

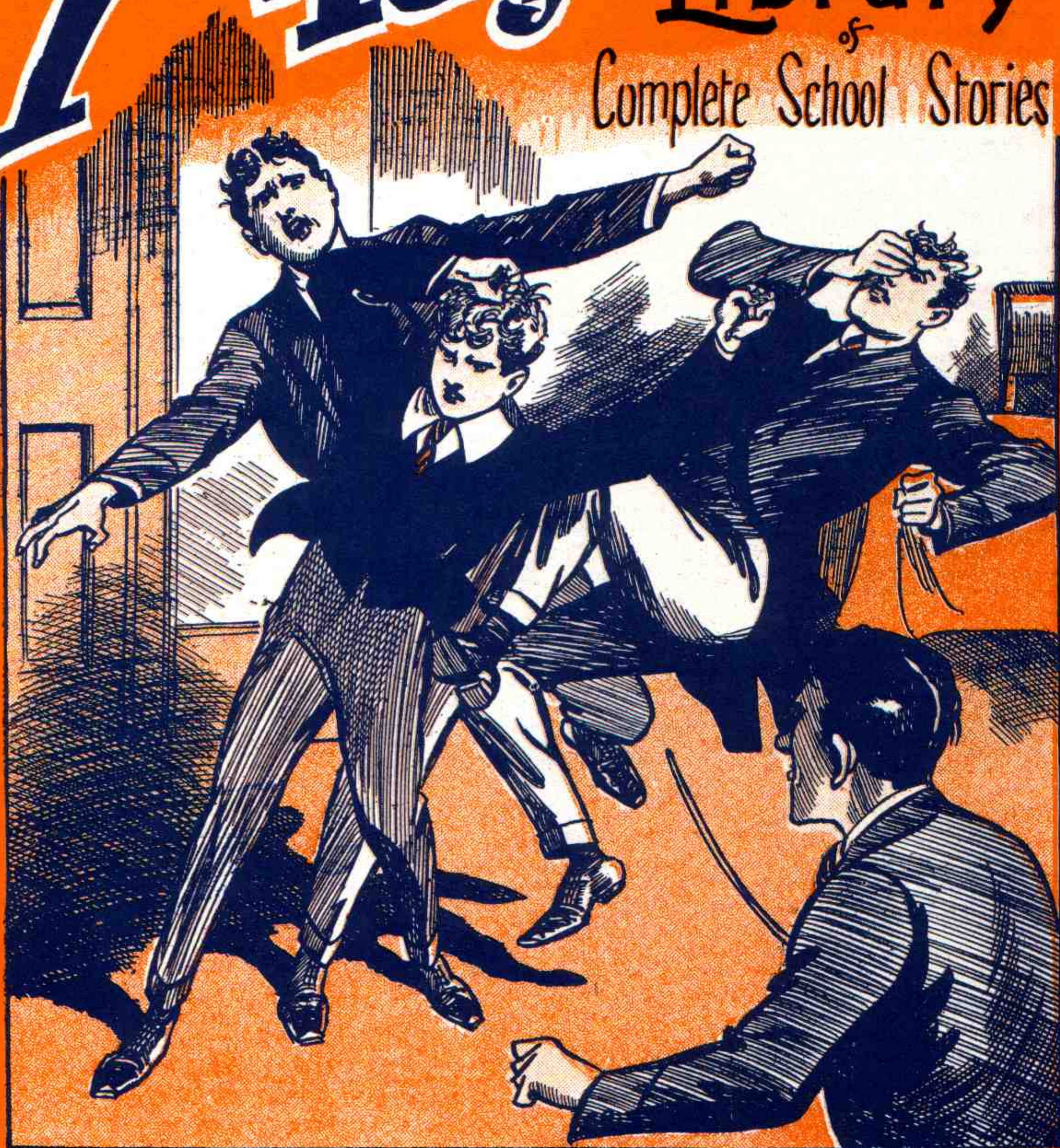
CAPTAIN & TYRANT! | THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR!
GRAND SCHOOL STORY. | AMAZING NEW 'TEC YARN.

No. 928. Vol. XXVIII.

Week Ending November 21st, 1925.

The Magnet ^{2[¢]}

EVERY MONDAY.
Library
of
Complete School Stories



BOB CHERRY REFUSES TO BE CANED!

(A lively episode from the long complete school story—inside.)



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

USING THE TELEPHONE!

A LOYAL Magnetite who has just started work in an office has, in the course of his duties, occasion to use the telephone a great deal. Apparently he finds it difficult to make himself understood, for messages passing through him—to use his own words—are often "messed up." What can he do to make himself understood? In the first place, my chum, you must speak slowly into the transmitter of the phone, slowly and distinctly. Don't be in a hurry. Just imagine that you are holding a conversation with someone in the room. Don't raise your voice too much. So many people think that by shouting into the telephone they are making themselves better understood. On the contrary, the more one shouts the more distorted becomes the message by the time it reaches the receiver at the other end of the wire. Remember, too, that the mouth should be on a line with and about an inch from the rim of the transmitter. And during telephonic communication the lips should be kept in that position. Don't look up at the clock or something and continue to speak, for only part of the words will be caught by the transmitter. But, from your letter, chum, I should imagine that your chief trouble is that you become flurried. Try and forget that you are using the telephone, and you'll find those messages being delivered properly.

JUMPING OFF A BUS!

A correspondent wants to know how to jump off a moving bus without risking a tumble. It's the kind of question I don't like answering, really; for, strictly speaking, one should never jump off a bus while it is in motion. I should look several sorts of an ass if I told you how to jump off a bus, and then when you came to put it into practice you crawled home with a damaged knee, or worse. My advice—you won't like it, my chum, I feel fairly certain, for your letter breathes the adventurous spirit that mocks at "safety first"—is to wait until the bus stops. You don't risk any tumbles then.

A GIRL CHUM!

A loyal reader up in the North writes me a rather pathetic letter. It appears that he has known a young girl friend for several years, and until recently they have got on famously together. Then his boy pal came along, and the young lady's interest in her old boy friend died out. She doesn't want to see him now; in fact, she avoids him, but she is always in the company of the other fellow. My chum wants to know what to do. Well, personally, I should

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be inclined to let the young lady get on with it. If she thinks as much of your friendship as you thought of hers she'll doubtless wish to renew it. And if she doesn't—well, make up your mind that you haven't lost a great deal. Friendships that "switch" about are not the true friendships. In any case, my chum, you are of an age where your work offers consolation; you are mounting the ladder of success. Don't let this little affair interfere with your progress. It's not worth it. As time goes on you will very likely wonder why it was the "split" upset you so much. These little trials with folk we call our friends happen to all of us. Don't imagine that yours is an isolated case, or you will be sympathising with yourself far more than is good for you. Anyway, the old MAGNET will cheer you up a jolly sight better than any words of mine. Keep smiling!

CATCHING COLD!

A reader who is very fond of his bath—he sings in it as well—tells me that he invariably catches a slight cold after his morning tub. How can he prevent it? Presumably he tubs in hot water these days—he's a hero if he sticks to the cold—and then goes out of doors too soon after it. Well, if he persists in bathing in the morning, he should sponge down with cold water afterwards. This might sound terrifying to him, but it isn't really. In fact, it turns the hot bath into a bracing tonic. And it closes the pores of the skin that have opened under the influence of the hot water. If my chum doesn't sponge down with cold water the pores take longer to contract, and this is how it is he catches these slight colds. Anyway, you try the cold sponge, my chum, and a brisk rub down afterwards, and I think you'll say good-bye to those colds.

LANGUAGE!

I come into contact with a lot of boys from time to time, and I often wonder why they drift into a slipshod manner of speech when they are with their boy friends. At their homes these fellows speak "quite nicely," but the moment they get out of doors aspirates are dropped, the wrong sort of slang is picked up, and poor old King's English is given a back seat. It's rather foolish, to my way of thinking, for I can't see any merit in it. Certain it is these thoughtless fellows suffer in the long run. They must be always on tenterhooks, when they are at home, as to whether they are going to say the right thing.

A BEAUTIFUL CATALOGUE.

Printed on art paper in five colours, the Mead new season's gramophone

catalogue is in keeping with the high quality of the instruments which that famous mail-order firm manufacture. Seventeen gramophones ranging from massive horn instruments to solid oak and mahogany cabinet gramophones, all displayed in their natural colours, give a comprehensive range of choice.

We understand that the Company have extended their works to include the manufacture of Jazz Sets, Saxophones, Banjos, Melodeons, and all small musical instruments.

A postcard to Dept. G2, The Mead Company, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, will bring full particulars.

GIDDY HEIGHTS!

A pal from Northampton is very keen to become an airman, and he seems to possess the right qualifications. He's well built, sound in wind and limb, and his eyesight "A.1." His knowledge of motors and the theory of flight surprise me, for my correspondent is only fifteen years of age. But this is where his enthusiasm for flying receives a severe rebuff. He can't stand looking down from a height. He's only tried himself once, and that was from the top of the Monument, in London. He tells me that he felt that he couldn't look down on the City—that his "tummy" began to jump. "Will this defect, in an otherwise perfect constitution, stop him from becoming an airman?" Some people would at once say "Yes." But I made the acquaintance of several airmen during the War, and, surprising as it may seem, some of them confessed that they "hadn't the nerve" to look down from the roof-top of an ordinary house. Yet these same fellows were accustomed to flying at heights varying from ten thousand to twenty-three thousand feet above the ground without experiencing any ill-effect. One of them explained to me that it was the motion of the plane that counteracted the "nervy" feeling. I don't know how right he was, but this little information should reassure my Northampton chum.

Next Monday's Programme.

"THE WORST FORM AT GREY-FRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

This is another splendid story dealing with George Wingate, the ex-captain of Greyfriars, and his bitter enemy Gerald Loder. And the "worst Form," as you can guess, is the Remove. Mind you read this story, boys.

"THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR!"

There is another long instalment of this brilliant detective serial on the programme for next week. Don't miss it.

"DANCING!"

Harry Wharton & Co. of the "Herald" have directed their literary energies to the ball-room floor. And the dancing number they have produced is distinctly good.

"PORTRAITS!"

Next week Dick Penfold, the scholarship boy, will figure in our portrait gallery.

To avoid disappointment, I advise you all to order your MAGNET in good time. Cheerio, chums.

Your Editor.

THE IRON HAND! Gerald Loder doesn't believe in sparing the rod now that he is captain of Greyfriars. Indeed, his ashplant could be likened into "Mary's little lamb," for it accompanies the bullying prefect everywhere he goes. Even Wingate, the late captain, gets a taste of it!



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Another remarkable story in the fine series dealing with the fall of George Wingate and the rise of Gerald Loder of the Sixth.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

"Fag!"

"FAG!" Gerald Loder stood in the doorway of his study in the Sixth Form passage at Greyfriars and called.

"Fag!" Loder's voice was easily heard the length of the passage.

Bob Cherry of the Remove was less than half the length of the passage away, having just emerged from Wingate's study in the Sixth.

Loder's eyes were fixed on Bob as he called.

There was no doubt that Bob Cherry heard. But, like the oft-quoted gladiator of old, he heard but he heeded not. "Fa-a-ag!"

For the third time, Loder of the Sixth repeated the call, his eyes gleaming at the junior.

Perhaps Bob Cherry did not know that he was being addressed. Perhaps he did not choose to know.

Once it had been a disputed matter at Greyfriars whether the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form—could be fagged by the Sixth. That dispute had long ago been settled in favour of the Remove.

The Third Form were fagged, and the Second, but the Remove pursued the even tenor of their way in lofty independence.

So Robert Cherry had every right to suppose that Gerald Loder was hawling to some Third or Second Former, and not to his more important self. Perhaps he did suppose so. Perhaps he did not; for since Loder had become captain of Greyfriars he had made it clear that the Lower Fourth might as well look out for trouble, the trouble being certain to come.

At all events, Bob Cherry turned a deaf ear.

He also turned his back, and strolled away down the Sixth Form passage with

his hands in his pockets, heedless of the existence of Gerald Loder, though that great man was now captain of the school and head-prefect of Greyfriars.

"Fag!" For the fourth time, Loder shouted, his face growing crimson.

Bob Cherry was walking cheerily away—and, like Felix, he went on walking. He was about to turn the corner and vanish when Loder roared:

"Cherry!" Bob grinned before he turned his head.

To the call of "Fag!" he had no intention of answering, not being a fag. But to the call of his own name he was bound to answer, the voice of a Sixth Form prefect being the voice of constituted authority.

He turned back. "Did you call, Loder?"

"You heard me call four or five times!" exclaimed Loder of the Sixth savagely.

"Only once," said Bob innocently.

"Come here!" Bob Cherry approached rather warily.

He did not want to get too near to Gerald Loder if he could help it. Loder was not looking good-tempered, and since he had become captain of the school his officious ashplant had been more in evidence than ever. It had never been idle since Loder had been in the Sixth, but now it was kept very busy.

"Now," said Loder grimly, "I don't want any lies, Cherry—"

"You won't get any from me, Loder! Not at all in my line," said Bob brightly. "I know you're supposed to be an example to us juniors as a prefect, but I don't follow your example in everything."

"What?" ejaculated Loder.

"I prefer to stick to the truth, you know," said Bob. "I'll do my best to follow your example in other matters."

There was the sound of a chuckle from Loder's study. His friends Walker and Carne of the Sixth were there. They

seemed to be rather entertained by Bob Cherry's answer to the captain of the school.

Loder set his lips. "So that's the way you talk to the captain of Greyfriars, is it?" he asked. "Exactly!"

"You heard me call you four or five times—"

"Only once, as I said."

"You heard me call 'Fag!'"

"Oh, yes!" said Bob. "But that wasn't calling me. I'm not a fag."

"I gave Wharton, the captain of your Form, a message for the whole Remove," said Loder. "I told him that fagging was to be the rule in future for the Remove, as well as the Lower Forms. Did he not give you the message?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then you know—"

"My dear man, we took that as one of your little jokes," said Bob. "It takes two to make a bargain, you know. You can call us fags if you like, but we're not going to fag. We don't consent."

"I haven't asked your consent," said Loder. "The Remove are now liable to fagging like the Third and the Second. Understand that!"

"Can't be done!" said Bob. "It was a rule when old Wingate was captain that the Remove never fagged."

"Old Wingate, as you call him, is not captain now; Wingate is nobody—and in fact is going to be called up by me to take a prefects' beating," said Loder. "I don't want to hear any more about Wingate. You talk too much, Cherry."

"Sorry if my conversation bores you, Loder," said the junior politely. "But you called me, you know. If you're tired of my company—shall I cut?"

There was another chuckle from the two seniors in Loder's study. But Loder's face was set in an angry frown. This sort of talk might amuse Carne and

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Walker, but it did not amuse the new captain of Greyfriars.

"I've called you to fag for me, Cherry!"

"Go hon!"

"I'm going to bring you cheeky young scoundrels to heel. Get into my study."

Loder stood aside from the doorway for Bob Cherry to pass in.

Bob did not move.

Loder's study was a good deal like a lion's den in the circumstances. It was easier to get into than to get out of.

"Do you hear me, Cherry?" roared Loder.

"I'm not deaf."

"Go into my study!"

"But I'm not fagging for you, Loder," argued Bob. "So what's the good of going into your study? You're not asking me to tea, I suppose?"

Another chuckle from Carne and Walker!

Loder breathed hard and deep.

"I order you, as a prefect, to step into this study, Cherry!" he said. "Disobey, and you will take the consequences."

With that Gerald Loder stepped back into the room.

Bob Cherry hesitated a moment.

He was quite resolved, as most of the Remove were, never to fag for Loder, or any other of the Sixth. Harry Wharton & Co. had held a council of war on that subject, and agreed upon it fully; and where the Famous Five led the Remove were sure to follow.

Nevertheless, a prefect had to be obeyed by a junior—that was one of the strictest rules of the school.

So the point was doubtful. Exactly at what point lawful commands ended and unlawful fagging began it would have taken a lawyer to determine. Certainly the Remove were entitled to refuse to fag. But they were bound to obey any order from a prefect that did not involve fagging. Stepping into the study could not be called fagging, howsoever doubtful a fellow might feel about what might happen after he had stepped in.

So, after a brief hesitation, Bob Cherry followed Loder in, and the new captain of Greyfriars kicked the door shut after him. And Bob Cherry, once shut up in the study with Loder, Carne, and Walker, understood to the full the feelings of Daniel when he found himself in the lions' den with the door closed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Loder Lets Himself Go!

GERALD LODER placed his back against the door.

Carne and Walker, lounging by the fireplace, grinned at Bob Cherry.

Bob did not need telling that this little matter was cut and dried among the bullies of the Sixth. He had been seen to call in at Wingate's study, and Loder had watched for him to emerge, intending to catch him alone, away from his friends in the Remove. Loder's new system was to be tried on Bob—and resistance on Bob's part was to be followed by punishment that would be a warning to the rest of the Lower Fourth.

Bob Cherry felt that he was "for it" now; but he kept cool. He had been expecting trouble with Loder; and now it had come.

"Hand me that cane, Cherry!" said Loder, pointing to a cane on the table.

"Certainly," said Bob politely.

He handed over the cane, and Loder swished it in the air.

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Swish, swish, swish!

It seemed quite a musical sound to Loder's ears. It was not quite so pleasant to Bob Cherry's. A caning is one of the many things which it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Having swished the cane a few times as a warning of the wrath to come, as it were, Loder lowered it.

"Now, you young rascal——"

Bob Cherry stared out of the study window.

In the quadrangle he could see his chums—Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. They were strolling under the leafless elms, chatting cheerily; little dreaming of the straits that Bob was in at that moment. But they were too far off for a shout to reach them.

"Cherry! Do you hear me?" shouted Loder.

Bob glanced round at him.

"Did you speak?" he asked.

"You heard me!" roared Loder.

"I heard you say, 'Now, you young rascal!'" agreed Bob. "Naturally, I supposed you were speaking to one of your friends—not being a rascal myself."

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Carne, staring at the selfpossessed Removite. "It's about time, I think, that some of the cheek was taken out of these cheeky young cads."

"High time!" agreed Walker.

"I'm going to take it out of him!" said Loder grimly. "Cherry, you are going to fag for me now, to begin with. You are going to wash up those tea-cups, as a start."

"I'm not!" said Bob. "Tubb of the Third is your fag. I'll call him, if you like. I'll do that much for you, Loder."

"Wash up those tea-cups, to begin with."

"Not even to end with," said Bob.

"You refuse?"

"Guessed it!" said Bob. "How bright you are in the Sixth! That chap was right who saw that the Sixth Form is the giddy Palladium of a public school. What a brain!"

Carne and Walker chuckled again, and their chuckles seemed to irritate Gerald Loder more than Bob Cherry's coolness. He pointed to a chair with the cane.

"You see that chair?" he asked.

"I've already told you I'm not deaf," said Bob. "Now I have the honour to inform you that I am not blind. I see the chair."

"Bend over it."

"I'm all right where I am, thanks!"

"Bend over that chair!"

"Can't be done, old man! I'm not going to fag for you, and you're not going to lick me for refusing. If you do, I shall put up a fight."

"Will you?" said Loder. "You refuse to bend over at a prefect's order! Very well! I could report you to the Head for a flogging! But I won't; I'll deal with you myself!"

And Loder advanced on the Removite, his left hand outstretched to grasp him by the collar.

Bob Cherry backed away, his eyes gleaming.

"Hands off!" he said. "Lay a finger on me, Loder, and I'll do my best to give you another eye to match the one Wingate gave you!"

Loder panted with rage.

If anything was needed to rouse his wrath to boiling-point, that allusion would have done it. Loder's late thrashing at the hands of the former captain of Greyfriars was still the talk of the school; it was not likely to be forgotten,

so long as that dark shadow lingered round Loder's eye. George Wingate was booked to expiate severely his rashness in thrashing the captain of the school; but that did not alter the fact that Loder had had the thrashing of his life, and was very sore about it, both mentally and physically.

The bully of the Sixth made a jump at Bob, and grasped at him.

His grip closed on the junior's shoulder.

"Hands off, I tell you!" shouted Bob.

Loder dragged him to the chair. By sheer force the powerful senior bent him over it.

Whack!

The cane came down, and there was a yell from Bob Cherry. It was a hefty swipe, and it hurt.

The next moment there was a yell from Loder, as Bob Cherry kicked out furiously.

His heel hacked Loder's shin; and Loder was the more hurt of the two. He released Bob and staggered back, his face almost white with pain.

In an instant Bob Cherry was streaking for the door. Loder, staggering and clasping his damaged shin, was in no condition to stop him. Unfortunately for Bob, Carne of the Sixth was on the watch, and he grasped the Removite before the door was reached.

Bob Cherry was swung back into the middle of the study in Arthur Carne's grasp.

"No, you don't!" grinned Carne.

"Let me go, you bully!" shouted Bob, struggling.

"Lend me a hand here, Walker! The little beast is like a wild-cat!" panted Carne.

James Walker jumped to his assistance. Even with both the Sixth-Form prefects grasping him, Bob Cherry still resisted.

That he was "for it" now was quite clear; and he did his best to get his money's worth, as it were.

There was a howl from Walker as Bob's clenched fist was planted in his eye; and Carne gurgled as a jabbing elbow caught him under the chin.

"Hold him!" gasped Loder. "Don't let him get away! I'll give him a lesson! I'll skin him! I'll——"

"We've got him!" growled Carne. "By gad, he's nearly fractured my jaw! Bend him over!"

