an hour ago, though. I never found him."

Dr. Locke knitted his brows.

"You are not on friendly terms with your cousin in the Remove, Coker?"

"No, sir!" answered Coker. "I bar the little beast—I—I mean, I—I bar him, sir."

"Quite so!" said the Head. "Yet you tell me that you were looking for him, and spent some time in doing so."

Loder winked at Gwynne, unseen by the Head. Coker's tale seemed lamer and lamer to Gerald Loder. It certainly seemed lame to Gwynne also.

But Coker's answer came readily:

"Yes, sir. I was looking for him; I had to speak to him. I've had a letter from my Aunt Judy, and she asked me to—"

"When did you receive that letter, Coker?"

"This afternoon, sir."

"That would be several hours ago at least, Coker."

"Yes, sir."

"Yet you found no opportunity of speaking to Caffyn till just on lock-up!" said the Head.

"As it happens, no, sir! I was going to his study about tea-time to see him, but some Remove fags were cheeky, and there was a row, and—"

"You did not find Caffyn in the quadrangle?"

"No, sir; I suppose he went in while I was looking for him."

Dr. Locke drummed on the table with his slim finger-tips. Coker's explanations might sound lame, but they came readily.

"Now tell me how you came to be in that tarry state, Coker!" said the Head at last.

"I've said it was chucked at me, sir!" answered Coker. "It wasn't my fault! I was coming back to the House, after looking round for Caffyn, when something whizzed at me from behind a tree. It hit me on the chest, and I grabbed at it. It was a paper bag full of tar, sir."

Loder winked at Gwynne again. Gwynne grinned. Both of them had wondered whether Coker would make any attempt to account for the tar. If he did, they expected him to put up a better story than this!

To their surprise, however, the headmaster seemed to listen to Coker with deep attention. They wondered almost dizzily whether it was barely possible that the chief beak was going to swallow this!

For a long minute there was silence in the study. Dr. Locke's brow was corrugated with thought. Then he spoke:

"Loder, please fetch Caffyn of the Remove here."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Loder.

He left the study.

Dr. Locke turned to his papers while he waited. Gwynne and Coker remained silent, the former eyeing the latter curiously, the latter dabbling at

the smears of tar. Why Caffyn had been sent for was a mystery to both of them. So far as either of them knew the Snipe was not concerned in the affair, apart from Coker's statement that he had been looking for him in the quad, where he had not found him. Gwynne, like everybody else who had seen Coker come in in that tar-stained state, regarded the evidence as conclusive and condemnation as inevitable. But it seemed that there was a doubt in the headmaster's mind.

The door opened again, and Loder came in with Caffyn.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Dog with a Bad Name!

EDGAR CAFFYN pulled himself together as he stood before the Head. He told himself that he had nothing to fear—unless he betrayed fear and so aroused suspicion.

But it was not easy to keep up his countenance under those quiet, searching eyes. There was guilty fear in his heart, and he dreaded to betray it in his face.

"Look me in the face, Caffyn!" said the Head quietly.

The Snipe, with an effort, lifted his drooping eyes.

"You are aware of what has happened to Mr. Prout, Caffyn?"

"I—I've just heard the fellows speaking about it, sir," faltered Caffyn.

"You were not aware of it before you heard it spoken of?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You had no hand in it?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Where have you been during the last half-hour, Caffyn?"

"In my study, sir."

"How long is it since you were out of the House, Caffyn?"

Caffyn paused, a tremulous moment. Very likely he had been seen leaving the House; it would not do to utter a falsehood that could be disproved. Any other falsehood the wretched Snipe was quite prepared to utter.

"I—I came in some time ago, sir—about twenty minutes, I think," he answered. "I went to my study. I had some lines to do for Mr. Quelch before prep, and—"

"You came in, then, before the attack on Mr. Prout?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I was in my study when I heard fellows calling out, and came down to see whether anything had happened. Plenty of fellows will tell you they saw me come downstairs, sir!"

The Snipe checked himself as he realised that he was defending himself before he was accused!

"I will speak plainly to you, Caffyn!" said the Head in the same quiet tone. "A few days ago you played a miserable prank on your cousin, Coker. He was in danger of being accused of having purloined the banknote that was found on him, and which it was proved that you had caused to be placed where it was found. After very long and careful consideration I decided to accept your explanation that it was a foolish jest and that you intended to explain after—"

"That—that is so, sir."

"Do not interrupt me, Caffyn! I felt that there was a doubt, and that you were entitled to the benefit of it. Mr. Prout does not take the same view, and he has expressed a very strong opinion that your action was deliberately wicked and that you should be expelled from the school. Have you entertained revengeful feelings towards Mr. Prout?"

"Oh!" gasped the Snipe. "No, sir!" "Have you thought of playing any further trick on your cousin, Coker?"

"N-no, sir!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Coker suddenly, forgetful of the presence in which he stood. "The Snipe! Of course! I might have guessed that!"

"Silence, Coker!"

"Oh! Yes, sir! But—"

"Silence! Caffyn, did you throw a bag of tar in at Mr. Quelch's study at Mr. Prout, who was standing at the window?"

"No, sir!" muttered the Snipe.

"Did you afterwards throw a similar bag of tar at your cousin, Coker, in order to make it appear that he had been guilty of the outrage?"

The Snipe trembled.

"No, sir!" His voice was hardly audible.

Dr. Locke's steady eyes seemed to look him through and through. Coker was glaring at him with scorn and loathing. Gwynne and Loder listened with keen attention. Both of them realised that the sage old Head had looked rather deeper into this mysterious matter than either of them had thought of doing.

"Did you, after this, regain the House by a back window or door without being seen to enter?" resumed the Head.

The Snipe licked his dry lips.

"N-no, sir."

"Did you then go to your study and come downstairs after the matter had become public, to give an appearance of having been indoors all the time?"

"No, sir," groaned the Snipe.

There was a brief silence.

"Very well!" said the Head slowly.

"There is no evidence against you, Caffyn, and without evidence I cannot act."

The Snipe breathed more freely. But his face was sickly, and the perspiration trickled down it.

"But," went on the Head, in a deep voice, "after your action of a few days ago, for which I came very near to expelling you, Caffyn, you are under the strongest suspicion."

"I—I—"

"You say," added the Head, "that you came back into the House before the outrage at Mr. Quelch's window?"

"I—I did, sir! I—I swear I did!"

"You came in at the door in the usual way?"

"Yes, sir, certainly."

"Can you give me the name of any boy or master who may have seen you enter?"

The Snipe's lying tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He forced himself to speak.

"I—I did not notice anybody when I came in, sir."

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows.

"No one saw you come in?"

"Not—not that I am aware of, sir."

Another pause.

"Very well!" said the Head again.

"If I misjudge you, Caffyn, you have only yourself to blame. But I do not and cannot trust you. Unless actual evidence is found that you were concerned in this matter, I can do nothing. I can only warn you that you are under serious suspicion, and that unless you are very careful indeed, you will not be allowed to remain in this school. You may go."

Caffyn almost tottered from the study, followed by the Head's grave eyes and a glare of scorn from Coker of the Fifth.

Dr. Locke turned to Coker.

"I accept your word, Coker, that you



"Caffyn is an unscrupulous young rascal!" boomed Prout. "And I am bound to say—yarooop! Whooo-hooooop! Groooooogh!" The Fifth Form master broke off, with a fearful spluttering yell, as a bag of tar hurtled through the window and burst over his features. "Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

were not concerned in this matter," he said. "You may go, my boy."

"Thank you, sir!" said Coker.

He left the study, followed by the prefects. Gwynne gave him a friendly grin in the passage; Loder shrugged his shoulders.

Coker went away to get a wash! Like Prout, he felt that that was the chief thing needful.

As for the Snipe, he crept away with a white face and sinking heart. Terror lay on him like a leaden weight. He avoided the other fellows and got back to his study, No. 1 in the Remove. There he shut the door, glad to be shut off from all eyes.

He wiped the perspiration from his brow. He moved restlessly about the study, unable to keep still.

He was safe, so far as that went. But he had failed again—and it was forced home to his mind that his escape had been narrow, and that the next false step would be his ruin. What was the use, after all, of his cunning, his cleverness, his unscrupulous trickery? He was under suspicion; keen eyes were on him, and if he was caught out—

He trembled.

He did not care very much whether he left Greyfriars or not. He was disliked and despised there, and he did not want to be at the same school with Coker except for the purpose of plotting against him and carrying out Mr. Sarle's plan of ousting him from the favour of Aunt Judith. But if he was turned out for treacherous scheming against Coker, against the darling of Aunt Judy's heart, what would be the result of that?

Mr. Sarle was his guardian, but he was entirely dependent on Miss Judith Coker! If she learned that her beloved Horace had had narrow escapes from his treachery, she would cast him off. And then?

What would the cold-hearted, unscrupulous lawyer do for him? Even if he did not throw him over entirely, he would do little for him.

Was it possible that, after all, honesty was the best policy? Really, it began to look like it!

In any case, he knew that he dared take no further treacherous action against Horace Coker! He was a dog with a bad name now!

He knew what the Head thought. Dr. Locke's clear eyes had seemed to read right through him. He would never have another chance!

What was the use of carrying on when he had failed this time? He had laid his plans cunningly enough. Matters had seemed to play into his hands, for while he had been watching for a chance to fling his missile in at Prout's window, Prout had fairly asked for it by standing at the wide-open window of Quelch's study. All had gone like clockwork. Coker had walked into the House with enough evidence on him to convict a dozen fellows! And it had all gone for nothing!

He dared not try again!

He dared not! Mr. Sarle might urge, and might threaten, but he dared not! If he tried again it would be futile, he knew that; but he dared not try. He had come to Greyfriars to blacken Horace Coker, to cut him out of his aunt's favour and his aunt's will, and the outcome of his rascality was that he was in danger of being cast off himself by his wealthy aunt, leaving Horace in more favour than ever! That was the outcome—and it was what he might have expected, had he been wise enough to understand that rascality, in the long run, can never thrive.

He was still moving restlessly and miserably about the study when the bell rang for calling over, and he went down. He saw Coker in Hall in the ranks of

the Fifth, though Coker did not take any heed of him.

In the Remove, when he took his place, the fellows moved to keep clear of him. Even Skinner and Snoop edged a little away from him. Evidently Coker had told of what had passed in the Head's study while the wretched Snipe was skulking out of sight. And the faces of the Removites showed what view they were taking.

If ever a hapless rascal repented of his rascality, the Snipe of the Remove did, as he stood there with his Form, under contemptuous eyes on all sides. He was glad to get away from Hall and creep back to his study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

When Duty Calls!

COKER rubbed his head thoughtfully.

"It's a bit thick!" he remarked.

Potter and Greene nodded assent. Quite early in their acquaintance with old Horace they had noted that his head was a bit thick.

"Awfully thick, in fact!" said Coker restively.

"Well, I don't know about that!" said Potter consolingly. "I suppose you're not what a fellow would call bright—"

"Eh?"

"But I dare say there are thicker-headed fellows about. I haven't actually met any, but—"

Coker fixed a grim stare on his chum. "Are you being funny, Potter?" he asked. "If you are, chuck it! I've no use for cheek—silly cheek! See?"

He rubbed his head again.

"It's too jolly thick!" he said.

Potter was silent this time. He fully agreed that it was too jolly thick, if

Coker was speaking of his head, as seemed to be the case, from the fact that he was rubbing it as he talked. But he realised that Coker's gesture was merely expressive of thought, and that it was not his head to which old Horace was alluding.

He was speaking of something else. What it was Potter did not know, and Greene did not know, and they hoped that Coker would not tell them. It was extraordinary how far a little conversation from Coker would go! Very little of it went a long way. But their hope was in vain. Coker, as they feared, proceeded to tell them what it was that was too thick.

"I've been thinking it over," he said. "I can't refuse old aunty! Just can't! She's too awfully good to me. She sent me those veal and ham pies. She remembers I like veal and ham pies. A dear old soul!"

Potter and Greene murmured assent. It was tea-time in Coker's study, and his friends were dealing with the veal and ham pies. Undoubtedly they were good. They were glad that Aunt Judy had remembered that Horace liked veal and ham pies. Potter and Greene liked them, too.

"Lots of little kind and thoughtful things, you know!" said Coker. "And if she asks a chap to do a thing, can a chap refuse? But I tell you men, it's a bit thick to ask me to have anything to do with that snipe."

Potter and Greene almost groaned aloud. If the veal and ham pies had not been so awfully good they would have retreated from the study.

Coker was going to talk about that tick of a cousin of his, in the Remove. They would almost rather he had talked football! On that subject he was, at least, funny! On the subject of

Caffyn he was only a weary, dreary, fearful bore.

"But I'm going to do it!" said Coker heroically. "It's a bit thick—in fact, it's fearfully thick, but I'm jolly well going to play up. Aunt Judy thinks I may improve the little beast! Blessed if I think it likely! Still, if any man can do it, I suppose I can!"

Coker finished his pie, and rose.

"It's not merely thick—it's sickening," he said. "You know what he did yesterday—tarring old Prout, and fixing it up to make it look as if I'd done it! Just the affair of that rotten bank-note over again, you know! And he's done things like that before! I can't imagine why! I suppose he must dislike me or something."

"Oh!" said Potter, with a gasp. "Think so?"

"Of course, I loathe him, myself," said Coker. "Who wouldn't? But because a decent chap loathes a snipe, that's no reason why a snipe should dislike a decent chap! Nothing about me to dislike, I hope."

"You're so nice to him!" murmured Greene.

"Well, I don't know," said Coker thoughtfully. "I've kicked him a few times, and I firmly believe that kicking does fags good. But I've noticed that they don't like it, all the same."

"You're such an observant chap, Coker!" said Potter admiringly.

"I think I am rather!" assented Coker. "Well, look here, you fellows, I'm going to play up all I can. I believe that lawyer Johnny, Sarle, has a bad influence over Caffyn. I'm advising Aunt Judy to sack him. I've given her that advice before, but the crawly brute seems to stick on, somehow."

Coker shook his head, puzzled and irritated. His opinion of Aunt Judy's solicitor, Mr. Sarle, was that he was a rotter and a rascal. He had told Miss Coker so. He had, indeed, told Mr. Sarle so—though he did not know why Mr. Sarle disliked him any more than he knew why Caffyn did! But Aunt Judy, greatly as she admired her Horace, had not taken his advice to the extent of sacking her legal representative. The fact that he was her younger nephew's guardian, perhaps, made her hesitate. Or perhaps there was a limit to her faith, even in the wonderful judgment and capacity of her darling Horace! It rather annoyed Coker.

"Well, I'll go and see the little beast, anyhow!" said Coker. "Sorry to cut before you fellows have finished your tea, but you won't mind."

Would they mind?

Potter and Greene were already thinking of cutting, even at the cost of abandoning the veal and ham pies, to get away from Coker's conversation on that boring subject! Would they mind?

They wouldn't! But Coker did not wait for them to say so. He barged out of the study and left them happy and contented.

Making his way to the Remove passage, Coker passed several Remove fellows; but this time he got through without waking up the hornets. The Bouncer was in the passage, and he grinned at Coker; but Horace nobly resisted the temptation to strew him on the floor. He was going to speak to Caffyn, and did not want to be rolled into the games study again by a mob of Removites.

He kicked open the door of Study No. 1. Rather to his surprise, the Famous Five were at tea there. Coker knew that Wharton and Nugent had hardly used their study except for prep since Caffyn came.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry affably. "Don't they knock at doors in the slum you were brought up in, Coker?"

"Where's the Snipe?" snapped Coker.

"I think he's tea'd in Hall," answered Harry Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "We've told him he's not wanted here. I'm going to ask Quelch to take him out of this study. I've kicked him out to go on with."

Coker frowned. That no fellow could like Caffyn, he knew by his own feelings on the subject. Still, he did not approve of Remove kids taking the law into their own hands.

"Look here, you can't kick my cousin out of his own study!" he stated.

"Can't we?" grinned Frank Nugent.

"No, you jolly well can't!" roared Coker.

"My dear man," said Harry, "we can kick Caffyn out, and we can kick Caffyn's cousin out, too, if he's cheeky! Take the tip, and bunk!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"The bunkfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and ridiculous Coker," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Coker breathed hard. He was on the verge of an explosion, when a fat voice squeaked in the Remove passage.

"I say, you fellows, Coker's kicking up a row in No. 1."

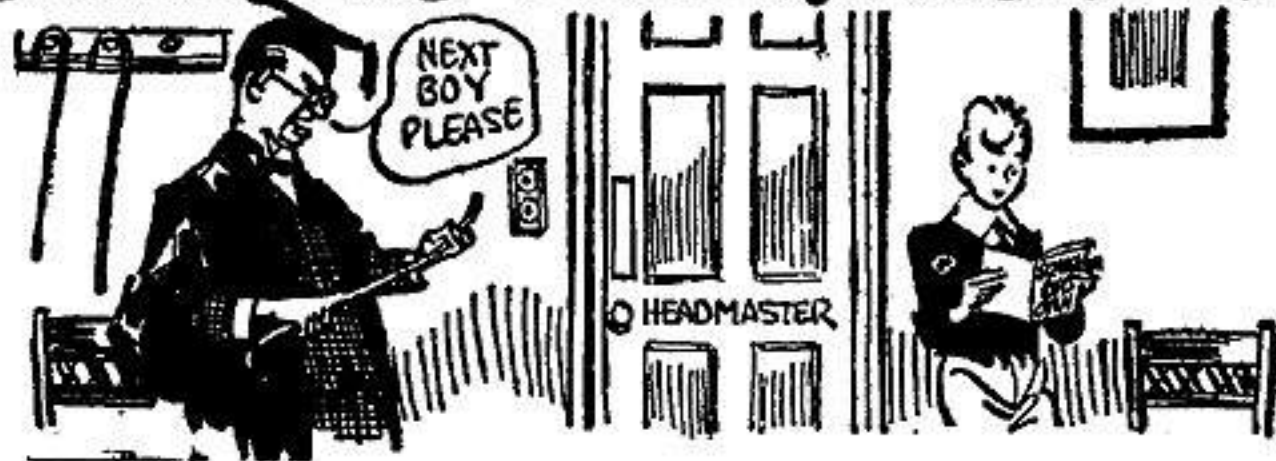
Vernon-Smith looked in at the door. "Coker want helpin' home again?" he asked.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Do you want helping home, Coker?" he inquired. "We're ready to oblige."

