

SCHOOL AND DETECTIVE STORIES EVERY WEEK!

And Special Humorous Supplement.

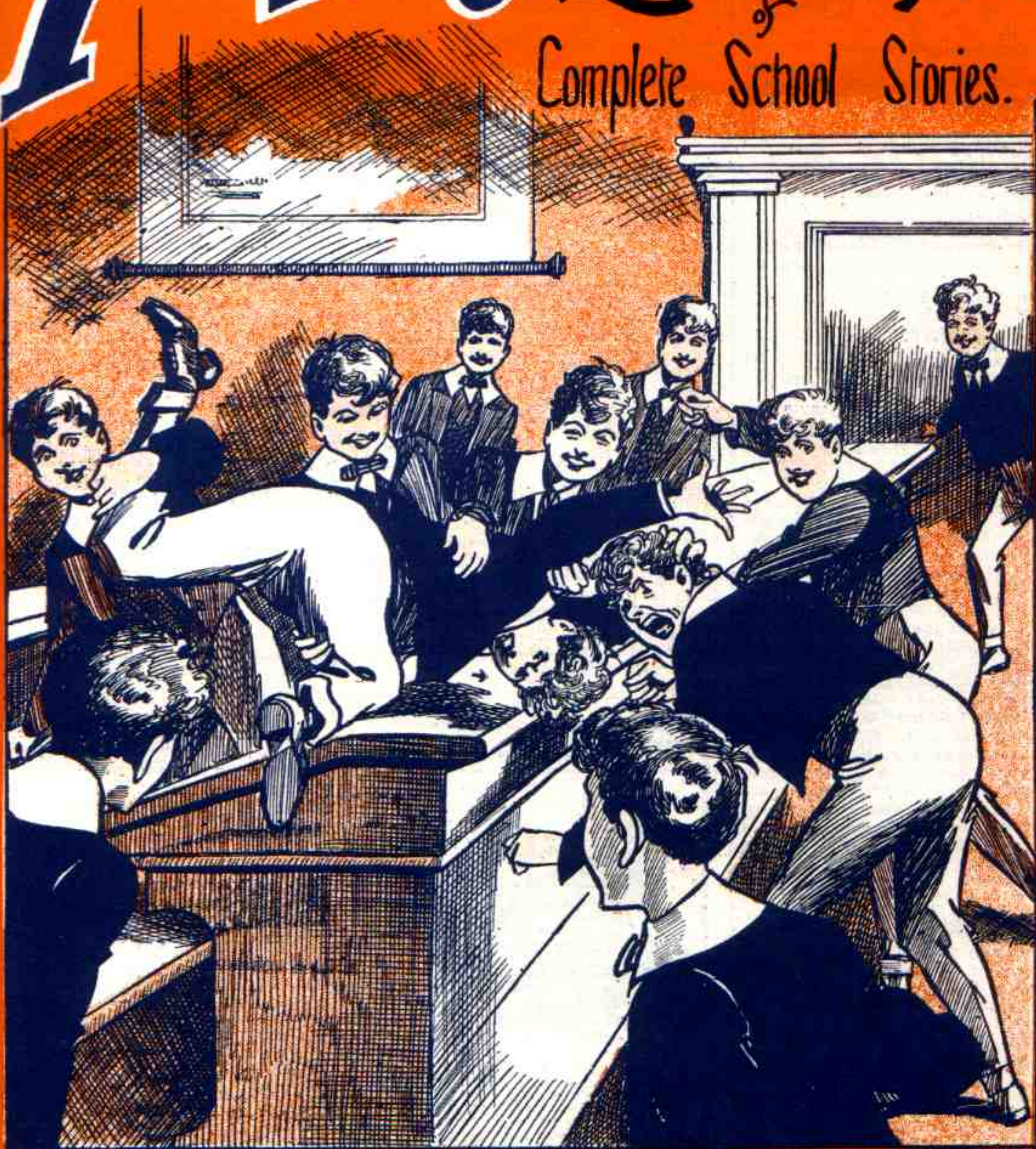
No. 925. Vol. XXVIII.

Week Ending October 31st, 1925.

The Magnet 2^d

Library EVERY MONDAY.

Complete School Stories.



FAG JUSTICE!

WINGATE MINOR GOES THROUGH THE MILL!

A painful five minutes for the young scamp of the Greyfriars Third! (See the grand school story inside.)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed "The Editor," THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

A NEW SERIAL!

Magnetites can look forward to a topping new mystery serial, featuring Ferrers Locke and young Jack Drake, which will start the week after next. There is a football interest in this coming yarn that will blend well with the latest mystery that falls to the lot of Ferrers Locke to solve. The title of this new serial is

"THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR,"

and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that this yarn will rank as the finest the good old MAGNET has ever had, which indeed is saying something. Look out for the first chapters, boys.

OBSERVATION!

Quite a crowd of my loyal chums are keenly interested in the above subject. At first glance it might appear ridiculous to be interested in a thing we do all day and every day from force of habit. But do we? How many people will walk along a pavement, for instance, and be able to give a fair account of all that they have seen when they get to the end of the thoroughfare? Not many, I'll wager. The eye will see all that comes within its range, but unless the brain is working closely with the camera of the eye the "pictures" are never "developed" sufficiently to be of any use. But the fellow who stores away what he sees finds it of great use to him later on. It sharpens him up, too, and quickens his perceptions, anyway. My correspondents not only "preach" about observation; they practise it. It is their custom to walk in twos or threes along a certain street, and then compare notes at the end of the beat. They remark that it is surprising how many things the most observant of them miss. I can quite understand it, but it's a splendid mental training, anyway.

SNORING!

A Magnetite who is one of a family of six, writes and tells me that his brothers are always chipping him because he snores. What can he do to cure himself of snoring? Well, the first thing I advise him to do is to practise breathing. He admits himself that he sleeps with his mouth open, and, try as he might, he cannot get out of that bad habit. But he must! It's not adenoids he's suffering from, he informs me, because his doctor has satisfied him as to that. It is surprising how many people don't know that the proper way to breathe is to inhale through the nose and exhale via the mouth. If my chum practises 'THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 925.

deep-breathing exercises every morning and last thing every night he'll soon get out of that habit of snoring. But the nostrils, like other exposed parts of us, must be kept clean, thus allowing of a free air passage.

"BY HOOK OR BY CROOK!"

No, this has no bearing on anything shady; it's simply the exclamation of a loyal Magnetite who is keen to possess the "Holiday Annual." At the present moment he hasn't enough money to buy his copy, but he's "putting by" for it, and is determined to bag a copy "by hook or by crook." Splendid fellow! There's one thing, he couldn't spend his money to better advantage, for already a batch of letters have reached this office from satisfied readers. But I must advise those of you who, too, are "putting by" your pennies, not to leave it too late. The rush this year to secure the "Holiday Annual" has been, and is still, "terrific," as Inky would say.

HOBBIES!

Any reader who is interested in fretwork will find the 1926 catalogue, issued by Hobbies, Ltd., Dereham, Norfolk, of particular interest. It has 236 pages, covering 22 pastimes, and showing over 500 fretwork designs, and all the tools therein are of British manufacture. A 1s. 6d. design of a large Cabinet Bookcase is given free.

FREE COLOURED PLATES



Railway Engines Past and Present and How a Locomotive Works—Free COLOURED Plate and Folding Chart given this week and next week with

CHILDREN'S PICTORIAL

On Sale Tuesday, Oct. 27th; 2d.

Interested readers can obtain a copy for 9d. at any branch or agent, or direct from the publishers, post free, 1s.

BURNT CORK, ETC.

Magnetites are going strong just now in amateur theatricals, and as a consequence I am receiving several queries as to the best make-up for a "nigger." The best and simplest method that I know of is burnt cork. Get some corks and char them in the fire or in the flame of a candle and mix the powder thus obtained with vaseline. This "mixture" is easily removed from the face by soap and hot water, and is not injurious to the skin. Another query concerns the colours required for a Chinese make-up. If those who desire this tip ask for No. 5 Make-up Stick—supplied at all chemists—and use this light yellow colour as their background, afterwards lining in and shading with a touch of brown—No. 10—and an ordinary "black liner," they will have all the colours they need.

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE!

This is not to be missed! The "Boys' Friend" is offering a top-notch opportunity to all interested in football. This takes the form of a Top Scorers' Competition, complete each week, and the prizes are £5 and Six Match Footballs. The best advice to be given is to get busy and win one of these splendid prizes. What you have to do is simple enough. Fix your attention on the performances of the crack teams. Then set down which two teams will, in your opinion, compile the biggest number of goals, that is, the combined total of both sides in a specified match in Divisions 1, 2, and 3 (Southern Section). It is the name of the teams who put together the largest 'united figure which are wanted. Whatever you do, don't miss the Top Scorers' Competition in the "Boys' Friend." Have a shot at netting one of these splendid prizes, and also of showing your proficiency as a forecaster.

Next Monday's Programme.

"THE CAPTAIN'S ELECTION!"

By Frank Richards.

A magnificent new, long complete story, dealing further with the Wingate brothers, and the election of a new captain now that Wingate has resigned from the job.

"THE PHANTOM BAT!"

The concluding instalment of this amazing mystery story, featuring the famous detective, Ferrers Locke, and his boy assistant, Jack Drake.

"GUY FAWKES!"

A special supplement, dealing with the Fifth of November celebrations.

PORTRAIT GALLERY!

Another topping portrait of a Greyfriars celebrity to add to your gallery.

Your Editor.

THE STRUGGLE! George Wingate, Captain of Greyfriars, finds it hard to do his duty in regard to his erring minor for that young scamp has deserved the "sack" a dozen times over and will, if he is reported to the Head, undoubtedly get it!



His Brother's Burden!

A magnificent new long complete story dealing with the two Wingates at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Third!

BUMP!

And a howl!

Harry Wharton smiled as he came along to the door of the Third Form-room at Greyfriars.

It was quite a sudden and startling explosion of sound from the Third Form-room; but it did not startle the captain of the Remove. Such sounds were not uncommon in the quarters of the Third when a Form master was not present.

Evidently a row was in progress among the Third.

It was Saturday afternoon, a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and after dinner the Third had their Form-room to themselves. Mr. Twigg allowed them to use it as a Common-room, and they preferred it to the Rag, where they were overshadowed by Remove and Fourth and Shell fellows. To judge by the uproar in progress, a good many of the Third were there, and they were expressing their feelings after the exuberant manner of the Third Form. A heavy bump, a loud howl, and a roar of excited voices showed that the fags were going strong.

But Harry Wharton had come along on business, and he pushed open the door of the Form-room. That afternoon the Remove were playing the Third at football. It was not an important match; the Third were very small beer at footer. They were keen on the game, which they played rather in the kick-and-rush style, with a happy disregard for a good many of the rules. Still, they played hard, as most Greyfriars men did; and when the Remove had a vacant date they did not mind fixing up a game with the Third. It was as good as practice, anyway.

Tubb, the captain of the Third, lived in hopes of beating the Remove some

day. Every form at Greyfriars had its captain, even the fag Forms; and George Tubb captained the Third in great style. Some day, he was convinced, he was going to beat Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove. That day had not, however, yet dawned.

Wharton looked into the Form-room.

What looked like an indistinguishable mass of arms and legs writhed and wriggled on the floor, between the forms and Mr. Twigg's desk.

On closer examination, it proved to be a fag sprawling, with five or six other fags sprawling over him.

The underneath fag was not to be recognised. Very little of him was to be seen. Paget was sitting on his head. Bolsover minor was sitting on one leg. The other fags sprawled, while the hapless youth underneath struggled and kicked.

George Tubb stood looking on, with his hands in his pockets, and a deep frown on his face. George Tubb, evidently, was angry; and, like the prophet of old, he felt that he did well to be angry.

"Give him some more!" said Tubb, as Wharton looked in, with a smiling face. "Scrag him!"

"Mmmmmmm!" came in a breathless gasp from the wretched youth wriggling under the fags.

"Having a good time, what?" asked Harry Wharton cheerily.

Tubb glanced round.

"Don't you butt in, Wharton!" he said. "We don't want Remove cads butting into our Form-room! Cut!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"All serene, Tubby! I won't linger long in the bear-garden. But I wanted to speak to you about the footer."

"Cough it up, then," said Tubb. "We're ready for the kick-off at half-past two, as arranged."

"Same here," said Harry. "But—"

"We're going to beat you this time," said Tubb. "Look out for squalls."

"I thought I heard a squall as I came along," said Harry. "Are you killing that fag?"

"Oh, rats! I'm captain of this Form!" said Tubb darkly. "When a fellow won't play for the Form, as ordered, I give him something to remember it by. See? Don't you butt in. What do you want?"

"I was going to speak to you about Jack Wingate."

"Wingate minor?" Tubb stared. "What about him?"

"Of course, it's not for me to suggest how you should make up your team—"

"I should think not," said Tubb of the Third emphatically.

"But I was thinking that young Wingate is a good forward, when he likes, and he would be a good man for you," said Harry. "I don't know if you've got him in your eleven, but if you haven't you might do worse."

Tubb stared at him.

Some of the fags laughed. Harry Wharton did not quite see what there was to laugh at, but he smiled agreeably. As a matter of fact, Harry was rather keen to see Wingate minor playing football that afternoon. Wingate major, the senior of Greyfriars, was taking the first eleven over to Redclyffe for a senior match. Wharton knew that he was worried about his minor; the scapegrace of the Third had given him much trouble of late. Occupied in a football match, Jack Wingate would be too busy to think of "playing the goat" in the way he had developed of late.

Certainly, it never occurred to Wingate of the Sixth that a Remove fellow was bothering about him or his troubles, or concerning himself about his troublesome minor. But no doubt he would have been grateful if he had known. Undoubtedly he would have been glad to know that his young brother was innocently occupied for

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that half-holiday, while Wingate himself was away.

"Good of you to come in and give us a tip!" said George Tubb, with a touch of sarcasm. "But we can manage our football affairs without any help from the Remove, thanks!"

"Many thanks, old bean; but we can manage!" assented Paget.

Wharton nodded. It was necessary to use tact in dealing with these independent young gentlemen of the Third Form. So Wharton did not take Tubb and Paget by their collars and knock their heads together, as they really deserved, for speaking to the captain of the Remove in such a fashion. Instead of that, he smiled cheerily.

"Well, I noticed young Wingate, when we played last time," he said. "He's got a good pace, and knows something about the game. Old Wingate would be pleased, too. Old Wingate's a good man."

"I agree to that," said Tubb. "Wingate's the only prefect I can stand."

"Quite a good man!" assented Paget. "We pass Wingate."

"Well, then," said Harry, "old Wingate would be pleased, and you'd like to please him; and young Wingate can play. I thought I'd drop in and mention it, Tubb."

"Awfully kind of you!" said Tubb, still sarcastic. "It hasn't occurred to you that I know a fellow's form as well as a Remove chap. That's young Wingate—there!"

He pointed to the wriggling heap on the Form-room floor.

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I've put him down to play!" said Tubb sulphurously. "Put him down, you know, in my eleven! And he refuses to play!"

"Oh!"

"Says he's got an engagement for the afternoon, and can't play," said Tubb. "Well, if he keeps that giddy engagement, he will be feeling a little tired, I think! He's going through it."

"Groogh! Mmmmm!" came in muffled accents from the midst of the sprawling, wriggling heap.

"Now, don't you bother any more, Wharton," said Tubb. "I'm dealing with this young cad, and I've got no more time to waste. Now, then, young Wingate—"

"Groogh! Gerroff!"

"Are you playing for the Third this afternoon?"

"Mmmmm!"

"Get off his head, Paget—he can't talk while you're sitting on his head, old chap."

Percival Spencer Paget removed himself from Wingate minor's head. A flushed and furious face came into view.

"You rotters! Let me alone!" panted Wingate minor.

"Are you playing—"

"No!" yelled Jack Wingate.

"We want you—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"So you're letting down the Form, are you?" roared Tubb.

"Blow the Form!"

"Frog's-march him round the Form-room, and bang his head on the desks," said Tubb, exasperated.

"Good egg!"

"Hold on a minute!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, pushing among the fags, "Let me speak to him!"

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"Get out!"

"Look here, young Wingate," said the captain of the Remove, unheeding the

objurgations of the excited fags, "you'd better play this afternoon. It will be a good game—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Shut up, and mind your own business!" bawled Wingate minor.

Wharton's face crimsoned, and there was a chuckle from the fags.

"That's the thanks you get!" grinned Tubb. "That's his bootiful manners, that is—they spoil him at home in the holidays, and he comes back to Greyfriars like that! But we don't take that sort of thing in the Third! Frog's-march, you chaps."

"Hoar, hear!"

"Let go!" shrieked Jack Wingate.

Harry Wharton walked out of the Form-room. Evidently his kindly intervention was wasted on Wingate minor. As he went down the passage, a terrific din followed him from the Third Form-room. In the grasp of the angry Third, Wingate minor was enjoying—or otherwise—the delights of the Frog's-march, including the banging of his hapless head on the desks. The uproar was tremendous; and Harry Wharton, as he walked away, was not surprised to see Mr. Twigg heading for the Third Form room, with a cane under his arm.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Off to Redclyffe!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?"

Bob Cherry asked that question rather humorously, as he came on Wharton, a little later, in the doorway of the House.

Harry Wharton's face was clouded with thought; and he was suffering from a feeling of annoyance. His visit to the Third Form-room had been well-intentioned; and the unceremonious "check" of Jack Wingate had irritated him keenly. It was rather an honour for the fag to have his unimportant existence noted by the captain of the Remove; and the fag had shown a striking lack of appreciation of that honour.

But Wharton was thinking more of Wingate major than of Wingate minor. The motor-coach had arrived to take the Greyfriars first eleven over to Redclyffe, and Wingate and his merry men were coming out to board it. Harry noticed that Wingate was looking about him, as if in search of somebody, and guessed that he was thinking of his minor. But Jack Wingate was not to be seen.

"Penny for 'em, old bean!" went on Bob Cherry, as he joined Harry in the doorway.

Wharton smiled faintly.

"Not bothering about our little match with the Third?" grinned Bob. "Tubby is going on the war-path this time, I hear, and going to make ducks and drakes of us. But I'm not feeling anything like cold feet. I think we shall sit on the Third."

"I was thinking about young Wingate."

"That's all right—he's playing for the Third," said Bob. "The young scallywag will be out of mischief for this afternoon, at any rate. You see, he's a good kid at games when he chooses, and Tubby is bound to play him. He wants all the quality he can get, to keep his end up against little us."

"He's refused to play in the match."

"My hat! If I were Tubby, I'd scrag him."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"They were scragging him when I saw him last," he said. "But you know what an obstinate little beggar he is. I

don't think they'll be able to rag him into playing. He told Tubb that he had an engagement for the afternoon."

Bob's rugged face became very serious.

"That's all rot—fags don't have engagements that can't be chucked. That means, Harry—"

"That the little idiot is playing the goat again," said Harry. "I know. It's not come out, but we happen to know that he was at the Cross Keys one afternoon, though I believe he only went there on a message for that blackguard Loder of the Sixth. But if it's something of that kind again—"

"Not our business," said Johnny Bull's voice. Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh joined the two juniors in the doorway. All the Famous Five, of the Remove, had turned up to see the first eleven off.

"Young Wingate's not in the Remove, Harry," said Frank Nugent. "He wants kicking; but—"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let us seek him out and kick him all togetherfully!"

"Not our business!" repeated Johnny Bull.

"Well, no," said Harry. "But I know that old Wingate is worried about him, and old Wingate's such a jolly decent chap. He's done us a lot of good turns one way or another!"

"That's so!" agreed Nugent.

"Let him give his minor a thumping good licking, then," said Johnny Bull. "That's what the young rascal wants."

Harry Wharton did not answer that. He agreed that Wingate minor would be none the worse for a good licking, so far as that went. He was, indeed, getting one from the exasperated Third. But he understood the natural repugnance of Wingate major on the subject. Wingate was head-prefect and captain of the school, and as prefect and captain it was his duty to come down hard and heavy on his minor, as on any other fag, if he kicked over the traces. Nevertheless, the fact that Jack was his young brother had to count.

Loder of the Sixth came into the doorway, and stared out at the motor-coach with a sneer on his face. Loder had been dropped from the first eleven, and he was exceedingly bitter on the subject. His pals—Carne and Walker—were both in the team, and were sitting in the coach now—they had failed to act on a hint from Loder to resign from the eleven as a protest. Gerald Loder was left on his own for that half-holiday, unless he cared to follow the team over to Redclyffe—and watch the game from which he had been excluded. And he did not care for that.

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at him, as he stood with a dark look on his face. Loder did not heed them; indeed, he did not care if they saw the bitterness and malice in the glance he fixed on George Wingate.

