

THE SCHOOL AND DETECTIVE WEEKLY!

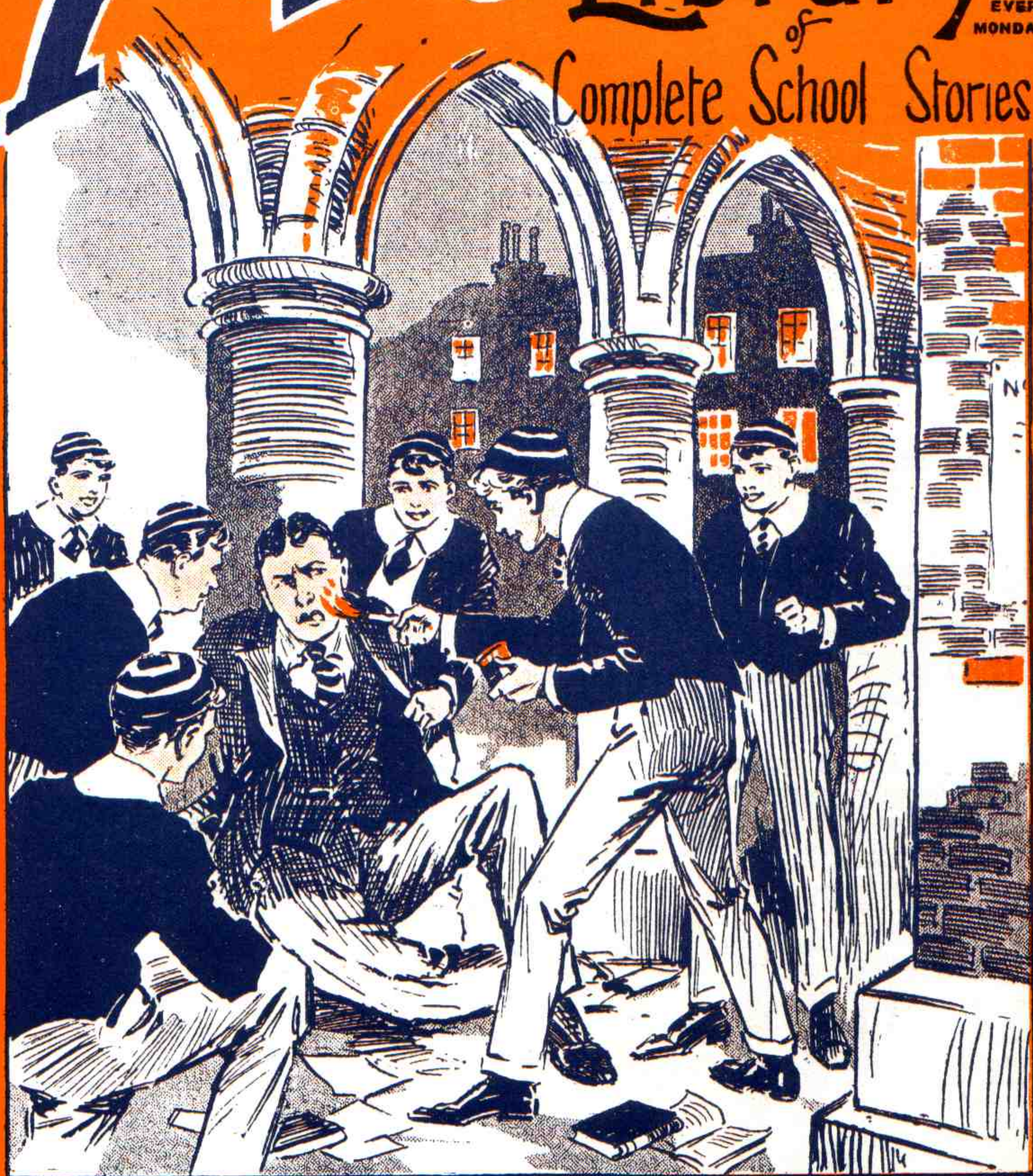
No. 930. Vol. XXVIII.

Week Ending December 5th, 1925.

The Magnet 2^d

Library EVERY MONDAY.

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GERALD LODER PAYS THE PRICE!

RAGGING THE CAPTAIN OF THE SCHOOL!

(An uncomfortable ten minutes for the bullying Sixth-Former. See the grand school story inside.)

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

NEXT WEEK'S CHRISTMAS NUMBER!

NEXT Monday's issue of the MAGNET will stand out by reason of the fact that it is a special Christmas number and no trouble has been spared to make it a success. Of course, if I had my way, you would have a 100-page number to celebrate the grand occasion, but that, as you all understand, is impossible. Even an Editor has to toe the line, you see. As it stands, however, the next issue of the MAGNET will take a lot of beating. Mr. Frank Richards has been burning the midnight oil on a special Greyfriars story dealing with the Christmas vacation, and the result means another feather in the cap of this inimitable author. Harry Wharton & Co. have moved with the times, too, for they have presented us with a glorious issue of the "Herald" devoted to this once-a-year occasion. And the serial, "The Mystery of Lone Manor," has climbed above its own high-water mark of quality. Magnetites would do well to order their favourite paper in good time.

SHETLAND!

I have before me a splendid letter from a reader chum in Shetland. He speaks very highly of the MAGNET—that shows we's got the right sort of headpiece, doesn't it?—and wants to know if Mr.

Frank Richards could introduce a Shetland boy to the jolly circle at Greyfriars. Well, Shetland is the kind of place that lends itself to an introduction of this sort, for it's full of romance, and that should help to provide a theme for a "Shetland" yarn. I'll pass on the suggestion to Mr. Frank Richards.

MY PORTRAIT!

A cheery Magnetite wants to know if I will wind up the Portrait Gallery with a portrait of myself. He says that thousands of readers must be wondering what I look like. He says more. Just listen: "There are thousands of readers who spend half their leisure time thinking, or trying to think, what you look like. Please put us out of our pain, and let us see." Now, I wonder if they would be put out of their pain if they saw a reproduction of my chivvy? I rather think—well, I won't say. Anyhow, I don't think I should fit in harmoniously with the MAGNET Gallery of Celebrities. Thanks for the suggestion, all the same.

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.

Nos. 17 and 18 of this famous all-school story library are now on sale. No. 17 features Billy Bunter in a new "roll." The one and only Bunter loses his heart to a member of the fair sex. Don't laugh, please, for the outcome of this attachment is extraordinary. We see a new Bunter—a Bunter who actually tells the truth. Note the title—"Surprising the School"—and make a point of getting this fine story, chums. No. 18 deals with Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, and is entitled, "The Millionaire

Boot-boy." Mr. Martin Clifford runs Frank Richards very close, so that a reader purchasing both these excellent volumes will have made a jolly good investment. Get them to-day.

Next Monday's Programme.

"LODER'S LAST CHANCE!" By Frank Richards.

A grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., featuring the rival Sixth-Formers, George Wingate, and Gerald Loder, the captain of the school. Don't miss it.

GRAND CHRISTMAS NUMBER!

Harry Wharton & Co.'s contributions to the "Herald" next week will be remembered for many a day. Look out for the grand Christmas number, boys.

"THE MYSTERY OF LONE MANOR!"

There is another exciting instalment of this powerful mystery story on the programme for next week. Be sure and read it.

PORTRAIT GALLERY. No. 15

No. 15 deals with Dr. Locke, the respected Head of Greyfriars. Be sure you add his grand old face to your collection, boys. Till next week, then,

Your Editor.

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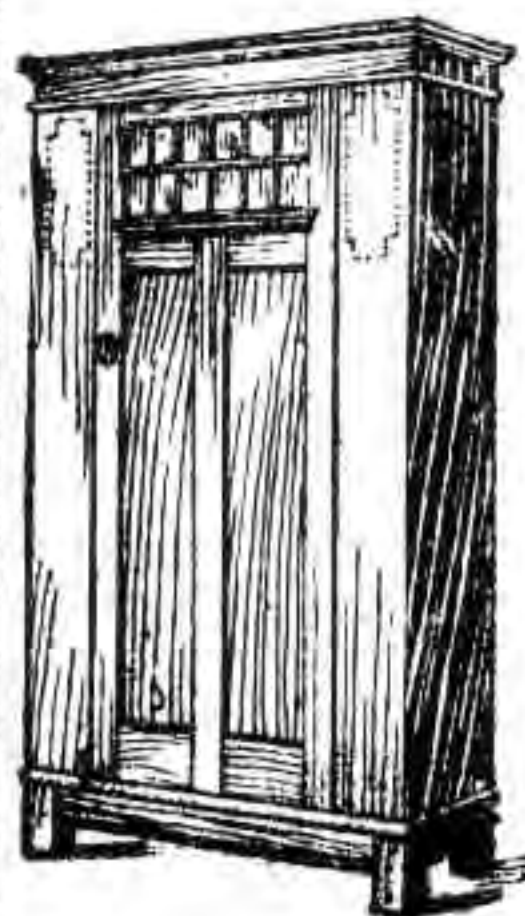
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SOME CAPTAIN! When Gerald Loder, captain of the school, calls "Fag," the fags turn their backs on him and stroll away. When Loder tries sterner measures and brings his ashplant into play, these "fags" set about him and give him a taste of his own medicine. Right well they are styled—



BY
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Another Splendid Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, dealing with the futile efforts of Gerald Loder to bring the Remove to heel.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

CLANG, clang!
Bob Cherry sat up in bed in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars and rubbed his eyes.

Misty dawn glimmered in at the high windows of the dormitory. Clammy mist was thick on the panes. It was cold, and it could not be called a nice morning. But Bob's exuberant spirits were not to be damped even by dismal December weather. At the first clang of the rising-bell he was awake, at the second he was out of bed with a bound. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob's powerful voice boomed through the dusky dormitory. "Rising-bell! Turn out, you slackers!"

Frank Nugent sat up. "Groogh! It's cold!" "Like a helping hand?" asked Bob cheerily.

"No, you ass!" "Never mind, I'll lend you one, all the same." And Bob Cherry's helping hand jerked the bedclothes off Nugent's bed and strewed them on the floor.

"Groogh! Fathead!" "Get a move on, old bean. You won't get warm sitting still in your pyjams!" said Bob cheerily. "Still feeling sleepy, Johnny?"

"Mmmm! Yes!" mumbled Johnny Bull. "That dashed rising-bell gets earlier every morning, I believe. I could do with another ten minutes."

"I'll give you something to cure all that."

"Whooooop!" roared Johnny Bull, as a wet sponge was playfully squeezed on his face. He leaped out of bed as suddenly as if he had been electrified.

"Anybody else want any help?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round cheerily, sponge in hand. "You turning out, Wharton?"

"Yes, ass!" said the captain of the Remove; and he turned out just in time to escape the sponge.

"Bunter!" roared Bob. "Snore!" Clang, clang! Clang, clang! The rising-bell gave a last vicious clang, and ceased. The deep snore of Billy Bunter continued.

"I'd better help Bunter," said Bob. "Bunter's still fast asleep! I'll shove this sponge down the back of his neck!" "Yaroooh! Keep off, you beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's awake, after all."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I say, you fellows, keep that dangerous maniac off!" yelled Billy Bunter. "Keep off, Cherry, you rotter! I'm not turning out yet! I'm putting in another five minutes!"

"Seconds, you mean," said Bob. "It will take me five seconds to soak this sponge in cold water!"

Bunter sat up in bed, and gave Bob Cherry a glare that ought to have withered him on the spot. Instead of which, Bob Cherry cheerily dipped the sponge in a jug, and came over to Bunter's bed, dripping sponge in hand.

On second thoughts—proverbially the best—Bunter decided not to put in the additional five minutes. He rolled promptly out of bed, on the further side.

"Buck up, old fat man!" said Bob encouragingly. "You ought to wash this morning, you know. It will do you good."

"Beast! I don't need so much washing as you do! I'm not so jolly dirty!" groaned Bunter.

"You don't get so much, that's a cert," chuckled Bob. "But dash it all,

you ought to put in one more wash before we break up for the Christmas hols. I remember you washed once last term!"

"Beast!" "And you ought to keep it up—at least once a term. There's nothing like a thorough change to keep you up to the mark."

"Yah!" "Now, what about you, Inky?" asked Bob Cherry, turning to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who was sitting up in bed hugging the blankets.

The dusky Nabob of Bhanipur was not a slacker, but he was keenly sensitive to the northern climate. There was a striking contrast between the December mists at Greyfriars and the torrid sun of his native land.

"Grooogh!" murmured Hurree Singh. "Like the sponge?" asked Bob. "Bunter doesn't want it."

The nabob shuddered. "My esteemed fat-headed Cherry, the coldfulness is terrific!" he said. "This excellent and disgusting climate is freezeful to the marrow of my idiotic bones!"

"Never mind, you get on better with the climate than you do with the language," chuckled Bob. "The giddy old moonshee who taught you English at Bhanipur must have been a regular corker. In fact, the corkfulness must have been terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I won't give you the sponge, as you're a tropical bird," said Bob considerably. "But I'll help you out, old man. What you need is to get into motion quick, and set the jolly old circulation going. When I've given you a few minutes' exercise you'll have a circulation like the 'Daily Mail.'"

"You esteemed and ridiculous ass—Yaroooh!" roared the nabob, as Bob jerked him off the bed.

"Now run for it!" said Bob.

"Oh, my hat! Ow! Let go! Oh!"

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SPECIAL
**CHRISTMAS
NUMBER**
NEXT WEEK!

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With Bob's powerful grip on his slim arm, the nabob had to run for it. Bob was running the length of the dormitory at a good speed, and he was taking the nabob's dusky arm with him, and, necessarily, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had to go with the arm. They raced along to the end, and then Bob Cherry spun his victim round, and raced back with him. Billy Bunter was in the way—Bunter was often in somebody's way—and Billy Bunter was strewn suddenly on the floor, yelling. Then there was a collision with Peter Todd, and Peter sat down with a crash.

"Put it on!" gasped Bob.

"Ow! Oh! Leggo! You fathead!" roared the nabob.

"Put it on! Aren't you getting warmer?"

"Yarook!"

There was no doubt that the nabob was getting warmer. Even his temper seemed to be getting rather warm.

Crash!

"You dangerous ass!" roared Skinner, as the two racing juniors bumped into him and sent him spinning.

"Whoop!" howled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Skinner's elbow had caught him under the chin; and Skinner had a sharp elbow.

"Kim on!"

"Let go! Ow! Stop it! I shall hit you punchfully——"

"Right wheel!" said Bob cheerily, as they reached the end of the long room, and he whirled round with the nabob and raced back again.

The big door of the dormitory opened, and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, walked in.

"Look out!" yelled Nugent.

But it was too late to look out.

Mr. Quelch walked right across the path of danger, and Bob Cherry and the nabob were going too fast to stop suddenly. There was a terrific crash as the Form master met the two members of his Form in full career. Three heavy bumps sounded as one, as Bob Cherry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and Mr. Quelch sat down on the floor of the Remove dormitory.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Called to Account!

"OH!"

"Ow!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I've done it now!"

There was no doubt that Bob Cherry had "done it."

Mr. Quelch sat and spluttered, and looked quite dizzy.

Bob scrambled to his feet at once; Hurree Jamset Ram Singh a little more slowly. Mr. Quelch sat where he was. He had reached a time of life when he was not quite so active as a Remove fellow.

"Bless my soul! What—what——" spluttered Mr. Quelch.

Really, it was not Bob Cherry's fault. It was quite unexpected for the Remove master to walk into the dormitory a few minutes after rising-bell. Nobody had expected that visit; and doubtless Mr. Quelch had not expected to find two juniors careering along the dormitory at breakneck speed. The incident was, in fact, unexpected on all sides; and nobody really was to blame. But Bob had a feeling that Mr. Quelch would consider that he, Robert Cherry, was to blame somehow. He hurried breathlessly to the gasping Remove master.

"Can I help you up, sir?"

"You caused me to fall, Cherry!"

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"An accident, sir—pure accident. I had no idea you were coming in, sir," said Bob. "Can I help you, sir?"

"No, Cherry; you cannot help me."

Mr. Quelch picked himself up without assistance. His eyes gleamed at Bob Cherry. Often had the Remove fellows compared their Form master's eyes to gimlets, on account of their penetrating powers. But never had they seemed so like gimlets to Bob Cherry as they did now. They seemed quite to bore into him.

"Cherry!"

"So sorry, sir," murmured the hapless Bob, beginning to wish that he had not been quite so exuberant that misty morning.

"What do you mean by racing about the dormitory like a—a—a wild bull, sir?" hooted the Remove master.

"I—I was warming up Hurree Singh, sir. He feels the cold a lot in the winter, and I—I was giving him a little exercise, sir," stammered Bob.

"You will come to my study after prayers, Cherry."

"Oh! Yes, sir."

Bob Cherry backed away. All the Remove fellows were looking at Mr. Quelch, wondering what this early-morning visit to their dormitory portended.

"Hurree Singh!"

"Yes, sir," said the nabob. "I assure you, honourably, esteemed sahib, that the regretted collision with your noble and ludicrous self was a lamentable accident and quite deliberately unintentional."

Sometimes Hurree Singh's weird and wonderful variety of the English language made his Form master smile. But Mr. Quelch was not in a smiling mood on this especial morning. He frowned.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed. "It is really remarkable, Hurree Singh, that after having spent whole terms at Greyfriars you have not succeeded in mastering the language spoken here."

"The masterfulness was complete and excellent before I came to this excellent and idiotic country," explained the nabob. "I was instructed by the most celebrated and disreputable moonshee in the whole State of Bhamipur, who was thoroughly acquainted with all the idioms of this esteemed country."

Possibly Hurree Singh meant idioms.

There was a chuckle from some of the Removites, and even Mr. Quelch's frowning brow relaxed.

"However, I need not deal with that matter now," went on Mr. Quelch, rather hastily. "I came here to speak to you, Hurree Singh, upon a much more important subject."

"The honourable distinction for my humble self is great."

"I received a report from Loder of the Sixth Form, head prefect of Greyfriars, and now captain of the school!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

The Removites understood then. Evidently Loder had lost no time in making his report to the Remove master that morning. He must have caught Mr. Quelch on his way downstairs.

"It appears from Loder's statement, Hurree Singh, that you committed a great deal of havoc in his study yesterday."

"The havoc was terrific, sir."

"You admit it?"

"The admitfulness is necessary, as the honourable Loder's statement is idiotically accurate, sir," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Esteemed Loder ordered me to fag for him, sir. The excellent Form to which I belong do not fag."

"It's always been settled, sir, that the Remove do not fag for the Sixth," said Harry Wharton. "Loder has started it

since he got in as captain of Greyfriars, but——"

"You need not speak, Wharton."

"Oh, very well, sir!"

"The question of fagging, Hurree Singh, is one which the Head has left to the Sixth Form prefects to decide," said Mr. Quelch. "Lower School boys cannot decide these matters for themselves. Loder sent you to his study to fag for him, and you fastened the door and proceeded to wreck his study. Is that the case or not?"

"That is the esteemed case, sir."

"You then escaped by the study window, and remained in hiding for a time, leading Loder to believe that you were still in his study."

"I am not responsible for the beliefs of the ludicrous Loder, sir," said the nabob meekly.

"Loder was forced to enter his study by the window, and he hurt himself by falling over broken furniture in the dark."

"I am glad to hear it, sir."

"What?"

"The gladfulness is terrific, sir."

"Upon my word! After this, it appears, you remained in hiding till bedtime, though well aware that the captain of the school was seeking you."

"The findfulness would have been too painful, sir."

"It seems that you were hidden in the dormitory when Loder put out the light for the Remove, but someone locked the door against him and prevented his entrance when he discovered that you were here."

"I locked the door, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"Indeed! You take it upon yourself, Cherry, to lock a Greyfriars prefect out of a junior dormitory."

"Yes, sir, when he's a bully like Loder."

"Hear, hear!" murmured some of the Removites.

"Silence!"

"I nipped out of bed afterwards and unlocked the door, sir," said Bob. "After I was sure Loder had gone to bed."

"Loder has reported the matter to me. On a previous occasion, when he came to seek an offender in the Remove passage, he was set upon by a mob of juniors," said Mr. Quelch. "Is it possible that if he had come to this dormitory this morning he would have been set upon?"

Mr. Quelch paused for a reply, like Brutus of old.

But there was no answer—save in the looks of the Remove fellows. And their looks showed that it was extremely probable that Gerald Loder would have been "set upon," as Mr. Quelch called it—collared and ragged, as the Removites would have called it. Certainly all the members of the Famous Five were prepared to stand together against the bully of the Sixth, and most of the Remove were ready to back them up.

"You may speak, Wharton, as head boy of the Remove!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Very well, sir," said Harry quietly. "We've determined that we won't fag for Loder, sir, and we won't let him lick us for refusing to fag, if we can help it. He had no right to fag Hurree Singh, and we consider that Inky—I mean Hurree Singh—was right to rag his study. If he lays a finger on Hurree Singh, we shall interfere."

"We jolly well shall!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Upon my word!" Mr. Quelch had told Wharton to speak; but he certainly

had not expected to hear him speak in such exceedingly plain English.

