

POCKET KNIVES AND POCKET WALLETS AWARDED EVERY WEEK!

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The MAGNET

EVERY SATURDAY.

2^D



FOOL'S LUCK!

“PLEASE TO REMEMBER——”

(The above incident is only one of the many treats Frank Richards has served up for readers in the powerful school story of Harry Wharton & Co., inside.)

You Raise a Laugh, I'll Award the Prize! See Below!



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to
c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

HERE is an amusing little puzzle which one of my readers has sent in to me this week. "There is a word of ten letters," he says. "The first two letters signify: The King. The tenth, third, sixth, and fifth signify the very opposite to a king in the Middle Ages; and the eighth, seventh, ninth, and fourth signify a place where there is plenty of air."

"When the ten letters are written down in their proper order they make a word which should be familiar to every reader of the MAGNET."

He didn't tell me what the letters were, so I had to put on my thinking cap and try to puzzle out the mystery. Two letters signifying the King! I was wondering what these could be until I suddenly caught sight of the post-box with the letters "G.R." upon it. Well and good! Now in the Middle Ages the king was at the top of the social system, and the very opposite to that was a "serf!" The third clue is easy—obviously the word is "airy."

"G.R.," "Serf," and "Airy"—put them down in their proper order and you get—Greyfriars!

This little puzzle interested me so much that I decided to see if I could make one up myself. This is the result.

Clues: Nos. 1 and 3 signify a soft pencil. Nos. 4, 7, and 9 signify a sudden shout. Nos. 5, 6, 8, and 2 signify the principal male character in a story.

When all nine letters are put down in their proper order, they give the name of one of the most likeable fellows at Greyfriars. Now put on your thinking caps and see if you can solve the puzzle. If you can't do it in five minutes, you'll find the answer at the end of this chat.

A TALK ABOUT "TALKIES."

One of my Welsh readers is seriously perturbed. He wants to see—and hear—a "talkie," but up to the present they have not reached the little village where he lives. He says he'll be able to understand them himself all right, but he wants to know what is going to happen to people who only understand Welsh? That's a bit of a snag, isn't it? Of course, the "talkie" manufacturers could synchronise the Welsh language with the film—but then the people who only understand English would be left out of it!

I am afraid that if the "talkies" boom continues, all the Welsh people will have to learn English perfectly—or else stick to silent pictures. Over in Belgium, where some of the people speak French and some speak Flemish, the "talkies" are only given in French—which is rather hard on the Flemish-speaking population. I am afraid that "talkies" will lead to people forgetting certain languages and concentrating more on the better-known languages of the world.

There is certainly one possibility which is opened out by "talkies." It is quite possible that, sooner or later,

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ENGLISH MAY BE THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

of the world. In fact, I see that a University man has evolved a new international language which is composed of only five hundred words of English. With these five hundred words, he claims, it will be possible to say anything, and if foreigners will learn them, English will become the universal language, and will be much more simple even than Esperanto. If the "talkies" were to confine themselves to these five hundred words, they would soon teach foreigners to speak our language—but let us hope that the "talkies" won't teach them to speak it with an American accent!

"RAPID FIRE" REPLIES!

Here are one or two questions asked by my readers:

How is Litmus paper made? By adding potassium carbonate to extract of lichens, and mixing with gypsum. Acids turn litmus paper red; alkalies turn it blue.

What is the longest word in the English language? I have always believed that "protantitransubstantiationableness" is!

Why were prisoners sent to Siberia? Because the country is so cold and the climate is so bad, that ordinary workmen could not be obtained to develop the natural resources, which include gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, graphite, etc.—all remarkably valuable.

Have you sent in a joke yet? Harry Shaw, of "Brookville," Newey Road, Wyken, near Coventry, has sent in one which gets a penknife for him this week. Here it is:



Police Inspector (interrogating prisoner): "So you are a locksmith, eh? What were you doing in this gambling den we raided, then?"

Prisoner:

"I was making a bolt for the door, sir, just as you came in!"



Why don't you have a shot at winning one of these useful penknives? They are worth having. I can assure you, and I've plenty left which I am just longing to give away to readers.

Here's an interesting query which comes from Harry King, of Epsom. Harry wants to know:

DID BUFFALO BILL REALLY EXIST?

He did—and his proper name was Colonel William Cody. In the old days of the "Wild West" Bill Cody fought with the Americans against the Indians, and when peace came at last Bill found life getting rather tame. However, during the building of a railway across the American continent, it was necessary to provide the workmen with fresh meat, and Bill Cody and his partner were employed to hunt buffaloes in order to get buffalo meat. He proved to be such a fine hunter that

he soon became known as "Buffalo Bill," and the name stuck to him.

So well known did he become that people began to write stories around him and while some of them actually described his exploits, most of them, of course, were fiction. With the advance of civilisation into the West, Bill found his job gone, and profiting by the publicity which had been given to his exploits, he started a "Wild West" show, where he introduced such incidents as the holding-up of the Deadwood coach, and the attack on ranches by the Indians. He came to England with the show—and some of my readers' fathers might be able

to remember seeing it.

But Bill was getting old, and he couldn't carry on indefinitely. He died eventually in retirement—but his fame still continues!

"Dear Editor," writes another reader this week,—*"My father says I am no earthly good. What shall I do?"* The answer is easy. Persuade him to put you in the air service!

I'm getting near the end of my space again. However, there's room for this limerick which J. Clements, of 41, Ellerslie Road, Shepherd's Bush, W.12 has sent me. He will be showing his new MAGNET pocket wallet to his chums by now. Can you beat his winning effort? There's a pocket wallet for you if you can:

Old Gosling, the Greyfriars parter,
Is champion greaser and snorter.

He looks the big gate

And when chaps come in late

He says: "Which as 'ow I'll report
yer!"

Do you know, I don't believe in the old maxim: "Laugh and grow fat." If it were true I should be as rotund as Billy Bunter. The reason? Because I've just finished getting next week's issue ready for you—and if anyone can read it and not laugh, well—he ought to see a doctor without delay. Take the long Greyfriars yarn, for instance. It's called:

"COWARD'S COURAGE!"

By Frank Richards,

and while it has a real good "meaty" plot in it—a plot that will hold your interest all through the yarn—the one and only Frank Richards doesn't forget your very natural desire to laugh at frequent intervals. That's what I like about his yarns. There's a serious side to them and a dashed humorous side to them as well.

Then in addition to the Greyfriars yarn Master Dicky Nugent is well to the fore as usual. He's never backward in coming forward is Dicky. Next week he presents the opening story in an amusing "Tuckshop" series, entitled:

"DR. BIRCHEMALL'S TUCK-SHOP!"

which might well be described as "one long scream." In addition to this there will be another gripping instalment of our new serial:

"PETER FRAZER—IRONMASTER!"

together with the first of a grand new series of "footer" articles under the heading of:

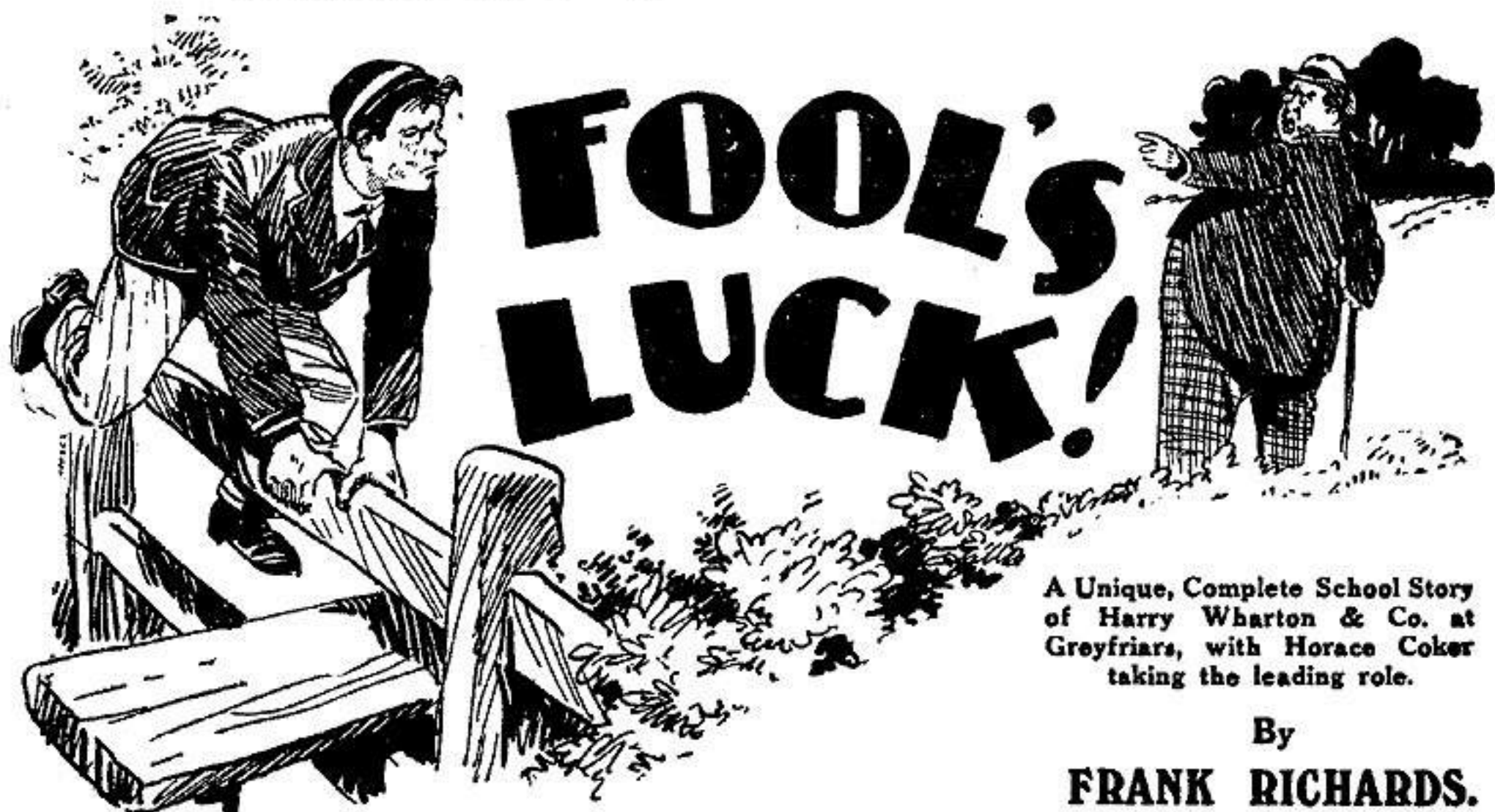
"INSIDE INFORMATION,"

and as usual my little chat.

Did you manage to solve the puzzle I gave you? If not, here's the answer: Clue No. 1: BB; No. 2: Cry; No. 3: Hero. Put them in their proper order, and the name is: "Bob Cherry."

Cheerio until next week.

THE EDITOR.



A Unique, Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, with Horace Coker taking the leading role.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Matter of Principle!

"NEVER!"

Coker of the Fifth uttered that word in loud and emphatic tones. So loud and so emphatic were Coker's tones that they reached many more ears than those for which they were intended.

"But, old chap——" urged Potter of the Fifth.

"You see——" said Greene.

"Never!"

Coker repeated the word, with even more loudness and emphasis. That a dozen other fellows, as well as Potter and Greene, heard him, did not matter a straw to Coker. He would not have cared if all Greyfriars had heard him. He did not care if the whole world listened in.

Horace Coker was standing under one of the old elms in the quad, leafless now in the November winds. He stood erect, his shoulders squared, his hands thrust deep into trousers pockets, his whole attitude and expression indicating dogged determination. Ajax, in his celebrated lightning-defying act, must have looked a good deal as Coker looked at that moment.

Harry Wharton & Co., coming along to the House, naturally paused to look on. So did other fellows. Coker did not mind. In fact, Coker liked an audience.

"Never!" said Coker, for the third time.

"The neverfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; and the other members of the Famous Five chuckled.

"But what's up?" asked Bob Cherry. "I suppose Coker's playing the giddy ox again," remarked Harry Wharton. "After all, it would be rather unusual if he wasn't."

"Coker, old man——" urged Potter.

"Cheese it, Potter!"

"Old chap——" murmured Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Potter and Greene exchanged helpless looks. Coker, having reduced them to silence, proceeded, with the same emphasis as before:

"Never! I've said never, and I mean never! See? I've stood enough from Prout. There's a limit to what a man can stand from an old donkey of a Form master! Prout's reached the limit. He stops there! See?"

"Oh, it's Prout!" said Frank Nugent.

Many faces registered hilarity.

Coker's troubles with his Form master were perpetual. Coker being the densest and most backward fellow in the Fifth, and being convinced that he was the brightest and cleverest fellow in that Form, trouble was bound to accrue. Prout would lose patience with Coker—and Coker would lose patience with Prout.

When brains were served out, Horace James Coker was at the tail end of the queue. But despite his fat-headed way of doing things, there is no gainsaying the fact that Coker was born lucky!

Now, it seemed, matters were coming to a head.

"There's such a thing," said Coker, "as justice! If a fellow wasn't in the right, a fellow could give in. But when a fellow's clearly in the right, what's a fellow to do?"

"You have to give a Form master his head!" urged Potter.

"Like a horse!" said Greene.

"There's a limit!" said Coker firmly. "Look at it! Prout jumped on me for nothing. I was thrashing some fags—those young sweeps who are standing grinning there——"

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned more expansively.

Coker, according to his own description and belief, had been thrashing them. Their own impression was that Coker had been getting the thrashing.

"Prout butted in," continued Coker

indignantly, "and gave me five hundred lines. Like his cheek! He's always butting in! Prout's a man who never can realise that another man knows best!"

"Form master, you know!" murmured Potter. "We always give in to Prout, old chap!"

"That's all right for you," said Coker. "But I've got my personal dignity to consider, and my position in the school."

How Coker's position in the school differed from that of any other Fifth-Former at Greyfriars was a secret known only to Coker. But Horace was satisfied that it did. In Coker's own eyes Horace James Coker was a person of tremendous importance.

"He butted in," resumed Coker. "He gave me a hefty impot. I said I wouldn't do the lines, and have I done them? Never!"

"But you've got detention for not doing them!" said Potter.

"I'm not doing the detention, either," said Coker. "Prout's detained me this afternoon! I'm not standing it! I've said never! You heard me?"

"Nearly all Greyfriars heard you, old bean," said Bob Cherry. "In fact, you could be heard nearly as far as Friardale."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Cherry!" Coker frowned at the grinning Removites. "If you want another licking, I'm the man to give it to you! Look here, Potter, it's no good talking. I've got detention unjustly. I can't give in, as a matter of principle. I refuse to be detained."

"But——" said Potter distressfully.

"Never!"

"But——" sighed Greene of the Fifth.

"Never!"

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter, "here comes Prout!"

"Oh, my hat!"

All eyes turned in the direction of the House.

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From the House came Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, and he came directly towards the group under the elms.

Prout was not looking genial.

Generally, the portly and ponderous master of the Fifth Form was a genial and cheerful gentleman. He fancied himself in the character of the school-master who has not forgotten his own youth, and who cultivates frank and friendly terms with his boys. Often he was in a chatty mood, and would keep a Fifth Form man standing for ten minutes or more, shifting wearily from one leg to the other, while he chatted. Prout's genial chats were dreaded in the Fifth. Fifth Form men would dodge round corners to escape them.

But the overflowing good-humour of the Fifth Form master had been conspicuous by its absence for some time past. Neither genial nor chatty, Mr. Prout had become testy, irritable, impatient.

What was the matter with Prout was a mystery in the Fifth. They agreed that Coker was enough to turn any Form master's hair grey; that a man who had to teach Coker things might well be heading for a nervous breakdown. Still, it couldn't be all Coker. There was something else—some worry on Prout's mind. Nobody in the Fifth knew what it was; but they got the benefit of it. Prout had been so ratty and unpleasant the past few days that the Fifth would almost have preferred him in his old chatty mood.

Prout came ponderously down the path, and the watching eyes of a score of fellows saw his frown deepen as he glanced at Coker.

Coker faced him resolutely.

Under so many eyes Coker felt that he had to stand up to Prout. He had announced, loudly, his intention of not giving in to Prout. Coker was not the man to eat his words.

There was silence as Prout arrived.

"Coker!" he said.

"Yes, sir!" answered Coker, with a judicious mingling of the firmness due to himself and the respect due to a Form master.

"I have told you that you are under detention this afternoon."

"Quite, sir. But—"

Prout raised a plump hand.

"You need say nothing, Coker. I have prepared a detention task for you. Go to my study now, and wait there."

"But, sir—" began Coker.

Prout, heedless, passed on. He proceeded on his ponderous way, leaving Coker and his audience behind.

All eyes turned on Coker. Every fellow was interested to know what Coker would do. It was not uncommon for a fellow to declare that he couldn't stand the Beak, that he wouldn't stand the Beak; and that he was going to tell the Beak exactly what he thought of him. But when it came to the pinch such a fellow always discovered that he could and would, after all, stand the Beak; and he never did tell the Beak what he thought of him.

There was a long pause.

"Better go in, old chap," whispered Potter, anxious to save Coker from himself, as it were.

"I've said I'm not going to be detained, Potter," answered Coker.

"Yes; but—"

"What I say I mean!" said Coker.

"Yes," said Greene; "certainly."

"But—"

"But," said Coker, "I can go to the man's study. He has a right to tell me to go to his study. I will do that."

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"Oh!" said Potter and Greene.

And Coker walked away to the House and went in. Potter and Greene stared after him, looked at one another, and grinned. The other fellows chuckled.

The threatened rebellion in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars had not—for the moment—come off. It was, at least, postponed. And the general impression of Coker's audience was that it would be indefinitely postponed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Startling!

"SCANDALOUS!"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Iniquitous!"

Bunter stared.

The Owl of the Remove had had the impression, until that moment, that he was alone in the old Cloisters.

It was because it was such a secluded spot that Bunter had selected it.

Bunter, as a rule, was a gregarious fellow. He liked company. But circumstances alter cases.

When Bunter was in possession of a cake he found that solitude had its charms.

It was all very well for the poet to ask, "O Solitude, where are the charms that sages have seen in thy face?" When a fellow had a cake there was a lot to be said for solitude.

Besides, the parcel under Bunter's arm did not exactly belong to him. It was only his by right of possession. Possession is said to be nine points of the law. By nine points of the law, therefore, that parcel belonged to Bunter. By the tenth point it belonged to Bob Cherry, from whose study cupboard Bunter had surreptitiously extracted it.

So the idea of solitude appealed to Bunter more than ever. Solitude spelled safety. Bob Cherry took a large size in boots, and Bunter had no desire to ascertain their exact weight.

With the parcel under his arm, therefore, the Owl of the Remove had rolled away to that sequestered spot. He stopped in a shady spot among the old stone pillars and unfastened the string of the parcel. That the parcel contained a cake Bunter did not yet know, but he had no doubt of it. He had seen Bob carry that parcel into Study No. 13, half-concealing it under his jacket, as if he wished to keep it from general observation. Rooting in the study afterwards, Bunter had found it at the very back of the cupboard, hidden by three or four other articles placed over it, screening it from sight. Obviously, to Bunter's mind, the parcel contained tuck. For what else but tuck could a fellow be so extremely careful about, and take so much trouble to conceal?

Inside the wrapping paper Bunter felt a cardboard box. Obviously, to Bunter, that box contained a cake.

It was not long since dinner, and even Billy Bunter was not hungry again yet. But, hungry or not, Bunter could always deal with a cake.

He proceeded to unwrap the parcel, exposing the cardboard box to view. He was about to open the box itself, when those startling ejaculations, in the rich, fruity voice of Mr. Prout, reached his fat ears.

"The rascal!"

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter.

He blinked round the stone pillar in alarm.

Prout, evidently, was walking in the Cloisters. It was half an hour since that little scene with Coker in the quadrangle, and Bunter had noticed, at the time, that Prout's ponderous tread had carried him in the direction of the Cloisters. Since then he had forgotten all about Prout. Apparently the master

of the Fifth was still there; and he also must have been rather forgetful, as Coker, no doubt, was waiting for him in his study all that time.

"Scoundrel!"

Bunter quaked.

His impression was that Prout had spotted him, in surreptitious and felonious possession of another fellow's cake, and was addressing those unpleasant remarks to him.

"Villain!"

Prout's ponderous tread passed the stone pillar behind which Bunter quaked, with the parcel in his fat hands.

To Bunter's relief, it passed, and did not stop.

He realised that Prout had not seen him, and did not know that he was there.

Prout was talking to himself!

Certainly, he was not calling himself all those unpleasant names. He must have been alluding to some other person whom he regarded with wrath and scorn.

Bunter blinked at Prout's broad back as he passed. A whiff of strong cigar-smoke came back to him, and Bunter almost sneezed.

Prout smoked big black cigars, with a hefty scent. Prout really had reached an age when a gentleman cannot smoke big black cigars with impunity. As a rule, Prout allowed himself rather carefully with those cigars. But of late, with a somewhat mysterious trouble on his mind, Prout had sought solace in tobacco, and instead of one cigar in the evening, he would light up five or six in a day. Probably that helped to account for Prout's irritable temper in these days.

Bunter suppressed his sneeze. He did not want to attract Prout's attention. He waited for the footsteps to die away.

They died away, and Prout was gone, leaving a trail of blue smoke behind him. Then Bunter proceeded to open the cardboard box.

His little round eyes glistened behind his big round spectacles as he did so. He was sure it was a cake. It might, perhaps, be tarts, or candied fruit, or something like that. Whatever it was, Bunter was going to enjoy a feast.

But as he removed the lid of the cardboard box a change came over the spirit of his dream, as a poet has expressed it.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked into the cardboard box.

It did not contain a cake; it did not contain tarts; it did not contain anything that even Bunter could regard as edible.

It contained fireworks!

Bunter was aware that the Fifth of November was near at hand. Like other schoolboys, he was pleased to remember the Fifth of November, and to celebrate the anniversary of Mr. Fawkes' desperate attempt to stem the tide of eloquence in the House of Commons. He was aware that some fellows were laying in fireworks, strictly against the rules of the House, which very properly forbade such dangerous things to be kept in the studies. The surreptitious manner in which Bob Cherry had conveyed that parcel to Study No. 13 was explained now. Bunter's thoughts, naturally, had run on tuck. Bunter lived and moved and had his being in tuck. Bob's thoughts, evidently, had run on fireworks.