"Let go, you rotters!" yelled Bob. "Rescue! Rescue, Remove!"

But there were no Removites near enough to hear the call. Bob Cherry was flung across the chair by main force, and Carne and Walker held him there, still wriggling desperately.

"Now then, Loder!" panted Walker.

"Hold him!"

Loder grasped the cane. The pain in his hacked shin was almost excruciating, and Loder was boiling with rage. As Bob was held between Carne and Walker, Loder lashed with the cane.

Lash, lash, lash!

It had been Loder's intention to give the mutinous junior "six." But he was not counting the strokes now. The cane rose and fell with terrific force and celerity, and a dozen lashes were administered almost in as many seconds.

Bob Cherry roared and yelled and struggled. A Head's flogging was a joke to a thrashing like this.

Still the cane rose and fell in Loder's vengeful hand.

"Hold on, Loder!" said Walker at last. "That's enough! You can't skin the young rascal!"

"You fool, it's not enough! Hold him!"

"I tell you——"

"Shut up!"

The cane lashed down again.

"Look here—" muttered Carne.

"He's hacked my shin!" said Loder, livid with rage and pain. "I'll cut the skin off him! I'll—"

"You won't!" said Walker decisively. "We're not going up before the Head to please you, Loder. Chuck it!"

"I won't!"

Loder lashed again. He had forgotten all prudence in his rage; but fortunately for him, as well as for Bob, his comrades had not.

"Chuck it!" repeated Walker angrily. And he released Bob Cherry, and pushed Loder back.

Carne jerked the junior off the chair, and swung him towards the door.

"Cut!" he snapped.

Bob staggered to the door. He was quivering with pain from head to foot, and his face was white. He opened the door, and limped into the passage. There he turned and looked into the study again.

"You rotten bully, Loder! You coward! I won't fag for you—and I'll hack your shins again if you touch me, you coward!"

Loder made a spring towards him, but Carne pulled him back.

"Don't be a fool; the kid's had enough. Get out of it, Cherry."

And Bob Cherry, with a last glare of defiance at the bully of the Sixth, limped away down the passage.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

To Fag or not to Fag!

"THE esteemed Bob is lingering longfully," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as the chums of the Remove strolled under the elms.

"Yes, jolly nearly time for tea!" said Harry Wharton. "He went in to speak to Wingate, but he can't be jawing to Wingate all this time. Let's go in."

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the four juniors, and grinned at them cheerily, as they turned from the path under the elms.

"I say, you fellows, Loder's been going it!" he said.

"I've no doubt he has," grunted Johnny Bull. "Since he's been captain of the school, he's needed a larger size in hats every day. Never saw such an ass with such a swelled head."

"The swellfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh. "Like the classic johnny in esteemed Horace, he strikefully touches the stars with his excellent and ridiculous head."

"But what's the latest?" asked Frank Nugent. "Has old Wingate been called up before the giddy prefects yet?"

Bunter chuckled again.

"I haven't heard," he answered. "Blow old Wingate, and blow young Wingate! I don't think much of the Wingates, anyway. I say, young Wingate of the Third isn't nearly so cheeky as he was, though. Loder gave him a jolly good licking, and it seems to have done him good. My minor Sammy says he hasn't heard Wingate minor saying anything about his friend in the Sixth lately."

The Removites laughed.

They were by no means sorry to hear that Jack Wingate of the Third Form had been brought to his senses in that respect. They were aware that Loder of the Sixth had taken up the fag; but he seemed to have dropped him like a hot

potato since he had become captain of Greyfriars. There was no doubt that that was all the better for "old Wingate's" young brother, though doubtless it had been a painful shock to his conceit.

"But I say, you fellows, the latest is fagging the Remove," pursued Billy Bunter, blinking at the juniors through his big spectacles. "That cad Carne of the Sixth told me to fetch his hat this afternoon. Of course, I wasn't going to fag for him, being a Remove man."

"And what did you do?" grinned Nugent. He could not imagine William George Bunter defying Carne of the Sixth, even with indubitable right on his side.

"Refused, what?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, I didn't exactly refuse," said Bunter cautiously. "You see, the beast would have licked me. I fetched his hat, but I told him he was a rotten bully and a cad."

"You told Carne of the Sixth that?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather! I jolly well told him what I thought of him," said Bunter.

"And what did he do?"

"Nothing."

"After you called him a bully and a cad?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, after that."

"Gammon!"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter. "He just walked away, as if I hadn't spoken! Took no notice, you know! Of course, it's possible that he didn't hear me—I didn't say it very loud."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now he's started on poor old Cherry!" went on Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. were laughing; but they ceased suddenly.

"What's that?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.



Wingate's face was composed as he came along the crowded corridor, fellows falling back to make room for him much more cheerfully and respectfully than they had done for Gerald Loder. "Now then, you chaps!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Three cheers for old Wingate! Hip, hip, hooray!" "Good old Wingate!" Wingate started, and smiled faintly. (See Chapter 6.)

"No end of a row," said Bunter. "You should have heard poor old Bob yelling! They'd got him in Loder's study, you know! I say, you fellows, he looked pretty sick when he got away! Like a sick rabbit! He, he, he!"

"You fat idiot—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Wharton grasped the Owl of the Remove by a fat shoulder, and shook him.

"What's happened, you fat dummy? Has that cad Loder been pitching into Bob?"

"Yaroooh!"

"Answer, you fat porker!"

"Leggo!"

"Let's get in," said Nugent hastily. "That's what's delayed Bob, I suppose—Loder's got hold of him. Come on."

Wharton released the Owl of the Remove, and the four juniors started for the House. They went at a run, anxious about Bob. Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing were in the House doorway, both looking grave; and Wharton called to them in passing.

"Seen Bob?"

"Yes," answered the Bounder. "He's been through it, poor chap! You'll find him in his study."

The chums of the Lower Fourth scudded up the staircase. They ran along the Remove passage to Study No. 13, which belonged to Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung, the Chinese. A peculiar grunting sound greeted their ears as they arrived. It proceeded from Bob Cherry, who was

thus expressing his feelings after his interview with Loder of the Sixth.

"Bob, old man—"

"My esteemed Bob—"

Mark Linley and Wun Lung were in the study with Bob, both looking deeply sympathetic. Bob was leaning on the mantelpiece, with a white, strained face. He gave his chums a rueful sort of grin as they burst into the room.

"I've had it!" he grunted.

"Bad?" asked Nugent.

"Horrid!"

"It's a rotten shame!" exclaimed Mark Linley indignantly. "I've been telling Bob that he ought to go to Mr. Quelch about it."

"I'm jolly well not going to, though," said Bob. "It wouldn't be any good—Loder knows how to look after himself. He would make out somehow that I was in the wrong. Besides, we can keep our end up without dragging a Form-master into our rows."

"That's so," agreed Harry Wharton. "But there's a limit, all the same. Tell us what's happened."

Bob Cherry—with interludes of grunting and groaning—explained what had occurred in Loder's study.

Wharton's eyes gleamed as he listened.

"So that cad means business?" he said.

"They're going to take up that wheeze of fagging the Remove, that was dropped when old Wingate was captain. They jolly well won't succeed."

"No jolly fear."

Bob Cherry made a grimace.

"I fancy a lot of fellows will give in if Loder tries these methods," he said. "I've had a licking I sha'n't get over for days. And Loder's captain of the school now—even if a fellow appeals to the Head, he will always be able to make out that he was only exercising his authority. Suppose I complained about it now—well, he would say I cheeked him in his study. So I did—no end of cheek! It's no good making complaints. If we can't stand up for ourselves, we go down."

"But we can," said Harry Wharton. "Loder will jolly soon find out that the Remove are up to his weight."

"Shoulder to shoulder, and down with the giddy tyrant, what?" grinned Bob. "Ow! Wow!"

"Come along to tea, old man," said Nugent.

"Ow! Right-ho! Wow!"

The Famous Five went along to Study No. 1 to tea. Bob Cherry did not sit down to tea—he took it standing. There was deep and indignant discussion in Study No. 1 over tea, Bob's contribution being chiefly in the form of grunts and groans.

A good many fellows looked in to hear what had happened, and to express sympathy and indignation. One or two fellows seemed to find something entertaining in the incident, especially Skinner of the Remove. Harold Skinner generally contrived to extract some amusement from the disasters of others.

"What an awful nerve!" Skinner remarked, shaking his head. "Of course, Loder's a prefect, and captain of the school, but doesn't he know that these fellows are awfully important—that common persons mustn't lay a finger on them? Somebody ought to explain that to Loder. He will be always making these mistakes if he isn't enlightened!" Some of the juniors in the passage grinned.

"Shut up, Skinner!" growled Johnny Bull.

"But it's really serious, you know," pursued the humorous Skinner. "Loder

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may begin fagging Wharton himself—his Enormous Magnificence! What will happen then? Will the skies fall?"

"Something will happen if you don't cheese it, Skinner!" said Harry, as the juniors in the passage chuckled.

"Anyhow, I never fagged," said Bob Cherry. "I've had an awful licking, but I didn't cave in. You'd have caved in fast enough, Skinner."

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"They haven't tried fagging me, anyhow," he said. "If they do, I shall stand up for my rights, and appeal to the Head! But I fancy the Sixth will have sense enough to let me alone."

"Do you?" said an unpleasant voice behind Skinner.

Skinner spun round.

Walker of the Sixth had come up to the Remove passage. He had a cane under his arm.

"Oh!" ejaculated Skinner.

"I'm looking for a fag!" said Walker agreeably. "I think you will do, Skinner! My football boots are in a shocking state. It was very muddy to-day. They've got to be made to look as good as new. Will you go and do it for me, Skinner?"

Skinner hesitated.

"The Remove don't fag, you know," he said feebly.

"Don't they?" said Walker, in the same agreeable tone. "We shall see about that, Skinner." He slid his cane down into his hand.

All eyes in the Remove passage were on Skinner.

Now was the time for him to stand up for his rights and tell James Walker that he wouldn't fag, and that he would appeal to the Head.

But Skinner did not. Bold words were one thing in the Remove passage among the juniors—quite another thing in the presence of a towering Sixth-Former with a cane in his hand. Skinner's courage, such as it was, oozed out at his finger-tips.

"I—I don't mind looking after your boots, Walker," he gasped.

"I thought not!" grinned Walker. "Get a move on."

Skinner drifted towards the stairs. Walker of the Sixth followed him, and gave him a cut from the cane to accelerate his movements. There was a howl from Skinner, and he disappeared down the Remove staircase, with the grinning prefect following him.

It was sufficiently clear that Skinner, at least, would not be one of the champions of junior rights under the new regime.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Major and Minor!

JACK WINGATE, of the Third Form, tapped timidly at the door of Wingate of the Sixth, his brother, late captain of Greyfriars School.

He entered hesitatingly.

Wingate minor would scarcely have been recognised as the cheeky, impudent young scamp he had been only a short week before. His late experiences had taken a great deal of the impudence out of the scapegrace of the Third.

It was probable that his scapegrace days were over. Unthinking, reckless, perverse as he was, Jack Wingate was not without the saving grace of common sense; and it had been made quite clear to him that in encouraging his dingy rascality Gerald Loder had simply been making use of him to undermine his brother's position in the school.

To his brother, Jack Wingate had

given scarcely a thought. But he had had a rude awakening now, and had begun to think.

Loder, blackguard as he was, was ashamed of having led a wretched fag into wrongdoing; and as soon as the captain's election was over, as soon as he was free to act, he had dropped the foolish fag, and thrashed him into the bargain.

Jack Wingate's "friend in the Sixth," by talking of whom he had intensely irritated the Third Form fags, had ceased to be a friend, and was nothing more now than a severe prefect, with a very keen sense of duty so far as Jack Wingate was concerned.

Instead of being encouraged, or permitted, in "playing the goat," Jack Wingate found himself under special observation, with a thrashing all ready for him if he showed a sign of kicking over the traces.

Perhaps Loder was seeking, by those drastic means, to undo the harm he had done the foolish fag; perhaps he was indemnifying himself for the constraint and trouble of his previous hypocrisy. Certainly it never could have been pleasant to the lofty, swanking Loder to play the part of friend to a cheeky fag of the Third.

Whatever Loder's motives, which were perhaps mixed, there was no doubt about his actions, and Jack Wingate suddenly found himself fallen from his high estate of a prefect's favourite—spurned on the one hand by the contemptuous Loder, disliked on the other by the fags he had antagonised by his airs and graces.

It was not pleasant for Wingate minor; but undoubtedly it was better for him than what had gone before, and his reform, though it had come about by compulsion, was better than no reform at all.

In his new subdued mood, Wingate minor was thinking more of his brother than was his custom, and he was remorseful at the disaster he had brought on the late captain of Greyfriars. Hence his timid manner and apologetic look as he came into the Sixth-Former's study.

Wingate of the Sixth gave him a nod.

George Wingate had suffered a good deal on his brother's account, but he had taken on the burden of his own accord, and he was not the fellow to grouse over the result. Much harm as the fag had done him, he still had only kindness to expect from the senior.

"Hallo! Trot in, kid!" said Wingate, smiling cheerily, though there had been a black cloud on his brow only a moment before. He had been thinking of his own position, which was as bitter and humiliating as it could be. He was expecting to be called before a Prefects' Meeting presided over by his old enemy and successful rival, Loder, there to receive the punishment due for having thrashed the captain of the school. And that punishment was certain to be as humiliating as Gerald Loder could make it. But he drove the thought of it from his mind as his brother came in.

"I—I say, George, can't anything be done?" urged Jack Wingate.

"About what?"

"Loder—and the rest! You can't go up before the prefects—you who were captain of the school."

"No choice about it, kid. I thrashed Loder—I'm not sorry for it, but it's got to be paid for."

"That was on my account."

"Yes, yes. Never mind that now."

"He asked for it," said the fag. "But—but it was awfully rash. The Head was bound to take it up. Some of the fellows thought you would be expelled. Paget of the Third offered two to one in doughnuts that it was you for the long jump."

Wingate laughed.

"Well, Paget of the Third was wrong," he said. "I've got to toe the line and take my medicine, that's all. It's right, too. When I was captain I should not have allowed mutiny. Loder's within his rights in enforcing his authority—in fact, he's got no choice in the matter. Anyhow, it can't be helped."

"The Head would jolly well sack him if he knew all about him, instead of letting him captain the school!" muttered the fag.

"But the Head doesn't know—and won't," said Wingate major. "Forget it, Jack. What did you come for?"

"I—I've got a message." Wingate minor coloured uncomfortably. "Loder's sent me with a message."

"Oh!" said Wingate, setting his lips.

"You're to go to the prefects' room at seven," said the fag. "All the prefects will be there."

"It's a prefects' meeting, then?"

"Yes."

Wingate drew a deep breath.

"Well, I was expecting it," he said.

"I've got to go through with it. Just like Loder to send my brother with such a message. He would!"

"I'm to go back to him and say that you're coming."

"Tell him I'm coming, then."

Wingate minor hesitated.

"Isn't there any way out, George?"

"No."

"Suppose——" The fag stammered.

"Well, suppose what, kid?" asked his brother.

"Suppose—suppose I—I went to the Head——"

"What on earth for?"

"And—and confessed to him——"

"Confessed?" repeated Wingate.

"Confessed to him—why you resigned the captaincy—because you caught me at the Cross Keys, and—and wouldn't report me to the Head, and—and couldn't keep your position without doing so—that was it, George."

"That was it. But——"

"Suppose I told the Head that?" muttered Wingate minor. "It would make a lot of difference to your position, George."

Wingate of the Sixth looked keenly at his brother, and his expression grew soft. He did not believe that the fag had the courage, or the devotion, to make such a confession to the headmaster—a confession that would bring the severest punishment upon himself.

But it was something that the thought of it had come into Jack Wingate's mind. It was something that he was no longer thinking wholly of himself in his accustomed way. There was a change for the better in Wingate minor, since he had lost the distinction of possessing a "friend in the Sixth."

"I'm glad you've thought of that, kid," said the Sixth-Former, after a long pause.

Wingate minor trembled.

"You—you want me to do it?" he gasped.

"No!"

"Oh!" said the fag, and he did not attempt to disguise his relief. The bare thought of facing Dr. Locke with such a confession made him shiver.

"No!" said Wingate kindly. "I'm glad you thought of it, kid; but you're



Gerald Loder pointed to a chair with his cane. "Bend over!" he ordered. George Wingate, quietly, composedly, bent himself over the chair, as many a fag had done at his order in his days of captaincy. His face was pale and set, but he was perfectly cool. Loder stepped towards him. Whack! His ashplant swished through the air, and came down hard with a hefty stroke that rang through the prefects'-room. (See Chapter 7.)

not going to do it. I'd rather lose the captaincy as I've done, and take a prefects' beating, as I'm going to, than see you bunked from the school—and that's what it would be practically certain to come to. No!"

"I—I think I'd do it, if—if you wanted——"

"I don't! On the other hand, I tell you not to do it," said the Sixth-Former. "We'll get through without that, Jack. Loder won't always be top dog. He's got the upper hand now; but he's making enemies in the school about as fast as he can; and he will come down with a crash one of these days. Cut off and give him my answer."

Wingate minor nodded, and left the study.

George Wingate moved restlessly about the room, when the fag had gone. The ordeal before him was a trying one, and he had to make up his mind to go through with it.

He had been captain of the school, and head prefect—the highest position a Greyfriars man could reach. Now he was simply a senior fellow, under the authority of the prefects; and the head prefect was Loder! He was liable to be judged by the prefects, and ordered a beating; and that was what he had to expect now—to be ordered to bend over

in the prefects' room, and take a licking like some fag of the Lower School.

It was bitter knowledge, and it made his cheeks burn. He needed all his self-command to go through with it.

The Head had ordered him to submit to authority, or to leave Greyfriars. He had chosen the former alternative. But it was not only the shadow of the sack that had influenced him. As captain and prefect, he had been keen on discipline; he had commanded, and now that he was in a subordinate position, he had to obey, and it was right that he should obey. It was his duty to go through with it, and that was what influenced him most. And if he needed any other influence, it was the knowledge that Loder hoped, fervently hoped, that he would desist, that he would defy the Head's order—and thus bring about his own expulsion from Greyfriars. Loder had been very successful, so far, in his plotting and scheming; but to that extent, at least, he should never be gratified.

But it was hard, it was bitter; and more than once the temptation came strong upon George Wingate to throw all other considerations to the winds, and defy his enemy. But that temptation passed.

At a few minutes before seven, the

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former captain of Greyfriars quitted his study, and with a quiet and composed face, made his way sedately to the prefects' room.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Coker!

"L ODER!" Jack Wingate looked in at the Greyfriars captain's study.

His face was sullen; it was only with great difficulty that he could force himself to speak civilly to the rascally Sixth-Former who had deceived him, fooled him, used him and thrown him scornfully aside.

Loder was in his study with Carford major. His face was very cheery, in spite of the cut on his lip, the red swelling on his nose, and the dark circle round his eye. Those damages were about to be paid for by the fellow who had inflicted them—paid for in full; and the prospect was a bright one to Gerald Loder.

He glanced round at the fag in the doorway.

"Come in!" he snapped.

Jack Wingate came in.

"You've taken my message?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"My brother will be in the prefects' room at seven," muttered Jack Wingate reluctantly.

Loder grinned.

"That's all right! What are you scowling about, young Wingate?"

Jack Wingate did not answer that question; but his expression grew more sulky and sullen. He moved to the door.

"Stop!" rapped out Loder.

The fag stopped.

"Don't you know better than to scowl like a little Hun when you come into your captain's study?" demanded Loder.

The fag scowled more blackly.

"Haven't you learned manners yet?" asked Loder. "I've given you a few lessons lately, you cheeky young sweep. Do you want another?"

No answer.

"Hand me that cane from the table."

Wingate minor handed over the cane, his eyes gleaming. This was the fellow who had been his "friend in the Sixth"—the fellow who had fooled him to the top of his bent. Evidently Loder was resolved to indemnify himself for having had to play at friendship with the cheeky fag.

"Bend over that chair."

"Oh, you rotter!" muttered Wingate minor.

"What?" roared Loder.

"My word!" said Carford major. "These fags are coming to something! It's really time something was done."

"This young sweep is the cheekiest of the lot," said Loder. "I've got a lot of reason to believe that he's been breaking the rules of the school—smoking cigarettes, and getting out of bounds, and all that. I'm keeping an eye on the young rascal. Bend over that chair, Wingate minor."

With bitter rage in his breast, the wretched fag bent over, and the cane lashed him twice.

"Now get out, and don't scowl next time you come to my study," said Loder, pointing to the door with the cane.

Wingate minor got out.

"I've heard that that young ass has been talking about you being a friend of his, Loder."

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" sneered Loder.

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Carford major laughed.

"Well, no; but there's been quite a lot of talk, all the same."

"I dare say I was kind to him once or twice, as he was the captain's minor, in Wingate's time," said Loder carelessly. "That's all."

"Oh, of course!" assented Carford; but he gave the captain of Greyfriars a rather curious look.

There was a thump at the door, and Coker of the Fifth looked in. He gave the captain of Greyfriars a familiar nod. Coker of the Fifth was not to be awed by the Sixth—he made it a point never to be awed.

"Hallo, Loder!" he said cheerily. "I've been waiting for a chance for a long time to speak to you about the footer."

"Have you?" yawned Loder.

"I have!" said Coker. "There's no time like the present, so—"

Loder rose to his feet.

"I'm afraid I haven't time to discuss football with you, Coker," he said.

"I'm due for a prefects' meeting."

"Oh, rot!" said Horace Coker. "The prefects can wait. Who the thump are the prefects, anyhow?"

"Chuck that!" said Loder, frowning.

"Talk of that kind won't do, Coker.

A Sixth-Former is going to get a prefects' beating to-day, and I shall not go any easier with the Fifth. Take care!"

"A prefects' beating!" said Coker, with a glare. "I'd like to see anybody try to give me one!"

"You'll see it pretty soon if you're not careful, my man! Now, cut off; I'm busy."

"About the football—"

"What the thump do you know about football?" snapped Loder contemptuously. "Talk about something you understand, if you must talk."

Coker glared at him, almost speechless. Coker had backed Loder up in the captain's election tooth and nail, hand and foot; all Horace Coker's terrific energy had been directed to that one end—to get Loder in as captain of Greyfriars. He had supported Loder, not because he liked him—he didn't—but because he believed that Loder was going to give him a chance in first eleven football. Wingate had never been able to see that in leaving out Horace Coker he was leaving out the finest footballer ever produced by Greyfriars or any other school. Coker had tried again and again to enlighten him, in vain. From Loder he hoped for better things—he had encouraging words from Loder upon which to base his hopes. Coker of the Fifth was by no means the only fellow whom Loder had deceived in one way or other into supporting him in the captain's election.

Coker had been surprised that Loder had not mentioned the subject since. Now it was mentioned, and Loder's view was quite a surprise to Horace Coker.

Carford major burst into a laugh. The expression on Horace Coker's face was really entertaining.

The great Horace seemed at a loss for words. Indeed, Loder had taken his breath away.

"What—what—what did you say, Loder?" stuttered Coker of the Fifth at last.

"Talk about something you understand," said Loder coolly. "You don't know anything about football. Marbles, I should think, was your game."

"Mum-marbles!" stuttered Coker.

"Or hopscotch!" said Loder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Carford major.

Horace Coker struggled for speech.

"Why, you—you—you cheeky cad!"

he gasped. "Didn't you tell me just before the election that I'd never had justice in football matters, and that you'd see that I got justice?"

"I dare say I did," assented Loder. "So I will. If you had justice done you as a footballer you'd be put to play with the fags of the Second Form. I can arrange that, if you like, now I'm Head of the Games. I'll speak to Gatty of the Second about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Carford major. Coker's face was growing more and more entertaining.

Loder waved his hand.

"Consider it done!" he said. "Now, cut; I'm busy!"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Coker.

Walker and Carne came into the study, unceremoniously pushing Horace Coker out of the way.

"Time we got going," said Walker.

"The meeting's at seven, you know."

"Just coming along," said Loder.

"Look here—" bawled Coker of the Fifth.

"What on earth's the matter with Coker?" asked Carne. "What the thump is he roaring in your study for, Loder?"

"He wants a place in the first eleven."

"Oh my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Loder. "Let's get going! Get out of the way, Coker, will you?"

"No!" roared the incensed Coker. "No, I jolly well won't! We're going to have this out! I—"

"Chuck it, you ass!" said the captain of Greyfriars impatiently.

"I can jolly well tell you—"

"Shift the silly ass!" said Walker.

"Look here, I— Hands off! Stop it! Oh my hat!" roared Coker, as the four Sixth-Formers collared him together and pitched him into a corner of the study, where he sat down with a heavy bump. "Oh! Ow! Oh!"

Loder & Co. walked away, grinning, leaving Coker of the Fifth to sort himself out at his leisure.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Prefects' Meeting!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Hook it, Bunter!"

"But I say—"

"Too late!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We've finished tea long ago, and there's nothing left. Hook it!"

"I've got news, you silly ass!" hooted Bunter, blinking indignantly into Study No. 1 in the Remove through his big spectacles. "News, I tell you—"

"Has your postal-order come?" asked Frank Nugent. "That would be news—terrific, in fact, as Inky would say."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Squiff of the Remove looked into the study over Bunter's fat shoulder.

"You fellows heard?" he asked. "There's a prefects' meeting, and old Wingate is up!"

"Oh, it's come at last, then!" said Harry.

"I say, you fellows, that's what I was going to tell you!" howled Billy Bunter indignantly. "You shut up, Field!"

"A lot of fellows are going," said Squiff. "You chaps coming?"

"Yes, rather!"

Wharton and Nugent were thinking of prep, but they banished the thought of prep now. Wingate, late captain of Greyfriars, was up before the prefects! It was thrilling news.

"I say, you fellows, do you think he will take it lying down?" asked Billy Bunter.

"He will take it bending over!" said Skinner from the passage.

"He's bound to take it," said Peter Todd, joining the crowd that was gathering outside Study No. 1. "There won't be a row."

"I fancy there will!" said Vernon-Smith. "I can't quite see Wingate major bending over at Loder's order. More likely to lose his temper and knock him spinning."

"And get bunked by the Head?" sneered Skinner. "I don't think!"

"Let's go down!" said Bob Cherry.

Some of the Removites were already going down. When Harry Wharton & Co. reached the bottom of the staircase they found a crowd converging in the direction of the prefects' room.

Fellows of all Forms swarmed into the broad corridor upon which that apartment opened.

Fifth and Sixth Form seniors were there, though even they were not allowed within the sacred precincts of the prefects' room. Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers, Removites, and Third and Second swarmed.

Loder probably had taken care to allow the time of the meeting to be well-known in advance.

He was not at all indisposed to allow Wingate's punishment and humiliation to be witnessed by a swarm of fellows of all Forms. The more the late captain was humiliated in the sight of all Greyfriars the better Loder liked it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come the grand panjandrum!" called out Bob Cherry, as Loder appeared.

Loder of the Sixth, captain of Greyfriars, walked down the crowded corridor with a lofty stride, fellows making way for him on all sides.

Whether Gerald Loder needed a larger size in hats or not, there was no doubt that he suffered very considerably from "swelled head" since he had become captain of the school. Even his own pals, Walker and Carne, were rather painfully aware of it, and frequently annoyed by it. They were still Loder's friends, but he gave them plainly to understand that they had to be very civil and tactful friends, and must take care how they treated the great man. Loder in power was a very different person from Loder plotting and scheming to get power into his hands.

Loder's manner now was very lofty, and some of the juniors grinned as they looked at him.

"Monarch of all he surveys, and all that—what?" grinned Temple of the Fourth. "He will keep his batter busy, at this rate."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Unfortunately for Cecil Reginald Temple, Loder overheard the remark, which was intended only for Dabney and Fry of the Fourth.

"Temple!"

"Hallo, Loder!"

"Step here."

Loder had an ashplant under his arm, and he slipped it down into his hand. Cecil Reginald looked rather green as he obeyed Loder's command.

"I think I've mentioned to you before, Temple, that I don't permit any cheeky impudence from Lower boys," said Loder.

Cecil Reginald crimsoned. In his own estimation, Cecil Reginald was a rather important fellow, not to be talked to like common juniors. Loder ruthlessly disregarded the importance of Cecil Reginald, even if he was aware of it.

"Do you hear me, Temple?"

"Ye-e-es, Loder."

"Hold out your hand."

"I—I say, Loder—"

"I think I told you to hold out your hand, Temple."

With a red and furious face, Cecil Reginald Temple held out his hand.

Swish!

"Ow!"

"Now cut."

Temple of the Fourth backed into the crowd, palpitating with rage. Loder tucked the cane under his arm, and walked on.

There were no more jeers, either aloud or muttered. Loder was evidently not a fellow to be trifled with. Temple of the Fourth, wringing his aching hand, thought a good many things, but did not give utterance to his thoughts.

Loder walked into the prefects' room, followed by Carne and Walker and Carford major. By his manner, he might have been a royal monarch about to seat himself upon his throne amid his admiring courtiers.

"Here come the rest of the happy family!" murmured the Bounder.

Gwynne of the Sixth came along, with North. They were looking rather grim; both of them were friends of Wingate's. Lawrence of the Sixth was next to come, and then two or three more.

The meeting was now complete; it only remained for the culprit to appear. It was now close on seven.

"Mind, we cheer old Wingate when he comes!" whispered Bob Cherry. "No law against cheering a chap who gets goals for Greyfriars, is there?"

"None!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We'll jolly well give him three times three, and chance it."

"The cheerfulness shall be terrific."

"I say, you fellows, Wingate's coming!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

Wingate of the Sixth came along the corridor. He seemed surprised to find it swarming with fellows of every Form at Greyfriars.

His face flushed.

From Wingate's point of view, the more private the proceedings of the prefects' meeting were kept, the better. Certainly, he did not want his "bending over" to make a juniors' holiday!

But he gave no sign; his face was composed as he came along the crowded corridor, fellows falling back to make room for him much more cheerfully and respectfully than they had done for Gerald Loder.

"Now, then, you chaps!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Three cheers for old Wingate."

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Good old Wingate!"

"Hurrah!"

Wingate started, and smiled faintly. He understood that this was a demonstration in his favour. From the prefects' room came Loder's sharp, unpleasant voice:

"Stop that row!"

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" yelled the juniors.



"You've lied and shuffled and taken me in, Loder," said Horace Coker fiercely. "Now put up your hands. I'm jolly well going to lick you, you rascal! I call you a rascal. If you don't like it, here I am, ready to answer for it. Have you got pluck enough to put up your hands?" Carne and Walker grinned, but the captain of Greyfriars eyed Horace Coker with a deadly gleam in his eye.
(See Chapter 9.)

Wingate walked into the prefects' room, and the thunder of cheering died away behind him.

"I'm here!" he said quietly.

His hand was on the door to close it.

"Leave that door alone, Wingate!" snapped Loder.

"Dash it all, Loder, we don't want a mob of fags staring in at us!" exclaimed Gwynne of the Sixth.

"That's for me to decide," said Loder coolly. "Wingate, you will stand there by the table."

"Very well!"

Wingate took his place quietly.

The doorway was crammed with faces, and behind them were a myriad more faces. Most of the fellows were glad that Loder had ordered the door to be left open; they wanted a view of the thrilling drama that was about to take place in the prefects' room.

"Look here, give a chap room!" howled Billy Bunter. "Look here, Bob, I ain't as tall as you—give me room!"

"Don't shove!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Order, there!" called out Loder. "Silence! If there's any more row, I'll give the lot of you detention for Saturday."

"Phew!"

"I say, let's clear!" said Harry Wharton, in a low voice, to his comrades. "That rotter wants to humiliate Wingate as much as he can! Let us get out of it, at least."

"Let's!" agreed Bob Cherry.

But it was easier to suggest than to do. The Famous Five were penned in by the crowd behind them, and nobody was disposed to yield an inch. Shoving was no use; the fellows behind shoved back. More and more keen and excited spectators were arriving, and the Greyfriars fellows were crammed in the corridor almost like sardines in a tin.

"Order!"

"Stop shoving!"

"Chuck it!"

"Do you want me to come out to you?" shouted Loder. "Silence, I say!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. gave it up, and remained where they were.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

"Bend Over!"

GEORGE WINGATE stood erect, quiet, composed, standing at the table in the prefects' room.

His face was a little flushed, but that was all. He had steeled himself to go through this bitter ordeal, and he was quite calm.

The prefects were sitting down, two or three of them looking very uncomfortable.

Gwynne and North, Wingate's own pals, were exceedingly discomfited. They had no choice about attending the meeting called by the head-prefect, on the instructions of the headmaster. They had to sit in judgment on their old friend. It was an unhappy position for them, especially as, in the circumstances, there was little they could say in his favour. They liked Wingate, and they disliked Loder intensely; but they could not take up the position of supporting a fellow who had thrashed the captain of the school. A breach of discipline of that extent had to be dealt with severely; and Wingate was, in fact, condemned beforehand. The meeting intended to ask him if he had anything to say for himself; but no excuse he

could offer was likely to make any difference. No pretext could be admitted as justifying laying hands on the captain of the school.

Loder sat with a smile on his face. It would have been more judicious on Loder's part to conceal the satisfaction he felt. But Loder was too puffed up with success and self-importance to think of what was judicious. Short as his period of supremacy had been, so far, it seemed to have made him almost indifferent to public opinion in the school.

Wingate stood waiting.

He had to wait.

Loder was speaking in low tones with Walker, and seemed to have forgotten Wingate for the moment.

As Loder was presiding at the meeting, the proceedings could not proceed, so to speak, until Loder gave his attention.

He was in no hurry.

It pleased him to keep his old rival standing like this, awaiting his pleasure. Wingate was nobody in particular now, and that fact had to be impressed upon him and all others. His cup of humiliation was to be drunk to the very dregs.

A voice called from the corridor:

"Get on with it!"

There was a laugh.

Loder glanced up.

"Hobson!"

"Hallo!" called back Hobson of the Shell.

"Was that you?"

"Yes, it was."

"Take five hundred lines."

"Oh, my hat!" said Hobson.

Hobson of the Shell did not speak again, except to debate, in whispers, with his pal Hoskins, whether he was going to do those five hundred lines or not. Hobson declared that he wouldn't. Hoskins thought that he would. Probably Hoskins was right!

There was silence again.

Gwynne of the Sixth broke it, his brows gathering in an angry frown.

"Look here, Loder, is this a giddy Quaker meeting, or are we going to get to business?"

"I'm about fed-up, Loder," said Tom North.

Loder felt, perhaps, that the exhibition of the culprit had gone on long enough. He stopped his cheery conversation with Walker.

"Yes, let's get on," said Carford major. "We can't waste the whole evening on this, Loder."

"Quite so," agreed Loder. "Now we—"

Gwynne crossed to the door and closed it. There was a buzz of disappointment in the corridor.

Loder glared at Gwynne.

"What the thump are you doing, Gwynne?"

"Closing the door."

"Open it, then!"

"Rot!"

Gwynne stood and leaned on the door. There was a gleam in his eye.

"Look here, Loder!" he said quietly. "Wingate's up for judgment. That's all right. I can't uphold what he's done, though he's my friend. But prefects' meetings never have been witnessed by a mob of juniors, and it's not going to begin."

"That's for me to decide!" snapped Loder.

"Nothing of the kind! You can hold the meeting in public if you like; but if you do, I step out of the meeting."

"Same here!" said North.

"Chuck it, Loder!" whispered Walker. "It's really too thick, you know. Draw the line, old man."

Loder felt that he had better yield the point.

"I leave that matter to the meeting, then," he said. "Settle it for yourselves."

There was no doubt that the opinion of the meeting was in favour of privacy. Even Carne and Walker did not share Loder's desire to make an exhibition of the fallen captain of Greyfriars. The door remained closed, and the mob in the passage were reduced to the necessity of listening instead of watching. Still, as Skinner remarked, they would hear the ashplant whacking when the prefects got to business. A remark that earned him a fierce jab from Peter Todd's elbow.

Loder fixed his eyes on Wingate maliciously. He felt defeated. Great man as he now was, he could not have everything his own way. But Wingate was to pay for it all.

"Now, Wingate, we'll deal with you," said Loder, as he might have spoken to some fag of the Third called up for judgment. "You can get out of your head any idea that you'll get special treatment here, because you used to be a prefect yourself. You're just a Greyfriars man who has forgotten his place, and checks those set in authority over him, and the sooner you understand it the better."

Wingate's only reply to this exordium was a contemptuous smile.

"The Head's given you the choice of being dealt with by the prefects, or bunked from the school," went on Loder. "You've chosen to come before us. Now, we needn't go into details. It's known to all present that you attacked the captain of the school, in this very room, and struck him."

"Thrashed him!" said Wingate.

Loder flushed.

"It's no good asking you if you have any excuse to offer, because you have none—"

"I admit it!"

"Oh, you admit that?" ejaculated Loder.

"Fully!" said Wingate. "I disregarded the rules of the school, which I had always enforced when I was captain. I'm bound to take my punishment. That's why I am here; not because I'm afraid of being bunked from Greyfriars. But you wouldn't understand that."

"I shouldn't; and I don't believe it now," sneered Loder.

"You can please yourself about that."

"Any fellow, not being a prefect, who strikes a prefect, is liable to a prefect's beating," went on Loder. "What you have done is just the same as if it had been done by a fag of the Remove."

"I know that!"

"Then it only remains to pass sentence," said Loder, looking round at the other prefects.

"Quite!" said Carford major.

"And the sooner the better," said Lawrence.

A cane lay on the table. Loder rose to his feet, and picked it up.

"Hold on a minute," said Gwynne.

"What have you got to say?"

"This. Nobody can uphold what Wingate did; but we're bound to take into consideration the fact that only a few days ago he was a prefect himself, and captain of the school. He does not uphold his action himself. He admits that he was in the wrong. I think, therefore, that if Wingate expresses his regret for what he did, the matter can drop."

"Hear, hear!" said North of the Sixth at once.

"Yes, something in that," agreed Carford.

"I agree!" said Lawrence.



Coker leaned on the mantelpiece, gasping. "These young rotters have been chipping you, what?" asked Greene. "Ow! Yes! Ow!" moaned Coker. "Then we'll pile into them," said Potter. Crack! Crack! In the grasp of the hefty Fifth-Formers, Skinner & Co. were not of much use. Bunter's head came against Skinner's, and Fisher T. Fish's bullet-head cracked on Snoop's. Four frantic yells blended into one in Coker's study. "Now kick them out!" chuckled Potter. (See Chapter 10.)

Loder bit his lip.

"If you fellows think that an apology would meet the case—" he began.

"Cut that out!" interposed Wingate. "I shall not apologise, and I do not regret what I did. I told you at the time, Loder, that I thrashed you because you were a scoundrel, and had used me like a scoundrel, and that stands. Because you happen to be captain of the school I was in the wrong, and that is all. But in the same circumstances I should do the same again."

"Oh, gad!" murmured Gwynne. He had failed in his effort to save his friend from the last humiliation.

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"That does it!" he said. "There is no question, then, of an apology, or even an expression of regret?"

"None!" said Wingate quietly.

Loder gave Gwynne a sneering look.

"Anything more to say?" he asked.

Gwynne shook his head, with a discouraged look. He had done his best, and he had failed. There was nothing more to be said.

"Then we shall proceed to judgment," said Gerald Loder. "Wingate is sentenced to a prefects' beating! He will bend over a chair and take six cuts from every prefect present. That is the rule; and six is the maximum allowed in such cases. I think this case calls for the maximum. If any fellow thinks differently, I'm willing to hear his opinion."

"Oh, get on with it!" said Wingate, before anyone else could speak.

Loder pointed to a chair with the cane. "Bend over!" he said.

His face fairly gloated at Wingate as he gave that order.

Many a time, in the course of his plotting and scheming, Loder had pictured himself sitting in judgment on his old rival, and giving that order. Now his visions had come to pass! There he was, captain of Greyfriars, ashplant in hand, ordering Wingate to "bend over." Loder's cup of triumph was full to overflowing at this moment.

"Bend over!" he repeated.

Wingate quietly, composedly, bent

himself over the chair, as many a fag had done at his order in his days of captaincy.

His face was a little pale now, and set, but he was perfectly cool. Loder stepped towards him.

The ashplant sang in the air.

Whack!

It came down, hard.

That hefty stroke rang through the prefects' room, it echoed in the crowded passage without.

Fellows there started, and stared at one another. They had known that it was coming, but now that it had come, now that they heard the stroke of the cane, it still seemed incredible.

Stroke after stroke rang out till the six had been administered.

Not a sound came from Wingate.

Certainly he was hurt, for Loder was a powerful fellow, and he put all his "beef" into it.

But Wingate might have been made of bronze for all the sign he gave. Loder was disappointed as he stepped back. He would have given a good deal to draw a cry of pain from the fellow whom he disliked intensely, and feared, for even at this moment of triumph he was conscious that in his heart of hearts he feared him. But that gratification was denied Loder; there was no sound or movement from the punished Sixth-Former.

Loder handed the cane to Walker.

He accompanied it with a look which conveyed his desire that Walker would lay it on hard, and break down the composure of the victim.

But Walker was very far from sharing Loder's bitter malice. He laid on the cane with an indifferent hand, heedless of Loder's angry looks. Carne came next, and his performance did not come up to Loder's desire. As a matter of fact, the rest of the punishment was a mere form. Gwynne and North had to take their share, but they simply flicked with the cane, and so it went on to the end.

Wingate's punishment, so far as the caning was concerned, was merely the

"six" he had received from Loder, the rest was negligible. But his real punishment was not the physical one; it was the bitter humiliation of bending over and being thrashed like a fag. From that reflection Loder drew solace and satisfaction.

"You can get up!"

Wingate rose.

"Go!"

Wingate left the prefects' room quietly.

He walked through a silent crowd in the corridor. His study door closed on him and hid him from the sight of Greyfriars.

In the prefects' room Gerald Loder glanced round with a grinning face.

"I fancy that will bring him to his senses," he said.

There was no answer.

Even Carne and Walker turned away without heeding Loder.

The captain of Greyfriars had a triumph to enjoy, but he enjoyed it all alone, and he was left in the prefects' room angry and irritated, and feeling that somehow, after all, his triumph left a bitter taste in his mouth.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Not to be Stood!

"I M not standing it!"

Coker of the Fifth made that remark, the following day, in his study, his hearers being Potter and Greene.

All that day Coker of the Fifth had worn a thoughtful frown.

In the Fifth Form room Mr. Prout had had unusual trouble with Coker. He always had trouble with him, Coker's powerful intellect being of the kind that could not deal easily with class-work. Mr. Prout's opinion, indeed, was that Coker ought never to have got his remove up from the Shell. Even in the Shell he would not have distinguished himself by his scholarship. There were rumours at Greyfriars that Coker never would have got his remove but for a certain

visit that his Aunt Judy had paid the Head, umbrella in hand.