Coker of the Fifth breathed hard,

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restrained his feelings, and turned to the door. He did not want helping home!

"Looking for that jolly old cousin of yours, Coker?" asked the Bounder, laughing, as he passed. "He's in Skinner's study, if you want him."

Without troubling to thank Smithy for the information, Horace tramped up the passage and kicked at the door of Skinner's study. It did not open; it was locked on the inside. Horace thumped.

"Is Caffyn here?" he shouted.

"Find out!" came back Skinner's voice.

"I want him!" roared Coker.

"He doesn't want you."

"Open this door! What have you got it locked for?"

"Go and eat coke!"

It did not dawn on Coker that the study door was locked because there was a smoking party inside. But he felt sure, from Skinner's answers that Caffyn was there; and he was not a fellow to be denied. He thumped and pounded at the door.

"Go away, you fool!" called out the thin, sharp voice of the Snipe.

Evidently Caffyn was there!

"Will you let me in?" roared Coker.

"No!"

Crash!

Coker's hefty shoulder smote the door, and it groaned.

Crash!

He hurled his whole weight on it.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Skinner. "We shall have Quelch up at this rate! Better let the fool in!"

And Harold Skinner hastily unlocked the door and it flew open. Coker marched into the study; and stopped suddenly, coughing and spluttering, as he captured a mouthful of tobacco smoke. Three dingy young rascals, cigarette in hand, stared at him angrily; and Coker stared back at them, spluttering.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Reforming a Rotter!

"U R R G H!" gurgled Coker.

"Groooooogh!"

Skinner and Snoop threw their cigarettes into the fire. Caffyn followed their example. With Coker kicking up a shindy there was a risk of a master or a prefect coming up to see what the row was. Skinner & Co. felt awfully like men of the world, as they smoked after tea in No. 11. But they did not want to display their men-of-the-worldliness to the eyes of authority.

"Wurrgh!" coughed Coker. "You putrid little brutes—ugggh! You ought to be jolly well licked! Gurrgh!"

"Can't mind your own bizney?" sneered Skinner.

"Look here, what do you want here?" demanded Snoop.

Caffyn did not speak, but he eyed his brawny, burly cousin evilly. He had no doubt that Horace had come on vengeance bent.

After the miserable trick of the previous day what was he to expect? All day long he had expected to hear from Coker, and to feel the weight of his heavy hand, or his heavier boot.

He knew the Remove fellows would not rally to his aid. Any other man in the Remove had only to cry "Rescue," to bring the whole Form buzzing round an invader. But nobody would have lifted a finger for the Snipe. Nobody objected to Coker kicking him for his treacherous trickery—

indeed, they were strongly disposed to kick him themselves.

His Form-master, Quelch, regarded him with hardly concealed contempt—his headmaster was weighing in his mind whether to turn him out of the school. He was scorned in his Form, and fellows of other Forms who noted his existence, did so with a sneer. Even Skinner and Snoop were rather dubious about keeping on his acquaintance!

He was friendless, and beginning to realise that he deserved to be friendless. And here was burly, brawny, Horace—on the trail of vengeance. The Snipe looked evil and scared. There was no help or rescue for him—Horace, if so disposed, could thrash him as much as he chose. Even if a Sixth Form prefect came up, he was likely to tell the wretched Snipe that it served him jolly well right—as it did!

In these circumstances, it was fortunate for the Snipe that Horace, under the influence of Aunt Judy's letter, had not come on the war-path. His intentions, in fact, were friendly—as friendly as he could force himself to feel towards the Snipe!

But, coughing and spluttering and angry, Horace did not look very friendly! Caffyn, backing round the table, eyed him across that article of furniture, wondering whether he would have a chance to dodge out of the study, if Horace started round the table after him.

Remove fellows came along the passage to look in, but obviously without any intention of interfering. The Snipe, already unpopular enough, had fed up the whole Form with his latest exploit.

Coker coughed, gurgled, gasped, and spluttered. Then he stamped across the study, and Caffyn dodged. But he was not after Caffyn. He stamped to the window and threw it wide open.

"Look here, what the thump!" yelled Skinner angrily, as the sharp wind from the sea blew in.

"You smoky little ticks!" gasped Coker.

"Nobody asked you here," yapped Snoop.

"That's better!" said Coker, unheeding, as the wind cleared the smoke off.

"Now a fellow can breathe. Caffyn—"

"Let me alone!" muttered the Snipe, setting his thin lips. "I'll go to Quelch if you touch me!"

Coker stared at him.

"Who's going to touch you?" he inquired. "You're not nice to touch, Snipe. I wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole if I could help it!"

"What the thump do you want, then?" demanded Caffyn, relieved, but puzzled.

He began to see that Horace was not there to thrash him.

"Aunt Judy's written to me about you," growled Horace. "It's pretty sickening, but she's asked me to do what I can for you, and I'm going to do it. You want taking in hand, that's a cert. Look at the dirty trick you played yesterday—and last week, too, and other times, as well. Well, I'm going to see if there's anything that can be done for you."

Caffyn could only stare. There was a chuckle from the fellows in the passage. The Famous Five had arrived there now, and more and more of the Remove were coming along, tea being over in most of the studies. Coker was getting quite a large audience—which he did not, however, heed.

"You're a lying sneaking, wily, smoky, dingy little scoundrel," went on Coker. "I needn't tell you all that.

You know it. I fancy every man in your Form knows it, too."

The knowfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh from the passage.

"Hear, hear!" grinned Squiff.

"But you won't improve in the company you're keeping now," said Coker, with a glare of scorn at Skinner and Snoop. "Now I'm taking you in hand, you're to cut these two young cads. See?"

"I shall please myself about that!" snarled Caffyn.

"You won't!" said Coker coolly. "I'm going to do what I can for you, to please aunty, and that's a beginning. If I find you in this study again, or speaking to those young rotters at all, I'll whop you—and whop them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" from the passage.

Coker stared round.

"Don't cackle at me, you cheeky young ticks!" he snapped. "Now, you've got to begin by chucking smoking, Caffyn. I'll chuck your cigarettes into the fire."

Coker grabbed a box from the table.

"They're mine!" yelled Skinner, in alarm.

"They go into the fire, all the same!" answered Coker coolly; and they went, in a shower, and the box after them.

Skinner, jumping forward desperately to save his property, was grasped by the collar. The next moment Coker had Snoop by the collar with his left. They wriggled and kicked.

"Rescue, you fellows!" yelled Skinner.

"My dear man, we wouldn't stop the performance for anything!" said Bob Cherry. "Coker's frightfully amusing."

"You're to have nothing more to do with my cousin, Caffyn, you two!" said Coker. "Understand?"

"Let go, you rotter!" howled Snoop.

"He's bad enough, without you young cads making him worse. Take that as a tip!" said Coker, bringing together the heads of Skinner and Snoop with a crack that rang like a shot.

Crack!

"Whoop!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Coker pitched Skinner into one corner of the study, Snoop into another. They sprawled there, rubbing their heads and glaring at Coker of the Fifth as if they could have eaten him. Caffyn edged towards the door, but it was blocked by grinning Removites, who did not open to give him passage. They did not want the performance to stop. Coker of the Fifth, for once, had the hearty good wishes and approval of the Remove.

"Now you'll leave my cousin alone, you two!" said Coker, glaring alternately at Skinner and Snoop. "Got it clear, or do you want a taste of my boot?"

"Hang him, and hang you!" yelled Skinner. "Get out of my study!"

"I'm going—and Caffyn's going, too. Come on, you Snipe!"

"I—I won't—"

"You will!" said Coker, catching Caffyn by the collar. "Don't howl, you funky little snipe. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm going to take you for a walk till lock-up!"

"A—a—a walk!" gasped the Snipe, in blank amazement. "What the thump do you mean, you fool?"

"Don't you understand plain English? When I say a walk, I mean a walk! We've got time to do six or seven miles before the gates are closed."

"Six or seven miles!" stuttered Caffyn.

A mile was more than enough for the weedy, idle, loafing Snipe.

"Yes. Come on!"

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"I won't!" shrieked Caffyn.

Coker did not trouble to answer him again. He walked out of the study, leading the Snipe by the collar. This time the Remove men made room for the Snipe to pass. They roared with laughter as they crowded back.

"Good old Coker!" chuckled Bob.

"Ain't he a jewel intirely!" chortled Micky Desmond.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop him!" yelled Caffyn. He grabbed at the arm of the captain of the Remove as he passed. "Stop him, Wharton!"

Wharton jerked his arm free.

"Nothing of the sort!" he answered.

"I think it's jolly decent of Coker to take any trouble about you, after the dirty tricks you've played on him."

"Help me, you rotters!" howled Caffyn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no help for Caffyn. Coker's startling idea of reforming the Snipe by a dose of strenuous exercise rather appealed to a strenuous Form like the Greyfriars Remove. Certainly, they were not likely to do anything to prevent Horace getting on with the good work.

Caffyn walked down the stairs with Coker, simply because he could not help it. A roar of laughter followed him.

Twice he attempted to bolt before he got to the door. In the doorway Wingate of the Sixth was standing with Gwynne, and the two prefects looked round curiously at Coker and his wriggling prisoner.

"What's this game, Coker?" asked Wingate.

"Taking my cousin for a walk!" said Coker. "Better for him than frowsting in his study."

"Oh, my hat!" said Gwynne.

"Lots!" said Wingate, laughing.

Coker walked out into the quad with Caffyn. They headed for the gates and walked out. Outside the gates, the great man of the Fifth released the infuriated Snipe.

"Three miles out, and three miles back," he said. "Try to cut, and I'll be after you like a shot—and I'll kick you all the way! I warn you not to try any tricks. I mean business. See?"

Caffyn, choking with rage, did not try any tricks. It was only too evident that there was nothing doing. He had to walk—and he walked!

They were not seen at Greyfriars again till Gosling was closing the gates. Then Coker walked in, fresh as a daisy after his long tramp. Coker's long legs were tireless. After him crawled the unhappy Snipe, almost on his hands and knees. He tottered into the House, tottered into the Rag, and collapsed into a chair, and groaned. He was barely able to totter into Hall for calling-over. At prep that evening in Study No. 1 he moved stiffly, as if afflicted with rheumatism. Wharton and Nugent smiled. But the hapless Snipe did not smile. He groaned.

If the way of the transgressor was hard, the path of reform seemed harder still—under such a reformer as Coker of the Fifth! And Coker had not finished yet. He had only begun!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Strenuous!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

It was the following morning, and the Remove were coming out in break. The Fifth were already out, and Coker, of that Form, was waiting for the Remove to appear.

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Which was surprising, as the Remove, of course, were miles and miles below the notice of so lofty a personage as Horace James Coker, of the Fifth Form.

But there he was—waiting! Bob Cherry greeted him, in surprise. Other fellows stared at him.

Unheeding, Coker made a dive at Edgar Caffyn and grabbed him by the shoulder.

"Come on!" he said.

Caffyn gave a squeal of angry and alarmed protest.

"Keeping it up, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Eh! Yes! Get a move on, Caffyn!" rapped Coker. "I've only got five minutes for you—can't waste all break on a snipe! I'm going to trot you round the quad at top speed!"

"Leave me alone!" yelled Caffyn.

"If you don't keep ahead of me, I shall help you on, see?" said Coker. "I'm going to give you three yards' start. I warn you to make the most of it."

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

Caffyn glared round desperately. His Form-fellows were taking this as a joke, regarding it all the same as a good thing for the loafing Snipe. Really, it was quite decent of Coker to take all this trouble about a relative whom he disliked and barred.

That was not Caffyn's view, however. He was still aching from that fearful tramp of the day before.

He struggled in Horace's hefty grip. And as Mr. Quelch came down the corridor from the Form-room, he yelled desperately to his Form-master.

"Mr. Quelch! Make him let me go, sir!"

"What? What?" exclaimed the Remove master. "What is all this? Coker, release Caffyn at once!"

Horace Coker breathed hard, but he obeyed. Caffyn stood panting for breath.

Mr. Quelch eyed the two of them.

"What does this mean, Coker?" he snapped.

"I hope you're not going to interfere, sir!" said Coker gruffly. "My Aunt Judy has asked me to take that Snipe up, and do what I can for him. I want to do as she wishes. I hate having anything to do with the little beast, but I think it's up to me and I'm doing it. A run round the quad will do him good."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, rather taken aback. "Is that your intention, Coker? What is your objection, Caffyn, to taking exercise in Coker's company?"

"I—I want him to let me alone!" gasped Caffyn. "The brute nearly walked me off my legs yesterday! I'm still aching!"

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly. He began to understand. The Remove fellows looked on, wondering how Quelch was going to decide this rather extraordinary dispute.

"Caffyn!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will go with Coker."

"I've a right to do as I like in break, sir!" panted the Snipe.

Quelch eyed him coldly.

"That is an error, Caffyn! You are the idlest and most unfit boy in my Form! I have reprimanded you on many occasions for idle loafing. I have had to punish you for smoking. I have heard that you have been caned by the Head of the Games for avoiding games practice. I am very glad to see that your cousin, a senior boy, is taking such an interest in your well-being. I approve of it!"

With that, Quelch walked on, leaving the Removites grinning, and Caffyn gritting his teeth.

The Snipe made a movement to dodge away; but several fellows pushed him back.

Coker's hand dropped on him again. "Your beak's got a lot of sense, Caffyn!" remarked Coker. "Much more sense than most beaks! Come on!"

There was no escape for Caffyn. His Form-master was the final court of appeal; and his Form-master had decided against him. Full of malice, rage and all uncharitableness, the Snipe went with Coker.

His run round the quad was a nightmare to Caffyn. Coker gave him the three yards' start, and then followed behind.

Caffyn ran hard! But Coker was soon close astern, letting out a heavy foot. The jolt from Coker's boot lent the hapless Snipe renewed vigour. He flew.

Fellows watched him racing, and roared with laughter. Caffyn panted, and puffed, and blew; and by frantic efforts contrived to keep just ahead of Coker's big feet. Right round the quad he went, panting and puffing, till he got back to the door of the House, where he bolted in like a rabbit into a burrow.

"I say, you fellows, that will do the Snipe good!" chortled Billy Bunter, who had blinked at the scene, through his big spectacles, with great entertainment. "He, he, he! Lazy rotter, you know—loafing snipe! Jolly good thing for him, what? He, he, he!"

Bob Cherry winked at his friends.

"You think that a lazy, loafing rotter ought to be made to take a little exercise, with a boot behind him?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!" answered Bunter. "Serve him jolly well right! I'd like to see every rotten slacker treated the same way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said the Owl of the Remove warmly. "You're not much better than the Snipe! Look at you now—hanging about with your hands in your pockets! Yah! A bit of a sprint would do you lots of good! Why don't you get on with it?"

The chums of the Remove took their hands from their pockets.

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Johnny Bull. "You start, Bunter!"

"Eh?"

"Go it, old fat bean!" said Bob. "We'll follow!"

Billy Bunter blinked.

"Oh, really, you fellows! I'm going over to the tuckshop now—"

"You're jolly well not!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Didn't you say that every rotten slacker ought to be treated like Caffyn? Well, then, go ahead—and we'll do the same as Coker."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Start!" grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter. "Look here—Yaroooh! Keep your boot away from my bags, Bob Cherry, you beast! I say, you fellows—Whooooop!"

Bunter started.

He had to start, and he had to keep on. After him trooped the Famous Five, laughing. Bob Cherry took the lead, letting out a foot to help the fat Owl on when he slacked.