"Oh crumbs! Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He stared at the box of fireworks, and glared at it! His very spectacles gleamed with indignation.

"Beast! Giving a fellow all that trouble for nothing!" gasped Bunter.

"Of all the rotters—"

There was quite a stack of fireworks in the box—squibs, catherine-wheels, crackers, and jumping crackers. On the



A powerful whiff from Mr. Prout's cigar caught Bunter fair and square, and before he knew what was happening, he was sneezing. "Ooooooh! Atchoo! Atchoo! Atchoo!" "Who is there?" snapped Mr. Prout, flinging away his cigar-end which, unbeknown to him, fell in the box of fireworks which lay at the foot of the pillar. (See Chapter 2.)

glorious Fifth, with the bonfire going, they would have been delightful. But they were of no use to Bunter now. He had not wended his solitary way to the Cloisters to let off fireworks all by himself; neither could he have let them off without giving himself away to all Greyfriars.

"Beast!"

Bunter was landed with plunder that he did not want. It had been risky getting that parcel away from Bob's study, and the risk had to be taken over again to return it. Bunter did not think of taking that risk. If the beast wanted his beastly fireworks, he could find them and fetch them. Bunter discontentedly dropped the box at his feet, with the intention of leaving it there.

"Scandalous!" It was Prout's voice again. "Iniquitous!" Prout was still communing with himself.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunter.

He crouched behind the stone pillar.

Prout had not gone when Bunter supposed he had. He was pacing the Cloisters, and, having paced to the end, he was now pacing back. Prout, plainly, was in a troubled and angry frame of mind, reflecting on the mysterious trouble that had fallen on him of late, and which made life so trying in the Fifth Form room. With a cigar near its end, glowing in his mouth, the portly master of the Fifth came ponderously along, and Bunter quaked in cover, alarmed at the possibility of being caught in possession of that box of forbidden fireworks. Until the great day came a junior was not supposed to have fireworks in his possession, and Bunter realised that, though the fireworks were not his own, he could not explain to a Beak that he had pinched them in mistake for tuck.

Prout's heavy tread came nearer and nearer, and Bunter, blinking from behind the pillar, saw him, and popped

his head back quickly. Prout's eyes were on the ground, his brow deeply corrugated. He had not seen Bunter. He was buried in troubled thought—thought so deep that he had not noticed that his cigar was burning perilously close to his lips, and would give him a shock soon if it was not ejected.

On the November breeze that whistled through the Cloisters there came again a powerful whiff from the cigar. This time it caught Bunter fair and square, and before he knew what was happening he was sneezing.

"Ooooooh! Atchoo! Atchoo! Atchoooooh!"

Prout stopped suddenly. He had supposed himself alone in the Cloisters. That Gargantuan sneeze warned him that he was not.

"Who is there?" snapped Prout, making a stride round the stone pillar behind which Bunter stood and sneezed. "Ow! Ow!" he continued, as the cigar, at the last lap now, began to burn his majestic mouth.

Mr. Prout promptly hooked the remnant of the cigar from his mouth and flung it down.

It fell into the box that lay at the foot of the pillar, and which Mr. Prout had not noticed.

"Bunter!" he snapped.

"Atchoo! Chooo! Chooo!" sneezed Bunter.

"What are you doing here?" rapped out Prout.

Probably the Fifth Form master was aware that, in his supposed solitude, he had been muttering his reflections aloud, and it was intensely irritating to discover that a Lower boy had overheard him.

"I—I— Atchooh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wasn't doing anything, sir! I—I—"

"You were listening!" hooted Prout. "Nunno! Oh, no, sir! I—I never

heard a word of what you were saying about Coker, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Coker?" repeated Mr. Prout blankly.

"Yes, sir; I never heard you calling Coker a villain, and a rascal, and a scoundrel, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"Pooh! You are a ridiculous boy!" snapped Mr. Prout, who certainly had not been thinking of Coker when he made those cryptic remarks. "You—"

Mr. Prout was interrupted.

Bang! Fizz! Whizz!

"Good gad!" gasped Mr. Prout.

The inevitable had happened. A burning cigar-end could not be dropped into a box of fireworks without something happening. Now it started to happen.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Fizzzzzz! Whoooooh! Fizzzz!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He backed away hurriedly as the sparks flew. Mr. Prout, who was standing close beside that box of fireworks, stared round him in wonder and alarm. It seemed to him that an earthquake was breaking out at his feet through the old stone flags of the Cloisters.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Oh, goodness gracious! Bless my soul! Oh!" spluttered Mr. Prout, leaping away with an activity that was amazing, considering the weight he had to lift.

The stack of fireworks in the box were all going strong now. They scattered as they exploded. Catherine-wheels whirled merrily in all directions. Squibs squibbed in showers of sparks. Crackers cracked. Mr. Prout, in a state of utter bewilderment, jumped away, and staggered against the pillar.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Fizzzzz!

"Bless my soul! Goodness gracious! What—what—what—"

Bang! Bang! One of the fearsome

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contrivances called jumping crackers, which explode a number of times in succession, landed between Mr. Prout's feet, and banged there. The cracker jumped, and Mr. Prout jumped. Bang! Prout leaped away. And the cracker, as if in intentional pursuit of the startled gentleman, leaped after him. Bang! Prout made another jump, and the cracker made another jump. Bang! "Goodness gracious! Upon my word! What—what—"

Bang!
"Ow! Yaroooh!"

Prout, in his hurry, stumbled over the cardboard box and fell. The cracker, with its last jump, landed on his back. There it proceeded to give forth its last bang.

Bang!
"Whooooop!"

Prout rolled over among the exploded fireworks. A squib, just at the end of its tether, exuded its last sparks into Prout's neck. The roar that burst from Prout awoke every echo of the ancient Cloisters.

He scrambled to his feet. His face was purple, his eyes ablaze. The mildest-tempered master might have been exasperated by what had happened; and Prout had already been irritable and testy. Now he was in a state of towering rage, compared with which the wrath of Achilles, so eloquently sung by Homer, was a mere trifle, light as air. With purple face and gleaming eyes Prout rushed towards a fat figure that was bolting out of the Cloisters.

In the quad there were startled exclamations and irrepressible chortles at a strange and unaccustomed sight, unprecedented in the history of the school—that of a fat junior, streaking towards the House at frantic speed, with a portly, purple Form master streaking on his track.

"Go it, Bunter!" shrieked a dozen voices.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Terror is said to lend wings. Certainly Billy Bunter appeared to be doing something like sixty as he streaked across the quad. He won that wild race and plunged into the House and vanished. The next moment, Prout plunged in after him; and a roar of laughter followed Prout in.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Phone Call!

B UZZZZZ!

Horace Coker grunted. Coker was still in Prout's study when the telephone bell rang stridently.

Prout had told him to go to that study and wait. Coker had decided to do as he was told. He was still determined that he would not be detained that afternoon. On a matter of principle, Coker felt that he could not give in. But a fellow who was standing up for his rights was bound to be careful to observe the rights of others, especially those in authority. Coker felt that. So Coker was going to obey all reasonable orders. That was how Coker put it to himself, though to other fellows it simply seemed that Coker had backed down under his Form master's eye.

Coker had been in the study more than half an hour now. He would have supposed that Prout had forgotten him, had it seemed possible for anyone to forget so important a person as Horace James Coker. That not being, in Coker's opinion, possible, he concluded that Prout had been delayed somehow.

Coker was standing at the study window, gloomily staring out into the quad, when Prout's telephone bell rang. He grunted, but gave it no other heed.

Buzzzzz!

The bell rang again. Coker, at last, turned impatiently from the window and took the receiver off the hook.

Naturally, he couldn't stand the incessant buzzing of the raucous bell. Besides, it was only good-natured to tell the caller that Prout wasn't there and take a message for the absent Form master—if any.

"Hallo!" growled Coker into the transmitter.

"Mr. Prout?" came a squeaky voice.

"This is Mr. Prout's study—"

There was an indistinct mumbling on the telephone. As so often happens on long-distance calls, the instrument was buzzing, and the voice of the caller was only one item on the programme.

Through the blurred buzz on the wires, Coker heard the name of Prout repeated, and a word he took as "tie."

"Blow the beastly thing!" said Coker. "I suppose this is Prout's haberdasher, and he's been ordering some new ties or something. Look here, I can't hear you!"

The squeaky voice came more clearly for a moment.

"I have not heard from you, Prout. You stated that you would telephone or write. You have done neither."

Coker did not reply for the moment. He stared at the instrument. That squeaky voice had a familiar ring to his ears.

Somewhere, he had heard that unpleasant, acid-toned, squeaky voice before. He was sure of that.

"Can you hear me? The instrument is buzzing! Can you hear me?"

"Who's speaking?" demanded Coker.

"Tighe."

"Yes, I know you're speaking about a tie. Are you the outfitter's at Courtfield?"

"I cannot hear you distinctly," came the squeaking voice. "Kindly tell me your intentions at once, Mr. Prout. I have the document ready for your inspection, and I am prepared to meet you in the same place as before, this afternoon, at the same time, and show it to you."

"Look here—"

"Am I to see you, or shall I let the law take its course?" came clearly and angrily. "Yes or no?"

"My hat!" murmured Coker, in amazement. "Do they think Prout has

pinched a tie out of their shop, or what? You must be potty, I think. Sure you've got the right number?"

"What? Is that not Mr. Prout's study at Greyfriars School?"

"Yes. Prout's out."

"What?"

"Prout's out, and as I happened to be in the study, I'm taking the call. Can I give Prout a message?"

"Oh!"

The buzzing on the phone had cleared somewhat, and the owner of the squeaky voice apparently heard all that Coker said. He seemed to be startled at hearing that his interlocutor was not Mr. Prout.

"I'll give him a message, if you like," said Coker. "But I tell you that if you've missed a tie, it's no good asking Prout about it. He can't know anything about your ties."

"That is not Mr. Prout speaking?"

"Of course it isn't! I keep on telling you that Prout's out," grunted Coker. "I'll give him a message, if you like, when he rolls in."

"Who is speaking? Your voice seems familiar," squeaked the man at the other end. "Now that I hear it clearly, it seems familiar to me."

"So does yours to me," said Coker. "I suppose you've served me in the shop, or something. Who are you, the Courtfield outfitter?"

"No, no! Tighe—Mr. Tighe—"

"For goodness' sake, ring off about that tie!" hooted Coker. "I don't care two straws if you've missed a tie, and Prout doesn't either. Do you think a Greyfriars Form master is a shop-lifter?"

"What? What? I don't understand you."

"And I jolly well don't understand you. I ask you who you are, and you keep on blithering about a tie you've missed. Talk sense! If you tell me you've missed a tie again, I'll put the receiver back."

"Who is speaking? I am sure I know your voice."

"My name's Coker—"

"WHAT?"

It was a startled howl instead of a squeak.

"Coker—Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form here. Prout's my Form master. What the thump's the matter? Nothing in a fellow's name to make you jump, is there? Look here, if you've got any message for Prout, cough it up! I'm getting tired of standing here, see? Now, then?"

Coker paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Like Brutus, he paused in vain. There was no reply.

"Hallo!" hooted Coker. "Are you there? Hallo! Cough it up, I tell you!"

Silence!

"My hat! The fellow's rung off!" ejaculated Coker in amazement. "Without giving me a message for Prout, too! Must be a born idiot! Hallo! Hallo!"

Coker bawled into the telephone. But there was no reply save a faint buzz, and it was clear that the unknown caller had rung off.

Coker put up the receiver in great astonishment. It really seemed as if the mention of his name had frightened the man off the telephone. It really was surprising. Coker's name was not, perhaps, a musical name; not one of those melodious names that impinge gratefully upon the ear. Still, there was nothing in it to make a fellow jump, and drop a receiver. Coker's face, in the opinion of many Greyfriars fellows, might have produced

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such an effect. But there was no reason why his name should do so.

"Must be potty!" concluded Coker. "First he bumbles about missing a tie, as if Prout could possibly know anything about his silly neckties, and then he rings off without leaving a message, as soon as I mention my name. Some giddy lunatic."

And Coker returned to the window, and his survey of the quad, while he waited to hear the approaching footsteps of Mr. Prout.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hiding Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Hide me!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"Oh crikey! Hide me!" spluttered the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter had done the Remove staircase at record speed. He whizzed into Study No. 1 in the Remove.

Five juniors were gathered there, discussing what they were going to do with the half-holiday. It was, so far, a fine afternoon, but the November sky threatened rain. The programme was not yet decided, when William George Bunter burst in on the Famous Five like a stone from a catapult.

He leaned on the study table and spluttered for breath. It was not a warm day, but perspiration streamed down Bunter's visage.

"Ow! Oh! Help! Hide me!" he gasped.

"What on earth's the matter?" demanded Harry Wharton, staring at the fat Owl in astonishment.

"Hide me!" spluttered Bunter.

"Loder of the Sixth after you?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ow! No! Worse than that—Prout!" spluttered Bunter.

"Prout!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Fathead! The Fifth Form Beak won't come up here."

"He's after me!" gasped Bunter.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

There was a sound from the direction of the Remove staircase, as if an elephant or a hippopotamus was negotiating the ascent. There was only one person at Greyfriars to whom those footsteps could be attributed—the portly and ponderous master of the Fifth.

"He's coming!" groaned Bunter.

"My esteemed chums, that is either the absurd Prout or a ludicrous earthquake," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, you might help a chap!" moaned Bunter. "I never let off the fireworks in the cloisters. Prout dropped a cigar into the box. But he's after me! Oh dear!"

"BUNTER!"

It was a deep, booming voice in the Remove passage. Evidently Mr. Prout was after Bunter.

Equally evidently, he was wrathful. In his wrath he had quite forgotten the etiquette which forbade a Form master to take into his own hands the punishment of a fellow belonging to a Form other than his own. Prout's proper course was to lay a complaint before Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. But in his present mood that was not a satisfying procedure for Mr. Prout to adopt. He wanted to lay his own hands on the impudent junior who had fireworked him. Prout was on the trail of vengeance.

"Bunter!"

"Cheek!" said Harry Wharton. "No Beak, excepting Quelch, has a right to

come up here. Go and tell him so, Bunter."

"Oh dear, he's wild!" gasped Bunter. "Frantic, in fact. You fellows hide me in this study before the beast gets hold of me."

Harry Wharton pulled out a screen that stood in a corner of the study. Bunter rolled behind it.

He was only just in time.

Less than a minute later the purple countenance of Mr. Prout was glaring in at the doorway of the study.

"Is Bunter here?" he gasped.

"Bunter, sir?" said Harry Wharton diplomatically. "Bunter's study is No. 7, sir, farther up the passage."

Prout gave a stare round the room, and, as Bunter was not visible there, he rolled on up the passage.

There was a gasp behind the screen.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Keep mum, fathead!" said Bob. "He will be coming back soon."

"Oh dear!"

Only Bunter's stertorous breathing was heard after that. The chums of the Remove resumed their discussion of the programme for the afternoon. In the distance they could hear Prout's ponderous progress up the Remove passage, and his deep, fruity voice inquiring for

You're BOUND TO LAUGH at this winning joke, which earns one of this week's useful pocket knives for: Miss K. O. Minson, of 3, Wensley Green, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, Yorks.

"What are you doing with that apple at the end of a fishing-rod?" asked Mr. Jones of his son. "I am fishing with it, dad," answered the youngster brightly. "But what's the apple for?" "Bait." "But you want a worm for bait." "Yes, but don't you see, dad," said the youngster, with a twinkle in his eye, "the worm's inside the apple!"

Come on, you fellows, don't let the girls beat you. I've plenty more prizes in stock!

Bunter. Most of the Remove were out of doors; but there were a few fellows about, and Mr. Prout inquired of everyone he saw. But nobody seemed to have seen Bunter, and Study No. 7 was empty.

Prout came rolling back along the passage, at last, puffing and blowing. Bunter had vanished. And all that remained to Prout was to take his complaint to the master of the Remove.

His heavy footsteps died away on the Remove staircase. Harry Wharton pulled the screen aside.

"You can come out, fatty," he said. "All clear!"

"The clearfulness is terrific!"

Bunter rolled out of the corner, gasping. The Famous Five eyed him curiously. They had hidden Bunter, as in duty bound when a Remove man was in trouble. But they wondered what he had done to excite the wrath of the Fifth Form master.

"I say, you fellows, is the beast gone?" gasped Bunter.

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

"Like his beastly cheek, you know, coming up here after a Remove man!" said Bunter. "I'll jolly well tell him so if he comes back, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm not afraid of Prout, if you fellows are!" said Bunter. "I say,

you fellows, you should have seen the old ass dancing when the fireworks went off. He, he, he!"

"You've been fireworking a Form master?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Bunter grinned. Now that the danger was over, the fat junior was full of courage, and disposed to take full credit for his remarkable and unintentional performance with the fireworks in the Cloisters.

"You fellows wouldn't have the nerve," he remarked complacently.

"Well, I don't think we should have the nerve to firework a Form master," said Harry, staring at the fat junior. "Mean to say—"

"He, he, he! Well, I did it," grinned Bunter. "Crackers and squibs and things banging and fizzing all round him. You should have seen him jump. Like a kangaroo. He, he, he!"

"You fat ass—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You'll get into a frightful row with Quelch—"

"Oh, I—I mean, it was an accident!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In fact, Prout did it himself!" gasped Bunter. "Chucked a cigar-end into a box of fireworks. What did he expect, the old ass?"

"Quelch will want to know what you were doing with a box of fireworks," grinned Johnny Bull.

"They weren't mine. I can prove they weren't mine. I—I don't know how they got into the Cloisters at all," stammered Bunter. "I never took the box there, you know. I say, you fellows, you can take my word, of course—but do you think Quelch will?"

"About as much as we do," chuckled Bob.

"Look here, you beast, if there's a row, you'll have to own up that they were your fireworks!" gasped Bunter.

Bob Cherry jumped.

"Mine!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, and you'll have to own up."

"You bagged my box of fireworks!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "No, certainly not! I—I never knew you had a box of fireworks, old chap. I—I thought it was a cake."

"You thought it was a cake!" stammered Bob.

"Yes, or else I shouldn't have taken it, of course. Not that I did take it, you know," added Bunter cautiously. "I never saw you take the box into your study and hide it in the cupboard."

"Oh crumbs!"

"As for thinking that it was a cake, I never thought about it at all, not knowing that it was there," explained Bunter. "I haven't been near your study to-day. How those fireworks got into the Cloisters is a mystery. But if there's a row, you'll have to own up that they were yours. I expect that of you."

Bob Cherry stared fixedly at the Owl of the Remove.

"You bagged that box from my study, thinking there was a cake in it," he articulated. "You let Prout drop a cigar into it and blow up all my fireworks. You fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Seven-and-sixpence worth!" roared Bob Cherry. "All I had for the Fifth. I'll jolly well—"

"I'll pay for the fireworks, of course," said Bunter hastily.

"Shell out, then!"

"I'm expecting a postal order—"

"What?" howled Bob Cherry.

"As soon as my postal order comes, I'll settle up at once," said Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "I'll tell you what, Cherry,

the postal order will be for ten bob. You hand me half-a-crown now, and I'll let you have the whole postal order when it comes—see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry did not join in the laugh. He was thinking of his seven-and-sixpence worth of fireworks—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

"You—you—you—" he gasped.

"No need to get waxy about it," said Bunter. "All your own fault. What was a fellow to think, when you hid that box away so carefully? Of course, I thought there was tuck in it. Not that I touched it, you know. I hope I'm not the fellow to bag a fellow's tuck."

Bob Cherry breathed hard and deep.

"Bunter came here and asked us to hide him, you men," he said.

"That's all right," said Bunter. "Prout's gone. No need to hide me now. I'll be going. But what about that half-crown?"

"You're going to get what you've asked for," answered Bob.

He picked up a five bat.

Bunter jumped away towards the door. Bob Cherry promptly headed him off.

"I—I—I say, what are you going to do with that bat, old chap?" gasped Bunter.

"Hide you," answered Bob.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"And I'm going to hide you till you burst, you fat villain!" roared Bob Cherry. "And you can think of the hiding next time you bag a fellow's things."

"I say, you fellows—Yarooogh! Leggo! Whooop!" roared Bunter, as a hefty hand was laid on his collar, and he was jerked over on the table.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Whack! Whack!

"Ow! Help! Murder! Fire!" roared Bunter.

Whack!

"Whooooop!"

"There, you fat villain!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Bunter travelled into the Remove passage at express speed, a large size in boots helping him on his way. He travelled, roaring.

"Ow! Beast! Yarooogh! Oooch!"

The door slammed on Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove limped away, repenting him that he had fled into Study No. 1 to ask the fellows there to hide him. The hiding had not been at all to his taste.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Under Detention!

HORACE COKER was fuming with impatience by the time he heard the heavy tread of Prout in Masters' passage. Considerably more than half an hour had Horace Coker waited in the study, and he could not help feeling that it was cheeky of Prout to keep him waiting like this. Several times was Coker tempted to leave the study in defiance of his Form master's order. But he stayed on. After all, Prout might have been delayed, and he might not be to blame.

So Coker waited, and was rewarded at last by hearing the heavy tread of his Form master approaching. He turned from the window as Mr. Prout rolled majestically in at the door.

Prout had not looked good-tempered when Coker last saw him. Now he looked less so than ever.

The incident of Bunter and the fireworks had not had a mollifying effect

on Prout. Neither had his interview with the Remove master, to whom he had laid his complaint. Mr. Quelch, of course, agreed that Bunter had been seriously to blame, and should be called on the carpet. But his gimlet eyes had grown very steely when he heard that Prout had pursued Bunter to the Remove studies and lost him there. He had pointed out that he never intervened in matters affecting the Fifth, and that he expected other Form masters to observe the same reticence with regard to the Lower Fourth. Prout had snorted, and Quelch had sniffed, and they had parted very coldly indeed.

