

The 1930 GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL NOW ON SALE!

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The MAGNET

2^D
EVERY
SATURDAY.



"THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!"

The shadow of gloom and tragedy is lifted from Ravenspur Grange with the advent of Ferrers Locke, detective, and with the employment of such artifice and ingenuity as to deceive even the nameless Terror!



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to
c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

HALLO, chums, I suppose there's no objection if I kick off this week with the following clever limerick:

Muttered Bunter to Teddy one day:
"There's a small debt I wish to repay.
I've received a P.O.
From the pater, you know,
And—" But Peter had fainted
away!

A useful leather pocket wallet has been forwarded to: A. C. Walmsley, Tower Cottages, Houghton, near Preston, Lancs. for the above winning effort.

Interested in the cinema? I expect you all are. Anyway, Arthur Tracy, of Birmingham is, and he wants to know, amongst other things:

WHAT IS A "MIX"?

First of all it is essential to know what a "Fade In" is. This is a term used in film circles to mean the gradual brightening-up of a scene from blackness. You have all seen a film begin with a dark screen; then the outlines are seen dimly, and gradually brighten until the scene is of usual light-strength. Conversely a "Fade Out" is the opposite thing—i.e. when the scene gradually fades to blackness. A "Mix" means that one scene is fading in while another is fading out.

Here are some more film terms which you might find interesting: A "Cut" is when there is no warning of a change of scene or position, but the word is also used by the director on the floor of the studio when he wants the camera-man to stop taking. He gives the order "Camera" to commence taking. A "Shot" is the taking of a portion of film without changing the position of the camera, but there are many different kinds of "shots." An "Akeley Shot," for instance, is a shot taken of a rapidly moving object—such as a galloping horse or a moving train—when the object is held in the picture while the background flashes past. It gets its name from the name of the man who invented the method of taking it.

A "TRUCKING SHOT"

is a shot taken while the camera is actually moving forward, sideways, or backward. A "rocking shot" is when the camera is rocked so as to give the effect of a rolling ship or a moving car. A "panoram shot" is one that is taken while the tripod of the camera is in a fixed position, but the camera itself is being swung horizontally or tilted vertically. When you see two pictures on the same length of film—such as a title on a moving background, or the effect of a vision, this is known as a "superimpose."

HOW MANY CRUSADES WERE THERE?

is the question asked by one of my girl readers, Ethel Bentham, of Renfrew. There were eight altogether, but all of

them were not successful. The first Crusade took place in 1095, when Jerusalem was taken. It was lost during the second Crusade, and the third, fourth and fifth did not succeed in capturing Jerusalem again. It was taken again on the sixth and lost once more on the seventh. The eighth, and last, resulted in all Christians being driven out of Syria. I suppose part of the Great War can be considered as a Crusade, for then Jerusalem was taken again by our forces.

And now, while I get my breath, let us have a laugh at this joke for which A. W. Henton, of 33, Grove Street, Leamington Spa, gets a "Magnet" pocket knife.



The teacher was testing her class with questions on general knowledge.

"Tell me," she said
"what is the
'Order of the
Bath'?"

"Please, miss," replied one of the young pupils, "pa first, ma next, and then us kids!"



A little while ago I had a letter from an American reader, and now there comes another from Paul Langley, of Newark, New Jersey, who has read in an English paper a reference to one of America's patriots which our reader thinks is slighting. The paper referred to Paul Jones as a pirate, and Paul (of Newark) wants to know if, in my opinion,

PAUL JONES WAS A PIRATE?

Well, Paul Jones was certainly guilty of one act which came under the heading of piracy, although he was sorry afterwards for having done it. Paul Jones was a Scotsman who commanded an American privateer during the American war. The English considered him a pirate, although so long as Paul confined his activities to commerce raiding he was quite in accordance with the rules of warfare at that time. But he landed near Kirendbright and pillaged the house of Lord Selkirk, which was, of course, an act of piracy. He died in Paris, and in 1905 his remains were discovered and removed to the United States.

The next question this week brings to me visions of

WHEN VENICE WAS IN HER GLORY!

Arthur Quilter, of Devizes, wants to know what "The Lion's Mouth" was. "The Lion's Mouth" still exists, and any visitor to Venice can see it to-day. It is in one of the outer walls of the Doge's Palace, and was used as a post-box for anonymous letters. If you had a grudge against a fellow, you dropped a letter through the open mouth of a lion's head and a secret tribunal read these letters and delivered judgment. Originally it was intended

to get information concerning those who were traitors to the State, but evilly-disposed persons began to use it for getting square with their own particular enemies. And the unfortunates who were condemned by the secret tribunal passed over the Bridge of Sighs—and were never seen nor heard of again!

That reminds me of an illustration I saw in a certain paper the other day. It showed the Bridge of Sighs with the Rialto in the background, as if both bridges were on the same canal. They are not—the Bridge of Sighs spans a very narrow canal, while the Rialto runs across the Grand Canal.

RAPID-FIRE ANSWERS

to some of the questions which various readers have asked me. Here goes:

How long is the Mississippi? Two thousand nine hundred and sixty miles.

Who originated the game of football? The Ancient Britons, and it has been played in this country ever since, despite many attempts to stop it. The last attempt was in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

What is Popocatepetl? A mountain in Mexico.

Where is Alsatia? It does not now exist. Alsatia was the name given to the precinct of Whitefriars in London, which was a sanctuary used by all manner of rogues, cut-throats, and highwaymen. Don't confuse it with Alsace, of which we heard so much after the War.

From where did the Ku-Klux-Klan get its name? The name is supposed to sound like the opening and closing of a rifle bolt, and was adopted by the founders of this secret society in the year 1868.

What were "Moonlighters"? A secret society which flourished in Ireland in 1880.

I am getting near the end of my space again, so I had better put you wise to next week's bumper bill-o'-fare.

As you are no doubt aware by now, Harry Wharton & Co. have finished their vacation at Ravenspur Grange and are once again with their noses down to the grindstone in the Remove Form at Greyfriars. As is often the case at the beginning of a new term, a fresh face is soon at the old school. And this week is no exception to the rule. Whose is the new face, you'll all be asking. Well, as I have never been known to spoil a treat yet, I am afraid I must ask you to wait until you read

"THE BOY WITHOUT A FRIEND!"

By Frank Richards,

next week's rattling fine yarn of Greyfriars. That you'll enjoy every line of it, I haven't the slightest doubt.

