

Frank Richards at his brightest and best in "A TRAITOR TO HIS SIDE!" Tip-Top Story of Creyfriars.

The Magnet ^{2^d}



What Did Coker Hear?



Come Into the Office, Boys—and Girls!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

HAVE you ever wondered how the big animal trappers, who go all over the world trapping big game and bringing back specimens, deal with really large and ferocious beasts? One of my Birmingham readers asks me to tell him something about how these beasts are caught. Do you know that it takes

FIFTY MEN TO TRAP A RHINO?

A rhino is one of the most difficult animals to trap, and one of the most powerful. Elaborate plans have to be prepared. First of all, a gigantic net strong enough to hold a struggling rhino has to be made. It takes fifty agile and experienced natives to handle this net, into which the rhino is inveigled.

As soon as the beast blunders into the net it is helpless. A strong cage is then constructed around the rhino and the net. Not until the cage is completed is the net cut loose from the rhino.

Concealed nets are also used for other big game, but sometimes lions and tigers can be lured by means of fresh meat bait to enter a wooden trap. This works exactly like an ordinary mouse-trap. When the animal tries to eat the bait, it works a lever, and down drops the gate of the trap, with the beast safe inside.

Elephants are trapped by means of decoy tame elephants, which mix with the wild ones and then lure them into a compound into which they are locked. Big pythons have to be manhandled, stretched out, and held down until they can then be forced into cages which have been already prepared for them.

It's no joke being an animal trapper, and it's a very expensive business—which is why the value of wild animals in this country is so great. They are sold to both public and private zoos and menageries, and also to circuses, and trainers who exhibit them at music-halls and the like. The biggest wild animal dealing centres in Europe, however, are at Antwerp and Hamburg.

FROM a Canterbury reader comes an interesting paragraph which deals with

A CURIOUS SIGNPOST.

About four miles away from where he lives is the town of Sandwich, while two and a half miles nearer is a place with the rather unusual name of Ham. A signpost on the road leading to both places bears the following: "To Ham Sandwich!"

Can't you imagine Billy Bunter, lost in Kent, suddenly brightening up when his eyes spotted that particular signpost? I believe there are quite a number of other quaint signposts in different parts of Britain. If you happen to live near one, drop me a line and tell me about it. I'll pass on the information to my other readers.

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A reader signing himself "R.F.," of Richmond, sends me a query concerning

FLOODLIGHTING BY GAS.

He wants to know if there were any gas floodlights operating recently in London. Quite a number of them—and remarkably effective they were, too. The principal spot where they were in operation was in St. James's Park, where most picturesque effects were obtained. Doubtless, my reader will have an opportunity of seeing them for himself next time London is floodlighted.

By the way, I would like to point out to this reader, and others, that it is not possible for me to answer queries immediately I receive them. The MAGNET goes to press some considerable time before you see it in the shops, so a few weeks must elapse before you can obtain a reply in this little chat of mine. If you want an urgent reply to any query, please send a stamped, addressed envelope with your letter, and I will then reply by post.

Several more readers have written to ask me the original

MEANINGS OF SURNAMES

which they bear. Here is a further selection:

Burnside meant "the dweller by the side of the burn, or stream." Quite a number of names are derived from the same source, owing to the number of words there are meaning rivers or streams. Here is a list of other names which come from the same source: Rivers, Brook, Brooks, Beck, Burns, Fleet, Brookland, Brookman, Brookwell, Brookward, Brooks-bank, Brookside, Beckford, Beckett, Beckham, Beckley, Beckton, and so on.

Troutbeck belongs to the same category as the above, but was given originally to a man who lived by that well-known mountain stream.

Addison: As the name implies, this means "the son of Addis." But you might ask "Who was Addis?" This was another form of the favourite British name "Adam." There are an astonishing number of names derived from the same source. Here are some of them: Addis, Adcock, Addyman, Adams, Addams, Adamson, Addy, Adkin, Ade, Ades, Adie, Adkins, Adkinson, Atkinson, etc.

Morton: This comes from the words "moor" and "Tun"—the latter originally meaning a farmhouse. The first Morton, therefore, was undoubtedly a farmer whose homestead was on a moor.

Chilton: Is a similar name, but the first syllable comes from the Norse word "keld," meaning a spring. Thus the name means "the farmer who lives by the spring."

Dalmain: Came from a French word which was used to designate "a stranger from overseas." Allmaine, and Allman, are variations of the same name.

And now for some more

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE!

A Diamond That Costs £60 a Week to Keep! A Diamond that is worth a hundred thousand pounds is the size of a hen's egg. It is locked in a safe deposit, and costs £60 per week in insurance and other charges.

An Omelette of Over Seven Thousand Eggs! This was baked in New York a few years ago. There were 7,200 eggs in it, and it was eight feet wide. It weighed half a ton!

Taking Films of Thoughts! It is now possible to film a person's thoughts! Wires pressed on the bones of the temple connect with a movie camera, which photographs the reactions that pass in a person's brain!

Americans Stand the Biggest Chance of Being Run Over! Statistics say that one person in three stands a chance of being killed or seriously injured by motor-cars in America. This is a larger risk than in any other part of the world.

TIM BUTLER, of Stroud, puts up the following query to me:

WHO WAS JACK HARKAWAY?

Ever heard of him, chums? I expect your grandfathers knew him well enough. He appeared in one of the earliest boys' publications ever issued in this country. The story featuring Jack Harkaway started in the first number, but it didn't finish up as modern boys' stories do. It simply carried on to the next weekly issue, without even a line to say "To be Continued." In fact, the stories invariably broke off in the middle of a sentence—and you had to wait a whole week before you could finish reading the sentence. Even when, after several months, the series came to an end, a sequel started immediately.

The "Jack Harkaway" series started with the hero at school, and in each succeeding story he became older and older, and the series went on with his grown-up life until, at last, it was obvious that he must have been too old to have any more adventures. But was the author dismayed? Not on your life. He started the whole series all over again with "Jack Harkaway, junior, at School!"—and the "junior" was the son of the original character!

There's a real "live punch" in every story published in the MAGNET. When you've read one of Frank Richards' masterpieces, you feel like the celebrated Oliver Twist—and ask for more! But you don't have to wait a whole week to complete a sentence that is in the middle of the most exciting episode. Modern authors of boys' stories really know how to tell a tale, as Frank Richards proves in

"A DANGEROUS DOUBLE!"

next week's grand long complete yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. I'll bet you're looking forward to it with much more gusto than your grandfathers looked forward to their weekly publications—which could be read in less than half the time it takes to peruse the good old MAGNET.

Another thing, in the days of yore you didn't get what the cinema people might describe as "a splendid supporting programme." Our supporting programme, as you know, includes further chapters of "Moose Call!" which is making a reputation for its clever author, Harrison Glyn. Thrill follows thrill in next week's chapters.

The "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, another contribution by our clever Greyfriars Rhymester—who this time interviews Bob Cherry—and my own little chat, will complete the programme. I venture to think, chums, you'll have to go a long way to find a programme to equal this.

Meet you all again next week.

YOUR EDITOR.



A TRAITOR to his SIDE!

By FRANK RICHARDS

—FEATURING HARRY WHARTON & CO. and RALPH STACEY,
the CRACK CRICKETER of the REMOVE!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Up a Tree!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. smiled.

It was quite a peculiar and interesting scene in the old quadrangle at Greyfriars School.

The Famous Five of the Remove were sauntering along the path under the ancient elms when they sighted Billy Bunter.

Bunter's proceedings were surprising. He was standing close to the thick, gnarled trunk of a big elm, flattening himself against that trunk, and peering round it through his big spectacles.

Evidently Bunter was hunting cover. Looking beyond Bunter and the elm, the chums of the Remove could see the cause—Coker of the Fifth Form with a stick in his hand.

Coker was coming along, gripping that stick in a businesslike way, with a grim frown on his brow.

The trunk of the elm being between him and Bunter, he did not see the fat junior; but it was clear that he was looking for him.

It was clear also that when he found him, the stick and Billy Bunter were going to become more closely acquainted.

Whereat the Famous Five smiled. A short time before, they had seen Billy Bunter devouring a large cake, and wondered whose it was! Now they guessed whose it was!

"Oh lor'!" they heard Bunter gasp, as he peered round the elm.

Bunter, for the moment, was safe in cover; Coker could not see through the elm. But he was coming towards it, and as soon as he passed it, undoubtedly he would spot the fat figure behind it. Bunter had had the feast, and after the feast came the reckoning.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He blinked round him through his big spectacles. It was useless to cut and run. Coker would have spotted him at once, and Horace Coker's long legs would have covered the ground at least thrice as fast as Bunter's short, fat

The branch sagged. It creaked, as if in protest against Bunter's tremendous weight.

Coker arrived.

He glanced round the elm, and then glanced, frowning, at the smiling faces of Harry Wharton & Co., looking on close at hand.

"Seen Bunter?" he snapped.

"Do you want Bunter?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"I shouldn't be asking you if I didn't, you young ass! Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At dinner."

Coker of the Fifth was not quick on the uptake. He did not realise that this was a jest. He snorted with impatience.

"I don't want to know whether you saw him at dinner, you young ass! I want to know where he is now! Have a little sense! Have you seen him, Cherry?"

"Certainly!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Well, where did you see him?"

"Last night, in the dorm."

"You young idiot!" roared Coker. "Can't you talk sense? Look here, that young sweep pinched a cake from my study. Potter saw him cutting off with it. I'm going to whop him—see?"

"Has the Head made you a prefect, Coker?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Eh! No, you young ass!"

"Only prefects are allowed to whop!"

"Don't be cheeky!" snapped Coker. "For two pins I'd whop the lot of you, as well as Bunter!"

"Do!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Get on with it, my esteemed and idiotic Coker!" grinned Hurrce Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhapsfully the whopfulness would be a boot on the other leg!"

Coker frowned grimly and gripped

Ralph Stacey is the best junior cricketer Greyfriars has ever had. But after being selected to play for the First Eleven, he doesn't scruple to sell his side to save his own skin!

ones. But to wait where he was, was only to postpone the evil hour for a few minutes.

Bunter was desperate. He climbed.

Any fellow but Bunter could have clambered easily up that rugged, gnarled, old trunk. But it was difficult work for Bunter. He was not nimble, he was not active, and he had a lot of weight to lift. He grunted and gasped as he clambered, and the perspiration ran in trickles down his fat face. But he clambered on desperately, grasped a low branch, and dragged himself on it. Exhausted by his terrific efforts, he hung over the branch, hoping that Coker of the Fifth would not look up as he passed.

his stick. He was not in a good temper, and the remarks of the Famous Five did not improve it. He was strongly inclined to give them the first taste of the stick he had brought out specially for Bunter.

But his attention was drawn from them the next moment by the sound of a breathless grunt.

"Ooogh!"
Bunter, with his fat chest over the branch, was in a very uncomfortable position. He found it difficult to breathe. He grunted.

Coker stared round.
"I knew the fat little beast came this way!" he snapped. "I can jolly well hear him! Bunter!"

Bunter suppressed his next grunt. Coker was staring round on all sides; but as yet he had not looked upward. He was not expecting to find the Owl of the Remove suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between the heavens and the earth. Coker was puzzled.

"Look here!" he hooted. "Where's that fat freak?"

"Oh where and oh where can he be?" sang Bob Cherry.

"The wherefulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Singh.

"I'll jolly well— Oh!" Coker's wandering gaze turned at last upon a sagging branch, over which hung a fat figure. He started and stared. "My hat! Bunter! So you're there!"

"Oh crikey! No!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm not here, Coker! I—I mean, I—I—I didn't—that is, I wasn't—"

Coker of the Fifth eyed him with a ferocious grin. Bunter was out of reach of his clutch. But he was not out of reach of the stick.

Coker reached up with the stick, and whacked.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as the swipe came across the tightest trousers at Greyfriars. "Oh crikey! Stoppit!"

Whack!
"Yoo-hooop!"

"Ware prefects, Coker!" called out Frank Nugent.

Loder and Sykes of the Sixth Form were coming along the path.

Both of them were prefects; and, as prefects, it was their duty to intervene if they spotted a Fifth Form man whopping a Remove junior.

Loder, who was not a whale on duty, would have passed on unregarding. But Sykes gave the scene his attention at once, and hastened his steps.

"Eh—what?" said Coker, staring round and spotting the prefects. "Don't be a young ass, Nugent! Fat lot I care for the Sixth!"

And he reached up and whacked again.

"Yo-ow-whoooop!" came in a roar from Bunter.

The elm branch creaked and cracked as he wriggled wildly on it.

Sykes came up with a run.

Sykes, the great bowler of the First Eleven, was immensely respected at Greyfriars. He knocked over wickets like coconut shies, and was a tremendous asset in the First Eleven, who, otherwise, were rather weak in bowlers. It was an honour for a slacker like Loder to be walking in the quad with a great games-man like Sykes. But Coker, as he said, did not care for the Sixth—not a brass button—neither was he a great admirer of Sykes' cricket, being convinced that he was a far greater cricketer himself, though nobody else could see it.

Unheeding the arrival of Sykes, Coker whacked again. There was another yell from Bunter. It rang far and wide.

"Stop that, Coker!" rapped Sykes.

Coker gave him a glare.

"Did you speak to me?" he snapped.

"I did!" said Sykes of the Sixth. "I told you to stop it!" Standing underneath the creaking branch that bore the weight of Billy Bunter, Sykes looked up. "Come down from that tree, you young ass!"

"Look here—" roared Coker.

"That's enough, Coker!"

"I can jolly well tell you—"

"I've said that that's enough! Do you want me to give you six on the bags with that stick?" snapped Sykes.

Coker looked at him. He glared at him. He was speechless with rage. Great man as Coker was, in his own estimation at least, it was an indubitable fact that, if a Sixth Form prefect told him to bend over, Coker had to bend over. If the Sixth Form prefect gave him "six," Coker had to take the six, and make the best of it. Such things seldom, or never, happened in the Fifth Form—still, there it was!

Loder, looking on, laughed. Prefect as he was, Loder rather funked the big and hefty Horace. He was glad to see him taken down a peg by a prefect who did not funk him.

It was rather fortunate for Coker that he was speechless with rage! Had he expressed his feelings in words, undoubtedly he would have got that six!

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on breathlessly. Coker was the fellow to knock a prefect down rather than take six from him—but that meant the "sack"! And it was clear that Horace—speechless for the moment—was just going to tell Sykes what he thought of him!

It was Bunter who, unintentionally and inadvertently, saved the situation!

That elm branch had long creaked in protest under Bunter's weight. Now it suddenly cracked and snapped, and branch and Bunter came down together.

"Ooogh!" came a wild gasp from Bunter.

He shot downwards.

Sykes was underneath. Before the Sixth Form man knew what was happening, Bunter landed on him, grabbing him wildly, and bore him earthward. They crashed together.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Catastrophic!

CRASH!

Bump!
"Yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Great pip!" stuttered Coker.

The Famous Five rushed to help. Sykes of the Sixth, winded and gasping, was extended on the earth under Bunter, who sprawled over him wildly.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Loder.

"Sykes, old man—"

"Urrrgh!" came spluttering from Sykes. "What the thump—ooogh—draggimoff! Wooogh!"

"I say, you fellows—yow-ow-ow—I'm hurt—yow-ow—I say—yaroooh!"

Five pairs of hands grasped the fat Owl of the Remove and rolled him off Sykes. Bunter rolled on the ground spluttering.

Sykes sat up.

He was dazed and dizzy and holding his right wrist with his left hand. He held it tenderly.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Wow! You mad young ass—ow!" He staggered to his feet. "Oh! My wrist! Ow!"

"Hurt your wrist?" exclaimed Loder.

"Twisted it—ow!"

Sykes of the Sixth, taking no further notice of Bunter or Coker or anything else, hurried away to the House!

That damaged wrist required immediate attention. So far as the bowling went, Sykes was almost the sole hope of the First Eleven in the match with Highcliffe which was taking place on Wednesday. If he was crocked for that match he hardly dared tell Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars. The merest whisper of such a disaster would have made old Wingate's face as long as a fiddle.

Loder of the Sixth followed him, with a faint grin on his face. Loder was rather bucked to walk in the quad with a great games-man like Sykes, but they were not friends, and never likely to be. Loder's tastes ran rather to "gee-gees" than cricket—his chief interest in cricket matches lay in making bets on the result.

At the same time, Loder was unmoved by being left out of the First Eleven. It rather amused Gerald Loder to think of Wingate losing the man on whom he chiefly relied in one of the biggest fixtures of the season.

But if Loder was amused, nobody else was. The Famous Five were quite dismayed. Their own matches loomed larger in their eyes than senior games, but they were, of course, fearfully keen on the success of the Greyfriars First. If Sykes was crocked—

"What rotten luck!" said Nugent. "Wingate will be tearing his hair over this."

"The tearfulness of his absurd hair will be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!" came from Bunter.

"You fat idiot!" roared Bob. "What the thump did you want to wallop down on old Sykes' napper for?"

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

"Kick him!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "It was all Coker's fault! Making out that a fellow had his cake! Ow! I never touched his cake! Rotten measly cake, too—hardly any plums in it! Ow!"

"You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "If Sykes is crocked for the Highcliffe match we'll boot you from one end of the Remove passage to the other."

"Ow! Beast! Ow!"

"Serve him right for his cheek!" said Coker. "Silly ass—talking about giving a Fifth Form man six! I'd like to see him do it!"

"You blithering ass!" hooted Bob. "What's going to happen on Wednesday if Sykes is left out?"

"Make room for a better man!" said Coker cheerfully.

"There isn't a better man in the Sixth."

"I know that—lot of duds!" agreed Coker. "But there's a better man in the Fifth! Wingate may have sense enough to give me a show! I'll ask him, at any rate, and give him a chance to do the sensible thing."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Coker.

It was one of Horace's fanciful beliefs that he could play cricket. His game was not like any other fellow's game. It resembled nothing else on earth. It was purely original. He had as much chance of playing for Greyfriars as of playing for England. And evidently he was regarding the crocking of Sykes as a rather happy accident—making room for him in the team, if only Wingate had sense enough to see it! He actually grinned,

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter and Coker between them have crooked old Sykes, and very likely dished Greyfriars in a School match next Wednesday. Bang their heads together."

"Good egg!"
"Hear, hear!"
"Hear, wharrer you at?" roared Coker. He whirled round his stick as the Famous Five rushed at him.

But it was twirled out of his hand in a twinkling. Then Coker, up-ended, smote the solid earth. He smote it hard, and roared.

"Whoop! Why, I'll smash you—I'll spifficate you—my hat—I—I—ooogh! Leggo! Ooogh!"

But the Famous Five did not let go. They grasped Horace Coker good

them felt fearfully hard to the other. Coker roared, and Bunter yelled. They roared and yelled, and struggled frantically.

"Cave, you men!" shouted Vernon-Smith from a distance.

The tall angular figure of Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, appeared in the offing. Bunter and Coker were dropped as suddenly as if they had become red-hot.

"Hook it!" gasped Bob.

"The hookfulness of our esteemed selves is terrific!" said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

The Famous Five hooked it promptly. They out away to the cricket ground, and joined a crowd round the nets. Mr. Quelch did not even see them, but as he came along

are not in my Form, Coker, I shall say nothing, except that I regard you as utterly stupid and undignified!"

And Mr. Quelch stalked on, leaving Horace Coker still rubbing his head, and glaring after him, with a glare that might have made the fabled basilisk feel envious.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Dangerous Double!

"WELL bowled, Stacey!"
"Oh, well bowled!"

