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COKER TAKES COMMAND!

by FRANK
RICHARDS



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STOP
PRESS
NEWS

TUBBY THE LOVER!

A laughable Story of Dr. Birchmell
and the boys of St. Sam's
By DICKY NUGENT

"Barrell!"

No answer.

"Barrell! How dare you ignore your headmaster? Can you not hear me? Are you deaf?"

Still no answer.

Dr. Birchmell glared. A chuckle ran round the St. Sam's dining-hall. The Head might have run round after it for exercise in the usual way; but on this occasion he was so surprised that he hardly noticed it.

It was dinner-time at St. Sam's, and the fellows were all feeding their faces—all, that is, with one exception.

Tubby Barrell, the fattest fellow in the Fourth, was a chap with a ferocious appetite. His feet in the eating line would have made False-tarf himself envious, and at dinner he had never been known to feel satisfied with less than three helpings of ong-tray and half a dozen plates of poodding.

Yet here he was now, sitting at the Fourth Form table without paying the slightest attention to the plate of boiled beef and carrots before him!

It was amazing; it was unpresidential. Even so, the Head would not have troubled himself about it, had he not noticed that Tubby was engaged in writing in a notebook. But that notebook did it. The Head did not mind fellows kicking each other under the table, or throwing pieces of bread about the room; but he had a strong objection to fellows writing at meal-times.

"Barrell!" he roared, for the third time. "Barrell! You are writing at the dinner-table!"

Still the fat junior paid no heed, though by this time Merry and Bright, on either side of him, were nudging him fiercely, and Jack Jolly was making frantic signals from the other side of the table.

The Head went from words to deeds. Seeing the birchrod that lay at the side of his plate, he bounded to his feet, and made a rush at Tubby Barrell.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooo! Ow-ow-ow!"

Tubby woke up at last! He jumped to his feet with a feendish howl.

Immediately afterwards, there was another feendish howl. As luck would have it, Tubby accidentally brought down a fat paw on the edge of his dinner-plate. The result was that the contents shot up in the air and landed on the Head's face with a juicy thud!

Plop!

"Yooooop! Wooooop! Greoooo!" shrieked the Head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Sam's fellows tried to stifle their laughter; but they found it impossible. Dr. Birchmell, with gravy

streaming down his face, and boiled beef and carrots clinging to his beard, was too comical for words!

The Head spluttered and gasped furiously as he shook Tubby Barrell's dinner out of his beard and wiped the gravy off his face. He fixed a petrifying glare on the startled fat Fourth Former.

"You—you yung idiot! You dangerous loonatick! Look what you've done with your dinner!" he shrieked. "Why did you not skoff it like the rest?"

Tubby Barrell looked at the remains of his dinner with dreemy, far-away eyes.

"I didn't want it, sir," he said, with a deep sigh. "The fact is, sir, I'm not hungry. I've lost my appetite!"

There was a gasp from the school—a gasp of sheer amazement. Even the Head forgot his injury at those incredible words from Tubby. He blinked dazedly at the fat Fourth Former.

"You—you've lost your appetite, Barrell!" he stuttered. "What the merry dickens has happened, then?"

Tubby lowered his eyes, while a rosy blush suffused his countenance. Then he spotted at his feet the notebook, which had fallen in the eggshattering, and he made a dive for it. But the Head was there before him.

"One moment, Barrell!" said Dr. Birchmell grimly. "I have a shrewd idea that this notebook of yours may throw some light on the mystery." He pored over the notebook and started reading it aloud. "A present to Miss

selfish liver, Barrell, and you can only behave according to your lights. I would not dream of allowing my dawter to have anything to do with a boy of your kidney! Bend over!"

"What for, sir?" gasped Tubby.

"Because I am going to dust your trowsis with my birchrod!"

Tubby pulled a rye face and bent over, and the Head duly dusted his trowsis; and then the fat Fourth Former astonished the natives once more. For, instead of howling and shrieking for mercy, as he usually did, he bore his punishment with grim fortitude, never allowing a single cry to pass his lips apart from a few deffening yells of aggerney.

Dinner finished in a regular buzz of eggshattering that day. Outside the dining-hall afterwards, there was quite a rush for Tubby Barrell.

"Going to serenade Miss Molly, Tubby?" asked Loye yewmorously. "I'll lend you my mouth-organ for the occasion, if you are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows, lemme get by!" gasped Tubby, who had a parcel under his arm. "I want to take this present to Miss Molly. It's a box of chocklits."

"Whose are they, old bean?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The grinning crowd at last made way for Tubby, and many of the fellows followed him out of the School House and across the quad, in the eggshattering of seeing some fun.

Jack Jolly & Co joined the podgy Romeo just before he reached Dr. Birchmell's house. There was a thoughtful frown on Jolly's face.

"Look here, Tubby, it won't do to go against the Head, you know," he said. "Why not eat the chocklits yourself and forget Molly Birchmell?"

But Tubby was not to be denied. He rolled cheerfully up to the Head's house and stood underneath Miss Molly's window and wissled.

The Head's fair dawter poked her head out at once, and very surprised she looked at the site of Tubby and his bodyguard.

"Gracious me! What's the matter?" she cried, in her tinkling, bell-like voice.

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Molly!" said Tubby, with a simpering smile. "I've brought you these chocks as a sign of my admiration and affection!"

Molly Birchmell tossed her pretty head.

"Really, Barrell, I can hardly accept a gift from a boy like you. With all dew respect to you, you're a little too fat for my liking. I prefer lean, athletick boys like Fearless."

Tubby frowned.

"Look here, Miss Molly, Fearless duzzent admire you half as much as I do. I think you're simply spiffing, especially considering what an old fossil of a pater you've got!"

"B-sh!" hissed Jolly, seeing the Head coming up behind Tubby at that moment; but Tubby carried on in blissful ignorance of the Head's approach.

"Your pater is a rotter and a cadd

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Molly, from her devoted admirer, Tubby Barrell, with love and—Bless my sole!"

"Oh, grate pip!" breathed Jack Jolly. "He's writing messages to Molly Birchmell!"

"Now we know why he's gone off his grub!" grinned Merry. "He's pining for Miss Molly!"

"Tubby Barrell in love!" gasped Frank Fearless. "And with the Head's dawter, too! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" hooted Dr. Birchmell. "This is no larking matter! Do I gather from this, Barrell, that you are proposing to make my dawter, Miss Molly, a present, and to enclose with it this sloppy, sentimental message?"

"It's not sloppy, sir!" cried Tubby indignantly. "It comes straight from the hart!"

"Hart, be bothered!" snorted the Head. "You have always had a

HARRY WHARTON & CO., HOLIDAY-MAKING ABOARD THE WATER-LILY ON OLD FATHER THAMES, KNOW FULL WELL THAT HORACE COKER IS A CHUMP! BUT THEY NEVER DREAM WHAT AN IDIOT HE CAN BE UNTIL—

COKER TAKES COMMAND!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Bunter the Punter!

"DON'T be an ass, Bunter!"
"Yah!"

Billy Bunter made that elegant retort as he stood in the punt with the puntpole in his fat hands.

Bunter knew best—as he generally did!

The Greyfriars Water-Lily was tied up under a big oak-tree that extended big, shady branches over the silvery Thames.

Harry Wharton & Co., on holiday up the Thames, had struck a hospitable spot at Tipton Lodge, in the vicinity of Mapledurham.

The tent stood on the bank of a tiny backwater, hardly more than a ditch, that trickled into the Thames shaded by oaks and beeches.

After breakfast that morning the Famous Five were tidying-up the camp. This was not hard work, but it was work, so Billy Bunter had rolled away and left them to it.

Now he had reappeared—in the punt.

The little stream in the wood at Tipton Lodge was so narrow that the punt nearly filled it from side to side. Bunter came down the stream, bumping alternately on either bank.

That was all right, so far. But the wide and rolling Thames was just ahead of him. Billy Bunter's belief was that he could punt. The Famous Five's belief, on the other hand, was that if he slid out into the Thames something would happen. So they hailed him from the bank.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched as Coker tangled himself in the sails and ropes!

The fat Owl blinked at them through his big spectacles from the punt. It was a contemptuous blink.

"Think I can't punt?" he demanded.

"You've got it," agreed Bob Cherry.

"Yah!" said Bunter, for the second time. It seemed the only adequate answer to a fellow who fancied that Bunter couldn't punt.

"You fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Where did you get that punt?"

"I found it tied up!"

"Anybody tell you you could take it?" asked Frank Nugent.

"I suppose we can do as we like here!" retorted Bunter. "Didn't that old donkey tell us to make ourselves at home?"

"You shouldn't touch that punt without leave!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter," murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"You needn't jaw," said Bunter.

Exciting Holiday-Adventure
Yarn of Popular HARRY
WHARTON & CO. of
GREYFRIARS.

"Watch me punt! You may pick up some tips! I shall be back for lunch, you fellows—have it ready! I may punt up as far as Pangbourne Lock."

"And suppose you tip into the Thames?" asked Bob Cherry. "It will be pretty serious if you make the river overflow its banks and flood the Thames valley——"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

Bunter was plump—he was very plump. There was quite a lot of Bunter. But, really and truly, he was not likely to make the Thames overflow its banks by falling into it—that was an exaggeration.

"Look here, you fat chump!" said Harry Wharton. "Old Sir George Tipton has given us leave to camp here, and told us to make ourselves at home. But that doesn't mean raiding his property without leave. You can't take that punt out without permission—even if you could handle a punt—which you can't!"

"Jealousy, as usual," said Bunter. "You fellows can't handle a punt—I can. Watch me!"

Bunter gave a shove with the pole, and the punt floated on down the little stream, bumping from side to side.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him with frowning faces.

They were in a hospitable spot. But, naturally, they did not want to

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stretch the limits of hospitality, but to keep carefully within those limits. Bagging a punt without leave asked or given was altogether too thick.

But it was Bunter all over. Given an inch, William George Bunter would take not merely an ell, but a mile and a half.

"Look here!" grunted Johnny Bull. "That fat freak isn't walking off with that punt without leave! I'll jolly well stop him!"

And Johnny Bull ran down to the bank of the backwater and grasped the edge of the punt, which was easily within reach. He started pulling it back.

Billy Bunter gave a roar of wrath as his progress was suddenly arrested.

"Wharrer you up to, you beast?" roared Bunter.

"Take that punt back," said Johnny.

"Shan't!" roared Bunter.

"Then I'll pull it back for you!"

"You cheeky beast, leggo that punt!" yelled Bunter.

Johnny did not let go!

Billy Bunter planted the pole against the bank and shoved in the opposite direction as Johnny tugged.

But Johnny was much more hefty than Bunter. Instead of going down-stream into the Thames the punt started up-stream, homeward bound to the boathouse from which Bunter had borrowed it.

"Will you leggo?" roared Bunter, his very spectacles gleaming with wrath. "I tell you I'm going to punt up to Pangbourne."

"You'd be drowned a long way this side of Pangbourne, old fat man," said Bob Cherry. "Johnny's saving your life—if that's worth anything."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter pulled in his pole for another push. But this time he did not push at the bank.

He pushed at Johnny Bull.

Landing the end of the puntpole on Johnny's chest, the fat Owl of the Remove put all his strength into the shove.

"Oh!" roared Johnny.

He let go the punt and staggered backwards. And as he ceased to pull the punt up-stream the force of that shove sent it skipping down-stream.

Bump!

Johnny Bull sat down.

He spluttered wrath as he sat.

Billy Bunter grinned back at him, the punt rushing river-ward under his feet.

Johnny Bull bounded up! He rushed. His intention was not now to grasp the punt and pull it back, but to jump into it and bang Billy Bunter's head on it.

But the punt was already out of reach.

It was hardly more than a few yards to the Thames, and Bunter's shove drove the punt those few yards. It slid out into the river, leaving Johnny Bull brandishing an infuriated fist on the bank.

"He, he, he!" floated back from Bunter.

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"You fat frump!" roared Johnny. "I'll burst you!"

"Yah!"

"Come back, you fat ass!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"I'll watch it!" grinned Bunter.

"You're not safe!" howled Bob.

"Yah! I say, you fellows, have lunch ready when I get back from Pangbourne!" chirruped Billy Bunter. "I say—Yaroooh!"

Out on the river Bunter found a difference in punting. The punt rocked, and Bunter suddenly sat down. He sat with a heavy bump, and the punt rocked more wildly.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's Bunter's punting style," he remarked. "We don't want him drowned—"

"Don't we?" snorted Johnny Bull. "Why not?"

"The whynotfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Come and cast off the boat," said Harry. "That fat ass will be in trouble soon. We shall have to get him back."

"Let him rip!" growled Johnny, rubbing his chest where the puntpole had shoved. "He thinks he can punt. Let him get on with it."

"Fathead! Come on!"

Johnny snorted, but he came on.

Leaving the camp by the backwater, the Famous Five ran through the trees to the mooring-place of the Water-Lily. The Greyfriars boat floated under the big oak a few yards up the Thames.

"Oh crikey!" came a howl from the punt. "I say, you fellows—Oh lor'!"

Evidently, Bunter was going to need assistance.

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped into the Water-Lily and hurriedly cast the moorings loose.

Up the Pole!

BILLY BUNTER was on his feet again.

He had crawled to his feet with great caution.

The punt was rocking under him in rather an alarming manner. But as the fat junior stood still in the middle of it, it moderated its transports, so to speak.

Billy Bunter's confidence revived.

He wielded the puntpole.

He gave a shove, and the punt slid away, quite smoothly. It slid so smoothly that Bunter was full of beans again at once. What could be easier than punting? You simply shoved, and the punt slid along—it could hardly be called work! No beastly fag, as in rowing! You just shoved, and moved on; then you walked along the punt, and gave another shove—it was safe as houses, and easy as falling off a form!

Bunter was going to enjoy this!

There were plenty of punts on the river. Once upon a time hardly anybody but a fisherman used a punt; but nowadays they swarm like row-boats. Among all the numerous punters on the Thames, Bunter was going to attract general notice and

admiration, by the ease and grace with which he punted Sir George Tipton's punt up to Pangbourne.

That, at least, was Bunter's programme, which he carried out successfully for nearly a whole minute.

After that brief lapse of time there was a change in the programme!

For at least forty or fifty seconds that punt slid easily and smoothly, and Billy Bunter felt himself master of the situation.

Then, for some reason unknown to Bunter, the punt, entirely of its own accord, took a different course.

Bunter jammed the bed of the Thames with the pole. The punt circled round the pole. Bunter was going to Pangbourne—but the punt seemed to want to go back to Tipton Lodge.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He was surprised, and he was annoyed! He had set out to navigate the Thames, not to circumnavigate the puntpole.

"Hold on!" came a shout from the Water-Lily, where Harry Wharton & Co. were casting loose as fast as they could.

Billy Bunter did not reply—and he did not heed! Bunter concentrated on punting! The punt, which at first seemed bent on going back to Tipton Lodge, changed its mind, and circled completely round Bunter's pole. For a dreadful moment it seemed to be going to slip from under Bunter's little fat legs entirely. But the fat Owl recovered the pole somehow, and, rather to his surprise, found that Sir George's punt was still underneath him.

"Oh crumbs!" gurgled Bunter.

He found that he was drifting past the Water-Lily, where the Famous Five were all on board, and about to put off. The Water-Lily came handy for a shove, and Bunter shoved at it. The punt spun away.

"Look out!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Stop!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Sit down and wait for us!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter was digging up the river with his puntpole again. This time he dug not wisely, but too well!

The pole jammed into the bed of the Thames, and stuck fast! It was quite a good shove, and it set the punt into rapid motion! The punt travelled; but Bunter, clinging to the pole, did not travel with it.

It seemed like an awful dream to Billy Bunter, as the punt shot away from under him, and left him without any visible means of support—except the puntpole!

"Yaroooh! Help!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, rescue! Yarooop!"

The punt rocked away on the Thames. It seemed relieved at having got rid of Bunter, and went sailing merrily on.

Bunter was left on the puntpole!

Luckily that pole had jammed deep. It stood the strain with Billy Bunter clinging to it, the Thames washing under him, trees and sky and river swimming before his eyes, and yell after yell pealing from the terrified fat junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the Water-Lily, now in motion. Harry Wharton & Co were rather anxious about Bunter, and hastening to the rescue, but the fat Owl, clinging to the puntpole like a monkey on a stick, was too much for them, and they roared.

"I say, you fellows!" shrieked Bunter. "I say, help! I'm drowning! Oh crikey! Where's that punt? I say—Yaroo!"

The puntpole was sagging over. It was well planted, but it could not be expected to stand up to such a strain for long. It sagged over, and the fattest figure in the Thames valley dipped into the Thames.

There was a fearful howl from Bunter as he dipped.

"Yoo-hoop! Gurrgh! Help! I say, you fellows—Beasts! Dear old chaps—rotters—help! I say, old beasts—dear old rotters—yaroo!"

Splash!

"Gurrrrrgh!"

The Water-Lily surged up, and Bob Cherry grasped the fat Owl by his collar as he went under.

Bunter's fat head came up again at once. A large mouth, full of water, spluttered frantically.

"Wuggggg! Guggggh! Ug-wug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrrugh! I say—gug-gug-gug! I'm drowning! Yug-wug-gug! I'm chick - chak - chook - choking — gerrroogh! Save me! Yaroooooh! I say—yurrrggggh!"

"Lend a hand here!" gasped Bob. "I can't lift a ton!"

Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent grasped hold of Bunter! By a combined effort he was dragged out of the Thames, and landed on the Water-Lily, like a very fat fish. He sprawled in the bottom of the boat, in a pool of water, gurgling.

"Urrrgh! I say—gurrgh!"

Harry Wharton rescued the puntpole. Then he looked round for the punt. It had spun out into the river, and started on a voyage down to London on the current! Two of the juniors seized oars, and pulled in pursuit of it.

"Urrgh!" gurgled Bunter. "I say, you fellows! I'm wet!"

"That's because the Thames is wet!" explained Bob Cherry. "You notice the same thing about all these rivers!"

"Beast! I'm soaked! Gurrgh!" Bunter sat up dizzily, and blinked through wet spectacles. "Oh crikey! Take me back to the camp—quick! I shall catch cold—urrgh!"

He rubbed his spectacles, and blinked round again. The bank of the Thames seemed to be receding instead of drawing nearer.

"Where are you going?" yelled Bunter. "Can't you see I'm soaked? Get me back to the tent, you beasts!"

"We've got to get the punt, fat-head!"

"The punt!" gasped Bunter. "Are you thinking about the punt when I'm wet to the skin? Blow the punt! Never mind the punt! Get me back to the bank just as quick as you can! What does it matter about the punt, you silly idiots?"

But to the Famous Five it did matter a little about the punt! They were not prepared to let Sir George Tipton's property float away down the Thames. They pulled after the punt, regardless of Bunter.

Bunter spluttered with Thames water and indignation. It was, of course, just like those beasts to think of the punt—as if the punt mattered—instead of thinking of Bunter! It was not their punt, so what did it matter?

"Will you gemme back to the bank?" howled Bunter. "Do you want me to catch my death of cold, and perish of pneumonia and plum-bago? Leave the punt alone! That old donkey can't say anything about it, as we're guests! Think he'll make you pay for it, you silly idiots? Let it rip, and get me back to the bank! Quick!"

"Ain't he nice?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Ain't he the sort of camper to make a riverside property owner feel nice and hospitable? It's all right, Bunter—you won't perish this time—besides, we'd rather lose you than the punt! That punt's worth something!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton hooked in the punt and tied it on! Then, at long last, the Greyfriars crew pulled back to camp, towing the punt home.

It was only a few minutes' pull, but during those few minutes Billy Bunter had time to tell them quite a lot of what he thought of them—all of it extremely uncomplimentary!