Following the winding-up of the Winkleson series of St. Sam's yarns, Dicky Nugent has come forward with a "Thought-reading" series which will raise the greatest laugh over. The first tale is entitled "Redeem the Remarkable."

Next comes another gripping instalment of our new serial of the French Revolution:

"THE SHADOW OF THE GUILLOTINE!"

By Geo. E. Rochester,

chockablock full of surprises and thrilling situations. You've sampled the thrills already, but they're nothing compared with those to come.

Another big attraction is the third of our grand new series of flying articles written by our expert in his own interesting way. This, together with another cheery "Come into the Office, Boys," completes one of the finest feasts of fiction obtainable.

Make a point, then, chums, of securing your copy at the earliest opportunity.

YOUR EDITOR.

IF YOU LIKE THRILLS, CHUMS, THERE'S A REAL FEAST OF THEM IN THIS YARN!

THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!



The final story in this grand new thriller series, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the popular chums of Greyfriars.

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Shot at the Window!

"MR. FERRERS LOCKE!"
Packington, the butler of Ravenspur Grange, announced the famous detective.

Sir Richard Ravenspur rose eagerly to his feet.

Harry Wharton & Co., who were in the library with the baronet, turned at once towards the man who entered; a man slim but muscular, with clear-cut features, and deep-set eyes that seemed to take in the whole of his surroundings with one fleeting glance.

"Ferrers Locke—at last!" breathed Bob Cherry.

The chums of Greyfriars knew the famous detective well. He was a relative of Dr. Locke, their headmaster; and they had seen him often at the school.

Ferrers Locke, evidently, had not forgotten them. He gave the group of schoolboys a nod and a smile as he advanced to meet the baronet, who shook hands with him warmly.

"I cannot say how glad I am to see you, Mr. Locke," said Sir Richard Ravenspur. "I can only thank you for coming so promptly in answer to my telegram."

"I have never been so glad to receive

a summons to a case, Sir Richard," answered Ferrers Locke.

"Then you were aware——"

"I was aware of the strange happenings at Ravenspur Grange, and was following the matter with the deepest interest. Had not the case been in official hands, I should have been tempted to offer my services," said Locke, with a smile. "I knew Inspector Garnish well—one of the best

The secret enemy of Ravenspur Grange, ruthless and cunning to a degree, finds more than his match in Ferrers Locke, the greatest detective of modern times! Read and enjoy this thrilling yarn of Harry Wharton & Co.

men at the Yard. And he is——"

"Dead!" said Sir Richard, with a slight shiver.

Locke compressed his lips a little.

"So I heard, shortly before I received your telegram," he said. "And nothing has been discovered since?"

"Nothing. Another man is coming from Scotland Yard to take up the matter where Inspector Garnish left it, but——" Sir Richard hesitated a moment. "But that need not interfere with you, Mr. Locke. So far as I am concerned, the case is absolutely in your hands."

"I have no doubt that I shall find myself on quite amicable terms with the official gentleman, Sir Richard," said Ferrers Locke. "In any case, I am at your orders."

"Thank you, Mr. Locke. If you can clear up the fearful mystery that has filled this house with gloom and horror——"

"I shall try," said Locke quietly. "You know these schoolboys, I think?" said the baronet.

Locke gave the juniors a smile.

"Quite well — though I hardly expected to see them here."

Packington, the butler, had not left the library after showing the Baker Street detective in.

He was moving, with his usual noiseless, limping tread, replacing some books that had been taken down from the bookcases.

Sir Richard glanced at him.

"That will do, Packington," he said a trifle sharply.

Locke glanced at the butler as he turned towards his master; one glance taking in the calm, composed face, the heavy dark eyebrows that gave it a slightly foreign look, the lines that made the face, otherwise youthful, seem elderly.

"Very good, sir," said Packington in his smooth tones.

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He moved towards the door.

Crack! Crack!

There was a startled cry from Sir Richard Ravenspur, a shout from Harry Wharton.

Ferrers Locke spun round towards the window.

The tall windows of the library looked on the terrace. Beyond, lay the gardens and the park; and behind the old trees of the park, the sun was sinking. The light was already growing dim in the library.

In one of the windows there was a jagged, gaping gash in the glass, where it had been struck and shattered by a bullet.

"Again!" panted Sir Richard.

A wave of pallor swept over his fine old face, and he leaned a hand on a table for support. Strong and sturdy as he was, the constant strain had told on him. He stood unsteadily; and Packington, crossing the library swiftly in spite of his limping leg, reached him, and supported him with his arm.

"Permit me, sir!" murmured the butler.

Ferrers Locke was already at the window.

Along the terrace came the sound of running footsteps. A Leyford constable came running up.

He stared in at Locke through the jagged aperture in the glass.

"That was a shot!" he panted.

"Search the grounds!" rapped out Locke.

The constable ran for the steps of the terrace.

Locke groped over the fastenings of the french windows. They were both locked and bolted; but he opened them swiftly. Harry Wharton & Co. were at his heels as he stepped out on the terrace.

The detective glanced back.

"Remain with Sir Richard!" he rapped out.

"But—"

"Remain, I tell you."

"Very well, Mr. Locke," said Frank Nugent.

Locke darted across the terrace.

Before him lay the open, wide gardens, glowing in the sunset, and the drive curving away under old oaks and beeches.

From somewhere in front of the house that sudden shot had come—a startling greeting for the Baker Street detective.

The Leyford constable was already searching for the man who had fired, and several manservants had run out of the house; while, from the park, Joyce, the keeper, and two or three other men appeared.

Watch and ward was kept at Ravenspur Grange, every hour of the day and the night, since the unknown assassin had struck at the life of the master of the Grange.

Locke did not descend from the terrace to join in the search. He stood where he was, for a full minute, watching the scene before him with eyes that nothing escaped.

Then he re-entered the library and closed the french windows.

Packington had helped Sir Richard to a deep leather chair, into which the baronet had sunk. His face was pale and his hands shaking a little. Packington hovered round him with respectful attention and sympathy.

"He is gone?" asked Sir Richard, as the Baker Street detective came back.

"I do not think anyone will be found, at all events," said Ferrers Locke. "But they are searching."

"If you desire to join in the search,

Mr. Locke, do not let me detain you here—"

"I do not think it would serve any useful purpose," said the detective tranquilly. "Fortunately, no damage was done—except to your window and your ceiling, Sir Richard."