"Loder can report Hurree Singh to the Head if he chooses," said Harry Wharton. "If it means a flogging, Hurree Singh will have to take it."

"The obedience to the esteemed Head will be terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the disgusting Loder is a boot on the other leg."

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows.

"Loder does not desire, and I do not desire, that the headmaster of Greyfriars should be constantly troubled by these disputes," he said. "The matter will not be reported to Dr. Locke. Loder has reported it to me as your Form master, Hurree Singh, and I shall deal with it. You will come to my study as soon as you are dressed."

"To hear is to obey, esteemed sahib."

Mr. Quelch quitted the dormitory, and there was a buzz of voices at once among the Removites.

"It's a jolly shame!" said Bob Cherry. "It served Loder right ragging his study, and we'd all have done the same."

"All the same, it's a win over Loder," said Vernon-Smith sagely. "Loder wanted to take it out of Hurree Singh himself—and he funks a ragging from the Remove. We've made him draw in his horns."

"That's so," said Harry. "But I wish it had been reported to the Head! A Head's licking isn't so tough as a thrashing from Loder, or a caning from Quelchy."

"The canefulness can be tolerated with the cheerful fortitude, my esteemed chums," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I will visitfully call upon the excellent Quelch and take my medicine."

"Quelch will warm you, anyway," remarked Skinner. "You won't want any more warming after Quelch is through with you."

"It's a rotten shame!" said Bob. "Quelch ought to stand by fellows in his own Form against that Sixth Form cad Loder. But we're not going to give in, all the same. The Remove will never fag."

"Never!"

"The neverfulness is terrific!" And the Removites finished their toilet and left the dormitory, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh quite calm and serene, but his comrades looking troubled and anxious. The Co. escorted him to the door of Mr. Quelch's study, and left him there, with deep sympathy. The nabob gave them a reassuring nod as he went in, and then they hurried away to escape the sound of the whacking cane that followed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

"Some" Captain!

"HE hasn't turned pale," remarked Skinner.

And there was a snigger from Snoop and Bunter.

The Removites had gone out into the quad, and there Hurree Jamset Ram Singh joined them, after his interview



"Whoop!" roared Johnny Bull, as a wet sponge was playfully squeezed on his face. He leaped out of bed as suddenly as if he had been electrified. "Anybody else want any help?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round cheerily, sponge in hand. "You turning out, Wharton?"

"Yes, ass!" said the captain of the Remove, rising. (See Chapter 1.)

with Mr. Quelch. The rich bronze complexion of the nabob prevented him from turning pale, as Skinner jestingly suggested. But his face was very set and grim, and he seemed to walk very painfully. It was obvious that he had been through it with great severity.

"Had it bad, old man?" asked Bob dismally.

"Ow! Wow! Yes! The badfulness was terrific!" groaned the nabob. "A Head's licking would have been the playful jokefulness in comparison! The esteemed Quelch put all his excellent beef into it."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Loder!"

Loder of the Sixth walked out into the quad with Carne and Walker and Carford major. He was glancing round him, and he came directly over to the group of Removites. It was clear that he was looking for Hurree Singh, and the anguished expression on the nabob's face seemed to please him. He could see that the Remove master had not spared the rod.

"So you've had your medicine, you cheeky young black scoundrel," said the new captain of Greyfriars.

"Thank you for your esteemed inquiry, my ludicrous Loder. I have had my medicine," said the nabob urbanely.

"You won't rag my study again in a hurry, I think!"

"Not till you fag me againfully."

"Oh! You'll rag my study again if I fag you again, will you?" demanded Loder, scowling.

"Exactly!"

"And so say all of us!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Hear, hear!"

"Try it on, and see what will happen to your study, Loder!" exclaimed Bolsover major truculently.

Loder set his lips.

He had his ashplant under his arm, and as head prefect and captain of the school, he was invested with full authority to order any or all of the juniors to bend over and take "six" on the spot.

But it was quite clear that such an order would be received with derision, and that if Loder handled his ashplant, the Famous Five would handle Loder fast enough.

With the exception of Skinner, and two of three more of his kind, the Remove were solid behind Harry Wharton & Co. in their resistance to the new captain of Greyfriars.

Loder was rather at a loss.

The Remove had handled him before, and had been severely punished by the Head. Hurree Singh had ragged his study, and was still wriggling from the effect of the punishment Mr. Quelch had given him. But it was clear, even to the bullying and obstinate Loder, that he could not always be dragging the Head and the Remove master into his disputes with the Lower Fourth. Possibly it even dawned upon his mind that in entering upon this contest with Harry Wharton & Co. he had bitten off more than he could conveniently masticate.

So long as the Remove rebels were prepared to face lickings he could not compel their obedience, and they seemed prepared to keep up the game as long as he did. And they had already reached the point of refusing to be caned by Loder himself—head prefect and captain as he was! That was the position into which he had already brought the captaincy.

A defiance of the captain of the school in the days when George Wingate had been captain of Greyfriars would have

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been unimaginable. But the Remove stood together almost as one man in their defiance of Loder.

He stood hesitating, and the juniors openly grinned at him. He looked round for Walker and Carne and Carford major, perhaps with the idea of calling on them for their aid in bringing the rebellious juniors to heel. But the three were walking away. They had no desire for a rough-and-tumble with a mob of mutinous fags simply because Gerald Loder could not let them well alone. It was no secret in the Sixth that even Loder's own special pals were growing fed-up with him since he had become captain of Greyfriars.

It is well said that he who hesitates is lost. Loder's hesitation in the face of open defiance from a crowd of juniors, banished the last rag of authority he had over them.

"Some captain, what?" jeered the Bounder. "Why don't you tell us to bend over, Loder?"

"Do," grinned Peter Todd. "Wingate wouldn't have let us talk to him like that, and you think you're a bigger man than Wingate! Order us all to bend over in a giddy row."

"And see if we'll do it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The bendfulness would not be terrific."

"I shall report this insolence to your Form master!" said Loder at last, his face red with rage.

"Report and be blown!"

"Run away and report, Loder!"

"How long do you think it will be before Mr. Quelch gets fed-up with you and your reports?" chuckled the Bounder.

"Go home, Loder! Get out of it!"

"Your face worries us, old bean," said Squiff. "Take it away and bury it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

George Wingate of the Sixth came along the path, taking a walk before breakfast in the quad. The ex-captain of Greyfriars stared as he heard the juniors talking in that style to the new captain of the school. He could not help a scornful smile crossing his face. By trickery and cunning Loder had ousted him from his place and supplanted him. And this was what he was making of the captaincy. Lower Fourth fags were talking to the captain of the school as they would hardly have ventured to talk to a Fifth Form fellow.

Loder's flush deepened as he caught the smile that appeared for a moment on Wingate's contemptuous face.

He knew that Wingate, as captain, had never been treated like this; never could have been treated like this. He realised that the high position he held was brought into contempt; the power he had gained was passing from him; the sceptre breaking in his hands. He did not realise that it was because he had "buted" into a position for which he was unfit—that while he claimed to govern others he had never learned to govern himself. He used his new position to favour his friends, or, rather, his flatterers, and to wreak his old grudges on fellows he disliked. He was, in fact, with power in his hands, like a beggar on horseback, riding for a fall.

He turned his savage glance on Wingate.

"You've put these young cads up to this!" he exclaimed. "They wouldn't dare to check prefects without backing in the Sixth!"

Wingate gave him a look of contempt. "Prefects should make themselves

respected," he answered. "A captain of Greyfriars has other business as well as swanking and bullying."

"Take care, Wingate," said Loder, between his teeth. "You've had a prefects' beating once, for all your airs and graces, and you may get another if you're not jolly careful!"

Wingate shrugged his shoulders scornfully, and walked on. Loder cast a black look after him, and, with a scowl at the Removites, strode away to the House.

Loder had almost reached the House steps when an apple flew, and his hat was knocked from his head. It spun away in the air, and Loder jumped, and swung round with a furious face.

"What's that? Who threw that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who threw that apple?" roared Loder fiercely, grasping his ashplant, and striding towards the crowd of Removites.

"Find out!"

"Come on, Loder, if you want to be ragged!"

"Duck him in the fountain!" shouted the reckless Bounder; and the cry was taken up at once by the excited juniors.

"Collar him!"

"Duck him!"

"Duck the cad!"

Loder stopped in his stride. Perhaps the rebellious Remove had not yet reached the point of ducking the captain of the school, but they looked like it. They were coming on to meet Loder as he advanced on them, and their faces were full of excitement. Loder stopped, turned, picked up his hat, and walked rather quickly into the House.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Funk!"

"Some captain!" chortled Peter Todd. "A captain of Greyfriars backing down from the Lower Fourth! Oh, scissors!"

"Let's give him a yell under his study window!" shouted the Bounder.

"Good egg!"

"Let's!"

And the excited crowd marched towards Loder's study, at the window of which the Greyfriars captain had appeared. Loder stared out at them in fury as they gave him a derisive yell.

He disappeared from the window.

"Loder's giddy star is on the wane!" chuckled Bob Cherry, as he walked away with his chums. "His row with the Remove is going to be his jolly old Waterloo!"

And undoubtedly it did look as if the captaincy of Greyfriars was falling into the sere and yellow leaf.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Ahead!

"WINGATE'S refused!" growled Loder.

It was two or three days later, and Loder of the Sixth had a much more important matter to consider than his row with the Remove. In the eyes of the Removites, certainly, there was no matter more important; but the Upper School did not see eye to eye with the Lower Fourth on that point. The football-match with St. Jim's was due, and it occupied Loder's attention, and perhaps took that attention away from the rebellious fags. At all events, for some days the captain of Greyfriars had let the Remove severely alone, and the juniors rejoiced in a victory. The question of fagging—a burning one in the Remove, but which left the rest of Greyfriars quite cold—lay dormant for the time being. Some of the Removites supposed

that Loder understood now that he had bitten off more than he could chew; others opined that he was biding his time. It was, in any event, a relief to be clear of Loder for a time, and the Remove felt that their resistance had been justified by the outcome, so far.

But Gerald Loder was not thinking of the Remove now, as he stood leaning on the mantelpiece in his study, gloomily surveying Walker and Carne and Carford major, who all looked very impatient.

"Wingate's refused!" he repeated. "He's said to me quite plainly that he will not play football for Greyfriars again so long as I am captain of the school. That settles the point about playing him at St. Jim's, if there were no other reason."

"He would play if he was asked civilly," said Carford major. "He doesn't want to let Greyfriars down."

"I've his own word on that. I suppose I'm not asked to resign the captaincy, as Wingate did," sneered Loder. "That's the price for getting Wingate into the eleven—a little too high, I think."

"A good many of the fellows wouldn't think so!" exclaimed James Walker tartly.

"Wouldn't they?" sneered Loder. "You among them, perhaps?"

"Well, what have you done with the captaincy since you had it," said Walker. "Nothing but trouble all along the line. Wingate's had a prefects' beating, and you let all the fellows see you were glad of the chance—a jolly undignified thing for the captain of the school. You've rowed with some of the Fifth. There's Coker saying up and down Greyfriars that you promised him a place in the eleven for his vote in the captain's election. You've started fagging the Remove, and brought a hornet's-nest about our ears. Nothing but trouble all the time. The fact is, Loder, you've been a good deal too big for your boots since the day you bagged the captaincy."

Loder turned quite pale with rage.

He had heard all sorts of opinions of himself and his captaincy, especially from the Remove. But this was the first time his own select circle had turned upon him with such plain language.

"That's what it is," said Carne, taking up the tale. "And why did Wingate refuse to play for Greyfriars again, if you come to that? Because you jolly well ragged him in a match!"

"Ragged him before all Greyfriars," said Carford major. "You couldn't expect a man to stand it. I wouldn't have stood it."

"Look here—" snarled Loder.

"Oh, let's talk sense!" exclaimed Walker. "We're your friends, and I can't say I like Wingate personally. But we want to beat St. Jim's at football, if we can, and we don't want to leave behind the very best footballer that Greyfriars has ever turned out."

"That's it," said Carne. "I'm hardly on speaking terms with Wingate myself. He left me out of the eleven a good many times when I expected to be played, and I've not forgotten it. But what the thump are we playing St. Jim's for at all? To ask for a licking?"

"We can beat St. Jim's without Wingate!" snarled Loder.

"Possibly, but it's taking a lot of risk for nothing. Besides, what will all the fellows think?"

"Let them think what they like! I'm captain of Greyfriars," said Loder arrogantly.

"Oh, chuck it!" snapped Walker.

"What?"

"Chuck it! We're not here to listen to swank."

"Look here, Walker, you cheeky cad. I—"

"Chuck it, I say! You're captain, but you know that the whole committee want to play Wingate, and you're sheltering yourself behind what he said the day you ragged him in a footer match. My belief is that if we go over to St. Jim's without Wingate we shall come home beaten. Kildare and his men can always put up as good a game as we want, when we're at the top of our form. We want Wingate to play. You can give him another prefects' beating after the match if you like, if you don't like to see the man take goals!" concluded Walker, with bitter sarcasm.

Loder set his teeth.

"I won't play Wingate!" he said.

"Look here—"

"That's final!"

"Well, if that's final, we're wasting our time," said Carford major savagely. "And you'll hear about it in committee, Loder, and you'll hear about it all over the school, I can tell you. Chucking away football matches from private malice—setting the school into an uproar fagging the Lower Fourth! What the merry thump has Greyfriars done to be landed with a captain like that?"

"If you want to be chucked out of the eleven after Wingate, Carford—" shouted Loder.

"Chuck me out as soon as you like. I've half a mind to stand out, anyhow."

I'm not keen on seeing the Greyfriars colours go down at St. Jim's!" snapped Carford major, and he stalked out of the study.

Walker and Carne followed him, the latter slamming the door as he went.

Gerald Loder gritted his teeth.

He had been successful all along the line—up to a point. Now it seemed as if his success was turning to dust and ashes. Even his own familiar friends, the pals who had always been with him against Wingate, who had backed him up through thick and thin in getting hold of the captaincy, were fed up at last.

He had "downed" his rival—he had supplanted him, he had humiliated him, he had forced him out of school football. He felt that he could consider that he had done with Wingate now; could afford to pass him by with careless contempt. And yet—he was up, and Wingate was down—and yet it seemed that Wingate's hold on Greyfriars was still stronger than his own.

That he was not big enough to fill Wingate's place was still hidden from Loder's obstinate mind—he was never likely to understand that. Nobody in the Sixth Form cared to hide his opinion that George Wingate was wanted in the first eleven much more than Loder himself was; even Walker and Carne, who were personally on bad terms with the ex-captain of Greyfriars, thought so and said so. They were, indeed, afraid of being thought parties to the exclusion of Wingate from games,

and they took pains to make it clear to all Greyfriars that they did not side with Loder on this subject. Really it seemed that Gerald Loder stood alone in his pride and arrogance, with none so poor as to do him reverence.

There was a tap at the door, and Blundell of the Fifth came in. Blundell was Form captain in the Greyfriars Fifth, and a great man in the first eleven. There was little love lost between him and Loder, especially since Loder had become captain of the school. Loder's new arrogance had been severely felt by the Fifth in many ways. Even the beating given to the egregious Coker had offended the Fifth.

Coker was an ass; but he was a Fifth Form man, and it was unprecedented for a Fifth Form man to be given a beating. It was in the captain's power to give it, and Loder had given it, and it could not be denied that Horace Coker had asked for it. But the Fifth were humiliated and annoyed, all the same; and a saying of Loder's—that he would give the Fifth Form captain himself a prefects' beating if he thought fit—was repeated up and down the Fifth Form studies with breathless indignation.

Blundell's manner was not pleasant as he came into Loder's study, but he was civil. Loder's glance was not very civil, however. He could guess why the Fifth Form man had come.

"About the match at St. Jim's, Loder—" began Blundell abruptly.

"That's all settled."

"You've got the list out?"

"I'm posting it up this evening."

"We all think in the Fifth—"

Loder raised his hand.

"I'm not interested in what you think in the Fifth!" he said. "You're a member of the football committee, Blundell, and can state your opinions at the



"Look out!" yelled Nugent. But it was too late to look out. Mr. Quelch walked right across the path of danger. Bob Cherry and the Nabob of Bhanipur were going too fast to stop suddenly. There was a terrific crash as the Form-master of the Remove met the two members of his Form in full career. Three heavy bumps sounded as one, as Bob Cherry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and Mr. Quelch sat down on the floor of the Remove dormitory. (See Chapter 1.)

meetings. But I don't want to hear the chatter of the Fifth Form studies."

Blundell breathed hard.

This was the kind of talk that Fifth Form men had had to put up with since Loder had been dressed in a little brief authority. But the captain of the Fifth kept his temper.

"I'll tell you, all the same," he said quietly. "We think in the Fifth that Wingate ought to be in the eleven. Have you put him in?"

"No."

"Well, I'm bound to say, then——"

"You're bound to say nothing," said Loder coolly. "When I want advice from the Fifth I'll ask for it."

Blundell looked at him. Loder came very near just then to being punched right across his study.

But the Fifth Form man restrained his wrath, and turned and walked out of the study—with a topic for more breathless indignation in the Fifth.

The door slammed behind Blundell.

Loder lighted a cigarette and smoked it moodily. He was quite determined that George Wingate, down and out, should remain down and out; he should never have a chance of scoring again for Greyfriars, never have a chance of being cheered by Greyfriars men on the football field. By cunning provocation Loder had caused the ex-captain of Greyfriars to resign from the first eleven, with the declaration that he would not play for School again so long as Loder was captain.

The blame, Loder considered, should have lain on Wingate's shoulders—that had been his calculation. Wingate was dropped, on his own words, and there was an end of it. Only it seemed that that was not the end of it; it seemed that the fellows expected Loder to swallow Wingate's wrathful words and ask him as a favour to play in the St. Jim's match. That was not what Gerald Loder had calculated upon at all.

He threw the cigarette, half smoked, into the grate, and lounged out of his study. Gwynne of the Sixth was in his doorway, and he called to the Greyfriars captain.

"I hear that Wingate's not in the eleven, Loder."

"You heard him resign from it yourself," snarled Loder. "You heard him say that he wouldn't play for Greyfriars again. Did you expect to see his name in the list after that?"

"Oh, I know all about that!" said Gwynne, his lip curling. "Didn't I see and hear you ragging him on the football field, just to make him say that? Do you think a fellow can't see through palpable stuff like that, Loder? I can tell you that whatever you provoked Wingate into saying, he's wanted to play for Greyfriars when a serious match is on."

"You can tell me what you like!" sneered Loder. "I'm not bound to take any notice. I can jolly well tell you that if I have any trouble with Wingate I'll not only take his colours away, but his Sixth Form privileges, too. And you had better take care yourself."

"In a word, is Wingate definitely out of the eleven?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm out, too! Scratch my name!"

With that Gwynne turned his back unceremoniously on Loder and went into his study.

Loder walked on, scowling. He would gladly have taken Gwynne at his word and turned him out of the team along with Wingate. But he realised that a football captain's business was to win matches; he thought more of personal

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swank than of the game, but he did not want to take a losing team over to St. Jim's. Wingate he was determined to keep out, but he could not afford to lose Gwynne and Blundell along with him. He admitted to himself that he would have to be a little more conciliatory, and it went hard against the grain. The matter was not finished yet; North of the Sixth, another of George Wingate's friends, met him in the passage.

"I hope there's nothing in this yarn that Wingate's keeping out of the eleven on St. Jim's day, Loder?" said North.

"There is."

"But it won't do, you know," said North. "The man's wanted."

"Are you captain of the eleven, by any chance? Have I made any mistake on that point?" sneered Loder.

North looked at him quietly.

"I'm in the team, and I want to beat St. Jim's. You're welcome to leave me out if you leave out Wingate."

A savage reply was on Loder's lips, but he restrained it. His eleven, playing in the first important match of his captaincy, seemed to be dropping to pieces round him. With an effort he answered civilly.

"You can't let down Greyfriars like that, North. You're wanted, and you're bound to play up."

He strode on savagely. A civil answer to a fellow who criticised his methods cost the new captain of Greyfriars a great effort. It was a fall for his self-importance.

Loder swung out of the Sixth Form passage in a savage temper—a mood in which he wanted a victim. As it happened, little Wun Lung of the Remove was ambling along in his usual quiet way, and Loder almost strode into him.

"You young ass!" hooted Loder. "What do you mean by running into me?"

"Me solly!" murmured the Chinese, backing away warily.

Smack!

There was a yell from Wun Lung as Loder's heavy hand smote him and he went spinning.

Loder strode on, feeling a little better. Wun Lung sat on the floor and stared after him with glittering eyes.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Late Repentance!

"NOT Wingate!"

"No!"

"What awful rot!"

"Hamlet," with the giddy Prince of Denmark left out!" remarked Vernon-Smith.

The Remove fellows were discussing the football list, now posted up by the captain of Greyfriars.

One name in that list was conspicuous by its absence—that of George Wingate, former captain of the school.

