

30 MOTOR-BIKES for MAGNET READERS!

(For Particulars of our Magnificent Football Competition see page 2.)

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The Magnet 2^d

Library

of
School & Detective Stories..

EVERY MONDAY.



HARRY WHARTON SAYS GOOD-BYE TO GREYFRIARS!

(A startling development in "Condemned by the School!"—the long complete school story inside.)

Published by Howard Baker Press Ltd, 27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon, London, S. W. 20.





A BIG SENSATION!

OUR new Football Competition is the most tremendous attraction ever known! The competition is a simple one, and there will be a chance for everybody to win one of the magnificent prizes which are offered to readers of the MAGNET. A marvellous competition of this kind is the sort of thing that makes history. A glance at the Prize List will send a thrill of excitement through you all. The offer is unique, and the chance presented is one to be seized by all Magnetites.

MOTOR-CYCLES AND WIRELESS SETS!

These useful articles figure on the programme. But I will just mention, in the first place, that the First Prize is £100; the Second Prize, £50. Extra awards are thirty splendid "James" Motor-Cycles, complete with lamp, horn, and licence; ten two-valve Wireless Sets; a hundred "James" Comet Cycles, complete with lamp, bell, etc.; twenty Gramophones, and fifty pairs of superb Boxing-Gloves! The list is enough to make you get up early in the morning and make sure of any little details concerning footer you may have forgotten! The Prize List, in short, contains all the jolly things which go to make life really enjoyable. There are a hundred Match Footballs; also a hundred Fishing-Rods of the best pattern. Then six Riley Billiards-Tables are waiting for owners, while the tempting array of wonderful prizes includes forty Football Outfits, twenty Model Steam Locomotives, a hundred pairs of Roller Skates, and two hundred and fifty Books, the last-named coming in as Consolation Prizes—and there is nothing much more consoling than a copy of a favourite book.

Fuller details of this amazing offer will be given next week. Watch MAGNET Chat!

"DISGRACED BY HIS FATHER!"

Next week's grand yarn of Greyfriars deals with the sorrows of Dick Russell. A fellow likes to feel no end proud of his father. He seldom speaks of the "governor," but he thinks no end, when the senior has carved out a big name for himself in the world, and has won esteem from all. Well, Russell felt pleased about his father, and was gratified when he heard that Mr. Russell was coming to the school. Russell has never been any too well supplied with pocket-money, but money is by no means everything. Dick did not expect his father to turn up in a handsome Rolls-Royce car, looking just like a millionaire, but it was in that style that the elder

Russell appeared at Greyfriars. There was a lot of talk, and any amount of surprise. The two things did not seem to fit—namely, Dick's relative shortness of cash and the obvious wealth of his parent. Then unpleasant things begin to circulate. It is reported that Russell pere is "wanted" by the police; on the other hand, Dick is the boy who is not exactly wanted at Greyfriars, with a black shadow of that description hanging over his name. One thing leads to another. Young Russell has a miserable time. But he has friends. Who the friends are I will leave you to guess. It is a great yarn, which touches the heart, though there is nothing morbid about it. All strong fibre and grit. There will be some surprise at the mention of treason against the State, also at the culmination, which comes as a real starter.

FALLING IN WITH A REQUEST!

Now, this more than noteworthy story of Greyfriars has another special point about it. I have been asked on plenty of occasions for a longer Greyfriars tale. Next week you have it. "Disgraced By His Father" is four MAGNET pages longer than the usual story, and you will agree, I think, that this is an acceptable move. Frank Richards, with all his dexterity, could hardly have got all the good stuff he has put into this story within the ordinary length. Just let me know your real opinion. Is it a step in the right direction to break away at times when something extra-good is in hand, and weigh in with a much more extensive yarn of the Greyfriars chums?



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"THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER!"

There is immense interest in next week's instalment of the thrilling Russian serial by "X." We have read of the astounding coups brought off by the detective, Ferrers Locke. If Locke had not been cast for the hazardous role of a sleuth, with every man's hand against him in a country torn by internecine strife, he would—not a doubt of it—have turned himself into a real "scoop" journalist, one of the men who live on the top levels of life, and make the pace hot wherever they go. But it is well and seemly that Ferrers Locke and Drake should be taking part in the war against the unmasked traitor who stands for nothing. Read next Monday's tragic adventures, and you will be swept away by the intensity and the drama of the situation.

A BOXING SUPPLEMENT!

Bunter scores again! He figures in the new supplement of the "Greyfriars Herald," the theme of which, specially selected by Harry Wharton, is the Noble Art. The Remond is famous for its prowess in defence. All the big men are experts. Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton himself, the esteemed editor of the supplement, may be greater at attack than Bunter, but this is scarcely the opinion of the Owl. Because Bunter is associated with the fly-by-night, that is not to say that he is a fellow to fly from a boxing adversary. I shall say no more. Read next Monday's supplement. It will interest you extremely!

GREYFRIARS ON LANTERN SLIDES!

The magic-lantern never palls. It pleases young and old, and I am dead certain there will be joy in the hearts of all readers of the Greyfriars stories when they learn that a splendid series of magic-lantern slides, featuring Greyfriars, Bunter, and the other celebrities of the great school has been put on the market. Here is a genuine treat for a winter evening. Seniors, as well as others, will find a hearty laugh awaiting them. The set of Greyfriars slides can be obtained from Mr. A. Crisp, 51, Stourbridge Road, Kidderminster, Wores, for 2s. 6d., post free.

SPECIAL TO ALL!

MAGNET readers will be interested in the new issues of our Companion Papers. This week the "Boys' Friend" is giving a topping yarn by Owen Conquest, describing the adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. in the Wild West. "Trouble On the Ranch!" is a winner.

The "Popular," a weekly which is extra-near to the MAGNET, has this week a crowd of attractions, including a brilliant instalment of its memorable serial of the Monmouth Rebellion.

Then the "Gem" comes up smiling with a long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co., entitled "Ructions on the River!"

Your Editor.

Here you have the latest news. Drop me a line and air your views!

The unfortunate possessor of a temper that requires more than ordinary control, Harry Wharton finds himself plunged into a sea of trouble. Certain shady folk take advantage of the circumstances, and Wharton, in his endeavours to clear himself, fights an uphill battle against public opinion. Does he win through?



Condemned by the School!

A magnificent story
of the Chums of
Greyfriars.

Related by
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Out of the Past!

"O W-WOW-WOW!"

That loud howl broke upon the ears of Harry Wharton & Co. as they were walking through the Friardale Wood one afternoon.

Frank Nugent stopped and ejaculated: "My hat!"

The Famous Five and Squiff of the Remove had been to see the "Big Game Hunting in Africa" film at the local cinema, and were on their way back to Greyfriars for tea.

Walking through the quiet, peaceful wood, that howl broke in with startling suddenness.

"Ow-wow-wow! Let go, you bullies! I wasn't spying— Oooooogh!"

Frank Nugent's face became grim. He recognised the voice of his minor, Dicky Nugent of the Second.

Frank pushed back his cuffs, and, with a warlike glint in his eyes, strode through the trees in the direction from which his young brother's voice proceeded. His chums followed.

"Dicky's in trouble again!" said Squiff.

"The bullyfulness of the esteemed and youthful Dicky seems truly terrific!" murmured Inky, in his weird and wonderful English.

"Loder, perhaps, or Walker," said Harry Wharton, with a frown.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as they came into a small clearing in the wood. "What the— My hat!"

There were three figures in the clearing. Nugent minor was struggling with two bigger fellows, who seemed to tower over him. One was Bolsover major of the Remove, who was noted as a bully. The other was taller but less heavily-built than the burly Remove. He looked older, and was loudly-dressed in a check lounge suit, bowler hat, and brown-topped boots.

The Removees looked curiously at Bolsover's companion. His narrow, pasty face, with its shifty eyes and sallow complexion, seemed vaguely familiar to

them. Then Frank Nugent gave a sudden exclamation:

"Snaith!"

The fellow released Nugent minor's arm and gave a dry, unpleasant laugh.

"Hallo!" he said. "Didn't you fellows recognise me?"

Harry Wharton's lip curled.

"Yes, we recognise you, Snaith!" he said quietly. "So you've turned up again, you rotter?"

Cecil Snaith, the late dandy of the Shell at Greyfriars, had altered considerably since Harry Wharton & Co. had last seen him. A reckless, abandoned young blackguard, he had been expelled in disgrace from Greyfriars. The school had been well rid of the rascally Shell fellow's presence.

Snaith looked different from of old. His thin, hard face was marked by many lines of dissipation. Dark stains on his fingers told of heavy cigarette smoking. He had grown a slight moustache, and a flashy ring glittered on the little finger of his right hand.

He was not a pleasant specimen of young manhood to look upon.

"Well?" sneered the ex-Greyfriars fellow. "You chaps seem to be having a good look at me. What's the verdict?"

Harry Wharton turned sharply to Bolsover major.

"What are you doing, Bolsover, associating with this cad?" he demanded. "And why were you bullying young Nugent?"

"I came upon the rotters talking together—and smoking!" piped Dicky Nugent, rubbing his ears ruefully. "I didn't know they were here. They grabbed me before I could get away, and accused me of spying on them. Then they started pulling my ears— Yow-wow! The cads!"

Snaith laughed mockingly, and, taking a yellow packet from his pocket, jauntily lit another cigarette.

"Have one, Bolsover?" he asked, extending the packet to Bolsover major. Bolsover's face crimsoned.

"No, thanks!" he growled.

Harry Wharton looked hard at the burly Remove fellow.

"So you're palling with Snaith now he's back, Bolsover?" he said quietly. "You're making a companion of that smoky, thieving rogue?"

Bolsover major clenched his big fists, and glared at Wharton.

"Mind your own business, Wharton!" he said truculently. "What's it got to do with you, anyway, if I do talk to Snaith? Are you my keeper?"

"I'm captain of the Remove, and it's up to me to see that you don't make a fool of yourself and disgrace the Form, as Snaith did for the Shell when he was at Greyfriars," retorted Harry Wharton sharply. "Take my tip and give Snaith a wide berth, Bolsover. He's not a fit companion for anybody."

"Hark to your Dutch uncle talking, Bolsover!" remarked Cecil Snaith, with a sneer. "Wharton is still the same high-falutin' moralist, I see. He expects you to go down on one knee before him and do homage."

"Does he?" growled Bolsover major. "Well, Wharton's jolly well mistaken if he thinks he can ride the high horse over me. Just because he happens to be captain of the Remove he thinks he's everybody. But it won't wash with me. Mind your own business, Wharton! If I care to chum with Snaith I shall do so. Go and eat coke!"

Harry Wharton clenched his fists and his cheeks flushed angrily.

His chums expected him to set upon Bolsover major and call him to account for his insolence. Wharton was very quick-tempered and headstrong. But this time he managed to restrain himself.

Bolsover major had always been a thorn in the side of the handsome Remove captain. Bolsover was the eldest fellow in the Form, and the biggest. He was a bully, and was high-handed in all he did, and he had always resented Wharton being captain of the Remove.

"Look here, Bolsover, I don't want to dictate to you," said Wharton between his teeth, "but you've got to understand that associating with cads like Snaith, and smoking, are not allowed at Greyfriars. Take my tip and leave Snaith alone!"

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"Rats!" retorted Bolsover. "When I need your advice, Wharton, I'll ask for it. Snaith, old chap, I'll have another fag."

Cecil Snaith's eyes glittered triumphantly at Harry Wharton & Co. as he handed Bolsover major a cigarette.

The Bully of the Remove lit the cigarette and insolently blew a cloud of smoke towards the Famous Five.

Harry Wharton's eyes glinted.

"Rag the smoky rotter!" he exclaimed, turning to his chums. "Let Snaith have it, too! Perhaps it will teach him to leave Greyfriars chaps alone!"

The Famous Five and Squiff made a concerted rush forward and grasped Snaith and Bolsover major before those two startled fellows had time to recover from their amazement.

"Yarooooogh!" howled Snaith, as Bob Cherry, Squiff, and Inky whirled him over.

"Yerrrugh! Yah! Oooch!" gurgled Bolsover, nearly swallowing his cigarette.

Bolsover fought with all his brute strength, hitting out wildly with his huge fists. But he was no match for Wharton, Nugent, and Johnny Bull. The sturdy Removites bowled him off his feet, and then proceeded to bump him on the cold, hard, unsympathetic ground.

The yells of Bolsover major and Cecil Snaith rang out crescendo through the Friardale Wood.

Snaith at last managed to tear himself free from the grasp of his tormentors. But it happened that just then they had arrived at the top of a steep slope that led down to a ditch.

Snaith lost his balance and rolled down the slope with a series of bumps and yells. Then, reaching the bottom, he plunged head-first into the slimy, muddy waters of the ditch.

Splash!

"Yerrroogh!"

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

Dicky Nugent forgot his smarting ears and chirruped with glee.

Harry Wharton, Nugent, and Bull, seeing what had happened to Snaith, promptly dragged Bolsover to the top of the slope and gave him a shove that sent him whirling over and over down to the ditch.

"Oooooooop! Yah! Gerrugh!"

Bolsover struck the water just as Snaith's head and shoulders rose from the surface. One of his huge boots struck Snaith on the nose, and, with dismal howls, they both submerged.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton & Co.

Two weed-festooned, muddy heads and shoulders rose out of the ditch. Snaith and Bolsover major gasped and gurgled in a truly wonderful manner.

"Oooogh!"

"Gug! Gug! Gug!"

They crawled up the slope, reeking of mud and slime. Bolsover major stood up and shook a muddy fist at Harry Wharton.

"I sha'n't forget this, you rotter!" he choked. "I'm not the—yerrrogh!—fellow to put up with your high-handedness, mark that! Groooogh! You wait!"

Bolsover squelched away furiously into the wood in the direction of Greyfriars.

Cecil Snaith presented a sorry figure. He turned to the chums of the Remove like a drowned rat.

"I suppose it's no use asking you fellows to help a chap when he's down?" he whined. "I'm broke and on my beam

ends. I've been living a dog's life since you chaps saw me last. Kicked out of Greyfriars without a character, ruined and disgraced, and no friends—not even at home! If you chaps could help me make a fresh start with a little cash—"

"We'd help you willingly if we thought you deserved it, Snaith, but we don't!" said Harry Wharton bluntly. "You have ruined your career by your own blackguardly ways. You haven't altered a bit. In fact, you look as though you've gone from bad to worse. If we gave you money you'd only gamble it away. No, Snaith, you needn't try to wheedle round us."

A baleful look came into Snaith's eyes.

"Very well, Wharton," he snarled. "You'd keep a downed dog down—eh? But it may come your turn to be disgraced and have all your friends turn their backs on you. By heavens, I'd like to see you get a taster of what it's like, you—you hypocrite! You chaps who profess to be decent are as bad—and worse—than those who do wrong openly and—"

"That's enough, Snaith!" rapped Wharton, his eyes blazing with rage. "You'd better clear off! And let me warn you not to show your face near Greyfriars again. Don't try to associate with any of the fellows, either. Now, will you go, or do you want another ragging?"

"Yes, I'll go—hang you!" snarled Snaith.

He went, and the chums of the Remove drew breaths of relief when the rascally fellow had disappeared into the wood.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Wharton's Challenge!

"SEEN Bolsover?" grinned Peter Todd, meeting Harry Wharton & Co. in the Hall at Greyfriars when they came in. "He's in a tearing rage! My word, didn't he niff! Quelchy met him on the stairs and gave him a hundred lines for entering the School House in that state. Bolsy's in the bath-room now, trying to get rid of the mud and the weeds and the slime!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other Removites.

"What was the row about, Wharton?" asked Tom Brown.

"Bolsover was talking to Snaith in the wood, and smoking, and we ragged the two rotters!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

The Removites started. "Snaith!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, giving Wharton a quick look. "Has that cad returned to Friardale, then?"

"Yes," said Wharton shortly. "He's right on his uppers, and I expect he intends sponging on Greyfriars chaps. I told him to keep away."

"Great Scott!"

The news of Snaith's return to the neighbourhood created a great stir.

"You chaps had better not have anything to do with that rotter!" said Harry Wharton, looking round grimly. "He isn't fit for any decent chap to associate with. He's trying to make out that he's repented, and requires help to make a fresh start, but you can take that yarn with a pinch of salt. Snaith isn't the repenting sort. I should advise you fellows to steer clear of him."

"Really Wharton?" sneered Harold Skinner. "And who are you, pray, to issue orders?"

"I'm captain of the Remove," said Wharton bluntly.

"Go hon!" said Skinner. "Well, you can go and chop chips, Wharton! You are too fond of riding the high horse in this Form. It was a fearful cheek, anyway, to chip in when Bolsover was talking to Snaith."

Harry Wharton went red.

"Yes, you're captain of this Form, Wharton, and well you let us know it!" chimed in Dick Rake. "Mind, we're not saying that you're not capable. We rather like you, but you've got too high a sense of your own importance. We're not all under your wing, like a kindergarten crowd. We'll do as we like."

Harry Wharton was about to make a hot retort, but Bob Cherry took one of his arms, and Johnny Bull the other, and they led him away.

They did not want a scene in the Hall, and they knew that Harry's one failing was his quick, impetuous temper.

The Co. went into Study No. 1, their headquarters in the Remove passage, and Bob Cherry and Nugent prepared tea.

The Famous Five were in funds, and they had quite a good spread for tea that day. They sat down to sizzling eggs and bacon, crisp toast, cakes, tarts, and pineapple, and Harry Wharton's cheerfulness soon returned.

"Well, to-morrow afternoon we play Redelyffe," said the handsome Remove captain. "It's bound to be a good match. I hear Redelyffe have got up a jolly strong team."

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "They've been winning all along the line this season, so far. Those Redelyffe chaps are hot stuff. But they won't have all their own way with us! We—"

Crash!

The study door was kicked open without ceremony, and a burly, angry figure stamped in.

It was Bolsover major.

Bolsover's rugged face was red and furious. He held a sheet of paper in one hand. Behind him came Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Trevor, Trelice, Rake, and a number of other Removites.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Did they ever teach you to knock at a door, Bolsover, where you were brought up?"

"None of your cheek!" roared the bully of the Remove, brandishing the paper aloft. "I've come about this!"

The Famous Five and Squiff looked at the paper, and they all started.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's the footer list for the Redelyffe match I posted on the notice-board after dinner. You've had the cheek to tear it down, Bolsover!"

"Yes, I have torn it down!" hooted Bolsover major furiously. "Look at it! My name doesn't appear in the list of players—"

"Well, I never intended that it should," retorted Harry Wharton. "I'm captain of the Remove team. I suppose I'm entitled to choose the players I want?"

"Yes, and the players you want always happen to be your own particular chums!" said Bolsover harshly. "You include them in the team every time, and other chaps in the club never get a decent show!"

"Hear, hear!" roared a number of voices outside.

Harry Wharton flushed.

"So you're complaining, Bolsover, because I've left you out of the team for the Redelyffe match to-morrow afternoon?" he said quietly.

An extra-long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week—

"I'm complaining about your beastly favouritism, Wharton!" raged Bolsover. "This isn't the first time you've left out a good player from the team in order to pitchfork one of your own particular set into it!"

"Blessed is he who bloweth his own trumpet!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, aren't I a good player?" demanded the bully of the Remove truculently. "I reckon I can show some of you chaps a few points!"

"Look here, Bolsover, it's no use you trying to kick against the traces!" put in Wharton hotly. "I admit you're a good player when you like to be. But you're so unreliable. You'd have had many a show in the Remove regular eleven before now, if I could have satisfied myself that you'd come up to the scratch. The Redclyffe match is one of the most important of the season, and I can't afford to take risks by playing an unreliable man. You're down as first reserve, Bolsover. I can't do any more than that for you."

"Oh, can't you!" snarled Bolsover, who was in a tearing rage. "I dare say you can't, Wharton—not while you've got your own pals to consider. But I'm not going to be left out of the Remove team by the likes of you! See? I'm entitled to a place, and I mean to have it! It's about time the Remove woke up and stopped your selfish ways, you—you swelled-headed, conceited, dictating rotter—"

Smack!

Wharton, his eyes blazing with ungovernable rage, brought the palm of his right hand across Bolsover's face with a crack like a pistol-shot. A red mark showed on the bully's cheek where Wharton's hand had struck. Bolsover gave a cry and staggered back.

"Take that, Bolsover, for your impertinence!" panted the young Remove captain, his chest heaving. "I'll show you whether you can do as you like. I'm going to give you a thrashing—not here, but outside. I'll meet you behind the ruined chapel in ten minutes' time, with the gloves on!"

Bolsover leaned against the table, his hand to his face, incoherent with rage for some minutes. Then he recovered himself. He grated his teeth.

"All right Wharton," he said thickly. "I'll be there. And I'm going to smash you for this!"

He turned on his heel and strode away, the other Removites in the passage respectfully making way for him.

Harry Wharton's chums looked uneasily at him.

"I—I say, Harry, that was a bit high-handed of you, wasn't it?" said Bob Cherry. "You needn't have challenged Bolsover to fight. You needn't have lost your temper like that. We could have settled with that cheeky idiot by chucking him out!"

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"I suppose you fellows are going to find fault with me now?" he said bitterly. "I know what I'm doing! Bolsover has set himself up against me. He's trying to challenge my position as captain of the Remove. I'm going to show him who's top dog. If I'm to have my authority flaunted like that I might as well chuck up the captaincy at once!"

Wharton's chums exchanged helpless looks.

They knew that when Harry was in a temper it was useless to argue with him. Bolsover's insolence had roused all the latent impetuosity in the Remove



"Throw him in!" said Wharton. Splash! Bolsover struck the water just as Snaith's head and shoulders rose from the surface, and one of his boots caught the rascal on the nose. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. (See Chapter 1.)

captain's nature. That was Wharton's weakness—his quick, fiery temper.

Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Inky tried to pacify him, but Harry Wharton remained stubborn. He had challenged Bolsover to a fight, and the bully of the Remove had accepted.