"That matters little enough," said Sir Richard. He breathed hard. "This strain is telling on my nerves a little, Mr. Locke. To be incessantly under the eye of an unknown enemy, seeking my life—"

"I quite understand that, sir," said Ferrers Locke sympathetically.

"The audacity of the villain is almost incredible," said Sir Richard. "This latest attempt will give you an idea of it, Mr. Locke. A constable constantly patrols the terrace before the house—and my keepers are on the watch in the gardens and the park—yet the dastard has ventured to make another attempt in full daylight—and, as usual, he has vanished mysteriously, as if he were a phantom—"

Harry Wharton made a sign to his chums, and they left the library quietly. They were not at all sure that the man who had fired the shot had succeeded in vanishing beyond the reach of capture; and they were eager to join in the search for him.

"Thank you, Packington," said Sir Richard. "You may leave us now, my good fellow."

"Very good, sir."

Packington left the library, the detective's eyes following the limping figure until the door closed on it.

"And now, Mr. Locke—"

"One moment, sir," said Ferrers Locke.

He moved to the window and examined the broken glass. Then his keen eye traced the gash of the bullet along the ceiling. He glanced out over the terrace to the grounds. Then he drew the heavy curtains, shutting out the daylight, and switched on the electric light. Once more his glance followed the gash along the old ceiling.

"Your unknown enemy, Sir Richard, has proved himself a skilful marksman with a revolver?" he said.

"More than once," said Sir Richard.

"His skill seems to have deserted him on this occasion," said Ferrers Locke. "The bullet, for whoever it was intended, did nothing but smash the pane and gash the ceiling."

"A random shot, fired in at the window in the hope of reaching a mark," said the baronet.

"A very slight hope, I should imagine," said Ferrers Locke. "The shot was fired from so low a level that it could scarcely have struck anyone in this room. Its course was upward, and after breaking the glass it struck the ceiling. Only a person standing very near the window might have been struck, and in the circumstances you would not be likely to be standing there."

Sir Richard Ravenspur gave him a puzzled glance.

"But the shot was fired, Mr. Locke—"

"Undoubtedly."

"It must have been fired with a murderous intention—"

"With a hostile intention of some sort, undoubtedly."

"And by the man who has sought my life, whose constant attacks have made my life a nightmare for more than a week."

The detective made no reply.

"Mr. Locke," exclaimed the baronet, "Inspector Garnish was of opinion that the assassin had no confederate. But

if that shot was not fired by his hand, there must be a confederate."

"We cannot say at present, Sir Richard," said Ferrers Locke gravely; "but the incident has at least proved to me that we are in deep waters, and that we have to deal with a man of infinite cunning."

The detective drew a chair towards the baronet and sat down.

"Now give me some details, Sir Richard," he said. "I desire to hear the whole matter so far as it is known to you from the beginning."

"Very well, Mr. Locke," said the baronet; and he was conscious of a slight feeling of disappointment.

Outside the house, thrown into a state of alarm once more by the sudden shot, searching was going on for the man who had fired, and it seemed to Sir Richard that there was a chance at least of the desperate villain being taken red-handed. He had expected Ferrers Locke to be eager on the search for him. But the Baker Street detective had apparently dismissed the incident from his mind, taking it for granted that the mysterious unknown would not be found. And Sir Richard Ravenspur wondered for some troubled moments whether after all Ferrers Locke was not perhaps an overrated man, and whether he was, as the baronet had fervently hoped, capable of solving the fearful mystery of Ravenspur Grange.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

"H I!" Harry Wharton stared round.

Under the glowing summer sunset the chums of Greyfriars had joined in the search of the grounds, but they had found nothing to reward them.

There was no sign of the man who had fired the shot at the windows of the library of Ravenspur Grange.

How he had vanished, how he had come and gone was a mystery, one more of the many baffling mysteries of the house of secrets.

No man had been seen; the constable pacing the terrace had seen nothing suspicious, and the hurried search, begun almost before the echo of the report had died away, had revealed nothing. It was as if the lurking enemy had come and gone like a spectre.

The juniors had gone down to the big bronze gates at the opening of the drive and looked out into the road, a shady country road that ran from Leyford to Oxford, passing the walls of Ravenspur Grange and its great park. On the road nothing met their view but a passing car. But as they stood in the gateway, debating whether to return to the house, a voice hailed them from across the road.

On the other side of the road was a stretch of woodland, with paths running up among the old trees, and in the shadow of the branches of a big oak a man was leaning on a trunk, and it was he who had hailed the schoolboys.

Wharton stared at him.

He had not for the moment observed the man standing there deep in the shadow of the trees. Now he looked at him with attention.

The man was roughly dressed, and wore a heavy slouched hat that shaded a sun-browned, bearded face. He was smoking a cigarette as he stood leaning on the oak, and a dozen cigarette-ends lay about his feet in the grass.



Deep in the shadow of the trees a man was standing. He was roughly dressed, and wore a heavy slouch hat that shaded a sun-browned, bearded face. "You called to me!" said Harry Wharton. "I reckon so! Is that place Ravenspur Grange?" "Yes." (See Chapter 2).

"Hi!" he repeated, as he caught Wharton's glance.

"May as well have a look at that johnny!" remarked Bob Cherry. "I suppose he can't be the man we want, but he's hanging about the place, anyhow."

Wharton smiled.

"He can't be the man," he agreed. "If he had attempted murder at the Grange a quarter of an hour ago he would hardly be standing there smoking cigarettes. And the lodge-keeper must have seen the villain if he ran this way. Still, let's go and see what this merchant wants."

The five juniors crossed the road.

The man, whoever he was, and whatever might be his business there, evidently had some interest in Ravenspur Grange and its occupants, and any man hanging about the place was open to suspicion.

Nearer at hand, the juniors scanned him, and were not prepossessed by his looks.

The bearded face under the slouched hat was hard in features, reckless in expression, the eyes sharp and watchful and shifty.

"You called to me?" said Harry.

"I reckon so. Is that place Ravenspur Grange?"

"Yes," answered Harry.

"You live there, what?"

"We're staying there in our school holiday," said Harry.

"Oh! You ain't been there long?"

"About a fortnight."

The sun-browned man reflected for a few moments.

"I reckon that's just the time," he said. "It's a fortnight since my pal came along here and never came back again."