Most of the senior footballers were on board, but Wingate of the Sixth seemed to linger. He was still looking round him, as if hoping to see someone. By that time, Mr. Twigg had quelled the riot in the Third Form room, and turned out the fags; and Wingate minor could have come along to see his brother off with the football team, if he had liked. But he had not come.

"Bunter!" called out Wingate, as the Owl of the Remove rolled up and stood blinking at the coach through his big spectacles.

Bunter blinked round.

"Yes, Wingate!"

"Do you know where my minor is?"

"No!" said Billy Bunter indifferently.

"Go and tell him I want to speak to him before I go."

"But I don't know where he is, Wingate," objected the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter did not like exertion in any shape or form. But as the captain of Greyfriars made a movement, he added hurriedly: "I—I mean—yes—all right! I'm going!"

And Bunter rolled into the House. "Seen that young rotter Wingate minor, you fellows?" he asked, as he passed the Famous Five on the steps.

"Somewhere in the Third Form quarters," said Harry. "I saw him there a quarter of an hour ago."

Bunter grunted discontentedly, and rolled on. The footballers were all ready to start now, but Wingate still stood beside the charabanc. Gwynne called down to him.

"Anything to wait for, Wingate?" "We're all ready," said Tom North.

"Just wait a minute or two, you chaps," said the captain of Greyfriars. "Oh, all right!"

"We don't want to be late at Redclyffe!" remarked Carne of the Sixth, and Walker endorsed that remark rather emphatically. But Wingate paid no heed to Loder's pals.

Billy Bunter rolled out of the House again. There was a covert grin on his fat face.

Wingate of the Sixth came towards him.

"Did you tell my minor?" "Yes; he's in the Third Form room," said Bunter.

"Well, why isn't he here?" snapped Wingate impatiently. "Didn't you tell him I wanted him?"

"Yes. He says he won't come!" "What?"

"He says he won't come!" grinned Bunter. And the Owl of the Remove made that statement in quite a loud voice, so that as many fellows as possible should hear.

Wingate stood quite still for a moment. Harry Wharton & Co. affected to have heard nothing; but from Gerald Loder there came a laugh. A good many of the fellows standing round exchanged glances—some smiling, and some frowning. Coker of the Fifth indulged in a snort. For a fag of the Third to send a message to the captain of the school that he would not come, was simply unheard-of. Obviously Jack Wingate was presuming upon his position as brother to the captain of Greyfriars, as he had done often enough before.

Wingate's face flushed crimson, and he went into the House. Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"I say, you fellows, it's thick, ain't it?" he said. "Fancy a fag sending that message to a prefect! He, he, he!"

"I'd skin him!" said Coker of the Fifth.

"Oh, Wingate always goes easy with his minor!" said Bunter. "I wish I had a major who was captain of the school! He, he, he!"

Loder walked out to the coach with a grin on his face.

"You men won't get off yet awhile," he said. "You're awaiting the pleasure of a Third Form fag!"

"Oh, rot!" grunted Gwynne, though he looked annoyed. He was George Wingate's best chum, but he did not like being kept waiting, sitting in the motor-coach, on account of Wingate minor.

"Pretty thick, isn't it?" sneered Carne. "If we're late at Redclyffe—"

"We shall be late!" said Walker.

"Rubbish!" said Tom North cheerily. "We've got lots of time!"

"Lots!" said Lawrence of the Sixth. "You'll need it," grinned Loder.



There was a covert grin on the fat face of Bunter as George Wingate came towards him. "Did you tell my minor that I wanted him?" asked the Sixth-Former. "Yes," answered the Owl of the Remove. "And he says he won't come!" "What?" "He says he won't come!" grinned Bunter. And he made that statement in quite a loud voice so that as many fellows as possible should hear. (See Chapter 2.)

"When Wingate's sermonising, he takes his time about it. Pity the young cad didn't come out here for it, and let us all hear the sermon. Might have done us good!"

Some of the senior footballers laughed; but there was a general feeling of irritation in the motor-coach, and all eyes were turned impatiently on the door for George Wingate's return.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Rebel!

JACK WINGATE was sitting on a form alone in the Third Form room. He was feeling sore and savage.

Mr. Twigg had put a stop to the ragging. Tubb & Co. were gone, leaving Wingate minor to himself. It was settled that he was not playing for the Third that afternoon. Indeed, Tubb's last remark was, that he wouldn't play such a sneaking, rotten outsider in his team at any price, and that so long as he was captain of the Third, Wingate minor would never play for the Form again.

The scapegrace of the Third cared little enough for that. All he wanted was to be left alone.

He had marked out his own way, and he meant to follow it—with the kind assistance of Loder of the Sixth. Wingate major suspected—more than suspected—that his young brother had fallen

under some evil influence, but he did not yet suspect that it was a Sixth Form prefect who was that evil influence. It would have required a good deal of evidence to make Wingate believe that even Loder could be guilty of paying off his personal grudges so basely.

Left to himself, there was no great harm in the fag. He was a spoiled boy, he was wilful and unthinking, and he seemed to believe that he was entitled to special consideration in the school as the captain's brother. But under the influence of an older fellow all that was worst in Jack Wingate came to the surface.

It was thoughtless folly that had made him take to smoking secret cigarettes; but since the captain of Greyfriars had caued him for the offence, he was passionately determined that he would smoke—whether he liked smoking or not.

And the notice of a fellow like Loder flattered and excited him. He was dazzled by the idea of becoming a follower and imitator of the sporting man of the Sixth, admitted to some of his excursions and wild escapades. Wingate, to his wilful mind, represented authority and dull routine; Loder, liberty and licence and adventure; and he had very easily made his choice.

And his brother had been so patient with him that the fag could not realise that that patience must have a limit.

Without a thought he had sent that

impudent message by Bunter, careless of the effect of it on Wingate, careless if the whole school heard the message delivered. Let Wingate major get off to his football match and leave him alone, and the sooner the better!

The Form-room door opened, and George Wingate came in. He came in with a knitted brow.

The fag looked at him.

"Aren't you going to Redclyffe?" he asked, a little uneasily, as he saw the prefect's expression.

"I sent for you," said Wingate.

"I couldn't come."

"Bunter told me you said you wouldn't."

"Well, I wouldn't, then."

"Is that the kind of message for a fag of your Form to send to a prefect?"

"Oh, don't give me any more of that!" said Jack Wingate impatiently. "You can lick me, if you like. I can't stop you."

Wingate of the Sixth looked at him.

"You look as if you've been licked already," he said, his manner relenting a good deal.

"I've had a row with some of the Third," said the fag sulkily.

"Whose fault was it?"

"Oh, mine, of course!" sneered Wingate minor. "Anyhow, I'm not complaining. I'm not going to be a sneak to please you!"

Wingate major breathed hard.

"If any Greyfriars fellow heard me taking talk like this from you, Jack, it would be called favouritism," he said. "You don't suppose that I should let Tubb or Paget speak like that to me, do you?"

"There's a cane on old Twigg's desk if you want to lick me!" retorted Wingate minor. "I'm not asking to be let off!"

"You seem to have been licked enough," said the captain of Greyfriars, believing—or trying to believe—that that was his reason for letting off the cheeky fag.

"Leave me alone, then!"

"I had to speak to you before I went," said Wingate quietly. "It's about the Third Form match this afternoon. You're playing for the Third?"

"No!" muttered the fag.

"Why not?"

"I don't care to."

"What are you doing, then?"

"That's my bizney," said Wingate minor defiantly. "You've no right to ask. You can lick me if you find me out breaking any of the rules; that's all a prefect has a right to do."

"I'm asking as your brother," said George Wingate quietly.

The fag grinned.

"I don't tell my relations all my affairs."

"That means, I suppose, that you are playing the goat again," said George Wingate. "Look here, kid! Last week you went to the Cross Keys—out of bounds. I went there for you, and didn't find you. I hoped I'd been mistaken in thinking you were there. I had to answer to the Head for going there. I practically gave him my word that you'd not been at the place. Afterwards it came out that there was no doubt about it."

"And your jolly old conscience is uneasy!" sneered the fag. "Well, you can go and tell the Head the facts if you like."

"That would mean a flogging for you."

"I know that. If it's your duty, and you're so thumpin' keen on your duty, get on with it!" said Wingate minor.

coolly. "Have I asked you to make a favourite of me? As if you would!"

"I haven't spoken to the Head about it," said Wingate. "It was left to Gwynne to inquire into, and he went very easy—too easy. It's over, if you keep clear in the future, Jack. But I can't help thinking that getting off so easily once may lead you to play the fool again. If so—"

"If so, I shall take my medicine, if I have to," said Wingate minor. "You won't suffer."

"My name will be disgraced as well as yours," said the captain of Greyfriars. "But I'm not thinking of myself; I'm thinking of you, Jack."

"Thanks!" said the fag mockingly.

"I want you to play in the football match to-day while I'm gone over to Redclyffe. Tubb's put you in his team."

"To keep me out of mischief—what?" sneered Jack Wingate.

"That, and other reasons. I want you to play. I advise you, as your elder brother, and ask you to."

"Well, I can't! I won't, if you want it plain!" said the fag sullenly. "I've got something else on."

Wingate's face set grimly.

"You won't?"

"No!"

"Then we'll drop the brother," said the captain of Greyfriars curtly. "Now, Wingate minor, I order you to play in the football match, as captain of the school and head of games. Catch on?"

Jack Wingate did not answer.

"Disobey that order, and you get a prefect's beating, and gating for a month's holidays," said the Greyfriars captain. "I'm sorry I can't trust you, Jack. I shall ask Tubb, when I get back, if you've played. If you haven't, you know what to expect."

"Look here—"

"That will do."

Wingate of the Sixth walked out of the Third Form room without another glance at his minor.

His temper was deeply ruffled, and the fag had had a narrower escape than he supposed of getting the thrashing he deserved.

Jack Wingate sprang to his feet and stared after his major as he disappeared. His face was red with anger.

"I won't!" he breathed passionately. "I won't! I won't! I won't!"

That passionate whisper did not reach Wingate major's ears. He strode out of the House to the waiting motor-coach. His face was set, and his expression drew many glances after him.

"I say, you fellows, Wingate's waxy!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "His minor has been cheeking him. He, he, he!"

"Shurrup!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Are we really starting at last?" asked Walker of the Sixth sarcastically, as Wingate took his seat in the big car.

"Yes!" snapped Wingate.

"About time, too!" sneered Carne. "Next time you want to jaw your minor at the last minute, Wingate, you might give us the tip in time. I can tell you I'm fed-up with this!"

"That's enough, Carne."

"What?" exclaimed Carne.

"That's enough! Don't give me any more of it; I'm not in the humour for it!" growled Wingate.

Carne flushed red, and opened his mouth for an angry reply; but something in the Greyfriars captain's look caused him to leave that reply unuttered.

The motor-coach rolled away. Some of the Greyfriars fellows sent a cheer after it.

Wingate's face was gloomy and set as the footballers rolled along the country road behind the buzzing engine.

For a time he was silent, but he spoke at last, flushing as he did so.

"I'm sorry I kept you fellows waiting. It was my fault, and I'm sorry."

"Oh, rot!" said Gwynne. "What does it matter?"

"Don't mench!" said Lawrence.

"All serene, old chap!" said Tom North.

Walker and Carne exchanged a sneering look, and did not speak. But Potter and Greene of the Fifth, who were in the first eleven, chimed in cheerily that it didn't matter the least bit.

"And I'm sorry I rather snapped at you, Carne," said Wingate. "I hope you'll excuse it."

"Oh!" said Carne, rather taken aback. "Oh, all right! Nothing in it, Wingate. I'd forgotten it already."

Wingate nodded, and as the vehicle rolled on towards Redclyffe he joined in the talk of the coming match. But ever and anon his thoughts wandered back to Greyfriars, and he wondered what his minor was doing—his brother, for whom his affection was strong, in spite of many trials, and for whom he was answerable, in a sense, to the old people at home—his father and mother, who never doubted that their younger son was safe from all harm in the school in which his elder brother was captain and head prefect.

Could he do more for Jack than he was doing—more than he had done? It was a troubling thought to Wingate. What could he do, against the perverse obstinacy of a spoiled and wilful boy? What was Jack doing now—now that his back was turned?

He tried hard to believe that the fag was playing in the junior football match. No other fag at Greyfriars would have ventured to cut the match after receiving a direct order from the head of the games. But Wingate realised that to Jack he was not captain of the school, not head of the games, so much as he was brother George, whose affection and patience had never had a limit.

Perhaps he had been too affectionate, too patient. There was Carford major of the Sixth, who had a minor in the Fourth; he certainly never wasted much thought on Carford minor—in fact, made it a rule to ignore his existence at school. Carford minor never gave him any trouble. Perhaps that was a better system. At school, nobody would have guessed that Carford major and Carford minor were brothers—they were as strangers. If trouble came young Carford's way, he had to deal with it without any help from his elder brother; he would never have dreamed of coming to the Sixth Form studies to speak to Carford major. Perhaps that was a better system than George Wingate's.

Perhaps it was; but it was not a system that George Wingate could have followed. Blood was thicker than water; Jack, perverse young rascal as he was, was the little Jackie that George had carried on his shoulders at home when he was a tiny kid. He had to stand by Jack, and get him somehow out of the miserable ways he had fallen into of late. And again Wingate's troubled thoughts ran on his vague suspicion that some evil fellow had got hold of Jack and was doing him harm.

"Well, here we are!" said Gwynne.

And Wingate woke from a brown study, realising that he had fallen into silence, and had not said a word for a long time; and now the footballers had reached Redclyffe School. And Wingate, with an effort, drove the haunting, troubling thoughts from his mind as the

Greyfriars footballers poured from the motor-coach and headed for the Redclyffe football ground.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritans!

ABOUT time we pulled up our socks!" remarked Bob Cherry. The first eleven were gone, and the little crowd outside the School House at Greyfriars broke up. Some of the fellows were going for their bikes, to run over to Redclyffe and watch the first eleven at the game. Coker of the Fifth was taking out his motor-bike for a run to Redclyffe; he was going to beat the footballers on the way there, and arrive first—if he did not run into a dog, or a market-cart, or a hedge, and arrive in a hospital. Coker of the Fifth was not keen on watching the first eleven win, because he doubted whether they could win, with himself left out of the team. He was going to see them make a muck of the game, and let them know what he thought of them after they had done it. Especially he was going to see his chums, Potter and Greene, make fools of themselves, Wingate having, for reasons inexplicable to the great Coker, put them in the eleven while leaving Horace Coker out.

Angel of the Fourth was taking out a car, with a party of friends, to visit Redclyffe for the match; Angel of the Fourth did these things in style. He was an expensive youth. Hobson & Co., of the Shell, were going over on push bikes.

Harry Wharton & Co. would certainly have joined the stream that was setting Redclyffe-wards but for the fact that the Remove had a match on that afternoon. But Wharton was thinking that over now, as Bob Cherry spoke.

"Better get along, what?" asked Bob. "Mustn't keep the jolly old Third waiting for their licking."

"I've been thinking," said Harry. "There's no need for us to play to beat the Third. Of course, they've got to be licked, or they will get their ears up. But we're not needed."

"But we want to play!" said Bob, in surprise. "My hat! Taking to slacking in your old age?"

"No," said Harry. "I was thinking we might take the bikes over to Redclyffe and see the first eleven play."

"Hem! The first are the first, of course," admitted Bob. "But I'd rather play than look on any day."

"Well, it's a chance to give some of the second-rate talent a look in," said the captain of the Remove. "Smithy will captain the team if I ask him, and—"

"And he'll be glad of a chance to put in his pal Redwing," said Bob, with a laugh. "But what else have you got in your mind, old man? You're not thinking of cutting the match simply to watch Wingate's crowd. Out with it!"

Wharton coloured a little.

"Well, I was thinking that as young Wingate refuses to play for the Third, we might take him over to Redclyffe with us. He ought to want to see his major play for Greyfriars."

"The oughtfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dryly.

"Well, any kid in the Third ought to jump at the chance of a day out with big guns like us!" said Harry, laughing. "I'll put it nicely to young Wingate, and make him come."

"I'm rather fed up with young Wingate!" granted Johnny Bull.



Coker gripped the spanner and made a rush at the halted cyclists. But the Famous Five did not want to waste time handling Coker. They shot off again at once, and he did not reach them. Coker was rushing after them, when Bob Cherry freed one hand, turned in his saddle, and hurled an apple which collided with Coker's nose with considerable force. (See Chapter 6.)

"Same here!" said Nugent frankly. "We had our study wrecked through young Wingate and his cheeky rows with Coker."

"Well, that wasn't exactly young Wingate's fault."

"Oh, bother him!" said Johnny Bull.

"The fact is, it's plain enough for anybody to see that old Wingate is worried about him," said Harry. "If we can lend a sort of hand without a lot of trouble, I don't see why we shouldn't."

"Hem! Good Samaritans, and all that," said Bob.

"If you fellows don't like the idea—" began Wharton, colouring a little.

"Oh, I don't mind! I'm on!"

"Any old thing!" yawned Johnny Bull. "You can talk to the cheeky young cad as nicely as you like; I'll keep mum. So long as he doesn't give me any of his lip, I'll be civil."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Smithy," said Bob.

The Bouncer of Greyfriars came up.

"Jolly near time for the match, Wharton," he said. "Nobody dropped out of the team at the last minute, I suppose?"

"Eh? Why?"

"Well, I'd like you to give Redwing a chance," said Vernon-Smith, with a laugh. "He swots too much, and a game would do him good. Even if he isn't top notch in form, he's good enough for the Third."

"I'll leave it to you," said Harry, with a smile. "I was going to ask you to captain the team, Smithy, this time—"

"Good egg! I'm your man! I shall play Redwing."

"Play him! That's all right. You'll have five places to fill, and you can begin with Reddy."

"You lot cutting it altogether?"

"We're going over to Redclyffe."

"All serene. I'd rather play myself. Every fellow to his taste," said Vernon-Smith. "Leave it to me to beat the Third—when you come back you'll find them done to a turn."

And the Bouncer walked away in a very satisfied frame of mind. The Co. looked a little uncomfortable. Evidently the Bouncer looked on their excursion to Redclyffe that afternoon as rather in the nature of slacking. Had they been needed in the Form match, nothing, of course, would have induced Harry Wharton & Co. to give it a miss. But Smithy and his team would beat the Third easily enough.

"We ought to have told Smithy why we're really going," grinned Bob Cherry. "He thinks we're simply mooching, and doesn't even begin to guess that we're doing Good Samaritan stunts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rot!" said Harry. "Let's go and dig up Wingate minor."

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"You go. I'll wait," said Johnny Bull. "The less I talk to that cheerful young merchant, the less I am likely to punch him."

"Oh, all right!"

Four members of the Co. proceeded to look for Wingate minor. Tubb & Co. were going down to the football ground now; it was quite settled that Jack Wingate was not to play in the Form match. The four Removites went to the Third Form room, where they expected to find the fag.

Three of them were smiling a little, and Wharton was looking a little conscious. It was true enough that it was not exactly any business of his to keep an eye on a rebellious fag; and he had all a healthy boy's dislike of seeming to be righteous or over virtuous. But he felt that he was right in this. Wingate major was one of the best fellows breathing, and he was troubled about his young brother. And it was not as if Jack Wingate had been a young rascal like, for instance, Skinner of the Remove, or Angel of the Fourth. His faults were mostly superficial. And Harry knew what Wingate of the Sixth did not know—that Gerald Loder, the blackguard of the Sixth, had taken up the foolish fag; and he knew what Loder's influence over a reckless lad was likely to be.

Jack Wingate was about to leave the Form-room, when the Removites came in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are," said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Here I am!" grunted Jack Wingate.

"You're not playing for the Third, after all?" asked Harry.

The fag set his lips.

"No! I won't! If you've come to give me some of your precious advice, you can keep it."

"I haven't!" said Harry mildly.

"Oh, that's good!" said Wingate minor suspiciously. "What do you want, then?"

"We're going over to Redclyffe this afternoon, to see the match there," said Harry, in his very pleasantest manner, apparently oblivious of the Third-Former's sullen scowl. "I thought you might like to come along with us."

Wingate minor stared at him.

"What rot! The Third don't go about with the Remove!" he said. "What the thump do you mean?"

"Hem! That's so as a rule, and a good rule; but there are exceptions to every rule," said the captain of the Remove. "We'd really like your company this afternoon, Wingate minor."

"Pleased!" said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"Delighted!" said Frank Nugent, with equal solemnity.

"The delightfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous young friend!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, can it?" said Wingate minor gruffly. "Think I can't see what you're up to? I suppose George has told you to keep an eye on me."

"George hasn't said a word to us about you," said Bob, with a grin. "George isn't a pal of ours."

"Then you're butting in of your own accord, because you're a set of meddling asses?" said Jack Wingate.

"What?"

"Meddling asses!"

The four juniors looked at him. It was, perhaps, fortunate that Johnny Bull had not come there with his friends. It was very probable that at that point Johnny would have weighed in with a boot. The Co. felt powerfully

moved to do so, but they restrained that natural desire.