The news spread like wildfire through the Lower School at Greyfriars, as the news of a fight always did. The juniors were careful to keep it from the ears of the prefects, however.

Ten minutes later a crowd of juniors gathered behind the ruined chapel, eager for the fight between Harry Wharton and Bolsover major.

Bolsover was the first to arrive. Harold Skinner was acting as his second. Harry Wharton came up with his chums soon afterwards, still looking flushed and angry.

Bob Cherry put the gloves on for him. Johnny Bull appointed himself time-keeper.

A ring was formed, and the two Removites faced each other.

"Time!" said Johnny Bull.

Bolsover started off with a whirlwind rush. He hit out at Wharton as if he meant to end the affair in half a minute. But a nasty jab under the chin brought him up sharp, and another in the chest caused him to stagger and gasp.

"Go it, Harry!" chortled Nugent.

"Pile in, Bolsover!" exclaimed Skinner eagerly.

Bolsover quickly recovered and fought more warily. Wharton attacked with a quick succession of terrific uppercuts and body blows. The two Removites fought

hammer and tongs, and at the end of the first round both bore marks of the fierce contest.

Skinner towelled Bolsover, who was not so fresh as Wharton. He rushed in eagerly, however, when Johnny Bull called time again, and he lashed into Wharton with all his great brute strength.

Wharton, though hot-tempered, had the sense to keep his head, and by clever footwork and a good defence managed to tide Bolsover of the battering blows that Bolsover aimed at him. He infuriated the bully by getting in numerous telling punches, but in doing so took a good deal of punishment himself.

Wharton dodged a sledge-hammer blow that Bolsover aimed at him, and got in a smashing left hook on his adversary's chin that sounded like the crack of a mallet when it landed, and lifted Bolsover right off his feet.

"Good old Harry!" chirruped Bob Cherry.

Bolsover did not lie down for long. He sprang up, with a roar and rushed at Wharton.

The two were fighting like tigers, when a dismayed gasp arose from the spectators, and an angry figure in cap and gown strode to the front.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, gazed at the two juniors with eyes that seemed to contract to points of steel.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed in horror. "Wharton—Bolsover! Cease fighting this minute!"

—entitled "DISGRACED BY HIS FATHER!" Don't miss it!

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Wharton and Bolsover gasped, dropped their hands, and wheeled round. "Oh, jenny!" moaned Bob Cherry. "The giddy fat's in the furnace now, and no error!"

Mr. Quelch looked angrily from one to the other of the combatants. Thunderclouds settled on his brow.

Wharton's nose was streaming with claret, his lip was cut, and his jaw bruised, while Bolsover looked very much the worse for wear, and his left eye, which was now a dark blue in colour, had "shut up shop" altogether.

"Boys, how dare you engage in this shocking, brutal display of fisticuffs!" rapped the Remove master. "Wharton, I can hardly conceive it possible that you, the captain of the Form and a youth whose duty it is to set an example to the others, should be a participant in this vicious display of pugilism. You and Bolsover have battered each other into a disgraceful state! I am ashamed of both of you! Who instigated this fight?"

Wharton bit his lip and was silent. Bolsover looked down. Nobody spoke, but several juniors looked uneasily at Wharton. The captain of the Remove flushed a deep red when Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes came to bear upon him.

"Wharton, I trust that your rash temper is not to blame?"

"I—I challenged Bolsover to fight, sir," replied Wharton in a low voice.

The Remove master's face hardened.

"I am surprised and disgusted, Wharton!" he rapped. "Your conduct does not do you credit. You and Bolsover will each take a thousand lines of Virgil. And you, Wharton, as the instigator of the fight, shall be detained in the Form-room to-morrow afternoon instead of taking the usual half-holiday."

Harry Wharton gave a cry of dismay.

"But—but, sir, our football match with Redclyffe takes place to-morrow afternoon! I—I cannot miss the match—"

"I am not interested in your football arrangements, Wharton, and I shall certainly not rescind your punishment because you wish to play in a football match to-morrow!" said Mr. Quelch icily.

He waved his arm imperiously as several of the dismayed Removites opened their mouths to plead with him.

"Not a word, boys!" he rapped. "Wharton is detained to-morrow afternoon, and nothing you can say will alter my decision!"

With that Mr. Quelch gave Wharton and Bolsover a grim look and strode away.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Runaway!

"WELL, that's done it!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Wharton, you rash idiot, you've made a fine mess of things now!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "We want you to captain our team against Redclyffe to-morrow. And you've got yourself detained through your own beastly temper!"

Harry Wharton clenched his fists hard and looked round.

Grim, unfriendly looks met him on all sides.

"We're in the cart now, properly!" said Dick Russell in exasperation. "Wharton, you ought to be jolly well bumped for being such a fathead! Perhaps that would knock some of the hot temper out of you!"

"Hear, hear!" said a number of Removites.

Wharton set his teeth hard.

"I'm sorry, you chaps," he said quietly. "I'm sorry this has happened, but I don't regret fighting Bolsover. No fellow in this Form will go against my orders with impunity while I'm captain. I mean to play in the Redclyffe match to-morrow, and I'll get away by hook or by crook. That's all I've got to say!"

He turned on his heel and strode away, his face flushed, his head held erect.

He went indoors and flung himself into the armchair in Study No. 1.

When Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh came in half an hour afterwards, they found Wharton still sitting in the armchair, brooding.

"Cheer up, Harry!" said Bob breezily. "No need to sulk over it, is there? That won't help matters."

Wharton did not reply.

His chums shrugged their shoulders and went away to Study No. 13 to do their prep.

Skinner & Co. made the most of the affair that evening. They were backed up by several restless spirits in the Form. They openly declared that the Remove wanted a new captain, and suggested that Wharton should be deposed.

Harry Wharton knew that he was in bad favour with the Form. He took it keenly to heart and did not appear much in public.

But, lying awake in bed in the Remove dormitory that night, he resolved to break detention and play in the Redclyffe match, even though it meant a flogging afterwards.

Next day Skinner & Co., and Bolsover major, and several other fellows went out with the undisguised purpose of seeing Snaith.

It was half curiosity to see the expelled Shell fellow that made them go, and half in defiance of Harry Wharton.

They came in just before dinner, and looked in at Study No. 1, where Harry Wharton was sitting alone at the table. He had not recovered from his moodiness, and his chums had deemed it best to let him alone until he came round.

"I say, Wharton, Snaith sends his best respects!" said Skinner. "We've all been down to see him, you know. He's staying at the Cross Keys."

Wharton's eyes glittered.

"He says that any time you care to look in and have a smoke and a game of nap, he'll make you welcome!" grinned Bolsover major. "Of course, we've disobeyed your orders, Wharton, in seeing Snaith, but we hope you'll forgive us if we ask you nicely?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner & Co.

Harry Wharton rose from the table and pushed back his cuffs.

"Will you cads clear out of this study, or shall I turn you out?" he said, between his teeth. "I'm game to tackle the lot of you!"

"And we're with you, Harry!" broke in Bob Cherry's cheery voice outside.

Bob was followed into the study by Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Inky.

Wharton's chums stood by their leader, and pushed back their cuffs in a business-like manner.

Skinner & Co. backed out of the study hastily. Only Bolsover major remained. He grinned truculently at Harry Wharton.

"So much for your orders, Master High and Mighty Wharton!" he said, snapping his fingers. "I think you'll find that your authority in the Remove has suffered a bad set-back since yesterday!"

Bolsover strode away and slammed the door behind him.

Harry Wharton turned a flushed, angry face to his chums.

"Thanks for backing me up, you fellows," he said quietly. "I just want to tell you that I shall be playing this afternoon. The team can wait for me at Redclyffe. I shall be there in time for the match."

"Great pip!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "You mean, Harry, that you're going to—to break out of the Form-room?"

"Yes; if I can't escape detention some other way," replied Wharton grimly. "I know it means disobeying Mr. Quelch, and I shall get into a fearful row when I get back. But I'm prepared to stand that, rather than leave the team in the lurch."

His chums looked at each other uneasily, but they did not attempt to persuade Wharton from his purpose, knowing full well that once Harry made up his mind to do a thing, nothing would alter his resolve.

After dinner Wharton was marched away to the Remove Form-room by Mr. Quelch, and the football team and the others who intended seeing the match left Greyfriars for the railway-station, en route for Redclyffe.

They had heard of Wharton's vow to break detention, but did not expect him to succeed in his reckless resolve. It was generally accepted that Bolsover major would take Wharton's place in the team.

Mr. Quelch looked grimly at the young Remove captain in the Form-room.

"You will remain here, Wharton, until five o'clock," he said. "I shall look in occasionally to see that you are still here. Kindly proceed with reading your textbook."

Mr. Quelch rustled from the Form-room, locking the door behind him.

No sooner had the master's footsteps died away down the passage, than Harry Wharton snapped his book shut and jumped up from his desk. He went to the window, opened it, and clambered out.

He swung himself down from the window-sill, and grasped the old ivy that clung to the wall. Then, setting his teeth grimly, he commenced to climb down steadily to the ground.

The task required no ordinary pluck in its accomplishment. But the ivy held, and Wharton at last jumped lightly to the ground.

Then he ran across the quadrangle to the bicycle-shed, took out his cycle, and pedalled swiftly away.

Gosling came out of his lodge as Wharton neared the gates.

"Stop, Master Wharton!" he shouted. "Which Mr. Quelch says you mustn't be allowed out! Form master's orders, and—"

"Go and eat coke!" said Wharton, gritting his teeth.

He drove his machine at full speed through the gateway, and Gosling gave a wild leap out of his path. The runaway Form captain disappeared through the gates and pedalled swiftly down the Friardale Lane. Gosling ran, wheezing, after him.

"Master Wharton, stop! You 'ear me? Stop, I says! Which I'll report yer—"

But Wharton disappeared round a bend in the lane, cycling at top speed towards Friardale. Gosling stared after him blankly.

A story that will strike home—next Monday's Greyfriars yarn!

"My heye!" he gasped. "The young rip! Wot I says is this 'ere—I'll report 'im!"

And Gosling walked away to the School House to report to Mr. Quelch.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Cunning of a Cad!

HARRY WHARTON kept on grimly, reckless of the consequences of his daring escapade. He turned off at the cross-roads, and took the Redclyffe route. Travelling at that speed, he would be able to reach Redclyffe almost as soon as the train.

He was pedalling along the narrow country lane, when all of a sudden he saw a figure dart out into the middle of the road ahead of him.

He rang his bell furiously, and then gave vent to an amazed cry.

"Snaith!"

Cecil Snaith watched him pedal up, an evil leer on his sallow face. He did not attempt to move as Wharton approached.

"Out of the way, you rotter!" exclaimed the Remove captain fiercely. "Do you want me to run you down? Get out of my way!"

"Stop, Wharton! I want you!" rapped Snaith. "If you don't stop, I—Ah! Would you!"

Wharton turned his handlebars and swerved to pass the rascally fellow. But Snaith, with a snarl, jumped in towards the machine and grasped Wharton's leg.

Crash!

Rider and machine toppled over and crashed on the dusty road.

Cecil Snaith stood by, grinning sardonically.

Harry Wharton attempted to rise, but fell back again with a cry of pain.

"Oh, my ankle! You cad, Snaith, you brought me off intentionally!"

Snaith gave a chuckle.

"So you've ricked your ankle, Wharton!" he sneered. "I'm glad of that. I intended stopping you from playing in the Redclyffe match, you see!"

Wharton staggered up, his injured foot wracked with pain. He leaned against a tree and looked with blazing eyes at the expelled Shell fellow.

"You—you cad! So that's your game!"

Snaith nodded.

"Yes; I heard all about it from Bolsover," he said coolly. "I knew that if you broke detention you'd take this road, so I laid in wait for you. I made up my mind to stop you playing in the match. It's about time Bolsover had a show, isn't it?"

Wharton started.

"So—so Bolsover put you up to this!" he exclaimed.

Snaith grinned.

"You can think what you like, Wharton," he said. "I'm not getting Bolsover into trouble. You can't take any action against me, as I do not belong to Greyfriars now."

Harry Wharton ground his teeth. His hands worked convulsively to get at his tormentor. But he could not move, except with difficulty. His injured ankle was rapidly swelling, and the pain was excruciating.

Snaith turned, and his sneering laugh rang mockingly in Wharton's ears.

"I'll be off now, Wharton, seeing that there's no possibility of your being able to play football this afternoon!" he said. "I hope the Remove wins—without your

help. You're in for a good licking when you get back to Greyfriars, too, aren't you? Ha, ha, ha!"

He disappeared down the lane, leaving Harry Wharton leaning against the tree beside his overturned bicycle, helpless and infuriated.

If he had been able to fight Snaith then, things would have gone hard with the expelled Shell fellow. Wharton's blood was boiling, all his temper surging up like a seething flood.

His breakaway from Greyfriars had been in vain! His sprained ankle would prevent him from playing football for many days to come. He would have to face the music when he returned to Greyfriars. And the Remove would play without him—with Bolsover in the team.

Wharton ground his teeth with rage.

"The cads—those two planned it between them!" he muttered. "Bolsover dared not attack me openly, so he got Snaith to do his dirty work! Oh, the rotters—the rotten cads!"

A few minutes later, while he was struggling to remove his boot, a farm wagon came along. The driver readily gave him a lift to the farm, where the good lady of the house bathed the junior's foot and put some soothing lotion on it.

Harry Wharton felt much better for the treatment, and was able to walk, albeit with a limp.

He was determined not to return to Greyfriars yet. If he could get to Redclyffe he would go.

The farmer informed him that an omnibus for Redclyffe passed that way in

twenty minutes' time. Wharton waited at the farm, hardly able to contain his feelings, until the omnibus came along.

The farmer stopped it, and the Remove got on board, leaving instructions to the farmer to send on his bicycle to Greyfriars.

After what seemed an interminable journey, the bus arrived at Redclyffe. Wharton got out at the railway-station and limped to Redclyffe School.

As he passed through the gates and turned towards the playing-fields, he heard a loud, enthusiastic shout:

"Goal!"

"Well played, Bolsover!"

"Good man!"

Wharton's brows knitted together. Bolsover was playing, then, in the Remove team. And he had just scored a goal. The Greyfriars fellows were cheering him loudly.

The referee had blown his whistle, and the Remove and Redclyffe had renewed the struggle by the time he reached the pavilion.

"Hallo, Wharton!" grinned Skinner, who was there with his cronies Snoop and Stott, with Trevor and Ogilvy standing near by. "So you've arrived! My word, you look as though you'd like to murder somebody!"

"Hard lines you didn't get here in time for the match, after all the trouble you must have taken in breaking detention!" said Ogilvy. "But the match is going strong, Wharton. We're one up already—Bolsover just scored a fine goal. He's playing like a Trojan. Look at him now!"



Wharton turned the handlebars and swerved to pass, but Snaith jumped in and grasped the junior's leg. Crash! Rider and machine toppled over on the dusty road. "You cad," gasped Wharton. "You did that intentionally!" (See Chapter 4.)

Dick Russell's father is a "wanted" man; his son, "unwanted"!

Harry Wharton looked.

Bolsover major, as inside-right, was certainly giving of his best that afternoon. He took the ball down the field in fine style, and charged away the home halves as though they were so many children. His footwork was clever, his speed and precision faultless.

The young Remove captain clenched his fists with helpless rage.

"The cad!" he muttered. "He can play football when he likes. And he's making a show now—his idea being to create a good impression. The cunning rotter!"

Skinner & Co., and the other Removes round the ropes looked curiously at Wharton. His handsome face was dark with rage as he watched the game. The Remove players on the field noticed it, too, and wondered at Wharton's apparent unsportsmanlike, selfish demeanour.

Redclyffe scored, and Peter Todd slammed the ball in again for Greyfriars just before half-time.

During the interval Wharton was surrounded by his chums and the other Removes. His eyes blazed at Bolsover as the burly Remove, flushed from the game, and jubilant at his success, strode up.

"So, you cad, you succeeded in your ruse to keep me out of the team this afternoon!" flashed Wharton.

Bolsover major started.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

Wharton gave a harsh, bitter laugh.

"What do I mean? You know full well what I mean, Bolsover!" he cried. "You and Snaith worked the rotten trick out between you! You got him to do your dirty work, while you skulked over here with the team!"

Bolsover looked at Wharton in bewilderment.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Wharton!" he said roughly. "What rotten trick am I supposed to have worked out with Snaith? I'm blessed if I can get your meaning."

"What the dickens has happened, Harry?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Wharton gritted his teeth and explained.

The Removes uttered amazed cries when they heard of Snaith's rascally attack on Wharton.

Bolsover seemed as much surprised as the others. His face went red, but he looked round with unflinching eyes as all the others turned their gaze towards him.

"You fellows can believe what you like," said the burly Remove, in a firm, hard voice. "Wharton would naturally pile on the agony and accuse me of being implicated with Snaith. But I tell you, honour bright, that I had nothing to do with it. I saw Snaith this morning, and told him about Wharton's detention, and—and everything. But I did not ask him to stop Wharton and prevent him from playing in the match. That's on my word of honour."

There was an awkward silence, broken at length by a harsh laugh from Harry Wharton.

"I don't believe you, Bolsover!" he cried bitterly. "You are a rotten cad and a liar! You and Snaith are tarred with the same brush, you—"

"I say, Harry, draw it mild, you know!" said Bob Cherry uneasily. "Bolsover has given his word—"

"What does that stand for from a cad like Bolsover?" rapped out Wharton furiously. "His word of honour is worth no more than a snap of the fingers! Of course, you chaps are ready to believe

him, as he's been playing so well, and you are down on me!"

"We are not down on you, Harry, but you might be a little reasonable, and not let your blessed temper get the better of you," said Frank Nugent. "Snaith played that rotten trick all on his own, no doubt. It's just the sort of blackguardly thing that rascal would think of. Try to take a sensible view of it, Harry."

"The view I take is the right one," said Harry Wharton between his teeth. "By heavens, if my foot were not injured I'd set about Bolsover now and give him the thrashing he deserves!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Bolsover. "I'm not asking you to believe me, Wharton. I don't care a rap for your opinion. I'm just asking the other chaps to believe me. I knew nothing of Snaith's intentions, and was not a party to it. That's honour bright, and you can go hang!"

Harry Wharton turned his back on Bolsover. It was apparent that his unreasoning temper had him again in its grip. His chums looked helplessly at him, and walked silently back to the football field.

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME!

Have you seen the wonderful list of prizes mentioned on page 2? Look out for further particulars of our

GRAND FOOTBALL COMPETITION!

Starting the week after next in the

MAGNET!

The referee blew his whistle, and the second phase of the game started. Harry Wharton sat by the pavilion, alone, and looked on with a flushed, angry face.

Redclyffe attacked hotly, and registered a goal within ten minutes of the resumption. The Remove, skippered by Frank Nugent, played up magnificently, and kept the Redclyffe fellows out of their territory.

Bolsover's play elicited constant cheers from the touchline. Redclyffe were lucky in scoring again, a free kick giving them the advantage. Play became fast and furious then. The Remove team kept up that almost mechanical precision and unanimity that Harry Wharton had instilled into them.

The result was another brilliant goal, scored by Hurree Singh.

"We're level now!" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically. "Play up, kids! We've less than ten minutes to go!"

Harry Wharton watched eagerly from the pavilion, frowning, however, when Bolsover came into the limelight, as the burly Remove very often did now.

He secured the leather in a break-away from mid-field and carried it into

the home territory with amazing swiftness, passing to Dick Russell and snatching up the ball again on a repass from Johnny Bull. The Removes round the ropes held their breath. The Redclyffe fellows were defending their goal, the goalie lynx-eyed and on the alert like a cat. Bolsover took a shot at goal which the custodian biffed out in grand style. Frank Nugent snapped it up and passed deftly to Bolsover. Bolsover might have taken another shot at goal, but he gave Squiff a quick glance instead, and, when the Redclyffe defenders came charging up, he back-heeled the ball smartly.

Biff!

The lad from South Africa rose to the occasion and slammed the ball in where the goalie was least expecting it. A jubilant roar arose from the Greyfriars fellows.

"Goal!"

"Good old Squiff!"

"Well played, Bolsover!"

The game was all over bar shouting, now, as Bob Cherry remarked. A few minutes later the whistle blew, leaving the Remove victorious by four goals to three.

"Jolly good game!" said the Redclyffe skipper enthusiastically. "That was a smart trick of yours, Bolsover. One of the neatest I've ever seen."

Bolsover laughed happily.

On all sides his Form-fellows were congratulating and praising him.

He shot a swift glance towards Harry Wharton. The handsome young captain's face was overcast, and he returned Bolsover's glance with a furious look.

"I say, Harry, you're not going to keep this up, are you?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Bolsover played a jolly fine game this afternoon—it's mainly through him that we've won, you know. I don't believe he had anything to do with Snaith's rotten trick. I can understand how you feel, but you might be sensible."

Harry Wharton set his teeth.

"If you think I'm going to make myself pleasant to Bolsover, you're mistaken, Bob," he said. "I believe that he's a rotten cad, and planned with Snaith to keep me out of the team, so that he could get into the limelight. He's succeeded very well. The whole Form will be licking his boots by to-night."

"Yes, and the whole Form will be calling you a silly, bad-tempered, vengeful fathead, Harry, if you don't shake off that rotten temper of yours," exclaimed Frank Nugent sharply. "Bolsover is beginning to get a swelled head already. You know what an ambitious blighter he is. He'll be wanting to captain the Form soon."

"He's been wanting to do that for a long time past," replied Harry Wharton bitterly. "I suppose you chaps will be turning on me and backing him up?"

"Don't be an ass, Harry!" growled Johnny Bull.

The journey to Friardale was made in comparative silence.

Gosling met them at the gates of Greyfriars with a grim look.

"Which as 'ow Master Wharton will kindly report hisself to Mr. Quelch immejitly!" said the school porter.

Harry Wharton's chums exchanged uneasy glances. Wharton detached himself from them and walked across the quadrangle into the School House. His lips were set in a thin, hard line, his eyes glinting and fearless.