Wharton started, and all the juniors looked quickly at the man in the slouched hat. Was this a clue at last to the identity of the man from Australia, who had been shot under the park wall of Ravenspur Grange that

dark and stormy night, and whose body had so mysteriously disappeared? The body of the man with a scar had never been discovered; no clue had been found to his identity; no one in the vicinity seemed to have seen him or heard of him. He had appeared suddenly as if dropping out of space, that dark night to meet his death at the hands of the unknown assassin, and then he had vanished, leaving no trace behind.

"You're from Australia?" asked Harry quietly.

The man started, and his sharp eyes flashed suspiciously at the Greyfriars junior.

"What about it?" he asked surlily.

"If you're looking for a man from Australia who came to Ravenspur Grange on a stormy night a fortnight ago—"

"That's it. Name of Jim Lane," said the man.

"Had he a scar on the face?"

"He had—and a deep one," said the bronzed man eagerly. "I can see you've seen him. It was a bullet from Black Edgar that left the scar. Where is he?"

"Black Edgar?" repeated Wharton.

It was the strange name that had been on the lips of the scarred man who had met his death under the park wall in the darkness.

"You wouldn't know that name," said the man with a grin. "It was pretty well known down under—bush-ranger and hold-up man in Queensland was Black Edgar. They say out there that he's dead, but Jim and me knew better. Jim knew more'n I did about him, seeing that Jim came from these parts—he was an Oxfordshire man. Jim knew that Black Edgar had come home, and we reckoned he'd be glad to see two old pals from the bush."

The man chuckled, not a pleasant chuckle. But he seemed to realise suddenly that he was speaking too freely, and he broke off with another suspicious

furtive stare at the Greyfriars fellows.

"But that ain't neither here nor there," he said. "I'm lookin' for Jim, and I want to know what's happened to him. He put a gun in his pocket afore he started out to see Black Edgar that night; but he never came back. I been away to London, and we was to meet again at the pub in Oxford, and Jim never came. I've come to look for him."

"You expect to hear of him at Ravenspur Grange?" asked Harry.

"I reckon so. That's where he was coming when he left me that night. If Black Edgar's got him—" The man paused, and, as if involuntarily, glanced over his shoulder into the deep wood behind him. The juniors remembered the fear with which the scarred man had spoken the name of Black Edgar; and it was easy to see that this man, hard and reckless character as he looked, shared that haunting dread.

"You seen him!" exclaimed the man from "down under" abruptly. "Where'd you see him, and where is he now?"

"If he was a friend of yours, I've had news to tell you," answered Harry. "A man of that description was shot—"

"Dead?"

"Yes."

"Gad!" muttered the other huskily. "Black Edgar got him, then. But what's the police doing? Ain't they got Black Edgar?"

"Nobody of that name is known about here," said Harry. "What was his surname?"

"More'n I know," said the man from Australia. "Black Edgar he was called in the bush, because he always wore a black beard—which I reckon he took on and off as easy as his hat. Jim saw him once without his beard, and I reckon that's why Black Edgar pulled a gun on him—and Jim got the scar on his face, and was lucky to get off with that. Anyhow, Jim told me that

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Black Edgar was a big toff at home, in the part of the country he came from. That's all he'd ever tell me. Say, who's the boss of that big place?" He nodded towards the Grange.

"Sir Richard Ravenspur," said Harry.

"Youngish man?" asked the stranger. "Been in Australia?"

"About sixty, I think," said Harry. "I don't know whether your uncle's ever been in Australia, Frank—"

"Never!" said Nugent.

"If he's sixty, he ain't Black Edgar come home again," said the bronzed man. "Black Edgar ain't over thirty, if that. I don't make it out—for Jim was coming to the Grange to see Edgar, that's a cert; and he reckoned that Edgar was a toff in these parts. That old gent you speak of got a son?"

"No; he's single."

"Well, it beats me," said the man from Australia. "But I ain't going back without knowing more'n I know now, and you can lay to that. If that villain's got Jim at last, I'm going to tell the police all I know about it, and get the rope round his neck if I can."

"You'd better come into the Grange," said Wharton. "Ferrers Locke, the detective, is there now, and he will be glad to see you, and to hear anything you can tell him."

"I'll come, you can lay to that," said the other. "Jim was a fool to come by night, and give that villain a chance at him. Black Edgar was handy with his gun in the bush; but I reckon he won't pull it in broad daylight, in this country, if he's about the place."

The man threw away his cigarette, and started to cross the road towards the gateway of Ravenspur Grange.

The juniors followed him, feeling considerably elated.

It was evident that this man from "down under" was an associate of the man with a scar—the man who had been so mysteriously murdered under the park wall—and they could guess how glad Ferrers Locke would be to question him.

His talk of Black Edgar was puzzling enough to the juniors, for they could hardly imagine that a one-time bush-ranger of Queensland was lurking about Ravenspur Grange—that the mys-

terious assassin was a man from the other side of the globe.

But it was likely enough that Ferrers Locke would be able to draw valuable information from the man whose "pal" had been shot that stormy night by the park wall.

The juniors could guess easily enough that both the man with the scar, and their present companion, had been associated with the mysterious Black Edgar in lawless deeds in Queensland, and that they had followed their former leader home to England with no friendly intentions—probably with a view to blackmail.

That would account for the fate of the man with the scar; though it was strange enough that the tragedy should have happened at Ravenspur Grange.

They entered the gateway of the Grange, and walked up the drive with the bronzed man from "down under."

As they came in sight of the great facade of the Grange, its many windows glinting golden in the setting sun, the juniors observed Packington on the terrace.

The butler gave a glance at the party coming up the drive.

He stood for a few moments gazing directly at them, and then, with his limping step, went into the house.

The man in the slouched hat stared up at the many-windowed facade of the Grange, the ivy-mantled walls, the old red chimney-pots glowing in the sunset over the ancient tiles.

"Jest the place!" he said, half to himself.

"You know the place?" asked Harry.

"I reckon not! I mean, it's jest the kind o' place Jim Lane described to me, when he was talking about the chief being a big toff at home."

A gleam of uneasiness came into the brown face.

"Jim reckoned that he was on to a good thing," he muttered. "But that villain got him. He laid for him that night and got him; I know that jest as if I'd been there and seen it done. If he knew that I'd come back from 'down under' along with Jim—"

He broke off, his furtive eyes peering about him uneasily, into the shadows of the oaks and beeches along the drive.

"After all, he can't know I was with

Jim," he said. "Jim Lane wouldn't be likely to tell him—even if he gave Jim time to say anything, which, I reckon, he didn't. I'm chancing it."