"It's a jolly afternoon for a spin," said Harry Wharton, after an awkward pause. "We'd help you up the hills, kid."

"I shouldn't want any help."

"Hem! I know you're a good cyclist."

"Quite as good as any ass in the Remove, anyhow. But I'm not looking for a ten-mile spin this afternoon."

"I'll tell you what," said Nugent, as if struck by a sudden happy thought.

"We'll go by train if you like."

"And we'll stand the fare," said Bob heartily. "And, look here, we'll take a bag of tarts in the train."

"You'll come, kid?" said Harry.

Wingate minor grinned sourly.

"No. I won't come," he said.

"Thanks all the same, but I happen to have an engagement. And I'm rather late already."

He moved towards the door.

"Better come along with us, kid," said Harry.

"Rats!"

Wingate minor walked out of the Form-room.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another with rather uncertain expressions. Wharton's face was red, and his comrades smiled, they could not help it.

"I—I suppose we can't glue him on a jigger and make him come!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I've a jolly good mind——" Wharton breathed hard and deep.

"Give it a miss, old fellow. It won't do any good to punch the cheeky little sweep."

"No, I suppose it won't! But——"

"Besides, we started out to play Good Samaritan, not to wallop cheeky fags!" chuckled Bob. "The Good Samaritan lizney seems rather off, though."

"The off-fulness is terrific!"

"Well, I thought the little beast would come," said Wharton ruefully.

"I've done you out of your game for nothing."

"Oh, that's all right! I'd like to see the first eleven thrash Redclyffe. But let's get off, or we shall miss half the match. We shall have to take all the short cuts and put on speed as it is."

"I suppose that's all we can do now."

"Well, you can't tell Smithy to take a back seat again after asking him to captain the team. Come on!"

The juniors rejoined Johnny Bull in the doorway. He surveyed them inquiringly.

"Where's Wingate minor?"

"Hem! He won't come," said Bob.

"Cheeky little cad! And you asked him?"

"Asked him nicely; butter wouldn't have melted in our mouths. But his lordship wasn't taking any."

"Then we've chucked up the footer match for nothing!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I thought it was a fatheaded idea all the time."

"Hem!"

"I dare say Smithy will find you a place if you ask him," said Harry Wharton rather tartly. "It may not be too late."

"Rot! If you're all going to Redclyffe, I'm coming to Redclyffe," said Johnny Bull calmly. "But I think it was a fatheaded idea, and I generally say what I think. It was a fatheaded idea!"

"Well, let it go at that, and come and get the bikes out," said Bob Cherry. "You talk too much sometimes, Johnny."

"Look here——"

"Oh, come on!" said Harry. "We've wasted enough time over that cheeky young cad; don't let's waste any more."

"I didn't waste any!" said Johnny Bull, with the accent on the personal pronoun.

Wharton reddened, but he made no rejoinder. He led the way to the bike-shed in silence, and the Famous Five wheeled out their machines. After that there was no time for talk. By highway and byway, by path and lane, the chums of the Remove kept up a racing speed, and the miles flew past under the wheels.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Loder Lays the Snare!

GERALD LODER sprawled in an armchair in his study with one leg crossed over the other, his hands behind his head, and blue curls of smoke rising from the cigarette in his mouth.

He looked like a slacker—as he was. But slacker as Loder was, he would have been glad to be going over to Redclyffe with the first eleven that afternoon.

His eyes glinted under his bent brows as he smoked in a sullen and resentful mood.

At the bottom of his heart he knew that he deserved to be left out of the team, that Wingate would have been a fool to play him after the way he had crooked up in the Highcliffe match owing to one of his "nights out" the previous night, and after he had disgraced his side by fouling a Highcliffe man. But he chose to take the view that the Greyfriars captain had jumped at the chance of getting rid of him. They had never been friends; they had more than once been rivals, and Wingate had seen his chance and taken it. That was how Loder spoke of the matter among his friends, and tried to think of it.

Whether he deserved his exclusion from first eleven football or not, he did not mean to stand it if he could help it. The episode had brought to a head his bitter rivalry with the captain of the school, and once more schemes were working in Loder's mind of ousting the Greyfriars captain from his place and stepping into his shoes.

He had schemed before, and failed. But now he had a card in his hand that looked like a winning card. Through Wingate minor, the scapegrace of the Third, Wingate major might be brought down.

It had been easy enough for the Sixth-Former to play on the thoughtless mind of the wilful, obstinate fag—easy enough to give a keener edge to his resentment against the elder brother who sought to control him. In any case, Jack Wingate would have resented any attempt at control; it was his lofty will and pleasure to do what was right in his own eyes. The mere notice of a Sixth Form man flattered and elated the fag; and from Loder he had not only notice, but soft words and cunning flattery. From his elder brother he received interference and what he called sermons. The contrast between Loder and Wingate, in Wingate minor's eyes, was very favourable to Gerald Loder.

That he was merely being made use of to help in the downfall of the captain of Greyfriars never even occurred to him. Certainly the fag, perverse as he was, would never have dreamed of lending himself to any such scheme. It did not cross his mind for an instant

that there was any scheme in Loder's thoughts at all.

But, though he did not dream of it, he was the trump card that Loder hoped to play in his contest with the captain of the school.

Loder was thinking over it now as he smoked in his study. He had ample leisure to think over it with the half-holiday on his hands. His pals were gone with the eleven; he was at a loose end for the day. For the game itself Loder cared little; but he cared very much for the "kudos" of a first eleven man—a Sixth Form man who was dropped out of games had to drop to a great extent out of public consideration, he ceased to count. While Loder idled in his study there were four of the Fifth playing for Greyfriars—Potter, Greene, Blundell, and Bland. Taking a back seat, with Fifth Form men in the front seats, was bitterly humiliating to him. And Loder's friends were the kind of friends who "rubbed in" anything like this; they sympathised and they consoled, with a sting in their sympathy and their condolences.

But he told himself viciously that his turn was coming.

Between Wingate minor's determination to "play the goat," skilfully urged on by the plotting prefect, and Wingate major's strong sense of duty, something had to come of Loder's scheming. Already the Greyfriars captain's sense of duty had been put under a severe strain. Wingate knew, and Loder knew that he knew, that the fag had visited the Cross Keys; yet Wingate minor had not been punished or reported.

Wingate had left the matter in Gwynne's hands, and Gwynne of the Sixth had somehow managed it so that nothing had come out. That had been against Wingate's desire and intention; but Loder did not think so for a moment. His belief was that the Greyfriars captain was deliberately screening his brother in wrongdoing; and if that should come to the Head's knowledge, with proof, Wingate's captaincy would come to a sudden end; he was not likely to be allowed to remain a prefect at all.

But proof was necessary; and that had to be forthcoming without Loder's hand appearing in the matter; it would not have been of much use putting up for the captain's election if the school knew that he had been instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the most popular fellow at Greyfriars.

There was a tap at Loder's door, and Wingate minor came in.

He did not enter the prefect's study timidly or hesitatingly. He came in briskly, as if he felt quite at home there.

Loder's eyes glinted for a moment.

He had to make himself agreeable to the cheeky fag, for his own purposes; but he was storing up the memory of all Jack Wingate's cheeky familiarity and consequence. Later on the scapegrace of the Third was to be put in his place with a heavy hand. But that time was not yet; and Loder, though his eyes glinted, nodded and smiled to the Third Former.

Jack Wingate nodded cheerily, as if he were a Sixth Form man himself. A nod from a fag of the Third would have roused the deepest ire of any other Sixth Former. It roused Loder's, as a matter of fact, though he smiled cordially.

"I say, suppose the Head looked in, Loder?" grinned Wingate minor. "What would he say about that cigarette?"



"Let that jigger alone!" bawled Coker. "I tell you I'm not lending you that jigger! You cheeky ass—" "This is where we chip in," murmured Harry Wharton. "Collar that bawling ass. If Wingate hits him, he will hurt!" As the Fifth-Former wriggled and writhed in the grasp of the Removites, he had the pleasure of seeing George Wingate vanish on the whizzing motor-bike. (See Chapter 10.)

Loder breathed hard. He was actually being "chipped" by this impudent young rascal. That was part of the price he had to pay for his scheming; and it was an added item for the fag to suffer for later, when he had served his turn.

"You're not playing football this afternoon," said Loder, without answering the remark.

"No; I told you I wouldn't," said Jack Wingate. "You're not playing, either, are you?"

And he grinned.

"No," said Loder, ignoring the cheeky grin. "I'm not in the eleven this time."

"It was rather rotten of my brother to give you the chuck," said Jack Wingate.

"We needn't discuss that," said Loder, his resolute cordiality breaking down for a moment. There was a limit to what Loder could tolerate, even for the success of his scheming.

"Well, I think—"

"Never mind that. What are you doing with yourself this afternoon, kid?"

"I—I thought we were going out together," said the fag, his face falling a little. "You said something—"

"Yes, but as it happens, I can't go," said Loder. "The Head has been down on me for my Greek; and I've got to do some mugging up this afternoon."

But I've fixed up something for you, kid, and you'll see me come along later."

"What's on, then?" asked Wingate minor, with what he fondly believed was the air of a man of the world. "Anything good?"

Loder laughed.

"Oh, quite! I suppose you're not afraid to trot down to the Cross Keys while your brother is away?"

"I shouldn't be afraid if he were here!" retorted Wingate minor.

"Plucky kid!" said Loder. "After all, why should he interfere with you as he does?"

"I'm jolly well not going to let him, I can tell you!"

"Of course, he means well," said Loder.

"Does he?" grunted the fag. "I know I'm fed-up, anyhow."

"Well, you'll trot down to the old place," said Loder. "Tell Cobb I shall be along in about an hour. While you're waiting for me, have a game with the marker in the billiards-room. He's rather a friend of mine, and he's going to give you some tips on billiards. You play quite a good game for a kid; but, of course, you've a lot to learn yet. You've got rather a gift with a cue; it only needs improving."

"I made a break of sixteen the other day," said Wingate minor proudly.

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"Good man!" said Loder admiringly. "Well, cut off, and fill up your time with billiards till I come along. Then we'll get on to something a bit more exciting."

"Right-ho!" said Jack Wingate.

And he nodded to the prefect, and strolled out of the study. He whistled as he went down the Sixth Form passage; an offence that would have brought prompt punishment upon him had any other prefect but Loder been in hearing.

Loder lighted a fresh cigarette, with a dissatisfied look. Rascal as he was, a blackguard to the finger-tips, Loder was not satisfied with what he was doing. It was the only way to bring down his rival, and he was determined upon his course; but he had a rag of conscience somewhere that was troubled a little.

"What does it matter?" he muttered impatiently. "The little fool won't get any harm—he's got to be caught and flogged, and that will be the end of it. A jolly good flogging will cure him of playing the goat—and when I'm captain of Greyfriars I'll see that he gets special attention, and a thumping hiding whenever he kicks over the traces! He won't come to any harm."

But the plotting prefect's brow remained a little clouded; he was not easy in his mind. The worst fellow at Greyfriars would have cut him had he known what Loder was doing; his chums, Carne and Walker, would have turned their backs on him in utter disgust and contempt. Loder knew it, and it was not pleasant to know it.

But he did not think of turning back. By fair means or foul, he was going to "down" George Wingate, and oust him from the captaincy; and by fair means it was impossible.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Chase!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Coker's come a cropper!"

"Poor old Coker!"

Half-way to Redclyffe, as the Famous Five wheeled into a rather rutty lane, they sighted Coker of the Fifth.

No longer proudly mounted on his motor-bike, careering at a speed dangerous to himself and to others—especially to others—Horace Coker was on his knees beside the machine, which was propped against a tree.

Coker's hands were black and oily, and there was a smear on his nose. His face was crimson, from mingled rage and exertion. When all went well with his motor-bike, Coker loved it; but when the jigger jibbed—as it often did under Coker's management—he addressed it in terms of the deadliest enmity.

He was talking to the motor-bike, with much more emphasis than elegance, when the chums of the Remove came pedalling up. Had that motor-bike had any personal feelings, those feelings must have been bitterly wounded by Coker's remarks. Fortunately it hadn't. Though if the motor-bike had been suddenly endowed, like Balaam's ass, with the power of speech, it might have retorted that the blame was not the steed's but the rider's.

Harry Wharton Co. had no time to lose; but they slowed down in order to sympathise with Coker.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" bawled Bob Cherry.

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"Did it begin back-jumping, Coker?" asked Johnny Bull.

"If I had a donkey that wouldn't go—" sang Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth rose to his feet, with a spanner in his hand and a ferocious glare in his eyes.

"You cheeky young scoundrels—"

"Like us to send back an ambulance?" asked Harry Wharton. "We pass through a village a mile on."

"An esteemed ambulance is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Do you want me to smash you?" roared Coker. The state of the motor-bike seemed to have had a deteriorating effect on Horace Coker's temper.

"Thanks, no," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Can we lend you a hand, Coker? Honest Injun, if we can help."

Coker snorted.

"What do you fags know about motor-bikes? Of course, you can't lend me a hand. If you come near me, I'll lend you a foot!"

"That's the Coker brand of gratitude!" chuckled Bob. "I sha'n't lend Coker a hand to-day."

"My esteemed fatheaded Coker—"

"Like us to push behind?" asked Nugent.

Coker breathed fury.

"There's nothing wrong with this bike," he said. "I've just got it all right again. I know how to handle motor-bikes."

"Killed anybody on the road?" asked Bob.

Coker gripped the spanner, and made a rush at the halted cyclists. The motor-bike, apparently, was a going concern again; but Coker had been long and hard at it, and as the jigger couldn't understand or feel what he said to it, he wanted a more sentient victim. He had a yearning to punch somebody, and the chums of the Remove were, from his point of view, asking for it. So he rushed them down.

But the Famous Five did not want to waste time handling Coker. They shot off again at once, and he did not reach them.

Coker rushed after the machines. Bob Cherry freed one hand, turned in his saddle, and hurled an apple, with deadly aim.

Bang!

The apple collided with Coker's nose with considerable force. Coker gave a wild howl, and sat down in the road.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By the time the Fifth-Former was on his feet again, the five were speeding away at a distance, chuckling merrily. The meeting with Horace Coker had had quite a cheering effect on them.

Coker rushed to his bike. It was in order again, or he believed it was. He was raging, and he did not stop to think of what might happen to him if he succeeded in overtaking five sturdy juniors all at once to visit vengeance on their heads. All he thought of was overtaking them. With glinting eyes and contracted brows, Coker let out his jigger, and flew in pursuit.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly, as he heard the chug-chug-chug of a motor-bike behind. "Is that Coker?"

He glanced back over his shoulder.

Coker was coming on in hot pursuit, the motor-bike fairly flying. It was a going concern—for the time, at least, though there was no telling how long it would remain one with Coker in control. Now it was fairly eating up the road, and Horace Coker was coming on hand over fist.

"He's after us!" grinned Nugent.

"Let him catch us," said Johnny Bull. "It won't take us long to mop up the road with Coker."

"Well, he'll catch us, at this rate," said Harry Wharton. "Luckily, only Coker will be the sufferer, if he does. Still, we don't want to waste time on him, if we can help it. Let's take this cut across the fields—he can't take his stink-bike that way."

"Oh, all right."

The Famous Five lifted their machines over a stile, and pedalled on by a grassy path. It was a short cut that joined the winding road again half a mile farther on, and saved a good deal of distance.

Coker was level with the stile a minute later, but he did not think of following the same path. Though really the juniors would hardly have been surprised if Coker had put his motor-bike to the stile to jump it, Coker's ways with a petrol jigger were so weird and wonderful. Coker of the Fifth swept on, putting on all his speed to cover the distance to the point where the path joined the road ahead.

The Famous Five had to lift their machines over a gate at the further end of the path, and as they mounted in the road again, they heard the chug-chug-chug behind.

Coker was not fifty yards away.

His face was ablaze with wrath. The offending juniors were as good as in his hands now, or he was as good as in their hands, if he had looked at it that way.

Harry Wharton glanced back.

"Well, he will have it!" he remarked. "After all, it won't take long to roll him into a ditch."

And the cyclists slowed down and dismounted, to wait for Horace Coker to come up.

Coker swept on towards them, grinning with glee now.

Bang!

"Great Scott!"

Some portion of Coker's mettlesome steed had "given," apparently. The motor-bike rocketed across the road, and rocketed back again, and then lay down on a grassy patch as if tired and in need of a rest. Coker sat in the grass by the roadside, and lifted up his voice. It was just as well that the juniors were still too far away to hear what Coker said to his steed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "He's come to anchor again! What price getting a rope and towing Coker to Redclyffe?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry made a trumpet of his hands, and bawled:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What will you give for a tow home, Coker?"

Coker scrambled up, with fury in his face. The chums of the Remove mounted their bikes again and restarted. When they looked back again, Horace Coker was once more on his knees beside his motor-bike, hard at work. And the Famous Five chuckled and rode on to Redclyffe, without hearing the chug-chug-chug of Coker behind them any more.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Redclyffe Match!

"GOAL!"

"Good old Wingate!"

That shout greeted the Famous Five as they arrived on the football-ground at Redclyffe School. The match was in progress, and the shout came from two or three dozen Greyfriars fellows who had followed the

team. Evidently matters were going well for Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co. joined the crowd. Bob Cherry gave Angel of the Fourth a cherry dig in the ribs.

"How's it going?" he asked.

Aubrey Angel glared at him.

"Don't puncture me, you ass! That's my first goal—one up for Greyfriars."

"Good!"

"Bravo, Wingate!"

The Famous Five added their voices to the cheering. The first-half was nearly over when they arrived, but they were in time for the first score.

"We're going to win!" said Bob cheerily, as if he were a member of the first eleven himself.

The sides lined up again after the goal, and the chums of the Remove looked on with keen interest. Wingate had scored for Greyfriars; but they could see that the Redclyffe men were in great form. It was a keen struggle, well contested on both sides, and it was worth watching.

"After all, this is as good as playing the Third!" remarked Johnny Bull. "It wasn't a bad idea to come over."

"Smithy will be beating the Third for us," said Bob Cherry. "I say, old Wingate's going strong. What a little roller his minor is not to want to see him going it."

"Some of the men look a bit done," remarked Wharton. "Greene is limping, and Bland looks blown to the wide. Redclyffe are in good form to-day."

"Old Wingate will walk over them," said Bob confidently.

"There they go again! On the ball!"

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

Wingate and his men were attacking again hard. But this time they did not get through. Redclyffe rallied, and drove them back, and there was a hot attack on the visitors' goal.

North of the Sixth, the Greyfriars custodian, saved, and saved again; but the leather went in, and then there was a roar from the Redclyffe crowd.

"Goal! Goal!"

"We're level now," remarked Bob. "I say, that was a decent goal. These chaps can play Soccer!"

"They'd beat us but for Wingate," said Hobson of the Shell, who was standing by the Removites. "What we really want is a couple of Shell men in the First Eleven—one, at least. Wingate will pull the game out of the fire; but with a Shell man or two—"

"Or a couple of the Remove?" suggested Bob, with a grin.

"Oh, rot!" snapped Hobson.

"Greyfriars are going to win," said Harry Wharton. "They're in great form, but Wingate is worth any two of them."

"Hear, hear!"

A gentleman in cap and gown came down to the field from the direction of the school; evidently one of the Redclyffe masters. He stopped near the group of Greyfriars fellows, and stood looking at the game. Then he glanced at the Removites.

"You are Greyfriars boys?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Will you point out Wingate to me?"

"Certainly. He's our skipper," said Harry, and he pointed at George Wingate, who was just then taking the ball up the field.

"Thank you."

The Redclyffe Form master stood watching the game for a few minutes more, and then turned to a Redclyffe Sixth-Former who was near at hand, and asked him a question.

"Only a few minutes now, Mr. Topham," was the answer.

Apparently the master had inquired how long it was to the interval. Harry Wharton wondered a little what was Mr. Topham's interest in the Greyfriars captain specially.

The Redclyffe master turned to him again. It was clear that he was turning over something in his mind, and was undecided.

"I suppose you know Wingate, at your school?" he asked.

"He's in the Sixth, and captain of Greyfriars," said Harry. "I know all about him, of course."

"Has he a brother at Greyfriars?"

"A brother? Yes—his young brother is in the Third there," answered Wharton, quite astonished by the question.

Mr. Topham paused again. After a minute or so he drew Harry Wharton a little aside.

"I have received a message by telephone," he said. "The message is for Wingate, but it is of rather an unusual kind, and I hesitate to give it to him unless assured that it is not some hoax. Do you know anything about his brother?"

Wharton was more and more astonished.

"Oh, yes," he said. "Of course, I don't have anything to do with him, as I'm in the Remove and he's in the Third. But I know about the kid."

"What is his character?"

"His—his character?" stuttered Wharton, astonished by such a question from a Redclyffe master.