Prout's eyes gleamed under knitted brows at the sight of Coker in his study. He had totally forgotten Coker's existence. Reminded of it by the sight of Horace James, he seemed more than ever annoyed. Prout was troubled by a private affair, he did not want to be troubled also by a dense, opinionative, obstreperous fellow like Coker. In his normal genial mood Prout could tolerate Coker; but when he was worried he found Coker hard to bear.

"Oh! You are here?" snapped Prout.

"You told me to wait for you here, sir!" answered Coker resentfully. "I've been waiting a jolly long time."

"Quite so!" said Prout, just as if it didn't matter.

"A jolly long time," repeated Coker, who was persuaded that it did matter.

"That will do, Coker!"

Prout turned to his table and began turning over some papers. No doubt he was looking for the detention task that he had thoughtfully prepared for this ornament of his Form.

"By the way, sir—" said Coker, remembering his talk on the telephone.

"You need not speak, Coker."

"Really, sir—"

"Be silent."

"But, sir—" persisted Coker.

"If you do not obey my injunctions, Coker, I shall have no resource but to cane you!" said Prout. "You cannot help being stupid, Coker. You cannot help being unusually obtuse. But you can help being disrespectful and disobedient. Silence."

"Very well, sir," said Coker. "I thought I ought to tell you that a man had telephoned. But never mind, of course."

Mr. Prout spun round from the table. "Someone telephoned while I was absent from the study?" he ejaculated.

To Coker's surprise he observed that the Form master's ruddy face had lost most of its colour all of a sudden.

"Yes, sir," said Coker; "as the bell was ringing I thought I ought to take the message for you."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Who—who—who was it?"

"He did not give his name, sir, but I think it must have been the outfitter's at Courtfield," answered Coker. "He refused to give his name or to leave a message. He said he had missed a tie—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Missed a tie, sir."

"Upon my word!"

"I think he was rather barmy, sir," went on Coker. "He said the law would have to take its course, and the matter would be placed in the hands of the police, and that he would meet you in the same place and show you a document—"

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"And all about a tie, so far as I could make out, sir," said Coker. "He repeated several times over that he had missed a tie."

The Fifth Form master gazed at

Coker. Many times in the Fifth Form room he found Coker's obtuseness intensely exasperating. For once he was glad of it. He did not want Coker, or anyone else at Greyfriars, to know anything about Mr. Tighe. Coker, evidently, had misinterpreted what had been said on the telephone.

"Is—is that all?" asked Prout, at last.

"That's all, sir. The man rang off very suddenly when I told him my name. I think he thought he was speaking to you at first."

"You should not have taken the call, Coker."

"Really, sir—"

"On another such occasion do nothing of the kind!" rapped Mr. Prout.

"I thought—"

"I fear that you are incapable of thinking, Coker. Say no more."

Coker relapsed into indignant silence.

This really was too thick. Any fellow would have taken a call for a man who was absent, there might have been an important message. Prout, instead of being grateful, was nastier than ever.

Coker had long ago given up expecting justice from Prout. But he felt that this was the limit.

He remained silent while Prout sorted through his papers and finally turned from the table with one in his plump hand.

"Here is your task, Coker. You are extremely—I may say disgracefully—backward in irregular verbs. I have set you an exercise in Latin irregular verbs. I shall expect this paper to be completed by six o'clock."

He held the paper out to Coker.

Coker did not take it. He had no use for it.

"If you please, sir," said Coker firmly, "I'd like to point out that I have some rather important business on this afternoon—"

"Nonsense!"

"Not at all, sir! It's very important—in fact, I think I may be able to give assistance to the law, sir," said Coker.

Prout started and stared at him.

"What do you mean, Coker?"

"Some months ago, sir, my Aunt Judith had a secretary, a man named Buzzard, a dishonest rogue who robbed her," explained Coker. "He cleared off and has never been seen since by the police. He was a very unpleasant little beast and I put him down as a rogue when I saw him at Aunt Judy's house. He robbed my aunt of a good deal of money and valuables—and bolted."

"I am sorry for Miss Coker's loss, but this does not concern me, Coker, or your detention this afternoon," said Mr. Prout.

"It does, sir."

"In what way?" snapped Mr. Prout impatiently.

"Because I've seen the man since," explained Coker. "Last Wednesday I went to Lantham with my friends to see the League match there. I went by train, owing to some cheeky fags bagging my car. At Lantham Station I saw the man."

"The man who robbed your aunt?"

"Yes, sir, that rascal Buzzard. I knew him at once, and he knew me and bolted. He got away."

"Well?" said Mr. Prout. "I suppose you informed the police."

"No, sir—I didn't think about that," said Coker. "Besides, I don't think much of the police. Not very intelligent, if you ask me, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"I'm going to look for myself, sir," said Coker. "I've got a lot of reliance



"Quick, Bunter!" said Wharton, pulling out a screen that stood in the corner of the study. "Get behind this!" Bunter was only just in time. The next moment the purple countenance of Mr. Prout entered the study. "Is Bunter here?" he gasped. "Bunter, sir?" said Wharton diplomatically. "Bunter's study is No. 7, farther up the passage, sir!" (See Chapter 4.)

on my own judgment and common-sense."

"Your—your what?" asked Mr. Prout, as if dazed.

"Judgment and common sense, sir! I'm going to find that man Buzzard and hand him over to the police. I don't suppose for a moment that they could catch a slippery rogue like that. I fancy I can."

"You—you—you fancy you can!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Yes, sir," answered Coker cheerfully. "What is wanted is brains, and that's where I come out strong."

"Upon my word! Coker, I will not waste time talking to you. You are a very dense and obtuse boy. You are detained—"

"You see, sir, I made up my mind to hunt for that villain Buzzard the very next half-holiday," said Coker. "I know he's about somewhere—"

"Do you mean you have reason to suppose him to be in this neighbourhood?"

"That's it, sir. When I saw him that day at Lantham he was on the station platform waiting for the local train that comes to Friardale. That showed that he was coming in this direction. He lost the train owing to my going for him. He was scared, and I fancy he cleared right off. Still, he must have had some business in this direction, what? May have got another job like the one he had with my Aunt Judy, playing the same game over again. You see, sir, I'm bound to get after him in the interests of justice."

"I see nothing of the kind, Coker. I do not suppose for one moment that you would succeed in finding the man you speak of. Neither is it a duty to be undertaken by a Greyfriars boy."

"Really, sir—"

"You are, in fact, talking nonsense, Coker."

"I, sir?" exclaimed Coker, in astonishment.

"Yes. You are detained for the afternoon, and I shall leave you in the

Fifth Form room with your task. Follow me!"

"But, sir—"

"Follow me!" boomed Prout, and he rolled out of the study.

Coker hesitated.

His mind was made up that he was not going to be detained that afternoon. Apart from his keen desire to hunt down that bad man Buzzard, it was a matter of principle with Coker. He wasn't going to undergo detention in the Form-room—that was as fixed and immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

But he followed Prout. A Form master, Coker admitted, had a right to order a fellow to follow him. So he followed on.

Coker did not admit to himself that he jibbed at rebellion in the actual presence of his Form master, and that he was postponing that rebellion till Prout was out of sight. He decided that he was carefully obeying all reasonable orders, as a fellow was bound to do—reserving to himself the right to disobey unreasonable ones.

He followed Prout into the Fifth Form room. There Prout laid the detention task on Coker's desk.

"Sit down, Coker!"

Coker admitted that that was a reasonable order, and he sat down.

"You will now proceed with your task, Coker. I shall probably be absent from the school for the greater part of the afternoon. On my return I shall expect to find your task finished. That is all! In the event of your breaking detention during my absence, Coker, I shall report you to your headmaster for a flogging," added Prout in a deep voice.

Coker almost smiled. He could not see Dr. Locke flogging a Fifth Form man—especially so important a man as Horace Coker.

"You see, sir—" he began.

"That will do, Coker."

Prout rolled from the Form-room. The door closed behind him, and

Coker was left alone with his detention task.

He did not begin work on it; he hardly glanced at it. Verbs, regular or irregular, never had appealed to Coker.

Coker was thinking, not of his detention task. He was thinking of the easiest and quickest way out of detention. Now that Prout was gone, and he was no longer under his Form master's baleful eye, Coker was more determined than ever. As a matter of principle, he wasn't going to be detained. Moreover, he felt it his duty to put in the afternoon hunting for that bad man Buzzard. And Latin irregular verbs were pretty sickening, anyhow.

Coker rose to his feet about a minute after Prout had left the Form-room. He gave Prout just time to get clear. Then he prepared to bolt.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Hard Cheese!

"RASCAL!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared round, almost jumping.

The Famous Five—still a little undecided as to what was to be done with the half-holiday—had come out of the House, and were strolling along in the quad by the masters' windows.

Some of the windows were open, and from one of them came that deep and booming voice.

"My hat! That's Prout!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The juniors glanced at the open study window.

Within Mr. Prout's portly form could be seen. He was standing at the telephone, receiver in hand.

Prout evidently was quite unconscious of the fact that his booming voice sounded out in the quad.

"Rogue!" he said into the instrument. "Yes, I will come. I will see

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the document. But I warn you—What—what?"

"Move on!" said Harry Wharton quickly.

The chums of the Remove accelerated and passed out of hearing.

Their cheery faces were rather grave. Any other fellows at Greyfriars who had chanced to hear Prout's peculiar remarks into the telephone would only have supposed that Prout was in an unusually bad temper. But the Famous Five, as it happened, knew more than that.

The chums had almost forgotten what had happened last Wednesday, when, quite by chance, they had overheard the talk between Mr. Prout and the little green-eyed man in black—Tighe, as he called himself.

It was no business of theirs, and they had dismissed it from their minds. But Prout at the telephone recalled it.

They had little or no doubt that the "rascal" and "rogue" whom he was addressing was the man Tighe, whom he had met last Wednesday on the old stone bridge over the Sark, and who, from what the juniors had heard, was seeking to extort money from him.

Prout's bad temper and nerves of late days had puzzled as well as exasperated the Fifth Form, and had attracted some notice outside the Fifth. Harry Wharton & Co. had a pretty accurate idea of the cause.

"I say, that's rotten, you men!" said Bob Cherry uncomfortably. "I suppose Prout's phoning to that little beast in black."

"That's it, I suppose," said Harry.

"I'm jolly glad we ducked the little beast in the pond!" said Johnny Bull.

"The gladfulness is terrific."

"Poor old Prout!" said Nugent. "It's rather hard on a man to be bothered like this, owing to his nephew landing himself in trouble."

"Hard cheese!" agreed Harry Wharton. "What that man Tighe is doing is what they call blackmail. He could be sent to choky for it; but I suppose Prout is thinking of his name in the papers."

"Poor old Prout!"

The chums of the Remove felt genuinely sympathetic towards Prout. With great discretion, they had not only kept what they knew to themselves, but had refrained from speaking about it to one another. The secret, therefore, was not likely to leak out. It would have surprised Prout had he been able to guess how deeply he was obliged to these discreet members of the Lower Fourth.

"Poor old Prout!" repeated Bob Cherry; and with that the matter was dismissed. It was obviously not a matter in which juniors should concern themselves.

"Now, about this afternoon—" went on Bob, coming back to a matter which did concern the chums of the Remove.

"Here, you kids!"

A gruff voice hailed the juniors.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's jolly old Coker!"

Coker of the Fifth was standing at a window of the Fifth Form-room. The window was open, and Coker was beckoning to the juniors.

Harry Wharton & Co. were on terms of warfare with Coker of the Fifth. But they were obliging youths, and they were sorry for a fellow under detention. So they walked along to the Form-room window.

"You young asses!" was Coker's polite greeting.

"Eh?"

"I had to call you!" growled Coker.

"I don't want to get a crowd here. If

you'd kept your eyes open you'd have seen me making signs to you."

The Famous Five smiled up at him.

"Forgot your existence, you see!" explained Bob Cherry cheerily.

"What?"

"Quite forgot that there was such a howling ass in the wide world!" further explained Johnny Bull.

"You cheeky young sweeps—"

"Is that what you called us for, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton. "If that's all, we'll clear. Your conversation palls after a time."

"After a very short time!" said Frank Nugent.

"The shortfulness of the time is terrific."

"Don't jaw!" said Coker, frowning. "I didn't call you here to listen to your gabble. I want you to do something for me."

"And that's your polite way of asking?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"The politeness is—"

"Preposterous!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you shut up?" growled Coker.

"You're wasting time with your silly gabble and babble. Have you seen Prout about?"

"He was in his study a few minutes ago."

"He's not gone out yet, then?"

"No; we should have seen him."

"Bother him!" said Coker. "Still, I can't waste time waiting here till the old donkey goes out. My time's of value."

It did not occur to Coker that anybody else's time might be of value, too. But it occurred to the Famous Five, and they moved on.

"Here, you young chumps!" rapped out Coker. "Stop! I haven't told you what I want yet!"

"Well, cut it short, Coker," said Harry Wharton, turning back again.

"We haven't a lot of time to waste."

"You young—"

"Cut it short, I tell you!" interrupted the captain of the Remove.

Coker glared at him, but he cut it short. It occurred even to Coker's mighty brain that in the present circumstances he was not master of the situation, and that these cheeky juniors, if they liked, could walk away regardless of his high behests. Coker suppressed his feelings.

"Look here, I'm getting out of this!" he said. "Prout thinks I'm going to stay in detention. I'm not. See? I'm clearing off. I've got important business on this afternoon, which can't be neglected to please an old ass like Prout. Go and find Potter and Greene, and tell them to wait for me in the lane. I'll join them outside the school. Safer, you know. See?"

The juniors regarded him curiously.

Coker was going to break detention. That was a serious matter, though Coker's powerful intellect did not seem to realise the seriousness of it. It was like his cheek to make them parties, in this way, to his act of rebellion. They were willing to oblige him, so far as that went, though Coker certainly lacked tact when asking favours. But—there was a but!

"You understand?" exclaimed Coker impatiently.

"Yes," said Harry. "But—"

"Don't waste time. Get off and find Potter and Greene."

"But—" repeated Wharton.

"Shut up, you young ass!"

"But—you'd better not bolt," said the captain of the Remove calmly. "You'll land into trouble, Coker."

"Mind your own business!" roared Coker.

"Besides, it's naughty," said Bob

Cherry, shaking an admonitory forefinger at the rugged, wrathful face of Horace Coker.

"What?" gasped Coker.

"Naughty!"

"The naughtiness is terrific, my esteemed and fatheaded Coker."

Coker's face became purple.

"You cheeky young rotters!" he roared. "I've a jolly good mind to jump down from this window and thrash the lot of you!"

"Go it!" chuckled Bob.

"You—you—you—" gasped Coker. "Look here, you cheeky little beasts, will you do as I've asked? I can't go round looking for those fellows when I'm supposed to be detained. I shall have to cut off quick, once I'm out of this. Look here—"

"Oh, we'll do it," said Harry resignedly. "We—"

"Wharton!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?"

It was the sharp voice of Mr. Quelch, and the Removites turned to attention at once. Henry Samuel Quelch came along the path under the Form-room windows, with a frowning brow.

He gave Coker of the Fifth a glance of disfavour, and then fixed his gimlet eyes on the five juniors.

"What are you doing here?" he snapped.

"H'm! We—we—"

"Well?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"We—we—we were just speaking to Coker, sir," stammered Wharton.

"I presume that that Fifth Form boy is under detention," said Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-es, sir."

"You are aware that no one is allowed to speak to a boy under detention, more especially a member of a different Form?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"You are deliberately breaking a strict rule of the school."

"H'm!"

"You will go into your Form-room, and remain in for an hour," said Mr. Quelch. "You will occupy the time in writing out Latin conjugations."

"Oh!"

"Go!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Famous Five, with dismayed looks, went. Mr. Quelch, with frowning brow, watched them into the House.

The chums of the Remove had not yet settled what was to be done with the half-holiday. But that was not a pressing matter now. For the next hour, at least, it was settled for them, and Latin conjugations in a deserted Form-room were the order of the day.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Bolts!

HORACE COKER breathed hard and deep.

His luck seemed to be out that afternoon. Coker wanted to be out himself, but only his luck was out.

His determination was more fixed than ever. He was not going to submit to detention.

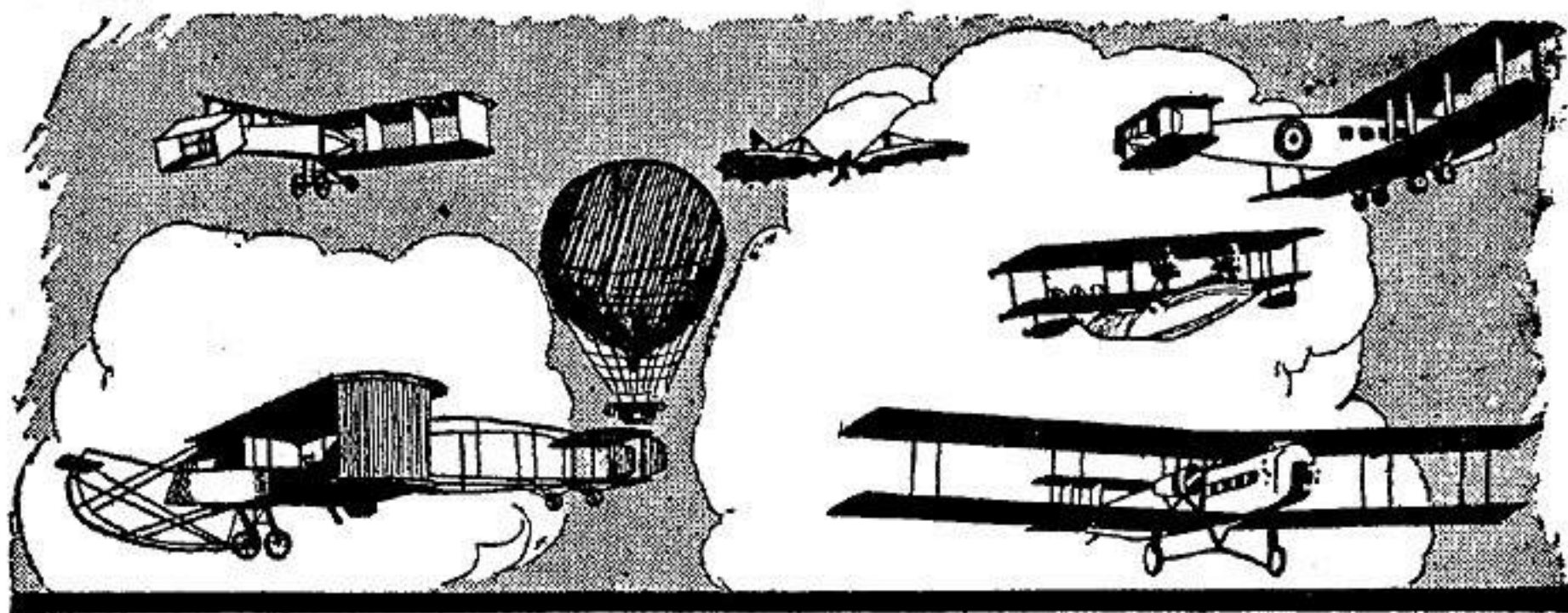
But there were difficulties in the way. Difficulties, it is said, are made only to be overcome. Coker was determined to overcome them. Still, the question remained, how it was to be done.

Mr. Quelch, after seeing his happy pupils into the House, walked slowly and thoughtfully up and down the path under the Form-room windows.

Coker, looking at him from the Fifth Form window, wondered when he was going. But it was futile to wonder. Quelch was not going. He was staying.

The fact was, that Quelch was on literary work that afternoon. His

(Continued on page 12.)



LEARNING to FLY!

It is only a few years ago that man was first able to make an aeroplane budge from the ground at all. Now scientists and inventors are talking of constructing a giant airship capable of carrying 400 passengers, irrespective of a crew.

A Trip to the Moon!

MOST fellows have heard of the inventors who are determined to fly to the moon—or bust. The opinion of ninety-nine experts in every hundred is that the aforesaid inventors will bust first. For the conveyance in which they hope to travel to the white-faced world that peers down on us so placidly from out the night sky is simply a super-gigantic rocket.

The quarters inside that rocket will be comfortable enough for the intrepid moon-travellers. But fancy being kicked through many thousands of miles of sheer emptiness—illimitable space—by a series of extremely violent explosions following one another in the tail of that nightmare rocket!

That trip to the moon will indeed be a miracle if it comes off. It will be two miracles if the rocket-travellers return to tell us all about it. Certainly they will have invented an absolutely fresh method of flying. It will be even more wonderful perhaps than the pilotless aeroplanes now being so successfully tried out.

Planes Without Pilots!

Can you imagine an extremely swift plane rising, turning, altering its speed—doing everything that an ordinary aeroplane can do, but without a pilot aboard? You'll have to try to imagine it, for planes without pilots are already doing these things. And wireless is at the bottom of it.

All the working gadgets aboard the pilotless plane are "tuned" to certain wireless signals, which are sent out by the pilot who is on the ground—far, far below his swift-speeding marvel.

As the signal is picked up by the receiving set aboard the pilotless plane, so the rudder, or the engine throttle, the elevator or what-not, answers as surely as though to a pilot's actual touch.

The operator down on the ground isn't guessing as to the plane's speed, or its height, or anything else. For the usual recording gadgets of an ordinary aeroplane are carried by these pilotless wonders, and they broadcast what the pilot ordinarily reads.

Wireless is stepping in to enable aeroplane designers and inventors to go on to greater marvels even than these. For some time they have been experimenting

with a plane fitted with a mechanical eye which takes in a tremendous slice of the country spread out below. That eye automatically transmits all it can see to a screen on the ground—so that watchers below have spread before them the panorama which they would be observing were they actually in that plane.

Giant Airships!

NOW do a bit more visioning. Put those pilotless and "seeing" planes into a war. Imagine hordes of them being dispatched by a foreign power to this country. Wireless would guide them to the buildings the enemy wish to be destroyed. The pilotless planes would be packed tight with ex-

The mighty envelope has inside it fifteen other "balloons," gas filled. So that if she got ripped in any one place all the gas would not leak out at once. At the moment of writing, the R101, with her full complement of officers and crew aboard, is anchored by her nose to a 200-foot steel lattice tower, after having been inflated with gas—a job which took a month or more—and drawn out of her gigantic shed. As we go to press, she is waiting for favourable weather conditions to start on her first trial flight.