"Poor old Harry!" said Bob Cherry, in his large-hearted way. "He is in for

Keep your eyes open for our magnificent Football Competition, chums—

it now, and no mistake. I wish we could do something to cheer him up. Goodness knows, he needs it!"

"I have some tinfal spondulicks, my worthy chums," said Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Harry's sadfulness of spirit can be overcome by a blow-outful feed. My willingness standfully to provide the feed is terrific."

"Good old Inky!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "A feed's the very thing! That will cheer Harry up. This way to the tuckshop!"

Bob, Inky, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Squiff arrived at Study No. 1 a short while later, laden with tuck.

They busied themselves and prepared a feed fit for the gods.

Everything was all ready when Harry Wharton came in.

His hands were clenched tightly together and his face was drawn with pain.

"Licked?" asked Frank Nugent sympathetically.

"Yes," said Wharton shortly.

His chums felt sorry for him. Although the plucky junior tried to hide his feelings, it was apparent that he had had a severe caning. And the others knew, from long, painful experience, that Mr. Horace Quelch could lay it on.

"Never mind, Harry," said Bob Cherry. "Look at the fine spread we've got ready. Inky stood treat. Come and have a good tuck in, and you'll soon forget your troubles."

"I don't want any tea," said Harry Wharton in a low voice.

"But, Harry—"

"It's good of you chaps to do this for me, but I don't want anything!" muttered the unhappy junior. "Leave me alone—that's all I want!"

He walked out of the study and went away.

None of his chums attempted to follow. They were all too taken aback. They had tea alone. And the feed that was to have been such a cheery affair proceeded in awkward, oppressive gloom.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Brewing!

RELATIONS became more than ever strained between Harry Wharton and Bolsover major after that. The young Remove captain's embittered feelings towards Bolsover became the talk of Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch noticed it particularly, and two days later spoke to Harry Wharton on the subject.

But Wharton could not be moved from the stubborn attitude he had taken up. His chums did their best, but had to give it up as a hopeless task. They realised that his sensitive nature and quick temper were to blame. Harry seemed quite unlike his usual self. He would not be convinced that Bolsover major had had nothing to do with Snaith's rascally attack on him in order to keep him away from the Redelyffe match.

Bolsover major traded on Wharton's unreasoning spirit and his own triumph in the Redelyffe match to gain favour in his Form-fellows' eyes. He found plenty of followers who were dissatisfied with the Wharton regime and who were willing to back him up.

Harry Wharton, coming into the Hall from the quadrangle one evening, stopped on seeing a crowd of Removites round the notice-board. He walked up and read the notice, and gave a start. This is what he read:



Wharton turned to the door, but as he did so Wingate himself appeared. "Wharton!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "What the dickens are you doing here—at this time of night?" For the moment Wharton was too taken aback to answer. (See Chapter 6.)

"NOTICE!"

"A Meeting will be held in the Rag at six o'clock this evening to discuss the question of electing another captain for the Remove, to take the place of H. Wharton, who is considered to be played out and otherwise unfit for the job. All patriotic Removites are requested to roll up and air their views."

"(Signed) HAROLD SKINNER,
"(Of the Remove)."

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, coming up and gazing at the notice. "What fearful cheek! Who's Skinner, anyway? The silly, interfering ass!"

Harry Wharton bit his lip and flushed at the chuckles of the other Removites standing round.

He strode forward to tear down the offending paper; but Bolsover major, Rake, Trevor, Valence, and a number of others planted themselves in his way.

"Buzz off, Wharton!" said Bolsover in his burly manner. "We'll see you don't tear down that notice! If you care to turn up at the Rag at six o'clock you'll probably hear something interesting."

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

Wharton clenched his fists and strode away.

At six o'clock the Rag was crowded. Practically all the Remove had turned up. Harry Wharton and his chums thought it best to go, although it rather went against the grain to attend a meeting called by Harold Skinner.

When they arrived Skinner was

already mounted on a chair. Bolsover major, Snoop, Stott, Treluce, and a number of other malcontents stood near to support him.

"Gentlemen—" began Skinner.

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, this meeting has been called to discuss a serious problem—"

"Whether Skinner and his gang should be provided with straight-jackets!" put in Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner glared.

"Order, please!" shouted Bolsover threateningly. "Any chap who interferes at this meeting will be chucked out on his neck!"

"Oh, bow-wow!" said Bob.

"Gentlemen," roared Skinner, "the problem is—what shall we do about a Form captain? Wharton is played out, and—"

"Hear, hear!" roared the malcontents.

"He's had a good innings, and it's about time we had a change! Wharton has had things all his own way long enough, and the Remove have been fools not to have chipped in before. He and his set think they are monarchs of all they survey in the Form—"

"I'll punch your silly head, Skinner!" broke in Johnny Bull.

"Order, order!"

"But we're fed up with 'em!" said Skinner, waxing warm to his theme. "They get all the best places in the footer team, to the exclusion of better players."

"Hear, hear!"

—and read this week's Chat for the splendid list of prizes!

"Wharton puts in all his pals, and leaves out chaps like Bolsover and Rake and Wibley and Morgan and Hazeldene and—"

"Rather!"

The fellows thus referred to looked indignantly at Wharton.

Skinner's accusation, though unjust, found believers. The second-rate players in the Remove could never understand why they were left out of the big matches; they could not realise that they were second-rate.

"We can well do without Wharton as a captain!" went on Skinner, encouraged. "The Redclyffe match the other day proved that! We won the match, and it wasn't Master High-and-Mighty Wharton that time who was responsible; it was a fellow whom Wharton had left out of the team, because he happened to have a grudge against him. I refer to Bolsover."

"Good old Bolsover!"

Bolsover major grinned.

Skinner & Co. had constituted themselves his publicity agents, and they had sown the seeds of rebellion against Wharton with a lavish hand.

"Wharton lately has shown that he is totally unfit to captain the Remove any more!" went on Skinner. "A fellow with a temper like Wharton's ought not to be in his position. He has shown a malicious, unsportsman-like spirit towards Bolsover—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And, therefore," said Skinner, looking round upon the large assembly—"therefore, I put it to you chaps of the Remove—isn't it time we had a new captain?"

"Rather!"

"Rats!" roared Bob Cherry. "You're a set of silly duffers! If you let yourselves be led by the nose by merchants like Skinner and Bolsover—"

"What Skinner says is right in the main!" said Dick Rake warmly. "You chaps have got the idea into your heads that you're top-dogs in the Remove. Wharton looks upon himself as a sort of tin god. Mind, I'm not saying you are not decent chaps! As a matter of fact, we like you. Wharton is one of the best, but as a captain he's a back-number. We think that for the good of the Form a new captain should be elected!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll take a ballot!" cried William Wibley, capturing Skinner's place on the chair. "That's the fairest way, chaps. We don't actually want to kick Wharton down from his pedestal without giving him a sporting chance. I think it's a matter for a Form ballot. The candidates for the captaincy will be Wharton, Bolsover, and myself—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come off it, Wib!"

Wibley came off the chair with a crash as Bob Cherry yanked him off and jumped up in his place.

"Chaps of the Remove, you are a lot of silly, discontented asses!" roared Bob. "You've got a lot of tosh into your noddles through listening to certain firebrands—"

"Yuh! Turn him out!"

"I won't be turned out!" shouted Bob. "Look here, if you can't give Wharton a chance—"

"We'll give him a chance!" cried Dick Rake. "Let's take a ballot!"

"Hear, hear!"

Bob Cherry paused and looked at Harry Wharton.

The handsome young Remove captain was silent.

"A ballot's fair enough!" put in Bulstrode. "It will settle the question for good and all then. We'll ask Wingate to take care of the ballot-box and count the votes, so that everything will be fair and square. The Remove will then choose its own captain by ballot. Surely Wharton won't disagree to that!"

All eyes were turned on Wharton.

His face was flushed as he faced the Remove.

"As you chaps seem so dissatisfied with me and my methods I'll agree to the ballot," he said quietly. "I'll speak to Wingate about it. He'll consent to take charge of the ballot-box, as Bulstrode suggests."

"Right-ho!" said Dick Rake. "We'll take the ballot. Who are the candidates? Of course, I'll go down as one—"

"Rats!" roared a number of voices.

Quite a stormy discussion ensued as to whom should be the candidates for the Remove captaincy.

At length it was decided that they should be Wharton, Bolsover major, Peter Todd, and Bulstrode.

A ballot box was put in the Remove dormitory. The Removes had each to write the name of his selected candidate on a slip of paper, and put it in the box before going to bed. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, would then take away the ballot-box and keep it in his study, and let the Remove know the result of the ballot in the morning.

Everything seemed square and above board, and everybody was more or less satisfied.

Bolsover major walked out of gates alone soon after the meeting, having obtained a late pass from Loder. He made his way through the gathering dusk down the Friardale Lane until he reached the stile near the cross-roads.

Cecil Snaith was waiting for him. The rascally fellow was sitting on the stile, his legs dangling, smoking an evil-smelling cheroot.

"Hallo, Bolsover!" he grinned, as the Remove came up. "You're doocid late, over half an hour, in fact."

"I've been to a meeting of the Remove," said Bolsover, hastily rejecting the offer of one of Snaith's cheroots. "The Form's up in arms against Wharton. They've decided to take a ballot to decide who shall be captain. I'm one of the candidates."

Snaith's eyes glinted.

"By Jove! I'm glad the fellows are turning against that conceited rotter, Wharton, at last," he said. "I'd like to see him set down from his high estate. Yes, and I'd like to see him hounded out of Greyfriars, too, and made to go through a bit of what I've had. You still game for a little quiet gamble, Bolsover?"

"I don't mind," said the bully of the Remove.

He crossed the fields with Snaith, and they went into a small spinney together. There they sat down, and Snaith produced cigarettes and a pack of cards. Next he took out a heap of silver coins and a number of Treasury notes.

Bolsover stared.

"My hat! You're rolling in wealth, Snaith! Where did you get all that money from?"

"I forgot to tell you. I've managed to work into a job at the Friardale Granary," grinned Snaith. "Nice little stroke of luck for me. I'm working on the books in the cashier's office. The screw isn't much, but I manage to make up my money in other ways."

Here Snaith gave a wink, and Bolsover looked at him incredulously.

"You—you mean that you steal?" he demanded.

"Call it that if you like," said Snaith, with an unpleasant laugh. "I just cook the books a little and make a bit each day for myself. It's as safe as houses. The manager will never find out. Quite a cushy crib for me—what?"

Bolsover shrugged his shoulders, and the pair of young rascals proceeded to play cards. Snaith won most of Bolsover's money by craftily manipulating the cards. The burly Remove did not suspect, however.

"I say, Bolsover," said Snaith, as his companion rose to go, "just a minute. I've got something to suggest. You'd be no end bucked, I suppose, to romp off with the captaincy of the Remove?"

Bolsover's eyes gleamed.

"Rather!" he said. "If only the ballot came out in my favour—"

"Why shouldn't it?" demanded Snaith, with a crafty look. "I could manage it for you, Bolsover. I'd take the risk just to satisfy my desire to see Wharton deposed. I hate the stuck-up cad! You say Wingate has the ballot-box in his room to-night, and that he counts the votes in the morning? Well, I'm game to get into Greyfriars to-night, break into Wingate's room, and get at the ballot-box. I'll wangle the votes so that you get the majority. It will be as easy as rolling off a form. I know Greyfriars like a book, you know. And I'm pretty expert at picking a lock, especially of a small box. What do you say?"

Bolsover major drew a deep breath. It had long been his dearest desire to become captain of the Remove. Although a candidate in the ballot, it was very uncertain whether he would poll the greatest number of votes. Here was his chance.

"Well?" said Snaith. "It's the chance of a lifetime, Bolsover. I'm not asking you to pay me. I'm willing to take all the risk and do the job off my own bat. Shall I?"

"All right," muttered Bolsover, after a lengthy pause. "Go ahead, Snaith! I—I sha'n't have anything to do with it, anyway. And it's time I became captain of the Remove."

"Right-ho!" grinned the rascally fellow. "Rely on me, Bolsover. Tomorrow you'll be declared captain of the Remove."

Bolsover strode away, his hands clenched, his heart beating wildly, eagerly. Captain of the Remove! His ambition would be realised on the morrow. The thought quite dispelled any qualms he might have had as to the honesty of the affair.

Snaith gave a quiet chuckle, gathered up the money he had so dishonestly come by, and returned to the Cross Keys.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Under False Colours!

BOOM!

The last stroke of midnight tolled from the old clock-tower at Greyfriars.

Cecil Snaith dropped lightly from the school wall, and, moving like a wraith, crept into the shadows, and made his way across the Close.

Everything was dark and silent and still as the grave. Not a light showed anywhere in the vast pile. Snaith chuckled to himself. This was like old

Special Boxing Supplement next Monday!

times when, as a member of the Shell, he used to break bounds after dark.

Some time had elapsed since then, but he remembered his way perfectly. Nothing had changed. He clambered in at the lower box-room window, and, with infinite caution, stole along the dark, silent corridors.

He reached the Sixth Form passage, and found Wingate's study. It was in darkness as he crept in and closed the door stealthily behind him. He took out his pocket-torch, and switched on the brilliant stream of light. He saw the Remove ballot-box standing on Wingate's desk.

It was the work of a few minutes to Snaith's cunning hands to turn the lock. He counted the votes, and found that Wharton had the majority of three, that Bolsover's and Peter Todd's votes were

and, in the soft light from the window, Snaith recognised Harry Wharton's profile.

"Wharton!" he muttered hoarsely, under his breath.

Wharton, unable to sleep for his restless thoughts, had left the Remove dormitory and gone down to Study No. 1 to get a drink. Hearing the marauder ahead he had followed, wondering whom it might be.

He could see nobody in the darkness, but kept on. Soon he heard the footsteps again.

They were making for the Sixth Form passage.

Wharton set his teeth and followed.

He saw a dark form enter Wingate's study. He had no idea that it was Snaith. The expelled Shell fellow was leading Wharton into a trap his cunning

bed-room opened, and Wingate himself appeared.

"Wharton!" exclaimed Wingate in astonishment. "What the dickens are you doing in here at this time of night?"

Wharton was taken aback, too amazed to speak.

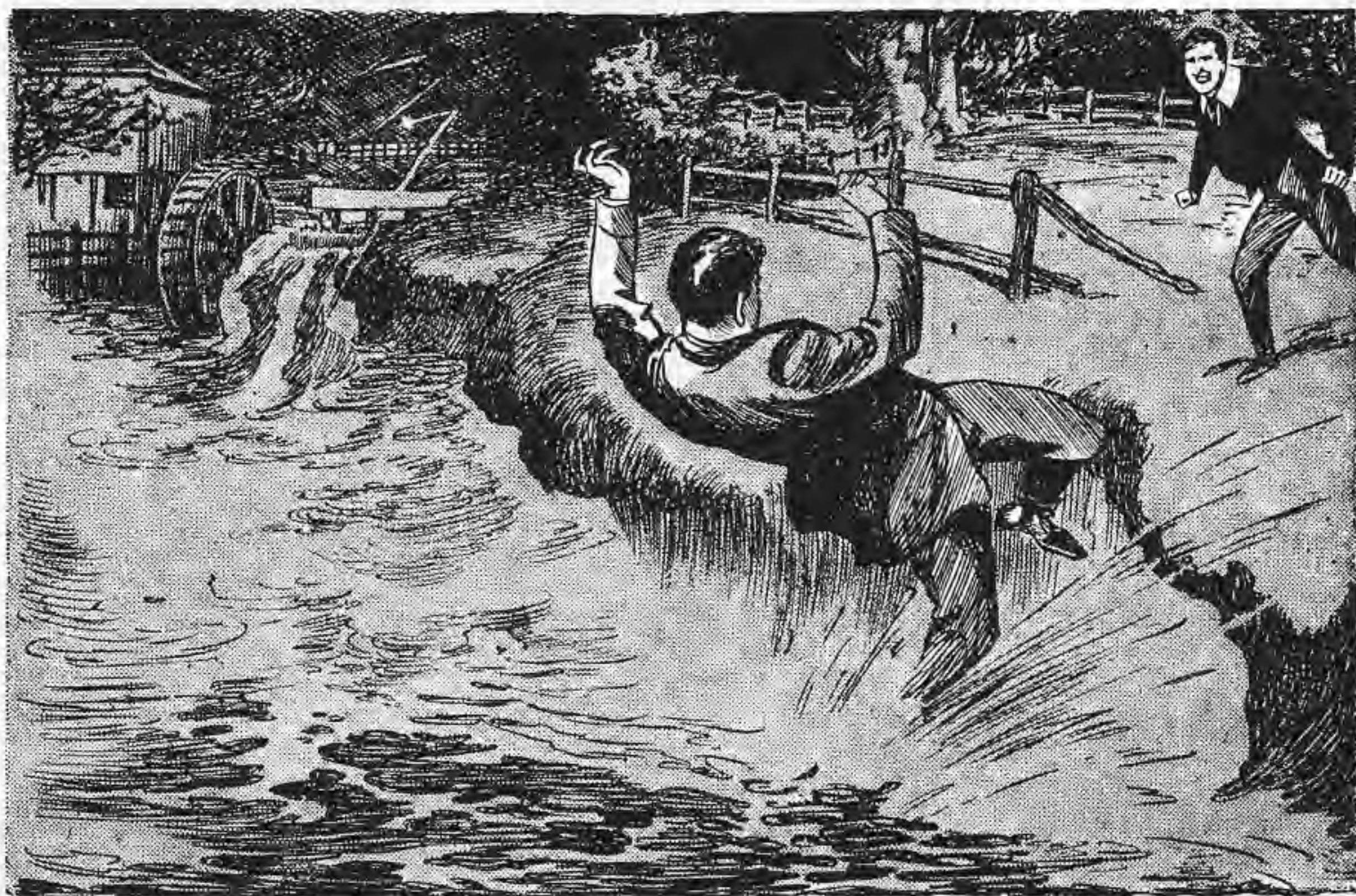
Wingate looked grimly at him, and his glance turned to the ballot-box.

"I—I thought I heard somebody creep in here, and I followed to investigate," burst out the Removite at last.

"But what were you doing out of bed in the first place, Wharton?" rapped Wingate sharply.

Wharton explained.

Meanwhile, Snaith had crept into the Remove dormitory, and gone over to Bolsover, who was awake. A few hastily-muttered words to the bully of the Remove, and he was gone.



Bolsover gave a shrill cry of terror and toppled over. In a sudden flash of lightning he saw that his assailant wore Greyfriars clothes; he had been fighting for his life with a schoolfellow! Splash! The boiling waters of the mill-stream closed over his head, effectually drowning his despairing cry for help. (See Chapter 7.)

equal in number, while Bulstrode came last.

He selected four of Wharton's vote papers, and, tearing up into four pieces a sheet of impot paper he found on Wingate's desk, wrote Bolsover's name on each, carefully copying the handwritings on the original four. Having thus falsified four votes for Bolsover, he destroyed Wharton's four and put the fragments in his pocket.

Then he placed the forged papers into the ballot-box and relocked it. Chuckling softly, he crept from the study.

Passing through one of the corridors, he suddenly gave a start and halted. Somebody was stalking him in the darkness. His quick ears detected the footsteps.

Snaith crouched in an alcove and waited. The footsteps rounded the bend,

brain had devised while crouching in the alcove.

Wharton's heart beat fast. Who could it be, prowling in Wingate's room at dead of night? Could it be somebody after the ballot-box? He had noticed that Bolsover was in the dormitory when he left, but it might be Skinner, or—

Hark! It was a sound in the room. The plucky junior gripped the door handle and opened it. He strode into the study and switched on the light.

The room was apparently empty, save for himself.

He heard a quick movement behind him, but wheeled round too late.

The door closed, and he heard swiftly-retreating footsteps up the passage.

Wharton turned to the door, but as he did so the door leading into Wingate's

Bolsover jumped up.

"Wake up, you chaps!" he called. "Wharton left the dormitory a little while ago. I'm going to see where he's gone."

Several fellows sleepily told Bolsover to be quiet. But Bolsover, Skinner, Stott, and Trevor got up and left the dormitory. Seeing them go, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Squiff followed.

Harry Wharton was not to be found anywhere in the Remove passage.

Bolsover then led the way to the Sixth Form passage, hearing voices from that quarter. The Removites came upon Harry Wharton standing in Wingate's study, facing the Greyfriars captain.

"Here he is!" cried Skinner. "So that's where he was off to when he left the dormitory! He came to get at the ballot-box—"

Billy Bunter as a boxer will make you roar!

"You lie, Skinner! You lie!" cried Wharton passionately. "I followed somebody here—"

"Oh, rats!" cried Trevor. "That's a likely yarn, Wharton. You were the only one out of the dormitory. Who else could have come down here?"

Wharton was silent. Even Wingate was gazing hard and curiously at him. His chums looked worried. They left the room, and searched high and low for the intruder that Harry had followed, but returned empty-handed. Snaith, who knew Greyfriars inside and out, was lying low in a safe hiding-place.

"Well, you kids had better cut off to bed," said Wingate gruffly. "The ballot-box hasn't been tampered with, so far as I can see."

"Wharton didn't have a chance, otherwise it would have been," said Skinner, with a sneer.

Next morning the whole Lower School at Greyfriars was talking over the affair. Harry Wharton had been found in Wingate's room after midnight, and his explanation, though plausible, was regarded as unsatisfactory by most fellows.

The Remove eagerly awaited the result of the ballot. Wingate told them just before dinner.

Bolsover had won by a majority of four!

The news caused a great sensation. "Bolsover's won!" chortled Harold Skinner in the Common-room. "So Wharton has been done in the eye, after all! Hurrah!"

The result was greeted with mixed feelings by the Remove. It could not have been called a popular result, exactly. Bolsover seemed very quiet and subdued. Harry Wharton just bit his lip when he heard of his deposition, and made no comment.

His eyes blazed when he met Bolsover in the quadrangle later, however.