What Wingate minor's character might be could hardly matter to Mr. Topham, who had evidently not even heard of his existence till that day.

"Yes; I have a reason for asking," said the Form master quietly. "Is he a boy likely to get into serious trouble—out of school bounds, and in an undesirable place? Please answer me frankly."

Wharton began to understand. He could guess now the nature of the telephone message which had come to Redclyffe for Wingate of the Sixth.

"Well, yes, sir," he said. "He's really not a bad little chap; but old Wingate has had a lot of trouble with him lately, I believe."

"Is there a public-house, with a bad reputation, called the Cross Keys, in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars?"

"Yes; about a mile from the school."

"Knowing as much as you do of Wingate's young brother, do you think it possible that Wingate minor has broken school bounds, and visited such a place?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Harry.

He had only too much reason to believe it possible; in fact, very probable indeed.

"You may speak to me frankly," said Mr. Topham. "It is no concern of



The motor-coach rolled away for Greyfriars; and Horace Coker picked himself up and stood staring after it. "Look here!" he gasped. "I've got to get back, you fatheads!" From the crowded charabanc grinning faces were turned on Coker. Even Potter and Greene were grinning. The Fifth-Former shook an enraged fist after the vehicle as it disappeared from sight. (See Chapter 10.)

mine, and I shall dismiss the matter from my mind. I only want to assure myself of the genuineness of a message I have received for Wingate before I trouble him with it. If the message is genuine he must receive it at the earliest possible moment."

"I understand, sir," said Harry. "Well, yes, I—I shouldn't be surprised if that young ass had gone to that rotten show this afternoon. Of course, I don't know anything about it, and if I did I shouldn't say anything to a Greyfriars master. But—"

"Thank you!" said Mr. Topham.

A minute later the whistle went. The score was one for one, and all the footballers looked as if they could do with a rest. Mr. Topham moved away from the juniors.

Harry Wharton rejoined his comrades.

"What's the confab about?" asked Bob, in wonder.

"That young ass Wingate minor!" muttered the captain of the Remove. "Somebody's telephoned that he's in trouble—a message for Wingate major."

"What silly ass was ass enough to send such a message in the middle of a football match?" growled Johnny Bull. "It's enough to put Wingate off his form, if it's serious."

"Blessed if I know! I suppose the man's bound to give Wingate the message," said Harry. "In fact, he's giving it to him now. I can see that."

"Rotten!" said Bob. "Might be a hoax, too—some silly ass playing a jape on Wingate."

"That's why Mr. Topham asked me about Wingate minor, I suppose—to make sure it was genuine. It's rotten!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" growled Hurree Singh. "The severe kickfulness is the proper caper for the esteemed and disgusting young rapscallion."

"Look at old Wingate!" muttered Bob uneasily.

And the chums of the Remove looked at Wingate with gloomy looks. It was only too plain to their eyes that the captain of Greyfriars had had a shock.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Black News!

GEORGE WINGATE was feeling quite cheery when the whistle went for the interval.

The game had been a hard one; and in the stress of the struggle he had forgotten for the time the existence of his troublesome minor.

He had played hard, and he had scored for his school, and he was looking forward to a victory after a hard-fought game. Most of the other fellows looked rather gruelled, but Wingate seemed almost as fresh as paint. There was a cheery smile on his face, as he stood chatting with Gwynne and Carford major by the ropes. He was a little surprised when a Redelyffe master came up to him.

"Wingate, I think?" said Mr. Topham.

"That's my name, sir," said the Greyfriars captain.

"I have a message for you—perhaps you will step aside with me for a minute or two."

"Certainly!"

A good many glances were turned upon the two; Redelyffe fellows as well as the visitors wondering what a Redelyffe master could have to say to the Greyfriars captain in the interval in a

Soccer match. Wingate was quite mystified.

"A message came by telephone a short time ago," explained Mr. Topham. "I took the call, and the speaker asked for a message to be given to you. It concerns your brother at Greyfriars."

Wingate started violently. All the brightness vanished from his face in an instant.

"Not an accident?" he exclaimed.

"No, no! Nothing of that kind," said the Redelyffe Form master hastily. "The message is, however, of a serious nature."

Wingate breathed hard.

"Is my brother in some trouble?"

"It appears so, and I am sorry to have it give it to you; but I think you would prefer to hear it without waiting till the end of the match, so that you can take whatever measures you consider necessary," said Mr. Topham kindly.

"And the message?" muttered Wingate.

"The message is that your brother, Jack Wingate, has been seen to enter a public-house called the Cross Keys—"

"Oh!"

"The person who spoke did not mention his name, but said that he was a resident in the village of Friardale, and knows both you and your brother quite well by sight and report. Seeing your brother enter such a place, he felt it his duty to communicate with you, as a prefect of your school. He telephoned to Greyfriars, and was told that you were at Redelyffe for a football match. He then rang up Redelyffe School, to ask for the message to be given you. I thought it my duty to bring you the message," said Mr. Topham.

"Quite so—thank you very much," stammered Wingate. "But—but—did he say anything else?"

"Only that he had seen the boy enter the Cross Keys, in a surreptitious manner, by a side-door, and that he did not leave again," said Mr. Topham; "that was apparently all he had to say."

"Enough, too," said Wingate bitterly. "But—but—of course, it may be a hoax—it's possible—"

"That, of course, is possible," said Mr. Topham politely. "Your own knowledge of your brother's character should enable you to decide. If you desire to take any action, my telephone is at your service; or if you do not wish to leave the field, I will ring up Greyfriars and give any message for you."

"You are very kind!" breathed Wingate.

Mr. Topham waited; but the captain of Greyfriars did not speak again. He was trying to think.

"Perhaps you would prefer to think the matter over," said the Redelyffe master. "I am quite at your service if there is anything I can do."

And with a bow, he retired.

Wingate did not detain him. His brain was in a whirl. For the moment, he had forgotten the football match and was unconscious of the curious glances that were turned on him from many directions.

His unhappy mind was torn between duties; he knew that, as a Greyfriars prefect, he was bound to act upon the information he had received; and, as a brother, he was passionately desirous of saving the foolish fag from the consequences of his folly.

It was a struggle between the brother and the prefect. Only too well he knew how likely it was that Jack Wingate had repeated his visit to Mr. Cobb's disreputable resort—and it was natural enough that some officious and well-meaning resident in Friardale, having seen the wretched fag sneaking into the

public-house, had felt it incumbent upon him to report what he had seen.

Wingate was only too glad that the telephone message had not gone to the Headmaster at Greyfriars. Yet why was he glad? If the message was true—if he found it to be true—he was bound to report the young scapegrace to Dr. Locke. Was he slackening in his duty—was he, sub-consciously—thinking of throwing his responsibilities as a prefect to the winds, for the sake of shielding a young rascal who happened to be his brother? If matters had come to that pass, he was no longer fit to be captain of Greyfriars, or a prefect of the school at all.

But was it true?

Might it not be some ghastly hoax—and the message not from some shocked and righteous gentleman in Friardale, but from some Greyfriars fellow who disliked him, and would be glad to give him pain? Wingate had few enemies—but he was not without them. The thought of Gerald Loder flashed into his mind. Loder had been left behind at Greyfriars, bitterly chagrined by his exclusion from the team? Would he, could he, be base enough to send a false message like this, in his grudge against the football skipper who had dropped him?

It was possible—Loder, or perhaps some resentful Lower boy whom the Greyfriars captain had punished; some malicious fellow like Skinner of the Remove, or Kenney of the Fourth. It was possible—possible—Wingate tried to think it probable. Yet all the time he knew—he knew—that Jack Wingate was in those very moments out of bounds, playing the blackguard, disgracing himself and his brother and his school. And yet—

Gwynne tapped Wingate on the arm, with a look of wonder.

"We're ready, old chap! I say, what's the matter?"

"Ready?" repeated Wingate. He stared at Gwynne, and woke up, as it were, to his surroundings. His face flushed crimson.

"I—I've had a message," he stammered.

"I saw that Johnny talking to you, of course; what on earth's the trouble?" asked Gwynne.

Wingate did not answer.

"Well, the referee's waiting, and he's a bit surprised," said Gwynne. "I say, Wingate, old chap, pull yourself together—you seem to be in a day-dream. We've got to play, you know!"

"I—I know!" Wingate made an effort to pull himself together, realising that the game had to go on.

"Come on, old fellow!"

"Line up!" said Wingate.

He went mechanically to his place. What was he to do?

He could delay the second half a few minutes, perhaps, while he sent a message to Greyfriars—he could speak to the referee—

The whistle shrilled.

It was too late now, and Wingate had a guilty feeling that he had had half-intentionally left it too late. He did not want to send a message to Greyfriars about his brother.

After all, why should he?

The information was possibly, at least, a hoax—a cruel trick played by some enemy. Very likely Jack Wingate was playing football with the Third Form fags at that very minute. Very likely—at least possible. What would he have done, if this information had come regarding any other fag, not his brother? That was in actual fact the question to be answered; he was bound to treat Wingate minor, in a matter like this, exactly like any other fag.

A MAGNIFICENT NEW FOOTER SERIAL

A LEADER
OF THE
LEAGUE!

By SYDNEY HORLER.

Starts in this week's
"GEM."

Mind you read the opening chapters, boys!

What would he have done? He would have accepted Mr. Topham's offer of his telephone: he would have asked the Redclyffe master to ring up Mr. Twigg at Greyfriars, and leave the matter in his hands as the suspected fag's Form-master. But then, the information would not have come to him, in this unusual way, but for the fact that the offender was his brother. So there was no comparison. After all, he could see into the matter when the match was over—no Greyfriars captain would think of interrupting a first eleven match on account of the delinquences of a Third Form fag. If only that fag had not been his brother, trusted to his keeping.

"Look out, Wingate!"

"There's a Greyfriars man gone to sleep, standing up like a giddy horse," remarked a Redclyffe junior.

The game swept away from Wingate; he realised that he had forgotten where he was again, with the thought of his brother's offence, and possible disgrace, in his mind. Some of the Redclyffians laughed; the Greyfriars spectators stared, as the game swept away from Wingate, and he was left standing.

Wingate set his teeth, and pulled himself together. With grim determination he threw himself into the game again, determined that he would dismiss this new trouble from his mind, and play to win.

"Poor old Wingate!" murmured Harry Wharton. "He's had a shock! But he's bucking up again!"

"The buck-up-fulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as the Greyfriars captain led a hot attack on the home goal.

"Go it, Greyfriars!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah! Put her through!"

"Bravo, Wingate!"

"Goal, goal, goal!" yelled Bob Cherry frantically, tossing up his cap, careless

where it came down, or, indeed, whether it came down at all.

"Goal!"

"Well kicked, sir!"

"Good old Wingate!"

The ball was in the Redclyffe net, and Greyfriars had gained the lead. George Wingate was himself again.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Win for Wingate!

"THE playfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; and his comrades grinned.

The play was hard and fast, there was no doubt about that. Redclyffe were putting up a great fight; and, man for man, they seemed rather a more hefty crowd than the Greyfriars team; but Wingate, as Harry Wharton had remarked, was worth any two of them. But for that one little lapse after receiving the message from Mr. Topham, Wingate had been going strong all the time, and now he was going stronger than ever. Seldom or never had the Greyfriars fellows seen him in such splendid form.

A new thought had flashed into George Wingate's mind, and it had the effect of nerving him to play his best game. Suppose that message was a false one? Suppose it was intentionally sent by some enemy—such as Gerald Loder—timed to reach him during the progress of the match, for the purpose of putting him off his game—as in actual fact it had done for a time? If that was it—and it seemed likely enough, as he remembered Loder's bitter chagrin and resentment—then it should never succeed in its purpose. He was almost savagely resolved on that. True or false, he seemed to see Loder's hand in this—the

cunning hand of his old rival and enemy. The blackguard of the Sixth, left behind at Greyfriars, overflowing with bitterness and malice, would have been glad enough to hear that Wingate had failed to pull off a victory—that the team from which he was excluded had been beaten.

If that was it—and Wingate almost hoped that was it—the trick should come to nothing. Wingate drove every other thought from his mind now but the game, and he played up as he had seldom played before. Good man as he had always been at Soccer, he almost surprised his comrades now, and he quite surprised the Redclyffe men.

It was from a pass given by Wingate that Gwynne scored the third goal for Greyfriars, to a roar of delight from the Greyfriars fellows round the field.

"Good old Wingate!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Good old Gwynne! I say, these Sixth Form men ain't bad at Soccer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They seem to be getting on all right without any help from the Shell, Hobby, old man," chuckled Bob, smacking Hobson of the Shell on the back with a mighty smack.

"Yarrah!" roared Hobson. "Keep off, you dangerous maniac!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Redclyffe can't get through," said Harry Wharton. "I'm rather glad we came over to see this. It was worth it—what?"

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Look at old Potter—Potter of the Fifth," said Johnny Bull. "Never knew Potter was such a good man. See how he got the ball away from that Redclyffe man. There they go!"

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 925.



THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 246.

HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR

Week Ending Oct. 31st.



BOB CHERRY:

Paper-chasing is a great sport, a grand sport—the very thing for a nippy winter afternoon. I prefer being a hound to a hare. There's much more fun in tracking than in being tracked. Next Wednesday afternoon, we mean to round up the slackers of the Remove, and make them take part in a paper-chase. Won't they be pleased! Can't you just picture old Mauly's beaming smile when he hears what's in the wind?

ALONZO TODD:

The only paper-chasing I have ever done was at the sea-side during the summer holidays. I was sitting in a deck-chair on the beach, reading one of my Uncle Benjamin's newspaper articles, when a sudden gust of wind blew the paper out of my hands, and sent it whirling away like a leaf in an autumn gale. I promptly sprang to my feet and gave chase. In my zeal to recover my newspaper, however, I charged full-tilt into a deck-chair which was occupied by a pompous old colonel. He went sprawling on to the shingle; and although I hastened to apologise, he seemed most annoyed, and his language was most lurid.

LORD MAULEVERER:

If there's one thing I hate on this bustlin', bustlin' planet, it's racin' an' chasin'. A paper-chase is an abomination to me, begad! The mere thought of it makes me go hot an' cold by turns. An' they talk of compellin' me to take part in one next Wednesday afternoon. Oh dear! What have I done to deserve such a faggin' an' fatiguin' ordeal? I'm sure I shall never survive. Somewhere along the road a grease-spot will be discovered; an' clever johnnies with magnifyin' glasses will identify it as havin' once been Herbert Plantagenet Mauleverer!

WUN LUNG:

Me likee paper-chasee muchee nuchee. Little Chinee can dasher along the road like an express train, and the hounds can never catchee-catchee me. You savvy?

(No, you artful little beggar, we can never "catchee-catchee" you, because you always manage to put us on the wrong scent!—Ed.)

HORACE COKER:

I've no use for kindergarden games
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 925.

like paper-chasing. Give me my trusty motor-bike, to go zipping along the roads with, and I'm happy. Paper-chasing is a fags' game, pure and simple, and the Babes of the Remove are welcome to it. I prefer a more manly sport—(Such as strewing the hungry highway with the feathers of slaughtered fowls!—Ed.)

DICKY NUGENT:

I'm awfully fond of paper-chasing, but we don't call it that in the 3rd—we call it hair and hounds, which is the same thing only different. I'm an awfully good hair, and I always manage to throw my pursuers off the scent. I'm also a jolly good hound, with a nose like a bloodhound for following the trail.

(We always thought Master Richard was an ugly young inn; but fancy him admitting that he's got a nose like a bloodhound! Talk about "truth in advertising"!—Ed.)

THE JOY OF THE CHASE!

By DICK PENFOLD.

POUNDING down the highways,
In our light attire;
Bounding through the byways,
Boysish cheeks aflare,
Gay chaps, glad chaps,
Resolutely racing;
Merry chaps, madcaps,
Gaily paper-chasing!

Up the steepest mountain
Gladly we would go,
Passing stream and fountain,
With their gurgling flow,
Bonnie chaps, bright chaps,
Panting as we're pacing;
Verily the right chaps
To go a-paper-chasing!

On the far horizon
We can see the hares;
And we keep our eyes on
Those white forms of theirs.
Sturdy chaps, stout chaps,
They will need outpacing!
But we'll stick it out, chaps,
Keenly paper-chasing!

Oh, the glorious rapture
Of the thrilling hunt!
Soon we'll catch and capture
Those flying forms in front.
Puffed chaps, pale chaps,
They will start grimacing;
Follow on the trail, chaps,
Nimble paper-chasing!

Now they loom before us;
Now we seize our prey,
Chanting in a chorus,
"Collared them! Hooray!"
Tried chaps, trusty chaps,
Stern defeat they're facing;
Tired chaps, dusty chaps,
Spent with paper-chasing!

Homeward through the highways
Slowly we return;
Backward through the byways,
For our tea we yearn,
Whacked chaps, weary chaps,
Feeble steps retracing;
Fagged chaps, but cheery chaps—
Hurrah for paper-chasing!

EDITORIAL!

THE paper-chasing season is now in full swing, and we have decided to honour this noble schoolboy sport by giving it a special Supplement to itself.

One day last week I gave a "tea-fight" to the industrious members of the "Herald" staff. Everybody was present—the Editor, the Fighting Editor (Bob Cherry), the Sports Editor (Vernon Smith), the Art Editor (Frank Nugent), and the noble army of "subs." Others, who had no connection with our merry little journal, tried to squeeze in to the feast. Billy Bunter suddenly discovered that he was a prominent member of our editorial staff. Skinner appointed himself a sub-editor for the occasion, and Bobover major claimed that he had been our Fighting Editor all along. I'd never noticed it!

However, when we had dined and wine, we drew our chairs round the blazing fire, and had a confab on the subject of our next number. I remarked that the Sports Supplements seemed very popular, but I couldn't think of any sport which hadn't already been dealt with in our pages. "We've had cricket and footer," I said, "and golf, and tennis, and swimming, and indoor games. If any fellow can suggest a new subject, I'll give him—"

"What?" asked Bob Cherry eagerly.

"My blessing!" I said, laughing.

"Not good enough," said Bob. "I want something a bit more useful than a blessing—something I can spend at the tuckshop."

"All serene!" I said. "A half-crown will be paid from our funds for the first practical suggestion for a new sports number!"

"Hand over the half-crown, Wharton!" said Vernon Smith, holding out his hand.

"Not too fast, Smithy! You haven't earned it yet!"

"Yes, I have. My suggestion is that you publish a special number dealing with Paper-chasing. It's never been done before."

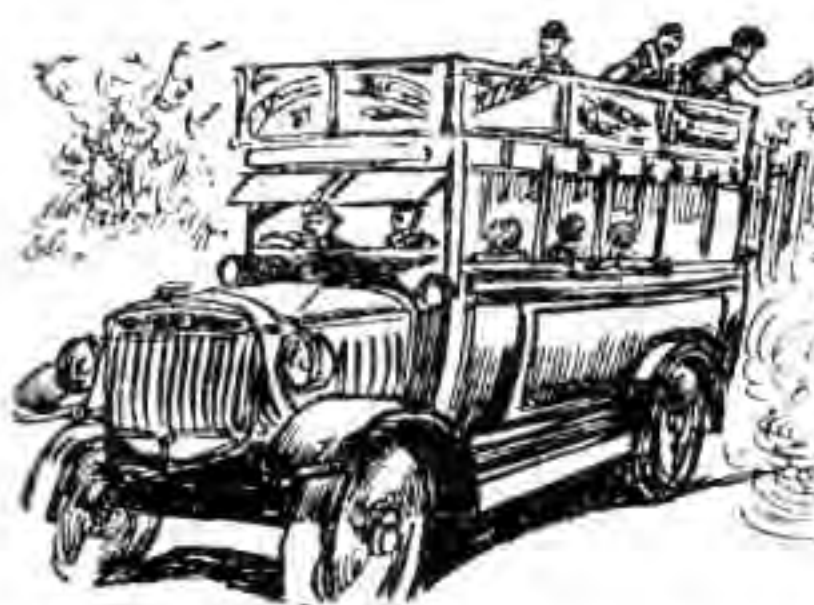
Smithy was quite right. We have dealt with nearly every subject under the sun, but somehow or other the joys of paper-chasing have been overlooked. I paid over the half-crown without demur; and then we put our heads together, and discussed the programme of articles for this issue.

Paper-chasing is a fine sport. It keeps you fit, and in the pink of condition; it thrills you while it lasts; and it gives you a tremendous appetite for tea. Billy Bunter tells me that he can work up a tremendous appetite without the artificial aid of paper-chasing, and I believe him!

If you want to catch the true spirit of the chase, let me refer you to Dick Penfold's rousing verses in this issue. Pen has written them out of his own personal experience of paper-chasing. He is one of our keenest "hounds," and he would cheerfully sacrifice even a footer match in favour of an afternoon's hare-hunting.