Greene of the Fifth had his place. Greene of the Fifth was a good man in his way, but the idea of comparing him with Wingate made the Greyfriars fellows smile.

First eleven matches did not concern the Lower School very closely. The Remove, for instance, attached more importance to their own junior fixture with Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, than to the senior match. But a School match was a School match, and every Greyfriars fellow was keen on the School's record. How the new captain would handle that match was a matter of interest to all Greyfriars; and the general

opinion now was that he was handling it rottenly.

The best footballer at Greyfriars was left out, on an occasion when they needed to put their strongest side into the field. Whether Wingate was to blame, or whether Loder was to blame, there was no doubt that the eleven was dangerously weakened, and the chances of a victory at St. Jim's considerably reduced.

Loder had made himself so unpopular in all Forms since becoming captain of the school that everyone was on the look-out for faults, and criticism centred on his selections for the St. Jim's match. The Bounder offered three to one in "quids" that the First eleven would come back licked; Temple of the Fourth declared that Loder did not want to win matches—which was rather unjust; Hobson of the Shell inquired whether it was worth the railway fare to go over to St. Jim's to beg for a beating. Even the fag Forms, the Third and the Second, had strong opinions on the subject, and expressed them freely—though not in Gerald Loder's hearing.

Tubb of the Third brought the news into the Third Form-room after prep there. Tubb was Loder's fag, and so had many personal reasons for detesting Loder. The captain of Greyfriars was not a pleasant or agreeable fag-master. On one point Tubb backed up Loder—on the subject of fagging the Remove! He had hoped that his own duties might fall to a Removite. But Loder seemed to have failed in that direction, for which Tubb despised him from the bottom of his heart.

"That fathead," said Tubb, in the Third Form-room, thus disrespectfully alluding to the captain of the school, "that fathead is leaving Wingate major out of the eleven. I've seen the list!"

"Oh, he doesn't know anythin' about football," said Paget of the Third. "He knows more about smokes and gee-gees than footer!"

"Your brother's left out, young Wingate," said Tubb.

Wingate minor looked rather blank.

"Loder wouldn't dare," he said.

Tubb laughed scornfully.

"Well, he has. It's Loder all over. That's your precious friend in the Sixth that you used to brag about!"

Wingate minor coloured painfully.

It was some time since Loder, having made use of him in bringing about his brother's downfall, had ruthlessly cast him aside, bitterly wounding the feelings of the foolish fag. It was with very mixed feelings that Jack Wingate recalled the days when he had boasted in the Third of his "friend in the Sixth," and drawn upon himself the dislike of the fags in consequence. He had had a lesson, and a severe one. His eyes had been opened to many things, but the harm that had been done could not be undone. Repentance came too late for that.

The Third had received him back into the fold, as it were, but Jack Wingate was not likely to be allowed to forget his folly in a hurry. The fags gave him constant reminders of it.

Wingate minor left the Third Form room, leaving the fags discussing the news brought by Tubb. His face was deeply troubled as he made his way to the Sixth Form passage. There he passed Loder and Walker. The former did not glance at him; the latter grinned. Loder utterly ignored the existence of the wretched fag of whom he had made use, except that whenever Jack Wingate transgressed, in his wilful way, the head prefect was rather harder on him

than on any other fag. That the wretched fag considered that he had a claim on him was annoying to Loder, and he used the most drastic measures to disabuse Jack Wingate's mind of that idea.

Wingate minor tapped at Wingate major's study door and went in. The ex-captain of Greyfriars was at work, deep in Greek, at his table; but he stopped and gave his brother a kind nod and a smile. There was one solace to Wingate of the Sixth in the present time of trouble—the lesson his brother had received was not lost upon him, and Jack Wingate was no longer the scapegrace of the Third, no longer ambitious of following in the footsteps of the once-admired Loder, the sportsman of the Sixth.

"Hallo, kid, trot in!" said Wingate. "What is it? If you want some help with your Cæsar I can chuck this for a bit."

"It isn't that," said the fag. "I—I—I've just heard that you're not in the football team for St. Jim's."

Wingate major's brow darkened for a moment.

"That's so," he said briefly.

"It's all my fault," said Jack.

"Well, that's so, too," assented Wingate. "But it's something if you can see it, kid. Never mind that now."

"But I do mind it," said Jack Wingate miserably. "It's too rotten. I've done you a lot of harm."

"It can't be helped now."

"I—I never had any idea that it would turn out like this."

"Of course you hadn't," said Wingate cheerily. "It can't be helped, and it's no good talking about it."

"Loder brought it all about," muttered the fag. "He got me into playing the goat. I—I thought he liked me." His lip quivered for a moment. "I was just being made a fool of to get you into a scrape. I—I wish you'd reported me to the Head now, instead of resigning—it would have been better."

"You'd have been bunked from Greyfriars."

"I—I know."

"There's the people at home to consider," said Wingate quietly. "I had to report you for the sack, or resign, and chose to resign. Anyhow, I gave Loder a thumping good hiding for his trickery."

"And that gave him an excuse to get you a prefects' beating," muttered the fag. "Loder really scored."

"Well, it can't be helped now."

"And now you're out of the football, too," said Wingate minor. "You're losing everything. Look here, you needn't stand it. I know jolly well that all the fellows would stand by you if you put up against Loder; he couldn't keep you out of the football without your consent."

"I've told him I shall not play while he is captain. A fellow can't eat his own words," said Wingate curtly. "Besides, he rags a man in the field. He would make it impossible for me to play. I shouldn't do the team any good, ragging with Loder instead of playing the game. So long as Loder's captain it's



Billy Bunter eyed the omelette again and again, and then he decided to take a snack. He took it—and another and another. It was a large omelette—but it grew smaller by degrees and beautifully less, as the Owl of the Remove took snack after snack. "May as well finish it!" he murmured at last. "After all, there's plenty of other stuff for Loder!" (See Chapter 7.)

better for the School for me to stand out."

"But you don't want—"

"It's a bit too late to consider what I want. I had to save you from the sack, and I had to pay for it. It's over and done with."

"I can't stand it, George."

"We've both got to stand it. Anyhow, it's something that you can see the harm you've done, and have given up playing the goat."

"I sha'n't be a fool like that again. But look here, Loder has made himself pretty well hated all over Greyfriars since he's been captain. If there were another election he wouldn't have a dog's chance."

"There won't be another election."

"You'd get in easily," persisted the fag. "You'd get your old place back again, and all the school would back you up."

Wingate made an impatient gesture.

"It can't be done. I can't be prefect and captain of the school without doing my duty; and my first duty would be to report you to the Head for punishing."

"But if the Head knew—"

"He doesn't, and won't know."

"Suppose I tell him?"

"And get bunked from the school," snapped Wingate. "No, I tell you. Besides, what's the good of going into that, Jack? I know you're sorry for the harm you've done; I know you mean to go straight in the future. That's enough! But you haven't the nerve to confess to Dr. Locke and take your punishment, even if I wanted you to. Let it drop."

He turned to his Greek again.

Jack Wingate left the study with a set face. It was true that he had not

the nerve to face the penalty for his wrong-doing; that penalty had fallen upon the broad shoulders of his brother. But could he let this go on? Since his bitter experience with Loder the scales had fallen from Jack Wingate's eyes; he understood more the unfailing kindness and affection he had received from his brother, culminating in Wingate's giving up everything to save him from the result of his folly and rascality. And the ex-captain of Greyfriars did not even reproach him for what he had done. Could he let it go on? The thought of confession to the Head, of saving a brother in his turn, had been often in his mind, and it was in his mind now, stronger than ever before.

He turned his steps in the direction of the Head's study.

He arrived in sight of the door of that dreaded apartment, and stopped.

The Head was there; he had only to tap, and go in, and— His heart failed him at the thought.

He knew that he could not face it.

With a miserable, downcast face, Jack Wingate turned and moved slowly away. His brother had been right—he had not the nerve! His wretched secret had to be kept; and his brother had to pay the price.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Off to St. Jim's!

"THEY'RE off!"

"Four to one, in quids!" said the Bounder, and there was a laugh.

George Wingate stood at his study window, looking out at the fellows who were getting into the car for the station.

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Loder & Co. were starting for St. Jim's.

The First Eleven did not look so cheery as was usual on such occasions. There was too much discontent and dissatisfaction in the team for that.

Gwynne was there, and North was there. It was by Wingate's persuasion that his two friends had kept their places in the eleven, and they had conceded to Wingate what they would not have conceded to Loder. Gerald Loder was well aware that he owed the two best men in his team to Wingate's intervention, and it added to his bitterness.

He would gladly have dropped both of them out, but he knew that he could not afford to do so; and he knew, too, that the rest of the team would not have tolerated such a step. Loder had to swallow his anger and chagrin, and make the best of it.

Blundell of the Fifth was there, with a grim face; Bland of the Fifth was with him, looking equally grim. Blundell had not spoken to Loder, beyond a few syllables, for days; he was playing for Greyfriars, but he was not on speaking terms with his captain.

Potter and Greene of the Fifth were there—the latter looking, as he felt, extremely uncomfortable. Greene was glad enough to play in the St. Jim's match, and intended to put up the game of his life; but the knowledge that he had Wingate's place, and that all Greyfriars considered that he was not big enough to fill it, had a very discomforting effect on him. Taken altogether, it was not a happy team.

Loder, feeling the general atmosphere of hostile criticism around him, was in one of his worst tempers. Walker and Carne were irritable; Carford major deliberately ignored Loder; their friendship, such as it was, seemed to have come to an end.

Wingate's brow was gloomy as he looked on.

It did not look like a winning team that was going out of Greyfriars; and it might have been a winning team—there was plenty of material for it if the new captain of Greyfriars had understood his business, and understood how to play the game.

But Greyfriars had elected Loder, and there he was! It was safe to say that every fellow who had voted for Loder in the captain's election a few weeks before regretted that he had done so. The probability was that, in a new election, Gerald Loder would not have scored a single vote, especially if Wingate had been the rival candidate. Wingate wondered, as he stood at his window, whether he had, after all, sacrificed so much for his brother—sacrificed others as well as himself. But it was too late to think of that.

Loder's brow was black as the car moved away.

He wanted to beat Kildare and his men at St. Jim's, if only to prove to Greyfriars that his captaincy was a success. But he could not help feeling very doubtful. Some members of the team made no secret of their belief that they were going out for a licking; and that was not the spirit in which to win.

"Well, they're off!" said Harry Wharton, as the car rolled away. "I don't give very much for their chances this time."

"The muchfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, let's give Loder a hoot!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Why not give him a hoot?" grinned Skinner. "Loder's getting jolly tame

these days—he would pretend not to hear it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not when the man's going to a football match," said Bob Cherry. "We'll hoot him when he comes home licked."

"And he will!" said Peter Todd.

"The lickfulness will be terrific."

That was the general opinion at Greyfriars, and the senior footballers knew it, and it had a discouraging effect on them as they went. Greyfriars generally was growing fed-up with the new captain, but probably the senior footballers were feeling it most of all.

"Anyhow, it's something to have that cad Loder gone for the afternoon," said Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth. "He can't do us a better turn than by gettin' out of our sight."

"Hear, hear!"

The footballers were gone, and the crowd that had watched their departure broke up.

There was a Form match on that afternoon, between the Remove and the Upper Fourth; and Harry Wharton & Co. repaired to Little Side, where they proceeded to beat Temple, Dabney & Co. by the usual comfortable margin of goals.

"Tea in my study, you fellows," said Bob Cherry when they came off the field. "Our little spread the other day was mucked up by Loder bagging the tuck—confiscating it, as he called it—but we'll make up for it to-day. You fellows peckish?"

"Famished!" said Johnny Bull.

"Feel as if you could do with something more solid than poached eggs?" asked Bob.

"Yes, rather."

"Good! We've got a pie."

"Oh, ripping!"

"Wun Lung's made it," said Bob. "He's a top-hole cook, as you know. Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with you fellows?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"What's he made it of?" he asked.

"That giddy Chinese is rather fond of cat and dog and things like that; they eat them in his country. I know he's a jolly good cook; but we don't want any Chinese cookery, thanks all the same."

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

"It's all right—I did the shopping, and it's a topping rabbit-pie—I kept an eye on the young rascal. No cat or dog in my study."

Half a dozen hungry fellows, with appetites rendered remarkably keen by football in a cold wind, tramped into Study No. 13 in the Remove. Little Wun Lung was there curled up in the armchair, as usual, with one eye on a large pie that was keeping hot in the fender.

It was a beautiful pie, with a rich brown crust, and a savoury aroma; and the juniors, reassured by Bob's assurance that it had been made of legitimate ingredients, were glad to see it.

Wun Lung's personal tastes, in the way of tuck, were weird, and rather ghastly in the opinion of Remove fellows. On such matters, east was east, and west was west, and never the twain would meet. Once upon a time Mrs. Kebble, the house-dame, had lost a cat, which had never turned up again; and it was believed in the Remove that that cat had disappeared in the form of Chinese cookery.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Allee leady, and allee light," answered Wun Lung, rolling out of the armchair. "Lovelee pie."

"No rats or mice in it?" asked Johnny Bull.

Wun Lung grinned.

"No lats and no micey," he answered. "Allee light. Foleign debble no like Chineese cookely."

To the mind of the little Oriental Greyfriars fellows were lumped together with the rest of the white races as "foreign devils." Wun Lung had learned many things at Greyfriars; but he had not "unlearned" that peculiar view of the heathen Chinese.

"Lovelee labbit," said Wun Lung, beaming. "Not so goodee as lovelee cat, but velly nice. What you tinkee?"

The hungry footballers sat down round the table, and they admitted that the pie was very nice. It had a lovely aroma; and perhaps it was that that reached the keen nostrils of Billy Bunter, and drew him to the study. The fat face and big spectacles of the owl of the Remove glimmered in at the door.

"I say, you fellows, you didn't tell me you were having a feed here," he said reproachfully.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in playful imitation of the Head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, how could we possibly have forgotten Bunter?" said Johnny Bull. "He's big enough to be seen, too—side-ways, at least."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Bunter edged into the study.

"I say, you fellows, I haven't really come here for the spread, you know. I want you fellows to stand by me. Loder's ordered me to fag for him this evening."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is Loder beginning again?" exclaimed Bob.

"Of course, you told him you wouldn't, and defied him to do his worst?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Well, you see, he had his ashplant under his arm, and he looked awfully bad-tempered," said Bunter. "I thought of telling him that he was a cheeky cad, only—only—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, I'm not going to fag for him," said Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to get his supper ready. Let Tubb do it. Tubb's his fag. He said that he would be late back from St. Jim's, and I suppose Tubb will be at prep with the Third. Still, the Remove don't fag!"

"Never!"

"The neverfulness is terrific!"

"I shall refuse, of course," said Bunter. "I say, that looks a ripping pie. I didn't come here for a feed, but I don't mind joining you."

"Does it matter if anybody else minds?" asked Frank Nugent, sarcastically.

"He, he, he!" Bunter decided to take that question as a joke. "I say, this is a good pie. Not so good as I can make. That beast Loder knows I'm a good cook—that's why he picked me out—"

"Fathead!" said Johnny Bull. "He's picked you out to fag because he knows you haven't pluck enough to refuse."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Bunter helped himself to pie—a large helping. He blinked at the Famous Five, through his big spectacles, with his mouth full.

"I say, you fellows, you'll have to stand by me, you know. I rely on you to collar Loder if he comes after me. I'll keep out of the way. See? Of course, if the brute grabs a chap by his collar, it's no good arguing. It would be beneath my dignity to enter into a wrangle with a rank outsider like Loder. I say, you fellows, this really is a good pie. I'll finish it, if you don't mind."



"By gad, that was a top-hole pie, Wun Lung," said Loder good-humouredly. "I'll give you the money and you can make me another one tomorrow." "No wantee muchee monee, Lodee," said the Chinese junior. "No payee muchee for old dog." "What?" "Cattie velly cheap, too!" Loder & Co. became suddenly pale—in fact, ghastly! (See Chapter 9.)

The dish was quite clean when Bunter had finished.

"Anything to follow?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Bob. "If we'd known you were coming, of course we'd have laid in a few more courses, with oysters and champagne. But we didn't know."

Bunter rose from the table.

"Well, I don't call that much of a feed," he said. "Hardly worth asking a fellow to."

"Nobody asked you, sir, she said!" sang Bob Cherry softly, and there was a chuckle in Study No. 13.

"When I ask a fellow to a feed I give him enough to eat," said Bunter.

"The whenfulness is terrific!"

"I stood you fellows a jolly ripping holiday at Bunter Court last vac," said the Owl of the Remove. "I don't expect gratitude, of course. But if there's anything in the cupboard—"

"There isn't!" chuckled Bob.

Bunter sniffed, and rolled to the door.

"Well, if you call that a feed, I must say that we don't agree about feeds," he said. "I've turned down several fellows' invitations to tea with you chaps. Still, if it's the best you can do, never mind. I'll show you what a spread is like next time I take you home to Bunter Court."

And having thus expressed his thanks for the feed, in his well-known polished manner, Billy Bunter rolled away, to scout along the Remove passage in the hope of finding tea going on in some other study, and of wedging in for the lion's share of the same.

"Nice chap!" said Bob Cherry. "How they must love him at home, and how I wish they would keep him there! I don't think we'll bother if Loder gives Bunter a licking when he comes home. He will feel like licking somebody, and it may as well be Bunter. It will do him good."

And the Co. agreed that it would.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Fags for Loder!

"OH dear!" mumbled Bunter.

He was mumbling in Study No. 7. He had finished up his prowling in his own study, and had shared Peter Todd's frugal tea. Bunter had had a whack in several fellows' teas, finishing up with Toddy's, so really he ought to have looked satisfied. But he seemed to have some trouble on his fat mind as he rolled in the armchair, and several times he muttered dismal ejaculations.

But Peter Todd was doing lines for Mr. Quelch, and had no sympathy to expend upon anyone but himself just then.

"Oh dear!" repeated Bunter for the tenth time, if not the twentieth.

Peter Todd looked up at last.

"Shut it!" he said tersely.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"I've got two hundred of Virgil to do. I can't grind out lines while you are mumbling and grumbling. Can't you go and mumble and grumble in the passage?"

"Beast!"

"Frigidus agricolam si quando continet imber—" murmured Peter, going on with his Georgic.

"Oh dear!"

Scratch, scratch, scratch went Peter's pen.

"Multa, forent, quae mox—"

"I say, Peter—"

"Caelo properanda sereno—"

"Do chuck that silly rot!" howled Bunter. "I say, Peter, I'm in a fix. You might help a chap out."

"I'll help you out with my boot, if you don't dry up!" said Peter Todd ferociously.

"I say, Loder will be back before long," said Bunter. "I say, his fag, Tubb, will be at prep with the Third, and Loder's told me to fag for him."

"Don't!"

"But I shall get licked!"

"What does that matter?"

"Beast!"

"A licking will do you good," said Peter. "Why, I'm going to lick you myself, if you don't shut up and let me get my impot done."

Bunter sat up in the armchair and gave Peter Todd a glare that ought really to have cracked his spectacles.

"You awful beast! I'm not going to be licked! I asked Wharton if he'd stand by me, and rag Loder if he came after me. They don't seem keen on it."

"That's all right," said Peter reassuringly. "Refuse to fag for Loder, and we'll all stand by you. I'll undertake to raise a crowd to rag Loder bald-headed, if he puts his nose into the Remove passage."

"Then he may report me to Quelch."

"You've got to risk that, of course."

"Do you think I want to get what Inky got the other day for ragging Loder's study?" bawled Bunter. "Don't be an ass! I don't want to fag for Loder, but I'm not going to be licked."

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"You are, if you say another word!" snapped Peter. "I've got to get this Georgie done. Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Dry up!" roared Peter, and he grabbed a ruler, and looked so ferocious that William George Bunter dried up at last.

The Owl of the Remove gave Toddy a scornful and resentful blink, and rolled out of the study. He did not want to fag for Loder; not from a sense of lofty independence, but from sheer laziness. But still more he did not want to be licked. In the "Rag" Bunter would declare quite loftily that he cared nothing for Loder, and did not give a rap for all the prefects in the Sixth. But the mere sight of a prefect's ashplant was sufficient to cut off the gas, so to speak.

There was no doubt that if Loder came home hungry, and did not find his supper in his study as he expected, there would be trouble for Bunter. If he was beaten at St. Jim's, too, he was likely to arrive home in a particularly vile temper. A member of the Famous Five would have risked it, but Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. In the Remove passage he would have been safe, since the Greyfriars captain had been taught to respect the territory of the Lower Fourth; but outside the Remove passage he might be at any moment at Loder's mercy. After much dismal reflection Bunter decided that it was not good enough, and he rolled away at last to the Sixth Form passage, to fag in Loder's study.

That study had been restored to order since Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had so drastically and effectively "fagged" in it. But it still bore a good many traces of the nabob's fagging. Certainly, Loder was never likely to let the dusky nabob loose in his quarters again. But Bunter was not the fellow to repeat Hurree Singh's performance. Bunter was a fellow to bow the knee, rather than face a thrashing, as Loder well knew. The bully of the Sixth had no doubt whatever that his orders would be carried out.