"So, you cad, you've got your wish!" he exclaimed, his chest heaving with rage and passion. "You've managed to turn me out—"

"Easy, Harry!" said Bob Cherry in concern. "The ballot was fair enough."

"I don't believe it!" cried Harry Wharton, looking round fiercely. "Somebody was in Wingate's room last night besides myself. I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "Is that the sportsman-like way you take a defeat, Wharton? Any excuse, I suppose!"

Bolsover's face was red as he looked round.

"You chaps can rely on me to do my best as captain," he said, and there was a genuine ring in his voice. "If Wharton cares to be friends, I'm willing to let bygones be bygones."

He held out his hand, but Harry Wharton turned his back and strode fiercely away.

Several fellows hissed him as he went.

Bolsover bit his lip, but he did not display any rage. Instead, he looked strangely perturbed. Skinner & Co. tried to hang round him and fawn upon him, but he shook them off.

After tea that day Bolsover major went out alone. He had made an appointment to meet Snaith by the hut in the Friardale Wood.

Cecil Snaith was there. He greeted the burly Removite with a cynical smile.

"Well, Bolsover!" he said. "What's the ballot result?"

"I've won," growled Bolsover.

"Ha, ha! I had a pretty narrow squeak with Wharton in the night, but I managed it, you see. If I hadn't

worked things, Wharton would have won. But"—here Snaith looked curiously at Bolsover—"you don't look best pleased at the result."

"I—I'm glad to be captain of the Remove," muttered Bolsover awkwardly. "But I tell you, Snaith, I feel an utter cad. I—I've only just realised what a rotter I am. I know I'm not a goody-goody, not by a long chalk, but I feel rotten about this, somehow. I'm captain of the Form under false pretences. If the chaps knew they'd send me to Coventry."

Snaith gave a sneer.

"So you're getting squeamish, Bolsover! My hat! I thought you had more grit in you than that. I suppose now you're goin' to make a clean breast of the affair, and throw yourself on the mercy of Wharton?"

"No, I'm not," growled Bolsover. "I've decided to stick it out as captain, and prove to the Remove that I can be decent if I like. I'm going to play straight after this, Snaith. I can at least try to be worthy of the position I've got by cheating. Wharton is right in all he's done and said. I realise it now. I wish I hadn't set myself against him in the first place. And I've come to tell you, Snaith, that I'm done with you after this."

Snaith's eyes glittered.

"You're done with me, eh?" he hissed. "Is this the way you show your appreciation of what I've done, Bolsover? You're going back on me, are you? Well, do it if you dare! If you break with me, I'll write to Wharton and tell him the truth."

"No, you won't!" rapped Bolsover. "You'll hold your tongue, Snaith. Supposing I gave the manager of the Friardale Granary the tip to examine his books? Where would you stand then? You'd go to prison for stealing your employers' money!"

Snaith reeled back as though he had been struck. He looked at Bolsover with baffled rage and hate written all over his sallow face.

"You—you threaten to do that, do you?" he panted. "What a fool I was to have confided in you, Bolsover! You've got the whip hand of me now. You hound! You've gone back on me after I've served your purpose! You're goin' to pose as a goody-goody to the Form! But we shall see how you get on, Bolsover. Wait and see! I've got it in for both you and Wharton now. I'll get my revenge on both of you, if I have to wait months!"

Snaith turned on his heel, and, snarling, disappeared into the wood.

Bolsover gave a laugh, and walked back to Greyfriars. He felt easier, now that he had done with Cecil Snaith. The good in the bully's nature was beginning to struggle with the bad. Bolsover major was not such an abandoned rascal as Snaith, and he genuinely meant to do his best in his false position as captain of the Remove.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Hand of Vengeance!

"WHAT'S the matter with Harry?"

Bob Cherry asked that question lugubriously. Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, and Squiff were with him in Study No. 13. The chums of the Remove were looking very glum.

"He's taken Bolsover's success to heart, and he's brooding over it," said

Frank Nugent. "He's walking about like a bear with a sore neck. It's his rotten temper again, I believe. I wish Harry could be a little more reasonable. He's only making things rotten for himself."

"Yes; the other chaps are calling Harry ugly names," growled Johnny Bull. "He won't have anything to do with Bolsover. He looks as though he'd like to eat him every time he sees him. He's brooding over something; it's not actually the result of the ballot. Harry still believes that Bolsover had a hand in keeping him away from the Redclyffe match, and he won't get it out of his head that the ballot's been wangled somehow."

"What rot!" exclaimed Squiff. "Who could have got at the ballot-box except—"

There was silence in the study. The chums of the Remove looked awkwardly at each other. The other Removites were still talking about that midnight affair in Wingate's room, when Harry Wharton had been discovered in there.

Harry's chums would not for the world have believed him guilty of attempting to get at the box. It was the chatter of fellows like Skinner and Billy Bunter that made them feel awkward.

"Bolsover's offered Harry a place in the Remove Eleven, and Harry has refused," said Bob Cherry. "He's still got his knife in Bolsover, the ass!"

That was the opinion of the rest of Greyfriars. Harry Wharton's impetuous temper was well known, and some of the boys were wondering how the feud between Bolsover and Harry Wharton would end.

Wharton kept himself apart from the rest of the Form. He even avoided his chums, who, prepared to give Bolsover a chance, had accepted places in the Remove Eleven under the new captain.

That evening Wharton went out alone, without telling anybody where he was going. Soon after, Bolsover major also left Greyfriars on an errand to the sports outfitters at Courtfield.

As dusk deepened into darkness, great masses of black cloud came up from the North Sea, and fishermen at Pegg Bay reported that rough weather was on the way.

By eight o'clock that evening a fierce storm was raging. The wind blew to a hurricane, rain fell in sheets, thunder lent hideous noise to the din, and the darkness was lit up by dazzling forked lightning that seemed to split the angry heavens in twain.

Call-over at Greyfriars saw two fellows missing from the ranks of the Remove. They were Harry Wharton and Bolsover. Neither had returned to the school. Mr. Quelch appeared anxious for their safety; but the rest of the school felt confident that the missing boys, being caught in the storm, had sought shelter until it abated sufficiently to enable them to return to Greyfriars.

Out on the wild countryside, however, Bolsover major was battling grimly with the raging elements. He had decided to walk from Courtfield, as there was no train for another hour. On his way he had been caught in the storm in the open country, with no shelter near.

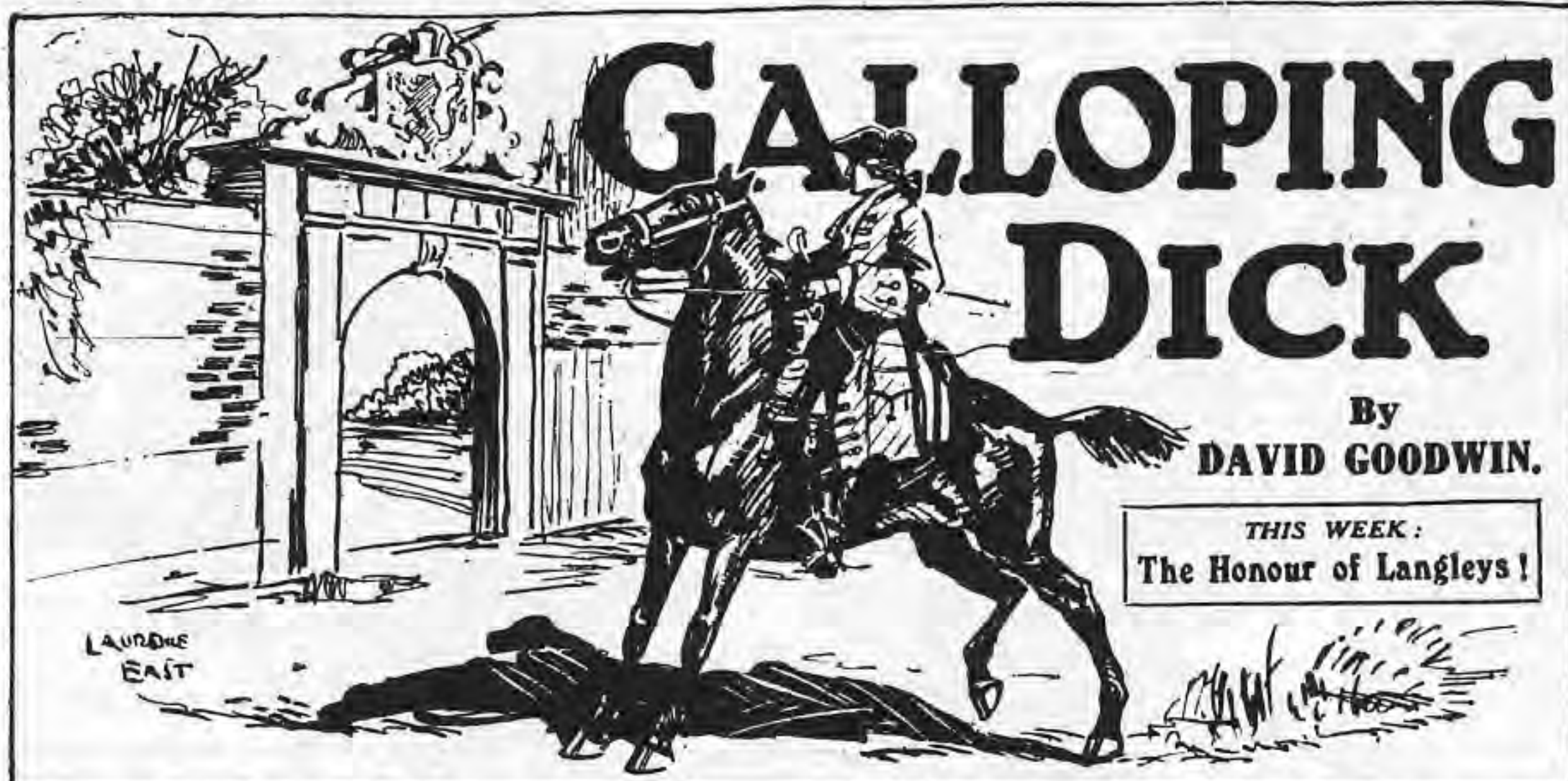
Drenched to the skin with the rain, buffeted by the gale, dazzled and deafened by the thunder and lightning, he staggered on, avoiding the wood, and making his way to the River Sark.

Bolsover reached the river at length and staggered blindly on, his objective

(Continued on page 17.)

Good company anywhere—the MAGNET!

With his heart full of bitterness against Sir Mostyn Frayne, gamester and rogue, who, in one stroke, has robbed him of a brother and the house and lands which had been the property of the Langleys for generations past, Dick Langley turns highwayman. With a price on his head he roams the countryside, seeking his livelihood behind a mask and a brace of pistols.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Shield Over the Door!

"**H**OLD, Kitty! Am I dreaming, or are those my own bearings on the escutcheon yonder? I did not know there were kin of mine in this county."

Gallop'ing Dick reined in the black mare, and looked intently at the house, very much astonished. He was close by the south front of a large country mansion, opening on to the bridle-path leading from Dalton Highway. It was a large house, rich and showy, but not in the best of taste, and very new. Moreover, it lay nearer the road than a well-placed house should, and thus it was that Dick saw what he did.

He paid little attention to the house and its surroundings. The thing that caught his eye was a large stone shield over the large doors that led into the hall. There was nothing strange in that, save that it was a larger and gaudier shield than a gentleman would care to set over his threshold, and the bearings were gaily picked out in the correct heraldic tinctures. But the odd thing was that Dick recognised the coat-of-arms as his own.

"Odd's fish, there's no doubt about it!" exclaimed Dick, riding to the outer gates. "'Argent, on a chief ermine a lion rampant, or,' as Sir Oliver, the herald, would have me read it. And the crest, a broken tilting-spear. 'Tis the same! I knew not that there were any other of our blood in England, and, indeed, I know that I am the last of the line. Come, Kitty, we will call on this gentleman who claims to be of my blood!"

Dick hooked the gate open with his whip, and rode over the path to the wide doors beneath the escutcheon with the air of one who feels he has a right to an answer.

"Within there!" called Dick, after he had knocked twice without answer. "Is there no serving-man to open these doors?"

His temper rising, he drew a pistol

from his holster and rapped loudly on the door with the butt.

The oak door swung open, and a portly steward appeared, in a great rage at the unceremonious summons of his visitor. The man opened his mouth to protest angrily, but at sight of Dick's commanding air, and the well-armed holsters of the mare's saddle, he shut it again and stared.

"Who lives here?" demanded Dick.

"Mr. Joshua Langley, the lord of the manor," replied the steward, looking apprehensively at the pistol-butts that still peeped from the holsters.

"Is Mr. Langley in?" asked Dick. "No? Then inform Mr. Langley that I will do myself the honour of calling upon him to-night if he will be good enough to receive me."

"What name shall I give, sir?"

"The same as his own," said Dick, with a grim laugh.

And, turning Black Kitty round, he rode out through the gates.

"A pail o' water for the mare, sir? Ay, an' welcome! 'Tis few more pails I'll ever draw out o' the old well!"

The honest-looking old cottager whom Dick had accosted sighed deeply as he unwound the windlass. Dick felt somewhat tickled, till he saw the man's grief was serious.

"Why, my good man, is the well drying up, then?" he said, dismounting.

"Dried up! Nay, sir; 'twill be my old bones that'll dry up when the day comes! I'm soon to be turned out. An' me an' my fore-elders ha' lived an' died in this 'ere cottage for three hundred years an' more, so you may believe I feels sad. There's no peace comin' for Roger Giles!"

"Why, man, who's going to turn you out?"

"It's the new squire, sir, Mr. Joshua Langley, up at the hall. He do want to build a shootin'-box here, for 'tis at the far side o' the estate. He rode down last week, and told me pretty rough as he wouldn't renew my lease, an' he was

goin' to pull the old cottage down. I prayed him to let me stay; but he only swore at me an' rode off."

"The heartless curmudgeon!" exclaimed Dick.

"Oh, sir, I mustn't complain, I s'pose. He has the right to do what he will with his own. But old Squire Everard would never ha' done it; he was the last lord o' the manor, an' my family were tenants of the Everards since the cottage was built."

"Now, tell me, good man," said Dick, "who is this Joshua Langley?"

"He was a tanner, sir, who tanned leather in Dalton for ten years. His business growing, he set up, by degrees, the biggest tannery in the county, employing two hundred 'prentices and men, and sore ill he paid them. But Joshua made great wealth, and is one of the richest men in the district to-day. He bought out the Everards, who were more generous, but poor, pulled down their house, built the new one, and set up as a country gentleman. It is as much as a man's life is worth to mention the tan-yards to him now."

"Ho, ho!" laughed Dick. "Well, tanning, is an honest trade enough though not sweet-smelling. But is he a good landlord apart from the case of your cottage?"

"He grinds his tenants into the dirt, sir, as he used to his 'prentices at the tannery!"

"Ha!" said Dick, and for some time he said no more, thinking silently.

"Good man," he said at last to the cottager, "do you collect together every tenant who holds a lease under Mr. Joshua Langley, and come at daybreak to-morrow before Langley Hall, and wait there till I summon you. It will be to your advantage."

The words, so commandingly spoken, puzzled the cottager's honest, slow wits, but he did not hesitate.

"We will be there, sir," he said, "for I see you mean us well, and we know whom to trust."

Dick waved his whip, cheerily mounted Kitty, and rode off. He dined at a

More thrilling highwayman yarns coming along!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 817.

wayside hostelry, thinking over what had passed; and as evening drew near he rode along the Dalton Highway, when he noticed approaching a handsome man of middle-age, well clothed and horsed. Judging him to be a man who could well spare his purse, Dick drew his mare across the path, and his pistol from the holster, and called courteously to him to stop.

Instead, the stranger stared at him, and then broke into a great gust of laughter.

"Why, Dick, my boy, do you rob your friends?"

"Sir Oliver Chandos!" exclaimed Dick, thrusting his pistol into its holster and spurring forward to meet the rider. "This is a happy chance!"

The two exchanged a warm hand-grip, for Sir Oliver had been a warm friend of Dick and his father in the old days at Langley. Sir Oliver, moreover, was pursuivant of the Heralds' College, which registers and deals with all pedigrees, arms, and titles, and he bore the office which is called, as in the old tourney days, Rouge Dragon, and which holds authority in the granting and registering of arms.

"How strange that I should meet you of all men, Sir Oliver," said Dick, "when I am about to ride in defence of my own arms!"

And he told the story of Joshua Langley to Sir Oliver, who was amused and indignant.

"I have seen the shield, and remonstrated with the man," said Chandos, "but to no purpose. In the days of Queen Bess and the Stuarts, when we heralds rode the country to see that those who bore arms rightly were confirmed in them, we posted those who bore them falsely and without right as 'no gentlemen'—and they deserved it—in the market-places of the towns. But that power is gone!"

"Yet, if you would do me a service," said Dick, "come to Langley Hall, as the house is called, shortly before cock-crow, and you will see sport. This peddling tanner has borne an honourable shield too long, and to-night I will strip him of it!"

"I will be there!" chuckled Sir Oliver. "But, beware, Dick, he is a dangerous rogue, especially in his cups!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Fall of Joshua Langley.

"ANOTHER throw, Langley! Shake the bones up well."
"Ay, rattle them out!"
quoth Joshua Langley thickly, as the dice streamed out on the table. "Yours again, Sir James! You have the devil's luck!"

In the wide dining-hall of the new house the company was sitting at dice, and Joshua Langley, a stout, heavy man, with a coarse face and red eyes, was farther gone in liquor than his companions.

They were not a very savoury crew. The families of good standing around Dalton fought shy of the new squire, who, they said, took his wine like a tanner, and still smelt of the steeping-yard.

His companions now were an unfrocked vicar, who had been turned out of his living, and lived on anybody whom he could sponge upon, and Sir James Sharpe, a debauchee who had squandered his heritage, and now lived on his skill at cards. He found Joshua a pigeon worth the plucking.

"Double the stakes and throw again!" said Joshua thickly. "Odd's blood, whom have we here?"

The door swung open, and Galloping Dick walked into the room. He bowed to Joshua Langley.

"Good-even to you, sir!" he said. "I trust my presence is welcome to one of the blood of Langley; for I bear that name, and the arms over your door are also mine!"

"So you are the rascal my steward spoke of!" cried Langley. "Out with you, knave, or I will have you flung into the fish-pond!"

Dick stepped across the room and halted before his namesake. The man shrank before the look in his eyes.

"I have some delicate family matters to discuss with this gentleman," said Dick quietly to the other two. "Will you do me the service to withdraw?"

Dick drew no weapon, nor did he use any threat; but the baronet and the vicar made no objection, and retired quietly.

"Now, sir," said Dick, turning on the new squire, "will you explain what my bearings are doing over your door?"

"Who are you?"

"Richard Langley of Langleys was my name six months ago. On the highways to-day they call me Galloping Dick!"

"Ha! A common robber!" cried the squire. "And you dare question my right to the shield! You knave, I could buy you fifty times over, and never feel the loss!"

"Do you see this riding-whip?" said Dick.

The squire started.

"I have allowed several insults to pass," continued the young highwayman, "for I cross swords only with my equals, and not with peddlers from the tanyard! But if you say another discourteous word, you shall be whipped round your own boundaries!"

The squire, half-sobered, gasped slightly, and cowered before the resolute knight of the road.

"That is better!" said Dick, his lip curling. "A very proper attitude, Master Tanner! You will remove that escutcheon at once!"

"I refuse!" shrieked the squire, in a sudden access of fury.

Dick laughed harshly. He gripped Joshua Langley by the collar and breeches, and hauled him rapidly out of the room and through the front doors on to the gravel.

The squire, weakened by late hours and debauchery, found himself powerless in the grip of the young highwayman.

Dick summoned the servants.

"Bring a short ladder and a length of rope!" he ordered. "The first who hesitates will be taught swiftness with a bullet!"

The serving-men, cowed by Dick's pistols, did as they were bid. Dick set the ladder against the wall over the door and mounted it, hauling the kicking Joshua after him.

"If you are not quiet, I shall let you drop!" said Dick.

Joshua became wondrous still. Calling one of the serving-men to help him, Dick bound the tanner in the form of a spreadeagle to the four points of masonry that jutted out above the escutcheon, and then descended, leaving the tanner in that ignominious position, bound tight above the coat-of-arms that he wrongfully claimed.

A horseman was seen approaching down the drive, and Sir Oliver Chandos halted his horse before the door. He stared at

the shouting Joshua in amazement, and nearly fell off his horse with laughter.

"Well done, Dick—well done, i' faith!" he cried. "A rare sight! And there is a crowd of tenantry coming along the road to see it!"

At that Joshua Langley gave in altogether.

"Take me down!" he shrieked. "Oh, take me down! I will do anything you ask—anything! I shall never be able to hold up my head again if my tenants see me thus!"

"Very good!" said Dick. "To begin with, you shall erase the coat-of-arms which belongs to the Langleys and never bear it again. Next, as you are so anxious to have a coat, Sir Oliver here shall grant you a new one of your own at the College of Heralds' fee of one hundred guineas, and a further fee of one thousand guineas in gold to me, which I shall divide among your tenantry, whom I hear marching up the road. Thirdly, you shall grant Roger Giles and his heirs a hundred years' lease of his cottage rent free!"

Joshua turned purple in the face, and strove with all his feelings. This was the bitterest pill of all, but he gave in.

"I agree!" he cried. "Quick! Take me down before they reach the gates, or I am undone!"

Dick and Sir Oliver, laughing hugely, took Joshua Langley down, and just as the tenantry entered the drive they escorted him into the house.

In the dining-room, still redolent of drink and dice, Sir Oliver granted him a coat-of-arms such as a tanner might honourably bear—very gay to look at, with a green oak-tree as crest, to remind him of the bark that gained him his wealth.

Dick and Chandos witnessed the signing of the lease, which the young highwayman took out and handed to the overjoyed Roger Giles, after which a thousand guineas from Joshua's strong box was divided among the mystified but delighted tenantry.

Then Dick entered the dining-hall once more, and with a grim smile regarded Joshua, who was poring over the new grant of arms with mixed feelings.