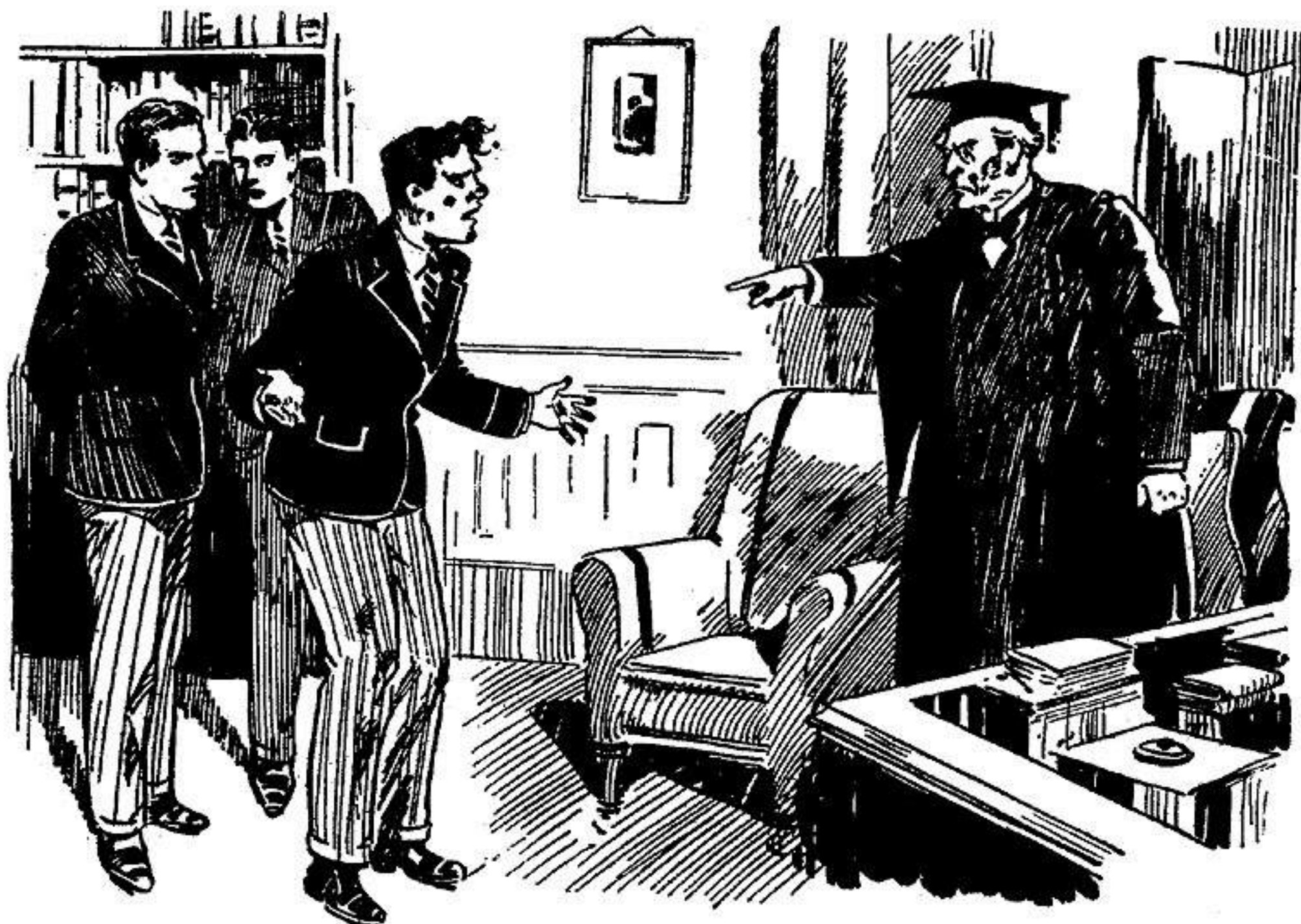
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as he flew. "I say, you fellows—yaroooh! You kick me again, you beast, and I'll—whooooop! Oh lor'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep it up!"

"Grooooh! Oh crikey! I'm out of breath! Urrrrgggghh!"

Billy Bunter rolled round the quad, puffing and blowing. When he came



"Coker!" said Dr. Locke. "Do you deny that you threw tar at Mr. Prout?" "Yes!" roared Coker. "Of course I do!" "Then how do you account for the tar on your person?" demanded the Head. "Eh! That's easy enough!" answered Coker. "It was chucked at me, same as you say it was chucked at Prout!"

back to the door of the House, he bolted in, like Caffyn. Bunter approved of Coker's methods with Caffyn heartily. He did not seem to feel the same approval of the same methods applied to himself.

"Beasts!" he gurgled, as he disappeared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five strolled away in the quad, laughing. Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag, and sank down into an armchair, spluttering for breath. Caffyn was already there, in another armchair, gurgling.

"Urrrgh!" from Bunter.

"Gurrgh!" from Caffyn.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

"Oh dear!" moaned Caffyn.

"Wooooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

"Yooooogh!" spluttered Caffyn.

It was quite a chorus, and they kept it up till the bell rang for third school. In third school, however, they both looked rather brighter and more alert than usual. That trot round the quad had done Bunter more good than jam tarts at the tuckshop, and Caffyn more good than a cigarette in his study.

But they did not like it all the same. Caffyn looked forward to further attentions from his Fifth Form cousin with dread; and Billy Bunter thanked his lucky stars that he had no cousin at Greyfriars like Coker of the Fifth.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Snipe's Secret!

HARRY WHARTON started. He was coming into his study, a few days later, for an old footer to punt about in the quad after class. Caffyn was there.

Until quite recently Wharton would have expected to be greeted by a scent of cigarettes when Caffyn was in the study.

But there was no smell of smoking now.

Caffyn was seated at the study table, with a letter in his hands. His eyes were fixed on the letter, though he was not reading it. He was so deep in troubled thought that he did not see Wharton enter—and the captain of the Remove stopped and stared at him uncomfortably. Little as he could like the Snipe, he felt a twinge of compassion as he saw the worry and trouble in the narrow, foxy face.

Caffyn was still an inmate of Study No. 1. After the affair of the tar, the captain of the Remove had kicked him out, and had intended to ask Mr. Quelch to shift him from the study. Both he and ugent had agreed that they could not stand the Snipe in their quarters any longer, if they could help it.

But the matter had dropped. Caffyn had to be somewhere, and nobody in the Remove would have been willing to take him in.

Even Skinner & Co. would never have consented. Skinner & Co. had dropped Caffyn like a hot brick. Coker's warning had been enough for them. They did not want any more trouble with Caffyn's brawny cousin.

And since Coker had taken Caffyn in hand, rough-and-ready as Horace's methods were, there had been a marked improvement in the Snipe, and his study-mates disliked him a little less than of old.

For one thing, he had given up cigarettes. Every day now, sometimes twice a day, Caffyn was put through it

by his hefty cousin. Coker, having taken a task in hand, was not the man to drop it. He was going to meet Aunt Judy's wishes if he could, and he had his own way of doing it.

It could not be denied that it was doing the Snipe good. Even Caffyn realised that. He needed wind for those daily sprints with Coker of the Fifth. He could not get out of those sprints, so in self-defence he had to chuck smoking. Gasping and panting on short wind was altogether too painful. Only very rarely now did the Snipe sneak into some secluded corner for a surreptitious cigarette.

He was surprised himself at the change a few days made in him. There was colour in his pasty cheeks, a new brightness in his eyes, which looked much less foxy. He found that he was less and less tired by those runs with Coker, and he had a much keener appetite, he slept better, and he found the work in the Form-room easier. It was borne in even upon the Snipe's dingy mind that there was something to be said for a clean and wholesome way of life. He had actually turned up for footer practice without having to be looked for and kicked.

Greatest change of all, he could speak without saying something unpleasant or sneering. Fresh air and exercise spelled better health, and better health spelled a more cheerful and amiable outlook on life.

Coker was an original fellow, and he had set out to reform the Snipe in a rather original way! But there was no doubt that he was getting results!

Now, however, as Harry Wharton looked at him, drooping over the study

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(Continued from page 13.)

table, the Snipe looked anything but bright. Wharton wondered whether there was bad news in the letter he had been reading.

Caffyn did not glance round at him. He was evidently unconscious of Wharton's presence in the doorway.

He made a sudden movement and dashed the letter down on the table. He struck it with his fist as it lay there.

"Old fox!" he snarled.

He saw Wharton the next moment. He spun round on him, his eyes gleaming.

"What do you want?" he snarled. "Spying on a chap!"

Wharton coloured.

"You worm!" he exclaimed, all his sympathetic feelings vanishing on the spot. "Can't I come into my own study for a footer? Don't talk to me!"

He crossed the study, picked up the football, and turned to the door with it under his arm. Caffyn watched him sullenly. But his expression changed as the captain of the Remove reached the door.

"Sorry!" he muttered unwillingly. "I—I—you startled me! I didn't mean— Oh, hang! It doesn't matter, anyhow."

Wharton turned again. It was so unusual for the Snipe to express any regret for having made himself unpleasant that it brought a smile to the face of the captain of the Remove.

"Any trouble?" he asked.

"Yes!" grunted Caffyn.

"I mean, I'm not asking you about your affairs," said Harry, realising that a fellow had to walk delicately in dealing with so suspicious a fellow as Edgar Caffyn. "I mean, if there's anything a fellow could do—"

"Nothing!"

"Oh, all serene then!" Wharton made a movement to go.

"Hold on!" said Caffyn.

Wharton held on.

"Look at that letter!" said the Snipe.

The captain of the Remove paused. He had felt a faint friendly impulse towards the fellow he disliked on seeing him look so thoroughly down and out. But he shrank from the idea of being mixed up in any way in the Snipe's dingy affairs.

"Oh, don't trouble!" said Caffyn with his old sneer, as he saw Wharton hesitate. "Why should you bother your head about a fellow you loathe? Go back to your friends!"

But Wharton's brief hesitation was over. He picked up the letter and looked at it. It puzzled him; there was not, so far as he could see, anything in it to cause deep trouble and worry. It was written in a thin, fine hand—that of Caffyn's guardian, the solicitor Sarle.

"Dear Edgar,—It is some time since I have heard from you. So far, you appear to have made no progress whatever. You will scarcely expect me to be satisfied with this. I shall hope to hear that you have done better when I see

you next week. Miss Coker is coming to the school next Wednesday to see Horace, and, of course, you also. I shall come with her, as it is her wish, and I think I had better see you.

"Your guardian,
"J. SARLE."

It was a cold, formal letter and did not indicate that Mr. Sarle was bothered by any great affection for his ward. But Wharton could not see why it had troubled Caffyn so much.

Caffyn was watching him with a half-sneer.

Wharton, of course, took the letter at face-value. He had not the faintest idea of what sort of "progress" Mr. Sarle had expected Caffyn to make at Greyfriars.

Mr. Sarle was a legal gentleman and a cautious gentleman. He was not likely to put anything in black and white that could possibly cause him trouble if it fell into the wrong hands.

Anyone reading that letter could only have supposed that Caffyn's guardian was dissatisfied with a schoolboy's progress at school! Certainly no one could have guessed that Mr. Sarle in reality was dissatisfied with Caffyn's progress in the plot for cutting out Horace Coker!

Caffyn had a feeling of contempt for a fellow who could not read between the lines.

But as he looked at Wharton's cheerful, healthy face, and could not help noting the absence of suspicion or cunning penetration in it, his contempt changed to a weary envy.

He felt that he would have given a good deal to have a healthy unsuspecting mind instead of the sharp cunning and slyness on which he had always prided himself.

Wharton laid down the letter and looked at him across the table.

"That's not awfully bad!" he said, with a smile. "You're a bit of a slacker in class, Caffyn, and I suppose Quelch's half-term report has made your guardian a bit restive. But you've time to pull up before the end of the term if you choose and if you want to satisfy Mr. Sarle."

Caffyn burst into a discordant laugh.

"Do you think Sarle's referring to school matters?" he jeered.

"Eh? What? I suppose so! What else?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

It was on the tip of Caffyn's tongue to tell him! But he checked that impulse. His dismal secret was not one that could be told.

"Oh! Nothing!" he snapped. "Let it drop!" He turned to the window and stood looking out into the quad, his back to the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton stared at Caffyn's back for a moment or two, and then walked out of the study with the football he had come for. Not till he had gone did Caffyn turn from the window.

He picked up Mr. Sarle's letter, tore it into fragments, and threw the fragments into the grate. He knew to what Mr. Sarle referred, if Wharton did not. What was he going to do?

His campaign against Coker was a ghastly failure. He dared not carry it on—and he did not want to carry it on. But what was he to say to Sarle when he came?

Footsteps came back along the passage. Harry Wharton looked into the study again.

"Come down and help us punt this footer about, Caffyn!" he said.

Caffyn stared at him for a moment.

"You don't want me," he said—"and if you do, your friends don't! I won't come—I—I—I mean—" He paused.

"Look here, I'll be jolly glad to come if you mean it."

"Come on!" said Harry cheerily; and Caffyn came. The other fellows stared when the Snipe turned up with Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "You getting a move on, Snipey, without Coker's boot behind you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Caffyn scowled.

"If you don't want me I'll clear fast enough!" he snapped; and he turned away—only to be jerked back by Bob's powerful grasp.

"Don't be an ass!" said Bob. "Join up and welcome, fathead! Now, then, pass that ball! Come on, Caffyn!"

And the Snipe joined in punting the footer, and forgot all about Mr. Sarle and his tortuous and dismal plotting, and when he went back to the House for tea, he was feeling a much more cheerful Snipe.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Change for the Better!

HORACE COKER reddened.

He reddened with wrath.

Coker of the Fifth was easily stirred to wrath. Anything, or nothing could excite the hot and hasty temper of old Horace. Often and often would Coker fly into a temper simply because he misunderstood something that was said to him; only to discover later that he had expended a lot of energy for nothing.

But on the present occasion Coker had ample cause for wrath.

He was standing at his study window looking out into the quad, where the old elms gleamed with the green of spring. There were plenty of things to be seen, that failed to win Coker's lordly approval. For instance, Wingate and Gwynno were walking, in state, on the Sixth Form green, where only the Sixth—not even the Fifth!—were allowed to walk. Swank, in Coker's opinion!

Billy Bunter could be discerned, rolling tuckshopwards. Not at all good for a podgy fag to cram himself with pastry, Coker considered.

Harry Wharton & Co. were punting a footer about. Coker approved of fags getting plenty of exercise. But he considered it "roll," otherwise "side," for juniors to punt a ball in the quad, and had he been a prefect, Coker would jolly well have stopped it. Luckily, Coker wasn't!

Tubb, of the Third Form, unseen by any eyes but Coker's, taking a bird's-eye view from the high window, was making a disrespectful gesture behind the back of Prout, who rolled in the Elm Walk. Tubb, little dreaming that any eye observed him, placed a thumb to his nose, and extended his fingers. It would have mattered little, but for the fact that Prout was Coker's Form-master, and from that circumstance derived some importance. Coker made a mental note to kick Tubb of the Third on their next meeting.

But all these things, though displeasing to Coker's lofty eye, did not cause that flush of deep wrath in his cheeks, or that thunderous frown that clouded his Olympian brow.

It was the sight of Caffyn that did that!

Coker's eyes, passing over other objects, fixed on the Snipe!

And he glared!

It was by sheer chance that he saw the Snipe. No other eye saw him. The Snipe was occupied in a way that made him very careful not to be observed, if he could help it.

He had a catapult in his hand. He was at a great distance from the House—quite small in the distance. But there was nothing the matter with Coker's eyes, and he saw him clearly enough, through openings in the branches of the elms by the school wall.

The Snipe, evidently, had made himself a new catapult. Before handling it this bright spring afternoon, he had looked this way and that way, like Moses of old, and seen that there was no man. It did not occur even to the Snipe's wary mind that he could be seen over the trees, from the distant House, by a fellow with good eyesight looking out of a window. But Coker saw him—and thunder grew on his rugged features.

The Snipe, fitting a stone to his catapult, was taking slow and deliberate aim at a pigeon resting on the wall.

Coker saw the whole thing. He was too far off to intervene; even his powerful voice could not have carried the distance. Long before he could get downstairs, let alone cut across the

quad, that unhappy pigeon would be down on the ground with a broken leg or wing. Coker, red with wrath, stared and glared, in a boiling state.

If there was one thing for which he loathed the Snipe more than another, it was his cruelty. Coker might be a fathead. He certainly was. He might be an ass. Undoubtedly he was. He might be hot-headed, aggressive, overbearing—few could doubt it. But he was a healthy and wholesome fellow. He would not have hurt any living thing, for all the gold in the Bank of England. Caffyn made him sick.

He clenched his big fists, almost convulsively.

"Oh, won't I whop him!" gasped Coker. "Won't I smash him! Won't I pulverise him! And that's the putrid little beast that Aunt Judy wants me to take up! I'll leave him alone after this—except for kicking him. But won't I jolly well kick him! Won't I just!"

Coker would have given much to be within kicking distance of Edgar

Caffyn at that moment. But he could only watch, in rising rage.

Caffyn seemed a long time about it. He had taken aim, slow and careful and deliberate aim, but he did not let fly. Coker wondered why he didn't.

The pigeon on the wall had not seen him, and was unconscious of danger. Besides, the pigeons at Greyfriars often hopped about among the fellows who threw them crumbs, and knew no fear. There was, luckily for them, only one Caffyn in the school, and that one, to judge by Coker's looks, was soon likely to be in the school hospital severely damaged. But the pigeon would not remain a target for ever, and the Snipe, as he delayed his shot, was risking losing his hapless victim.

Still he did not shoot. At length, to Coker's wonder, he ceased to aim at the pigeon, and lowered his weapon.

Why, Coker did not know. He stared round and about, to see whether anyone had spotted the Snipe, and scared him from his rascally action. But there was
(Continued on next page.)



"Linesman," whose cheery chat is always full of interesting football facts, will be pleased to hear from readers who have problems to solve. Write to him, c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CUP WINNERS' MEDALS!

It is part of my job to settle football arguments, and I am quite pleased that some of my readers recognise this—and refer their arguments to me. "We were talking about players who had gained English Cup winners' medals, and I said there were several who had been on the winning side three times, but my friend said I was wrong. Can you give me the facts?"

In reply I have to say that the reader who declared that several modern players had three Cup-winners' medals was right.