Bunter proceeded to carry them out.

He knew the train by which the footballers were expected to return from St. Jim's; and he was to have supper all ready and hot for Loder and his friends. Bunter was a good cook; it was almost the only thing he could do well, but he could do that. Loder's study cupboard was well supplied; and Bunter proceeded to turn out the good things.

His little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles as he did so.

Omelettes with tomatoes were things that Bunter could make, and make well, and that was one item in the programme. He had to slice the ham and tongue, he had to open the jam, and prepare the jelly; he had to unpack the cake. It was really a task after Bunter's own heart—it scarcely seemed like fagging.

But Loder, with all his cunning, did not quite know his man.

That Bunter would never dare to disobey his order, he was assured; and so far his assurance was well-founded. None of Hurree Singh's performances were to be feared from Bunter. But that Bunter, in the presence of appetising tuck, might not be able to resist the temptation to dispose of it internally was a circumstance Loder had overlooked. Bunter, undoubtedly, would never have dared to raid his study, though he was a study-raider of the most ruthless variety. But with the tuck under his eyes—with the omelette

hissing in the pan under his fat nose—it was a different matter.

Bunter was hungry; he had only had enough for three or four fellows since dinner. So he was not merely peckish—he was seriously hungry. The beautiful omelette, when he had made it, made him feel famished. He eyed it, and eyed it again; but it was not in the nature of things that he should continue to feast only his eyes on it. Flesh and blood could not resist such a temptation—Bunter's flesh and blood, at any rate.

He decided to take a snack.

He took it—and another and another! It was a large omelette, but it grew smaller by degrees and beautifully less as the Owl of the Remove took snack after snack.

"May as well finish it!" murmured Bunter, at last. "After all, there's plenty of other stuff, and—and Loder may not miss his eggs and tomatoes."

That was exceedingly doubtful. But there was no doubt that Bunter was going to finish that omelette; it disappeared almost by magic.

Bunter blinked at the empty dish uneasily.

Now that the eggs and the tomatoes were gone beyond recovery, he realised that it was absolutely certain that Loder would inquire after his property. Refusing to fag was serious enough; but bolting Loder's supper was more serious still.

Bunter trembled at the prospect.

A licking was an absolute certainty now. It could not have been worse if he had taken the bolder course and refused to fag in Loder's study at all.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

He was "for it" now! That was certain. In the circumstances, he felt that he might as well go the "whole unicorn." It was no worse to be hanged for a sheep than for a lamb. If he was going to wriggle under Loder's ashplant, there was some satisfaction in indemnifying himself in advance with Loder's supper.

Bunter sat down at the table and piled in. He was "for it" beyond the shadow of a doubt, and he was going to have his money's worth.

Ham and tongue, chipped potatoes and celery, all sorts of things, vanished rapidly under Bunter's hefty onslaught.

Jam and cake and biscuits and jelly followed.

Bunter was fairly going now. His Gargantuan appetite was more than equal to the ample supper Loder had laid in for himself and Carne and Walker. Scarcely a crumb was left when Bunter had finished.

He was feeling a very satisfactory fulness when he rose from Loder's table at last. He shoved plates and dishes and tablecloth into the study cupboard, leaving the study as he had found it.

In the Remove he was going to say that he had "scoffed" Loder's supper by way of a rag on the bully of the Sixth; there was a little glory to be gained by that. But what he was going to say to Loder, when he was cornered later on by the enraged prefect, was a terrible problem.

His only hope was to dodge Loder as long as possible; and when he could dodge him no longer, to rely upon his remarkable powers of lying to escape retribution. Loder might believe that the housekeeper's cat had done it. Bunter hoped so.

He rolled out of Loder's study, and made his way to the Remove passage. His inner Bunter was full and satisfied; but his fat mind was deeply troubled. It was so very improbable that Loder would believe that the cat had done it. But the fat junior endeavoured to

assume an airy, devil-may-care manner as he came into the Remove passage and found a good many of the Remove fellows there.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you been fagging, you fat rascal?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bunter winked.

"What do you think?" he asked.

"Well, I think you have," said Bob. "And if you weren't a fat duffer with no more pluck than a bunny rabbit, I'd jolly well boot you for it!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Boot him, anyway," said Squiff. "Any Remove chap who fags for Loder ought to be booted."

"Hear, hear!"

"The bootfulness ought to be terrific!"

"Hold on, you silly owls!" roared Bunter. "I tell you I've jolly well ragged Loder! You fellows wouldn't have had the nerve to scoff all his tuck, I jolly well know that."

"What?" roared Bob Cherry.

"You've scoffed Loder's tuck?" shouted the Bounder.

"Oh, my hat!"

Bunter grinned. For once he was somebody in the eyes of his Form-fellows; for once, he was a Remove man who had stood up for the rights of his Form, and defied the Sixth Form tyrant. True, his defiance had been in his own peculiar manner. But there it was—he had done it.

"You've really scoffed Loder's tuck?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Every crumb!" said Bunter recklessly. "Every dashed crumb! And I can tell you it was some feed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No end of stuff, you know. More'n a dozen eggs, and tomatoes, and ham and tongue, and a cake, and a pie. It was gorgeous!" said Bunter. "Of course, it wasn't the grub I was caring about—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've jolly well shown Loder that he can't fag me, see, same as Inky did," said Bunter valorously.

"You mean that you couldn't resist the tuck!" chuckled the Bounder. "Loder would have known that, if he had known you as well as we do."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Still, it's all to the good," grinned Bob. "Bunter will get a fearful licking from Loder, but that doesn't matter."

"Ow! I say, you fellows, you'll stand by me, you know."

"Like one man!" said Bob. "Let Loder come up here after you, that's all. We'll make him wish he hadn't."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"He won't come up here," said Nugent. "He will bide his time and catch Bunter on his own. Still, we're all risking that, rather than fag for Loder."

"Oh dear! I—I think I—I'll keep out of Loder's way for a bit," said Bunter. "Anyhow, I've had the tuck."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And William George Bunter consoled himself, as well as he could, with that reflection, as he proceeded to look for a safe hiding-place, in readiness for Gerald Loder's return to Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Not Happy and Glorious!

"HERE they come!"
"Here's the jolly old team!"

The Greyfriars footballers had returned from St. Jim's. Hazeldene of the Remove brought the news that Loder & Co. were coming, and there

was a rush of fellows from all directions to see them come in. Everyone was curious to know how the match had gone; but for once a Greyfriars crowd gathered for news without Billy Bunter's fat, inquisitive face being seen in their midst. The news that Loder was coming had sent the Owl of the Remove into deep hiding.

Harry Wharton & Co. were on the scene when the Greyfriars footballers returned in the deep December dusk.

Quite an army of Greyfriars fellows gathered to see the First Eleven as they came in.

"They look like winners—I don't think!" grinned the Bounder.

"How many goals were they beaten by?" surmised Skinner. "Did Kildare of St. Jim's make his century?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder & Co. did not look like a winning team.

They looked tired, and discontented, and dissatisfied, and on anything but amiable terms with one another.

Loder's brow was black.

"Well, how did it go?" called out Coker of the Fifth.

Loder did not answer. With a scowling face, he tramped through the crowd of Greyfriars fellows in silence.

"How did it go, Walker?" called out Hobson of the Shell.

"How did anybody expect it to go?" answered Walker sarcastically, and with that cryptic answer he walked on.

"They've had a tremendous win, and they're too modest to tell us about it," said Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did it go, Carford?"

Carford major gave a snort.

"Five goals to one—that's how it went, if you want to know."

"We needn't ask who bagged the five!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Licked to the wide!" growled Wynne. "I knew I was a fool to go, and I know it now more than ever! I'm fed up!"

"Same here!" grunted North.

"Better than I expected," jeered Coker. "It seems that you bagged one goal. That's rather wonderful."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who bagged a goal for Greyfriars?" called out Temple of the Fourth. "Let's know who did it. A man who can take a goal with a captain like Loder is worth knowing."

"Gwynne got it," said Greene of the Fifth. "St. Jim's were three to one in the first half, and they put on two more. We left them grinning."

"The griffulness must have been terrific."

"We never had a chance," said Potter of the Fifth savagely. "The whole dashed team at sixes and sevens, our best man left out, and Loder in a raging temper ragging a chap. I've had enough of Loder if he can't keep his silly temper in a football match!"

"I've had more than enough!" snorted Blundell of the Fifth. "I'm not playing again for Greyfriars so long as the fellows are asses enough to let Loder play at being football captain!"

Evidently, the First Eleven felt very sore.

It was not surprising news. Nobody had expected Loder & Co. to come home victorious. Everybody was in the happy position of being able to say "I told you so." But the footballers were

sore—very sore. They had been fed up with Loder before they started; they were more than fed up with him now. Loder, in his study, was in his most savage mood.

He knew what his men were thinking and saying about him, and he realised that his position—won by so much trickery and cunning scheming—was growing insecure. Even in the train coming home, Blundell had declared that a new football captain was wanted, and expressed the opinion that though hitherto the captain of the school had always been captain of football, it was time that the two jobs were divided—if Loder was to remain captain of the school. Blundell had expressed that opinion in Loder's hearing, and there had been a murmur of approval. It was no wonder that Loder had reached

as a funky fellow who would not dare to refuse to fag. He would have preferred to hand over the duty to a member of the Famous Five; but he had not done so, for the ample reason that the fagging would not have been done. But it seemed now that even Bunter, the fattest and funkiest fellow in the Remove, had lifted up his heel against Loder's tyranny. At all events, he was not there, and supper was not there, and, to Loder's other many causes of irritation and discomfort, was added the fact that he was very hungry.

"Well, here we are!" said Carne sarcastically. "If we've come too early, Loder—"

"Oh, let's get down to Hall before it's all gone," said Walker crossly. "You'd better come too, Loder, if you want any supper."

"I ordered Bunter—" began Loder between his teeth.

Walker gave a scoffing laugh.

"Yes; you order the Remove to fag, and a fat lot of good it is. Now even that fat funk Bunter snaps his fingers at you! You'd better chuck up fagging the Remove, Loder. You've taken on a job too big for you—like captaining a football team."

Loder glared.

"Come with me and bring your canes," he said. "I'm going up to the Remove passage for Bunter."

"Oh, can it!" said Walker rudely. "We've had a long journey and a football match, and I don't feel up to a scrap with a mob of juniors to follow."

"Catch me in the Remove passage!" sneered Carne. "In Wingate's time a prefect could step into any study he liked, and the young rascals were jolly careful to be civil. Now, if we go into the Remove passage, we shall have the whole crew of them on our necks. What's the good of telling us that the Head will lick them afterwards? That won't prevent the young scoundrels ragging us baldheaded. Chuck it!"

Loder opened his mouth for an angry reply, but just then there came a tap at the door of the study.

"That's Bunter," said Loder, with a triumphant sneer at his comrades. "He's thought better of it. I'll lick him for being late. Come in!"

The door opened. But it was not Billy Bunter; it was little Wun Lung, the Chinese, who glided into the study with his soft step.

Loder stared at him angrily, and reached towards the cane that lay on his table. The little Chinese had given no offence whatever—so far, at least—but that did not matter to Loder. He wanted to wreak his evil temper upon someone, and Wun Lung had turned up at the right moment.

"What do you want, you little rascal?" snapped Loder. "Bend over that chair!"

"No savvy!" said Wun Lung innocently.

"Bend over that chair!" rapped out Loder, swishing the cane.

Walker and Carne were a good deal given to bullying, but this was rather too "thick" for them.

"For goodness' sake let the kid alone, Loder!" exclaimed Carne. "What has he done?"

(Continued on page 16.)

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Greyfriars in a savage temper, after bitter words with a good many members of his exasperated team.

It was not thus that Wingate had been accustomed to return to Greyfriars after an away match. Loder missed the cheering that generally greeted the Greyfriars footballers on their return. When Wingate's team had lost a match, it was not lost for the same reasons. On all sides the Greyfriars fellows declared that Loder had "mucked up" the captaincy, and now he was "mucking up" the football—an unpardonable sin. It really looked as if the star of Gerald Loder was on the wane.

Walker and Carne came into Loder's study a little later. Loder had asked them to supper, and they were hungry; and, sore and savage as they felt, they wanted their supper all the same.

But there was no sign of supper in Loder's study.

Bunter had been ordered to have it ready, and Loder's pals were quite aware that he had picked out Bunter

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 251.

HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR

Week Ending Dec. 5th.

Editorial!

HARRY WHARTON

VARIETY concerts for winter evenings! These are the proper capers. Let the chess maniacs ponder over their boards until bed-time; let the ludo fanatics rattle their dice-boxes; let the slacker snore on his study sofa. But we, who love a rousing "sing-song," will toddle along to the concert-hall and make merry. We will warble until we get "clergyman's sore throat," or some equally distressing affection of the larynx. And when at last we troop up to bed we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have spent a really ripping evening.

Concerts have always been popular at Greyfriars. It's surprising how many fellows can sing, and how many more think they can! There is many a budding Caruso in the Remove. There are also fellows who sing so badly that they get warned off for "boring," as they say on the racecourse.

Which fellows represent the pick of the Remove singers? Well, I should award the palm to Johnny Bull, Micky Desmond, and Frank Nugent. Johnny has a deep and powerful voice, which booms through the concert-hall like thunder. His vocal chords seem to be situated somewhere in the region of his boots. Micky Desmond sings Irish melodies delightfully, and Frank Nugent has a fine treble voice. By the way, Franky is a prominent member of the school choir. He's a member of what Gosling once called our "surplice" population. I'm no great shakes as a singer, myself. I can't get up to the high notes, and I can't get down to the low ones without a deal of strain and effort. And I never attempt to sing more than a couple of songs in the course of an evening. My favourites are "Drake Goes West" and "The Trumpeter."

Billy Bunter prides himself on being a fine songster. He certainly puts all his heart and soul into his singing—especially when the song happens to be about grub! Bunter sings "Eat More Fruit" and "I Do Like a Nice Mince Pie" with tremendous gusto. His voice, however, is odious, rather than melodious!

Lord Mauleverer could sing like a skylark if he cared to; but singing, like most other achievements, is "too much fag" for the born-tired slacker of the Remove. Mauly was once persuaded to sing a song about many brave hearts being asleep in the deep, and before he was half-way through the first verse he was asleep himself!

Little Wun Lung warbles Chinese love songs with touching tenderness. When

Wun Lung tackles an English song the result is distinctly amusing.

Hurree Singh, of course, prefers the "Indian Love Lyrics" to any other sort of song, and his rendering of them, "in the best and choicefullest English language," is no less amusing than Wun Lung's.

I feel sure that our Special "Concert" Number will be universally enjoyed.



ODE TO A SKYLARK!

Which took place when HORACE

COKER "sang," at a school concert.

By DICK PENFOLD.

Hail to thee, proud Coker!
Bird thou never wert;
When thou croakest, croaker,
Does it really hurt,
And does the crowd get very cross and curt?

Higher still and higher!
The top note thou reachest;
Who can but admire
The pluck thy singing teachest?
Screeching, thou still dost soar, and soaring
ever screechest.

Like old Gosling sawing
Stubborn blocks of wood;
Like a rodent gnawing
Matchwood for its food,
Thou warblest on—and not a word is under-
stood!

Like a mongrel yapping
In the noisy streets;
Like a terrier scrapping
For its rival's meat,
Is thy "bass" booming voice, so siren-like
and sweet!

Like a foghorn hooting
O'er the misty bay;
Like a Klaxon tooting
On the King's highway,
Or like the rumbling wheels of an approach-
ing dray!

Sounds of tropic thunder,
Shaking summer skies,
Rending clouds asunder,
Startle and surprise:
And yet, when Coker sings, this mighty
tumult dies!

Nightingale and linnnet,
Silver-throated lark,
Simply are not in it!
Coker's raucous bark
Beats all the sounds you hear, in copplee or
in park!

We look before and after
In quest of ammunition;
Then, with merry laughter,
We pelt the mad musician,
Until he turns to flee—a very wise decision!

Peace once more descendeth
On the concert-hall;
Coker's croaking endeth—
"Glory be!" say all.
They'll not turn up again, if Coker's "on
the bawl"!

SHOULD SINGING BE BARRED?

Our contributors "give voice" to their views.

BOB CHERRY:

Should singing be barred? Well, it all depends who is singing! If it's a nightingale warbling, or a kettle singing on the hob, all well and good. But if the singer is Coker of the Fifth, or Billy Bunter, or any other absurd croaker, he should be painlessly put away, in my opinion. I heard Coker sing at a concert once, and it's haunted me ever since. As for Bunter, he would put a serenading tom-cat to shame! In a nutshell, my views are these. If a fellow's a Caruso, let him sing to his heart's content; but if he's got a voice like a ship's siren in a fog, let him for ever hold his peace!

BILLY BUNTER:

Singing is quite all right in its proper place—which is at a school concert. The fellow who gets my goat is the chap who sings in his bath. I never could understand anybody wanting to sing in a bath. I always yell in mine—especially when I first put my toe in, and find that the temperament of the water has dropped to zero! How any fellow can sing in his bath, from sheer happiness, is a mystery to me. Of course, I'm a wonderful singer; and it's only personal jealousy that keeps me out of the school quire. Most of my critics say that I've a base voice. This is quite true—though I can also sing trebble, alto, baritone, and tenor. I'm keenly looking forward to the next School Konzert, when I shall sing a special song of my own composing, called "GRUBB, GRUBB, GLORIOUS GRUBB!" I egg-spect my song will make a big hit; but I hope my hearers won't!

MR. PROUT:

Certainly, singing should be prohibited. I see no sense in it whatever. It is a noisy, obnoxious nuisance! Last evening, when I was correcting examination papers in my study, a number of juniors assembled under my window, and started to sing, "Show me the Way To Go Home!" What they really needed was someone to show them the way to sing! It was the most heart-rending discord I have ever heard; and I found it impossible to proceed with my work until I had dispersed the singers, and given them a hundred lines apiece.

HURREE SINGH:

I see no reason why the tuneful songfulness should be barfully prohibited at Greyfriars. I am very fond of singing, and at the last school concert I made a great hit when I sang, "Asleepfully Asleep in the Deepful Deep." Doubtless my worthy and esteemed chums are familiar with the chorus:

"Loudfully the bellfulness in the esteemed tower rings,

Bidding us list to the warning it convey-fully brings.

Sailors, beware bewarefully!

Sailors, beware bewarefully!

Danger is nearfully creeping closer,

So beware bewarefully!

In the mighty deepfulness, many brave hearts sleep the sleepfulness,

So beware bewarefully!

WILLIAM GOSLING:

"Wot I says is this 'ere. Them as can sing, ought to sing; an' them as can't sing, ought to be muzzled! That's my sentiments, young gents!"



The St. Sam's Konser!

"Music hath charms"—but not the sort of music which DOCTOR BIRCHEMALL inflicts upon his long-suffering audience.

IT was Speech Night at St. Sam's. The prize-giving and the chin-wagging were over, and the fellows, with their sisters and their cuzzens and their aunts, flocked into the Konserst Hall.

Ever since the days when Julius Seizer and William the Konkeror had been boys at St. Sam's, it had been the custom to wind up the Speech Day proceedings with a Grand Konserst.

With flushed and egg-sited faces, the St. Sam's fellows took their seats. There was a very distingwished company present. Jack Jolly's uncle, General Blaize Popham, was there; and the old war-horse, with his fat red face and fierce whiskers, was a very commanding figger.

Merry and Bright were also with their people. Merry's pater was an Admiral in the Air Force! and Bright's pater was something to do with the House of Lords—a night-watchman, or something of the sort. The Guvvners of the school were also present in full force.

The Head was the M.C. This duzzent mean that he won the Military Cross during the War, for at that unhappy time he dodged the collum by becoming a Conshien-shus Objector. The mistick letters mean to imply that he was Master of the Ceremonies.

There was a cheer when Doctor Birchermall mounted the platform.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Birchy!"

"On the bawl!"

The Head frowned at the assembly.

"Silence!" he roared. "Ladies and gentlemen, before we commence our evening entertainment, I wish to say a few words. At previous Speech Night konserts, I have been shocked and disgusted by the somewhat vulgar nature of some of the songs which have been sung. I recollect that Jolly of the Fourth sang a song to the effect that he was deficient of bananas. A most senseless song! And another junior gave us a stupid song about a cat. I cannot recall the words, but they went something like this:

'Felix continues to peregrinate,

Continues to peregrinate still!'

Such songs, lacking alike in dignity and decorum, are not fit for the ears of our worthy and respected Guvvners. They want something classicle and lofty, and they shall have it."

The Guvvners nodded with approval, and some of them muttered "Here, here!" in their beards.

"I will set the ball rolling myself," the Head went on, "by rendering that famous classic, 'Boiled Beef and Carrots.'"

There was a sudden rush to the door on the part of a few pannicky juniors who had heard the Head sing before, and knew what a terrible ordeal it was to listen to him.

"Come back!" roared the Head.

But the door of the konsert-hall slammed behind the rennygades.

The Head frowned, and made an impatient gesture to Mr. Noyes, the music master, who sat at the piano.