It was senior cricket practice; but from the crowd that had gathered to look on, anyone might have supposed that a school match was in progress. Loud shouts, coupled with the name of Stacey,



The elm branch, having long creaked in protest under Bunter's weight, suddenly cracked and snapped, and branch and Bunter came down together. "Ooogh!" came a wild gasp from the fat junior, as he shot downwards and landed on top of Sykes. "Urrrgh!" spluttered Sykes. "What the thump—ooogh!"

and hard. Hefty and beefy as he was, Horace had no chance in the grasp of so many sturdy hands.

He struggled, he roared, he yelled! But he was firmly held. And Bunter, as he scrambled up to flee, was grasped and secured also. Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh bagged Bunter, while four fellows held on to Coker like limpets to a rock.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter. "I say—yarooop!"

"Leggo!" shrieked Coker. "Yoo-hoop!"

Bang!
Two heads came into hard contact. Two fearful yells woke the echoes of the quadrangle of Greyfriars.

"Give them another!" roared Bob. "Hard!" gasped Johnny Bull

"Go it!"
Bang!

Which head of the two was the harder cannot be said, but each of

he had a view of a Fifth Form man and a fat Removite sitting up and rubbing their heads.

He frowned.
"Bunter!"

"Yow-ow-ow! My napper! Wow!"

"What are you sitting on the ground for, Bunter?" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Get up at once, you absurd boy! Go into the House!"

Billy Bunter tottered away. He was rather glad to get off the scene in his Form-master's presence. Coker might have restarted after the interval!

Mr. Quelch gave Horace a freezing glance of contempt.

"If you were in my Form, Coker, I should cane you for this absurd horse-play in the quadrangle," he snapped.

"You are utterly untidy and dishevelled—a disgrace to your Form, Coker! You, a senior boy! As you

greeted Harry Wharton & Co. as they came along, after beating a retreat from the quad.

Wingate of the Sixth clapped his hands—the great Wingate, head of the games, captain of the school. That was such a tribute as might have given any junior swelled head. But Stacey of the Remove, with all his faults, never seemed to suffer from swelled head. Certainly he was pleased with himself; but the best junior cricketer at Greyfriars had a right to be.

Stacey was bowling to First Eleven men. His bowling was so remarkable that he was in great request at senior nets. He had just clean-bowled Blundell of the Fifth—a tremendous batsman of the First Eleven. Blundell was trying to look as if he didn't mind, and not quite succeeding.

Remove fellows yelled applause, just as if Stacey had taken a wicket in a
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match. It was sheer joy to Removites to see First Eleven wickets go down to Remove bowling.

Such a feat had been performed by Hurreo Janset Ram Singh—the best junior bowler at Greyfriars—before Stacey came that term. But Ralph Stacey seemed to take such things in his stride as it were.

Blundell was looking at his wicket with quite a peculiar expression on his face. A dozen Remove men yelled—loudest of all Ogilvy and Russell, who were Stacey's pals in Study No. 3.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Stacey's going strong as usual!" remarked Bob Cherry. "The strongfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"Bravo!" roared Johnny Bull. Harry Wharton & Co. did not like Stacey. Between his ways and their ways there was a great gulf fixed. But they admired his cricket wholeheartedly. Even Wharton, who liked him least, shared that feeling.

Ogilvy glanced round at the Famous Five as he heard them speak, grinning.

"Some bowler, what?" said Oggy. "I say, he's bowled Blundell clean as a whistle, and he's done the same to Gwynne of the Sixth, and North, and Bancroft. First Eleven wickets are cheap to-day."

"You ought to be jolly proud of him, Wharton!" added Russell.

Harry Wharton made no reply to that.

Plenty of fellows in the Form considered that he ought to be proud of his relative and double, Ralph Stacey.

Wharton watched Stacey curiously. The fellow was so like him that he might almost have been looking at himself in a mirror. In flannels he was more like him than ever. Indeed, when Temple

of the Fourth came down to look on, he asked a neighbour whether it was Wharton or Stacey bowling to the seniors.

But the resemblance was only outward. Inwardly, the two "doubles" of the Remove were as unlike as chalk and cheese.

Looking at him now, a handsome, sturdy cricketer, fit as a fiddle, Wharton almost wondered whether he was the same fellow who sneaked out of school bounds, to lay dingy bets with Joe Banks, or play banker with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe.

Every fellow there, or nearly every fellow, looked on Stacey as a splendid sportsman; yet Wharton knew that his rival had deliberately run him out in a Remove match, caring nothing for the game so long as he scored over a fellow he disliked. The fellow was a strange mixture of good and evil—and the evil predominated. Yet even with these thoughts in his mind, Harry's glance was one of admiration when Stacey bowled to Blundell of the Fifth again. The fellow was a magician with the round red ball.

Perhaps the fall of his wicket had "rattled" the captain of the Fifth a little. Anyhow, he mistimed his stroke, and skied the ball, and it dropped, a perfect sitter, into the hand of Squiff of the Remove. Blundell blushed. And when Stacey bowled again, it was not a catch this time; he rooted out the middle stump with a ball that Blundell could have sworn was going to be a wide. Blundell came off.

"That kid's hot stuff," he said to Wingate. "You try him."

"If he were a couple of years older," said Wingate, "I'd try him in the First."

He went to the net.

The crowd of Greyfriars fellows watched eagerly. Wharton found himself watching his rival and enemy as eagerly as anyone else.

Wingate was the mighty hitter of the First Eleven—the man of fours and sixes. Even Sykes found him hard to handle. Yet everyone saw that he guarded his wicket with the greatest care, and took no liberties with the bowling from that remarkable Remove man.

Five balls he played, all round the wicket. The sixth slanted his leg stump, and Wingate gave a whistle.

"Bowled!" "Well bowled, Stacey!" roared Ogilvy and a dozen other fellows.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "That man can bowl! This is worth watching, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton nodded. "By gum!" said Tom Brown, the new skipper of the Remove, "By gum, what a prize-packet! What? He conked out in the St. Jude's match, I know; but wait till we play him against Rookwood! What?"

Wharton's lip curled. It was chiefly because he refused to play Stacey for the Remove that he lost the captaincy of the Form. And he had been right—he knew that! He knew why Stacey had "conked out," as Browney expressed it in the St. Jude's match a few weeks ago. It was because a horse he had backed had lost that day, leaving him in a hole. A fellow with that kind of worry on his mind was not a fellow to be trusted in school matches.

"Look at him!" said Tom Brown. "You'd play him now, Wharton, if you were skipper, what?"

"No!" answered Harry curtly. "Then you're an ass!"

"Thanks!" "And it's jolly lucky for the Remove that you were chucked," added Tom hotly. "That chap is going to win matches for us all through the season! Look how he's handling First Eleven men."

"He can bowl!" said Harry. "He can bat, too—and have you ever seen a better man in the field? You're an ass, Wharton! And a silly ass!"

"Thanks again!" said Wharton sarcastically.

"Oh, rats!" Tom Brown moved away impatiently.

One of the "doubles" of the Remove was a black sheep—that was a fact known to all the Form. And Stacey's wonderful cricket made many of the fellows think that, whichever it was, it was not Stacey. They simply could not imagine that magnificent cricketer dodging out of bounds into the Three Fishers, or sneaking in at the back door of the Cross Keys.

"Look here, Wharton!" Bolsover major grunted in the ear of the late captain of the Remove. "You shut up, see? Everybody knows you're jealous of Stacey's cricket—and the less you say about it the better."

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner. Even Skinner, the weedy slacker, had come along to see Stacey performing his wonders at the senior nets.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips and walked away. His chums remained watching Stacey, keenly interested. He was, as Bob had said, worth watching. Hazeldene, of the Remove, joined Wharton as he went. There was a sneer on Hazel's face.

"They make a lot of fuss of that chap!" said Hazel. "I can't see that he's so wonderful. A lot of luck in it, if you ask me."

Wharton coloured uncomfortably. Hazel, like many Remove fellows, had



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an impression that his dislike of Stacey was due, or partly due, to the fact that the new man had "put his nose out of joint" on the cricket field. He answered sharply:

"That's rot, Hazel! I've never seen such a bowler off a county ground."

"If you think so much of him, I wonder you didn't play him when you had the chance!" sneered Hazel. "The fellows turfed you out for barring him out of the cricket."

Wharton checked an irritated answer, and walked away from Hazel. He went into the House, to wait for his friends to come in to tea. Mr. Quelch was standing in the doorway, and he beckoned to the junior as he came in. His face was grim—as it generally was when he looked at the junior who only last term had been his trusted head boy.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" Harry answered respectfully, but with a bitter tone in his voice. He could see that more fault-finding was coming, and wondered whether it was due to Stacey.

"I understand," said Mr. Quelch, "that you have certain friends at Highcliffe School, Wharton—"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry Wharton, in wonder. "Courtenay, the junior skipper there, is an old friend."

"I am not alluding to Courtenay, a boy for whom I have a great respect," snapped Mr. Quelch. "I understand that you have made friends with a boy named Ponsonby."

"Nothing of the kind, sir."

"This boy, Ponsonby," went on Mr. Quelch, unheeding the denial, "is a boy with whom I do not care for boys of my Form to associate, Wharton."

Wharton set his lips.

"It's no use telling me that, sir!"

"Do you mean, Wharton, that my wishes in the matter count for nothing with you?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply.

"No, sir. I mean that I have nothing to do with Ponsonby—"

"You have been seen with him."

"I have not been seen with him," answered Wharton sullenly.

"I am speaking from the report of a prefect, Wharton."

"Then you'd better tell the prefect not to make such a fool of himself, sir!" retorted Wharton. "Tell him he ought not to take one fellow for another."

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"What—what?" he ejaculated.

"Wharton! How dare you! How dare you make such a reply to me! Go to your study and write a hundred lines, and bring them to me before tea."

Wharton with compressed lips and gleaming eyes went to Study No. 1 in the Remove—to write lines.

His chums found him thus engaged when they came in to tea.

"By gum!" said Bob Cherry, as he burst into the study. "That man Stacey is a corker! I say—"

"Hang Stacey!" snapped Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob stared.

"Lines?"

"Yes."

"What for?" asked Frank Nugent.

Wharton laughed savagely.

"Because Stacey's been seen with Pon of Highcliffe!" he answered.

"Oh!" said Frank blankly.

"Rough luck!" said Johnny Bull.

"Look here, old man, can't you make Quelch understand—"

"Make the old ass understand that his precious new head boy is a black-guard and a rotter, and a treacherous worm!" said Wharton. "No, I can't undertake to make Quelch understand that—or anything else. Cut along to

your study for tea, Bob—I'll join you when I've finished these rotten lines."

And the Co. left him to his task.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Why Not?

WINGATE of the Sixth grunted. He was annoyed.

It was a couple of days since Billy Bunter's adventure in the elm-tree, and the fat Owl of the Remove had forgotten all about it. But its outcome could not be forgotten by greater men than Bunter.

Sykes of the Sixth was crooked.

His damaged wrist, instead of getting better, had got worse. It was an absolute certainty that Sykes would not be able to bowl again for a couple of weeks at least.

That was a knock-out blow for Wingate. Just at present the First Eleven match with Highcliffe School was the most important affair in the universe to the senior cricketers of Greyfriars. Highcliffe was a slack school in most things; but they turned out a good first team, and the Highcliffe captain, Langly, was especially a hard nut to crack. Wingate having lost his best bowler was rather like a bear with a sore head these days. He had slanged Sykes for getting crooked; which was a solace in its way, but did not mend matters. He had slanged Loder who, when he liked, was a good bowler—but who was hopelessly off colour at present possibly owing to late nights and too many cigarettes. Wingate was in a mood to slang the whole wide world.

Now he sat in his study going over his list. His best bowler now was Potter of the Fifth—a good man, but not a patch on Sykes. As for his change bowlers they were a weak lot. Batsmen he had galore; but the team was not strong in bowling men, and it was his champion bowler he had lost. Wingate, generally good-tempered and sunny, scowled at the list on his study table.

He grunted with annoyance when Coker of the Fifth barged in. Nobody ever pined for the company of Horace Coker, and least of all did Wingate pine for it now.

Coker could see that his arrival was not welcome. Fortunately, he did not care. He breezed in cheerfully.

"Going over your men, what?" asked Coker, glancing at the paper on the table.

"Yes; shut the door after you."

"I've come here to speak to you—"

"Well, don't!"

"I suppose that's what you call manners, in the Sixth!" remarked Coker. "Well, it's about the cricket."

"Cricket!" repeated Wingate, gruffly. "Don't be an ass! Stick to marbles—that's your game!"

Coker breathed hard.

"I hear that Sykes is crooked," he said. "You'll want a new man for the match on Wednesday. You know how I bowl!"

"I do! Cut!"

"I may be better with the bat," said Coker. "Perhaps I am. Still, I can bowl—rather better than Sykes, if you ask me. I'm prepared to forget all the rotten things you've said about my cricket, and play if you want me."

"Fathead!"

"If you looked at it as a sensible chap," said Coker, "you'd see that this is rather lucky, Sykes getting crooked before the match. It gives you a chance to get a better man in. I'm not the fellow to push myself forward in any way, I hope; but if there's a better all-round cricketer at Greyfriars than I am,

I'd like to know his name! That's all!" said Coker, with dignity.

Wingate glared at him.

At a more propitious moment he might have been entertained by Horace Coker telling his funny stories. But at present, annoyed and worried and exasperated, he was in no mood for Horace's unconscious humour.

"See that door?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"Eh? Yes! What about it?"

"Get on the other side of it—and quick!"

"I haven't finished yet," said Coker calmly. "I suppose it's no good telling you you're a fool, Wingate—no good telling you that you're a crass ass! But I'm bound to say—Leggo, blow you!"

Wingate seemed to have lost patience. He rose, grasped Horace Coker by his burly shoulders, and twirled him out of the study doorway.

Coker was burly and beefy; more than a match for some Sixth Form men. But Wingate made short work of him.

Horace twirled through the doorway, spun in the passage, and sat down with a bump.

"Now cut!" said Wingate briefly.

He went back into his study and slammed the door.

It opened again the next moment, and Horace Coker's red and wrathful face glared in.

"You silly ass!" roared Coker. "I've a jolly good mind to mop up the study with you! Yah!"

Then Coker slammed the door and departed. Wingate rose—and sat down again. Coker was not worth kicking along the passage.

He bent a worried brow over his list. Who was going to take Sykes' place? There was a tap at the door, and it opened again. Wingate gave almost a yell of annoyance.

"Will you get out, you silly idiot, or do you want me to knock your silly nose through the back of your silly head?"

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Loder of the Sixth in astonishment.

"Oh!" Wingate reddened. "I thought it was that fool Coker again—sorry! Come in, Loder—what is it?"

Gerald Loder came in. He, like Coker, glanced at the cricket list on the study table.

"Filled the blank yet?" he asked.

"No!" snapped Wingate.

"Well, look here," said Loder, "I've played for the First before, and I'm keen to play again. I don't say that I'm a bowler like Sykes—but I can bowl and I'm a good man on my day. A lot of men think that I ought to have a chance, Wingate. What about it?"

Wingate gave a snort.

"Nothing about it! You're not fit for one thing. I've been keeping an eye on you at the nets, and you're rotten. You're slack. You'd like to figure in the First Eleven, but you're too dashed lazy and slack to keep yourself up to the mark. Don't say anything more about it."

Loder scowled.

"You'll have to play somebody!" he snarled. "May a fellow inquire who you've got in your mind?"

"I suppose it will have to be Greene of the Fifth!" growled Wingate. "He's keen, at any rate, and doesn't smoke cigarettes and spoil his wind. You do!"

"Is this a sermon?" sneered Loder.

"Oh, don't worry! Cut!"

"Well, you'll lose the match!" said Loder venomously. "And serve you jolly well right!"

And Loder stamped out, and once more the study door slammed. Loder went back to his own study and the consolation of a cigarette.

He was angry and disappointed; though, as Wingate had said, keen as he was to figure in the First Eleven, he was not keen enough to keep himself up to the mark for the place. Anyhow, his hopes were knocked on the head now, and Loder drew what comfort he could from the practical certainty that Greyfriars would be defeated when they met Highcliffe on Wednesday. And he turned over in his mind the possibility of laying a substantial bet against the home team, with some fellow whose patriotism exceeded his prudence.

Wingate, left with his problem, forgot Loder's existence. But another interruption came soon after Loder's exit.

The Greyfriars captain breathed wrath as there was a tap at his door, and it opened again. Was he never to have a minute to think out a cricket captain's troublesome problems?

But his frowning brow cleared as Mr. Lascelles, the games master, came in. He jumped up, with quite a cheery look.

"Just the man I want to see, sir!" he exclaimed.

Larry Lascelles smiled and nodded. "Worrying it out?" he asked.

"Yes. And if you'd give me some advice—"

"I'm going to make a suggestion," said Mr. Lascelles. "It may make you jump a little, Wingate."

Wingate smiled.

"You've forgotten more about cricket than I ever knew, sir," he answered.

"What's the big idea?"

"What about Stacey?"

"Eh—who's Stacey?" Wingate did jump. "You don't mean that new kid in the Lower Fourth?"

"I mean exactly that new kid in the Remove," assented the games master.

"You want a bowler, and that kid Stacey is the most wonderful bowler, for his age, I've ever seen. If he can take your wicket and Gwynne's and Blundell's, he can take Highcliffe wickets."

Wingate gasped.

"A Remove fag—in the First Eleven—"

"Any port in a storm!" smiled Larry Lascelles. "Only a suggestion, Wingate, but you might do worse. I'd think it over, if I were you."

Wingate did think it over when the games master left him; and, startling as the idea was, the more he thought it over, the more it pleased him. Why not? He could imagine the buzz of amazement among the big men of the Sixth and Fifth if they saw the name of a Removite posted up on the board in the team for the First Eleven match with Highcliffe. Yet—why not?

That evening, in Hall, fellows noticed that Wingate was rather less grumpy, and very thoughtful—very thoughtful indeed. He had food for thought.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

On to a Good Thing!

"HERE, Stacey!"

Harry Wharton scowled.

Scowling was not one of his ways, certainly; but it irritated him intensely to be mistaken for his double, Ralph Stacey.

It was Price of the Fifth who called to him in the quad as the Remove came out after class on Monday.

Remove fellows were used to the "doubles" of the Form, and seldom mistook one for the other; even the short-sighted Owl generally knew them apart. But fellows in other Forms, who saw neither of them often, naturally did

not know "t'other from which," as Peter Todd had expressed it.

Ralph Stacey had made a great deal of use of that strong resemblance. More than once it had saved him from the consequences of his proceedings as a "black sheep," landing those consequences on his luckless relative. But to Wharton it was simply an annoyance.

So, instead of answering Price of the Fifth, he scowled at him, and walked on, causing Stephen Price to stare.

"Stacey, you cheeky young ass!" called out Price.

Harry Wharton, like Felix, kept on walking!

Hilton of the Fifth was with Price. He stared after the Removite, and stared at his comrade.

"Look here, what do you want that fag for, Pricey?" he asked. "I'm not goin' to waste time on cheeky fags if you are! See you later!"

"Don't be an ass, Cedric, if you can help it!" answered Price gruffly.

"Come on, and shut up!"

"Oh, rot!" grunted Hilton.

But he came along. The dandy of the Fifth generally followed the line of least resistance, and was rather like wax in Stephen Price's hands.

Quickening his pace, Price overtook Wharton, and caught him by the shoulder.

Harry stopped, turned, and knocked his hand away. He had no use for Price, the rankest outsider in the Fifth Form.

"You cheeky young goat!" exclaimed Price, deeply exasperated, but, at the same time, evidently unwilling to hunt trouble. "Look here, I want to speak to you, Stacey!"

"You silly chump!" snapped Wharton.

"I want you to come down to the nets and bowl a few!" said Price.

Wharton stared at him.