No doubt that rumour was unfounded, but really Coker in class was enough to turn any master's hair grey. At the best of times he did not make Mr. Prout happy. Now he had more important matters than lessons to think of. How was a fellow to put his thoughts into such piffle as Latin verse when his position as a footballer was at stake? How was he to bring his powerful mind down to irregular verbs when it was a question whether he should or should not take his rightful place in the Greyfriars First Eleven?

Coker couldn't and wouldn't. Wherefore Mr. Prout had piled impots on Horace Coker, and openly and loudly expressed his regret that the cane was not used in senior Form-rooms. Coker had more lines to write than he could remember; more, it was to be hoped, than Mr. Prout would remember.

So when Coker, in the study after tea, declared he wasn't standing it, Potter and Greene felt sympathetic for once. They were Coker's friends, and so long as he did not talk football they could stand his conversation.

"I'm not standing it!" repeated Coker, staring at his study-mates with a gloomy frown.

"It's hard cheese," agreed Greene.

"It's bare-faced injustice and unfairness," said Coker.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Potter with a judicial air. "You did rather get Prouty's rag out, you know."

"Prouty! Who's talking about Prouty?"

"Eh? Weren't you?" asked Potter in surprise.

"Certainly not! Blow Prout! I've got rather more important matters to think of than a silly Form-master."

"Oh!"

"It's about the football!"

Potter and Greene groaned simultaneously.

It was football, after all! They really might have guessed it. Coker was not likely to keep off that subject long, so long as Soccer reigned at Greyfriars. Coker's football was about on a par with his Latin verse and his irregular verbs. It was, perhaps, a little more irregular than his verbs. According to his faithful chums, it was enough to make a cat laugh—certainly it made all Greyfriars smile. Potter and Greene cast glances towards the door, they really did not want to hear Coker on the winter game.

"That ead, Loder—" went on Coker.

"Yes, he's a ead all right," agreed Potter. "Not much of a captain for Greyfriars. Rotten the way he handled Wingate yesterday—"

"Never mind Wingate."

Potter was not going to change the subject so easily as all that.

"He's really going it rather strong," said Greene. "He's revived that wheeze of fagging the Remove, and the kids don't like it a little bit."

"I'm with him there," said Coker. "Why shouldn't the Remove be fagged? Cheeky young sweeps!"

"Right as rain," said Potter cordially. Coker on fagging was more tolerable than Coker on football.

But the great Horace was not to be diverted.

"Still, that's no business of ours," he said. "It's about the football—"

"Oh dear!"

"What did you say, Greene?"

"N-n-nothing, old chap."

"Loder practically promised me a place in the First Eleven if I backed him

up at the election," said Coker, frowning.

"Hem! Better not say so outside this study, old bean. Bribery and corruption, and all that—"

"Don't be a fool, Greene!"

"Hem!"

"If Loder had offered me such a thing as a bribe for my vote I should have knocked him down, and he knows it!"

"Oh!"

"That wasn't the case at all. I put my claims before Loder—claims that Wingate had disregarded all the time. I pointed out to him that the best footballer in Greyfriars had been consistently ignored in all the matches, owing to Wingate's obtuseness and his crass ignorance of a man's form. I asked him whether a fellow could expect a little more sense from him if he got in. He answered me quite plainly that if he became captain of Greyfriars his first step would be to see that I got justice."

Potter winked surreptitiously at Greene.

"What was a fellow to understand from that, knowing that he was a first-class footballer?" demanded Coker.

"Hem!"

"Yet, when I raised the subject yesterday Loder simply laughed at me."

"What a neck!" murmured Potter.

"He said that I should have justice," said Coker, his voice thrilling with indignation. "He said that in justice I should be put to play with the fags of the Second Form, and that he would see it done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter and Greene involuntarily.

Coker glared at them.

"What are you cackling at?" he hooted.

Coker jumped up in a state of excitement, and his comrades suppressed their mirth. It was difficult, but they did it. Horace Coker was not to be trifled with in serious matters like this.

"If you fellows are going to cackle like a pair of silly, cackling geese—" bawled Coker.

"Hem! Not at all, old chap!" said Potter hastily. "I say, it was an awful cheek of Loder to say that! Awful!"

"Frightful!" said Greene.

"I should have hit him," said Coker. "I was going to hit him. But a lot of the Sixth were there, and they hustled me. Upon the whole, though, I'm rather glad I did not hit him."

"Prefects' beating, if you did!" murmured Potter.

"I'm not thinking of that, you ass! They wouldn't get me to bend over as Wingate did. I can tell you," said Coker disdainfully. "I'm made of rather different stuff, I hope."

"You are!" agreed Potter; though whether he meant that remark as a compliment or not was not clear.

"What I mean is, that I think Loder ought to be given a chance of making his word good," explained Coker. "He's got rather windy in the head since he's been captain of the school, and he may think that he can treat fellows just as he likes. He can't!"

"No, he can't!" assented Greene.

"I've a right to expect, from Loder, a chance to take my proper place in school games," said Coker. "If he thinks he can throw me over, he's making a mistake. I'm not standing it."

"But—"

"I'm not standing it."

"You see—"

"I'm not standing it!" roared Coker.

"Oh, all right!"

"Loder's going to give me a show in the next first eleven match, now he's

football captain. I could make allowances for Wingate, as he was rather an ass, and didn't understand what he was losing in leaving me out. But there's no allowance to be made for Loder. He knows."

"Oh!"

"You fellows finished tea?" asked Coker.

"Yes, I was just going along to speak to Fitzgerald—"

"Same here—"

"Never mind Fitzgerald," said Coker. "There's a meeting of the football committee this evening; they're selecting the men who are to play Rookwood. They'll want a good team to meet Bulkeley and his crowd; and for that reason it's important that my claims should not be overlooked. I'm going to see Loder and get his promise that he will put in my claim."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He's bound to do it, and he's going to do it," said Coker. "If he refuses—but he won't."

"But—but suppose he does?" ejaculated Potter, gazing at Coker in wonder.

He was aware, though Coker was not, that the great Horace had about as much chance of playing for School as Sammy Bunter of the Second Form had. Loder was not a good captain of Greyfriars; but he was rather too good a captain to think of putting Horace Coker into a football match.

"Well, he can't, after what he's said," explained Coker.

"Wasn't he just pulling your leg, to get your support at the election, old chap?" hinted Greene.

"It's barely possible," said Coker. "I hate to think such a thing, even of a rank outsider like Loder. I'm going to give him a chance to make his words good, at any rate. He can't really refuse. If he does, I shall show him what I think of him. There's only one thing I could do in such circumstances—thrash him till he howls."

"Oh gad! Thrash the captain of the school—the head of the Sixth!" gasped Greene.

"I don't care twopence for the Sixth! I refuse to recognise Loder as captain of the school, if it's the fact that he got the job by sneaking trickery—taking fellows in to get their votes. In any case, if he doesn't keep his word to me, it's up to me to thrash him. I regard that as a duty. I'm not the fellow, I hope, to go back on a duty for fear of consequences."

"Oh!"

"As I said, I'm not standing it—it's not to be stood," said Coker. "You chaps come along with me. If there's trouble, I may need your help. Loder has always got those eads Walker and Carne hanging about him. They might interfere when I started thrashing him."

"They—they might!" gasped Potter. "I—I think it jolly likely that they would!"

"You fellows can handle them if they do, see?"

"Handle Sixth Form prefects?"

"Yes; come on."

Coker strode to the door. His mind was made up; and Coker's mind was the only mind that mattered, in Coker's opinion.

Potter and Greene seemed to hold a different opinion. They did not stir.

Coker looked back from the door.

"Come on!" he snapped.

"But—"

"Are you coming?" roared Coker.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance.

"Oh, all right!" said Potter resignedly.

And the two Fifth-Formers followed Horace Coker from the study.

Coker strode away determinedly to the Sixth Form passage. Potter and Greene followed him as far as the corner of the passage. Then they suddenly vanished.

Coker strode on—alone! In hurling down the gauntlet of defiance at the captain of Greyfriars, the Sixth Form prefects, and the universe generally. Horace Coker had to proceed on his own. Potter and Greene were not disposed to take on so very large an order.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coker Asks For It!

“WINGATE, of course!” said Walker.

“Of course!” said Carne. Gerald Loder looked

sullen.

“I don’t see it,” he answered.

“You may not see it, old bean,” said James Walker quietly. “But I can tell you that if you propose, in committee, to drop Wingate out of the first eleven, you’ll have more trouble on your hands than you’ll know how to deal with.”

“Who’s captain?”

“You are, Loder; but even the captain of the school isn’t a little tin god, as you’ll find if you go too far,” said Walker. “Have a little sense. What will it look like? Is there anything the matter with Wingate’s footer? Can we spare him from the team that’s to go over to Rookwood? Have a little sense!”

Loder scowled.

Whether the captain of the school was a “little tin god” or not, it seemed that Gerald Loder looked upon himself in that light.

“Wingate dropped me out of the eleven when he was captain,” he said sullenly. “What’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.”

“The circumstances are a bit different,” said Carne. “You fouled a man and nearly lost us a match—”

“I’ve heard enough of that!” snapped Loder.

Arthur Carne shrugged his shoulders impatiently. James Walker took up the tale again.

“We’re trying to save you from yourself, Loder. You’ve put a lot of fellows’ backs up already. If you carry the feud with Wingate as far as to push him out of School footer, there will be trouble—and serious trouble. What do you want, anyhow? The man’s down—down and out! Can’t you leave him alone now he’s at the bottom?”

“Not if I don’t choose.”

“Oh, do as you choose, then!” said Walker angrily. “I’m fed-up! If you’re going to set all the Sixth against you, go ahead!”

“I expect my friends to back me up!” said Loder, scowling.

“You won’t find us backing you up to the extent of leaving out the best footballer at Greyfriars, and chucking away School matches. And if that’s how we look at it, who are pally with you, how do you think other fellows will look at it?” demanded Walker.

Carne nodded assent; and Loder bit his lip hard. He realised that there was a point beyond which he could not expect support even from his own familiar friends. They had helped him all along the line, till George Wingate was down; but they had slacked down after that: they had been half-hearted in the scene in the prefects’-room.

“MAGNET” PORTRAIT GALLERY

No. 12.—James Walker (Prefect.)



Without the evil influence of his pal Loder, now captain of Greyfriars, James Walker would doubtless develop into a Sixth Former and prefect of the “right sort.” As it is, he is given to bullying, playing the “goat,” and generally backing up Loder in all his shady ways. A good footballer and cricketer when he puts his mind to it, Walker usually manages to bag a place in the Greyfriars First Elevens. Is very friendly with Arthur Carne, also a prefect and a shallow imitation of Gerald Loder. Hardly worthy of a place in this gallery except that he is a prefect with whom Harry Wharton & Co. have often come into violent and painful contact.

Now they had fairly turned on their leader.

Loder had it borne in upon his mind that if Wingate was to be driven harder it would have to be by surreptitious and underhand means, and that open warfare was not quite practicable to the extent he had contemplated. He esteemed himself a “little tin god,” but his will was not yet law at Greyfriars. He knew that he had to give in; that after what he had just heard from Carne and Walker it was useless to raise in committee the question of Wingate’s exclusion from the first eleven. But he did not relent. Wingate was down, but he was not down low enough.

“Of course, I shall not set myself against all the fellows,” said Loder, after a pause. “My own opinion is that Wingate has been overrated as a footballer, and that we can do without him in big fixtures. Still, I shall be guided by the opinion of the committee, especially at first. I don’t want to take everything into my hands.”

“All the better!” said Walker dryly.

“It couldn’t be done, anyhow,” said Carne. “Give it a miss.”

Loder gritted his teeth, and there was an angry retort upon his lips when, fortunately, perhaps, he was interrupted by a hefty thump on his study door.

The door flew open, and Loder stared round in great irritation, to see Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, looking in.

“You cheeky lout!” roared Loder. He was in an angry mood, and his anger turned on Horace Coker at once.

“What? What’s that?” snapped Coker.

“How dare you thump my door open?”

“Precious few things I don’t dare, if I choose,” answered Coker disdainfully. “If you fancy that I’m afraid of you, Loder, now you’re captain of the school, you’re making a mistake. Forget it!”

Loder breathed hard.

This really was not proper language to be used to the head prefect of Greyfriars, though Coker did not seem aware of it. Coker rather prided himself upon being no respecter of persons.

But Coker was as amenable to discipline as any other fellow at Greyfriars. What had happened to Wingate should have been a lesson to Coker and all the Fifth; but Coker, evidently, hadn’t taken it to heart.

“I’ve come here about the football,” said Coker. “You practically promised me a place in the first eleven, Loder.”

“You silly owl!”

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 928.



THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 249.

HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR

Week Ending Nov. 21st.



MY FAVOURITE FILMS!



Our contributors discuss their likes and dislikes at the Cinema.

BILLY BUNTER:

Some of you might think that I like a film where there's a lot of eating and drinking going on, but I don't. I can't bear it! What could be more tantalising than to watch your favorite film artist glutting himself with jam-tarts, and drinking copious drafts of ginger-pop? I saw a man doing that on the screen the other evening, and it was so real that I shouted out to him: "Hi! Don't be a greedy glutton! Save a little tart for me!" And all the people roared with laughter—the callus beasts! They didn't know how famished that film made me feel, or they would have sent the chooklit-seller along to fortify me. My favorite films are those in which grubbing, and feasting, and bunkwetting are kept well in the background!

DICKY NUGENT:

I like a good whack of bloodshed and fighting in my films. I like to see bullets flying about like hail, and villains being killed off like flies. I went to see "The Siege of Calley" at the Courtfield Cinema, and it was grate! you ought to have seen the british soldiers climbing up the walls, and bashing the french over the head with their blunderbuses! I got so eggsited that I was shouting historically. every time a frenchman got spiked I shouted "that's got him!" and young gatty was shouting, "On the ball, England! Give 'em sox!" then one of the attendants came up, and threatened to turn us out if we didn't behave ourselves. so we had to sit as mum as mice while the deadly slawter was going on. those are the sort of films that appeal to me—none of your luv-making tosh! I like to see the red decks streeming with blod—or the battlefields, as the case may be. one jolly good battle is worth a hundred silly kisses!

FRANK NUGENT:

I like the historical films best—but please don't infer from this that I possess my minor's bloodthirsty temperament! The film I enjoyed best was "The Four Horsemen of the Thingummy-bob." That was a real masterpiece, and I wasn't satisfied till I had seen it six times!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 928.

MR. PAUL PROUT:

The only films I care for are those featuring big-gaffe shooting in the wild wastes of Africa or in the Rocky Mountains. I have often wished I could play the lead in one of these productions. But for my scholastic duties at Greyfriars I should certainly offer my services, and, with due regard to modesty, I think I should make a much more lifelike hero than many of the so-called "stars."

WILLIAM GOSLING:

Which I ain't one of yer film fanatics. I wouldn't pay a shillin' of my 'ard-earned money for a seat in the Courtfield Picture-house—not if I knows it! I gets such an 'orrible thirst in them sort of places—an' no means of appeasin' it, neither. Master Wharton treated me once to a seat at the pictures, but I won't pretend I enjoyed it. I see a funny little man with twinklin' feet, an' a bowler-'at, an' a stick, an' 'e sent everybody into fits of larfin'. But 'e never succeeded in ticklin' the funny-bone of William Gosling. I jest sat an' glared at 'im all through the performance.

(Gossy, you long-faced old pessimist! If Charlie Chaplin couldn't make you laugh, then nobody can!—ED.)

THE SLACKER'S RETREAT!

By LORD MAULEVERER.

When work is finished for the day,
An' Greek an' Latin over,
The fellows seek the field of play,
An' fancy they're in clover.
My steps, however, always roam
Towards the Courtfield Picturedrome!

I do not go to see Tom Mix
With prairie bandits grapplin';
Nor do I go to see the tricks
Of clever Charlie Chaplin.
I sit a-snorin' in the gloam
When visitin' the Picturedrome!

I do not worship at the shrine
Of Rudolph Valentino,
Although his acting's jolly fine
An' well worth seein', I know!
I sleep when in that "home from home,"
The cosy Courtfield Picturedrome!

I pay a shillin' for my seat,
An' stretch my legs out lazily;
The merry music's measured beat
I seem to hear but hazily.
Let lovers sigh, or villains foam—
Films bore me at the Picturedrome!

Away from Cherry's heavy hand
I sit an' dream delightfully;
To sleep in peace is simply grand—
Exertion bores me frightfully!
An' so does swottin' at a tome:
That's why I seek the Picturedrome!

The seats are very soft an' snug,
An' every prospect's pleasin';
I always bring a cosy rug
To keep myself from freezin'.
On cushions soft I rest my "dome"
When snoozin' at the Picturedrome!

Let other chappies race an' chase,
An' live a life of action;
Let other boobies go the pace—
It bores me to distraction!
My weary steps will always roam
Towards the Courtfield Picturedrome!

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

WHEN Mr. Frank Richards gave us his screamingly funny story about the Greyfriars Film Fans, it struck me that a "Cinema" Number of our merry schoolboy journal would go like the proverbial hot cakes.

On a wet and wintry half-holiday, when footer is out of the question, and we are at our wits' end to know how to amuse ourselves, the Courtfield Cinema invariably comes to the rescue. If funds are in a flourishing state, we telephone for a taxi to take us over to Courtfield. If funds are low, we brave the elements and walk.

The Courtfield Cinema, although it styles itself "the latest, greatest, and up-to-date" of picture-houses, is very much behind the times. Pictures which enjoyed a popular run in London before the War have at last found their way to Courtfield! Films which were produced at the time of the Flood—or thereabouts—are advertised in the local "rag" as "brand-new productions"! Fisher T. Fish declares that the proprietors of the Courtfield Cinema need a charge of dynamite to wake them up!

But, with all its shortcomings, the local picture-house serves up some very good shows occasionally. And it would be unreasonable to expect the sleepy old market-town to be ahead of New York and London in the matter of picture progress.

Of course, we all have our own particular film favourites. Douglas Fairbanks is mine, the inimitable Charlie Chaplin is Bob Cherry's, Tom Mix appeals to Johnny Bull, and Rudolph Valentino is idolised by Frank Nugent. Hurree Singh's favourite "star" is a certain dusky Oriental whose name I will not attempt to pronounce!

Most of you, I expect, have read of our adventures in the film-producing line. When Lord Mauleverer had a cinema camera and projector sent to him by his uncle he was too lazy to find out how it worked, and he handed it over to us. So we promptly converted the woodshed into the "Super Majestic Cinema," and we gave some ripping shows. "The Greyfriars Animated Gazette," which portrayed a number of amusing everyday happenings at the old school, will not soon be forgotten. Billy Bunter featured prominently in this. And it was through Bunter that our moving-picture performances were brought to an abrupt end.

I don't want my readers to get the impression that we are "potty" on pictures. We would rather have a fast and exciting footer-match any day. But "when the snow is snowing, and it's murky overhead," a trip to the cinema makes a pleasant diversion.

Some of the ambitious fellows in the Remove are hoping to become film "stars" when they grow up. Billy Bunter declares that he has already received tempting offers from Hollywood, the home of the film industry; but he says that nothing short of a three-figure salary, per week, will induce him to sign a contract. "As soon as I come to years of discretion," says Bunter, "you'll see me starring in one of the big American productions." This can never be; for the simple reason that William George Bunter will never arrive at years of discretion!

HARRY WHARTON.



Humbling the Head!

By
DICKY NUGENT

ANOTHER SIDE-SPLITTING STORY
— OF ST. SAM'S. —

JOLLY and Merry and Bright, the heroes of the Fourth, were looking Jollier and Merrier and Brighter than usual. For one of Bright's titled relations, a commissioner at a London picture-pallis, had sent him a cinema cammera.

The three chums eggssamed it with great glee.

"What luck!" chortled Jack Jolly. "We shall be able to take action-pictures of all the daily doings at St. Sam's, and we'll give a show every Satterday night in the junior Common-room."

"Yes, rather!"

"It's a perfect peach of a cammera!" said Merry. "Must have cost at least eighteen-pence!"

"What!" roared Bright. "My titled relation wouldn't have got much change out of a thousand-pound note when he bought this cammera! It's a beauty! You just feed it with films, and turn the handle, and there you are!"

There was a tap on the door, and Binding, the page, looked in.

"Master Jolly," he said, "you're wanted! The 'Ead says to me, 'Give my best respects to Master Jolly, an' arsk 'im if 'e will do me the faver of steppin' along to my study.'"

"My hat!" gasped Jack Jolly. "Was the old buffer sarkastic, Binding?"

"I'm afraid 'e was, Master Jolly. 'E spoke pleasant enuff, but there was a narsty gleam in 'is eyes. Without wishin' to damp your sperrits in any way, I should say you were booked for a hawful floggin'!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Jack Jolly thoughtfully slipped a cushion into his trowsis, and rubbed some rezzin into his palms, so as to be on the safe side. He wasn't sure weather it was going to be a case of "handers" or "benders." Then he swept Binding, the page, aside like a leaf and hurried away to the Head's study.

Dr. Birchmall was looking ferce.

"Jolly," he said in his polished, skollery tones, "you're going to get it in the neck good and proper! I have just discovered that you were responsible for that outrage on Guy Forks night, when a number of masked juniors interfered with the enjoyment of me and the masters! What have you got to say for yourself?"

"I—"

"Silence! Answer my question at once, Jolly! What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Sir, I—"

"Silence!"

Jack Jolly gave a snort of eggasperation. How could he possibly answer the Head's questions when the old buffer kept roaring "Silence"?

"Jolly," thundered the Head, "do you deny that you were the ringleader of that dasterdly outrage? Speak up, boy, and deny it if you dare! Be silent, sir!"

Jack Jolly bit his lip with vexation. It was impossible for him to get a word in edgeways.

"Very well!" said the Head grimly. "As you have no word to say in your defense—silence, you scamp!—you are convicted out of your own mouth! I will at once summon a General Assembly in Big Hall, and you will be birched until you shriek and squeel for mersy you will never get! I will give you just one more chance to confess to your complissity in this outrage— SILENCE!"

Jack Jolly had opened his mouth to speak, but he shut it again like a rat-trap. How could he eggsspect iustiss at the hands of

this Nero—this blustering tirant who ruled St. Sam's with a rod of iron—or, rather, a rod of birch-twigs?

The Head crossed to the winder, and bel-lowed to Fossil, the porter, who was sweeping up the leaves in the quad.

"Fossil, let the sollum bell tole forth, summoning all the boys into Big Hall!"

"Werry good, sir!"

A few minnits later St. Sam's was mustard in Big Hall. The Head came striding in, his expression sour as vinnegar. In peppery accents, he told of Jack Jolly's misdeeds. He stamped to and fro on the platform, hitching up his trowsers like an old salt.

"I have given Jolly every chance to confess to his base conduct," concloded the Head, "but he has nothing to say! I will now proceed to wield the merry birch! Take him up, Fossil!"

"Sir," said Fossil, "the young rascal 'as bin an' barricaded 'is trowsis!"

"What?"

Fossil plunged his hand into Jack Jolly's clothing and pulled fourth a cushion.

"Ah!" said the Head grimly. "He shall reseave an extra twenty strokes for that subterfuge!"

Jack Jolly was hoisted on to the porter's sholders, and the Head got busy with the birch.

Swish! Swish! Swish! (Short paws.)

Swish! Swish! Swish! (Interval for the Head to get his breth.)

Swish! Swish! Swish! (The birch broke, and the Head sent for a new one.)

Swish! Swish! Swish! (Another short paws, as the victim seemed to be feinting.)

Swish! Swish! Swish! And so on, ad lib., ad infinitum.

When he had laid on ninety-nine of the best the Head was obliged to desist.

"Ruff luck for the century, sir!" mer-mered Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth.

The Head was puffing and blowing like a grampers.

"I feel whacked!" he gasped.

"Not so whacked as I feel!" wailed Jack Jolly. "You crool brute! I've a good mind to get my pater to persecute you for croolty!"

The Head larfed.

"No magistrate would beleieve his story," he said. "They would larf at the idea of a boy reseaving ninety-nine strokes with the birch. There would be no proof that such a castigation had taken place."

But the Head spoke too soon! All the time the flogging was in progress, Bright had been turning the handle of his cinema camera, and he had a complete record of the painful scene.

Jack Jolly heard about this afterwards, and he chuckled gleefully, in spite of his fizziel angwish.

"Good for you, Bright!" he said. "We've got the Head in our power now! Let's go and give him a fright!"

Jack Jolly & Co. strolled along to the Head's study. They marched into that sacred apartment without nocking.

The Head jumped to his feet, his face livid with rage.

"How dare you!" he thundered. "How dare you come barging into my study with your hands in your pockets!"

Jack Jolly chuckled.

"Would you care to step along to the junior Common-room on Satterday evening, sir?" he said. "We're giving a special picture-show. Bright, here, owns a cinema

cammera, and he's taken a film of the fearful flogging you've just given me!"

The Head turned dethly pail. He tried to speak, but his tung seemed to be tethered to his mouth.

"Of corse, sir," went on Jack Jolly cheer-fully, "we shall invite a representative of the Sossiety for the Prevention 'of Croolty to Children! He will be interested in that flogging film! When he sees the birch rise and fall ninety-nine times—"

"Stop!" cried the Head horsely. "If you carry out your thret, Jolly, I shall be a ruined man!"

"Eggsactly!"

The Head blinked helplessly at the three juniors. He was in their power, and he knew it. If a representative of the S.P.C.C. saw that film the Head would certainly be persecuted in a court of law, and that would mean losing his job as headmaster of St. Sam's.

The only way out of his paneul predicament was to pretend to be pally with Jack Jolly & Co. It would go very much against the grane for the lofty and digguified Head to have to eat humble pie to three juniors, but it was the only way!

"My—my dear boys," stuttered the Head, "would you care to do me the honner of dining with me this evening?"

"Yes, rather!" said Jack Jolly.

"Mind you make it a four-corse dinner!" said Merry. "None of your bread-and-cheese snacks, you know!"

"I prommis you the feed of your lives, my dear boys!" said the Head humbly.

"By the way," said Bright, "you gave me an impersition the other day—"

"It is kanselled!" said the Head.

"I wish you could kansel my flogging!" grunted Jack Jolly. "I feel like a limp rag! You'll have to let me off lessons to-morrow, Birchmall!"

"Oh—ah! With plezzure!" stammered the Head. "You are eggscused lessons for the remainder of the week, Jolly!"

This ought to have sattisfied Jack Jolly, but it didn't. He insisted on the Head making a publick apology for having flogged him. Dr. Birchmall tried to riggle out of this ordeal, but he had to go through with it.

On Satterday evening there was a grand cinema show in the junior Common-room, and lots of St. Sam's scenes were flashed on to the screen. But the flogging scene was cut out, greatly to the releef of the Head.

The fateful film was destroyed at length, and not until then did the Headmaster of St. Sam's sleep soundly in his bed. He had reseaved a dreadful fright, from which he would not recover in a hurry!

THE END.

SPECIAL
"DANCING"
SUPPLEMENT
next week, chums.
DON'T MISS IT!



(Continued from page 13.)

"The Rookwood match comes along soon. I want to know whether my name's going up in the list."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Walker. "How long do you think Loder would remain captain of Greyfriars if he played duds like you, Coker?"

"I don't want any cheek, James Walker."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Cheek!"

"Cheek—from a Sixth Form prefect!" said Walker, staring. "I rather think Wingate went too easy with you in his time, Coker. I fancy you want a lesson, my buck!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Shut up?" repeated Walker, quite dazedly. "Did you say shut up?"

"I said shut up, and I mean shut up!" retorted Coker of the Fifth. "Now, Loder, let's get to business. Do I play against Rookwood?"

"You howling ass!" said Loder, in measured tones. "If we were playing Rookwood juniors, instead of their first eleven, I shouldn't dream of playing you. It would be asking for a licking!"

"I don't want any of your funny rigmarole!" roared Coker. "Give a chap a plain answer. Do I play Rookwood?"

"No, you born idiot!"

"Do I play in the first eleven at all this season?" demanded Horace Coker categorically.

"Not so long as I'm captain."

Coker's face set.

"Then you were fooling me before the election—pulling my leg to make me back you up?"

"Oh, get out!"

"I never liked Gwynne as a candidate, but I should have voted for him. I asked him what he would do for me if he got in, and he said nothing, or less than nothing if he could. It was cheek, but it was straight dealing, anyhow. You told me I should play in the first eleven."

"I told you nothing of the sort!" growled Loder.

"It amounted to that. It was largely through me that you got in; I've got a lot of influence, and I used it supporting you in the captain's election. Now you propose to turn me down. Do you think I'm the sort of fellow to be used like that?" demanded Coker.

Loder glanced round the study and picked up a cane.

That action made Coker of the Fifth snort with contempt.

"That cane won't help you much when I begin with you!" he said. "You've lied and shuffled and taken me in, Loder. I hear that Wingate called you a scoundrel the other day when he thrashed you. Scoundrel's rather strong; but I certainly consider you a rascal! I don't allow a rascal to play dirty tricks on me without putting up his hands—see?"

Loder gripped the cane hard.

"Put up your hands!" went on Coker, advancing into the study. "I'm jolly well going to lick you, you rascal!"

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That's the word—rascal! I dare say Wingate had his reasons for calling you a scoundrel. I call you a rascal! If you don't like it, here I am, ready to answer for it! Have you got pluck enough to put up your hands?"

Carne and Walker were grinning, but the captain of Greyfriars eyed Horace Coker with a deadly gleam in his eyes.

"That will do, Coker!" said Loder, between his teeth. "Now bend over that chair!"

"Eh?"

"Bend over that chair! I'm going to give you six for your dashed impudence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

Loder swished the cane.

"I'm waiting!" he said.

"You'll have to wait till your hair's grey, old bean, before I bend over!" chuckled Coker. "You can't wallop the Fifth, old man. Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder made a sign to the other two prefects. It was Coker's fixed opinion that, for some mysterious and unexplained reason, he was above the law, so to speak. It was quite a mistake on Coker's part; and he was about to discover what a mistake it was.

Walker and Carne closed in suddenly on Coker and pinioned his arms.

Coker resisted furiously.

"Hands off, you cheeky cads!" he bawled.

"Do you think you can talk like that in a Sixth Form study?" asked Carne, with a grin. "Over you go!"

Horace Coker was a hefty fellow, and he resisted desperately. But two big Sixth-Formers were rather too many for even the hefty Coker.

There was a brief struggle, and then Horace Coker was bending over the chair Bob Cherry had bent over.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Gerald Loder laid on the cane with mighty swipes. Coker roared and howled and struggled.

"You cheeky cad! Yaroooh! You rotter! Whoop! I'd lick any one of you, man to man! Ow—ow—ow! Leggo! I'll smash the lot of you! Oh crikey!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yooooooooop!" yelled Coker.

"Now," said Loder coolly, "apologise!"

"What?" howled Coker.

"Apologise—sharp!"

"Never!"

Whack!

It was a terrible swipe, and it made Coker fairly squirm. He put up a wild struggle; but Carne and Walker had him fast.

"Cough it up, old man!" said Walker encouragingly. "You've got to be taught respect for the Sixth, you know."

"Blow the Sixth!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Whack!

"I'm waiting for that apology!" said Loder, poised the cane for another swipe. "I'll keep this up as long as you do, Coker."

"Go and eat coke!"

Whack!

"Whooooooooop!"

Coker made a terrific effort and tore himself away from Carne and Walker. He rolled on the floor, and jumped up, catching Loder's cane across his

shoulders as he did so. For a second Coker was about to rush on Loder, but Carne and Walker were grabbing at him again, and Coker decided upon retreat. Really, he had had enough!

He made a wild jump for the doorway.

Loder jumped after him, and let off with his foot as Coker rushed through the doorway; and there was a crash. Coker fairly flew, and landed on his hands and knees in the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, crikey!"

Horace Coker picked himself up dizzily and limped away, hardly aware whether he was awake or dreaming. That he, Horace James Coker, the most important fellow in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, had suffered such an indignity seemed as if it must be a dream. But the pain of the castigation was real enough—awfully real!

He limped away in a state of mind to which no words could have done justice, leaving Loder & Co. roaring with laughter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Poor Old Coker!

"I SAY, you fellows, Coker's caught it!"

Billy Bunter brought the news into the Rag.

The winter dusk was thick on the quad, and it was not yet time for prep. A crowd of juniors had assembled in the Rag, and the Famous Five were chatting before the fire. They were discussing football matters, the Rookwood junior match being in the offing—a much more important matter to the Remove fellows than the Rookwood senior match, about which Loder & Co. were concerned, and about which Horace Coker had concerned himself.

"Coker's caught it!" howled Bunter, his little round eyes gleaming with excitement behind his big spectacles.

"Caught what?" asked Wharton.

"The flu?"

"No, you ass! A licking from Loder."

"What?"

"Rats!"

"Coker of the Fifth?"

"You should have heard him roar!" chortled Billy Bunter. "They had him in Loder's study, three of the prefects; and they made him bend over and gave him about a dozen. It sounded like beating a carpet."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Poor old Coker! I know what it's like. I've been there myself."

Harry Wharton whistled.

"I dare say Coker asked for it," he remarked. "He's always asking for it, as a matter of fact. But the Fifth think they can't be licked."

"That's only Fifth-Form swank," said Vernon-Smith. "Even the Sixth can be licked by prefects. Look at Wingate! All the same, it will make the Fifth fellows wild."

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I say, I heard them! It was funny! Coker said that Loder had promised him a place in the first eleven for his vote in the election—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now Loder won't play up."

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

They were not surprised to hear of Loder breaking his word, but they would have been exceedingly surprised to hear of him playing Coker at football.

"I saw them going," went on Bunter, full of exciting news. "Coker, and Potter, and Greene. I knew there was

ANSWERS
Every Saturday ... PRICE 2:

something up when Potter and Greene suddenly scudded away, and I kept Coker in sight. I say, you fellows, he called Loder a rascal!"

"Not far wrong," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "We know pretty well how Loder got elected. Coker isn't the only silly ass he spoofed at that time."

"Not by a good many," said Nugent. "And he started in to thrash Loder," howled Bunter. "Actually told him to put up his hands—the captain of the school, you know! Then they collared him, and gave him jip!"

"What the thump did he expect?" said Hazeldene. "Wingate would have done the same."

"The samefulness would have been terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the worthy and ludicrous Coker is always putting his esteemed foot in it."

"Can't say I blame Loder," remarked Hobson, of the Shell. "Coker's got to toe the line like any other fellow. There's too much Fifth-Form swank about Coker."

"And he limped off like a lame dog!" said Bunter. "Looked beaten to the wide. Serve him jolly well right, of course! Coker's a swanking ass! He kicked me the other day."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's hope he'll kick you again to-morrow. The more you are kicked the better!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—" "What a come-down for old Coker, though," chuckled Skinner. "He brags about not caring a button for the Sixth." "Poor old Coker."

"I say, you fellows, let's go and look at him," said Bunter. "I heard him groaning in his study—making no end of a row."

"Let him alone, you fat ass!" said Johnny Bull.

"I guess he's worth seeing," said Fisher T. Fish. "That swanking galoot, Coker, has pulled my years. I guess I want to see him licked."

"Same here!" said Skinner, laughing. "If Loder's given him beans he won't be so dangerous as usual. Let's give him a look in. He swanks over us enough."

"Let's!" said Snoop.

"Stop!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, frowning. "Don't be a cad, Skinner! If Coker's down on his luck leave him alone."

"Rats!"

Skinner & Co. left the Rag with the amiable intention of staring into Horace Coker's study in the Fifth-Form passage and enjoying the sight of Horace's painful discomfiture.

Coker, of the Fifth, as a matter of fact, did not deserve much consideration at the hands of the juniors. With the lower Forms Coker had a heavy hand. But most of the juniors agreed with Wharton, that it was rather rotten to jeer at a fellow whose pride had had a fall, howsoever lofty and unfounded his pride had been. But Skinner & Co. did not care for Wharton's opinion, and they made their way to the Fifth-Form passage to enjoy the scene.

There was a sound of grunting, groaning, and gasping proceeding from Coker's study as they approached it.

Skinner & Co. grinned at one another. "I say, you fellows, that's Coker!" chuckled Bunter.

"Seems to have had it bad," said Skinner.

Skinner opened the door of the study, without troubling to knock. The four Removites stared in.

Coker was not sitting down. He stood

uneasily, leaning on the study mantelpiece, and his rugged face was quite pale. Coker had been "through it" with a vengeance, and it had been a shock to him. It was said of old that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Coker's lofty pride had had a fall from which it was likely to take a long time to recover. He had been "whacked" like a fag, and it still seemed almost incredible to him that such an awful happening had happened. His feelings towards Loder were absolutely Humish. But Coker, though not a prudent fellow as a rule, was beginning to realise that he had better keep those feelings to himself. Loder was top dog, and that circumstance was filtering slowly but surely into Loder's lacklustre intellect.

He looked at the grinning Removites with a lacklustre eye. Coker was feeling quite spent; he had no energy left to deal even with Skinner & Co.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "Feeling bad, old bean?"

"Get out!" said Coker faintly.

"Had it hot?" asked Snoop. "You asked for it, didn't you, Coker? You're always asking for it, aren't you?"

"I guess I never knew such a galoot for asking for it," said Fisher T. Fish. "You pulled my years the other day, you cheeky mugwump. I guess I've a hunch to come in and pull your years now, Coker."

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "Let's bump him."

Horace Coker stared gloomily at the juniors. He could not even move without feeling sharp twinges of anguish, and dealing with these cheeky young rascals was out of the question. For the moment all the beef had been taken out of Coker, of the Fifth.

"You young sweeps!" he said feebly. "Get out, or—Ow!"

Coker gave a howl as a cushion—one of his own cushions—whizzed across the study and caught him under the chin.

He sat down suddenly on the hearth-rug.

"Yarrah!"

Coker jumped up as if he had been galvanised. Sitting down, at present, was painfully painful.

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

There were footsteps in the passage. Skinner looked quickly out of the study.

"I say, you fellows, let us pass!" said Bunter apprehensively.

"Hold on!" said Potter pleasantly. "Anything you'd like done with these cheeky fags, Coker, old man?"

Potter and Greene had given Coker a wide berth while he was hurling defiance at the Sixth. But now that the alarms and excursions, so to speak, were over, they were coming in to speak a word of sympathy. They had heard from other quarters how Coker had got on with the captain of Greyfriars; indeed, Coker's hapless fate was already the talk of the senior studies.

Potter and Greene would never have dreamed of following Coker on the reckless path he had marked out for himself; but they were more than willing to visit punishment on the fags who had mocked him in the hour of adversity. That much, at least, they could do for their chum, with satisfaction to themselves.

Coker leaned on the mantelpiece again, gasping. Potter and Greene had rather expected hot words and reproaches; but Coker was too far gone even for that. Really, their hearts quite smote them.

"These young rotters have been chipping you—what?" asked Greene.

"Ow! Yes! Ow!" moaned Coker.

"Fags mustn't chip the Fifth, you know," said Potter. "You take Bunter and Skinner, Greene. I'll take the other two."

"Right-ho!" said Greene.

"Look here—" began Skinner.

"I say—" stammered Snoop.

"I guess—"

"I say, you fellows—"

Crack, crack! In the grasp of the belty Fifth-Formers Skinner & Co. were not of much use. Bunter's head came against Skinner's, and Fisher T. Fish's bullet-head cracked on Snoop's.

Four frantic yells blended into one in Coker's study.

"Yarooooooh!"

Crack, crack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Now kick them out!" said Potter. "Chuck 'em out one at a time, Greeney, while I stand here and kick!"

"Good egg!" said Greene.

Skinner & Co. were pitched into a corner till wanted. Billy Bunter was selected to go first. Potter stood by the open doorway, his right foot drawn back. Greene, with a grip on Bunter's collar, swung him forward.

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"I say, leggo!" howled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I came here to sympathise with Coker—I did, really! I say—Yaroooh!"

Bunter spun into the doorway, and Potter let out his boot.

Crash!

The Owl of the Remove disappeared into the passage with a frantic yell.

"Fish next!"

"Look yere!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, as Greene grasped him. "I guess you ain't going to kick a free American citizen! I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you! I calculate—Whoop!"

Bump!

Fisher T. Fish followed Bunter.

"Now Snoop!"

Sidney James Snoop flew into the passage, fairly lifted there by Potter's boot.

"Now Skinner!"

Harold Skinner dodged Greene's grasp, and bolted for the door. But he could not dodge Potter's boot.

Crash!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Skinner sprawled in the passage.

"Anything more we can do for you fags?" asked Potter politely, looking out of the doorway.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Take a fives bat out to them!" said Coker.

"Good!"

But Skinner & Co. did not wait for the fives bat. They picked themselves up and fled; and did not stop to take breath till they were safe back in the Rag again. They rushed in breathlessly, fearful lest Potter of the Fifth should be on their trail with a fives bat in his hand.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo; you seem in rather a hurry!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, "we've been kicked—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Look here, you fellows, you back me up, and let's go and raid Coker's study, and mop up those Fifth Form cads!" howled Bunter. "I've been kicked, I tell you!"

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "We won't raid Coker's study, Bunter, and we won't mop up the Fifth; but I'll tell you what I'll do for you—I'll give you another kick."

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Which was all the sympathy William George Bunter received; and all he deserved.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

"Bravo, Remove!"

"OLD Wingate's name is up." Harry Wharton made that remark as he stopped and glanced at a paper on the notice-board.

It was a notice in Gerald Loder's hand, which, in ordinary circumstances, would not have interested the Remove juniors at all, as it referred to a Form match between Fifth and Sixth.

Form matches between the Remove and the Fourth or the Shell were matters of great interest to Harry Wharton & Co.; but the senior Form matches did not worry them very much. But on the present occasion the matter had interest, as they had wondered whether Wingate's name would be up for the Sixth Form eleven.

Loder had made it fairly clear that he was not satisfied yet, and that he was carrying on the feud with his old rival. It seemed to some of old Wingate's friends in the Lower School that Loder would not be content to leave the former captain with his football laurels; so long as George Wingate was acknowledged the finest footballer at Greyfriars and a man indispensable in the school matches, he was a thorn in the side of the new captain of the school.

So Harry Wharton & Co. would not have been in the least surprised to miss Wingate's name from the present list.

But there it was. "G. Wingate" figured in the list for the Form match—Sixth v. Fifth.

"After all, I suppose Loder knows he can't spare him!" remarked Bob Cherry. "The Sixth generally beat the Fifth; but with Wingate left out there would be a lot of difference. Blundell's crowd would have a jolly good chance of wiping up the ground with Loder."

"I don't suppose Loder sees all that," said Harry. "He thinks himself quite as good a man as Wingate, or better."

"That's rot, of course!"

"Utter rot, if Loder could see it!" agreed the captain of the Remove. "And I can't help thinking that he'd risk losing matches, to give old Wingate another knock. Still, there's the name."

"The Sixth won't stand it," said the Bounder sapiently. "Loder can be as malicious as he likes; but the Sixth have a say in the matter; they're not going to lose matches to please Loder. And the Senior Form match is really a practice match for picking out the men for the game at Rookwood; so this looks as if Wingate will play for school, as usual. Rather a come-down for him to play under Loder's captaincy, after being captain himself!"

"After turning Loder out of the Eleven, too," said Frank Nugent. "I rather expected Loder to jump at the chance of giving him back the same."

"I fancy he will, when the chance comes along," said Johnny Bull. "My belief is that he dare not drop Wingate openly; but he will make things so jolly uncomfortable for him that Wingate will have to drop out. How can a fellow play in a team with his captain down on him all the time, looking for chances to trip him up?"

"Dash it all, I hardly think Loder's so bad as all that!" said Bob.

"Well, he is, fathead, and you'll see!"

Arthur Carne of the Sixth came along by the crowd of juniors who were reading the list. He called out sharply:

"Fag!"

Not one of the Removites looked round.

"Fag!" repeated Carne.

"Now, then, all together!" murmured Bob Cherry.

There were seven or eight of the Remove on the spot. They all turned their backs, together and ostentatiously, on Carne of the Sixth, and walked out of the House.

Carne stared after them, scowling.

"Fag!" he shouted.

Harry Wharton and his comrades walked into the quad.

Carne made a movement to follow; but he did not follow. It was borne in upon his mind that the little crowd of Remove fellows were in a humour to handle him if he did. Fagging the Remove was easy enough when dealing with fellows like Bunter or Skinner or Fisher T. Fish. With Harry Wharton & Co. it was rather a different proposition; the lesson Bob Cherry had received in Loder's study had not quelled his spirit in the very least, and his comrades shared his determination.

Carne of the Sixth bit his lip, but he decided to leave the tussle to Loder. A struggle was coming between the new captain of Greyfriars and the heroes of the Remove; and Carne, on second thoughts, did not want to be in the forefront of the battle.

"Here, Vernon-Smith!"

The juniors looked round.

Carford major of the Sixth was sitting on the railings of the Sixth Form green, with a book in his hand. He rose from the railing and held out the book to the Bounder.

"Take this up to my study," he said.

The eyes of all the other Removites were on Smithy.

"Take that book up to your study?" repeated the Bounder.

"Yes."

Carford major was holding out the book. As Vernon-Smith did not make any movement to take it, Carford major's hand continued extended, with the book in it, and he began to look a little foolish. The juniors smiled.

"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh, quite! I'd be quite glad to oblige you, Carford, if you're askin' me to take the book in as a personal favour," said the Bounder politely. "You're not a bad sort, in your way, and I'm an obligin' chap. Are you askin' it as a favour?"

Carford major reddened.

"You cheeky young sweep! I'm telling you."

"Ah! That alters the case," smiled the Bounder. "That's fag-

For Next Week!

THE WORST FORM AT GREYFRIARS!

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ging! With all due respect—which isn't much—allow me to inform you that the Remove do not lag. Good-bye, Carford!"

"Hear, hear!" chuckled the Removites.

And they turned their backs on Carford major, as they had done with Carne. Carford stared after them with a very red face.

But Carford major was rather a tougher customer than Carne. He made a stride after the juniors, and caught Herbert Vernon-Smith by the collar.

"Take this book!" he said grimly. The Bounder eyed him. His friends were ready to back him up, even to the awfully serious extent of handling a prefect of the Sixth. But Smithy's manner changed.

"Hand it over, as you're so pressing," he said.

"I thought you'd think better of it," grinned Carford major.

"Look here, Smithy—" began Bob Cherry hotly, as the Bounder meekly received "Titus Livius" from the Sixth Former.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Smithy.

He put the volume under his arm, and walked away. But he did not head for the House.

He headed for the fountain in the quad. Carford major stared after him, puzzled and surprised.

"Where are you going, Smith?" he shouted.

Vernon-Smith did not answer. He reached the fountain, and tossed "Titus Livius" into the air over the big granite basin.

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

The volume floated in the water, soaking and sinking. Carford major stood and stared as if petrified. Vernon-Smith looked back at him with perfect coolness.

"There's your book, Carford," he said. "If you want it again, you can swim for it. Good-bye!"

The angry Sixth-Former was making a rush at him.

"Line up!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

The juniors lined up at once, and five or six more Remove fellows came speeding up from different directions to lend their aid.

Carford major reached the Bounder and grasped him. At the same moment seven or eight pairs of hands grasped the prefect.

Bump!

Carford major sat down in the quad with a bump that shook all the breath out of him.

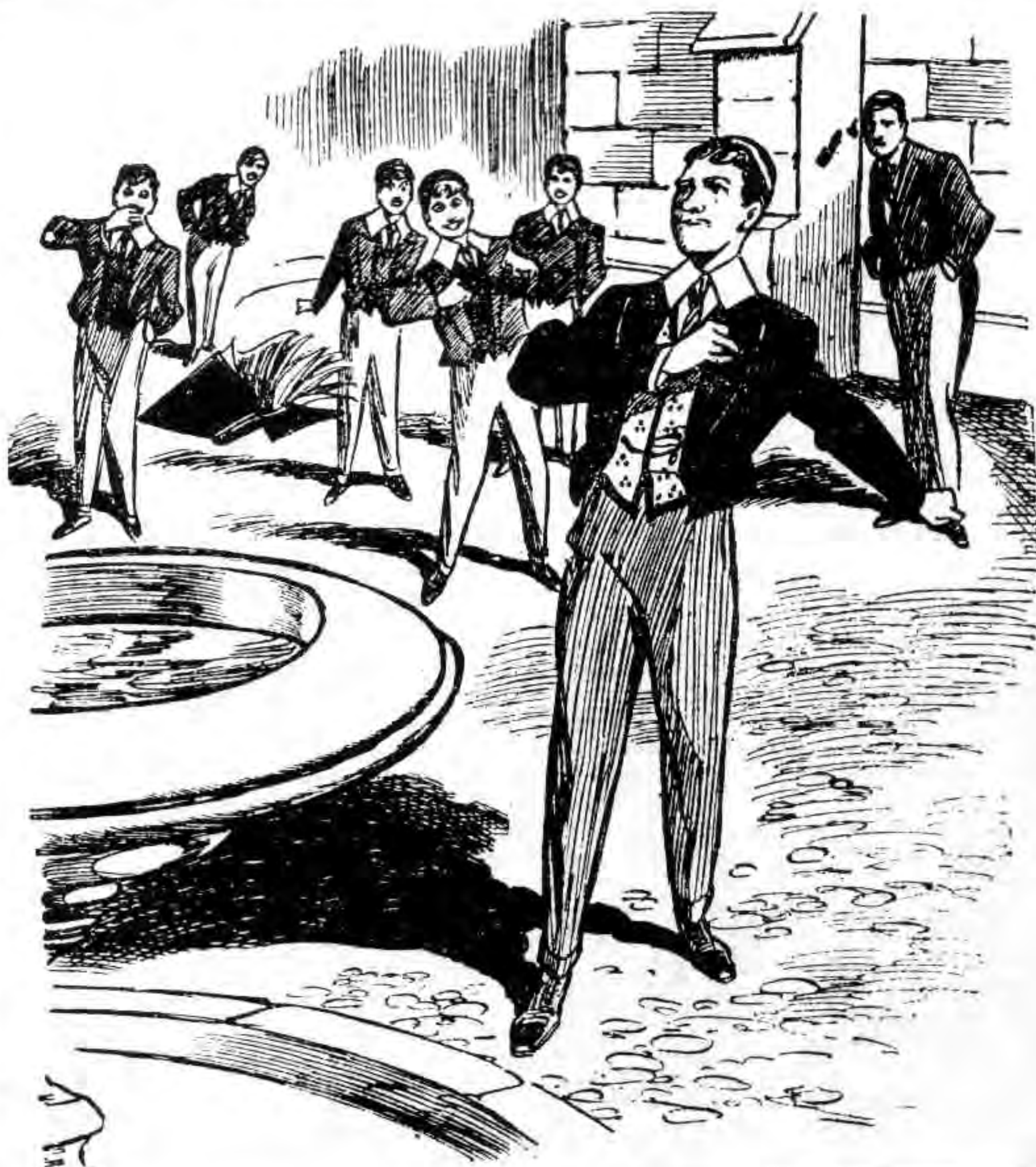
"Oh!" he gasped.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked away. The bell was ringing for third lesson now, and they headed for their Form-room.

Mr. Quelch did not receive the undivided attention of the juniors during third lesson. They had handled a prefect; and whether the great man was in the right or in the wrong, that was an extremely serious matter. Harry Wharton & Co. fully expected trouble when they came out of the Form-room. In the circumstances, some of Mr. Quelch's valuable instruction was lost upon them. They could not help thinking of what was going to happen; and when Mr. Quelch wanted to know the name of the victor in the ancient battle of Cannæ, Bob Cherry replied unthinkingly:

"Carford major!"

That was an answer that made Mr. Quelch stare, as well it might, and earned Bob fifty lines.



Vernon-Smith put the volume under his arm and walked away. He did not head for the House, but headed for the fountain in the quad. "Where are you going, Smith?" shouted Carford major, looking puzzled and surprised. The Bounder did not answer. He reached the fountain, and tossed Titus Livius into the air over the big granite basin. Splash! "There's your book, Carford," he said. "If you want it again, you can swim for it. Good-bye!" (See Chapter 11.)

"Now look out for squalls!" remarked the Bounder, as the juniors were dismissed.

"The squallfulness will probably be terrific!" observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the sagfulness of our esteemed selves is not the proper caper, and we shall fight it out finishfully."

Tubb of the Third came up to the Removites in the quad.

"You're for it!" he told them cheerfully. "Loder wants you in his study after dinner, Wharton."

"Only little me?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, so he said."

"You're supposed to be the giddy ringleader," grinned the Bounder. "That's one of the responsibilities of being captain of the Form. Are you going?"

"No!"

Tubb's eyes opened wide.

"I say, you Remove kids have got some cheek!" he said. "You've got to go when a prefect sends for you."

"Loder won't get me alone in his study, as he did you, Bob," said Harry. "It's not quite good enough."

"No fear!" agreed Bob. "We stand or fall together."

"Shoulder to shoulder!" said Nugent.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Tubb of the Third derisively. "Remove swank won't wash, you know. Take my tip, and do as you're told, like a good little kid."

The Bounder took Tubb's ear between

a finger and thumb, that seemed like an iron vice to the unfortunate Tubb.

"Go back and tell Loder that he can whistle for us, if he wants us," he said. "Tell him I pulled your ear for giving us a cheeky message—"

"Ow!"

"Tell him I kicked you—"

"Yaroooh!"

"And that we'll do the same for him, if he asks for it."

Tubb of the Third jerked his ear away and fled. Whether he carried the Bounder's message back to Loder or not the juniors did not know, and cared very little. If Loder waited in his study for Wharton after dinner, he waited in vain. Harry Wharton and his friends were with the crowd that gathered on Big Side to look on at the Form match.

When the senior footballers came down to the ground, Loder's eye roved over the crowd, and fixed on the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, Loder?"

"Did you receive my message by Tubb?"

"Yes."

"You did not come to my study."

"No."

"Very good," said Loder. "I'm busy now, but come to my study at half-past five, Wharton."

He walked on without waiting for an answer, and Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Loder's Luck!

WINGATE of the Sixth attracted a good many glances, as he appeared on Big Side with the footballers.

As a rule, Form matches did not attract a large crowd; but this time Big Side was alive with fellows of all Forms.

There was a general curiosity to see how Wingate and Loder would get on together in the first match since Gerald Loder had become football captain.

Some fellows had expected Loder to leave Wingate out; others had expected that Wingate would refuse to play under Loder's captaincy. Neither expectation had been realised; the past and present captains were both there. Wingate quiet, calm, sedate, showing no sign in his face of the thoughts in his mind; Loder, cool and arrogant, and a little overbearing, in the manner the Greyfriars fellows had learned to expect from their new captain. He took no special notice of Wingate, and the latter gave him as wide a berth as he could. No doubt Wingate realised that all eyes were upon him, and kept himself well in hand.

Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, could not help giving Wingate a glance as he tossed for choice of ends with Loder. Blundell was a first-eleven man, and he was by no means pleased by the change in football captains. On the present occasion, however, it gave him a better chance of a win, as he was playing against the Sixth.

Blundell won the toss, and gave the Sixth the wind to kick-off against.

"Line up there!" said Loder. "Now, then, don't dawdle about, Wingate!"

Wingate's eyes flashed for a moment. He gave no other sign of having heard Loder and made no reply. Gwynne of the Sixth eyed him rather anxiously as he took his place at outside-right, Wingate being inside.

"Keep your temper, old bean!" he whispered, pausing a moment. "Loder would like to get your rag out. Don't let him."

Wingate nodded.

"And remember," added Gwynne, "put up your best game; the cad would be jolly glad of a chance of leaving you out of the Rookwood match next week."

"I know that."

"Well, don't give him a chance."

"I won't—if I can help it!"

That was not a very satisfactory reply to Gwynne, but there was no time for more talk.

The whistle went and the ball rolled.

Gerald Loder was at centre-forward, and he was in great form. Only a short time before Loder had been turned out of the first eleven for fouling an opponent and general unfitness. There had been a change since then. With all his arrogance, Loder was aware that a position like that of captain of Greyfriars could not be upheld simply on swank. Swank there was in plenty; but since the successful election Loder had been more careful than usual—cigarettes in his study were fewer, excursions out of the school after lights out had been dropped, for the present at least. Loder was unusually fit, and he had put in some hard practice. At his best Loder was a good forward—and he was at his best now.

He was conscious that it meant a good deal to him in the way of prestige to win the first match in which he officiated as captain. In a way he was glad that George Wingate, the best player in the school, was at his side; he wanted to win. But it was safe to surmise that if Wingate won more limelight than Loder the Greyfriars captain would forget all prudent considerations and give a free rein to his malice. For the moment, however, Loder put such things out of his mind; he was very keen not to be beaten by a Lower Form in his first essay as football captain.

"Loder's going strong!" Bob Cherry remarked, as the Sixth attacked the Fifth Form goal in great style. "After all, the man's a player when he keeps himself fit. That was a near thing."

The ball, sent in from Gerald Loder's foot, rebounded from the crossbar.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Oh, ripping!" roared Bob Cherry the next moment.

Wingate's head had driven in the ball.

Bland, in goal, had not expected it, and the leather was in the net before he knew where it was.

"Bravo!"

"Goal!"

"Good old Wingate!"

There was a roar of cheering for the late captain of Greyfriars. Loder's eyes blazed.

He had had bad luck. Very nearly he had taken that goal; but Wingate had quite taken it, and that made all the difference. It was a step towards victory for Loder's team, but he did not think of that. Almost he would have preferred defeat to a victory won for him by the fellow he had wronged and supplanted. He gave Wingate a black and bitter look.

"Loder looks pleased!" grinned the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Wingate!" roared Bob Cherry, as much for Loder's benefit as anything else. "Goal! Goal! Good old Wingate!"

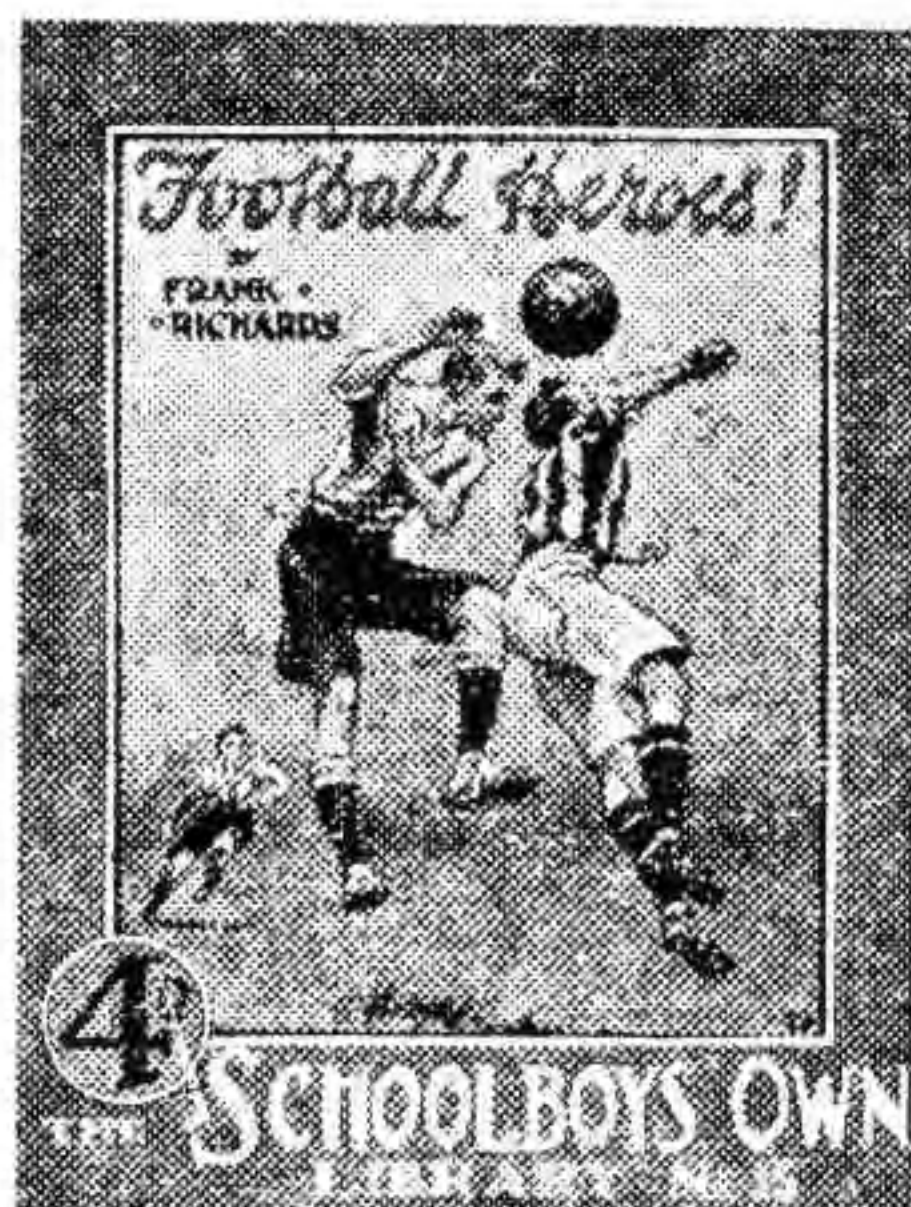
The sides lined up again, and again the Sixth got away with the ball, and the Fifth Form defence was broken. The ball went out to Gwynne, who slung it to Wingate as he was stopped, and Wingate rushed it on. Loder was behind, or Wingate would have centred to him; but he knew, without even looking, that Loder was not in a position to take a pass. He rushed the ball on to kick, and there was a shout from Loder.

"To me!" he shouted. "To me, Wingate!"

As a footballer playing football, Wingate was bound to send in the ball, with a good chance before him of scoring, and knowing that that chance would be lost if he sent the ball to the centre. But as a footballer under his captain's orders, he was bound to obey orders. But, as it happened, Loder's shout came too late; the ball was already speeding from Wingate's swift, sure kick as the shout came.

Right into the goal went the spinning leather, and it looked like a certain score. But Bland was watchful this

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time and he had luck. He leaped at the ball and drove it out with his fist, just succeeding in saving; but the ball dropped fairly for Wingate to send it in again. But there was no chance for Wingate; Loder, his face red with rage, rushed up to him, and they collided, and a Fifth Form back sent the ball down the field. Potter of the Fifth was on it in a flash and taking it on to the Sixth Form goal, and there was a rush to defend. But Loder, captain of Greyfriars, seemed to have forgotten that he was playing football at all in his rage and animosity.

"Wingate! You cheeky cad, how dare you disobey orders!" he shouted in a voice that rang across the field and made the Greyfriars fellows stare at one another.

Wingate gave his captain a quiet look. "You called too late——"

"It's a lie!"

"What?"

"Don't give me any back-chat!" snarled Loder. "I'm not standing any swank from you, Wingate, because you were captain of Greyfriars once upon a time. If you're going to play in my team you're going to obey orders!"

Wingate set his lips.

"No captain worth his salt would have given that order!" he said tersely. "I'm not sure I should have given you the ball if you'd called in time."

"What?" howled Loder.

"Play up, the Sixth!" yelled Hobson of the Shell. "Is this a football match, or a meeting of the Sixth Form Debating Society?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Loder!" yelled Walker.

Gerald Loder, recalled to himself, rushed into the game again, amid shouts of laughter from the onlookers. But the Fifth Form forwards were going strong now, and the Sixth goal was hotly attacked. North did his best, but the ball went in from Potter's foot.

"Goal!"

"Some football captain!" said Coker of the Fifth, in the crowd, derisively. "There'll be a scrap on Big Side before this match is over! We've got a top-hole football captain in Loder—I don't think!"

And, for once, Horace Coker's hearers were in agreement with him on the subject of football—a thing that had certainly never happened before!