"Play up, Noyes!"

The music master thumped the ivories, and the Head, clearing his throat and taking a deep breth, started to sing.

General Blaize Popham shifted nervously in his seat. Admiral Merry looked jolly uncomfortable. Bright's pater screwed up his face in an expression of anguish.

The Head's voice fairly boomed through the konsert-hall.

"Boiled beef and carrots!

Boiled beef and carrots!

That's the stuff to give the troops!

Better than all your stews and soups!

Don't feed like vegetarians

On the stuff they give to parrots;

But day and night blow out your kite

On boiled beef and carrots!"

"Gad, what a voice!" muttered General Blaize Popham. "Old Birchermall might be a jolly fine headmaster, but he can't sing for toffy!"

"I can't stand much more of this!" gasped Admiral Merry, plugging his ears with his fourfingers, as the Head broke out afresh.

Jack Jolly & Co. grinned. They could endure the Head's warblings better than their relations.

The Head went on singing the praises of boiled beef and carrots, until Tubby Barrell, the fat fellow in the Fourth, began to feel quite ravvenus.

At last the song came to an end, and a mighty cheer rang out. The audience cheered bekwase they were thankful that the Head had finished.

Doctor Birchermall, panting for breth, glared at the assembly.

"Why don't you shout 'Ong-cere'?" he demanded horsely.

"Bekawse we've had enuff!" growled General Blaize Popham. "Really, my dear Birchermall, your voice is the limit! Why don't you put a sock in it?"

"W-w-what?" gasped the Head.

"What you want," said Admiral Merry, "is a muffler!"

The Head flushed to the roots of his bald head.

"Really, gentlemen, you are very rood to crittize my singing like that," he protested. "We will now pass on to the second item on our programme. This will be another song by me, entitled, 'When It's Night-time in Timbuctoo, it's Friday Over Here!'"

The audience groaned. They had not antissipated that the Head would have the nerve to sing two songs in suxxession. This was indeed the limit, as the gallant general remarked. It was piling Pellion on what's-a-name.

The Head took no notiss of the deep groans that boomed through the hall. He turned to Mr. Noyes.

"Strike up, old top!" he commanded.

"And give me the tip when it's time for me to start. You see, I don't know a note of music!"

"That was obvious from the outset!" grunted the general.

Mr. Noyes played the opening bars, and he swung round on the pianno-stool when it was time for the Head to chip in.

Once again, that terrifying voice rang through the hall. And there was a fresh stampede to the door. Fellows in the Fifth and Sixth made a hurried egg-sit, and they were all squashed together in the doorway, struggling to get out. It was like a Rugby scrum.

The Head stopped when he was half-way through the cornus.

"Burleigh! Bounder! Swotter!" he

roared. "Come back! Don't you know it's frightfully bad manners to walk out on the hall when your headmaster is singing?"

The seniors did not come back. Wild horses would not have dragged them back. They kicked and fought and struggled in a mad desire to escape from that dreadful ordeal of lissening to the Head.

Doctor Birchermall clenched his hands feercely, and went on singing. Instead of keeping time with the music, he raced madly ahead of it, whooping and wailing like a savvidge performing one of his sollum rights.

General Blaize Popham mopped his perspiring brow.

"I can't stand much more of this, by George!" he muttered. "It's awful! I see the Guvvners are fed-up already!"

The Guvvners—those bearded and venerable old gentlemen who were responsible for the control of St. Sam's—had tottered to their feet, and were now hobbling quickly out of the hall on their crutches.

"Gentlemen!" cried the Head, aghast. "Where are you going?"

"Ahem! I—I've just remembered that I've got an important appointment to keep!" replied Sir Gouty Greybeard.

"Same hear!" said Colonel de Creppit.

And the rest of the Guvvners mumbled various excuses, and hurried out of the hall as fast as their crutches would carry them.

"Well, I call that very rood and unkind," said the Head. "I hate to go on singing under such heavy discourridgement."

"Dry up, then!" snorted General Blaize Popham.

But the Head did not dry up. He finished singing—or, rather, croaking—"When It's Night-time in Timbuctoo." And then, to the utter dismay of his audience, he announced that the next item on the programme would be a further song by himself entitled, "Wink To Me Only With Thine Eyes!"

The Head started this fresh song; but he never finished it. Before he could get into his stride, so to speak, General Blaize Popham and Admiral Merry rushed on to the platform.

"Collar him!" roared the general.

"Gag him!" cried the admiral.

Doctor Birchermall's song came to a sudden fool stop. He was violently seized by the general and the admiral, and frog-marched off the platform.

The St. Sam's fellows jumped to their feet, cheering wildly.

"Unhand me!" gasped the Head.

"Gentlemen, you forget yourselves! I'll have the law on you for this, bust me if I don't! This is assault and battery! Help! Reskew!"

But nobody went to the Head's assistance. The fellows were only too glad to see the back of him. And they hoped that the general and the admiral would give him a jolly good bumping as soon as they got him behind the seens. Their hopes were realised.

The school konsert broke up in disorder. And an hour later, when the Head came into Big Hall for calling-over, he was in a shocking state. He was limping in both arms, had a leg in a sling, and his right eye was as black as the ace of spades.

"My boys," announced the Head, "the last has not been heard of this! I have been treated in a most ruffanly manner, and as I cannot punnish my assailants, I will punish their son and nevew respectively. Jolly and Merry, you will be soundly birched in the morning! I may add that I shall refuse to sing in publick again!"

A decision that was greeted with loud and prolonged cheers by the boys of St. Sam's.

THE END.

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Make a Note of It!

**GRAND CHRISTMAS
NUMBER**

NEXT WEEK!

ORDER EARLY, BOYS!

—HARRY WHARTON, Ed.



(Continued from page 13.)

"Me comee—" began Wun Lung.

"They're a cheeky mob in the Remove," said Loder. "The more they're licked the better for them. Bend over that chair, you young scoundrel!"

"No, savvy!"

"I'll make you savvy fast enough, you lying little heathen!" said Loder, and he grasped Wun Lung by the pig-tail and bent him over the chair.

Whack, whack, whack!

Carne and Walker shrugged their shoulders. Wun Lung yelled and wriggled.

"No whackee pool lill' Chinees, handsome Lodee!" he wailed. "Me comee because likee Lodee!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Walker. "He says he likes Loder! What a taste!"

"Me comee faggee for good handsome Lodee!" howled Wun Lung.

The cane was in the air for a fourth swipe, but Loder arrested it.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"Me faggee."

"Oh!" Loder released the little Chinese, who rolled off the chair and jumped away. "Why couldn't you say that at first, you little idiot!"

"No lettee Wun Lung speakee," groaned the little Celestial. "Me comee faggee for big handsome Lodee. Makee goodee suppee."

"Where's Bunter? I told Bunter to be here, and to get my supper ready!" snapped Loder.

Wun Lung grinned.

"Bunttee no faggee," he said. "Bunttee velly blave—no flaiddee of Lodee. Bunttee baggee all Lodee's tuck. No coffee for Lodee!"

"What?" roared Loder.

He rushed to the study cupboard and threw open the door. Carne whistled and Walker grinned. Loder's cupboard was in the same state as that of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard—it was bare!

Loder stuttered with rage.

"The—the fat rascal! The—the cheeky scoundrel! I'll smash him! I'll skin him! I—I—I'll—"

Words failed Loder.

He swung round on Wun Lung.

"And you've come to tell me. I suppose they're all chortling over it in the Remove studies—what?"

"Bound to be!" grinned Walker.

"Lemove fellee laughee velly muchee," said Wun Lung, with a nod. "All lemove tinkee Bunttee velly clevee. Bunttee blagge up and downee Lemove passage."

"I'll give him something to brag in the Remove passage about!" gasped Loder. "I—I—I'll—"

"Me likee handsome Lodee," purred Wun Lung. "Me tinkee Bunttee velly bad hat. Me comee faggee for Lodee; makee nicee suppee. What you tinkee? Makee lovelee labbit-pie for handsome Lodee."

Loder stared at the little Celestial.

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Wun Lung, being a particularly defenceless little fellow, had come in for a larger allowance of cuts and cuffs than any other fellow since Loder had become monarch of all he surveyed at Greyfriars. At their last encounter Loder had sent him spinning with a savage smack, simply because Walker and Carne had annoyed him. Really, it was surprising if that kind of treatment had evoked affectionate regard. Loder could think of a much more probable explanation. His methods, which had failed with most of the Remove, had succeeded with Wun Lung; the kid had been brought to heel, and was in a frame of mind to feed out of the bully's hand, as Loder had boasted to his friends that all the Remove should soon be.

The bully of Greyfriars smiled grimly.

"So you're going to fag for me instead of Bunter?"

"Me likee faggee for handsome Lodee," murmured the little heathen.

Loder laughed.

"Yes, I know exactly how much you like to fag for me. You mean that you want me to leave you out of the next licking."

"Lodee velly clevee," murmured Wun Lung.

"Well, I'll leave Bunter over; he will keep," said Loder. "Cut down to the tuckshop for me—Mrs. Mimble will open the door if you give my name—and get me something for supper."

"Me donee," said Wun Lung. "Makee lovelee labbit-pie for Lodee, all nicee hot and smoking. Me blingee."

"Buck up, then."

Wun Lung wriggled out of the study. Walker and Carne looked astonished, as they felt; but Loder gave them a vaunting look.

"I think I told you I'd tame those cheeky young scoundrels," he said.

"Well, you seem to have succeeded with that little foreign beast," admitted Walker. "But one swallow doesn't make a summer. I haven't noticed much tameness about Wharton and his crew."

"Even that fat funk Bunter seems to have got his ears up!" grinned Carne.

"Bunter will put his ears down by the time I've done with him," said Loder savagely. "I'll tame him, and the rest of the Remove, too. I'll have them all feeding from my hand soon."

"I don't think!" murmured Walker. "I say, I suppose that cheeky little heathen isn't pulling your leg, is he? He's really coming back? I can tell you I'm hungry!"

"Of course he's coming back," growled Loder.

But, as a matter of fact, Gerald Loder did not feel quite sure of it.

But in a few minutes Wun Lung of the Remove reappeared. He bore a large bag into Loder's study. With a cheery grin upon his queer little Oriental face, he opened the bag, and lifted out a large, luscious-looking pie into the fender. Loder & Co. looked at it with intense satisfaction. Dishes of chipped potato and cauliflower accompanied the pie. Wun Lung had evidently taken a great deal of trouble in fagging for Loder. Really, it might have seemed that Bunter's raid in the study had given him an opportunity for which he had longed. It was a supper for the gods. Gerald Loder looked almost genial.

Walker and Carne, as they sat down to that excellent supper, almost forgot Loder's exploits as a football captain. Quite an atmosphere of good-humour reigned in Loder's study in the Sixth.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Supper!

"YOU can cut!"

Loder spoke almost kindly.

Little Wun Lung had laid the table, sorted out plates and dishes, prepared supper with all the deftness of a practised fag.

Loder watched him with satisfaction.

This was very different from the kind of fagging put in by Tubb of the Third. Tubb of the Third would drop plates and crack tea-cups. If he made toast he very often burned it; if he boiled eggs he boiled them too hard or not hard enough; and he either could not or would not learn how to make an omelette. He was, in fact, a resentful fag, giving unwilling service, extracted from him by the terror of the ashplant. Fagging by Wun Lung, the Chinese, was remarkably different. He combined the qualities of a first-class chef with those of a deft head-waiter. Loder was already making up his mind that he would instal Wun Lung as his regular fag, in the place of the clumsy and heavy handed Tubb.

Indeed, he felt that it was rather fortunate that Tubb of the Third had not been available that evening, and equally fortunate that Billy Bunter had gone on strike. Wun Lung was worth more than the two of them put together, when it came to fagging.

This indeed was the real thing, the kind of fagging that a fag-master dreamed of when he had pleasant dreams! Such a fag as this nimble little Chinese was a treasure. He was a queer-looking little foreign beast, no doubt, but he fagged as if he had been born for it. He did not drop a single plate; he did not spill the salt on the tablecloth; he did not grunt, like Tubb, or bump into chairs like that clumsy youth.

So when supper was all ready, and the three seniors sat down to it, Loder told the Chinese quite kindly that he could cut. It was almost on his lips to say "Thank you!"

"Me no go," said Wun Lung. "Me like waitee on handsome Lodee."

"Oh, all right!" said Loder.

Walker and Carne could only stare.

If Loder's methods with the Remove produced fagging like this, they felt that they had to revise their opinions about Loder and his methods. Either of them would have jumped at the chance of bagging a fag like this dutiful Chinese. Thrashing other Removes had produced only rank rebellion and resistance, ragging in the study and hooting in the quad; but with Wun Lung the heavy hand seemed to have succeeded perfectly.

The little Chinese showed no resentment whatever for the licking Loder had given him that very evening, or for the innumerable cuffs and cuts he had received at various times. Orientals were supposed to be revengeful, and to have long memories for injuries. But it was evident that this particular Oriental had been licked into a properly respectful frame of mind—into a subservience that was really delightful to behold.

Wun Lung served the pie, and the aroma of that pie was really beautiful. Loder & Co. proceeded to demolish it at a great rate, and Wun Lung hovered round the table, with a deft and ready hand to help again.

Loder often stood suppers in his study, but he had never stood anything quite so nice as this, even when he had ordered a rabbit-pie or a steak-and-kidney pudding specially cooked by Mrs. Mimble.

"Why, this is simply ripping!" said Walker. "It makes a man glad he got home ravenous, this does!"

"Top-hole!" said Carne. "Beats me how a kid can cook like this. I suppose he has a gift for it."

"Some fag!" said Walker. "I say, Loder, as it seems to be established now that the Remove are going to fag, I'll take Wun Lung for mine."

Loder grinned.

"You jolly well won't," he said. "I'm keeping that fag! I wouldn't part with him for all the rest of the Lower School in a lump, now that I know what he can do. You're going to be my regular fag now, Wun Lung."

"Me likee velly muchee."

"How did the kid get a pie like this cooked?" asked Walker. "Surely it couldn't be done on a study fire in the Remove?"

"Me askee Misse Cook lette me use oven in kitchee," explained Wun Lung. "Tippce cookee."

"Oh, my hat!" said Walker. "Some fag! He makes pies, and tips the cook to use her oven. This is something new in fagging."

"A bit of an improvement on Tubb, hat?" smiled Loder.

"I should say so."

"Handsome Lodee likee pie?" asked Wun Lung.

"Certainly, kid! It's top-ping!" said Loder graciously. "Hand out a little more. I can do with another helping."

"Same here!" said Walker.

"And here!" grinned Carne.

In the other Sixth Form studies that evening there was a great deal of ill-humour; the result of the St. Jim's match was discussed, and discussed again, with ever-growing annoyance and irritation. But in Gerald Loder's study all was calm and bright. That excellent, ample supper had had a wonderfully ameliorating effect on the tempers there, and Loder, Carne, and Walker had almost forgotten their football failure, or, at least, carefully avoided it as a topic.

Supper was over at last, and Loder & Co. helped themselves from Loder's cigarette-case.



"Look here, Loder, you chuck this!" said Billy Bunter, blinking through his big spectacles at the enraged prefect, between the shoulders of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry. "I'm fed-up with you, Loder! Following a fellow about!" "You cheeky young rascal!" roared Loder. "Oh, chuck it!" said Bunter. "Who's afraid of you, Loder?" (See Chapter 10.)

really putting the lid on. I should have thought a pie like that jolly expensive."

"No payee muchee for old dog," said Wun Lung.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Cattee velly cheap, too."

Wun Lung spoke very innocently, gazing with a smile that was child-like and bland at the startled Sixth-Formers.

His words were followed by an awful silence.

The cigarettes dropped from the hands of Loder & Co., as if they had become suddenly red-hot. Three faces became suddenly pale—in fact, ghastly.

"What—what did you say?" asked Walker at last, in a faint voice. "What—what was that pie made of? I—I understood that it was a rabbit-pie?"

"Chinee cookee cattee and dog—"

"You—you—you dastardly heathen!" gasped Loder. "You—you—you've given us a—a—a pie made of—of cat and—and dog—"

"Eatee cattee and doggee in China," said Wun Lung innocently. "Likee velly muchee in China."

"Oh, gad!" groaned Carne. "I've read of that. Those filthy heathens eat anything! Cat! Oh dear! Dog! Oh, great gad!"

"You can clear away, and then eat, Wun Lung," said Loder.

"Me tankee handsome Lodee!"

Wun Lung sidled a little towards the door.

"You likee pie?"

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"If you wantee more, me makee 'nothee pie."

Loder laughed.

"Blessed if I ever heard of such a fag! I really think I shall have to lick you again if it does you all this good."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Walker and Carne.

"But we sha'n't want any more to-night, kid," said Loder good-humouredly. "By gad, I almost feel as if I had overdone it already; it was such a top-hole pie. You can make another to-morrow, though. Come here after class, and I'll give you the money for the shopping."

"No wantee muchee monce, Lodee. Velly cheap."

"Great Scott!" said Walker. "That's

The pie was a large one, but the three hungry Sixth-Formers were getting right through it. Wun Lung seemed to enjoy hovering round the table and helping them. Perhaps he had his own reasons for enjoying that task—reasons with which Loder & Co. were as yet unacquainted.

"This kid could get a job as chef in a first-class hotel," said Walker. "I've never come across better cooking than this. The flavour, too! It isn't all rabbit."

"No; real, too, I think," said Carne.

"A jolly old mixture," said Walker. "I'm sure I came across some mutton. Anyhow, it's a topping pie, and we jolly will never get anything like it in Hall!"

Walker gave utterance to a horrid, gurgling sound, such as is heard on Channel steamers on a rough day. He hung over Loder's fender, and the horrid sounds continued.

Carne dropped limp into a chair, a cold perspiration breaking out on his brow.

Gerald Loder leaned feebly against the mantelpiece, with strange emotions surging within him.

He had enjoyed that pie. He had enjoyed it so much that he had rather overdone it; but he had felt quite comfortable until he heard the ingredients of the pie stated by the cook. In China they will eat cat and dog with great relish; but the bare thought of it gave Loder horrid heavings within.

Wun Lung, keeping near the door, smiled sweetly at the three unhappy Sixth-Formers.

"You villain!" groaned Loder at last, holding on to the mantelpiece. "You disgusting Chinese savage! Are you pulling my leg?"

"No pullee Loddee leggee! All selene, what you tinkee? Nicey cat and doggee makee lovelee pie."

"You awful villain! Did you—did you put anything else in it?" groaned Loder, horrid visions floating before his mind. He remembered some more things he had read about Chinese cookery.

Wun Lung nodded cheerfully.

"Nicey little mousey—"

"Mouse! Oh, gad!"

"And a nicey big lat—"

"A—a—a—a rat!" Carne collapsed helplessly, and followed the example of Walker. There were two at the fender now.

"And some nicey snails—"

"Snails!" said Loder faintly.

"And bootiful lovelee flogs—"

"Frogs!"

Loder made a wild grasp at a cane, and plunged across the study at the Chinese. Wun Lung whipped the door open, and darted into the passage. The door slammed after him.

Loder did not attempt pursuit. His fate was upon him. He dropped the cane, groaned, gurgled, and plunged back towards the fireplace. There were three at the fender now.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Loder on the Trail!

"I SAY, you fellows!" gasped Bunter.

It was morning break the following day, and Harry Wharton & Co. were walking in the quad, when Billy Bunter rushed up in great alarm.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?"

"Loder!"

"Oh! Shoulder to shoulder!" said Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!"

Gerald Loder, with a cane under his arm, was striding after Bunter. It was his first opportunity of dealing with the Owl of the Remove, whose delinquency the previous evening had led to that ghastly supper in Loder's study.

Bunter had had the feast, and now he had to pay the reckoning; at all events, Loder was determined that he should. The Owl of the Remove backed behind the Famous Five, greatly relieved for those five sturdy figures to stand between him and the captain of Greyfriars.

"Back up, Remove!" shouted Bob Cherry.

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Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing came speeding up from under the elms. Squiff and Tom Brown came sprinting from the House. Peter Todd appeared from somewhere.

Quite a warlike array faced Loder of the Sixth as he came striding on.

That Bunter had "scoffed" Loder's tuck on account of his own unearthly appetite, and not as an act of defiance to the bully of the Sixth, the juniors were well aware. Nevertheless, he had done it. He had been ordered to fag for Loder, and he had not fagged for Loder. So the Remove rebels were bound to stand by him, and they were ready to do so.

For a crowd of fags to face the captain of the school in warlike array was a happening unheard-of at Greyfriars—till Loder's time. Now they lined up to tackle Loder of the Sixth as a matter of course. If there were consequences to be faced, they were prepared to face them.

Gerald Loder came on savagely, but he stopped before he reached the group of determined juniors.

"Come here, Bunter!" he rapped out savagely.

"Oh, really, Loder—"

"Come here and bend over."

"I—I say, Loder, I—I never touched your tuck!" gasped Bunter. "It—it was the cat!"

"What?" roared Loder.

"I—I saw Mrs. Kebble's cat coming out of your study afterwards, Loder," stammered Bunter. "I—I suppose you can take my word! I never touched the stuff—I wouldn't! Besides, I was nowhere near your study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to give you six for scoffing my tuck," said Loder, "and another six for not fagging when ordered."

"Ow!"

"You're not!" said Harry Wharton coolly. "Keep where you are, Bunter! Loder will have to walk over us before he touches you!"

"I shall report this to the Head, Wharton!"

"Report—and be blown!"

"Run away, Loder," said the Bounder. "You've taken on a job too big for you, if you could only see it. Wingate's job is a size too large for a fellow of your build."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The too-largefulness is terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Loder," said Hurree Janset Rain Singh.

Loder gripped his cane and glared at the juniors. All authority was on his side, but the habit of discipline was broken; Loder's tyranny had broken it. Handling a prefect was an awfully serious matter, and if it happened—as obviously it was going to happen if Loder made an attack—the captain of Greyfriars had only to report it to the headmaster, for condign punishment to fall upon the offenders. But Loder was aware—as were the juniors—that the Head did not want to be incessantly troubled by disputes between a prefect and Lower boys.

A captain of Greyfriars was supposed to be able to keep order in the Lower Forms without constantly appealing to the headmaster; that, indeed, was what prefects were appointed for. And

Loder could not do it. By recklessly over-riding the rights of the juniors he had driven them to resistance—and now that they had started resistance they rather liked the idea—like a tiger that has tasted blood. So far from dodging trouble with Loder, they rather seemed to be looking for it.

A crowd of grinning faces looked at Loder—with Billy Bunter safely entrenched behind.

Loder was so evidently at a loss that the Owl of the Remove took courage. William George Bunter was always as brave as a lion when there was no danger about.

"Look here, Loder, you chuck this!" said Bunter, blinking through his big spectacles at the enraged prefect, between the shoulders of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry. "I'm fed-up with you, Loder! Following a fellow about! I've had to dodge you twice this morning already! I can jolly well tell you I'm fed-up!"

"You cheeky young rascal!" roared Loder.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bunter. "Who's afraid of you, Loder?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"We don't think much of you in the Remove," said Bunter valorously. "What do you ever do but lose football matches? My opinion is that you won't keep the captaincy very long. In fact, I shall use my influence with the fellows to turn you out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As for your tuck—blow your tuck!" said Bunter. "You can't fag the Remove. Funky fellows might fag for you; not chaps like me! The fact is, Loder, I despise you!"

"Go it, Bunter!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Well, I think it's time we told that cad what we think of him!" said Bunter. "Who's Loder?"

"Echo answers, who?" said Nugent, laughing.

"He got in as captain by a lot of dirty tricks," said Bunter. "We all know it. He promised me a spread in his study if I voted for him; and when I went to his study for it he kicked me out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Come on, Loder!" said the Bounder.

"We're waiting for you, you know; and when we've rolled you in the mud and bashed your hat over your ears and whacked you with your own cane, you can report us to the Head—and show him what a jolly topping prefect he's got. The Head will be pleased!"

Loder breathed hard.

Three or four Sixth-Formers had glanced at that peculiar scene in the quadrangle and deliberately walked away. Loder had no support to expect from his Form-fellows and fellow-prefects. He was captain of Greyfriars, but he stood alone. There was the authority of the Head behind him, but that authority could not be constantly invoked—indeed, he had received a hint to that effect from Dr. Locke already.

The Head had even mentioned that these incessant bickerings—he called them bickerings, not realising the importance of these matters—had not occurred when Wingate was captain of Greyfriars, and he had added that his time was of value.

In point of fact, Loder had to back down once more, as he had already backed down more than once. After striding up to the Removes with an authoritative frown and a cane, there was nothing left for him but to stride off—like that king of olden time who

ANSWERS
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marched up a hill, and then marched down again.

With a bitter look, Loder tucked his cane under his arm.

"I shall report this!" he said.

And he walked away, with all the dignity he could muster. It was not very much.

"I say, you fellows, Loder's a funk," said Bunter.

"But suppose he does report us?" remarked Johnny Bull. "It's a jolly serious thing to back up against the captain of the school, it means a Head's licking!"

"We can stand it," said Harry. "We've had it before and survived it. And I'm jolly certain the Head will get fed-up with licking the Remove because Loder isn't equal to his job!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Ten to one he won't report it," said Vernon-Smith. "More likely to bide his time and take it out of us when he gets a chance. Look out for Loder, Bunter."

"Oh!" Billy Bunter became suddenly serious. "I—I say, you fellows, do—do you think Loder will be after me again?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"You talked to him so nicely," chuckled Bob. "Loder won't forget that in a hurry. It will mean a licking sooner or later, but never mind—"

"But I do mind!" roared Bunter. "I mind a lot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Until morning break was over Billy Bunter haunted the Famous Five like a fat shadow. For once in his life, he was glad to get into the Form-room again.

But after third lesson the sight of Gerald Loder in the distance sent him scuttling away to the Remove passage, whence he did not venture to emerge till dinner. After dinner he dodged Loder again successfully; but little Wun Lung, who had also been doing some wary dodging, was not so fortunate. When the Remove fellows gathered for afternoon class they found the little Chinese wriggling and squirming painfully in the Form-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you had it?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Wun Lung groaned.

"Beastly Lodee catchee me, whackee velly hard. Ow!"

"I say, you fellows, the beast is trailing me, too, like a Red Indian!" groaned Bunter. "I say, something ought to be done, you know!"

"Something will be done," said Harry Wharton. "After class we'll give Loder something else to think of. We've been on the defensive so far, but it's time now to take the offensive."

"Carry the war into Africa, like jolly old Scipio!" chuckled Bob. "Good egg! Instead of Loder hunting us, we'll hunt Loder."

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Quelch came into the Form-room, and the discussion ceased. But during class Harry Wharton & Co. were thinking a good deal less of irregular verbs than of the next move in their war with the bully of the Sixth. And when the Remove were dismissed the Famous Five proceeded from discussion to action.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Plays the Goat!

"I OBJECT!"

Thus William George Bunter. William George spoke with emphasis. Not only did he object, but his objection seemed to be deep.

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 14.—Tom Brown (of the Remove).



Browney, to give him his nickname, hails from New Zealand—"The Land of the Waiting Spring-time"—as Rudyard Kipling has it—and is indeed a worthy representative of that great Dominion. From the first, Tom Brown showed that he had his head screwed on right and very soon jumped into popularity with his Form fellows. A good footballer, a good fast bowler, and a useful fellow with his "mitts," Browney is a front ranker in the field of sport. Relishes a joke with the best of 'em, but shows scant ability as an originator of them. Possesses undoubted literary ability—as witness his contributions to the "Greyfriars Herald." Shares Study No. 2 with Bulstrode and Hazeldene. Summed up, Browney's character is aptly expressed in three words—"A Good Fellow!"

"Now, look here, fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

"I object!"

"Ass!" said Bob Cherry. "It's as easy as falling off a form. You let Loder sight you in the quad all alone—"

"I object!" said Bunter for the third time.

"The objectionable Bunter had better be bumped," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, luky—"

"Don't be such a howling funk, Bunter!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove impatiently. "Do you want to have to dodge Loder every day till we break up for the Christmas hols?"

"No; but—"

"If we give him a jolly good lesson he may chuck it up. If not, he will grab you, sooner or later. He was watching in the passage when you came out from classes."

"I say, you fellows, couldn't you raid him in his study, and—and thrash him, and—and give him the kybosh! I—I'll keep watch in the passage, see? Give him a regular wallop, and—"

"Yes, I can see myself walloping Sixth Form prefects in the Sixth Form passage, fathead! Now, look here, you happen to be the fellow that Loder's down on at the present moment, so

you're the fellow to lead him into a trap. If there's a report to the Head it will look rather rotten for Loder, trailing a fag into a solitary spot to wallop him. You've got to be trailed!"

"I object! You see—"

"You walk under Loder's window, and let him see you. Then you stroll off to the Cloisters."

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter, in angry alarm. "If I did that Loder would grab up his biggest cane and be after me like a shot."

"Exactly! That's what we want."

"Why, you—you—"

"You roll into the Cloisters—" said Harry.

"I jolly well don't!" said Bunter emphatically.

"Loder follows on. He's sure to—to—"

"I'll take jolly good care that he doesn't!"

"You'll lead him right up the Cloisters, to where we shall be in ambush," went on Harry. "We collar him before he can collar you."

"Oh," said Bunter, a little relieved, "that's all very well. But suppose you don't collar him in time?"

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"Oh, that will be all right! Anyhow, you'll have to take your chance. If you get a lick or two it won't matter."

"Not a bit," said Bob cheerily.

"Won't it?" roared Bunter. "I can tell you it will matter a jolly good deal. I know Loder's licks when he's in a bad temper. I don't want any. And I can tell you that I'm not taking any."

"My esteemed funky Bunter—"

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter. "One of you fellows can draw Loder, and I'll be in ambush with the rest. See?"

"But you're the man Loder wants," said Frank Nugent impatiently.

"That's all right! Suppose you heave a brick through his study window—"

"What?"

"Then he will want you more than he wants me," said Bunter brightly. "See? I think that's a jolly good idea."

"You fat chump!"

"Now, look here, Bunter, play up!" said Wharton. "There's practically no risk. We'll take all the risk in handling Loder."

"I object—"

The objections of William George Bunter seemed unending.

"My esteemed Bunter, the play-upfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "In my esteemed country of Bhanipur when a tiger is to be catchfully collared the shikarees tether a goat in the jungle, to draw the worthy and ferocious tiger to the spot. Whenfully the tiger comes after the goat the shikarees close in on him, and he is a gone coon and a back number. In this case, my excellent Bunter, you are going to play the goat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're used to playing the goat, in one way or another, Bunter," said Bob. "Now you can play the goat in the Bhanipur way, while jolly old Loder plays the tiger."

Billy Bunter shook his head. In this way, if not in others, he objected to playing the goat.

"I object!" he said, for the umpteenth time.

"Oh, roll him away!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "We'll manage without the fat ass. Loder will collar him sooner or later, and lick him. And serve him jolly well right! We'll give Loder a rest till he's licked Bunter."

"Hear, hear!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"If you had the sense of a bunny rabbit, Bunter, you'd know that this is the best way to keep off a licking," said Harry. "After Loder's fallen into the trap this time he will be jolly careful how he stalks a Remove chap into quiet corners."

"Something in that," admitted Bunter.

"I—I say, you fellows, of—of course, I'm keen on ragging Loder, and I—I'm not afraid. You know my courage. Brave as a lion—"

"Or a hare!" said Johnny Bull.

"I'll do it!" said Bunter. "Mind, you fellows, all be ready for Loder. Don't let him get loose before I get away."

"Ha, ha, ha! Leave that to us."

And Billy Bunter gave his consent at last. His objections were still strong, but he realised that with Loder on his trail he was bound to have to pay, sooner or later, for his performances in the Greyfriars captain's study. His only hope lay in the prospect that Loder would get fed-up with the Remove and leave them severely alone; and only Harry Wharton & Co.'s campaign was likely to bring that about.

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Bunter's chief concern was for his own fat skin. But the safety of his fat skin was evidently bound up in the success of the Remove campaign, so the fat junior gave in his adhesion.

Soon afterwards Remove fellows might have been seen, as a novelist would express it, strolling in a casual sort of way towards the old Cloisters.

By ones and twos they sauntered thither and disappeared among the old stone arches and pillars.

The Cloisters was rather solitary at all times, and especially when a misty winter dusk was falling. Harry Wharton & Co. had the place quite to themselves, and it was far out of sight and hearing of the House.

Billy Bunter, with considerable inward trepidation, rolled in the quad by himself.

He had seen Loder in his study. It was not yet night, but Gerald Loder had his reading-lamp on and could be seen from the quad. He had shut his window, Coker of the Fifth having strolled by and called to him to inquire what sort of a football captain he called himself. Every now and then Loder glanced from the window, his yellow-backed novel not engrossing the whole of his attention. And so, when the fat form of Bunter rolled by, Loder's eye fell on him. In fact, Bunter rolled around in sight of the window till Loder had no choice about seeing him.

The fat junior saw Loder move, rise from his seat, and approach the window. He leaned on a tree and watched Loder.

After gazing from the window for a few moments Loder disappeared, and Bunter knew that he had left the study. Why he had left it Bunter did not need telling, neither did he require informing that Loder had taken his ashplant with him.

Any other prefect, requiring Bunter for punishment, would have called to him from the study window to come in; but Loder did not think of doing that, for the excellent reason that no member of the Remove would have come to his study when ordered. Obedience to the captain of the school was a thing of the past, so far as the Remove were concerned, and their example was having followers in the other Forms. There had even been an excited meeting of fags in the Third Form room, when Tubbs had proposed going on strike against fagging, amidst thunders of applause.

The Remove, taken in the lump, were too much for Loder. But a single Removite, caught on his own, was still easy enough to lick, and he could be made to pay for the delinquencies of the rest. So Loder, seeing Bunter in the quad, with no other Remove fellow in sight, walked out of the House with his cane under his arm and a deadly look in his eyes.

Bunter did not wait.

The scheme was for Bunter to walk away in a leisurely manner towards the Cloisters, as if going for a stroll, unconscious that the bully of the Sixth was on his trail. But after a backward blink had revealed to him Gerald Loder coming out of the House, there was not much leisure in Bunter's movements.

He broke into a run.

Loder hurried after him.

Bunter was cut off from the House; but if he had headed for the school shop or the gym, doubtless he would have found Removites there. To Loder's satisfaction, he headed for the Cloisters—a quiet spot where a junior could be thrashed without his yells reaching any other ears. Loder grinned and followed him fast.

"Stop, Bunter!" he called out, at last. Bunter put on a spurt.

So far, Loder had followed him with a rapid stride, which about equalled the pace of Bunter's run. Now he broke into a run himself; and though Bunter ran hard, the Sixth-Former gained at every step.

Bunter fled desperately into the Cloisters.

He had had fearful misgivings that Loder might collar him before he reached the ambush; and now it seemed likely that his misgivings would be realised. Behind him he heard the heavy, rapid tread of the bully of the Sixth, and he panted with terror as he fled on.

"Stop, Bunter!" shouted Loder.

"Ow!"

Whack!"

Loder reached out and whacked as he pursued, and he was near enough now to reach Bunter with his cane.

"Yaroo!"

Bunter's yells awoke every echo of the ancient Cloisters.

"Now, stop, you fat fool!"

"I say, you fellows, help!" yelled Bunter, dodging round a stone pillar.

"I say, rescue, Remove!"

Loder rushed on him.

"Pile in!" shouted the voice of Harry Wharton.

"Collar the cad!" bawled Bob Cherry. There was a rush of feet.

The Cloisters, which had seemed solitary a moment before, seemed peopled now with yelling juniors. Before Loder knew what was happening, a rush of the Remove hurled him fairly off his feet, and he went to the ground, and as he sprawled, a dozen Removites sprawled over him. The Greyfriars captain was in the hands of the Amalekites.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Too Much for Loder!

"H OLD him!"

"Sit on him!"

"Make Bunter sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll up, Bunter!"

"Where's Bunter?"

But answer there came none. William George Bunter had sagely disappeared from the scene. Having "played the goat," he was leaving the Remove fellows to catch the tiger, and to deal with him when caught.

"The esteemed funky Bunter has deparitfully bunked," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I will sitfully recline on the worthy Loder's fat head."

"Grrrrrooogh!" spluttered Loder, as the Nabob of Bhanipur sat down.

"He's kicking," said Bob Cherry. "Jump on his legs."

Five or six fellows trampled recklessly on Loder's legs. Loder left off kicking.

"You young villains!" gasped Loder, his voice sounding strangely muffled with Hurree Singh sitting on his head. "You'll be flogged for this—you'll get sacked! I shall report this to the Head. I—I—"

"We're going to give you a lot to report, old bean," said Bob Cherry. "We haven't begun yet."

"Gerroff!" panted Loder.

He struggled fiercely. But a couple of juniors held each of his wrists, and he could not put in a single blow. There were a dozen fellows on the spot, and the Greyfriars captain was absolutely helpless. He gave up the unavailing struggle at last, exhausted and panting.

"Roll him over!" said Harry Wharton.



Whack! Loder lashed out at the fat junior. "Yaroooh! I say, you fellows, help!" yelled Bunter, dodging round a stone pillar. "I say, rescue, Remove!" "Pile in!" shouted the voice of Harry Wharton. There was a rush of feet, and before Loder knew what was happening, the Remove Juniors charged out upon him. (See Chapter 11.)

"You young scoundrels, what are you going to do?" howled Loder.

"We're going to give you six with your own cane."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The sixfulness will be terrible."

"Roll the cad over!"

In the grip of many hands, Loder was rolled face down on the stone flags. He almost wondered whether he was dreaming. He was head prefect of Greyfriars—captain of the School—and he was going to be caned with his own cane by a mob of juniors! To such a pass had things come; a state of affairs that would have been unthinkable a few weeks ago at Greyfriars. A captain of the school flogged by juniors!

Worse even than the flogging was the awful thought of the roar of laughter that would ring through Greyfriars from end to end when the story got about. Loder shuddered at that thought more than he shuddered at the cane.

Whack!

Bob Cherry wielded the cane, and he made it fairly ring on Loder. It was not a time for half-measures. The Remove rebels were taking great risks, and Loder had to pay for it in advance. The matter, reported to the Head, meant a Head's flogging all round; and with such a prospect ahead, the Removites intended to have their money's worth.

Whack, whack!

Loder writhed and gasped.

It was no horrid dream—it was real—painfully real! His own cane was whacking on his own trousers, as it had been wont to whack on the trousers of bending fags! Often and often had

Loder handed out "six"; but perhaps he had never fully realised how painful a "six" could be. He realised it now.

"Whack, whack!"

"Oh, you young villain! Stop!" shrieked Loder.

Whack!

The last of the six rang like a pistol-shot, and Loder fairly squirmed under it.

you, Loder, not to mention twopence for the brush! Do you feel grateful?"

Loder did not answer. His eyes fixed in horrified apprehension upon a small tin of red paint that Bob Cherry produced from his pocket. Bob prised off the lid, and jabbed a bristly brush into the paint.

"Keep that away from me!" shrieked Loder. "I—I—I'll let you off for what you've done! I—I won't report you! Keep off!"

"You can report as much as you like, old bean; we're going to keep up this game as long as you do," said Harry Wharton. "You've done plenty of things you ought to blush for—now we're going to make you blush. Shove it on, Bob."

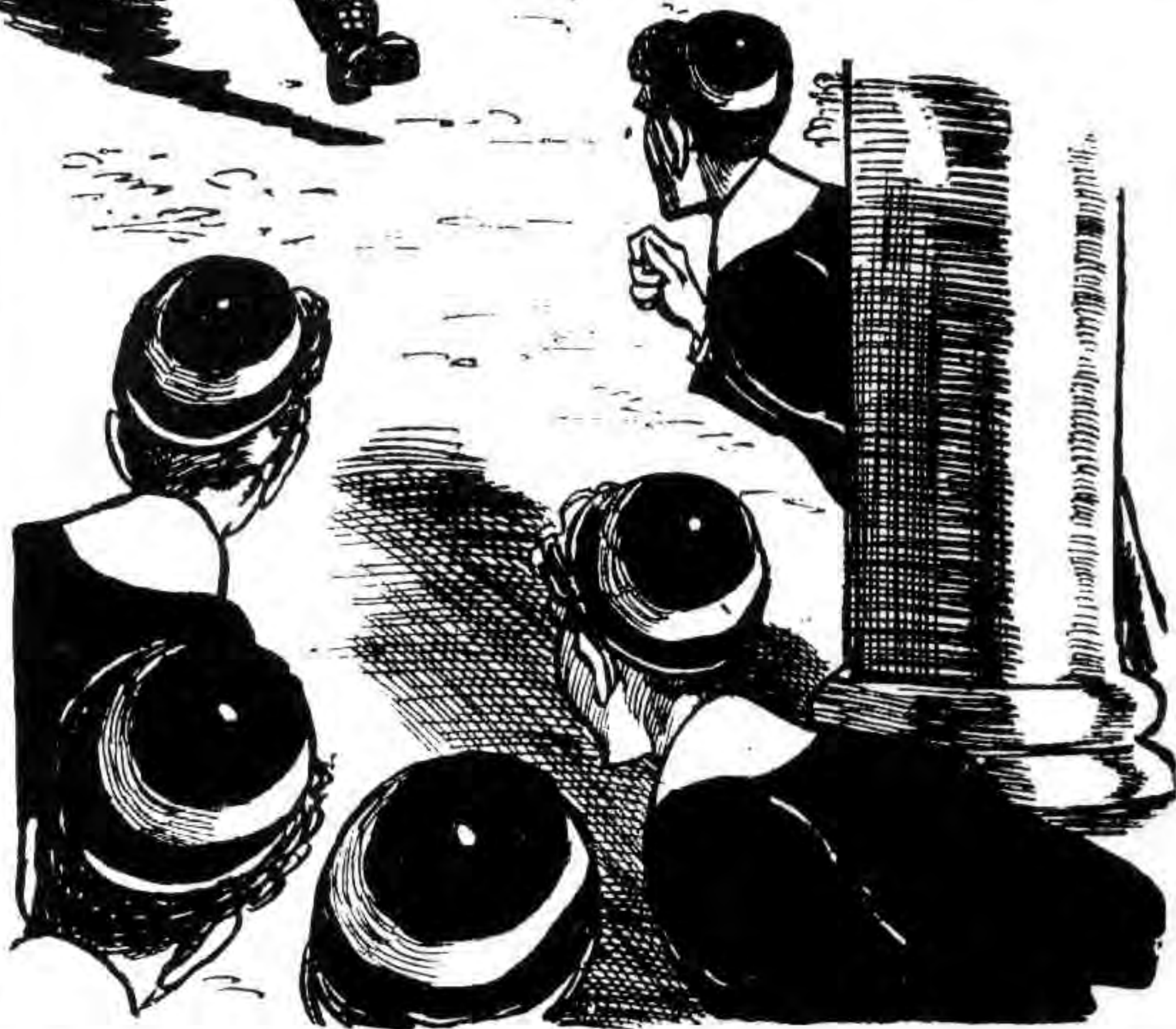
"Ugh! Urrrrrrgggh!"