Hilton of the Fifth often played cricket under the influence of Blundell and other games men, but Price loathed that game and every other. His tastes were like those of Stacey and the Bounder—only more so. Everyone knew that Price of the Fifth smoked in his study, and kept racing papers there. A sudden interest in cricket was astonishing—in Price.

"Not to me," added Price. "Some other men are going down, and I want to see you bowl. I hear that you bowled Blundell and Wingate the other day."

Apparently Price was interested in what he had heard of Stacey's wonderful bowling. Most of Greyfriars was interested, but it was rather new for Price to worry about such things.

"Well, you're wrong," said Wharton. "I didn't!"

"You didn't!" exclaimed Price.

"No!"

"Why, I heard Wingate himself say so!"

"Rot!"

"Look here, kid," said Cedric Hilton, "what are you gammonin' for? I was jolly well at the nets that day, and saw you bowlin'!"

"You didn't!"

"What do you mean?" snapped Price angrily.

"I mean that I'm not Stacey," snapped Wharton, "and I don't like being taken for him! Go and eat coke!"

With that Harry Wharton turned his back on the two Fifth Form men, and walked away, leaving them staring.

"What does the young cub mean?" muttered Price, between his teeth.

Hilton laughed.

"Haven't you heard?" he said.

"There's two kids in the Remove—relations, I think—as like one another as two peas! You've got the wrong pig by the ear!"

"Oh!" said Price. He remembered that he had heard of the doubles of the Remove. "That's that cheeky young cad Wharton, then!"

"I suppose so. Dashed if I should know one from the other! Quelch ought to keep them labelled!" said Hilton, with a laugh. "But what the deuce do you want either of them for?"

"Because I heard Wingate talking to the games master this mornin'!" snapped Price. "That's why! They didn't see me, but I heard them."

Cedric Hilton looked at his pal in blank wonder. Why an overheard talk between the Greyfriars captain and Larry Lascelles should cause this sudden interest in a Remove bowler was a mystery to him.

"Mad?" he asked at last.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Price.

"After what I heard I want to see with my own eyes how that kid shapes. The secret's not out yet; and if he's the man Lascelles believes him to be, we're on to a good thing. But I've got to be sure before I take Loder on."

"Loder?" repeated Hilton.

Price sneered.

"Loder of the Sixth—he's made up his mind that Greyfriars are going to get whopped to the wide on Wednesday, now Sykes is out and Wingate won't give him the place."

"Lot of good he would be in Sykes' place!" grinned Hilton. "But he's right about the whopping—Highcliffe will get away with it. Wingate's simply got no bowlers—Sykes crooked, Gwynne off colour, Bancroft absolutely rotten—and you can't win a match on batting alone. Potter's the best man he's got to bowl, and I don't believe Potter's up to taking Highcliffe wickets."

"That's why I want to see Stacey at it with my own eyes."

"But why?"

"Oh, come on! There's the kid!"

Stacey came out of the House with Ogilvy and Russell. This time there was no mistake. Stephen Price had got the right pig by the ear, as Hilton had expressed it.

He received a more polite greeting from Stacey than from Wharton. Stacey had no prejudice against rank outsiders, and it was his policy to make himself agreeable to everybody in general. Civility cost nothing.

"Will you come down and bowl a few to some of the Fifth, Stacey?" asked Price. "I haven't seen you bowl, and I've heard a lot about you."

"Pleased!" answered Stacey.

"Blundell will be at the nets in ten minutes."

"I'll be there."

"By gum," said Ogilvy, as Price walked away with Hilton. "You're getting a rush of custom, old man. The big men are going to keep you busy."

Stacey laughed.

"It's rather fun taking their wickets," he said. "I fancy it's rather a new experience for most of them to be bowled out by a junior."

"What-ho!" grinned Russell.

The three went down to the nets with their chum. Fagging at fielding was not, as a rule, popular among the juniors, but fellows were generally keen to turn up when Stacey was bowling. And it was true that he was very much in request for practice—his bowling gave the best men in the First Eleven something to think about.

Stacey bowled to Blundell of the Fifth, and Bland, and Fitzgerald, and Potter, and Greene, with other members



"If you crook up in the senior match, Stacey, as I fully expect," said Loder grimly, "if you fall to take a single wicket, and if you make a duck in both innings——" Wingate's new recruit caught his breath. "In that case, all right!" continued Loder. "I can, if I like, hold back my report to the Head. Do you understand?" "Yes!" said Stacey in a low voice.

of that Form in turn. Price watched him eagerly—Hilton with a cricketer's interest. They noticed that Wingate of the Sixth came along to look on, too—and Price, glancing at the Greyfriars captain, saw satisfaction in his face, and saw him speaking in a low tone to Gwynne, who nodded assent. Price did not hear the remark he made, but he guessed its purport.

Stacey was still bowling, getting wicket after wicket from the Fifth Form batsmen, when Stephen Price turned away.

"Hold on!" said Hilton. "This is worth watchin'."

"We've seen enough—come on."

"But, look here——"

"Oh, come on, I tell you; no time to lose—we've got to see Loder before the thing gets out."

Hilton followed his friend in sheer wonder. They walked back to the House. There was a wily grin on Price's narrow face.

"Look here," said Hilton restively, "suppose you explain what you're up to, Pricey! I can't make you out."

"We're on to a good thing, old bean," said Price, in a low voice. "What I heard Wingate discussin' with Larry this morning was this—they're thinkin' of playin' Stacey in a First Eleven match."

Hilton jumped.

"A Remove kid? Rot!"

"Rot or not, that's the idea—and that's why I wanted to see him bowl! I don't play myself, but I know a player when I see one—and I can tell you this, Cedric—that kid, fag as he is, is twice as good as Sykes of the Sixth at his very best! He's simply a marvel—one of those giddy cricket prodigies you hear about sometimes. If Wingate's got the nerve and the gumption to put him in,

he's going to beat Highcliffe on Wednesday."

Hilton whistled.

"By gad! I shouldn't wonder! A lot of the big men will kick, though, if a Remove fag is shoved in."

"Well, that's the idea! So far as I could make out, Larry suggested it to Wingate two or three days ago, and he's been chewing over it since. Now, it's clear that he's made up his mind. As soon as he's got it finally fixed, he will let the men know—the list goes up tomorrow, anyhow. You can take it from me that R. Stacey will be in the list."

"It will be a bit of a surprise for the school," said Hilton. "But what's it got to do with us?"

"We're going to back the dark horse!" grinned Price. "Loder's looking out for a chance to lay money against Greyfriars—but he can't get a man to take him on, naturally. If this was known——"

"But when Loder knows——"

"We're goin' to book our bets before he knows."

"Oh gad!"

"Come on," said Price. "Nothin's been said so far about it—but it may come out any time. We've got to nail Loder down before he gets a hint of it."

Cedric Hilton came to a halt. He was a good deal of a "sportsman" and a black sheep; but he drew the line closer than his comrade.

"That's a bit too thick, Pricey!" he said quietly. "You can't take advantage of a fellow like that."

"Oh, don't be a goat!" snapped Price. "Come on, I tell you."

Hilton shook his head.

"Leave me out!" he said. "I'm not interferin'—leave me out!"

"Don't be an ass, Cedric!"

"Well, don't be a rotter, Steve."

"Oh, rats!"

Price of the Fifth went into the House alone.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Spotted!

"THE young rotter!" muttered Gerald Loder.

Loder was genuinely disgusted.

After class that Monday, Loder of the Sixth took a stroll down to the village of Friardale. His destination was that far from delectable establishment, the Cross Keys.

A public-house was, of course, strictly out of bounds for all Greyfriars fellows; and it was Loder's duty as a prefect to see to the enforcement of that salutary rule.

But a strict attention to duty would have caused Loder, on the present occasion, to report himself to the Head for breaking bounds!

From Friardale Lane a path ran beside the Cross Keys, leading down to the river. Loder, after a stealthy glance round about, slipped quickly into that path.

A certain dingy acquaintance of Loder's, a Mr. Lodgey, had returned to the neighbourhood, after a long absence, for the Wapshot races. Loder was going to give him a call.

Loder of the Sixth was feeling bucked at the moment. Short of cash, owing to the unreliable habits of the "dead certs" he had been backing, Loder had fairly jumped at the chance of booking a bet with Stephen Price on the Highcliffe match. It seemed likely to set him up again financially.

Why Price of the Fifth backed Greyfriars, Loder could not tell—he attributed it to Price's ignorance of the game of cricket.

Everybody else knew that it was going to be practically a walk-over for Highcliffe, since Sykes was crooked.

Price was a slacker and a dud at all games; but even Price ought to have known that Wingate and his men had little or no chance in that match.

Loder considered himself in luck.

He stood to win a tenner from Price if Greyfriars lost the match on Wednesday; and that, to his mind, was a practical certainty.

So Loder was feeling bucked, and in a very cheery mood indeed. But his expression changed as he spotted a figure ahead of him on the path.

It was the figure of a Remove junior.

Its back was towards Loder; but there was a familiarity in the figure that he knew at once.

That Remove junior was out of bounds—and it was obvious that his destination was the same as Loder's.

He was peering through the hedge by the path towards the Cross Keys; plainly, to make sure that the coast was clear before he approached the building more nearly.

Loder's face set grimly.

A minute ago he had been a sportsman going out of bounds to talk "gee-gees" with a dingy racing man. Now he was a Greyfriars prefect again—ready and keen to do his duty!

Had that young rascal been Angel of the Fourth, or Smithy of the Remove, Loder might have stretched a point—for, as the poet says, a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind! But he had no mercy to waste on Harry Wharton!

Loder, as a prefect, knew all about the disgrace Wharton was in that term. He was suspected and distrusted by his Form-master, who had asked the prefects to keep an eye on him.

Loder had an eye on him now—a grim eye! He had had plenty of trouble with Wharton in the latter's days as captain of the Remove. He had not always got the best of it. He disliked that particular junior; and had always been keen to catch him out. But, till this term, he had never had much chance—Wharton had never seemed to be guilty of anything beyond ragging sometimes. But now—

That dutiful prefect did not immediately approach the junior. The path by the Cross Keys was out of bounds; but a fellow caught there might say that he was taking a short cut to the river—indeed, Loder remembered that Harry Wharton & Co. had once been caught there, and had made that very excuse! He was going to be quite sure this time.

He backed behind a tree and watched through a screen of hawthorns.

The junior was hardly more than a dozen feet from him. Loder waited and watched.

The young rascal seemed satisfied at last. He turned his head to look back along the path and Loder had a full view of his face.

If he had doubted before, he could not have doubted now that it was Harry Wharton, with a full, clear view of his face at a dozen feet distance.

He smiled grimly and waited.

Satisfied that he was not observed, the junior slipped through a gap in the hedge into the weedy garden of the Cross Keys.

There was no doubt now—and no lying excuse about taking a short cut would help him. Loder left his cover and advanced quietly to the gap in the hedge beside the path.

Standing there, he watched the young rascal.

The junior cut across the garden towards the veranda at the back of the inn. That was also Loder's way in—if he had gone in; but he had abandoned his intention of calling on Mr. Lodgey now. It would hardly have suited the sportsman of the Sixth to carry on with a Greyfriars junior in the offing.

Loder had his duty to do, and for once, by way of a change, he was keen on doing his duty! He could figure as a zealous and dutiful prefect, and at the same time pay off an old and bitter grudge. But that was not his only reason. As a frequenter of the Cross Keys himself he did not want Greyfriars juniors hanging about the place—it would have been too dangerous for him, personally. Wharton certainly would never hang about there again—after this! This meant the "sack" for him.

It was time for action now! Loder whipped through the gap in the hedge and cut after the junior.

At the sound of running feet behind him the Remove turned, and Loder had a full view of his face again—startled and scared!

But it was brief.

The junior recognised him at once, and, turning from the veranda at the back of the inn, dashed away down the long garden.

Loder raced after him.

"Stop!" he shouted.

The fugitive dashed on desperately.

Loder rushed on in pursuit.

"Will you stop?" he roared. "I know you, you young fool—stop! Do you hear me, Wharton? Stop!"

The junior tore on at frantic speed, reached the gate at the lower end of the garden, and leaped.

He cleared the gate at a bound.

"By gad!" gasped Loder.

He ran on to the gate, opened it, and rushed out. In the distance a fleeting figure was cutting across a meadow.

Loder started in pursuit. He was angry, but more puzzled than angry, by the flight of the detected young rascal. He would have preferred, certainly, to march Harry Wharton back to Greyfriars with a hand on his shoulder. But the young rascal's game was up, anyhow. Flight saved him from Loder's grip, but it could not save him from a report at the school.

But Loder, as he ran on, guessed—or thought that he did! It came back into his mind that Wharton, spotted more than once out of bounds, had declared that he was not the fellow seen—taking advantage of his likeness to Stacey! If he got clear now he would play the same game again, and hope to get away with it. At that thought Loder exerted himself to overtake the fugitive.

Marched into the school with a prefect's grip on his shoulder, the young scoundrel would not be able to put up that story again.

Loder ran hard.

But it was in vain. He was drawing nearer to the running junior when the fugitive dodged into Friardale Wood and vanished among the trees.

Loder panted on after him.

But it was futile now. Among the trees and thickets in Friardale Wood the elusive junior had vanished, and Loder saw nothing more of him.

For a good half-hour he hunted, and then he realised that by that time the young rascal must be back at the school—probably laughing at him.

And Loder, gritting his teeth, started back to Greyfriars! Again and again the likeness between Wharton and

Stacey had saved one of the "doubles" at the expense of the other. Loder was determined that it should not save him this time.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

In the Hour of Triumph I

"I SAY, you fellows!" Billy Bunter fairly yelled. His little round eyes almost popped through his big, round spectacles in his excitement.

A number of fellows in the school shop stared round at him.

Harry Wharton & Co. were there, refreshing themselves with ginger-beer and buns, after cricket practice, with a crowd of other fellows.

So the fat Owl of the Remove had a good audience as he burst in, his fat face aglow with excitement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Has your postal order come, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows, it's up!" gasped Bunter.

"What's up, fathead?" asked the Bounder.

"Stacey—"

"Stacey's up?" repeated Harry Wharton. "For what? The sack?"

"Shut up, Wharton!" roared Ogilvy across the tuckshop. "You're more likely to be up for the sack than Stacey."

"Much more likely!" hooted Dick Russell.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, Wharton thinks a man ought to be sacked for playing cricket better than he does?" remarked Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, I tell you—"

"What's the news, old fat bean?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "You men let Bunter get it off his chest before he bursts his crop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Mauly! I say, you fellows, Stacey's up—his name's up—the list's up! Jevver hear of such a thing?" gasped Bunter.

"You howling ass!" said Bob. "What do you mean—if you mean anything?"

"The list—the First Eleven list—" gasped Bunter.

"That won't be put up till to-morrow morning," said Vernon-Smith. "Has Wingate put it up already?"

"He jolly well has!" gasped Bunter.

"And Stacey's in it."

"What?"

It was a roar of astonishment from the whole crowd.

Billy Bunter grinned with gratification.

He liked to be the bearer of startling news. He had his wish this time! He had fairly brought down the house!

"Stacey!" yelled Vernon-Smith. "Stacey in the First—"

"A Remove man in the First Eleven!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Gammon!" said Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, I saw Wingate come along from his study and pin up the list!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Coker was there—and you should have seen his face! Coker thought his name might be in it. He, he, he! He snorted like a mad elephant when he saw Stacey's name."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bob. "Is it true?"

"You can go and see for yourselves. I say, Walker and Carne of the Sixth, were scowling like anything!" chortled Bunter. "I heard Walker tell Carne that old Wingate was a silly fool!"

"Oh, my hat! A Remove man—in

the First Eleven—old Stacey!" exclaimed Ogilvy. Heedless of a half-finished ginger, Ogilvy dashed out of the school shop and cut across to the House, eager to read with his own eyes such glorious news for his study. Russell dashed after him.

A crowd of fellows followed.

Seniors and juniors were equally interested. In putting a Remove fag into the First Eleven Wingate was making history at Greyfriars.

Everybody wanted to know whether it was true! Seldom had the notice-board been so crammed.

In a few minutes only five fellows were left in the tuckshop—and four of them were anxious to rush after the eager crowd.

Harry Wharton calmly finished his ginger.

"Coming, old man?" asked Bob.

"I'm not fearfully interested in Stacey's stunts," answered Harry.

"Oh, rot! Dash it all, it's a jolly old distinction for the Remove," exclaimed Bob, rather hotly. "Stacey may be a bit of a bad hat, but getting into the First Eleven—"

"Well, it's a bit startling," said Johnny Bull, "but the team's weak in bowlers, and Stacey's a wonderful man in that line. Some of the big men will grouse, but, really—"

"Now Sykes is out—" said Nugent.

"Stacey owes it to Bunter," grinned Bob. "That fat idiot crooked Sykes. But, look here, it's a leg-up for the Remove to get a man into the First Eleven, whether we like the man or not. It will make the Fourth and the Shell look jolly green."

"The greenfulness will be terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Oh, let's go and look!" urged Bob.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders, but he followed his friends at last. It was

difficult for fellows to believe the news unless they saw it with their own eyes. But Wharton had no doubt of it. Certainly, he had not expected to hear any such news, and he wondered that Wingate had thought of it; nevertheless, in the present state of the First Eleven, it was certain that Stacey of the Remove would be an extremely useful recruit—on his cricket form.

And Wingate did not know him as Wharton did. It would never have crossed Wingate's mind that so good a cricketer as Stacey was capable of deliberately running out a fellow he disliked.

True, in a First Eleven game, Stacey was hardly likely to be guilty of any treachery of that kind. He had no enemies among the seniors over whom he desired to score. And the chance of figuring in the Greyfriars First was so great and glorious that Stacey was certain to go all out to play the game of his life.

His cricket had already made him popular in his Form—except among the few who stood by Wharton. Now he was going to be more popular than ever—a fellow who reflected such glory on his Form!

The Famous Five found an almost impenetrable swarm packed before the notice-board, where Wingate's paper was pinned.

There was a babel of voices.

"It's true!"

"R. Stacey—"

"Bravo!"

"Good old Stacey!"

"Good old Wingate!"

"What utter rot!" came Horace Coker's angry bawl. "A Remove fag in the First Eleven—my hat! What utter tripe!"

"Shut up, Coker!" roared the Removites.

"Stacey!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth. "Fan me, somebody! Wingate could have had the pick of the Fourth—"

"Or of the Sholl!" growled Hobson, captain of that Form. "Still, it's true that that man Stacey is a real corker at cricket! Never saw such bowling!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hero comes Quelch!"

The wild excitement had drawn the Remove-master to the spot. No doubt he suspected a rag! But the mob swaying before the notice-board, though wildly excited, was orderly.

Quelch glanced at them, puzzled.

"It's the First Eleven list, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. "Wingate's picked out a Remove man to play for Greyfriars."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "Who?"

"Stacey, sir!" said half a dozen voices.

"Dear me! I believe Stacey is a very good cricketer," said Mr. Quelch, and his pleased expression was not to be mistaken. "I congratulate Stacey. Is he here?"

"No; he went out of gates," said Ogilvy. "This will be great news for him when he comes in, sir."

"Quite so, Ogilvy," said Mr. Quelch, with a gracious nod. "It reflects credit upon my Form! I am very pleased."

And Mr. Quelch walked on, very pleased indeed.

"Quelch is bucked!" remarked Tom Brown. "He thinks a lot of Stacey. By gum, he's right, too—fancy a Remove man in the First Eleven."

"Pity Stacey isn't here to see it," said Squiff. "He ought to be here! Sure he's gone out, Oggy?"

"Yes; he went out after bowling at

(Continued on next page.)