When Bolton Wanderers brought off their Cup-winning hat-trick—winning the trophy for the third time since the War—they had several players who had helped them to success in each of those three finals, and who, consequently, have now three Cup-winners' medals.

The number of Bolton Wanderers players who were on the winning side in the finals of 1923, 1926, and 1929 was five—Pym, Haworth, Nuttall, Seddon, and Butler.

Previous to that successful Cup run by the Wanderers, the only player of comparatively modern times—indeed, I think the only professional player—who had three Cup-winners' medals was Clem Stephenson, who is now manager of Huddersfield Town.

A lot of people are under the impression that because Finney, the Bolton Wanderers full-back, was in the side when they won the Cup in 1923, he also has three medals. But this is not so. Finney was absent from the second of those three finals in which Bolton Wanderers played, owing to injury. Otherwise, he might have been included in the lucky—or skilful—group of players who have been concerned in three triumphs. One other player of our time—David Jack—has been on the

winning side in three Cup Finals—twice with Bolton Wanderers and once with Arsenal.

It will be noted that all those men I have mentioned who can dangle three medals on their watch-chains have now retired from active participation in the game with the exception of Butler, who is still playing at outside-right for Reading.

AN UNIQUE EXPERIENCE!

WHILE I am on this subject, perhaps the unique experience of another Bolton Wanderers player may be mentioned—centre-forward J. R. Smith. He was in two of the finals in which the "Trotters" were successful, and previous to joining the Wanderers he had gained a Scottish Cup winners' medal.

The successor to J. R. Smith—who should not be confused with Joe Smith—was Harold Blackmore, who is now the leader of the Bury attack, and he led the forwards in the 1929 Final. Not long ago, Blackmore told me of his strange introduction to Cup football. He was in the reserve side of Exeter City when that club was drawn to play against Bristol City in a Cup-tie. As the reserves had no match on their programme on that particular day, Blackmore took a "bus-man's holiday," and went to Bristol with the intention of watching his first team mates play. He had just settled himself in his place on the ground when a board was sent round: "Harold Blackmore is wanted in the Exeter dressing-room at once." Blackmore hurried from his place to the dressing-room, to find that the Exeter centre-forward had been taken ill and could not play. That was Blackmore's strange introduction to Cup football.

One thing leads me to another, and while I am mentioning Blackmore, I may pass on another bit of information which he gave me, and which may prove useful

to some of my young readers. In his early days, Blackmore was very much worried—as many other centre-forwards are—because he sent so many shots over the bar.

In consequence of this, he got somebody to give him an empty beer barrel, and spent quite a lot of his practice-time trying to shoot the ball into the barrel. That practice, so he told me, taught him to shoot low and accurately.

THE SAFEST JOB!

WHICH is the "safest" position on the field so far as injuries are concerned? That is another and somewhat awkward question which has reached me, and for a little while I was perplexed about the answer. However, there is one fact which seems to suggest that goal-keepers receive fewer serious injuries than the players in other positions.

Taking the English First Division there are, at the time of writing, twelve goal-keepers who have appeared in every match for their teams this season. There are only fourteen full-backs who claim a like distinction, fifteen half-backs, and nineteen forwards.

Seeing that there is only one goal-keeper in a side, two full-backs, three half-backs, and five forwards, the obvious inference from the figures I have given is that the goal-keepers have the safest jobs, and the forwards are most frequently injured.

I ought to point out, of course, that there are reasons other than injuries which account for players being absent from their teams, but in the majority of cases casualties lead to absence, and, therefore, the conclusion is that the forwards are hurt more frequently than the players in other departments.

Now for a technical question. Can a player be offside when the ball comes to him from an opponent? The answer is in the affirmative.

A player in an offside position may interfere with the play, in the opinion of the referee, and thus cause an opponent to make a desperate effort to prevent the ball going to him. In such a case the attacker could be given offside even though the ball went to him off a defender. "LINESMAN."

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no one to be seen between the trees and the wall except the Snipe; he was still observed only by Coker.

Yet it was clear that he had changed his mind. Had he seen Coker glaring from the study window? He was not even looking in that direction.

Coker stared in surprise and puzzlement.

He was still more surprised a moment or two later. The Snipe bent down and put his foot on the catapult. Coker could not hear it snap, but he knew it had snapped.

The Snipe had destroyed his own weapon. Coker saw him throw the broken fragments of it over the wall.

"Well, my only hat!" gasped Coker. He gazed as if mesmerised.

The Snipe turned away from the spot. The pigeon, unconscious of its narrow escape, rose from the wall and fluttered away. Caffyn drove his hands into his pockets and walked under the trees and disappeared from Horace Coker's view.

Coker rubbed his head thoughtfully.

He wondered what it meant. Evidently the Snipe had repented of that cruel and cowardly action, before carrying it out. Why? It was not like the Snipe. Was there some remnant of decency in the fellow somewhere, and was it coming to the surface?

"My only hat!" repeated Coker.

Coker was quite unaware of the lesson the Famous Five had given Caffyn a couple of weeks ago on the subject of catapulting. It was that, added to the Snipe's present healthier state of body and mind, that had caused the change that so astonished Coker. The Snipe had begun to think—and to think on right lines!

Very few people are cruel by nature. It is only want of thought—inability to realise what the victim feels like. The fact that the Snipe had profited by his lesson, showed that there was hope for him.

Coker's rugged brow was no longer wrathful, but it was very thoughtful, as he left his study. He was no longer yearning to kick the Snipe. He wasn't going to kick the Snipe. It even dawned on him that perhaps Aunt Judy was right in thinking that, as elder cousin, it was his duty to take the wretched fellow up and make the best of him. Coker resolved to keep on with the good work.

He came on the Snipe in the quad. Caffyn had joined the juniors who were punting the ball; certainly a much more healthy and desirable occupation than potting pigeons. Coker watched him for some time, and when the Snipe walked off to the House, followed him, and clapped a hand on his shoulder.

Caffyn started and stared round.

"Look here—" he began.

"I saw you with that catapult from my study window!" said Coker.

Caffyn caught his breath.

"I never—" he began.

"If you had, I should be smashing you up at the present moment," said Coker genially. "But you didn't. You're getting decent, Caffyn. You're not such a sneaking, vile little beast as you think you are."

"You silly idiot!" said Caffyn.

"Look here, come up to tea with me," said Coker. "I've got lots and lots of stuff. Tea in my study, what?"

The Snipe blinked at him. This was a tremendous concession from the great Horace, who had no use whatever for fags. But he meant it.

"Come on, kid!" said Coker.

He marched Caffyn into the House. Bob Cherry chuckled as he saw them go.

"The jolly old lion and the lamb," he remarked. "Wonders will never

cease, my beloved 'earers! Caffyn's getting decent, and Coker's getting civilised!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was perhaps rather a strain at tea in Coker's study. Potter and Greene stared at Caffyn, and said nothing to him. On the other hand, Coker talked to him, and told him all about football, and about the wonderful things that he, Horace, would have done in the first eleven, if only Wingate had had the sense to play him for School!

But in spite of the silence of Potter and Greene, and the conversation of Coker, the Snipe enjoyed his tea, which was very good if the conversation was not. He said "Thanks, Horace!" when he went, and Coker did not even think of kicking him for calling him Horace.

After tea Coker wrote to Aunt Judy on the subject.

"Dear Aunt Judy,—You will be pleased to hear that yung Caffyn is improving a hole lot. I am doing all I can for him, and he does not seem to be sutch a friteful little beest as he was! I had him to tee to-day.

"Yore affectionate nephew,

"HORACE."

Which letter gave great pleasure to a kind old lady, and made her quite keen to see her nephews when she came down to Greyfriars School on Wednesday.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Very Kind of Coker!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. smiled.

A stone image might have smiled.

Potter and Greene of the Fifth contrived to suppress their feelings. Coker was serious—very serious—and when Coker was in a serious mood he had no use for hilarity.

Coker was talking. That was nothing new. He generally was. He was talking football. Neither was that anything new. It would have been rather new if he had known what he was talking about. His loud voice reached other ears beside Potter and Greene's, but Coker did not mind that. All Greyfriars was welcome to listen to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of Horace Coker if all Greyfriars liked! Generally, Greyfriars was not keen on it.

But the Famous Five, being within range of Horace's powerful voice in the quad, lent him an ear—or, to be more accurate, ten ears. For once Coker's conversation was entertaining.

Coker sometimes jested. His jokes were deep and hard to spot. At such times, serious if not sad faces surrounded Coker.

But when Coker was serious, very serious, he was sometimes amusing. Thus it was with Coker now. Quite unconsciously, he was a real shriek!

"Why not?" Coker was saying. "Football's the game for him! He's not such a sneaking little slacker as he was! I haven't had to kick him for nearly a week! He's getting fairly fit already. Why shouldn't I teach him to play football?"

The Famous Five looked at one another, and smiled and smiled and smiled. Potter and Greene trembled on the verge of an explosion. It would have offended Coker if they had laughed. Coker was sublimely unconscious that he was saying funny things.

It was really kind of Coker to carry his patronage of the Snipe so far as to

think of teaching him to play football. Football undoubtedly would do him good. It would do him lots of good.

The only objection to the scheme was Coker as a teacher! Coker knew the rules, so far as that went. But he had never been known to pay any regard to any of them. Caffyn had put in a little games practice because he had had to! Not much—but a little; so he knew just a trifle about Soccer. Trifle as it was, it was safe to bet that it exceeded Coker's knowledge of the great game. For Horace Coker on the football field played a game like a bull in a china shop, only more so—much more so!

Not aware of this, Coker went on:

"Why not? A lot of trouble for me—but I don't care! The fact is, I rather wish I'd taken the Snipe in hand earlier. I'm making a man of him. He's getting quite clean and decent. He hasn't played any of his rotten mean tricks for a long time. Football's the thing, and I'm the man to put him up to it. Why not?"

Potter and Greene did not answer. They couldn't! They were too busy suppressing their emotions at the idea of Coker teaching anybody football.

"Look what I've done for you fellows," went on the unconsciously humorous Coker. "I've told you a lot about Soccer—the fruits of my experience, you know! I don't mean that you're good players—you're not! Wingate's a fool to play you in the first eleven, Potter, when he leaves out a man like me. Putting you in the reserves, Greeney, is another proof that the man's cracked! Still, I've improved you a lot, as you know."

"Oh crumbs!" said Potter.

"Oh scissors!" gasped Greene.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five. They really could not help it.

It was not, perhaps, the best of manners to burst into a yell of merriment when Coker was talking with great seriousness. Still, they felt that Coker should not say these funny things if he did not want fellows to laugh.

Coker stared round at them.

"What are you fags cackling at?" he demanded. "Shut up, anyhow! Look here, where's young Caffyn? Go and tell him to change for footer, because I'm going to give him some coaching."

Coker never could remember that he wasn't empowered to give orders to juniors. On this occasion, however, the Famous Five generously refrained from strowing him in the quadrangle. They were quite keen to see Horace Coker in the role of football coach.

"Let's!" said Bob Cherry.

"The hearfulness is the obeyfulness, my esteemed and idiotic Coker!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And the Famous Five walked off to look for Caffyn. Potter and Greene also walked off; they were due on the senior ground for a pick-up there, and had been anxious to get off for some time. They started while Coker had his back turned to speak to the Removites, and when he turned round again they were already at a distance, walking fast.

They grinned as they went.

On the whole, Potter and Greene were rather pleased by the interest Coker was now taking in his cousin in the Remove. They saw much less of Coker these days.

Even his wheeze of teaching Caffyn football was in one way a good idea. It would keep him busy elsewhere, instead of trying to barge into the Fifth Form pick-up as usual.

"Here, you men!" called out Coker, as he had a view of Potter and Greene's departing backs. "Here, I say! Don't



Squiff leaned up against the upright as Coker took a flying kick at the ball. Crash! Bump! Caffyn crashed backwards, as if a cannon ball had hit him. "Ow! Wow!" he shrieked. "Urrrrrrgggh!" "Good shot!" roared Bob Cherry. "Do it again, Coker!"

buzz off—I hadn't finished what I was saying!"

That was an error of Coker's! He had! Potter and Greene turned deaf ears and accelerated.

Coker, frowning, walked off to the changing-room. There he waited for Caffyn to turn up, having no doubt that his lordly behests would be obeyed. He was prepared, if necessary, to look for Caffyn, kick him as far as the changing-room, and whop him till he changed! Coker as a reformer had a high and heavy hand. Fortunately, it was not necessary. In a few minutes Caffyn came in with Harry Wharton & Co.

All of them were smiling. Caffyn's cheery grin was quite unlike his usual sneering smile. The fact was, he was rather bucked at being sought out by those important and popular fellows, the Famous Five, and he rather liked walking down to the changing-room with them. There was no doubt that the Snipe was turning over a new leaf, more or less. He was finding the path of improvement less and less thorny the farther he trod it.

Over his mind, like a leaden weight, hung the coming visit of Mr. Sarle; the renewal of scheming and treachery and trickery. The fact that it worried him so much showed what a change had taken place in him.

But he dismissed that trouble from his mind when he could. The more friendly terms between him and his study-mates helped. Study No. 1 was a much more cheery place than formerly; the Snipe was no longer an outcast in his own quarters. Skinner's study was still severely barred to him by the autocratic decree of his Cousin Horace. But the Snipe did not miss it now.

"Oh, here you are!" said Coker, as they came in. "Get changed, kid! I'm

going to give you some football coaching."

"Thanks!" said Caffyn demurely.

"I'll put you kids through it at the same time, if you like," added Coker generously. "You remember that time I played for your fag team a few weeks ago. We nearly lost the game owing to your rotten play. I'll put you up to a few things if you've got enough sense."

"Oh, do!" said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"You're frightfully good, Coker!" said Johnny Bull.

"We may learn quite a new style in Soccer with Coker's instruction," remarked Nugent.

"The mayfulness is terrific."

Coker nodded and smiled. Being blind and deaf to sarcasm, he lapped this up like milk.

"That's all right," he said. "If you fags are keen, that's the chief thing. Keennes, and a good coach, that's what makes a footballer! Buck up, though—I can't wait about for a mob of scrubby little ticks!"

The juniors bucked up. They left the changing-room with Coker, and many curious eyes turned on the great Horace, as he led his flock down to the football ground.

"I say, you fellows, what's this game?" squeaked Billy Bunter, blinking at the party in surprise through his big spectacles.

"Football!" answered Bob Cherry gravely.

"What's Coker going to do, then?" asked Bunter innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter barely dodged a lunge of Coker's boot. Quite a number of fellows followed on to see what was going to happen. There were some fellows at practice on the Remove ground already, and they stared at the arrival of Coker.

"What have you fellows brought that fathead here for?" inquired Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Coaching us in footer," answered Wharton.

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

"Don't cackle at me, young Smith!" said Coker. "Get out of the way! Here, give me that ball, Ogilvy!"

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Ogilvy.

"Give it to him, Oggy, old man!" said Harry Wharton. "Coker's going to coach us at Soccer—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you sending over that ball?" roared Coker.

He was in a good temper; but his wrath was easy to rouse.

"Oh, here you are!" answered the Scottish junior, grinning; and he kicked the footer across to Coker.

Bump!

It landed on Coker's nose, and the great Horace staggered back, with a smudge of mud on his features. His powers as a footballer, apparently, did not extend so far as stopping a ball with anything but his face.

"You little ass!" gasped Coker, dabbing his nose.

"You big ass!" grinned Ogilvy.

"If you want me to smash you—" bawled Coker.

"What about that coaching?" interposed Harry Wharton. "We're waiting, Coker, and we don't want—hem—to waste your time!"

"You are keeping us on the tenter-hooks, my esteemed Coker!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And Coker of the Fifth let Ogilvy off with a glare—which did no damage—and proceeded to get on with the coaching.

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THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coached by Coker!

LIKE this!" said Coker. Caffyn watched. Everybody watched. The Remove fellows did not seem to mind having their practice interrupted by Coker of the Fifth. Perhaps they were pleased at the idea of a free entertainment.

Coker issued instructions. He was going to dribble the ball across the field. If any of the juniors could get it away from him, during that process, Coker declared that he would eat it. Caffyn, by watching him carefully and attentively, was to pick up sound knowledge of that branch of the game.

Having said "Like this!" Coker started. His programme was mapped out; but, like so many of Coker's programmes, it was not carried out according to schedule.

Any fellow watching Coker might have fancied that he was not giving an exhibition of the dribbling game, but trying to tie his legs together in sailors' knots.

It was one of Coker's perpetual difficulties at Soccer that his feet continually got in the way of one another. Both of them got in the way of everybody else, too. They were large feet, and Horace never quite seemed to know what was to be done with them. They rather cramped his style.

Exactly what happened was not clear to Coker. There was some confusion with Coker's feet and the ball; a sort of mix-up. Why he went over and hit the footer with his nose Coker could not have explained. That, however, was what he did, and there was a cheer from the watching Removites.

"Bravo Coker!"

"Do that again!"

"Like that, you know!" said Bob Cherry. "That's how he does it! If we do it like that in our next match we shall surprise the enemy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The surprisingness will be terrific!"

Coker rose from the earth. His face was red, his nose redder. It had hit the Soccer ball rather hard. The ball showed no damage; it was tougher than Coker's nose. The nose had a slightly dilapidated look. It oozed crimson. Coker felt it over. It was still there, fortunately; but it felt as if it wasn't.

"Oh!" said Coker. "Ow!"

"I don't think I could do that, Horace!" said Caffyn blandly. "I'll try, if you like—I'm keen to learn! Will you do it again, so that I can see exactly how you did it?"

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

Coker gave his cousin rather a suspicious look. It was not, of course, his intention to show Caffyn how to tangle his legs and crash his nose on a football.

"Don't you be cheeky!" said Coker darkly.

"Eh! Weren't you showing me—"

"Shut up!"

"Is the show over?" asked the Bounder. "If so, we'll get on. I hope you haven't punctured that ball, Coker."

"Shut up!" said Coker. "I didn't come here to listen to fags cackling. You young ticks get out of the way. I think I'd better begin, Caffyn, by showing you some shots at goal. If you've got a kid here that knows how to stop a ball, Wharton, stick him in and let him do what he can."

"We shall want our best man for that!" said the captain of the Remove. "Get to it, Squiff!"

Sampson Quincey Ifley Field grinned.

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"Which side of the goal shall I stand on?" he asked.

Coker blinked at him.

"You young ass!" he hooted. "Don't you even know that a goalkeeper gets into the goal?"

"Not if you're shooting for goal!" contradicted Squiff. "If you're shooting, old bean, we need two goalkeepers, one on each side of the goal, a dozen yards from the posts—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, there's no telling on which side you will miss!" explained Squiff. "All we can be sure of is that it will be by a dozen yards or so."

"Get into that goal!" roared Coker, as the juniors gave a yell of laughter.

"Oh, all right!" said Squiff, and he walked into goal, where he stood with his hands in the pockets of his shorts, leaning on a post. That was all that it was really necessary for a custodian to do when it was Horace Coker who was shooting.

"Now watch, Caffyn!" said Coker.

"I'm watching!" said Caffyn. "I'm fearfully interested!"

"And so say all of us!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker was very careful with that shot. Splendid footballer as he knew he was, he knew that accidents sometimes happened. He did not want to miss the ball, as he sometimes did, and let the juniors watch a large size in football boots gyrating in the air. Neither did he want to lose his balance and sit down, either on the earth or on the ball. He was there to give Caffyn instructions; and such exploits as these would not have been instructive. They might have been entertaining. But Horace was not there, intentionally, at least, as a comic entertainer.

He kicked—or, rather, miskicked! It was wonderful what Coker could do with a footer. There was the thrill of unexpectedness about his goal-shooting. Nobody ever knew what was going to happen till it happened.

Least of all did Edgar Caffyn know what was going to happen on this occasion, or wild horses wouldn't have dragged him there to be coached by Coker.

If Coker had tried to "get" him he would have failed. Coker's successes, when they came, came unexpectedly.

Crash!

Bump!

"Urrrrrrgggh!"

Squiff, in goal, did not need to take his hands out of his pockets. Caffyn spun over as if a cannon-ball had hit him, and went full length on the ground. He rolled there and roared, clapping his hands in anguish to muddled and damaged features.

"What the thump!" gasped Coker, staring round.

The juniors shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good shot!"

"Do that again, Coker!" roared Bob Cherry. "Pick Caffyn up, you men, and let Coker do it again!"

"Ow! Wow!" shrieked Caffyn.

"Wow! Ow! Urrgh! You silly idiot! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My foot slipped," said Coker, passing the trifling incident off in an airy way. "Send that ball over here, Cherry!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" Caffyn sat up, clasping his nose. "Ow! Urrgh! Yow-ow!"

Bob ran to the ball.

"I'll see if I can do it!" he said.

"I'm not such a fearfully good goal-getter as Coker, but I'll try."

Bob tried—and succeeded! The ball came from his foot like a whizzing

bullet, and hit Coker fairly on the nose. Coker sat down, roaring, and the Removites yelled with delight.

"That all right, Coker?" asked Bob innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I got you just as you got Caffyn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Urrgh! You wait till I get hold of you!" gurgled Coker, scrambling to his feet. "I'll—I'll—gurrgh!"

"Isn't that right?" asked Bob, in innocent wonder. "I tried to do exactly the same as you did, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker rushed at Bob Cherry. Apparently, although he was coaching the Removites at Soccer, he was not pleased by the really masterly way in which Bob had followed his example.

Bob dodged him. Johnny Bull put out a foot. Coker, of course, did not see it till he stumbled over it. He landed again.

Caffyn, rubbing his damaged nose and gasping, tottered off the field. Kind as it was of Coker to teach him football, Caffyn seemed to have had enough already.

But Coker had forgotten Caffyn now. His temper had failed him. He charged at the Removites with the fell intention of strewing the football field with them. As usual, Coker did not count the odds. But they were there, all the same. Instead of strewing the ground with gasping juniors, the juniors strewed the ground with the gasping Fifth Former.

For several minutes Horace Coker lived the exciting life of a Soccer ball. After which, he was deposited in touch, and the juniors settled down to games practice—minus Coker's coaching. It was a breathless and dilapidated Coker that limped back to the House.

At tea in Coker's study later, Potter and Greene inquired blandly how he had got on with coaching the fags at footer. They smiled as they asked the question. Coker did not smile as he answered it.

"If you fellows are going to give me silly cheek," he said, "I'm ready to bang your silly heads together. If that's what you want, say so."

The subject dropped, like a hot potato.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coming to a Crisis!

AUNT JUDY beamed.

"Dear Horace!" she said.

Smack!

Aunt Judy's kiss of greeting could be heard at quite a distance.

About fifty fellows saw her greeting her beloved Horace, and most of them, in Horace's place, would have felt rather uncomfortable.

Not so Horace Coker, however! Coker had had one of the most terrific scraps of his career with a fellow who had thoughtlessly alluded to Miss Judith as an old frump! If any fellow saw anything ridiculous in his elderly relative greeting him affectionately in public, Coker was prepared to knock that fellow into a cocked hat. With all his faults, Coker was, in the main, quite a nice chap!

"Jolly to see you aunty!" said Coker. "Blessed if I know why you've brought that man Sarle with you, but never mind."

"He is Edgar's guardian, Horace."

"Oh, yes, all right! No need for me to speak to him," said Coker. "Look here, aunty, I'm going to fix up tea in the study, and what about having Caffyn—the three of us, what?"

No wonder Aunt Judy beamed!

This was what her kind old heart had longed for—the establishment of peace and friendliness between her two nephews! It looked as if her wish was to be granted at last!

Coker marched his aunt into the House. Plenty of fellows smiled; but the smiles were mostly kindly. Aunt Judy, in her old-fashioned bonnet, with her celebrated umbrella, looked like an entertaining relic of Victoria's reign; but who could help liking the dear old soul? And it was quite pleasant to see how Coker, so big and rugged and aggressive, as a rule, became kind and tender in looking after Miss Judy.

Mr. Sarle had arrived in the same taxicab from the station; but Coker calmly and cheerfully ignored him.

He was not going to shake hands with a man he disliked, despised, and distrusted; he was not going even to speak a civil word to him.

Mr. Sarle, on his side, affected not to be aware of Coker's existence.

While Coker marched Aunt Judy off, Mr. Sarle went squeaking in his elastic-sided boots into the visitors' room, where his ward, Edgar Caffyn, was to see him.

Caffyn had seen the arrival, but he was not in a hurry to go in and meet his guardian.

He was in the quad, leaning on an elm at a little distance from the House, his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a worried frown and wrinkle on his brow.

The arrival of Mr. Sarle was a blow to him. He had tried to put the lawyer and his cunning and his scheming out of his thoughts, and had succeeded to a great extent. But he had to face up to facts now.

What was he going to do?

As he stood there thinking, he realised how deep the change in him had gone. Healthier in body, healthier in mind, healthier in his outlook on life, he was beginning to feel for Mr. Sarle such a loathing as Horace Coker instinctively felt.

He had abandoned his campaign against his cousin from fear! But it was not from fear that he was unwilling to recommence it. Better motives than that influenced him.

He found himself wondering what fellows like Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry would have thought if they had known all about it. He shrank from the thought of their horror and scorn.

And Coker—even Coker—Coker whom he had disliked, hated—he knew that he no longer either disliked or hated Coker. Horace was a fathead, and a rather overbearing fathead—but what a decent fellow he was! His methods were rough and aggressive, no doubt—but that did not alter the fact that he was, according to his lights, doing his best for the fellow who had treacherously injured him.

The Snipe would have given much to be a fathead like Horace, instead of the keen, sharp, clever, wily young rascal that he was. Better a fool than a rogue! It even paid better, in the long run! For, after all, what had been the outcome of all that cleverness and cunning and unscrupulous sharpness? Honesty, even stupid honesty, had beaten it all the time, and all along the line.

If only he could have kept clear of all that miserable, sneaking trickery, given up the unscrupulous attempt to oust his Cousin Horace, and become a care-free schoolboy, like the fellows in his study, whom he already liked and respected!

But Mr. Sarle stood like a lion in the path—or, rather, like a cross between a fox and a wolf!

Worried and troubled, Caffyn rather

forgot that Mr. Sarle was waiting for him in the visitors' room. Harry Wharton came out of the House, glanced round him, and came over to Caffyn.

"Your guardian's here, Caffyn," said Harry. "He's asked me to tell you that he's waiting for you."

Caffyn looked at him.

"Oh, all right!" he said wearily.

"Don't you want to see him?" asked Harry, rather puzzled.

Caffyn's lips curled bitterly.

"No! If you knew—" He broke off.

Wharton walked with him towards the House. A couple of weeks ago he would not have bothered his head about the Snipe. Now he was feeling rather concerned about him. He knew nothing of Mr. Sarle, except that Horace Coker loathed him. But the hard, cold face of the solicitor had not made a pleasant impression on him. It came into his mind that Caffyn might not have been the fellow he was if he had been in better hands.

Caffyn walked slowly. He did not seem to care if he kept Mr. Sarle waiting. He stopped suddenly.

"Look here, Wharton—" He broke off again.

"Go it, old scout!" said Harry.

"What's the row?"

Caffyn's face flushed.

"We're not friends!" he muttered.

"But—but—look here! I—I'm beginning to see what a fool I've been—what a rotter, if you like that better! You'd loathe me more than you ever did, if you knew— Look here!" It came out with a rush. "You know what a lot of beastly things I've done against my Cousin Horace since I've been here—and I fancy you've got an idea of the reason—"

Harry Wharton coloured uncomfortably, but did not speak.

"It was a rotten scheme, from the beginning, to land that fathead in all sorts of trouble, to get him into disgrace, to oust him from old Judy's favour, to get her to put my name in her will instead of his! And—and—and it wasn't my idea, to begin with—I can say that truthfully!" muttered the Snipe. "I was bad enough, I dare say, but it was an older head than mine that thought it all out and planned it all."

Wharton set his lips.

"Sarle?" he asked.

"Yes!"

"The awful rotter!"

"That isn't all!" muttered Caffyn wretchedly. "I've chucked it! I give you my word, if that's worth anything, that I've chucked up the whole thing! I wouldn't harm Horace now for twice old Aunt Judy's fortune! I wouldn't—I wouldn't!"

"Stick to that anyhow!" said Harry.

"But—but you don't understand!" muttered the Snipe. "I've chucked it, but Sarle hasn't! He's as keen on it as ever; and he's here to-day to find out what I'm up to and to set me going again. Don't you understand?"

Wharton understood, and his eyes gleamed.

"I'm a fool to tell you, I suppose!" groaned the Snipe. "But—but what's a fellow to do—"

"You'd like my advice?" asked Harry quietly.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

It was as if the worried Snipe was catching at a straw like a drowning man.

"Make a clean breast of it to your Aunt Judy!" said Harry.

Caffyn started.

"You're mad!" he stammered. "I'm dependent on her. Sarle's my legal guardian, but he does nothing for me; everything comes from Aunt Judy."

"That makes it easier; you've nothing to lose by playing the game. She's a good sort—a really good sort. You can trust her."

"I dare not. You fool! If she threw me over—and she would; she would if she knew! Oh, you're a fool!"

With that the Snipe turned and hurried into the House, leaving Wharton staring after him. The captain of the Remove moved away, slowly and thoughtfully. He pitied the hapless Snipe, and he had given him sound advice—he knew that. But would the Snipe have the sense, the courage, to act upon it?

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

At the Cross-roads!

"EDGAR!"

Mr. Sarle snapped through thin lips that looked like a vice as the Snipe came into the visitors' room.

His sharp, ratty eyes searched the boy's face.

"Shut the door!" he rapped.

Caffyn closed the door. His face was bitter as he did so. No other ears were to hear what the legal gentleman had to say to him. He felt a sense of sickness at this beginning again of secrecy and surreptitious caution. The change from Harry Wharton's company to Mr. Sarle's struck him almost like a blow.

"Now sit down!" snapped Mr. Sarle.

Caffyn sat down.

"And now tell me why you have kept me waiting so long?"

"I've been thinking!" muttered Caffyn.

"I do not understand you, Edgar!" Mr. Sarle's voice was quiet and dangerous. "You know why you are at Greyfriars—or have you forgotten?"

Caffyn did not answer.

"You are not here to waste time!" said Mr. Sarle. "Nearly a whole term has passed, and you have effected—exactly nothing! From what I am able to observe, that young ruffian Horace is more in Miss Coker's favour than ever. You have not even written to me for two or three weeks. What is the matter with you, Edgar?"

"Nothing you'd understand!" muttered Caffyn.

Mr. Sarle's ratty eyes glinted.

(Continued on next page.)



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"What does that mean precisely, Edgar?" he asked.

"It means that I'm fed-up with it," snarled Caffyn—"sick of the whole thing, if you want to know! The fellows here wouldn't touch me with a barge-pole if they knew the kind of rotter I was! I tell you, I'm sick of it all!"

Mr. Sarle stood silent, looking at him. His wary instinct had warned him that something was amiss, but he had not guessed that it was so bad—or, rather, so good—as this!

There was a long silence.

"So that is it?" said the solicitor at last. "You have been frightened; you have lost your nerve?"

"Not only that!" muttered Caffyn.

"What else?"

"You wouldn't understand."

"No doubt I am very dull!" said Mr. Sarle, with bitter sarcasm. "But I seem to understand this much—that you desire to give up the—the business on which we have been engaged?"

"Yes!" breathed Caffyn.

"You are at liberty to do so if you choose, of course. If you prefer to be a poor relation rather than the heir of a wealthy old lady—if you choose to leave everything in the hands of a relative who regards you with dislike and contempt—"

The Snipe winced.

"Suppose he does! Don't I deserve it!" he muttered. "Horace isn't a bad chap. He's a fool, but he's been jolly decent to me lately. He's the biggest fool that ever was! But don't I wish I was half as decent! And I'd try to be if you'd let me!"

"And the fortune—" sneered Mr. Sarle.

"It's his, isn't it?" snarled Caffyn. "I suppose Aunt Judy can leave her money to whom she likes. And it was all fixed up years ago; you know jolly well that she fixed it all up for Horace before I was born! If she changed her will, it would be a rotten trick after all these years! What's the good of pretending that I've any right to it? You know I haven't."

"It is rather new for you to bother about the rights of a matter!" sneered Mr. Sarle.

"Very likely! I suppose I've changed—I know I have! And I'm jolly glad of it, too!" added the Snipe, with a touch of defiance.

Mr. Sarle drew a deep breath.

"You are free to choose, Edgar!" he said in a quiet tone that was full of menace. "But if you disappoint me, you have nothing, naturally, to expect from me! It is true that I am your guardian, but there is nothing to compel me to remain so! I shall do nothing for you!"

"What have you ever done?" snarled Caffyn. "You'd never have troubled your head about me at all if you hadn't had a use for me—to get at old Judy's money! Think I don't know that? Think I've ever fancied—that you were doing all this wangling simply for my sake? You've got your axe to grind; you've got your eye on the money through me! And you've never spent a shilling on me! It's all come from Aunt Judy—and I've repaid her with sneaking, rotten trickery, like the beast I was!"

"Will anything more come from Aunt Judy, Edgar, if she sees you in your true colours?" asked Mr. Sarle grimly.

"You mean you'd give me away to her, and get her to throw me over?" muttered Caffyn. "Oh, I know what you mean!"

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"Hitherto," said Mr. Sarle, "I have stood your friend with Miss Coker. As her solicitor, I have some influence over her. It has all been used in your favour. Now, however—"

Caffyn licked his dry lips.

Again there was a long silence. But there was surrender in the face of the Snipe, and Mr. Sarle read it there.

He broke the silence at last.

"This is only a fit that will pass, Edgar. You will come back to a more sensible point of view."

"You mean you'll make me?" said Caffyn huskily. "You mean that you'll do nothing for me, and that you'll wangle it for Aunt Judy to throw me over—as, I suppose, you could if you liked? You mean that you've got me in a cleft stick, and I'm helpless?"

Mr. Sarle smiled faintly.

"I should not express it so crudely," he said. "But you have grasped my meaning. I advise you, Edgar, to reflect upon this, and to make up your mind to act sensibly, in your own interests—and mine."

Caffyn staggered to his feet.

"I—I—I'll think about it!" he muttered. "I'll think! Let me get out of this for a bit!"

"I have brought some legal papers with me," said Mr. Sarle, "in order not to waste time while I am waiting for Miss Coker. I will sit here and look them over while you take a little walk, Edgar, and reflect over what I have said to you. But let me see you again before I go. I must know what to expect definitely."

Caffyn nodded, and left the visitors' room.