Then Bunter bundled ashore, and rolled into the tent, to towel down, and to change into a selection of garments belonging variously to Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Just Like Loder!

"COMING, Bunter?"

"No!"

"Thanks!"

"Beast!"

There was a wind on the river. The Greyfriars camp was on the Oxfordshire side; and that morning the Famous Five were going to run across and have a look at Purley, on the Berkshire side, and the pleasant places adjacent.

Bunter seemed to have had enough of the Thames for that morning. He was still changing, in the tent, when Bob Cherry gave him a roar, before joining his comrades in the Water-Lily.

Not at all dismayed by the loss of Bunter's company on the trip, the Famous Five pushed off.

Surging gently out into the river, the Water-Lily passed within a biscuit's toss of a wide green lawn, next to the shady wood, that extended to the water-side.

On that lawn, facing the river, with a very pleasant view across into Berkshire, was a wooden summer-house. It was by taking refuge from the rain in that summerhouse, that Harry Wharton & Co. had first made the acquaintance of old Sir

George Tipton, the owner of that pleasant little Thames-side estate.

That acquaintance had started rather unpleasantly—but matters had mended since. Sir George, at first sight, had struck the juniors as the most disgruntled old codger that they had seen since they started that voyage up the Thames from Kingston. But they were in his good graces now—and free of his estate so long as they chose to stay. Which was very convenient for a river-party desiring to explore some of the most beautiful reaches of the Thames—and not at all in a hurry to track the river to its source.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry, as he glanced at the summerhouse ashore. "There they are!"

That summerhouse, which had sheltered the Thames trippers from the rain two or three days ago, had quite different occupants this fine sunny morning.

Four fellows sat there, all of them smoking cigarettes. They were four Greyfriars seniors, and as they saw the boat, they glared at the five Greyfriars juniors. Or rather three of them glared, and one of them grinned.

Loder and Walker of the Sixth were prefects at Greyfriars School—great men whose greatness ended with the term. In the Thames valley, in holiday-time, the juniors cared no more for Loder and Walker than for their friends, Hilton and Price of the Fifth; and they had made that fact quite plain.

It had been rather awkward when Price and his friends arrived, Stephen Price being the nephew of old Sir George, and having come with his pals to stay a few days at Tipton Lodge.

But the campers kept to their camp and to the river, and—since the row that had happened at first sight, Price & Co., being more interested in motoring in Sir George's car and knocking the balls about in Sir George's billiards-room than in boating—had steered clear of them.

Which was all the juniors wanted. They were not looking for rows in their trip on the Thames. And if they wanted rows, they always had one when they chanced on Pon & Co., of Highclife, or on Shifty Spooner, who was trailing them up the Thames with felonious designs on their boat.

"What a gang!" grunted Johnny Bull, as he looked round at the party in the summerhouse. "I wonder whether Loder and Walker would like the Head to see them now?"

At which his comrades grinned.

Gerald Loder, with his cigarette in the corner of his mouth, was reading something out from a pink paper to his interested friends.

Probably had the headmaster of Greyfriars seen Gerald smoking and imparting sporting information to his friends, he would not have considered him suitable for a prefectship next term.

Loder ceased to read out "Spotlight's Sure Snip for the Swindleham Handicap" as the Greyfriars boat

appeared from under the trees farther up the bank, and scowled at the juniors instead.

Walker of the Sixth gave them a grim look.

Price gave them one that was blacker than Loder's. Stephen Price's nose was red and raw; it had not recovered yet from contact with Harry Wharton's knuckles.

Cedric Hilton grinned, and waved his cigarette to the juniors, leaving a trail of blue smoke in the air. Hilton was rather a bad hat like his friends, but he was a good-tempered fellow, and had no use for rows and rags.

"Better keep our distance!" said Bob, with a grin. "Look at dear old Loder! He'd like us to come within range!"

There was a basket in the summerhouse, with bottles of cool and refreshing drinks in it. Loder was seen to stoop and pick up a bottle of ginger-beer. The juniors saw Hilton lay a hand on his arm—and saw Loder scowl at the dandy of the Fifth. If Gerald Loder had thought of buzzing that ginger-beer bottle at the Water-Lily, however, he refrained.

Floating off the shore, the Famous Five proceeded to step the Water-Lily's mast, and sort out the sail. It was while thus engaged that Harry Wharton spotted a figure coming down from the house towards the river.

It was an ancient gentleman with a fierce white moustache and grizzled brows over a beaky nose. He stumped along with a stick. Following old Sir George came his man Pickings, with a camp-stool in his hand.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Harry. "Hold on a minute, you men!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's old George!" said Bob. "Want to stop and ask him about his jolly old rheumatism?"

"No, ass! But he's coming down to the bank. He will spot that crew as soon as he passes the summerhouse. Think they want him to see them smoking and mugging up racing papers? Think he'd approve?"

Bob chuckled.

"More likely to lay his stick round Pricey, and tell the rest that he'd prefer their room to their company," he answered. "I'll bet you they keep that sort of thing pretty dark from the old bean!"

"The darkness is probably terrific!" agreed Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"No bizney of ours!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Let him cop them! I don't believe, from what I've seen, that the old bean thinks much of that nephew of his. Price has barged in with his smoky pals, and the old sportsman's let him, that's all! He doesn't like Pricey!"

"Might give them the tip!" said Harry. "They're a dingy crew, but they—"

"Lot of thanks you'll get!" grunted Johnny.

"Well, we won't stop for thanks!" said Harry, laughing. "It won't

lose two or three minutes, punting in to give them a word. Let's!"

"Let's!" agreed Bob, always good-natured; and he grasped an oar and punted the Water-Lily closer in to the bank.

Loder & Co. stared at that proceeding in surprise.

As the summerhouse faced the river, with its back to the distant house, they saw nothing of the old gentleman coming into the offing. It looked to Loder & Co. as if the juniors were coming hunting for trouble.

Gerald Loder had started uncorking that bottle of ginger-beer. Now he stopped, with his thumb on the cork.

"Oh gad!" The juniors heard Cedric Hilton's drawling voice as they pushed in to the bank. "What do those fags want?"

"A hiding!" said Price, between his teeth.

"They'll get it, if they step ashore!" muttered James Walker. "I suppose your uncle isn't around, Pricey?"

"No. I left him on a sofa in the library, nursing his gammy leg!" answered Price. "Safe till lunch, I think!"

The boat bumped on the edge of the green lawn. Bob held on with the boathook, and Harry Wharton jumped ashore. Four fellows stared at him as he stepped hastily towards the summerhouse.

"Asking for it—what?" asked Loder grimly. He rose to his feet.

"Price's uncle is coming down from the house!" answered Harry Wharton. "He will be here in a few minutes! If you want him to see you smoking and reading racing papers, it's no bizney of mine—but I thought that perhaps you wouldn't."

"Oh!" gasped Price.

It was evident that Price, at least, did not want old Sir George to spot his present occupation. The cigarette disappeared from his mouth as if by magic, and he put his head out round the end of the summerhouse to glance towards the distant mansion. Then he looked round at his friends in alarm.

"Chuck it, you men!" he breathed. "The old fogey's coming!"

Hilton's cigarette disappeared as rapidly as Price's. Walker was almost as quick. Loder grunted with annoyance.

"Look here, I don't see acting like fags with a prefect comin'!" he snapped. "Bother the old ass!"

"Chuck that smoke away, you fat-head, and shove that paper out of sight!" breathed Price. "I should get into a fearful row! The old ass is fearfully strict about such things! If he spotted that pink paper, he'd tell me to quit, and very likely help me off with his boot!"

Loder, grunting, abolished his cigarette, and tucked the racing paper out of sight under his jacket.

Harry Wharton smiled faintly as he turned back to the boat. It was clear that his warning had been a useful one, and that it had saved Price & Co. from trouble.

"Thanks, kid!" called out Hilton.

"All serene," answered Harry.

"Hold on a minute, Wharton!" called out Loder.

Harry Wharton turned back towards the summerhouse. He supposed that even the bully of the Sixth had a civil word to say for a useful service rendered.

That was a little mistake on his part.

Loder stepped out of the summerhouse, and as Harry Wharton faced round towards him, he jerked the cork from the ginger-beer bottle.

Swoooooosh!

Before the captain of the Remove knew what was happening, a stream of fizzy ginger-beer smote him full in the face.

"Urrrgh!" he gasped.

He staggered back and sat down on the green lawn with a bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from Walker and Price.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Loder.

"Oooogh!" Wharton spluttered as he scrambled to his feet. "You rotten cad—you measly worm—unurrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Price & Co.

Harry Wharton dabbed his face with his handkerchief.

Loder grabbed another bottle of ginger-beer from his basket. More was coming—and Wharton jumped into the boat, and Bob pushed off.

"I told you you'd get a lot of thanks!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Look here, let's give Loder a few tomatoes—"

"Hold on!" gasped Harry, dabbing his streaming face. "We can't kick up a shindy under old George's nose! Push off!"

The Greyfriars boat pushed off. The sail filled, and the Water-Lily danced away on the Thames—followed by loud laughter from Price & Co., in the summerhouse.

Bunter Up a Tree!

"OH crikey!" murmured Billy Bunter.

He gave an alarmed blink through his big spectacles.

Bunter was not in the best of tempers. The Famous Five had gone off in the boat and left him on his own. It was true that Bunter had declined to go; but that made no difference. Bunter did not want to be left on his own.

But that was not the worst. The provisions were stacked in the locker on the Water-Lily. Had they been left in the tent it was probable that Bunter would have lunched very early, and that the returning voyagers would have had to whistle for their lunch.

Bunter was ready for lunch, and lunch was not ready for Bunter.

But there was still balm in Gilead, so to speak. Bunter sat on a camp-stool and munched apples.

They were scrumptious apples. They had been collected in Sir George's orchard; and specially sent down to the campers. There was a big bag of them. Luckily, Pickings had arrived, with that big bag of apples after the Famous Five had

started for Purley. So Bunter had the lot to himself. He would have preferred a few cold chickens—still, the apples were delicious, and they helped to fill the aching void.

According to the proverb, an apple a day will keep the doctor away. Billy Bunter was parking apples at a rate that would have kept the whole medical profession at bay.

Bunter, however, ceased suddenly to munch at the sight of four figures on the path in the wood by the Thames.

His eleventh apple remained suspended in his fat hand, as he blinked at those four figures, approaching the camp.

"Beasts!" breathed Bunter.

He did not suppose for a moment that Loder and Walker, Price and Hilton, were paying a friendly call.

Old Sir George, certainly, had ordered his nephew to maintain friendly relations with the Greyfriars campers. But Bunter knew exactly how much Price of the Fifth would regard his uncle's wishes, if he was able to disregard them. The fact that the seniors were coming looked like trouble—for certainly they would never have come with friendly intent.

Billy Bunter rose from the camp-stool.

Staying only to grab up the bag of apples—Bunter was not destitute of presence of mind—he dodged behind a tree, and from that cover, blinked cautiously and uneasily at the approaching enemy.

They had not seen him yet. Probably they supposed that he was in the boat with the others. Bunter did not mean to make his presence known if he could help it. He had no use whatever for Loder's boot.

That tree hid him till they should arrive at the camp. Then he would be revealed. There was only one resource for a fat Owl who objected to being kicked: Bunter scrambled up into the tree.

Ten feet from the ground, jammed in a forked bough, and almost completely screened by foliage, he felt safer. He jammed the bag of apples in another fork, selected his twelfth, and started on it.

Voices floated up to him from below.

"Don't be a fool, Hilton!"

"What's the good of bein' a bully-in' ass, Loder?"

"We can't handle that gang as they deserve, while Price's old fool of an uncle stands by them! But they're gone now—and when they come back they're going to find a bit of a change in their camp."

"Tip the tent into the water!" said Walker.

"And chuck everything else after it!" said Price. "We'll make the young cads fed up with camping here."

"They're not likely to go sneaking to the old bean, and if they did, what could they prove?" said Loder. "We know nothing about it, of course."

"Nothing at all," grinned Price.

"I believe one of them stayed behind," said Hilton. "I didn't see that fat freak Bunter in the boat when they went."



"Got him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he hooked Loder like a fish.

"If he's there we'll chuck him into the water after the tent!" said Loder.

"A wash will do him good."

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter. He was glad that he was up that tree.

The four Greyfriars seniors arrived at the camp.

"Nobody here!" said Loder, glancing round. "I expect that fat fool Bunter was in the boat. If he wasn't he's wandered off somewhere. Gone to rob the orchard, as likely as not."

"Beast!" breathed Bunter.

"Somebody's been here, rather recently!" grinned Hilton, with a gesture towards a sea of apple peelings and discarded core that strewed the ground round the camp-stool lately vacated by Bunter.

"Oh!" said Price. He looked round rather uneasily. "May have dodged out of sight when we came along. Hold on, Loder, old man—we can't

rag their camp if one of them's watching us. My uncle—"

"Blow your uncle!" grunted Loder.

"Blow him as much as you like!"

said Price, who was not apparently a very dutiful or affectionate nephew. "But we've got to toe the line while we're here, old chap. I don't want a row with nunky. If he's kept in a good temper, he may tip me a fiver when we go, and I can tell you I've got a use for it. If he gets his rheumatic old back up he may push me out. That sort of old bean has to be treated with tact."

"There's such a thing as bein' decent, too, Loder, if you happened to think of it," remarked Hilton.

"You shut up!" grunted Loder.

"Look here, Steve, your fathanded uncle can go and eat coke. You told us he was fierce on trespassers and campers and river rowdies—now the

old ass lets that gang camp here and stopped us when we were kicking them out—"

"Well, he's told you why," said Price. "The first night they were here there was a burglary, and they grabbed the burglar and got back a bundle of bonds that he was cutting off with—thousands of pounds' worth. That's made the old lean think no end of them."

"Bother the old ass!" said Loder. "Look here, we've come here to rag this camp, and we're going to rag it, see?"

And Loder, by way of a beginning, aimed a kick at Bunter's campstool and landed it in the backwater. Loder was much less particular about displeasing old Sir George than old Sir George's nephew was. Price was poor; and a rich uncle was worth cultivating. But Sir George was not Loder's uncle, and Loder cared very little about Sir George, and, in fact, very little about Price. Loder was going to have his own way.

"Now lend a hand with that tent," he said.

"If that fat brute's got an eye on us from somewhere, it means a row," said Price uneasily. "We can't make out that we know nothing about it if we're seen at it, Loder."

Hilton chuckled.

"I fancy Bunter's not far off," he remarked.

"Rot!" said Loder.

"I suppose your uncle doesn't decorate his trees with check trousers, Steve, does he?" grinned Hilton.

"Eh? What do you mean?" asked Price.

"I mean that if he doesn't there's somebody in those trousers," answered Hilton, pointing upward.

"Oh, crikey!" came a startled gasp from the leafy elm. Billy Bunter realised that he was spotted.

"Oh, my hat! There he is!" exclaimed Walker. "Is that you up there, Bunter, you prize porker?"

"No, it ain't!" gasped Bunter. "Tain't me!"

Loder stared up into the branches with a black brow. Now that he looked up, he could discern Bunter.

The fat junior, apple in hand, blinked down at him through his big spectacles. The expression on Loder's face made him gladder than ever that he was out of reach.

"You fat rotter!" roared Loder. "What are you sticking up in that tree for? Come down at once!"

"Beast!"

"Come down!" roared Loder.

"Shan't!"

"Look here, chuck it, Gerald!" said Price. "I tell you I don't want a row with my uncle— Here, look out!"

But it was too late for Loder to look out. From Bunter's fat hand above the apple dropped, and it landed fairly on Loder's upturned face.

It was a large apple. It landed fair and square on Loder's nose. Bunter had dropped it without intending to do so; but he could not have aimed so well if he had tried. It fairly banged on Loder's nose, and

Gerald Loder uttered a terrific yell as it banged.

"Ow!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Ow! Oh gad!" howled Loder, clapping his hand to his nose, which felt as if a hammer had smitten it.

"Ow! Ooogh! I'll smash him! Ow! I'll scrag him! Ow! My nose! Oh!" He glared round furiously at his friends. "What are you laughing at, you fools?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll smash him!" roared Loder.

And, to Billy Bunter's alarm and terror, the bully of the Sixth started clambering up the gnarled trunk of the old elm.

Not Loder's Lucky Day!

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

"Those cads?" growled Johnny Bull.

The Greyfriars Water-Lily was sailing merrily home. The Famous Five had crossed the river; they had landed and rambled round Purley, they had done a little necessary shopping, and now they were sailing home to lunch.

And as the boat glided gracefully up to the bank of Tipton Lodge the crew had a view of their camp at the mouth of the little backwater—of Walker and Hilton and Price standing under a leafy elm-tree, and of a pair of legs disappearing into that tree.

They could guess that the legs were Loder's.

Of Bunter, whom they had left in the camp, there was nothing to be seen.

"Those sweeps!" said Frank Nugent. "What are they doing in our camp?"

"Where's Bunter?" exclaimed Bob.

"The wherefulness is terrific."

"Up that tree, perhaps! Loder can't be climbing it for fun," said Harry Wharton. "Is that bully after Bunter?"

"Listen!" grinned Bob.

From the leafy elm came a roar, which indicated where Bunter was.

"Beast! You keep off! I'll chuck an apple at you if you come up! Beast! I'll jolly well bang you with this bag!"

"Sounds like Bunter!" chuckled Nugent.

"We've come back in time," said Harry. "We'll make those cads sorry they've butted into our camp! Hook on, quick!"

Loder and Bunter, in the tree, could see nothing but leaves. Hilton, Price, and Walker, on the ground, were staring upward after Loder, and had no eyes for the river and the craft thereon.

Had they looked round they would have seen the Water-Lily running in; but they did not look round. So they did not see the Water-Lily.

The Greyfriars crew ran the boat to the bank, and did not even stop to drop the sail. Bunter, it was clear, was in need of rescue, and they were in a hurry to go to the rescue. They stayed only to tie on.

"Get hold of something," said Harry hastily.

He grabbed up a thick stick and started up the bank.

The heroes of the Remove were great fighting-men, but they were not equal to handling Fifth and Sixth Form seniors. But Bunter had to be rescued, and the enemy had to be driven off.

Bob Cherry grabbed the boathook. The other three grasped an oar each. Thus armed, they rushed towards the camp.

From the elm-tree came another roar—this time from Loder.

Billy Bunter, in sheer desperation, was hurling apples. One crashed on Loder's already damaged nose, another on his chin, another caught him in the eye. At such short range, even Bunter could not miss.

Loder roared, and very nearly lost his hold. But he grabbed again and clambered on furiously.

Bang, bang, bang! came apple after apple, banging on Loder. Then the desperate fat Owl hurled the bag with the apples that remained in it, and Loder, getting the goods in bulk, as it were, was fairly knocked backwards. He slithered down the tree and grabbed a lower branch and hung on, spluttering. Hanging to a bough with his hands, his legs swung in the air.

It was at that moment that the Famous Five arrived.

"Go for 'em!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh gad!" exclaimed Hilton. "Look out!" The next moment he went over as Johnny Bull charged with an oar, like a knight of old with a lance, and it jabbed in the Fifth-Former's ribs.

"Here, you young rotters!" panted Walker. "Yaroo! Keep that stick away, Wharton, or I'll— Yoo-hoo-hoo!"

"Give them jip!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Give them terrific toco!" yelled Hurree Janset Ram Singh, jamming his oar under Stephen Price's chin.

Walker, with a roar of rage, dodged Wharton's thick stick; but as he jumped at the captain of the Remove, Bob Cherry charged with the boathook. There was no arguing with a boathook. James Walker bounded away like a buck.

"Go for 'em!"