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the nets to the Fifth Form men," answered Ogilvy. "I wish he'd come in. I—"

"Here he is!"

"Here, Stacey—"

"Look here, old chap!"

Stacey had come in. He was rather red and breathless, as if he had hurried. A dozen fellows rushed at him at once, surrounded him, and rushed him to the notice-board. Every man there, senior or junior, made way for him. Stacey just then was a man they delighted to honour.

"Look!" yelled Russell, pointing.

Stacey looked.

"What the thump!" he exclaimed.

"My name—there—"

"You're wanted for the First on Wednesday, old bean!"

"Oh!" gasped Stacey.

His eyes danced. This was a triumph of which he had hardly dreamed. Picked to play for the First Eleven! With such giants as old Wingate and Gwynne and Blundell of the Fifth!

No wonder his eyes danced.

"Ripping, what?" exclaimed Ogilvy, thumping him on the back.

"The ripfulness is terrific, my esteemed and absurd Stacey!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Gratters, old chap!" exclaimed Bob Cherry heartily.

"Silly rot!" came from Coker of the Fifth.

"Shut up, Coker!"

Stacey's eyes wandered from the paper on the board to the sea of faces round him.

He started a little as he noted a face like his own among the mob. Harry Wharton was there.

The light died out of Stacey's eyes and the smile from his lips. Wharton was there—Wharton had not been out of gates.

This time it was impossible for the black sheep to fasten his misdeeds on innocent shoulders. Loder of the Sixth believed that it was Wharton he had seen at the Cross Keys—the name he had called after the fugitive was proof of that. Had Wharton been out of gates—

But he had not!

Stacey felt sick at heart.

In this, the hour of his greatest triumph, he was a lost man! Loder would find out his mistake when he came in, and then—

The hero of the hour got away as soon as he could to his own study. While all the Remove rejoiced in his good luck, Stacey was counting the minutes till he should be called into the headmaster's study to be expelled from Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Something Like an Alibi!

"WHARTON!"

"Hallo!"

Wharton's reply was not very respectful, considering that Gerald Loder was a Sixth Form man and a prefect.

But Wharton had little respect for Loder personally, and he was not in a mood to show more than he felt.

Loder surveyed him grimly.

He had just got in, a little breathless, and in a very bad temper. He came on Harry Wharton in the quad, and called to him at once. Loder was going to waste no time over the young rascal. Dislike and duty coincided now, and he was going to march him direct to his headmaster to receive judgment and sentence.

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"You've got back, then!" sneered Loder.

Wharton eyed him.

"Back?" he repeated.

"Yes, you young rotter! You dodged me in Friardale Wood, and left me to hunt for you, but precious little good it will do you."

Wharton stared at him in sheer amazement. For a moment he wondered whether Loder of the Sixth was wandering in his mind.

"In Friardale Wood?" he repeated. "I haven't been in Friardale Wood for a week or more, Loder."

"Haven't you?" said Loder grimly. "Well, you can tell Dr. Locke that, you dingy young rotter!"

"I'll tell Dr. Locke, certainly, or anybody else," said Harry, in wonder. "But even if I had been in Friardale Wood, what about it? Friardale Wood isn't out of bounds that I know of."

"The Cross Keys is!" said Loder.

"Potty?" asked Harry.

"You cheeky young rascal!" roared Loder. "Come with me. I'm going to take you to the Head at once."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I don't mind," he answered. "Let's go and see the Head, by all means!"

"Oh, I know your game, you shady young scoundrel!" said Loder, between his set lips. "It's a chicken that won't fight this time! Quelch spotted you once at the Three Fishers, and Wingate somewhere else, and you got off because there was supposed to be a possibility of a mistake! You won't get away with it this time, as I saw you almost as near as you're standing now."

"You saw me at the Cross Keys!" stuttered Wharton. "When?"

"Not an hour ago."

"An hour ago I was playing cricket with about a dozen other Remove men on the spot!" said Harry.

"Do you think I'm going to believe that when I saw you at the Cross Keys and chased you when you ran for it?" said Loder contemptuously.

Harry Wharton drew a deep, deep breath.

He knew at once what must have happened—where Stacey must have been before he came in to see his name in the First Eleven list.

Loder had seen Stacey at the Cross Keys and taken him for his relative and double! Wharton was a dog with a bad name now, and the fact that the junior was spotted in a disreputable resort was sufficient to make Loder, or any other prefect, believe him to be Wharton.

Stacey, it was certain, would have no scruple in leaving him to believe so. That was the game he had played on previous occasions.

But this time even Stacey was at the end of his tether!

For this time Wharton had not been out of gates, and he could prove, by innumerable witnesses, that he had been nowhere near the Cross Keys when Loder believed that he had seen him there. His double's game of deceit was up!

Loder was staring at him, puzzled by the astonishment in his face, that gave place gradually to scornful amusement.

"Are you denying that you were there, Wharton, when you know that I saw you and chased you?" he demanded.

"Quite!" answered Wharton coolly. "You can take me to the Head, if you like, Loder; but if you'd prefer not to make a fool of yourself, you'd better look into it first."

Loder set his lips.

"I know the game you've played before," he said. "Are you going to make out that it was Stacey I saw?"

"I'm not going to make out anything," answered Harry. "You can do as you jolly well like! Let's go to the Head, if you choose. I'm ready to tell him where I've been every minute since class, and I can call a dozen fellows to prove it. Go ahead!"

Loder paused.

He was certain—absolutely certain! Yet he was staggered now.

Like the other prefects, and many Greyfriars fellows, he believed that Wharton was "playing the goat" this term, and making use of his likeness to Stacey to hunt cover. But the junior's cool confidence staggered him, and he had to admit that it was at least possible that it was the other way about—that it was not, after all, Wharton who was the "black sheep."

Certainly Loder did not want to make a fool of himself before the Head. Certain as he was, and angry as he was, he decided to look into the matter before he incurred the serious responsibility of a report to the headmaster. He disliked Wharton; and he cared nothing about Stacey, either way. But he did not want to make a serious mistake.

There was a silence, during which Wharton waited, with the scornfully amused look still on his face. He was willing to make the matter clear to Loder, if Loder wanted him to. Still, he had no objection to Loder making a fool of himself, if that was his desire.

"Look here!" said Loder at last. "If it was not you that I saw, it was that relation of yours who's so like you, Stacey."

"That's for you to think out," said Wharton coolly. "Nothing to do with me whom you may or may not have seen."

"You deny that it was you?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Harry carelessly.

"Well, then, I'm going to question you as a prefect, and you're going to answer me!" snapped Loder. "What did you do after class to-day?"

"Let's see. After the Remove came out, I had a jaw with Price of the Fifth, who took me for Stacey, and wanted to see me bowl. After that, I went down to Little Side with some Remove men for cricket practice, while Stacey was bowling to some Fifth Form men at the senior nets. I don't know when he cleared off, but it seems that you do," said Wharton sarcastically.

"How long did you stay at cricket?" Wharton glanced up at the clock-tower.

"Until half an hour ago. Then I went to the tuckshop with my friends for ginger-pop. I stayed there till Bunter brought the news of the new notice on the board, when I went to look at it. That was a quarter of an hour ago. The last quarter of an hour—"

"Never mind the last quarter of an hour!" snarled Loder. "It was close on an hour ago I saw you at the Cross Keys. According to what you say, you were with the cricketers at the time."

"Just that," smiled Wharton.

"Give me a few of their names."

"Cherry, Bull, Hurree Singh, Nugent, Vernon-Smith, Redwing, Field, Brown, Todd, Hazeldene, Penfold, Linley, Ogilvy, Russell, Bolsover," Wharton recited.

Loder cut him short before he could continue the recitation. He had more names to give if Loder wanted to hear them. Loder didn't.

"You mean to say that all those fellows, whose names you've mentioned, will testify that you haven't been out of gates since class?" he demanded.

"They will, and some more, too!" said Wharton cheerfully. "Some of the Fourth—Temple and Dabney and Fry—and Hobby of the Shell, and—"



"Ain't you sacked?" squeaked Bunter, blinking at Stacey through his big spectacles. "Why should I be, fathead?" asked Stacey. "Wandering in your mind, or what?" "Oh crikey!" gasped the fat Removite. "I—I say, Stacey, how did you get Loder to let you off? He wouldn't have let Wharton off!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Loder.

"You asked me," answered Wharton demurely.

Luck had been against him on previous occasions, but this time luck was unmistakably on his side. He was able to prove so sweeping an alibi that it was impossible for even his old enemy of the Sixth to doubt it.

"I shall ask the fellows you've mentioned!" yapped Loder.

"Do! Shall I call some of them?" Wharton looked round. "Here, you men, come up—Smithy, Redwing, Toddy, Bob—Loder wants you!"

Loder did not, as a matter of fact, want them. He knew quite well by this time that the "dog with a bad name" had been speaking the truth. Unwillingly and grudgingly, he had to admit to himself that it was not Wharton he had seen at the Cross Keys.

But the juniors came running up at Wharton's shout in wonder.

"What's wanted?" asked Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton laughed.

"Loder's spotted a Remove man playing the giddy ox out of bounds, and wants to know whether I've been out of gates since class," he answered.

"Well, you jolly well haven't!" exclaimed Bob hotly. "Twenty fellows at least can prove that. Look here, Loder, if—"

But Gerald Loder did not "look there." With a scowling brow he tramped on to the house.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Loder's Trump Card!

"STACEY—"

"That Remove kid—"

"It's awful rot!"

"Oh, I don't know! Wingate thinks—"

"Old Wingate knows—"

"But a kid in the Lower Fourth—"

"That kid Stacey—"

Loder of the Sixth heard it on all sides as he came into the House. The name of Stacey was on every tongue.

That name, of course, was in Loder's mind at the moment. As it was not Wharton that he had seen at the Cross Keys, he knew that it must have been Stacey. No other fellow could have been mistaken for Wharton—only his double.

It was now his duty to report Stacey to the Head, and have him up for judgment. He was not particularly keen on it.

He had come little into contact with the new fellow in the Remove, and knew little of him, except that he was a wonderful cricketer, and the double of another Remove fellow. He was going to make his report, certainly; but he no longer had any personal grudge to urge him on, as in the case of Wharton.

Indeed, now that he was aware that the delinquent was not the junior he disliked, Loder felt a twinge of pity for the dingy young rascal "up for the sack." He was going to do his duty—having no motive to do otherwise. But it was no pleasure to him.

"What's all this about Stacey?" he asked Walker of the Sixth. "Has anything come out about him—or what?"

"Haven't you heard? The paper's up for the Highcliffe match."

"I haven't seen it. But what on earth has that to do with Stacey?"

"He's in it."

Loder jumped.

"Pulling my leg, you ass! Stacey, a Remove kid, in the First Eleven! What the dickens do you mean?"

Walker shrugged his shoulders. He was one of the men left out—and far from approving of Wingate's revolutionary selection.

"Look at the board!" he answered.

"Wingate's gone mad, that's all."

Loder, in utter amazement, went to the notice-board to look. The excited crowd there had cleared off, but there were still a dozen fellows standing discussing the "latest."

"Good gad!" said Loder blankly, as he read "R. Stacey" in a list containing such names as Wingate, Gwynne, Blundell, Potter, and the rest. "What fearful rot!"

"Yes, isn't it?" said Coker of the Fifth. "I say, Wingate ought to be turfed out of the captaincy—what? I offered to play—"

"You silly ass!"

Loder walked away, leaving Horace Coker glaring, and the other fellows grinning.

His face was black and bitter.

He had been refused a place in the First Eleven for that match. And the vacant place was given to a Remove junior.

It was insult, added to injury.

Loder's resentment was so deep and bitter that he had a strong impulse to go directly to Wingate's study and "row" with him.

It would have been bad enough to have been left out for Greene of the Fifth, or any other senior, but to be left out for a fag in the lower Fourth, a kid who had not been a whole term at the school—

"Heard the latest?"

Price of the Fifth gave him a nod, and a smile, which Loder returned with a black scowl.


"Did you know about this when you came to my study a couple of hours ago?" he asked bitterly.

Price raised his eyebrows.

"My dear chap, how should I know?"

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A TRAITOR to his SIDE!

FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from
page 13.)

he asked innocently. "Wingate doesn't confide cricket secrets to me. He never speaks to me at all, if he can help it. Of course, it came as a surprise to me to—"

Loder shoved past him, and went to his study.

He slammed the door of the study after him.

His verdict in seeing Stacey's name in the First Eleven had been that it was "rot." But a very few moments' reflection showed him that it was far from being "rot."

It was not agreeable to admit that in leaving him out and putting a junior in, Wingate was acting for the good of the side.

But Loder was no ass like Horace Coker, and he knew. He had not thought about it before, but now that he did think of it he knew that Wingate had secured a prize-packet for the Highcliffe match.

Stacey's bowling might make all the difference. Junior as he was, he had demonstrated that he could take First Eleven wickets, and Greyfriars bats were as good as Highcliffe bats—or better. What he had done at the nets he could do in a cricket match.

Anger and resentment could not blind Loder to the fact that in putting Stacey in, Wingate had enormously brightened the prospects of the home team. It was a bowler that was wanted—and Stacey was a bowler of almost uncanny powers.

And Price of the Fifth had nosed it out somehow in advance, he was sure of that. That was why he had booked the bet, backing Greyfriars when good cricketers regarded the home prospects as more than dubious.

Loder stood to lose, instead of winning, a tenner on that cricket match—if Stacey did what was expected of him.

But—
There was, after all, a trump card in Loder's hand.

He had been savagely disappointed to learn that it was not Wharton, but Stacey, whom he had spotted at the Cross Keys.

He was glad of it now.
Had it been Wharton he would have been able to gratify an old grudge. But that was little or nothing in comparison with the power that was now in his hands.

It was in his power now to dish Wingate over that match, and beat Price at his sharp practice! For what was going to happen when he made his report to the Head?

It was the "sack" for Stacey.
Could there be any doubt about that? At the very least it was a flogging—but surely it would be the sack! If it was the sack, Wingate's wonderful bowler would be gone from Greyfriars before the Highcliffe match came off.

Loder threw himself into a chair and thought it over. Whether Stacey was

expelled or not was a matter of indifference to him, except from the point of view of "dishing" Wingate and Price.

Was it possible that the young rascal would be able to elude the ultimate penalty and hang on? A flogging would not prevent him from playing on Wednesday? And that was the only real question for that dutiful prefect, Gerald Loder.

He was a deep young rascal. The way he had succeeded in landing his misdeeds on his relative, Wharton, was proof of that. Quelch thought a lot of him and might stand by him. Wingate, too, especially as Wingate wanted him to bowl on Wednesday. If he succeeded in wriggling out of expulsion—

Tap!
A knock on the door interrupted Loder's reflections.

"Oh, come in!" he snapped.
It was Stacey of the Remove who entered.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Price of Silence!

"YOU!" grunted Loder.
Stacey nodded.

His handsome face, so like Harry Wharton's, was pale and clouded. Loder, looking at him, smiled sourly. He had been debating in his mind whether the young rascal was booked for the sack. He could see from Stacey's face that the young rascal himself had little doubt about it.

"I was going to send for you, Stacey!" said Loder. "I've got to take you to the Head, of course."

Stacey winced.
As Loder knew, he had cut and run for it at the Cross Keys, hoping that his likeness to Wharton would save him, as it had saved him before.

Had Wharton been out of gates at the time, as he might easily have been, Stacey would very likely have got away with it.

But since he had learned that Wharton had not set foot out of gates since class, and that a score of fellows could bear witness to the fact, he knew that that chicken would not fight. His game of deception was up.

From his study window he had watched Loder come in, and seen him speaking to Harry Wharton in the quad. He knew that Loder was aware of the facts now. That was why he had come to the prefect's study without waiting to be sent for.

One hope remained to him—a plea for mercy to Loder! It was the slimmest of slim chances—but it was all that was left.

"You're going to take me to the Head?" he faltered.

"Well, what did you expect?" grunted Loder. "I fancied that it was Wharton I had caught at the Cross Keys—I know now it was you. You know that."

"It—it was the—the first time—"

Loder interrupted him.
"Don't tell me any lies, Stacey—and I advise you not to tell the Head any. It's perfectly well known that either you or Wharton has been playing the giddy goat this term, asking for the sack over and over again. I know now that you're the man! What's the good of lying?"

"Give me a chance, Loder!" muttered Stacey.

"What do you mean?" grunted Loder.

"It means more to me than to any other fellow! If I get a flogging I don't care! But if it's the sack—if I

get pushed out of here—I'm done for! Not only at school, but in every other way!"

Loder looked at him in silence.
"I'm a poor relation of Wharton's!" Stacey gritted his teeth over the words. "His uncle has taken me up and sent me here because my father's had bad luck and can't provide for me or send me to school. If you've ever seen old Colonel Wharton, you know what he's like. If I'm sacked for this he will throw me over—"

"Are you asking a prefect to screen you, you young rotter?"

Stacey looked at him. The thought was in his mind that Loder, prefect as he was, was no better than himself. He had heard plenty of talk about Gerald Loder, and he could guess pretty accurately how it had happened that Loder had been at the Cross Keys that afternoon.

But it was useless to touch on that. It would only put Loder's back up, and certainly not incline him to mercy.

"If you'd give me a chance, Loder, I—" he muttered.

"No good talking!" snapped Loder. "You're bowled out now, Stacey! Did you fancy you could land it on that relation of yours every time? You've played a pretty rotten game in that direction, Stacey! You were bound to trip sooner or later! This time you can't land it on Wharton."

"You don't like Wharton any more that I do!" muttered Stacey sullenly. "Every fellow in the Remove knows that you've got a down on him, and would catch him out if you could."

"That's enough!" snapped Loder. "Cheek won't help you, Stacey! I'm taking you to the Head, and you can get ready to pack your box."

Stacey breathed hard.
"You needn't be so sure of that!" he answered. "Quelch will speak up for me, and Wingate, too! I've got a chance!"

Loder was silent again. He wondered whether Stacey was right! If the young rascal got off with a flogging—

Quelch, he knew, had a high opinion of the young rascal—he had made him his head boy in the Form. Would he believe that this was Stacey's first transgression—to be dealt with leniently?

It was not likely, but it was possible! And if Quelch stood by the culprit, the Head was certain to be strongly influenced by the opinion of the boy's Form-master.

Stacey had, at least, a sporting chance of escaping the sack—and he was cunning enough, wily enough, to make the very most of it. And if he was not sacked he would bowl for Greyfriars on Wednesday—and make all the difference between victory and defeat.

Loder was thinking hard.

Whether Stacey was sacked mattered nothing to him. But it mattered a great deal whether Wingate pulled off a victory after contemptuously leaving him out of the team—and whether Price of the Fifth won a tenner from him by sharp practice.

If he had been absolutely certain that Stacey would be sacked and sent away by the morning's train—

But it was only extremely probable, not absolutely certain. Loder sat silent, thinking.

Stacey watched him, wondering what he was thinking of. He could see that Loder was hesitating.

Why, he did not know.
He knew that there was no love lost between Loder and the Greyfriars captain; he knew, like everybody else, that Loder had been disappointed of a place

in the Eleven. He had a strong suspicion that Loder would have been glad to see the school beaten by Highcliffe, in the circumstances. But that only made it more unlikely that Loder would hesitate to take him to the Head. Yet he was hesitating.

Loder spoke at last. He spoke in a low tone, as if in dread that his words might reach other ears, though there were no other ears to hear.

"Just listen to me, Stacey! You, a Lower kid, have been shoved into the Eleven in my place—I think it's rot. I'd like to see Wingate made to look a fool—as he will be, if you turn out to be no good in the match."

