



Coker the Humorist!

William Green.

The "funny" man of Greyfriars School needs a lot of convincing that he is more humorous than humorist!

THE first indication Potter and I received of Coker's new form of madness occurred one evening in the study. We had been jawing about the prospects of the First XI. in a coming Soccer match against Rookwood, and I had just expressed the hope that Wingate would include me in the team. It was then that Coker butted.

"Yes," he remarked, "but you haven't been practising enough this season. You're green! Ha, ha, ha!"

And with that Coker went off into a howl of laughter.

Potter and I stared at him in surprise, and Coker, after quietening down, looked at us with quite a pitying expression.

"Don't you see the joke, you fellows? You're Green, and you're green! Two greens, you see! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Great Scott!" murmured Potter. "So that's the joke, is it? Green—green! My hat!"

"Mean to say you didn't see?" asked Coker cheerfully. "I always said you were a couple of brainless idiots! Well, what are we doing for the rest of the evening? I suppose we don't want to potter round the study till bedtime? Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker fairly yelled, while we looked at him more in sorrow than in anger.

"Now tell me you didn't see that one!" chuckled Coker. "George Potter—potter round the study, you know! Ha, ha, ha!"

In this manner did we learn that Coker was setting up as a humorist.

Now Coker is, and always was, a humorist—without intending to be so. The more seriously he takes himself, the more screamingly funny he seems to other people. As a cricketer, or a footballer, in the Form-room, or even on his beloved motor-cycle, no comedian or circus-clown can compete with him.

But when it comes to being intentionally humorous, all that is funny about Horace Coker departs from him. And, judging by the behaviour of Coker after his two initial puns had been perpetrated, it undoubtedly was his intention to shine as a humorist. The prospect was quite alarming.

All the rest of the evening Coker was making the most wretched puns. To say that it was exasperating would be putting it mildly. By bedtime we felt like slaughtering the silly cuckoo!

We went to bed, sincerely hoping that by the following morning the phase would have passed.

But it hadn't, as we quickly found out.

"Coming for a sprint round the quad?"

asked Potter, innocently enough, as the three of us trooped downstairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

We looked at him in blank astonishment. Neither of us could see anything to laugh at in that remark.

"Well, what's the joke?" asked Potter gruffly.

"Why, I was just thinking that if we were at Dartmoor we shouldn't be allowed to!" chortled Coker.

"What the dickens——"

"Don't you see? Quad—quod! Quad, meaning our quadrangle and quod meaning chokey—prison, you know. Ha, ha, ha!"

"M-m-my hat!"

That's about all we could say. Coker as a humorist was getting a bit thick!

"Well, the sooner we forget that the better," grunted Potter. "Are we having a sprint or not? There's young Wharton and his crowd hoofing it round already!"

"Cheeky fags!" remarked Coker, with a frown. "They had the nerve to cheek me yesterday. Talking about quod, let's go over and give 'em a few hand-cuffs to teach 'em their manners!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Hand-cuffs! You know! Meaning cuffs with the hand, or bracelets. Ha, ha, ha!"

We turned in to brekker without our sprint that morning. Coker's witty remarks left us with no heart for exercise!

All that day we had to endure an unending stream of similar jests from the humorous lips of Coker. By the time the day had ended both Potter and I were nearly frantic.

Try as we might, we could not induce him to abandon his new rôle. The fact that we made no pretence of laughing did not interfere in any with Coker's enjoyment of his own jokes. He even grew rather chirpy about it during the day, thinking that we were unable to appreciate his subtlety, that his brains were vastly superior to ours!

"Something must be done," said Potter to me, just before we retired that night.

"The limit has been reached!"

"Nem. con.!" I replied, with enthusiasm. "Of course, Coker has redeem-

ing features. He has tons of money!"

"And doesn't mind spending it, either," said Potter, with a nod. "But money's not everything, and unless this business of Coker as a wit finishes pretty soon, I'm going to finish with Coker!"

"Me, too! But half a minute!"

An idea had just occurred to me—an idea that seemed at first glance to offer little chance of success for us, but nevertheless an idea.

I explained it to Potter, who pursed his lips a little thoughtfully.

"Sounds a bit thin to me," he said.

"He's such a thick-skinned ass that I doubt if he'll be put off like that! I should prefer something more concrete, and therefore more likely to appeal to his limited intelligence—something with boiling oil in it, for instance!"

However, there was no boiling oil available, and, anyway, that would have been a little fierce, perhaps, even for the exasperating Coker. So we put my simple little wheeze into effect instead.

Our opportunity came as we were trooping out of the class-room after morning lessons on the following day. Coker, walking between us, was chuckling very merrily, evidently at the recollection of one or other of the painful jokes he had been inflicting on the long-suffering Fifth during the preceding two days.

"I say, you chaps," he began, "did you hear me pulling old Bland's leg after brekker this morning?"

I closed one eye at Potter. This was just the kind of opening we wanted.

"I turned round to him," continued Coker cheerfully, "and I said: 'I say, old man——'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's explanation came to an abrupt finish as Potter and I burst into a roar of laughter. It was now Coker's turn to stare at us.

"Ha, ha, ha!" we roared in unison.

"Gone off your rockers?" asked Coker politely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, chuck it, you idiots!" he

Coker, walking between us, was chuckling merrily, evidently at the recollection of one of his painful jokes. (See previous page.)



"Well, Bland turned round, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and I, at my signal, simply roared, while Coker, with consternation on his face, simply blinked at us.

"'Bland turned round!'" gurgled Potter, as though that remark contained some screamingly funny gem of wit. "That's rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's rich?" howled Coker. "Blessed if I can understand you! I suppose this is a fat-headed jape to put me off my stroke!" Coker added, showing somewhat unusual understanding—for him. "Not having the brains to appreciate my wit, you don't want to listen to it, eh? Nice pals you are—I don't think!"

Anyway, the wheeze worked all right, and Horace announced his intention of devoting himself to the serious side of life. And from that moment Horace Coker became really funny again!

THE END

exclaimed wrathfully. "What the dickens are you laughing at, anyway?"

"Why, your joke, of course," I replied. "Fancy you turning round and saying that to Bland! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you grinning idiots!" roared Coker. "I haven't told you the joke yet!"

"Oh, sorry! Our mistake!"

"Well, anyway," resumed Coker, regarding us rather suspiciously now, "I said to Bland: 'I say, old man, do you believe in being bland?'"

Coker paused to give us an opportunity to laugh, but we simply looked at him like a couple of boiled owls. However, he was accustomed by now to our inability to appreciate his quips, so he went on, quite cheerfully: