

"THE CAPTAIN'S ELECTION!" This Week's Splendid
Story of Greyfriars School.

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Week Ending November 7th, 1925.

The Magnet 2^d

Library EVERY MONDAY.

Complete School Stories.



TROUBLE TO COME FOR HARRY WHARTON & CO.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF RAGGING A PREFECT!

(An amazing incident from the long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., 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.

"THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR!"

THE opening chapters of our amazing new detective story start in next week's bumper issue of this paper. Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake are, of course, the central figures, and the mystery they set out to solve carries you along on a tide of thrilling expectancy as you follow its weird passage bit by bit. Imagine a footer field of modern times with all its attendant noises. Then picture a fine old Manor house of a bygone period complete with moat and drawbridge. There seems little connection between these two things and yet they prove the starting point of the world's biggest mystery. And the unravelling of that mystery is given exclusively to Magnetites. I'm saying no more at this stage. My job is to arouse your interest for this coming treat—the author will keep it keenly alive until the end. Look out, then, next week, for the start of

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MYSTERY!

HORSES!

A Magnetite who is very fond of horses writes and tells me that he has just been badly bitten by a strange

horse. Don't run away with the idea that the horse was hungry and went looking round for something to clamp his jaws on. Nothing of the kind. The horse in question is quite an ordinary specimen of the equestrian variety. My reader chum approached it in a friendly spirit and attempted to pat its neck. That sounds harmless enough, doesn't it. But there's a way to do these things. It is very inadvisable to approach a horse from the flank and attempt to pat it unless the creature knows you well. If you want to make friends with a horse it is far safer to stand in front of its head and stroke it. Don't startle it by appearing as if from nowhere. After all, we humans don't like to be startled like that. True, we don't bite, but we often say nasty things when we are startled. But to return to the horse. Don't jerk your arm up suddenly and attempt to stroke it. Take your time about it, and if you are inclined to be nervous, fix your eyes upon the eyes of the horse. If you see the "whites" of the animal's eyes take warning and keep clear, for that sign indicates the streak of viciousness. So many people get bitten through trying to give a horse something to eat. The correct way to hand a horse anything

eatable is to extend the palm of the hand below the mouth of the horse, keeping the thumb as flat as possible. The horse then "licks" the dainty from the palm and doesn't bite for the simple reason that it can't.

Next Monday's Programme.

"THE WHIP HAND!"

By Frank Richards.

Now that Gerald Loder has attained his ambition of being captain of Greyfriars the sparks begin to fly. Loder is a born tyrant and he shows himself in his true guise in this coming story. But even a tyrant gets a hiding or two, and Loder certainly gets one from a fellow—who shall for the moment be nameless—that he is likely to remember for all time. Don't miss this grand story, chums!

"THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR!"

The first instalment of this wonder-serial appears in next week's *Magnet*, and if you fellows don't like it—well, I'll eat my best Sunday hat!

"GYMNASTIC" SUPPLEMENT!

Harry Wharton & Co. of the "Herald" have devoted their energies to a "gymnastic" supplement and they have scored a bullseye. Look out for it!

"CECIL REGINALD."

Our Portrait Gallery is "honoured" next week by a picture of Cecil Reginald Temple, the dandy and captain of the Upper Fourth. Add it to your set, boys!

Your Editor.

THESE TWO NEW NUMBERS OF THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY—

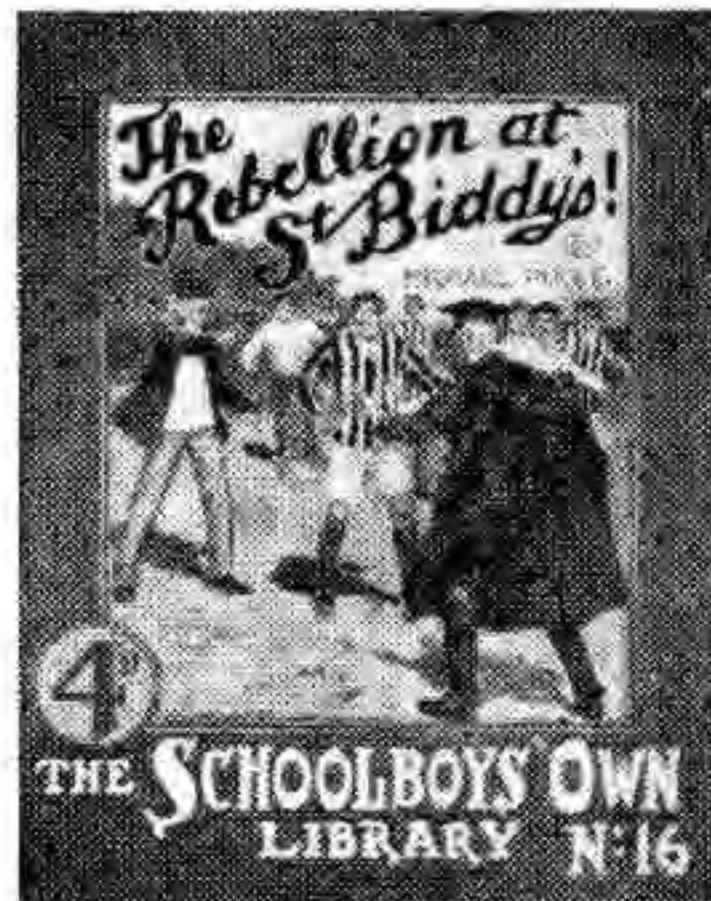


A magnificent new story of Harry Wharton & Co., describing their thrilling fight for the Public Schools' Football Cup.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A rollicking yarn of school life at St. Biddy's, introducing "Giglamps," the schoolboy scientist.

By MICHAEL POOLE.



—ON SALE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6th. ORDER NOW!

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING! When Gerald Loder ceases to play the bully, when the high and heavy-handed prefect becomes an ordinary human being, Greyfriars sits up and rubs its eyes, so to speak. Yet there's a reason for this sudden change in Gerald Loder, and it is supplied in —



A Magnificent, New, Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars School, describing Gerald Loder's bid for the coveted position of Captain of the School. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Loder Asks For It!

"YOU do the talking, Wharton!"
"I say, you fellows, better leave it to me."

"Shut up, Bunter."

"But, I say—"

"Cheese it!" roared Bob Cherry.
"Now then, are you fellows all ready? Quick march!"

"Go it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Not too much row," said Harry Wharton. "Remember we're going into the giddy quarters of the Sixth."

"Blow the Sixth!" said Bolsover major independently.

"Who are the Sixth, anyhow?" inquired Billy Bunter, valorously prepared to defy the whole Sixth Form of Greyfriars so long as there was no Sixth-Former at hand. "Who cares for the Sixth?"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Silence! Order! March!"

There was no silence, there was little order, but the Remove fellows marched.

Nearly all the Remove were there.

Evidently it was a great occasion—an episode of great importance in the history of Greyfriars School.

At the head of the column was Harry Wharton, captain of the Remove. After him came his faithful followers, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, Johnny Bull. Bolsover major came next, shoving smaller fellows ruthlessly out of the way to make room for his important self. Billy Bunter rolled along with the Famous Five—though on his merits, as the least important member of the Form, he was only entitled to bring up the tail of the column.

Squiff and Tom Brown, Peter Todd and Dutton, Hazeldene and Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith and Redwing, all had good places. After them came the smaller fry. Even Lord Mauleverer had

exerted himself to join in this demonstration. Even Skinner and Snoop had turned up, Skinner wearing his usual sneering expression, but not desiring to be left out. Hardly a Remove man was absent.

It was unusual, if not unprecedented, for a crowd of Lower Fourth fellows to march into the Sixth Form passage. But Harry Wharton & Co. had important business on hand.

Matters had reached, in the opinion of the heroes of the Remove, a serious crisis. And the Remove were going to express their opinion on these matters.

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!

Three or four Sixth Form men looked out of their study doorways as they heard that unaccustomed sound in the passage that was sacred to their lofty selves.

Gwynne of the Sixth grinned, North shrugged his shoulders, Walker scowled. Loder of the Sixth came out of his study with an ashplant in his hand. Loder, the bully of the Sixth, was bound to interfere.

"Stop this!" he shouted.

Loder planted himself directly in the way of the advancing juniors. The column had to halt, or else walk over Loder.

"Halt!" bawled Bob Cherry.

The column swayed to a rather disorderly halt. Fellows shoved into one another and trod on one another's feet. The foremost Removites had stopped, and the hindmost were still advancing, which led to some confusion. It was as with the Tuscans of old, when those behind cried "Forward!" and those before cried "Back!"

Loder was a Sixth Form prefect and had to be regarded. Not that Harry Wharton & Co. intended to allow even Gerald Loder, with all his prefectorial authority, to turn them back. But they were willing to reason with Loder, if he was amenable to sweet reasonableness.

"You cheeky young sweeps!" exclaimed Loder indignantly. "What the

diemens do you mean by swarming into the Sixth Form passage like this?"

"We're coming to see Wingate!" said Harry Wharton mildly.

"Good old Wingate!" roared the Removites at once.

"Hurrah!"

"Stop that row!" shouted Loder furiously.

The Removites were disinclined to stop that row. They rather liked making a row, and at the present moment they were enthusiastic. Enthusiasm in the Greyfriars Remove was generally expressed audibly—very audibly. On the present occasion the Remove's enthusiasm could have been heard as far as the Head's study.

"Hurrah! Three cheers for Wingate!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hip! Hip! Hurrah!"

"Good old Wingate!"

Every fellow in the Remove knew that Gerald Loder was the rival of Wingate of the Sixth, late captain of Greyfriars. Every fellow knew, or guessed, that Loder hoped to capture the captaincy which George Wingate had unaccountably resigned. That knowledge caused them to cheer with more vociferation than ever. They wanted the bully of the Sixth to learn what they thought of him in comparison with Wingate.

Loder's teeth were set with anger. He gripped his ashplant and looked powerfully inclined to rush on the mob of shouting juniors, laying it right and left.

"Silence!" called out Harry Wharton. "That's enough, you fellows! Will you step aside, Loder? We want to see Wingate, and we know he's in his study."

"No!" snapped Loder.

"No law against visiting Wingate, is there?" asked the captain of the Remove politely.

"Sheer off!"

"You see, we're bound to see Wingate. This is a deputation of the Lower Fourth

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—the whole Form!" said Wharton impressively.

"You young ass!"

"We're going to remonstrate with Wingate and get him to withdraw his resignation, if we can. What will Greyfriars be like without Wingate as captain?" argued Wharton. "He's got to stick to the job, see? That's what we're going to point out to him."

"Hear, hear!"

"If there's a new election some rotter might get Wingate's place," said Johnny Bull. "You might get it yourself, Loder."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We want Wingate!" said Frank Nugent. "That's what we're going to tell him. Trot out of the way, Loder, please."

"Let us pass!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith angrily. "You've no right to stop us, Loder."

"Shove him out of the way!" roared Bolsover major.

"Forward!"

"March!"

Loder brandished his cane.

"Clear out of this corridor, the lot of you!" he shouted. "Take a hundred lines each and clear. Now, then, sharp's the word!"

"You see——"

"We want——"

"Clear, I tell you!" shouted Loder savagely. "Another word, and I'll give you the ashplant, Wharton!"

"You see——" recommenced Wharton calmly.

Whack!

Loder suited the action to the word. The cane came down across the shoulders of the captain of the Remove, and he broke off with a yell.

"Now, get out! Now—— Oh gad! Hands off! Clear out! Oh crumbs! Yarooop!" spluttered Loder as the excited Removites flowed over him like the tide over a sunken rock.

Gerald Loder vanished from sight.

He was sprawling on the floor of the Sixth Form passage, breathless, gasping, wriggling, while the mob of juniors passed over him.

Loder was a prefect; and the person of a prefect was sacred; no junior was supposed to lay a finger on a prefect of the Sixth. But circumstances alter cases. On the present occasion the Remove forgot all about the great authority vested in Loder as a prefect; and they walked over with him just as if he had been Coker of the Fifth, or Hobson of the Shell, or any other obstreperous fellow who got in the way and wouldn't get out of it. Loder sprawled and gasped under the mob of juniors, feeling as if several earthquakes had happened to him all at once.

Carne and Walker, his pals in the Sixth, stepped out of their studies to intervene. But they stepped back again. The Removites looked too truculent to be dealt with just then. Loder roared for help; but there was no one to heed the sound of his roaring.

"Forward!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

And the Remove—leaving Loder for dead, as it were—marched on to George Wingate's study, where Bob Cherry signalled their arrival by a terrific bang on the door, which made it fly open as suddenly as if a battering-ram had struck it.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

GEORGE WINGATE was standing at his study window, staring out into the quad, when his study door flew open.

His rugged face was gloomy.

All Greyfriars was puzzled by his sudden resignation of the captaincy of the school; and Wingate had said no word in explanation, even to his best friends.

He had his reasons; but he had good reason for keeping them to himself. He had had, indeed, no choice in the matter; though his action seemed to most of the school to be the outcome of a sudden and unaccountable whim. The loss of the position he had long held was a heavy blow to him. He was no longer captain of the school—no longer a prefect. Both positions had been included in his resignation.

The Head had been astonished, and a little annoyed; he had reasoned with Wingate, and wasted his words. In the end he had had to accept the captain's resignation, coldly and stiffly. Hardly a fellow in the school, and none of the masters, approved of Wingate's act; but he was deaf to remonstrance. It was not likely that the intended remonstrance of the Removites would have much effect on the Sixth-Former who had turned a deaf ear to his headmaster. But the heroes of the Lower Fourth were not yet aware of that.

Wingate was popular in the school—almost everybody liked him. He had his enemies, and, though they were bitter, they were few. Even shady characters like Angel of the Fourth, and Skinner of the Remove, upon whom Wingate had sometimes dropped a heavy hand, could not quite dislike him. Even Coker of the Fifth rather liked him, though Wingate had persisted in leaving that great man out of the football eleven. The captain's resignation had come as a blow to all Greyfriars; and the school naturally did not know that it was a heavy blow also to himself.

Wingate was thinking over the new situation, with a gloomy brow, as he stared into the misty quadrangle. Already, in a couple of days, he had been made to feel keenly that the power had departed from his hands. His old rival, Loder, was a prefect; Wingate was an ordinary member of the Sixth, and, therefore, Loder's position was now a superior one, and the blackguard of the Sixth took pains to make that very clear.

Juniors who had trembled at Wingate's frown now smiled at him cheerily; Tubbs of the Third had even nodded to him in the quad. On one occasion when, from force of habit he had dropped into his accustomed chair in the prefects' room, Loder and Carne and Walker had concentrated surprised stares on him—reminding him sharply of his new position; and Wingate had walked out with a crimson face. These things were trifles; but trifles had a sting.

Indeed, only Wingate's personal popularity saved him from a myriad slights and humiliations which would have been inflicted ruthlessly on a fellow like Loder or Carne in the same situation.

More important matters troubled him, too. There were the football matches; and there was the perpetual trouble of his minor, Jack Wingate of the Third, a trouble that was no less, but perhaps greater, since Wingate was no longer in a position to deal authoritatively with

the mutinous fag. He had been torn between conflicting duties as a brother and as a prefect; now he was a prefect no longer, and Jack Wingate was not wont to listen to brotherly counsels.

As George Wingate stood staring glumly from his study window, Hobson and Stewart of the Shell passed, in the quad. They looked up at him, spoke to one another, and grinned. Wingate's cheeks burned as they passed on. He would have called the two disrespectful Shell fellows into his study to "bend over"; but bending over at Wingate's order was now a thing of the past. He smiled bitterly as something of Shakespeare came into his mind:

"But yesterday the word of Caesar might

Have stood against the world; now lies he here,

And none so poor to do him reverence."

And then came the bang of his study door, and it flew open, and a disorderly mob of Removites wedged into the doorway. Behind them were more and more, most of them shouting. George Wingate swung round, with a blaze in his eyes.

His impression was that, in his new-fallen state, the fags of the Lower Fourth fancied that they could do as they liked, even in the precincts of his own study. But he was still a Sixth Form man, though no longer a prefect. The official ashplant was gone; but he picked up a fives bat from a shelf, and made a stride towards the crowd at the doorway.

"You young rascals!" he thundered.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I say, Wingate——"

"How dare you swarm into my study like this!" shouted Wingate. "By Jove, I'll give you a lesson! Do you think you can turn a Sixth Form study into a bear-garden?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You see——"

"My esteemed Wingate," ejaculated Hurree Janset Ram Singh in dismay, "we have arrivefully come with terrific respectfulness."

"It's all right, Wingate!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hastily. He saw that there was a slight misapprehension.

"Is it?" snapped Wingate. "Well, get out before I lay this bat about you, and sharp!"

"We've come——"

"I can see you've come! I'm waiting for you to go!"

"We're a deputation——"

"A—a what?"

"A deputation of the Remove," explained Bob Cherry. "You do the talking, Wharton. Fire away!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter——"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Look here, what are you butting into my quarters for, you silly fags?" exclaimed Wingate irritably.

"We're a deputation——"

"Oh, rot!"

"We've come here to remonstrate——"

"You young ass!"

"Hem!" Wharton coughed. The reception of the Remove deputation was not precisely encouraging. But Wingate's faithful admirers and supporters were not to be denied. Wharton went on: "The fact is, Wingate, the whole school has heard with dismay——"

"What?"

"With dismay and concern that you have resigned the position of captain, long held with—with success—and—and—success—I mean—"

Wingate burst into a laugh. He laid the fives bat on the table, realising that it was not needed. Wharton evidently was getting off a speech composed for this great occasion, and which he only imperfectly remembered. This was not a cheeky invasion of his study, as he had supposed at first, but a demonstration of loyalty.

"And success—I mean, efficiency," resumed Wharton. "Under your leadership, Greyfriars has gone from—from—"

"From bad to worse?" suggested Skinner, from behind.

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"From—from victory to victory, at cricket and football, and—and—"

"Marbles!" came from Skinner; and some of the fellows laughed.

"Chuck it, Skinner!" shouted Bob Cherry wrathfully. It was just like Harold Skinner to turn a serious affair like this into a jest.

"And games generally," went on Wharton. "The result is that the whole school sees, with dismay and concern the—"

"We've had that!"—from Skinner.

"Order!"

"We want you to keep the captaincy, Wingate!" said Harry Wharton, throwing the remnants of his half-remembered oration to the winds, as it were, and coming down to facts. "We think you jolly well ought not to resign!"

"I've resigned," said Wingate quietly. He was a little touched by this loyal demonstration, though it made no difference to his resolution.

"You can take that back," said Johnny Bull. "The Head doesn't want to lose you—he can't want to. You can withdraw your resignation."

"Withdraw it!" shouted three or four juniors.

"It happens to be impossible," said Wingate. "Now, I'm much obliged to you, but there's nothing more to be said. Shut the door after you."

The Removites, however, were under the impression that there was a good deal more to be said, and they proceeded to say it.

"You see, we can't spare you!" said Harry Wharton. "Greyfriars won't be Greyfriars without you as skipper, Wingate."

"If there's a new election some cad may butt in. And what will become of Greyfriars then?" said Bob Cherry.

"Some cad like Loder—" suggested Nugent.

"Or Carne—" said Johnny Bull.

"That's for all the school to decide," said Wingate impatiently. "Every Greyfriars man has a vote in the election, and I suppose the fellows will vote for the man they want."

"Ye-e-es, but—"

"But it won't do. We want you, Wingate!"

"Will you stand again?" asked Vernon-Smith. "The Remove will vote for you to the last man if you do."

"Hear, hear!"

Wingate shook his head.

"I'm not standing for re-election," he said curtly.

"Then withdraw your resignation."

"Can't be done! Now get out!"

"Look here, Wingate—"

"Be reasonable, old scout—"

"Bump him!" suggested Skinner; and there was a laugh.

"Cheese it, Skinner!"

"Well, he's nobody in particular now," said Skinner. "We've just



"Clear out!" said Loder savagely. "But, you see—" said Wharton calmly. Whack! Loder's cane came down on Wharton's shoulders. "Now get out—now—oh, gad! Hands off—clear out—oh, crumbs! Yarooooop!" spluttered Loder, as the excited Removites flowed over him like the tide over a sunken rock. The Sixth-Former vanished from sight. (See Chapter 1.)

walked over Loder, and he's a prefect. Wingate isn't."

"Kick Skinner, somebody!"

"Yaroooo!"

"I say, you fellows, Loder's coming this—"

"Let him come!" said Wharton.

"Now, Wingate—"

"You'd better clear!" said the late captain of Greyfriars quietly. "You mustn't cheek Loder—a prefect of the Sixth Form."

"Blow Loder!"

"Bless Loder!"

"Who cares for Loder?"

"Here he comes!" grinned the Bounder.

Gerald Loder, ashplant in hand, dusty and untidy and crimson with rage, forced his way through the mob of juniors into Wingate's study. He fixed a hostile glare on George Wingate.

"Look here, Wingate, you've got to stop this!" he shouted. "You've got to remember that you're not head prefect now, and you're under authority like anybody else. See?"

"I shall not forget it, Loder," said Wingate very quietly.

"You're encouraging these cheeky fags to kick up a shindy in the Sixth Form studies—"

"I'm doing nothing of the sort."

"Don't contradict me!" bawled Loder.

"What?"

"You've got to catch on to your place, Wingate; you don't seem to understand it. Any more of this, and you'll be called up for a prefects' beating."

"I—a prefects' beating?" said Wingate almost dazedly.

"Yes, you—a prefects' beating!"

mimicked Loder. "You're just as liable to it as any other man at Greyfriars who isn't a prefect, and you know it—or ought to know it. So take care, I warn you!"

"You cheeky cad!" roared Wingate, clenching his hands.

"Better language, or I'll report you for a beating at once!" jeered Loder. "You want to be brought to your senses!"

Wingate controlled himself with a great effort. His impulse was to knock Loder spinning across the study. But Wingate had always been great on discipline, and he could not lay hands on a prefect without knocking discipline spinning as well as Loder.

He checked the hot words on his lips, turned his back on Loder, and walked across to the window.

Loder looked after him, with a sneer. Now that Wingate was down and Loder was up, it was the time for the cad of the Sixth to feed fat his ancient grudges.

But he had counted without the Removites. The humiliation of the idolised captain of Greyfriars by a fellow disliked so much as Loder was by the juniors was a little too much for Harry Wharton & Co. They had handled Loder once already, and they had no hesitation in handling him again.

"You—you worm!" gasped Bob Cherry. "How dare you speak to Wingate like that, Loder, you cad!"

"Cherry—"

"You rotter!" exclaimed Wharton, his eyes blazing. "You dare to insult Wingate in his own study—and you're not fit to black his shoes! Turn the cad out, you fellows!"

"Kick him out!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Outside, Loder!"

"Give him the frog's-march!" bawled Bob Cherry.

Wingate swung round.

"Stop that, you kids! Stop— Oh, my hat!"

Wingate, for once, was not heeded. The excited Removites collared Gerald Loder on all sides, and he went out of the captain's study with a rush. He went headlong, roaring.

"Frog's-march!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Bravo!"

"Give him jip!"

"Look here, stop that!" shouted Walker of the Sixth, coming out of his study, cane in hand. "Stop— Oh, yaroooooh!" Walker went spinning, and his cane flew into the air.

Loder of the Sixth, struggling and gasping and writhing in the grasp of the juniors, went down the Sixth Form passage in the frog's-march. Right down the passage the juniors swept with him. The deputation to Wingate had been a failure; in that direction there was obviously nothing doing. But at least the Removites could make it clear to Loder and Loder's set that the fallen captain of the school was not to be insulted with impunity—not while the Remove were on the scene, at all events.

Right down the passage they swept, Loder gasping and struggling, to the corner. And then there was a sudden, horrified halt, as an awe-inspiring figure came into view, and Loder was dropped as if he had become suddenly red-hot.

"Oh!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"The Head!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

DR. LOCKE, headmaster of Greyfriars, stopped as suddenly as the juniors.

He was quite as surprised as they were.

A terrific din in the direction of the Sixth Form quarters had drawn him from the scholastic quiet of his study to ascertain what was the matter. Now he knew.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Bunk!"

Bunter set the example.

When it came to leading in an affray Bunter was content with a modest place in the rear—modesty and diffidence were his distinguished characteristics at such a time. But when it came to leading a retreat Bunter was all there. He was the man for that, and second to none.

He fled wildly. Three or four juniors who happened to be in his way went sprawling as Bunter butted into them. Bunter's weight was no joke when William George was in a hurry.

"Boys!" exclaimed the Head.

Bunter vanished. Skinner vanished after him, and Snoop after Skinner. Fisher T. Fish sprinted after Snoop.

But most of the Removites stood their ground. They could not all escape, with the Head's eyes right upon them. A few stragglers vanished, but most of the Removites stood where they were, staring at the Head, who stared at them. Between the juniors and the headmaster Loder of the Sixth lay sprawling, quite out of breath, and gasping as if for a wager.

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"This is—is a riot!" exclaimed the Head.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not answer that.

There was no doubt about it.

It was!

"I am surprised—I am astonished!" said Dr. Locke. "Is it possible—I repeat, is it possible—that you boys of a junior Form have been laying violent hands upon a Sixth Form prefect?"

"Hem!"

"You see, sir—"

"Loder! Rise to your feet, Loder, if you are able to do so," said the Head. "Wharton, Cherry, assist Loder to his feet."

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry would have preferred to assist Loder with their own feet. But there was no gainsaying the Head. They took hold of the panting bully of the Sixth and lifted him from the floor. Gerald Loder leaned on the wall and gasped.

"This is an extremely serious matter," said Dr. Locke. "I cannot allow an outbreak like this to pass without the severest punishment."

"Hem!"

"The damagefulness of Loder is not great, sir," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "He has merely been given the march of the esteemed and ludicrous frog."

Some of the juniors grinned, and Dr. Locke's grave face twitched for a moment. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's wonderful flow of English seemed rather to detract from the seriousness of the situation.

"The fact is, sir—" began Wharton.

"I am willing to hear anything you may possibly have to say in extenuation of your rebellious and riotous conduct, Wharton," said the Head. "You are free to speak, as head boy of the Remove. What have you to say in excuse of attacking a prefect of the Sixth Form?"

"Well, sir, Loder butted in—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, he wedged in—that is, he butted—I mean, he was too swanky—he interfered, I mean, sir," stammered Wharton.

"For some time I have heard a great deal of noise going on," said the Head. "It was Loder's duty as a prefect to interfere."

"He insulted Wingate, sir," said Johnny Bull bluntly.

"If that is the case, Bull, it is Wingate's business to resent an insult, and I am certain that he did not request the intervention of Lower Fourth boys."

"Nunno! But—"

"It is scarcely for Lower Fourth boys to judge in a dispute between members of the Sixth Form, if such a dispute took place," said the Head. "You add to your offence by such an explanation, Bull."

"Oh!"

"I see no excuse for this riotous conduct," said the Head. "I shall request your Form master to deal with you severely. Nugent, will you kindly convey my desire to Mr. Quelch to step here?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Frank Nugent departed dismally to fetch Mr. Quelch upon the scene. All the Removites were feeling extremely uncomfortable now, and Loder's eyes were gleaming with malicious satisfaction. Mr. Quelch had a heavy hand when he was angry. The Removites would have preferred to be dealt with by the Head. And Mr. Quelch was certain to be greatly annoyed by having his whole Form reported to him by the headmaster. It would be, in a

sense, a reflection upon his management of his Form; and Mr. Quelch was touchy upon such points. He was absolutely certain to "take it out" of the Removites.

Even the Famous Five began to realise that it would have been more judicious to leave Gerald Loder severely alone. After all, a Sixth Form prefect was a Sixth Form prefect, and discipline was discipline. But it was rather late to think of that.

Dr. Locke stood silent and grim while he waited for the appearance of the Remove master. Loder still leaned on the wall, recovering himself a little, but looking very dusty and breathless and crimson. The juniors exchanged dismal glances. It was rather a long wait, for Mr. Quelch was not in his study, and Frank Nugent had to seek him in the quadrangle, where he was taking a little walk with Mr. Froit, the master of the Fifth, under the ancient elms.

But the Remove master arrived on the scene at last, with Nugent trotting by his side. Nugent had simply told him that the Head wanted him in the Sixth Form passage, and Mr. Quelch did not know what to expect. So he was greatly surprised to see nearly all his Form gathered there, and he looked at Dr. Locke for an explanation.

"There has been a riot, Mr. Quelch," said the Head.

"Indeed, sir?"

"Your Form seems to have broken out into an utterly lawless demonstration, Mr. Quelch."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, with a glitter in his eyes.

"Loder of the Sixth has been attacked—I myself saw him struggling in the grasp of a mob of Remove boys, Mr. Quelch. This is a very serious matter, as you will perceive."

"Undoubtedly, sir," said the Remove master. "It is a matter that calls for very exemplary punishment. You need have no doubt, sir, that it will be administered, if you leave the matter in my hands."

"I propose to do so, Mr. Quelch," said the Head graciously. "Your boys have, for once, failed to do credit to your very excellent and efficient training."

"You are very kind to express it in such a way, sir," said the Remove master.

The juniors listened in silence. They weren't really very interested in this solemn exchange of compliments between two masters; they wanted to know what they were "in for." They soon learned.

"I should not care to flog so many boys if it could possibly be avoided," said the Head. "But a severe caning is—"

"Quite so, sir. I will administer a general caning to-morrow morning after prayers—six strokes to each offender," said Mr. Quelch.

"I think that will meet the case, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "Doubtless you will take the names of these boys; and I may mention that there were four others—Bunter, Skinner, Snoop, and Fish. They left immediately I appeared, but they were concerned in the riot."

"I will make a note of it, sir."

"Very good, Mr. Quelch."

The Head sailed majestically away. Some of the Removites grinned a little. The sudden flight of Bunter, Skinner, Snoop, and Fish had not saved them from the general calamity. The Head's eye was much keener and more comprehensive than the juniors had supposed.

Mr. Quelch proceeded to take the names of the delinquents, as well as

putting down those of the fugitives. He had to take the names of nearly all the Remove.

He took them with a grim face. "Six" was the punishment in store, and Mr. Quelch's expression indicated that every stroke of each "six" would be well laid on. It was probable that Mr. Quelch's arm would be tired after prayers on the morrow morning, and certain that the Removites would be still more tired.

Loder walked away with a grin on his face, while the Remove master was taking down the names. He hardly regretted his severe handling now, the price the rioters were to pay for it being so very heavy.

Having taken the names, Mr. Quelch dismissed his boys with a curt gesture. He was very angry with them, that was clear.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the rest of the Remove marched away with glum faces. There were gloomy looks and deep grousing in the Remove passage at tea-time that afternoon.

"This is what we get for backing up Wingate!" growled Bolsover major.

"The game isn't worth the giddy candle, is it?" said Hazeldene.

"Oh, rot! We can stand six!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "We're backing up Wingate all the same."

"Oh, blow Wingate!" said Bolsover major.

"Bless him!" said Skinner. "It was a mug's game all along—just like all Wharton's rotten wheezes!"

"We don't seem to do Wingate much good by backing him up," remarked Russell; "but we're jolly well getting it in the neck ourselves."

"What's the good of grousing?" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, rats! I don't want six in the morning."

"Same here!"

"The samefulness is terrific; but the grousefulness is the wrong pitcher that goes longest to the well," said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "Keep up the smiling pecker, my esteemed chums."

"Grousing does no good," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, rats!"

"Rot!"

A good many of the Removites seemed to find solace in grousing, whether it did any good or not; and they groused loud and long. And—outside the select circle of the Famous Five, who had originated the idea—it was generally agreed that the "deputation" of the Remove to Wingate had been an absolutely rotten wheeze.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

BILLY BUNTER put a fat and grinning face into Study No. 1, where the Famous Five had gathered for a rather late tea. Enthusiastic discussion in the Remove passage, after the disastrous result of the expedition to the Sixth, had taken up a good deal of time. There was still a buzz of voices in the passage; the prospect of "six" after prayers in the morning seemed to worry many of the Removites.

"I say, you fellows—" grinned Bunter.

"Oh, blow away!" said Harry Wharton crossly. "Trouble enough without your face added to it to make it worse."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Roll away, barrel!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bunter did not roll away; he stood in the doorway and grinned. The Owl of the Remove seemed very pleased with himself and things generally.

"I say, you fellows, you're rather green," he remarked. "You got yourselves fairly copped by the Head."

"Buzz off!" snapped Nugent.

"He, he, he!" Bunter seemed greatly entertained. "I say, I'm a bit wider than you chaps, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha! A good bit—a few yards, I should say!" roared Bob Cherry, and the chums of the Remove chuckled.

"I don't mean that, you silly ass!" hooted Bunter. Bunter had been alluding to his sagacity, not to his extensive figure. "I say, you fellows, you got fairly copped; but I was rather too wide. I bolted in time."

"Fathead!"

"You're green, you know," said Bunter complacently. "You're not up to snuff. Presence of mind, you know; that's where I come in."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five. Evidently Billy Bunter did not yet know that the Head's unerring eye had spotted the fat fleeing figure, and that the name of W. G. Bunter was on the list for execution in the morning.

That was the discovery the Owl of the Remove had yet to make.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter. "I cleared off, with my usual presence of mind, and I've been lying doggo in a box-room. Brains, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the giddy sentence?" asked Bunter. "I haven't heard yet. I suppose the Head's coming down rather heavy?"

"Six each from Quelch after prayers to-morrow morning," said the captain of the Remove.

"He, he, he!"

"Well, where does the cackle come in?" asked Bob. "Is there anything funny in getting six?"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "You fellows will squirm! Quelch lays it on hard, you know, when he's in a wax. Did he seem in a wax?"

"The waxfulness was terrific."

"I say, you fellows, you'd better stuff some exercise books into your bags," chuckled Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"You'd better take your own tip, too, fatty," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Eh? I'm not down for a licking," said Bunter.

"You jolly well are!" chuckled Bob. "The Head spotted you, you see, and gave Quelch your name."



Jack Wingate and George Tubb were going it hammer and tongs when the Form-room door suddenly opened, and Gwynne of the Sixth appeared, with a cane in his hand. The Sixth-Former did not waste time asking questions; he had come to stop the row, and he acted instead of speaking. Whack! Whack! The two Third-Formers separated, yelling, as the prefect's cane smote them.
(See Chapter 5.)

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, greatly entertained by the sudden change of William George Bunter's expression.

The Owl's fat jaw dropped.

Obviously, he could no longer see anything of a comic nature in "six" from Mr. Quelch after prayers in the morning.

"I—I say, you fellows, that's gammon, isn't it?" he gasped.

"You'll see in the morning."

"I say, is it honest Injun?" howled Bunter.

"Honest Injun!" grinned Bob.

"You're for it, Bunter, the same as the rest of us. Why don't you cackle?"

"Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, it ain't fair!" exclaimed Bunter. "I said all along it was a rotten idea to go to Wingate—"

"You jolly well shoved yourself in," grinned Johnny Bull, "and I saw you kick Loder when we were handling him. Lucky for you if Loder didn't notice whose hoof it was."

"Look here, you fellows can explain to Mr. Quelch that I hadn't anything to do with it, you know," said Bunter anxiously.

"But you had, old fat man."

"What difference does that make, you silly ass? You can tell Quelch I was just an onlooker, and specially mention that I never kicked Loder—or, in fact, touched him at all. Quelch will take your word—and he might not take mine."

"The mightfulness is terrific."

"I'm jolly well not going to be caned in the morning!" roared Bunter indignantly.

"Looks to me as if you are," grinned Bob. "You seemed to think it funny a few minutes ago. Where's the fun gone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I can't stand it, you know," said Bunter. "I'm not strong—I was always delicate, you know."

"You look it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fancy that old beast spotting me, when I got away so quick!" groaned Bunter. "I thought it was all right. Lot of sympathy you beasts feel for a chap."

"About as much as you were feeling for us," said Nugent.

"Well, we've got our own licking to think of, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "It's no worse for you than for us."

"I suppose you can't help being a born idiot, Wharton—"

"Eh?"

"And a silly chump, but—yarcrooh!" Bunter broke off as half a loaf landed on his fat nose, and he sat down in the doorway.

Half a loaf is said to be better than no bread; but on that occasion Billy Bunter would have preferred none. He gave a yell and rolled out into the passage.

It was a dismal Bunter that rolled into Study No. 7 to tea. He found his study-mates, Peter Todd and Tom Dutton, looking very grave. "Six" in the morning was a prospect that did not exhilarate them.

"I say, Peter, those cads in No. 1 say that the Head spotted me, and I'm for it," groaned Bunter.

"What about it?" grunted Peter. "I'm for it, too, and so is Dutton. So are all the fellows. Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Ring off!" growled Toddy. Peter was not in his best temper. Probably

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he felt that he needed all his sympathy for himself, and had none to waste upon Bunter. He did not realise—as Bunter did very clearly—how important it was that the Owl of the Remove should escape the general sentence. Canings for other fellows were a light matter, and even had their comic side. But canings for Bunter were extremely serious.

"Look here, Toddy, be a pal," urged Bunter. "Go to Mr. Quelch, and tell him I had nothing to do with it."

"The Head saw you, you silly ass."

"Tell him that I—I came along to—to remonstrate with you, and—and urge you to—to keep order—"

"I can see myself doing it!" said Peter.

"Beast! I say, Dutton, old chap!" said Bunter, turning to his deaf study-mate as a last resource.

"Eh?"

Tom Dutton looked at him inquiringly.

"I'm down for a licking, like the other chaps," said Bunter. "I really had nothing to do with it, you know. I want you to explain that to Mr. Quelch—he would take your word. He knows you're a truthful chap."

"It's in the lobby," said Dutton.

"What is?"

"My cap."

"Oh crumbs! Chap, you ass, not cap! I didn't say cap!"

"Eh?"

"Quelch mightn't take my word!" shrieked Bunter. "But he knows—"

"Whose nose?"

"Knows, you ass, not nose!" raved Bunter.

Tom Dutton's deafness was an affliction not only to himself.

"What's the matter with my nose? Is there anything on my nose, Toddy?" asked Dutton.

Peter grinned and shook his head.

"I said 'Quelch knows—' shrieked Bunter.

"Quelch's nose!" said Dutton. "What on earth are you talking about, Bunter? Is anything the matter with Quelch's nose?"

"Oh dear! I want you to go to Quelch, and tell him how the matter stands!" roared Bunter.

"I don't know anything about a hatter. And what has a hatter to do with Quelch's nose, anyhow? Looks to me as if you're as mad as a hatter, the way you talk, Bunter. You'd better shut up."

"You silly deaf dummy!" howled Bunter.

Like other deaf persons, Tom Dutton sometimes heard with unexpected distinctness. Unfortunately for Bunter, he heard that last observation quite clearly.

He jumped up from the tea-table.

"You cheeky fat ass! I can hear you all right when you don't mumble—I'm not deaf! I'll give you deaf dummy!"

"Yarcrooh!"

"Take that—and that—"

"Yow-ow-ow! Draggimoff, Peter!"

Peter Todd chuckled, and continued his tea cheerfully and calmly. Tom Dutton smote, and smote again, and the second smite landed William George Bunter in the passage.

Tom was rather touchy about his deafness; he was a good deal chipped on the subject, and not in the least disposed to take any from Bunter. He slammed the door on the Owl of the Remove, and returned to his tea with a ruffled brow.

The door opened again, and Bunter blinked furiously in.

"I say, I'm coming in to tea, you beasts—"

Whiz!

Bunter slammed the door again just in time to escape a whizzing cushion. On second thoughts, he decided not to come in to tea.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Scapegrace of the Third!

"I T'S up, you men!" said Paget of the Third.

The "men" to whom Percival Spencer Paget addressed his remark were the members of the Third Form at Greyfriars.

Paget came into the Form-room, and George Tubb, captain of the Third, turned a flushed and smeary face from the fire, over which he was broiling a herring on a weird-looking contrivance of wires and pen-handles.

"What's up?" he asked.

"The old scout's paper."

"Oh!" said Tubb, and he turned to his herrings again. It was tea-time, and the herrings were slow in cooking—though rather quick at burning at odd corners. The Head's notice—which Paget alluded to as the old scout's paper—did not interest Tubb so much as tea just then.

"What does the beak say?" asked Bolsover minor.

"Date of election, Wednesday," answered Paget. "Tellers, Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch. Three o'clock in the lecture-hall."

"Sha'n't go," said Tubb. "I rather liked old Wingate, though he's got a cub of a minor in our Form. But I don't care to vote for anybody else in the Sixth."

"It don't matter to us very much," remarked Bolsover minor. "The Sixth are all much of a muchness. I liked old Wingate."

"Blest if I know why the man resigned," said Paget. "Here, young Wingate, why did your brother resign the captaincy?"

Jack Wingate did not answer.

He was seated at his desk, grinding through lines for his Form master, Mr. Twigg, while the rest of the Third were at leisure. It was not easy to grind out lines while a crowd of fags were talking and scuffling about, but no one bothered to keep quiet on that account. Fellows had to take the rough with the smooth in the Third Form at Greyfriars, and often there was more rough than smooth.

A good many impots had come into Wingate minor's way of late. He was in his Form master's bad books.

His career as an amateur black-guard, in imitation of Loder of the Sixth, had brought him in more kicks than halfpence, so to speak. Several times Mr. Twigg had caned him for smoking, or for having cigarette-stains on his fingers.

Mr. Twigg, fortunately, did not know of the Cross Keys episodes in Jack Wingate's dingy downward way; he did not, so far, suspect the sullen, sulky, wilful fag of "pub-haunting." But he knew that Wingate minor was the most perverse and troublesome fag in his Form, and the vials of his wrath were frequently poured on the scapegrace's head.

With a hundred lines to write, and a strong disinclination to write any of them, Jack Wingate was not in a pleasant mood. He was unpopular just then with his friends, too, having thrown over Form football for more dingy occupations. Tubb & Co. made no

secret of their scorn for a fellow who refused to play for his Form when asked.

It was, to a certain extent, against a fag to have a brother in the Sixth, especially if that brother was captain of the school. The other fags naturally expected him to be rather "sidey" in consequence.

Wingate minor was not merely "sidey"; but sometimes he seemed to think that he could do exactly as he liked, because his brother was captain of Greyfriars. Tubb & Co. made it a very special point to impress upon him that he couldn't.

But though Jack Wingate was rather in disgrace with his Form-fellows at present, he was an object of some interest as brother of George Wingate, who had so unexpectedly resigned the captaincy. Even in the Third that surprising resignation had caused excitement.

The Third had little to do with the Sixth, excepting to keep out of their way as much as possible; but they agreed that old Wingate was a good man—he was, in fact, the only Sixth Form man who was not a beast.

Every prefect who wielded the power of the ashplant was, of course, to some extent, a beast, in the view of fags who might be called upon to "bend over." But it was unanimously held in the Third that old Wingate was as little of a beast as it was possible for a Sixth Form prefect to be.

Jack Wingate had been a good deal questioned as to the reasons of his brother's resignation; but he either could not or would not explain. At all events, he did not. If he knew the reason he kept it to himself.

Instead of answering Paget's question, he went on with his lines, with a sullen and sulky brow. He was the cause of his brother's fall, and he knew it; and, sulky and perverse as he was, it troubled his conscience a little. But he was thinking a good deal more about Mr. Twigg's tyranny in giving him lines than about his brother's disaster.

"Can't speak, can't you?" hooted Paget.

The fag did not even look up. He scratched on with the inky, smeary lines he was covering the foolscap with for the benefit of Mr. Twigg.

"Sulky cub!" said Tubb.

Wingate minor looked up at last.

"Can't you shut up while a fellow's writing lines?" he demanded.

"Blow your lines!" said Tubb. "What did you get the lines for? Smoking in the box-room! Smoky little cad!"

"Shut it!"

"If you tell me to shut it, young Wingate, I'll jolly well come over and bang your cheeky head on your desk!" roared Tubb.

"Oh, give us a rest!"

"Look here, young Wingate, you must know something about it!" said Grant of the Third. "Why did your brother chuck up?"

"Better ask him!" growled Wingate minor.

"I'm asking you."

"Well, find out."

"Nice, polite, and polished little cub, ain't he?" said Percival Spencer Paget. "They coddle him at home in the holidays, and he comes back to school like this."

Wingate minor flushed, and dipped his pen in the ink again. He had many lines to do, and he was doing them under difficulties.



Loder halted after a circuit of the table, leaned over that article of furniture, and made a slash at Bunter across it. "Yaroooh!" Bunter caught the cane with his fat shoulders and roared. Loder dealt another swipe, but Bunter dodged it, and the cane came down on the table, and smashed an ink-pot, sending the ink streaming over table and papers and floor. (See Chapter 6.)

"Candidates' names up yet?" asked Bolsover minor.

Paget shook his head.

"No; but it's pretty well known that Loder will stand. I heard Skinner of the Remove say he believed that Loder had something to do with old Wingate chucking up. Skinner's a keen chap."

"What utter rot!" exclaimed Jack Wingate.

"Oh, it's rot, is it?" said Paget. "Do you know anything about it, after all?"

"Loder had nothing to do with it, I know that."

"He knows a lot about Loder!" sneered Tubb. "I've seen him sneaking into Loder's study! Sucking up to a prefect! Yah!"

"If that cad Loder stands, we'd all better vote," said Grant. "We don't want a bully like that to get in."

"No fear!"

"Yes, I think I'll take the trouble to vote against Loder," said Tubb. "He gave me six the other day for sliding down the banisters."

"Worst man in the Sixth," said Paget. "We'll all roll up and vote against Loder. Lucky they let us vote."

"Well, every Greyfriars man has a vote in the captain's election," said Tubb. "I'd like to see them trying to keep the Third from voting. Even the little cads in the Second vote! Of course, that's rather rot."

"If Loder gets in it will be a bad thing for Greyfriars," remarked Paget, shaking his head with an air of sage wisdom. "It's a man's duty to keep him out. We'll all agree to vote against Loder."

"I sha'n't!" said Wingate minor.

"What?"

"Loder's not a bad sort," said the fag.

"I like him."

"He gives you cigarettes, I jolly well believe!" snorted Tubb. "He's that sort—rotten all through."

"My hat! He wouldn't stay a prefect long if the Head knew that," said Paget. "Does he give you cigarettes, young Wingate?"

"Find out!"

"Well, we're all voting against him," said Tubb. "Wingate minor will have to roll up with the rest. You hear that, young Wingate?"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Are you going to vote against Loder on Wednesday?" bawled Tubb.

"No!"

"Look here, I tell you to, as captain of the Form."

"Go and eat coke!"

"If you say that again, Wingate minor, I'll come over to you!" bawled the captain of the Third, in great wrath.

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Jack Wingate independently.

Tubb of the Third left his herrings to burn and rushed across to the desks. The next moment he was mixed up with Jack Wingate and his impot. They rolled on the Form-room floor together.

For five minutes there was wild excitement in the Third Form-room. Jack Wingate was no match for Tubb; but he was plucky, and he was in an exceedingly bad temper. So the fight was terrific. The rest of the fags gathered round, shouting and cheering.

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In the midst of the din the Form room door opened, and Gwynne of the Sixth appeared, with a cane in his hand.

Gwynne did not waste time asking question; he had come to stop the row, and he acted instead of speaking.

Whack, whack!

Tubb of the Third and Jack Wingate separated, yelling, as the prefect's cane smote.

"Stop that!" said Gwynne cheerily. "Any more of it and I'll come back."

And he tucked his cane under his arm and left the Form-room.

The late combatants glared at one another, breathlessly; and then Wingate minor returned to his lines, and Tubb to his herrings.

Jack Wingate's pen scratched wearily on, amid a hubbub of voices—and he had to pause every now and then to dab a crimson stream that oozed from his nose.

When Tubb's weird feast was ready for consumption, a cheery party of fags gathered round to enjoy it; but the scapegrace of the Third was not asked to join the select circle. Not that he desired to do so. Under the influence of his friend in the Sixth, Jack Wingate had changed very considerably from the careless and cheery fag who had formerly participated in the manners and customs of the Third, and had been contented with them. He glanced at the feasters with a sneer, as he gathered up his lines to take them to Mr. Twigg's study. Tubb, under the ameliorating influence of the feast, relented and called out to him as he was going to the door:

"Come on, young Wingate—there's one for you."

"Thank you for nothing!" replied Wingate minor. "Keep it!"

"What?"

Tubb jumped up, and Wingate minor quitted the Form-room rather hurriedly.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

No Bargain!

BILLY BUNTER rolled into the Sixth Form passage and stopped at Gerald Loder's door, and raised a fat hand to tap.

Then he hesitated.

Bunter was worried. The "six" in the morning from Mr. Quelch, which had seemed so entertaining to him while he supposed that he was to escape, had now become a matter of the most pressing seriousness. With a problem like that on his fat mind, Bunter had been giving his powerful intellect unusual exercise, and he had thought of what he considered a first-class idea. He had seen the Head's notice on the board, announcing that the captain's election was to be held on Wednesday afternoon; and in the "old scout's paper," as Paget of the Third called it, he had seen a way of escape. It was practically certain that Loder of the Sixth would put up for election; his old ambition was well known to all the school. Bunter had a vote!

It was not perhaps in accordance with the highest morality to offer his vote as a bribe to a prospective candidate in an election. But William George Bunter was not thinking of moral considerations. So long as he escaped a licking he was prepared to leave moral considerations to take care of themselves.

Whether it would work, was the only question that troubled him. Doubtless Loder could get him off the licking if he liked. But would he do it for Bunter's promised vote? As a prefect and a Sixth Form man and a man of honour Loder was bound to scorn the offer, and

to cane Bunter for his cheek in making it. But Loder's honour was rather a doubtful quantity; so Bunter hoped for the best.

But he hesitated.

Interviewing the bully of the Sixth in his study was a good deal like interviewing a lion in his den. Only the awful prospect of "six" from Mr. Quelch's cane could have made William George Bunter dare to be a Daniel.

But he made up his fat mind at last.

After all, Loder was not a fellow like Wingate or Gwynne or North. If he put up for election, he would not care much how he got in, so long as he did get in. Bunter was sure of that.

He was about to tap at the door when there was a footstep behind him in the passage and a heavy hand descended on his collar.

Shake, shake!

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He spun round to find himself in Loder's grasp. He blinked at the bully of the Sixth through his big spectacles.

"Ow! I say, Loder—"

Shake, shake!

"Yow-ow! Leggo! I say—ooooop!"

"You young rascal, what are you hanging about my study for?" demanded Loder.

The bully of the Sixth was not in a good temper. He had not quite recovered yet from his handling among the unruly Removites.

Certainly, it was a great satisfaction to know that the offenders were all booked for severe punishment in the morning. That was all to the good. But that could not abolish a large number of pains and aches that troubled Loder. The Removites had handled him far from gently.

"I—I came here to—to speak to you, Loder—"

"To rob my study cupboard, more likely, you young scoundrel!"

"Nunno! I—I didn't know there was anything in your cupboard—I—I mean I wouldn't—"

"Well, if you came here to see me you shall see me," said Loder grimly.

Still gripping Bunter's collar with his right hand, he threw open the door with his left.

Bunter entered the study headlong, hurled in by a swing of Loder's powerful arm.

Bump!

"Ow! Oh!"

Bunter sprawled on the carpet, and Gerald Loder followed him in. He kicked the door shut and picked up a cane.

"You were in that mob this afternoon, Bunter, I think," he said.

"Nunno—not at all! That's quite a mistake, Loder!" gasped Bunter, sitting up dizzily. "I—I was out of gates—I mean, I'd gone to tea with Coker of the Fifth—I was a mile away—"

"Get up!"

Loder swished the cane.

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter crawled to his feet. He blinked at the swishing cane through his big spectacles in dire apprehension.

Loder pointed to a chair with the cane.

"Bend over!" he said.

"I—I say, Quelch is going to lick us for that to-morrow morning, you know!" gasped Bunter.

"I know that. I'm going to lick you for telling lies," said Loder agreeably. "You said you weren't in the mob this afternoon—"

"I—I wasn't—"

"I saw you, you see."

"I—I mean, I was," stammered Bunter.

"Exactly! Bend over!"

"I—I say, Loder—"

"No need to say anything," said the bully of the Sixth genially. "Save your breath for howling. You'll need it. Bend over."

Loder swished the cane again, deriving great entertainment from Bunter's apprehensive squirmings. There was a cruel strain in Loder's nature, and he liked to inspire terror.

"But I came here to speak to you, Loder!" spluttered Bunter. "You see, there's a notice on the board—"

"Half a dozen, I dare say, but I'm not interested in them at the present moment," said Loder. "I'm interested in thrashing a fat young rascal who came here to loot my study and who's been telling me lies."

"I—I didn't—"

"Are you going to bend over?" roared Loder.

"Oh crikey!"

Loder made a cut at the Owl of the Remove with the cane, and Billy Bunter jumped back. There was a howl from Loder, as the cane swept down and caught his own calf.

"Ooooooop!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter, terrified at that calamity. He dodged round the study table.

"Ow! Ow!" Loder rubbed his leg furiously. "I—I—I'll skin you! I'll cut you into—ow-wow—ribbons! I—I'll—"

He rushed after Bunter.

William George Bunter was not a light-weight, and generally his movements resembled the leisurely motions of a tortoise—a tortoise that had never learned the value of time. But on this occasion he moved with remarkable swiftness.

He whipped round the table in desperate haste. If anything could spur the Owl of the Remove to activity, it was a cane swishing behind him.

"Stop!" roared Loder.

Bunter flew.

Loder stumbled over a hassock and came down on his knees. His face was crimson with fury by this time.

"I—I say, Loder!" gasped Bunter. "I say, listen to a chap! I came here to make you an offer, you know! Oh dear!"

He flew again, as Loder was up and whipping round the table after him.

Really, it was hard on Bunter.

He was quite well aware—at least, he was fairly certain—that Loder would let him off, for his vote in the election, if only he could get Loder to listen and realise how matters stood. But Loder wouldn't listen. He would not listen at first, and he was less disposed than ever to listen now that he had whacked his own knee and fallen over his hassock on to the floor. He breathed wrath and vengeance as he pursued Bunter round the table. Apparently it had not yet occurred to the bully of the Sixth to make any alteration in his manners and customs on account of the approaching election. Certainly he had no suspicion of the offer Bunter had intended to make him. So, far from intervening to save the fat Owl from "six" in the morning, Loder was going to give him twice six to go on with.

Bunter had no time to explain. He had to flee for his fat skin. Round the table he went again, fleeing breathlessly, with Loder and the swishing cane in hot pursuit. It was like a game, with the study table as the mulberry bush; but Billy Bunter was not enjoying it at all.

Loder stopped after a circuit of the table, leaned over that article of furniture, and made a slash at Bunter across it.

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter caught the cane with his fat shoulders, and roared. Loder dealt another swipe, but Bunter dodged that, and the cane came down on the table and smashed an inkpot. Ink streamed over table and papers and floor.

Billy Bunter made a desperate break for the door.

Loder was after him like a shot.

Whack!

"Yooop!"

Bunter had the door open then, and he bolted into the passage.

Crash!

"Great gad!" roared Walker of the Sixth. "What—" Walker went fairly flying across the passage as the fat junior cannoned him.

"Stop him!" howled Loder.

"Ow! I'm winded! Ow!"

Walker staggered against the opposite wall. Bunter did not stop to inquire whether Walker was hurt. Perhaps he knew he was! He bolted down the Sixth Form passage and disappeared.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A New Leaf for Loder!

GERALD LODER glared along the passage. He was disposed to rush in pursuit of the Owl of the Remove, but he restrained himself. Walker of the Sixth gave him a savage look.

"You silly ass!" he hooted.

"Look here, Walker—"

"Is this how you greet a man you've asked to tea?" roared Walker.

"Oh, rats! That young scoundrel bolted!" snapped Loder. "Why didn't you stop him?"

"What the thump were you after him for? You're such a thundering bully, Loder."

"What?"

"Never saw such a rotten bully," said Walker. "The fat villain has nearly driven my waistcoat into my backbone! Ow! You're always pitching into the fags. Why can't you let them alone?"

"You cheeky ass—"

"Is this how you're getting ready for the election?" sneered Walker. "The Head's notice is on the board. Election's Wednesday. You'll bag a fat lot of fag votes at this rate."

Loder started.

It was the first time he had thought of this aspect of the matter. He was disliked and dreaded among the juniors, and he liked to inspire dread and was quite indifferent to the dislike. But it occurred to him now that dislike and dread were not the feelings that inspired voters to rally round a candidate.

"Dashed rot, letting the fags vote at all!" he growled.

"Well, they do vote," grinned Walker, "and I fancy that Bunter's vote, at least, won't be in your favour."

"Oh, rot! Who cares for the way the fat fool votes?"

"You will when it comes to the poll," said Walker coolly. "Can't you have sense enough to keep your silly temper till the election's over, at least?"

"I wasn't thinking of the election," growled Loder.

"You'd better begin to think of it, if you don't want Gwynne to get in as captain of Greyfriars."

"Is Gwynne up, then?" asked Loder, with a start.

"Nobody's up yet, but it's pretty well known that Wingate is urging him to stand, and that he will do it."

"He won't get in!" granted Loder.

"You won't keep him out by thrashing the fags who are going to vote on Wednesday," answered Walker.

"Come in, old man!" said Loder amiably. "We'd better talk this over, if the election's fixed so early. My fag ought to have been here already and got tea. I'll larrup him—"

"Oh, do!" said Walker sarcastically. "Larruping him will make sure of his vote—for Gwynne."

Loder gritted his teeth.

"I'm not going to make myself civil to a scruffy gang of fags for their dashed votes!" he snarled.

"Yes, you are," answered James Walker coolly. "You'd do that, or anything else, to bag Wingate's place, and you know it! Only, you'll very likely spoil it all with your rotten temper!"

"Fag!" shouted Loder.

There was no reply. Tubb of the Third was Loder's fag that term, and Tubb of the Third ought to have been on the spot. But Tubb of the Third was not on the spot.

"Fa-a-a-ag!"

Two or three juniors who heard the call scudded quietly away. Nobody in the Lower School at Greyfriars was anxious to fag for Loder.

"Fag!"

Loder shouted, and gritted his teeth. Tubb of the Third came unwillingly along the passage at last.

He fully expected a licking for being late to answer the call. But for James Walker's sage advice, undoubtedly Loder would have given him the licking he anticipated.

Indeed, as it was, Loder could scarcely restrain his savage temper. He almost yearned to take Tubb by the collar and lay the cane round him. But, angry and savage as he was, Loder was no fool; and he was prepared to go any lengths to "bag" the captaincy of Greyfriars. After he had secured that coveted distinction it would be time to make the fags feel that life was not worth living.

"You're late, Tubb!" he said. But he threw the cane into a corner, much to George Tubb's relief.

"Sorry, Loder!" said the fag meekly.

"Well, never mind! Cut down to the tuckshop and get me some things—and look sharp. Here's a ten-bob note."

Tubb made a list of intended purchases, and took the ten-shilling note. As he was going out of the study Loder added quite genially:

"Get a ginger-pop for yourself, too, Tubb."

"Eh?"

Tubb stared round in his astonishment. "Oh! Yes! Right! Thanks!" he gasped.

And he scudded away, wondering whether he was dreaming.



Greatly to his surprise, Jack Wingate found himself grabbed by the collar, and swung back. "Let go!" he shouted. Gwynne gave him a grim look. "Is that the way you talk to a prefect?" he asked. "Isn't it about time you learned manners?" "Take your paws off my collar!" The Sixth Former breathed deep and hard. He did not take his "paw" off Jack Wingate's collar, but tightened his grip, and marched the sullen, resisting fag to his study. (See Chapter 8.)

By the time he returned with supplies for tea he found Gerald Loder in quite a good humour. When he spilled water from the kettle in the fender, Loder paid no heed; when he dropped a cup and cracked it, Loder only laughed. Tubb was almost convinced that he was dreaming this. Really, it was impossible to recognise this Loder as the Loder he knew.

"Ready, Loder," he said, at last.

"Right-ho!" said Loder kindly. "You can cut off, Tubb. Take a slice of that cake with you."

"Oh! Yes! Thanks!"

Tubb of the Third left the study with his slice of cake, and in the corridor he pinched himself to make sure that he was awake.

In the Third Form room he confided to the other fags his conviction that Loder of the Sixth was going mad. On no less startling theory could he account for this sudden and amazing change in the bully of the Sixth.

"Well, is that all right, Walker?" asked Loder, with a sour grin, as the door closed on George Tubb.

"That's better!" said Walker. "But you've got a lot of leeway to make up if you don't want the Lower School to roll up in a body and vote against you."

"Hang the Lower School!" snarled Loder.

"Every vote counts, ass! Look here! I hear that all the Remove are to be caned after prayers to-morrow morning for ragging you."

Loder compressed his lips.

"Yes, rather, the cheeky young rotters! And Quelch will make them squirm—I could see it in his eye!"

"There's your chance," said Walker.

"What do you mean?" growled Loder uneasily.

"Put in a word for them with the Head and get them off their punishment," said Walker.

"What?" roared Loder.

"Just that."

"I'll see them all at the bottom of the bottomless pit first—and you along with them!" hooted Loder. "Why, they gave me the frog's-march—me, a prefect! One of the cheeky little beasts kicked me in the ribs!"

Walker shrugged his shoulders.

"To-day's Monday," he said. "With all the Remove thrashed on your account on Tuesday, how do you think they're likely to vote on Wednesday?"

"Oh, rot!" snarled Loder.

"Well, I dare say Gwynne will make a good skipper," grinned Walker. "In point of fact, he'll make a better skipper than you, Gerald, old bean—only, he doesn't happen to be a friend of mine. Don't play the goat, old man; play to win. You can take it out of the fags afterwards! If you get in as captain, the Head's pretty certain to make you head prefect. Then you can do as you jolly well like."

Gerald Loder did not answer; his face was sullen. It went bitterly against the grain with him to let anybody off punishment; and especially fellows whom he disliked so intensely as Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove.

But he knew that Walker's advice was good. He had made a party for himself in the Fifth and the Sixth, but he knew very well that the mass of junior votes would weigh very heavily in the election. Fags who would not have taken the trouble to vote at all would roll up to vote against the bully of the Sixth. Loder would gladly have disfranchised the whole of the Lower School, had it been in his power to do so. But as that

was not in his power, evidently it behoved him to conciliate them.

After all, as Walker had remarked, he could "take it out" of them afterwards. A little civility would cost nothing.

It was against the grain, but Loder made up his mind to it. After tea he left the study with Walker.

"Going to the Head?" asked Walker, with a grin.

"Well, yes."

And Gerald Loder went along to the Head's study to see Dr. Locke, on the unprecedented mission of intervening to save offenders from punishment.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Wingate Explains!

"NOT for Joseph!"

Gwynne of the Sixth spoke very emphatically.

Wingate, standing by his study window, looked across at his friend, who was sitting on the study table. Gwynne was looking determined.

"Look here, Gwynne—"

"Cut it out!" said Gwynne decidedly.

"I hope you'll have sense enough to withdraw your resignation, old scout, before the election. Anyhow, I'm not standing in your place."

"I want you to, Gwynne. I don't think I made a bad captain of the school," said Wingate, "but I think you'll be as good, at least."

"Thanks! But I'm not taking any."

"Loder's pretty certain to put up," said George Wingate. "In fact, I know that Walker is going to propose him, and Carne to second."

"Let him!"

"It will be a pretty rotten thing for Greyfriars with a man like Loder in command," said Wingate. "I don't want to run the fellow down, but, between ourselves, we know he's a bad hat. I've got jolly good reason to suspect that the reason why he let us down in the Highcliffe match was because he had been out of bounds the night before, and was tired out with playing the goat."

"Only too jolly likely," agreed Gwynne.

"Well, that's not the kind of captain we want here," said Wingate. "Captain of the school is always captain of football here. Loder isn't the man, and you know it, Gwynne."

"I know it."

"Then you'll stand, old chap."

"Then you'll withdraw your resignation, old chap!" grinned Gwynne.

"I can't!"

"Rats!"

"It's really impossible, Gwynne," said George Wingate, with a deeply troubled look. "It's out of the question, old man."

"I'll believe that when I know the reason."

"I can't tell you the reason."

"Gammon!" said Gwynne. "It's just a whim—a bee you've got in your bonnet! Take it back before it's too late!"

"I can't!"

Gwynne whistled. He was a good deal attached to Wingate, but he was a good deal exasperated by him, too. Wingate's resignation of the captaincy had been a blow to his friends.

Wingate took a few turns up and down his study. He was deeply troubled in his mind. Gwynne was the fellow he had most confidence in to take the place he had resigned. He was deeply anxious to keep the black sheep of the Sixth out of it. His own personal distaste for

Loder did not enter into it—consciously, at least. It was the good of the school he was thinking of, and it was only too clear that Gerald Loder's captaincy would do Greyfriars no good.

"Look here, Gwynne." He halted at last and stood before his friend. "Look here. If I tell you my reason for resigning, and you see it's impossible for me to withdraw, will you stand then?"

Gwynne nodded.

"If I see that it's impossible, I'm your man," he said. "But not unless."

"I—I never meant to breathe a word about it," said George Wingate, "and it's in confidence, of course. It was through my minor."

"What the thump has a fag of the Third to do with the captaincy of the school?"

"A lot, as it happens," said Wingate ruefully. "I had to resign just when I did, or else—or else—" He broke off, colouring painfully.

"Or else—what?"

"Or else report my brother to the Head, to be flogged or sacked, for punishing!"

"Oh, holy smoke!"

Gwynne stared in astonishment at the late captain of Greyfriars. George Wingate's face was crimson.

"That young rotter—" ejaculated Gwynne.

"I caught him out of bounds at the Cross Keys," muttered Wingate. "As a prefect, as captain of the school, I was bound to report him. His being my brother made no difference to that. It wasn't the first time, either. I knew that. He might have got off with a flogging. It might have been the long jump for him. I couldn't stand it. I—I had to keep it dark, but I couldn't keep it dark and keep my position too. One dashed blackguard in the family is enough. I couldn't do that."

"I—I suppose you couldn't," said Gwynne slowly. "It would have been pretty rotten."

"A bit too rotten for the captain of Greyfriars," said Wingate, with a faint smile. "As it was, I know I cut it rather fine. I was still a prefect when I spotted him. But I resigned at once. As nobody in particular I'm not bound to report anybody. That's the business of the prefects."

Gwynne whistled softly.

"I wish you'd reported the young rascal instead of resigning," he said. "You're too soft, George, old man."

"Possibly. But he's only a kid—a silly kid. And—and there's the people at home," muttered Wingate. "The pater and—the mater. It's no good talking about it. I couldn't do it, and the only thing was to resign. I couldn't keep my position and screen him. Now you see how it stands. I can't withdraw my resignation. I can't accept a prefectship if the Head offers it to me again. My first duty would be to report my brother. You see how it stands?"

"I see."

"That lets me out," said Wingate. "Mind, this is in confidence. I'm speaking to you as a pal, not as a prefect."

"That's understood, of course."

"Then you'll stand in the election?" asked Wingate anxiously.

There was a pause, but Gwynne nodded at last.

"If you mean to stand by that young blackguard through thick and thin, you're done as captain of Greyfriars," he said. "If you're keen on the 'brother's keeper' stunt—"

"It's settled, anyhow."

Gwynne slid off the table.



"I don't blame you juniors for standing by Wingate," said Loder. "I spoke to him in rather a rotten way, and I'm going to apologise to him for the words I used." "Oh!" "But that's neither here nor there!" said Loder cheerily. "To come down to brass tacks, I'm overlooking what you did this afternoon. I've explained to the Head that you Remove men were a bit excited, and misunderstood things a little, and begged him to let you off on that account." (See Chapter 9.)

"Well, I'll put up in the election," he said. "I dare say Loder will beat me at the poll; but if I get in I'll keep the place warm for you, ready for when you come to your senses, old bean."

"You'll tell our friends that I've explained about my resignation, without going into details," said Wingate. "I shall back you up, and I fancy a lot of the Sixth will follow my example, though I'm no longer captain. And when you get in as skipper, Gwynne, I'll back you up all along the line just as you've done for me."

"I'd rather it were the other way about," said Gwynne. "And I think you're an ass, old man. But I'll put in my name as a giddy candidate."

"Do. Go and see the Head about it now."

"Oh, all right."

Gwynne of the Sixth left the study, leaving George Wingate with a more contented expression than his face had worn for some days. Gwynne, however, was not looking contented. He was satisfied with second place, and had no keen ambition to fill the first place in the limelight. And he was deeply and savagely exasperated with Jack Wingate, the miserable and insignificant young rascal in the Third Form who had caused all the trouble with his dingy e-say in blackguardism.

As it happened, on his way to the Head's study he came on Jack Wingate, leaving Mr. Twigg's study with a sheaf of impot-paper under his arm, and a scowl on his face. Wingate minor had delivered his impot, but the master of the Third had not been satisfied therewith. Hastily scrawled lines, adorned with blots and smears, did not meet with Mr. Twigg's approval, and Jack Wingate had been given his imposition to write over again. Hence the sullen scowl on his face.

Gwynne frowned as he saw him, strongly tempted to box the young rascal's ears. He restrained that impulse for Wingate major's sake. But the scapegrace of the Third was in a mood to ask for trouble. Gwynne had always been kind to him, on his

brother's account, and very good-tempered and patient, and it was like the cheeky fag to presume upon it. He brushed roughly past the Sixth-Former as he went down the passage.

That was the last straw. Any other fag who brushed roughly past a prefect was booked for a licking, and in the present instance Gwynne was in no mood to make allowances for his chum's minor.

Greatly to his surprise, Jack Wingate found himself grabbed by his collar and swung back.

"Let go!" he shouted.

Gwynne gave him a grim look.

"Is that the way you talk to a prefect?" he asked. "Isn't it about time you learned manners?"

"Take your paw off my collar!"

"My what?"

"Your silly paw!" snarled the fag.

Gwynne breathed deep and hard. He did not take his "paw" off Jack Wingate's collar. He tightened his grip and marched the sullen, resisting fag to his study. There he picked up a cane.

"Bend over that chair!" he said curtly.

"I won't!"

"You won't?" smiled Gwynne. "We shall see about that, my lad! I'm about fed-up with your airs and graces, and I rather blame myself for not having taken some of them out of you before! It might have saved your brother a lot of trouble! Bend over!"

Wingate minor eyed him sullenly, without obeying. With a twist of his powerful arm, Gwynne bent him over the chair, and then the cane rose and fell with heavy whacks.

"That's six!" said Gwynne, throwing down the cane. "Now cut! And take that scowl off your face before I see you again, or I'll give you another six."

Wingate minor, trembling with passion, left the study, and wriggled his way back to the Third Form room. Gwynne proceeded to the Head's study to give in his name as a candidate in the captain's election, and he passed Loder of the Sixth coming out, in the Head's doorway.

That evening all Greyfriars knew that there were two Sixth Form candidates for the captaincy—Loder and Gwynne. And the excitement on the subject was intense.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Loder Surprises the Remove!

"**R**ALLY round!"
"Yes, rather!"
"The rallyfulness is terrific!"
"Up against Loder all along the line!"

"Hear, hear!"

In the Remove passage a crowd of fellows discussed the coming captain's election with great excitement.

There was scarcely a dissentient voice in the Remove when it was known for a fact that Gerald Loder was standing. The Remove were up against the bully of the Sixth. As one man they were going to roll up on Wednesday afternoon and vote against Loder.

Gwynne, his opponent, was rather popular, especially as a chum of Wingate's. But if the rival candidate had been North, or Lucas, or even Walker or Carne, the Remove would have backed him, on account of their long-standing and deep-seated feud with Loder of the Sixth. The heavy hand of the Sixth Form bully had been felt too often in the Lower Fourth to be forgotten. And his insulting manners towards the fallen captain of the school deeply incensed the juniors, who liked and admired Wingate.

"Rally round!" repeated Bob Cherry in the crowded passage after tea. "That's the giddy watchword—rally round!"

"The rallyfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Singh. "The esteemed and ludicrous Gwynne is our man."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Down with Loder!" roared Bolsover major. "The cad's got us a licking from Quekhy! Down with him!"

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 926.



THE GREYFRIARS HERALD



No. 247. HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR. Week Ending Nov. 7th.



EXCEPT for a break of five years—from 1870 to 1875—Greyfriars has celebrated Guy Fawkes' Day ever since 1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot. It has always been the custom to build an enormous bonfire, and to cast weird and grotesque effigies to the flames.

Formerly, the bonfire was always built in the Close; and its proximity to the school building proved a source of danger. In 1862, on the night of the Fifth, a strong wind from the sea blew the flames towards the building, with the result that a serious fire occurred. Happily no lives were lost, but a great deal of damage had been done before the Courtfield Fire Brigade—a very primitive affair in those days—succeeded in extinguishing the flames.

In consequence of this calamity, the headmaster of that period forbade Guy Fawkes celebrations; and for five years Greyfriars had to dispense with its bonfire. Fireworks were also banned by the school authorities; but this ban was evidently winked at, for lots of fellows contrived, in some mysterious manner, to smuggle fireworks into the school. In 1872, the reckless pupils of the Remove Form held a pyrotechnic display in their dormitory. Sky-rockets were discharged from the windows, and went screeching over the towers and turrets of Greyfriars; and all sorts of fireworks were thrown down into the Close in a state of indignation. One foolish youngster discharged a rocket inside the dormitory, under the impression that it was a firework of a non-soaring kind. The rocket hit the ceiling with the velocity of a bullet from a machine gun; and a shower of plaster came down on to the heads of the merry-makers. The juniors stared aghast at the hole in the ceiling which the rocket had made.

Of course, the masters were quickly on the scene, and there was a grim day of reckoning for the Guy Fawkes celebrators. The unfortunate youth who had fired the rocket was awarded a sound dozen with the birch; the captain of the Form received a similar dose; and many others were also flogged. Naturally, the Head took a very serious view of the outrage, for it might easily have resulted in a terrible fire.

In 1876, a new headmaster agreed to the revival of Guy Fawkes celebrations, with the proviso that the bonfire should be built on the football field, and not in the Close, as in former years.

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Since that time there have been no big calamities. At the same time, there have been some very exciting Bonfire Nights.

In 1895, an unpopular master named Prye had an alarming experience. A jumping-cracker became entangled in the folds of his gown, and set it alight. Fortunately, a couple of thoughtful juniors had brought the hosepipe down to the football ground in case of accidents, and they promptly gave Mr. Prye a very thorough baptism. They extinguished him, and distinguished themselves. Perhaps the hosepipe played upon Mr. Prye rather longer than was necessary. Still, as I have said, he was an unpopular master, and doubtless deserved it. History tells us that Mr. Prye was very much "put out" by the incident.

A few years later, Greyfriars had a very unhappy Bonfire Night. It was a wild, wet night, and the bonfire stubbornly refused to burn, although dozens of flaming torches were thrust into it. Scores of fellows exhausted themselves in trying to stir the smouldering mass into a blaze, but all their efforts were unavailing. The fireworks, too, were thoroughly soaked by the rain, and very few would light. That particular Bonfire Night was a "wash-out," in every sense of the term. The Head was petitioned, next day, to allow the Guy Fawkes celebrations to take place on the next fine night. He sportingly agreed, with the result that another bonfire was erected on the evening of the 9th of November. It blazed up merrily on this occasion, and its ruddy glow could be seen for miles around.

Another Bonfire Night is now due, and the excited juniors tell me that it's going to beat all previous records. Over fifty guys have been manufactured, and goodness knows how many crates of fireworks have been delivered at the school during the last few days.

I have no doubt that the Fifth will be celebrated in rousing style; and I shall become a care-free fag again, for the occasion, and throw myself heart and soul into the festivities.

Next Week:
A GRAND
GYMNASTIC NUMBER!



"PLEASE to remember the Fifth of November!"

We shall remember it at Greyfriars, all serene. In fact, there is not the slightest danger of our forgetting it. During the last week the noble army of guy-makers has been hard at work, and many fearful and wonderful effigies will be carried to the bonfire on the night of "the Fifth."

It seems rather a shame, when you come to think of it, that the careful work of many leisure hours will all be destroyed in one hectic moment. Dicky Nugent's guy, for instance, is an elaborate representation of Billy Bunter. It is the plumpest guy you ever saw, and Dicky and his fellow-fags have taken no end of pains with it. It is Bunter to the life, even to the spectacles perched on the snub little nose! (They are not real specs, of course. Dicky bought them at a toyshop in Eriardale.)

This effigy of William George Bunter, planned with great care, and fashioned with much toil, will be burnt to glory before you can say "Guy!" What the feelings of Billy Bunter will be when he sees his "double" roasting we can only conjecture. I imagine that the fat junior will bristle with righteous indignation against the merry guy-makers of the Second!

Amongst the many other guys in the procession there will be an effigy of Guido Fawkes himself. This is the work of Micky Desmond. The Famous Five have chosen Coker of the Fifth as a fitting subject for a guy, and our effigy of the great Horace is a real work of art. We have hidden it in a secret place until the evening of the Fifth; for Coker knows of the guy's existence, and he will leave no stone unturned to get hold of it. But Coker, search he ever so diligently, will be unlucky. "The hiding-place of the guy is a deep, dark secret."

The humorous Skinner has had the audacity to manufacture a guy of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. The effigy has been suitably bedecked with gown and mortar-board, and it will bear the inscription:

"THE NERO OF GREYFRIARS!"

I can't help saying that Skinner's perverted sense of humour has carried him a little too far. The suggestion that Mr. Quelch is a tyrant is in rank bad taste. Certainly he comes down heavily at times, but he is a gentle lamb compared with the tyrant Emperor who fiddled while Rome was burning. I should advise Skinner, while there is yet time, to take his guy to some lonely spot and destroy it. If he dares to exhibit it on Bonfire Night, under the nose of Mr. Quelch, he will "get it in the neckful portion of his anatomy," as Hurree Singh would say.

HARRY WHARTON.



Fire, Flame and Fury!

By
TOM BROWN

An Interview with
WILLIAM GOSLING

"If ever a man deserved to be 'anged, drawn, an' quartered, an' then put in the pillory, an' then stoned in the stocks, that man was Guy Fox!" said Gosling, with great deliberation. "E were a wrong 'un, Master Brown—a habbsolute wrong 'un, as ever was! A bad hegg, that's wot 'e was!"

"Rats!" I retorted. "I regard jolly old Guy Fawkes as a public benefactor. If it wasn't for him there would be no bonfires, no fireworks, no torchlight processions, no nothing!"

"An' a good thing, too!" said Gosling fiercely. "I don't 'old with these 'ere Guy Fox celebrations! A hannual hannyancee, that's wot they are! An' that feller Guy Fox—drat 'im!—oughter 'ave been drowned at birth! Do you know wot 'e done? 'E smuggled 'isselt down in the vaults of the 'ouses of Parliament, an' 'e tried to blow up the King an' all 'is Ministers!"

"I don't believe it, Gossy," I said, smiling. "I believe old Guido was only rotting—putting the wind up the troops, as we would say nowadays. I believe he only did it for a lark."

"Well, 'e lost 'is 'ead over the job, an' serve 'im right!" said Gosling savagely.

There was a pause. It was the evening of "The Fifth," and we were standing outside Gosling's lodge. Dusk had fallen, and very soon the festivities would begin, and the fun would be fast and furious. There would be a torchlight procession in the Close and a

parade of guys, and then a march down to the football ground, where a big bonfire would be lighted. My heart beat high at the prospect of all this, but Gosling's face was dark and angry.

"If I was the 'Ead," said Gosling, "I'd abolicate Guy Fox Day to-morrow!"

"Well, that would be all right, so long as you didn't 'abolicate' it to-night!" I said, laughing.

"I 'ates fireworks!" growled Gosling. "I can't stand the sight of 'em, nor the smell of 'em, nor the flashin' an' bangin' of 'em!"

"Fireworks are ripping!" I said, with enthusiasm. "I've got a bundle of squibs in my pocket—"

Gosling sprang back in alarm.

"Don't you go a-loosin' of 'em off here, Master Brown! I can't abide 'em! Wot I says is this 'ere—'Allo! Wot's all this?'"

The darkened Close suddenly became animated with rushing figures. Fellows came pouring out of the school building, carrying weird and grotesque guys. Torches were lighted, and they flared in the wind. There was a clamour of merry voices.

Gosling surveyed the scene with a jaundiced eye. Presently he gave a violent start.

"My heye!" he ejaculated. "The—the owdaious young rips! They've actually got a guy of me—William Gosling!"

"And a jolly clever guy, too!" I said. "It's you to the life, Gossy—uniform and all!"

The effigy which represented our aged and venerable porter was being carried by Rus-

sell and Ogilvy. Where those bright youths had obtained the uniform from, goodness only knows; but it was there, all complete, and the dummy figure carried a broom. Russell and Ogilvy bore it along, laughing uproariously.

"The—the cheeky young warmints!" roared Gosling. "They're goin' to put me on the bonfire—leastways, not me, but me double! I won't let 'em do it! I'll collar that there guy—"

And Gosling, with a bellow the bull of Bashan might have envied, made a sudden rush towards the hilarious juniors.

At that precise moment there was a series of bangs and flashes, and Gosling found himself surrounded by leaping, sputtering fireworks. Jumping crackers leapt at him from the darkness; there was a constant crack, crack, crack! of exploding squibs, and Gosling leaped high in the air. He established a record for the veterans' high jump, the previous best having been put up by Methuselah.

"Yaroooooh!" yelled Gosling, in wild alarm. "You—you mad-brained young 'ooligans! My trowsls 'as caught fire! 'Elp!"

"Forward, the fire brigade!" roared Russell. "Gossy's on fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of feet towards the hapless Gosling, and he was seized by many hands and whirled away towards the school fountain.

"In with him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ellup!" panted Gosling. "Wot ate you doin' of, you young villains?"

Splash!

The unfortunate Gosling was whirled off his feet, and the next moment he was floundering in the wide bowl of the fountain. If he had indeed been on fire, the outbreak was thoroughly extinguished now!

Spluttering and gurgling, the unhappy Gosling scrambled out of his unwelcome bath and squelched savagely away to his lodge. I had not finished interviewing him, nor did I intend to. Gosling was in no state to be interviewed just then. I would rather have interviewed a lion in his den than William Gosling at that moment.

The next day found Gosling more convinced than ever that "Guy Fox Day" ought to be "abolicated"!



GUY FORKS!

From an Essay by
Bolsover Minor.

House of Lords, and blow up the King and all his Ministers."

"Blow 'em sky-high, by all means!" said Winter. "But how are you going to get into the place?"

"Easy enuff," said the ingenious Guy. "There's a pal of mine—a fellow named Thomas Percy—who happens to live next door to the Houses of Parlyment. I shall go to him, under the name of Johnson, and he will engage me as his servant. One dark night I shall sneak into the seller under the House of Lords, and smuggle enuff gunpowder there to blow half London to smithereens!"

"My hat!" gasped Winter. "But—but you'll be blown up yourself, Guy, when you fire the gunpowder!"

Guy Forks laughed.

"I'll chance that," he said lightly. "It will be for a good cause, anyway. You'll come back to England with me, won't you, Winter?"

"Yes, rather! But I'm not coming down into the seller with you, thanks! Life is too preashus!"

So the two plotters returned to England, where they were joined by other plotters. And they all put their heads together, and decided that November the Fifth, 1605, would be a ripping night for carrying out Guy's great stunt. But most of the plotters were craven cowherds. They wanted to get rid of the King and the Parlyment, but they didn't want to get blown up in the process. So they arranged that Guy Forks himself should do the dangerous part of the blizzness. Guy didn't mind a bit.

But there was a trayter in the ranks of the plotters, and this tretcheros bound sneaked to the Guvverment.

On the fateful night of the Fifth, when Guy Forks was on his knees in the seller, groping for his wax vesters, he was suddenly pounced upon by the King's men.

The game was up; and the dark, daring, dasterly, diabollicle plot of Guy Forks was never executed. But Guy was! On January 31st, 1606, he was marched to the scaffold, where he got it in the neck good and proper. Several of the other plotters had their heads chopped off at the same time.

The last words of Guy Forks were: "I have lit a candle in England which will never be put out!" This was a figger of speech, meaning that the Gunpowder Plot would never be forgotten. And, sure enuff, it is remembered and sellybrated to this day. We make guys and build bonfires and let off fireworks, and we chant the well-known ditty:

"Remember, remember,
The Fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot;
When Guido, poor feller,
Was nabbed in the seller,
And afterwards caught it red-hot!"

DON'TS FOR THE FIFTH!

DON'T hold a jumping-cracker in front of your face after you have ignited it, or you'll be a jumping-cracker yourself!

DON'T fall asleep on the footer-field, or some short-sighted person might mistake you for a guy and shove you on the bonfire!

DON'T forget to wash your chivvies after winding up the celebrations on the Fifth, or the House dame will have something to say when she sees the smoke-begrimed pillow-cases. Then there'll be more fireworks on the Sixth!

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GUY FORKS was the man who invented gunpowder. Most people think he was a Spannyard, but as a matter of fact, he was born in Yorkshire. Being fond of fighting and bludshed, he joined the Spanulsh Army when he grew up.

One summer, he met a man named Winter, and they started discussing the state of England at that period.

"What's your opinion of King James, Guy?" asked Winter.

"I think he's a wash-out," answered Guy Forks promptly. "I have already decided to get rid of him, and he ain't a-going to reign no more!"

"Good! And what do you think of the House of Lords?"

"Bah! A lot of fops and frumps!" said Guy Forks contemptuously. "What they want is a jolly good blowing-up. I vote we go back to England Winter, and store some sacks of gunpowder in the seller of the



(Continued from page 13.)

"Six in the morning!" grinned Peter Todd. "Loder's got us six in the morning, but we'll give him the kybosh at three in the afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared over Peter's little jest. The election was timed for three on Wednesday afternoon, but the "six" on Tuesday morning were, of course, the six strokes from Mr. Quelch's cane.

That dread sentence worried most of the Removites. Lord Mauleverer said dismally that he was going to dream about it all night. It was all that was needed, if anything was needed, to make the Removites back up enthusiastically against Loder. Even Skinner, who had a sneaking admiration for Loder as a first-class sportsman and blackguard, was determined to vote against him in revenge for the licking.

"The Remove vote will very likely turn the scale," said Harry Wharton. "Every man's got to roll up and give Loder the kybosh."

"You bet!"

"Most of the fags will vote against him," said Squiff. "Nobody in the Lower School likes Loder."

"Well, some of the fags will vote as they're told," said Hazeldene. "Walker's backing Loder, and he will jolly well thrash his fag if he doesn't vote for Walker's man."

"That's not fair play!" exclaimed Bob Cherry hotly.

"Not at all; but there it is," grinned Hazeldene. "Is there ever any fair play in elections?"

"Well, there ought to be," said Bob. "Every chap ought to vote according to his conscience, after thinking the matter out. I'll jolly well punch any Remove chap who doesn't vote for Gwynne!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Hazel.

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Bob. "We've got to back the best man, and Gwynne's the best man, isn't he? Bunter was saying something about voting for Loder. Let me catch him at it!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is! My hat! You look as if you've been through it, Bunter!"

"That beast, Loder——"

"Loder again?" said Harry Wharton.

"I've been through it! I've had an awful time! The beast chased me round his study table, you know, swiping me with a cane. Then that ass Walker got in the way when I was bolting, and I hurt my head on his waistcoat——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The brute wouldn't even listen to me, you know," groaned Bunter. "Just pitched into me, like the beastly bully he is. I say, you fellows, I'm going to vote against Loder on Wednesday!"

"Good egg!"

"Did you go to Loder to tell him so?" grinned Skinner. "That was rather asking for it, wasn't it?"

"No. I went to make him an offer," said Bunter. "You see, Loder could get us off that licking to-morrow morning, if he liked. I was going to offer to vote

for him if he'd speak to the Head and get me off. See?"

"Why, you fat worm!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"And didn't Loder cack?" chuckled Skinner.

"He never even listened to a chap!" groaned Bunter. "He suspected that I'd come to his study to bag something from his cupboard. As if I would, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I'm jolly sore!" said Bunter, dismally. "I've been in severe pain for an hour or more—awful pain, in fact. I'm hungry, too. My postal-order never came by the afternoon post, as I expected——"

"Go hou!"

"There's still time to cut down to the tuckshop before it closes," said Bunter. "Only, you see, the last post is in, and my postal-order hasn't come. If you like to lend me the five bob, Cherry——"

"Bow-wow!"

"If you like to lend me the half-crown, Inky, you can have the postal-order as soon as ever it comes in the morning."

"The likefulness is not terrific."

"Make it a bob, Wharton."

"Ask me again at Christmas," said the captain of the Remove.

"If you've got a tanner about you, Nugent——"

"Two or three," said Frank Nugent cheerfully. "I'm keeping them about me, too."

"I say, Johnny——"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Johnny Bull. "You chaps, I think we'd better scrag Bunter for offering his vote to Loder. He might catch Loder in a better temper another time, and offer it again."

"Good wheeze. Collar him!"

"Yah!"

Bunter vanished into Study No. 7 and slammed the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Loder!" shouted Bob Cherry suddenly. "Coming up into our passage, by Jove!"

"Cheek!"

"Rush him!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as two or three excited fellows made a movement.

"The rushfulness is the proper caper," exclaimed Hurree Singh. "The excellent and disgusting Loder has got us a licking——"

"One's enough," said Wharton. "Keep cool, you chaps. If we handle Loder again it means a Head's licking as well as one from Quelch."

"Something in that," said Tom Brown. "Let him rip!"

Loder of the Sixth came up the Remove staircase. The crowd of juniors in the Remove passage eyed him almost wolfishly.

They fairly yearned to lay hands on the bully of the Sixth, roll him along the passage, and roll him down to the next landing. It really seemed rather reckless of Loder to venture into the Lion's den in this way, perfect as he was. It had been demonstrated once to him, that very day, that the Remove sometimes forgot the respect due to a prefect.

But the juniors restrained their vengeful impulse. They were "for it" already for having handled Loder, and enough

was as good as a feast, when it came to lickings.

But their looks showed that they would not be very patient with Gerald Loder. If he had come to the Remove quarters to exercise his usual bullying proclivities, it was certain that there would be an outbreak.

But for once Loder was not looking domineering, or aggressive, or unpleasant. There was actually a genial smile on his face as he came up to the crowd of lowering juniors. He gave the captain of the Remove a pleasant nod, much to his astonishment.

"I've just looked in to say a few words to you Remove men," said Loder agreeably.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Pinch me!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is a dream!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We had some trouble to-day," said Loder. "Now, you fellows shouldn't have done what you did. You know as well as I do that there's such a thing as discipline. But thinking the matter over, I've come to the conclusion that I was rather in the wrong, and I don't mind saying so, though it's not usual for a prefect to speak like this to Lower School fellows. The fact is, I said something jolly unpleasant to Wingate of the Sixth, and you heard me. You all like Wingate——"

"We do!" said Bob.

"And you're right," said Loder. "Wingate's one of the best; and it's a great loss for Greyfriars that he's resigned the captaincy."

"Oh!"

"I can see that as well as anybody," said Loder blandly. "We shall never get another skipper like old Wingate, because there isn't another man in the school of the same quality. I don't blame you juniors for standing by him. I spoke to him in a rather rotten way, and I'm going to apologise to him for the words I used."

"Oh!"

"But that's neither here nor there," said Loder cheerily. "To come down to brass tacks, I'm overlooking what you did this afternoon. I've explained to the Head that you Remove men were a bit excited, and misunderstood things a little, and begged him to let you off on that account."

"What?"

"Eh?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The Head's speaking to Mr. Quelch about it," said Loder. "There won't be any 'six' in the morning. It's all off. As the offended party, I had the right to beg you off, and I'm glad to say I was successful."

"Well!" gasped Harry Wharton. "My hat!"

"Of course, we're dreaming this," said Bob.

Loder laughed pleasantly.

"Just a word more," he said. "You Remove men got a bit out of hand, because you admire old Wingate so much. Well, you're right. You went to him to ask him to withdraw his resignation. I wish you'd succeeded."

"Phew!"

"I'm getting up a petition in the Sixth," went on Loder. "My idea is for the whole of the Sixth to put it to Wingate, and beg him to withdraw his resignation. We want him as captain of the school. If he consents, then the election on Wednesday is off, of course."

"Great Scott!"

"That's how the matter stands," said Loder. "We're drawing up a paper, and all the Sixth will sign it, asking Wingate to withdraw his resignation."

ANSWERS

Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

I want all the lower Forms to sign it, too. I hope I can rely on you Remove men to put in your names."

"Yes, rather!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"You—you—you mean it, Loder?" stammered Peter Todd.

"Certainly."

"Then—then I take back a lot of the things I've been thinking about you, Loder," said Toddy candidly.

Loder smiled.

"That's all right," he said. "We've had our little troubles, and we don't always see eye to eye; but in this matter we're quite in agreement; we want Wingate back in his old place."

"Hear, hear!"

"The paper will be on the table in the prefects' room to-morrow," said Loder. "I want every Greyfriars man, big and little, to sign it. That will prove to Wingate that the whole school wants him."

And Loder of the Sixth nodded to the juniors, and went down the Remove staircase, leaving the Remove absolutely dumbfounded.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Loder's Master Stroke!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned out of the Remove dormitory very cheerily the following morning.

There was no "six" after prayers.

Possibly Mr. Quelch was glad to be relieved of the hefty task of caning the whole Form. There was no doubt that the whole Form were relieved.

Opinion in the Remove, on the subject of Gerald Loder, was very much modified now.

Fellows who had expected a severe caning, and escaped from the same most unexpectedly, could not help feeling obliged to the prefect who had begged them off.

They had handled Loder, and handled him severely, and it was Loder who had weighed in to save them from the consequences.

It was unexpectedly and amazingly kind of Loder.

That it was an electioneering dodge, in view of the coming election, was a natural suspicion, on second thoughts; nevertheless, there it was; there was no "six" after prayers.

Moreover, was it an electioneering dodge? According to what Loder had said, there was to be no election at all if he could prevent it.

If the election took place, Gwynne and Loder stood as the rival candidates; but if Wingate withdrew his resignation, the whole thing was off, and George Wingate would be captain of Greyfriars again.

That was a consummation devoutly to be wished, from the point of view of most of the school; but nobody had expected Loder to take that view. Many who knew him, had suspected that, somehow or other, he had had a hand in bringing about Wingate's resignation. Wingate's motives were totally unknown and mysterious; but he was not the fellow to act on a sudden whim; he had a motive, and a strong one, whatever it was. And Harry Wharton & Co. had wondered whether Loder had somehow had something to do with it—and knowing that Loder had taken up the captain's minor, they had even wondered whether Jack Wingate was involved in the matter somehow—in which they had drifted very near to the facts.

But Loder's new move took the wind out of the sails of his detractors, as it were.

It amazed his own friends in the Sixth.

It amazed Wingate.

Vernon Smith, after thinking the matter out, declared in the Remove that it was all gammon; but for once the sagacious Bounder was wrong. It was not gammon; for that day, the paper lay on the table in the prefects' room for all Greyfriars to sign.

It was known that the headmaster had accepted Wingate's resignation reluctantly; it was fairly certain that he would welcome the captain of Greyfriars back in his old place. All, therefore, depended on George Wingate's decision. That the whole school—including Gerald Loder—wanted him to resume the captaincy, was made clear by the lengthy document which was soon covered with signatures—Loder's standing at the head of it.

Harry Wharton & Co., much puzzled, were driven to the conclusion that they had misjudged Loder.

If the petition had its expected effect, the election would be off, and Loder's supposed ambitions would be knocked completely on the head.

And how could it fail?

Whatever might be George Wingate's unknown motives for resigning, could

he persist in his resignation in the face of a demand from the whole school that he should resume his old place?

It did not seem likely.

Not content with inaugurating this extraordinary movement, Loder of the Sixth took the trouble to canvas for signatures that day. He interviewed Coker of the Fifth, and persuaded that great man to sign; and, of course, Potter and Greene signed, too, and nearly all the Fifth. Junior signatures were sprawled all over the paper; even Lord Mauleverer exerted himself to saunter into the prefects' room and sign—and a blotty, smeary smudge announced that W. G. Bunter had also exerted himself. Tubby & Co. of the Third rolled up as one man. Only one name in the Third was missing, and that, curiously enough, was Wingate minor. Jack Wingate was the only Third-Former who did not seem to care whether his brother remained captain of the school or not. Of all the Sixth, only Gwynne's signature was lacking—and that excited considerable surprise, as he was Wingate's chum. It gave rise to a suspicion that Gwynne of the Sixth was letting ambition triumph over friendship, and certainly did harm to his popularity.

But Gwynne had no choice in the



There was a storm of cheering, and many hands were raised in support of Loder. Billy Bunter made an attempt to vote with both hands, but Mr. Quelch called him sharply to order, and only one of Bunter's fat paws was counted. The two Form-masters proceeded to count, amid a buzz of suppressed voices. By the show of hands it was pretty obvious that Loder would be selected captain of Greyfriars school. (See Chapter 12.)

matter. Knowing Wingate's motive, he knew that his friend could not withdraw his resignation; and, knowing that, it would have been sheer humbug to sign the paper. His abstention surprised all the school—excepting Loder. To Loder, it simply revealed the fact that Wingate must have confided the truth to Gwynne.

The petition was to be presented to Wingate after tea that day; and the general opinion was that he would give in, and do as all the school desired.

"Loder's not a bad chap," said Bob Cherry, at tea in Study No. 1 that afternoon. "We've had a lot of trouble with him, and he's no end of a bully; but I really think he must be all right at heart."

"He seems to realise that Wingate's the best man going, as captain of the school," remarked Nugent.

"It beats me," confessed Harry. "I never expected anything like it from Loder. I even thought well, it seems that I was wrong. I suppose it's dawned on Loder that Wingate's the best man for the job."

"Anyhow, it's a great wheeze, and Wingate simply can't refuse," said Johnny Bull. "But if he does—"

"Oh, he won't!" said Bob cheerily.

"No, I think he can't. But if he does, I'm rather blessed if I don't vote for Loder in the election. It can't be said that he hasn't done his very best to keep Wingate in the job."

"And Gwynne hasn't," said Bob. "That's a bit of a surprise—I thought Gwynne would jump at it. But he's not signed."

"Vaulting ambition!" grinned Nugent. "I suppose the idea of becoming captain of the school has got into his head a little."

"Well, I don't like to think that of Gwynne; but, dash it all, he ought to back up his own friend, especially with Loder giving the lead," said Bob. "Loder's backing up Wingate, though they're pretty well known to be enemies."

"It's decent of him," said Wharton. "Unless—unless there's something behind it that we don't catch on to."

"What could there be?" asked Bob, in astonishment.

"Blessed if I know!" said the captain of the Remove candidly. "I never trusted Loder, that's all. But a fellow has to admit that he seems to be playing the game straight enough now."

Similar opinions were expressed in many studies; Loder of the Sixth, for the first time in his career, was popular in the school. He was well aware of it, and he smiled to himself over it, as he sat in his study at tea with Walker and Carne. For his popularity in the Lower School, Gerald Loder did not care a button—he would rather have been feared than liked. But it was useful till the election was over—that was all Loder wanted. After the election, it was extremely probable that Gerald Loder's new popularity would vanish as suddenly as it had arisen.

Carne had a puzzled look on his face when he came into Loder's study and joined him and Walker at tea. He had just come from the prefect's room.

"How's the giddy petition goin'?" asked Loder.

"Practically every man in the school has signed," said Carne. "I've just left a crowd of the Second sticking on more smudges. Are you quite out of your senses, Loder?"

"I hope not."

"You've dished yourself properly, so far as I can see. Don't you want to bag the captaincy after all?"

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Loder grinned.

"Just a few?" he answered.

"Well, you've dished your chances. Wingate simply can't refuse to do as the whole school asks him. He will lose a jolly good many friends at Greyfriars if he does."

"Of course, that would be very painful to me," said Loder ironically. And Walker gave a chuckle.

"Well, he can't refuse," said Carne. "I don't know what he's got in his bonnet; but he can't stand out against the whole school."

"Perhaps he can," grinned Loder. "Perhaps it's absolutely impossible for him to withdraw his resignation."

"That's rot. How could it be impossible?"

"Well, it might be he might think so, at least. You see," drawled Loder. "I happen to know his reason, and it's a clincher. Wingate can't possibly withdraw his resignation, and he can't possibly give a public explanation of his motives. I haven't dished my chances, old man—I've dished Wingate, and I've dished Gwynne. I'm going to win the election to-morrow."

"Looks like a walk-over," chuckled Walker. "We're going to have a giddy time in the Sixth, Carne, old man, with Loder as captain. The jolly old bonds will be relaxed a little."

"More than a little," grinned Loder, "and the Lower School will be brought up to time pretty sharply. They don't fag the Remove under Wingate—but the Remove will be fagged when I'm captain of Greyfriars. Some of those cheeky young rotters will find life hardly worth living."

"Don't tell 'em so before to-morrow," said Walker.

"Ha, ha! No."

Arthur Carne stared at Loder.

"Then you know Wingate's reason for resigning?" he asked.

"I happen to know it."

"It's a real one—not a whim?"

"Quite."

"Blessed if I can understand it! It must be something shady, I should think," said Carne.

"Right on the nail—it's shady!" said Loder. "I won't go into particulars—what's the good? But Wingate's bound to stand by his resignation, and I don't risk anything by what I'm doing, or I jolly well shouldn't be doing it, old bean. Wingate will irritate a lot of the fellows by refusing to take any notice of the petition, and that's all to the good. He's been a little tin god at Greyfriars too long!"

"I'm with you there," agreed Carne. "But—"

"I fancy I've done a good electioneering stroke of business," said Loder, with a satisfied grin. "You'll see, old bean."

"Yes—if the election comes off," said Carne.

"It will come off all right!"

"Wait and see!" grinned Walker. "Pass the ham-sandwiches! Loder, you'll have to lick your fag for the way he's made these sandwiches—careless little scoundrel!"

"I'll make a note of it—for Thursday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

If that conversation in Loder's study had been overheard by Greyfriars generally, his new popularity would probably have evaporated on the spot. Fortunately for the candidate for election, it was not overheard.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Time of Asking!

"NO!" "Now, look here, Wingate," said Tom North.

"No!"

"Look at the giddy petition!" said Potter of the Fifth. "You can't turn down a thing like that, Wingate."

"You can't, indeed," said Gerald Loder, in his mildest tone. "It really isn't treating the school well, Wingate."

Wingate's rugged face was flushed and distressed. A party of the Sixth and Fifth had waited on him in his study, after tea, to present Loder's previous petition from the whole school. Loder was in the lead—he was glad to make himself conspicuous in such a popular movement—as he had the best of reasons for knowing that it could come to nothing, and could only cause George Wingate embarrassment.

Walker and North of the Sixth were with him, and Potter and Greene and Blundell of the Fifth—all First-eleven men. A buzzing of voices and a scuffling of feet in the passage outside indicated that a good many more fellows were at hand. The study door was half-open, so that the crowd outside could hear. Loder very particularly wanted them to hear.

"You see, it's like this," went on Loder. "The whole school wants you to play up, Wingate! You can take it from me that we all feel this seriously, because you and I, to be quite frank, have never been friends. We don't pull together, and you've recently hoofed me out of the first eleven. So if you find me as keen as the rest on your keeping the captaincy, you can take it that Greyfriars wants you."

"Well put!" said Walker.

"Bravo, Loder!" came a shout from the passage, in stentorian tones recognisable as Bob Cherry's.

That generous speech from the fellow whom the juniors had always considered the worst fellow in the Sixth, and the most unpleasant bully at Greyfriars, had an immense effect on all hearers.

Wingate was surprised himself. His distrust of Loder was great; but he had no fault to find with him now. It never even crossed his mind that Loder knew the cause of his resignation, and knew that he could not withdraw it without being bound in honour to give his minor up to the Head's sentence.

"Good man, Loder!" called out Temple of the Fourth. "You can't refuse now, Wingate."

"Say the word, old pippin!" shouted Bob Cherry; and there was a laugh.

"Look at the petition!" urged Greene of the Fifth, as Wingate did not speak. "It's signed by nearly every man at Greyfriars."

"I believe only two fellows have left it unsigned," said Loder. "I forget the names—"

"Wingate minor and Gwynne of the Sixth," said Walker.

Wingate set his lips.

"Well, that shows that nobody has been forced to sign," said Loder. "Any fellow who didn't want to sign left it alone, and there were only two in all the school. It's not often that a fellow gets a vote of confidence like this, Wingate, and really I must say I think you ought not to turn it down."

"It can't be helped," said Wingate. "I can't withdraw. I had a good reason for doing as I did, and that's the end of it. I dare say you meant well in this business, Loder, but I wish you'd left it alone!"

"I certainly meant well," said Loder. "I know what's for the good of the school—perhaps a little better than you do, Wingate, from the look of things. I say out plainly that you ought to take up the captaincy again after this."

"Hear, hear!"

"It can't be done, and that settles it. Any fellow who thinks that my opinion is worth anything will take my advice and vote for Gwynne to-morrow," said George Wingate.

"That's all very well!" said Potter. "You seem very keen on getting Gwynne in; he doesn't seem so keen on keeping you in, Wingate."

"Gwynne knows why I've resigned; I've told him," said Wingate quickly. "He knows I can't take it back."

"Then I don't see why you can't explain to the school," said Potter rather tartly. "We've always backed you up as captain, and we're entitled to an explanation when you practically throw us over."

"I know," said Wingate uncomfortably. "I feel that. But I can't go into it—it's a personal affair. But there it is—my resignation stands. Vote for Gwynne to-morrow—"

"Oh, bother Gwynne!" said Greene. "Never mind Gwynne! We want you, Wingate."

"Hear, hear!" came in a shout from the passage.

"I say, you fellows, bump him if he doesn't say 'Yes!'" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, once more, Wingate——" said Loder in his silkiest tone.

"Let it drop!" said Wingate. "I tell you it can't be done! My answer is 'No!' I'm sorry, but I can't give any other answer."

"That's not treating Greyfriars very well."

"That's my answer!" said Wingate curtly. Perhaps something shifty and malicious in Loder's eyes caught him, for his brow darkened. "The fact is, Loder, if you've done all this with good intentions I'm obliged to you; but—but you've never been keen on my account before. I hope I'm not doing you any injustice, but this looks to me——"

"Well, what does it look?" said Loder, with a sneer.

Wingate breathed hard.

"It looks to me as if you know something about the affair, and jolly well know that I can't withdraw my resignation," he said.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Potter, with a very curious look at the cad of the Sixth.

Loder reddened.

"I won't say anything in answer to that, Wingate," he said. "I'll leave it to the fellows to judge. So far as I can see, it was a sudden whim on your part to throw up the captaincy. If you've got any reason, you never told me—and I'm not a thought-reader. But after that, of course, it's impossible for me to say any more. If you distrust me to that extent I'd better step out."

And, with a great deal of dignity, Loder retired from Wingate's study.

An uncomfortable silence followed his exit.

Wingate was feeling extremely uncomfortable; his distrust of Loder was deep, but he felt that his suspicion was ungenerous, and ought not to have been uttered. He could read the same opinion in other faces.

"Well," said Potter at last, "it's no good keeping this on if Wingate really means business. I'm fed-up!"

"Sorry!" said Wingate. "I can't change my answer. If you're fed-up, Potter, chuck it."

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 10.—Lord Mauleverer (of the Remove).



A delightful combination of indolence and generosity, Herbert Plantagenet Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, is something of an enigma to his schoolfellows. Mauly must have been born tired, for to him even the spending of his money—and he is a millionaire—presents "too much tag." Give his lazy lordship a sofa, a well-filled cushion, and then leave him in peace and he'll fall asleep blessing you in about two seconds. Generous to a fault, Mauly finds it much easier to say "yes" than "no" when anyone seeks a favour of him. Thus, Bunter of the Remove has had cause to bless the day that Mauly turned up, for the slacker is a never-ending source of supply to the Owl when he's wanting cash.

Mauly shares study No. 12 with Sir Jimmy Vivian, a distant relative of his, and Piet Delarey, and this apartment is most luxuriously appointed. It is safe to say that Mauly has never done anyone an ill turn in his life and as a natural consequence he is very popular with his Form fellows. His guardian is Sir Reginald Brooke.

"Well, I don't see that there was any need to insult Loder, when he's done his best to keep you in the captaincy," said Potter. "It seems to me that Loder's shown up a good deal better than you have in this business."

And with that Potter of the Fifth walked out with Greene. The rest of the deputation followed him from the study with clouded faces. The petition was left on the table unheeded.

There was a deep groan in the passage as the door closed. A crowd of fellows expressed their feelings by groaning in chorus. Wingate of the Sixth had been cheered times without number, but this was the first time he had been groaned, and it made him wince.

"Blessed if I understand Wingate!" said Bob Cherry, as he walked away with his chums. "He's not treating us well."

"The treatfulness is not terrifically well," said Harree Jamset Ram Singh. "There will be an election, after all, to-morrow. How are my esteemed pals going to vote?"

"Gwynne, I suppose," said Harry Wharton, but he spoke rather dubiously. Loder had succeeded in making his peace with the Famous Five, and they had altered their opinion of him very considerably. But they had not quite

reached the point of deciding to vote for him, though a good many other fellows had.

"Well, I suppose we'd better stick to Gwynne," said Bob. "He's Wingate's pal, anyhow, and Loder's always been a bad egg. Up to now, at any rate. Not that I'm specially keen on Gwynne."

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. "I don't think I shall take the trouble to vote at all. I'd walk ten miles to back up old Wingate; but I'm not keen on Gwynne, especially as he never signed the petition."

"Wingate would like fellows to vote for Gwynne," said Frank Nugent. "If that counts for anything——"

"I don't see that it does," said Johnny Bull, with a grunt. "We've all asked him to keep the captaincy, and he's turned us down sharp enough. I shan't vote at all. It's a half-holiday to-morrow, and I'd give up a dozen half-holidays for Wingate, but I don't see wasting one on Gwynne. I'm going out for the afternoon."

"Same here," said Nugent, after some thought. "Loder's played up so well that I don't feel like voting against him. But I don't care about voting for him. I shall give the whole thing a miss."

"Well, I think I shall stay in and vote for Gwynne," said Harry.

"Please yourself, old scout."

Undoubtedly Gerald Loder had played his cards well. Even the Famous Five had forgotten their long-standing feud with him, and did not care to make any exertion to keep him out.

Loder was, in fact, popular for the moment. Wingate had turned him out of the first eleven, and he had returned a kiss for a blow, so to speak, by making an effort to keep Wingate in the captaincy. That he had failed was considered Wingate's fault, certainly not Loder's.

A good deal of electioneering was going on that evening. Gwynne was not keen on it, but Loder and his special friends were very keen. Billy Bunter was seen in a jammy and sticky state, announcing that he was going to vote for Loder; Coker of the Fifth let all Greyfriars know that Loder was his man. Loder, without exactly saying so, had given Coker the impression that he would be played in the first eleven under the new captaincy.

Certainly Coker would have had no chance under Gwynne's leadership. He would have no chance under Loder's, for that matter; but he did not know that, and he was quite enthusiastic about Gerald Loder's candidature. Coker did not think much of the Sixth, and made no secret of his low opinion of that great Form; but in the belief that Loder had picked him out to play for the school he uttered far and wide his conviction that Loder was the man Greyfriars had long wanted. And Loder had a way of making promises, or half-promises, to many fellows, which rallied them to his side.

Vernon-Smith of the Remove made a calculation that evening after listening to the talk in the passages and studies. His conclusion was that if all the fellows voted, the poll would be about evenly divided, and the winning candidate would get home by a majority of four or five or six. But it was not likely that all would vote—indeed, a good many fellows had declared their intention of giving the election a miss. Peter Todd voiced the opinion of a large number when he remarked:

"Wingate won't take the job on himself, and he seems to think he can give it away to anybody he pleases. But he can't. I won't vote for Loder, but I sha'n't vote for Gwynne. I'm going out on my bike to-morrow."

In the Third Form, George Tubb was Loder's enthusiastic backer. At the present time Loder's study was a land flowing with milk and honey for his fag, and George Tubb's opinion of Loder had completely changed. School-boys have short memories, especially in the Third Form; Tubb of the Third judged Loder as he found him—and he found him very kind and agreeable at present. Most of the Third were likely to follow their captain's lead, and Jack Wingate was able to express in perfect safety his intention of backing up Loder—for which Tubb had punched him only a short time before.

Jack Wingate, indeed, was feeling very pleased with his prospects. He was sorry that his brother had lost the captaincy; it was a distinction to be the captain's minor, and he had made the most of it. But that could not be helped; and it would be a great thing for him, he considered, for his sporting friend in the Sixth to get in as captain of the school.

Loder had taken him up, flattered him, and fooled him, and it had not yet

dawned on the scapegrace of the Third that Loder had had secret and treacherous motives for his action. Jack Wingate's belief was that that friendship was to continue, and that he would

THE GREYFRIARS GUY!



Written before the election by a certain Sixth-Form Prefect.

GONE are the days when they hailed me with respect.

Gone are the days when the fags were circumspect.

Now, I can hear, as Guy Fawkes' Day draws nigh,

A score of tuneful voices calling, "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

I'm coming! I'm coming!

To know the reason why!

To check those tuneful voices calling "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

Gone are the days, once so happy and so free,

When loyal little fags to My Highness bowed the knee.

Down in the Close, their dancing forms I spy,

And hear their dulcet voices calling, "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

I'm coming! I'm coming!

With my ashlant raised on high;

I'll stop those dulcet voices squalling "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

Long, long ago, in the dashing days of yore,

Fags flocked around, to worship and adore.

Now, times have changed, and a laughing-stock am I;

I hear those hateful voices calling, "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

I'm coming! I'm coming!

I'll catch them on the sly!

How dare those cheeky fags keep bawling, "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

How, panic-struck, the fags all melt away!

"Quick! Mind your eye!" I hear young Nugent say.

Fiercely I smite at the figures rushing by;

And now I hear no voices calling, "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

I'm coming! I'm coming!

I'll put them through the hoop!

I hear those anguished voices calling, "Ow! Yow! Yooooo!"

be free to do precisely as he liked, with the captain of the school as his friend.

There was a bitter awakening in store for Wingate minor when he had served the plotting prefect's turn. For the present, however, his "friend in the Sixth" was as kind as ever, for every vote counted.

Gerald Loder went to bed that night in a very satisfied frame of mind. Already, in his mind's eye, he saw himself captain of Greyfriars, his long, long ambition realised at last. And it was very probable that on the morrow he would be captain of the school—reality.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Captain of Greyfriars!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Roll up, you know!" said

Billy Bunter. "Election's a three."

"Bother the election!" said Johnny Bull.

Johnny was wheeling his machine out of the bike-shed on Wednesday afternoon.

"Oh, really, Bull! England expects every man to do his duty, you know," said Bunter impressively.

"Fathead!"

"Roll up, and vote for Loder!" said Billy Bunter. "If you're in doubt, you can't do better than do as I do—follow my lead, you know."

"So you're voting for Loder?" asked Bob Cherry, who was getting his machine out for a spin with Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent. "Because he chased you round his study table with a cane?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hem! That was—was a misapprehension, you know," said Bunter. "The fact is, Loder's a good chap. 'Tain't every prefect in the Sixth Form who would cash a fellow's postal-order for him in advance."

"Oh, so that's it?" granted Johnny Bull, in disgust. "How much has Loder paid for your vote, you fat rotter?"

"That's an insult, Bull," said Bunter with great dignity. "I hope I'm not the kind of fellow to sell my vote in an election. You may be, of course, but you shouldn't judge others by yourself, Bull."

"What?" roared Johnny Bull.

"I should certainly not be influenced by anything of the kind," said Bunter. "If Loder offered me money for my vote, I should hurl it back at him with scorn, I hope. On the other hand, one good turn deserves another. I was actually short of money—quite stony, in fact; a very unusual thing with me, but there is was——"

"Awfully unusual!" said Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Oh, quite!" said Bunter. "I am expecting a postal-order for a considerable amount from one of my titled relations. But noblemen are so absent-minded, you know. There's some delay about——"

"Perhaps the duke has got the bailiff-in?" suggested Frank Nugent syntopetically.

"Or the marquis may have got the sack from his job at the fried-fish shop," remarked Bob thoughtfully.

"Beast!"

"Well, how much has Loder given you for your vote?" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Nothing. He has cashed a postal-order for me, in advance, for five shillings," said Bunter. "Of course, he will take the postal-order when—when it comes."

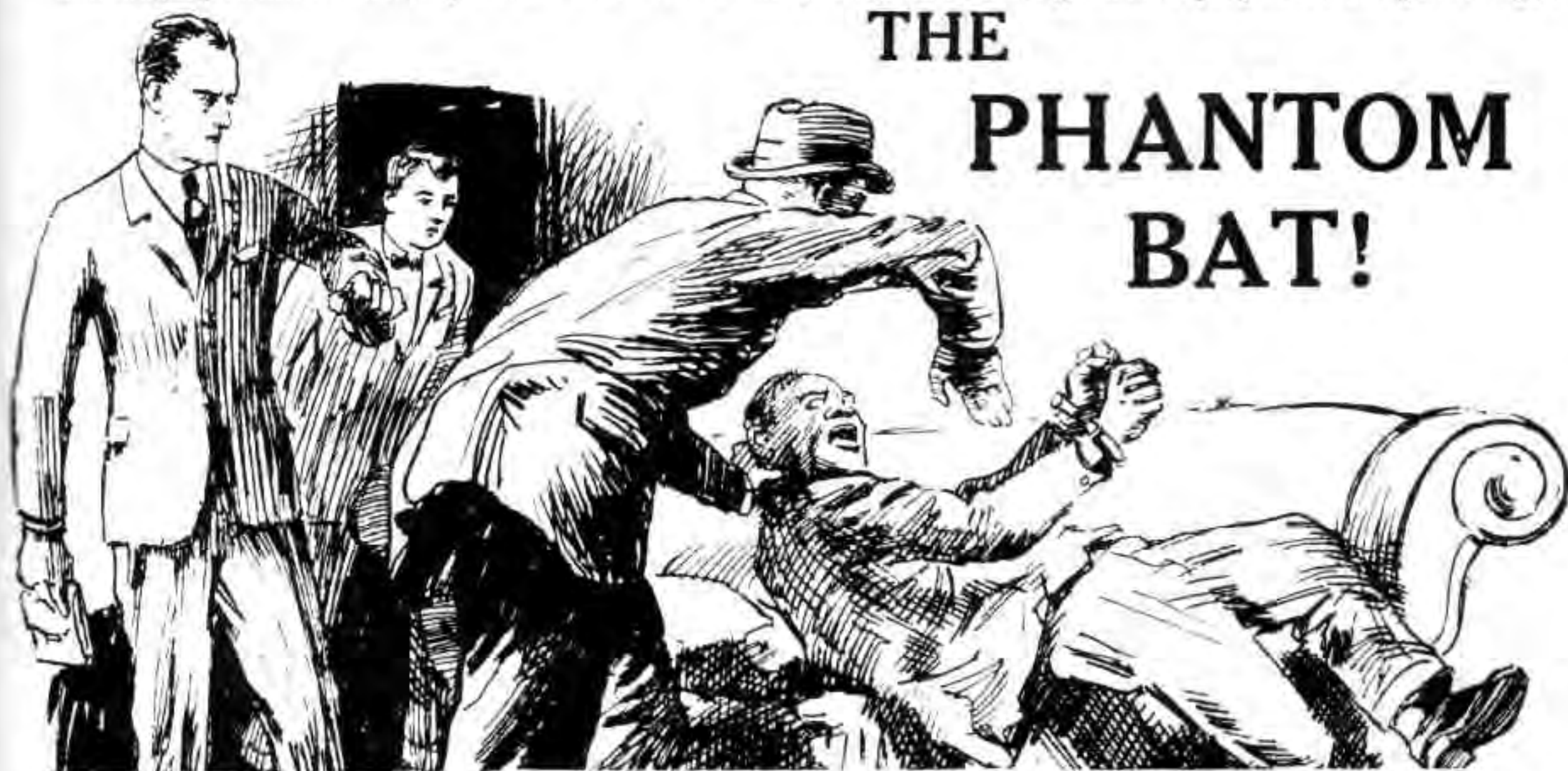
"As Inky would say, the whenfulness is terrific!" grinned Bob.

"He may have asked me to tea in his study after the election," went on Billy Bunter. "If he gets in, naturally, he

(Continued on page 27.)

BLUFF! Ferrers Locke sets out to bluff the formidable organisation known as the Phantom Bat gang, about as amusing a pastime as twisting a lion's tail. But it's surprising how far bluff backed up by nerve and grit will go!

THE PHANTOM BAT!



The concluding chapters of this Amazing Story of Detective Adventure.

The "Snark."

THE arrival of the express that was to bear Ferrers Locke and Inspector Pycroft to London cut short further words, and it was not till they had secured seats in a first-class smoking compartment that the investigator was able to again turn his attention to the paper.

Glancing from the headlines to the letterpress, he read aloud:

"On our front page we reproduce a photo that we are convinced will prove of considerable interest to our readers at the present time. It was forwarded to us by a correspondent whose veracity we have no cause to doubt; he alleging that this unique snapshot depicts the much discussed, so-called Phantom Bat. We may add that the picture was secured in the neighbourhood of Chesham, at approximately six-forty-five on the seventeenth instant."

"Just what I said!" exclaimed Pycroft. "There you are, Chesham. It was Dimsdale the Bat was carving off for a million!"

"It seems incredible," the investigator remarked, after a moment's pause; "and yet—well, we'll soon ascertain, for we'll go straight to the editorial offices as soon as we get to town. The news editor is well known to me, and we'll get hold of the name and address of the photographer. From him we ought to be able to learn in what direction the Bat was proceeding, and if it was away from Chesham, then it is on the cards that your theory is the correct one."

During the remainder of the journey Locke treated Pycroft to an account of his extraordinary discovery at Tobyn's Bay.

But, once in the metropolis, little time was lost in securing a taxi, in which the companions were rapidly whirled away to the editorial offices of the journal in which the photo of the Bat had appeared.

Martyn Hyman, the editor, was in, and, after greeting the unofficial detective warmly, and learning his business, at once dispatched a subordinate to obtain the required information.

"I suppose at the moment it would be somewhat out of place to ask your opinion on this much-discussed question of the Phantom Bat?" he asked.

"Out for a scoop, Hyman?" Locke laughed. "Well, old man, I'm afraid you're a wee bit premature. My opinion, after all, is only that of an ordinary mortal, although I've very good reason to believe that unexpected developments in this case may take place at practically any moment."

"And you won't forget our phone number in such a case, eh?"

"You bet. No, you've helped me a good many times, Hyman, so if you're obliged to be away, see that a smart man is left in charge, for if I'm not mistaken, when you get the copy, it'll be a nine days' wonder. But here's your man back; and if he's got the ad-

dress I'm off. Pycroft is waiting for me in a cab outside."

The junior who had entered, handed his chief a slip of paper, which he in turn passed on to Locke, who, after glancing at it, gripped the editor's hand, and bounded from the room.

"Seven St. Mildred's Terrace, Highgate!" he shouted to the man at the wheel as he re-entered the vehicle.

"Got fixed up?" Pycroft asked excitedly.

"Looks like it, old man, as I've told the taxi-driver to drive to Highgate. Only hope we shall find the fellow in, for every moment wasted is precious."

Luck was evidently on the side of the investigator that day, for, on drawing up at the address given, he encountered the very man he had come to see emerging from the house.

A brief introduction, and the great detective was invited inside, where, after a few pointed questions, he was able to learn all the particulars he required. Then, expressing his thanks, he quitted the premises as speedily as possible.

In a very few words the investigator enlightened the inspector as to the information he had obtained, the photographer's verbal description exactly agreeing with what Locke had previously seen of the Bat.

"And did you find out in which direction it was travelling?" came Pycroft's not unnatural question.

"Yes, the Bat was crossing the lake into which our plane crashed, and, striking a line that would lead to it, or over the old ruined house in the lane."

"Told you so! Told you so!" the Yard man shouted with glee. "I'd have bet—Hullo!"

For at that instant the conveyance in which they were travelling swerved so suddenly that the speaker was almost flung from his seat. Then, amidst a chorus of wild shouts, the vehicle was brought to a dead stop.

Springing out to ascertain the cause, it was to see a man lying prone in the road, where he had evidently been flung through impact with the vehicle they had just quitted.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 926.

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous private detective, is called in by Scotland Yard to investigate a series of mysterious robberies. Assisted by Jack Drake, Inspector Pycroft, and Harry Dimsdale, a young airman, Ferrers Locke discovers that the robberies are carried out by a dwarf who, garbed as a Bat, is transported through space by means of wireless waves.

The chief of the gang working behind the Bat is a man who calls himself Count Majorca. But he turns out to be an impostor, for the real count, a clever inventor of an apparatus that can control the atom, is found by Ferrers in an underground room at a house at Tobyn's Bay.

From the imprisoned count the detective learns that the chief of the Bat gang was a former employee of his, hence his knowledge of the wireless apparatus and how to use it.

Hardly has Locke made this important discovery when Pycroft meets with a message from the Bat gang. In effect the message states that Harry Dimsdale has been taken prisoner by them, and that his life will pay forfeit if Locke persists in tracking down the gang. Without loss of time Ferrers Locke, accompanied by Pycroft, makes for the station to catch a train to London. On the way he sees a newspaper in which is reproduced a photograph of the flying Bat. Under the microscope the picture reveals the fact that the Bat is carrying something. And that something is the form of Harry Dimsdale.

(Now read on.)

"The fellow dashed straight off the kerb, and almost under my wheels, sir," the cab-driver shouted excitedly. "Did all I could to avoid it."

"Yes, guv'nor, that's right! I see'd the bloke; 'e must 'a been mad!" a young urchin who darted up chimed in.

"Never mind about that!" Locke snapped. "First thing is to see what damage is done!"

And, striding to the prostrate man, who was face downwards, the investigator gently turned him over.

A single glance was sufficient to assure him that the sufferer was a Japanese, who had sustained a severe gash across his forehead, whether inflicted by contact with the taxi, or with the hard surface of the road, it was impossible to say; anyhow, it had rendered him unconscious.

"By thunder!" Pyecroft's voice unexpectedly caught the detective's ear. "Why, what's he doing here?"

"You know him?" said Locke, glancing up.

"Know him? Yes. He's Yamato, an interpreter employed at the Yard," the C.I.D. man explained in low tones. "We'd better get him along to the hospital."

"Nothing of the sort; we're nearer my place. I'll have him taken there," said Locke. "I can easily render first-aid, and if necessary we can phone for a doctor. The man's heart is beating all right; he's only stunned."

Inwardly wondering at his colleague's decision, but refraining from asking questions, Pyecroft assisted to lift the insensible man into the taxi.

In a very few minutes they were at Locke's chambers in Baker Street, and in yet another few minutes the sufferer had been deposited on a lounge in Locke's consulting-room, where the detective busied himself with warm water and bandages.

"Shows evident signs of returning consciousness. Won't be long before he comes round," Locke remarked, as he surveyed the neat bandages that swathed the injured man's head.

"Wonder what account he'll give of himself?" ventured Pyecroft. "Unless he's got special leave, he's no right to

be absent from headquarters at this hour of day."

Ferrers Locke laughed, a short, hard laugh.

"The explanation may be interesting," he replied. "Anyhow, got a pair of bracelets on you?"

"Got—er—what?"

"A pair of bracelets. If so, hand them over."

"But, by thump, man, you're not going to—" began the inspector in amazement. Then after fumbling in his pockets, he produced the handcuffs.

With deft fingers, Locke snapped them home on the Jap's wrists, a proceeding that caused the police official fairly to goggle.

"Just as well to take precautions," the detective said quietly. "These fellows are like wild cats when they're fairly roused."

"Yes, I know, but—"

Ignoring this remark, Locke's next movement was to insert his hand inside the man's vest. When he withdrew it he clasped a long narrow-bladed knife which he laid aside. Then, with a skill gendered by long practice, the contents of the pockets were removed. A bulky wallet containing papers and letters being greeted with a grim smile as it came to light.

"And now, Pyecroft, if you wouldn't mind holding his head steady in case he moves, I think I'll show you something that will astonish you."

Too astounded already at the unexpected proceedings he had witnessed, the police official did as requested without comment, whilst with a sponge and warm water, Locke set to work on his prisoner's left cheek.

For several seconds, he kept alternately applying the warm water and wiping it away. Then, having carried it to a point that he deemed satisfactory, a rougher use was made of the towel; the result being that some thick flesh-coloured pigment was removed, laying bare beneath where it had been a triangular scar.

"You realise the meaning of that?" the detective asked with a twinkle in his eye, glancing up at the inspector.

"By thunder, yes! But—but it seems impossible."

"Not at all impossible, as you can see. It simply means that this man who, masquerading as an interpreter, gained admittance to the Yard itself, and is none other than the Shinto priest, in league with the very man we are out to run down."

Inspector Pyecroft tried to speak, but words failed him. He could only gasp, as his unofficial colleague went on:

"Anyhow, there's one member of the gang accounted for; and now if we don't run the others to earth, my name's not Ferrers Locke."

The Code Message!

AFTER a few inarticulate sounds, the prisoner opened his eyes and gazed around in astonishment. Then, as returning consciousness cleared his brain, his sallow face flushed, a faint crimson, and a gleam of intense malignity flashed from his eyes as they rested on Ferrers Locke who was bending over him.

With an effort he attempted to rise: the action causing him for the first time to realise that his wrists were firmly secured.

For one second he gazed at the encircling irons in speechless amazement—only to burst forth in a torrent of abuse in his native tongue; then, putting on a brazen front, and lapsing into English, he demanded to know the meaning of what he termed "his outrage."

"Best keep quiet and not ask too many questions, Yamato," Inspector Pyecroft remarked sternly, as he stepped forward. "I am saying this unofficially, but you can take the hint."

"And also unofficially," Locke interrupted, "I may as well say that there are several questions you'll have to answer, or it will be the worse for you."

Biting his lips the Jap shot a glance of intense hatred at the speaker, and possibly would have replied, had not at that moment the door of the room been flung wide as Jack Drake bounded in.

"Got up here sooner than I expected, guv'nor," he said; "and I—" He paused, as his glance fell upon the manacled form on the lounge.

"One of our friends, Jack," Locke



"Hallo!" exclaimed Inspector Pyecroft, as the conveyance swerved suddenly. "What's happened, Locke?" Amidst a chorus of wild shouts the vehicle was brought to a dead stop, and Ferrers Locke jumped out to see a man lying prone in the road. (See page 21.)

A STORY IN A THOUSAND!



The MYSTERY of LONE MANOR

Featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake in a case that undoubtedly ranks as the most mysterious they have ever undertaken.

STARTS in this paper NEXT WEEK!

explained with a smile. "A gentleman who did his best to have me murdered when I met him in the temple at Lambeth."

"The Shinto priest—" The lad gasped.

"Yes, the Shinto priest, who yet finds time to pose as an interpreter at Scotland Yard, and play the spy for Varnaz"; and, as he mentioned the name, the detective's eyes were searching the face of his captive.

The effect produced was exactly what he had anticipated, for as the name caught the prisoner's ears, the man started violently. His jaw dropped, and his slits of eyes seemed as though about to start from his head.

"Well, did you arrange matters all right with my friend the doctor at Vyemouth?" Locke continued.

"Yes," replied Jack. "That was soon fixed up O.K. He's an awfully decent sort. Got out his car at once, and drove me back to Alano Craig, and we had the old chap fixed up comfortable in less than half an hour."

"Good!"

"Though, my word, he didn't half make a rumpus at first."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"Not to be wondered at," he agreed; "and now, lad, I've got some papers to go through that promise to be interesting."

As he spoke the sleuth held up the wallet he had taken from his prisoner's pocket.

Maddened with rage on discovering that he had been relieved of his wallet, the Jap sprang to his feet, and with manacled hands raised high, leaped at the criminologist. But Pycroft, who was an adept at the art of dealing with refractory criminals, shot out his arm, and clutching the native by his collar,

hurled him back on the lounge, where he quickly planted a knee on his chest, to keep him down.

"I think a length of cord would come in handy in this case," the police official suggested.

In a very few moments some straps having been removed from travelling trunks, the late interpreter at the Yard, found himself secured to the lounge without the possibility of moving either hand or foot.

"Now we'll proceed to go through these," Locke remarked, as though nothing had happened.

First lighting a cigarette, he settled himself in a chair at the table with the opened wallet before him.

The first few papers abstracted were laid aside without comment, nor was it till he withdrew a sheet of paper on which was written what was evidently a message in cipher that he showed any signs of interest.

Far more demonstrative than his chief, Jack Drake, who standing at the back of his chair, had been following every movement, had no sooner caught sight of the bold handwriting on the paper his chief held in his hand, than he uttered a shout of surprise.

"Gosh, gov'nor, the same list!" he said.

"Then you recognise it?" asked Locke, looking up.

"Recognise it. My giddy aunt, rather! I'm not likely to forget it. Remember the torn envelope that took us down to Tobyn's Bay, and—"

"Yes, I know. The poisoned letter. The postcard to the costumier in Westminster Bridge Road, and the scrap of paper picked up in the apartment of the Rajah of Golcoondabad. You're quite correct, Jack. And now we find this in the possession of one of Scotland Yard's

employees. Little wonder at the leakage of news from that quarter, I'm thinking."

"And you can bet I'll make it my business to find out how the chap came to secure the post!" Pycroft growled.

"And 'twixt you and me and the gatepost, Pycroft, I'd advise you not to kick up too much fuss about it, for the mere fact that the man did secure the position does not rebound to the credit of the force you represent," remarked Locke grimly. "But, leaving that out of the question, we've got to ascertain what this communication is." And with great deliberation the sleuth smoothed out the paper and began to pore over it in silence.

At first glance, it appeared a hopeless case:

"(ZEFBC. TFIL. ZOLPP.) (COLJ. M. YV.) (KFDEQ. YLXQ. QEROPAGV.) (XTXFQ. XOOFSL. XQ.) (Z. TFQE. RPRXL.) (PRMMIV. —. —.)"

For some five minutes the criminologist remained scribbling on a sheet of paper he had drawn towards him; then, with a laugh, he looked up.

"Got it!" he said triumphantly. "The series of letters being bracketed in threes, gave me the clue. All one has to do is to count three letters ahead of the one written here, so to speak, and there's an end to the mystery. For instance, take the first letter—'Z.' Now, the third letter ahead of 'Z' is 'C.' Following this rule, 'E' becomes 'H,' 'F' becomes 'I,' 'B' becomes 'E,' and 'C' becomes 'F,' making the word 'chief.' The message then reads: 'Chief will cross from P. by night'

boat Thursday; await arrival at C. with usual supply."

"By thump, but you take the biscuit, Locke," the inspector jerked out, as he patted his comrade on the shoulder. "And Thursday. Why, by all that's wonderful, that's to-day!"

"Yes; and all day," laughed Locke.

"Then he'll be crossing to-night?"

"According to this message."

"And I should say he has got some more dirty work on hand, guv'nor, for if he's asking for a further supply, don't you think he's referring to some more of that anæsthetic—"

"You mean, the 'Sleep of Silence' that can only be procured from a priest of Shinto," interposed Locke. "Undoubtedly that's what he's after, my lad."

Then, cupping his chin in his hand, the detective again lapsed into silence.

"Long odds that the 'P' in that message refers to Paris," Jack suggested to the inspector, in guarded tones, not wishing to break into his chief's train of thought.

"And you're not far from the mark, my lad," Locke unexpectedly agreed, having overheard the remark.

"The expression, 'Will cross by night boat' points to that. And now to get a little further information from our prisoner."

Approaching the bound Jap, who scowled fiercely at him as he advanced, the private detective, not a little to the prisoner's astonishment, began to speak rapidly in his native tongue.

At first the man addressed obstinately refused to speak; but at length, as Locke progressed, he entered into a conversation that lasted till Locke, having apparently gained his ends, turned and beckoned Pyecroft aside.

"I ventured to assume part of your authority, Pyecroft," he remarked quietly, "which, under the circumstances, I don't think you'll object to."

"Hump!"

"I pointed out to the fellow pretty plainly the position he was in, and possibly enlarged a trifle on the subject of the sentence he would be sure to get on conviction."

"Well?"

"Well, I told him that, to a great extent that sentence would depend upon

how far he was willing to assist us to secure the other members of the gang."

"Inviting him to turn King's evidence to save his skin?" the inspector grunted.

"Practically that. Only adding that, as you had great influence with the powers that be, that in the event of any information he gave us proving correct, you would use that influence on his behalf."

"Then, as you went so far, what did you get out of him in return?" asked Pyecroft.

"That I'll explain to you presently. But, in the meantime, our best plan is to have the fellow removed, for we can't hang around here indefinitely, mounting guard."

"Yes, yes, of course. I'll phone for a couple of men and a taxi."

"Better plan still. Explain matters, and get your people to send along the police ambulance."

"The ambulance! What the dickens for? What's the stunt?"

"Simply this, my dear fellow. This Jap is not to be trusted to walk out quietly, and we certainly don't want it known that a handcuffed man was escorted from this house."

"I've got you!" the police official nodded. "If our ambulance comes along, he can be taken out on a stretcher, and the lookers on, who are bound to accumulate, will take it for a hospital case."

"That's the ticket. So if you don't mind—" But the burly inspector was already striding towards the phone.

Some twenty minutes later a form swathed in blankets was borne on a stretcher from the house in Baker Street, to be placed in an ambulance, which at once started off.

"And now that the coast is clear," said Locke, as he flung himself in a chair, "I'll explain the little plan I've mapped out."

"This Jap, who tells me his name is Loa Haing, which, by the by, sounds more Chinese than Japanese, admits that I translated the code message correctly. He also agrees that the master mind behind all these astounding outrages is, as I suspected, the man Vernaz, who is posing as Count Majorca, and whilst, more important than all, is the fact that Harry Dimsdale is indeed in his power, and at the present moment is detained in the old ruined house that we have such good cause to remember."

"Then that clears the air, guv'nor," Jack interrupted.

"Most decidedly so, my lad!"

"May clear the air," Pyecroft repeated. "But don't seem to me we're any nearer getting him away."

"Listen!" the detective jerked out, somewhat sharply. "The crook is in Paris and returning by the night's boat from Dieppe, so that, with the best of luck it would be impossible for him to get to Chesham before to-morrow morning. But supposing he had altered his plans, and made the day crossing, he could easily arrive there this evening, and that's exactly what I intend him to do."

Jack and the inspector stared at the speaker in astonishment.

What seemingly impossible plan had matured in the master mind of the man before them? each asked himself.

"Yes, I know, if he changed his mind," Pyecroft at length said slowly. "But how the deuce you're—"

Ferrers Locke laughed, as he noted the astonishment depicted on his listeners' faces.

"You haven't got me, either of you," he said. "But we are about to play one

of the biggest games of bluff we've ever had a shot at. It's a game of bluff that will not only be the means of releasing Harry Dimsdale, but the scooping of the whole bagful of crooks into our net, and at the same time elucidating the mystery of the Phantom Bat!"

And, with eyes that sparkled with unusual animation, the great investigator sprang from his seat.

Big Bluff!

THE scrunch of wheels on gravel caused three men who were lounging round a fire to spring to their feet with looks akin to consternation.

"By Jupiter! The chief!" a tall flashily dressed individual rapped out. "How the dickens has he got here at this time?"

"Can't be, you thick-headed fool. Isn't he crossing by the night boat?" a hideous dwarf, who had been seated at his side, asked in a cracked voice.

"Well, let's hope it isn't the boss—that's all," the first man answered, "for the Snark hasn't turned up yet, and if the chief gets here and finds he's without a supply of dope—" A shrug of the shoulders completed the sentence. "But there, move yourself, Bonsor, you lout, and get to the door!"

The thick-set man addressed as Bonsor scowled at the speaker, and possibly, under any other circumstances, would have retorted hotly; but, keen as his companions to know who the arrival could be, he hurried from the underground room in which they had been seated, and clambered up some steep steps leading to a trapdoor overhead.

Listening intently, his comrades preserved an unbroken silence, to glance significantly at each other a few moments later, as the sharp sound of bolts being shot back caught their ears.

"He, he, he! The chief sure enough!" croaked the dwarf. "The Snark'll have a hot time now!" Then, bending his unshapely head forward, added: "I can hear a strange voice. Who's the chief got with him? What's his game, Husky?"

"How do I know? But there goes the signal that we're wanted!" For at that instant the peculiar notes of a buzzer echoed out, and, without more ado, Husky mounted the ladder-like arrangement, closely followed by his deformed comrade.

Swiftly crossing a passage, Husky, who was leading, pushed open a door and entered a room that presented a marked contrast to the one he had recently quitted. In place of plain wooden chairs and table, and bare floor, the apartment in which he found himself was sumptuously furnished, and well lighted by shaded electric lights, lights that the carefully shuttered and curtained windows prevented from being seen outside.

But it was not the appearance of the chamber that arrested his attention, for he had visited it on many previous occasions, but the tall, immaculately dressed man, with sleek black hair, who, whilst carelessly removing his gloves, was engaged in earnest conversation with a short, grey-haired individual wearing gold-rimmed glasses.

Even had not the chief been addressing the stranger in French, the very cut of his clothing and general appearance would have pronounced him as a visitor from across the Channel, and it was with feelings of the greatest curiosity that the crook's three assistants awaited to learn the reason of such an unexpected visit.

Flinging himself in a chair, and after flicking a speck of dust from his patent



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Does, the dark-haired man, turning to his subordinates, remarked shortly, as he indicated the visitor with a jerk of his head:

"This gentleman is Monsieur Girarde, of Paris. Although you've never met, you, anyhow, Husky, know him by name well enough."

Husky nodded, as he shot a searching glance at the grey-haired stranger, who, having also seated himself, seemed more interested in the pattern of the carpet than on those in whose company he found himself.

"Reckon I know him well enough by name, chief." And a grim smile wreathed the speaker's features, as he recalled the many parcels of valuables he had consigned to the man from Paris, who was possibly one of the most notorious fences known to the underworld. "Glad to see you, mister," he went on, addressing the arrival.

The little Frenchman looked up, then grinned and nodded, on finding that he was being addressed.

"Doesn't understand a word of English, so you won't make much headway by trying to talk to him," the head of the gang interrupted. "But it was on his advice that I altered my plans, and crossed by the day service. The French police are getting a little too inquisitive, so Monsieur Girarde decided that a change of air would do him good, and I suggested that he came over here for a bit."

Husky whistled, whilst Bonsor, turning to the dwarf, winked knowingly.

"I see the Snark isn't here," the head of the gang went on.

"No, chief. An' wot's more, we ain't heard nothing from 'im," Bonsor interrupted excitedly.

"Possibly not. Anyhow, I have. So that's sufficient!" came the sharp reply. "And— Though, first, our prisoner. Still sullen—eh?"

"Just the same as when we first landed him."

"Hump! Then he won't be sullen much longer, I'm thinking!" the black-haired man snapped viciously.

"Why, what's the move, chief?" Bonsor asked hesitatingly.

"Simply this. A warning was left with Ferrers Locke that if he refrained from interfering with my affairs for one month the airman would be released unharmed. This warning the cursed detective chooses to ignore." Then, pausing, so as to give full effect to his words, the speaker went on. "Ferrers Locke intends to pay us a visit to-night."

Had a bombshell dropped in the room it could not have caused more consternation than those few short words. Too dumbfounded to speak, the members of the gang glared at each other in speechless wonderment.

"There's one thing, though," their chief snapped, as, rising, he banged his fist on a table, "this will be the last visit Ferrers Locke will ever pay! I assure you that!"

"Then it's a police-raid!" Husky at length jerked out.

"No. Nothing of the sort. But I'd better explain to you all, so that you'll know how to act."

"By some means Locke got to know that I was in Paris, though he is evidently under the impression that I'm not returning till later, and, taking advantage of this knowledge, the fool hit on a plan by which he hoped to rope the whole lot of us in."

"He, he, he! Ferrers Locke's a good 'un!" the dwarf chuckled. "Well, if he's coming here to-night, chief, let me

get hold of him, and I'll finish him for you!"

"Very possibly you may have the chance."

"Sure the news you've got, chief, isn't faked?"

"Faked!" The black-haired man laughed scornfully. "Did the Snark ever send on faked news? No, as usual, it leaked out through Pyecroft, for that ass never knows how to keep his tongue between his teeth."

"So much the better for us," Husky grinned.

"But now. All of you remember this. Locke has determined to come here made up to represent me. He's conceited enough to imagine that he can disguise himself so that you will take him for your chief."

A broad grin from Husky, a hoarse laugh from Bonsor, and a chuckle from the dwarf greeted this statement.

"How far he will appear like myself I can't say. But remember this, and let there be no mistake. When he arrives none of you are to show the slightest surprise. You are to treat him exactly as though he was your chief and as though his disguise had not been penetrated."

"Yes," Husky interpolated.

"Answer any questions he puts to you, and then, when he comes here, as he will—well, you can leave me to deal with him." And the speaker tapped his hip-pocket significantly. "And now bring Dimsdale up here. It will be interesting to see the meeting between the friends," he added, with a sneer.

"You two," he said sharply, indicating the dwarf and Bonsor, "needn't wait. Only don't forget to follow the disguised detective to this room when he arrives."

Obedient to the orders they had received, the crook's subordinates sidled from the room.

With his hands secured behind his back Harry Dimsdale, looking pale and worn, was unceremoniously thrust in by Husky, who, in response to a jerk of the head from his chief, instantly quitted the room, closing the door after him.

"I've sent for you, Dimsdale," the chief at length rapped out in a loud voice, "to tell you that as Ferrers Locke is ignoring my warning you will know what to expect."

"I know this—that I am in your power, you despicable coward," the young airman flashed, "and that you would not hesitate to murder me in cold blood, but you'd sing a different tune if my hands were free!"

A short laugh was the only reply as the chief rose and slowly approached him. Raising a hand he placed it lightly over the airman's mouth, and then, in a voice that had suddenly entirely changed, whispered in his ear:

"If your hands were free, would you be able to make use of them?"

With a half-choked cry Dimsdale staggered back.

"Why—why—" he gasped.

"Hist!" came the instant warning. "Not a word, or you will ruin everything!"

"But—but—no, it can't be! Yet you're Locke!"

"Quite right," said Locke coolly, for he it was, "and there's Jack as well." The detective pointed to the "Frenchman" standing at the door, his body covering the keyhole of the door to blur the vision of any curious member of the gang who might be on the prowl. Then, drawing a knife from his pocket, Locke severed the cord that bound the prisoner's arms.

"Come over here and sit in this arm-chair," Locke went on in the same guarded tones. "You must keep your hands behind you, as though you are still bound, and, here, take this."

The detective's hand went to his pocket, and, taking a revolver therefrom, he slipped it in his companion's pocket.

Seating himself as directed, with his hands behind him, Dimsdale listened with growing astonishment whilst Locke briefly explained the daring plan he attempted—a plan that up till then had worked so successfully.

"But I can hardly yet believe that you're not the crook!" the young airman stammered. "How—how did you manage it?"

Ferrers Locke laughed shortly.

"Fairly easy to an old hand at the game," he replied. "I was at a dinner not long ago where the man calling himself 'Count Majorca' made a speech. I remembered his peculiar mannerisms in voice and gesture, and, for the rest, a photo taken by flashlight of the same dinner provided me with ample copy for his make-up. But there—no more for the present; it can't be long now before my 'double' arrives."

The words had barely escaped his lips than there came a warning cough from Jack Drake, who had remained with his ear close to the crack of the door.

"I can hear a motor outside, guv'nor," he whispered as he glided to the investigator's side. "Yes, that's it! There's a door opened and shut, and now—" The lad flung himself in a careless position on a seat, with one hand buried in his jacket-pocket.

For several seconds not a sound was heard in the room as with tensely strung nerves the three awaited developments.

They had not long to wait. Footsteps were heard approaching. A few words, followed by an oath, caught the listeners' ears. Then the door was flung open, and, followed by the dwarf, Husky, and Bonsor, a tall, black-haired man strode in.

Once again a second of profound silence followed. The newcomer seemed as though petrified as he glared at his double, who had risen to his feet.

With a curious little smile curling the corners of his lips the detective watched the varying emotions sweeping over the features of the scoundrel before him.

Without for a second removing his eyes from the man, who was now glaring at him with the ferocity of a tiger, Locke pressed the trigger of his automatic. Three stinging shots rang out in quick succession, the bullets, intentionally missing the man, plugging themselves in the wall.

It was the agreed signal to Inspector Pyecroft, who, with one or two picked men armed with sledgehammers had been waiting below.

Instantly the crash of these heavy implements on woodwork rang out, followed by the sound of splintering, rending wood as the door gave way before the fierce assault.

"We're coming!"

With that reassuring cry the burly inspector, at the head of his men, broke into the room, and in a few moments Bonsor, Husky, and his chief had been handcuffed.

"By Jove, Locke, we ought to congratulate ourselves!" panted Pyecroft, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "If this isn't one of the—"

A wild shout from Jack caused the detective to swing round. Overlooked



"If your hands were free, would you be able to make use of them?" Dimsdale staggered back, with a half-choked cry as he recognised the voice. "Why—why," he gasped, "it's—it's you, Locke!"

in the excitement of the moment, the dwarf had dropped to the ground and wriggled away. Now, seizing his opportunity, he had sprung at Jack Drake from behind. Utterly powerless in the grip of the herculean deformity, the lad was slung over the dwarf's shoulder as though he had been an infant. And as Drake's warning shout rang out the dwarf, bearing him aloft, darted from the room.

Brushing aside those who stood in his way, Locke sprang after the swiftly vanishing pigmy, though not in time to prevent him from passing through a door on the opposite side of the passage, which he slammed behind him.

For a second the detective crouched low, then with every ounce of strength at his command he hurled himself at the wooden panels.

Not built to withstand such an onslaught, the catch that secured the door gave way. The detective found himself at the foot of a winding staircase that led upwards.

Three at a time he leaped up the treads; but the dwarf, with his burden, had already obtained a good start. Nor was it till after he gained the roof of a short tower that the investigator again sighted his quarry.

A second later and he would have been too late, for even as he dashed on to the wind-swept platform the hideous creature, raising the still struggling lad high above his head, was on the point of hurling him below.

One frantic leap and Locke's hand had grasped the arm of his faithful assistant and dragged him back, whilst with his disengaged hand a blow was planted on the back of the dwarf's head that sent him crashing forward.

A wild, frenzied shriek, a crash of mouldering brickwork, and as Jack Drake dropped at his rescuer's feet the dwarf, driven against a parapet that was rotten with age, hurtled down to the depths below amidst an avalanche of crumbling bricks and masonry.

Two days later, lounging back in an armchair, garbed in his old faded dressing-gown, Ferrers Locke was beaming on Jack and Inspector Pyecroft, who were seated facing him in his cosy consulting-room at Baker Street.

"You were asking me, Jack," he remarked, what was my first clue as to how this so-called Phantom Bat stunt was worked. Well, it was the fragment of waterproofed silk I obtained from outside the window of Myrtle House."

"I guessed as much, guv'nor," said Drake.

"In my own mind," Locke went on, "I connected it with the envelope of a balloon. Then, noticing the peculiar make of the black suit worn by the Bat when we came across him at the rajah's place at Cheshunt, I was more convinced than ever."

"The Bat being played by the dwarf," Pyecroft interrupted.

"Undoubtedly. This man Varnaz had taken advantage of his late employer's investigations to put them to a use for which the count had never intended them. You see, the powerful dynamo we discovered in the cellars provided the power for transporting the dwarf by wireless waves to any destination the crook desired."

"And the dwarf was employed for—"

"The two-fold purpose. Namely, his prodigious strength and light weight."

"There's still one point that isn't quite clear to me," the inspector chimed in, "and that is this—how the chief of the gang could get the requisite measurements so as to land the dwarf at the exact spot he wished to plant him when he was sent out on these nocturnal raids."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"You've forgotten your friend with a theodolite, who used to work the surveying stunt. With that instrument it was child's play to obtain the necessary measurement as to height from the ground, positions of windows, etc. Then an ordnance map of the district, a pair of compasses, and a little calculation and the trick was as good as done."

"And that ugly dial of his that we caught a glimpse of, guv'nor, was evidently a mask?"

"Sure thing, my lad. A mask not only to protect the dwarf from the effects of the anæsthetic with which he sprayed his victims, but to render his features immune from the intense heat thrown out when engaged in burning out locks or similar obstructions."

"And now, my lad," said Locke, "we shall have to clear all thoughts of the Phantom Bat out of our minds, for this morning's post has brought a communication that seems likely to develop into a case even more interesting than the problem we have just succeeded in solving."

"It certainly will be interesting," replied Drake, "if it beats the case of the Phantom Bat!"

THE END.

THE CAPTAIN'S ELECTION!

(Continued from page 20.)

will want his friends round him at such a time. There will be a celebration. The party would scarcely be complete without me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"My opinion of Loder is that he's been a lot misjudged," said Bunter. "I'm voting for him, and I hope you fellows will do the same. I'm doing all I can to rally the fellows round him. He's the best candidate, bar none. If he doesn't win the election there won't be any feed in his study, so—so—I mean, of course, that has nothing to do with it. I want old Loder to get in on his merits."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, you fellows, you're not going out biking while the election's on," said Bunter warmly. "Talk about Pontius Pilate fiddling while Carthage was burning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Do you mean Nero fiddling while Rome was burning?"

"No, I don't; I mean Pontius Pilate fiddling while Carthage was burning. Classical allusions are lost on you, Bob Cherry. You're ignorant!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Rally round, you chaps," said Bunter encouragingly. "Look here, I may be able to get you in at the celebration in Loder's study afterwards. I'll do my best. Follow my lead, and vote for Loder."

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You fat owl!" said Johnny Bull. "If you're sticking Loder for a feed, as a bribe for your vote, you'd better stick him before the election, not after. After, you're more likely to get his boot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three juniors wheeled their bikes away, leaving William George Bunter frowning. Whether it was enthusiasm for Gerald Loder as the best candidate, or the thought of the feast to follow Loder's success, Bunter was very anxious to gather in votes for his man. That hot chase round Loder's study table was quite forgotten. Bunter was thinking of that same study table laden with good things from the tuckshop.

He rolled away to the House, and found Harry Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh in the doorway. He stopped to blink at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, you're voting?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Good!" said the Owl of the Remove. "That's right! England expects every man to do his duty, you know."

"Such an expectfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "The disappointment of England must be great and frequent."

"Fellows ought to rally round at a time like this," said Bunter. "The prestige of Greyfriars is at stake, you know. If the wrong man gets in, the old school goes to the dogs. You're voting for Loder?"

"No; Gwynne."

"Well, you silly ass!" said Bunter. "Look here, Loder's the man. If he gets in he's standing a spread—I mean, he's out and out the best man for the job

—generous, too, in money matters. Take my tip, and vote for him."

"Rats!"

"I say, you fellows, your pals are going out on their bikes," said Bunter. "Don't you think you ought to go with them? I believe they're going over to Cliff House to tea."

"So are we—after the election," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "After we've voted for Gwynne, you diplomatic barrel."

"Oh, really, Wharton, I wasn't thinking of Gwynne losing your votes, of course. But there's such a thing as friendship. I'm sure your pals will miss you if you don't go."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh made a motion with his boot, and the Owl of the Remove rolled rather hurriedly into the House. Wharton looked at his watch, and the chums of the Remove followed.

Many fellows were heading for the lecture-hall now, where the election was to take place. But the crowd was not nearly so numerous as might have been expected on the occasion of a captain's election. Every fellow who chose to exercise the right had a vote; but there were a good many who did not choose. A candidate like George Wingate would have crammed the hall with Greyfriars men, senior and junior, big

and little. But there was no such enthusiasm for Gwynne of the Sixth. A couple of days before crowds would have rolled up simply for the purpose of keeping Loder out. But the plotting prefect had disarmed the hostility of the Lower School. Loder had undoubtedly played his cards well, with the astute assistance of James Walker of the Sixth. His unpopularity seemed to have disappeared. Indeed, it was easy to tell from the remarks on all sides that he was a more popular candidate than Gwynne.

Gwynne had not taken much trouble about the election. His view was that if Greyfriars wanted him, there he was; while Loder had left no stone unturned to accumulate supporters, and he was not at all particular in his methods. And fellows, in many cases, rather liked being sought after and gently flattered by so great a man as a Sixth Form prefect and prospective captain of the school.

At three o'clock the Sixth were there almost to a man, and most of the Fifth; but a great many juniors had failed to turn up. There were not more than a dozen of the Remove, and a smaller number of the Fourth, and a sprinkling of the Shell.

When Loder came in with Carne and Walker, he glanced over the meeting, and smiled confidently. The smaller the crowd the better he liked it. His backers had seen to it that all his supporters were present, and the absence of fellows who might have favoured the other side was all to the good, from Loder's point of view.

(Continued on page 28.)

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THE CAPTAIN'S ELECTION!

(Continued from previous page.)

Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch came in to conduct the proceedings. George Wingate came in with them, and was received in silence. His refusal to take any heed of the "petition" had left many Greyfriars fellows feeling sore, and they made no secret of it.

Wingate proposed Gwynne, and Tom North seconded; and Loder of the Sixth was proposed by Walker and seconded by Carne. On a show of hands, both Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch were of opinion that Loder "had it"; but Gwynne's supporters called for a count, and the count was taken.

The two Form masters proceeded to count, amid a buzz of suppressed voices. Jack Wingate was putting up his hand for Loder, when he caught his brother's eye, and coloured, and shamefacedly put it down again. Then he frowned, and put his hand up again in time to be counted; and George Wingate, with an expressionless face, turned his glance away. Billy Bunter made an attempt to vote with both hands, in his enthusiasm for Loder, for the forthcoming

celebration in Loder's study. But Mr. Quelch called him sharply to order, and only one of Bunter's fat paws was counted.

There was silence when the result was announced:

"P. Gwynne, sixty-seven votes."

"G. Loder, one hundred and two votes."

There was a hush.

"Gerald Loder, of the Sixth Form, is declared duly elected captain of Greyfriars School!"

There was a roar of cheering from Loder's supporters. The plotting prefect's face blazed with triumph.

Gwynne shrugged his shoulders, and gave Wingate a half-comical look. He did not seem very deeply disappointed. The two friends left the lecture-hall together immediately.

"The esteemed game is up," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh to the captain of the Remove. "Let us depart—fully hunk. The honourable and execrable Loder is our esteemed new captain."

"He may turn out a good man," said Harry.

"Perhaps," assented Hurree Singh. "But the perhapsfulness is terrific."

The crowd streamed out of the hall, Gerald Loder walking away in the midst of a crowd of friends, looking as if he were walking on air.

Captain of Greyfriars!

His long ambition had been realised at last. At long last he had downed his old rival, George Wingate, and taken his place! Captain of Greyfriars! Loder's cup of satisfaction was full. He nodded and smiled to his friends, with the pleasing words ringing in his ears—captain of Greyfriars—captain of Greyfriars!

The election was over; Greyfriars School had a new captain. And now it was over a good many fellows—ever among them those who had voted for Loder—wondered what kind of a captain Greyfriars had got!

THE END.

(Don't miss the next story in this grand series, "Boys," & The title alone, "The Whip Hand!" gives you an idea of how Loder behaves now that he is captain of Greyfriars.)

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