"Bash 'em!"

"Mop 'em up!"

Hand to hand, no doubt, big seniors would have handled Lower-Fourth juniors effectively. But they seemed to have had enough of oars and boathooks. Price was already running up the path through the wood, one jab under the chin having been enough for him. Walker bounded away from the boathook and cut after him, uttering a fearful yell as the boathook jabbed at his trousers as he went.

Cedric Hilton walked after them. He disdained to run, but he walked rather quickly. And the Famous Five turned their attention to Loder.

Loder had dragged himself on the bough, with the intention of clambering up again and collaring Bunter. But the uproar below him made Loder

pause. He glared down at the sight of his friends in full retreat—and the Famous Five gathered under the elm.

The Co. had returned at a lucky moment for Bunter—not lucky for Loder. Loder's luck was right out!

"Come down, Loder!" roared Bob.

"Waiting for you, Loder!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Billy Bunter. "I say, collar that beast! I say, he's chucked the camp stool into the water. He was going to rag the tent. I say, bash him, you fellows!"

"Coming down, Loder?" bawled Bob.

Loder was as unwilling to come down as Bunter had been a few minutes ago. He clamped himself on the branch and glared down instead of coming down.

Bob reached up with the boathook. He jabbed.

Loder's yell almost reached Berkshire, across the river.

"Yarook! Stoppit! Keep that boathook away, you young demon!"

"Coming down?" grinned Bob—and he jabbed again.

Loder made a grab at a higher branch. He was not coming down; he was going higher, out of reach of that sharp point. That, at least, was Loder's intention, but it was not carried out. Bob used the hook instead of the point and hooked on to Loder.

"Got him!" said Bob. "Hooked, by gum!"

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

"Oh gad!" panted Loder.

The hook was in his jacket, well in. Bob dragged on the handle. Loder was hooked like a fish, and he had to come down.

He had the choice of clambering down in a hurry or of descending in one. He chose to clamber down.

"Bag him!" roared Bob, as the enraged bully of the Sixth dropped to the ground, and Loder was promptly bagged.

He glared round for his friends. They were vanishing from sight at the other end of the path through the wood. Evidently, they had no idea of coming back for Gerald Loder.

Collared on all sides, Loder was helpless in the hands of the Philistines. Loder was a fairly hefty fellow, but he was not hefty enough to deal with five. They jammed him against the elm, and pinned him there.

"I say, you fellows, have you got him?" squeaked Bunter, from above.

"The gotfulness is terrific."

Billy Bunter scrambled down from the tree. Bunter was gasping for breath, but he was full of beans, with three of the enemy gone and Loder safely held.

"I say, you fellows, hold him while I smack his head!" gasped Bunter.

"I say, hold him while I boot him! I say, hold him while I jab him with the boathook!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep off, you ferocious frog!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Did you say Loder kicked the camp stool into the

water? I dare say he will get it out again for us! Won't you, Loder?"

"Let me go!" roared Loder, struggling savagely.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, make him go in for it!" chuckled Bunter. "I say, chuck the cad in after it."

"Come on, Loder!" said Johnny Bull.

Loder did not want to come on. But in the grasp of the Famous Five he had to. They walked him down to the edge of the little stream. There the camp stool could be seen, in four feet of water. Loder had put it there; it was up to Loder to get it back again.

"Go it, Loder!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly.

"Do you think I'm going into the water, you blockhead?" roared Loder.

"Sort of," agreed Bob. "Like what?"

Loder was tipped into the stream. There was a mighty splash as he went in.

"He, he, he!" cackinnated Billy Bunter.

Loder floundered in the water, gained his feet, and stood up, with the backwater flowing under his arms. He gave the grinning juniors on the bank a deadly glare, and strove to clamber out.

Bob lunged with the boathook.

Loder did not wait for that lunge to reach him. He backed away so swiftly that he lost his footing, and sat down in the creek. The water flowed over his head again. He came up, blowing like a whale.

"Hand out that camp stool, old man!" said Bob. "You're not getting out without it! Must learn to be more careful with other people's property."

"If you want your camp stool you'll have to come in and get it!" roared Loder.

The boathook came into play again.

Loder, gurgling fury, spun round, and attempted to climb out on the other side. Bob reached out, and promptly hooked him back with the boathook. Again Gerald Loder sat down in four feet of water.

When he spluttered up again, it seemed that Loder was satisfied. He grabbed the camp stool and handed it out. Then he was allowed to crawl out of the water.

"Thanks!" said Bob. "Now you can cut, Loder! Drop in again when you want another bath with your clobber on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder did not reply. He gave the cheery Bob a deadly look, and tramped up the path through the wood, squelching water at every step. Dripping from head to foot, he squelched dismally away, and disappeared after his friends.

"I've got rather an idea that Loder's sorry he called!" remarked Bob Cherry. "What do you fellows think?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no doubt that Loder was sorry that he had called. On that point there was no possible doubt—no possible, probable shadow of doubt—no possible doubt whatever.

Disaster in the Night!

"RAIN!" murmured Bob Cherry sleepily.

It was pattering down on the Greyfriars juniors' tent.

Night had fallen, and with the fall of night came the patter of rain. But at dark, like the birds, the Greyfriars campers went to roost, and they were well sheltered in the tent, under the trees by the little backwater. So nobody bothered about the rain.

Billy Bunter was already asleep—as a rumble like distant thunder in the tent indicated.

Harry Wharton & Co. rolled in their blankets, listened for a time, drowsily, to the patter of the rain, but they soon dropped off into slumber.

It was a couple of hours later that Harry Wharton suddenly awakened. He awoke with a start.

"What—" he gasped.

Something seemed to be billowing over him. He put out his hand, and found that he was covered with canvas. He started up, banged his head on a slanting tent-pole, and roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a startled voice.

"Oh, my hat! What—"

"Look out! What—"

"The tent's coming down!" shouted Harry.

It was not coming down—it had come! Fallen canvas swamped over the campers, and they struggled wildly to release themselves.

"I say, you fellows!" came a loud howl. "Whizzer marrer? That you larking, Bob Cherry, you beast? I say, I'm smothered—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent. "We'd better get out of this!"

"I say, you fellows!" bawled Bunter. "Will you stop it?"

"Crawl out, you fat ass!" roared Bob. "The tent's down, you silly ass!"

"Beast! Why didn't you fix it properly?" howled Bunter. "Rotten laziness all round, as usual."

The Famous Five struggled out of billowing canvas. Rain greeted them as they emerged, dripping through the branches over the camp.

Billy Bunter was still kicking and roaring under the fallen canvas. He howled to be released. It did not seem to occur to the fat Owl to release himself.

"Will you gemme out of this?" raved Bunter. "I'm smothered! I say, you fellows, where are you? Will you lend a hand, you beasts?"

There was a dim starlight under the rainy trees. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at the wrecked tent, in the dimness. How it had come down, so suddenly and completely, was an exasperating mystery. They were careful campers, and every peg had been carefully pegged. It was the first time such a disaster had happened during their Thames trip, and they had had much windier nights than this.

"How the thump—" growled Johnny Bull.

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"I say, you fellows—" roared Bunter.

"Oh, bother the fat chump—hook him out!" said Bob.

They groped for Bunter to hook him out. Bob Cherry got hold of a fat ankle, while Wharton seized an ear, and they lugged.

Billy Bunter rolled out, roaring.

"Ow! Leggo my ear! You're pulling my ear off, you beast! Leggo my leg! You're breaking my ankle! Beasts! Rotters! Ow! It's raining!" added Bunter; in an indignant yell. "I shall get wet!"

The fat Owl struggled to his feet. He glared at the Famous Five in inexpressible indignation. He seemed to think that it was their fault that it was raining—indeed, that they had got up that shower specially to make him uncomfortable.

"It's raining!" bawled Bunter. "I shall be soaked! You jolly well want me to be soaked! Where's the umbrella?"

Unheeding the howling Owl, the juniors groped in the dismantled tent for their clothes, and hurried them on, under such shelter as the branches afforded.

"Will you get the umbrella?" roared Bunter. "Can't you hear me telling you that I'm getting wet?"

The Famous Five heard, but they heeded not. Bunter, breathing wrath, scrambled for his clothes.

It was a damp and dismal party in the dripping rain.

Billy Bunter posted himself in the best shelter he could find, and hooted to the other fellows to get the tent up again.

"Are you going to stand there like a lot of moulting fowls?" howled Bunter. "Do you want me to get drenched? Will you get that tent up?"

Johnny Bull stepped towards the fat Owl. He did not speak. He kicked Bunter once, twice, thrice, eliciting three successive fiendish yells. Then, feeling better, Johnny rejoined his comrades, leaving Bunter rousing the echoes of Sir George Tipton's estate.

"Better stick it up again, I suppose!" said Bob. "Blessed if I know how it came down. We had it safe enough."

"I think I can guess!" said Harry, setting his lips. "I fancy we've had a visitor while we've been asleep."

"Oh, my hat! Loder—or Price—"

"I believe so! The tent never collapsed of its own accord! I suppose we might have expected some trick like this from that cad Loder."

"By gum!" Bob glared round in the shadows. "If he's still about—"

"Not likely to hang on after getting the tent down! Look here!" added Harry.

He flashed on an electric torch, and held up a tent-rope! It had been clean cut with a knife! The pegs were still in the ground.

The juniors gazed at it with deep feelings.

It was clear enough now! That tent had been safely pegged—and the pegs were still where they had been.

planted. Some person or persons unknown had crept round the tent in the dark, cutting the ropes. Obviously, it was one of Price's party—most likely Loder.

"I say, you fellows, will you get that tent up?" yelled Bunter.

"No good getting it up!" said Bob. "That blighter may be hanging about all this time. We don't want it over again."

"Better finish the night in the boat!" said Harry. "It's not long till dawn—it's jolly early sunrise this time of the year. We can manage under the tarpaulin."

"That's the only thing!" agreed Bob.

"Are you going to get that tent up again?" howled Bunter.

"No; we're going into the boat. Come on, fathead! One of those cads has let down the tent, and he may come back and let it down again!" hooted Bob. "Roll along, barrel, and shut up!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled after the Famous Five, as they moved towards the bank of the little stream. At night, the Water-Lily was pulled into the backwater for safe mooring.

But as they came to the water's edge, a startling surprise greeted the dismayed campers.

The starlight glimmered on the stream that rippled under the rain-drops. But it did not glimmer on the Water-Lily.

"The boat!" gasped Bob.

"Gone!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared in utter dismay at the empty anchorage. The Water-Lily had been secured, not only by the painter, but by a chain and padlock; the latter a precaution against Mr. Shifty Spooner, who had tried to steal the boat that had once been his property.

But the padlock had not saved it this time!

The chain had been padlocked to a post at the water's edge, used for mooring. That post had been sawn through.

The juniors looked at it. If they had doubted before that they owed their disaster to Loder & Co., they could not have doubted now. No tramp or pilferer or boat-thief would have been likely to happen along provided with a saw! It was easy enough for Loder to obtain one from the gardener's shed.

"Oh!" breathed Harry Wharton.

Johnny Bull braudished a clenched fist.

"That rotter!" he gasped. "He sawed this post through and sent the boat adrift—and then let down the tent—and us asleep all the time—Oh crumbs! If he was still here—"

"He's back at the house before this."

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter, "where's the boat? I can't see the boat! What have you done with it?"

"It's gone, you ass!"

"I'm getting soaked!" roared Bunter. "Why didn't you tie it up safely, you silly fatheads?"

"Idiot! Loder's done this!"

"You shouldn't have let him, then!" roared Bunter. "Look here, if the tent's down and the boat's gone, what am I going to do? I tell you I'm getting soaked!"

It was rather unfortunate for Bunter that the Famous Five did not realise that he was the only fellow that mattered.

They turned on him as one man, grasped him, and sat him down in the nearest puddle with a bump and a splash.

"Now shut up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

Bunter sat and roared, while the Famous Five, in wrath and dismay, consulted what had better be done—in the dripping rain. And the worst of it was that there did not seem, at present, anything that could be done. Loder had given the Greyfriars crew rather a knock-out blow!

Trouble in Price's Party!

CEDRIC HILTON, seated in a deep leather armchair in the billiards-room at Tipton Lodge, yawned over his cigarette.

Price and Walker were playing billiards. Loder was not present. The hour was late—a good deal past midnight. Price & Co. did not keep early hours in holiday-time.

Old Sir George, who had long been in bed, was probably quite unaware of his nephew's manners and customs in that respect. Stenson, the butler, had looked in three times, his face more expressive each time, and had finally gone off to bed, leaving the Greyfriars seniors to their own devices. A butler's disapproval was not likely to worry Price & Co.

The whole house was sleeping, with the exception of Price and his friends. Hilton was sleepy; but it was his way to yield to others, and he sat and yawned and waited for them to get through.

But when Price, having run Walker out, proposed a fresh game, the dandy of the Fifth sat up and threw away his cigarette.

"What about bed?" he asked.

"Waiting for Loder," answered Price.

"Loder gone out?"

"Yes."

"What a night for a walk!" yawned Hilton.

Price laughed. But he said no more and re-started billiards with Walker.

Hilton rose from the armchair.

"Half-past twelve!" he said. "If you men are goin' to make a night of it, I think I'll toddle off!" Then he paused, his expression changing. "I didn't see Loder go out. Where's he gone?"

"Oh, just a nice walk in the rain!" answered Price.

Walker chuckled.

"Is he ass enough to go ragging those fags in the middle of the night?" asked Hilton.

"I shouldn't wonder."

"You're an ass, Pricey! Your uncle won't like it."

Price shrugged his shoulders.

"If they come yowling to the old bean, I don't see what they'll prove," he answered. "Nobody here will know anything about it. Plenty of tramps along the river who might make off with their boat."

Hilton frowned.

"That's a rotten trick!" he said slowly.

Another shrug from Stephen Price.

"Better tell Loder that!" he said.

"It was his big idea. They seem to have got Loder's rag out to-day!"

"It's a bit thick!" said Walker.

"Still, you know old Gerald! When he's got his back up he doesn't stop at much."

Hilton made no answer. He stood frowning, and said nothing more

will be sorry for their cheek about this time!" said Loder. "I left them wriggling out from under their tent—in the rain. Tent seems to have collapsed on them, somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't know whether they've started looking for their boat yet," went on Loder. "If they have, I hardly think they'll find it! They had it padlocked—safe as houses, I've no doubt they fancied it! I'm afraid it's gone, all the same."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They can go down the river to-morrow and hunt for it!" said Loder. "Perhaps they'll take it as a tip not to stay where they're not wanted!"

"Good man!" said Price.

they can! But they'll get it back, if they like to follow it down the river. It will be stopped at the first lock, I suppose—if somebody doesn't snap it up. Who cares?"

"I do!" said Hilton.

"You're a fool!"

"And you're a rotter!" yawned Hilton.

Loder gave him a dangerous look, and Stephen Price hastily interposed.

"Now then, no ragging among pals!" said Price amicably. "Where are you goin', Cedric?"

Hilton, without replying, left the billiards-room. If he was going to bed, he did not trouble to say good-night.

Loder threw himself into a chair



"Ow! Leggo!" roared Bunter, as Bob Cherry held on to a fat ankle and Wharton seized an ear. "You're breaking my ankle! You're pulling my ear off!"

about going to bed. Hilton of the Fifth was a good-natured fellow and a good deal too good for the company he kept. It was easy indolence of character that put him so much under Price's influence; but there was a limit, and the expression on his face indicated that the limit was reached.

About ten minutes later the french windows of the billiards-room were pushed open from outside and Loder came in. His cap and raincoat were dripping; but he was grinning as he shook off splashing drops of rain-water.

Price and Walker gave him grinning looks of inquiry. Hilton regarded him with a steady, fixed gaze.

Loder threw off the wet cap and coat.

"O.K.?" asked Price.

"I fancy those young scoundrels

"You've sent their boat adrift, Loder?" asked Hilton quietly.

"I gave it a good shove, right out into the river, and saw it go on the current before I attended to the tent," answered Loder coolly. "I daresay it was a mile off before I woke the crew up."

"Dirty trick!" said Hilton.

Loder stared at him.

"What's biting you, you fool?" he asked politely. "You got a handling from them this morning, same as we did."

"They'll have to pay for that boat if it's lost—it's not their own," said Hilton. "It's a pretty good craft, too—it will run them into a pretty penny if they don't get it back. You'd have to pay, if they could fix it on you."

Loder laughed.

"They're welcome to fix it on me, if

and lighted a cigarette. Price and Walker resumed their game.

But Cedric Hilton was not gone to bed. In a few minutes he reappeared in the billiards-room and, to the surprise of his friends, he had a cap and raincoat on over his evening clothes and a key in his hand. The three stared at him.

"Goin' out?" asked Price, blankly.

"Yes." Hilton crossed to the french windows. "I'll go out this way—I don't want to wake the house."

Loder, with a glint in his eyes, rose and stepped between Hilton and the french window.

"Is that the key of the boat-house?" he asked quietly.

"You've guessed it."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"Guess again!"

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"You're not going after those young cads' boat!" said Loder, between his teeth.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Walker. "Don't be a fool; Hilton!"

"Cedric, old man, for goodness' sake don't play the goat!" exclaimed Price. "What the dooce does it matter to you?"

Hilton did not answer him. He looked at Loder.

"Will you oblige me by gettin' out of the way?" he asked.

"Not unless you hand over that key," answered Loder. "I don't suppose you'd get their boat back, but I jolly well know that you're not going to try."

"I've asked you to get out of the way!"

"You can ask till you're black in the face!" said Loder. "You're not goin' out of the house with that key."

"For goodness' sake," you fellows—" exclaimed Price, in alarm.

It suited Price of the Fifth to keep in with Loder, who was a Sixth Form prefect at Greyfriars. It suited him still more to keep in with Hilton, who was wealthy and easy-going, and an extremely valuable pal for a fellow like Price. A row between the two on his little holiday party was quite dismaying to the cad of the Greyfriars Fifth.

But a row was coming, and Price could not stop it. Loder was determined that Hilton should not take the skiff out from the boathouse to look for the Water-Lily. Hilton had made up his mind on that point. On the rare occasions when Cedric Hilton made up his mind he could be firm enough. He did not even glance at Price—and did not seem to hear him.

"Last time of askin', Loder," he said lightly.

"Stand back, you fool!" snarled Loder.

Hilton slipped the key into his pocket. Then he walked directly at Loder.

Loder did not budge an inch, and Hilton grasped him, to push him out of the way.

"Hands off!" panted Loder, his face red with rage.

He staggered aside in Hilton's grasp.

"Look here—" exclaimed Walker.

"Cedric, old chap—" bleated Price.

Hilton heeded neither of them. He twisted Loder aside, and the bully of the Sixth struck at him and struck again. He got in two before Hilton hit out—and then the Fifth Form man's fist crashed, and Gerald Loder went spinning, to measure his length along the wall.

Cedric Hilton threw open the french windows.

He stepped out, and then looked back in the rain.

Loder sat up, panting.

Hilton did not waste a glance on him.

"Good-night, Steve!" he said coolly. "After this I withdraw gracefully from the merry party. You might send my bag after me; I shan't be comin' back. See you next term at Greyfriars."

Without waiting for an answer Hilton turned and disappeared into the darkness and the rain.

Shifty Spooner in Luck!

SHIFTY SPOONER could hardly believe his eyes—or his luck.

Sunrise was bright on the Thames. The sun was shining down from a blue sky, and the valley of the Thames had a bright, fresh, newly washed look. The rain had stopped before dawn.

Mr. Spooner was not very susceptible to scenery. He did not care a boiled bean for Nature's fresh bright look in the sunshine after the rain.