Stacey watched his face. What Loder said was true—he would have been glad, very glad, to see Wingate's new recruit fail him at the pinch. But he knew quite well that Stacey would not fail. He knew that a junior, picked for such a distinction, would play the game of his life, and he knew what Stacey could do if he chose! So what did he mean?

Loder proceeded, in the same low tone, to elucidate what he meant.

"If it turns out like that, Stacey—if you crock up in the match, as I fully expect—if you fail to take a single wicket, and if you make a duck in both innings—"

Stacey caught his breath. "In that case, all right!" said Loder. "I can, if I like, hold back my report to the Head till Wednesday. I can take time to make investigations into the matter—to make absolutely certain that it was not Wharton I caught at the Cross Keys to-day. I will hold over my report till Wednesday, Stacey. Do you understand?"

Stacey understood. Loder would not, perhaps dared not, put it more plainly. But there was no mistaking his meaning.

This was his revenge on Wingate! Wingate's new recruit was to let him down in the match! And then Loder's report would never be made to the Head! Stacey would be safe!

The wretched young rascal of the Remove stood silent, breathing hard. Unscrupulous as he was, the idea gave him a shock. He would have done that or anything else to save himself from the sack! He would not have done it to escape a flogging.

If he could only have counted for certain on a flogging! But the chances were for the sack, and he knew it only too well!

"Do you understand?" repeated Loder grimly.

"Yes!" said Stacey, at last, in a low voice.

"Then you can cut!" Stacey left the study without another word.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing in It!

"ROT!" bawled Robert Donald Ogilvy. "Utter rot!" hooted Russell.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" "Shan't!" retorted Billy Bunter independently. "I say, you fellows, lots of the fellows know! I say Stacey's for it."

"I'll jolly well kick you!" said Ogilvy warningly.

"Beast! Wharton knows!" howled Bunter. "I tell you I heard Loder speaking to him in the quad—didn't I, Wharton?"

"Shouldn't wonder," said Harry. "You generally hear things that don't concern you, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Anything in it, though?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Have they really bowled out Stacey at last?"

"Better ask Stacey!" said Harry. "I don't want to say anything about it, or about him. I suppose Stacey can tell you if he chooses."

"He won't be here to tell anybody anything!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I tell you Loder spotted him at the Cross Keys—"

"Will you shut up, you fat idiot?" exclaimed Ogilvy angrily.

"No, I jolly well won't," answered Bunter. "Loder thought it was Wharton, and if it wasn't Wharton it was Stacey, that stands to reason. Well, we all know that Wharton hasn't been out of gates since class! So it was Stacey."

There was a buzz of excitement in the Remove passage. A crowd of fellows were there—others standing in the study doorways. Before tea there had been news that startled and amazed the Remove—the news that R. Stacey was up for the Highcliffe match. After tea, there was still more startling news, if true—that R. Stacey

was up for the sack! But as the latter news came from Billy Bunter, unconfirmed as yet, there were more doubters than believers.

Wharton had said nothing—and intended to say nothing. If Stacey somehow crawled out of this hole as he had crawled out of others, it was not for him to speak. Stacey, much as he disliked him, was his relative, and it was by no means a gratifying idea to Wharton that his relative should be kicked out of the school in disgrace.

But Bunter had heard that talk in the quad and knew, and half a dozen juniors, whom Wharton had called up to tell Loder that he had not been out of gates, guessed. And Bunter was not the fellow to keep anything to himself.

Not that it was likely to be kept dark long, anyhow. Wharton could scarcely doubt that Loder would report Stacey to the Head! He was no whale on duty, but there seemed no reason why he should avoid the performance of this plain and obvious duty.

"Where's Stacey now?" asked the Bunder.

"He went down," answered Ogilvy. "We're waiting tea for him in Study No. 3 till he comes back."

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

Our merry Greyfriars Rhymester says that interviewing the big noises at Greyfriars is no joke. You'll certainly agree with him after perusing this week's verses written around

MONSIEUR CHARPENTIER, the French Master at Greyfriars.



(1) M'sieur Charpentier (or Mossoo, as he's called) Is a kindly and genial bloke, He says that his scholars are driving him bald, Which I fancy is only a joke. He frequently squats in the Form-master's chair. While his pupils are fooling about; And often in accents of wildest despair You can hear the poor gentleman shout; "Assez! Enoff! Taisez-vous, Vernon-Smeat! Mes garçons, my verree good boys, Be quiet! N'importe! And take you ze seat! Mon Dieu! Zat you make not ze noise!"

(2) He's shortish and fat with a Frenchified beard, But his heart is as solid as lard. The language he speaks is at times very weird, And to follow his meaning is hard. The hour for French lesson means plenty of fun To the junior fellows, of course; About five minutes work on the average is done, And poor old Mossoo gets quite hoarse. "C'est fini, all xis! I am speaking to you! Ecoutez! Just hark vis you there! Sacre nom d'un petit bon homme en caoutchouc! I am feenished! Que dois-je faire?"

(3) My task of recording the next interview With Mossoo was really quite good, Except for the language, so what could I do To ensure I would be understood? To settle the matter I purchased a book Of "Handy French Phrases (Pronounced)," Thus I went in his study and stole a quick look At the volume, and gravely announced: "Bonjoor, Monseer Blank, et comang tally voo? Say tun bookoo bell joornay, we, we! Avay-voe got la plume de mon oncle, Mossoo? Jer comprong parlaymong! Bonn wee!"

(4) To say he was startled is putting it mild, He gazed at me dumb with surprise, I nodded politely, I bowed and I smiled, He fixed me with wide-open eyes. "Je ne comprends pas!" he exclaimed in amaze, Emphatically shaking his head. So I turned to my book and, avoiding his gaze, I stood there and solemnly said: "Donny-mroor mon chapeau et mes gants sivvoo play! Bonjoor, Monseer Blank! Au revwah! Voo parley tro veet et jer parley frangsay! Jer dayzeer un chapeau! Porkwah pah?"



(5) If I knew who published that volume I had, I'd bust him one right on the scalp! It must have been wrong, for Mossoo said: "You're mad!" And lustily bellowed for help! Then Wingate and Loder and one or two more Came rushing to lend him a hand. And as I went forcibly out through the door, I tried once again in stentorian roar To make old Mossoo understand: "Oo est ma tahnt—vooley-voe lettez go? Lassay go there et takes vote hook! Ow! Yaroooh! Ow! Groohoop! Ow! Yaropski! Ow! Oh!" (But the latter was not in the book!)



Snigger from Billy Bunter!
"You'll have to wait a jolly long time! I fancy he's with the Head now—Loder's bound to take him there. He, he, he! He's up for the sack!"
Ogilvy made a step towards the fat Owl, his eyes gleaming with anger. He grasped him by the collar.

"Now, you fat cackling rotter—"
"Yaroooh! Leggo!" roared Bunter.
"I say, you fellows, make him leggo!"
"Chuck it, Oggy!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

Oggy glared at him.
"I'm going to bang his cheeky head on the wall for spinning his rotten yarns about a pal of mine!" he bawled.
"I say, Wharton, you know it's the truth!" roared Bunter. "You make him leggo!"

Wharton hesitated a moment. He liked the sturdy Scottish junior, all the more for his loyalty to a friend who was unworthy of his loyalty, and he had little sympathy to waste on the tattling Owl. Still it was rather hard for Bunter to have his head banged for telling what Wharton, at least, knew to be the truth.

Harry caught Ogilvy's arm.
"Chuck it, old bean," he said. "The fact is—" He paused.

"You're not going to say that that fat tattling toad is telling the truth?" snapped Ogilvy.

"Well, yes," said Harry at last. "At least Loder fancied he saw me at the Cross Keys, and accused me of it, but he had to take it back when he found that I hadn't been out of gates."

"We can guess whom he saw, if he fancied it was Wharton!" grinned the Bounder.

"Now you know!" hooted Bunter. "Leggo, you beast!"

Ogilvy released the fat Owl of the Remove.

"I don't believe it!" he said obstinately. "There's some mistake somewhere. Loder may fancy—"

"Could he fancy any fellow except Stacey was Wharton?" drawled the Bounder.

"Well, he's fool enough for anything!" snapped Ogilvy. "Anyhow, if it's true, Stacey's up before the Head—and I jolly well know he isn't."

"I jolly well know he is!" gasped Bunter. "And if he thinks Quelch will get him off, he's jolly well mistaken. Quelch will drop him like a hot brick when he knows."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here he comes!"

All eyes turned in the direction of the Remove staircase.

Stacey was coming up.

Harry Wharton eyed him curiously. Unless Loder had let him off—and there seemed no imaginable reason why Loder should—he was up for drastic punishment.

But he did not look like it. His face was clouded and his lips drawn hard, but it could not be said that he looked like a fellow who was going to be sacked.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. Then he gave a fat chuckle.

"I say, Stacey, have you come up to pack?" he squeaked.

Stacey glanced at him.

"Pack?" he repeated. "Why?"

"Eh? Ain't you sacked?"

Stacey's glance shot towards Wharton for a second. Then he laughed carelessly.

"Not that I'm aware of," he said.

"What's put that idea into your fat head, you benighted owl?"

Bunter gasped.

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"Then you ain't sacked!" he ejaculated.

"Why should I be, you fathead? Wandering in your mind, or what?" asked Stacey.

"I jolly well knew there was nothing in it," said Ogilvy in relief. "That blithering bloater makes out that Loder caught you out of bounds and took you to the Head, and—"

Stacey laughed.

"Sorry to disappoint you, Bunter!" he remarked. "I suppose Wharton has been pulling your leg. In his case, I dare say the wish was father to the thought, as jolly old Shakespeare says."

Harry Wharton's eyes glinted.

"I've told Bunter nothing, Stacey," he said quietly. "He knows what he heard Loder say to me, that's all. Anybody might have heard Loder, as he talked to me in the middle of the quad. He said that he had caught a fellow out of bounds whom he took to be me—"

"Wasn't it you?" asked Stacey airily.

"No—as I happen to be able to prove," said Wharton contemptuously.

"This time I didn't happen to be out of gates, as happened last time."

"Oh, pack it up!" snapped Russell.

"If there's anything in it, Stacey's up for trouble. Is Loder taking you to the Head, Stacey?"

"No."

"Then that settles it."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Stacey, how did you get Loder to let you off? He wouldn't have let Wharton off."

"You see, I don't happen to have done anything to be let off for," said Stacey. "Can't you get that into your fat head?"

"But Loder said to Wharton—"

"Tea ready, you fellows?" asked Stacey, glancing at Ogilvy and Russell.

"I'm more than ready for tea, if you're not fearfully interested in Bunter's gabble."

He went into Study No. 3 with his friends.

A puzzled crowd was left in the Remove passage.

Wharton was the most puzzled of all.

It was a relief, in a way, to find that his relative was not to be sacked—glad as he would have been to see him leave the school on any other terms. But how he had escaped that fate was a mystery. Loder was not a dutiful prefect, and he often left duties undone. But why should he have left this duty undone, on account of a junior he hardly knew, and who was nothing to him?

How had Stacey made it worth his while to keep his mouth shut? That was what it boiled down to.

Wharton was not likely to guess.

But most of the other fellows took it for granted that, as Stacey was obviously not up for punishment, there was nothing in the story at all. And several fellows made it a point to kick Bunter for having started it. Stacey, just then, was the hero of the hour in the Remove—the fellow who was going to cover his Form with glory, by playing in the First Eleven. They little dreamed how he was going to play, when that great match came off.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

HORACE COKER started.

It was the following afternoon and Coker of the Fifth was extended in an armchair in the games study.

That apartment was often crowded by the Fifth, but just at present Coker had it to himself.

After class, Wingate had his men on Big Side for a little final practice before the big match on the morrow. Stacey of the Remove was at practice with the great men.

A numerous concourse of Greyfriars fellows watched them, seniors and juniors. But Coker was uninterested.

Coker was feeling bitter.

Coker had offered his valuable services for the Highcliffe match, and they had been refused, in a manner that nobody would have called polite.

A mere junior—a microbe of the Lower Fourth—had been chosen instead of the great Horace. Coker did not, like Loder, realise that Wingate had done a good thing for the side. Coker was clothed in conceit as in a garment. Coker's view was that Wingate was a hopeless idiot—and he wondered that all Greyfriars could not see that as clearly as he, Horace James Coker, could.

Thinking this over, as he sprawled in the deep armchair, Coker was irritated by footsteps and voices in the games study. He did not want to hear "cricket jaw"—he was feeling sore on the subject of cricket. But mere irritation turned to wonder and wrath, as the voice of Price of the Fifth fell on his ears.

It did not occur to him for the moment that Price did not know that anyone was there. Sprawling in the chair by the window, Coker was hidden by the high chair-back from fellows coming into the room.

"More fool you, Cedric!" he heard Stephen Price say. "If you'd taken my tip, you could have booked a bet at the same figure. What I make on the match to-morrow will set me up for some time."

"Easy money," said Hilton of the Fifth, with a faint note of contempt in his voice.

"I'm making a tenner, anyhow," said Price.

"If they pull it off, you mean."

"They'll pull it off all right. I've been watching that kid Stacey, and I can tell you Highcliffe are going to get the surprise of their lives. Larry Lascelles knew what he was talking about when he advised Wingate to try him in the First."

Hilton yawned.

"Well, I seem to have missed a good thing," he said. "But I think I'd rather miss it, thanks all the same, Priccy. There's a limit, you know—and bettin' on school matches is rather thick."

"Rot!" said Price.

Up rose Horace Coker!

He stared, or rather glared, at Hilton and Price, over the back of the armchair. Price gave a violent start. He saw at once that Coker had heard, and his thin lips came together hard. Price's reputation was none too good in his Form and it was not likely to be improved by the fellows hearing that he was making bets on school matches. That kind of thing could not be kept too dark.

"You rotter!" bawled Coker.

He came round the armchair.

"You worm!" he bawled.

Cedric Hilton laughed.

"Anythin' bitin' you, Coker?" he drawled.

Coker took no heed of the dandy of the Fifth. His glare of scorn and contempt was fixed on Stephen Price.

"You outsider!" he roared. "Making bets on school matches, what? What sort of a crawling worm do you call yourself?"

"Any bizney of yours?" inquired Hilton.



The Highcliffe man was undoubtedly a good man, but nobody had expected him to catch Stacey out first ball. But that was what he did. Stacey snicked the ball away, fairly into his hands, and the Highcliffe man held it safely!

"You shut up!" roared Coker. "I'm talking to Price. You crawling, cringing, sneaking, money-grubbing, unwashed rotter—"

"Let's get out of this," muttered Price, and he turned to the door.

Coker tramped across and put his back to the door. It was not, perhaps, exactly Coker's business what the "bad hat" of the Fifth did. But Coker, as often happened, did not confine his attention to his own business. Coker was angry, indignant, and disgusted; and in that frame of mind, Coker was not the fellow to make a secret of it.

"You just stop there!" said Coker grimly. "It would serve you jolly well right if I gave you away to Prout! I can't do that! But you're not going to disgrace the Form and get by with it. See?"

"You obstreperous fathead!" muttered Price.

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

"Where will you have it?" he inquired.

"Look here, Coker—" began Hilton.

"You shut up! Where will you have it, Price?"

Stephen Price did not seem to want it anywhere. He backed away from Coker in alarm.

"Look here, you silly ass—" he snarled.

Coker followed him up.

"Keep off, will you?" howled Price.

"No!" answered Coker. "I won't! I'm going to wallop you, as you jolly well deserve. That's for a start."

Coker jumped at Price, punching. Cedric Hilton put a foot in his way, and Coker, of course, tripped over it. He landed on the floor with a terrific bump, at Price's feet.

"Whoop!" roared Coker, as he landed.

Price made a strategic movement towards the door. But Coker bounded up like an indiarubber ball. He leaped after Price and grasped him.

"Now, you rotter—" he panted.

"Hands off!" yelled Price.

"I'll watch it!" growled Coker. It was a case of hands on, not off—and they were laid on hard!

Coker of the Fifth had a hefty punch. There were Sixth Form men who treated Coker with tact, in view of that hefty punch of his. Not for the tenner he expected to win from Loder, or for twice that sum, would Stephen Price willingly have faced that punch. But he had no choice now.

Coker's idea was to make it clear unto Price what he thought of a shady rotter who disgraced his Form. And there was no doubt that he made it abundantly clear.

Price, yelling and howling, was knocked right and left. Then Coker got his head into chancery.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Help me, Cedric, you fool!" howled Price frantically. "Ow! Oh, my hat! Lend me a hand! Drag him off! Wow!"

Hilton rushed to his aid. He grasped Coker to drag him off his hapless victim.

Coker freed one hand and swung it round. A terrific back-hander caught Cedric Hilton across the face and sent him spinning.

He crashed into a corner and lay there gasping.

Then Coker gave his attention to Price again.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Wow-ow-ow! Wow!"

Thump, thump!

"Yaroooh!"

"There!" gasped Coker. "I fancy

that will do! That'll teach you to disgrace the Fifth with your filthy bets on cricket matches! Yah!"

Hilton was picking himself up, when Coker spun Price round and flung him into the corner. He crashed on Hilton, flattening him down again. They mixed up in the corner.

Coker gave them a glare of scorn, tramped out of the games study, and slammed the door after him.

Price sat up dizzily! With one hand he caressed a damaged eye—with the other he dabbed a streaming nose. And his feelings were inexpressible in any known language.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Highcliffe Match!

"**R**OTTEN, I call it!" grunted Billy Bunter, the following morning.

"How's that, old fat man?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Well, what I mean is, that chap Stacey gets off third school," said the Owl of the Remove. "I dare say that's why he's so keen on playing for the First. I'd rather play cricket than grind with Qualch."

"Who wouldn't!" chuckled Bob.

"Well, it's rotten!" grumbled Bunter. "I'd have played for the First Eleven, if Wingate had asked me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I hope I'm as good a cricketer as Stacey, any day!" said Bunter warmly.

"The hopefulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter grunted discontentedly. It was

a glorious summer's morning. The day of the Highcliffe fixture. Highcliffe were coming over early, and the fellows expected to see the game begin in break.

After break, the fellows who were not cricketering had to go into the Form-rooms. Stacey, as a member of the eleven, was excused class, like the other cricketers—the only man in the Remove who was. Which Billy Bunter pronounced to be rotten. The fat Owl, as he declared, would willingly have played cricket, or anything else, rather than have gone in with Quelch.

"I wish Wingate wanted another man!" sighed Bob Cherry. "I've heard that Larry tipped him to play Stacey! I wish Larry had tipped him to play a few more of the Remove! Good for the team, what?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, Stacey's the prize-packet!" he said. "I hope he's in form and won't let them down. He doesn't seem to look fearfully bucked."

"I've noticed that!" agreed Bob. "Stage fright, perhaps. It's a bit of an ordeal going on with First Eleven men."

"He's generally got plenty of nerve."

"Well, he ought to be bucked," remarked Frank Nugent. "There isn't a man in the Form who wouldn't jump at the chance of changing places with him."

"What-ho!" said Bob.

"The jumpfulness would be preposterous!" sighed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, it's something to have a Remove man in the First Eleven," said Ogilvy. "Even if you don't happen to like him, Wharton!" he added, with a grin.

The Greyfriars fellows were coming out after second school. Every fellow was thinking of the cricket match.

In the circumstances, considering the glory and distinction that had fallen to his lot, Ralph Stacey might have been expected to look "bucked."

But Wharton was not the only fellow who noticed that he did not look bucked, or anything like it.

In the Form-room that morning he

had been very quiet and thoughtful, and more than once a deep cloud had settled over his brow. He had been, for once, inattentive to Quelch.

But Quelch was very considerate. He supposed that Stacey was thinking about the First Eleven match.