Mr. Sarle sat down with his legal papers, with a faint sarcastic smile on his thin lips. This outbreak on the part of the Snipe was unexpected and disconcerting, but it did not disconcert Mr. Sarle unduly. His long experience in the legal world had not given him much faith in the better side of human nature. He had not the slightest doubt that Edgar Caffyn, after thinking the matter over, would decide on what he was pleased to describe as a "sensible" course of action.

But the Snipe, breathing more freely when he had got out of the lawyer's presence, was thinking—on lines that would have surprised and alarmed Mr. Sarle, had he known. Harry Wharton's words of advice were in Caffyn's mind, like a gleam of light where all else was dark.

He was at the cross-roads of life, and he knew it, and he had to make his choice. He made it—and it led him to Coker's study, in the Fifth!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Caffyn Takes The Chance!

"**T**ROT in, kid!"

Horace Coker's bull-voice roared a welcome.

Caffyn's dismal, scared face brightened.

In his present uncertain, scared, worried frame of mind it would have needed little to unfix his purpose, to drive back the confession he intended to make, to throw him back into Mr. Sarle's dismal network of treachery and trickery. It was fortunate for both the cousins that Coker was on a new tack.

Coker was not the fellow to do things by halves. And the unmistakable improvement in the Snipe since he had taken him in hand was very encouraging to Horace. Coker was going on with the good work, even to the extent of being civil to such an inconsiderable microbe as a Lower Fourth junior!

Aunt Judy smiled a happy smile!

She was seated in the window-seat in Coker's study, listening to the entrancing conversation of Horace Coker.

Potter and Greene were not there, of course. They were coming in to tea later—it was sure to be a good tea! But if Coker fancied that they were going to stand his aunt for a whole hour before tea, Coker was off-side. So Potter stated to Greene, and Greene fully concurred.

As it happened, Coker had forgotten their existence. He was telling Aunt Judy about football. She was delighted to hear that he had been coaching Caffyn at that great game. It pleased her as much to hear about it as it had pleased the Removites to witness it!

Caffyn came in, interrupting the flow of Coker's eloquence. And Coker's hearty greeting made the good old lady beam.

"Take a pew, kid!" said Coker. "Look at him, aunty! Hardly know him, would you? Hardly a pimple left on his chivvy—what? He's losing that sneaking rat look that he always had, too! What?"

Caffyn looked at his beefy cousin. Horace was making himself agreeable—and this was how he did it!

Nevertheless, Horace, fathead as he was, was like a breath of fresh air from the sea after Mr. Sarle!

"I've got something to tell you, aunty!" said Caffyn.

He wanted to get it out at once, perhaps afraid that otherwise he would never find the courage to get it out at all.

"Yes, my dear Edgar," said Miss Coker. "But don't interrupt Horace, he—"

"Oh, let him fire away!" said Coker, good-naturedly. "You're looking rather sick, kid. Anything up?"

"Yes," muttered Caffyn.

Coker looked at him. He was not an observant fellow, but he could see that there was something very much amiss with the Snipe of the Remove.

"You want to tell Aunt Judy something?" he asked. "Well, I'll clear off for a bit, if you like. Is that what you want? Dash it all, she's your aunt, as well as mine, and I mustn't bag her all the time."

"No, I want you to hear it," said Caffyn.

"Fire away, then!" said Coker.

"But what—" asked Miss Judith, puzzled.

"I'm going to own up," said the Snipe. "Horace hasn't told you, aunty—he's not the chap to tell things about a fellow—but ever since I've been at this school I've been giving him a lot of trouble—"

"Chuck that!" said Coker, frowning. "What's the good of bothering aunty with that, you young ass?"

"I've played a lot of rotten tricks on him, and very nearly landed him into getting sacked," went on Caffyn.

Miss Coker blinked.

"Edgar!" she gasped.

"Don't talk rot, kid!" said Coker. "You've been rather a worm, but—"

"Let him speak, Horace," said Miss Judith, very quietly. "Why are you telling me this, Edgar?"

"Because I'm sick of it, and ashamed of myself," answered Caffyn.

"Well, my hat!" said Coker. "My hat! This beats it!"

"Let him speak, Horace! You confess that you have acted very unscrupulously and wickedly, Edgar! Why?" asked Miss Coker, in the same quiet tone. Possibly there had been some faint suspicion in the old lady's mind already.

"Because the game was to disgrace



"Why have you acted so wickedly, Edgar?" asked Aunt Judy in a quiet tone. "Because the game was to disgrace Horace with you and get you to disinherit him in my favour! It was my guardian, Mr. Sarle, who put me up to it, and planned the whole thing. That's my excuse, if it is one." Miss Judith listened quietly, her eyes gleaming.

Horace with you and get you to disinherit him in my favour," said Caffyn Coker blinked!

"What utter rot!" he said. "Don't take any notice of that, aunty! Caffyn's been rather a worm in some ways, but that's all rot. As if he could ever have thought of anything of the kind! Bosh!"

Miss Coker made him a sign to be silent.

"Have you anything more to tell me, Edgar?" she asked.

"No, only that it was my guardian, Mr. Sarle, who put me up to it, and planned the whole thing," said Caffyn. "That's my excuse, if it is one."

"Mr. Sarle?"

"Yes."

"Edgar!"

Horace barged in again.

"Well, that makes it look a bit more likely," he remarked. "I've told you often enough, aunty, that that man, Sarle, is an awful rotter! I'm not surprised at any rotten thing he does. Haven't I said so?"

"You have, dear Horace," said Miss Coker. "But let Edgar speak. If you are telling me the truth, Edgar, why are you telling me now?"

"I've said that I'm sick of it," muttered Caffyn. "I know you'll throw me over now—I suppose you will—but I can't stand any more of it—and I won't! I've just seen Sarle, and he won't let me off. He's keeping me to it. He's going to give me away to you if I don't do as he orders. I can't—and I won't! I—I can't! I wish I'd never come to Greyfriars. I wish—"

The Snipe's voice broke, and he ceased to speak.

"By gum!" said Horace Coker.

"Let him speak, Horace! Edgar, my

poor boy, tell me everything, and you may depend on my protecting you."

"You'll throw me over, as Sarle said you would, if you knew," said Caffyn wretchedly. "He thinks he's got me there, the brute! But if you're going to know, I'd rather you heard it from me than from him!"

"Tell me!"

In muttering tones, with a pale face, the Snipe stammered out the whole story of dreary trickery and treachery.

Miss Judith listened quietly, Coker dumb with astonishment.

Caffyn ceased to speak at last.

"That's the lot!" he said. "Now—"

"By gum!" said Coker dazedly.

Miss Coker rose to her feet. Varying emotions had chased one another over her countenance while she listened to Caffyn's tale. Now deep anger predominated. Her eyes were gleaming.

"Where is my umbrella, Horace?" she asked.

"Here it is, aunty."

Miss Judith gripped her umbrella in a firm, business-like grip. With a firm step she walked to the door.

"I say, aunty—"

"I am going to see Mr. Sarle, Horace!" said Aunt Judy. "I am going to tell him that I no longer require his services as my solicitor. I am also going to let him learn what I think of his conduct!"

Aunt Judy left the study.

Coker grinned.

"I shouldn't like to be in Sarle's shoes now, Snipey!" he remarked. "Would you?" He chuckled. "Come on, kid, and let's see what happens."

Horace strode out of the study, followed more slowly by the Snipe. At the foot of the staircase they overtook Miss Judith. She had stopped to speak to a

little crowd of Removites who had come in from the quad.

"Carter—I think your name is Carter—"

"Wharton, ma'am," said the captain of the Remove, with a smile.

"Oh, yes, yes! Will you show me the way to the visitors' room, please?"

"Certainly, Miss Coker!" said Harry. He piloted Aunt Judy to the visitors' room, and threw open the door.

Mr. Sarle looked up. Then, at the sight of Miss Coker, he jumped up, his hands full of legal papers.

"Mr. Sarle!" said Miss Coker, in a trembling voice.

"Madam—"

"You are a rascal!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"And a villain!"

"Miss Coker—"

"You are no longer my solicitor—"

"Madam!"

"You may send in your account, which will be examined, scrutinised very carefully, I assure you—"

"I—I—I—"

"Now go! Do not let me see you again! Rascal! Rascal! Rascal!" Miss Coker's voice rose, and rose. "Rascal!"

"My dear madam!" gasped Mr. Sarle.

"Rascal!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Go!" exclaimed Miss Judith, gripping her umbrella hard. "Go! Rascal! Go! And take that!"

Swipe!

"Yoooooooo!" howled Mr. Sarle as he took it. The umbrella landed fairly on his scheming head, and he staggered.

"And that—and that—and that!"

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Swipe, swipe, swipe!

The hapless solicitor dodged and scuttled like a hunted rat across the room to the door.

Swipe, swipe!

Miss Judith was behind him, her umbrella going strong. It landed again, and again, and yet again, as the hapless lawyer ran for the open door on the quad.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"Great pip!"

"Look!"

"I say, you fellows! He, he, he!"

"Give him beans!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Oooogh! Help! Seize her!" shrieked Mr. Sarle, dodging doorwards under a rain of blows. "Yarooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fifty fellows at least stared in amazement at the extraordinary scene. Sarle,

bent almost double, crouching from the fierce swipes of the umbrella, ran for his life! With amazing agility, Aunt Judy kept pace, raining blows!

How many swipes landed on Mr. Sarle before he escaped from the House, he never knew. Dozens, at least—but it felt like hundreds!

Dishevelled, breathless, gasping, howling, Mr. Sarle got out of the House at last, and streaked for the gates. Howls of laughter followed him as he went. Miss Judith, standing in the doorway, brandished her umbrella after him. Like a hunted hare, Aunt Judy's late legal representative vanished out of the gates of Greyfriars.

All Greyfriars roared over it.

Even the Head, gazing from his study window with amazed eyes at a fleeing figure in the quad, had had to smile.

Less dignified personages than the Head rocked with merriment.

Aunt Judy—a little faint after her exertions—had tea with Coker in his study—and with Caffyn. Knowing all the facts now, Miss Judith took the view that the chief blame, if not all of it, should be laid on Sarle.

Wisely, Miss Judith decided to keep her nephew Edgar under her own eye; and when she left the school that day, the Snipe went with her.

Caffyn was not sorry to go; but he took quite a friendly leave of Cousin Horace, who promised to give him some more coaching at games in the holidays, and of Harry Wharton & Co., who were feeling quite amicable to the Snipe when he went. And when they spoke of him after he had gone, it was no longer as the "Snipe"—he lingered in their memory as "old Caffyn."

THE END.

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

ALL my readers who have read stories of the Canadian lumberlands will know what a "flume" is. It is a long, wooden trough which conveys a stream of water over valleys, etc. I wonder how many of you know, however, that London once possessed a flume? It was known as

THE BOARDED RIVER,

and one of my Hornsey readers, who has heard this expression, asks me if I can tell him what it means, and to what it refers. "The Boarded River" is an old name given to a part of the New River, which, as my North London readers will know, conveys water from springs near Chadwell and Amwell to Clerkenwell. When it was built, in 1613, this "New River" had to pass over the valley near Highbury, and this was contrived by means of an enormous flume, or wooden trough, 462 ft. long. This is the section which became known as "The Boarded River."

Incidentally, the New River must have presented a peculiar sight in Nelson's days. The famous sailor described it as having between 300 and 400 bridges over it, and more than forty sluices. Nowadays the southern end of the New River is one of London's "hidden rivers," for it passes under Colebrook Row and has long since been covered over.

A reader who signs himself "Doubting Thomas," in the course of his letter, says: "I can't believe that there are, so many undiscovered secret passages as stories make out there are." Well, he must really be a Doubting Thomas, for even to-day there must exist hundreds of secret passages which have not yet been discovered. Just a little while ago

A LOST SECRET PASSAGE

was discovered at Thames Ditton, which is on the other side of the Thames from Hampton Court Palace. No one knew it was there; but while some workmen were making excavations in the grounds of a large building they struck brickwork. Further investigation showed that this was the brickwork of a secret passage that proceeded under the Thames in the

direction of Cardinal Wolsey's famous palace.

Ever since Tudor days this passage has been lost and forgotten. Now it has been brought to light, 387 years after King Henry VIII, who lived in the palace, died. It was known, of course, that secret passages led from Hampton Court Palace, but these were all bricked up many years ago, and even to-day no one can tell exactly how many there are, or to where they lead, or how many times they branch off into different side-passages.

It is no easy matter to explore secret passages; in fact, it is an extremely dangerous task. The original builders designed cunning pitfalls, and a false step whilst exploring one of these passages might easily lead to the death of the explorer. Furthermore, having been forgotten all these years, there are vast accumulations of poisonous gases in them, sufficient to kill a man before he even guesses what is happening.

Where passages cross under rivers the task of exploring them is made even more difficult by the constant percolating of water through the brickwork. Many such passages are flooded to a depth of several feet, while others are rendered completely impassable by accumulations of water and mud.

FROM "Curious," of Wembley, comes a question concerning

A FAMOUS PUBLIC SCHOOL.

He wants to know if I can tell him something about the famous Harrow School, when it was founded, and by whom. Harrow School was founded in 1571 by John Lyon, who lived in the neighbourhood. It was not until 1611, however, that the first building was erected. In those days the whole school was taught in one room. The various Forms were ranged round the big room, facing outwards, and the masters sat at their desks by the walls, opposite their scholars. At one end of the room the headmaster sat at his desk, and he was, therefore, able to keep an eye on everyone in the school, masters and scholars alike.

That particular room is now the Fourth Form-room.

I think I have space this week for a few more

SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS,

which may interest those of my readers who bear them.

Fitzgerald. This, like all names beginning with "Fitz," is a Norman name, and means "the son of Gerald." "Fitzclarence" is another typical example of this kind of name.

Ap Evans means "the son of Evans." "Ap" corresponds in Welsh to "Fitz," the English "son" at the end of a name, the Gaelic "Mac," and the Irish "O'."

Shaw comes from the name of a wooded shelter for livestock. Berkenshaw meant a dweller near the birchwood shelter, and other names derived from the same source are Openshaw, Crankshaw, Bradshaw, Grimshaw, and Longshaw.

Atterbury means a dweller in the bury, or borough. It comes from "atte Bury," and similar names are Bury, Boroughs, Burrows, Burg, and Borrow.

Wells means a dweller by the well, and is connected with "Atwell." Other names of the same type are Weller and Wollman, which mean a man who was employed at the well.

Oakden means a dweller in the oak valley. All names with "oak" in them mean that their original bearers lived near oak-trees. Some of them are: Oak, Oakes, Nokes, Oakeley, Oakeshot, Oakenfold, Oakey, Oakhill, and Oakwood.

Snooks, strange as it seems, belongs to the above group also. It is a contraction for "the dweller by the seven oaks."

The name "Richards," of course, is a contraction for "the son of Richard," or "Richardson," and that brings me to Frank Richards' splendid school yarn which will appear in next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET. It is entitled:

"A SCHOOLBOY'S SECRET!"

and is the first of a grand new series featuring Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars and their cheery girl chums, Marjorie Hazeldene & Co., of Cliff House School. I do not intend to spoil your enjoyment by divulging the plot of the story, but I will say this, the yarn's a winner right from the word "Go." Once you start reading it, you won't want to put down the old paper until you've read every line of it.

George E. Rochester, too, is at his very best in our smashing pirate story, while the topical issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," together with another interesting Soccer talk, will round off a programme it will be hard to beat.

YOUR EDITOR.

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THE SEA SPIDER

GEORGE E. ROCHESTER

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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. Accompanied by his old chief petty-officer, Wesel, he boards a monoplane and flies across 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. Wesel is shown over the Spider, and then introduced to the officers and crew as Ulverst's second-in-command. The first vessel to fall a prey to the Sea Spider is the bullion-carrier Minneapolis. While transferring the bullion boxes from the sunken vessel, Harn, one of the Spider's divers, is attacked by a swarm of dreadful, human-like sea creatures, fully six feet in length. Heedless of the danger ahead, Ulverst determines to go to the rescue of his shipmate.

(Now Read On.)

Ulverst's Orders!

ULVERST moved his heavily weighted feet, shuffling for a better foothold. As the nearest of the sea creatures surged in towards him he braced himself up against the Spider and slowly raised a steel-encased arm, which terminated in steel prongs, wickedly curved, to serve as fingers.

On came the foremost sea creature, followed closely by its companions. Ulverst waited, rigid and motionless. Then, as the thing surged in to grasp him, he brought his arm down heavily, aiming with his curved fingers of steel at the great cold, bulging eyes of his attacker.

Ulverst felt the sharp steel prongs bite deep into the soft balls of the creature's eyes, and through the small look-out window in his helmet saw it writhe.

Blindly, flounderingly, the mortally wounded creature thrashed away. But by this time its companions were on Ulverst.

Again the man raised an arm and brought it down, ripping and tearing at the great staring eyes and the bulbous bodies of his attackers, sending those in the forefront writhing madly back out of range to stain the water with the crimson which seeped from their wounds.

Others were soon on him, surging forward through the bloodstained water, harrying him in greater numbers, pushing up against him, clawing at him, and impeding the action of his heavily encased arms.

Through the look-out window of his helmet Ulverst could see nothing now save a nightmarish world, peopled by flat and hideous faces which seemed to float, hazy and fantastic, in a sea of crimson blood.

Like a man possessed Ulverst began to fight for his very life. Inside his suit the perspiration was pouring down his face, trickling into his eyes, and bringing a salty and acrid taste to the parched dryness of his mouth.