But he was glad that the rain had stopped. Mr. Spooner was on the towpath on the Berkshire side of the river, not very far from Tilehurst, and he did not like rain when he was taking his walks abroad.

Shifty was walking up the towpath in the bright early morning, with a wary eye open—not on the scenery. He did not even notice that the railway, so near the river at that point, rather spoiled the scenery—such things did not worry Mr. Spooner.

Shifty was wary, and had reason to be wary. Shifty had spent two years in the stone-jug for mistaking another man's property for his own—and he was in some danger of seeing the inside of the stone-jug once more. And in spite of all the modern improvements in prisons, which make them so attractive in comparison with a job of hard work, Shifty did not want to go in again.

Shifty had been having bad luck. He had failed, so far, to get hold of the Water-Lily, after trailing it so long up the Thames. And a spot of burglary at Tipton Lodge, which had promised well, had turned out an absolute fizzle. Unluckily for Shifty, the Water-Lily had tied up at that very spot, and Harry Wharton & Co. had collared him in his flight, and though Shifty had got away in his canoe, he had had to leave his plunder behind—so that enterprise had to be written off as a dead loss.

It never rains but it pours, and Shifty, getting away from Tipton Lodge as fast as he could, had had the misfortune to encounter the owner of his canoe. Once more Shifty had had a narrow escape.

For two or three days since then Shifty had understudied the shy violet, keeping out of the public eye, and lying low.

But Shifty was faced with a dreadful alternative. Either he had to get hold of something that did not belong to him, or else he had to look for a job of work.

That latter alternative was unthinkable to Shifty. Work he abhorred. The stone-jug was better than that! So, in the early morning, Shifty Spooner was on the warpath again—on foot this time, nourishing a faint hope of getting once more on the trail of the Water-Lily.

Quite unknown to the present owners of the boat, the possession of the Water-Lily for a time meant much to Mr. Spooner.

His hope was faint; but the proverb tells us that the darkest hour is just before the dawn. Shifty, as he slouched up the towpath, wondering whether there was a dog's chance of spotting the Water-Lily again, suddenly saw it.

He came to a halt on the towpath and stared.

His eyes bulged in surprise.

Really it was not easy to believe his eyes. They fairly popped at the drifting boat.

In all his surmises and anticipations, Shifty Spooner had never dreamed that he would ever have the luck to spot that boat adrift, rolling down the river without an occupant.

Now he spotted it.

"Suffering snakes!" breathed Mr. Spooner, gazing at it.

It was the Water-Lily—he knew his old boat at a glance. In more prosperous days, before an official hand had ever fallen on his shoulder, Shifty had had that boat built to his own specifications. Shifty knew secrets about that boat that no one else knew or suspected.

And there it was.

Somehow or other it had run adrift while its crew were on shore. The last Shifty had seen of the Greyfriars crew—which was on the night they had grabbed him getting away with Sir George Tipton's bonds—they had been on the other side of the river in Oxfordshire. If they were still there, the drifting boat must have wandered across the river, after getting away from its moorings. Probably it had wandered to and fro a good many times, the plaything of the current.

Now it was close to the Berkshire side—only ten or twelve feet out from the towpath where Mr. Spooner stood gazing at it in amazement and delight.

"Coo!" breathed Mr. Spooner. "Is this luck?"

He fairly grinned with glee at the drifting Water-Lily.

It was amazing luck.

At that early hour, few were abroad on the Thames. That was why Mr. Spooner was abroad. Later in the day, when there were crowds about, it was Mr. Spooner's intention to retire to seclusion for a time—after the episode at Tipton Lodge he had to be wary. At the present moment he was the only person on the towpath at that point, and, looking up and down the river, he could see only one single craft, apart from the Water-Lily.

That was a light skiff coming down the river under a pair of sculls, and still at a considerable distance.

Except for that, Mr. Spooner had the Thames to himself.

"Coo!" repeated Mr. Spooner, in a deep breath of satisfaction. "Suffering tadpoles! This beats it!"

He moved along, keeping pace with the slowly drifting boat. He hoped that it would drift into the rushes, and give him a chance to grab.

It drifted a little nearer as if to tantalise him. But, within six feet of the bank, it eddied out again.

"Blow!" said Mr. Spooner.

Shifty did not want to swim with his clothes on. But he was not likely

to let that boat drift away, after coming so near. Across the water it would be out of his reach—and, lower down, it would be snapped up by any waterman who saw it adrift, and in any case would be taken in at the next lock. It was now or never for Shifty. He plunged in.

A few strokes brought him to the boat and he grabbed the gunwale. Dripping, he clambered in.

The Water-Lily at long last was his again.

He squeezed water out of his clothes. He was wet and uncomfortable; but that mattered little in the hour of success and triumph.

Shifty bent over the stern locker. It was that locker which, for some reason only known to Shifty, had a special attraction for him. Once before, when he had got hold of the boat for a time, he had found that locker screwed up, and the Famous Five had recaptured the boat before Shifty could deal with the screw. But it was not screwed now—it and its contents were at Shifty's mercy.

Shifty opened the lid and looked into it. It was nearly full of various articles, mostly tinned goods.

Mr. Spooner was very eager to explore that locker. He was undecided for a moment whether to get going at once or pull the Water-Lily into some secluded spot first. The latter seemed more prudent, as the Greyfriars crew might be searching for their boat. Shifty picked up a pair of oars and sat down to row.

"Hi!"

He stared up the river as he heard that hail.

The skiff he had observed in the distance was nearer now. The hail came from that skiff.

It had only one occupant. If it was a member of the Famous Five, after the boat, Shifty was ready to deal with him! But a glance showed him that the fellow in the skiff was a stranger to him.

He was some years older than any of the juniors; and he was dressed in a way very unusual for a fellow sculling on the river in the dawn.

He was in evening clothes, and with that garb he wore a cap! A raincoat lay in the skiff, which looked as if he had come out while it was still raining during the night.

Shifty Spooner stared at him blankly. He had spent a good deal of time on rivers, and had seen all sorts and conditions of river men; but never before had he seen a fellow in evening dress sculling in the sunrise. Apparently that fellow had made a night of it!

"Hi!" repeated the occupant of the skiff.

He was hailing Shifty as the skiff shot on.

Shifty decided not to heed. He sat to the oars and pulled.

"Hi!" shouted the fellow in the skiff again. "Hold on!"

Mr. Spooner set his teeth and put his beef into the pull. Who the fellow in evening clothes was he had not the faintest idea; but it was clear that he was interested in Mr. Spooner. Shifty wanted nothing to

do with him. Shifty wanted to get away with the Water-Lily.

He pulled hard! He was a good man with oars; but the Water-Lily was a roomy boat, and not the craft to compete in a race with a light skiff that fairly skimmed the water.

That skiff came on like an arrow, and was alongside before Shifty had covered much distance.

Mr. Spooner gave the handsome fellow in the skiff an evil look; but the latter gave Mr. Spooner a pleasant nod.

"Lookin' for that boat," he said pleasantly. "Thanks for pickin' it up, but I'll take it over now!"

Not So Lucky!

HILTON of the Fifth laid in his sculls and dropped a hand on the gunwale of the Water-Lily.

Mr. Spooner ceased to pull and he also laid in his oars; but he kept a grip on one of them. If that dandified fellow persisted in bothering Mr. Spooner, Shifty had a use for that oar, though not for rowing!

"Who the dickens are you?" demanded Mr. Spooner gruffly. "Take your hand off my boat!"

Hilton raised his eyebrows.

"Your boat?" he asked.

"My boat?" said Mr. Spooner definitely.

"There's a little mistake somewhere!" remarked Hilton. "That boat's the Water-Lily—its name's plain enough to be seen. Besides, I know it by sight! It went adrift last night—"

"Plenty of Water-Lilies on the Thames," said Mr. Spooner. "You're mistaking this for another boat! Sheer off, please!"

Hilton smiled, and kept his grasp on the gunwale of the Greyfriars boat. He had supposed, at first, that Mr. Spooner was some river idler who was looking for a reward for picking up a drifting boat. He realised now that Mr. Spooner was a boat-thief.

"I think you're making a mistake, my friend!" he drawled. "You didn't get as wet as that pullin' a boat! You swam off to it. What?"

"My business, not yours!" retorted Mr. Spooner. "I'm asking you, civil, to let go my boat."

"Let me explain!" said Hilton politely. "This boat belongs to some boys from my school, and I'm after it to get it back for them! Understand?"

"I said sheer off!" was Mr. Spooner's reply.

"I've followed it a good way, looking for it—and now I've found it," said Hilton. "I'll tip you five shillings, if you like, for picking it up! But I must really ask you to hand it over."

Shifty gave a quick glance up and down and round about the Thames. Not a single craft was in sight! There was nobody on the towpath. He gripped the oar and lifted it.

"You going to sheer off, you

tailor's dummy?" he inquired disagreeably. "I'm going to knock you over, if you don't."

"Is it worth while?" drawled Hilton. "Look here, my man, even if you got away with the boat, I should give information at once, and you'd be looked for. You'd never get it past a lock in either direction. Hadn't you better think again?"

Hilton was, of course, unaware that Mr. Spooner's object was not so much to steal the Water-Lily as to run it into some quiet spot where he could explore the locker. But he was soon aware that Mr. Spooner did not intend to give up possession of the boat.

The oar swept through the air, aimed at Hilton's head. With success right in his grasp, Shifty was not standing on ceremony with this dandified fellow who had cropped up so unexpectedly.

But Hilton, dandified as he looked, was not precisely the tailor's dummy that Mr. Spooner had taken him for.

He was on his guard; and as the oar swept down he pushed the skiff quickly alongside the Water-Lily; and the blade of the oar came down a yard from him. It came down with a crash that made the little skiff rock.

Before Mr. Spooner could recover his unwieldy weapon for another swipe, the dandy of the Greyfriars Fifth had leaped into the Water-Lily.

The skiff glided away, rocking; the Water-Lily rocked, too; but Hilton kept his feet easily. He was too close to Shifty for Shifty to use the oar again; and Mr. Spooner dropped it and took to his fists.

He was about twice as heavy as the slim, handsome Fifth-Former of Greyfriars, and had no doubt of knocking him out in two or three seconds.

But that was one of Shifty's mistakes.

With a growl of rage he flung himself at Hilton, hitting out. He hardly knew how Hilton's left brushed his punch aside and Hilton's right came out like a mallet, tapping on his nose.

But he knew that he went over backwards, pitching over the gunwale of the rocking Water-Lily and landing on his back in the Thames with a resounding splash!

Quite a waterspout flew up as Mr. Spooner hit the Thames with his back, and disappeared under the surface.

Hilton, keeping his feet in the wildly rocking boat, rubbed his knuckles. Shifty's bony nose had rather hurt his knuckles.

A head came up, dripping, from the water a few yards off the Water-Lily. Shifty Spooner spluttered for breath, his face red with rage.

He swam at once for the boat! Shifty was not giving in yet.

Hilton glanced round the Water-Lily and picked up the boathook.

Shifty's hand grasped the gunwale. The boathook rapped on his knuckles and Shifty gave a roar! Then the pointed end poked Shifty and he gave another roar.

"Call it a day, what?" smiled Hilton. "You seem to be able to swim, my friend—what about swimmin' to the bank?"

"Wait till I get at you!" gasped Shifty Spooner. "I'll bash you till you're a hospital case!"

"What an attractive prospect!" murmured Hilton.

"Put that 'ook down or I'll have the boat over!" roared Mr. Spooner, hanging on the gunwale till the Water-Lily dipped at a dangerous angle.

"I think not!" drawled Hilton.

He threw his weight on the other side and coolly jabbed at Mr. Spooner with the boathook.

Shifty had to let go or be punctured. Shifty was very much in earnest; and he took one jab and then another—but as the boathook came again he realised that it was not good enough, and let go. Jabbing from the sharp end of a boathook was an overwhelming argument. Shifty let go and dodged.

"That's better!" said Hilton. "Hadn't you better make the bank? Perhaps another jab or two—"

He reached over with the boathook.

Shifty Spooner, with inexpressible feelings, swam clear.

Hilton gave him a smile and a nod, dropped the boathook, and picked up a pair of oars.

Shifty made for the boat again, but a single strong pull sent the Water-Lily far out of his reach.

The dandy of the Fifth smiled back at the infuriated face in the water. If looks could have slain, the look that Mr. Spooner gave him in return would have ended the career of the dandy of the Greyfriars Fifth! But Mr. Spooner's deadly look only drew a smile from Hilton; and he pulled on after his skiff, which had drifted some distance out.

Shifty swam after the boat for a few minutes! He could hardly make up his mind to let it go. It was really cruel luck for Shifty. Fortune, after seeming to smile, had let him down with a bump.

Hilton looked back at him, grinning as he pulled. 'In a few minutes he overtook the skiff, caught the painter, and tied it on astern of the Water-Lily. Then he started pulling up the river—keeping well out.

Shifty, from the water, glared after him. Shifty was a good swimmer; but he was not prepared for a race up the Thames. With deep feelings, Shifty Spooner swam back to the bank.

He crawled out on the towpath and stood, running with water, gazing after the boat disappearing up the river. His feelings were deep, and his language expressive, as he gazed. Shifty Spooner had captured a punch on the nose and a drenching—merely that, and nothing more; and the fact that that was exactly what he deserved seemed to afford Mr. Spooner no consolation whatever.

Shifty, muttering curses, walked off to seek a place where he could dry his clothes. Once again his luck was out!

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Quite a Surprise!

"I SAY, you fellows—" "Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Beast!" roared back Bunter.

Nobody in the Greyfriars camp was feeling merry or bright in the cheery sunrise.

It had not been a happy night!

The Famous Five had very quickly realised that nothing could be done about the missing Water-Lily till daylight. Whether there was a craft available in the Tipton Lodge boat-house they did not know; but obviously they could not knock up the house at one in the morning and

ask for the key of the boathouse. Foot-slogging after the missing boat was impossible, as the towpath was on the other side of the river. They could only wait for daylight—and having decided on that, they made shift to get the tent up again somehow, and crawled into it for shelter from the rain.

They would have been rather glad if Loder of the Sixth had come back with further designs on the tent. They were anxious to see Loder—yearning to see him!

But there was no further alarm in the night; and fortunately the rain ceased at dawn when they turned out.

For once in his fat life, Billy Bunter turned out early also. Bunter was damp and uncomfortable, and uneasy about breakfast, and in a fearfully bad temper.

It was a glorious morning after the rain. That was all right, so far as it went. There was as yet no sign of stirring in the direction of the house.

That one member of Price's party had gone in search of the missing boat, the juniors had not the faintest idea. Hilton had slipped down the stream in the skiff, before they had missed the Water-Lily, and they had neither seen nor heard anything of him.

"After all, we shall get it back all right!" said Bob. "'Tain't as if it's been pinched. May find it jammed in the bank only half a mile away. Or they may have stopped it at Purley Ferry. Anyhow, it won't get past a lock. The people at the lock would be sure to spot it."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"We'll make that cad Loder sit up for this!" said Johnny Bull. "I don't see keeping the peace if Loder doesn't! Next time we see him we'll rag him bald-headed."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"All the same, I think we'd better pull out as soon as we get the Water-Lily back," he said. "Old Sir George is jolly hospitable—but Price is his nephew, and ragging with his nephew and his nephew's friends is rather awkward! When we get our boat we'd better go."



Hilton's right came out like a mallet, and Shifty Spooner was rocking.

"We're going to make Loder sit up first!" said Johnny Bull, positively.

"I say, you fellows, let's go up to the house!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "The old donkey will jolly well jaw Loder, and anyhow they'll stand us some brekker. It will get Price into a row, too."

"We haven't come here to start a row between old George and his relations," growled Bob Cherry.

"You silly chump!" howled Bunter. "Blow old George and his relations! Let's go and wake up the old codger, and tell him—"

"Oh, shut up!"

The Famous Five had no idea whatever of carrying complaints up to the house. They were not at Tipton Lodge to cause trouble. But that

view of the matter did not appeal to Billy Bunter in the least.

"Well, if you fellows think I'm going without brekker just because you've been fools enough to lose the boat with all the grub on it, you're jolly well mistaken!" roared Bunter. "I'm going up to the house."

"Stop where you are, fathead!" "Shan't!"

Billy Bunter started. But he did not proceed very far. He had, in fact, taken only two steps, when Johnny Bull grabbed the back of his neck and sat him down with a heavy bump.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.



r toppled backwards, pitching over the gunwale of the Water-Lily!

"Now keep quiet!" hissed Johnny. "You're asking to be tipped into the water! You'll get it, if you don't shut up!"

"Beast!"

"Nothing for it but to wait till they turn out at the house, and then borrow a boat, if we can!" said Harry. "And— Why, what— look!"

He gave a gasp of astonishment and pointed to the river.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Bob. "Is that the Water-Lily?"

"Is that our boat?" gasped Nugent.

"Who the thump is that pulling it?" howled Johnny Bull. "It looks like that slacking ass Hilton!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed in amazement.

It was the Water-Lily; there was no mistake about that. Towed behind it was a little skiff. And the fellow pulling the Greyfriars boat was Cedric Hilton of the Fifth! They gazed at him dumbfounded.

"Well, this beats it!" gasped Bob. "Can Hilton have gone after our boat?"

"Looks like it," said Harry. "He's got it, anyhow!"

"He's pulling in here!" said Nugent.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Cheer up, old fat man!" chuckled Bob. "Here's the boat coming back, and the grub on it! Think of the grub, and be happy!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Billy Bunter fixed his spectacles on the approaching boat. The wrathful frown faded from his fat face. There was grub on the boat! The boat was coming! Life was about to be worth living once more!

Hilton, as he drew in to the bank, glanced round. He saw the Famous Five staring at him, and gave them a nod and a grin.

Then he pulled in, and laid in the oars as the Water-Lily nosed into the little backwater. He punted in and threw the painter to Bob Cherry, who caught it and tied on.

The dandy of the Fifth stepped ashore, taking his raincoat on his arm.

The juniors blinked at him.

"You—you went after our boat?" ejaculated Harry, blankly.

"Sort of!" agreed Hilton. He glanced down at his clothes and smiled. "I didn't stop to change! Glad I've got it back for you."

"You've saved us a jolly long hunt for it!" said Bob.

"Quite a long one, I think!" grinned Hilton. "When I spotted it I found a man in possession—and he seemed very unwillin' to give it up. I've barked my knuckles on his nose."

"Oh crumbs!"

"A boat-thief?" exclaimed Harry. "By gum! That man Spooner, perhaps—"

"Was he a blighter with a face like a fox, and shifty eyes like a rat?" asked Johnny Bull.

Hilton laughed.

"That description fits him very

closely," he answered. "He seemed fearfully keen on keepin' possession. Know the man?"

"If it's the same man, he's been after it before!" said Harry. "I—I say, Hilton, we're awfully obliged to you."

"The obligefulness is truly terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Hilton!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You've made your nobby clobber a bit grubby!" said Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"You silly fatheads, now you've got the boat back, can't you trot out the grub, instead of standing there jawing?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "Fat lot you care whether a fellow's hungry or not!"

"Kick him, somebody!"

Hilton glanced at his watch.

"Not seven yet," he said. "Time to cut in and change before my dear friends come down! If you fellows would like to oblige a chap—"

"Give it a name!" said Bob at once.

"Then you might shove that skiff back into the boathouse for me! I'd rather not lose time—I've an early train to catch."

"Leave it to us!" said Harry.

Hilton nodded, and walked away towards the house in the distance—the juniors looking after him very curiously.

"That chap's a silly ass and a bad hat, but he's not a bad sort!" remarked Bob Cherry. "He's done us a jolly good turn! Get hold of that skiff!"

As the skiff was on the riverward side of the Water-Lily, which filled the little backwater from side to side, it had to be lifted out and taken round.