"Good-day, Squire Joshua!" said Dick. "You have now a coat and crest that, although new, are truly your own. See that you do not dishonour them. I do not think that you will again meddle with the bearings of a family not your own."

And Dick and Sir Oliver, mounting their horses, rode away, laughing heartily.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Red Rebels of Beacon Hill!

"I CRAVE your pardon, sir, but the matter is urgent! Johnny, my lad, take down that picture, and hide it away in the loft! See that you cover it up well!"

Galloping Dick, smoking his long churchwarden in the armchair of the inner parlour at the Green Man—a very excellent hostelry on the Stapleford Road—felt too happy and comfortable to argue with any man about anything. It was the day following the events recorded in the previous chapter.

But the action of the landlord was so curious that he felt bound to ask the reason of it. The worthy man had suddenly opened the door after a short knock, and appeared with an agitated look on his usually jovial features, and behind him was his sixteen-years-old son.

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"We have you now!" roared the rebel spokesman. "You fooled us three hours ago, but we'll fling your body to the crows for it! Rush him, lads!" Like a flash Dick's two pistols leaped out. "Drop your weapons!" he ordered. "The man who refuses dies!" (See Chapter 4.)

On the wall of the parlour hung a large and gaudy portrait of the King of England, not very good, but still recognisable, with the words beneath it, "Georgius III. Rex." It was this picture that the landlord pointed out to his son, who hastily took it down from its nail.

"Why, host, what has overtaken you?" said Dick, taking the long pipe from his mouth. "Are the bailiffs on the road, and are you going to hide the furniture?"

"Nay, nay, sir!" said the landlord. "I trust my credit is as good as any man's. But this is a portrait of the King—Heaven keep him!—and the Red Rebels are about, I have just heard. And, having told you that, sir, I conceive you know the reason I take the portrait down?"

"Not I, in faith!" said Dick. "Who are the Red Rebels, and why should you hide the King's portrait because they are coming?"

"You are a stranger, sir, I see," replied the host. "You must know that this is a disloyal neighbourhood. Years ago there lived here a very violent man named Simon the Tinker, with some gifts of speech and leadership. He was a great preacher of equality and the rights of man, which seems to me to mean that every idler should be free to thief and loot as he pleases. Simon gathered a following round him; he was gaoled for raising a riot, and after that he preached hotter than ever, calling for a Republic and the downfall of the Throne!"

"A saucy fellow, in faith!" chuckled Dick. "And yet the King sits on his throne in spite of the excellent tinker's wrath."

"Yes, sir; and, indeed, the Stapleford Rebels are little heard of outside Stapleford. But in the district they are a veritable plague. Simon the Tinker was

hanged for cracking a comrade's skull with a Hollands' bottle; but his place was taken by one Andrew Loring, a horse-coper. He leads the band that Simon first gathered, and they wear a red rosette, and dub themselves the Red Rebels, meeting in a cave on Beacon Hill o' nights, where they drink to the King's downfall and hatch plots of rebellion. The plots, methinks, come to little except more drink; but the rebels add to their numbers now and then, and there's a dozen in all, and are a sad trouble to us settled folk!"

"How so?" said Dick.

"They force us all to swear ourselves of their side," said the landlord; "and, indeed, many of the villagers are no better, and quite willing to do so. Any man suspected of loyalty to the King, however, is likely to find himself knocked o' the head some dark night, or his house fired. And thus it is, hearing they are about to visit the houses on this side, I hid my picture of his Majesty, for 'twould go ill with me if I were found with it!"

Dick's pipe fell and smashed to fragments as he leaped up.

"Why, gadzooks, man, you don't mean that you lower the King's portrait at the bidding of such scum as that? Hoist it up, man, and defend it! Egad, if it were mine, I would stand before it and pink through the shortribs the rascal who dared to lay a finger on it!"

The landlord shook his head gravely.

"I am a man of peace," he said, "and do not want my house sacked by rebels. I find it better to live at peace with all men, and I am not a match for Loring's rascals. But, indeed, Loring himself no longer leads them, for he followed Simon's habits, and is now in prison. They await a new leader, one Henry Beauchamp, whom I have heard is on the road to join them this very day.

This Beauchamp, once a gentleman of good lineage, has fallen very low through his own debauchery and evil habits, and has had a noted career as a rebel in the Pretender's cause, but only to fill his own pockets."

"Indeed!" said Dick, rising and taking up his riding-whip.

The landlord suddenly turned pale.

"I—I trust you are not he, sir!" stammered the man. "I—I meant no harm. I—"

"Nay, man, not I!" laughed Dick. "But what you tell me interests me much, and also it rouses my gall not a little. Tell me, where do these rebels meet? What is their favourite tap-house? I know such rascals are never far from the liquor."

"They meet chiefly at their cave, sir, where, I believe, they have a good store of smuggled Hollands. But when in the village they foregather often at the sign of the Black Dog, a very low pothouse indeed, a mile down the road."

Dick threw two guineas on the table.

"There's your score, landlord," he said, laughing. "Perhaps you do well to hide the picture, for we cannot all be fighting men."

And, striding out with a nod of farewell, Dick brought Black Kitty from her stall, and rode out from the road.

"Odd's life!" he said to himself, checking his pace before an unsavoury-looking inn. "This is the Black Dog, then? A worthy house for rebels. I like not this business mine host told me of, and, pink me, if I don't look into it!"

Dick, ever ready for adventure, hitched Black Kitty to a rail, knowing she would make short work of any who interfered with her, and entered the inn.

There were but two persons there—the potboy and a stranger. The latter was dressed in faded clothes that had once

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been of fine quality, and his hands and bearing were those of a gentleman. But his face was blotched with evil living, and there was a crafty gleam in his eyes.

"Good-even, sir!" said the stranger, who had been eyeing Dick intently. "Are you one of us?"

"This is Henry Beauchamp, the rebel, by the look of him," thought Dick, turning his eyes on the man—"the new leader they are awaiting." Then he replied quietly: "One of whom, sir, I pray?"

The man's eyes grew still more cunning. Instead of replying at once, he lifted his glass to his lips.

"I drink," he said, "to the brothers of the Red Rosette!"

Dick's eyes flashed. He raised his tankard.

"I drink," he cried, "to King George. Heaven bless him!"

He drained the tankard to the bottom. But the stranger stared, and a look of devilish rage convulsed his features. With an oath he dashed the dregs of the glass in Dick's face.

"Out!" he cried hoarsely. "Come out upon the turf behind the inn and draw your blade, and I will run you through and cut the Red Rosette over your heart, dog of a loyalist!"

Dick said no word, but wiped the dregs from his forehead with a silken handkerchief, and with a courteous bow motioned to the rebel leader to go out before him. But for all his gentle manner the highwayman's eyes glittered like newly-ground sword-points.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

How Dick Taught the Rebels a New Tune!

THEY reached the plot of turf, and the two rapiers leaped from their sheaths. No time was wasted on further formality, but the blades clinked together, while the potboy gaped from over the fence at the combatants.

Before three thrusts were exchanged Henry Beauchamp—for it was he—needed no telling that he had met his match. He was a fine swordsman, and a treacherous one. But all his cunning tricks availed nothing against the wonderful swordsmanship Dick had learned from his father. He found himself at the highwayman's mercy, and cursed savagely under his breath. Yet Dick did not strike home.

Suddenly springing back out of sword's reach with an oath, the rebel picked a pistol from the tail of his coat—which he had scorned to take off for so young an adversary—and fired it in Dick's face.

But the dastardly trick failed. The pistol flashed in the pan with a harmless click, and with an oath of despair the scoundrel flung the weapon in Dick's face and rushed at him again with the rapier. There was a quick gleam, a loud cry, and Henry Beauchamp fell to the grass.

"He earned his death," murmured Dick, wiping and sheathing his blade. "But for that villainous trick I would have spared him. The world is well rid of a traitor."

Dick shook the dust of Stapleford from his shoes, and rode off towards the downs, leaving a rare uproar behind him, of which he took no notice. It was not till night was falling, two hours later, that he skirted the woods at the foot of Beacon Hill, and there he became aware of a knot of men, half a dozen or more, standing under the trees.

"What have we here?" muttered Dick, looking at them. "An ill-favoured rabble enough, in truth! Egad, this is Beacon Hill, isn't it? Can these be more of the pothouse rebels? If so, they'll be little pleased with me for depriving them of their new leader."

But, to Dick's surprise, the men came running towards him with uncouth gestures of fellowship, and many winks and leers, as becomes those who hold that all men are equal.

"Welcome!" they cried. "Come, lads, give a rouse for the new leader of the Red Rebels—the blade that'll show 'em the way to win!"

"Stand off, rascals!" said Dick, in gust. "What does this folly mean?"

"Nay, man, we are your new comrades!" they cried. "See, we wear the Red Rosette! We have heard how well you started, not two hours since, by pinking a whipper-snapper who drank a health to the King! 'Twas bravely done, comrade!"

"Odd's death," thought Dick, "this is the most topsy-turvy neighbourhood I ever rode into, and every man in it never fails to get hold of the wrong end of the stick! These rogues take me for Henry Beauchamp, and some dolt has taken his dead body for mine, and set the story abroad that he killed me!"

He was just about to tell the rogues their mistake and lay into them with his riding-whip, when a new thought struck him.

"They are not all here," he thought. "Did not mine host say there were a dozen? Egad, if I had them together I'd take my chance of teaching them a lesson! They should greet King George or kill me! I would I knew their cave in the woods!"

The thought flashed through his head like lightning, and he checked the speech that was on his lips, and answered quietly:

"We are well met, it seems," he said, "and what will you now? For I am strange to this neighbourhood."

"Ay, we will soon show you the ropes!" said the spokesman of the rascals. "All's not ready yet; but come to the cave at ten o'clock to-night, an' we'll all be there to greet you, an' hatch a plan that'll set the flag o' rebellion flying all through Wessex!"

And the rebel gave Dick minute instructions how to find the cave. The young highwayman sat motionless on his black mare and smiled grimly.

"I will be there!" he said, when the man had finished. "See that you are ready for me!"

"Three hours have passed," muttered Dick, as he slipped from Kitty's back just below the rise that led to the cave, "and there's the place, sure enough; but what have the rebels heard in the meantime? If they haven't learned in three hours that I'm not Henry Beauchamp, but his supposed victim, they're even duller rogues than I took them for."

Dick mounted the slope, and, walking round the clump of bushes that had been described to him, found the cave easily enough.

He felt the two double horse-pistols in the tails of his coat, and marched boldly ahead. He knew well that he was walking into extreme danger, but he did not hesitate.

No Langley would suffer disloyalty, and the young highwayman had all the pride of his race. Though he was killed for it, he would teach these rebels a lesson, and, single-handed, as he was, he had cowed

more than one gang of rascals as desperate with his quick eye and deadly horse-pistols. It was not as though he were dealing with men of honour, who could not be defeated by fear.

A hoarse snatch of song reached him as he entered. It broke off as he passed through the cave's mouth and found himself in a wide, roomy space, lit by rush-lights and grease-lamps.

Two large hogsheds stood at one end, and all round the sides were wooden benches, on which sat the rebels, twelve in all, and they gave no sign or word as Dick entered, but glowered at him strangely.

He saw that his suspicions were right; they knew now who he was, and were but waiting to take their revenge on him. There was an empty wooden seat in the centre, left as though for their expected leader, and Dick advanced and took it.

Instantly, from all the men, a rebel song broke forth—a scurrilous, foul-worded chant, directed against the King and the Sovereignty of England. The knaves glared at Dick as they sang it; it was a threat against him, to show what he might expect.

"Enough!" cried Dick, in a voice of thunder, leaping up and striking the seat with his hand to stop the foul outflow of song, and looking round commandingly.

In a moment every man's hand flew to his belt, and knives and bludgeons were plucked free.

"We have you now!" yelled the rebel spokesman. "You fooled us three hours since, you young viper, but we'll fling your body to the crows for it! Rush him, lads!"

Like a flash Dick's two double pistols leaped out, and presented themselves at the rebels.

"Drop your weapons!" ordered Dick. "The man who refuses, dies!" There was no mistaking the determination in his command.

The spokesman and one other, crying to the rest to follow, sprang forward. There was a double report, and both fell gasping on the cave's floor. The rest, in fear of their lives, instantly obeyed Dick's order, and flung their weapons away.

"Mount upon the benches!" commanded Dick. "Mount! The man who stays down joins the two who lie there!"

The knaves were convinced. With pallid faces they scrambled up on the benches, and stood there in a row.

"Lift up your voices," cried Dick, "and sing 'God save the King!' Take your time from me, and remember that a bullet awaits the man who fails! Altogether, now!"

Never did a stranger chorus arise. There were no good voices among the knaves, and the singing was vilely bad, but, with their eyes on Dick's pistols, they did their very best, and the National Anthem filled the cave, Dick's clear voice leading it.

"Very poor," commented Dick, "but the intention was good, and you will doubtless improve with practice. Now file out through the cave's mouth and go your own ways, remembering that if ever again there is talk of revolution in your village, Galloping Dick will return and give you another lesson in loyalty."

They departed meekly, leaving their weapons behind, and as Dick rode off laughing through the forest, the Red Rebels of Stapleford sneaked home to bed.

THE END.

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CONDEMNED BY THE SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 12.)

being the mill by the iron bridge. He would probably find shelter there.

As he neared the mill he could hear the stream boiling and thundering like a mad thing. He shuddered as he neared it, and grasped a wooden stake near the water's edge for support. To fall down there would mean a nameless horror. The mill stream was a death trap at ordinary times, but now, lashed to fury and flood by the storm, it was doubly so.

In the next flash of lightning he saw the bridge and staggered towards it. Suddenly he heard a footstep near him, and his heart bounded. He stopped. Then, to his horror, he found himself

the roar of the storm, to be swallowed and muffled a moment later by the tempestuous waters of the mill-stream.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Outcast of the School!

"THEY'RE not in yet!" muttered Bulstrode.

The Hall at Greyfriars was crowded. It was just on bedtime, but nobody had thoughts of retiring. Neither Bolsover nor Harry Wharton had returned, although the worst of the storm's fury was now over.

The juniors gathered round the Hall door and the windows, and looked out anxiously into the dark, bleak night.

Suddenly the gate bell tolled in the distance.

"Somebody's coming in!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

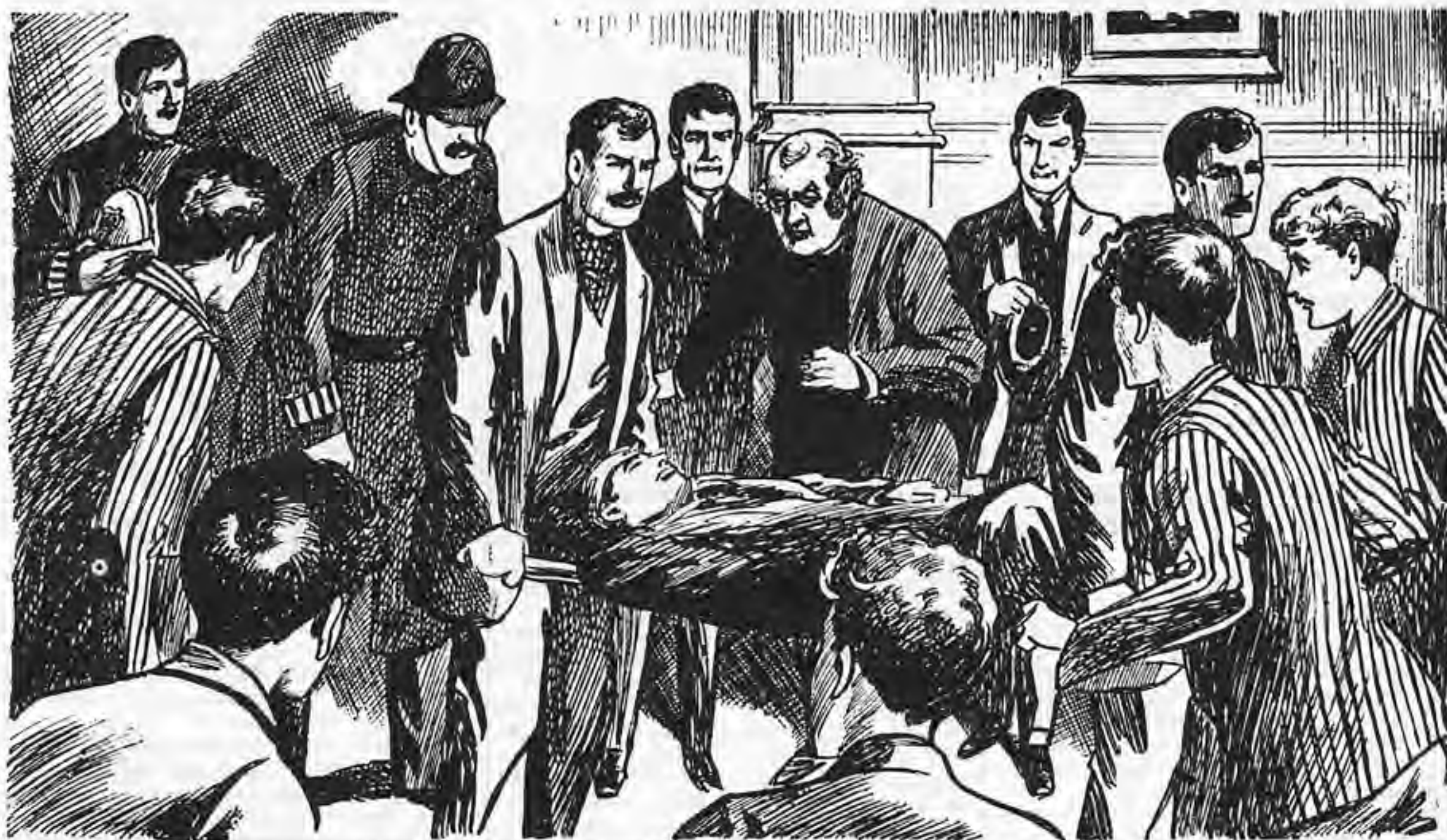
The prefects herded the juniors to bed, but not to sleep. Candles were lit, and the Remove sat up—waiting for news.

Where was Percy Bolsover? What had happened to him? Wharton maintained a sullen silence at the persistent questions that were put to him.

It was past eleven o'clock when the gate bell tolled. The Removes crowded to the windows. They saw the Hall door open, and in the light that flooded from it saw two policemen and three men. They had with them a stretcher, on which lay a prone figure.

"Good heavens!" muttered Nugent. "It's Bolsover! Something terrible has happened!"

Regardless of the school regulations the Removes dashed from the dormitory in their slippers and pyjamas. A tragic scene met their gaze in the Hall. Dr. Locke, Mr. Quelch, and Wingate



Bolsover, his head bandaged, looking as white as death, was lying on the stretcher. "He's—he's not dead?" exclaimed Wharton in a strained voice. "No boys, Bolsover is not dead," said Dr. Locke quietly, "but he is in a very serious condition." (See Chapter 8.)

grasped in a pair of strong arms that dragged him down in the darkness to the edge of the bank.

"This is where I settle with you, Bolsover!" hissed a voice close to his ears. "You won't keep the captaincy for long. You—Ah!"

Bolsover gave a shrill cry of terror as, in a flash of lightning, he saw the boiling mill-stream below him. He saw, too, in that momentary flash, that his assailant wore Greyfriars clothes. It came to him with sickly horror that he was fighting for his life with a schoolfellow!

The two fought on the edge of the river's bank. Bolsover exerted all his strength and tore himself free. But next minute a foot shot out and tripped him up.

With a cry of terror the Remove junior fell. He clutched desperately in the air as he toppled off the bank and plunged down into the raging flood below.

His despairing scream rang out above

It was Harry Wharton. He came into the Hall drenched to the skin, hatless, and nearly exhausted. He was immediately surrounded.

"Haven't you seen Bolsover?" asked Wingate of the Sixth.

"No," replied Wharton. "Is he out, then?"

"Yes. Which way did you come?"

"Along by the Sark," muttered Wharton. "The storm was terrible while it lasted."

"What ever made you go out, Harry?" demanded Bob Cherry. "You didn't say a word to us."

"No; I wanted to be alone," replied Harry Wharton quietly. "I just wanted to get away from all the talk and scandal, that's all. I went farther than I intended, and got caught in the storm."

Another hour passed, and still there was no sign of Bolsover.

Dr. Locke rang up the local police, who promised to send out a search-party.

were there, with other masters and prefects.

Bolsover, his head bandaged, looking white as death, was lying on the stretcher. One of the men had a Greyfriars School cap in his hand.

"He—he's not dead?" exclaimed Wharton in a strained voice.

"No, boys, Bolsover is not dead, although he is in a very serious condition," said Dr. Locke. "He had fallen in the mill-stream in the Sark, and was rescued in the nick of time, after a most terrible ordeal, by men who were taking refuge in one of the mill outhouses. His head is badly wounded, but, by the aid of Providence, he will recover."

"When we got him out he was still conscious, sir," said one of the rescuers. "He said something about one of his schoolfellows throwing him in; then he lost his senses. And, sir, we found this on the bank, at a spot where we saw unmistakable signs of a struggle."

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He held out the Greyfriars school cap. Dr. Locke took the cap, and, amid a breathless hush, read the name on the tab inside.

"Wharton!"

All eyes turned on Harry Wharton.

"Wharton, your cap was found on the bank near the spot where Bolsover fell in—or, as he said, was thrown in," said the Head grimly. "Can you explain its presence there?"

"No, sir," replied Harry in a low voice. "I lost my cap on the river-bank. But I did not see Bolsover. If you think that I threw him into the mill-stream, I—" He broke off and looked round with hard, strained eyes.

Looks of condemnation met him on every side.

He knew in his heart what most of them there were thinking. They were accusing him of that cowardly attack on Bolsover!

"I didn't—I swear I didn't have anything to do with it!" he cried, his voice harsh, almost sobbing. "I haven't seen Bolsover at all! I know nothing about it!"