And the man, who had paused, hesitating, moved on again towards the house, the juniors with him.

Crack!

From the direction of the house, from one of the many windows that glowed like molten gold in the blaze of the sunset, came the sudden report.

A hoarse cry came from the man in the slouched hat.

He staggered, and Harry Wharton sprang towards him.

Wharton caught the falling figure in his arms, unable to realise for a moment what had happened.

But the next moment he knew.

The heavy weight sagged in his arms, almost dragging him down. A convulsed face was turned to him.

"It was—was—"

The choking voice broke off. The heavy body slid from Wharton's arms with a dull thud to the earth, and lay at the feet of the horrified juniors—dead, with a bullet through the heart.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke on the Case!

FERRERS LOCKE leaned back in his chair, listening quietly while the baronet talked. Every now and then he put in a brief question; but for the most part he was content to listen. Sir Richard Ravenspur gave him a succinct account of what had happened at Ravenspur Grange—as strange a story as any to which the celebrated detective had ever listened. Locke gave him the keenest attention; he made no notes, every detail to which he listened was stored in a wonderfully retentive memory. To the baronet, the whole matter was wrapped in the deepest mystery, and he doubted whether Locke would be able to see light, where to him all was darkness. The identity of the secret assassin, his strange knowledge of all that passed in the household, even the motive for his desperate attempts on the baronet's life, were all unknown to Sir Richard Ravenspur—so unknown, so inexplicable, that he had wondered whether the man was some madman. At that suggestion, with which the baronet concluded his story, the Baker Street detective smiled faintly.

"If he is mad, there is method in his madness," he remarked. "I think we can rule out that hypothesis, Sir Richard."

"But why these savage attempts upon my life?" asked the baronet. "I have injured no man to my knowledge—at least, to such an extent as to cause him to regard me with such implacable enmity. What have I done to bring this upon me?"

"I think we may also rule out the theory of vengeance," said Locke. "Obviously, it is no action of your own that has provoked this vendetta."

"Then why?" said Sir Richard helplessly. "Am I to believe that this desperate man has no tangible motive at all?"

"Scarcely. He has a motive—and a very strong one. He has forfeited his neck—and only a very strong motive could account for that."

"The motive, then?" said Sir Richard.

"The man has an interest of some sort in your death. Heavy life-insurances have sometimes been the cause of crime—"

"My life is not even insured."

"You are a rich man, sir."



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"I am comfortably off," said Sir Richard. "Income-tax and super-tax leave me about ten thousand a year."

Ferrers Locke smiled. "Many people would call that very comfortably off," he said. "A fine house, a large estate, and ten thousand a year would tempt many a man to crime."

Sir Richard shook his head. "No Ravenspur could be capable of such villainy," he said. "And the circumstances of the case rule it out, as you express it, Mr. Locke. My heir is my brother, Captain Ravenspur, and my dear brother lies now in a nursing-home at Leyford, not yet out of danger. I have told you how he swallowed the dose of poison, intended for myself, and saved my life."

"And the next heir?" said Ferrers Locke.

"A distant relative, now a secretary at the Embassy in Paris, resident in France, whom I have not seen for years."

"We need not trouble about him at present, then," said Ferrers Locke, smiling. "We must look nearer home."

He paused a moment. "One very striking circumstance must have engaged your attention in this strange story," he said.

"I cannot say—"

"A fortnight ago, your nephew Frank Nugent, and his schoolboy friends, came to stay with you. Before their arrival there were no attempts on your life."

"None. I never dreamed that I had an enemy in the world."

"The first attempt was made on the day following their arrival?"

"That is the case."

Sir Richard stared at the Baker Street detective.

"You do not imagine that the schoolboys—"

"A detective is supposed to be no respecter of persons," said Locke, with a smile. "But one draws a line somewhere. Your nephew Frank Nugent, of course, is not in the line of inheritance."

"No; the estate is entailed on the Ravenspur line. Except in the way of a legacy, it would not be possible for my sister's son to benefit by my death—if it were conceivable that such a thought had ever occurred—"

"Nothing of the kind," interrupted Ferrers Locke. "I am merely asking for information. It is a coincidence that the attempts on your life began immediately after the arrival of this schoolboy party. Some connection may exist, to account for the coincidence. Now, on the night of their arrival, you have told me that they lost their way in a storm, that they met a man from Australia who was shot dead under the park wall, and whose body mysteriously disappeared when searched for."

"It has never been found," said Sir Richard.

"The man uttered the name of 'Black Edgar'—a very curious name," said Ferrers Locke. "The inference was that he was expecting to meet this Black Edgar—and his subsequent fate hints that he indeed met him, to his cost. He was killed, and his body was hidden. The very next day the attempts on your life began. The unknown assassin had shown a thorough knowledge of your household and its arrangements—he has access to every part of the house—it is evident that he knew of the secret passage from the house to the old hunting-lodge in the park, which Inspector Garnish discovered, and which has been blown to fragments with dynamite—evidently by the criminal. So much knowledge as this was not gained in a day. We must assume that the assassin

was on the spot—that he was waiting his opportunity to strike—but that something occurred to force his hand. One attempt has followed another, with ferocious determination. Does it not appear that the assassin, who had hitherto regarded himself as perfectly safe, and at leisure to proceed cautiously, began to feel his position insecure, and determined to strike at once, at any hazard, in order to get his work over, and to get away to safer quarters."

Sir Richard nodded. "But the arrival of a party of schoolboys can scarcely have caused him alarm," he said.

"It was what happened the same night that caused him alarm," said Ferrers Locke.

"The coming of the scarred man?"

"Exactly."

"But the man was killed, his body vanished—"

"And the search began," said Ferrers Locke. "No doubt the body was hidden in the secret recess under the old

SALISBURY COMES OUT ON TOP!

A MAGNET pocket-knife has been forwarded to the sender of the following amusing rib-tickler:

A farmer was playing cricket, and almost as soon as he went in to bat he was clean bowled. "Not out!" said the youthful umpire, a lad of twelve. "Well, well," said the farmer, "this is the luckiest let-off I've ever had. You are a good little chap." The next time the farmer did manage to hit the ball, but it dropped neatly into a fielder's hands. "N - not out!" said the umpire again. The farmer was quite pleased. "It's good of you, sonny," he said. The next ball clean bowled the farmer again, and the umpire was looking very uncertain, when a yell came from the farmer's orchard: "It's all right, Dicky, you can give the old man out now. We've got all the apples we can carry!"