Of course, there are people at Greyfriars who hate paper-chasing like a plague. To Lord Mauleverer, a paper-chase is a penance. He couldn't shift his lazy bones across the ten miles of country if he tried. But to the vast majority of Greyfriars fellows paper-chasing will always be a joy and a delight.

HARRY WHARTON.



Mauly's Paper Chase!

By

MARK LINLEY.

An Amusing Story, Featuring the Slacker of the Greyfriars Remove.



I.

LORD MAULEVERER groaned. It was a deep groan, and it proceeded from the very depths of his being.

Mauly sat up on his study sofa, and blinked at Bob Cherry, and groaned again—a heartrending groan, which ought to have moved Bob to dire compassion. But it did nothing of the sort. Like Pharaoh of old, Bob hardened his heart. Those deep groans, instead of rousing his sympathy, made him give a snort of exasperation.

"Shake a leg, Mauly! You're coming on this paper-chase, whether you like it or not! And so is Skinner. You are two of the biggest slackers in the Form, and we're going to make you stir your lazy stumps this afternoon! You will be the hares. You'll start off right away, with bags of paper, and we shan't expect to see you for dust! You'll scatter the paper at intervals along your route, so that the hounds can follow the scent. See?"

Lord Mauleverer saw—only too plainly. He saw that he was in for a most strenuous and exhausting afternoon. Anything in the nature of physical exertion was gail and wormwood to his lordship, and a paper-chase was a particularly strenuous affair. Mauly had been looking forward to a long, long sleep on his sofa. He had, indeed, actually dropped off to sleep; but the boisterous Bob Cherry had rushed in, and dragged him rudely from the arms of Morpheus.

"Get a move on!" said Bob briskly. "Skinner's already changing into his running togs!"

His lordship groaned, long and deeply. Then he tottered to his feet with an effort, and drifted languidly out of the study. He ambled along the passage, and climbed the wide staircase leading to the Remove dormitory.

Skinner was in the dorm, changing. There was a dark scowl on Skinner's hatchet face.

"So they've collared you, Mauly?" he said, when his schoolfellow came in. "Awful nerve, isn't it, to force us to take part in this stunt? We're the hares, too. We shall have to nip along the roads like greased lightning—"

"Ow!"

"They're giving us twenty minutes' start, but you know what Wharton and his pals are. They can run like the very dickens! And Cherry says that if we get caught within a three-mile radius of Greyfriars, it will be proof that we've been dawdling, and we'll get a record humping."

"Oh dear!"

"We've got a happy afternoon in front of us!" said Skinner. "We shall feel like bits of chewed string by the time we get back! Fancy galloping for miles at top speed!"

Lord Mauleverer didn't fancy it at all. His groans, as he changed into running attire, were really distressing.

There was a pattering of feet on the stairs, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked into the dormitory, grinning.

"Back up, the hares!" said Wharton. "Are you ready?"

"Have a heart!" pleaded Lord Mauleverer. Wharton had a heart, undoubtedly, but it didn't melt for Lord Mauleverer's benefit. The hares were hustled out of the dormitory with their bags of paper, and they were advised to put as much distance as possible between themselves and Greyfriars in the next twenty minutes.

Lord Mauleverer and Skinner pattered down the stairs in their light shoes; and a moment later they were running down to the school gates, watched by a group of grinning juniors from the dormitory window. They ran through the gateway, and vanished down the lane, scattering paper in order to indicate which direction they had taken.

Both Skinner and Mauly had bellows to

ment before they had gone very far. But they dared not stop or slacken, for in about twenty minutes' time the hounds would be in hot pursuit of them. And if they were captured within a three-mile radius of the school, the consequences would be far from pleasant.

"Come on!" panted Skinner. "Put the pace on!"

Lord Mauleverer, puffing and blowing like a grampus, stumbled along in Skinner's wake. And as he flogged his way painfully along the hard road he found himself pining for some peaceful haven where the slackers ceased not from slacking and the weary were at rest.

II.

"How much farther?"

Bob Cherry panted out the question.

The "hounds"—there were half a dozen in all—halted at the foot of a steep hill and exchanged glances of dismay.

Things had not worked out according to their calculations. They had anticipated an easy task in tracking and capturing the hares. Indeed, they had expected to find Lord Mauleverer fast asleep beside a haystack about half a mile from Greyfriars.

But their reckoning was at fault now. They had followed the scent at a rattling pace for over five miles, and still the trail of paper lay ahead of them. They were beginning to feel "whacked," and the hill which loomed up before them looked far from inviting.

"I—I'm blessed if I can understand it!" gasped Wharton. "We ought to have overtaken the hares long before this."

"They're leading us a merry dance, and no mistake!" said Nugent. "They must have scorching along the road like a pair of giddy Nemeses! Fancy that horn-tired slacker, Mauly, getting as far as this—and goodness knows how far beyond! It—it's amazing! I should never have believed it if it wasn't for the scent. But they've shed paper at intervals all along the road, and the trail continues up this hill."

"A beast of a hill, too!" growled Johnny Bull. "And I've lost all my puff!"

"I also am panting at my last gasp!" muttered Hurree Singh.

"Well, it's no use hanging about!" grunted Wharton. "We're not going to be beaten by a pair of slackers like Mauly and Skinner! Come on!"

The hounds pressed on. They took the hill at a very steady jog-trot. They were tired and dusty and perplexed. The hares must have shown a remarkable and sustained

speed to get so far ahead, and exactly how far ahead they were was uncertain.

"Have you fellows noticed," said Bob Cherry, as he toiled up the hill, "that the hares have kept to the main road all the way from Greyfriars?"

"Yes," said Wharton. "Rather strange, isn't it? You'd have thought they would have struck out over the fields or turned into the woods. The silly asses! Fancy sticking to the main road all the time!"

"Burchester's only a couple of miles farther on," said Nugent.

Then he suddenly stopped short, as if struck with an idea.

"What's up, Franky?" inquired Wharton.

Nugent turned an excited face to his companions.

"I believe we've been spoofed!" he exclaimed. "Skinner and Mauly could never have run all this way. It's just occurred to me what they've done. There's a bus that runs every afternoon from Friardale to Burchester. I reckon they hopped on to it, and rode all the way, scattering their paper at intervals on the road."

"Oh, my hat!"

Nugent's explanation seemed very feasible. It was just the sort of trick that would have occurred to Skinner, and Lord Mauleverer would have been a willing party. A lift on the Burchester bus would certainly have saved the hares a great deal of weary foot-slogging.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"I believe Franky's right," he said. "Hallo! Here's the bus coming back! Keep your peepers open as it passes us. If those bouncers are on board—"

The bus came rumbling by, but there was no sign of Skinner and Mauly among the passengers.

"They're wise enough to go back by train, I expect," said Johnny Bull. "They knew we should meet the bus on the road."

The vehicle was not travelling very fast, and Wharton was able to rap out a question to the conductor.

"Did two fellows in running togs ride on your bus to Burchester?"

The conductor answered in the affirmative.

"Thanks!" said Wharton grimly.

And the hounds pushed on. Their feelings towards the fellows who had duped them were almost homicidal.

Half an hour later they reached Burchester, and came upon their quarry.

Mauly and Skinner were sitting down to afternoon tea in a cosy little restaurant in the High Street. They occupied a secluded table, but Bob Cherry's keen eye detected them, and the hounds swarmed into the restaurant.

"Oh, begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer, looking up with a start. "They've found us, Skinner! We shall be for it now!"

Skinner looked quite startled.

"They don't know that we came by bus," he muttered.

"Don't they, by Jove! Judgin' by their wrathful chivvies, they know everythin'! The game's up, dear man!"

It was impossible for Harry Wharton & Co. to administer a severe bumping in the restaurant. That, as they informed the quaking hares, was a pleasure to come. Meanwhile, the weary hounds sat down and had tea themselves, and ate it with hearty appetites. The appetites of Lord Mauleverer and Harold Skinner, however, seemed to have suddenly petered out.

When tea was over, the unfortunate hares were escorted down a quiet alley-way and given the bumping of their lives. After which the whole party returned to Greyfriars by train. And the hapless hares sat squirming and groaning in their carriage, feeling that life was not worth living.

THE END.

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Harry Wharton came upon their quarry sitting down to afternoon tea in a cosy little restaurant in the High Street. "Oh, begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer, as the hounds swarmed into the room.



(Continued from page 13.)

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

"Give us another, Wingate!"

But it was Potter of the Fifth who put the ball in, making four for Greyfriars. There was a roar. Wingate seemed to have infused his spirit into the whole team. Potter of the Fifth was playing the game of his life, and all the other fellows seemed at their very best. Redclyffe, fighting gamely, had a feeling of being overwhelmed.

"Good old Potter!"

"Bravo!"

"Goal, goal, goal!"

"We must carry this news to Coker!" chuckled Bob. "I heard Coker saying that Wingate was a born ass to play Potter and Greene, when he might have had Horace himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redclyffe had attacked hard again and again, but they did not get through. Tom North, in the Greyfriars goal, had little to do now. The game swept into the home half and stayed there. Indeed, but for the fact that the finish was at hand, there was no doubt that the visitors would have increased their score, good as it was already.

But the referee was looking at his watch, and the whistle went while the home goal was besieged.

"Four to one!" said Bob Cherry. "Three up for Greyfriars! Something like a win for us—what?"

"Hurrah!"

"Greyfriars wins! Bravo!"

The footballers came off the field, many of them looking done to the wide. It had been a gruelling game. George Wingate's face was flushed and his eyes bright.

Gwynne thumped him on the back.

"Good man!" he said. "Was it some jolly good news that that Redclyffe johnnie gave you? It seemed to buck you up in the second half, old scout."

"Oh, no!" said Wingate, and his face clouded.

"Well, you've played the game of your life," said Gwynne. "I was beginning to think Redclyffe were pulling it off, by gad! Never saw you play such a game."

"Well, we've won," said Wingate moodily. "Anybody who wanted to beat a licking for the eleven will be disappointed, at any rate."

Gwynne stared.

"Eh? Who could want that?" he asked. "Oh, I catch on! I suppose dear old Loder would have liked to see us come home with a licking to our credit: he's that sort."

"We've won without Loder, anyway," said Tom North, with a grin.

Wingate nodded, and went in to change. His face was gloomy and thoughtful again now. Now that the match was over he was free to think of the message Mr. Topham had given him. Back into his mind came the black trouble and doubt.

Where was his minor?

Harry Wharton & Co. were going for THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 925.

their bicycles, when Wharton heard his name called and looked round.

"Hallo! It's Wingate."

The Famous Five stopped at once for Wingate to come up.

"I noticed you kids here," said Wingate. "Weren't you playing a Form match at the school this afternoon?"

"We left it to the lesser lights, and came over to watch your game, Wingate," said Harry, with a smile. "It was only with the Third, you know."

"Had the match started when you left?"

"No, I think not."

"Can you tell me whether my minor was playing in Tubb's eleven?"

Wharton was silent.

"I want to know specially," said Wingate.

"Well, I—I think not," said Harry reluctantly.

"If you know, tell me plainly," said Wingate gruffly. "It's important, as it happens."

"Well, the kid told us he wasn't playing," said the captain of the Remove. "He had some trouble with Tubb, I think. And—and I saw the Third going down to Little Side, and Wingate minor wasn't with them."

"You mean, you're certain he wasn't playing in the Form match?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said Harry. "That's what I wanted to know. Thanks!"

Wingate turned away at once, leaving the Famous Five feeling very uncomfortable.

Wingate was not a fellow to wear his heart on his sleeve, or to allow his face to betray a trouble on his mind. But the juniors had seen plainly enough that he was troubled, all the same.

"That little rotter!" muttered Johnny Bull. "I've a jolly good mind to kick him when we get back to Greyfriars."

"He's in trouble again, of course!" said Harry. "Somebody seems to have seen him playing the goat, and telephoned here for Wingate. It's rather odd. Must have been somebody jolly officious, I should say."

"Fatheaded trick!" said Bob Cherry. "Why can't the little beast behave himself? He ought to have come over here with us, if he wasn't going to play for his Form. I think we'd better kick him."

"If he's out of bounds again he will get enough, without our chipping in," said Nugent. "Wingate's a prefect, you know. It's a rotten position for him. He can't leave his duty undone, because the young rotter happens to be his brother. My minor in the Second would turn my hair grey if I were a prefect."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Coker!"

"Chug, chug, chug, chug!"

Horace Coker had arrived.

The motor-bike was a going concern again. Coker of the Fifth had arrived now that the match was over.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Not Coker's Way!

"COKER!"

George Wingate hurried up to Coker of the Fifth, as he stood beside his motor-bike.

Coker was not looking his pleasantest. He had set out on his motor-bike to

beat the footballers' motor-coach on the run to Redclyffe. He had arrived when the match was over, and the Greyfriars footballers were preparing to depart. Coker, who had a tremendous opinion of himself as a motor-cyclist, was disappointed. And the sight of the five grinning faces of the juniors he had vainly chased on the road did not make him more amiable.

"Coker's got here alive!" Bob Cherry remarked. "Congratters, Coker, old man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky young sweeps——" Coker was beginning, as Wingate came up.

"Coker!" called out the Greyfriars captain.

Horace Coker turned his head independently. He always liked to make the fact clear that he didn't care twopenny for the Sixth.

"Hallo, Wingate! I hear you've pulled it off!" he said carelessly. "I rather expected to hear that you'd bagged a licking."

"Cheeky ass!" murmured Johnny Bull.

Wingate did not heed Coker's remark.

"Will you lend me your jigger?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"I've got to get back to Greyfriars in a hurry," explained Wingate. "I'd be no end obliged if you'd lend me your bike."

"Well, my hat!" said Coker.

"You can go back in the car with the team," said Wingate. "Will you do it, Coker? I'll take care of the jigger, of course!"

"Well, the fact is, I'm not jolly keen on obliging you, Wingate," said Coker coolly. "You refused me a place in the eleven!"

"What?"

"You left out the best man you'd got, and risked getting a licking here," said Coker. "That's rather serious!"

"Don't be a fool!"

"What?" roared Coker. He did not understand in the least that there was anything obtuse in his observations.

"I've no time now to listen to that rot," said Wingate angrily. "I tell you I'm in a hurry!"

"Well, you can go home in your jolly old charabanc!" said Coker sulkily.

"I'm in a hurry, and I can save half the distance on short cuts, on a motor-bike," said Wingate. "I suppose it's in good running order?"

"Not with Coker in the saddle!" murmured Bob Cherry. "It does buck-jumping stunts with Coker up."

And the juniors grinned.

"It's in topping order, of course," said Coker disdainfully. "Look at it! But I'm not lending this jigger!"

Wingate, without heeding that grim refusal, proceeded to make a hasty survey of the jigger. He knew more about motor-bikes than Horace Coker was likely to learn in three score years and ten.

Really, it was a first-class motor-bike. Coker's affectionate Aunt Judith stinted her beloved Horace in nothing, and when dear Horace had expressed a desire to possess a motor-bike, Aunt Judy's only thought had been to provide dear Horace with the very best that money could buy. But any machine would have jibbed occasionally in the hands of Horace Coker. He not only had a lot to learn, but ignored the fact that he had anything to learn at all.

"It's all right," said Wingate.

"Of course it is—top-hole!"

"Well, lend it to me, and go back in the car, Coker."

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"Can't be did!"
"Look here—"
"Rats!" said Coker independently.
Wingate gave him one grim look, and took him by the collar. In his anxiety about his brother, he was not likely to stand on ceremony with the egregious Coker.

Coker of the Fifth, greatly to his surprise, found himself sitting on the ground. He sat there hard.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.
Wingate started up the engine.
Coker staggered to his feet, red with wrath.

"You cheeky rotter!" he roared. "Do you think you can bag a chap's bike because you're a dashed Sixth Form man? I don't give a rap for the whole Sixth!"

"Stand clear!"
"Leave that jigger alone!" bawled Coker. "I tell you I'm not lending you that jigger! You cheeky ass!"

"This is where we chip in!" murmured Harry Wharton. "Collar that bawling ass. If Wingate hits him, he will be hurt!"

"Hands off that jigger! Leggo! Let go, you young rascals! Why, I'll smash you!" roared Coker, as he found himself writhing in the grasp of five grinning juniors.

"Take it easy, old man," chuckled Bob. "Wingate's in a hurry!"

"I'll smash you!"
"Sit down, old chap!"

Bump!
"Oh crumbs! I—I—I'll—" spluttered Coker.

"You were chasing us a while ago," shouted Johnny Bull. "Well, now you've caught us, Coker!"

"The catchfulness is terrific, my ridiculous Coker!"

"I—I—I—" spluttered Coker of the Fifth, struggling wildly.

Chug, chug, chug!

The motor-bike was going, with Wingate of the Sixth in the saddle. No doubt it was a little unceremonious to borrow Coker's petrol bike in this style. But Wingate had no time to waste on Horace Coker. There was no reason at all why Horace couldn't take a seat in the car with the footballers, excepting his lofty independence and his scorn of the Sixth. On this occasion Coker's lofty independence had rather a fall.

As he wriggled and writhed in the grasp of the Removites, he had the pleasure of seeing George Wingate vanish on the whizzing motor-bike, leaving behind only a cloud of dust and a smell of petrol.

"I—I'll smash him!" panted Coker. "I'll smash you! I'll—I'll smash the lot of you!"

"The smashfulness will be terrific, my esteemed chums! Sit on his ridiculous head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What the thump's all this?" demanded Potter of the Fifth, coming up with Greene.

"Draggemoff!" gurgled Coker. "Kick 'em off! That cheeky brute, Wingate, has bagged my bike—says he's in a hurry! Drag off these cheeky fags, do you hear? Smash 'em! Help! Can't you lend a fellow a hand, you gaping dummies?"

"Eh? What?" ejaculated Greene.

"Gaping dummies! Footling idiots!" howled Coker. "Don't I keep on telling you to drag 'em off? You can't play football, but you can handle a gang of cheeky fags, I suppose?"

"You put it so nicely, Coker!" chuckled Potter.

"Lend a hand, you dummy!" raved Coker.

Bump!

"Yarooooop!"

Leaving Horace Coker for dead, as it were, Harry Wharton & Co. scudded for their bicycles. Coker sat up in the dust.

"Ow! Wow! Groogh! Ow!"

"Let me give you a hand up, old man," said Potter genially. "You are always rowing with fags, Coker; but, dash it all, you shouldn't kick up a shindy here at Redclyffe."

"Keep it for Greyfriars," suggested Greene.

Coker staggered to his feet.

"I'll smash 'em! I've a jolly good mind to smash you, too! Where are those cheeky fags?"

Potter pointed along the road. A bunch of cyclists waved their hands to Coker in farewell and whizzed away.

"So Wingate's borrowed your stink-bike?" asked Greene.

"Yes—the cheeky rotter! I told him I wouldn't let him have it," gasped Coker. "Told me I could go home in the charabanc. Check!"

"Well, why couldn't you?" said Greene. "Wingate's been playing no end of a game for Greyfriars. We've beaten Redclyffe four to one, and Wingate bagged two of the goals."

"Blow Wingate! I'll jolly well lick him for this, captain or no captain! What are you sniggering at?"

Potter and Greene chuckled as they walked to the motor-coach. They did not think that Coker of the Fifth would have much luck if he began licking George Wingate. Coker followed them to the car.

"Hallo! Brought another passenger?" asked Gwynne. "I think I saw old Wingate going off on your stink-bike, Coker."

"Yes, the cheeky rotter!"

"What?" exclaimed Gwynne.

"I refused to lend it to him, and he told me to go home in the car! I told him I wouldn't!" gasped Coker, fairly thrilling with indignation. "And he collared the bike! Collared it!"

"You refused, did you?" said Gwynne.

"Yes, I jolly well did!"

"You didn't want a seat in the car?"

"No! I'll take it now, of course; I've got to get back."

"Get on, driver," said Gwynne coolly. "No 'of course' about it, Coker. You say you refused to lend Wingate your stink-bike, you cheeky ass! Well, I refuse to let you come home in the car—see? One good turn deserves another."

"I've got to get back, you fathead!"

"That's a little problem you can settle for yourself, Coker."

"Look here— Oh, my hat!"

Once more Horace Coker found himself sitting in the dust. The motor-coach



Jack Wingate went to the door, but there he turned and lingered. "George," he whispered, "you won't resign—I never dreamed—I'm sorry—sorry—George, isn't there anything I can do?" "Yes," replied the elder brother. "You can go to the Head and confess to him what a dingy little scoundrel you are. That will let me out!" The lag shivered. "I daren't!" he gasped. "Then get out of my study!" ordered George Wingate. "The sight of you makes me sick! Get out!" (See Chapter 12.)

rolled away for Greyfriars; and Horace Coker picked himself up and stood staring after it.

"My—my hat!" he gasped.

From the crowded charabanc grinning faces were turned on Coker. Even Potter and Greene were grinning. Coker shook an enraged fist after the vehicle as it went.