Certainly, fellows were not supposed to think about games in the Form-room—though, as a matter of fact, they often did. But this was a very great and special occasion. Quelch was gratified by the distinction that had fallen to his head boy, and only too pleased to give him the necessary leave from third school.

Stacey, coming out with the Remove, walked away by himself, his hands thrust deep into his pockets.

He had to change for the game, but he did not seem to be thinking of that. His face was thoughtful, clouded. Some of the fellows who noticed it wondered, like Bob, if it was stage fright. It was no light matter for a Lower Fourth junior to join up with the giants of the Sixth and Fifth.

That kind of dubiety, however, was never likely to trouble Stacey; he had, as Wharton said, nerve enough for anything. Nobody in the Remove dreamed of what was on his mind.

Hard as he was, unscrupulous as he was, Stacey was deeply uneasy at what lay before him. Apart from his natural desire to distinguish himself in such a match, he would have liked to keep faith if he could.

To keep faith at all risks, he knew perfectly well, was what he ought to have done. But he had to pay Loder of the Sixth the price of silence.

He was going to do it! According to his own selfish view, he had no choice in the matter. But to his credit, be it said, he was not going to do it without deep twinges of shame and remorse.

Stacey, envied by all the Lower School that morning, was not, in truth, much of an object of envy.

Russell and Ogilvy did not leave him long to himself. They ran him down in the quad, and marched him off to help him change.

Most of the Remove went down to Big Side in break. Most of the other

Forms gathered there also. The Highcliffe seniors had come over, and everybody was anxious to see the beginning of the game. If Highcliffe took the first knock they might have a chance of seeing the Remove recruit bagging Highcliffe wickets before the ball went.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle. "I say, look at Pricey! Have you seen Pricey?"

The Famous Five smiled as they glanced at the sportsman of the Fifth, who had come down to the field with Hilton.

Price had a damaged look.

His nose was swollen, and there was a dark shade under one eye. Prout, in the Fifth Form Room, had asked Price what had caused the damage, and Price had told the old punch-ball story, which was good enough for Mr. Prout.

He dared not mention that Coker had punched him, lest it should transpire why Coker had done it. It was all very well for Price to regard betting on the school matches as the sporting thing to do, but he hardly dared think of what would happen if the Head heard of it.

"There's a picture for you!" grinned Bob Cherry, alluding to Price's decorated visage. "I hear he was scrapping with Coker in the games study yesterday."

"Ho, he, he!" from Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you why, too!"

"Oh, of course, Bunter's heard!" remarked Johnny Bull. "What key-hole were you at, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Bull! I happened to hear Coker speaking to Potter and Greene. Of course, I wasn't listening to—"

"You hear things without listening!" remarked Nugent.

"Yes, I mean, I happened to hear Coker tell his pals why he pitched into Price, quite by accident, of course. You see, Coker found out that Pricey had been laying money on this match."

"The dingy rotter!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Price all over!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Coker's a howling ass, but if he punched Pricey for that, more power to his giddy elbow."

"Well, that's it!" grinned Bunter. "Coker said he'd like to find out who Price made the bet with and he'd punch him, too! He thought it was one of those sporting men in the Sixth. Whoever it is, he must be backing Highcliffe, as Price backed Greyfriars. Frightfully unpatriotic, you know."

"Loder, or Carne, or Walker, if it's a Sixth Form man," said Bob. "Nobody else in the Sixth would do it."

"Pity the Head doesn't know!" said Harry Wharton, with a curl of his lip. "Hallo, there's jolly old Coker!"

Horace Coker came along with Greene. The latter was not looking very bright. He had hoped for the place that had been assigned to Stacey of the Remove.

"Lot of rot!" Coker was saying. "Playing a measly fag, and leaving out a Fifth Form man! Wingate's a fool!"

"Well, I'd have liked a show!" said Greene.

"Eh? You? You're no good, old chap!" said Coker. "No more good than Potter, old fellow! That ass Wingate has put Potter in. Now, as a candid fellow, would you say, for a minute, that Potter's bowling was anything like mine?"

"No fear!" said Greene. "If it was, he wouldn't be playing."

And the juniors chuckled at that reply.

"Don't be a cheeky ass, Greeney!" said Coker, frowning. "Hallo, here's that worm Price! I've a jolly good mind to lick him! I told you why I



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punched him yesterday in the games study—"

"Don't tell all the school, you ass!" grunted Greene.

"Well, I wish I knew who the other rotter was! He's pretty thick with Loder," said Coker. "I've a jolly good mind—"

The juniors grinned at one another as the great Horace passed out of hearing. Perhaps it was just as well for Coker that he did not know who the "other rotter" was; for he would have been booked for very bad trouble if he had handled a Sixth Form man as he had handled Price of the Fifth.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's Stacey!"

There was a cheer from the Remove as Ralph Stacey appeared among the cricketers. Sturdy as he was, he looked very slight among the big seniors.

They noticed that some of the Highcliffe men glanced at him curiously. Some of them heard Langley, the Highcliffe captain, speak to Wingate:

"Is that young Wharton? I've seen him playing in junior matches at Highcliffe! You're playing him?"

"It's not Wharton—it's a relation of his, named Stacey!" answered Wingate. "Yes, I'm playing him. He's rather hot stuff."

Langley stared at Stacey. Certainly, he looked every inch a cricketer; but that he was such "hot stuff" as to be worthy of a place in a First Eleven match, the Highcliffe captain was not likely to believe—till he saw with his own eyes!

Wingate won the toss, and, on a perfect wicket, elected to bat. It was rather a disappointment to the spectators who wanted to see Stacey bowl. But they had the satisfaction of seeing Wingate and Blundell begin knocking up runs before the bell went for third school. Then the Greyfriars crowd trooped off unwillingly to their Form-rooms, and left the cricketers to get on with it.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not as per Programme!

MR. QUELCH had a far from attentive class in third school that morning.

Almost every man in the Remove was thinking of what was going on on Big Side.

Not always did the juniors take so keen an interest in a First Eleven game. But the fact that a Remove man was in it made all the difference.

The Remove recruit was well down in the batting list; he was played for his bowling, not his batting. But he was so good a bat, that Remove men expected him to make a good stand, even against First Eleven bowling, and they wanted to see him do it. Every fellow was anxious to be out of the Form-room in time to see Stacey take his knock.

Mr. Quelch had to exercise patience in that lesson. But he was in an unusually mild and benignant mood—no doubt because he was so pleased at the distinction awarded to his head boy.

Seldom had the Lower Fourth been so inattentive to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of Henry Samuel Quelch; seldom had they asked so recklessly for lines and detentions. But there were no lines and no detentions; and Mr. Quelch was still mild and benignant when he dismissed his Form.

With a rush of hurried feet, the Remove swept out and raced down to the cricket field. All Forms were concentrating there. A sea of eyes turned on the scoreboard.

"Eighty for eight!" said Bob Cherry,

"They'll be through before tiffin, at this rate!"

"Highcliffe are bowling well!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"Wait till they see Stacey bowl!"

"Let's hope he'll come off!" said Nugent.

"Oh, he'll come off all right!" said Bob. "Thank goodness it's a half-holiday to-day! Stacey will be worth watching!"

"Yes, rather!" said Ogilvy.

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes Bancroft—he made first slip a present of that!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Eighty for nine!" said Vernon-Smith. "Last man in—"

Ogilvy grunted.

"Rather fatheaded of Wingate to leave Stacey to the end of the tail," he said. "He can bat better than a lot of these Sixth Form men."

"We'll see him do it, if Potter gives him a chance!" said Russell.

Potter of the Fifth was at the other end when Stacey came in as last man. Stacey had the bowling.

Plenty of the Removites agreed with Oggy that Stacey was worthy of a more honoured place than the "end of the tail." Still, as he was last on the list, they were out in time to see him bat, which was something. They only hoped that Potter would survive long enough to give him a chance. Potter of the Fifth was a bowler; as a bat, he was in the tail. All the Remove agreed that it was rough luck on Stacey.

"Anyhow, he's got the bowling," said Russell, "and if Potter has sense enough to keep his sticks up for a few overs—"

"Well, it's Stacey's bowling that Wingate wants," remarked the Bounder.

"His batting isn't the point."

Sniff from Ogilvy.

"They haven't done so jolly well at batting—nine down for 80!" he answered. "I can tell you that Stacey—"

Ogilvy broke off.

He stared, his eyes seeming to pop from his head.

The Highcliffe man at first slip was undoubtedly a good man, but nobody had expected him to catch Stacey out first ball.

But that was what he did.

Stacey nicked the ball away, fairly into his hands, and he caught it and grinned as he held it up.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Russell.

"Stacey—out for a duck!" gasped the Bounder. "Oh, gad! Is he going to crock up now, as he did in the St. Jude's match for us?"

"Duck's eggs are cheap!" cackled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I can jolly well tell you I shouldn't have landed a catch like that! Talk about making them a present of it—"

"I've said all along that that chap has a lot of luck!" said Hazel, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It's let him down now."

"Nerves, perhaps—first time in a First Eleven match!" remarked Bob Cherry. "His bowling will be all right."

"Look at that!" came Coker's booming voice. "I wonder what Wingate expected! Rotten!"

"Shut up, Coker, you fathead!"

"After all, it's his bowling that's wanted!" said Ogilvy, recovering from the shock. "Perhaps Wingate was right to leave him for the last man. Never mind that—wait till you see him bowl!"

"All down for 80!" said the Bounder. "Nothing to write home about! Stacey's a queer fish. Sometimes you'd think he ought to be playing for his

county, and next day he fumbles a ball like a Second Form fag!"

Harry Wharton's eyes were on Stacey curiously. He knew why the fellow had crooked up in the Remove match at St. Jude's. Was there something of the same kind the matter with him now? True, he was undergoing a big ordeal for a junior, but he had fairly made Highcliffe a present of his wicket.

"Rough luck, Stacey!" said Wingate genially when the Remove recruit came back to the pavilion.

The Greyfriars captain was disappointed, but he was not the man to discourage a player. Moreover, he had not expected a junior to make much of a stand against bowling that had taken severe toll of First Eleven wickets. He was not wholly surprised by that duck—being far from sharing the great expectations of the Remove men.

"Sorry!" muttered Stacey.

"My dear kid, it's all right!" said Wingate, giving him a cheery tap on the shoulder. "It's your bowling we want, you know! Right as rain!"

Stacey bit his under-lip hard.

The unsuspecting confidence of his skipper made him feel hot all over with shame. Nobody knew that he had thrown his wicket away or dreamed of suspecting it—except Loder of the Sixth! Loder had expected it, and grinned when he saw it! Stacey was glad to get away from Wingate's eyes.

The Greyfriars innings had ended unexpectedly early, and there was time for Highcliffe to get going before lunch. Ogilvy gave Russell a joyful dig in the ribs when Greyfriars went into the field.

"Now we'll see!" he remarked.

"We jolly well will!" agreed Russell.

The Remove cheered when Stacey was put on to bowl the first over, against Langley.

They watched, all eyes!

Now for the fireworks!

Keenest of all, watched Price and Loder.

The former, like the crowd, expected fireworks. The latter did not. And it was the latter who was right.

The fireworks did not materialise.

Whether Stacey was suffering from "nerves" under the ordeal of a First Eleven match, whether he was off colour, or whatever the reason was, his bowling had lost all its sting.

The Greyfriars fellows could hardly believe that this was the same man who had mopped up Wingate at the nets. He did not mop up Highcliffe wickets.

That over gave Langley ten.

Larry Lascelles, who was umpire at one end, gave him very curious looks. Wingate's face lengthened. Both of them wondered whether a mistake had been made—whether they had expected too much of a fellow who was, after all, only a junior. Stephen Price's face lengthened more than Wingate's. Longest of all were the faces of Ogilvy and Russell.

Potter of the Fifth bowled the next over, and captured a wicket. Stacey bowled again—and failed again. There was no fall of wickets—there were no catches in the field—there was nothing. The Remove men watched in glum silence.

At lunch-time Highcliffe were 30 for one wicket. And the Greyfriars fellows could only hope that Stacey would pick up his lost form when the game was resumed after lunch. That hope was doomed to disappointment.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Traitor in the Ranks!

HARRY WHARTON rose from his seat in the grass. "Coming?" he asked. "Oh, stick it out!" said Bob. "Fed up!" answered Harry briefly. And he walked away.

After lunch the resumption of the Highcliffe innings had given Stacey a chance to display his form, if he had recovered it.

Evidently he hadn't.

Wingate, hoping against hope, unwilling to realise that he had made so serious a mistake, gave him over after over.

But it came to nothing.

From whatever cause, Stacey was putting up a very bad show. Not merely was he not good enough for a First Eleven match. He was hardly good enough for a junior game. His bowling was about worthy of the "small game" of the fags.

Wingate finally took him off, and Potter did yeoman's work, with change bowlers to help him out.

The Removites, at least, hoped that Stacey would bring off some of his brilliant catches in the field. Instead of which, he missed every chance, dropping two or three that were perfect "sitters."

Even Ogilvy and Russell had to admit that he was absolutely no good, and that the First Eleven was practically a side of ten men.

Stacey, it seemed, was hopelessly off colour, throwing away the chance of his life.

There were other thoughts in Harry Wharton's mind. A cynical whisper from the Bounder had brought him there. Vernon-Smith, keen and suspicious by nature, had formed his own theory to account for Stacey's lamentable failure to fulfil expectations.

"You've heard the talk about Pricey betting on the school in this match?" he murmured to Wharton. "Know who the other man was?"

"No."

"Somebody's backing Highcliffe—what?"

"I suppose so."

"And somebody's trying to help Highcliffe win!" said the Bounder, with an unpleasant grin.

Wharton stared at him, hardly understanding for a moment. Then he felt a thrill of something like horror. Was that it?

Evidently the Bounder suspected it.

"What awful rot, Smithy!" he breathed. "For the love of Mike, don't let anybody hear you talk such piffle."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. Wharton lay in the grass for some time, thinking it over. It was impossible—it was too utterly rotten, even for a fellow like Stacey! Besides, a Fifth Form man, even a rotter like Price, would never make bets with a Remove junior. Smithy was a rotter to think of such a thing. It was wildly impossible. And yet—

Wharton walked away from the field.

He was, as he had told his friends, fed up. He was not keenly interested in seeing Highcliffe pile up runs at the expense of Greyfriars. Still less was he disposed to see a Greyfriars fellow playing into the hands of the enemy.

For, though he discarded the suspicion and strove to drive it from his mind, it was not to be got rid of. Nobody but the Bounder, probably, would have thought of such an idea, but it did explain Stacey's hopeless failure in the game where so much had been expected of him.

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Harry Wharton walked back to the House.

Nearly everybody else was on Big Side, including all his friends, and it was rather dismal "mooching" about by himself. But nothing would have drawn him to cricket again, with such thoughts in his mind.

As it happened—frequently—he had lines on hand for Mr. Quelch. He went to his study to write them, to fill up time, and decided after that to go down to the junior nets and get the groundsman to bowl to him. He had to fill in the afternoon; and he was more than fed up with the Highcliffe match.

Meanwhile, the Highcliffe innings was going strong.

Potter was doing his best, but Sykes of the Sixth, watching from the pavilion, mournfully regarded it as a very poor best. The change bowlers could not damage Highcliffe.

The fact was that the Greyfriars First Eleven was weak in bowlers, and the loss of Sykes had put the lid on, now that it had been proved that the Remove recruit was no good.

With Highcliffe seven down for 110, the most hopeful men on the home side could not help being pessimistic.

Indeed, Langley & Co. were thinking that they would probably not have to bat a second time at all.

It was then that a change came over Stacey.

The traitor in the ranks was feeling absolutely sick with himself. More than once he had been tempted to play up, as he knew that he could if he liked, and defy Loder.

But he dared not.

Loder of the Sixth was in the watching crowd, his eyes on him. More than once Stacey glimpsed him there.

Perhaps it was because Loder strolled away, to go to his study for a quiet smoke, that a change came over Stacey. No longer under his watchful eye, he had a feeling of relief.

He dared not break his compact with Loder. It was a report to the Head, and the "sack" if he did.

But he told himself that there was no need to overdo the thing.

After such a pitiful display as this, he would, of course, never be tried in a senior game again. It was dubious whether Tom Brown would ever trust him to play for the Remove. That was utter disaster to a fellow who, with all his faults, was the keenest of cricketers. So long as Highcliffe won, the bully of the Sixth would be satisfied. There was no need to make their victory an overwhelming one. And Stacey was yearning to show what he could do if he liked.

As the field crossed he came up to Wingate.

"Will you let me take a few overs, Wingate?" he muttered.

The Greyfriars captain looked doubtful.

"I'd like to try again," muttered Stacey.

"Well, I'm not blaming you, kid, for crocking up like this," said Wingate kindly. "It was my mistake. But what's the good?"

"Just give me another chance."

Wingate smiled faintly.

"Well, it won't do any harm, if it doesn't do any good," he conceded. "Here, Potter, let Stacey take the ball."

There was a movement of some interest when it was seen that Stacey was going to the bowling end.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! They're putting Stacey on again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

And he sat up and took notice.

"Fat lot of good!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, you never know!" said Bob. "Hope for the best till you see the jolly old worst."

The Bounder watched, with a sneering grin. But he stared after the first ball. There was a roar from the Remove.

"Oh, well bowled! Well bowled, Stacey!"

And a Highcliffe man walked out.

"Hurrah!" roared Ogilvy and Russell.

"He can handle the Highcliffe tail!" said John Bull.

It looked as if Stacey could! For the next wicket went down to the next ball; and the next to the next!

Electrified, the Greyfriars crowd roared applause for the hat-trick!

Wingate thumped his bowler on the back.

"Good man! Good man!" he exclaimed.

"Bravo, Stacey!"

"Good man!"

"Hurrah!"

Stacey had jumped back into popularity at a bound. Three wickets in a single over—it showed what he could do! The Highcliffe innings, instead of going on till tea-time, collapsed suddenly. All down for 110. Langley & Co. had to reverse their opinion about not having to bat again.

Stacey was surrounded by rejoicing friends when the field came off. Price of the Fifth, who had been suffering anguish, breathed again. And Loder of the Sixth, when a fellow strolled into his study and told him of the hat-trick by Stacey, nearly had a fit.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Cat Out of the Bag!

"**Y**OU young rotter!" breathed Loder.

Harry Wharton looked at him.

Loder's face was dark with anger, which he seemed to find it hard to control, though he lowered his voice lest other ears should hear.

Wharton was simply astonished.

He had not spoken to Loder, and had hardly seen him since the affair about the "catch" at the Cross Keys. He had almost forgotten his existence.

Why Loder come up to him now, his eyes glinting with suppressed rage, was just a mystery to him.

The Highcliffe match had stopped for tea, with Greyfriars two down for twenty on their second innings.

Wharton was not thinking about it. After finishing the lines in his study, he had changed into flannels and gone down to the deserted nets, where a groundsman gave him some bowling. Now he was coming back to the House to tea.

From talk among fellows he passed, he heard that Stacey had wound up the Highcliffe innings with the hat-trick, and that Greyfriars were in. It did not occur to him—there was no reason why it should—that Loder was disturbed by the news, and watching for a chance to speak to Stacey away from the other cricketers. Neither did it occur to him that, being in cricket flannels, he was taken for Stacey.

So he was simply puzzled.

"If you think you can play tricks—" went on Loder, in the same tone.

"Tricks!" repeated Harry.

"Yes, you double-dealing young rascal! I want to know what you're up to. Come this way!" muttered



"Let go my arm, Wharton, you fool!" snarled Stacey, his eyes gleaming. "Do you want me to knock you down before all the school?" "Do you want me to go to Wingate, and open his eyes to what you're doing?" asked Wharton contemptuously. "Do you want all Greyfriars to know you're throwing away a match to help Loder win a filthy bet?"