"Are you telling the truth, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch, looking grimly at him. "You have recently been deposed from the captaincy of this Form by Bolsover. I could not help noticing on many occasions that you bore Bolsover a grudge. You have a temper, Wharton, that you cannot or will not govern. Can it be possible that you have been guilty of this terrible assault on your school-fellow?"

"Certainly not, sir!" cried Wharton hotly.

There was silence in the Hall.

Then the injured figure on the stretcher moved. Bolsover's eyes flickered open and stared upwards in terror.

"Wharton—don't!" he cried shrilly. "You coward, to trip me up— Oh! I'm falling—"

His voice trailed off into a moan, and, clutching his hands to his eyes, he shook with fear.

"The boy is in a fever. He is delirious," murmured Dr. Locke. "Show the way to the sanatorium, Wingate. I will telephone for the doctor immediately."

Bolsover was taken away, semi-conscious and moaning.

Dark, condemning looks were cast at Harry Wharton.

Even his chums avoided his glance when he turned appealingly to them. He tried to speak, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Boys, kindly return to your beds," said Mr. Quelch. "I trust there will be no disturbance. Wharton, we will go into this matter to-morrow."

The Remove went. Harry Wharton followed, his hands clenched tight, his eyes glittering.

Back in the dormitory most of the juniors turned their backs on him. A few commenced to snore, but they were quickly silenced by Bob Cherry.

Next morning all Greyfriars seethed with the news of the tragedy.

Wingate came in from the sanatorium soon after breakfast and reported that Bolsover was conscious, but that his condition was still grave.

Harry Wharton tapped at Mr. Quelch's door and entered in response to the master's grave voice. The junior's face was pale, and his eyes hollow, telling of a sleepless night.

"I came to ask whether I could be permitted to see Bolsover, sir," he said quietly. "I am accused of attacking him

in the storm last night. I—I have no means of defending myself, but if I could see Bolsover—"

"Very well, Wharton, you may come to the sanatorium with me now," said the Remove master quietly.

Bolsover was lying in bed in the sanatorium, his bandaged head propped up on a pillow. He was haggard and pale, and was evidently in great pain.

His face flushed when he saw Wharton approach with Mr. Quelch, and he struggled up into a sitting posture.

"Wharton—you cad!" burst passionately from the injured junior's lips. "So you have come to see how I am! You are sorry, I suppose, that I wasn't done for properly last night!"

"I didn't do it, Bolsover," exclaimed Wharton. "You have no proof that it was I—"

"You were the only Greyfriars fellow besides myself who was out last night!" rapped Bolsover, his face contorted with pain. "It could not have been anybody else but you!"

He then recounted to Mr. Quelch all that had happened on the bank of the Sark the night previous, of the figure in Greyfriars clothes that had attacked him and tripped him up into the mill-stream. He repeated the words his assailant had uttered. Mr. Quelch turned a hard, set face towards Harry Wharton.

"Well, Wharton, have you anything to say in your defence?" he asked.

"Only that I am innocent, sir!" cried Harry desperately. "I swear that it wasn't I who attacked Bolsover on the river-bank!"

Bolsover gave a bitter laugh, and, wincing with pain, lay back again in bed, his eyes flashing at Wharton with fierce condemnation.

"Wharton, I am afraid I cannot believe you," said Mr. Quelch at last, quietly. "You must have committed this hideous attack on Bolsover in the heat of temper. I am well aware of your ungovernable temper. No doubt you did not realise at the time, Wharton, what you were doing. You were carried away by the impetuosity of your temper. You must, however, be held responsible."

Wharton looked appealingly at Bolsover. The injured junior snarled at him from his bed. Mr. Quelch was regarding Wharton coldly. He turned on his heel and walked from the sanatorium. His brain was in a whirl. Everything seemed terribly unreal. It was like a bad dream.

Fellows he met in the quadrangle avoided him. He was shunned indoors, and not a word was spoken to him. Mr. Quelch's opinion was shared by practically all the fellows at Greyfriars. Harry Wharton's hot, ungovernable temper was well known. All believed that, in the heat of impetuous rage, Wharton, meeting his enemy in the storm on the river-bank, had sought a mad revenge by hurling him into the Sark.

Wharton could not have known what he was doing at the time. He could not have realised what horrible consequences his rash act might bring. But that he was guilty none doubted.

He had Study No. 1 to himself that morning. His chums even kept away from him. They believed him guilty.

The miserable junior's soul was torn in torment by his mental sufferings. When he received a summons to the Head's study he guessed what it portended.

He went, with head erect and lips firmly set.

Dr. Locke regarded him gravely.

"Wharton, I cannot express my grief

and horror at the calamity that has just befallen Bolsover. I can hardly believe that you, a lad I have always regarded as most exemplary and a credit to Greyfriars, could have been guilty of so cowardly an act. I have discussed the matter at length with Mr. Quelch and the prefects. It seems that Bolsover and you have been at loggerheads lately, and that you bore him a grudge for various imagined grievances.

"I can quite realise, Wharton, that in an unthinking moment you allowed your temper to gain the mastery of your discretion, and that you were, at the time, not responsible for your actions. I do not believe that in the ordinary way you would stoop to so cowardly a revenge. Were it not for that, Wharton, I should not hesitate to expel you from Greyfriars as a vicious character. Your position here, however, is untenable. In view of the circumstances, it is impossible for you to remain at Greyfriars. But I shall not expel you, Wharton. I merely request you to leave the school."

Harry Wharton looked at Dr. Locke with steady eyes.

"I am not guilty, sir. There has been a terrible mistake and misunderstanding," he said in a quiet, modulated voice. "I can see, now, how circumstances are against me. I admit I have a temper. I—I wish I could control it. I have wished that many, many times. The evidence against me is overwhelming—nobody can be blamed for believing me guilty. But I am innocent. I swear that. I will leave Greyfriars. I could not remain here with everybody against—even my own chums—"

Here the unhappy lad's voice broke; but he controlled himself and set his teeth hard.

"I'll go from Greyfriars at once, sir," he said quietly. "But I shall return when I have proved my innocence. I am not guilty, and I mean to prove it."

With that he turned and left the Head's study.

He went to the dormitory and packed his things.

Carrying his bag, the condemned junior went downstairs and crossed the quadrangle to the gates.

Scores of eyes watched him go.

Suddenly from beneath the old elm-trees emerged a procession of jubilant Removites. At its head were Skinner and Stott, who carried a banner upon which was inscribed in large letters:

"GOOD-BYE, WHARTON!
GOOD RIDDANCE!"

A flush of shame surmounted Wharton's cheeks as he caught sight of the banner. His ears tingled as he heard the raucous shouts of his late school-fellows.

Wharton quickened his step, biting his lip until the blood came. Once at the gates, he paused and looked back upon the grey old walls of Greyfriars. Even Gosling, the porter, averted his face as the junior was about to pass through the gates.

"Harry, old chap!"
It was the voice of Bob Cherry. Wharton started involuntarily.

"Good-bye, Harry, old man!" said Bob Cherry huskily. "I—I can't see you go like this without saying good-bye. Keep your pecker up and—"

Bob broke off, for he could say no more.

His hand sought Harry's, and they gripped.

A battle of wits: Red Mask v. Ferrers Locke! Who's the victor?

Then Harry Wharton turned, and, fighting back the lump that rose in his throat, walked out of Greyfriars—an exile, disgraced and condemned by the school.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Resource I

IT all seemed like an unhappy dream to the stricken junior as he made his way down the Friardale Lane towards the village. The world seemed to be reeling about his ears, but out of the chaos came one clear, insistent thought. He was innocent. He had been branded for a crime he had not committed. And he must prove his innocence somehow—clear his name in the sight of Greyfriars and his chums.

Reaching Friardale, he left his bag at the railway-station, and had something to eat at Uncle Clegg's shop in the High Street. He did not want the meal, but he felt that he must do something.

He then went to the bank of the River Sark, and sought out the spot where Bolsover major had been attacked in the storm. He remained there all the afternoon, watching the mill-stream with horrified fascination, shuddering at the vision he conjured up of Bolsover struggling in that swirling flood on the night of the storm.

Who could Bolsover's assailant have been? What Greyfriars fellow would have had the cruel callousness even to think of such a crime?

Hours passed in bitter reflection, and then the overwrought junior fell into a doze. He woke refreshed, and found that it was fairly late. The wood was not far away, and on its outskirts was a small cottage where, so a notice said, teas and refreshments could be procured.

Feeling hungry, he went into the cottage and sat down in the old-fashioned little parlour.

A small, homely little woman came out and took his order.

When she set the tea before him she looked curiously at the brooding junior.

"You be from Greyfriars, young sir?" she inquired.

Wharton nodded dully.

"I thought maybe you were the young gentleman who took refuge in here last night during the storm."

Harry Wharton started.

"Then a fellow from Greyfriars came in here last night during the storm?" he exclaimed. "Who—who was he? Can you describe him?"

"I don't know, young sir," was the wondering reply. "He wore the same clothes as you are wearing, and said he came from Greyfriars."

Wharton's brain worked swiftly. Could it have been Bolsover? But Bolsover would have said that he took shelter. Besides, had he stayed at the cottage he would not have been on the Sark bank. There were only two fellows out of Greyfriars in the storm. Wharton had certainly not been in the cottage that night. Then who could it have been?

"Cannot you remember his face?" he demanded eagerly of the lady.

"Well, now I come to think of it, I did think that he looked rather old to be a schoolboy," came the slow reply. "I should have thought he was well over twenty. He had a long face and small, dark eyes. His clothes did not seem to fit him very well."

Wharton gave a start as sudden realisation came to him.

"Snaith!" he ejaculated aloud. "It was that cad Snaith! The rotter was



"No you don't, Snaith!" rapped out Wharton, gripping the rascal's arm and jerking it backwards. "I'm going to find out what's in that parcel." Snaith turned in amazement. "Wharton!" he cried hoarsely. "You—you here!" (See Chapter 9.)

masquerading in school clothes. Oh, I begin to see now!"

Forgetful of his unfinished tea Wharton left the cottage, the good lady staring after him in great astonishment.

She could not understand the junior's behaviour a bit.

Wharton hurried along the towing-path until he came to the Cross Keys. He strode through the wicker gate, and presented himself to the startled Mr. Cobb at the bar-parlour door.

"Is Snaith here?" he demanded. "I want to see him."

Mr. Cobb bared his yellow teeth in a snarl.

He knew Harry Wharton, and was by no means charitably inclined towards him. He had had several "rubs" with the handsome Remove captain in the past.

"Ow do I know where Snaith is?" demanded Cobb, barring the entrance to the room. "If you want 'im you'll 'ave to look for 'im, but not on these premises. Get hout!"

"I'm coming in!" exclaimed Wharton passionately. "Snaith is living here. I will see him—"

"Chuck the young bantam out, boys!" said Cobb, turning to some disreputable-looking loafers who were in the parlour.

They came forward willingly. The junior struggled desperately, but was no match for the ruffians. He was hurled out on to the towing-path, and the door of Mr. Cobb's bar-parlour slammed peremptorily.

Wharton struggled to his feet and set his collar and tie straight.

"The cads!" he muttered. "They're shielding Snaith! But I'll get him, if I have to wait here all night!"

Darkness soon came on. Harry Wharton crouched in the trees opposite the Cross Keys, and waited, watching the door of the bar-parlour like a lynx. He was convinced that Cecil Snaith had not yet left the neighbourhood.

It was a long, uncomfortable vigil, but Wharton did not notice the discomforts of waiting.

Eleven o'clock struck from the village church clock when the door of the Cross Keys opened and a well-known figure crept stealthily out, carrying a parcel.

"Snaith!" muttered Wharton between his teeth.

He crouched low in the thick shadows and watched. Cecil Snaith halted on the towing-path and looked about him craftily.

Then, holding the parcel tightly under one arm, he walked on, away from Friardale.

Harry Wharton crept out of his hiding-place and stalked Snaith. Skilled as a Boy Scout in the art of tracking, he managed to follow his quarry along the towing-path without making his own presence known.

Reaching a quiet, secluded part of the river, Snaith stopped and gave a quick glance round.

Silently, stealthily, Wharton crept up until he was right behind him.

Snaith gave a low grunt of satisfaction, believing himself to be unseen. Then

Don't miss "The Pride of the Ring I"—by Billy Bunter—next Monday I

he raised the parcel aloft, to hurl it into the dark waters of the river.

But in the same instant Wharton leaped out of ambush, caught Snaith's arm, and, with a quick, deft jerk, pulled him backwards.

"No, you don't, Snaith!" he rapped out sharply. "I've got you now, you cad!"

The parcel dropped on to the grass of the towing-path.

Snaith turned, but reeled back at sight of his assailant.

"Wharton!" he cried hoarsely. "You—you here!"

Harry Wharton fastened both hands on the wriggling wretch and pulled him away from the river.

"Yes, I'm here, Snaith, and I want a reckoning!" he said between his teeth. "It was you who attacked Bolsover by the mill-stream last night! I want proof, and—Ah! Would you!"

Snaith, with a snarl like a wild beast, reached out with his foot to kick the parcel into the swiftly-moving river. But Wharton's quick eyes saw the move, and he jerked Snaith back.

"I'm going to find out what's in that parcel, Snaith. I had an idea the contents might be interesting; that's why I followed. But first of all I'm going to make you my prisoner!"

"Hang you, Wharton! I'll see that you don't!" hissed Snaith.

The pair struggled desperately on the grass, each grimly doing his uttermost to overpower the other. They fell, locked in each other's embrace, and rolled over and over.

Snaith, however, his strength undermined by his evil mode of living, wilted like a reed in Wharton's powerful grasp. The junior held him powerless, one knee on his heaving chest.

"Hang you, Wharton!" gasped Snaith. "Let me get up!"

"When I've made you my prisoner, you cad!"

Wharton, holding down his exhausted adversary with one hand, jerked off his necktie with the other. A short, sharp wrestle ensued, and he succeeded in tying Snaith's hands together with the necktie.

Snaith, panting with helpless rage, struggled to free his hands, but the knot held.

Wharton then picked up the parcel he had prevented Snaith from hurling into the river. He tore away the brown paper covering. A schoolboy's Eton jacket, collar, waistcoat, and trousers were revealed. The garments were muddy, creased, and weather-stained.

Harry Wharton set his teeth grimly, and looked down at the wriggling wretch at his feet.

"So this, as I thought, explains the mystery!" he exclaimed, his lip curling with contempt. "It was you, Snaith, who attacked Bolsover last night. You somehow managed to obtain these things from Greyfriars, and masqueraded last night as a Greyfriars fellow. You intended making Bolsover believe that it was I who threw him into the mill-stream! You low-down worm to do a thing like that! I—I have learned to restrain my temper now. Otherwise, I should feel like—"

He ground his teeth together, and jerked Snaith roughly to his feet, and hustled him away to a barn that stood in a field nearby. Wharton was completely master of the situation. Snaith was like a snivelling babe in his hands.

The barn was deserted. Entering, Wharton found some rope in there, and with this he bound Snaith hand and foot and flung him into a heap of straw.

"There, Snaith! We'll stay here for the night. To-morrow morning you are coming to Greyfriars with me to confess to the Head. I have discovered sufficient to prove my innocence. The lady in the cottage where you took refuge last night in the storm will identify you. These clothes you tried to throw in the river will dispel any doubts that may arise on that point. There were only two fellows out of Greyfriars last night—Bolsover and I. So, Snaith, you cad, you are bowled out!"

"Let me go!" beseeched Snaith wildly, his face livid with fear. "I'll confess to you, Wharton! It was I who attacked Bolsover. He—he turned on me, and I wanted my revenge. I wanted to strike at you, too. I saw you both out in the storm last night. I had the clothes, and I hit on that plan to attack Bolsover and make him believe it was you who did it. I did not mean him to be killed. I did not realise till afterwards, where I had sent him. The storm was terrible. I had to take refuge in the cottage—" His voice trailed off into a whining sob.

"Let me go, Wharton! I'll write out my confession if you will set me free!"

"No, Snaith, I will not set you free," said Wharton calmly. "You will stay here with me until morning."

He closed the barn door, and sat down in the straw beside Snaith. He was calm and possessed, and grimly determined. And the night wore on its dark, lonely hours, with the condemned junior mounting guard on his prisoner in the barn.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Truth!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he was crossing the Close at Greyfriars early next morning with Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and the Bounder. "My hat! Who's this coming?"

Two figures appeared in the old gateway. One, dressed in Etons, was carrying a parcel and leading the other, who had his hands tied.

The Removites gave cries of amazement when they recognised the two.

"Why, it's Harry!" ejaculated Bob Cherry incredulously.

"Wharton back!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"And Snaith!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Wharton prodded his prisoner forward. They were both hollow-eyed and haggard-looking from sleeplessness; but whereas Snaith presented a sorry, despicable figure, Wharton's eyes were bright and his athletic figure had lost none of its vigour.

"Harry," cried Frank Nugent, starting forward, "what does this mean? Why have you brought in Snaith like this?"

Fellows crowded up from far and near. Harry Wharton looked round with flashing eyes.

"It means that I have proved my innocence!" he exclaimed. "This worm here—Snaith—who was kicked out of Greyfriars some time back for being a blackguard—is the one who attacked Bolsover. And I can prove it, although he has confessed!"

"Great pip!"

The school looked on in amazement as Harry Wharton took his prisoner indoors and up to Dr. Locke's study.

The Head was amazed at this early morning visit.

Briefly, and in a calm voice, despite his inward feelings, Harry Wharton told the Head of what he had done and discovered since leaving Greyfriars the day previous.

Dr. Locke stood up in amazement.

"Wharton, if what you say is true—"

"It is true, sir!" cried the condemned junior eagerly. "Here are the clothes that Snaith wore in the storm. He tried to throw them in the river. The lady at the cottage will identify him. It is Snaith who is guilty—not I!"

Dr. Locke brought his stern gaze to bear upon the wilting rascal in Wharton's grasp.

Snaith gasped out his confession, seeing that it was useless to maintain a plea of innocence. Dr. Locke listened with a hard, set face.

"So, you scoundrel, this innocent lad on whom you sought to shift the guilt of your cowardly crime, has brought the truth to light!" he exclaimed at length, in a voice tremulous with anger. "Fortunately for you Bolsover was saved, and his hardy constitution has enabled him to make a speedy recovery. He is leaving the school sanatorium this morning to resume his usual position in the school. I will send for Bolsover."

Trotter, the page, fetched Bolsover major from the sanatorium.

The burly Removite's face was pallid, and his head was still bandaged, otherwise he was his usual self. He gave a start on seeing Wharton and Snaith.

In quiet tones the Head told Bolsover of what had transpired.

Bolsover listened in amazement.

He looked first at Snaith and then at Harry Wharton. His face reddened.

"I'm sorry, Wharton!" he blurted out suddenly. "You—you must have suffered, I know. This rotter Snaith has been the cause of all the trouble from the first, and you were right about him. I have been a fool—a fool! Yes, and a rotten cheat, too. You are, by rights, still captain of the Remove. The ballot was a fake! It was Snaith you followed to Wingate's study that night. Snaith got at the ballot-box and falsified the votes, so that I became captain under false pretences."

Bolsover then told of his dealings with Snaith, and made a full confession of the plot that had secured him the captaincy of the Remove.

Snaith looked balefully, malevolently at him. His face went livid when Bolsover denounced him as a thief as well as a blackguard.

"Snaith, if I did my duty I should hand you over to the police, who would see that you received your just deserts," exclaimed Dr. Locke. "But, much as I feel it to be my duty, I am ashamed to hand over a boy who once belonged to Greyfriars, and have him branded as a common felon and thief. For the sake of the school's good name, therefore, I will allow you to go, but you must rid the neighbourhood of your undesirable presence, and never return. Bolsover has already suffered for his misdeeds, for which, I rejoice to see, he has repented."

Bolsover turned to Wharton and held out his hand.

"Can you forgive me, Wharton?" he asked huskily. "I know I'm a rotter, and deserve the sack for my caddishness. I've played the giddy ox and made unnecessary trouble in the Form. But if I can make amends—"

"That's all right, Bolsover!" said Wharton, taking the burly Removite's hand and laughing. "We have both made mistakes. Had it not been for my

(Continued on page 27.)

360 Pages! "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"—NOW ON SALE! 360 Pages!



Which do you prefer? Some devotees of both state their opinions.

BOB CHERRY:

Personally, I believe in "ringing the changes"—that is to say, living in the country, and varying the monotony by an occasional trip to town. Country life is jolly nice, but it doesn't offer a great deal in the way of amusement. Ye ancient village of Friardale, for instance, has no theatre or music-hall. Pity the poor pedestrian who gets stranded in Friardale! The only attractions are the village pump and the bunshop! Of course, there is an inn; but an inn is a very doubtful attraction at the best of times. I haven't overlooked the fact that you can get bathing and boating in the country; but these are summer joys. In winter—unless the ponds happen to get frozen over—country life is a rather tame affair.

BILLY BUNTER:

Town life beats country life any day of the week. Peter Todd, who is rather a glutton for statistics, tells me that there are 20,000 eating-houses in London. There's only one in Friardale, and that's nothing to write home about. If you go in and ask for a duzen doe-nutts, the proprietress says, "Mercy me! I only make doe-nutts to order. You should order them a fortnite in advance." Of course, there are a few farmhouses in the country where a chap can get a good feed of clotted eggs and new-laid cream; but give me the town, where there is a restorng staring you in the face at every step!

MARK LINLEY:

Town life and country life each have their attractions. It's all a question of temperament. If you're fond of theatres and dancing and so forth, you won't come to the country for them. If, on the other hand, you want a quiet life, combined with plenty of outdoor exercise, the country will suit you down to the ground. I prefer country life myself; but I quite appreciate that there is a

certain glamour and fascination about a mighty city which the country cannot give.

ALONZO TODD:

I have a horror of big towns. The last time I went to London my poor nerves were completely upset, owing to the traffic. I wanted to cross Piccadilly Circus, and I stood hesitating on the pavement for at least ten minutes before I could muster up courage to take the plunge. I found myself mixed up with a congestion of motor-buses, taxicabs,

COUNTRY LIFE!