Others are impatiently waiting for her to leave the hangar for good, for they want that colossal shed badly. No other building anywhere is large enough for the "hatching" of the very latest scheme—the building of a British airship which will make R100 and R101 look like babies. Even so, the shed—which is at Cardington, near Bedford—will have to be enlarged!

400 Passengers and a Crew!

This new air liner is to be a giant the like of which has never before been imagined. Instead of having passenger accommodation for a mere 100 passengers and crew, the new airship is to carry 400—plus the crew.

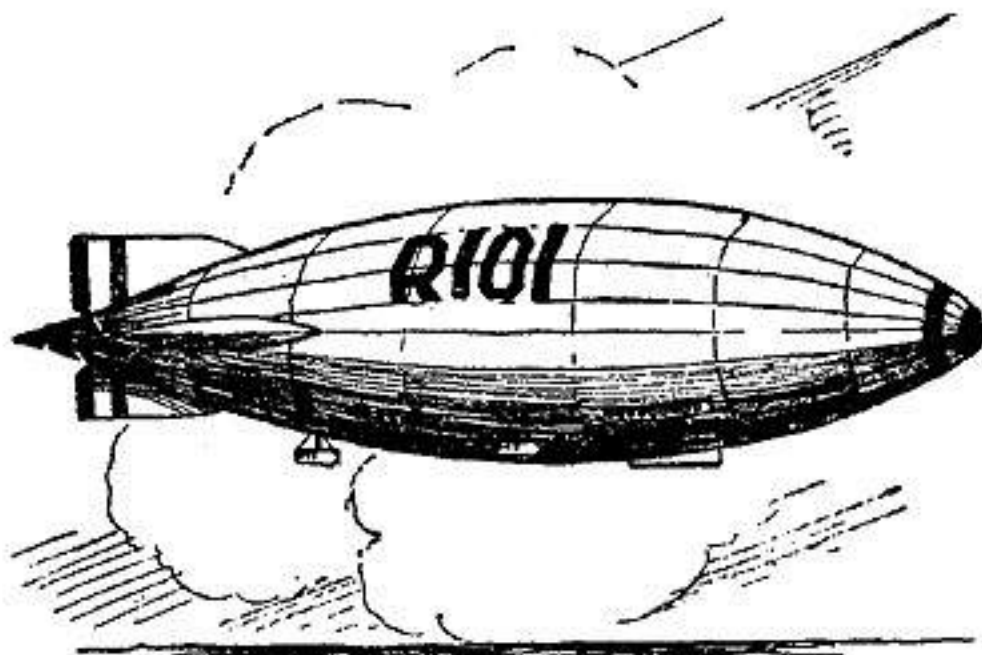
For the two "R's" gigantic mooring masts of steel have been erected at various points, and to the tip of the mast the big "sausage" will have to be anchored by the nose. The mast-tip will be able to move around with the wind.

That is, as the wind changes direction the anchored airship will be able to veer around with it, thus cutting out any danger of being shipwrecked.

The new venture will be quite independent of any such anchoring scheme. She is designed to fly up from the surface of the sea, and to alight on the sea when she comes down. To allow of this, she will be provided with two mighty floats, each 300 feet long, water being pumped into and out of the floats as necessary. When filled with water they will act as anchors and so keep the airship still.

She is to have fourteen engines—not merely six like the R101. She will be 850 feet long, 230 feet wide, 150 feet deep, and will hold 12,000,000 cubic feet of gas. The R101 can get on nicely with only 5,000,000 cubic feet.

(Special "Footer" article next week.)
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The R101—Britain's Mightiest Airship.

plosives, which would "go off" as each plane smashed into its target. And chunks of building would fly about like giants' confetti.

What a target for them would be our gigantic airships the R100 and her sister ship R101—why, the pilotless planes simply couldn't miss them!

The R101 had to have a hangar, or workshop shed, built specially for her—a shed on the floor of which twenty-five full-sized football pitches could be marked out, leaving plenty of room to spare. The airship itself is 709 feet, from nose to tail-tip, with room for 100 passengers and a big crew.

Those who designed this monster did so with the idea that she should carry passengers from London to New York in forty-eight hours—with a guarantee against air-sickness!

FOOL'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 10.)

famous "History of Greyfriars" occupied his mind. Unlike most modern authors, Mr. Quelch followed the old-fashioned method of thinking before he wrote. He was thinking now, shaping in his mind what he was going to click off on his typewriter. With his hands behind him, a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow, Quelch paced up and down that quiet path, deep in reflection—forgetful of Coker and everything else but the well-turned phrases that were growing in his mind. Quelch was going to pace there, heedless of the passage of time, until the spirit moved him to return to his study and write.

Which was very discomfiting for Coker. Quelch, it was true, was not his Form master, and Quelch was very particular not to intervene in another Form master's affairs. Still, it was manifestly impossible for a detained fellow to drop from a Form-room window under the very eyes of a master.

So long as Quelch was there, Coker couldn't bolt by the window. That was a cert. And Quelch showed no sign of departing.

Coker turned wearily away from the window.

He crossed to the Form-room door and looked out. If he went that way he ran the risk of being stopped at any moment. He might run into anybody—into Prout himself!

If Prout stopped him on his way out, what was Coker to do? Nothing short of hitting Prout would solve the difficulty.

Coker did not contemplate hitting Prout.

Hitting a Form master was jolly bad form. There were other considerations, too—such as the absolute certainty of the "sack" for a fellow who raised his hand to a master.

Prout was not to be seen. But at the end of the Form-room passage two masters stood in conversation—Hacker, the master of the Shell, and Capper, master of the Fourth.

Coker popped his head back into the Form-room. With a master pacing under the windows, and two masters cackling in the passage—for that was how Coker regarded the serious conversation that was going on between Hacker and Capper—he was fairly cornered, unless he escaped by the chimney, which really was not to be thought of.

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera; and really they seemed to be up to the same game in regard to Coker of the Fifth!

"Blow 'em!" growled Coker.

He paced the Form-room like a lion in a cage.

His detention task lay unheeded on his desk. Coker did not give it a glance. He was less inclined than ever for irregular verbs.

The minutes passed.

Coker's time, as he had said, was of value. That afternoon was to be devoted to trailing that bad man Buzzard, who had swindled his Aunt Judy. The police being incapable of capturing that unpleasant gentleman, the task fell to Coker's more capable hands. Coker was prepared to take it on and make a success of it. But while he was retained in the Fifth Form room there was nothing doing. Wherever that bad man Buzzard might be, certainly he was not in the Fifth Form room at Greyfriars. Coker's time, which was of such value, was being wasted.

No wonder Coker fumed.

He went to the window again at last. On the path below, Quelch was still

pacing in meditation. Coker glared at the top of his head. Why the old ass was walking there, why he couldn't walk somewhere else, why he wanted to walk at all, were mysteries to Coker. But there he was!

Coker's glance passed him, and dwelt on a group of Fifth Form men chatting at a distance. There were Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, Hilton, Fitzgerald, Potter, and Greene, in the group. Coker's glance dwelt on them sourly. Potter and Greene were not even looking towards the Form-room—they seemed quite forgetful of their detained chum. Talking football, most likely—fiddling while Rome was burning!

Gazing morosely from the window, Coker presently beheld a portly, ponderous form rolling away from the House.

It was Prout!

Plump, portly, and majestic, Prout, in coat and hat, rolled down to the gates. He was going out at last.

It was a relief to see him go, at all events. With Prout off the scene, breaking detention was easier. Coker watched him disappear, with satisfaction.

Still Quelch showed no sign of departing. Coker scowled at the top of his head again and left the window. Once more he crossed to the door and looked out.

Hacker and Capper were no longer talking there. But Wiggins, the master of the Third, was standing in the open doorway of a Form-room, apparently talking to someone inside.

Coker snorted.

It seemed to be raining Form masters that afternoon.

Coker had never realised before how numerous and how objectionable were the staff of Greyfriars School.

How long was that ass Wiggins going to stand there, cackling? That was what Coker wanted to know.

Coker gave him five minutes. If he was not gone by then, Coker was going to chance it. After all, Wiggins might not be aware that he was under detention—might not take any heed of him as he passed. Anyhow, Wiggins wasn't his Form master—only the master of a fag Form! Coker determined to chance it.

Five minutes elapsed; but Mr. Wiggins did not elapse—he was still there, still talking to someone in the Third Form room. Coker drew a deep breath, and walked out.

Wiggins glanced round at his rather heavy footsteps.

From the surprised expression on his face, Coker could see that Wiggins, after all, knew that he was under detention. Knew, obviously, that he ought to have been in the Fifth Form room, sitting at his detention task, instead of walking down the passage.

Coker marched on grimly.

"Ah, Coker!" said Mr. Wiggins mildly. "Coker! Do you hear me, Coker?"

Coker heard him, but he did not heed him.

He marched on, leaving Mr. Wiggins staring after him.

"Upon my word!" said Wiggins.

Then he turned back to resume his interrupted conversation with the inmate of the Third Form room.

Coker's heart was beating a little faster than usual. So far, he had got away with it. But he was not out of the wood yet.

"Hallo! What's this game, Coker?" asked Wingate of the Sixth, meeting him face to face.

"Eh? What game?" asked Coker.

"You're under detention," said the

captain of Greyfriars. "What are you doing out of your Form-room?"

"What put that into your head, Wingate?" asked Coker pleasantly.

"Prout!" answered Wingate.

"He told you?"

"Yes."

"Prout talks a lot too much!" remarked Coker.

"Well, you'd better get back, and I won't mention that I've seen you," said the Greyfriars captain good-naturedly.

"My detention's over," explained Coker.

"Not till six."

"Yes; I'm let off."

Wingate eyed him dubiously.

"Prout's gone out," he said. "Who let you off, then?"

"I did!" answered Coker coolly. "I let myself off, Wingate. And I'm jolly well going out, and you can go and eat coke, and tell Prout to do the same, if you like."

With which defiant speech, Coker ran round Wingate, bolted for the door, and sprinted into the quad.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wingate.

Coker rushed down the steps into the quad. It was unfortunate for Loder of the Sixth that he happened to be coming up at the same moment.

There was a sudden collision, and Coker staggered, and Gerald Loder sat down with a bump at the bottom of the steps.

"Ow!" gasped Loder. "What——"

Coker recovered himself, and rushed on and sprinted across the quad. He did not stop to ask Loder whether he was hurt. No doubt he knew he was. He lost no time in getting to the gates.

"Ere, Mr. Coker!" It was Gosling, the porter, who had evidently been apprised by Prout that Coker was gated till six. "Ere! You stop! Mr. Prout's horders——"

If Coker had not heeded a Form master, and the captain of the school, he was not likely to heed William Gosling.

He sprinted on.

"You 'ear me!" shouted Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere——"

But Coker heard no more. He dodged out of gates, Gosling staring after him, as well as a score or more of Greyfriars fellows.

The news flew round that Coker of the Fifth, detained by his Form master, had broken detention. Coker had bolted!

"The ass!" said Potter of the Fifth, when he heard.

"The chump!" said Greene.

"The silly owl!" continued Potter.

"The burbling bandersnatch!" said Greene.

"It will mean a flogging!" said Blundell of the Fifth. "Pretty disgraceful for a Fifth Form man to be flogged like a fag!"

"Well, let's hope it will do Coker good!" said Potter; and with that charitable wish he dismissed Coker from his mind.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Man with the Green Eyes!

"**B**LOW him!"

"Bless him!"

"The ass!"

"The chump!"

"The preposterous fathead!"

Harry Wharton & Co. in the Remove room were speaking of Coker of the Fifth, relieving their feelings a little by telling one another what they thought of him.

An hour's detention was only an hour; but sixty minutes seemed very long to the chums of the Remove.

Neither did Latin conjugations make the minutes fly. Rather, they made them drag.

Having conjugated a sufficient number of Latin verbs to satisfy Quelch—or so they hoped, at least—the Famous Five gave up the classics, and found comfort in talking about Coker of the Fifth.

"The howling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "The burling chump! Landing us in detention on a half-holiday—"

"The born idiot!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The terrific and preposterous dummy!" grunted Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That blessed clock must be slow!" said Frank Nugent. "I believe we've been here two hours at least."

"Twenty-five minutes," said Harry. "Five minutes more! Just our luck for Quelch to land on us while that ass Coker was wagging his chin!"

The last five minutes dragged by like snails.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Quelch!" murmured Bob Cherry, as there was a footstep in the passage.

Five juniors jumped to their desks and assumed a studious aspect. Mr. Quelch, looking into the Form-room a few seconds later, looked at them—and might have supposed that those five fellows asked nothing better of life than to sit in a Form-room conjugating Latin verbs, had he not, from experience, known better! The Remove master smiled faintly.

"You may go!" he said.

Up jumped five Removites, as if moved by the same spring.

They lost no time in getting out of the House. Wharton glanced towards the windows of the Fifth Form room; but Coker was not visible there, and he wondered whether Coker had bolted. As a matter of fact, he had—a quarter of an hour ago.

Having decided on a walk down to the village, and a visit to Uncle Clegg's tuck-shop there, the Famous Five strolled out of gates. Coker they dismissed from their minds. But Coker, like a bad penny, was bound to turn up. The school had been left behind hardly five minutes when Coker appeared in the offing, in Friardale Lane, and hailed the chums of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Now, let's give him a jolly good bumping for getting us detention with his jaw!"

"Hear, hear!"

Coker came striding towards the juniors.

"Stop!" he rapped out.

He did not ask them to stop. He ordered them to do so. That was Coker's way. As he often said, he had a short way with fags.

But as the Famous Five intended to stop, anyhow, and deal with Coker, they obeyed the order smilingly.

"I want one of you to run into the school with a message," said Coker. "Any one of you will do. Find Potter and Greene—"

"We're not interested in Potter and Greene, thanks!" said Bob.

"Eh? You young ass, I didn't suppose you were! Don't be cheeky! I want them to come out here," said Coker. "Tell them I'm waiting in the lane, and I want them to come out and join me at once. I've been waiting for a fag to turn up to take that message in, so I'm glad you've come along."

"We're rather glad you've come along, too," remarked Harry Wharton. "So the pleasure is mutual."

"The gladfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You see, you got us detention, wagging your silly chin from the Form-room window," explained Johnny Bull.

satisfied, they walked on towards the village, while Coker sat and struggled for his second wind.

Coker did not follow. Perhaps his time was of too much value; or perhaps he was too winded. Anyhow, the chums of the Remove arrived in the village without seeing any more of Coker of the Fifth.

Under the hospitable roof of Uncle Clegg they disposed of light refreshments, the minutes passing much more pleasantly than they had done in the Form-room. The threatened rain was still holding off, and there was a glimmer of winter sunshine in the



Harry Wharton & Co. were speaking to Coker when Mr. Quelch came along the path under the Form-room window, with a frowning brow. The master of the Remove gave Coker a glance of disfavour, and then fixed his gimlet eyes on the five juniors. "You are deliberately breaking a strict rule in speaking to a boy under detention," he snapped. "Go to your Form-room and write out Latin conjunctions for an hour!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Look here—"

"Collar him!"

"You cheeky young sweeps!" roared Coker. "Go and take that message at once, or I'll jolly well thrash the lot of you! Mind, I mean it. I give you one minute."

"Go ahead!" chuckled Bob. "You're going to thrash the lot of us, and the lot of us are going to bump you, Coker! Get on with it, and let's see how it works out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker got on with it, and the Famous Five got on with it. For a few minutes one senior and five juniors were mixed up in the lane, with a considerable quantity of dust. But it was not the thrashing that happened next; it was the bumping.

Bump, bump!

"Oh!" roared Coker. "Ow! Leggo, you young villains! Ooooooop!"

The Famous Five let go, leaving Coker sprawling in the lane.

A little breathless, cheery and

November sky. Ginger-pop and buns were grateful and comforting.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly.

"What—"

"Seen that sportsman before?" asked Bob, with a nod towards a man who was passing along the street outside, coming from the direction of the railway station.

The juniors glanced out of the tuck-shop. The man on the pavement outside was a little man, dressed in black, with a long nose and greenish-coloured eyes. He had a meagre, mean, unpleasant face, that once seen was not soon forgotten. The juniors knew him at once.

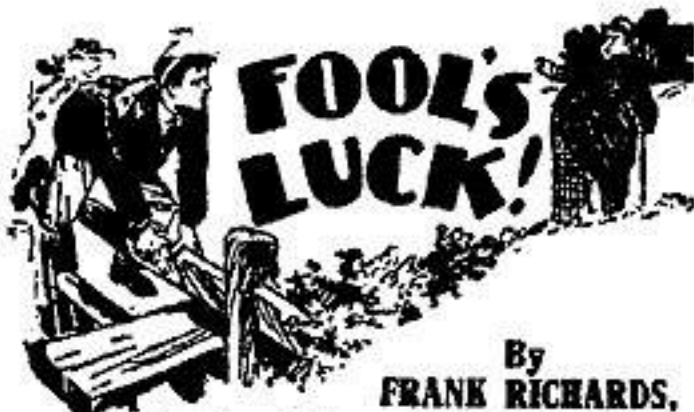
"That's Tighe!" said Frank Nugent.

"The Tighefulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton's brow darkened as he looked at the man in black. It was the man who had met Mr. Prout on the Sark Bridge a few days before—the

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

blackmailer. He passed on out of the sight of the schoolboys in the shop.

"That rotter is here again!" said Harry.

"He's come down to see Prout, I suppose," remarked Johnny Bull. "Poor old Prout! What a scrape for a man to be in!"

"The scrapefulness is preposterous," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let us give that unpleasant and esteemed beast another ducking."

"It would serve him right," said Harry. "But"—he shook his head—"better not butt in. If he's going to see Prout, we can't stop him; and, from what we heard the little beast saying to poor old Prout, it would be all the worse for Prout if we did."

"He ought to be in choky!" growled Johnny Bull.

He stepped to the door, and looked out after the man in black. Tighe was turning into a side-street, from the High Street, that led towards the river. He disappeared from sight the next moment.

"Jolly good idea to follow him and give him a ragging!" said Johnny, as he turned back into the shop.

"Might run into Prout at the same time," said Harry. "It's pretty certain that his business here is in connection with poor old Prout."

"Prout's meeting him somewhere," said Bob, with a nod. "We heard the little beast say, the other day, that he wouldn't go to the school to see Prout; he's got some reason for keeping away from the school. He makes poor old Prout come and keep an appointment at a distance from Greyfriars. That's why he picks a half-holiday, when Prout can get off."

"Poor old Prout!"

The chums of the Remove finished their ginger-pop in a thoughtful mood. They were sorry for "poor old Prout," and would have given a week's pocket-money to deal with Mr. Tighe as he deserved. But it was evidently wiser not to butt into a delicate matter that did not concern them. And the long-nosed, green-eyed Mr. Tighe went on his way, never dreaming how narrowly he had escaped a ragging.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Prout's Predicament!

"UNPARALLELED iniquity!" said Mr. Prout.

Prout, in times of trouble, found solace in rolling out impressive words of that kind.

The portly master of the Fifth sat on one of the old stone seats of the bridge over the Sark. He was early for the appointment he had made by telephone, to meet Mr. Tighe in the same place as before.

His eyes were on Bridge Lane, that led towards Friardale, and there was deep wrath in them.

Prout had consented to see the blackmailer again, but he had not in the least made up his mind how to deal with him.

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He felt, in fact, helpless, like a bird in a snare—a fat old bird, who had never been in a snare before, and did not know how to meet such an emergency.

To yield to Tighe's demands seemed impossible, as well as an act of weakness of which he should be ashamed. But the thought of disgrace, though not of his own making, was unnerving to him.

He had held his head so high at Greyfriars. He was the most impressive figure in Masters' Common-room; or, at all events, he was persuaded that such was the case. Other members of the staff hung on his words as if pearls of wisdom were falling from his lips, and it never occurred to Prout that they were merely waiting for him to leave off talking.

His Form respected and admired him—anyhow, Prout had no doubt that they did. Respectful silence fell on the Fifth Form games study when Prout rolled in for one of his friendly chats. How was Prout to guess that it was the silence of dismay? He never did guess.

Occupying this enviable position in the school, it was awful to think of disgrace falling on his name—of fellows telling one another that Prout's nephew had been sent to "quod."

Prout was not responsible for his nephew's actions. There were fellows in the Fifth who averred—in private—that he was hardly responsible for his own! But there it was. Eustace Prout was his near relative, bearing the same name, and the thought of that name in all the newspapers, in connection with a sordid trial, made Prout writhe.

Justice is a great thing. Courts of law must exist in a civilised community—less happy in that respect than a savage one. But there is no doubt that, as a rule, punishment falls more heavily on a criminal's relatives than on the criminal himself. A reckless rascal goes to prison, and suffers less than his connections, who have to pursue their daily avocations with the shadow of disgrace on their name. Prout had never realised this before, or, indeed, thought about it at all. Now he thought about it quite a lot. He reflected bitterly that if names were suppressed in newspaper reports, this sort of trouble would not fall on the innocent, punishing them along with the guilty.

He thought some very hard things about newspapers.

Prout was no nearer to making up his mind when the slight figure and unpleasant face of Mr. Tighe appeared in Bridge Lane.

He rose from the stone seat, and walked off the bridge to meet the newcomer. He preferred to meet Mr. Tighe in a less conspicuous spot.

Tighe stopped, under the trees by the wayside, and waited for him to come up. Prout came up, breathing heavily.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Prout!" said Tighe, in his squeaky voice, with a kind of mocking civility.

Prout did not return the greeting. He stared at Tighe with all the contempt and biting scorn that he could compress into his glance. It had no more effect on Tighe than water on a duck's back.

Probably Mr. Tighe was accustomed to angry and contemptuous looks and hardened to them. In his peculiar line of business he must have met with an extraordinary amount of contempt.

"I am here," said Prout, in his deep, booming voice.

"So I see," assented Tighe.

"I have consented to see you."

"Quite so."

"But I have no intention of yielding to your demands, or making any concession to your unparalleled iniquity!" said Prout.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed, sir!" boomed Prout.

"Then may I ask why you are here at all?"

There was a pause. Prout found it difficult to answer that question. His purple face registered scorn—again with no perceptible effect on Mr. Tighe.