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hunting-lodge. But the episode brought the police to Ravenspur Grange—it started searching, questioning, observing—it endangered a man who had much to fear from the law and the police, considering with what object he was here, and what a history of crime his past had probably been."

"I follow you," said the baronet slowly. "The villain was biding his time, doubtless hoping to cause my death in some unsuspecting and seemingly accidental manner—but with the police in the house, he feared to delay the stroke longer."

"For that reason—and probably another," said Ferrers Locke. "The scarred man was evidently a man who knew him—who could have betrayed him. He killed the scarred man ruthlessly, to silence his tongue—but the man was evidently an associate of a criminal past—"

"That is very probable."

"And what he knew may have been known to others," said Locke. "He came—and was killed. There may have been danger of other such associates appearing on the scene. In such circum-

stances, our friend the enemy would realise that he had no time to lose."

"True."

Sir Richard paused.

"You assume that the murderer of the scarred man is, beyond doubt, the same man who is attempting my life?"

"Beyond doubt. In so quiet and peaceful a spot, normally, as Ravenspur Grange, it would be too amazing a coincidence if two desperate murderers should suddenly appear simultaneously. I think we may take it for granted that it is the same man."

"But"—Sir Richard made a gesture—"you assume that this assassin was on the spot—that he was here—you practically assume that he is a member of my household—"

"It is very probable."

"The secret passage from the old lodge—"

"That gave access to the house—it enabled the man to come and go undetected, but that was all. Either the man is in the house, or he has a confederate in the house. That he does not depend on the secret passage from the lodge, now destroyed and buried under tons of earth, will be proved, if another attempt be made on your life. But the incident that has occurred since my arrival is conclusive to my mind."

"The shot at the window?"

"Exactly."

"But that came from without," said Sir Richard, puzzled. "From a distance—some distance beyond the terrace."

"And it was fired almost at random," said Ferrers Locke.

Sir Richard started.

"What do you infer from that, Mr. Locke?"

"That we have to deal with a very cunning man," said Locke. "Now, Sir Richard, I will ask you to take the trouble to give me a full description of the members of your household, and the time they have been with you."

"Most of them a very long time," said Sir Richard. "My man Jervis has been with me twenty years; few of the servants have been here less than five or six years. My butler, Packington, is the newest—he has been with me little more than three months."

"I have seen him already," remarked Ferrers Locke. "He walks with a limp, I think I observed."

"He was wounded on the Somme," said Sir Richard. "He has an excellent War record." The baronet smiled faintly. "Packington is a man to be trusted, Mr. Locke. He came to me with the very best recommendations."

"No doubt," assented the detective. "Apparently few changes are ever made in your household staff, Sir Richard."

"Few and seldom."

"Yet you have changed your butler within the last few months."

"That was inevitable."

"Why did the former butler leave?" Sir Richard smiled again.

"He was the most loyal and faithful of servants, Mr. Locke."

"No doubt—no doubt; but answer my question."

"There was a burglary in the house," explained Sir Richard. "The butler was savagely attacked—indeed, the ruffian seems to have gone out of his way to use him most brutally. The poor fellow was disabled, and unable to carry on his duties afterwards. He retired on a pension, and I had, of course, to replace him. I was fortunate to secure so excellent a man as Packington."

"Was the burglar ever arrested?"

"No; he fled without effecting any robbery in the house, after the struggle with the butler, and the alarm being

given. Inspector Cook of Leyford had the case in hand, but he was not successful."

Ferrers Locke was silent for a moment.

"Except in this instance, which was unavoidable, you have made no recent changes in your household?"

"None."

"There is none whom you feel that you can regard with distrust?"

"None!" repeated the baronet.

There was another silence.

"The incident since your arrival, Mr. Locke, at least proves one thing," said Sir Richard, breaking the silence.

Locke's eyes dwelt curiously upon him for a moment.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Taking it that the assassin is some member of my household, unknown to me, every member who can be proved to have been actually in the house when that shot was fired is cleared of suspicion."

"It would seem so, Sir Richard," said Ferrers Locke.

Something in his tone caused the baronet to give him a quick glance; but the Baker Street detective's face was grave and thoughtful.

"It should be easy, Mr. Locke, to ascertain beyond doubt which of the servants were within the house when the shot was fired," said Sir Richard. "The butler, to begin with, was actually in this room, in our presence."

"Which eliminates Packington," said Locke, with a smile.

"Precisely. And—"

Sir Richard Ravenspur broke off suddenly. From somewhere in the distance the crack of a firearm was heard; and faintly, following it, came a hoarse cry.

Ferrers Locke sprang to his feet.

"That was a shot—"

Sir Richard rose from his chair, his face pale and startled.

"The search is still proceeding," he said in a faltering voice. "Have they found the villain—has he fired on them? Good heavens, the boys—!" He made a step towards the door.

"It is not that," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "But—"

The door opened, and the startled face of Jervis, Sir Richard's valet, looked in.

"What has happened, Jervis?"

"A man has been shot on the drive, sir—a man who was coming to the house with Master Frank and his friends—"

"Dead?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, sir."

"Remain here, Sir Richard," said Ferrers Locke. "Jervis, remain with your master. I will see to this."

"But—" exclaimed the baronet.

"Sir Richard, you must consider yourself under my orders, for the moment. Remain here with Jervis!" said the detective sharply.

"Very well, Mr. Locke."

And the Baker Street detective hurried alone from the room.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Next Step!

PACKINGTON, the butler, met the detective in the hall. Packington's usually grave and composed face was startled out of its customary calm.

"Mr. Locke, sir! A man has been shot—"

"I am aware of it," said Ferrers Locke.

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Through the great doorway he could see the drive, with the startled group there—Harry Wharton & Co., and James the footman, and several startled servants, gathered round the body that lay still on the earth. Some of them were staring up at the windows of the house. In the group was one of the Leyford constables, and another was hurrying up the staircase, apparently to search the upper rooms. It was known to all that the shot had been fired from an upper window of Ravenspur Grange.

"Let the house be searched, Packington," said Locke.

"I have already given orders, sir, to that effect," said Packington. "The search is going on."

The detective nodded, and hurried down to the drive.

"Mr. Locke—" exclaimed Wharton.

Locke pushed his way through the group, and looked down at the dead man. Then his glance swept the many-windowed front of the Grange.

"The shot came from the house, Mr. Locke," said Frank Nugent. "It came from one of the windows."

"This man was coming to the house with you?" asked Locke.

"Yes," said Harry.

"Who is he?"

"I don't know his name."

Wharton explained hurriedly how the juniors had met the man in the slouched hat on the Leyford road.

Locke's eyes glimmered.

"A friend of the scarred man—seeking him!" he said. "I understand. I understand—quite."

He dropped on his knees beside the body.

The Leyford constable touched his shoulder.

"Excuse me, sir, but the man had better not be touched till my inspector comes."

"This is Ferrers Locke, the detective," said Wharton.

"Oh!" The constable's manner changed at once, and he stepped back. "I didn't know, sir."

Locke, unheeding, proceeded to make a rapid examination of the body. He was occupied only a few minutes, and then he rose to his feet.

"You boys had better go into the house," he said quietly. "This is no sight for you. Come."

Leaving the Leyford constable in charge of the fallen man, the detective returned to the house, the juniors following him. There were sounds of uproar and confusion all through the great house. Footsteps pattered, doors opened and shut, voices called and shouted. The house was being searched from end to end for the man who had fired from the window.

"Shall we help, Mr. Locke?" asked Harry.

"If you like," answered the detective. "The man will not, however, be found in the house."

"Blessed if I see how he's going to get away!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"He has got away already."

"But—" exclaimed Nugent.

"Search if you like," said Ferrers Locke. "I shall be very much surprised if you find any suspicious character in the house."

"But the shot came from the house, sir," exclaimed Frank. "There's no doubt at all about that."

"The doubtfulness is not terrific, honoured sahib," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Quite so," assented Ferrers Locke.

"I was afraid the villain might take another pot-shot at you, Mr. Locke,

while you were out there beside that poor chap," said Johnny Bull.

Locke smiled faintly.

"That was not likely," he said. "I imagine that the scoundrel did not linger a single second at the window, after firing the shot that sent that poor fellow to his account."

"No, I suppose he wouldn't," said Johnny Bull. "But getting away from the house is another matter. Let's hunt for him, you men."

The Famous Five hurried up the stairs, to join in rooting through the upper rooms. Ferrers Locke returned to the library. He found Sir Richard in a state of agitation. At a sign, Jervis retired out of hearing.

"What can this mean, Mr. Locke?" exclaimed Sir Richard, passing his hand over his brow. "The man is dead?"

"Yes."

"A stranger—a man unknown here—shot down at my door!" exclaimed Sir Richard. "Mr. Locke, it is some madman that we have to deal with."

"I think not," said the detective quietly.

"Who is the man—is that known?"

"It is known to me—now," said Ferrers Locke. "There are papers in his pockets which show that his name is Albert Hedge, and that he is from Australia. He had stayed recently at a public-house in Oxford, and has been in London. From what he had already stated to Wharton and his friends, it is clear that he was an associate of the scarred man, and was coming here to learn what had become of him."

"And—"

"And he was recognised, as he came up to the house, by the man who killed Jim Lane, the scarred man; and the assassin shot him dead from a window, only in time, I imagine, to save himself from discovery."

Sir Richard's hands trembled.

"Proving beyond doubt that the assassin was in the house—that he is still in the house?" he exclaimed.

"It would appear so."

"And not in hiding, in some secret recess or passage," said the baronet. "Had it been so, he would not have seen the man coming up the drive—neither would he have feared being seen by him."

"Precisely."

Locke's face was grave.

"The assassin, Sir Richard," he said quietly, "is a man who moves freely about the house—unsuspected! His identity is unknown here, but he is here day and night, unknown! Doubtless your eyes fall upon him every day, without knowing."

Sir Richard shuddered.

"To you he is not recognisable," said Ferrers Locke. "But he feared recognition and betrayal, both from the man with a scar and from this man, Lane's associate. Both evidently were associates of the unknown criminal in the past, and Lane traced him here."

"Here—in my house!" faltered the baronet.

"Here—in your house, Sir Richard."

"But who—"

"That is what we have to discover," said Ferrers Locke, "and this incident, terribly tragic as it is, has rendered our task easier."

"How is that, Mr. Locke?"

"The man has been forced to act suddenly, unexpectedly, and with his usual ruthless determination," said Locke. "It is clear that he did not know that this man Hedge was in the neighbourhood, or he would have sought to silence him in some less terribly conspicuous way. I imagine that he intended to lie low while I was here—to allow nothing out of the normal to happen so

long as Ferrers Locke was at Ravenspur Grange. That shot at the library window is proof of it, to my mind."

The baronet looked bewildered.

"I do not see—"

"No doubt you will see later," said Ferrers Locke. "Such, I believe, was the dastard's intention, but the arrival of Lane's comrade threw him into sudden alarm, and forced him to act promptly. Now he has betrayed himself—to a certain extent. It is clear now that he does not need to use the secret passage from the hunting-lodge to enter the Grange. He is here! His next step—"

"An attempt on my life?" asked Sir Richard.

"No," answered Ferrers Locke tranquilly, "on mine!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In the Night!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. went to bed that night in a thoughtful and somewhat troubled mood.

They were conscious of some little disappointment.

Ferrers Locke had arrived. And from the arrival of the famous detective the

right in declaring that the man would not be found within the walls; but how he could have been so certain of it was rather a puzzle.

Later, the new man from Scotland Yard had arrived, to take over Inspector Garnish's work. The juniors had seen him—a square-jawed man named Jude; Inspector Jude, of the C.I.D. He had greeted Ferrers Locke with somewhat cold civility, obviously not pleased to find a private detective on the case, but impressed, at the same time, with the

"Mr. Locke!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as the detective came hurriedly along the drive. Ferrers Locke pushed his way through the group and looked down at the dead man. "The shot came from the house, Mr. Locke," said Frank Nugent. "It came from one of the windows!"

(See Chapter 4).

so carefully watched and guarded, Sir Richard Ravenspur could be in danger.

It was likely enough that the secret assassin might hold his hand until matters had settled down a little, but unless he made some further movement it was difficult to see how he was to be traced. That he actually was one of the known occupants of the house seemed a wild idea to the juniors. One of the servants might be his confederate, but that he could be the mysterious assassin himself seemed impossible and incredible.



juniors had expected much—they hardly knew exactly what; possibly some sudden and dramatic turning of the tables on the hidden enemy of Ravenspur Grange.

So far as Locke was concerned, there had been nothing dramatic.

The detective had been busy.

Every member of the household, men and maids, had passed under his inspection, and he had made a very thorough examination of the old house. It had all led so far to nothing.