The red paint dabbed on Loder's face.

"Groogh! You—you young scoundrels—y o u— Ooococh!" spluttered Loder, as Bob playfully dabbed the brush into his mouth.

"Better keep your mouth shut, old pippin," said Bob.

The advice was too good not to be taken; Loder kept his mouth shut. The paint was not agreeable in any way; but it was better taken externally than internally. With a furious face and gleaming eyes, Loder submitted to the painting of his face, while the



"Give him some more!" shouted Bolsover major. "He hasn't had half enough yet! Make it a dozen!"

"Make it six dozen!" said Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop it!" shrieked Loder. "Oh, you young villains! Oh, great gad! I'll skin you for this! I—I—I'll—"

Loder became incoherent.

"Sit him up!"

Loder sat up in the grasp of innumerable hands. He howled loudly as he sat. Again he strove to struggle, but the grasping hands were too many for him. He was backed against a pillar, and his head gently tapped on the hard stone, as a warning to keep quiet. And he spluttered and gave in.

"You've got the paint, Bob?"

"Here it is! We've wasted a bob on

Removites chortled as they looked on. Loder's aspect was growing quite startling.

"Jever see such a beauty?" said Bob, scraping out the last of the paint. "I wish I'd had another bob's worth now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can take that face to the Head when you make your report, Loder," said Wharton. "And you can remember that, if we get a Head's flogging, we shall give you extra beans next time. This time we're painting you; next time we shall shave your head and your eyebrows."

(Continued on page 26.)

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NERVE! In a quiet section of civilised England, a gang of desperadoes are determined to force their way into a certain house. To do this they lay siege to the place, each point of vantage being covered by a sniper who knows his job thoroughly and shoots at sight!



The MYSTERY of LONE MANOR

A Baffling Mystery Story, featuring Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, and Jack Drake, his boy assistant.

Taking Risks!

TRAVERS led the way, slipping swiftly over the top and dropping down to the farther side. They could see no one in the gardens below.

"Don't think they spotted him," whispered Jack.

He ran forward, crouching, and scrambled up after Travers. The youngster was outlined against the sky for a moment, and as he twisted round to slither down on the other side, Locke's voice cut the air like a knife: "Down—flat!"

Ping!

Instantly the youngster obeyed, pressing himself against the tiles. His nerves tightened as he heard the bullet that came humming over him. Then he sprang down the farther slope, landing on his hands and knees on the leads below.

"Crumbs, that was a narrow squeak!" muttered Travers. "They've spotted us!"

The two crouched down behind the stone coping. Jack's heart was beating fast.

Would Locke risk the passage, covered as it was by the sniper in the bushes below?

"Don't take any risks, guv'nor!" exclaimed Drake warningly.

But even as he spoke a panther-like form came swinging over the ridge, so swiftly and easily that the watching man below was seconds late. The whine of lead came, smashing half a dozen tiles; but by that time Locke was crouching with Jack and Travers.

"He's in that clump of laurels by the edge of the water," said Locke calmly. "I'm going to drive him out of there."

On hands and knees, the three crept over the flat roof at the top of the tower towards the battlements. Lying flat behind the stonework, Locke raised his head and hand cautiously. His automatic cracked sharply, and on the instant the detective dropped.

They heard the bullet rip through the bushes.

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"Missed the beggar!" murmured Locke. "He'll have a pot at us this time! Gently does it!"

Again he raised his eyes, and sent a shot humming into the clump of bushes where the sniper was hidden. This time an answering hum passed a yard or so to their left.

"You've rattled him!" grinned Travers. "He's not so steady on his shots now—"

Crash!

A bullet had flattened itself on the stonework behind which Travers was lying. Chips of stone flew upward, pattering down on to the roof behind them.

Travers and Jack both had automatics in their hands, and, at Locke's order, Jack slithered off along the leads towards the roof of the north wing. From the far corner of it he could overlook the northern reach of the moat. With Travers stationed at the back of the tower, the three defenders had the whole moat in view between them.

Locke heard Jack's weapon speak at once, twice in rapid succession. A shout came from below.

From where Travers crouched, he could see no one. On the other side of the tower he heard Locke's duel with the man in the bushes continue, shot for shot. Locke was having difficulty in dislodging the sniper below.

Travers' face was tense and set.

For how long was this to go on?

"We can't hold out till doomsday!" he muttered, his eyes searching the shadows of the garden. "When it gets dark—"

Already the dusk was upon them. Out on the lonely waste of marshland the evening mists were rising, white and ghostly. Locke was not shooting now, and everything was very still. An eerie feeling of desolation, and merciless watching eyes—

A sudden sharp shout.

Three shots in quick succession. Travers swung his head, saw Locke racing down the roof towards Jack Drake, crouching as he ran.

A bullet smashed on to the stonework of the old tower, and another. Jack

Drake fired again, and a cry drifted up to Travers' ears, and the vague sound of running men in the garden, and a splash of water in the moat.

"What's the game?" Travers asked himself eagerly. He saw Locke drop beside Jack and peer down over the embattlements. "He'll get a bullet through his head if he's not mighty careful!" he added grimly.

A man came into his view, running round the corner of the house, on the far side of the moat.

"Silva!" breathed Travers; and he raised his automatic.

There was a menacing crackle of fire from men unseen, and the whine of lead rose and died over the roof of the tower.

"Trying to dislodge 'em from the tower," thought Travers, his finger steady on his trigger, as he stared down at Silva. "Well, here's to see this villain jump!"

He pressed the trigger.

The bullet ripped into the turf a foot in front of Silva, and he halted in his tracks, face startled. The Spanish-English scoundrel glanced up, and his handsome face set in lines of malignant hate as he saw Travers' head. Then, turning, he plunged into the cover of the trees beyond the lawn.

Locke was creeping back to his post.

"What was happening over there?" called Travers. And Locke smiled coolly.

"Couple of 'em trying to swim the moat under cover of their pals' fire," he answered quietly. "More pluck than sense. But we've scared 'em off again. They're sniping from the trees."

Dusk was swiftly deepening. Travers turned again to stare down into the darkened garden. He heard Locke recommence his duel with the man in the laurels.

The waters of the moat were rippling sluggishly, dark and somehow sinister to Travers' eyes. The flaming crimson disc of the sun had vanished behind the mist, and the shadows lay black in the trees where Silva and other of the Wolves were hiding. Immediately below, the sluice-gate could be seen,

which had been so mysteriously raised on the night of the unknown man's visit to the old house.

An automatic barked from among the trees, and another. Travers crouched low. They were firing at him. When he peered down again, he gave a shout: "Look out! By Jove! Mr. Locke

Ferrers Locke turned his head.

"What's up?" he cried incisively.

"The sluice!" exclaimed Travers. And on the words, his weapon sent a bullet singing down. "Quick! They're trying to open the sluice! If they empty the moat, we're done!"

When Night Fell!

LOCKE came running across the leads, and dropped beside Travers.

A knot of dark figures had come racing out of the trees towards the sluice. Already two men were at the wheel which raised the sluice-gate. A hail of bullets was humming past the heads of Locke and Travers, and splashing on the embattlements. It was impossible to raise their eyes or hands.

"They are good shots!" snapped Ferrers Locke.

Travers saw that the detective's eyes were dancing with an odd light.

He realised that Locke was enjoying himself. The spirit of gay adventure that was never far below the surface of this man with the steely eyes and granite jaw was coming to the surface now. Locke had an odd inborn love for a hot corner.

"If they empty the moat—" repeated Travers.

"They sha'n't!" came the answer.

Locke slithered swiftly towards the ridge of tiles behind them. Travers gave a cry.

"They'll get you if you cross it!" he warned; but the detective shook his head.

"Not with reasonable luck—and it's the only way!"

In a flash he had leapt to his full height, and with a quick leap and swing was dropping over the ridge on the farther side, leaving Travers marvelling at the nerve needed for such a feat. But already Locke was safe behind a twisting chimney-stack.

From where he stood, pressed against the stack, Locke commanded a view of the sluice, but was safe from the snipers in the trees. Unless they ventured into the open, they could not deal with him now.

His automatic stabbed the dusk with a flash of venomous flame, and one of the men at the sluice staggered, clapping a hand to his shoulder. The other gave a cry and bolted for the trees.

The wounded man flung himself full-length on the grass, evidently fearing a second shot. But Locke was not firing at wounded men.

"Get to the other side of the tower, Travers," called the detective. "I can't get back till it's darker—I'll look after this side from here. But watch out for that fellow in the laurels. He's annoyed, and I've not been able to locate him quite yet."

Travers obeyed.

An unearthly silence had fallen. By the sluice-gate the wounded man was crawling into cover again.

And slowly the darkness deepened.

With anxious eyes, Ferrers Locke scanned the sky. The moon would be up later, but clouds were drifting along, and it threatened to be a dark night,

with rain. A blustering wind came storming over the roof, icy cold, and at his post on the north gable. Jack Drake shivered.

"What a game!" the youngster muttered.

But of one thing he, like the others, was determined. The Wolves were not going to enter Lone Manor if he could help it!

Whatever it was, the strange secret which this old house held, which these relentless enemies who called themselves the Wolves were after, Adam Guelph had asked them to guard that secret! And with the old man lying between life and death after that reckless rescue by aeroplane on the part of Ferrers Locke, it was up to them to do as he had asked.

And at memory of that strange message found in the floating box in the moat, Jack Drake began puzzling again over the odd sentence that had been left unfinished—

"Guard the secret! Where the stone fingers point—"

"Heaven knows what it can mean!" muttered the youngster, with a sudden impatient shrug of the shoulders. "Sounds like giddy moonstruck madness! Crumbs! It's getting dark!"

He listened.

The wind was rustling the trees below, but he thought he could hear faint footsteps at the edge of the moat. Peering down through the gloom, he strained his eyes in the effort to see, but in vain.

"Hallo, hallo—"

He felt sure he had heard a faint splash in the moat. He plunged his hands into his pocket, slipping another clip of ammunition into his automatic. Then he turned and crept noiselessly down the roofs to where Travers lay.

"I say!" muttered the youngster.

But Travers' hand came through the gloom and gripped his arm.

"Hush!" warned Travers. "Listen!" From immediately below came a faint sound in the water.

INTRODUCTION.

TOM TRAVERS, a clever goalkeeper who plays for Larkham City, receives an urgent message—"Come at once"—from

ADAM GUELPH, his uncle, an old miser, residing at Lone Manor, a gloomy old house, complete with moat and draw-bridge. Fearing the worst, Travers confides in

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous detective of Baker Street, and

JACK DRAKE, his clever boy assistant, who, after many thrilling experiences, discovers that Adam Guelph has been kidnapped by a secret society calling itself "The Wolves."

SILVA, and **DROOD**, a blind man, members of the society.

Although Adam Guelph is rescued from the Wolves, Locke learns from the doctor into whose care the old miser is placed that Guelph is in such a serious condition that the detective need not expect any help from him. The motive, therefore, for the kidnapping of the old man, Locke is left to discover unaided. When he returns to Lone Manor the detective finds that Silva and his gang of ruffians are determined to force their way into the house. Silva declares that he will besiege the place, and his threat is no idle one, for he has under his command a number of "snipers," who lose no time in showing that they mean business. Then Travers suggests that if the party can reach the old tower the attackers could be held at bay. But to reach the tower Locke & Co. have to run the gauntlet of the snipers below.

(Now read on)

The next moment footsteps come to their ears behind them. Under cover of dark, Locke had crept over the ridge to them. He crouched beside them.

"There's someone swimming the moat just here, I fancy!" breathed Travers.

"And round the corner, too!" put in Jack quickly. "I came to tell you that. I heard a splash—"

"And on the other side, too," came the cool voice of Ferrers Locke. "I've just come to warn you. You heard my shot just now? I fancied I heard someone going to the sluice-gate, so I thought I'd warn 'em off. I heard the bullet hit the iron handle, I think it was; they sheered off all right—realise we've got the sluice covered, although it's dark. They won't try to raise it again yet awhile."

All three crouched silent, listening. A soft splash came to their ears. Peering down, Jack fancied he could make out a head against the dark water.

"Shall I have a pot, guv'nor?"

"Might as well," nodded Locke.

"We've got to scare 'em off if we can." The automatic spat down into the darkness, and they heard the bullet take the water with a sharp hiss. The head, if it had been a head that the youngster had seen, had vanished.

"Back to your post, Jack!" whispered Ferrers Locke. "We've got to stop this! We've plenty of rounds, thank goodness—we can afford a little blind shooting. If we can put up a barrage—"

Jack hurried back to the north gable. Crouching behind the battlements, he sent a few shots whining down, scattered over the stretch of moat. But he heard nothing, save the bullets taking the water.

"This is no good!" muttered Jack. "These chaps aren't funks—not by long chalks. They'll be across all right now it's dark, and the guv'nor knows it well enough. I wonder—"

He broke off.

From somewhere below had come the crash of glass, followed by a heavy blow.

Almost instantly, from the other side of the old house, came a second smash, followed by a thunderous blow on the shutters of one of the barricaded windows.

Crash—crash! Crash—crash! There came the sound of a splitting shutter.

"They're across all right!" muttered Jack Drake coolly.

The thunderous, smashing blows rang out loudly through the night as the Wolves attacked the barricades of the besieged manor.

The Green Spider!

JACK heard Locke's voice call to him, and the youngster hurried back to the roof of the tower.

"We've got to get to somewhere where we can shoot down at 'em," Locke told him swiftly. "Travers knows this house and we don't—carry on, Travers!"

Travers had slipped his automatic into his pocket.

"Follow me!" he said tersely.

As they scrambled over the roof-ridges, along narrow stone copings, raced over flat spaces of leaded roof, Jack's pulses drummed excitedly. The crashing blows of the attackers were ringing through the stillness. It would not be long now before they were at grips with the Wolves!

"Here!" muttered Travers, slipping to the edge of the roof at a point above one of the attacked windows. The three

crouched down at the edge of the dizzy drop, and sent a warning bullet singing down.

"If they don't clear, we shall have to fire into 'em, I'm afraid!" said Locke grimly.

But, even as he spoke, a flash of flame darted from the darkness beyond the moat. There came a cry from Travers, and he staggered back.

"Hit!" he said, and laughed shakily. "Got me in the forearm—"

Another bullet whistled by them, dangerously near.

"Checkmate!" breathed Locke. "We can't stay here. Too exposed. They've got the measure of our position all right!"

They retreated, and in the shelter of a chimney-stack the detective examined Travers' arm. It was only a flesh wound, and Locke soon had it bandaged roughly. But it had been a grim warning. The attack on the windows was not without cover from snipers beyond the moat, who could easily locate the position of the defenders if they fired.

"We must get downstairs," said Locke. "We'll fight from inside!"

And a few minutes later the three were running down the great staircase of Lone Manor. From two points they could hear the attackers-smashing at the barricades.

"The library," whispered Jack Drake, and flung open the door. As he did so, they heard a heavy fall and eager voices. The youngster peered through the gloom towards the dim square of window, saw the figure of a man come squeezing in through the opening made there, between the broken shutters.

Jack heard a sharp cry from the man in the room.

Pitch-black though it was, the man seemed to sense the youngster's presence. He shouted to the others, and came running through the darkness. Jack yelled to Locke, and squared up to meet the attack.

The youngster's left flashed out, straight from the shoulder, staggering the man in the darkness. But already another had broken in, was being followed by a third. Jack jumped back through the door, dragging it after him and turning the key. In the hall a match flared as Travers swiftly lit a lamp.

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In the light of it, the three saw the locked door shake as someone came crashing against it.

Jack licked his lips. The blood was racing through his veins. He felt a keen desire to pump an ounce of lead through that door, but he checked himself. They were not out to kill. And then Locke gripped his arm.

"This way!"

From another room came the sound of running feet across the floor. The Wolves had broken in there, too. A door crashed open farther down the hall, and the figure of a man came running out full tilt into the light—a man at sight of whom a quick cry escaped Jack Drake.

It was Drood, the blind man, one of the leaders of the Wolves!

By the sound of his footsteps as he had raced across the room by which he had entered, Drood might have been a seeing man. But now, in the lighted hall, he gave an odd gasp, and his hands came up as if to protect himself. He staggered, like a man in the dark, and crashed against the table on which the light stood.

The lamp reeled, smashed to the floor, and went out.

From Drood came a queer exclamation, almost of satisfaction. Then his harsh voice rang out malignantly:

"Here they are—all three of them! Here, in the hall—quick!"

It was amazing, uncanny. Some odd sixth sense seemed to have revealed their presence to him.

Thundering footsteps echoed through the house. With another terrific blow upon it, the library door broke open—they heard it crash back in the darkness. The hall was suddenly full of stumbling men.

Fighting back to back in the dark, hitting out blindly at a surging ring of men, who could be felt rather than seen, the three struggled in grim, dogged silence. Then above the clamour came the voice of the blind man:

"Make way for me, you fools! I'll nail them!"

Travers felt a pair of big hands come out of the blackness and wind round his throat, bearing him backwards, throttling him. Drood's powerful frame was on top of him, pinning him to the floor. Other hands came diving at him, dragging his wrists behind his back, snatching the automatic from his pocket. He felt a cloth wind round his arms, fastening them, and knew that Drood, the blind man, was trussing him up helplessly. Travers struggled, but a blow on the side of the head set his senses reeling.

The vivid white beam of an electric torch came swinging through the dark. It revealed Jack and Travers Locke, both pinned down, while the blind man was lashing Locke's wrists behind his back with a strip of torn curtain.

As the torchlight fell on the grim face of Drood, with the strange eyes and relentless jaw, the blind man threw up a hand to his face. A snarl broke from him, as though the light had hurt his eyes.

"You fool, Scaramanga! Keep off that confounded light till I've finished this!"

"Sorry!" came a soft, lisping voice, the voice of the man Scaramanga. The torchlight was shut off abruptly.

"Right!" came the voice of Drood, growling. A match flickered, a lamp was lit. The three prisoners were dragged to their feet.

There was a burning pain in Travers' arm, and his head ached sickeningly as he stared round at the Wolves.

His eyes fell on the face of Silva, dark and handsome, with the black eyes glittering and cruel, a silky smile of triumph on the red lips; on the face of Drood, blind, indignant; on the thin face of a tall man to whom Silva was speaking, addressing him as Scaramanga—a man with a thin, dark, upturned moustache, and nose like a hawk's beak—a Greek Travers realised him to be from the name.

There were nine men in the hall, not counting Locke, Travers, and Jack. Silva bowed mockingly.

"I warned you, Mr. Locke!" The soft voice was almost caressing. "I told you that it was useless to set yourself against the Wolves. The house is in our hands, as I told you would be the case."

Locke nodded coolly.

"Temporarily, yes, Mr. Silva," he answered, and his voice was light and casual.

"And now," came the grinding voice of Drood, "you are going to tell us where the green spider is. Or—"

He broke off, with a harsh cackle that sent a cold thrill down Jack's spine. There was something about the blind man that was vaguely horrible.

"The green spider," repeated Locke, and shot a meaning glance at Jack and Travers. "Sounds uncommonly interesting, gentlemen. But what is the green spider?"

"Don't tell us you have forgotten?" said Silva, with a laugh that was icy-cold.

"I never knew," said Locke laconically. "Believe me or not, as you like."

"We don't believe you!" snarled Drood.

"But we'll make you speak soon enough!" came the lisping voice of Scaramanga, the Greek. "Think again, Mr. Locke!"

The green spider! Mystery upon mystery! Jack Drake's brain was in a whirl. What could it be—the green spider, for which these men, who called themselves the Wolves, had risked so much, seemed willing to go any lengths to gain?

"The Stone Fingers Point—"

"YES," crooned Silva gently. "you would be very wise to tell us where the green spider is hidden. For you are bound to know. Otherwise, I fear—well, the Wolves have their own little methods, you know, but I am afraid they are not always quite pleasant!"