"Let us come to business," suggested Tighe coldly. "I have come from London to see you, Mr. Prout. It is a long and expensive journey; neither do I like the country—and this part of the country I specially dislike. I had better warn you that this, my second visit, is also the last."

"I am glad to hear it, sir!" boomed Prout. "I certainly have no desire to see your rascally face again."

"Unless we come to terms now you will hear nothing further from my principals, Sharp & Co."

"I have no doubt, sir, that you are Sharp & Co. yourself," snapped Mr. Prout. "I have no doubt that that is the name under which you carry on your rascally business as a money-lender."

Tighe shrugged his shoulders.

"That is neither here nor there," he remarked. "To come to the point, I have the document with me. Your nephew, Captain Eustace Prout, gave us this cheque, post-dated, in return for a loan of fifty pounds."

"I offer you that sum to redeem the cheque."

"Let us talk sense," suggested Mr. Tighe. "The cheque is forged. It has never been seen by the man whose name is signed to it. It is endorsed on the back by Captain Prout. It is absolutely valueless in itself, but it may possess a value to any gentleman bearing the name of Prout, who has his position in life to consider."

"Sixty pounds is a large sum for me to part with," said Mr. Prout. "But I will pay it to save that foolish, reckless young man, and to avert disgrace from my name. That is my offer."

"It is refused," said Tighe. "The price of that document, as I have told you, is five hundred pounds."

"Rascal!"

"You are wasting time, Mr. Prout."

"Scoundrel!"

"Really, sir—"

"I may tell you," said Mr. Prout, "that I have learned that my nephew is no longer in the kingdom. Apparently he raised that loan from a rascally moneylender in order to get abroad. That he intended to redeem the cheque I am certain, though his act is only to be explained by his peculiar state of mind, due to shellshock in the War. The cheque, you say, is post-dated—and I am assured that Eustace will meet it before the date when it falls due for payment."

"No doubt that is his intention," assented Mr. Tighe.

"Then on what grounds, sir, dare you trouble me in the matter? You need not present that cheque. You have only to retain it until Eustace Prout redeems it at your hands."

Tighe smiled, almost pityingly.

"That is not our object at all, Mr. Prout," he replied.

"No," boomed Prout. "I understand, sir. I understand that you would not have taken that paper from my nephew at all had you not known that it was forged, and that he had a relative in a high position, who could be blackmailed."

"Clearly, you have reflected on the matter to some purpose, sir," said Tighe coolly. "Nevertheless, we are wasting time. Do you desire to see the cheque, to ascertain beyond doubt that matters are as I state? I believe you mentioned that you would not accept my word."

our hand. Otherwise, the law will be set in motion."

"I—I must have time to—to think what—"

"You have had ample time to think," answered Tighe coldly. "And you may think further, if you choose, while you walk back to the school."

"That—that paper—"

"Remains in my hands. It will be sent to you by registered post as soon as your cheque for five hundred pounds has been cleared."

"You imagine that I will trust you to—"

"I imagine that you have no choice in the matter. However, I will concede a point. If you like, I will go with you to your bank. We can get a cab in the village, and you may make the payment in notes in exchange for this document."

Tighe waited for an answer.

Mr. Prout stood irresolute. On the one side was a heavy loss, and the shame of submitting to blackmail; on the other was the shadow of deep disgrace, under which he felt that he could never hold up his head at Greyfriars again. The hapless gentleman's confused mind swayed like a leaf in the wind. He had had, as Tighe said, ample time to think, yet, even now, at the last moment, he could not decide.

"Your answer?" snapped Tighe, at last.

A gust of passion swept over the persecuted gentleman. Anger took the place of decision.

"No!" he boomed. "No, never! I will not submit to a scoundrel! I withdraw my offer of sixty pounds. I will pay fifty—the sum you lent to my nephew. Not a penny more! Not a halfpenny more! Scoundrel! Do your worst!"

"Very well." Tighe's voice came like the hiss of a snake between his thin, tight lips. "Very well, you will hear further soon. There is nothing more to say, Mr. Prout."

He jumped back as the portly Form master, grasping his stick, strode at him.

Swish!

Tighe barely escaped the slash of the walking-stick. Prout strode at him for another slash, and Tighe took to his heels, running down the lane like a rabbit.

"Rascal!" boomed Mr. Prout, after him.

Tighe disappeared from sight in a few moments. And Mr. Prout, angry, alarmed, dismayed, turned slowly away in the direction of Greyfriars. He had defied the blackmailer, and that was satisfactory, so far as it went. But the consequence had to follow. And the unhappy Mr. Prout, as he trod ponderously back to the school, thought of the consequences, and his plump heart almost died within him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Reward!

HORACE COKER fumed with impatience.

Time was passing—Coker's time—which was of such value. Coker, hanging about Friardale Lane, was wasting time, and could not help feeling that he might as well have stayed in the Form-room.

Having bolted out of detention, Coker was free for the afternoon. He was at liberty to undertake the task he had set himself. But Coker did not want to "go it" alone. Naturally, he wanted his friends with him. He had

no idea of mooching about all through the half-holiday on his lonesome. He liked company, and he liked an audience. Potter and Greene were his chums, and loyal chums should have been on the look-out to make themselves useful to Coker. Instead of which, they seemed to have forgotten his existence.

It was scarcely possible, of course, for any sane person to forget so important a person as Coker of the Fifth. No doubt Potter and Greene supposed that he was still under detention in the Form-room. Still, they ought to have been on the look-out. They ought to have joined up with Coker before this.

But they hadn't, and it was necessary to get word to them. Having bolted, Coker could not very well walk into Greyfriars again looking for them. He had to find some fag to take a message. He had found Harry Wharton & Co., and, instead of obeying his orders, they had bumped him, and gone on their way regardless. Coker fumed impatiently as he waited in the lane looking for some fags more amenable to persuasion.

At last he sighted a fat figure rolling down the lane from the school. It was William George Bunter of the Remove. Coker stepped out of the hedge, and beckoned to Bunter.

"Here, you fat freak!" he called out. Coker had his own particular way of asking favours of a fellow.

Billy Bunter stopped and blinked at him through his big spectacles, and grinned.

"He, he, he! So you've bolted, Coker. I say, Prout will be waxy."

"Don't be cheeky!" snapped Coker. "You'll get a flogging," grinned Bunter. "Fancy a Fifth Form man getting flogged! I say, the Fifth won't like it."

Coker glared at him. "Do you want a jolly good hiding, Bunter?" he bawled.

Bunter backed away. Apparently he didn't.

"Now, shut up!" said Coker. "I want you to go and find Potter and Greene, and tell them to come out here to me—see?"

"Think I'm a fag?" demanded Bunter, backing farther off, and preparing to take to his heels.

Coker clenched a heavy hand.

But perhaps his experience with the Famous Five had taught Coker something. Perhaps he realised that punching Bunter, though a satisfactory proceeding in itself, would not help in getting a message to Potter and Greene.

He unclenched his hand, unknitted his brows, and spoke as civilly as it was possible for Coker to speak to a Lower Fourth fellow.

"Look here, Bunter, take that message in for me. There's a cake in my study cupboard. You can have it, if you like."

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

This sort of appeal touched him. The mere mention of a cake was enough to interest Bunter.

"Well, I don't mind obliging a chap," he said. "What sort of a cake?"

"Plum," growled Coker. "Look here, tell Potter and Greene—"

"What size?"

"You fat little beast—"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"Tell Potter and Greene I'm waiting for them."

"Yes, but how much cake—"

"Two pounds!" shrieked Coker. "Now, go and tell Potter and Greene I'm waiting for them here, and they're to come out at once."

"Right-ho!" answered Bunter cheerfully. And he turned round and started for the school again, leaving Coker to fume.

Bunter retraced his steps at a good speed. Coker was glad, at least, to see that he was hurrying off with that message. It was more probable that Bunter was hurrying off for the cake.

The fat junior went in at the gates and hurried towards the House. He gave a perfunctory blink round him; but Potter and Greene were not in sight. Bunter rolled into the House, and headed for the Fifth Form quarters.

He intended, of course, to find Potter and Greene and deliver the message. That was only cricket, as he was to have the cake as a reward. But first things came first; secondary things second. The cake was important; the message to Potter and Greene less important. Bunter decided to deal with the cake first, and the message afterwards. There would be ample time to look for the two Fifth-Formers when he had disposed of the cake.

So Bunter headed direct for Coker's study. He opened the door and rolled in.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. The study was not untenanted. Potter and Greene were there.

Bunter blinked at them. Potter and Greene, evidently, had remembered that there was a cake in the study cupboard. The cake was no longer in the cupboard. It was on the table, and Potter and Greene were eating it.

Perhaps they were missing Coker that afternoon, and consoling themselves for the loss of his company with the cake. Possibly, indeed, they liked his cake better than his company.

Anyhow, they were disposing of the cake with considerable satisfaction to themselves when Bunter rolled in.

The two Fifth-Formers glared at him. "You cheeky young ass, what do you want here?" demanded Potter. "Think you can butt into a Fifth Form study when you like, you sweep?"

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter.

"Get out!" "That cake— Is—is—is that the cake that was in the cupboard?" gasped Bunter. More than half the cake was already gone, and Potter and Greene were still eating. Bunter's reward was performing a vanishing trick under his very eyes.

"What the thump do you mean?" snapped Potter. "Mean to say you came here after Coker's cake, you grub-raiding young sweep?"

"Oh, really, Potter—"

"Get out!" snapped Greene. "I say, you fellows, that's my cake!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I came here for that cake—"

"You've got the cheek to tell us so?" exclaimed Potter, in amazement. "Well, of all the nerve!"

"I mean—"

"Give me that fives bat, Greeney!"

"I—I say!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! Leggo, Potter you beast. Yaroooooh!"

Instead of letting go, Potter twisted the Ow! of the Remove over, with a grip of iron on his collar, and applied the fives bat to Bunter's tight trousers. There was a fiendish yell from Billy Bunter.

Whack, whack!

"Whooooop!"

"There!" said Potter. "That's a tip about raiding tuck in a senior study. Now get out!"

"Yaroooooh! Beast! Wow!"

"Kick him out!" said Greene, cutting another slice of cake. "For goodness'

sake don't let him make that row here!" "I say!" howled Bunter. "Coker sent me with a message to you fellows! Wow! I came here to find the cake—I mean, to find you fellows—ow! Leggo! Coker says—Yaroooooh!"

"Coker sent you in with a message?" grunted Potter, glaring at him. Potter did not, somehow, seem pleased at getting a message from Coker.

"Ow! Yes! Wow! Beast!"

"Well, what's the message?" snapped Potter.

"He's waiting for you in Friardale Lane, and you're to go to him at once!" gasped Bunter. "He said I could have the cake."

Potter and Greene exchanged a dismayed look. They had supposed, and hoped, that they were clear of Coker for the afternoon. A little of Horace Coker's company went a long way, with his friends. Moreover, they were not keen on getting mixed up with a fellow who was rebelliously out of bounds. They were feeling inclined to slaughter Bunter for bringing them that message. Now that they had received it, they couldn't very well make out that they hadn't; and they did not want to quarrel with Coker. They had recently quarrelled with Coker, to the extent of locking him out of the study, and there had been a severe dearth at tea-time till they had buttered him up again and brought him round.

"Bother you, Bunter!" growled Greene.

"You fat little meddling ass!" grunted Potter.

"I suppose we shall have to go!" mumbled Greene.

"I suppose so!" growled Potter.

"I say, you fellows, that's my cake!" wailed Bunter.

"Get out!"

"But Coker said—"

"Do you want some more of the five bat?" roared Potter.

"But that's my cake—"

Potter made a jump for Bunter. Bunter, in alarm, made a jump for the door. Potter's boot caught him in transit, and Bunter went into the Fifth Form passage like a bullet from a rifle. "Yowp!"

Bunter disappeared into space. Obviously there was no cake for Bunter; nothing but a hard, unsympathetic boot.

Potter and Greene finished the cake. They seemed in no hurry to join Coker, urgent as his message was. And the cake was good. They finished it to the last crumb, and then left the study and the House. They felt bound to go out to Coker, but they went without enthusiasm.

In the quad a fat junior gave them a baleful glare through his spectacles. Potter paused to give Bunter a kick in passing—the reward he deserved, in Potter's opinion, for bringing in that message from Coker. Then the two



"Very well!" hissed Mr. Tighe. "If you will not pay me what I ask, there is nothing more to say, Mr. Prout. You will hear further soon!" The blackmailer jumped back as the portly Form master, grasping his stick, strode at him. Swish! Tighe, barely escaping the slash, took to his heels. "Rascal!" boomed Mr. Prout. (See Chapter 9.)

Fifth Form men went out of gates, leaving William George Bunter in a state of mind that was positively homicidal.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Coker!

"O H, here you are!" growled Coker.

"Here we are, old chap!" said Potter.

"Yes, here we are!" said Greene. "I've been waiting a jolly long time," said Coker. "If you fellows had had the sense of bunny rabbits, you'd have guessed that I was waiting for you out of gates."

"Hem! You see—" murmured Potter.

It was not likely to please Coker to tell him that they had guessed it, and that that was why they hadn't come out before. So Potter and Greene tactfully did not mention that.

"You got my message, I suppose?" grunted Coker.

"Yes, old fellow."

"Well, now you're here, don't waste time jawing," said Coker. "Come along!"

Potter and Greene followed him down the lane.

"Prout's gone out," remarked Potter casually. "Some time ago. Chance for you to get back to the Form-room, Coker—"

"What?"

"Save a row, you know," said Greene. "If Prout finds you there when he comes in, it will be all right."

"Don't be a silly ass, Greene!"

"Well, it means a frightful row," said Potter uneasily. "Your friends would hate to see you flogged, Coker."

"Don't be an idiot, Potter!"

"Prout will be frightfully wild," urged Potter. "He's been like a bear with a sore head lately. He's sure to

report you to the Head for a flogging if he finds you've cut."

"The Head is hardly likely to flog me," said Coker contemptuously. "The Fifth are never flogged."

"Well, he might sack you, instead!"

"Don't be a fathead! The Head would think twice before he sacked me," said Coker disdainfully. "There are some fellows in every school who can't be spared—fellows whose character gives a tone to the school. That's my position at Greyfriars. The Head may be waxy, but he won't cut off his nose to spite his face. He knows that Greyfriars can't afford to lose a man like me."

"Oh crikey!" said Greene.

"But—but—but," babbled Potter, "do you think you're going to defy Prout like this, and get away with it?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Prout will take me to the Head, of course," said Coker. "I expect that. I shan't be sorry, either."

"You'll be sorry by the time the Head's through with you," said Potter, with conviction.

"Don't be a footling ass! I shall explain the whole matter to the Head, and show up Prout. Mind, I don't want to. I'd rather say nothing about the old duffer. But if Prout takes me to the Head, I shall have no alternative but to point out that Prout was wholly to blame in the matter—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And let him see that Prout is a footling old donkey," said Coker. "I'm rather sorry for Prout; but if he asks for it, he gets it. That's all."

Potter and Greene were reduced to silence. Obviously, an intellect like Coker's was out of the reach of argument.

"Never mind all that," said Coker, dismissing the trivial subject with a wave of the hand. "I've no time to

bother about Prout now. We've wasted a lot of time, owing to his fatheadedness, already. We've got some work to do this afternoon. That man Buzzard is—"

"That man Buzzard!" groaned Potter.

"Oh dear!" said Greene.

If there was one topic on which Horace Coker was more fearfully and awfully a bore than any other, it was the topic of that bad man Buzzard, who had swindled his Aunt Judy.

When Coker got on that subject, Potter and Greene felt that they really couldn't stand any more of it. It was the Thing-too-Much!

They had already had it over and over again. They were fed-up with it to the very teeth. If Coker got going on that subject again, his friends felt that they would scream.

Coker, regardless, got on the subject.

"I'm after that rascal," he explained.

"I think I mentioned to you fellows that he got a job with my Aunt Judy a few months ago as secretary—I saw him in the holidays—and robbed her and bunked. If I'd been on the spot at the time—"

"Oh dear!"

"What's the matter, Potter?"

"Oh, nothing!" groaned Potter.

"We saw him at Lantham Station a few days ago," resumed Coker. "He was waiting to take the Friardale train. He got away—you fellows let him slip through your fingers. It was like you!"

It did not seem to occur to Horace Coker that Buzzard had slipped through his fingers also.

"Well, we're after him again," said Coker. "He was coming down to Friardale—that's clear. We got after him at Lantham, and he bunked. Well, he must have had some business in this neighbourhood, or he wouldn't have been coming here. See that?"

Coker stated this masterly deduction quite in the manner of Sherlock Holmes.

"Did you work that out in your head?" inquired Potter sarcastically.

Sarcasm was wasted on Coker.

"Yes," he answered. "I've worked it out—I've a head for such things, you know. As I've mentioned to you fellows more than once, I've practically all the brains of our study. Well, we chased the little beast off—but if he was up to some rascality in this quarter, he would stick to it, of course. My idea is that he's very likely playing the same game over again—getting a job with somebody to rob them. See? I've worked it out that he's planted somewhere about here, and all we've got to do is to nose him out and bag him."

"Is that all?" asked Potter, still sarcastic.

"That's all! Having got him, we shall hand him over to the police," said Coker. "The police are capable of dealing with a man who is handed over to them, though a fellow with brains is required to catch the man. See? Well, I'm going to catch him, and you fellows are going to help me."

"But how?" demanded Greene. "Do you expect to run into the man walking about the lanes?"

"Quite possible!" said Coker. "If he's living in this neighbourhood, as I suspect, he won't stay indoors all his life, I suppose. Might butt into the man any minute, walking about."

Potter and Greene looked at him. If Coker was building his hopes of a capture on such a foundation as this, they could not help feeling that the bad

man, Buzzard, was not in very great danger from Coker.

But it was useless to argue with Coker. Like an obstinate horse, Horace had to be given his head.

"Well, we're after him," went on Coker. "I told Prout I was going after him, and what do you think Prout had the cheek to say? He said it was nonsense! Prout all over!"

"But—" said Potter helplessly.

"Don't jaw, old chap! You're too fond of jawing—like Greene. I keep on telling you fellows that you talk too much. This way!" said Coker, swinging himself over the stile into Friardale Wood.

"Look out!" gasped Potter.

"What—"

"Prout!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Coker stared along the footpath, up which he had been about to stride. A portly, ponderous figure was coming along it. Mr. Prout, returning from his meeting with Tighe, had arrived at the stile on Friardale Lane from one direction, as Coker & Co. reached it from the other.

Potter gave one glance at the portly figure, and vanished up the lane towards the village. They had no desire for their Form master to spot them in company with a fellow who had broken detention. They stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once.

Coker, having got over the stile on Prout's side of it, could not retreat so rapidly.

"Upon my word!" boomed Prout.

He sighted Coker at the stile. He could scarcely believe his own majestic eyes, at the sight of the senior he supposed to be undergoing detention in the Fifth Form room at Greyfriars.

"Coker!" he stuttered.

"Oh, jiminy!" ejaculated Coker.

He swung himself hurriedly back over the stile into the lane. Mr. Prout accelerated.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Coker! I command you to stop! I shall take you back to the school with me! Stop, I command you!"

Coker did not stop.

He jumped back into the lane, and started at a run in the direction taken by his friends.

Prout reached the stile, gasping for breath.

"Coker! Stop! Rebellious boy! Rascal! Stop!" boomed Prout.

Coker vanished in the distance.

Prout slowly negotiated the stile, and stood in the lane, gazing after the vanished ornament of his Form.

"Upon my word!" he gasped. "This passes all bearing! He shall be flogged—expelled—bless my soul!"

And Prout resumed his way to Greyfriars, thinking less now of the unparalleled iniquity of Tighe than of the unprecedented rebelliousness of Horace Coker.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Fool's Luck!

POTTER and Greene halted, breathless, on the outskirts of Friardale. They looked back along the winding lane, but there was no one in sight.

"Oh dear!" gasped Potter. "Prout never spotted us, I think."

"He must have spotted Coker," said Greene.

"Luckily, that doesn't matter."

"Quite!" agreed Greene.

"We should have got into a fearful row, going round with a fellow out of detention," said Potter. "Prout's

frightfully bad-tempered lately, and I don't want him on my track."

"Same here."

"Coker's welcome to him," said Potter. "He seems to like getting Prout's rag out. I suppose Prout's got him and is marching him back to the school."

"Unless Coker's knocked him down!" said Greene.

"Oh my hat! Even Coker isn't fool enough for that."

Greene shook his head.

"Coker's fool enough for anything," he answered.

"Well, if Coker's sacked, it will be a quieter life in the study," said Potter, drawing comfort from that reflection. "After all, no fellow could stand Coker permanently."

"Great pip! Here he comes."

There was a thudding of heavy footsteps in the lane, and Coker came sprinting up, dusty and breathless.

"Oh, here you are, you fellows!" he gasped.

"Prout didn't get you?" asked Potter.

A suspicious fellow might have detected a note of disappointment in Potter's voice. Fortunately, Coker was not a suspicious fellow.

"I shouldn't be likely to let him," answered Coker disdainfully. "He ordered me to stop. Of course, I took no notice."

"Oh!" said Potter and Greene.

"I simply left him," said Coker. "Prout ought to understand that I've wasted enough time on him for one day. But he's dense."

"You ran for it?" asked Greene.

Coker frowned. "Running for it" was rather an undignified proceeding, more suitable to a fag than to a great man of the Fifth Form.

"I left him," said Coker. "I wasted no time, of course. I did not run for it, Greene—but I cleared off. It was that or hitting the man—and it's bad form to hit a Form master. I hope I shall never be driven to hitting Prout."

Coker shook his head seriously. He seemed to be troubled, for the moment, by the painful possibility that he might have to hit Prout some day.

"Anyway, we're done with him now," he continued, more brightly. "We'll keep on this way—no good going back—we'll go by Bridge Lane."

"Might walk as far as Pegg, and get tea there!" suggested Potter.

"Not a bad idea," agreed Greene. "They stand you a good tea at the Anchor."

"I'm afraid we've no time to think of tea this afternoon," said Coker coldly. "We've got work on hand. We shall need every minute to scour the neighbourhood for that man Buzzard."

"Rather like looking for a needle in a haystack, what?" asked Potter flip-pantly.