With a superhuman effort, which wrung a strangled groan from his bloodless lips, he straightened up, striving

desperately with his steel fingers to tear to pieces the soft and fleshy bodies around him.

Ulverst was about all in now. Another few moments would see the end. Already the blood was pounding in his temples and his vision was becoming blurred. It was instinct alone—the blind instinct of self-preservation—which kept him going, kept him on his feet.

Once he swayed, and would have gone over backwards had not his steel-encased shoulders crashed up against the hull of the Spider.

Desperately he endeavoured to keep a grip on his swimming senses. There was a roaring in his ears, and every gasping breath he drew into his dry and tortured lungs was like the stab of a knife.

The futility of further struggling impinged itself on his half-crazed brain. Why go on? Why not give up and end this senseless struggle which could have but one end?

Madly, savagely, Ulverst put the thought from him. No, no—he would fight on to the end—would go down only when neither nerve nor muscle would function further.

The roaring in his ears increased, the interior of his diving suit an infernal and deafening crescendo of sound. His eyes were shut, his face grey with an awful pallor.

But he was still on his feet.

Then, behind him, although he did not know it, the steel door of the diving chamber slid open, and the steel-encased arm of Wesel encircled him. As he was dragged to safety the blackness of unconsciousness engulfed Ulverst, and he sagged limply forward, to fall heavily to the iron floor of the diving chamber.

When Ulverst next awoke it was to find himself lying in his bunk. His eyes flickered drowsily open, and slowly and half comprehendingly he took in his surroundings.

Then, as dawning consciousness brought clearer perception, he struggled to raise himself weakly on his elbow. As he did so the well-groomed form of

Dr. Valendorf stepped quickly to the side of the bunk.

"You must not move, Ulverst," he warned. "You must keep quiet."

"What is that rumble?" demanded Ulverst. "What are we doing? What is happening to my boat?"

"We are running on the surface under Diesels," replied the doctor.

"On the surface!" repeated Ulverst sharply, attempting to throw back the bedclothes. "What cursed interfering fool has given the order to run on the surface—"

"Ssh! Ulverst, you must control yourself!" Gently Dr. Valendorf pressed the man back on to the pillow and rearranged the coverings. "It is night—the boat wanted air—and Wesel says there is no danger. We are running without lights."

"But where are we cruising—where are we heading?" demanded Ulverst.

"We are homeward bound for Ice Rock."

Ulverst's face convulsed with sudden passion, and again he struggled to rise.

"Homeward bound?" he cried. "By whose order? Who is captain of this boat? Who gave the order to abandon the Minneapolis?"

"It was Dubowsky," replied the doctor. "But I warn you, Ulverst, you must not excite yourself. You are a sick man—"

"Send Dubowsky to me!" cut in Ulverst passionately. "I'll teach the doddering old fool to give orders. Send him to me, I say!"

"Ulverst, please—"

"Send him to me, will you?" snarled Ulverst. "The interfering imbecile!"

Turning from the bunk, Dr. Valendorf spoke quietly to a ward-room steward who was waiting in attendance.

"Ask Dubowsky to come here, please," he said.

Dr. Valendorf knew only too well that Ulverst would not rest until he had seen Dubowsky.

During the interval of waiting which followed the steward's departure Ulverst spoke in more composed tones.

"How did I get here, Valendorf?" he asked.

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"Wesel got you into the diving chamber," replied the doctor. "You were very close to death, Ulverst."

Ulverst was silent a moment.

"And Karn?" he asked quietly.

"Is dead!"

"Poor devil!" whispered Ulverst. "He was a good hand." Then in a stronger voice: "How long have I been lying here?"

"Nearly nine hours."

Ulverst's firm, thin lips twitched in the faint shadow of a smile.

"It must have been a close call," he murmured; then tone and expression changed as he blazed: "Curse those engines—what are they running for—Mein Geist! But I'll kill Dubowsky—"

He broke off as that self-same individual entered through the bulkhead door and grinningly approached the bunk, rubbing his bony hands as though he were washing them.

"Well, well, Ulverst," chattered Dubowsky, "it is indeed delightful to see you awake and in possession of your senses once again. When they took you out of the diving suit you were black in the face, and I said you were dead. I diagnosed you as dead—"

"Stop that, you fool!" cut in Ulverst savagely. "By what right have you abandoned the Minneapolis and ordered a course to be laid for home?"

"Well, you see," babbled Dubowsky, "those sea creatures showed no signs of moving, and Surgut and Karn had brought boxes of bullion aboard to the value of two hundred thousand pounds before they were attacked, so I thought that you would be content with that amount—"

"Curse you and what you thought!" blazed Ulverst. "Wesel is my second-in-command. He is the one who should have given any orders that were to be given, not you!"

"You are wrong," cried Dubowsky, stung to angry resentment. "I am joint captain with you aboard this craft. Wesel is under me. I have as much right as you to say what shall and what shall not be done."

His face, dark with passion, Ulverst raised himself on his elbow.

"If I could but lay hands on you, Dubowsky—" he fumed, his voice quivering.

Dubowsky shrank away, taking cover behind the silent Dr. Valendorf.

"I will not have you speak to me like that, Ulverst," he cried petulantly. "The Spider is as much mine as yours. More so, indeed. It was I who designed her. If it had not been for me you would not have her—"

"Get out of my sight!" grated Ulverst. "Get out of here! I shall speak to you when I am well!"

Dr. Valendorf touched Dubowsky on the arm.

"Yes, go," he said quietly.

Dubowsky needed no second bidding, and hastily betook his scraggy self towards the door. In the doorway he turned and paused for a parting shot, rubbing his hands and chuckling in malevolent glee.

"And another thing I've done," he cackled. "That sea creature which came aboard with Surgut. It did not expire, and I am taking it back to Ice Rock with me to study it, and then dissect it. I have it in the emergency water tank—he, he, he!—which I have had filled with salt water and transferred to the ward-room where I can keep an eye on it!"

With that, Dubowsky was gone, vanishing hastily and abruptly.

"Is that true?" demanded Ulverst, of Dr. Valendorf. "Has that maniac got the thing alive aboard this boat?"

The doctor nodded.

"He has," he said.

Ulverst leaned back on his pillow.

"Then it'll go back into the sea—dead," he rasped, "just as soon as I am well enough to leave this bunk."

Dr. Valendorf did not reply, and Ulverst laughed shortly.

"I suppose, Herr Doktor," he said, "that that will not meet with your approval?"

"I am interested in the creature, certainly," admitted Valendorf a trifle stiltedly. "It is a thing which can, almost without exaggeration, be described as possessing arms and legs, and it has, undoubtedly, vocal chords of a sort. It would, indeed, be a most fascinating creature to study at one's leisure, and if it were possible to convey it alive to Ice Rock without inconveniencing you or the crew in any way, then I would be deeply appreciative."

Again Ulverst laughed, but this time with a hint of amusement.

"All right, we shall carry the thing to Ice Rock for you if it is at all possible, Valendorf," he promised. "Then you and Dubowsky can get at it with your scalpels. Unless," he added with grim humour, "Dubowsky intends to keep it as a pet."

He lay quiet a moment, then continued:

"Well, we will discuss those devils later, when I am more in the humour. Send Wesel to me!"

"You had better eat first," advised Valendorf. "I have some hot soup ready for you!"

"I will eat when I have seen Wesel," replied Ulverst stubbornly.

With a shrug of his shoulders, Valendorf turned to the steward, who departed in search of Wesel.

Within a few moments the latter, sea-booted, jerseyed, and leather-jacketed, entered, and strode to the bunk.

"You are better, then?" he said awkwardly, as Ulverst did not speak, but lay looking at him in silence.

"Yes, Wesel, I will soon be all right now," said Ulverst quietly. "Thank you for bringing me in!"

Wesel grunted and fidgeted uncomfortably to cover his embarrassment.

"Valendorf," said Ulverst to the doctor, "will you and the steward leave us, please? I wish to speak to Wesel alone."

The doctor hesitated.

"It will only be for a few moments, I promise you!" said Ulverst.

When he and Wesel were alone Ulverst leaned eagerly forward in his bunk.

"What is our course, Wesel?" he whispered.

"Five degrees."

"And our bearings?"

"We are almost due west of the Flannan Isles, off the Outer Hebrides of Scotland," replied Wesel.

Ulverst nodded.

"And how are the fuel tanks?" he asked.

"They contain sufficient fuel for another two thousand miles under Diesel engines," replied Wesel.

"And we have also the electric motors," murmured Ulverst.

His tone became sharp and imperative.

"You will alter course at once, Wesel," he ordered. "Get me that chart."

Stepping to a rack, Wesel returned with a folded chart to the North Atlantic.

Taking it, Ulverst struggled up into a sitting posture, and then spread the chart out in front of him.

"You see this point," he said, indicating a small cross inked in on the chart and lettered 47 deg. 35 min. lat. and 31 deg. 7 min. longitude. "You will turn the Spider and make for there!"

Wesel looked nonplussed, and Ulverst's hand gripped him by the wrist.

"You do not know what lies there, Wesel!" he said hoarsely. "You do not know what lies beneath the sea in mid-Atlantic! But I do; and it is something so strange and incredible that it has to be seen to be believed!"

A City Under the Sea!

THE Spider was immediately turned as Ulverst had ordered, and the course laid for the cross which had been pin-pointed on the map and which lay almost in mid-Atlantic.

Throughout the ensuing hours the Spider drove on through the surging seas, submerging only when some strange craft was sighted. But Wesel kept as far as possible from the steamship routes, and it was towards dusk of the following day, when Ulverst was up and about again, that he reported they were nearing their objective.

"I wish you'd tell me what we're to find there!" Wesel growled.

Ulverst laughed and shook his head. "You'll see when we submerge," he said.

"But why all this mystery?" chattered Dubowsky. "Why can't you tell us now, Ulverst?"

"Because you wouldn't believe me, that's why," returned Ulverst roughly.

He had not yet forgiven Dubowsky for abandoning the Minneapolis, and throughout the cruise to the objective they were now approaching, he had had little to say to him except a few sneering words about the sea creature which Dubowsky had kept and which was still alive in the emergency tank.

Taking a bearing on the stars, Ulverst gave the order to submerge, and throughout the Spider sounded the gurgle and hiss of intruding water and expelled air.

Down and down sank the Spider until the ocean floor was reached. The searchlights were switched on, the crank gear rumbled into life, and with its two great eyes glaring golden and balefully through the murk, the Spider proceeded to crawl along the ocean floor.

Wesel and Ulverst were at the look-out windows, when suddenly the former stiffened, staring in incredulous amaze, for the Spider was approaching the ruins of a vast undersea city.

The floor of the ocean was rock and seaweed, without any vestige of sand, and on this hard, rocky floor still stood the walls and towers, the streets and thoroughfares of a mighty city.

"Ulverst!" Wesel wheeled from the look-out window. "What is it, Ulverst?"

"The lost city of Atlantis," replied Ulverst. "I am certain of that. I discovered it quite by chance when I

had the Spider out on trials. There will be wealth here, Wesel, wealth undreamed of. In the morning we will explore."

He had taken the forward control wheel, and the Spider was lumbering along a wide thoroughfare flanked by blackened and seaweed-covered walls which had once been the frontage of noble buildings.

There was intense excitement aboard the Spider, and Dubowsky, crowding Wesel aside from the look-out window, babbled:

"Mein Gott! Ulverst, why did you never tell me of this? We would have been here long ago had I but known."

"Might I remind you again," snapped Ulverst, "that I am captain here?"

"No, you are not!" cried Dubowsky. "You are joint captain with me, as I have told you before. I have as much say in the Spider as you have. It was I who designed her. She is mine!"

Ulverst did not answer, but he glanced at Wesel, who, knowing him so well, knew also that there would come a time when Ulverst would settle once and for all the question as to who was captain of the Spider.

The thoroughfare along which the Spider was crawling terminated in what was nothing more nor less than a huge city square, and the golden beams of the searchlights shone on the vast, pillared frontage of a building not unlike the Parthenon of ancient Rome.

The sight of the building set Dubowsky chattering excitedly again.

"It is Atlantis!" he cried. "There can be no doubt about it. Mein Gott, Ulverst, but this is a discovery which would have made me famous were we not indulging in this horrible piracy!"

That was the way of it now. He would have been quite content to have abandoned all piratical enterprises for the sake of giving to the world a remarkable treatise on this vast city under the sea, the existence of which had often been suspected, but never proved.

However, he dared not anger Ulverst by any such suggestions, but for hours he kept the Spider perambulating around the wide thoroughfares which once had been trodden by human feet, but which now knew no life save that of the dark and sinister monsters which haunted the depths and which floated, dived, or swirled away from the Spider's great glaring eyes.

Once that strange steel brute of the underseas was attacked by a giant monster which might well have been the father of all sharks, for so it was shaped, and it came at the Spider with gleaming jaws agape.

The thud of its charge was felt throughout the boat, but the Spider rambled on unhurt, and the monster reeled from the impact to charge and charge again. But the sharp, inwardly curved teeth could find no purchase on the smooth, steel sides of the Spider, and, working itself up into a frenzy, the monster charged again in the savage despair of the death throes.

It had literally battered itself to death against this invader of the underseas, and, as its body drifted past, Wesel nodded grimly.

"And so will be served anything which attacks the Spider," he said. "But it's going to be risky work in the morning, Ulverst, when we go out!"

Returning at length to the great square, the Spider squatted down for a period of six hours, for Ulverst wished to save his fuel and rest his men.

At the end of that time the Spider surfaced in order to let air into the boat; then, descending to the depths



As the sea beasts surged in towards him, Ulverst raised a steel-encased arm which terminated in sharp steel prongs, wickedly curved!

again, Ulverst, Wesel, and Surgut donned their diving suits.

"We'll take axes," said Ulverst, "and explore this Parthenon place first."

"What do you want axes for?" demanded Dubowsky.

"In case we're attacked, you fool!" snapped Ulverst.

When the last nut of the suits had been screwed tightly into place, and telephone and communication lines fixed, the three men moved into the diving chamber on the starboard side of the Spider.

The electrically controlled door slid shut, and the door in the outer hull commenced slowly to rise in order to let the water slowly into the diving chamber.

Once the door was fully open Ulverst and his two companions moved slowly and clumsily out of the diving chamber. Watched by the men at the look-out windows, they made their way laboriously across the seaweed-covered stones of the square.

Peering down, Ulverst saw that the square was paved by the most wonderful and colourful mosaic, which the water had been unable to either damage or efface.

Mounting the steps, the trio made their way in through the ruined entrance. Here it was as black as night, for not even the twilight of the depths could penetrate the corridors they slowly and laboriously traversed.

In spite of his iron nerve, Wesel was wishing himself back on the Spider. For who knew what menace in the form of undersea monsters lurked in that vast cavernous building?

He found himself wondering what

Surgut thought of it all, and fancied that he, like himself, would be wishing the venture over.

But Ulverst pressed resolutely on, and eventually came to a flight of steps which led down into what had obviously been the vaults of the building.

Here he hesitated, his electric torch shining on the steps which led down to he knew not where—perhaps to treasure, or perhaps to a fearful death in the stomach of some lurking monster.

But Ulverst would not have been what he was had he lacked nerve, and, to his companions' dismay, he commenced the descent.

Loyally Wesel and Surgut followed him, moving laboriously down the treacherous going. The pressure of water here was terrific, and, in spite of the oxygen which they carried, Wesel was feeling the choking sensation of suffocation in his lungs.

The steps terminated in a narrow corridor, and the light of the torches showed dark and doorless vaults on either side. Entering the first one, Ulverst shone his torch about the floor, the glimmering beam coming to rest on several big iron-bound boxes.

As he surveyed them through the glass look-out window of his headpiece the eyes of Ulverst glittered. The boxes contained treasure, of that he was certain. Why else should they be stored away down here if they did not contain valuables of some description?

Stretching out the claws of one electrically controlled steel hand, he attempted to raise the lid of the nearest box. It failed to move, being locked

and clamped. Raising his axe, Ulverst attacked the fastenings.

He had scarcely commenced, however, when suddenly he paused, stiffening in horror; for out of the murk came what seemed like steel claws which fastened on his arm in a crushing, vice-like grip.

The Monster of the Depths!

INSTANTLY Ulverst turned his light on the creature which had attacked him. As he did so he felt sick with sudden fear, for he was in the clutches of a monster crab.

The thing was immense—so immense that it filled almost half the vault. In that first moment of terror Ulverst, queerly enough, found himself wondering how it was he had not seen the creature when he first entered the vault.

Wesel could have supplied him with the explanation; for Wesel had seen it stir into horrible life, slowly raising itself from the floor where it had been crouching, to stretch out a giant claw and seize Ulverst by the arm.

What Wesel wondered, however, was how such a giant had got into the vault. It could not have crawled in. After a while the explanation flashed into his mind. The thing had grown in here—had grown to such dimensions that it was a prisoner. It had fed on whatever had ventured into its foul lair, and now it was drawing Ulverst towards its soft and beastly lips, which were gaping open.

Seizing his axe in his right hand, Wesel brought its razor-sharp edge down with all the strength in his strong arm. It cut splinteringly into the creature's claw, but did not release that dreadful grip on Ulverst.

Wesel struck again and again with his axe. Surgut was also hacking frantically at the joint in the claw. Suddenly the monster crab loosened its grip and made a sluggish movement in the direction of Wesel.