Then slowly and sadly Horace Coker started for the railway station. It was not Coker's lucky day.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Parting of the Ways!

GERALD LODER looked up, starting a little.

Loder was seated on the Sixth Form green at Greyfriars in a deck-chair, with a book open on his knees.

The afternoon was quite warm and sunny for the time of the year, and it was very pleasant sitting there on the Sixth Form green, under an old elm. Loder had been reading and yawning.

The title on the cover of Loder's book was "Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum." But that was only the cover. Inside the cover was hidden a yellow-backed novel dealing with the enthralling—to Loder—subject of horse-racing. But a prefect of the Sixth could not sit in the public view reading a racing novel at Greyfriars. Hence the camouflage of the cover borrowed from a classic volume of Quintus Horatius Flaccus.

But Loder forgot his racing novel as he heard the chug-chug-chug of a motor-bike in the distance, and saw Wingate of the Sixth hand over Coker's jigger to Cosling, the porter, and come striding up the path towards the House.

Loder had spent a boring afternoon.

He was left out of the football, his friends were away at Redclyffe, and even his shady resort of the Cross Keys was barred, owing to the fact that he had sent Jack Wingate there, and it was no part of his scheme to join the deluded fag.

He had not expected the footballers back yet awhile, and he had been yawning for some time over his novel on the Sixth Form green, after walking back from the post-office in Friardale. For it was, of course, Loder who had telephoned to Redclyffe, carefully refraining from giving his name.

What the outcome of his plot would be, Loder did not know, but he hoped for the worst.

That the message would disturb and trouble Wingate was certain; and Loder hoped from the bottom of his heart that it would put the captain of Greyfriars off his game. He would have given a great deal for the Greyfriars eleven to return defeated. It would be something in his favour if they were defeated as soon as he was dropped from the team. Apart from that advantage, his deep malice would have made him rejoice in the overthrow of the team that had turned him down. He even thought it possible that Wingate might throw over the match and return to Greyfriars, in his anxiety for his brother.

To that extent, he had evidently not succeeded. The afternoon wore away, and he saw nothing of Wingate. But he still hoped that the captain of Greyfriars, alarmed and anxious for his brother, was playing a losing game over at Redclyffe.

And afterwards—

Wingate could not refuse to act on the information he had received. Jack Wingate was still at the Cross Keys; Loder's

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sporting friends there were keeping him occupied. He would still be there when Wingate came back; and what could the head prefect of Greyfriars do? Once before Wingate minor had gone to that disreputable haunt, strictly out of bounds, and nothing had been said of it—in public, at least. Would Wingate dare to screen his minor a second time?

If he did, Loder had further measures to take. It had come to the Head's knowledge that the captain's minor was "pub-haunting," and that his brother, the head prefect of Greyfriars, was deliberately screening him in his wrong-doing.

Once up before the Head, questioned by Dr. Looker, Wingate was not the fellow to lie or shuffle; he could not if he would, as Loder very well knew. He would have to admit the truth.

There could be only one result. He would be turned out of his prefectship; his captaincy of the school would be cancelled. The Head would not allow a fellow he could not trust to keep that position; that was unthinkable.

Loder grinned with glee at that thought. It looked as if Wingate's downfall was coming at last.

On the other hand, Wingate might do his duty as a prefect—report his minor to the Head. That would be a lesser triumph; but it would be a triumph. He would share his brother's disgrace, and the wretched fag's punishment would be a heavy blow to him. And if it came out—as Loder intended that it should—that this was not the fag's first offence of the kind, it was quite on the cards that Wingate minor would be expelled from the school.

How would George Wingate hold up his head again at Greyfriars after that?

Howsoever the scheme turned out, it seemed to Loder that he was bound to score. The outcome depended on Wingate's course of action; but the result could only be a triumph for Loder. At the best, Wingate would be deprived of the captaincy; at the worst, his brother would be disgraced, and the shadow of his disgrace would fall on Wingate.

Loder was bored that long afternoon "on his own," but he had some very happy thoughts to keep him company!

Wingate came towards the House, Loder watching him with a covert grin. He was a little surprised to see the captain return without the team; but he guessed at once that Wingate had borrowed the motor-bike to save time—as soon as the match was over. That was a proof, so far, of the deep uneasiness the message to Redclyffe had caused the captain of Greyfriars.

As he came striding along, Wingate sighted Loder on the Sixth Form green, and paused. Then he came over to the plotting prefect.

Gerald Loder felt a tremor.

Did Wingate guess?

How could he guess? Loder had spoken on the telephone to a Redclyffe master—he had assumed a deep voice—he had not given any name; he had referred to himself as a resident in Friardale. Wingate could know nothing of his trickery.

Yet he felt a tremor as the captain of Greyfriars came towards him. A bad conscience was the cause. Under Wingate's clear, honest eyes, Loder always felt a little uneasy; that was one reason why he disliked the Greyfriars captain so intensely. Now he felt more uneasy than he had ever felt before.

But he succeeded in nodding calmly enough to Wingate. He would not give himself away, at least.

"You're back early," he said.

"Yes; I borrowed Coker's motor-bike."

"How did it go? The match, I mean."

"We beat them," said Wingate, with grim satisfaction, as he noted the dark look that Loder could not keep from his face. "Four goals to one."

"Oh!" said Loder. "You've had luck." He picked up his book again.

"Just a word before you begin reading," said Wingate quietly. "Have you seen anything of my minor this afternoon?"

"Your minor? Can't say I've noticed him."

"You can't tell me whether he's within gates?"

"I'm afraid not. The Third have been playing footer," said Loder. "I dare say he was in the game."

Wingate searched his face, but Loder's look was quite casual, and unconscious. The Greyfriars captain felt his vague suspicions melt away. After all, what reason had he to suppose that it was Loder who had sent the telephone message? Had it been false? Yes; but it looked as if it was true. And surely if it had been Loder who had seen Jack Wingate stealing into the public-house, he would have reported him to the Head—he would have been glad of a chance of disgracing the captain's minor.

"There's Tubb," added Loder carelessly. "I dare say he can tell you where your minor is."

Wingate nodded, and walked on. Loder grinned at him over his racing novel. Really, the fellow was so simple that it was scarcely worth the trouble of pulling the wool over his eyes. That was the thought in Loder's mind.

Near the House, Wingate stopped Tubb of the Third. Tubb was talking to Paget, telling him how they ought to have beaten the Remove this time, especially with Harry Wharton & Co. away. As a matter of fact, they hadn't beaten the Remove. Smithy and his merry men had walked all over the Third, in the style the Remove footballers were accustomed to.

"Tubb!"

"Yes, Wingate," said the fag, looking round.

"Did my minor play in your team?"

Tubb of the Third frowned.

"No! He stood out."

"Do you know where he is?"

"I think he's gone out of gates. I haven't seen him since the match," answered Tubb.

Wingate went on into the House. It did not take him long, making a few inquiries to ascertain that Wingate minor was out of gates, and had been out since early in the afternoon. From Billy Bunter, indeed, he learned just when Jack Wingate had started, and the direction in which he had gone. The Owl of the Remove, short-sighted as he was, saw more things that did not concern him than any other fellow at Greyfriars.

The captain of Greyfriars did not linger, after hearing from Bunter that his minor had gone towards Friardale some hours since. It was clear to him now that the telephone message to Redclyffe was well founded; he knew where the semaphores of the Third was. He realised that he had known it all the time—that in coming back to Greyfriars to make assurance doubly sure, he had been hoping against hope; hoping to learn that what he knew was true was false.

He went to his study, and sat on the edge of the table, for a few minutes, thinking.

There was no doubt now; and no

doubt about his duty. For the second time, having escaped after his first venture, Wingate minor was "punching"—if indeed it was only the second time. The head prefect of Greyfriars had to deal with the matter. It was not Jack Wingate's brother, but the school prefect, who was called upon to act.

Personally he need not have acted. He had only to step into Mr. Twigg's study, and place the matter in the hands of the master of the Third. But he did not think of doing so.

On the first occasion he had asked Gwynne to act. Gwynne had acted rather like a pal than a prefect; the offender had escaped. Wingate had not asked that—he had not expected it; but if he left the matter to Gwynne again, it would be a mere subterfuge to get his minor screened, and he knew it. Better to say nothing at all than to descend to that sort of trickery. If he was going to back up his brother in wrong-doing, no subterfuge would save his conscience. He had to deal with Wingate minor as with any other fag, or report him to someone in authority who would so deal with him. Or else he had to abandon his duty as a prefect, and betray the Head's trust in him.

That was George Wingate's choice, and it came as a shock to him to realise that he did not know how he would choose.

Had it been the wretched fag's first offence, he could have given him up to a flogging. It would have gone bitterly against the grain, but he could have done that. But it was the second offence—possibly the third, or fourth, or the tenth or twelfth, for all Wingate knew. One thing was certain, as soon as the matter came before the Head, the whole truth would be brought to light. And it was more probable than not that Jack Wingate would be sent away from Greyfriars.

Perhaps, from consideration for his youth, and for his brother's position in the school, the Head might spare him a public expulsion. But he would not allow him to remain, and so it came to the same thing. Wingate was not thinking of himself, but of his brother and the people at home.

He had his duty to do; and if he did it—It came miserably into his mind that he could not do it.

He left his study at last, and walked down to the gates. As he turned into the Friardale road, five juniors came whizzing along on their bicycles. Wingate did not even see them, so deeply was he buried in black thoughts; and Harry Wharton & Co. glanced after him and exchanged uneasy looks.

"Old Wingate looks fairly up against it," said Harry.

"He does—he do!" growled Bob Cherry. "And I jolly well know the reason. Let's get in and kick that young scallywag."

Wingate strode on down the lane.

When the chamberlain returned with the Greyfriars footballers, soon afterwards, they did not find Wingate in the school. Gwynne looked for him, but learned that he had gone out. And when Horace Coker, after his journey by train, tramped wrathfully in, he found his motor-bike; but Wingate was not there to hear the eloquent things Coker had intended to say to him.

A good many fellows wondered where Wingate was. There was a little celebration in Gwynne's study over the victory at Redcliffe, but the captain of Greyfriars did not appear there.

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 9.—Hurree Singh (of the Remove).



His full name and title is Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, which latter being interpreted means that "Inky" is an Indian prince of no small standing. At Greyfriars, however, he is regarded as just an ordinary schoolboy, except where his peculiar and original method of speech is concerned. According to Inky he was instructed in English by the finest teacher of our language in India, but as is apparent every time Inky opens his mouth, his tutor knew more about the English language than we shall ever know. For instance, Inky argues that we say "delightfully," "regretfully," etc. Then why shouldn't we say "chuck-outfully"? But, for all his queer expressions, Inky is generally voted a good sort. A fine sportsman and a particularly clever bowler of the "demon" variety, Hurree Singh is a power to be reckoned with on the playing fields. Is a prominent member of the Famous Five, and shares Study No. 13 in the Remove passage with Bob Cherry, Mark Lanley, and Wun Lung, the Chinese junior.

The captain of Greyfriars, as the duck fell, was standing under the shadow of a tree close by the Cross Keys—watching.

Wingate had no intention of repeating his former experience at the disreputable inn; of demanding his minor there, and being detained by a shindy with Mr. Cobb and his rowdy friends while the fag escaped by the back way. That had happened once; but it was not to happen again. He was watching—watching with a heavy heart and a clouded face, for the wretched scapegrace of the Third to come stealing cautiously out. And even while he watched, with a miserable certainty in his heavy heart, George Wingate found himself hoping that there was, after all, a mistake, and that he would not discover his minor out of bounds.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

JACK WINGATE peered out into the falling dusk.

From the half-open side door of the Cross Keys he peered into the muddy, dusky lane beside the inn.

"All clear, sir!" said Mr. Cobb, with a grin.

Jack Wingate had spent his afternoon

in the delectable establishment of Mr. Cobb. He had played billiards with the marker while waiting for Loder to come; but Loder had not come.

But the fag had hardly missed his sporting friend of the Sixth.

Two or three sporting gentlemen had made the time pass quite cheerily. They were friends of Gerald Loder's, and they were carrying out his wishes. And the scapegrace of the Third had played cards, and smoked cigarettes, and was feeling tired but greatly elated and excited. True, he had lost two or three pounds at the cards; but Loder had lent him the money, and Loder was not likely to dun him for it. So the loss did not trouble Wingate minor very much.

It was more than time to return to the school if he was not to excite suspicion by being late for call-over. But the fag was unwilling to go. He had to tear himself away from the charming circle, but he did so at last.

All seemed clear as he peered from the door into the dusky lane. He had only to get out. Once he was in the public road he was safe, and in the shadows under the trees there was safety.

Jack Wingate stepped out of the porch, and the door closed behind him.

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He hurried down the little muddy lane in deep shadow under the branches. Only a minute—

"Stop!"

A hand fell on his shoulder.

Wingate minor stopped, and trembled from head to foot. For the moment he did not recognise his brother's voice, it was so changed and husky. He was caught—caught!

Then he saw his brother, and panted with relief. It was not a master, it was not a prefect whom he needed to fear.

"George!" he muttered.

"Come with me, Jack!"

"You needn't grab my shoulder. I'm coming."

Wingate dropped his hand to his side, and the brothers walked together out into the road.

There Jack Wingate pained. There was something in his brother's face that startled him and made him vaguely uneasy.

"Come!" said the Sixth-Former.

"You're going to report me to the Head?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know!" repeated the fag blankly.

"No. Let's get back now. Come!"

The fag started down the road by his brother's side. Several times he stole uneasy glances at the Greyfriars captain's face, but Wingate did not look at him, and he said no word.

The wretched fag's uneasiness intensified. This was not the brother he knew. What was the matter with George?

In silence they walked on, and the school gates came in sight. Gosling was closing the gates.

Wingate walked in, and Jack followed him, a gathering dread in his breast. He was caught—fairly caught in the act by a Sixth Form prefect! If that prefect had not been his brother, he would have known what to expect. He knew that he would have been taken directly to the Head. Then a Head's flogging, or the "sack"—one or the other! But his brother would never—never—It came darkly into Jack Wingate's mind that he had overstepped the limit at last; that it was no longer his brother, patient and kind, that he had to deal with, but a Sixth Form prefect with his duty to do.

His knees knocked together at the thought. Loder had got him into this. He owed this disaster to his sporting friend in the Sixth. Would Loder stand by him and help him? He knew that Loder would not—could not. Loder's part in the transaction meant "bunking" for Loder if it came out. Only too clearly Jack Wingate realised that even if he told of Loder's participation in his wretched escapade the blackguard of the Sixth would not admit the truth—he dared not. Loder would deny every word of it—the fag knew it. Not that he was thinking of betraying Loder. The betrayal of the sporting senior would not save him; but even had he desired to make Loder share in his disaster, he could not have done so. Gerald Loder knew how to take care of himself.

They entered the House.

Wingate minor turned an almost haggard look of appeal on his brother. The nearness, the terrible imminence of his danger, had taken all the impudence out of the wretched fag now.

"Not to the Head, George?" he breathed.

Wingate did not answer, but he led the fag to his own study in the Sixth Form passage. Jack Wingate almost

sobbed with relief. There was still a chance, then!

Gwynne of the Sixth looked out of his study doorway.

"Oh, here you are, Wingate! Come in! We want you, old bean!"

"Later, old fellow," said Wingate dully. "I've got to talk to my minor now."

Jack Wingate followed his brother into the captain's study. Wingate put on the light and closed the door.

Then he stood looking at the scared fag. There was a long minute of silence.

"You—you've spotted me," said Jack Wingate at last. "I—I'm sorry. I've been rather a fool. How did you know?"

"Some Friarish man saw you go in and gave the tip."

"Meddling ass!" muttered the fag.

"I think I should have guessed," said Wingate. "You disobeyed the order I gave you, as head of the games, to play in the Third eleven."

"You shouldn't have interfered." The fag was recovering his old cheeky manner a little. Wingate had brought him here instead of taking him in front of the Head. What could that mean, except that it was to be another "sermon," and escape?

"You've been most of the afternoon at that rotten show?"

"Some hours."

"You know what I'm bound to do, as a prefect," said Wingate.

The fag's newly-found confidence faded away again.

"You won't!" he breathed. "It—it might be the sack! If it comes out that I've been there before—and it will—why, it's the sack! I should be sent home—"

"Didn't you take that risk?"

"I—I never expected to be spotted. How was I to know that a meddling fool would give me away?" breathed the fag. "What did you want to come there for?"

"I had to come, or report you to your Form master. Would you have preferred to find Mr. Twigg waiting for you there?"

Jack Wingate shivered.

"You're not going to report me to the Head, George! I—I'll be more careful—I'll promise—" His voice rose shrilly. "George, don't look like that! I'm your brother! You can't get your brother kicked out of the school—you can't let me be sent home! What am I to say to father—and—and—mother, George?"

"Do you think I haven't thought of that?"

The fag breathed quickly.

"Then you'll let me off! Let me off this time, and—and—for mercy's sake say what you're going to do!"

Wingate did not speak for a moment. His face was pale when he did speak at last.

"I'm not going to report you," he said slowly. "I'm going to betray my trust—I'm going to screen you. I'm going to act like a rotter to save my brother from what he deserves. I'm bound in honour, in common decency, to treat you as I should treat any other fag of the Third Form caught at the same rotten game—and I'm not going to do it! As a prefect, as captain of the school, I'm bound to do it. So there's only one resource—I've got to resign!"

Wingate minor stared at him.

"Resign from the captaincy!" breathed the fag.

"Either that, or take you to the Head!" said Wingate quietly. "As an

ordinary member of the Sixth Form, I'm not bound to report you. As a prefect and captain, I've got no choice. You've had your way, Jack—you've played the blackguard. And that's what it costs me. Now go!"

The fag went to the door, but there he turned and lingered. George Wingate had gone to the window, and stood staring out into the dusk of the quad. The wretched fag's heart smote him as he noted the droop in the Greyfriars captain's usually erect head.

"George!" he whispered.

Wingate did not look at him.

"You won't do that—I never dreamed—I'm sorry—sorry! George, isn't there anything I can do?"

Then Wingate looked round, with a bitter look.

"Yes. You can go to the Head, and confess to him what a dingy little scoundrel you are. That will let me out."

The fag shivered.

"I daren't."

"I know that! Get out of my study! The sight of you makes me sick. Get out!"

With a white face, the fag crept out of the study.

Wingate of the Sixth was left alone—alone with his bitter thoughts. He had taken the only way—the only path that was open to a fellow who was not utterly dishonourable. If he remained a prefect, if he remained captain of the school, he was bound to do justice with an even hand. And he was going to be silent—he was going to save his minor. He could save him at the cost of his honour and self-respect, or at the cost of his position in the school.

With such a choice before him, a fellow like George Wingate was not likely to hesitate. That evening his resignation would be placed in Dr. Locke's hands. He had made up his mind to it; but the blow was a heavy one.

Loder of the Sixth had wondered exactly what the outcome of his scheming would be. Whatever the outcome, it meant advantage for him. He was assured of that. But certainly he had not anticipated so complete, so overwhelming a triumph as this. He could scarcely believe his ears when he heard the news. Without an effort on his part, success had fallen into his hands like a ripe apple. Wingate had resigned!

The news spread like wildfire through Greyfriars School! George Wingate was no longer captain of Greyfriars—no longer even a prefect! It was incredible—fellows refused to believe it—Gerald Loder scarcely dared to believe it.

But it was true!

Only Loder of the Sixth surmised, and one wretched fag in the Third Form knew, the reason. They kept their own counsel—and George Wingate kept his! Even to his protesting friends in the Sixth he gave no explanation—he had none to give. And they had to accept the fact that he was no longer captain of Greyfriars, and had no intention of altering his decision, or standing for re-election. The way was open, at last, for Loder of the Sixth to realise his old ambition; and in his mind's eye the black sheep of Greyfriars already saw himself captain of the school.

THE END.

(Now that the way is open for Loder to "bag" the captaincy, how long will his "friendship" for Wingate minor last? Mind you read "The Captain's Election"—next week's fine Greyfriars story.)

...ORCA ...CRAIG ...YN'S BAY, ...GLETERRE! These broken words doubtless convey little to you, but to Ferrers Locke they mean the ultimate rounding up of the gang working behind—



A full-of-thrills detective story featuring Ferrers Locke, the private investigator, and his clever boy assistant, Jack Drake.

Forced to Descend!

THE faint report that had echoed out from the sky, prior to the brilliant illumination it heralded, was not passed unnoticed by the young airman, Harry Dimsdale. To a man who had faced death scores of times over the Boche lines, such a sound was not without its significance. Something unforeseen was about to happen, and his safest plan was at once to alter his course.

Like a flash he had thrust the joystick forward, and at the same instant jamming his foot on the rudder bar, the light craft dipped her nose and swerved on one side, the result being that even as the brilliant light flashed athwart the sky, instead of still ascending, the aeroplane had dropped to a much lower altitude and was banking away from instead of towards the tower.