"Don't be an ass, Potter."

"But we really haven't an earthly of finding the man, even if he's in the neighbourhood at all, which isn't likely," urged Greene.

"Don't be a fathead, Greene."

"But look here, Coker—"

"Dry up!"

Coker walked on, and his faithful chums dried up, and followed him. They walked through the village and turned into Bridge Lane. In that lane five juniors of the Remove were strolling and chatting, after a satisfactory spread at the village tuckshop.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's jolly old Coker again!" said Bob Cherry, glancing round at the Fifth-Formers.

"Turned up like a bad penny!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The badfulness of the penny is terrific."

Coker frowned at the Famous Five. The sight of the quintette of cheery Removites was, to Coker, like a red rag to a bull.

"Look here, you men," he said to Potter and Greene, "we've no time to waste, but we can spare a few minutes to thrash those cheeky young scoundrels!"

"You'd want more than a few minutes, old bean!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"And more than a few of the Fifth!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Come on, you men!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene did not come on. They were willing—or unwilling—for Coker to drag them round highways and byways looking for a needle in a haystack. But they objected very strongly to being mixed up in an uproarious shindy with a mob of Lower Fourth fags.

"Look here—" exclaimed Potter.

"For goodness' sake, chuck it!" said Greene.

And they walked on very quickly, passing the Famous Five, and heading for the river at a good rate.

"Come back!" roared Coker.

Potter and Greene did not come back. They did not even turn their heads. They walked on more quickly than before.

Coker stared after them. Then he stared at the grinning Removites.

"Waiting for you to begin, old bean," said Bob Cherry genially.

"The waitfulness is terrific."

"Wade in, old tulip!" said Johnny Bull invitingly.

Coker breathed hard. Lessons were wasted on Horace Coker, but his last experience with the Famous Five was so recent that, perhaps, it had impressed upon him that single-handed he could not deal with those five cheeky juniors. And Potter and Greene, so far from backing up the great man, were already disappearing in the distance.

"I've no time to waste on you now," said Coker at last. "I'll thrash you later on, you young sweeps!"

"Better late than never," said Bob. "Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, Coker isn't going to thrash us now. So the question before the meeting is—are we going to thrash Coker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The thrashfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let us give the esteemed and preposterous Coker a terrific ragging."

"Hear, hear!"

"Collar him! Coker wants more!" said Harry Wharton.

Potter and Greene were almost out of sight. If Coker was not to lose his friends he had to hurry after them.

He hurried.

Coker would have disdained the bare idea of running away from a mob of juniors, howsoever numerous. But he had to run to overtake Potter and Greene. And he ran.

A roar of laughter followed him.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Put it on!"

"We're after you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker heard, and his ears burned, but he did not turn back. The fags could wait; Coker had no time to waste on them that afternoon. Coker disappeared round a bend of the winding lane; and the Famous Five, chuckling, sauntered in a more leisurely manner in the same direction.

Coker had to run hard, as a matter of fact, to overtake Potter and Greene. They were losing no time—no doubt

hoping that they were losing Coker. Tramping about the lanes all the afternoon and missing their tea was not a prospect that appealed to Potter and Greene. Still, they did not care to run and thus reveal to Coker their powerful disinclination for his fascinating society. So Horace overtook them at last.

"You silly owls!" he gasped, as he came up panting. "I might have lost you—marching off like that!"

Potter and Greene glanced at one another. Their brief hope had failed them.

"Marching off, instead of backing a fellow up!" exclaimed Coker wrathfully. "Do you call that pally? I've a jolly good mind to knock your silly heads together!"

"What about looking for that—that man Buzzard?" murmured Potter. "No good wasting time on a lot of fags when we've got something really important on hand, Coker."

Coker's brow cleared.

"Well, that's so," he agreed. "I'm glad to see you're so keen. Still, you should leave it to my judgment. It's always best to leave things to my judgment—you fellows being a pair of fools, as I've often told you!"

"Oh!" said Potter.

"Ah!" said Greene.

They walked on towards the distant bridge.

One of this week's useful
POCKET WALLETS has been
awarded to the sender of the following clever Greyfriars Limerick:

Said Bunter to Mauly: "Old
bean,
Now don't be so selfish and
mean.
You just lend me a quid——"
But it couldn't be did,
'Cause Mauly had gone like a
dream.

Sent in by Walter McGuinness,
44, King Street, Burnley, Lancs.
Pile in with your efforts, chums!

On a fallen log by the wayside a man was sitting to rest, smoking cigarette after cigarette as he sat there. The grass round him was littered with cigarette-ends and burnt matches. He had his back to the three fellows coming up the lane, and Coker's glance fell carelessly on him as he approached the resting wayfarer. But suddenly Coker gave a start, and his eyes were riveted on the back of the little man in black who sat on the log.

"My hat!" breathed Coker.

He gripped Potter's arm.

"Ow!" ejaculated Potter.

"See that man?" breathed Coker.

"Eh—what man?"

"That fellow sitting on the log smoking."

"Yes. What about him?"

"He looks like Buzzard——"

"Oh, rot!"

"What?" hooted Coker.

"I—I mean you can't see his face; you can't recognise a man by his back, you know," said Potter.

"Well, he seems familiar. I'm jolly well going to see his face!" said Coker. "Come on!"

Horace Coker strode onward. Potter and Greene looked at one another and grinned. Coker's idea that he might run into that bad man Buzzard and bag him seemed to his chums the very limit in fatheadedness even for Coker. But they did not allow for the chapter of chances, not to mention fool's luck.

"The born ~~man~~," murmured Greene. "I suppose he's going to take every man we see for that blighter Buzzard." "I suppose so," assented Potter. "Coker can't help being an idiot. But it must be a funny thing to have a brain like Coker's. Handicaps a fellow."

They walked on after Coker, without the slightest expectation that the man sitting on the log would turn out to be the man they had seen at Lantham Station.

Coker, hurrying ahead, had almost reached the man, when he noticed the Fifth-Former's heavy footsteps and turned his head.

His face was revealed. It was a thin, meagre face with a long nose and greenish eyes.

Potter and Greene stared at it almost in stupefaction. It was the man!

Coker gave a roar.

"Buzzard!"

With a cry of alarm, the green-eyed man leaped up from the log and bounded out into the road. Coker jumped at him.

"Buzzard, you rascal! I've got you now!" he roared.

But Coker had not quite got him. The little man in black dodged round Coker with desperate agility and started to run. He headed for the distant village at a frantic speed.

"Stop him!" yelled Coker, pounding on his track.

But the green-eyed man was past Potter and Greene before that astonished pair could lift a hand to stop him.

Leaving them behind, he raced on towards Friardale.

"After him!" shrieked Coker.

He rushed frantically in pursuit, and Potter and Greene joined up. But the man in black was running like a hare.

After him pounded the three Fifth-Formers, and Coker's voice woke the echoes of the countryside as he roared:

"Stop, thief! Stop, thief!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Tighe-Buzzard-Sharp-Brown!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came to a sudden halt.

"What the thump——" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"That's Coker yelling——" said Frank.

"Either Coker or a steamer's siren got loose somehow," said Johnny Bull.

"But what the merry dickens——"

"Stop, thief!" came a roar along the winding lane. "Stop, thief!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had been sauntering along in a leisurely way when that sudden uproar startled them. Just ahead of them was a bend in the lane, and a clump of trees hid from their sight what was passing. But they could hear the rapid beat of footsteps approaching, and Coker's roar in the distance.

"Stop, thief! Stop, thief!"

"Well, we'll stop him!" said Bob Cherry. "Line up, my infants, and bag him as he comes by. If some jolly old thief has been pinching something from Coker it's up to us."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

The Famous Five spread out across the lane, from hedgerow to hedgerow. Whoever it was that was racing towards them was not likely to get by.

Their eyes were fixed on the corner by the trees, round which the racing man would appear in a few seconds.

He came suddenly into sight, running

towards them with almost the fleetness of a hunted hare.

"Great pip! It's Prout's man!" ejaculated Bob.

"The sportsman with the green eyes!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"My only hat!"

"Stop him!"

The man with the greenish eyes was almost upon the juniors in his desperate flight from Coker, before he saw them. But as he sighted them he drew to a panting halt, casting wild glances round him for a way of escape. Their attitude showed that they meant to stop him, and there was no chance for the man in black to get through the five of them.

"Collar him!" roared Bob Cherry.

Even without Coker's cry of "Stop, thief!" to incite them, the chums of the Remove were quite prepared to handle the rascal who was blackmailing a Greyfriars Form master.

As he ceased to run they started towards him swiftly. Tighe, alias Buzzard, made a desperate spring for the hedge beside the road.

He crashed into it and strove to struggle through; but the juniors were too quick for him. Bob Cherry leaped after him and grasped one of the plunging legs, and the next moment Harry Wharton grasped the other. Tighe, alias Buzzard, was hooked out of the hedge by main force, and he came down in the lane with a heavy bump.

"Got him!" chuckled Bob.

"Bag him!"

"What-ho!"

The man in black struggled desperately. But all the juniors had hold of him now, and he had not an earthly.

"Let me go!" he shrieked. "Release me at once! Help!"

Coker came pounding round the bend breathlessly. After him came Potter and Greene.

"Great Scott! Those kids have got him!" roared Coker, in great delight.

A moment more, and Coker's powerful grasp was on the man in black.

"Got you, Buzzard!" chirruped Coker.

The juniors released the man with the green eyes. Coker's hefty grasp was quite enough to secure him. But they stood round ready to collar him again if he dodged.

The long-nosed man seemed to crumple up in Coker's hands. He panted and gasped spasmodically.

Coker grinned at Potter and Greene as they came breathlessly up.

"What did I tell you?" he demanded.

"It's the man!" said Potter in amazement. "That's the merchant we saw at Lantham the other day, right enough."

"Didn't I tell you I'd get him?" chuckled Coker.

"You did," gasped Greene—"you did! And you've done it! Wonders will never cease!"

"Coker was right," said Potter, "and some ass said that the age of miracles was past!"

"Let me go!" whined the man in black. "You are making a mistake—I've never seen you before. I—"

"You've jolly well seen me, and I've jolly well seen you!" grinned Coker. "You saw me at Coker Lodge, when you were secretary to my Aunt Judy, you rogue! You know me all right, Buzzard."

"My name is not Buzzard!" gasped the green-eyed man. "I assure you—it is a mistake. My name is Brown—John Brown!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob

Cherry. "You've got a lot of names, old bean. It was Tighe the other day."

Tighe started, and stared at him.

"Have you kids seen this rascal before?" asked Coker.

"We've seen him," said Harry Wharton.

"It is a mistake!" panted Tighe.

"My name is Brown—"

"Chuck it!" said Coker. "Your name's Buzzard—at least, that was the name you used when you swindled my Aunt Judy. I know you, Buzzard!"

"But what has he done?" asked Frank Nugent.

For the moment the juniors had had the impression, when they recognised Tighe, that Coker was butting into the affair of Prout. But it was clear that Coker knew nothing about Tighe's connection with the Fifth Form master of Greyfriars. It appeared that Tighe, under the name of Buzzard, was an old acquaintance of Coker's.

"He swindled my Aunt Judy," said Coker. "She took him on as a secretary, and he robbed her and cleared out, after a lot of swindling that came out afterwards. The police have wanted him ever since, but, of course, they couldn't bag him. That was left for me to handle."

"Now I've got him," said Coker gleefully. "You needn't wriggle, Buzzard, and you needn't tell lies! I've got you, and I ain't letting go till you're handed over to the police."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That's why the rotter told Prout he wouldn't go to the school to see him. He was afraid he might run into Coker."

"That's it!" said Harry.

"What do you kids know about this scoundrel?" asked Coker.

"Oh, we happened on him once," said Wharton. He had no intention of telling Coker anything about Mr. Prout's affairs. "We saw him on our way back from Lantham the day we went to the League match there."

"That was the day I nearly got him at Lantham Station," said Coker. "Well, I've got him all right this time. I said I would—and I have."

The juniors grinned. Coker had got him, that was certain; but without Harry Wharton & Co. on the spot it was exceedingly doubtful whether Coker would have got him. The fleeing rascal was leaving him hopelessly behind, when the juniors took a hand in the game. But Coker was not the man to give credit to anyone but himself. Coker had said that he would get Buzzard, and he had got him; and that was all there was about it.

"We helped a little, didn't we?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Don't be cheeky, Cherry!"

"The helpfulness was terrific, my esteemed and fat-headed Coker," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Shut up!"

"That's Coker's delicate way of expressing thanks for services rendered," observed Bob Cherry. "Chesterfield isn't in it, with Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't cackle, you fags! And don't jaw!" said Coker. Tighe, alias Buzzard, wriggled, and Coker's grasp tightened on him. "Keep quiet, you rotter! I've got you, and you're not getting away."

"I tell you it is a mistake! I am not—"

"Shut up! Now," said Coker, "this rotter has been up to some rascality here, as I told you follows. What have you been up to, Buzzard?"

"Nothing!" panted Tighe. "I—I was simply having a day in the country—I was doing no harm—"

"Gammon!" said Bob. "You measly worm, you jolly well know that you ought to be in chokey, whether your name's Tighe or Buzzard or Brown."

"I tell you—"

"You deny that you're Buzzard, do you?" demanded Coker.

"Yes, yes! I have never heard the name before," panted Tighe.

"Well, I dare say you've got some proof on you," said Coker. "Hold the little beast, Potter, while I search him."

"I—I say, hadn't you better leave that for the bobbies?" asked Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter."

"But—but—"

"This matter is in my hands. Simply do as I tel. you, and you won't go far wrong," said Coker, in his most autocratic manner. "Hold the little beast by the collar, while I go through his pockets."

Potter took the green-eyed man by the collar. Tighe struggled convulsively as Coker calmly proceeded to search his pockets.

"Shouldn't wonder if he's got some loot about him now," remarked Coker. "You can see he's afraid of being searched."

"I protest!" shrieked Tighe. "I—I—"

"Shut up!"

Coker turned out the rascal's pockets remorselessly. A pocket-book came to light, and Coker jerked it open. There were a number of letters and papers in it.

"This will fix him, I fancy," remarked Coker complacently. "The bobbies may want some proof that he is Buzzard, when I give him into custody. My hat! His name seems to be Sharp, as well as Buzzard and Tighe and Brown!"

There were letters in the pocket-book, addressed to Messrs. Sharp, at Biter's Buildings, E.C. 2. And there was a folded paper, evidently a cheque, which Coker unfolded and looked at.

"Great pip!" he ejaculated. "This cheque has got Prout's name on it."

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

From what they knew already of Mr. Prout's trouble, they could guess what cheque that was.

"It's payable to Eustace Prout, signed by somebody named Stacey, and endorsed on the back by Eustace Prout!" said Coker. "That rascal must have stolen it."

"I—I did not!" gasped Tighe. "It was handed to me in security for a loan—"

"Shut up! Think I'm going to believe a word you say?" snapped Coker. "You men, old Prout's got a nephew named Eustace—an old Greyfriars man. You've seen his name on the roll at Greyfriars—he was wounded on the Somme, and got shell-shock and things. This cheque belongs to him."

"I tell you—"

Coker shook him till his teeth rattled. "Now shut up!" he said. "I don't want any more from you, Buzzard. I'll bang your napper on a tree if you don't dry up. You robbed my Aunt Judy, and it's plain that you've robbed Prout's nephew—"

"Looks like it," said Potter. "Anyhow, that cheque can't belong to Mister Buzzard-Tighe-Sharp-Brown!"

"There's nothing here with the name of Buzzard on it," said Coker, after a further examination of the papers. "I suppose he chucked that name for good, after he bunked from Coker Lodge. But that cheque's proof that he's a thief, anyhow; and I'm prepared to swear that he's Buzzard. I'll



"The man's fainted!" said Coker. "Get some water from the pond, Potter, and mop it over his chivvy. You can use his hat." On hearing these words, the apparently unconscious man made a sudden jump to his feet, and fled along the lane at top speed, before a hand could be raised to touch him. (See Chapter 13.)

keep these papers to hand over to the police." Coker slipped the papers into his pocket, Tighe eyeing him wistfully as he did so. "As for the cheque, I'll hand that to Prout, to send back to its owner—"

"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton. "I—I'm sure Prout would be jolly glad to get hold of that cheque, Coker."

"I don't want any advice from fags, or any help either. You kids can clear off," said Coker. "Now about getting this rogue to the station—My hat! What's the matter with him?"

Tighe had suddenly crumpled up, and hung, a heavy weight, on Potter's arm. Potter let him slip to the ground.

"Fainted!" he said.

"Sheer funk!" said Coker contemptuously. "Man ought to have a little more beef in him, when he starts as a rogue. Get some water from the pond, and mop it over his chivvy. You can use his hat."

Potter picked up Tighe's hat, and stepped away towards the pond. Coker stood staring contemptuously down at the man in the faint.

But a moment later Coker had a surprise. Mr. Tighe's faint might have been more properly described as a "feint."

The apparently unconscious man made a sudden jump to his feet, and fled along the lane at top speed, before a hand could be raised to touch him.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Greene, clutching at him—too late!

"The rotter!" roared Coker. "Spoofing! He never fainted at all! You silly asses, to be taken in like that! After him!"

Coker rushed in furious pursuit. Potter and Greene trailed after him, Potter still with Tighe's bowler hat in his hand. Hatless, desperate, Tighe covered the ground like a hare.

He bolted into a footpath across the fields towards the river, and fled on, with Coker & Co. whooping after him. Harry Wharton & Co. looked after the chase—and smiled. Coker had stated that he did not want any help from fags; so they left him to it.

Help from the fags, however, might have been useful to Coker, though he did not want it. For, an hour later, Coker & Co. were trailing home in the November dusk—without the green-eyed man. He had vanished somewhere among fields and hedges, and Coker & Co. had sought in vain. And all the way back to Greyfriars Coker explained to Potter and Greene what a pair of benighted asses they were, to let the man get away.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Right for Coker!

WRATH, deep wrath, dwelt on the brow of Prout.

Standing at his study window, Prout looked out in the dusk, and beheld Greyfriars fellows coming in, in twos and threes and fours.

Harry Wharton & Co., as they came up to the House, discerned Prout standing there, and noted the thunderous wrath in his brow.

"Something waiting for Coker when he gets in!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Something hot!" said Nugent.

"The hotfulness will be terrific!"

And the juniors passed into the House, leaving Prout still staring thunderously from the study window.

Dusk deepened to darkness.

Prout shut his window, and turned from it. He paced his study, his brow more thunderous than ever, his eyes glinting.

He was waiting for Coker to come in. Often and often had Prout been exasperated, indeed enraged, with that remarkable member of his Form. But never had he been so deeply incensed as now.

Prout was worried and troubled; and on top of his worries and troubles came the worry of the ineffable Coker. It was really too much.

His interview with Tighe had left the Fifth Form master in a frame of mind far from enviable. Anger and alarm, rage and apprehension, alternated. He

could not and would not yield to the demands of the blackmailer. Yet he shrank from the inevitable consequences. That cheque in Tighe's hands, once made known, would cover the name of Prout with shame as with a garment.

His nephew's name was on the Roll of Honour at Greyfriars; Prout had often gazed at it there with pride, seen with pride others gazing at it. But what comments would it evoke, when the truth was known? For the unhappy young man there were many excuses; the War had left him with a mind unhinged. But that did not alter the fact that he had stained himself with crime—that he had brought shame on his name, on Mr. Prout's name. Pondering miserably over it, Prout was tempted to yield after all, to pay the dastardly blackmailer the sum he demanded, and gain possession of the tell-tale document.

Time was passing; and he had not—he could not decide. Prout's fat and rather flabby mind was not equal to dealing with emergencies.

And on top of this tormenting worry there was Coker! Coker, at least, should be made to feel the weight of his wrath.

The fellow who defied his authority, who had disobeyed his direct commands, who had flouted him, should suffer for his sins.

A Head's flogging was the very least that would satisfy Prout. Indeed, he was considering whether he should demand Coker's expulsion from the school. No punishment, he felt, was too severe for the obtuse, obstreperous fellow who had so unthinkingly added to his troubles when he was deeply troubled already.

Every minute, as it passed, added to Prout's deep wrath.

Tap!

The portly Form master spun round to the door as he heard the tap. The door opened.

Coker of the Fifth presented himself.

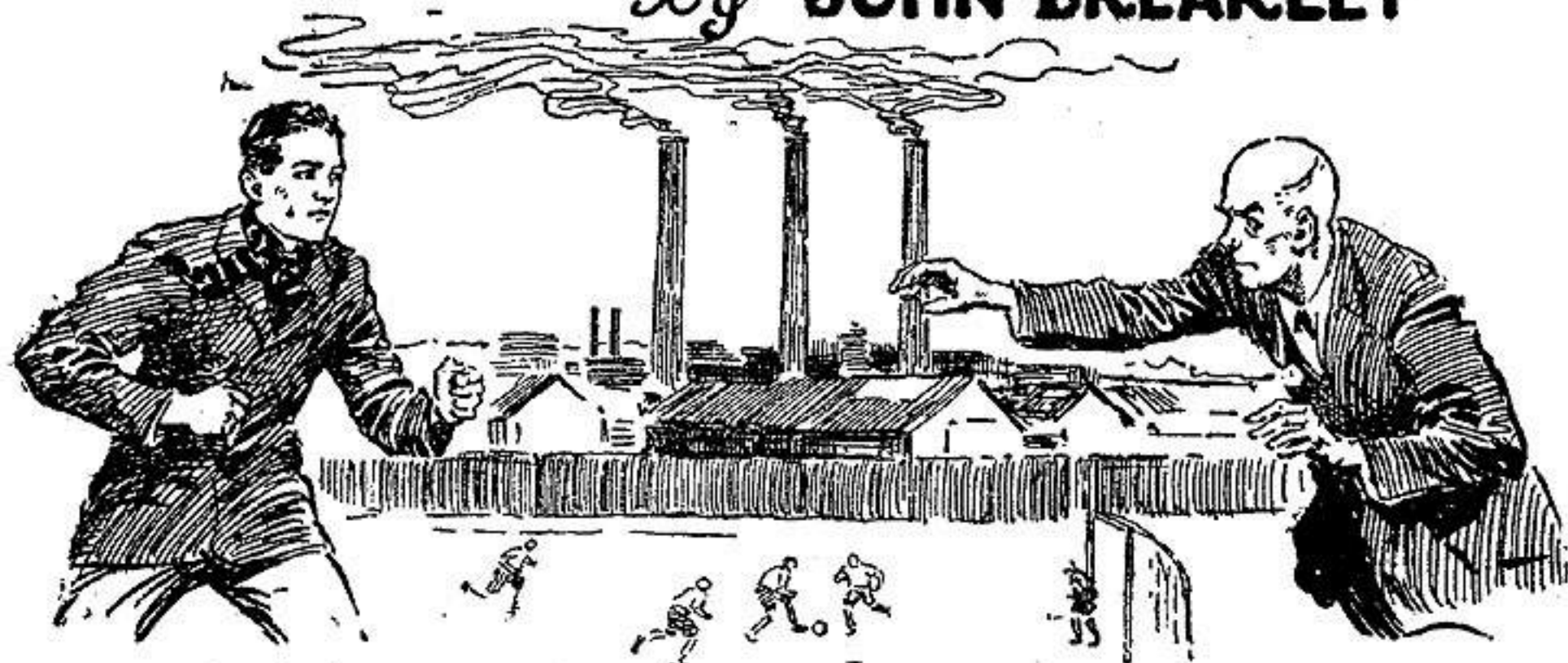
(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,134.