Billy Bunter gave the Famous Five an indignant howl as they proceeded to handle the skiff.

"Can't you get the grub out of the boat first?" he roared. "Want me to cart it out? Am I to do all the work?"

Johnny Bull paused a moment and fixed a grim eye on the Owl of the Remove.

"Get the grub out and get brekker ready for six!" he said. "If it isn't ready by the time we've put this skiff away, you shan't have any!"

"What!" roared Bunter.

"Not a morsel!" said Bob.

"Why, you beast—"

"Better get busy, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"If you think I'm going to cook brekker for six—" shrieked Bunter.

"There will only be brekker for five, if you don't!"

"Why, you—you—you—" gurgled Bunter.

Bull.

Leaving Bunter speechless, the Famous Five gave their attention to the skiff. They lifted it out, carried it past the Water-Lily, and slipped it into the backwater again. Then Bob Cherry punted it up the short distance to the boathouse, his friends following him on the bank, and they put it away.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter got busy. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,647.

The awful threat of depriving him of brekker was enough. Bunter got busy in a hurry. There was a cheery scent of frying bacon in the Greyfriars camp when Harry Wharton & Co. came back after putting the skiff away.

A Narrow Escape!

"GONE?" asked Walker.

Stephen Price scowled blackly.

"Yes!" he snapped.

"Did he get that boat?" asked Loder.

"I don't know, and I don't care!" scowled Price. "Stenson says he came in about seven, changed and packed his bag, and cleared. He'd been gone an hour when I came down. That's all I know!"

Walker whistled. Loder shrugged his shoulders. Price scowled at both of them.

The three were down rather early—considering the time they had gone to bed the night before. Loder was rather anxious to know whether Hilton's intervention had been effective in the matter of the boat. Price was still more anxious to know whether the dandy of the Fifth really meant to cut the party.

There was no doubt about that now. Cedric Hilton was gone, and it was a blow to Price of the Fifth! Easy-going as Hilton was, Price had not found it easy to get him to join that party—and now he had lost him! Price had a lot of uses for a friend who had plenty of money and never counted it. He would rather have lost both Walker and Loder!

They were at breakfast—Price, at least, not enjoying the meal. He was very much inclined to quarrel with Loder, but he did not want his little party to diminish further.

Loder rose from the table and lighted a cigarette.

"I'm goin' to see if they've got that boat back!" he said. "Comin'?"

"Oh, bother the boat!" answered Walker. "I haven't finished brekker!"

"Look here, Loder, don't start another row with those fags!" grunted Price. "My uncle——"

"I'm fed up with your uncle!" answered Loder.

"We've got to keep on his right side while we're here! I tell you that——"

Gerald Loder did not wait for him to finish. He walked out of the room, leaving Price scowling and uneasy. Price would have been glad enough to see the Famous Five get all that Loder wanted to give them, and some over; but he had to be careful with Sir George. If the old gentleman cut up rusty, Loder was ready to go. And as for the difficulty he might leave Price in, he cared nothing about that—nothing, at least, in comparison with giving those cheeky fags what, in Loder's opinion, they richly merited.

If that boat was back at its moorings, Loder was going to see that it did not remain there—even if it

led to a row with old Sir George. And if Price did not like it, Price could lump it! That was how Gerald Loder looked at it.

He crossed the lawn to the wood by the river, through which the little backwater flowed. He was soon in sight of the Greyfriars camp—and of the Greyfriars boat.

There it was, tied up again, evidence that Hilton had succeeded in getting it back for its owners.

The Famous Five were busy on shore, striking the tent and packing their goods and chattels. Billy Bunter, seated on a log, was watching them, and eating apples.

Loder, keeping out of sight, watched them for a few minutes.

Their activity looked as if they were breaking camp.

That, in fact, was what they were doing. Having consulted on the matter, the chums of the Remove had agreed that it was best to cut short their stay at Tipton Lodge. They had intended to put in a day or two longer at that pleasant spot, but to stay there on fighting terms with Sir George's nephew and other guests was a little too awkward. Their chief regret was that they were going without handing something back to Loder of the Sixth. Still, even Johnny Bull agreed that it was wisest to avoid more rows at Sir George's place—the Famous Five having a little more delicacy in such matters than Gerald Loder had.

Loder did not approach the camp by the path through the wood.

He guessed that the juniors were going, and would soon be gone; and, so far as that went, it was satisfactory to have driven them away.

But that was not all the satisfaction that Loder wanted. Hilton had undone his work with the boat! Now he was going to undo Hilton's—if he could! They were not going off in a cheerful party in that boat. They were going to hunt for that boat if they wanted it!

Loder retraced his steps, and walked away quickly to the boat-house. There he pushed out the punt.

While the juniors were busy packing ashore, it was easy to slip down the stream, in the punt, and jump on the Water-Lily. The boat was tied only by a rope to a branch—it was a second's work to cast it loose and shove it out. And this time Loder was going to make sure work of it. He was going to pull that boat across to the Berkshire side, send it adrift there, and come back by the ferry.

It was quite simple and easy while the juniors were busy ashore, packing up in the camp.

Loder grinned sourly as he pushed out the punt.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co., unaware of Loder, were packing the tent.

Johnny Bull looked round at Bunter with a grim eye.

"Packed up those crocks in the hamper, Bunter?" he called out.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"You fat, lazy, frowsting chunk of tallow——"

"Beast!"

"Get a move on, Bunter, you lazy, fat ass!" said Nugent.

"I'll carry this basket of apples on the boat, if you like," said Bunter. "If you fellows think you're going to leave all the work to me——"

Bunter did not finish that sentence.

Johnny Bull had a tent-peg in his hand, which he was about to pack in the bag with the others. Instead of packing it, he buzzed it at Bunter. It banged on the spot where Billy Bunter had parked considerable quantities of eggs and rashers that morning.

"Ooooh!" spluttered Bunter.

"Have another?" roared Johnny.

"Urrgh! Beast!"

"Get a move on, then!"

"Ow! Rotter! Ooogh!"

Bunter got a move on. He started for the boat with the basket of apples. He got on board the Water-Lily with that basket.

He did not land again. Bunter was unemployed, but he was not seeking work! He sat down in the boat, and restarted; after the interval, on the apples.

It was about five minutes later that a punt came gliding down the little stream, and Bunter blinked at Loder of the Sixth, in the punt, and grinned.

If Loder was going punting, he could not get by, as the Water-Lily entirely blocked his passage.

Loder shoved hard with the punt-pole, and the punt came down with a whiz. A moment after Bunter had sighted him, the punt bumped on the Water-Lily and set it rocking.

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter, as he rocked in the boat.

It seemed to the fat junior that Loder must be blind, not seeing the boat in his way.

But the next moment Loder was jumping into the boat.

Leaving the punt to take care of itself, Loder landed in the Water-Lily and grabbed at the painter. He had not, in his swift rush down the stream, noticed that Bunter was now in the boat.

Now he noticed him—but he did not heed him. He grabbed at the painter to drag it loose.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.

Had the Water-Lily remained unoccupied, as when Loder had done his scouting, there was no doubt that Loder would have got away with it. The Famous Five on the bank had no time to reach him before he got clear. Swiftly was Loder's cue—and he had been very swift!

But the Water-Lily was not now unoccupied. Billy Bunter was there, and as Loder grabbed at the painter, the fat Owl yelled the alarm and the Famous Five, on shore, all stared round from their occupations.

"Loder!" yelled Bob.

"Stop him, Bunter!" shrieked Harry Wharton.

The five juniors rushed for the bank. Loder was bagging their boat under their very eyes, and they had no time to reach him before he did it!

Crash!

There was a big apple in Billy Bunter's fat hand. He threw it, or

rather banged it, at Loder's head, as Loder grabbed the painter.

Even Billy Bunter could not miss at a range of six feet!

That apple banged on Loder's head like a hammer, and the bully of the Sixth staggered, and missed his hold of the painter. He stumbled in the rocking boat, lost his footing, and sat down with a howl.

He was up again in a moment and grabbing at the painter again. But that moment was enough for the juniors.

Bob Cherry, with a desperate bound, covered the last six feet and landed in the boat, crashing into Loder.

They rolled together in the bottom of the Water-Lily; and in another moment the rest of the Co. were piling in.

The painter still held the Water-Lily. In the bottom of the boat Gerald Loder sprawled and roared under the Famous Five!

Carried Off!

"**H**E, he, he!" chortled Bunter. Billy Bunter sat grinning in the stern seat, watching the mix-up amidships.

Very nearly—very nearly indeed—Loder had got away with the Water-Lily. Bunter had put paid to him. Loder was not going to get away with the Water-Lily now! He was not going to get away without it, in fact! He was not going to get away at all!

"Got the sweep!" grinned Bob Cherry, as he knelt on Loder's waistcoat.

"Urrgh! Leggo! Lemme gerrup!" spluttered Loder.

He wriggled wildly under the five juniors, rather like a worm under a wheel.

"We've got the cad!" said Frank Nugent breathlessly. "The rotter was going to walk off with the boat under our noses—"

"The walkfulness will not be terrific now!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, I stopped him!" chortled Billy Bunter. "If I hadn't stopped him he would have had the boat! I say, I did it!"

"Will you lemme gerrup?" gurgled Loder.

"I say, you fellows, chuck him into the water!" chirruped Bunter. "I say, lemme get at him with the boat-hook! I say, I'll puncture the beast!"

"Duck him!" said Bob.

"Hold on!" said Johnny Bull. "I know a better one than that! Loder's chosen to get on our boat—let him stay on it!"

"Eh? We don't want his company!"

"We do!" answered Johnny.

"What the thump—"

"We're going to tow, after we get through the lock. Loder can tow us up to Pangbourne."

"Think he would, you ass?"

"I'm sure he would, if we keep on pulling his ear till he does!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young rotters, let me go!" roared Loder, struggling desperately. Harry Wharton laughed.

"You're not going yet, Loder! You came here of your own accord, didn't you? You wanted to get off in the boat! Well, you're going to get off in it!"

"I—I—I'll smash you!" shrieked Loder.

"Get on with it!" grinned Bob.

Loder would gladly have got on with it! But a fellow flattened out in the bottom of a boat, with five fellows kneeling on him, was not in a position to get on with anything.

"Give me a rope, Bunter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Mind if I tie your hands to a thwart, Loder?"

Loder heaved and the boat rocked. But his hands were tied to a thwart. Then the Famous Five left him to wriggle. Loder was welcome to wriggle as much as he liked; he could do nothing else—he could not even sit up. He lay on his back, wriggling and roaring.

"He, he, he!" cackinnated Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped ashore and resumed their packing, leaving Loder till wanted. His voice, on its top note, followed them from the boat, unheeded.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes Pickings!" remarked Bob Cherry, as Sir George's man came down the path, with a basket in his hand.

The Famous Five greeted Pickings politely.

"Sir George's compliments, and a basket of heggs!" said Pickings. "You young gentlemen going?" he added.

"Yes; we've got to push on!" said Harry. "Please take a message from us to Sir George. Best thanks for his kindness and hospitality."

"Certainly, sir," said Pickings.

He gave a start as an infuriated voice pealed from the boat.

"You young scoundrels, come and let me loose!"

"Wha-a-t's that, sir?" stuttered Pickings.

"Oh, that's Loder!" said Bob cheerily. "He got on our boat for a trip, and now he's changed his mind. But we're taking him all the same."

"Oh, my eye!" said Pickings.

"You might give Price a message, too—tell him that if he wants Loder, he can pick him up somewhere round Pangbourne this afternoon!"

Pickings grinned.

"Yes, sir! Certainly, sir!"

"You young villains!" came Loder's yell.

"The young gentleman sounds rather excited, sir!" murmured Pickings.

"Yes; he's got rather a bad temper, but we're going to give him something to cure all that!" said Bob cheerily.

Pickings was tipped, and he departed, grinning. Then the Famous Five lost no time in getting their outfit on board the Water-Lily. It was probable that the message sent by Pickings would bring Price and Walker to the spot, to the rescue of Gerald Loder. Loder certainly was not going to be rescued; and the

Famous Five were easily able to deal with a couple of seniors. Still, it was judicious to depart without a battle.

So the boat was packed, and the chums of the Remove went on board, Loder eyeing them with looks that were positively homicidal.

"Will you let me loose?" he hissed.

"Not a lot!" answered Bob, shaking his head. "You're not wanted to tow yet, Loder!"

"Anxious to get to work?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The painter was cast off, and the juniors pushed the Water-Lily out, as two figures appeared in sight, running from the direction of the house.

Price and Walker had received the message sent by Pickings.

The juniors grinned cheerfully at the sight of them, as they came sprinting by the path through the trees.

Having pushed the boat into the river, out of reach of a jump from the bank, they held on, Bob hooking the boathook into an overhanging branch, to give Stephen Price and James Walker time to come up and say a farewell word, if they wanted to.

Loder twisted his head up, and glared at his friends over the gunwale.

"Stop them!" he howled.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Walker, standing on the bank and staring at him. "What are you lying down there for, Gerald?"

"I'm tied, you fool!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Look here, you young rotters!" shouted Price. "Let Loder out of that boat at once, do you hear?"

"The hearfulness is terrific!"

"We're keeping Loder for a bit!" explained Bob. "You can have him back later if you like, when we're done with him."

"You silly young idiot!" gasped Price. "Bring that boat in—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Loder sent our boat adrift last night, Price, as I expect you know!" said Harry Wharton. "He came down here this morning and tried the same game on again, under our noses. Now he's going to have a lesson! Anything more to say before we go?"

"You young rascal—"

"Push in, and let's collar Price!" said Johnny Bull. "Let's put him through it as well as Loder!"

That was enough for Stephen Price. He backed away from the bank, turned, and disappeared through the trees. Evidently he wanted to run no risk of being put through it with Loder!

"Hold on, Pricey!" roared Bob.

Price disappeared without answering. Walker, grinning, followed him.

The Famous Five pushed off, and pulled up the river. Tipton Lodge sank out of view behind them. Loder, in the bottom of the boat, wriggled and glared and gasped. He could hardly believe that the juniors were in earnest in carrying him off in the boat. But certainly it looked as if they were.

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"Will you young rotters put me ashore?" he hissed.

"Yes—when it's time to tow!" answered Bob.

"I'll shout for help!" howled Loder.

"Take that boathook, Bunter! If he shouts, give him something to shout for!" said Bob.

"He, he, he! Yes, rather!" chirruped Bunter.

Loder decided not to shout.

"Mind if we chuck a few things over you, going through the lock, Loder?" asked Bob. "We're not making an exhibition of you, you know—funny animal as you are!"

Without waiting for permission from Loder, Bob threw the sail and a rug or two over him! Loder disappeared from sight!

"If you hear a sound from under that sail, Bunter, jab with the boathook!" said Bob.

"He, he, he! Leave it to me!"

The juniors pulled on, and there was no sound from under the sail.

Loder Makes Himself Useful!

"READY, Loder?"

Loder of the Sixth did not answer.

Above the lock, the juniors had pulled into the towpath, and they were ready for Loder to do his bit.

Loder did not seem ready.

Bob Cherry had passed the end of the towline over Loder's shoulder and knotted it round him. Now the crew of the Water-Lily were ready for him to step ashore and tow.

The boat was close in to the bank. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull stepped out. The other fellows waited for Loder to follow. He had been released from the thwart. But he seemed more disposed to use his fists than to pull on the towrope.

Fists, however, were not much use to Gerald Loder now. He was in the hands of the Philistines. Five fellows were prepared to handle him without the slightest ceremony. Billy Bunter held the boathook, only too keen to give Loder a jab or two. Loder breathed fury, but he did not yield to the impulse to jump at the juniors, hitting out right and left.

"Get out, Loder!" said Harry Wharton.

"You young scoundrel——" hissed Loder.

"Speech may be taken as read! Get out!"

"Do you think I'm going to tow this boat?" shrieked Loder.

"Yes!"

"I—I—I'll——" Loder gasped with rage.

"I say, you fellows, I'll make him get out," said Billy Bunter. "Stand clear while I jab him!"

"Go it!" called out Bob, from the bank. "Jab him till he jumps out, Bunter! We can't hang about waiting for Loder."

Loder jumped out of the boat without waiting to be jabbed.

On the towpath he grasped the rope that was knotted round his shoulders to tear it loose.

"Hand me that boathook, Bunter!"

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called out Bob. "Now then, Loder, let that rope alone! You get punctured if you touch it!"

Loder, gritting his teeth, continued to drag at the knot. But he ceased to do so all of a sudden as Bob poked him with the sharp end of the hook.

"Yaroooh!" roared Loder. He fairly danced on the towpath.

"Have another?" asked Bob.

"Keep off, you young villain!" roared Loder.

"Leave that rope alone! Now, get going! We'll walk with you to keep you company," said Bob affably. "Don't look so jolly ill-tempered! That isn't the sort of face for a summer holiday up the river! Put on a smile!"

Loder did not put on a smile. But he moved on with the towrope. One jab was enough to get him going.

Harry Wharton pushed off from the bank. Frank Nugent sat and steered. On the towpath, Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull walked with Loder. Loder was not likely to stick to the towrope if left unguarded.

The Water-Lily surged on up the river.

The Famous Five had smiling faces. Billy Bunter was grinning from one fat ear to the other. Loder was scowling like a demon.

There were plenty of people about, on the bank towards Pangbourne on that bright sunny morning.

Loder's first idea was to call for help as soon as somebody was at hand. But he soon gave up that idea.

"Don't speak to anybody on the towpath, Loder," said Bob. "If you even open your mouth when we pass anybody I'm going to jab you! I'm going to give you a jab for every syllable. If that's what you want, go ahead!"

Loder breathed fury and towed on.

Bob and Johnny Bull walked beside him, Bob with the boathook under his arm.

A good many people were passed, and several times Loder opened his lips—but shut them again.

It was not hard work towing the Water-Lily, but it was fearfully humiliating and enraging for Loder. He kept up a fairly good speed. The Famous Five did not want other towed boats to pass them, and when Loder slowed down Johnny Bull promptly kicked him to spur him on. Loder very soon tired of that method of encouragement.

He tramped on savagely, towing the boat. But his feelings were growing deeper and deeper. He was rather in the state of a bomb just going to explode.

About a mile had been covered when Loder suddenly turned to the left and charged across the towpath. So sudden was the action that his two conductors had no time to stop him.

The bows of the Water-Lily crashed into the bank. There was a roar from the four juniors in the boat.

As the Water-Lily tilted up, Harry Wharton, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and Billy Bunter pitched aft, bumping on Frank Nugent, sitting at the lines.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Wow!"

It was quite a mix-up in the boat. The stern dipped to the water as the bows climbed the bank. Four fellows sprawled right and left.

"Look out!" yelled Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Collar him!"

Bob and Johnny Bull rushed after Loder. There was a stile by the towpath, giving admittance to a field-path. Loder made a desperate bound at the stile.

But two pairs of hands grasped him from behind, and he was dragged back, with a bump, on the towpath.

He rolled over, mixed up in a wild and frantic struggle with the two juniors.

Harry Wharton scrambled out of the boat. The towrope was slack now, and he shoved the Water-Lily off the bank.

Then he rushed across to lend a hand with Loder. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed him. Nugent kept the boat steady, while Billy Bunter sprawled and roared.

Loder struggled frantically with four juniors. But four were far too many for him. Loder was flattened out on the towpath, face down, and Bob Cherry sat on his shoulders to keep him there. Loder's face was buried in the grass roots, and he gurgled wildly.

"Bunter!" shouted Bob.

"Yaroooh!"

"Bring the frying-pan ashore——"

"Blow the frying-pan! Ow!"

"And give Loder six!"

"Oh, all right!"