At half-time the score was goal to goal; and when the whistle went for the interval Loder strode up to the ex-captain of Greyfriars. The other fellows gathered round with uneasy looks.

"Look here, Wingate," rapped out Loder, "I want to know where we stand. If you're going to play the game on your own there's no room for you in my team; a footballer's expected to back up his captain. I fancy that was your rule when you were captain."

"It was," said Wingate quietly. "And I shall back you up, Loder, so long as you're my captain, even when you give silly orders. But I've already told you that your silly order came too late."

"That's enough," he said.

"Quite, I think," assented Wingate.

"You'll play out this game. And you'll tender an apology and a promise of better behaviour in the future before you play for Greyfriars again."

"I shall do nothing of the sort."

"That will do!"

Loder turned his back on Wingate. He moved away and did not even look at the ex-captain of Greyfriars again.

"Well, the game's up now, George, old man," said Gwynne dismally. "Loder was looking for a chance, and he got it."



As the ball rebounded from the cross-bar Wingate dashed in and got his head to it. Bland, in goal, had not expected it, and the leather was in the net before he knew where he was. "Bravo!" "Goal!" "Good old Wingate!" There was a roar of cheering for the late captain of Greyfriars. (See Chapter 12.)

Wingate smiled faintly.

"It's a case of the wolf and the lamb over again," he said. "There's not room for Loder and me in the same team. I knew it from the start, but I wouldn't be the one to make the break. Can't be helped."

"But——" muttered Gwynne, in dismay.

The whistle went, and Gwynne had no time to say more. The second half began, and for a time the Fifth had it all their own way; the trouble in the Sixth Form eleven had its natural effect. But after Blundell had put in the ball, the senior Form pulled themselves together, and a goal came from Gwynne to equalise.

Bob Cherry looked up at the clock-tower.

"Five minutes to go, and anybody's game!" he said. "My idea is that Greyfriars haven't a very bright look-out for the first eleven matches this season."

"The brightness of the look-out is not terrific," assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes old Wingate!"

The Sixth Form forwards swept down on goal. Wingate had the ball, and he centred to Loder just in time, and Loder, almost too surprised to take the kick, sent the leather whizzing in, beating Bland to the wide. Wingate had given him the goal; he was playing football, not thinking of personal animosities. And it proved the winning goal, for the whistle shrilled out and the game was over.

"Well, I'm surprised!" said Coker of the Fifth. "With Loder as captain, a team oughtn't to win. But I know the cause of it—that idiot Blundell left me out! I was willing to play for the Fifth—offered, in fact! There's nothing to cackle at, you cheeky fags!"

But the cheeky fags seemed to think that there was, for they persisted in cackling.

The footballers came off the field. Loder wore a satisfied look. He had won his first match as football captain, and he had kicked the winning goal. It did not suit him to remember how much he owed to Wingate.

He turned and faced the ex-captain of Greyfriars.

"You will remember what I've told you, Wingate," he said in his most unpleasant tone. "I don't want to be hard on you, but——"

"Don't worry, Loder," said Wingate quietly. "I shall not play football for Greyfriars again so long as you are captain."

And Wingate turned his back on the captain of Greyfriars and walked away.

(Gerald Loder tries his hand again with the Removites next week, but he finds that he has bitten off more than he can chew. He can order the Removites to fag for him as much as he likes, but Harry Wharton & Co. care little for orders from Loder, and they say so pretty plainly. Mind you read the next story in this remarkable series, entitled: "THE WORST FORM AT GREYFRIARS!" By Frank Richards.)

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AS Ferrers Locke, Jack Drake, and Travers hurried out of the big front door the yellow lamp-light seemed pale and wan against the dawn. A grey light was flooding over the marches, and a white, ghostly mist hung over the flat countryside, with its winding creeks, up which the tide was stealing from the distant sea, and its desolate stretches of mud and rushes. Jack shivered in the chill air.

"Of all the dreary places I've struck, this takes a good deal of beating!" thought the youngster. "Hang it, anything might happen in these marshes!"

There was an old, tumbledown boat-house against one corner of the house, with a rotting punt inside. But the bottom was sound, and a minute later they were paddling through the weeds of the moat towards the spot where that floating box had been seen.

They passed under the drawbridge and round a twist in the moat. Travers manoeuvred the punt so that Jack could grasp the mysterious object.

"A cigarette-box of carved sandal-wood," said Locke. "Let's have a look inside, young 'un!"

Jack raised the lid.

"There's a piece of paper there, guv'nor—something written on it!"

"Why, it's a message addressed to you, Travers!" cried Locke.

Travers unfolded the torn sheet.

"To my nephew, Thomas Travers. If anything should happen to me, you must carry on at Lone Manor in my stead. Guard its secret. Where the stone fingers point—"

"Yes?" cried Jack.

Travers shook his head.

"That's all," he said. "The message was never finished!"

"Unfinished!" breathed Locke. "May I look? My heavens, how his hand was shaking! When he wrote this, he was face to face with——" He broke off, and added slowly: "Whatever it was!"

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Locke stared up at the window of the room overlooking the moat.

"That window was open," murmured the detective. "It's pretty clear what happened. Adam Guelph was scribbling this message when he saw that he could not finish. Afraid lest it should be seen and possibly destroyed—or was it that he was afraid of revealing some secret? It's queer, that last, unfinished phrase—anyway, he slipped what he had written into this cigarette-box, and tossed it out into the moat, hoping you would find it."

Travers was poring over the scrawled sentences.

"The first part is clear," he muttered. "He wants me to look after this house for him—he knew that something was going to happen to him. But then—'Guard its secret!' What secret? What did he mean by that?"

"Looks to me as if he was going to tell you in the rest of the message if he had had half a chance," put in Jack Drake quickly. "Where the stone fingers point! That's a clue to the secret of Lone Manor, I'll bet! Eh, guv'nor?"

"Seems so to me, Jack," agreed the detective. "But you know this house, Travers. Doesn't that queer phrase convey anything to you? Think, man!"

But the young footballer shook his head hopelessly.

"Nothing at all," he said.

The paper slipped from his fingers, and he sat with his head in his hands. Locke touched him sympathetically on the shoulder.

"Cheer up! Things aren't as bad as they might be. We might have found your uncle lying dead; but there seems every chance of his being alive. If he's to be found, trust the young 'un here and myself to find him for you!"

Back in the house, Locke made his decision.

"If you are willing to leave this affair in my hands, Travers, I'll throw up everything at the moment to carry it through. Jack, we can do that all right, can't we?"

"Well, there's the case of Colonel

Warr's polo pony, and that business of the Edinburgh forgery; but, of course, we can give 'em the miss, guv'nor, and let the C.I.D. have their head," said Jack Drake cheerfully. "Personally, I'd like to concentrate on this giddy mystery!"

"Then that's settled," said Locke. "I shall have to slip back to London to arrange one or two things, of course; but I'll be back as soon as possible, and you'll have Jack down here in the meantime. But what about yourself?"

"It's difficult for me," said Travers, frowning. "My manager will want me. If I break my contract, I should get it in the neck, and very properly. I'm wanted next Saturday, of course; the Larks are playing the 'Spurs; but I gave the manager an idea that my dashing off like that was important, and I can stay down here a few days."

"Good! I fancy it won't be long before something happens down here! Judging by that broken message from your uncle, there's some secret about this house that we don't understand. I fancy we may have some queer birds swooping around before long!"

The bright light of early morning was flooding in through the big windows now, and they turned out the lights. Locke made a swift examination of the drive and garden, but, as he had expected, without result. Jack made for the kitchen quarters, and soon had some appetising rashers of bacon frying with half a dozen eggs; even if the servants had all vanished, the food in the larder hadn't.

The youngster was a good hand with the frying-pan, and it was an appetising meal that he prepared and laid out in the kitchen. Then he went in search of Travers and Locke. The detective he found lying back on a leather sofa in the library, his hands clasped behind his head, pulling at a pipe that had long since burnt out. Locke was deep in thought. Jack moved silently away again.

"I'll cook him some fresh grub when

he wants it," he told Travers. "But when the gov'nor's got that brain-pan of his going, he doesn't like to be interrupted—not even for a spot of grub!"

It was eight o'clock before Ferrers Locke motored away from Lone Manor on his way to London. On the way, he stopped at Sharn, the nearest village, four miles from the old manor, to inform the local police of the disappearance of Adam Guelph and his three servants.

The local policeman, however, did not seem particularly interested. In his heart he could not get rid of the idea that Guelph had gone off for a holiday unexpectedly, taking his servants with him.

"Much ado about nothin'," grumbled the local policeman, watching Locke's car vanish down the road. "Still, I may as well go along to this here house to-day an' make a note or two. An' that moat ought to be dragged. Wunner who that gent was? Nice feller, but don't know nothin' o' police work, o' course!"

And he went back into the "police-station"—in other words, his little cottage—without the faintest idea that he had been in conversation with none other than Ferrers Locke, the world-famous sleuth.

The policeman turned up at Lone Manor that afternoon, and Jack Drake had a good deal of fun in quietly pulling the unsuspecting man's leg. The dragging of the moat revealed nothing, and the arm of the law went back to the village on his bicycle, confirmed in his opinion that it was a lot of fuss about nothing.

Jack Drake, standing at the edge of the drawbridge, watched him go with a grin.

"Good chaps, these country coppers," he said to Travers. "And a lot of 'em are clever at their jobs. But that one's a pompous ass, I'm afraid. Still, p'raps it's all to the good. We don't want the police for ever nosing round here, getting in the gov'nor's way."

The twilight was deeping swiftly into dusk. The mists were beginning to rise, white and ghostly, round the moated house, and to the youngster the marshlands seemed more dreary and forlorn than ever, with only the occasional wailing cry of a curlew to break the vast silence.

"Well, the gov'nor said he'd get back from London as soon as poss, Tom, so let's hope that'll be soon!" said Jack, as he and Travers turned towards the house. Their feet rang hollow on the drawbridge, and Jack's eyes roamed over the great straggling building, and along the damp walls of the moat. "You know, this place would give me the hump pretty soon, without the gov'nor!"

Both were feeling dog-tired, and they turned in early. Though a small petrol engine had been installed by Adam Guelph for the purpose of raising the bridge at nights, and the old mechanism had been got into thorough working order, they agreed to leave the drawbridge down, in case Ferrers Locke returned in the middle of the night.

Jack's room was in the front of the house, Travers' at the back. The youngster fell asleep almost instantly.

But it seemed that he had scarcely closed his eyes before he was awake again. He sat up quickly in the darkness, all his senses on the alert. A moment later, somewhere below, a clock struck two.

There was a stealthy movement by his bedside.

"Who's there?" cried Jack sharply.

"It's all right—it's Travers!"—came the muttered reply. A hand came through the darkness and gripped Jack's shoulder. "Quick—get up!"

In an instant the youngster was out of bed.

"What's up?" he whispered.

"I don't know what it means," answered the footballer grimly, "but there's someone swimming the moat!"

The Open Sluice!

A MINUTE later the two were in Travers' room, peering down through the broken moonlight at the broad stretch of dark water below.

A head could be seen driving through the water, and the faint splash of the swimmer came faintly to their ears. The long ripples glinted as they ran over the glassy surface of the moat.

"What's the game?" muttered Jack, in bewilderment. "If he wanted to get into the house, why didn't he try the drawbridge—whoever he is?"

"That only leads him to the front door," answered Travers, in a low tone. "He expects to get a better chance at one of these windows round here—"

He broke off. The swimmer had vanished from their sight. But they heard the faint scraping as he hauled himself up on to the stone ledge below one of the windows. There came the tinkle of glass.

"He's in!" Travers muttered. "He's broken the window of the library and got in there!"

As though by one impulse, the two turned and made silently for the door. Along the black passage they stole to the head of the stairs. Jack Drake's heart was beating swiftly with excitement.

What did it mean—this mysterious midnight visit to the old moated manor house from which Adam Guelph had

vanished so bewilderingly the night before?

Down the broad stairs they crept. A pale grey light glimmered in through the great windows of the hall, vaguely revealing the dark outlines of the furniture. Outside the door of the library they came to a halt, listening.

Faint movements could be heard from behind the closed door. Travers' hand stole to the knob.

"Ready, Jack? We'll surprise the beggar! Collar him before he knows what's happening!"

The footballer crashed the door open and leapt into the room, Jack Drake at his heels.

There was a startled ejaculation from the intruder. For a moment his dark outline passed across the window—that of a big, powerful man. Then Jack saw the figure of Travers hurtle forward.

Powerful though the mysterious night-raider obviously was, he could not throw off the strong, athletic Larkham City footballer. The two men rocked past the square of grey window, breathing hard and fast, gripped together. Jack Drake, about to spring forward to Travers' aid, hesitated. In the darkness, how could he tell friend from foe?

The trampling feet echoed noisily through the lofty room. Came the dull sound of a fist crashing home on someone's jaw, and the click of teeth. Then a staggering form was outlined against the window, and it was not Travers. The intruder recovered himself, and sprang for his attacker.

Travers tried to guard, but in the dark it was next to impossible. A heavy fist crashed sickeningly between his eyes, and he reeled back blinded. Jack heard him fall, saw his assailant spring for the window. But in a flash the youngster had intercepted him.

"No, you don't!" snapped Jack grimly.

His back was to the window, his fists were ready. The man was not going to escape so easily if Jack Drake knew anything about it!

Already Travers was on his feet again. "Leave him to me, Jack!" snapped Tom Travers, and he rushed in.

Again the trampling feet, the swaying bodies in the gloom, and then Travers caught his foot in an overturned chair, slipped, and was flung off. He staggered up, and Jack Drake, tired of being an onlooker, jumped in. But their enemy was not waiting. He vanished through the door, with Jack in hot pursuit.

Whoever it was, he seemed to know his way about the house. They heard the great front door dragged open.

The drawbridge was down—the way of escape lay clear. The fugitive's feet rang out on the bridge as he raced away; but a moment later the swift, light footsteps of the youngster in pursuit rang hollow on the drawbridge, too. The man turned, with a snarl.

A heavy fist flashed through the gloom, but Jack sprang aside, and the blow found nothing but the air.

"I don't know who you are, but I'm going to find out!" panted Jack grimly.

He knew a trick or two of wrestling, and the lithe arms that gripped the man round the waist, and the leg that came twisting between the fugitive's sent him crashing down, with Jack Drake on top of him. With a knee on the other's chest, Jack grinned breathlessly and yelled to Travers.

"A light, man! Quick! Let's have a look at him!"

But the man underneath was too strong to be held, even though the

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 928.

INTRODUCTION.

TOM TRAVERS, a young goalkeeper of great promise, playing for Larkham City.

ADAM GUELPH, an old miser, and Travers' uncle.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous private detective of Baker Street, and

JACK DRAKE, his clever boy assistant.

During a hard-and-fast game between Larkham and Cardiff City, Travers, who is putting up a splendid game between the "sticks," receives an urgent message—"Come at once"—from his uncle. Put off his game—for he fears something has happened to his miserly relative—Tom lets his side down badly. After the match, a faction of the crowd advances threateningly upon Travers, but Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, who had been interested spectators of the match, rush to the goalkeeper's aid. Travers thanks his rescuers, and informs them that something untoward has happened at Lone Manor.

The detective and his assistant readily offer their aid, and, in company with Travers, they journey to Lone Manor, a gloomy house of a bygone period, complete with moat and drawbridge. The house is found to be empty. The remains of a half-finished meal in the dining-room sets Locke thinking, and, in looking for clues, he finds a playing-card, the jack of diamonds, on which the words, "Los lobos"—a Spanish term, meaning "the wolves"—are pricked out. Suddenly Drake calls the sleuth's attention to a small box which is floating in the moat immediately under the window.

"Come on!" said Locke, hurrying out of the house. "We'll soon fish that out. It may be a clue!"

(New read on.)

youngster had managed to get him down.

Jack held on gamely as his prisoner struggled, but the weights were too unequal. He was flung off, and as he sprang in again a blow on the point of the chin sent him crashing back.

Travers came racing to his aid; but Jack was up again in a moment, returning doggedly to the attack. He slipped past the blow that was aimed at him, and gripped the intruder in a second attempt to bring him down. But a short-arm blow came driving up into his face, and, with a dazed cry the youngster reeled away. His feet went over the edge of the drawbridge. A moment later he was in the moat!

The icy water closing over his head swept the dizziness from his brain. He struck out.

He glimpsed the dark figure of the man on the drawbridge staring down for an instant before he turned and raced away into the darkness. Then Travers' voice came out of the gloom:

"Jack! Jack!"

"I'm all right!" cried the youngster, treading water. "Don't worry about me! Follow that rotter!"

Travers did not hesitate; he knew that Jack Drake could swim like a fish. He vanished in pursuit of their mysterious enemy, while Jack started off swimming for the steps.

The moat was wide, and it was some while before Jack realised an odd fact—that though he was nearer the wall, he seemed farther from the drawbridge than he should have been. He stopped swimming and trod water.

"Hang it, I'm being carried along!" he gasped in bewilderment.

There was no doubt of it. Though he had ceased to swim, the wall of the moat seemed to be slipping past him, faster and faster.

It was like some absurd dream! How could there be a current running in the moat—a strong current, too?

"Am I going dippy?" muttered the youngster, hitting out against the stream.

But the current dragged him on despite his efforts. Out of the darkness ahead came the sound of roaring waters, and, peering through the broken moonlight in startled apprehension, Jack Drake gave a sudden cry.

He struggled desperately, fighting with all his strength against the rush of water that was sweeping him on. But the current had him in its grip. With staring eyes the youngster glanced again over his shoulder, at where the dark waters of the moat seemed to be pouring themselves in a mad torrent into a yawning opening in the wall of the moat.

It was the tunnel, he knew, by which the moat could be filled or emptied; it was connected with one of the winding tidal creeks that ran everywhere through the fens from the distant sea. And the sluice-gate at the mouth of the tunnel had been raised.

Whirled helplessly round in the foaming torrent, Jack Drake struggled vainly. The roar of the water was very loud now, echoing out of the tunnel-mouth in a hollow boom.

Who could have opened the sluice—and why? But that was a question that scarcely occurred to him then.

"If I'm caught in the tunnel I'm done for!" he gasped.

The rushing waters dragged him down, and closed above his head. Had anyone been watching from the bank they might have seen a white hand appear

for a moment through the bubbling maelstrom, and then it was swallowed in the tunnel mouth.

"Mr. Harrison" !

THE thunderous echoes drummed in Jack Drake's ears as he was tossed into the pitch blackness. His shoulder was crashed against the stonework, and a stab of pain came, to be forgotten in an instant as he fought wildly for breath.

But his nostrils were below the water. He must hold his breath at all costs; but already the blood was pulsing in his temples, and his head felt as though it would split. He kicked upward; knew that unless he could breathe now he would choke his lungs with water, for he could not hold out longer.

The foaming eddies strove to drag him down. But somehow he fought his way to the surface, and, with a wild gasp, the youngster filled his lungs with the wet, cold air. The spray dashed into his eyes blindingly.

He was far down the tunnel now, being carried on at breathless speed. There was scarcely a foot of space between the surface of the torrent and the stonework that arched above it; he felt his matted hair brush the roof of the tunnel as a whirl of water tossed him a few inches higher. And then, as though very far away, a faint gleam of moonlight flashed into view.

The far mouth of the tunnel!

It was a miracle that he had not been stunned against the stonework as he was swept into the tunnel through the open sluice-gate; a miracle, too, that he had been able to keep his breath in the tunnel! Dazed though he was, Jack's chief thought was one of amazement to find himself still with his senses as he was borne out of the farther mouth into the moonlit creek beyond.

He struggled feebly. But all the strength seemed to have left him. It was all he could do to keep his head above water as he was carried away down the wide creek, with the high mud-banks on either side.

"I'm done!" he told himself.

But he wasn't done—not by long chalks; and in his heart he knew it.

The creek was growing wider, deeper. The mud-banks seemed to slide by endlessly. He was swimming now, with his strength gradually returning, content at first to keep himself afloat, then working his way by inches nearer and nearer to the bank.

It was on the misty saltings, far from the moated house, that Jack Drake hauled himself after what seemed an eternity of time. He lay face down for many minutes before he struggled to his feet and looked about him.

The great waste of marsh stretched away on all sides. Lone Manor was lost in the mist. He had only a vague idea of direction to work upon, and, as he found out later, that was wrong. But he set off, chilled to the bone, in the direction in which he believed Lone Manor to lie. Useless to follow the creek—the numerous side-channels were too confusing.

It was a slow job, picking his way over the saltings, splashing his way through creeks where the rising tide was stealing higher, through dark mud-flats and beds of reeds. The grey mists hemmed in him. Jack shivered.

"Crumbs, this is a go!" muttered the youngster, with a rueful grin. "Wet to the skin, covered in mud, and goodness knows if I'm going in the right direction!"

He soon realised definitely that he was

not. He made away to the right, only to be brought up short by a broad creek of dark water. He turned back.

"Lost!" he muttered. "Lost in these giddy marshes! Of all the luck!"

It was not a cheery spot to be lost in. At high tide, he knew, the saltings would be covered with six feet of water. And the tide was creeping swiftly higher, as he could tell in the winding creeks that baffled him at every turn.

Dawn began to break, grey in the east. The light increased rapidly, and a golden bar of sunlight cut across the marshes. And by the light of the coming day he caught sight of something that brought a quick cry of delight to his lips.

A house lay away to the left, and a minute later he came upon a rough road banked above the saltings. A few minutes more and he was at the gate of a garden.