YOU CAN START READING THIS POWERFUL INDUSTRIAL SERIAL TO-DAY, CHUMS!

Peter Frazer-Ironmaster!

By JOHN BREARLEY



INTRODUCTION.

Head and sole owner of Frazer's Iron Foundry! It is a strange prospect that lies before Peter Frazer, a youngster of eighteen, when he arrives in the squalid industrial city of Maxport late one night to take over the great business left to him in his dead uncle's will. Without thought of danger, Peter hires an ancient hansom cab to take him from the station to Manston, the house that is to be his future home. The lad's first inkling of the forces working against him comes when the cab is waylaid in a deserted side-street and he is attacked by half a dozen seafaring ruffians. Peter is knocked senseless after a desperate struggle against powerful odds, and regains consciousness to find himself in the cabin of a small steamer at anchor in the estuary of the River Maxwell. Two men are in the cabin—the captain and the cab-driver—and from their conversation the kidnapped youngster learns that he is to be taken to sea—never to return. Peter has only one clue to the identity of the cab-driver—his unknown enemy: the man is completely bald, with a broad, jagged scar running right across the top of the skull. A paper is signed, and then the two men leave the cabin, and a burly deckhand is sent to guard the captive. At sight of a knife in the man's hand a plan of escape forms in Peter's head. Enticing the man to the bunk where he lies with his hands bound, Peter kicks out with all his force at the unshaven jaw. The blow knocks the man out, and Peter struggles out of the bunk, his heart in his mouth. Will the luck hold?

(Now read on.)

A Bid for Freedom!

EVERYTHING depended on time, for the man was only knocked out, and the skipper might return any moment. Turning his back, Peter's fingers searched feverishly for the knife on the table-edge, found it, and painfully he commenced to saw at the rope round his wrist. He bit his lip as the keen blade cut him, and fingers and arms ached with the strain, but at last the knife sliced through the first turn of the rope containing the knot.

With a tug and a wrench he got one wrist free, then the other, and leaned wearily against the table. Now that his hands were at liberty he had only one impulse—to dash up on to the deck and get them on the scarred man or the skipper! But out of the tail of his eye he caught a feeble movement from the floor of the sailor coming round, and

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he abandoned his natural impulse for thoughts of escape.

"Home, James, first," he muttered. "Too many on this boat for me. Interview my friend some other time—when my head don't ache. I'll know his bean all right—that's one comfort."

He had reached the cabin door and lifted the latch, when again came the sound of footsteps down the steps outside. The sound sent him berserk.

Leaping back to the table he turned the lamp off sharply. Then he dived for the door and swung it open, plunged furiously at a pair of thick legs on the steps, and, catching the man in his stride, swung him over his shoulder into the darkened cabin. He reached the deck in three giant leaps.

A terrific bellow of pain and fury roared up the companion behind him—a yell that first paralysed the crew loung-

"Someone's fighting you tooth and nail, Mr. Frazer. They want the foundry off the map! And it's no use trying to stop 'em. Frazer's got to go——" A strange greeting for young Peter Frazer on his arrival at his newly-acquired property. But, true as it undoubtedly is, it does not frighten the new master of Frazer's Iron Foundry—a fighting master who is determined to keep his Works going at all cost!

ing on the black deck, then sent them racing in a body for the cabin. Even as Peter jumped on to the deck and hurled himself headlong for cover beneath the bulwarks, the men thundered down into the cabin below.

Pandemonium raged, a whirlwind of roars and curses. The rush of cold, wet air after the stuffy cabin made Peter's head reel, and his limbs refused to act. Again he pulled himself together sternly, and when with a rush the crew poured back on deck again, driven up by the frantic yells of their damaged captain, he was sliding forward noiselessly towards the fo'c's'le with a fierce grin of excitement on his white face.

"Bagged the skipper and one sailor. Damaged others. What an evening! Here come the lads—just hark at that skipper! Nice playmates—I don't think!"

The men were spreading. Like a soft shadow Peter sped to the side, in his arm a heavy coil of rope over which he had stumbled. This he raised high above his head and flung far out into the black waters, then dived for the other side of the ship.

There was a mighty splash. "Overboard, on starb'd side!" roared a voice. "Lower away a boat there! Quick, you dogs!"

"What an evening!" chuckled the fugitive, breathlessly, worming his way over the litter of chains and tackle on the deserted fo'c's'le. His luck held still. The captain's yells had drawn every man to the cabin, and even as the starboard boat struck the water and a hand pounded for'ard with a lantern, he was over the bitts and down the anchor chain like a monkey.

Silently he slipped into the bitter water, and, holding the chain, dragged off his heavy shoes. Then a boat dropped from the falls on the port side, and the captain's oaths grew louder as someone dragged him up on deck—a man in a macintosh cape and cap whose soul was burning with fear and fury.

The mist hung closely to the water and Peter had not the slightest idea where the shore lay. Somewhere out in the darkness he could hear the splash of oars, then—blessed sound!—came the faint, far-off whistle of a train. Using a powerful side-stroke, he slipped away from the ship, the iron cold making his teeth clench. He had no fear of the boats finding him in the mist, and it suddenly struck him that they dared not use a lantern out on the river.

He was swimming away from them. The sound of their oars faded, and he began to lengthen his stroke.

How long he swam he could not tell. With the fierce excitement of conflict behind him fatigue began to return. The fiery lights commenced to crackle and burn before his eyes again, and legs and arms felt like lead.

Vaguely he felt himself passing under the hull of a barge. The water gurgling beneath its blunt stern nearly dragged him down, but he fought clear.

Almost at his last gasp he felt his outstretched arms thump against slippery masonry.

It was the slimy wall of a dock. His frozen fingers clutched in crevices and out again as he felt his way along the wall, and then, when he had nearly given up, they closed round the iron rungs of a ladder.

Sobbing with exhaustion he grasped them and drew himself out of the water with painful slowness. At last he was on dry land. His knees gave, and he sagged helplessly forward, presently becoming aware that rough hands were turning him over gently and a quavery voice coming from a long way off.

Stupidly he muttered something and slumped forward again. For the second time since arriving in Maxport, he slipped off into bottomless darkness.

Mr. Dimmock—and Another!

IT was broad daylight when Peter Frazer came to his senses again. His eyes opening hazily, made out first a wide bow window that looked out on to a garden, then a pleasant, neatly furnished room—all of which swayed dizzily.

Slowly it dawned upon him that he was comfortably tucked up in a bed, that all his body was one great ache, and finally, that someone had split his head neatly in two!

Peter studied the window groggily and tried to think where he was, but the ache in his head made that impossible.

Suddenly there was a quiet rustle from the side of the bed. Someone unseen rose and touched his forehead gently with shrewd fingers, and a glass containing a long, cool drink was held to his lips. The drink and the gentle massage of the fingers soothed him. A calm voice a few hundred miles off breathed in his ear, "Quite safe now," and intimated that he might sleep again. So Peter slept.

When the boy woke once more the sun was setting, and though he turned his head slowly to look all round, the room was empty. For some minutes he lay still. The aches in his body were not quite so intrusive, and his head had joined up again, so the second sleep had done him good.

Cautiously he wriggled himself into a half-sitting position with his elbows, and, laying his head back against the bed-rail, took in the details of the room more carefully.

A tray containing an empty glass stood on a chair by the bedside. Peter gazed at it owlishly, and at last remembered the drink and the quiet, calm voice telling him that he was safe. Certainly, even to his still dazed mind, it was obvious that he had escaped from the gentle attentions of the Scarred Man and company—how, he could not think—but still, he was in strange, if comfortable, surroundings, and it behoved him to find out all about it as speedily as possible.

With Peter usually, to think was to act. Holding his head gently with one hand and the bed firmly with the other, he got gingerly out on to the carpet and looked round for his clothes. They were not there. Then he remembered that, of course, they would be soaked, so that probably his host, whoever he was, was having them dried.

"Jolly thoughtful of him!" grunted Peter, clinging feverishly to the bed-rail, while the floor of the room heaved and buckled under him. "Wish someone would come, though!"

There was a water carafe on the washstand, and having groped his way across to it, he drained it dry. The cold water made him feel better, and he lurched over to the window. At least,

he would have a look at the outside world!

For a long time the youngster stood staring at the scene. And even then he could not make up his mind whether he was in the front or the back of the house. Below, a pleasant little front garden, split by a neat gravel path, ran down to a box hedge in the middle of which was set a little white gate.

All the signs pointed to this being the entrance of the house, and yet it did not open on to a street as one would expect, but—of all things—on to a football field.

Peter rubbed his eyes dazedly. That it was a football field was certain, but an untidy, unkempt, neglected field; nevertheless a football pitch, for at either end stood goalposts, dirty and forlorn, and across and down the field were the remains of white marked lines. A narrow asphalt path encircled the whole field.

Beyond it, almost flush with the farther touchline, stood a long, high building, flanked by smaller buildings and split by three huge chimneys that reached up, black and stark, against the evening sky.

The setting sun caught two of the high, gaunt windows at the end, so that they winked redly, the only spots of colour in the sombre black mass.

The spaces between the buildings were paved with asphalt. Two mountainous piles of coal and coke blocked up one end of the Works, for such the place appeared to be, but the other end took a sudden curve towards the house he was in. Peter moved to the other side of the bay window to take in fresh details, and saw that behind the buildings on the curve the water front must lie, for two big derricks reared skeleton fingers high in the air. By craning his neck the boy managed to make out another and smaller cottage at the far angle of the Works.

There was not a soul to be seen anywhere, nor did there appear to be any life in the buildings opposite, and it suddenly occurred to him that it was Sunday. The Works looked ugly—and dead!

In the midst of these thoughts, the door of the room opened quietly and a man stood in the doorway regarding him. As Peter turned, the newcomer's face lit up in a beaming smile, and he came forward quickly, holding out his hand.

"Awake at last, and up!" he cried. "Well, my boy, and how do you feel?"

There was a hearty warmth and kindness in the greeting that astounded Peter, standing warily by the window, and he only stared back silently.

The newcomer was a man of about fifty, of medium height, and slightly stooped. He had the gentle air, the lined face and puckered eyes of the scholar, but the neatness of his grey-tinged brown hair and clothes bespoke the middle-aged business man. His voice as he spoke was quiet and cultured—the voice Peter remembered having heard earlier in the day—and his smile was a kindly beam, but the hand that took his was firm and hard.

The puckered eyes studied Peter closely.

"Feeling pretty bad?"

"Fairly cheap, sir," admitted Peter. "But thanks very much. Er—where am I, please?"

Again that beaming smile.

"Why, where did you expect to be?" Peter smiled wryly.

"If you'd asked me that last night, I'd have said beneath the sad sea waves," he grunted, feeling his head tenderly. "But I seem to have landed comfortably, thanks to you. I suppose this is Maxport?"

"Of course," smiled his host. "Why not?"

"Only that I thought I'd swum a few dozen miles away from it. Well, if this is Maxport, perhaps you know Mr. Dimmock, of Frazer's Foundry?"

"Passably well."

"Then that's where I set out for a few thousand years or so ago," said Peter. "My name's Frazer. Manston's the name of the house. That right?"

"Quite right!"

"Well, it's Dimmock's fault for not meeting me!" yawned Peter, sitting down on the bed. "What is he like, sir?"

"Oh, a splendid chap—a really good fellow!" chuckled the other. "One of the best in the world. I'm hal! And that's the foundry you've been staring at!"

Peter nearly slipped off the bed.

"Oh, great Scott!" he cried. "I really beg your pardon! I'd no idea! Awfully sorry for what I said about you not meeting me! How did I get here?"

Mr. Dimmock pushed the boy back gently.

"Don't you worry about that," he said. "It's I who am sorry—terribly sorry for not having met you! I shall never forgive myself! But, really, it was most urgent business on which I was called away, and this house is so well known I'd no idea you could go wrong."

"I went wrong all right," replied Peter grimly. "Apparently some other people were expecting me as well. They met me, too!"

Mr. Dimmock laid a hand on his shoulder eagerly.

"Yes, my boy. Now tell me— But come, you must be starving! Do you feel like dressing and coming downstairs? We'll soon have something ready for you. Oh, and you don't mind me calling you Peter, do you?"

Peter stood up.

"Rather not," he grinned.

So this was his uncle's manager—and his own! He had pictured a man of different type—a brisk, keen-featured man, perhaps, with quick ways and a loud voice; but this gentle, scholarly man was totally unlike his mental picture, and he looked and acted like a good scout.

Mr. Dimmock bustled out and returned in an instant with a dressing-gown, and a few minutes later, Peter, having painfully negotiated the stairs with the aid of his manager's arm, was seated at a light meal in a long, warm room with tall windows at each end.

A shuffling old maidservant—apparently the only other occupant of the house—waited on him and then retired. As Peter ate Mr. Dimmock explained the position to him.

"This used to be your uncle's house," he said. "But about three years ago he asked me to come and share it. I lived in the town, and he was a lonely man, and the arrangement turned out well for both of us. This is the living-room. I have a bed-room to myself, and also a study—there."

He pointed to a door at the far end of the room.

"That's the street beyond that wall. This house is all part of the foundry. You saw the Works. Your uncle made the field in between into a sports ground for the men, but— However, did you catch a glimpse of a cottage farther along? Well, that's for the chief engineer and foreman, so that he's always handy. All the foundry is enclosed in a wall, and our wharf is over yonder. We're built right on the edge of the town and the marshes."

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Over that wall you're in the slums; beyond the works you're on the marshes! Queer position? Well, perhaps; but your uncle wanted his men to work in clean air, clean as possible, that is—not that they appreciated it!" he added sadly. "I think he had an idea one day of building cottages for his workpeople out there beyond the foundry—in its shadow, so to speak. But he died too soon. At present they just live near in the centre of the town, which, of course, is not so healthy."

His face was downcast as he spoke of his dead employer, and Peter, eating slowly, listened attentively. The food was putting fresh strength into him. His head felt clearer already, and his legs were steadier as he rose from the table at last and walked to an armchair before the window that looked out on to the works—his works!

"And now, my boy, tell me what happened last night."

"How did I get here, first?" asked Peter quietly.

The other bent forward.

"Someone—old Marks, that is, a night-watchman—found you sprawled out on top of a dock step, soaking wet and unconscious! He called for help, and, of course, they searched you and found my card. Do you know, you landed only fifty yards below this house, and so, naturally, they brought you straight here. I had just returned. They put you into bed and phoned for Dr. Russell. He'll be here again shortly, incidentally. There, now, that's all we know of you."

"And now, if you feel like it, tell me what happened," added Mr. Dimmock.

At that moment the door opened and another stranger stepped quietly into the room.

A Bitter Feud!

SO swiftly had the door opened and the newcomer appeared that he stood beside them almost before they realised it. Peter, mouth half opened to begin his strange tale, found himself wondering if the man had knocked.

He could have sworn he had not, neither had he heard his swift footsteps on the carpet.

Peter glanced quickly at Mr. Dimmock, and found him beaming his cheery welcome; evidently he was used to the abrupt entry! The man responded with a curt nod.

"This is Mr. Moller, Peter. Moller—Mr. Frazer, our new chief."

Repressing a grin at the strange title, Peter held out his hand to Moller. Mr. Dimmock became explanatory.

"Mr. Moller is our engineer and head foreman of the works, Peter. And if I may say so to his face, an extremely able one, too! He handles our somewhat tough workmen very well indeed."

"Why, are our workmen tough?" asked Peter in surprise.

"They're worse than that, sir!" rapped Moller abruptly.

His voice, like the rest of him, was harsh and forbidding. There seemed no expression whatever in the man's heavy, hard face, and his eyes, as they stared down at Peter, were cold and flinty, mouth a straight line, heavily marked at the corners. Slightly taller than Mr. Dimmock, he was far sturdier in build, and Peter judged that his loosely-cut clothes covered a powerful and muscular body.

"Oh, hardly as bad as that," protested Mr. Dimmock gently. "Wild, perhaps, and ignorant, shall we say? This is the low end of the town, remember, and

most of our men live round the works. It is so difficult to get good buildings in so congested an area. But come, Peter, we haven't heard yet how you came in such a plight last night. Sit down, Moller, please! You've come just in time."

Ensnared in his armchair, facing the two men, Peter briefly told the tale of his hectic evening, Dimmock listening eagerly with a tense expression on his scholarly face. When the story finished the manager burst out furiously:

"The scoundrels! It's the last straw! By Jove, Peter, we'll scour Maxport for these villains!"

In his agitation he jumped up and paced the room feverishly, but Moller, the foreman, sat immovable and met Peter's eyes with the same cold, searching stare.

"Would you recognise 'em again, sir?" he asked slowly.

Mr. Dimmock stopped in his long strides and turned. There was an instant's silence. It was on the tip of Peter's tongue to launch forth instantly on all he had seen of his assailants, the squat captain, the hulking sailor whose jaw must certainly have been broken, and, last of all, the man with the terribly scarred, bald head. But even as he leaned forward a lightning, inexplicable impulse stopped him. His mouth set firmly as though to cut off the words, and he shook his head.

"It doesn't matter!" cried Mr. Dimmock excitedly. "It's the same gang! The villains! Your poor uncle—By heaven, I'll go to the police this instant. I won't stand it any longer!"

Peter twitched round with a jerk.

"No, you won't!" he said, with a snap in his voice that made Mr. Dimmock spring round in astonishment. "Oh, I'm frightfully sorry! I didn't mean to talk that way. But I want to hear all about these mysterious people first! Suppose we wait a while, until my head aches a bit less, before calling in the police? Besides," he added slowly, "I'm not sure I want the police in yet!"

"My dear lad!"

Peter raised his head and eyed his new manager and foreman steadily.

"You spoke of a 'gang' just now," he said. "That means, I take it, you've had trouble with them before! Did—did they trouble my uncle?"

Mr. Dimmock laughed bitterly, and Moller's expression grew dour.

"Trouble him! Peter, they killed him!"

"Great Scott! I thought—"

"Oh, I know his heart gave out!" cried Mr. Dimmock quickly. "But it was the terrible worry brought it on—the worry caused by these enemies! They killed him as surely as if they had shot him down. The sudden strikes! The brawls in the foundry! The mysterious fires, the thefts, the broadcasting of cherished secrets!"

He hurled himself down into his chair, his long fingers drumming on the padded arm. The gentle, beaming expression on his face had been replaced by one of deep-graven care.

"The fires, the thefts, the strikes spoiled our works and lost our contracts! We couldn't complete work, and the orders were cancelled. If ever there was a free fight or brawl, it was always our best hands who were hurt, and good foundry-men are not found everywhere. And on one occasion, at least, your uncle's life was attempted!"

"My sacred aunt!"

Paralysed with astonishment, and utterly bewildered by the extraordinary tale of persecution, Peter could only grip the arms of his chair, and stare at his agitated manager.

"And all this is the work of one gang?" he asked at length. "But why, how do you know, Mr. Dimmock?"

Mr. Dimmock shook his head sadly.

"I can only guess, Peter," he murmured. "Your uncle, though he was my good master and friend, was a hard man to some, I fear, and—" His voice trailed off apologetically.

"You mean, he made these enemies himself?" cried Peter.

The other nodded.

"But he would never discuss things with me, Peter. He knew that someone—somewhere—was trying to strike him down, to ruin him and his beloved works, but when I tried to talk to him about it, to seek to find if there had been anyone in his past life who would owe him such a hideous grudge, he snapped me into silence. And, like you, Peter, he would not call in the police!"

"By gum, sir, he must have been a warrior! Wreck his business, and try to do him in! Someone must have hated him quite a lot, as you say! How long had it been going on?"

"Rather more than a year and a half, Peter."

And Moller's harsh voice broke in from the shadow.

"Before I joined the firm!"

So silently had he sat all this while that his abrupt remark caused Peter to start. The man's stolidness, in contrast to Mr. Dimmock's agitation, struck him as strange.

"Oh!"

"Your uncle engaged Moller nearly a year back, when affairs were getting too bad," explained Mr. Dimmock.

Peter turned to the foreman.

"And did you stop them?"

He could see the man's eyes narrow in the firelight, but met the look squarely. He was not at all sure yet that he liked Moller.

"No, I didn't!" replied the engineer harshly. "But I checked 'em!"

"And really, Peter," broke in Mr. Dimmock, "it is these foundry fights that cause most of the trouble. Some of our men are really rough characters."

"The Granger gang are toughs—the others are worse!" interrupted Moller incisively.

"And, as I said, somehow it's always a good man or so who gets hurt," continued the manager. He laid a worried face on his hand. "The last month or so since your uncle died has been terrible," he said despondently. "The reputation of the firm has suffered so! We could still get the orders if only we could be sure of fulfilling them. But what can I do with a wild lot of workmen and always the menace of these enemies behind it all?"

Another deep silence fell in the darkening room. Mr. Dimmock, his earlier cheeriness quite gone, stared into the fire in profoundest dejection. Moller, ramming knobbly hands deep down into his pockets, stared at his boots. And Peter, nursing his sore head, slowly digested the talk of the past half-hour.