Billy Bunter sorted out the frying-pan and scrambled ashore. Bunter was bumped and breathless, and he was more than willing to give Loder six.

"Urrgh!" came a gurgle from Loder. "You young rotters! Urrgh! If you dare—— Gurrgh!"

"Got him safe?" asked Bunter.

"Safe as houses! Loder, you're going to have six. You'll get the same every time you give trouble. You're more trouble than you're worth, really, but we'll keep you in order."

"Go it, Bunter!"

Loder struggled and heaved and rocked. But with Bob sitting on his shoulders, Wharton and Johnny Bull standing on his legs, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gripping his ears, he was safely pinned.

Billy Bunter, gasping but grinning, swung the frying-pan!

Whop!

There was a gurgling howl from Loder as it landed on his trousers.

Whop!

"Urrgh!"

Whop!

"You—you—you—— Gurrgh! Stop it!" shrieked Loder. "I—I—I'll tow, if you like! Will you stop it?"

"Not till you've had six!" said Bob cheerily. "You've often given a fellow six at Greyfriars, Loder. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Put some beef into it, Bunter!"

Whop!

"Oooooogh!" howled Loder. "Will you leave off? Oh gad! Ow!"

Whop!
 "Yurroooooogh!"
 Whop!
 "Oh! Ow! Stoppit!" shrieked Loder.
 "That's six!" said Bob.
 "I say, you fellows, let me give him a few more. I'm just getting my hand in!"
 "Have a few more, Loder?"
 "You—you—you stop it! Stoppit, I tell you! I'll tow—I'll do anything you like! Will you stoppit?" howled Loder.
 "Well, we'll give you a chance," said Bob. "Keep that frying-pan handy, Bunter—Loder may want some more presently. Any more tricks, Loder, and you get a dozen next time. Now let him get along."
 Loder staggered to his feet. He wriggled with anguish. Six from a frying-pan was neither grateful nor comforting. The look on Loder's face was positively bloodthirsty.
 But he gave no more trouble. That six was enough for him. With deep, deep feelings, Loder tugged at the towrope again and towed the Water-Lily onward.
 Bob and Johnny walked with him, as before; but Loder gave them no more trouble—not a spot. The other fellows sat in the boat, ready to step ashore and give Loder some more of the same—if he wanted it! After that six from the frying-pan, Loder was quite a lamb—and the Water-Lily rolled on to Pangbourne without a spot of bother.

Coker Wants a Lift!

"Hi!"
 The Greyfriars crew looked round as they were hailed from the bank.
 In the golden summer's afternoon the Water-Lily was a good distance past Pangbourne. At that delightful spot Loder had been dismissed, and the chums of the Remove had no doubt that they had seen the last of him—till next term at Greyfriars.
 Now, as there was a breeze on the river, the crew of the Greyfriars boat were considering putting up the sail to take them up to Streatley and Goring. That hail from the bank interrupted the discussion.
 "Hi!" repeated the voice—a powerful one which was familiar to the ears of the Remove fellows.
 The Water-Lily, at the moment, was a few yards out from the bank. The fellow who hailed came to the water's edge, waved a large hand, and shouted impatiently:
 "Hi, you young asses! Hi!"
 "I say, you fellows, that's Coker!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, turning his big spectacles on the figure on the bank.
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coker!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. He waved a hand to Coker of the Fifth in a cheery greeting. "Fancy meeting you, old bean!"
 "You young ass, pull in!" called out Coker.
 "Want anything?" asked Harry Wharton.
 "Don't be a fool!"
 "Eh?"
 "Do you think I should be yelling to you if I didn't? Don't be a young idiot, if you can help it! Get in to the bank!"
 The Famous Five looked at Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars and smiled.
 At Greyfriars, Coker of the Fifth always seemed to have an idea that he could give orders to Remove juniors. Evidently he had not changed in the holidays. Having spotted the Greyfriars crew, and having apparently some use for them, Coker of the Fifth issued his lordly behests—still under the erroneous impression that he spoke as one having authority, saying "Do this!" and he doeth it.
 "Do you hear?" roared Coker.
 "Do we?" murmured Bob Cherry. "I seem to catch some sort of a gentle whisper, Coker."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "What are you fags sniggering at?" hooted Coker.
 "I want a lift in your boat. I can't jump that distance, so pull in!"

(Continued on next page.)



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"Say please!" suggested Nugent.

"What?"

"Please!"

Horace Coker did not say "please." He gave Frank Nugent a glare instead.

"I say, you fellows, shy something at him!" suggested Billy Bunter. "He can't get at us here. Shall I shy an egg at him? We've got lots."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you pull in?" roared Coker. Harry Wharton laughed.

"Might as well give him a lift, if he wants one," he said. "All right, Coker—we'll push in."

"Well, be quick about it!" grunted Coker.

The Famous Five grinned as they pushed in. They did not expect anything in the way of politeness or good manners from Coker of the Fifth—they knew him too well. Still, he was a Greyfriars man, and it was only good-natured to give him a lift.

"I suppose you kids haven't seen anything of Potter or Greene?" asked Coker, as the Water-Lily bumped in the rushes.

"No. Lost them?" asked Harry.

"The silly chumps are always getting lost!" grunted Coker. "If I take my eyes off them for a minute they get lost. Half a dozen times to-day I've spotted them in time taking wrong turnings, and stopped them. Now they've done it at last—lost themselves! What are you grinning at, you little idiots?"

It occurred to the juniors that Coker's pals, Potter and Greene, might have had reasons of their own for getting lost. Coker's was the kind of company that was liable to pall after a time.

"I dare say they'll wander back to Pangbourne in time," went on Coker. "I jolly well know I'm not going to hunt for them any longer—I've been looking for them for over an hour now. I'm jolly well going back to Pangbourne now, and they can jolly well take their chance—I've walked my legs nearly off, looking for the silly asses!"

"Pangbourne?" repeated Harry. "My dear chap, we're going up the river, not down. We've left Pangbourne miles behind. We're not going back."

"I suppose it doesn't matter much whether you go up or down the river, fooling about in that boat?" said Coker, staring at him.

"Well, it does a little!" said Harry. "You see, we're doing the Thames these hols, and we're going up."

"Rubbish!" said Coker.

"My dear chap—"

"Don't be cheeky! I don't like that sort of thing from fags! Keep that boat steady—do you want me to drop into the water?" roared Coker.

Harry Wharton & Co. were willing to be obliging, in spite of a certain lack of the manners and customs of civilisation on the part of Horace James Coker. But there was a limit. Really, they were not prepared to go down the river again, instead of

going up, because Coker of the Fifth wanted to get back to Pangbourne.

So Johnny Bull pushed off, to settle the argument in the simplest manner. Coker jumped.

The bank was rather steep at that point. The Water-Lily was already three feet out. Coker landed in the boat, slipped, rolled over, and roared. His arms, flying out to clutch at support, caught Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton, and they joined Coker in the bottom of the boat.

The Water-Lily rocked from side to side in the wildest way.

Billy Bunter gave a squeak of alarm.

"Ow! I say, you fellows, we're going over!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You thundering idiot, Coker!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You blithering ass!" yelled Johnny Bull.

The juniors scrambled up in the rocking boat. Coker sat up rather dizzily.

"You silly little idiots!" he gasped. "Why didn't you keep the boat steady? I might have dropped into the water!"

Apparently it had not occurred to Coker that the Water-Lily had been pushing off when he made his jump.

"Pity you didn't, you silly ass!" gasped Bob Cherry, rubbing his head which had banged on a thwart.

"You terrific fathead!" exclaimed Hurree Singh.

"That will do!" snapped Coker. "If I'd fallen in, I'd jolly well have licked you all round! I've got a short way with fags, as I've told you at Greyfriars—you'd better look out! Now, get that sail up!"

The Famous Five looked at Coker of the Fifth. They had not seen Coker since Greyfriars School had broken up for the summer holidays; and now that they had encountered him on the banks of the Thames they were unwilling to fall upon him and smite him hip and thigh. But Coker was asking for it very earnestly.

"You cheeky ass!" hooted Johnny Bull. "We're not pulling down the river—we're going up!"

"That will do, Bull!" Coker scrambled to his feet, tripped over a rope, and sat down again. "Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do that again, Coker!" said Bob Cherry.

"I've said that I don't want any cheek!" said Coker darkly, as he resumed the perpendicular once more. "That's a tip! I don't want to thrash you, as you're giving me a lift in your boat—but look out! I've got to get back to Pangbourne, where I'm staying, and I've walked my legs off looking for those two asses Potter and Greene. It's all right—it won't take me long to run this boat back under sail," added Coker condescendingly.

"You think you can sail the boat down to Pangbourne?" asked Harry Wharton, staring at him.

There was a wind up the river. It was the best wind the Greyfriars voyagers had struck, so far, for getting up the Thames. They were good men with a boat and could sail

as near the wind as the Water-Lily could expect to get. But they could not sail right in the wind's eye! Coker, it seemed, fancied that he could!

"I don't think—I know!" said Coker.

"The wind's dead astern!" howled Bob.

"Think I can't tack a boat?" snapped Coker. "Don't be a fool! And don't jaw! Perhaps you'd better leave it to me to get the sail up—clumsy lot of young asses!"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. The alternative to giving Coker a lift in their boat was seizing him and hurling him bodily ashore or into the River Thames. They were reluctant to take those drastic measures with a Greyfriars man they had run into during the hols. Moreover, if Coker was able to sail the Water-Lily in the wind's eye he was welcome to get on with it. The chums of the Remove, in fact, were quite interested to see Coker do it.

Coker proceeded to get the sail up. As he proceeded to get it up upside down, it presented some difficulties. The Famous Five watched him with smiling patience as he struggled with it. After ten minutes of heroic efforts during which he tangled himself in the sail and the ropes, Coker yelled to them.

"Can't you young idiots lend a hand? What are you sticking there like a lot of stuffed dummies for? Lend a hand, blow you!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five lent willing hands, disentangled Coker from the sail and the sheets, and got the sail up—not upside down.

The wind caught it, and the Water-Lily began to travel up towards Goring. Coker soon put a stop to that. Coker sat at the sheets and sailed that boat—and the Water-Lily suddenly slanted across the river, with bellying sail and a wild rush, causing dismay and consternation among other craft.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out!"

"Stop him!"

"Coker, you mad ass——"

Crash!

What would have happened if the Water-Lily had not rammed a punt nobody knew. Perhaps Coker would have piled it up on the Oxford shore. Perhaps he would have collided with a steam launch. Perhaps he would have mowed his destructive way through capsizing rowboats. But the Water-Lily did ram a punt!

From the punt came a yell of deadly rage.

With great presence of mind Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull grasped Coker, hurled him into the bottom of the boat, and sat on him to keep him there, while Frank Nugent and the nabob got the Water-Lily under control.

The Greyfriars boat skimmed on up the river at a spanking speed—leaving a man staggering in a rocking punt, shaking his fist and hurling remarks after the Greyfriars craft that almost turned the atmosphere of the Thames valley blue.



"Leggo, you cheeky rotter!" roared Coker, struggling frantically, as he was carried to the water's edge in the strong grip of the farmer.

Coker, Too!

HORACE COKER sat up. Leaning to the breeze, making good speed, the Water-Lily sailed merrily up the Thames. Coker was getting a lift—and a rapid lift—but it was in the direction opposite from that desired by Coker.

That could not be helped, as his experiment of sailing in the wind's eye had not been a success. Moreover, the Greyfriars crew were going up the river, anyhow, not down. They kept a wary eye on Coker, as he dragged himself to a seat and sat gasping for breath. Really and truly the Famous Five did not want to handle Horace Coker if only he would not insist upon it.

"You cheeky young rotters!" was Coker's first remark, when he had breath enough to make one.

"Lovely afternoon!" said Bob.

"What?"

"Ripping day after the rain we had last night!" said Bob affably.

"I'm not talking about the weather, you young idiot!"

"I am!" answered Bob.

"The esteemed weather is preposterously delightful, my absurd Coker," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Coker breathed hard and deep.

"I've a jolly good mind—" he began.

"You have?" ejaculated Bob, in surprise.

"Yes!" roared Coker. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"I shouldn't have guessed that,"

said Bob, shaking his head. "I fancied you had rather a weak one—not good at all! But I suppose you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind," roared Coker, "to thrash the lot of you all round for your dashed cheek! You might have wrecked the boat, playing silly tricks like that! You fags ain't safe in a boat!"

"Not with you sailing it, old bean!" agreed Bob. "Keep smiling! You're getting a lift, and we're making jolly good speed!"

"You silly young ass, you're going up the river, and I want to go down," hooted Coker.

"Yes, I guessed that one, when you hit the punt. But we don't want to go down. We prefer the surface."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I want to go down the river. You're dense, you young ass! Never saw such a dense dunderhead in my life! How am I to get to Pangbourne when you're cutting up to Streatley?" howled Coker.

"You can get to Pangbourne this way, by keeping on!" said Bob. "Land at Streatley or Goring, and walk the rest. It's about twenty-five thousand miles past Goring—nothing to a hiker like you, Coker!"

Coker glared at him.

It was perfectly true that, although Pangbourne lay astern, it was possible to reach it by keeping on—the world being round! Clearly, however, Coker was not prepared to face that rather lengthy trip. He gave the playful Bob a petrifying glare.

"Will you talk sense?" he bawled.

"What's the good?" asked Bob.

"You'd never understand it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker half rose. Johnny Bull, in a casual sort of way, picked up the boathook. Coker sat down again.

"I won't thrash you as this is your boat!" he said. "But you'd better look out! I don't take check from fags!"

"It's all right, Coker," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "If we land you at Goring, you can get back to Pangbourne by train. If you'd rather walk it we'll tip you out wherever you like."

"I wouldn't!" grunted Coker. "I've nearly walked my legs off already, looking for Potter and Greene, the silly asses! Keep on to Goring."

This was mild, from Coker. He was the fellow to give orders and to smack disobedient heads. Possibly it occurred to Coker that there were too many heads on the Water-Lily to smack with comfort. Or possibly it occurred even to Coker that he could not take possession of somebody else's craft and carry on as if he were monarch of all he surveyed.

Anyhow, he sat tight, and kindly allowed the juniors to do as they liked with their own boat.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter, "we're not going so far as Goring before we camp. It's miles. What about supper?"

"There's no railway station nearer," said Harry. "Coker wants to get a train."

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"Blow Coker!" said Bunter indignantly. "Think I'm going to wait for my supper because Coker wants a train?"

"Shut up, Bunter!" said the Famous Five in chorus.

Coker at the moment was a guest of sorts on the Greyfriars boat. Politeness was due to a guest. Bunter, however, was no whale on politeness, especially when he was getting hungry.

"Look here—" he bawled.

"Will you ring off?" hooted Bob.

"No, I won't!" howled Bunter. "If you fellows think I'm going to wait hours and hours for my supper, I can jolly well say—Keep that boathook away, Bull, you beast! If you poke me with that boathook I'll jolly well—Yarooop!"

"Shut up!"

Billy Bunter relapsed into indignant silence.

Coker's face gradually cleared as the Water-Lily ran merrily on. The Greyfriars boat sailed well, and a run up the river on that delightful reach was enjoyable enough to banish the frown from the most disgruntled brow.

Instead of frowning, Coker had a thoughtful look.

The juniors, noticing it, supposed that he was thinking of trains and timetables. But quite other matters were in Coker's mind.

"It would serve them jolly well right," he said at last, apparently in answer to his own thoughts.

"Eh? Whom?" asked Harry. "And what?"

"Those asses, Potter and Greene," said Coker. "They can jolly well wait at Pangbourne. I don't see why I should hurry, when they go and get themselves lost, like a pair of fools. I mean, it's not the first time—they keep on getting lost—"

"Oh!"

"It's rather ripping on the water," went on Coker. "I fancy I'll stick in this boat for a bit."

"Oh!"

Billy Bunter gave Coker an expressive blink. Billy Bunter was not yearning for a prolongation of Coker's company.

Neither was anyone else, as a matter of fact.

The Famous Five looked at Coker. They wanted to be civil. They wanted to be obliging! But they did not want Coker in the boat—longer than was unavoidable to carry him along to a railway station.

Coker was quite blind to all that! It was such an honour, such a distinction for Coker of the Fifth to condescend to take notice of Remove fags, that it never occurred to Coker that his remarks would be heard with mixed feelings.

"I mean," went on Coker, in explanation, "we're not at school now! At Greyfriars I couldn't speak to a gang of fags—it would let me down too much. But nobody knows us here! We're not likely to run into Greyfriars men who would see me consorting with Remove fags on the Thames."

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Coker, evidently, was considering the matter entirely from his own point of view! It had not occurred to his powerful brain that the juniors had a point of view also—and quite a different one!

Coker smiled quite genially.

"I'll jolly well camp out with you to-night, and Potter and Greene can jolly well go and eat coke!" he said.

"But—" gasped Bob.

"That's all right!" said Coker.

"Don't—don't you think Potter and Greene will rather worry?" asked Bob.

"Let 'em!" said Coker heartlessly.

"Serve 'em right!"

"But—"

"It's all right," said Coker. "I've thought it out! Now, look here, we may as well look round for a camp."

"But—" gasped Nugent.

"The fact is, I haven't had any tea, and I can do, with an early supper," said Coker. "I suppose you've got some grub?"

"Yes, lots. But—"

"Well, I'll look out for a camp—you can leave that to me!" said Coker. "I'll tell you when to stop."

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. Bob Cherry grinned, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh closed a dusky eye at his friends. Johnny Bull opened his mouth—and shut it again!

"Rather a lark, really," said Coker. "Don't you fags get bragging about it at Greyfriars next term, that's all!"

"Oh crikey!"

"The bragfulness will not be terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"O.K.!" he said. "It's all right—why not?"

Something, after all, was due to hospitality. The Famous Five nobly resolved to bear with Coker! As for Billy Bunter, he was rather pleased—it meant an earlier supper! That was worth even Coker's company! So no voice was raised in dissent as the Water-Lily glided on, and Coker—apparently having taken command—watched the shore for a suitable camp.

Camping with Coker!

"STOP!" said Coker.

"Eh?"

"I said stop!"

Evidently Coker was in command!