The latter was too quick. He staggered rather than stepped back, and, striking again at the shattered, groping claw whilst Ulverst and Surgut backed out of the vault, he foiled it, and followed his two companions out into the dubious safety of the corridor.

Dubious indeed; but the trio were safe at least from the crab, which could not follow them out of the vault. Turning, Ulverst slowly led the way back up the steps, along the dark and wide corridors, and out to where the great golden eyes of the Spider spelt security from the menace of the depths.

Back inside the boat, which they reached safely, they divested themselves of their diving suits.

"Well, we've got to settle that fellow somehow," said Ulverst, when, after the change of atmospheric pressure, they were able to breathe normally again. "There's treasure in those chests—and I'm going to have it!"

Turning to Braden, Zutloss, and the others, who were crowding about him, he explained what had happened.

"Again I owe my life to Wesel," he said. "And to you, also, Surgut. But I'm going to destroy that crab and get those chests opened."

"But this is stupidity," interjected Dubowsky. "How can you destroy the thing? And, anyway, you do not know for certain that the chests contain treasure. You say they are locked and clamped, and that you could not open them."

"That's quite true," retorted Ulverst. "But, all the same, I'm convinced there is something of value in them. They were the sort of chests which were used for storing treasure when every man was his own banker, as it were."

"All right. You'll kill yourself one day through this greed of yours for gold," snapped Dubowsky. "But have it your own way. If you are killed, I at least can take the Spider home to Ice Rock. We have taken enough bullion from the Minneapolis to satisfy me."

"Yes, but not to satisfy me!" retorted Ulverst. "I shall not be killed, either, my friend. And now we'd better decide just how to deal with that monster."

The consultation which followed brought forth many suggestions, some sensible, others impossible. It was Ulverst himself who suggested the scheme which was finally adopted.

"What we will do," he said, "is place a charge of high explosive in the vault and blow the brute to pieces."

"Yes, and blow the chests to pieces as well!" jeered Dubowsky. "In any case, who is going to be fool enough to venture into the vault to place the high explosive in position? It will be the end of the one who dares it."

"Not at all," replied Ulverst. "There will be some risk, I know, but it can be done."

"Well, I don't think it can!" snapped Dubowsky. "If you will be guided by me for once you will abandon this madness, for madness it is!"

"If I was guided by you," snarled Ulverst, in a passion, "I would come out of this game dangling on the gallows! I tell you I am going to make as much money as I can and just as quickly as I can. Who knows what we might find in those chests? The wealth of Atlantis was reputed to be fabulous."

"Yes, but who will place the high

explosive in position?" asked Braden. "That is the dangerous part of the job."

"I will place it in the vault myself," replied Ulverst. "It is not a job I would ask any of you to tackle."

"I'll tackle it," volunteered Wesel.

"So will I," offered Surgut.

Ulverst shook his head.

"I know that both of you would do it," he said, "but I would not allow it. The man who goes into that vault goes into the jaws—or, rather—with grim humour—the claws of death, and that man is going to be me."

In vain Wesel tried to dissuade him from the venture, but Ulverst was adamant. An hour later, when the high explosive had been prepared, he issued from out the diving chamber, and, accompanied by Wesel and Surgut, set off again for the vault.

Progress was slow and laborious, and again as the two entered the corridors there came to Wesel that feeling of dread.

Stifling his fears, however, he kept resolutely on, plodding and shuffling along beside Ulverst, his eyes wary and watchful behind the glass of his look-out window.

Descending the staircase, the two gained the corridor of vaults. In the doorway of the one which housed the chests and their terrible guardian Wesel and Surgut halted.

Slowly, shuffling step by step, Ulverst went in alone. Through his look-out window he could see the horrible, squat monster crouched on the floor, and as he hurriedly deposited the box of high explosive on the floor the thing commenced to move.

Slowly it lumbered to its legs, huge, grotesque, and terrifying, and as Ulverst commenced to shuffle back towards the doorway a claw came out to seize him.

Instead of striking at the claw with his axe he thrust the axe between the giant nippers. Instantly they closed on it, and the axe was wrenched from Ulverst's grip with a jerk that was felt through the thick steel gauntlets of his hands.

He had gained the momentary respite he needed, however, for by the time the monster had dropped the axe Ulverst had reached the doorway and was through into the corridor with Wesel and Surgut.

Retracing their steps, the two made their way back to the Spider, and as they appeared in the glare of the searchlights Braden pressed the button which would explode the charge down in the vault.

(Look out for more hair-raising thrills in next week's chapters of this gripping pirate story, chums.)

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No. 127 (New Series).

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

EXTRA
GOOD
EDITION

March 9th, 1935.

TO REMOVE FOOTBALLERS

Will those of you who borrowed bathchairs and crutches from Chunkley's Hire Department after the match with the Courtfield Slayers last week kindly return them at once? They're urgently needed for the monthly meeting of the Greyfriars Board of Governors.

A FREAK in the FORM-ROOM!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Few!"

It was Mr. I. Jolliwell Lickham, the master of the Fourth at St. Sam's, who made that remark.

Mr. Lickham was amazed—dismayed.

He had just stepped into the Form-room to take the Fourth at mathymatticks—to find that a dense cloud of smoke hung over the class like a Paul! For a moment Mr. Lickham thought there was a fire. Eyes blazing, he half-turned to call out the school fire brigade. Then, through the Paul, he caught a glimpse of a gigantic figger sitting at one of the desks, puffing away at a fat cigar, and he realised that the outbreak was merely an outbreak of smoking on the part of Sloggem Hall, the amazing new boy at St. Sam's!

"Bust me!" eggshelled Mr. Lickham, under his breath. Aloud, he said in a more dignified way: "Hall, Hall, what are you doing of?"

Sloggem Hall looked up, and Mr. Lickham got another shock when he saw that the new boy had been reading a pink sporting paper of a type sternly forbidden at St. Sam's!

"Ullo, old covey!" said Sloggem Hall, in his deep, rumbling voice which seemed to come from the very bowels of the earth. "Which I'm a-smoking, if you want to know—a-smokin' of a cigar an' a pickin' out of a winner for the Diddleton 'Andicap to-day."

There was a gasp from the Fourth. "Boy!" cried the amazed Mr. Lickham. "Wretched, depraved youth! How dare you? Know you not that smoking is strictly forbidden at St. Sam's?"

"Sez you!" leered Sloggem Hall. "While as for betting on horse-racing," went on Mr. Lickham fiercely, "such an offence is likely to earn the culprit immediate eggspulsion!"

"Haw, haw, haw! You don't say so!" roared Sloggem Hall, in a voice that made the windows rattle. "Well, wot are you goin' to do about it, old covey, any'ow?"

Mr. Lickham took his curridge and a cane in both hands, then stood before the black-board and drew a deep breath.

"I am going to cane you, Hall," he said. "Stand fourth!"

There was a breathless silence. All eyes were turned on the booby of the Fourth. The Fourth wondered how he would take it.

They didn't wonder for long. The grin quickly vanished from Sloggem Hall's brootal dial as he grasped what Mr. Lickham meant. Two ticks later he stepped fourth, and rising to his full hite of seven feet, he grabbed Mr. Lickham by the middle of his hair and held him in mid-air, intending obviously to give him a few light taps on the fizz.

Jack Jolly, the kaptin of the Fourth, jumped to his feet. He realised that a light tap from Sloggem Hall was sufficient to fell an ox, and he didn't intend to stand by and see his Form-master slawtered in cold blood. His blud boiled at the meer thought of it.

"Reakew, Fourth!" he yelled. Then he flung himself into the fray.

With the eggseption of Toadey minor and Tubby Barrell and one or two others not worth mentioning, the Fourth responded to a man, and fully a score of juniors herled themselves at Hall, hitting out with desprits force the while.

The effect on the booby of the Fourth was negligible, however. The only sign he gave of netissing the attack was a muttered growl of "Blow me tight! Feels as if some mos-keeters are buzzin' round me!"

It began to look as if all the efforts of the Fourth would not save Mr. Lickham from having a ruff time. Forchuntly, before Sloggem Hall had time to land his first light tap, there came an interruption. A stern figger in cap and gown looked in the doorway and a skollerly voice echoed across the Form-room.

"Boys! Boys! What is the meaning of this here?"

"The Head!" gasped the Fourth; and they abandoned their attack on Sloggem Hall and trickled back to their desks in dubblo-quick time.

Even Sloggem Hall seemed to be affected by Dr. Birchmell's majestic prezzence. He lowered the yelling Mr. Lickham to the floor again and removed his cigar from his mouth.

Dr. Birchmell, who for some reason was holding his hands behind his back, eyed the new boy sternly.

"Smoking, oh?" he rapped out. "Give me that cigar, Hall!"

The new boy glared, but duly handed over the Flor de Dustbin, which Dr. Birchmell transferred to his own lips before whipping his hand behind his back again.

"I see also that you have been reading a pink sporting paper," remarked the Head, puffing away at Sloggem Hall's cigar with considerable relish. "Let me warn you that gambling on racehorses is strictly forbidden at St. Sam's. Roulette and fan-tan, yes—but horse-racing, never! Savvy?"

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"Look 'ere—" began Sloggem Hall. The Head-shuddered slitley at the new boy's coarse axcent.

"Half a jiffy, I haven't finished yet," he said. "The last warning I must give you is never to lift your Form-master by the hair. If you start that sort of thing your Form-master is bound to find it hard to keep his hair on and you'll always be getting wiggin. Besides, it shows a lack of respect."

"Taking it all round," concluded Dr. Birchmell, "I am not at all pleased with your egghibition this morning and I feel that some slite punishment is called for. Kindly neel on the floor and place your head on one of the desks."

The new boy bared his fangs in a grin of amusement. He didn't mind carrying out that order if it gave the Head any pleasure, and he was quite certain that the Head couldn't hurt anyone so tuff as himself.

He neilt down on the floor and placed his head on one of the desks, looking somewhat like a condemned man at the executioner's block in the process.

Then the Head brought to light something he had been carrying behind his back all the time. It was an enormous bludgeon! Swing-ing it over his head, he brought it down with tremenjous force on the giant's napper, then repeated the performance fully half-a-duzen times.

"Woocooop! Yocoooop! Yarocooop!" gasped Sloggem Hall, and the Fourth-Formers grinned. It was evident that the Head had found a weapon which the booby would treat with respect in the future!

"Well, that's that!" panted Dr. Birchmell, as he lowered the bludgeon at last. "You may return to your desk now, Hall, and I trusted that Mr. Lickham will have no more trouble with you."

Sloggem Hall rose and returned to his desk looking quite abashed.

Dr. Birchmell strolled off shortly after, trailing his bludgeon behind him and puffing away at the remains of the new boy's cigar. The Fourth then settled down to its normal morning's work, without much fear that the new boy would give them any more trouble.

How long his lesson would last was rather dewbious. But for the time being, anyway, Sloggem Hall was content to be just an ordinar-y member of the Fourth at St. Sam's. And the Fourth-Formers and Mr. Lickham found that a welcome change.

(Don't miss "Sloggem Hall's Triumph"—the amazing and amusing sequel to this yarn in next week's number!—Ed.)

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



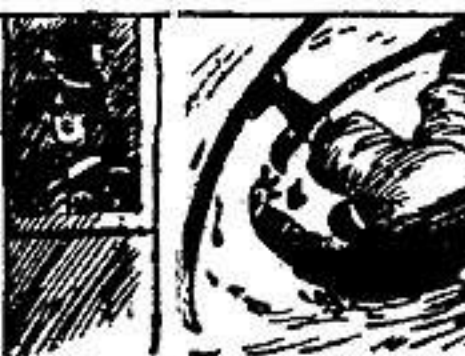
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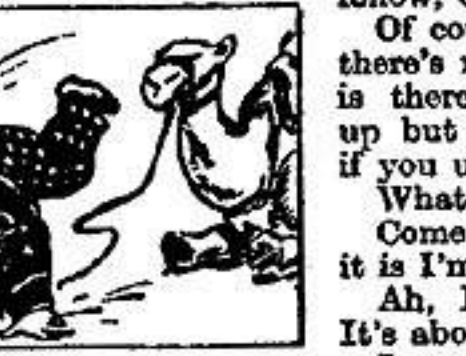
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DORM RUGGER'S THE GOODS

Declares

DICK
RAKE



Enthusiasts who rave about pillow-scraping, bed-tennis, and other popular nocturnal games of the past, had their eyes opened this week, when Vernon-Smith introduced to a delighted Remove the brand new game of Dorm Rugger.

Take it from me, lads, this game beats anything you ever saw in the way of dormitory sport!

All you need is a bladder and a dormitory. The end walls of the dorm are the goals, and the bladder takes the place of a ball. A real Rugger ball, Smithy says, would be found too heavy for dormitory use and would probably fetch up the beaks before the game had a chance to get going.

The field of play consists of the beds in the dorm just as they stand, and the players have to jump from bed to bed to get along. The ball is allowed to be passed only from one side of the dorm to the other and not lengthwise, and if a player touches the floor of the dorm a free kick is awarded to the other side. This last rule, by the way, is awfully sensible; it keeps the fellows from clattering along the boards and thereby inverts the danger of attracting attention from the floor below.

The excitement when Smithy's bladders played Wharton's Wanderers this week was intense. Whispered cheers and muted counter cheers were almost continuous. It was a strange scene—a bladder zig-zagging all round the dorm, and ghostly pyjama-

You'd Roar

IF GOSLING WERE HEAD

Says Squiff

"Wot I says is this 'ere," remarked William Gosling, when I called on him for the "Greyfriars Herald" at the lodge. "Boys' lives is too complex nowadays. There's too many subjects to learn, too many games to play, too much rushin' about—an' none of you's any the 'appier for it! Now, if I was 'Ead—"

"Ah! What then, Gossy?" I asked, getting out notebook and pencil and preparing for something really good. "Think we'd be any better off?"

"Eaps!" growled Gosling, as he reflectively lit his pipe. "You'd be 'ealthier an' more contented, like wot they was years ago. To begin with, I'd knock all this noo-fangled nonsense about French an' science an' wot-not on the 'ead."

"My hat! That would be an improvement," I grinned. "We'd have a lot more time to ourselves!"

Gosling smiled sourly. "Ho, no, you would not," he said. "I'd keep you a-grindin' away at Latin an' Greek an' arithmetic like they did in the days gone by. An' you'd get up at six in the mornin' an' do a lesson afore breakfast, too!"

"Great pip! But—but do you think—"

"An' as to games, there'd be no tennis or anythink like that," went on Gosling. "Jest oricket an' football—that's all—an' only on Saturday arternoons, too."

Wednesday arternoon you'd work!"

"But you said—"

"Every Form-master'd 'ave a big birch—not a piffin' little cane like wot they 'ave now," said Gosling gloomingly. "I'd give 'em instructions to use 'em 'ard an' often—an' with or without reason. That's the proper way to bring up boys!"

"But, my dear old Gossy—"

"There'd be no skylarkin' about if I was 'Ead, neither," growled Gosling darkly. "Anyone who made a noise'd be well an' truly whopped. This'd be a nice quiet school like wot it used to be. As to food—"

"But didn't you say—"

"I'd jest give you bread-an'-scrape an'—an' per'aps meat twice a week. Then I'd turn all the box-rooms into punishment-rooms an'—"

"But didn't you say we'd be more contented?" I howled. Gosling grinned.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," he said. "You'd 'ave to be! If you warn't, then I'd keep on a-floggin' of you till you were. See?"

What a high old time we'd have, lads, if Gosling were Head! We'd simply roar—but it wouldn't be with laughter!

MY CRITICS ARE WRONG

Yawns

LORD MAULEVERER

I expect most of you sportsmen have got quite a wrong idea of me. Owing to libellous descriptions of my activities, there's a sort of mistaken thingummy generally, if you get me.

It's all very well, begad, to say I'm this and that and the other, but you, my dear old tops, will, of course, appreciate that a man's a man for all that.

It's quite easy to accuse him of what-not and all the rest of it, but it doesn't necessarily follow, old beans, does it?

Of course the point I'm coming to is that there's no point in coming to all this at all, is there? I suppose I wouldn't bring it up but for the way I've been brought up, if you understand what I'm driving at.

What I mean to say is— Come to think of it, I've forgotten what it is I'm trying to say!

Ah, I've suddenly remembered, though! It's about sleep!

I want you sportsmen to understand that my critics are entirely wrong when they say I'm always going to—

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GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



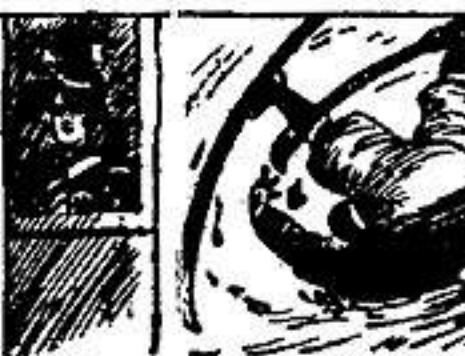
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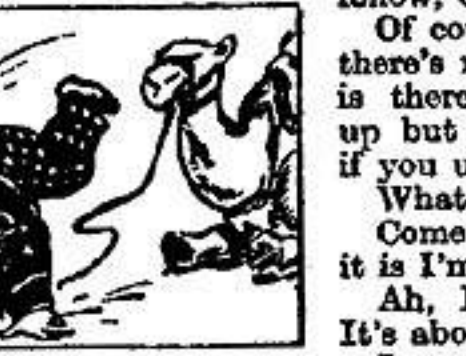
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