Loder. "I don't want everybody to hear."

"But what—"

"Do as I tell you."

"Oh, all right!"

In sheer wonder Wharton followed him under the elms. A prefect's order had to be obeyed; little as he respected that particular prefect.

But he was utterly perplexed to know what was coming.

Stacey, as a matter of fact, did not want to see Loder, and was taking care to keep out of his way while the cricketers were off the field. If that hat-trick gave the bully of the Sixth dubious qualms, he was glad of it—his feelings towards Loder were bitter enough.

Had Wharton been, like the other fellows, in his school clothes, Loder would not have made this mistake. But seeing him in flannels, Loder, looking for Stacey, had no doubt that he had found him!

Naturally, he did not guess that Wharton had left the crowd and changed for a little cricket practice on his lonely own! He was looking for a fellow exactly like Wharton, but in flannels! And he had found one!

"Now, listen to me," said Loder, when they were safe out of other hearing. "We've got to have this straight! You carried on as arranged as long as I was on the field—directly my back was turned you started showing off."

This was Greek to the wondering Wharton.

"If you fancy I don't mean to get you at it, get that out of your mind at once," went on Loder. "My report goes in to the Head this evening if Greyfriars get through. Make no mistake about that!"

"Your report!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, you tricky young rascal! Whether it's the sack or a flogging, you'll get one or the other—and you can bank on it that I'll try my hardest to make it the sack if you let me down!"

"Let you down!" repeated Wharton, parrot-like in amazement. "Who's letting you down—and how?"

"What do you mean by that hat-trick, then?" snarled Loder.

"That hat-trick?"

"Yes, you young rotter! If you were only wanting to show off what you could do, if you liked, all very well—so long as you keep to the arrangement. But it's risky—too jolly risky! Don't you take any more risks like that! Highcliffe have got to win—with plenty of margin. See?"

Wharton gazed at him dumbfounded.

"If Wingate gets away with this, after chucking me out of the team, I'll make you sorry for it!" muttered Loder. "Mark my words, you know what it means if I report you to the Head for going to the Cross Keys! By gad, I'll make you sorry for yourself if you let me down!"

Wharton stood as if stupefied. But the meaning of all this was dawning on him now.

"Look here," muttered Loder. "you've heard the talk about Price's bet, owing to that fool Coker gabbling all over the shop. I dare say you've guessed whom he bet with. Is that what you've got in your mind?"

Wharton stood speechless.

"If that's it, I'll do the fair thing! I stand to win a tenner from Price over the match! I promise you a whack in it if that's what you're thinking of. I don't want to be mean about it."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"But if I lose a tenner to Price, look

out, that's all!" said Loder. "Now, put it plain, you young sweep! Are you sticking to the arrangement or not?"

It was clear enough to Harry now. He had wondered why Loder had let Stacey off over the Cross Keys affair. Now he knew!

Stacey had not been let off—rather, he had been "played" like a trout on a line. He was to be let off, if he gratified Loder's grudge against Wingate, and helped him to win his bet with Price, by giving away the Highcliffe match! Smithy had guessed fairly accurately, after all—though he had not, of course, guessed that Loder was pulling the strings.

"Answer me, you little idiot!" snapped Loder. "We can't stand here talking—somebody will notice! Can't you speak?"

"Oh, yes!" gasped Wharton. "I'll tell you something, Loder—"

"What do you mean?"

"You're making another mistake! I suppose you fancy you're speaking to Stacey—"

Loder jumped.

"What? What do you mean? You're Stacey—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Did you think so because I'm in flannels? I happen to be Wharton—"

"You young liar!" hissed Loder.

"Are you trying to put the wind up me—"

"I'm Wharton!" said Harry coolly.

Loder looked at him as if he could have bitten him. He could hardly believe that he had made such a disastrous error.

"What have you changed into flannels for, then? What—" He broke off. "Wharton! Oh gad! If you repeat a word of this—"

He choked:

"I shall repeat exactly as much as I think fit!" said Harry coolly. "And, first of all, I'm going to speak to Stacey! I know now why he's throwing the game awry, and I'm going to stop him! And if you take him to the Head afterwards, Loder, I'll come, too, and tell the Head what you've just said to me!"

And with that Harry Wharton turned and walked away, leaving Gerald Loder transfixed.

Loder's face was white as chalk as he watched him go.

He had given himself away utterly, and there was something very like terror in his heart as Wharton left him.

Wharton walked back to the House. Price of the Fifth spotted him in the quad, and cut across to speak to him. Seeing him in flannels, Price, like Loder, took him for Stacey.

"Hold on a minute, kid," said Price anxiously. "I say, I've been watching your game, and I was jolly glad to see you bring off that hat-trick! Look here, for goodness' sake pull yourself together after tea—everybody's fearfully disappointed—"

Wharton looked at him and laughed.

"Don't worry, Price!" he answered. "I think you'll win your tenner from Loder! I don't think you'll be allowed to stick to it—but you'll win it all right, I fancy!"

And he walked on before Stephen Price could answer, leaving the Fifth Form sportsman staring after him blankly.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Play the Game!

"STACEY!"

"Don't bother!"

"Must!" said Wharton curtly.

Stacey gave his relative and double an evil look.

The cricketers were gathering at the pavilion again, and Stacey was not in a happy or pleasant mood.

The cheering that had greeted his hat-trick had been like wine to him, and from the bottom of his heart he longed to play up and do his best for Greyfriars. But he knew that he dared not, and the prospect before him was dismal enough. Apart from the treachery which weighed on his mind and his conscience, he had to throw away a unique chance of distinguishing himself—as a junior winning glory in a First Eleven match. He was in no mood to be bothered by anyone, least of all by the relative whom he bitterly disliked.

"Leave me alone!" he snapped, and would have swung on, but Wharton seized his arm and stopped him.

Stacey's eyes glittered at him.

"Let go my arm, you fool! Do you want me to knock you down before all the school?" he snarled.

"Do you want me to go to Wingate and open his eyes to what you're doing?" asked Harry contemptuously. "Do you want all Greyfriars to know you're throwing away a match to help Loder win a filthy bet from a Fifth Form man?"

Stacey stopped dead.

"Are you mad?" he breathed. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that that fool Loder, taking me for you, has gabbled it all out, and I know the whole game!" said Harry.

Stacey almost staggered.

"Come with me," said Harry quietly. "You're not wanted till the end of the innings—lots of time. Come!"

Stacey followed him without a word.

Many glances fell on the two juniors, so strangely alike, as they walked away from the pavilion.

Wingate went out to the wickets with Gwynne; Stacey, as before, was last man. He was not likely to be wanted yet.

Russell and Ogilvy and the famous Co. stared at the two juniors, astonished to see them walking away together. Heedless of curious glances, Wharton and Stacey left the field, and stopped under one of the shady old elms.

"Now what do you mean?" breathed Stacey. "If you mean that you've got hold of something wrong and mean to make a tale out of it—"

"Cut all that out!" said Harry scornfully. "I've had it all from Loder—and I know exactly what you're doing. You've got to stop it."

"Stop what?" asked Stacey fiercely.

"What you're doing—playing for the other side!" said Harry. "Loder's not going to win his bet on Highcliffe."

"I know nothing about his bets."

"That may be true. But you've failed Wingate deliberately, and you mean to go on as you've started. You've got to stop it! I'll do you the credit of believing that you're doing it unwillingly."

Wharton's lip curled. "You're afraid of Loder taking you to the Head. Well, that's over."

"You seem to know all about it!" muttered Stacey. "I fancy you couldn't prove anything, though. And if you think I'm going to be sacked—"

"Can't you see that Loder's teeth are drawn now?" snapped Wharton. "He dare not rake up that Cross Keys business now. I've told him that if he does I shall go to the Head, too, and you know what that means! Do you think Loder wants the Head to know that he offered to let a man off on condition that he betrayed his side in a cricket match?"

Stacey stood silent, looking at him.

"By gad!" he said at last. "You're right! You mean to say that Loder let it out to you?"

"He let the cat out of the bag thinking he was speaking to you. That hat-trick alarmed him," said Wharton scornfully. "He was afraid you were going to do the decent thing. Well, he gave himself away pretty completely, and I left him shivering with funk. You've nothing to fear from Loder now. If he gets off with losing a tenner to Price, he gets off cheap—and he knows it!"

Stacey nodded slowly.

His eyes danced.

"By gum! They'd lynch him if they knew, and you could tell them—"

"I'm telling you!"

Stacey laughed.

"I never thought there'd be a time when I should feel grateful to you, Wharton!" he said. "But one never knows! I can tell you this. I'm as keen on beating Highcliffe as any man in the field, and I'd have gone all out to do it if I hadn't been under Loder's thumb."

"You're not under his thumb any longer. You can play the game now."

"I know. You watch me in their next innings!" said Stacey, with a deep breath. "I tell you I'm at the top of my form, and I've taken the measure of their batting—I know what I can do. I never knew Loder had a bet on it—I thought it was all spite against Wingate. But I'm glad of it. I wish he had his shirt on it—he'd lose his shirt! By gum! Leave it to me!"

He walked back to the cricket field. Wharton saw him laughing as he went.

Evidently he was looking forward to the rest of the match now—with very different intentions.

Wharton made a gesture of repugnance.

The whole affair made him feel sick; but he was glad, at least, that he had been able to put paid to Loder—glad, too, that had saved his relative from playing the traitor at Loder's dictation. There was this much to be said for Stacey—that he had been an unwilling traitor. Now that he no longer had anything to fear he was glad of the chance to do the decent thing.

Wharton rejoined his friends on the ground.

"Going to see the finish?" asked Bob.

"Yes; it may be worth seeing, after all."

"You seem to be getting pally with Stacey."

"What rot!"

"Well, I don't know what you've been jawing to him about, but he looks all the better for it!" grinned Bob. "Look at him now."

Stacey, standing at the pavilion with the waiting batsmen, certainly looked very merry and bright. A load was off his mind.

The Greyfriars innings went on till last man was called, and Stacey again partnered Potter of the Fifth at the wickets.

The Greyfriars' batsmen had failed again, and the score stood at 60, and nobody expected it to be much increased—another duck was looked for.

But there was no duck this time!

"By gad!" said Wingate, when Stacey knocked the ball away for 4.

Ogilvy gave a chirrup of glee.

"See that?" he demanded.

"Not blind, old man!" grinned Bob. "He's picked up a bit."

The next was for 3, and being the last ball of the over, Stacey still had the bowling. The over gave him 12.

"What about that?" chortled Russell. Once more Ogilvy and Russell wore proud of their chum.

"Oh, ripping!" said Bob.

"The ripfulness is terrific."

"I tell you, it was a mistake to put him in last!" declared Ogilvy. "But if Potter only holds out—"

Unluckily, Potter did not hold out—he went out! The score was at 79, Stacey not out for nineteen. Price of the Fifth smiled! Loder, if he had been there, would certainly not have smiled. But Loder was not there. Loder was sticking in his study in a very unenviable state of uneasiness of mind.

"Now wait till you see him bowl!" said Oggy blissfully.

And it proved to be worth waiting for!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Well Won!

CRICKET is well said to be a game of glorious uncertainty.

Never had its glorious uncertainty been more clearly exemplified than in that match—owing to the very peculiar circumstances.

The Highcliffe second innings kept the Greyfriars crowd in an almost continuous roar.

One name was on every tongue.

It was the name of Stacey of the Remove.

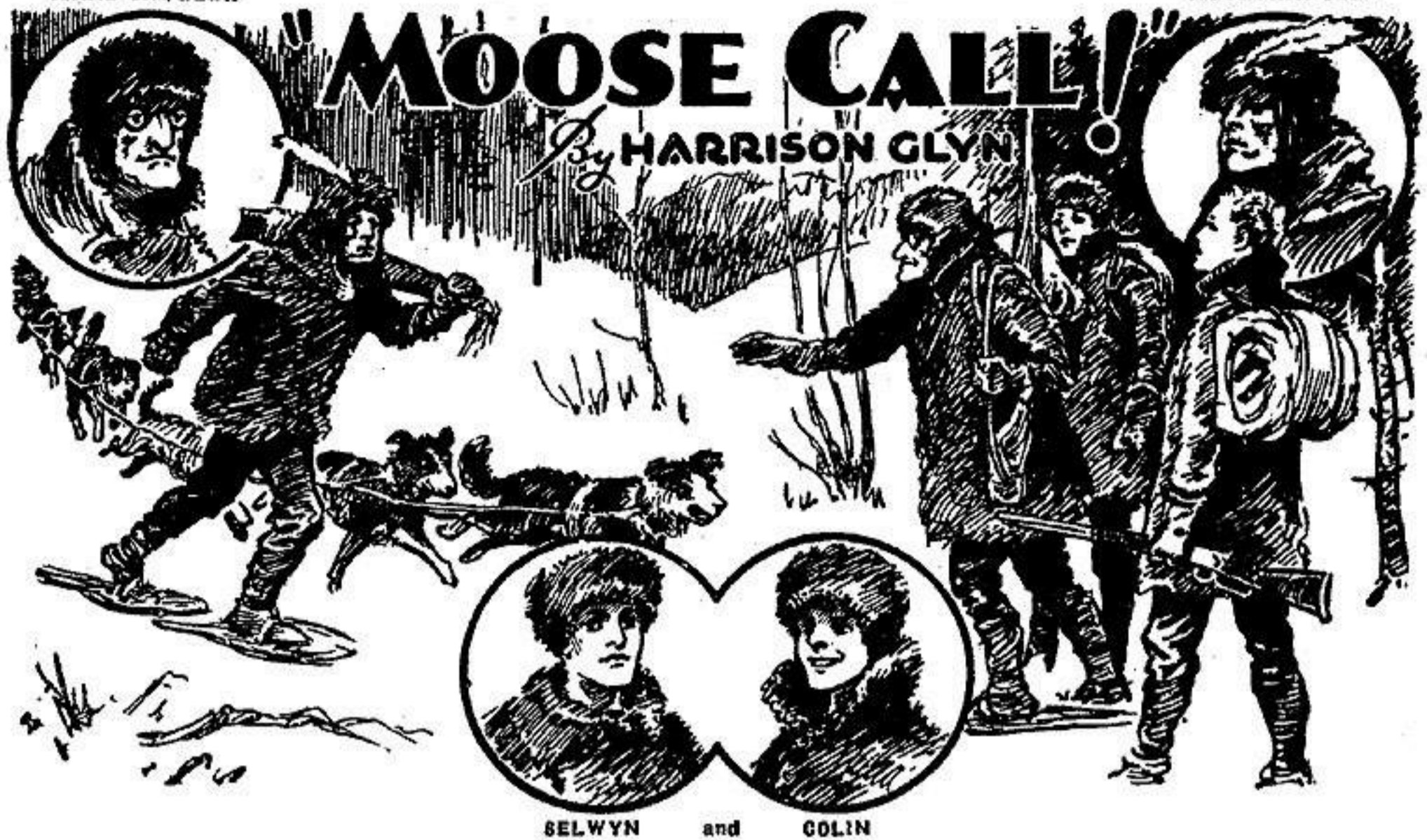
Highcliffe, rather contrary to their early expectations, had to bat a second time, but they looked on it rather as a matter of form. Having taken 110 in their first innings, and wanting only 49 to tie, 50 to win, in their second innings, they regarded the thing as all over bar shouting.

It wasn't!

(Continued on page 28.)

ISAAC SNUGGER

MOUNTAIN LION



SELWYN and COLIN

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Having been informed that their Uncle Amyas, a gold prospector, has been murdered in Canada, Selwyn Gore and his brother, Colin, set out for Moose Call, determined to settle accounts with the murderers. En route, the boys meet Mountain Lion, a Sioux Indian and an old friend of Amyas Gore, who leads them to the Great Chief's Head, in the Sunrise Mountains, where they discover the murdered man's claim. Leaving the Indian to keep watch, Selwyn and Colin make for the homeward trail to register the claim. They are ambushed, however, by a gang of toughs, chief among whom are Majoe and Musty, two villainous rascals who are determined to gain possession of the claim. The boys are tied hand and foot and given until the morning to divulge the whereabouts of the gold claim or suffer the consequences.

(Now read on.)

The Stampede!

FEEL any pain?" asked Selwyn, when the toughs had settled down to sleep.

"Only that my limbs are swollen and my head is throbbing."

"Poor kid!" murmured Selwyn sympathetically. "And I can't help."

He wanted to talk about Mountain Lion, but feared the conversation might be overheard. What had happened to the Sioux? Could he have been watching on the hills? Had he been lazily sleeping when the gang of murderers rode by? Of course, if Mountain Lion had seen them, he might have gone back to the camp and roused up Red Bull and his Sioux braves. But would Red Bull bother about two white men? Mountain Lion might care, for he had been Amyas Gore's Red brother, but the rest—

A sudden scraping noise on the cliff not far away caused Selwyn to roll over and look. At first he could see nothing unusual. But as his eyes grew accustomed to the glow of cooling embers and the rising moon, he noticed that the horses had scattered and were peering upward at the cliff face above them.

They stood tense, strained, watching.

Following the direction of their gaze, Selwyn caught his breath, for he saw the figure of a man spreadeagled like a bat against the steep cliff face.

"Colin," he whispered tensely, "look up at the cliff!"

Colin in turn rolled over and looked, and he, too, saw.

The figure came slowly down, feeling with moccasined foot for a grip at the narrow ledges and fissures. A loose stone rattled down and the figure hung motionless. But Blackbeard and his gang were sleeping soundly, and none heard.

The figure was clad in leather trousers, fringed along the outer seams. Selwyn saw a knife in a case strapped to the body belt.

Copper-coloured hands gripped the cliff, and every now and then the man dropped his head to cast a glance below. Selwyn and Colin heard him murmur hissing, a sound the horses seemed to understand, for though they pricked up their ears, they made no attempt to bolt.

Feathers showed in the band about the man's straight black hair, and his leather jacket was both fringed and beaded. The man was a Red Indian. It was the faithful Sioux, Mountain Lion, and Selwyn had not a shadow of a doubt but that he had trailed Majoe and his murderous gang to this place, and was now bent on rescuing their prisoners.

Selwyn prayed that the Red Indian might land safely.

Nearer and nearer to the ground the climber came, and just when he had only another twenty feet or so to go, a jutting, bushy ledge on which he had set his weight suddenly broke away from under him. Rock and shale and dust came hurtling to the bottom, followed by the Indian, who landed on his feet like a cat, his hawk-like face boldly showing in the moonlight.

Glancing around him, Mountain Lion saw the two brothers lying bound, both hand and foot, within a few short strides of him. His hand sought his knife and he whipped it out. He flourished it, indicating that he meant to cut them free.

Before he could do so, however, a terrified horse broke away from the rest and went careering madly past the toughs and rousing them from their slumbers.

Majoe shot a glance at the boys, saw them still lying where the gang had placed them, and seemed relieved.

"Who in heck raised the riot?" he bawled. "Can't you let a man sleep in peace, you slobbering lot of prairie polecats? What's the row?"

At a second glance he saw a be-feathered Indian leaping to where Selwyn and Colin lay, a shining, bare-bladed knife in hand.

"Look!" he cried, firing his gun. "An Injun!"

The Sioux ducked, swung aside, and then rose again.

"Get away while you can, Mountain Lion!" shouted Selwyn. "Never mind about us!"

A second shot pierced the darkness and a horse dropped where it stood. Mountain Lion had eight armed men to deal with, and there was no chance of rescuing the boys now.

With a shrill war-whoop that sent the blood racing through Selwyn's veins, he leapt upon the pinto pony he had brought from Red Bull's camp, and, yelling like a madman, drove all the others out before him.