By Dick Penfold,

With the playful winds I rejoice
As they sweep the slope of the down;
For the country life's my choice,
Not the hustle and bustle of town.
As I sit astride my steed—
An all-steel bike, you know—
I get all the pleasure I need,
And my cheeks with rapture glow!

Heigh-ho! for the long, white lane
And the fresh, fair fields of Kent.
In sunshine, storm, and rain—
Oh, happy the hours I've spent!
The elements I defy;
They can thunder and rage at will.
'Tis a care-free lad am I,
As I speed o'er dale and hill.

The cramped and the crowded streets
Of the stuffy and smoky town,
Where everybody one meets
Seems to wear a worried frown—
For these I have no love;
There are sweeter spots I know,
Where the sky is blue above,
And the grass is green below.

You may take your choice, of course.
Already I've taken mine;
Past heather and copse and gorse
I flash at a speed divine.
The cares that infest the day
Slip away like a vanished load;
For me there is but one way—
The way of the Open Road!

brewers' drays, cars, and motor-cycles. At any second I expected to find myself sandwiched between two vehicles and afterwards picked up in pieces. How I came through unscathed I do not know. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me the wisdom of the motto, "Safety first," but how can one ensure safety in such a whirl and welter of traffic? I much prefer the country, where all is peaceful and serene. Of course, there is always the risk of being knocked down by a wheelbarrow, or chased by an infuriated bull. But such risks are small compared with those one has to face in a mighty city.

HURREE SINGH:

The rushfulness and the tearfulness of town life is not to my esteemed liking. I prefer the country, where one can gatherfully pluck the prinful primrose and the butterful buttercup. I also love to hear the songful melodies of the blackful blackbirds and the nightful nightingale. In town the smokefulness and the dustfulness and the noisefulness are terrific. So I votefully plump with both hands for the esteemed and ludicrous country!

DICKY NUGENT:

i like town life best bekawse i can always go to a picture pallas and see charlie chaplin and mary pickford and duglass fairbanks and all my favorites. there's always plenty to see and do in a town, but country life bores me stiff. i wish greyfriars was in oxford street or pick-a-dilly. then i should be as happy as a sandboy!

THE HEAD:

In my youth I preferred the flutter and gaiety of town life. In my advancing years I much prefer the quiet restfulness of the country. But I do not despise the big towns. Far from it. They stand for progress and commerce. London, in particular, is the most wonderful city in the world, and even now I like to pay a visit to it occasionally, so as to keep in touch with modern conditions and improvements.

STOP PRESS!

Lord Mauleverer burst like a cyclone into my study an hour ago, and sent a bottle of ink splashing over my impot. I was about to wade in and slaughter him, when his lordship explained that his exuberance of spirit was due to his having finished reading "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

"It's simply the best Annual I've every struck!" he exclaimed.

That remark saved Mauly.

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" is the best book of its kind on the market! But let me whisper a word of advice, chums. There's a terrific rush to secure this world-famous volume, so don't leave your order too late!

Clean, wholesome literature every week—in the **MAGNET**!

If Greyfriars was in London!



By BILLY BUNTER.

WHY is Greyfriars stuck in the hart of the country? Upon my sole, I don't know.

This partikular corner of Kent is a dead-and-alive hole. There is only one tuckshop to the square mile. In London there are at leost a hundred. You can hardly walk a step without seeing a Lions or an A.B.C. caffy.

Now, if they had built Greyfriars School in London it would have been jolly sensible. How ripping, for all my hampers and letters to come addressed:

W. G. Bunter, Esq.,
Greyfriars School,
Pick-a-dilly Serkus,
London, W.

Whenever I happened to feel hungry I should have the pick of duzzens of choice hotels and restorongs. One day I should pop out to the Carlton for dinner, the next day to the Ritts, and the day after that to the Savoy. I should live on the fat of the land, and be able to regain all the flesh that I lost during the last heat wave.

Oh, how glorious if Greyfriars was in London! Night after night I should go to Wingate of the Sixth for a late pass. "Where are you going, Bunter?" he would ask. "To the Hipperdrome, Wingate," I would reply. Or "To the Colly-sec'um." Or else I should say, "I'm just going to have dinner with a few friends at the Pick-a-dilly Grill."

There would be no long tramps to the nearest village, like we have now. If I wanted to go anywhere I should simply dump my ample form into a taxi. Of corse, it would be infra dig for a Bunter to ride on a bus! Besides, it would be eggspensive, bekawse I should take up enuff room for three people, and therefore have to pay three fairs!

And just look at the amount of shopping a fellow could do in London! There are no shops in Friardale worthy of the name, and even in Courtfield they are old-fashioned and behind the times. But in London there are big emporiums (good word that!) where you can buy anything under the sun, from a chocolate pig to a caravan. They take you up and down in lifts, from one department to another, and they actually supply tea on their roof-gardens. That's the sort of plaice for me!

When a half-holiday came along we should never be at a loss what to do. We could go and see all the sights, such as Westminster Museum, the British Abbey, the Tower of Parliament, and the Houses of Monument. (I beleeve I've got things a bit mixed, but my study-mates are kicking up such a shindy that I can't kollect my thoughts.)

Another half-holiday attraction would be to pop down to Richmond, and hire a punt for the afternoon. I'm jolly good at punting—so good, in fact, that my name ought really to be Punter instead

of Bunter. How ripping it would be to lay in the Remove dormitory at night and listen to the roar and bussle of the mity metropopolis! At Greyfriars it is so dead quiet at night-time that you can hardly hear a snowdrop. I eggspsect some of my readers will be wondering how on earth I could patronise the big hotels and restorongs, and ride in taxis, and hire punts, when I'm generally in the state known as "stony."

The fact is I should never be stony in London. That's where all my titled relations live, you know. There's the Marquiss de Splosh, who lives in Park Lane. He's a distant relation—distant at present, but not if Greyfriars was removed to London. He'd be very near then. And then there's Aunt Bessie, of Billingsgate, and Aunt Winnie, of Wopping—both rolling in riches. I should be able to call on each of them in turn, and come away with a "fiver" russling in my pocket.

The sooner the Head arranges for Greyfriars to be shifted to London the better. I shall put it to him and see what he says. Of corse, it would mean a certain amount of work knocking the school down, and removing all the bricks and beds and desks to London. But I would cheerfully lend a hand, especially as it would mean a month's freedom from lessons while the transfer was taking plaice.

People who say that town life is inferior to country life are talking out of the backs of their nex. Country life is weary and dreary and stale and slow. Town life is lively and lovely in every way—one dizzy wirl of plezzure!

Eggscuse me now, dear readers. I'm just going to put my proposition to the Head. I'm not afraid to beard the old buffer in his den, and I'll hope he'll listen to reezon.

LATER.—I've just been to the Head and put my novel skeem before him. Instead of falling on my neck and saying "What a riping wheeze, Bunter! We'll have Greyfriars shifted to London right away," he picked up his cane and gave me three stinging cuts on each paw. Beast! He called my skeem "wild" and "Yewtopian," whatever that may mean.

Yow-ow-ow! My beesfly palms seem to be on fire!

OUR SPORTS CORNER!

By H. Vernon-Smith.

Life in the country is at its best just now. I don't claim to be a great lover of Nature, and all that, but I appreciate blue skies and bright sunshine, green meadows and babbling brooks. They make open-air sport so pleasant. And we have certainly had our fill of sport just lately.

On Wednesday afternoon there was a cross-country race, open to all the Remove. Of course, the slackers didn't take part. Lord Mauleverer slumbered peacefully on his couch, and Skinner & Co. wandered to the woodshed to enjoy a "nap" of another description. But the sportsmen turned out in full force, and a great race resulted. Mark Linley made all the running, and looked a certain winner; but in the last half-mile Bob Cherry came along by leaps and bounds, to win a glorious race by a matter of yards.

That same evening there was a fishing contest in the River Sark. Twenty

amateur fishermen took part. The fellow who landed the weightiest catch was to be adjudged the winner. Mr. Quelch agreed to judge, and he brought an enormous pair of scales down to the river with him. Exactly one hour was allowed, and we threw out our lines and waited hopefully. The scream of it was that not a single fish of any description was landed, and the contest fizzled out in a ghastly failure! Billy Bunter claimed to have landed a hefty trout; but nobody saw it, so the claim was squashed—and so was Bunter!

Frank Courtenay & Co., the heroes of Highcliffe, engaged the Greyfriars Remove in a thrilling boat-race on Saturday morning. I'm afraid we regarded it as rather a soft thing for us, and we paid the penalty of our cocksureness. Highcliffe put up a surprisingly good show. Every man-jack of them rowed his hardest; and, although Greyfriars led for three-parts of the distance, they rapidly overhauled us, and passed the winning-post a length to the good. Our oarsmen must pull up their socks next time, and not take things for granted.

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

A special number dealing with the open country is bound to attract.

Country life has much to recommend it, especially at this season of the year. In the winter it is another proposition.

It has always struck me as being very strange that a town-dweller should rush to the country on every possible occasion, and that country-dwellers should derive their chief amusement from "a trip up to town." Human nature is very contrary. People who live by the sea, for instance, seldom appreciate it. And there are people who have lived in London all their lives, yet have never been to the Tower, or the British Museum, or the Monument.

At Greyfriars there are country-lovers and town-lovers, and representatives of both sides have something to say in this issue. In fact, there has been quite a heated Town versus Country debate. I will leave it to my readers to decide which party has made out its case the more convincingly.

Certain to score—"Disgraced by his Father!"—next Monday's—



A sensational Detective and Adventure Story staged in Russia. Chronicled by a well-informed person who, for obvious reasons, takes the pen-name of "X."

The Wager!

A SNATCH at the wire brought it down, and the slash of a knife cut the slender cord, plunging the room into darkness.

"Go, brothers! Go quickly! You know the many ways!" Father Petro's voice cried out softly, and a trampling of feet began as the assemblage scattered to right and left.

"This way, Locke. Keep touch with me," Boris whispered.

Locke found himself led through the darkness until they gained a narrow passage, down which a clear current of air swept. Boris halted there for a moment. They could hear dull cries and commands now, and the trampling of heavy feet overhead.

"They are seeking for the way into the vault," said Boris. "Someone has betrayed us. Locke; but there is nothing to fear. While they waste time overhead, every man will get clear away."

They went on, then, up the passage which rapidly narrowed and finally came to an end in a solid wall, down which a shaft of light poured. There were hand-grips set in the wall, and Boris, climbing them, gained the iron grid, and thrust it upwards.

Ferrers Locke followed him, and they found themselves standing in a narrow court behind the walls of a grimy house. Here he and Boris slipped out of their robes, dropped them into the gap, and closed the grid again.

The house was one of a long row that ran along the outer part of the courtyard, and, as Locke stood there, he could hear quick footfalls sounding to right and left.

"Each house communicates with the vault," said Boris. "And our brothers are making good use of these passages."

Boris crossed to the wall on the left, and opened a narrow doorway, pacing quietly through it, followed by Locke. On the left of the passage was the main street, and it was that way that Boris turned, but Locke reached out and caught him by the arm.

"I want to see who it was that carried out the raid," he said. "There will not be any danger now. Come this way."

And so Boris and Ferrers Locke strode quietly into the courtyard, and found themselves in a thin circle of spectators gathered around the porch of the church.

In the porch five or six armed soldiers were standing on guard, and Ferrers Locke recognised the little commandant among them. He was talking to a broad-

shouldered figure in quiet, European dress.

"It is Count Heinrich," Boris said.

They pressed their way through the circle, and, as they drew near to the steps, Count Heinrich turned and caught sight of them. For a moment his heavy face was shadowed. Then, with a curt nod to the commandant, he came hurrying down the broad space and held out his hand to Locke.

"You are just in time, my friend," Count Heinrich declared. "You are about to see a most interesting incident. Our good Russian friends here are routing out a den of rats—conspirators who have chosen this church as their rendezvous."

"Conspirators! That's interesting," Ferrers Locke drawled. "Who are they, count?"

THE CURTAIN RINGS UP ON

RED MASK, a powerful and sinister individual, whose identity is known only to Ferrers Locke, holding sway over the fortunes of distressed Moscow. Englishmen, in particular, have been made to feel the weight of his tyrannical power.

FERRERS LOCKE, England's premier detective, who forms a society known as the Brotherhood of the White Heather. Its object is to rescue the innocent victims of Red Mask.

JACK DRAKE, the detective's clever young assistant.

PRINCE IVAN, BORIS SAROV, FATHER PETRO, and **MR. MALTBY**, members of the society.

COUNT HEINRICH, a German. Noted for his extravagances and his apparent limitless wealth, the count appears to hold some mysterious power over the officials of the city.

One victim has already been rescued from the clutches of Red Mask, thanks to Ferrers Locke, whilst Jack Drake has secured an important map from Dimitri, Red Mask's trusted emissary.

Knowing but little of the language Jack decides to be a mute, and, on the strength of this little artifice, worms his way into the service of Dimitri. He is requested to deliver a letter to Red Mask at the fortress of Butirka, and, on his arrival there, Jack is shown to a small room to await the pleasure of the "Chief."

Meanwhile, Ferrers Locke has called a meeting of the Brotherhood at Father Petro's church. In an underground vault the Brotherhood discuss their plans. Suddenly the alarm is sounded. The police are raiding the church. Immediately the members of the Brotherhood are seized with panic, with the exception of Ferrers Locke. "Quick!" commands the detective, plucking Boris Sarov by the arm. "Put out the electric light!"

(Now read on.)

Count Heinrich shrugged his shoulders. "I know as little about them as your good self," he returned. "After all, you and I are foreigners here, my dear Locke. How should I know who they are, or what they do?"

A clamour came from the church, and the count turned his head. A group of soldiers came hurrying out of the building, and, between them, thrust forward in front of their bayonets, came the reeling figure of the old priest—Father Petro. He was dishevelled, and there was an ugly bruise on his temple, but the old fellow held his head high as he came stumbling into the sunshine.

Locke heard Boris draw a quick breath. Then he saw the golden insignia on the priest's breast. Father Petro was hustled across to where the commandant stood and brought to a halt there. Count Heinrich linked his arm under Locke's.

"Come, Mr. Locke," he said. "Let us see what this means. We are both interested in these quaint Russian people and their customs."

They strolled across the court together, halting behind the dapper little commandant, who was already commencing to cross-examine the grey-bearded old priest.

"Men in my church, commandant? And why not? It is open to all."

The old priest turned and nodded towards the building.

"Why, even the very birds are free to enter and leave now," he added.

His voice was quiet and dignified, and there was an air of serene contentment about him that seemed to exasperate the fiery little commandant.

"You lie to me, Father Petro, and you know it," he said. "It was not for any innocent purpose that those men were in your church. They were conspirators. Where are they?"

The priest shrugged his shoulders. "They have gone," he said quietly.

"If your soldiers could not find them—why, how should I be able to?"

Ferrers Locke, standing at the side of Heinrich, saw the hard face stiffen for a moment. Then Heinrich crossed to the commandant, and spoke to him in a low tone. The commandant indicated the insignia on Father Petro's torn robe.

"Why do you wear that? What does it mean?" he demanded.

The priest's thin fingers touched the edge of the embroidery.

"Merely an old man's folly," he returned. "In England they say that this humble little bloom means good luck, and

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surely in our poor country now we all of us require much of that."

The throng in the courtyard had edged nearer now, and a murmur of sympathy went round.

"Father Petro speaks well," one individual called out. "Let him go, commandant. He's an old man and can do no harm."

Ferrers Locke saw the commandant's eyes shift for a moment to Count Heinrich's, and Locke noted the quick shake of the head that the burly man gave.

"Stand back there!" the commandant cried. "Come, Father Petro, it is not for me to decide. You must go before the committee."

Heinrich stepped back to Ferrers Locke and put his hand on the detective's arm.

"He's a cunning old fox—that priest," he said. "But they have got him at last, and they have a short way of settling these affairs in Russia!"

He began to pace across the dingy court with Locke by his side. Boris had discreetly vanished, and Locke and Heinrich came out into the quiet side street just as the commandant with his squad of soldiers marched off with Father Petro stumbling along in their midst.

Into the main street the sorry cavalcade turned, and Locke, waiting on the corner, watched the faces of the people on the thronged pavement, as they halted to witness the armed group.

It seemed to Ferrers Locke that most of the inhabitants glanced angrily at those armed men with the aged priest in their midst, but no one made any attempt to interfere, and Heinrich suddenly laughed.

"You see, Locke? They are very well disciplined—these Moscowites. I don't think that you Londoners would allow a popular priest to be arrested thus."

Drawn up against the pavement a little way down the street was a blue-painted limousine. A man in livery stepped to the door, and opened it as Heinrich and Ferrers Locke reached the vehicle.

"Can I give you a lift anywhere?"

"Not at the moment, count," Locke returned. "I'm going to be rather busy."

He looked at the broad, heavy face for a second or so.

"Do you think that Father Petro is doomed?" Locke asked.

"Not the slightest doubt of it," Count Heinrich returned. "There is a little discreet courtyard behind the Kremlin, my dear Locke, and if you examine the wall at the end of the court very carefully, you will find many bullet marks. These Russian soldiers do not miss at thirty yards."

Locke drew back.

"They ought not to, Count Heinrich," he said. "But, of course, there is always a chance of their victim getting away."

"Not in the case of Father Petro—I can assure you of that much," said Count Heinrich as he entered the waiting vehicle.

"Shall we make a small bet on it, count?" Locke said. "A dinner that Father Petro does not face the firing squad."

Heinrich laughed.

"You're a rash man, Locke. But still I shall be glad to take on the bet with you."

When the car moved off Heinrich glanced back at the tall, cool-looking figure. Locke was writing something in a small diary, and the broad-shouldered tyrant grinned to himself.

"Those English—always precise—he is taking a note of that bet of ours. I shall see to it that the dinner is worthy of the occasion."

The Result!

HALF an hour later, from his gorgeous palace on the bank of the river, Count Heinrich sent an urgent telephone message to the commissioner at the Kremlin. There was no mistaking its purpose.

"The priest must be found guilty, and he will be shot to-night. You understand?"

"Yes, Excellency. But what of the others? The Englishman Maltby and Prince Ivan?"

Heinrich smiled to himself.

"They will be sentenced to three months' confinement at Butirka Fortress," he said. "Send them there to-night. They will both go on the long, long journey."

He replaced the receiver, and, crossing to the window, glanced out over the bustling city. He drew a deep breath, swelling his powerful chest.

"Ivan would not sell me those jewels of his, and now he will never have another chance to sell them. I shall take them without purchase. As for Maltby, I think he was growing dangerous. He is better out of the way. There shall be no mistake about them this time—they will not slip through my fingers as that little white fool did. Dimitri is ready to start, and he shall leave with his new passengers to-morrow morning."

The long day dragged on, and somewhere about dusk came the report that the trials had taken place, and the committee had given its decision. Maltby and Prince Ivan were condemned to imprisonment for three months. Father Petro had been betrayed into making an impassioned speech against the authorities, and his sentence had been death.

"He will walk the little passage," Count Heinrich muttered to himself. "I hope that he takes his good luck emblem with him—it has not been so very effective."

He changed his garments then, dressing in the rough costume that he wore when visiting the fortress. He was in his private apartment in the palace when a discreet knock sounded at the door, and a harsh voice sounded.

"A message for your Excellency."

It was one of Count Heinrich's trusted valets, and he stepped to the door and opened it, allowing the man to enter.

"What is it? What is wanted?" Count Heinrich demanded.

The man held out an envelope.

"One of the messengers from the hotel brought it, your Excellency. It is from that Englishman, Locke."

Count Heinrich opened the envelope and spread out the sheet. The message ran:

"Apparently you have won, count. I've heard the result of the trial. Will you dine with me at the club to-morrow night at 8 p.m.? Your signature endorsing this note will be sufficient.—Ferrers Locke."

A grim smile crossed the count's face as he crossed to his desk.

"Ach! Those fool Englishmen!" he said, with a wink to the servant. "They think they know everything—and they always pay!"

He scrawled an arrogant signature across the foot of the sheet, blotted it, and slipped the sheet in an envelope.

"For Mr. Locke, with my compliments," he said, chuckling again.

Had he followed that messenger, Count Heinrich might not have been quite so pleased with the joke. Ferrers Locke was pitting wit against wit, and an old priest's life was the stake!

Boris Sarov turned into the residential mansions shortly after nine o'clock that evening, and, entering Ferrers Locke's chambers, found the detective seated at his desk.

"I have a message for you, Mr. Locke," Boris said. "Count Heinrich left his home about eight o'clock. He was in his closed car, and headed for the Butirka road."

Locke looked up from his task and nodded.

"That is satisfactory. It gives us a clear field."

Boris came across to the desk.

"You have some scheme on this evening?"

Locke did not reply for a moment. There was a sheet of notepaper spread out in front of him, and behind it was a number of phials containing colourless fluids. Locke was using a small camel-hair brush, dipping it first into one phial, then another. Boris saw the lines of writing gradually vanish, till at last the sheet was clear save for a heavy-scrawled signature at the bottom:

"Heinrich von Galtz."

When the sheet was dried carefully Ferrers Locke selected a small phial of ink, then drew the sheet towards him. Then, taking a pen in his capable fingers, he wrote a few words on the sheet.

"Now, Boris!"

Boris came across and leaned over the detective's shoulder, and a gasp of surprise escaped him. For in front of him, in the same scrawling hand as the signature, was the grim command:

"Father Petro has to be handed over to the bearer."

"(Signed)"

"HEINRICH VON GALTZ."

The note was folded, and slipped in an envelope. Then Locke arose to his feet.

"Here is a job for you, Boris," he said. "You'll have to come with me to the Kremlin. I'm going to rescue Father Petro, and you'll have to get him clear of the country. I have booked two berths in the night express from Moscow, and I have got passports ready here for you and the Father. But he will have to be disguised. I want you to take him to your place and fix him up. You will go as two old men with business to do at Warsaw. He must shave, of course, and wear other clothes. You understand?"