Well was it for Harry Dimsdale and his companion that he had acted with such promptitude, for, caught in the outer rays of that great white glare, some unseen force struck them, causing every vein in their bodies to tingle. If they had been in the direct line of what was undoubtedly a powerful wave of electricity, it would have at once and for ever terminated their careers. As it was, the effect was bad enough, for with a jerk that threatened to snap it from the shaft, the propeller stopped dead.

"Jammed!" was all the young airman could shout, frantically wrenching at the throttle as like a stone they dived towards the earth. Another moment, and the seemingly inevitable crash would have taken place, when, apparently removed from the malign influence that had stayed their course, the propeller again commenced to revolve. And even as the landing-carriage brushed the stunted shrubs over which it hovered, by a masterful manipulation the nose of the machine was brought upwards, the throttle was opened to its fullest extent, and the occupants again found themselves rising, as the light that had revealed them to their enemies faded away.

"Fifteen hundred feet!" Dimsdale jerked out, glancing at the altimeter faintly shown up by a spot light. "We

can't keep this going much longer, Locke," he added, as the engine began to hum an uneven note. "The jerk when they jammed our engines has loosened something. Any safe landing-place round here?"

Despite the thrilling experience he had been through, the great detective had not lost his bearings, so that it was with the utmost confidence that he replied: "Straight ahead. If we can

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous private detective of Baker Street.

JACK DRAKE, his clever boy assistant.

INSPECTOR PYECROFT, a leading light of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard.

"THE CHIEF," a mysterious personage, who directs the coups of the Phantom Bat, the name given to the weird, inhuman-looking object, capable of flying like an aeroplane, about which, so far, very little is known by Scotland Yard.

HUSKY and the **SNARK**, two prominent members of the Chief's gang.

HARRY DIMSDALE, a friend of Ferrers Locke, who has invented an aeroplane that is noiseless in flight.

With every fresh appearance of the mysterious Bat comes news of a daring robbery. Ferrers Locke, who has taken the case in hand, is convinced that the headquarters of the gang known to be working behind the Bat is somewhere in the direction of the Chiltern Hills. The detective enlists the help of Dimsdale, who, with his noiseless aeroplane, sets out on the trail, and is later joined by Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake. The detective's plan is to visit all the likely houses in the vicinity of Chesham for news of the Bat gang, and to that end the sleuth and his two colleagues adopt a gipsy disguise and travel around the countryside in caravans.

Ferrers Locke has cause to believe that a certain house is the headquarters of the gang, and at once decides that Dimsdale shall, with the aid of his noiseless machine, fly him over the house and land him on the roof. The plan is put into practice, but the gang in league with the Bat get wind of the detective's intentions. As the aeroplane leaves the ground the sky is illumined by a brilliant white light, and simultaneous with its appearance comes a faint report. Little does Ferrers Locke, aboard the aeroplane, know that from the house he intends to visit destructive forces have been let loose sufficient to send him and Dimsdale to a fearful death.

(Now read on.)

only clear this hilly ground and the lake beyond, it will be easy, for there's a long stretch of rolling downs farther on."

A nod was the only response, for Harry Dimsdale had all his work cut out to keep the aeroplane in flight.

Like a dim shadow the wooded heights they were crossing passed beneath, and then, as a pale moon burst from behind a bank of clouds, it glittered coldly on the broad stretch of water the criminologist had mentioned.

Then that which he had so vainly tried to avert happened. There was a loud snap, a spasmodic jerk, and the nose of the aeroplane was pointing earthwards. A fraction of a second it remained thus poised. Then, with quivering wings and screaming rigging-wires, the machine plunged down and down till, striking the surface of the placid lake with a report that reverberated far around, it sent a great column of water hurtling into the air.

Well was it then for Ferrers Locke that, having anticipated but a short passage, he had not strapped himself in his seat; for with that presence of mind that under the most nerve-racking circumstances never deserted him, he dived clear of the machine when yet some fifteen feet from the water.

Encumbered though he was with boots and clothing, to a swimmer of his experience it was but child's play to strike again to the surface. A glance round showed him the derelict plane some twenty yards off.

A few vigorous strokes with one arm brought the detective alongside. With his disengaged hand he succeeded in wrenching from his pocket and opening a stout clasp-knife, then taking a long breath he allowed himself to sink.

Guiding himself more by instinct than anything else, Locke, after several futile attempts, clutched at something he knew to be his comrade's arm, and then the keen knife he carried came into play, as, groping around, he discovered the strap that was holding the man to his doom.

A swift stroke and this was severed, and then, though feeling as though his lungs were ready to burst, Locke, still

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retaining his grip on the arm, struck out vigorously.

It needed a tremendous effort to draw the dead weight behind him as he forged his way upwards. Then, as his face rose above the surface of the water, a great gasp of life-giving air gave him renewed strength and enabled him to hitch his disengaged arm around one of the plane struts.

The strain, even on his tried muscles, was beginning to tell, making them feel as though ready to crack, but still he clung on. Inch by inch the motionless form was raised higher, till, by superhuman and what seemed to him an almost final effort Locke succeeded in dragging the young airman on to a portion of the wing that remained above water just as a shrill cry, in a voice that he knew well, echoed out from the distant shore.

The Clue of the Coat!

FERRERS LOCKE had not been mistaken, although it seemed impossible that the lad, whom he had left outside the grounds of the half-ruined mansion, could have gained the shores of the lake. The shout, nevertheless, that had arrested his attention had indeed proceeded from the lips of Jack Drake.

Like his companions, the unexpected light that had appeared in the sky had caused him considerable uneasiness. He felt sure that it was the prelude to some unexpected attack on his beloved master, a suspicion which the sudden change of the plane's course fully confirmed. Its erratic flight almost instantly afterwards assured him that, whatever the nature of the crook's design against the occupants of the craft, it had to a certain extent succeeded.

"Great Scott!" he jerked out hoarsely as his sharp eyes detected the uncertain manner in which the machine was flying. "She'll crash! Come on!"

Without a wasted second the lad tore

off down the lane in the wake of the aeroplane. His one thought was to be as near as possible to his chief when the inevitable happened.

No less anxious than himself, Pyecroft and Tom, the caravan driver, started to follow in his steps.

Far out-distancing his companions, Jack noted that Dimsdale was striking a course that, running at right angles from the lane he was then in, practically carried him over a broad road that led to the distant, wooded hills.

"Oh, heavens!" the lad groaned. "If only I'd got my motor-bike! Ah, gee whizz! What's this?"

On suddenly rounding the bend in the lane he almost dashed into a large closed car, drawn up under a clump of trees. A car that, although the headlights were out, had, nevertheless, its engine running. Who owned it, or how it came to be there, Drake did not pause to think. Come what would, he would commandeer it, as with its aid he could follow the aeroplane that was so rapidly forging ahead.

With a bound he was alongside, only to find himself gripped by the arm and flung on his back by someone who had unexpectedly emerged from the surrounding gloom.

To attempt to offer explanations Jack knew would be worse than useless, but he was going to borrow that car if fifty men stood in his way; so that without a second's hesitation he landed out with his left, the contact of his knuckles against flesh assuring him that his blow had got home.

A savage oath burst from the fellow's lips, and, loosening his hold, he staggered back, giving Jack the opportunity he was longing for. A second drive with his right thudded against the unknown's ribs, then, with a spring, Jack was in the driving-seat of the car, his fingers feverishly searching for the gears.

Roaring like an enraged bull, the chauffeur, on recovering his balance, sprang after him. But he was too late:

Then a stab of flame pierced the darkness, followed by a sharp crack, and a bullet whizzed past Drake's ears and smashed the wind-screen to fragments. Another second and Jack was beyond range, as, letting her all out, he tore over the road ahead of him like a whirlwind.

Jack had worked many a stunt on his master's great white racing car, but possibly none so daring as the one he was then attempting, flying through the gloom with but the occasional light from the stars to guide him.

With a rush and a roar the tree-bordered slope, above which he caught a glimpse of the vanishing aeroplane, was passed, and then, as he emerged into the open stretch that led down to the slopes of the lake, his heart leaped into his mouth as he witnessed the plane, like a stricken bird, plunge earthwards.

Still, he might be in time to be of some use, and heedless of everything, he raced the car down the sloping road. A big jolt almost flung him from his seat as the car struck some unexpected object, then, skidding on one side, the off-side wheels plunged into a ditch, and remained jammed there.

To leap clear and again dash onward was but the work of a moment, and it was on gaining the very edge of the water that the shout that had caught the detective's ears escaped Jack's lips. A whoop of delight escaped Drake's lips as he espied a small boat, hitched lightly round a sapling at the water's edge. It was but a cockleshell sort of craft at the best, but at that moment to the anxious lad it was worth its weight in gold.

Leaping in, he tore the painter clear, then, seizing one of the sculls, thrust it over the stern, and with a practised sweep was soon urging the light craft towards the derelict plane.

Once alongside, Jack was overjoyed to find that his beloved chief was not only alive, but apparently unhurt, though not a little dismayed when Ferrers Locke, in a few brief words, acquainted him as to his doubts concerning the airman.

"We must get him ashore as quick as we can, my lad!" panted the detective. "Bring the boat round! Now, bear a hand! Steady—"

It was by no means an easy task to get the unconscious man into the little craft without submerging it, but at length it was done.

"And now you, guv'nor?" Jack cried.

"Scull for all you're worth!" came the sharp order. "I'm not so done in that I can't swim!"

As he spoke, Locke, slipping from his support, struck out with a powerful breast-stroke.

Bending his back to it, Jack sent the light skiff flying over the water, to heave a sigh of relief as her keel grounded on the sandy beach. Here help was awaiting him, for not only had Locke scrambled ashore almost at the same instant, but Tom, who had followed hard on the youngster's track, had already gained the spot.

Without a moment's delay Harry Dimsdale was stretched on his face on some soft, yielding turf, and then, with the criminologist superintending, each in turn took on the arduous task of attempting to restore animation, in which, after somewhat prolonged efforts, they proved successful.

"And now if we'd only got some coats or things to wrap round him," Locke jerked out, "we could row him across to where those lights are twinkling on the other side, for there's bound to be a house of some sort."

"Wraps!" jerked out Inspector Pyecroft, who had just joined the group.



With that presence of mind that under the most nerve-racking circumstances never deserted him, Ferrers Locke dived clear of the machine before it nose-dived into the water. (See Page 21.)

"Say, Jack, there's sure to be something of that sort in the car you left in the ditch."

"Car!" Ferrers Locke cried in amazement.

"Yes, gov'nor. Hadn't time to explain. A car I borrowed, but she's no good for us now. Nose-dived into a ditch. A broken axle, I think. But it's a good idea about the rugs. I've got my torch, and if there are any rugs there you'll have them in a jiffy."

Without waiting for a reply the lad passed off.

In a very few moments he was back, bearing in his arms not only an overcoat, but a fur rug, in which the airman was instantly swathed. And then, after placing him in the charge of Inspector Pyecroft and Tom, to be ferried across the lake, Ferrers Locke, accompanied by Jack, started off to tramp round the edge of the lake to the distant house.

The walk proved a longer one than either had anticipated, but the time passed swiftly enough, the criminologist, in answer to the lad's eager questions, explaining how the engine of the aeroplane had undoubtedly been fouled by a wireless wave of considerable force, and Jack, in his turn, narrated how he came to find the car that had brought him to the shore of the lake in the nick of time.

"And have you formed any theory as to the owner of the car which you found in such an unlikely spot?" asked Locke.

"As to that, gov'nor, I've hardly had time to think about it," came the reply.

"But, now you ask me, putting two and two together, I'd bet my boots it's owned by the crook who's got his headquarters there, for, after what's happened to-night, there can be little doubt on that point—eh?"

"No, I don't think you're far wrong. Though at the moment we've not any absolute proof," said Locke. "The star-shell, or whatever it was that was used to show us up, might have been fired from any spot within a radius of a mile, and as for the wave of electricity that nearly settled us, there's no saying where that was directed from."

"Anyhow, there's one thing, gov'nor. I took good stock of the car, in case I should ever come across it again."

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"I'm afraid in this case, my lad, it was a waste of time," he said, not unkindly; "for if I'm any judge of the man we're up against, he knows who it was who borrowed it, and he'll provide against such a contingency by scrapping it—that is, providing, of course, that the car belongs to the gang. However, here's the house we've been making for, and you bet I shan't be sorry to get my clothes dried."

Entering what proved to be a cottage, the wanderers were most hospitably received by the occupants, an aged dame and her spouse, who had been prepared for their arrival by Inspector Pyecroft.

After instant inquiries about Dimsdale, who, he learned, had been wrapped in warm blankets, and had dropped into a deep sleep, Ferrers Locke set about making himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit. He was soon arrayed in a suit of borrowed garments many sizes too large for him, whilst the good wife of the house bundled his dripping clothes off to be dried.

Then, having settled down to a hearty meal of bread and cheese and cold bacon, which was all their host could provide them with, the conversation naturally turned on the exciting events of the past few hours.



"We must get him ashore as quickly as we can, my lad!" panted the detective. "Bring the boat round. Now bear a hand—steady—" It was by no means an easy task to get the unconscious airman into the little craft without submerging it, but at length it was done. (See Page 22.)

"Had a look at the things Jack took from the car?" Locke asked the inspector, as, leaning back, he lighted a pipe with tobacco Pyecroft kindly supplied.

"You bet!" came the quick response.

"And did they tell you anything?"

"Tell me anything!" Pyecroft growled. "No fear, except that they cost a lot of money. Look here, Locke, the owner of these things is so darned cute that he's even had the tailor's tab removed from the coat, in case of accidents, I suppose. You can see under the collar where the stitches have been."

"And nothing in the pockets?"

"Nothing, except a handkerchief unmarked, and a silver cigarette-case with a few Turkish fags."

"Got them with you?"

"Yes; here they are!"

The inspector produced the articles he had described, and, leaning back in his chair, watched his companion closely as he narrowly examined them.

"Humph!" Locke grunted, as he laid them down. "Certainly not much of a story here. That the coat, Jack?" And he pointed to a garment laid over the back of a chair.

"Yes, gov'nor."

"Hand it over!"

This request was instantly complied with. The coat was spread out on the table, and Locke proceeded to examine it thoroughly.

As Pyecroft had stated, it was an expensive garment made from the finest cloth, and lined throughout with good silk. And, turning it over and over, Locke's hands strayed into the pockets—the inside breast one being almost instantly turned inside out.

"Thought so," he jerked out. "At some time the owner of the coat has had something with a keen edge in this pocket, which has cut through the lining. See, here's where it's been

mended!" And his long fingers rested on a darn that would have been passed unnoticed by ten out of twelve people.

"Nothing very extraordinary about that," said Pyecroft, inwardly annoyed that he had overlooked the fact, trivial though he deemed it.

"Didn't say there was, my dear fellow," Locke responded, with a smile; "but, anyhow, before it was mended it allowed something to drop through, for I take it that you overlooked the fact that there is a little bulge at the corner of the coat just against the seam. May be only a little fluff that's accumulated," he added, as he noticed his companion's crestfallen look. "However, it's worth investigation. Lend me your penknife, Jack."

The lad having handed over the knife, the criminologist with the utmost care proceeded to cut the stitches that secured the cloth to the silk lining, which being done, he drew forth first a white metal button, then a broken and bent cigarette, and, lastly, a fragment of paper, evidently a portion of an envelope.

Jack Drake, who had been watching his chief's every movement, uttered an ejaculation of surprise as the button was laid on the table.

"Why, hang it all, gov'nor," he cried, "that's a button off a District Messenger's tunic!"

"Not much doubt about that, my lad."

"And we know that the man who sent you the poisoned letter was the one who borrowed a District Messenger boy's uniform from the costumer's in Westminster."

"Exactly."

"Which proves that the owner of the coat, even if he isn't the actual man who addressed both the letter to you and the postcard to the costumer, is in
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close touch with whoever did," the lad rattled on.

"Very fair piece of deduction," the criminologist smiled.

"And if that's the case," Jack continued excitedly, "as the coat was found down here, the man's here as well."

"Was here, more likely," Locke corrected. "For I should say in all probability he's miles away by this time. But let's see what we can glean from these other scraps."

"Similar cigarette to those in the case," he mused, as he fingered the little roll of tobacco. "Good brand; smoke them myself sometimes. And now, what's here?"

He carefully smoothed out the remains of the envelope, and regarded it steadily for several minutes in silence; whilst Pyecroft, who had risen from his seat, came and peered over his shoulder.

"Posted in France," the police-officer at length remarked dryly; "and, if any other proof was wanting, the remains of the last word, 'g-l-a-t-e-r-r-e' is undoubtedly a portion of the word 'Angleterre.' But what puzzles me to a certain extent is the peculiar termination of the addressee's name, 'o-r-c-a.'"

"O-r-c-a, Orca," Jack repeated; then, with a start, laid his hand on his chief's shoulder. "Jumping stars, guv'nor— But, no, it cannot be!"

"Couldn't be what?"

"Why, Majoreca—Count Majoreca."

"And why not?" Locke demanded, swinging round, whilst Inspector Pyecroft gasped in surprise.

"Why not? It's true the man reported to the Yard that he'd been a victim of the Phantom Bat. But all along I've had my suspicions as to his alleged collection of cameos—suspicions that were considerably increased when our friend here was drawn off on a false scent by faked finger-prints."

The police inspector winced.

"Anyhow," the criminologist went on, "it's a clue that's well worth investigation. Whoever the man may be, we know that his name terminates with 'o-r-c-a.' Now, on the next line, we find 'r-a-i-g'; this, surely, would be 'Craig,' a Scotch word, possibly referring to the name of a house such as Moss-craig, whilst, with the exception of Angleterre, the final address, so far as we can see is 'yn's Bay,' and if that fits in with anything else than Tobyn's

Bay, I'll—well, I'll devote my energies in future to selling matches," he added, with a laugh.

"Then the next move?" Jack queried.

"Next move? Back to Baker Street to-morrow morning, and then on to Tobyn's Bay."

"I'll get you, old man," he went on, turning to Pyecroft, "to keep an eye on things down here for a bit, for one never knows what may turn up. And you, Tom, you'll have to see about fishing the aeroplane out of the lake. Although Dimsdale won't be fit for much to-morrow, he'll be quite equal to giving you instructions. And now I think we'd better tumble in for an hour or two, for Jack and I, anyhow, have a long journey before us."

A Grim Warning!

A DRIZZLING rain was falling as the Baker Street detective and his young assistant stepped on to the wind-swept platform at Tobyn's Bay the next day, and glanced around.

Apparently they were the only passengers to alight at that dismal spot, and they had to wait whilst the aged individual who acted in the capacity of station-master, booking-clerk, and porter all rolled into one, had seen the train clear away, before he hobbled up to take their tickets, and unlock the gate that would allow them to pass into the road.

"Yus. There were the Crooked Bullet, 'bout a mile an' a 'alf down the road, where, m'be, old Jim Scroggs 'ould find 'em a bed," the official informed Locke, in response to his inquiry as to an inn.

Finding that the chance of obtaining a conveyance was worse than useless, the detective and the lad, picking up their suit-cases, started on their uninviting tramp, with the roar of the distant sea breaking against the rugged cliffs surrounding the bay ringing in their ears.

A brief interview with a high official of the G.P.O. in the morning had, by means of a service wife despatched to the local postmaster at Tobyn's Bay, elicited the fact that some miles from the beaten track there still stood an old house known as Alane Craig.

Armed with this information, the criminologist had at once started for

that lonely spot, intent on following up the clue he had obtained from the torn envelope. That there were many difficulties facing him, he was forced to admit; but to Ferrers Locke difficulties to be overcome only acted as a spur, giving him even a keener zest to bring the case to a successful conclusion than ever.

It wasn't long before the welcome shelter of the Crooked Bullet was gained, and there, in the seclusion of a private room, the criminologist at once secured a homely—if substantial—supper. After the meal, at Locke's invitation, mine host joined him in an after-supper pipe.

With the tact of which he was a past-master Ferrers Locke led the conversation round to the object of his visit, viz., to learn all he could about Alane Craig.

"Been closed for close on six months now, ever since the old chap left," the ruddy-faced landlord informed him. "Rummy old chap he were, too," he added as an afterthought.

"Rummy old chap? In what way?" Locke inquired casually.

"Bit up the pole, sir, in my way of thinking. He never talked much, but when he did it were all about volts and metres, an'—oh, law, I forget half the gimcrack words! But somehow he'd got his head full of this new wireless stunt, for he cracked on that when he'd fixed up some invention or other, he'd—let's see, what did he say?—revolutionise the world! That's it. I recollect those words very well now."

"And so he's left Alane Craig? Ever hear why?"