There was a world of cold cruelty in the soft, icy voice. Silva went on with a deprecating gesture:

"Have you, Mr. Locke, ever had a lighted match held between your fingers?"

Jack Drake felt his heart grow cold. This man Silva had a heart that was diabolical—he could see it in his eyes.

The Greek broke in.

"Wait!" he said. "It may be true—we shall find out. But, first, remember, there is what Guelph himself told us about the secret door under the moat which—"

"Lies!" snarled Drood. "He was trying to fool us!"

"Possibly!" smiled the Greek. "But we cannot afford to leave any stone unturned. We tried to empty the moat before, but our man failed that night. To-night we can empty it without disturbance, at our leisure. Let us do so now, and discover if there really is this secret door beneath the moat, of which Guelph spoke."

"Scaramanga is right," parred Silva. "And if we find that there is no such

door we will proceed to question Mr. Locke and his friends once again. I fancy we shall not have much difficulty in persuading them to tell us all they know."

He smiled his silky smile.

"I tell you we know nothing—less than you do!" broke out Travers. "We had never heard of the green spider till to-night, whatever that may be—"

Silva raised his eyebrows slightly and turned away. He motioned to three of his men, and the prisoners were seized and forced roughly across the floor to a small side room behind the library. They were flung in, and the door crashed behind them, leaving them in darkness.

Jack Drake had stumbled to his knees, but he staggered up. He heard the deep, furious breathing of Tom Travers near him. Then from Ferrers Locke came a shadowy laugh.

"Splendid!" the detective whispered. "This is what I was hoping for!"

"I don't see that we're so well off, guv'nor," answered Jack Drake ruefully. But a moment later he gave a gasp of amazement to feel a hand fall on his shoulder. He knew that the hands of both Travers and Locke had been lashed behind them.

"Who's that?" said the youngster sharply. But in a flash he knew. "Guv'nor, you've got free!"

"Well, don't shout it all over Lone

Manor!" muttered the detective warningly. "Yes, I'm free." His hands were already busy on the cloth tying Jack's wrists. "Y'know, there is a way of crossing your wrists and doubling your fingers so that it's easy to get free unless the chap who's trussing you up knows the trick. Lucky they only tied my wrists!"

In a moment Jack was free, and Locke was releasing Travers. Travers was gritting his teeth in the darkness. The pain from his wounded arm was intense after the rough handling he had received.

"Well, here we are!" went on Locke in the same low tones. "Free, but with the Wolves in possession of Lone Manor. They're busy emptying the moat now, it seems, in search of a secret door, of which Adam Guelph told 'em, which they hope leads to the hiding-place of this mysterious green spider."

"What the thump can that be, guv'nor?" muttered Jack Drake.

"Ask me another, young 'un," replied Locke, with the shade of a chuckle in his voice. "But I think we can deduce one thing. This green spider is the object, hidden at Lone Manor, that we have been wondering about so long—the magnet that draws the Wolves. And we know something about this green spider, too! If we can solve that riddle of the broken message, 'Where the stone fingers point,' we shall be on

the way to finding the hiding-place of the spider."

Jack glanced towards the window. Like the others, it had been barricaded. A crack in the shutters revealed the big oak table that had been dragged against it.

"Think we could shift that table and open the shutters without their hearing us?" he muttered.

"We'll try," answered Locke.

And luck was with them! Believing all three of their prisoners safely trussed up and helpless, the Wolves were not keeping a very strict eye on the room into which they had been thrown. After ten minutes' cautious work the table and shutters had been drawn back, inch by inch, with scarcely a creak.

Locke drew up the lower sash of the window noiselessly. He put out his head cautiously, staring out.

"The sluice is on the other side of the house," he murmured. "But it's clear they've opened it; you can see the movement of the water. We are bang on the moat here. But there's a ledge of stonework under the window, running along the wall to the tower at the corner. If we could get there we're near the boathouse."

"By Jove!" whispered Travers. "If we could get the boat!"

"Can you climb along the ledge?" asked Locke.

Travers nodded.



From the other side of the old house came a series of violent crashes. The Wolves were smashing in the shutters of the barricaded windows! (See page 23.)

"Yes. My arm hurts like blazes, but my fingers can grip."

"Then carry on."

Travers swung himself over the low sill. All was very silent, though they could hear now the distant rush of water through the sluice as the moat slowly emptied into the creek.

Gripping the irregularities in the old stonework with digging fingers, the Larkham City footballer moved cautiously along the narrow ledge that overhung the water.

Jack followed, and last came Ferrers Locke.

It was not easy, and at any moment their escape might be discovered. But five minutes later they were in the old tower. Locke still had his electric torch, and he flashed it cautiously around.

The bright beam fell on the damp, mouldering stonework of the big, bare apartment on the ground floor of the tower. Lichen-covered flagstones were beneath their feet. Above their heads a bat whirled suddenly.

"Now for the boathouse!" muttered Jack Drake.

But from Tom Travers came a sudden quick cry. He had flung out a pointing hand.

"My heavens! Look!"

The ray of torchlight had fallen on a carved stone figure, life-size, that was set in a niche in the wall. Jack grinned.

"Only a giddy statue, Tom! Think it was Drood or Silva?"

But Travers gripped the youngster's shoulder.

"But look—look! The fingers, man—the stone fingers—"

From Jack came a sharp breath. Locke's eyes gleamed suddenly.

"By Jove, Travers, here's a find!"

"Where the stone fingers point," muttered Travers. He stared through the gloom at that white, rather eerie figure that stared down from the niche with unseeing eyes. "Where do they point? The right hand is clenched; they don't point anywhere. But the left hand fingers—"

"Why, they are pointing straight to the floor!" put in Jack Drake. "Look! They're pointing to that old iron chest which—"

In a flash the three were across the flagstones, and Locke had dragged open the lid of the chest.

A mutter of disappointment came from Tom Travers.

"Empty!"

They stared at the shadowy interior. Then Locke chuckled.

"Perhaps the fingers don't point only to the chest," he murmured; "but to what is underneath as well!"

It was the work of half a minute to lift the chest aside between them, heavy though it was. And then Jack's face lit up.

For set in the flagstones beneath the iron chest was a rust-eaten iron ring.

With gleaming eyes Ferrers Locke gripped the ring and lifted. At first it seemed as though even his strength was not sufficient to raise the flagstone. But suddenly it shifted in its socket, and was swung aside. The three found themselves staring down into a well of darkness, into which a narrow flight of winding stone steps disappeared.

A damp, earthy smell rose to their nostrils.

"My word, this old house is beginning to give up its secrets!" drawled Ferrers

Locke. "So the green spider is somewhere down there—eh? Who goes first?"

He stood listening. No sound broke the stillness, but for the faint rush of water through the open sluice on the far side of the house. All else was quiet. Obviously their escape had not yet been discovered.

And then the three stiffened, their faces grew startled.

For from somewhere beneath their feet, down in the dark into which the stone stairway led, had come a faint, ghostly cry like a human voice.

In alarm and bewilderment Tom Travers stared from Jack Drake to Ferrers Locke with questioning eyes.

(Had they been forestalled? Had the Wolves succeeded in their quest? Whatever the cause, Ferrers Locke and his assistants are determined to elucidate the mystery of the green spider. Be sure you read next week's thrilling instalment of this splendid serial!)

REBELS OF GREYFRIARS

(Continued from page 21.)

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

"You began the game, and we'll chuck it when you do," went on the captain of the Remove. "If you'll take a friendly tip, you'll begin learning football, instead of ragging the Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think that will do," said Bob. "He's had the lot. But he can have the paint-pot and the brush."

And Bob Cherry rammed the pot and the brush down Loder's back.

"Now you can cut, Loder."

The captain of Greyfriars staggered to his feet. The Removites backed off, shrieking with laughter at his crimson face. They were quite prepared for an attack, and Loder looked for a moment or two as if he would run amuck, hitting out right and left. But if Loder had done so, his last state would have been worse than his first.

Instead of rushing on the grinning juniors, Loder turned and dashed away, panting with rage, followed by a howl of laughter.

He was glad that the dusk was thickening, as he crossed the quad. But as he entered the House there were exclamations from five or six fellows.

"Loder—"

"What—"

"Great Scott!"

Loder dashed on without a word, and rushed to his study. He passed Wingate in the Sixth Form passage, and the ex-captain of Greyfriars stared at him, and burst into a laugh.

Loder gave him a bitter glare, and rushed into his study, slammed the door, and locked it. He was likely to be busy for some time, getting rid of the complexion Bob Cherry had given him, and he did not want any interruptions.

In the Cloisters Harry Wharton & Co. laughed loud and long. The old Cloisters rang with their merriment.

"Well, we've done it now," said Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "It means a terrific licking, of course; but it's worth it."

"Yes, rather!"

"Perhaps it doesn't," said Peter Todd sagely. "I fancy that if I were captain of Greyfriars I'd try to keep dark a jolly old episode like this. If Loder's got any boss-sense, he won't tell the Head that he's been flogged with his own cane, and painted like a November guy. The Head's jolly certain to think, if he does, that Greyfriars needs a new captain."

"Licking or no licking, it's worth it," said Harry Wharton. "And next time we'll pile it on thicker—if there is a next time! Loder will get fed-up with ragging the Remove in the long run."

"Hear, hear!"

The Removites were in no hurry to return to the House. They had willingly taken the risk. Nevertheless, they felt a certain uneasiness as to the outcome of the affair. They were prepared for a Head's licking; but they were not keen on it. But the dusk was turning into dark, and Harry Wharton & Co. went into the School House at last.

They passed their Form master, talking with Gwynne of the Sixth in the Hall; but neither Mr. Quelch nor the prefect took any heed of them. Loder had not reported them yet, it was clear—and he had had plenty of time.

The juniors went up to the Remove passage for prep; and prep was not interrupted by any summons to the Head's study. When the hour came for dorm, Gwynne of the Sixth saw lights out for the Remove. And still nothing had been heard from Loder.

By that time the rebels of the Remove were quite reassured. Loder had not reported to the Head—and he was not going to report! Infuriated as he was, he realised that he could not afford to face the storm of ridicule that would have burst on him had the story spread all over Greyfriars.

Doubtless he hoped to wreak his vengeance in more surreptitious ways; and possibly he was fed-up with the Remove, and realised, at long last, that that unruly Form never would be tamed, and never would "feed from his hand."

Certainly that appeared to be the case—for on the next day, and the next, the Remove heard nothing from Loder. When they passed him in the quad he ignored them. Nothing more was heard of fagging the Remove. The Greyfriars captain really seemed to have forgotten the existence of that recalcitrant Form.

In the Remove studies there was much rejoicing.

They had entered into a contest with the captain of the school, and they had won! It was clear that they had won; Loder had had enough of them, if not a little too much.

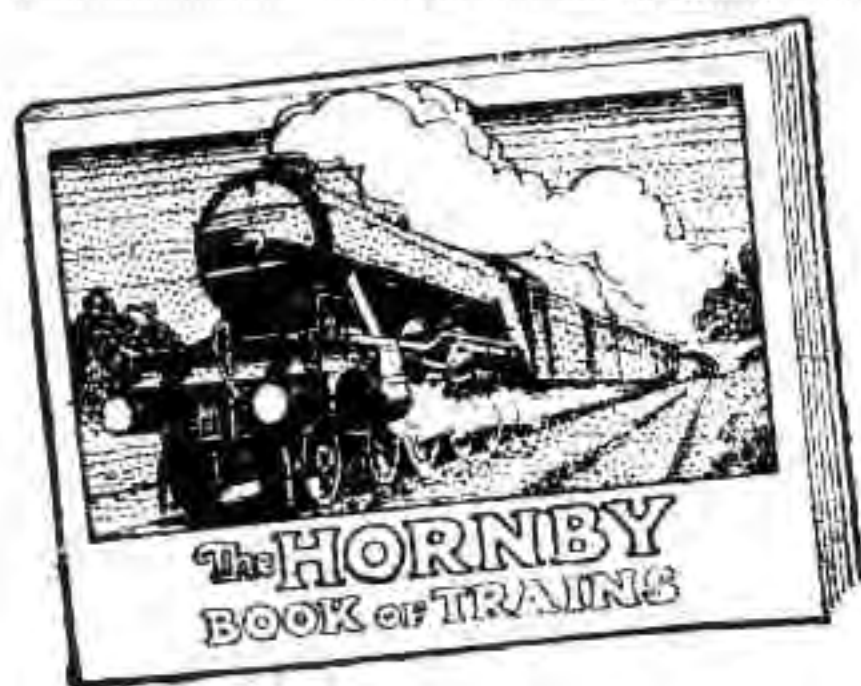
And the victorious Removites rejoiced accordingly. Even Billy Bunter rolled past Loder in the quad with a cheeky grin, and Loder affected not to see him.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been too much for Loder. So far as the Remove were concerned, the captain of Greyfriars had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof!

THE END.

(It is a bitter pill for the lordly Gerald Loder to have to swallow, but he is not beaten yet—not by any manner of means. So make sure you read next week's topping tale, entitled "LODER'S LAST CHANCE!" by Frank Richards. It is undoubtedly the finest story in this wonderful series.)

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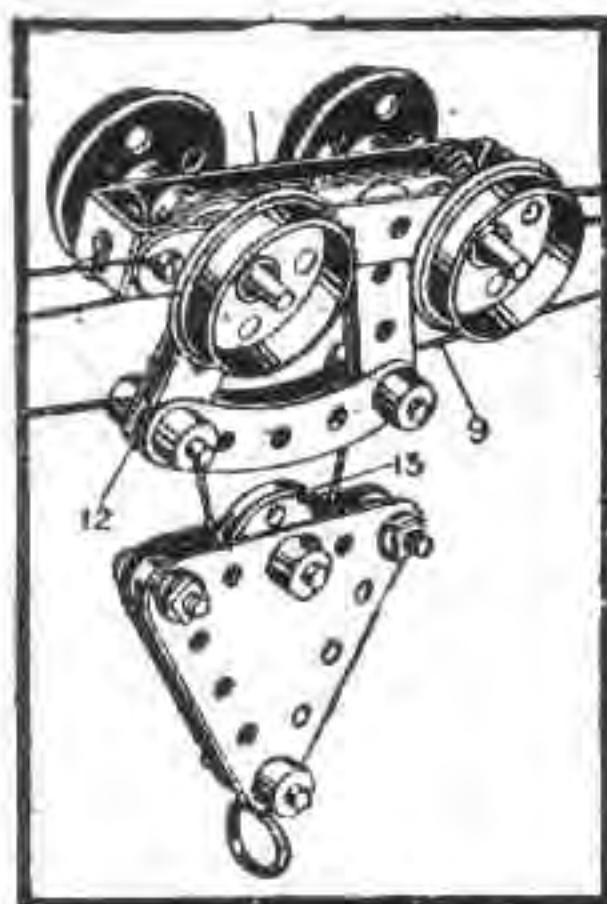
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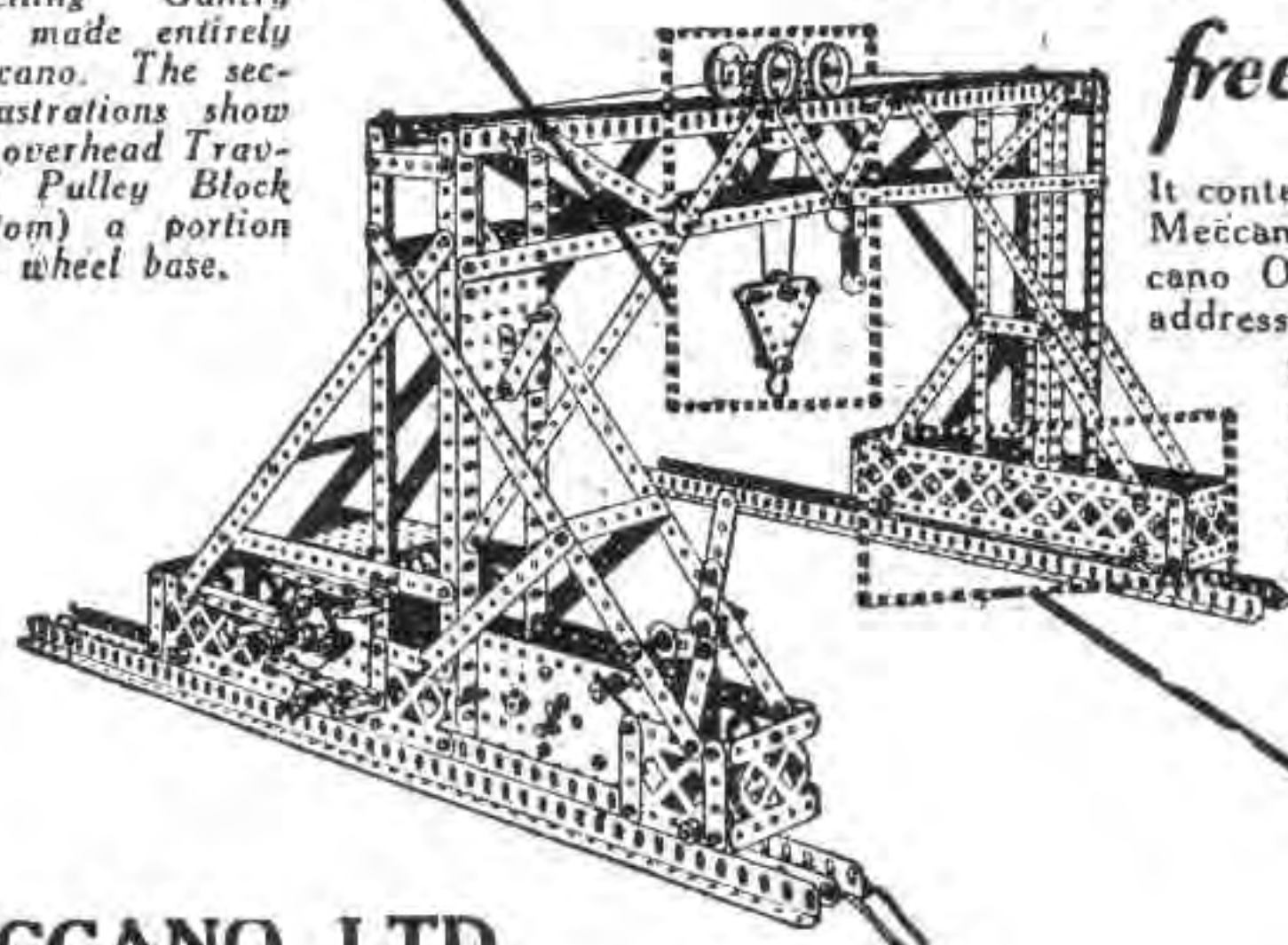
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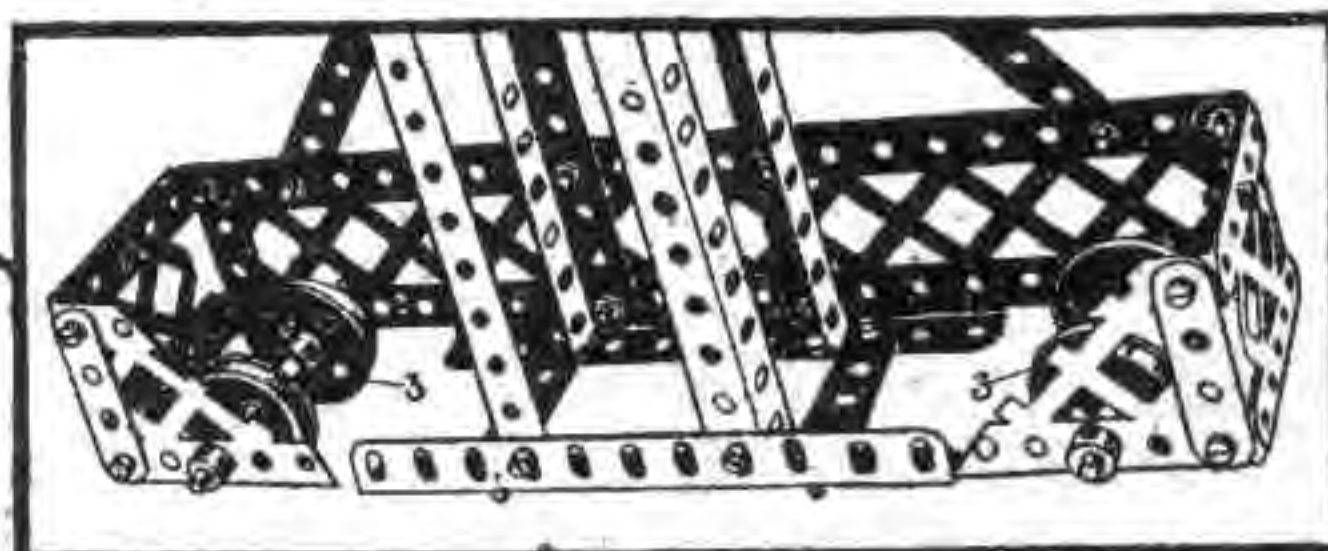
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