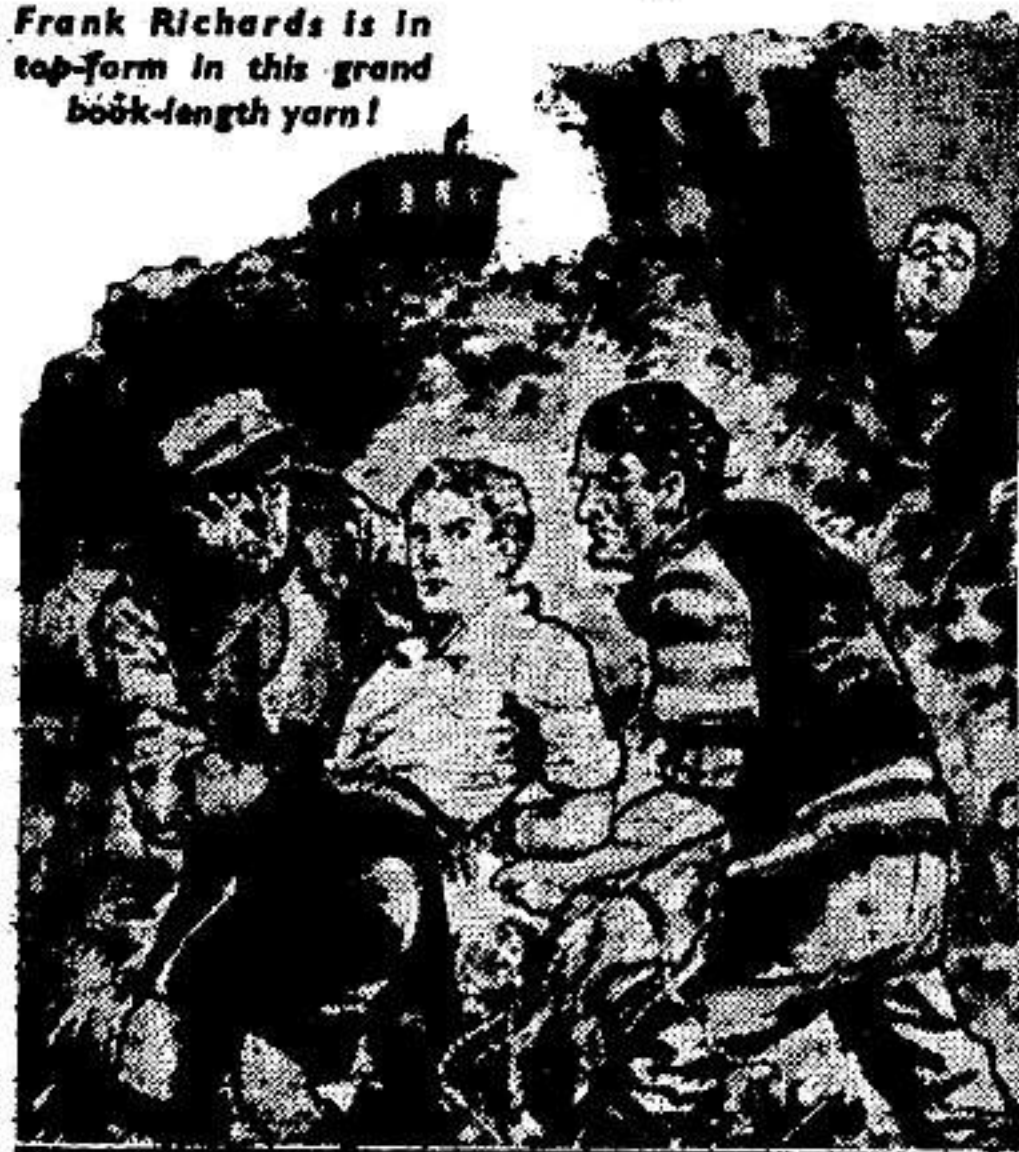
The wind was less favourable round the bend by Basildon; but the chums of the Remove would have preferred to keep on under sail. Neither was that curt tone of command from Horace Coker grateful and comforting to their ears.

But they had made up their minds to be civil to Coker—if he would let them—and that was that! Perhaps they remembered the old text about "suffering fools gladly." If they could not suffer Coker gladly, at least they could suffer him patiently. Coker, after all, was not a bad chap—and it was his misfortune, not his fault, that he was every imaginable kind of an ass.

"I say, you fellows, that looks all

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"The KIDNAPPED HIKER!"

right!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at the bank. Bunter was thinking wholly of supper.

The spot selected by Coker did look all right. It was on the Berkshire bank; the towpath being on the other side in Oxfordshire. A pretty little paddock, surrounded by beeches and willows, was on the bank—no doubt belonging to some building that was out of sight farther inland.

Certainly it was a very pleasant spot for camping. But whether the proprietor would welcome campers was another matter.

The sail was dropped, the Water-Lily pushed into the bank, and the juniors surveyed the selected spot.

"Looks all right," said Bob; "but I—"

"I fancy I know all about camping!" said Coker. "Tie on to those willows!"

"But—" said Harry.

"Don't jaw! Do as I tell you!"

"It's barely possible," said Johnny Bull sarcastically, "that the owner mayn't like a camping party camping in his paddock."

"I said don't jaw!" answered Coker. "Tie on to those willows, some of you."

"Suppose we get turned off?" asked Nugent.

"I'd like to see anybody turn me off!" said Coker disdainfully.

"I say, you fellows, it's all right!" urged Bunter. "I can tell you I'm jolly hungry!"

Harry Wharton & Co. scanned the paddock. It was very attractive. There was, for a wonder, no notice-board to be seen, apprising trespassers that they would be prosecuted! If there were a building at hand it was hidden by the trees farther back.

They were still undecided when Coker, getting impatient, grasped the painter and tied on to the willows on the bank. He stepped ashore—which settled the matter, unless the Famous Five were prepared to push on and strand him there—which they were not prepared to do.

"After all, let's chance it!" said Bob. "It's early—and if anybody turns up and makes a fuss, we can push on—lots of time before dark."

"All right!" agreed Harry.

"Coker's running this show, so it's all right!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, give him his head!" said Bob. "It's only till to-morrow! We drop him at Goring to-morrow."

Grunt, from Johnny Bull! However, he acquiesced, and that camp was decided on.

The juniors landed.

There was a fence along the bank with a gate in it. The gate was shut. Coker threw it open.

"Now get the things ashore!" he said briskly. "Look alive! I'll help you get your tent up! I don't suppose you kids know how to get a tent up properly."

"We've had it up a few times since we started on this trip!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Don't answer me back, Bull! I don't like it!"

"Look here——"

"Shut up, and get those things out

of the boat!" said Coker irritably. "I've no use for gabble."

Johnny Bull suppressed his feelings with difficulty. The camping outfit was taken ashore, and the juniors proceeded to erect the tent.

Coker kindly helped. Evidently he did not trust Remove fags to do the job properly.

"Now, then! You hold that pole, Wharton! Don't tangle up the canvas, you young asses! Give me that mallet, Cherry! I'll knock those pegs in—I expect they'd come out in the middle of the night if I left it to you! Don't tie yourself up in knots in that rope, Nugent! Where are the tent-pegs? You silly young ass, where the dickens are the pegs?"

"In the bag under your nose!" said Johnny Bull.

"Don't be cheeky, if you don't want a tap from this mallet!" said Coker darkly. "Now, then, don't tumble over that rope, Bunter—yarcrooh!" Coker roared, as he tumbled over the rope himself, and his features came down on the bag of tent-pegs! "Ow! Oh! Wow!"

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

"Stop that silly cackling!" roared Coker, rubbing the features that had established contact with the pegs. "What are you cackling at? Now, keep that pole steady, Wharton—hold that rope, Cherry. Keep it taut. Stand clear while I knock in the peg—I'll show you how to do it."

Bang!

"Yarcrooh!" roared Coker.

He dropped the mallet and bounded almost clear of Berkshire, claspings the thumb of his left hand in the fingers of his right and roaring.

"Oh! Ow! Ooooooh! Oh crikey! My thumb! Wow! Ooop!"

"Is that how you do it?" asked Bob, with interest. "Good! Go on showing us how to do it, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd rather not do it that way myself!" remarked Johnny Bull. "But every man to his taste! Carry on, Coker!"

"Woo-ooooh-ooop!" roared Coker, sucking his thumb frantically. "Oh crikey! Ow! You've made me bang my thumb fooling about like a lot of little idiots! You can stick those pegs in yourselves——"

"I'd rather stick them in the ground!" objected Bob. "I'm jolly well not going to stick any pegs in myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! You silly young idiot!" howled Coker. "Wow! I don't mean stick them in yourselves, you dense young ass—I mean stick them in yourselves! I mean—— Ow! Wow! Wow!"

"He means ow-wow-wow!" said Bob. "Got that, you fellows? It's nice to have it quite clear at last! All right, Coker—now that we know you mean ow-wow-wow, we can get going."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Co.

Perhaps it was fortunate that Horace Coker was fearfully busy sucking his thumb, otherwise there might have been assault and battery

on the spot. But Coker's thumb kept Coker busy for quite a long time.

While Coker gave his attention to that unfortunate casualty, the Famous Five got the tent up and the pegs safely in without any more thumbs being hammered. By the time the tent was up, Coker had recovered a little; and supper was sorted out.

It was quite a nice supper. There were a couple of cold chickens—a late gift from Tipton Lodge; there were sosses, which Bunter fried over the stove, scoffing one every row and then to go on with; there were cold potatoes, and watercress and radishes, there were unlimited new-laid eggs, also a present from Tipton Lodge; and there was cake and biscuits to wind up with, and hot cocoa to wash it all down.

A day on the river had given everybody a good appetite—especially Bunter. Coker, who had missed his tea while looking for those elusive youths Potter and Greene, was as hungry as a hunter, and almost as a Bunter. The effect of that excellent supper was cheery good humour all round; and Coker, in spite of a twinge or two in his thumb, was in quite a good temper.

"This isn't bad!" said Coker, when supper was over and he sat contentedly gazing at the rich red sunset on the Thames.

"The badfulness is not terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I've a jolly good mind to keep on and let Potter and Greene go and chop chips!" declared Coker.

"Oh!"

"Still, I could hardly keep on with a mob of fags," said Coker thoughtfully. "It would hardly do."

The Famous Five were of opinion also that it would hardly do. However, as Coker seemed to have thought that out for himself, they politely refrained from mentioning it.

Coker rose to his feet.

"I'll take a stroll round, while you kids are washing-up and putting the things away!" he remarked. "Get it all done clean and tidy! Nothing like being clean and tidy when you're camping. Don't let me find the place in a litter when I get back!"

And Horace Coker strolled off; leaving the chums of the Remove looking expressively at one another.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"After all, it's only till to-morrow morning!" he said. "We can stand Coker till then without slaughtering him!"

And the Co. agreed that they could or, at least, would refrain from slaughtering Coker unless it became absolutely unavoidable.

Coker Won't Go!

"ROT!"

"Look here——"

"Don't talk, my man! Just clear off!"

"You cheeky young idiot!"

"That's enough! Shut up!"

Harry Wharton & Co. rose to their feet.
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feet as loud voices in dispute reached their ears. One voice was Coker's—the other a stranger's; which they could guess to belong to the proprietor of the property on which they had camped.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "This means move on!"

"Coker all over!" grunted Johnny Bull.

In the red sunset Coker was in view at a little distance. Facing him was a man in gaiters with a very red and angry face. He looked like a farmer, and no doubt there was a farmhouse in the distance behind the trees.

"Look here!" roared the man in gaiters. He was a big and powerful man, and towered over Coker, big and burly and beefy as Horace was. "Look here——"

Coker waved a hand at him.

"You've said enough, my man!" he answered. "You can pack up the rest!"

"You come and camp here on my land, without so much as by your leave!" roared the man in gaiters. "I got to turn sheep into this paddock, and here I find a gang with a tent up——"

"You can turn in your sheep," answered Coker. "I've no objection, so long as they don't come nosing about the camp."

"You—you—you've no objection!" stuttered the man in gaiters. "You've no objection to a man turning his own sheep into his own field!"

"None at all," assured Coker, "so long as they don't bother me or disturb me, you know! I should object to that."

"My word!" said the man in gaiters.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another. Then they looked at the farmer. That gentleman seemed on the verge of a fit.

He raised a large, red hand, and pointed to the tent.

"Get out!" he said. "I'll give you five minutes to pack up and go! If you ain't gone by then, you'll be put!"

Coker laughed. He seemed amused.

"We've camped for the night!" he explained. "We're not going on farther. Don't be an ass! You fellows who live along the river seem to fancy that the whole country belongs to you. Well, it doesn't! You haven't even got a board up! Not that I should take any notice of it, if you had."

"You going?" roared the farmer.

"Hardly!" smiled Coker.

"You silly ass, Coker!" roared Bob Cherry. "Of course we're going, if we haven't leave to camp! Shut up!"

Coker glanced round.

"Don't be cheeky, Cherry! Leave this to me! Don't touch that tent! I'll whop you if you do!"

"You ain't going?" demanded the man in gaiters.

"Haven't I said so?" asked Coker impatiently. "Don't talk rot! We're going in the morning! Now clear off and don't bother!"

The man in gaiters did not clear

off. Neither did he cease to bother. He made a stride at Horace Coker and gripped him.

Coker was not likely to stand that! He gave grip for grip, and for nearly a minute there was a terrific struggle, at which the juniors gazed.

Then Coker, hefty as he was, was plucked off his feet.

"You cheeky rotter, leggo!" roared Coker, struggling frantically.

With his long legs thrashing the air wildly, Coker was carried down to the bank in the strong grip of the farmer. He roared, he struggled, he wriggled, he fairly raved; but he went along resistlessly; and the man in gaiters tramped past the camp and the staring juniors and reached the water's edge.

There he pitched Coker into the boat.

Coker landed in the Water-Lily with a terrific bump!

He sprawled and spluttered with all the wind knocked out of him. Coker was no end of a fighting-man; he feared no foe, and never counted odds; but for the moment Coker was hors de combat; all that Coker could do at present was to sprawl in the Water-Lily spluttering spasmodically.

The man in gaiters left him to sprawl and splutter, and walked up the bank to the Greyfriars camp.

"Now then, you——" he hooted.

Coker sat up in the boat, gurgling.

"Collar him!" he spluttered.

"Pitch him into the river! I'll be along in a tick—groogh—as soon as I get my—urrgh—breath—and I'll—gooogh!"

The Famous Five had not the slightest idea of collaring the man on whose land they had camped without permission and pitching him into the river! Coker of the Fifth seemed to suffer from the extraordinary delusion that he was monarch of all he surveyed; but the Remove fellows did not share that delusion, something was due to law and order.

"All serene!" said Bob affably. "If you're really not pining for our company, we'll quit! Get going, you chaps!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter, and get a move on!"

"But I say, perhaps the chap will let us camp if we pay," suggested Bunter. "I'll pay—you needn't worry about it! If one of you fellows will lend me the money——"

"Not a bad idea, if the gentleman is agreeable!" said Bob. He gave the man in gaiters a cheery grin. "Will you let us camp here for the night, if we ask you nicely and pay for the accommodation?"

The farmer's frowning face relaxed. He seemed quite a good-tempered man; though it was not surprising that his good-temper had failed him in dealing with Horace Coker.

"Well, I don't see that you'd do much harm, if you don't play tricks and leave a lot of litter about," he said. "If you'd asked leave, I wouldn't have said no. I don't want any broken bottles or old tins for my sheep to tread on."

"Of course you don't!" agreed Bob. "We'll be jolly careful! What about ten bob?"

The man in gaiters hesitated a moment, glancing towards Coker in the boat. It was clear that Coker had roused his ire deeply. Still, perhaps he thought that that bump in the boat was enough for Coker. He nodded at last.

"Roight!" he said.

And "roight" it was!

A ten-shilling note changed hands and the man in gaiters walked away—with a last inimical glance at Coker in the boat.

Which was very satisfactory to the Famous Five, who did not want to pull up stakes and travel, after settling down so comfortably. They were glad to see the man in gaiters disappear by a distant gate.

Coker, meanwhile, spluttered for breath in the boat. Unaware of the amicable arrangement to which the juniors had come with the farmer, as their voices did not reach him from the camp, Coker was still warlike. Still, it was several minutes before he got out of the boat—even the burly Horace was feeling rather severely the effects of that terrific bump.

When he landed at last there was grim determination in Horace Coker's brow. He tramped up to the camp.

"He's gone?" he asked.

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

"Let him come back, that's all!" said Coker grimly. "I'll show him! He got the upper hand that time, I don't quite know how! I'll be ready for him if he comes back! I'll smash him!"

"But——"

"Don't jaw!"

"But——"

"I said don't jaw! I'll knock him into a cocked hat and boot him out of the field if he comes back!" roared Coker. "Let him show up here again, that's all! I'm ready for him! He took me rather by surprise, grabbing me like that! I'll show him——"

"But——"

"Shut up! You kids needn't interfere—leave him to me! I fancy he will think twice before he comes back to shift me! Let him, that's all—just let him!"

Coker, in the attitude of Ajax defying the lightning, waited for that man in gaiters to come back. The juniors grinned and let him wait! There was no reason why they should tell Coker things that he did not want to hear; so they left it at that, and Coker remained on warlike guard.

The man in gaiters did not come back! Having given the campers leave to camp, for a moderate consideration, there was no reason why he should.

Coker, unaware of that, smiled grimly as the minutes passed and there was no further demonstration from the enemy.

"I fancied he'd think better of it," he remarked at last. "It's all right—you kids can turn in, you won't be disturbed! You can feel sure of that."

"We do!" agreed Bob.

"The surefulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't snigger!" said Coker. "There's nothing to snigger at that I can see—"

"He, he, he!"

"Stop that cackling, Bunter, if you don't want your head smacked!"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"Shut up! Now turn in, the lot of you!" said Coker. "I'll sleep in the boat—no room for me in that tent with a crowd of fags. If that cheeky blighter comes back, just call for me—I'll deal with him! But he won't—you can bank on that! He knows better! He jolly well understands by this time that I won't go!"

Quite satisfied that they could bank on that, though for reasons unknown to Coker, the juniors turned in for a night's rest in the tent.

Coker, after a last warlike glare across the darkening field, went back to the boat to bed down for the night. And slumber descended on the Greyfriars camp beside the murmuring Thames.

Unexpected!

SHIFTY SPOONER'S eyes glinted in the moonlight.

The moon that night favoured Shifty.

At that late hour the river was deserted; nobody seemed to be about, but Mr. Spooner.

Mr. Spooner was sculling a little skiff and looking for a camp—not a camp for himself! Shifty was glad to be on the water again; and he had found that skiff tied up at a riverside bungalow after dark. It was much easier to spot the Greyfriars camp from the water, if it was to be spotted at all; and hope springs eternal in the human breast.

That the Greyfriars crew had gone up the river Shifty knew. How far they had gone he did not know. He hoped, at least, that they had camped

somewhere on the reach between Pangbourne and Goring. He knew that they were travelling up the Thames by easy stages, and it seemed probable.

Shifty had sculled up the river nearly as far as the bridge at Streatley, on the Oxfordshire side, looking for a camp—the Greyfriars camp! But he had had no luck! He had spotted some camps and wasted time giving them the once-over; but none of them was the camp he wanted.

Then he sculled down on the Berkshire side, again keeping a hawk-eye open for camps, and again spotting several that had no interest for him whatever—but at last spotting a boat he knew tied up under a bunch of willows!

Under those willows it was deeply dusky; but the moonlight fell bright and silvery on the water, and Shifty easily made out the shape of the boat—and read the name *Water-Lily* on her stern, as he glided noiselessly close to the moored craft.

The hour was late—very late—or, to be more exact, it was very early! The moonlight was beginning to fade towards dawn. Shifty had had a night of it—and a summer's dawn was at hand. But he was in luck at last—and he held on to the gunwale of the moored *Water-Lily*, with glinting eyes, feeling that he was getting at last the reward of patience.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again—that was Shifty's motto. He had tried, tried, tried again—and now he had succeeded! No wonder Shifty's eyes glinted with sheer satisfaction as he held on at last to the gunwale of the *Water-Lily*.

"Suffering tadpoles!" breathed Mr. Spooner. "I got it at last! I've earned it by this time, by gum; but I got it!"

He sat silent in the skiff; looking ashore across the moored boat. He had trailed the Greyfriars crew long enough to have learned their manners and customs. They were accustomed to sleeping ashore in the tent, leaving the boat tied up, with a padlocked chain on it for safety.

The padlock had beaten Mr. Spooner once; but it was not going to beat him again; he had provided himself with an implement for dealing with padlocks.

All he needed to do was to make sure that the chain did not clink and wake a wary sleeper—as had happened once before.

Looking ashore, he spotted, as he expected, a tent. It stood a little way up the bank, beyond a low, straggling chestnut fence. Shifty Spooner grinned at that tent glimmering in the moonlight. From the tent came a sound that floated to his ears—not an alarming sound, but rather a reassuring one, the sound of a rumbling snore. Evidently the campers were asleep in their tent as usual—one of them giving audible evidence of the fact.

There was no other sound in the stillness, save the faint wash of the river. Satisfied that the coast was clear, Shifty silently pushed alongside the *Water-Lily* and groped in the deep shadows under the willows.