Seven stampeding horses, on one of which the Sioux clung, crashed headlong into the half-dazed and running crowd of toughs. Blackbeard and his gang went down as if a hurricane had struck them, and when they rose again and looked, the horses and the Red Indian who was driving them had vanished along the mesa.

Majoe began to fire haphazard, and the others joined in. They were answered by a mocking laugh and a high-pitched whoop. Then the hoof-beats drummed dully to silence, and the only sounds Selwyn and Colin heard, as they lay grinning on the ground, were the loud and violent curses rapped out by John Majoe and his gang of killers.

"Curse the flamin' Injun!" roared Majoe. "We've lost our hosses! Why

didn't some of yer keep a sharp look-out?"

"That was Mountain Lion, Majoe," Selwyn called out, unable to conceal his delight. "And he'll fetch Red Bull and the Indians down on you! How do you like that?"

Majoe swung round with a savage oath, his gun pointing at the bound-up prisoner. But he did not fire.

"I'll show you and your brother what I think of it—to-morrow!" he said furiously.

The Long, Long Trail!

NOTHING had happened in all his life to give Selwyn such a thrill as did the arrival of Mountain Lion and the stampeding of the gang's ponies.

Although his body was just one throbbing ache through the pressure of the tightened thongs upon his wrists and ankles, he let out one great triumphant cheer. And Colin joined in with a shout which added to the exasperation of the gang of toughs.

"Col," laughed Selwyn, "that dynamite explosion and the smashing up of Majoe's shack was pretty good, but this beats it. The gang haven't a pony to ride. They'll have to foot it. And did you see the grin of Mountain Lion's face when he rode past us on the back of that pony?"

"I'd say I did," smiled Colin, "and, Sel, if that rock hadn't slipped, he'd have freed us and we'd have got away."

"He'll come back," returned Selwyn. But Colin did not answer. The Sioux Indian would come back right enough, but would he come while they were yet alive?

Within a few minutes the eight men came straggling back from the open, dangling their guns, and cursing loudly. Their evil faces looked positively devilish as the dying glow of the fire played upon them, showing eyes heavy with sleep, a week's growth of scrub on chin and upper lip, skin creased with dirt, and hair and beard matted and straggling.

"Pile that fire up!" roared Majoe savagely. "Curse it, why didn't one of yer keep guard, like I told yer? And not one of you could plug that flamin' Injun!"

The man Slick piled wood upon the fire and stirred it to a leaping blaze. Sullenly the other seven gathered round. Musty was playing with his gun as if he would like to use it, his slits of eyes slanting evilly this way and that.

"Waal, keep guard now. I ain't gonna do all the work!" snapped Majoe.

He bent over the tied-up prisoners. If he expected to find them wilting and scared, he was mistaken, for Selwyn was openly mocking at him, and Colin's smile of triumph almost maddened him into using the gun.

"That's one to us, Majoe," laughed Selwyn. "You and your gang may murder and kill and illtreat helpless prisoners, but you can't have it all your own way. Now you'll have to walk."

Majoe whirled his revolver by the finger-ring, his eyes darting fire.

"If it warn't that I want you Britishers to show me whar Amyas Gore's claim is, I'd plug you stone dead hyar and now!" he snarled.

"You'd better consider what you do!" Colin shot back contemptuously. "The Sioux Camp is not so far away, and Mountain Lion has ponies to ride. He may bring Red Bull and his braves down on you before you know where you are. And don't forget he knows we are

prisoners. He knows you and Musty are with this gang of murderers. If we disappear, that won't be the end of it!"

"I'd take a chance at that. We'd plant yore bodies where they'd never be found. We'd swear we let you go, and, whatever people might think, they couldn't prove anything. You can't frighten me, kid. If you refuse to show us that claim, you're both as good as dead."

The powerfully built brute swaggered back to the fire.

"Some of you git breakfast ready!" he snapped, addressing his toughs. "And, Musty, hand round the bottle of rye. We're gonna move up the mountain at daybreak."

In half an hour all the gang had fed, but no more food was offered Selwyn and Colin. By this time Colin was lying prone, his body hunched up in pain, his face white under its tan.

Selwyn's plight was not quite so bad.

"Bad, Colin?" asked the older brother.

"Pretty bad, Sel, old boy," Colin answered. "If they don't ease these cords soon, I shall faint."

Selwyn called out to Majoe.

"My brother's in much pain. Send a man to ease his bonds, will you?"

"No!" snarled Majoe. "Let him suffer."

"And if he does any more whinin'," added Musty, "I'll come right over and tie 'em tighter."

Luckily for Colin, one of the other toughs interfered.

"It don't sound like sense to me keepin' the kids tied up like this. I don't mind bumpin' 'em off, if it's a question of them or us; but they've got to climb the mountain, and how ken they if you cripple 'em?"

Blackbeard and Musty had not thought of that.

"Durn me, if he ain't right!" snarled Majoe, as he drank raw rye whisky liberally from a bottle. "All right, loose 'em. And one of you stand by and shoot if they attempt to run."

Selwyn and Colin were freed, and when, half an hour after day broke, the gang started up the trail, they were able to walk briskly enough in spite of the severe bruising of their wrists and ankles.

Their sufferings and the keen mountain air had made them ravenously hungry. One of the men, who was walking abreast of them, seemed to sense this.

"Hungry?" he asked.

"Yes," Selwyn answered. "Can't we have something to eat?"

"Eat the air and grow fat on that!" snarled Musty, who came trailing behind, the flap of his holster thrown back, and the gun butt ready to his hand. "It's all yo're likely to get!"

Then Majoe began to boast.

"After all, what do we want with ponies?" he cried aloud. "Thar ain't a cayuse what could climb this trail, and later the track grows steeper. Best thing the Injun could do for us was clear off with the ponies."

"What about when we come down again and want 'em?" asked one of the gang.

"Why, we'll come down carrying so much gold, we'll be able to buy up all the hosses in Canada," said Majoe, grinning.

Whenever the trail narrowed, the party went on in Indian file, the blackbearded John Majoe taking the lead, for he knew the ground. He was followed by two of the men, one of whom was the burly Slick. Then came Selwyn

and Colin, the others bringing up the rear, Musty the last of all.

The going was not so easy for the gang as it might have been, for they were loaded with packs, and some of them carried mining tools and a cradle besides their rifle and revolvers.

Musty had his Winchester strung over his shoulder as well as his pack. The men had divided the contents of Selwyn's and Colin's packs among them, and thrown away what they did not want, so that the two brothers walked "light."

As they toiled upward, Selwyn looked about for a chance of escape. If the trail opened out and they had half a chance they were going to make a dash for it. They had talked that over together before the climb began.

But whenever a chance offered, one or other of the men would trudge along beside them, always on the open side of the trail, a Colt in his hand.

After a long, hard trudge, they came to the cliff from which Amyas Gore had been shot and hurled to his death, having reached it by a route other than the one Mountain Lion had shown them.

As they saw the flat plateau stretching before them, Slick uttered a yell.

"Here's a place to rest," he bawled. "Nice an' sheltered. Gives us a chance of seein' who's comin' up, too. I vote we eat hyar."

"And I vote we don't," snarled Majoe, glowering at him. "I don't like the place. I wouldn't stay hyar if you wuz to offer me all the gold thar is in the Sunrise Mountains. We're gonna push on till we find a better an' safer place. Supposin' thar's pryin' Injuns down on the slopes? We don't want to be seen, I tell yer."

The men had gathered in a group. They looked sulky and disappointed at Majoe's decree.

"It's eating time," grumbled Slick.

"Waal, we're pushing on," snapped Musty. "I don't like this place either."

"Why not?" asked Selwyn. "Is it because it was here you murdered Amyas Gore?"

With a snarl, Musty whipped his revolver out and turned its gleaming barrel full on the boy. The villain's teeth were clenched so hard that Selwyn could hear them grate as he moved his under jaw.

"Ghosts," said Selwyn. "You hate the place, even in daylight, don't you, Musty?"

Musty's finger trembled on the trigger, but Majoe, just in time, hauled him along, dragging his arm down.

"Cut out the shootin' and kem along," Majoe snapped, impatiently. "We're aimin' at reaching the Great Chief's Head before dark. It's up thar the claim is. We'll give the kids what's sure comin' to them after they've showed us the claim."

He led the way from the plateau up the trail among the bushes, and half an hour later called a halt. This time, while the men ate, Selwyn and Colin were grudgingly given some hard biscuit and bully beef.

The boys ate the food greedily and hoped for more, seeing which, Majoe laughed coarsely.

"That's all yo're gonna get," he jeered. "Not enough for a year old baby, is it? But we only aim at keeping you two boys alive till you've told us the great secret; then, over the mountain side you go, pronto!"

He spoke as if he meant it, and with this prospect in view, the boys resumed their march with the gang.

It was as the shadows began to creep

across the mountains and the air grew chill, that they came within view of the great Head.

Majoe halted the moment it came in view. They were now following the steep and stone strewn track up which Mountain Lion had led the two boys and Snugger.

"Look," cried Majoe. "There she is—the Great Chief's Head. And behind her somewhere is gold worth millions. The dust the boys carried and that nugget kem from somewhere up thar. They can't deny it, 'cos me and Musty trailed 'em so far. But they fooled us and disappeared. All the same, they had the dust on 'em when they kem down."

With their haven in sight, the men trudged on without complaint, and as the sun sank and it grew too dark for further progress without risk, they pitched camp for the night.

Selwyn and Colin were again tied up, and this time one of the gang, with rifle ready, was set to watch the trail. They had got a little behind the Head and were dangerously near to the place where the slide hole ran from the narrow rocky ledge down into the arena where Amyas Gore had staked his claim. Selwyn began to fret about it.

With that uncanny second sense which helped Majoe so much, the bearded villain seemed to know that the key to the secret was close at hand, for he came and squatted by Selwyn and began to wrench at his arm.

"What's the way in to Amyas Gore's claim, boy?" he asked. "You tell me and I'll see you right. Up thar, ain't she? But which is the point? You tell me. Never mind about Musty, I'm your pal, see."

His coaxing tone was about as convincing as the snarl of a wolf to the lamb it is about to eat.

"Me tell you," said Selwyn, contemptuously. "I'll never tell. Neither will my brother. You wasting your breath, Majoe."

"Am I? We'll see," rejoined the blackbearded villain with a horrible leer. "Wait till to-morrow. You'll tell."

He screwed Selwyn's arm again till the boy could have shrieked with agony, then got up and turned to the men.

"Not one scrap of grub for the durn Britishers," he ordered. "Not a drop of water. We'll pass on a trial, sentence, an' execution in the morning."

THE ONLY WAY!

IT was a long time before the two brothers fell asleep that night. Hunger kept them turning uneasily. Besides, the wind was moaning round the mountain and strange sounds came echoing out of the depths.

Selwyn wondered what had happened to Mountain Lion. Had he gone back to the Sioux camp? Would he bring them aid? Perhaps, after driving off the ponies, he had ridden into Tomahawk to report; in which case the Mounties would very likely come riding to the rescue.

The tough who had been placed on guard strode to and fro when the moon swung up, and then sat down, facing the trail.

It was daylight when Selwyn fell asleep. But scarcely had he closed his eyes when the toe of a thickly soled boot dug brutally into his ribs.

He awoke to find Musty leering at him.

"Wake up," snarled Musty, "time for breakfast!"

It was only another trick to torture the boys, for though food was handed



"I'm giving you a last chance!" boomed Majoe. "Tell me whar your gold claim is and I'll let your brother go free. Refuse, and over the mountainside he goes, pronto!"

round, Selwyn and Colin were left out. They had the agonising pleasure of watching the villains eat, the men taunting them the while.

They said nothing, however, for to have answered the brutes would only have made matters worse.

Presently, Majoe came over with Musty, and the other six men lined up behind.

"Now," said Majoe, pointing upwards "I've warned yer. Amyas Gore's claim ain't fur away. Show us the way to it."

"Never!" answered Selwyn. Majoe swung round on Colin and lunged out with his foot.

"What about you?" he snapped. "You know. I've bin hyar before an' tried, and it baffled me. Thar's nothing else but solid rock. How do we get to the gold?"

Colin sat with his knees drawn up, his tied hands drooping over them.

"Find out, you villain!" he replied. "Neither my brother nor I are telling you!"

"Is that your last word?" Majoe bit at his underlip savagely.

"My last word." Majoe turned away. "Slick," he yelled, "bring that length of rope I told you about."

Slick came sauntering forward, the coiled rope in his right hand. It measured about eighty feet over all. Slick's evil face was stretched in a broad, self-satisfied smile.

"Drag that kid up!" ordered Majoe. Two of the brutes hauled Colin on to his feet.

It was impossible for the boy to offer any resistance, for his hands and ankles were tied together.

Rolling over, Selwyn bent his knees and rose to his feet. But his wrists, too, were tied together, and he could only hop. A big brute seized him by the arm and held him.

Majoe laughed at the rage that burned in Selwyn's eyes.

"That's right, Joe," he said to the man who gripped Selwyn by the arm, "you look after him. Musty, tie that rope round the other one's waist. That's the ticket! Four of you git hold of the end of the rope and hang on to it like glue. Musty, you an' Slick march the

kid to the edge of the cliff and stand him thar. An' if he or his brother don't talk, shove him over when I give the signal. We'll leave him dangling there. How's that?"

The men only laughed. "That's right, boss," said Slick. "Going to treat the other one the same?"

"No," answered Majoe, with a coarse oath. "Too much trouble. We'll heave him over and let him float down to Mountain Lion, for I s'pose the Sioux Injun's waitin' for him somewhar down below. Go on, march that kid to the brink."

Selwyn, suffering agonies, watched the toughs lift and carry Colin to the very edge of the mountainside and stand him there. The rope hung loosely about Colin's waist. Four men caught hold of the free end, letting the slack lie in folds between.

Majoe, viewing the preparations with undisguised satisfaction, turned to Selwyn.

"I'm givin' you a last chance," he boomed. "Tell me whar the claim is and I'll let the kid go free. Refuse, and over he goes, pronto. Now, which is it to be?"

"Don't tell him, Sel!" Colin implored. "I don't care what they do to me."

"If I tell you and show you where the claim is, Majoe," said Selwyn, "you'll kill me and my brother just the same." Majoe looked hurt.

"When I make a promise, I keep it," he said, with a hypocritical sigh. "You boys hev got me all wrong. Well, are you going to tell?"

"No!" shrieked Colin. "Never! Don't tell him, Sel! Mountain Lion will avenge us."

Musty and Slick were staring at Majoe, waiting for the signal. They stood just behind Colin, with hands held ready to hurl him over the brink.

Selwyn felt sick and weak with horror. For a second his brain reeled. He could

not let Colin die like that, no matter what happened afterwards.

"I'll tell," said Selwyn brokenly. "Found sense at last, have yer?" chuckled Majoe. "Somehow, I thought you would. Called yore bluff at last, have I? Waal, whar's the claim?"

"First bring my brother back here and release him," said Selwyn.

"Bring the boy back!" roared Majoe. Slick and Musty bore Colin back from the brink, and Musty very reluctantly untied the rope.

The eight men gathered round, their faces alight with eager expectation. Majoe, looking mighty pleased with himself, bent over Selwyn, who had dropped to the ground.

"Get goin'," he said, "we've waited long enough!"

"First of all cut away these bonds," said Selwyn. "They hurt too much for me to answer. Set my brother free as well. Why be afraid? You've got your guns!"

"Makin' conditions yourself now, are yer?" growled Majoe. "Oh, well, loose 'em, boys!"

Once more Selwyn and Colin found themselves free to move their arms and legs.

"Yo're free now!" stormed Majoe. "Whar's the claim?"

"Up there!" answered Selwyn, pointing to the rock face which appeared to present an unclimbable front at all points.

Instantly the men scattered and went running along the rocky wall, trying to climb it wherever foothold offered, Majoe yelling to them in vain to come back.

When four or five of them had slipped and fallen heavily, they limped sullenly back to Majoe.

"The Britisher's pullin' yore leg, boss," growled Slick. "Only a fly could climb them rocks. It was a trick to save his brother!"

"If I thought it wuz," said Majoe, bending over Selwyn and flourishing his gun. "I'd blow his brains out, soon's wink! Were you kiddin', kid?"

"No!" answered Selwyn. "The claim's up there. And there's only one way to find it. If you wait, my brother and I will show you the way."

(Is Selwyn playing for time, or will he disclose the whereabouts of the gold claim? Don't miss next week's exciting chapters of this grand yarn, whatever you do, boys!)

A TRAITOR TO HIS SIDE!

(Continued from page 24.)

Wingate had his doubts about entrusting Stacey with the ball! However, that hat-trick encouraged him to do so. The fellow seemed extraordinarily unreliable—wonderful one minute, rotten the next! But you never could tell! Stacey was given the first over—and Wingate rubbed his eyes as he watched it!

He had hardly dared hope for another hat-trick! But that was what he beheld!

Stacey was always good—when he chose! At the top of his form he was amazingly good—and he was at the top of his form now.

In his relief at the load that had been lifted off his mind, he seemed twice as good as he had ever seemed before, at his very best.

All Greyfriars gathered to watch that innings. Even the Head came down with Mr. Quelch. Remove men roared themselves hoarse. For Highcliffe, who only wanted 50, never looked for a minute like making them. They were mown down like hay!

"Stacey! Stacey! Bravo!"

"Good man!"

"Oh, good man!"

Larry Lascelles exchanged a gleeful grin with Wingate. They had not been mistaken, after all! Three wickets in the first over, a catch in the second, two wickets in the third—it was Stacey's game!

"Six down for 8!" said Bob Cherry. "Hurrah!"

Highcliffe batsmen went in like men going to execution. Potter captured a wicket on easy terms, Wingate caught a man out, Blundell made a good catch—but it was the Remove recruit who was the "goods."

"Last man in!"

"Last man won't last long!" said Bob. "Stacey's going to bowl!"

And last man lasted exactly as long as it took Stacey to send the ball down! Highcliffe were all down for a total of twenty. After the startling vicissitudes of that game, Greyfriars had won by 29 runs.

Immediately the field was black with a swarming crowd.

"Shoulder-high!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bravo!"

Up went Stacey, on the broad shoulders of Wingate and Gwynne. Round him the mob surged and roared and cheered. Stacey, as he swayed aloft, caught sight of Harry Wharton in the swarm, cheering and waving his hat. When he was able to get away from the crowd he found an opportunity of speaking to Wharton.

"Thanks!" he said.

That was all.

He was gone before Wharton could answer.

Greyfriars celebrated the victory that evening, and there was very little in the way of prep. Price of the Fifth, in his study, had his own reasons for rejoicing—over a tenner he had received from a savage, scowling, and disgruntled Loder. But Price's rejoicing was short-lived. His study door was kicked open, and two juniors came in—two juniors so much alike that Price hardly knew one from the other. He stared at Wharton and Stacey.

"What do you fags want?" he snapped.

"This," said Harry Wharton, with cool contempt. "You've won a tenner from Loder over the match to-day. You're going to put it in the school hospital box, and we're going to see you do it."

Price glared.

"Get out of my study!"

"As soon as you like," drawled Stacey. "If you'd rather see somebody else about it. All the Fifth will be interested to hear. I'll call Coker to begin with—"

"Shut up!" hissed Price.

A ten-pound note enriched the collection in the hospital box. Wharton and Stacey went up to the studies together. They passed Loder of the Sixth on the way—and he gave them a look that a demon in a pantomime might have envied. They laughed, and went cheerfully on their way. And Wharton, in his study that evening, wondered, for the first time, whether it might be possible, after all, for him ever to become friends with his double.

THE END.

(The next yarn in this series is better than ever, chums! Make a note of the title: "A DANGEROUS DOUBLE!" and be sure to order your copy of the MAGNET well in advance!)

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