"Fine!" grinned Jack, all his cheery spirits returning with a rush. "If I can get a cup of something hot, an' they can tell me how to get to Lone Manor——"

He broke off at the sound of heavy footsteps on the gravel. The next moment a man came into view round the corner of the house, leading a dog. Jack opened the gate and stepped into the garden.

He was welcomed by a menacing growl from the dog. It was a big, ugly grey animal, with fangs that looked unpleasantly dangerous. Jack glanced at its owner, glad to see that the hand holding the dog's chain was tightly grasped. But though only a few yards separated them now, the youngster was puzzled to see that the man's gaze was directed past him.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the man, halting. "Who's there?"

It was an odd question, with the youngster in full view. Jack walked forward, and again the dog bared its teeth, with a savage note of warning quivering in its throat. At the youngster's movement the man half-turned towards him; but still his eyes—queer, greenish eyes—stared past him.

And in that moment a queer feeling came to Jack Drake that he and the other had met before. There seemed to be something vaguely familiar in the big, powerful figure with the square, heavy-jowled face. He caught his breath sharply.

"Crumbs!" muttered Jack Drake.

Could this be the man with whom he had struggled on the drawbridge only a few hours since?

"Who's there?" cried the other again.

And in that instant the youngster understood.

This man was blind!

So his sudden vague sense of recognition had been mistaken. For the mysterious intruder at Lone Manor could not have been a blind man.

"Sorry to trouble you, sir," said the youngster, "but I've lost my way. I want to get to a house called Lone Manor——"

"Lone Manor?" echoed the blind man; and it seemed to Jack that there was an odd note in his voice. He moved suddenly forward, and his hand fell on the youngster's shoulder. "Why, you're soaked to the skin, boy!"

"Been lost in the marshes," explained Jack. "Had to swim a creek. I——"

He broke off at the sound of footsteps, and turned to see a young man stride round the corner of the house.

The newcomer was rather strikingly handsome, with smooth-brushed black hair and dark eyes that gleamed swiftly from the blind man to Jack. He came

forward with almost noiseless steps; there was an odd panther-like grace about him. He smiled, and his long, slim fingers touched the blind man on the arm.

"Didn't know you had a pal here, Drood!" he laughed.

But despite his easy manner and his low, pleasant laugh, Jack Drake did not like the man with the dark eyes. The youngster was a keen judge of character, and some instinct warned him—told him of the tiger-streak of cruelty beneath the pleasant surface. He noticed, too, that the dog seemed to cower away a little from the newcomer.

"Someone who wants Lone Manor, Silva," answered Drood, the blind man, slowly.

The man addressed as Silva seemed to Jack to give an almost imperceptible start.

"Lone Manor?" he cried. "Why, that's the house, surely, where Mr. Guelph lives?"

Jack nodded silently. He was suddenly on his guard. Who were these men that by luck he had stumbled upon?

"I think we can put you on the road

for Lone Manor," murmured Silva, an almost silky tone in his voice. He turned to the blind man: "Drood, Harrison's here—inside. Get in and explain things to him as far as is necessary, will you?"

Drood nodded and turned away, the stick he carried tapping along the wall of the house. Silva moved towards the gate.

"I'll tell you how to get to Lone Manor," he said in his sleek voice.

Jack grunted inwardly as he listened to the man's directions. He was frozen to the bone, shivering, but there had been no offer of hospitality.

"Thanks," he said shortly. "I see."

Silva closed the gate behind the youngster, and instantly strode off noiselessly round the corner of the house after Drood. Jack halted and turned back.

"Nice, hospitable crowd, I must say," he told himself. "Seemed uncommon taken aback when I asked for Lone Manor, too. Hanged if I don't get nosy here."

With set lips the youngster swung open the gate and strode through.

Some instinct told him that these men

were crooks. What did they know of Lone Manor?

Without attempt at concealment Jack Drake strode down the path and round the corner of the house. There came a quick exclamation in Silva's voice.

Three men were standing on the gravel outside an open french window—Silva and the blind man, and a tall figure in leather coat and helmet, apparently a flying man. This, Jack realised instantly, must be the man Harrison of whom Silva had spoken.

The three men had been speaking in low tones. But at the youngster's appearance there came an abrupt silence. Silva's eyes gleamed.

"What do you want?" he cried, a harsh ring in his voice.

"Look here, sir," said Jack coolly. "I'm soaked to the bone. Can't you let me dry my togs?"

"Get out!" rasped the airman. His face was almost hidden by the fur lined flying-helmet, but Jack saw the ugly twist of the lips as he spoke. "Clear out, before you get kicked out! See?" He turned to Silva. "What does this youngster want nosing round here? Set that dog on him if he won't go."

The dog, whose chain the blind man was holding, snarled savagely and strained on the leash. Jack got ready to give it his boot if it was allowed to fly at him. But Silva's silky laugh broke in:

"Oh, we'll let him dry himself. Come inside."

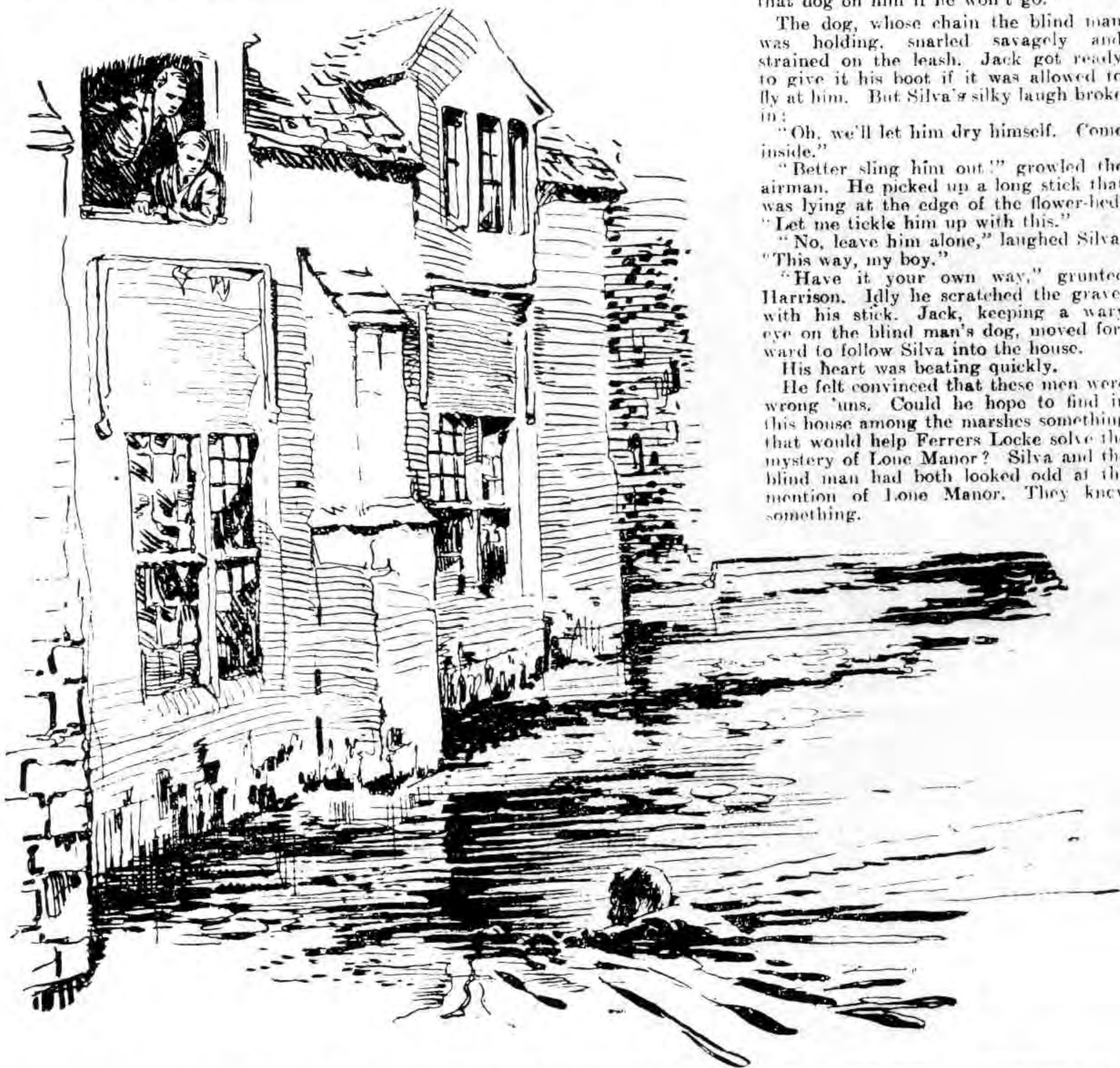
"Better sling him out!" growled the airman. He picked up a long stick that was lying at the edge of the flower-bed. "Let me tickle him up with this."

"No, leave him alone," laughed Silva. "This way, my boy."

"Have it your own way," grunted Harrison. Idly he scratched the gravel with his stick. Jack, keeping a wary eye on the blind man's dog, moved forward to follow Silva into the house.

His heart was beating quickly.

He felt convinced that these men were wrong 'uns. Could he hope to find in this house among the marshes something that would help Ferrers Locke solve the mystery of Lone Manor? Silva and the blind man had both looked odd at the mention of Lone Manor. They knew something.



Jack Drake and Travers peered down through the broken moonlight at the broad stretch of dark water below. A head could be seen driving through the water, and the faint splash of the swimmer came faintly to their ears. (See page 23.)

And then a quick cry rose in the youngster's throat, to be checked before it reached his lips.

His eyes had fallen to the gravel, to those apparently idle marks scratched there by the man in flying kit.

Two strange hieroglyphics stared up at him for a moment before they were erased by the stick that had made them. Two marks utterly meaningless to Silva. To Jack Drake, however, they meant a great deal, even more than the message alone that he had read there, scratched on the soft gravel in the secret shorthand known only to himself and Ferrers Locke!

"Danger—watch out!"

That was the message that had been scratched in the gravel. For an instant the eyes of the airman met those of the youngster.

And in that amazing moment Jack Drake realised the truth, despite the wonderful disguise.

Harrison, the airman, was Ferrers Locke himself!

A Grim Game!

"THE guv'nor!"

Ferrers Locke himself! Jack Drake knew now, without a shadow of doubt. This man in flying kit whom Silva and Drood, the blind man, called Harrison, was Locke in disguise!

Concealed as the face was with its fur-lined flying-helmet, Jack could recognise "Harrison" now. That he had not

done so before did not surprise him. The voice, the manner, everything had been altered by the detective's amazing skill.

"Danger—watch out!"

So his suspicions had been right. Silva and Drood were crooks, doubtless were connected with the strange disappearance of Adam Guelph and his servants from Lone Manor. And Locke was on the trail.

Just what game the guv'nor was playing, Jack Drake could not imagine. But in some way, it seemed, he was "well in" with Silva and Drood; they trusted him, believing him to be someone else, little dreaming that this man they seemed to have taken to some extent into their confidence was Ferrers Locke, the famous detective.

Locke had turned away now, tossing down the stick with which he had scratched that warning message in the gravel. With scarcely a pause in his stride, the youngster followed on after Silva into the house, his brain in a whirl.

There was a fire in the room from which the french windows opened on to the garden. It had burnt low, was scarcely more than a handful of glowing cinders. Silva nodded towards it.

"If you can coax that into a blaze, you can dry yourself," he said, and went back into the garden. Jack heard the voice of "Harrison": "Ought to have sent the little beast off with a flea in his ear, Mr. Silva!" And the youngster chuckled below his breath.

"Wonderful actor, the guv'nor!" he told himself. "But what the thump is his game? How has he got in with this bunch of rotters? Anyway, Silva and the blind man must be connected somehow or other with this affair at Lone Manor. And why's the guv'nor in flying kit?"

There were endless questions hammering in Jack Drake's brain.

He crept back to the window. The voices of the three men came to his ears. Their talk was puzzling.

"Then the patient is all ready, Mr. Silva?" The disguised detective was speaking.

"All ready, Harrison. And the plane is ready, too? Plenty of juice and all that? Won't do to have a forced landing on this trip!"

"You trust me!" came the answer.

"If you do have any mishaps, Harrison," came the voice of the blind man harshly, "it'll be pretty serious for you, I fancy, with the passenger you are carrying. You understand that? Good! There must be no mishap."

"There won't be!"

Silva's voice broke in impatiently.

"We're wasting time. The sooner you get off, the better."

Jack crept away from the window as he heard them make a move.

"The guv'nor's taking a plane trip, is he?" he muttered, raking at the fire. "With a giddy mysterious passenger. Wish I knew what it all meant."

A step at the window turned Jack's head. Ferrers Locke was standing there, staring into the room.

"About time you'd finished and cleared off!" he exclaimed loudly, stepping into the room. In an instant he was at the youngster's side.

"Guv'nor—"

"What in blazes brought you here."

(Continued on page 28.)



A short-arm blow came driving up into his face, and with a dazed cry Jack Drake reeled away. His feet went over the edge of the drawbridge, and a moment later he was in the moat. (See page 24.)

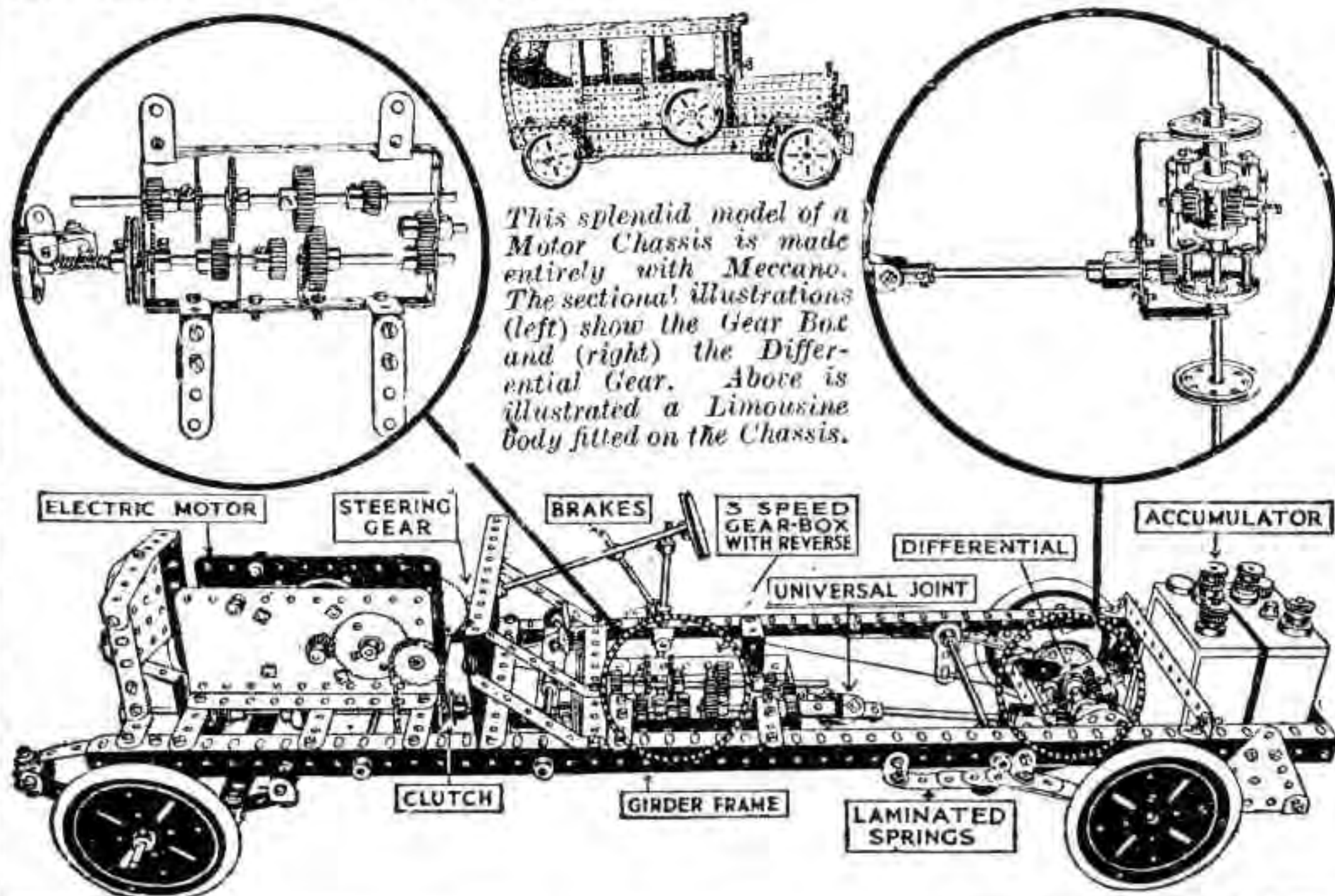
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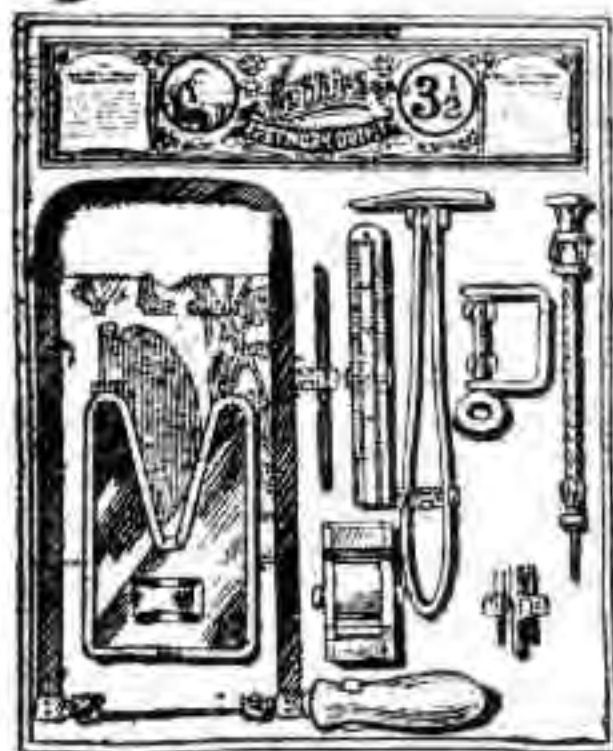
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THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR

(Continued from page 26.)

Jack?" breathed the disguised sleuth. "But don't waste time telling me now! Young'un, I'm on the trail—hot and gingerly! These men, Silva and Drood—they are members of the Wolves, a mysterious, secret association that's kidnapped Adam Guelph from Lone Manor. What's happened to the three missing servants I don't know, but Adam Guelph is here, in this house, a prisoner. They want to get him away—"

"And you are taking him off for them in a plane?" gasped Drake. "Guv'nor, you're a giddy wonder! How've you fooled them? How—"

"Can't explain all now, but I found out their scheme. I collared the real man, Harrison, and am impersonating him, and if all goes well I shall get Adam Guelph off in Harrison's plane. Harrison is a crook airman, who's being paid well to do as he's told and not ask questions. Silva and Drood think old Guelph is going off to the custody of some other members of the Wolves, but that's where they've made a slight mistake. I'm going to fly to Birmingham and put the old man in charge of my old friend Dr. Grieve. Guelph's in a bad way. They're drugging him now—"

The detective's face hardened.

"We're up against fiends, Jack! Silva

is a human panther for cruelty and cunning. And the blind man, Drood, has him beat! There's something I can't understand about Drood. He's blind without a doubt, yet he seems to have eyes in his finger-tips! It's uncanny sometimes—in the dark, for instance—"

Locke's low muttered words snapped off.

A shadow had fallen into the room, and, swinging round, Jack saw the big figure of the blind man standing at the open french windows, head half turned, as though listening.

Instantly Ferrers Locke spoke, in the utterly different voice that he used in part as Harrison the airman.

"Hurry up, you! Don't take all day drying your filthy clothes! I'll give you five minutes, and if you ain't out then, you'll feel my boot! Get that?"

"Sha'n't be long now, sir!" said Jack, with a cleverly imitated tremor of fear in his voice. "Just two minutes—"

Drood came stepping into the room, his stick tapping as he felt his way.

"That's right, Harrison," he said, in a voice cold as ice, which betrayed the malignant, ruthless mind within. "Silva was a fool to allow the little rat in the house!"

He groped nearer to Ferrers Locke. The powerful right hand came out, gripping the detective's shoulder.

"I am sure you agree with me—Harrison!"

There was a bitter accent on the last

word which came as a sudden warning. Locke leapt back, just as Drood raised his stick and brought it whistling savagely through the air. He was only just in time.

"Spy!" shrieked Drood. "I heard you! You're not Harrison—you—"

He came forward with a blind rush, claw-like hands thrust out. It was, as Locke himself had said, as though the blind man had eyes in his finger-tips. His hands closed round the detective's throat.

"Spy!" he repeated hoarsely. "Spies both of you—"

Jack sprang forward, and his hand shot out from behind Drood, closing over the man's mouth, choking back the torrent of words.

Locke wrenched free, and Jack Drake dragged the blind man backwards. Drood's stick lashed the air venomously, crashing down on the detective's shoulder with an ugly sound. Then the detective's steel-like arms were wound round the struggling man, bearing him to the ground. Jack's hand was torn from his mouth, and again Drood's voice rang out in a snarl:

"Spies! Silva—Silva—"

Locke's handkerchief was crammed into Drood's mouth, silencing him. The detective knelt on the man's chest.

"Quick, Jack!" he whispered. "That cloth—"

(Mind you read next week's instalment of this grand serial, chums.)

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