He glanced into the boat. In the dimness all he could see was what appeared to be a bundle of rugs. It was to the moorings that he gave his attention.

His groping hands found the chain, padlocked to a branch of the willow. Loder, in a similar case, had borrowed a saw from a shed at Tipton Lodge. Mr. Spooner did not need a saw. Mr. Spooner had had a long experience of the implements that picked locks, and he had come provided. Only a faint snap came from the padlock as Shifty dealt with it.

Not a sound came from the chain. Shifty was not going to betray himself by a sound of clinking, as had happened when he had first had to deal with that chain! Softly and silently he tucked in the loose chain when the padlock was opened.

Again he glanced towards the tent ashore. All was still—there was no sign of alarm—no sound but the rumbling snore which showed that William George Bunter was deep in the land of dreams.

The *Water-Lily* drifted loose.

All Mr. Spooner had to do now was to step into it and pull across the river—and once on the other side of the Thames he cared little whether the Greyfriars camp awakened or not. He was done with the stolen skiff! He would be done with the *Water-Lily*, too, as a matter of fact, once he had made his search in the stern locker! Once what he sought was in his hands, it was not Mr. Spooner's intention to flee in a boat that the police would be looking for! He was going to make off by land, leaving the Thames behind him as fast as he could!

With a deep breath of satisfaction, Shifty Spooner stepped into the *THE MAGNET LIBRARY*.—No. 1,647.

Yo! Ho! for the Rolling Main!



THE JOLLY ROGER Butters from the masthead. Small shot sweeps the decks. The clang of grappling iron and the clash of cutlass rings once more over the blue waters of the Spanish Main. The swashbuckling pirates of the past live their exciting adventures over again in this magnificent book. In thrilling stories and vivid illustrations they blaze their trail of pillage and destruction across the Seven Seas. Ask your newsagent to show you a copy.

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Water-Lily, leaving the skiff to drift away whither it would. He was quite willing for its owner to get it back, when it was picked up sooner or later by some waterman.

Standing in the Greyfriars boat, he pushed off from the willows with his hands, and the Water-Lily floated gently out into the river. Very careful indeed was Mr. Spooner to make no sound till he was out of reach of a jump from the shore!

In a minute or less, he was quite safe from that! The Greyfriars boat drifted softly and silently out into the Thames. Ten feet off the shore Mr. Spooner was all right; and a roar of alarm from the camp would not have worried him now.

Grinning with satisfaction, he moved to pick up the oars and take his seat to pull. His satisfaction lasted till he had made his first step!

He stepped on the bundle of rugs and, to his startled astonishment, on something under the rugs.

What it was, he did not know; till a startled howl apprised him that it was some portion of a human frame!

Shifty jumped.

So did Coker of the Fifth!

"Oh!" came the startled howl, as Coker jumped.

"Suffering cats!" gasped Mr. Spooner.

The boat was out in the moonlight now! At his feet that bundle of rugs was stirring wildly. It dawned on Mr. Spooner that the boat was not, as he had believed, untenanted.

One of the campers, it seemed, contrary to their usual custom, was sleeping in the boat. Certainly there was somebody under those rugs—somebody who was yapping with annoyance because Mr. Spooner had inadvertently trodden on his leg.

Shifty gritted his teeth.

One of the juniors had no terrors for him! Two or three would have been a different matter. One of them he could handle easily enough! Shifty was ready to grasp that one, and give him all the punches he required to keep him quiescent; then to pitch him ashore and have done with him. One Lower Fourth junior of Greyfriars was not likely to give Shifty Spooner a lot of trouble. The river was solitary; there was no one to intervene; it was all right for Shifty!

The bundle of rugs heaved as the startled sleeper scrambled up. A tousled head and an angry face came into view in the moonlight.

"You silly young asses!" came an angry roar. "Wharrer you mean by jumping in on me? What—"

Coker of the Fifth broke off as he saw Mr. Spooner!

He blinked at him.

Shifty blinked at Coker.

Finding somebody unexpectedly in the boat, Shifty naturally supposed that it was one of the juniors. But it was not one of the juniors. It was a big, burly, beefy fellow Shifty had never seen before.

It was not a schoolboy whom Mr. Spooner could easily handle! It was a burly fellow who, on the other

hand, could easily handle Mr. Spooner! It was quite a dismaying shock for Shifty!

Coker scrambled to his feet.

"Who the thump are you?" he roared. "I thought it was one of those silly fags jumping in—who the— Ow!"

Shifty jumped at him.

Big and burly as Horace Coker was, Shifty Spooner was not losing that boat again if he could help it. Coker was going out of that boat, if Shifty Spooner could push him out! Shifty was a rather desperate man at that moment.

"Oh!" gasped Coker, as he went over in Shifty's grasp. The Water-Lily rocked. "Oh crumbs! A dashed boat-thief—oh crikey! Trying to steal this boat with me in it—my gum! I'll jolly well show you!"

Coker jolly well did!

Shifty was heaving him over the dipping gunwale when Coker got one in with his hefty right. He got it in hard! A jolt with all Horace Coker's beef behind it landed on Shifty's jaw! Had a mule kicked him there it would have produced the same effect.

Mr. Spooner gave a gurgling howl and rolled over in the bottom of the boat!

Coker scrambled up again.

"You rotten rascal!" roared Coker. "Stealing this boat— Ah! Would you!"

Shifty would—if he could! But he couldn't! He scrambled up to get Coker's next jolt in his eye. He collapsed in the bottom of the Water-Lily, moaning.

Coker stared round him. The boat was drifting to the middle of the river. At a little distance a skiff was drifting. From the bank came a shout—Coker's roar had awakened the camp. Coker grabbed the oars and started catching crabs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a yell from the bank.

"The boat—"

"Coker—"

"All right!" roared Coker. "Coming!"

He pulled—with a grim eye on Shifty, sprawling in the stern.

Shifty Spooner sat up dizzily! He sat with one hand to his eye and the other to his jaw. Life, at that moment, seemed a weary desert to Mr. Spooner; weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable. He sat and stared dizzily at Coker, as Horace, catching crabs innumerable, rowed back to the camp. From the bank came a yell as the awakened juniors saw him in the moonlight.

"That rotter Spooner!"

"That terrific rascal Spooner!"

Shifty rubbed his eye and rubbed his chin, and slipped over the gunwale. He swam sorrowfully away to recapture the drifting skiff. Once more Mr. Spooner had found the way of the transgressor hard—and wet!

Coker pulled in!

The Famous Five, on the bank, grasped the boat and made it fast! Coker grunted.

"Cheeky blighter—trying to steal

the boat with me in it!" he said. "I gave him two pretty good ones!"

"You've saved our boat for us, Coker!" gasped Bob.

"Eh? Of course I have!" grunted Coker. "He must have got it loose while I was asleep—then he trod on me, blow him! What did you kids turn out for? Go back to bed at once!"

"But—"

"Shut up!" said Coker.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Coker! Coker had saved the Water-Lily for them—there was no doubt about that! Had not Coker been sleeping in the boat, Shifty Spooner would have got away with it this time! They had let Coker join up—and this was their reward for suffering fools gladly. In the circumstances, they felt that it was up to them to go on suffering Coker gladly. So when Coker said shut up, they shut up!

Harry Wharton & Co. had rather thoughtful faces when the Water-Lily ran up to Goring in the morning.

Coker had saved their boat from the dishonest clutches of the ubiquitous Mr. Spooner. Something was due to gratitude! If Coker wanted to keep on in the craft he had saved for them they felt that it was up to them! There were a few whispers, and the Co. agreed.

So when Goring was in the offing, Harry Wharton gave a last glance round at the faces of his comrades, read assent in those faces, and put it politely.

"Like to keep on in this trip, Coker?"

Coker stared at him.

"Eh?" he ejaculated.

"If you'd care to join up for the trip—"

"What?"

"Do!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, do!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Did you say join up for the trip, Wharton?" asked Coker.

"Yes!"

"Well, don't be a fool!"

"Oh!"

"I've put in a day with you," said Coker. "If you brag about it at Greyfriars next term, making out that I've gone about with you fags in the hols, look out for squalls! I'm not likely to join a mob of fags in a trip! I suppose you don't mean it for cheek, Wharton, so I won't smack your head!"

"Oh!" gasped Harry. "Thanks!"

"But shut up!" said Coker.

And Coker went ashore at Goring to take a train back to Pangbourne, and no doubt to overjoy Potter and Greene with his reappearance there. And Harry Wharton & Co. went on through Goring Lock, and towed merrily up to Cleeve in the best of spirits! Coker had made the whole party happy!

THE END.

(Now look out for: "MYSTERY ON THE THAMES!"—the next yarn in this great holiday series by Frank Richards. It's a winner!)

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

(Continued from page 2.)

and a beastly booby," he said. "But I don't mind—Yow-ow-ow!"

Tubby broke off with a yell as Dr. Birchsmall's finger and thumb closed over his fat ear. The next thing he knew was that the Head had snatched away his box of chocklits.

"Go, Barrell!" thundered the Head, as he crammed a handful of chocklits into his mouth. "These chocklits are confiscated; and if I ever catch you again trying to encurrige my dawter to adopt your greedy habits, I shall birch you black and blue!"

"But, sir—"

"Go!" roared the Head.

Tubby fled; and the crowd fled with him, harking fit to bust, with Miss Molly's mewsical giggle ringing in their ears as they went.

It began to look as if Tubby's romance was nipped in the bud. But the fellows were to learn in the very near future that Tubby Barrell was not beaten yet!

(Don't miss "Tubby's Slimming Cure!"—the hilarious sequel to this yarn in next week's number.)

PEDALLED OVER CLIFF ON WINGED CYCLE!

Redwing's Amazing Experiment

Will the day ever come when we shall be able to cycle through the air as easily and safely as we cycle through Friardale at present?

Tom Redwing of the Remove believes most decidedly that it will. He is, moreover, actively engaged in bringing the great day nearer!

The first trial of his new home-made "cycleplane" (writes a GREYFRIARS HERALD correspondent), was held at Hawkscliffe last week, and attracted a large crowd of villagers and holiday-makers.

Tom Redwing's appearance at the top of the cliffs with the cycleplane being wheeled behind him by eager village boys, was greeted with cheers and laughter.

It was a peculiar contraption, partly aeroplane, partly glider, and partly the kind of thing you see in the imaginary inventions of comic caricaturists.

The pilot's seat was a bicycle saddle, and there were pedals and two light wheels just as in an ordinary jigger. But those two wheels performed other functions besides those of the ordinary jigger, for, in addition to driving two small propellers, they also set four wings rotating rather on the lines of the paddles of a paddle steamer!

Redwing, interviewed, was full of optimism.

"Yes, I really believe the thing will work," he told our correspondent. "No doubt many improvements are possible, but they are for the future. At the moment, you can look on me as a pioneer, blazing a trail for others to follow. Danger? Well, I suppose there's a certain amount of risk, but not a lot. I've carried out plenty of preliminary tests, and I know the thing is buoyant enough to carry me short distances safely."

"M'yes; but there's a sixty feet drop

to the sands," objected our correspondent. "Rather a long way down, Reddy, isn't it?"

"You wouldn't think anything about it if it were a lift, would you?" retorted Redwing cheerfully. "Well, you can take it from me it's as safe as most lifts—in fact, safer than some I've seen! Anyway, there's danger in everything. It would probably surprise you to know how many chaps are killed or injured at footer and cricket every year! Now, if you wouldn't mind standing aside—"

The GREYFRIARS HERALD correspondent obliged. Soon afterwards, Redwing took off.

It was a peculiarly thrilling sight to see him pedalling furiously down the grass slope towards the edge of a sixty-foot-high cliff. Some of the ladies in the audience were seen to turn away, unable to watch him to the finish. But Redwing, though a brave enough fellow, is not the man to risk his neck unnecessarily. He was unquestionably convinced that his weird machine was



at least able to give him a happy landing; and this proved to be the case.

A dozen yards from the edge of the cliff, the tail of the cycleplane lifted itself, and Redwing rose gracefully into the air, amid roars of applause from the spectators. After heading out to sea, he performed a circular move that brought him back to the sands, and here he actually rose slightly on the current of warm air before finally losing height.

He made an easy landing on the sands, having had the machine under perfect control all the time, then set to work to take the cycleplane to pieces and pack it for transport back to his father's cottage.

"Yes, it behaved all right, as you saw for yourself," he said, in reply to our correspondent's inquiry. "The only trouble is, it doesn't remain up long enough; but I shall find a way out of that difficulty one of these days—next summer vac, perhaps!"

From which I gathered that air-cycling is nothing more than an amusing spare time hobby with Reddy.

It will never surprise me, all the same, to see him come cycling through the windows of the Remove Form-room to morning classes one of these fine days!

MY MINOR DID SURPRISE ME!

By BOLSOVER MAJOR

When I put my wrist out of action on a "try your strength" machine on the pier, half the joy of a seaside holiday departed for me! It used to be my delight of a morning to take a stroll round the pier, having a pennyworth at every strength-testing device I could find. Now, I could no longer bask the merry punchball or heave at the cheery tugging machine or close my paw over the grip-testing what-not.

I felt in a pretty foul mood when I took my minor for a stroll on the pier the day after my wrist had gone wrong.

"Rotten luck to crock up like this just when I was getting my hand in," I growled. "I was just beginning to get the knack of these machines. In another day or so, I should probably have been good enough to start getting my pennies back. I haven't done it, of course, but I was getting jolly near the point where my penny would have come back to me automatically."

"I'll have a try at some of them if you like," my minor said. "Perhaps it will cheer you up to see me following in your footsteps."

"Fat lot of cheering up I shall get out of that!" I said. "It'll be sheer waste of money, of course. You'll never be strong enough to get your penny back if you try from now till Doomsday. Still, you can try if you like. Got any pennies?"

"One."

"Well, that'll give you one go. Certainly not more. Have a snack at that punchball!"

My minor nodded, inserted his penny in the slot, and pulled down the ball. He clenched his fist, and gave it a fairly hefty clout for a fag.

"Ping!"

"What's that?" I asked.

"My penny back!" was the answer.

I stared! I blinked! I had been trying for a week to hit that ball hard enough to get my penny returned—and had failed. My minor had done the trick first pop! I felt quite dizzy.

"Mind trying that again, kid?" I asked faintly.

"Pleasure!" And my minor tried again—and, believe it or not, had his penny returned for the second time!

This, I may tell you, was the first of a number of shocks I received on the pier that morning. From the punchball, we went on to the auto-weight-lifter. My minor lifted the weight and got back his penny. He tried the grip-testing machine and got back his penny. He tried the tug-of-war what's-its-name, and got back his penny.

"I'm dreaming. It can't be real," I murmured to myself.

Finally, we came to a gadget I felt sure he couldn't possibly master—a sort of parallel-bar arrangement in which you had to pull the two bars together to get your copper returned. I had tried it myself and had hardly been able to move it. Surely this would beat him!

I almost tottered over, when he calmly snapped the bars together and got back his penny without an effort!

"What does it all mean?" I asked my minor dazedly. "Are you a super-man or am I suffering from hallucinations?"

"Neither!"

"Then what the dickens is the explanation?"

"It's easy," grinned my minor. "You see, there's an international

athletic's camp near this place, and the giddy athletes spent yesterday afternoon on the pier. They played on these machines for hours and evidently they left them a good deal weaker than they found them. That's the explanation!"

I was jolly glad to hear it. If I hadn't heard the facts, I should never have been able to look my minor in the face again!

TWO POINTS OF VIEW!

Squiff says he loves the white Atlantic rollers.

Fish says he prefers the green Transatlantic dollars!

GUESTS SIMPLY "SURGE-ON" HIM!

It is stated that the amenities of Mauleverer Towers include complete accommodation for invalids, with a visiting doctor and resident nurses.

Mauly's always noted for his generous "hospital"-ity!

QUELCHY WAS A BOY ONCE—REALLY!

Says DICK RAKE

On a sandy shore on the South Coast last week, I was doing handspings and somersaults after my morning dip, when the sound of handclapping led me to conclude with a deep bow before the deckchair from which it came.

I nearly had a fit when I straightened myself up again and saw that the man who had clapped my efforts was my own Form-master!

"Well, Rake, there is seemingly no need to ask you if you are enjoying your holiday," remarked Mr. Quelch. "Are you always as energetic as this on the beach?"

I grinned feebly and said I thought I was. Quelch nodded approvingly.

"That is just as it should be, Rake. I was the same myself when I was your age."

"What?" I gasped.

"Just the same," said Quelch reminiscently. "I well remember a sea-side holiday when I used to go for a five-mile run before breakfast every morning!"

"Great pip!" I breathed.

"Yes, I think I must have been a real boy," went on Quelch dreamily. "Certainly I recall many phases typical of the average boy. I collected foreign

stamps, I remember, and kept guinea-pigs—oh, yes, and a tame mouse! I got into innumerable scrapes. At this time of the year, for instance, I was always in trouble for trespassing in somebody's orchard!"

"You were, sir?" I ejaculated incredulously.

Something in the way I said that must have affected Quelch. He started slightly and his eyes, which had had a quite unusual twinkle in them, took on that gimlet look we know so well. He abruptly changed the subject.

"Ahem! I trust, Rake, that the holiday which you are enjoying in such a—um—vigorous manner will result in your returning to Greyfriars next term with a renewed zest for work and an inflexible determination to improve on your previous attainments in the Form-room."

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" I gasped.

Soon after that, we parted. I heard no more of Quelch's boyhood days. But I came away with an abiding sense of having made a great and important discovery.

Hitherto, it has been generally supposed in the Remove that Quelch came on the earth fully grown in a puff of smoke during a thunderstorm or a volcanic eruption.

Now I know better. He was not a separate creation, after all, but has gone through just the same stages of development as you and me—in the dim and distant past, of course!

It's an amazing thing to realise, chaps, but Quelch was a boy once—really!

Answers to Correspondents

"Indignant" (Second).—"They must think we're infants to take away our exercise books and put us on slates."

Why worry? While you're young you kick off with the slates, but later on, you'll go out on the tiles!

H. J. C. (Fifth).—"There isn't a fellow in the school who can look me straight in the face."

Then take our tip, old chap, and wear a mask!

G. L. (Sixth).—"I'll wipe out your editorial office in one fell swoop."

Try it on, old bean. We have an idea that your "one fell swoop" is likely to be "one swell flop!"

"Simple Simon" (Second).—"Is it true that Gosling was once a baker?"

No; yet he "loafs" about the gateway, is always very "crusty," and has been known to boast he is well "bread"!

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

IN this issue of the MAGNET you have read of the amusing and amazing antics of Horace Coker, who unexpectedly bumped into Harry Wharton & Co., and in consequence brought about more exciting times for the holiday-makers aboard the Water-Lily. But although the great Horace has gone, peace and quietness does not come the way of the Greyfriars Removites. Oh, no! More troubles are in the offing, and Johnny Bull gets more than his share of them! For some unaccountable reason, Johnny is missing from the party. What has become of him? It's a real poser for Harry Wharton & Co. until they succeed in elucidating the

"MYSTERY ON THE THAMES!"

On no account should you miss reading this spanking-fine yarn, chums. It shows Frank Richards at his very best, and this should be sufficient recommendation for you to make certain of reading this coming treat.

WORTH NOTING!

Attention should be drawn to the topping new complete tales of Tom Merry & Co. now running in our companion paper—the "Gem." This week's yarn:

"GUSSY'S WILD MAN!"

By Martin Clifford.

tells of the chums of St. Jim's thrilling adventures in the wilds of Brazil, where they are searching for a lost explorer. Get a copy of the "Gem" to-day and sample this tip-top adventure yarn.

Chin, chin, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.

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