"Bless you, no. I reckon he got sick of tinkering about, and chucked the job. No, all I knows is that his man come along one morning and told us the old chap had paid him off, an' gone away."

"Old man?" Jack suddenly interpolated, glancing up.

"Old! Yes, for sure. The count were bent with age, an' his hair, what he'd got, was as white as snow."

Ferrers Locke and his assistant shot a quick glance at each other.

Here was news they had not expected to hear. That the title used, "Count," only agreed with what they had surmised from the torn portion of the envelope that had fallen into their hands, was one thing. Yet, on the other hand, the description of the person bearing the title did not by any means fit in with that of the individual each had in his mind's eye.

Puffing out a cloud of smoke, the investigator casually remarked:

"You mentioned the title 'Count' just now. Was the old man really entitled to such a handle to his name, or was it just a nickname he'd got in the village?"

"Law bless you, no! He was a live count right enough. Though his name was a bit awkward to remember, always reminded me of majolica jugs."

"Majoreca?" Locke suggested.

"Yes; sure that was it—Majoreca."

"Rather strange for the old man to leave so suddenly, wasn't it?" the criminologist went on. "What sort of man was this—er—assistant of his?"

"Can't say I took kindly to him. Didn't like the look of his eyes—seemed something shifty about them. And then his sallow face and smooth black hair always reminded me of—well, one of the villains one sees on the stage. You know the sort?" the proprietor of the inn explained with a laugh.

"You bet!" laughed Locke. Then, feeling that he had pumped the

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Locke was about to speak when the aged man, with a strength that seemed incredible to one of his appearance, seized one of the chairs and swung it aloft. "Back!" he cried in a cracked voice. "Back! You're another of those who would try to steal my secret!" (See page 26.)

landlord to the fullest extent, Ferrers Locke, simulating a yawn, expressed the wish to be provided with his candle, so that he could get to bed, and a few minutes later he and Jack, having turned the key in the lock of the double-bedded room they had secured, were left to themselves.

"Rum yarn, that, about this white-haired count, isn't it?" Jack queried, as he flung himself on the edge of his bed.

"One that I'm not altogether surprised to hear," Locke answered; "and there's another point. The date on which this count was supposed to have left his house on the cliffs coincides with that on which the man we have known as Count Majorca suddenly appeared in Society."

"Right enough, gov'nor, and as he'd got plenty of oof, and was very free with it, Society was content to take him for what he professed to be, without asking questions."

"Exactly, my lad. But we're going to dig into this a little farther—and to-night."

"To-night?" the lad echoed, in surprise.

"Yes; why not? We're strangers here, and would be instantly noticed by anyone we came across if we started prowling round Alane Craig by daylight. So we'll give the inmates here a chance of getting into their beauty sleep, and then be off!"

Having blown out the candle, as if they had retired to rest, the detective and his assistant waited silently in the dark, till the clang of the clock in the village church assured them that half an hour had passed, when, cautiously rising, Ferrers Locke opened the window of their sleeping chamber.

The rain had ceased, and the light from a faint moon enabled him to see

that the descent from the window was a matter of comparative ease, so that signing Jack to follow, he clambered through, and a few seconds later dropped noiselessly to the road below.

Once outside the building, a swinging stride soon brought Locke and his assistant beyond the confines of the village, when turning to the left, they followed a narrow path leading to the very edge of the sea-girt cliffs.

That they would have any difficulty in locating the building they were bound for neither anticipated, for they had already learned that Alane Craig, which had at one time been the residence of an adherent of the ill-fated Charles Stuart, was perched on the extreme edge of the cliffs, some three-quarters of a mile away.

"Guess that's the show, gov'nor," Jack suggested, in guarded tones, as, rounding a clump of boulders, a gaunt-looking structure silhouetted against the sky came into view.

"Certain to be," his chief agreed. "Got here sooner than I thought we should, and now, as there appears to be a fairly high wall surrounding it, we'll bear a bit to the left, and see if we can find an entrance."

This required very little search, for almost immediately on approaching the outer wall, a narrow door, that stood partially open, loomed in sight.

Needless to say, little time was lost in taking advantage of this unexpected opportunity, and passing through, the companions found themselves in what had once been a well-ordered garden, but one which had been allowed to run to decay.

Pausing for a second before advancing, Locke glanced around, then, with a soft "Hist!" rested his hand on Jack's shoulder, for wafted on the night air came a sound, heard even above the

thud of the breakers below—a sound that both of them instantly recognised: the unmistakable sound of a motor-car engine. A grinding noise as of wheels biting into gravel, a whir that gradually faded into silence, and then once again all was still.

"What could it mean?" each silently asked himself. "Who could have visited that presumably deserted house at that hour of the night, and for what reason?"

Ferrers Locke was the first to break the silence.

"Pity we weren't here a few moments earlier!" he snapped. "Then we might have got a glimpse of this visitor. Anyhow, it can't be helped, so the best thing to do is to get along to the other side of the building, for that's evidently where this car started from."

And as he spoke he strode forward.

Skirting the side of the dismal-looking structure, they found, on turning the corner, that they had gained the main entrance, which was approached by an imposing flight of steps.

Jack had just opened his lips to make a remark, when, to his intense astonishment, his chief, darting forward, snatched up something from amidst the weeds, and returning, exhibited to the youth the still-glowing end of a cigarette. Passing the stump backwards and forwards beneath his nostrils, he inhaled the fumes.

"Looks very much as though our friend who owns the overcoat that brought us down here has also been paying a flying visit," he remarked, as, pinching off the burning end, he placed the stump of cigarette in his pocket.

"You don't mean?" Jack stammered.

"Seems very much like it, for I don't suppose there are a dozen people in London who smoke this particular blend

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of Turkish, which is the same as those Pyecraft found in the silver case taken from the pocket of the overcoat."

"Then what on earth can be the reason? What can he have been after?" Ferrers Locke laughed shortly.

"That I hope we shall find out before we leave. Anyhow, our first job is to get in; and we sha'n't do that if we stop here."

Turning without further comment, the detective mounted the steps, where, with the aid of his electric-torch, he examined the lock that secured the door.

"Nothing difficult about this," he at length remarked. "Why, the veriest novice of a crackman could pick it with a bent wire."

Producing a bunch of skeleton-keys from his pocket, the investigator inserted one in the keyhole, and after the second attempt the wards of the lock clicked back, and the door opened inwards, to be softly closed as soon as Jack had followed him across the threshold.

Here they paused to listen intently, but not a sound rewarded them for their patience, so that switching on his electric-torch, the criminologist glanced around.

That the house had been occupied by a man of affluent means was evident at a glance at the surroundings, though the dust with which everything was coated considerably marred the beauty of both hangings and furniture alike.

Turning his attention to the oaken flooring, Locke, to his inward satisfaction, soon found traces of recent foot-marks, and following them up, found they led to a large, carved settle, apparently let into the wall, and there terminated.

"This is where we stop for a bit," he whispered, as he flashed his lamp over the heavy piece of furniture.

"Then you think it shifts—eh, guv'nor?" Jack queried.

"Think? Well, the late visitor would hardly have crossed the hall, and left his finger-marks all over this piece of oak, just for the pleasure of doing so," the detective replied, in a slightly irritable tone. "Ah! I think I've got it. Looks as though this was where he seized hold of it to drag it aside; and now for the spring or bolt that holds it."

Possibly there was not another man in the United Kingdom more conversant with the manner adopted by our forefathers in disguising the entrances to their secret chambers or passages than Ferrers Locke; so that it is not surprising that in a very few moments he had mastered the difficulty.

An apparently firmly fixed piece of carving being moved on one side permitted a heavy bolt to drop, and then with perfect ease the massive settle was drawn outwards, revealing behind it a flight of steep, wooden stairs that led downwards.

Without a word, Locke commenced to descend, closely followed by Jack, their progress being stayed after some twenty steps by finding themselves in a brick-built, vaulted passage, straight before them.

This was duly traversed for some twelve or fourteen yards, when they were again compelled to halt, for facing them was a heavy door, firmly secured by a couple of stout beams thrust into sockets on either side.

"Lucky the bars are on our side,"

Jack grinned, "or we'd never have got through."

"They'd certainly have wanted some breaking down," his chief agreed, "whilst now all we've got to do is to lift them out!"

Suiting his actions to his words, he removed the bars one by one, and placed them aside. Uncertain as to the nature of the reception he might meet with on the other side, the detective drew his automatic from his pocket, and, standing ready for any eventuality, signed to Jack to open the door.

Flashing his light around, it was to discover that beyond the door lay a small vaulted cell-like chamber, the furniture consisting of a couple of chairs, a rough table, on which rested the remains of a meagre meal, and a long bench against the wall, littered with sheets of paper, compasses, phials, and strangely-shaped pieces of metal.

One searching glance, and Locke had taken in all these details, and then as his light was swerved round to the farther corner of the room, he gave a sharp intake of breath, for struggling to his feet from a pile of rugs or blankets stretched on the stone flooring, was a white-haired, decrepit-looking man.

"Gosh!" Jack blurted out. "The old chap who they said had left the house!"

Striding into the room, Locke was about to speak, when the aged man, with a strength that seemed incredible to one of his appearance, seized one of the chairs and swung it aloft.

"Back!" he cried in a cracked voice. "Back! You're another of those who would try to steal my secret."

Then with a sudden change, he let the chair fall with a clatter and he clucked.

"No matter—no matter! You won't find it amongst my papers. It's here—here!" And the old man tapped his forehead significantly as he spoke.

It required all the great criminologist's tact to assure the aged prisoner, whose mind was evidently partially deranged, that he came as a friend, and not as an enemy, and then it was only with the utmost difficulty that he was able to piece together, from the man's rambling and disjointed sentences, the causes that had led to his imprisonment in that underground chamber.

Briefly, the man's statements amounted to an assertion that he was Count Majorca, who had spent the best portion of his life, and immense sums of money, in perfecting a system which, by means of electrical waves, inanimate objects could be propelled through space. The only person living, with any knowledge of the count's successes having been a man named Varnaz, who from the very first had acted as his assistant.

Then the old man explained that there came the time when this Varnaz, having drugged his employer, conveyed him to that underground room, the existence of which was known only to themselves; how he had left him as a prisoner, taking with him all his employer's drawings and working models.

"And yet this man Varnaz visits you occasionally. Was he not here to-night?" Locke hazarded, as the aged prisoner paused.

"Yes, he comes at times and leaves a supply of food. Ah, he would murder me, but for one thing," the occupant of the cell whispered hoarsely.

"And that?" Locke asked.

"That he wishes to learn more. He

knows there are other things I can do. But they are here—here!"

Again the aged inmate feebly tapped his forehead, then evidently worn out, with conflicting emotions, pressed his hand across his brow and sank back.

For several moments Ferrers Locke and his assistant gazed at each other in mute astonishment, Jack at last blurted out:

"Well, I'm hanged! I couldn't follow all the old chap said, for it was all such a jumble; but it looks to me as though this man Varnaz has not only pinched the old chap's invention, but his name as well, and is—is—"

"Known to outsiders as Count Majorca," Locke said dryly. "On that point I've very little doubt, my lad. Of course, we could easily have him roped in, in connection with this matter, but that would utterly ruin our chance of connecting him with the Phantom Bat outrages, and recovering not only the Epstein Emeralds, but the Star of Golconda."

"Then what are we going to do with the old chap?" the lad asked, indicating the count, who had fallen into a state of coma undoubtedly brought on by sheer exhaustion.

"For his own safety," said Locke thoughtfully, "it would be best for him to remain a prisoner for a few hours longer. If we were to let him have his liberty in his enfeebled state of mind and body, there is no knowing what might happen to him, and at the same time it is essential that the discovery we have made to-night should be kept perfectly secret."

"Then you're going to leave him here?" Jack asked in wide-eyed astonishment.

"Yes; and before he can realise our intentions. At all costs we must return to the inn before our absence has been discovered. Then before breakfast you can run over to Vyemouth. It's only a few miles from here, and see Dr. Salter; he's an old chum of mine, whom I can trust implicitly. He'll arrange to have the count removed to a nursing-home till—well, anyhow, for a few days. And now, come on, my lad—we've got to get a move on."

Moving as silently as possible, the companions quitted the underground chamber, and with equal silence the door was closed and the bars refixed. Then with as little loss of time as possible, the hall was regained, the oak settle replaced in position, and, securing the front door after them, Locke and Jack Drake hurried back to the village.

To clamber up to their bed-room window, which had been purposely left open, proved an easy task, and the room once gained, the criminologist sat down to write a long letter to his friend, Dr. Salter, fully explaining matters, and asking him to at once accompany Jack to Alane Craig without a moment's delay.

Then flinging themselves down, fully dressed as they were, each tried to snatch a few hours' sleep.

The rest the investigators had allowed themselves was of the very briefest duration, for scarcely was the household astir than Jack Drake, after borrowing a push-bike, the only vehicle he could procure, from the proprietor of the inn, started off on his errand to the doctor at Vyemouth, Ferrers Locke giving him some final instructions just before riding off.

Scarcely, however, had the lad vanished from view round a bend of

the road, than a cloud of dust coming from the opposite direction announced the approach of a motor vehicle.

With an inward feeling of apprehension, Locke watched the oncoming vehicle, which was approaching at a rapid rate. Apprehension that was not decreased when, as it pulled up with spasmodic jerks, amidst a swirl of dust, the portly form of Inspector Pyecroft could be seen seated inside.

"Jolly glad I struck against you straight away, Locke," the police official shouted as he bundled out. "Have been travelling all night. Would have wired you, only couldn't get through to such a hole-in-the-ditch sort of place as this; and—"

"What's wrong?" broke in Locke impatiently.

"What's wrong?" the inspector snorted. "Bout the sticky limit, that's what I call it. Why, man alive, Dimsdale started from the cottage yesterday afternoon to go down to the lake to superintend the salvage of his plane, and—and—well, he's never been seen since."

"Not seen?"

"No. Vanished clean off the map without leaving a trace."

"Impossible."

"I tell you it's not impossible," the inspector retorted, with some warmth. "He's gone. But there, look at this." And drawing a folded paper from his pocket, Pyecroft almost thrust it into his companion's hand.

Glancing at the paper handed him, Ferrers Locke unfolded it with great deliberation, then whistled softly between his teeth as he mastered the contents, which, typewritten and without any heading, read:

"To Ferrers Locke.—Your friend is in my power. If you would save his life, abandon all attempts to interfere with my movements for the space of one month, and he will then be set at liberty unharmed—otherwise— But there, to a man of your ability, I need not say more.

"THE PHANTOM BAT."

"I tell you what it is," Pyecroft said, resting his finger on Ferrers Locke's arm. "Whoever managed to lay their hands on Dimsdale took him for you."

"For me?"

"Sure thing, to my way of thinking. You know you scurried off to London in the old suit you had borrowed—as your togs weren't dry?"

"Well?"

"Owing to the soaking it had had, Dimsdale's leather jacket was so stiff that he couldn't get into it, and as the old lady had got your things fixed up nicely by the time he was fit to go out, he just rigged himself up in them, and—and— Wait a moment," added the inspector hastily, as Locke was about to speak. "This is my view, and I think you'll agree. In the dark Dimsdale was pounced on, chloroformed most likely, and carried off for you; and now, his captor finding out the mistake, is turning it to the best advantage he can."

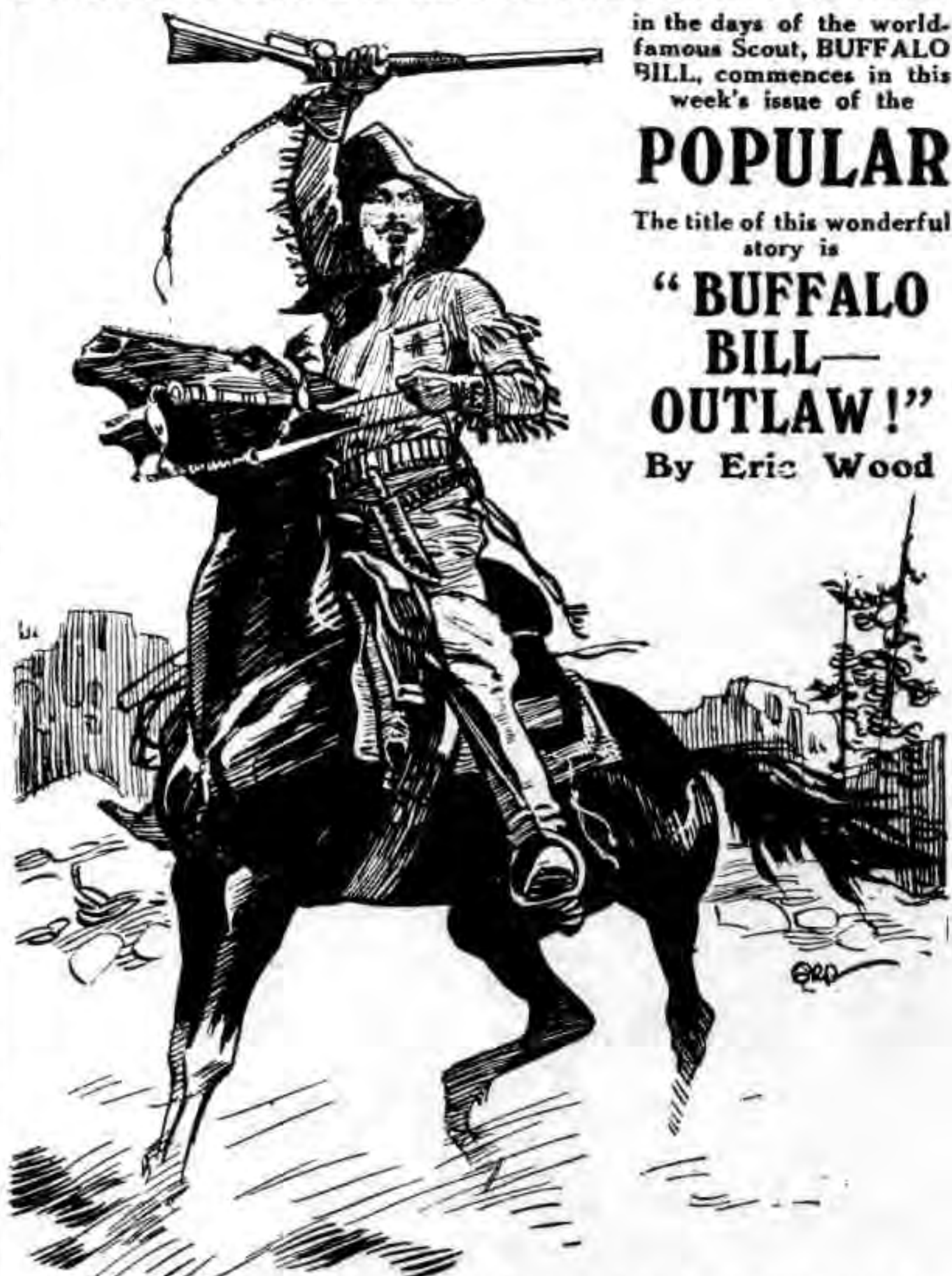
"There certainly is something in the idea," Locke agreed. "But whether mistaken for myself or no, we must get Dimsdale out of their hands at once."

"And be mighty careful how we set about it."

"Granted; for our friend is not one to stick at trifles, as I discovered last night."

"You've discovered—Great Scott, what?"

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"For one thing, who the man is. But I'll let you know all about that as we get back to town, for this news you've brought down won't permit of a moment's delay." Then, glancing at his watch, the detective added: "There's a fast up-train in five-and-twenty minutes; we'll catch that. You can arrange with your chauffeur to bring the car back, and I'll leave a note for Jack telling him to follow on as quickly as possible."

Darting indoors, the Baker Street detective hastily scribbled a note to his young assistant, whilst Pyecroft explained the situation to the driver of the car. So that within the space of a few moments Locke and Pyecroft were both tramping towards the station.

This was gained just as the early morning newspaper train rattled through, and as soon as the only official had received the bundle of daily papers that had been flung out, Locke purchased a selection.

Opening the first—an illustrated daily—Locke started back with an exclamation of surprise, for in bold type at the head of the first page he had caught the

startling words: "Remarkable Photo of the Phantom Bat!" Whilst beneath was a somewhat misty representation of the weird object shown up against a bank of light clouds.

Then once again Locke started, as he gazed more earnestly at the print. Surely the form of the mysterious visitant was different from when he had encountered it? Could it be a patch of cloud? In an instant a powerful magnifying-glass was snatched from his pocket.

"By Jove, Pyecroft," he cried at length, "look at this! It looks as though the Bat was carrying something, and—and it's horribly indistinct, but it's not unlike a human form."

"Dimsdale!" the inspector shouted. "By thunder, old man, that explains how he vanished without leaving any trail that could be followed! For that's Dimsdale right enough!"

(Don't miss the concluding chapters of this amazing mystery story, which appear in next Monday's MAGNET. Order your copy now, chums.)

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