It was a painful moment. Then suddenly in the midst of the silence, he broke into a long, deep chuckle, a chuckle that grew and grew, until at last he lay back in his chair and laughed—and gasped with the pain in

his head together, while his manager and foreman stared at him, petrified.

Muttering something about "hysteria" and "overwrought nerves," Mr. Dimmock sprang to his feet and started hastily for the sideboard; but in Moller's cold eyes, half hidden in shadow, a peculiar light began to dawn as he studied the big, gurgling youngster before him.

And even as Mr. Dimmock brushed past, Peter threw out an arresting hand to stop him.

"It's all right, Mr. Dimmock!" he spluttered shakily. "I'm not going to faint or waggle my legs in the air and scream. I'm just appreciating Uncle Desmond's legacy! Oh, my hat! Oh, my head!"

"Peter—"

He lay back and struggled for breath, his eyes gleaming, and, hesitatingly, Mr. Dimmock backed away to his own armchair and waited dubiously for him to recover.

Peter finished his laugh out. He had pictured a comfortable home, and perhaps an interesting job learning his own works. By contrast, the thought of what he had gone through and now the news of what was before him, struck him simply as a howling, roaring joke. It was five minutes before he sat up and regarded them once more, flushed and wet-eyed.

However, there was no getting past the set, straight faces before him. Grim reality suddenly made him pull himself together with a snap.

Reaching out, he laid a firm hand on the manager's knee.

"Tell me this, Mr. Dimmock. Is Frazer's worth carrying on?"

"Yes."

"No!"

The two answers came almost together, Moller's harsh negative coming prompt and forcibly, however, while Mr. Dimmock hesitated the merest second.

Peter wheeled to the foreman quickly. "Why not?" he challenged.

Doggedly, Moller shook his head.

"Because you're up against it!" he growled. "You're a boy—though I'm not denying you can't take care of yourself—but these enemies of your folks are big! Don't I know it!"

He rose from his chair and stood staring down at Peter, shoulders bent, head oddly on one side.

"Someone's fighting you tooth and nail, Mr. Frazer! They want Frazer's Foundry off the map, ay, and the Frazers, too! Why, I don't know! Maybe it's for the works—it's been a wonderful property, and can be again—may be 'cause they had a grudge against the old man! Myself, I think it's the works they want. Else why should they have gone for you when you've done no harm?"

The last remark struck Peter powerfully. If a bitter feud had been directed against his uncle through hatred only, why had it been carried on after his death? Also, why was the foundry itself and its workmen attacked continuously?

Moller went on harshly.

"Here's my tip, sir, for what it's worth! You're young. Yonder works'll sell for good money—now. Soon—ye'll have to give 'em away! Sell while ye can and get into some other profession with the money."

Slowly Peter looked round at Mr. Dimmock.

"Well, sir?"

The manager sighed heavily.

"I'm afraid it's the only good advice, Peter! I said 'yes' just now because—well, I thought you'd want to carry

on! Even if you could fight these people, you have not the slightest clue to who they are. Neither have we! And the position is, my dear lad, that unless you can take the works and the workmen in hand quickly and restore peace and our reputation, there'll be no more Frazer's Foundry! We could find a buyer now—at a price—but in a few months, at this rate you'll be driven out and bankrupt! Then anyone—anyone, I say, could buy the foundry at their own price!"

Mr. Dimmock's voice suddenly broke.

"And yet, and yet, Peter, it could be such a good business! It would have broken your uncle's heart to see it go into other hands!"

"Then, by golly, it won't go!" cried Peter, and thrust out his hand. "Mr. Dimmock, I really believe you want me to stick it out, too!"

Jumping up, his eyes went from one man to the other, from Mr. Dimmock's kind, worried face to Moller's hard features over which the expressionless look had settled once more.

"This is how my legacy stands, then. I can either sell Frazer's and find a job—in other words, I can scoot—or I can wade into a fight with enemies I don't know, but who know me! And I've got to set about the biggest lot of toughs



Mr. DIMMOCK, the scholarly manager.

who ever worked in a foundry! Is that right?"

"Yes!"

"And you'll be with me whatever I do?"

They nodded.

Peter raised an arm and touched his head tenderly, lovingly—and significantly.

"I owe somebody one for this," he said slowly. "Gentlemen, Frazer's will not be sold!"

At the Works I

"JENKINS!"

"Yes, Mr. Dimmock?"

"Open that ledger, please, to date!"

"Jenkins!"

"Yes, Mr. Frazer?"

"Open that window!"

Mr. Dimmock glanced sideways from the piles of heavy books and littered papers before him.

"It will be for the first time," he observed with a smile.

"I believe you," said Peter dryly, and stared at the grimy panes. "This office wants some air—and a clean. Buck up, Jenkins!"

The cheerful junior clerk, straining red in the face, managed at last to

force the tight window up and open. A smoke-tainted breeze blew into the stuffy office and rustled the papers. Over in the corner, another clerk, as rusty and dingy as the office itself, hunched his thin shoulders, but did not look up from his work.

"It'll be worse down in the foundry," warned Mr. Dimmock absently, from his books.

"But not much," retorted Peter. "Chap can't breathe here. Anyway, how much longer before we go into the foundry, Mr. Dimmock?"

"Just ten more minutes," smiled Mr. Dimmock. "I always like to get the letters and morning work seen to first. But I've nearly done! Jenkins—"

Peter went to the window and stood looking out upon his new but shaky kingdom. Mr. Dimmock had described Frazer's Foundry as a small one. They dealt mainly in galvanised sheets and tin plates—light work compared to the great foundries fifty miles farther north. But to Peter, Frazer's Foundry was enormous.

Three great chimneys, belching heavy, flame-tinted smoke that rolled thickly out into the marshes, towered above a clump of smaller stacks, some reeking, others smokeless. The huge yard, thick with gritty mud, surrounded the black foundry buildings and was littered with mighty dumps of ore, dull coal or smouldering slag. Battered trucks ran groggily on half-buried lines, hustled along to the dumps and were emptied amid sparks and blinding dust. A backwater of the river, its waters sluggish with dirt until they met the gush of boiling water from the mill vents, made a boundary between the foundry and the marshes, just as the football field made a boundary on the town side.

It was Peter's first day in his new work, after a dismal week spent indoors by doctor's orders—much to his disgust! It had been an infuriating week, watching the foundry at work across the deserted football field and listening to its bedlam. And the debt outstanding against the Scarred Man had grown bigger by consequence!

The week's rest, however, had worked wonders. He felt as fit as ever he had done in his life. Turning from the window he dropped a hand on his manager's shoulder.

"I'm going over to the foundry!"

Mr. Dimmock closed the ledger resignedly.

"Is your head all right?" he asked. "It's a terrible place till you're used to it, Peter!"

"I feel great," answered Peter patiently, not having the heart to ask the kindly, worried-looking man not to keep treating him as a small child. And without waiting for further remonstrances, he sauntered out of the office, down the iron stairs, and across the yard.

Out in the open the tang of the furnace-smoke came stronger. He noticed the men and youths about the dumps stop their work and stare at him. As he came nearer the great foundry, a queer thrill of excitement caught him.

He was going to see his works—the foundry he had made the vow to fight for—and save!

(The stop-at-nothing gang that is working to cripple Frazer's Iron Foundry will find themselves up against a tough customer in young Peter Frazer. So look out for another full-of-thrills instalment of this powerful serial next week!)

FOOL'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 23.)

Prout's eyes gleamed at him.

Coker stepped into the study; not in the least alarmed, ashamed, or uneasy; Horace Coker was perfectly satisfied with himself and his proceedings, and his looks showed as much. Coker could see clearly that he was in the right, all along the line; and if Prout could not see it, too, so much the worse for Prout!

"Coker!" said Mr. Prout in a deep voice. "You have returned!"

"Yes, sir!" said Coker cheerfully.

"You have dared," said Prout, his deep voice trembling with anger—"you have ventured to break defecation—to disregard your Form master's authority, and—"

"Quite unavoidable, sir, in the circumstances," said Coker, with the same cheery satisfaction. "As I explained to you, sir, I was going after that man Buzzard—"

"You—you—" gasped Prout.

"I got him, sir, but some silly duffers who were with me let him get away again," said Coker. "Still, I've got his papers, and his London address, and even the police may be able to get him now, with my assistance."

Prout gazed at him.

"Coker! You—you will come with me to the Head—"

"Certainly, sir," said the cheery Horace. "But I've something to hand you, sir, before we go into that."

"What do you mean?"

"Something that belongs to you, sir—or, rather, to your nephew," said Coker.

"My—my nephew?"

"Yes, sir—Captain Eustace Prout—a cheque—"

"A cheque?" said Mr. Prout faintly.

"You see, sir, I got that man Buzzard," said Coker. "He seems to have had a lot of names. He had letters in his pockets addressed to Sharp & Co.—"

"Sharp & Co.?"

"And Tighe—"

"Tighe?"

"Seems to have used the name of Tighe, among others," said Coker. "He was called Buzzard when he spoofed my

Aunt Judy—a nasty little beast with a long nose and green eyes."

Mr. Prout laid one hand on the corner of the study table for support. He gazed at Coker, as if Horace's cheery face mesmerised him.

"You—you—you have seen—seen the man Tighe?" said Mr. Prout, in an almost inarticulate voice.

"You know anything about him, sir?" asked Coker.

"I—I—"

"Well, among the papers in his pockets was this," said Coker, laying a cheque on the table. "I know he must have stolen it, as he's a thief, anyhow, and it's made payable to Eustace Prout, and endorsed Eustace Prout on the back. I don't know where your nephew is, sir, so I thought I'd better bring it to you. I suppose you can send it to Captain Prout."

Like a man in a dream, Prout gazed at Coker.

With trembling, fat fingers, he picked up the cheque.

It was the incriminating document that Tighe had shown him. There it was—the forged cheque with his nephew's name on the back!

Prout looked at it. He devoured it with his eyes. It was the paper for which the blackmailer had demanded five hundred pounds! And now it was in Prout's hands—placed there by Coker!

Prout hardly breathed.

It seemed to him that this must be a dream—a delusion! The frightful worry that had tormented his mind, the shadow of disgrace that had darkened his days—where were they now? Gone—vanished! His nephew was saved, and he was saved—by the biggest fool at Greyfriars or anywhere else!

"I suppose you'll know what to do with that cheque, sir?" said Coker.

Prout's glance wandered to the fire.

"Eh? Yes! I—I know what to do with it, Coker!" he articulated. "Upon my word! I—I am surprised! In fact, astounded! I—I feel quite dazed!"

Prout was silent for some moments. His fat fingers clutched the cheque, and he strove to pull himself together.

He spoke at last.

"Coker! In the—the circumstances—you are excused. I—I overlook your

rebellious conduct. It must not occur again; but—but I excuse you. You go, Coker."

"Thank you, sir," said Coker heartily. "I was sure that, on reflection, sir, you would realise that I was not to blame in any way; that I was bound to act as I did, sir. I am really glad that you see it now, sir."

Prout waved him to the door. Coker departed.

The moment the door closed behind Coker, Prout jumped to the grate, & the cheque dropped into the glowing coals. It disappeared from existence in a moment, and Prout breathed freely, feeling as if a mountain had been rolled from his mind and his heart.

"Flogging?" asked Potter.

"Or the sack?" asked Greene.

Coker stared at them as they greeted him with those queries.

"What are you burbling about?" he asked. "Prout's done the sensible thing—he's let the whole thing drop."

"He's let it drop?" gasped Potter.

"Certainly."

"You're not going to be flogged?" gasped Greene.

"No, ass!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Coker saw nothing surprising in the state of affairs. He had been in the right, and Prout had seen it on reflection. What was there surprising in that? Potter and Greene were surprised, however; and they never could understand how Coker had got off without receiving what he had asked for so earnestly.

Other fellows were astonished, too. It was agreed that Coker of the Fifth had more than his fair allowance of fool's luck. Only Harry Wharton & Co. had a shrewd idea why Coker had been let off. But what the Famous Five knew they kept strictly to themselves.

THE END.

(There will be another grand long yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled, "COWARD'S COURAGE!" It's a peach of a yarn, chums, so make sure of reading it by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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The Sixth Form Soccer team at St. Sam's couldn't beat a carpet, let alone the famous French team—Lay Rodours. But to mighty men of valour like Jack Jolly & Co. of the Fourth the result's a foregone conclusion.

WELL DONE, THE FOURTH!

By DICKY NUGENT.



READY for the grate match, Burleigh? Dr. Birchmell, the headmaster of St. Sam's, asked that question of the kaplin school.

Burleigh replied with a vigorous nod. "Yes, rather, sir! Every member of the team is as fit as a fiddle. I feel confident we shall put up a good show against Lay Rodours."

"I am afraid you will find them rather tuff nuts to crack, Burleigh. Being French footballers, they train on a diet which consists principally of frogs. As a result, they jump about with amazing agility."

"I believe that is true, sir," agreed Burleigh. "Of course we know we are up against a stiff proposition in playing a team that has already defeated Aston Hotspur and Tottenham Villa. But we will do our best."

Dr. Birchmell raised an admonishing finger. "That is not enuff, Burleigh. For the honour of St. Sam's, you must win; not merely do your best. As a matter of fact, I have been thinking seriously over the problem."

"Indeed, sir?" "Yes, indeed, Burleigh. The conclusion I have come to is, that to make your team really complete, you need one player of outstanding merit—some one who will inspire the rest of the team and put terror into the hearts of the other side by his brilliant, masterly tactics. I am glad to inform you, Burleigh, that I have found the very man to achieve this desirable end. Burleigh looked interested. "That's very good of you, sir. Can you tell me the name of this sooprem Soccer jeenus?" "Certainly. His name is Alfred Birchmell!"

that you drop Swotter from the team, and put me in his place."

"M-m-m-my hat! But, sir, you can't play Soccer for nuts!" gasped Burleigh. "You can't play Soccer for nuts!" hooted Burleigh. "Why, sir, from what I know of you, you hardly know the difference between a football and a tennis-racket!"

"That only goes to show, Burleigh, that your nollidge of me is very imperfect. When I played for Oxbridge, my boy, I was known everywhere as the demon centre-forward, and I am quite sure that my foot has not lost its old cunning yet!"

Burleigh grinned. "Sorry, sir, but it can't be did! I'll give you a chance with pleasure when I'm getting together a team to play marbles or Ludo. But not before!" Dr. Birchmell frowned. "Your remarks are so disrespectful, Burleigh, that I cannot allow them to pass unpunished. I am, therefore, going to inflict on you the severest punishment possible in the circumstances."

Burleigh's grin faded away. "Surely, sir, you—you're not going to eggspit me, or hog me?" he cried. "No, Burleigh. Your punishment is going to be worse than that!" "Grate pip! What are you going to do, then?" "I am going to punish you by declining to play for you this afternoon under any circumstances whatever—even though you go down on your bended knees and implore me to do so!" said the Head loftily. Burleigh breathed a sigh of relief. "I'll try to bear up under the blow, sir!" he grinned. "Well, good-buy for the present, sir! See you at the match!" And the kaplin of St. Sam's moved off.

Several keen-eyed juniors who had been watching Burleigh from the shadow of a doorway followed after him. They were Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth.

Jack Jolly & Co. were just at the beginning of a despit game they had planned. They were the honour of playing Lay Rodours to fall to the Fourth team that afternoon, and but for trechery, they would have secured it previously.

Now that they had been deprived of their just reward by fowl play, they had decided on a despit move. The idea was to kapture all the members of the First Eleven, one by one, and imprison them in the coal-hole for the afternoon. Once the First Eleven had been disposed of in this fashion, Jack Jolly & Co. hoped to get the chance to play the form visitors after all.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp! Clatter! Bang! Crash! Making hardly a sound, the heroes of the Fourth followed in the track of the unsuspecting Burleigh. All at once they came to a lonely passidge not very far from the coal-hole. Jack Jolly gave a quick glarise round to assure himself the coast was clear, then he brought his men to a halt.

"Roady, chaps?" he asked in a horse whisper. "Yes, rather!" "Then charge!" Like unleashed hounds, the juniors charged. Burleigh hardly had time to look round before they were upon him. "What the dickens—" he gasped. "Collar him!" hilt Jack Jolly. "What-ho!" "Yaroooooh!" roared Burleigh. "Wharret you doing?" roared Jack Jolly & Co. did not stop to eggspain what they were doing; they just did it! They bowled Burleigh over, gagged him so that he couldn't speak, and bound him so that he couldn't move, then rushed him off to the coal-hole. There they opened the door, pitched him down the stone steps, locked up the door again, and went off in search of more vikims.

They soon found one in Swotter of the Sixth, who was sitting in his study perusing Zonophone, the well-known Greek orther. Swotter was duly swoited (jok J.), rushed off to the coal-hole and thrown down after Burleigh.

One after the other, the seniors who had been down to play against Lay Rodours were imprisoned in the coal-hole. It was not until just before dinner-time that the juniors' labours were complete! Every member of the Eleven had been kaptured!

"And now we'll adicem for dinner!" grinned Jack Jolly, when their labours had finished. "I fancy we've earned it by now!" "Hear, hear!" The Co. then went along to the dining-hall to feed their faces.

II. "HERE are they?" "What the dickens has happened to them?" Questions like these were being asked all round the First Eleven football-pitch that afternoon at 2.30.

It was the time fixed for the kick-off, and Lay Rodours were already waiting outside the pavilion ready to begin the game.

At 2.30 p.m. Dr. Birchmell himself rushed on the seen. He gave a start of surprise on learning from Mr. Lickham that the First Eleven had vanished. "Impossible, Lickham!" he snorted. "Why, I saw Burleigh with my own peepers just before dinner, and we discussed the match at grate length. You must send out scouts in all directions immediately, and find out what has happened."

At that moment Jack Jolly, attired in Soccer kit, gave the Head a dig in the ribs. "Please, sir," he said meekly, "as the first Eleven hasn't turned up, don't you think the Fourth had better play insted?" We're all ready, aren't we, chaps?"

"Yes, rather," grinned the rest of the team, who were hanging back in the rear. Dr. Birchmell gave a hurried glarise in the direction of the Skool House. But still there was no sign of the missing seniors. Something had to be done, and that quickly. He tugged his beard thoughtfully for a minute, then at last nodded his head.

"Very well then, Jolly," he said. "Of course, you won't stand an earthy against this crack forin team. Nevertheless, you will be able to give them a game of sorts, and thus save them from feeling too disappointed. Carry on!" "Hoorary!" yelled the Fourth-Formers delightedly. Pleepl! The referee's whistle blew, and Jack Jolly kicked off.

The grate game had started. And a grate game it proved to be. Lay Rodours were a fine, scientifick team, and there wasn't much they didn't know about the grate game of Soccer.

But the play of Jack Jolly and his merry men was not to be sneezed at either, and Lay Rodours soon came to the conclusion that it wasn't going to be eggactly a walk-over for them.

Roar after roar of cheering rent the air as the Fourth kept the forinners at bay. On one or two occasions the French forwards succeeded in penny-trating the St. Sam's lines. But each time Stedfast, in goal, kept his citydai intact.

Then St. Sam's took the offensive. A brilliant solo run by Jack Jolly, during which he dodged under his opponents' arms and legs, and skipped over their shoulders, ended up right in front of the forinners' goal. Jack poised himself, then sent in a stingin shot that the goalie hardly saw.

Crash! "Goal!" "Hoorary!" The spectators went wild with egg-stimement. They were quite accustomed to seeing Jack Jolly score brilliant goals against teams like St. Bill's and St. Alf's, and the Muggleton Grammar School; but it was something new in their egg-experience to see him scoring against a team that had only recently looked Aston Hotspur and Tottenham Villa.

Play was resumed, and now the French team looked awfully dejected. From this time until half-time they tried their hardest, and at last Monsieur Sportier broke their duck with a goal that even Stedfast couldn't prevent.

The second half was even more egg-siting than the first, and the vast crowds round the ropes watched the game with tense, taught egg-spressions on their dices.

No further score was registered until five seconds from full-time. When that time arrived Jack Jolly, realising that it was now a case of do or die, leaped into action. Taking the ball down the field on his own, he tricked one opponent after another. Like a man possessed, he chased the bounding leather, the inspiration streaming down his dille in cascades.

One second to go! The suspense seemed awful. Jack Jolly pawed for the nearest fraction of time, then shot. It was the kick of his football career. Like a boolet from a gun, the ball hurtled through the air to its destination. The French goalie stood up to it, hoping to stop its terrlick flight. But it was a forlorn hope.

Crash! It had arrived, catching the goalie full in the bread-baske. Yelling feendishly the French ens-lodian was carried with fearful force to the back of his goal, while the ball rolled out of his grasp safely into the corner of the net. "Goal!"

It was a deffening roar from the his-torical specklators. They nearly went mad. Hats and caps and mortar-boards were thrown into the air; stately seniors danced cake-walks, and majestic masters and inky fags thumped each other on the back. It was a memorable seen—a moment never to be forgotten.

Afterwards a great scilybration was held in Big Hall. By that time the first Eleven had been released. Of course, they were furious at first, but when they heard the result of the game they had to admit that the juniors were certainly justified their bold attitude.

Under the influence of innumerable jam-tarts, doughnuts, and bottles of finger-beer the seniors eventually forgot their troubles, and good humour and friendliness soon rained sooprem. Dr. Birchmell, as usual, insisted on making a litte speech.

"Gentlemen," he said, "to-day's match was a sternly-fought kontest, and nobody will begrudge the viktors their viktory. Of course, if I had been playing for the Fourth, the result would have been a fourgone conclusion."

"It certainly would," grinned Jack Jolly. "Ha, ha, ha!" "But seeing as how I didn't, I think the juniors put up a magnificent performance," said the Head, who didn't suspect the reason for the loud laughter. "I, therefore, congratulate the triumphant side in four well-chosen words: 'Well done, the Fourth!'"

And as the young footballers listened to the cheers of the assembly they felt that something attempted, something done, had earned a nite's repose.

THE END.

(Look out for another amusing St. Sam's yarn next week, entitled: "DR. BIRCHMELL'S TUCKER SHOP". You'll be tickled to death when you read it!) THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,34.