The tall figure drew itself up.

"Do you mean that you are going to snatch Petro away from the very jaws of death?"

Locke smiled.

"Of course I am," he returned calmly. "Don't you understand there's a—there's a dinner hanging on it?"

Then his eyes flashed.

"And very much more than a dinner," he continued. "It is another challenge from Red Mask, and I am going to see that I win."

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2^d

Plenty of treats in store, boys! Full particulars on page 2!

Twenty minutes later when Locke and Boris left the mansions no one would have recognised the detective. He was dressed in a loose-fitting blouse and rough riding-breeches, while a tangled wig drawn down over his brows gave him a hang-dog appearance that his slouching gait further emphasised. Boris slipped into a long coat, and Locke fixed a white beard over the Russian's strong chin.

They turned through the high gateway of the Kremlin, and making their way through that amazing city within a city, they finally reached the commandant's tower. Here a sentry challenged them, and Locke handed the fellow the letter.

"We have to wait for a reply," he said in Russian. "Be quick, for time presses!"

Five minutes later the commandant himself—a black-bearded, broad-shouldered man—came out of the porch towards the two unsavoury-looking figures. Red Mask hired all sorts and conditions of ruffians to carry out his bidding, and these two certainly looked their parts.

"Follow me!" the commandant said as he turned towards the solid block of grey granite on the right.

It was the prison in which the condemned were confined, and out of it presently stumbled the weary old priest.

Boris gripped at the old fellow at once, dragging him forward a pace or two, so that Father Petro nearly fell. At the doorway the commandant and three or four soldiers watched that rough handling, and a loud guffaw sounded.

"Good luck, Father Petro!" one rough-voiced man drawled. "But do not congratulate yourself. You may have missed standing up against the wall, but you're going to something worse!"

Locke turned and placed himself on the other side of Petro, and together he and Boris dragged their old prisoner away. They hustled him through the narrow passages, while behind them stalked the armed escort that the commandant had sent with them. And so they emerged from the gates of the Kremlin into the hushed night, and, turning down a narrow street, came out on the edge of the river. The car was waiting there, and Locke, opening the door, beckoned to Father Petro to enter.

"You are saved now, Father Petro," he said. "The White Heather has brought you good luck."

Red Mask's Messenger!

JACK DRAKE, in his ragged peasant's dress, was seated at the little window of the stuffy room, watching the sentries as they changed guard. He had been waiting there for the whole of the afternoon, and he was feeling just a trifle fed-up with the position.

The letter which Dimitri had given to Jack was still awaiting delivery, and he fully realised the importance of that missive. The youngster was also anxious to get away to find Ferrers Locke.

"I don't know what he'll be thinking about me," Jack told himself. "But I am not going to leave here until I have handed over this note."

Presently one of the soldiers came in with a jug of coffee and a few slices of black bread.

"Perhaps you're hungry, little brother," the soldier said.

It was a friendly action, and Jack nodded his thanks to the man. He was

still playing his part of being a mute. When the soldier left the room Jack waded into the hard bread and coffee, thorough! enjoying the poor fare.

Later someone came in and lighted an oil-lamp, and Jack spent another weary two hours. Then he heard a stir in the small courtyard, and, stepping to the window, saw a broad-shouldered figure in a heavy cloak stalking down the passage.

The muffled figure vanished into the doorway of the house, and Jack heard the heavy tread as the man passed the doorway. A minute or so later an attendant flung open the door of the chamber and beckoned to Jack.

"Come!" he said.

The lad followed the man up the stairs into a room on the left. Seated at the desk was the towering figure of Red Mask. Jack's guide gave the youngster a push, and he stumbled forward, halting at the desk. He gave Red Mask the letter, and just for a moment Jack had an anxious qualm as he saw the broad



Peering through the window Jack saw two manacled figures walking across the courtyard, urged on by the bayonets of their brutal escort. (See page 26.)

fingers reach for the flap. He had resealed it very carefully, but those piercing, penetrating eyes that had shot a glance at him through the mask were very keen.

Jack breathed a trifle more freely when Red Mask broke the envelope and withdrew the sheet swiftly. Again he turned and looked at the affrighted lad.

"So you are a mute—eh?"

Jack nodded; and the broad-shouldered figure leaned back in his chair.

"You may be useful to me," Red Mask went on presently. "Go downstairs and wait. I shall have a message for you to take back to the man who gave you this."

He took out a few greasy notes and thrust them towards the lad.

"You cannot speak, or I would warn you that you must not reveal to anyone what takes place here. If you did, I

would see to it that you were made even more mute than you are now!"

The sinister voice deepened, and Jack felt the full power of that terrible personality concealed behind the Red Mask.

"Go!" the deep voice said. "Go and wait!"

Jack was only too glad to grab the notes and hurry out of the room, down the stairs, and into the little waiting-room again. His nerves were a-quiver, for he realised whom it was that he had met—the terrible Red Mask, whose power over Moscow had made him known and feared by every inhabitant.

"My hat! I don't like the look of that fellow!" Jack told himself. "And I wish I was out of here!" He crossed to the window again, glancing out at the dark courtyard. The high walls of the fortress loomed in front of him, and he realised that it would be madness to attempt to get away. There was an armed sentry in the passage, and every now and again other soldiers would appear, patrolling along the side of the wall.

Since that grim episode when Ina Cartwright had been snatched away from the hands of her enemies strict orders had been given for extra guards.



Red Mask would not be caught napping again.

Jack Drake had no idea of the time when he heard the clang of the gates, and a group of figures came trooping along the narrow passage. One of the escorts was carrying a lamp, and when he reached the door of the small house he stood aside.

Jack, peering through the window, saw two manacled figures between the armed escorts, and as they passed under the light he recognised Mr. Maltby and the bent, feeble figure of Prince Ivan Staliski.

Prince Ivan was leaning on Maltby's arm, and Jack could see that the old fellow was almost in the last stages of exhaustion. Jack heard them file down the passage and climb the stairs. Then the escorts retired, leaving one armed sentry on the doorway.

A murmur of voices overhead came

Not here to-day and gone to-morrow! The MAGNET'S come to stay!

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to the youngster's ears, and for a moment he hesitated. Then, crossing the room, he stepped out into the passage. It was empty, and there was no sign of anyone on the stairs. Taking a big risk, Jack Drake climbed the stairs, and halted on the dark landing. The light was pouring under the doorway on the right, and Jack, gaining the wall, leaned forward to listen.

The hard voice of Red Mask, speaking a slow guttural English, came to him.

"You do not seem to appreciate your position, Mr. Maltby," the voice said. "You are no longer under the authority of the Moscow committee; you have been handed over to me—Red Mask."

"I do not recognise your authority," the quiet voice of Maltby returned. "Nor do I agree with the result of the trial that my friend Prince Ivan and I underwent to-day. It was an outrage—a travesty of justice. I shall see to it that my Government is informed of what happened."

A low, mocking laugh sounded.

"Your Government! Your Government will never hear anything more about you, Mr. Maltby!" came the reply. "You were sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the Butirka fortress—you and your friend Prince Ivan."

The voice took a deeper note.

"To-night, while you were being transferred here, you attempted to escape, and the escort, after warning you, had to fire. By to-morrow morning the report will be made public in Moscow that you and Prince Ivan are dead—and there will be two small graves in the fortress here to mark your end."

Jack knelt down and peered through the wide keyhole. He could see the desk, and the pale men standing in front of him. Red Mask was not in his line of vision, but he heard the terrible voice clearly enough.

"That is how we will account for you. But your fate will not be such an easy one. There are worse things than death, Mr. Maltby—as you will presently discover, unless you agree to my wishes."

Drake saw the tall figure of Maltby draw itself up.

"I have no intention of bargaining with you," the plucky Britisher returned. "I do not recognise your authority."

"But you will recognise my power, you fool! Listen to me! I want the truth! What is the meaning of the white heather? And who is behind it?"

Jack heard the chair creak as Red Mask leaned forward.

"And who was the man who escaped from the carnival—the man in the black velvet suit?"

"I was in black velvet," said Maltby. "And so were others. I did not know that any of them escaped."

"You lie, and you know it! One got away—confound him! And he was the one I wished to secure!"

Red Mask's fist thudded down on the desk before him.

"You do not realise the danger of your position," he went on. "I am giving you a chance. Reveal to me the secret of the white heather, and let me know the name of the man at the head of it, and you shall leave here to-night—a free man. And so shall Prince Ivan! You shall have safe escort from here, and no one shall know what has happened. You may be afraid of the

brotherhood, but they shall not harm you. I am Red Mask, and I can save you—and I can also kill!"

Jack listened with bated breath. He knew that Maltby was being put through a terrible ordeal. He was offered his life and his freedom in return for betrayal of his brothers and of Ferrers Locke.

Only for a second was there silence in the room. Then Maltby turned to Prince Ivan and put his hand on his shoulder.

"There is only one answer that we can make to this gentleman, I think, prince," he said.

The drooping shape straightened up, and Prince Ivan nodded his grizzled head.

"You are quite right, Mr. Maltby," he returned. "There is only one answer."

Maltby looked at the lowering figure seated in the chair.

"We're wasting time," he said. "I have nothing to tell you—no information to give."

The chair fell over as Red Mask leaped to his feet. He came round the desk, and Jack saw him now—a huge, menacing shape—as he lunged towards Maltby.

"You obstinate fool! You do not know what your refusal means!" the deep voice snarled. "You think, perhaps, you will face a firing-squad. But that is too quick—much too quick. You will die, but you will die of weariness, distress, and famine!"

"That may be so; but, at least, we shall die clean," came the quiet reply.

A bell clanged, and Jack leaped to his feet and darted down the landing, where he heard footfalls in the passage below. There was another door on the left, and Jack tried it. It gave to his push, and he entered, swinging the door half to behind him. Red Mask's voice barked out an order in Russian, and Jack heard the footfalls of the soldiers mounting the stairs.

Then, a few moments later, he heard them returning with Maltby and Prince Ivan. There was a window on the right, and Jack tiptoed across to it, peering out. There was just time enough to see the two prisoners hurrying across the courtyard—urged forward by the bayonets of their brutal custodians. They vanished into the narrow doorway of the guard-room, and Jack drew a deep breath.

What was going to happen to them? Red Mask's terrible words repeated themselves in the youngster's brain, and a half-vague resolve formed itself in Jack's heart. By hook or by crook, he would have to let Ferrers Locke know the real fate that awaited these two.

Waiting until the coast was clear, Jack slipped out of his hiding-place. Creeping down the landing, he passed the closed door of Red Mask's room. The youngster gained the waiting-room below without being observed. He was only just in the nick of time, for a moment later heavy footfalls sounded on the stairs, and Red Mask came into the waiting-room with a letter in his hand.

"Quick!" he said, beckoning to Jack. "Take this back to Dimitri. See to it that he gets it to-night!"

Jack took the letter, bowing low, and Red Mask led the way out of the doorway and into the court, walking down the passage in front of Jack until he reached the narrow gate, where the sentry gave the salute.

"Tell Dimitri that there is no time

to be lost— Oh, well, you cannot speak! Go!"

Jack turned away to hurry off down the dark road, and suddenly he heard the deep note of a motor-horn. A moment later two headlights flashed round the bend of the road.

The youngster slipped into the shadow of the wall, and waited. The car came on with a rush, and halted as it reached the side gate. A man flung himself out of the vehicle, and as he darted for the gate Red Mask strode out into the light of the lamps.

"What is it? What has happened?" the harsh voice asked.

The reply came in quick, jerky rushes:

"They—they have rescued Father Petro, your excellency; snatched him away under the very guns of the firing-squad!"

Jack understood the gist of the swiftly-spoken sentences, and the torrent of angry words that broke from the massive figure. Then, grabbing the speaker, Red Mask shook him, finally flinging him back against the bonnet of the car.

"You fool!" Red Mask flared. "Take me back to the Kremlin. I shall find out who is responsible for this, and he will suffer."

The burly figure vanished into the car, and the other man, leaping into the seat behind the steering-wheel, swung the car round, and drove it headlong towards the dim patch of light which was Moscow.

Jack Drake slipped out from the shadow of the wall, peering after the car as it vanished into the darkness. Then, with a shrug of his shoulders, the youngster turned, crossed the road, and gained the low, marshy ground on the left, but it was not towards the Peresilni, where Dimitri awaited him, that Jack headed. He had had quite enough of solitary adventuring, and he was going back to find his master, Ferrers Locke.

It was an hour later before Jack found himself crossing one of the many bridges of Moscow, and, half-way over it, he found that a cordon of police had been drawn up. There were five or six pedestrians being questioned by the man in charge of the patrol, and Jack found one of the sentries grabbing him by the arm, to drag him up to the official.

Each man was subjected to a steady scrutiny, and had to answer various questions before he was permitted to go. When Jack's turn came he made his usual signal, and the questioner grabbed him by his shoulder and shook him.

"Do not play those tricks with me," he rapped out. "Who are you, and what is your business here?"

Already one or two of the pedestrians had been arrested, and were standing glumly in the line of pickets. For a moment Jack began to fear a similar fate for himself, when a quick idea came to him, and, slipping his hand into his ragged robe, he produced the envelope which Red Mask had given him. The envelope was addressed to Dimitri, and on the back of it was a seal—a red impression of a mask in a circle.

The man with the lantern tilted the light so that it fell on the envelope, and the officer in charge of the party started as he looked at the bold handwriting. One glance at the seal was quite sufficient, and he tossed the envelope hurriedly back into Jack's hand, as though it was something poisonous.

"A messenger of Red Mask?"

He almost cringed as he drew away from Jack.

"Why did not you let me know at first,

little brother?" he said. "A thousand apologies; but we were only doing our duty."

Jack tucked away that precious envelope, and strolled down over the bridge, with a grim smile on his grimed young face. His little bit of bluff had worked, and he had got through the cordon of police that had been thrown all round the city.

As Jack turned into one of the main thoroughfares, he realised that a house-to-house search was going on, for here and there groups of armed men were pacing along the pavement.

The lad slipped into the side-road, and finally entered the residential mansions by the passage in the rear, climbing to the first floor, where he gained Ferrers Locke's suite, and entered.

A figure lounging in a dressing-gown arose as the youngster came hurrying into the room, and Ferrers Locke nodded quietly to Jack.

"Got back, then, youngster!" he said, in his cool, easy drawl.

Jack stared at him for a moment, then hurried forward and caught Locke by the arm.

"My hat! I think you must be the only cool person in Moscow, governor. Don't you know what's happening? They are searching everywhere, and arresting people in hundreds!"

Locke smiled. "The police have only just left me," he returned. "They are searching for Father Petro; but, of course, I knew nothing about that gentleman."

His steel-blue eyes hardened as he looked at his young assistant.

"But they're only wasting time,

Jack," Ferrers Locke went on. "Father Petro is already out of Moscow, and I am waiting for a telephone message."

Jack drew the letter from his blouse and handed it to Locke.

"You've saved Father Petro, governor," he said, "but I don't think you'll manage to do the same for Mr. Maltby or Prince Ivan. They are in the clutches of Red Mask, and he has threatened them with some terrible vengeance."

Ferrers Locke thrust the youngster into a chair and held his arm.

"Now then, young 'un," he said, "let's hear your report. Then I'll look at the letter later. We've got to save Maltby and the prince, Jack, and I think it's going to be a long, long job."

In the commandant's court at the Kremlin, Red Mask was striding up and down the room, facing the startled chief.

"You fool! You dolt! Why should I have interfered with Father Petro? What did I want with that old fool?"

"It was your writing, your Excellency. I swear to you that that cursed sheet had your orders on it, with your signature. You can see now—the signature is still there!"

Turning back to the table, Red Mask leaned over the sheet of notepaper. At the foot of it was his own sprawled signature, "Heinrich von Galtz," but the message had vanished, and, in its place, in the centre of the note, was a well-drawn picture of a sprig of white heather!

(Don't miss the next grand instalment of this wonderful story, chums. It's packed with thrilling situations from beginning to end!)

CONDEMNED BY THE SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 20.)

temper I should not, perhaps, have been landed into this trouble. Now that the truth is out, we'll forget the matter."

Harry Wharton and Bolsover went out of the Head's study, taking Snaith with them. They held on to him grimly when he attempted to break away.

Greyfriars was told the truth of the whole story. And a cheer was given for Harry Wharton.

"Good old Harry!" chortled Bob Cherry, wringing his chum's hand. "You can kick us all for not believing in you. Start on me, and kick hard!"

"No, Bob, I won't do that!" laughed Harry Wharton happily. "Let's all join together and kick this low-down rotter out of Greyfriars. He's going out of the neighbourhood for good this time, and I think he deserves something by way of a send-off."

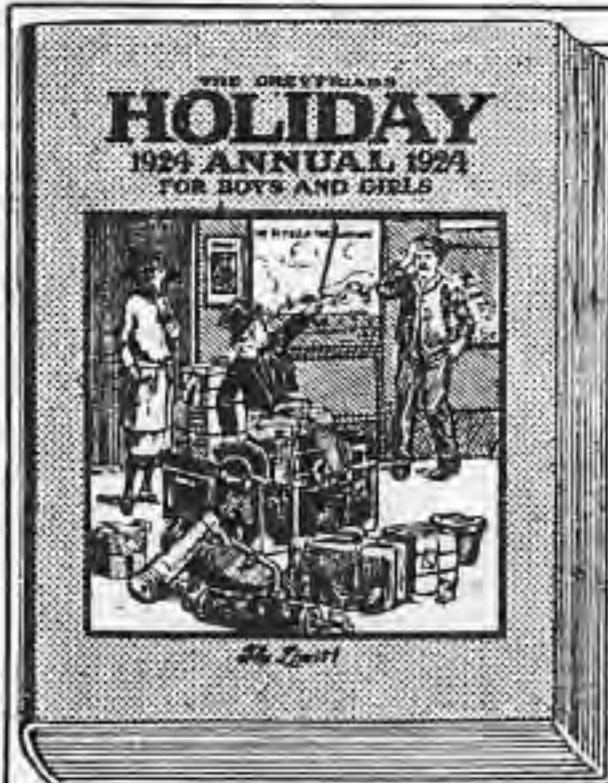
"Hear, hear!" Cecil Snaith was grasped by many willing hands—violently and without ceremony. He was dragged downstairs, struggling and yelling for mercy.

He disappeared at the run in the direction of Friardale, and was not seen again.

Harry Wharton was the hero of the hour. Bolsover major received some cutting remarks from the Removites, but most of them good-naturedly fell in with Wharton's wishes and agreed to let bygones be bygones.

Harry Wharton had vindicated his honour, and was now reinstated as captain of the Remove, after having been Condemned by the School.

THE END.



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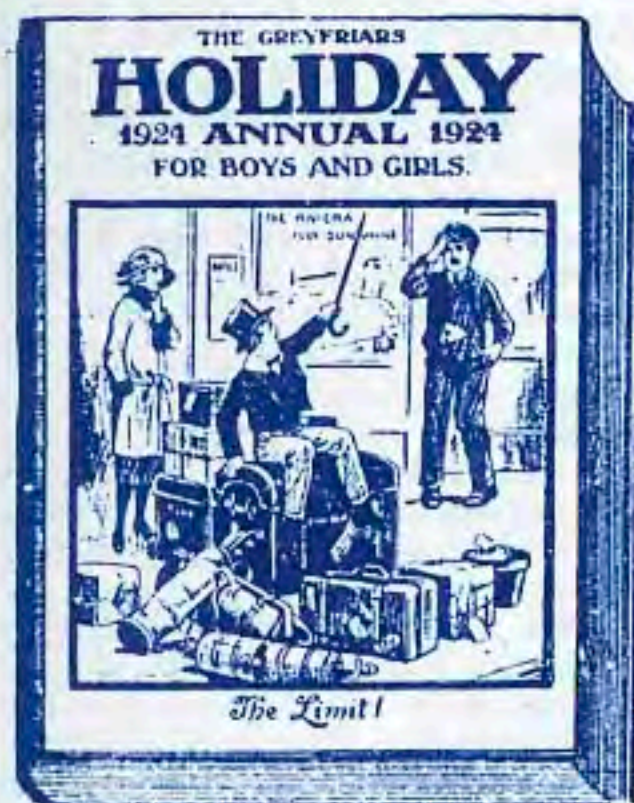
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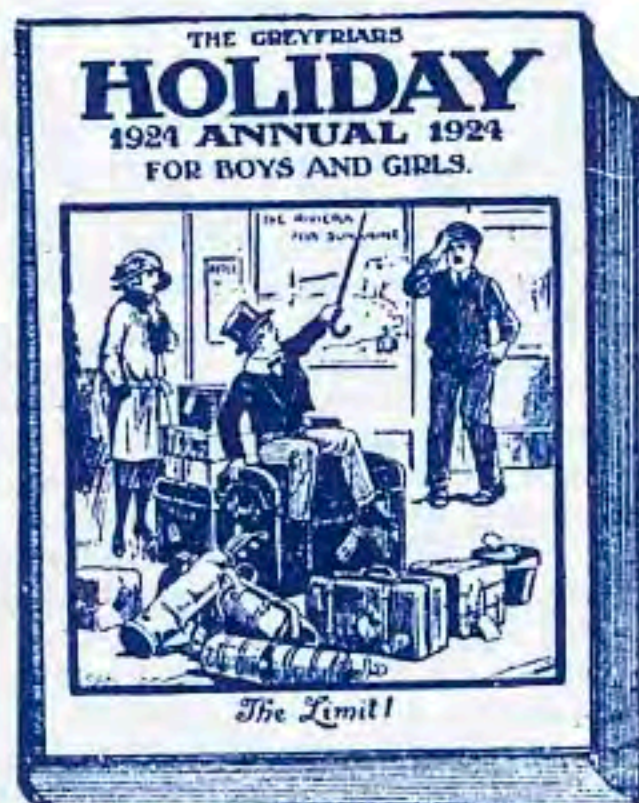
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