The assassin was at large, as daring and desperate as ever. The presence of the famous detective had not deterred him. The shot at the library window proved that; and then the killing of the man from Australia, in the drive in front of the house, under many eyes, while Locke was actually within the Grange, within hearing of the shot. The escape of the man who had fired from the window was inexplicable. Not a sign of him had been seen in the house, though the upper rooms were being searched within two minutes of the report of the revolver. Ferrers Locke had not troubled to join in searching the house for him, and he had been

name and fame of Ferrers Locke. The two men were not likely to work together, and the man from the Yard had made it quite clear that he was in official charge of the case, and that he desired neither assistance nor interference from outside parties. He had brought three men with him from London, who were to remain permanently in the house till the case was cleared up; to watch over the safety of the baronet, and doubtless over Mr. Jude's own, for the tragic fate of Inspector Cook, of Leyford, and of Inspector Garnish, of Scotland Yard, conveyed a warning that could not be neglected. Death lurked in every shadow for the men engaged in hunting down the mysterious killer.

With Mr. Jude's arrangements for the safety of the baronet the juniors had no fault to find; neither, probably, had Ferrers Locke. Mr. Jude himself took over the dressing-room adjoining the baronet's bed-room, and one of his men was posted in the bed-room itself, to watch at night, as well as Jervis. In addition to the men from London, two Leyford constables remained in the house. It seemed unlikely enough that,

"Gammon!" said Johnny Bull as he sat on his bed and took off his boots. "Nothing in it! I've looked over the whole lot, and there isn't one that fills the bill. There's such a thing as common-sense. We know that the villain climbed a rope-ladder one night to Sir Richard's bed-room window. Only a jolly active man could do that—a young man. We sighted the brute when he was got up as a man with a sandy moustache and wig. He was in disguise, of course, but we saw that he was a young man, didn't we?"

"We did," agreed Bob Cherry.

"Well, there isn't a young man in the whole house," said Johnny Bull. "Nearly all the servants have been here for years and years—some as long as twenty years. I believe James, the footman, is the youngest, and he's well over thirty. Well, the murderer is a young man; and everybody in the house is either old or at least getting on."

"The man who swung himself up that rope-ladder and down again wasn't a day over twenty-five," said Harry Wharton, with conviction.

"Well, then, that settles it," said

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Johnny Bull. "One of the servants may be in league with him, but he's not the man."

That seemed conclusive to the juniors. "But how the thump does he get in and out unseen, now that the secret passage from the park has been blown up?" said Bob.

"Might be another," said Johnny Bull. "This is a very old house; parts of it are seven hundred years old. There was one secret passage, as we know, and there may be another."

"That's quite possible," assented Wharton.

"The possibility is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "That would account for the villain's preposterously sudden disappearance after firing from the esteemed window."

"But who is he?" said Nugent. "There was no answer to be made to that."

The identity of the mysterious enemy was the deepest mystery of all, his motive a hopeless puzzle.

The juniors believed—they had reason to believe—that both Inspector Cook and Mr. Garnish had been on the track when the murderous hand of the assassin had struck them down. But what they had suspected or known could never be known now. And the thought haunted their minds that Ferrers Locke was running the same risk. What was more likely than that the assassin, finding the famous detective in the lists against him, would seek to rid himself of so dangerous an adversary, and in the easiest way? The man who had not spared the country inspector, who had not spared the man from Scotland Yard, was not likely to spare the famous Baker Street detective. He would fear Locke more than he had feared the others, and it seemed certain to the juniors that while Ferrers Locke was in the house he was under the shadow of death.

They turned in at last, but Harry Wharton wooed sleep in vain. The regular breathing of his comrades told him that they were sleeping peacefully, while the captain of the Greyfriars Remove lay wakeful, his eyes on the high windows where the stars glimmered above in the summer sky. He was thinking of Ferrers Locke, and of the assassin who might even then be skulking in some disused room or gloomy corridor, or behind the wainscot in some secret ancient recess. The detective had been given a room opening from the high oaken gallery that surrounded the hall. In the hall the electric light was still burning through the dark hours; but on previous occasions, as Wharton knew, it had been turned off by the unknown enemy, and the house plunged in darkness to cover up his prowling.

Wharton thought of the house in darkness, of the creeping form stealing through the shadows; of the sleeping detective, at the mercy of the prowler. Doubtless the detective's door was locked, but a locked door was not likely to stop the man who, as was known, had not been baffled by the lock of Sir Richard's safe.

Wharton tried to dismiss the haunting fears from his mind. Ferrers Locke was not the man to be caught napping, not the man likely to fall at the hand of the most unscrupulous enemy. Wharton could imagine the smile that would dawn on the cool, clear-cut features if Ferrers Locke could know that the schoolboy was anxious about him. In spite of all, Wharton could not dismiss his uneasiness, and he was still wide awake at the chime of midnight. He turned his head on the pillow and closed his eyes; but sleep would not come.

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Giving it up at last, Harry turned out of bed and drew on trousers and slippers. It could do no harm at all events to take a look below and ascertain that all was well. He remembered the night when such a step on his part had saved the life of Sir Richard Ravenspur. It might save the detective's life, as it had saved the baronet's.

Silently Wharton opened the door and closed it behind him. From the landing he crept to the stairs, making no sound in his slippered feet.

All was silent below.

Wharton descended the staircase which led down to the oaken gallery. At a great height above the polished floor that ancient gallery of carved oak surrounded the hall on three sides, passages and doors opening from it. One passage led to the room of the baronet, where watch and ward was carefully kept, so carefully that at present it seemed unlikely that the enemy would attempt to strike. From that passage came a glow of faint light. But that was the only light that met Wharton's eyes. The gallery itself, save in that one spot, was dark; the hall below plunged in blackness. Wharton groped his way to the oaken balustrade and stepped below. The light had been turned out, against the instructions of Sir Richard Ravenspur, of Ferrers Locke, and of Mr. Jude, of Scotland Yard. It could mean only one thing, that the unknown enemy was at work. The uneasiness that had kept Wharton awake was after all well founded.

He knew it now. He knew that the black shadows about him might hide a creeping form, that his footsteps, faint as they were, might have reached unseen ears and alarmed an enemy who would think nothing of taking his life, as he had taken the lives of others to secure his safety. The junior's heart beat a little faster as he stared round him in the gloom; a thrill ran through him. But he did not hesitate. The extinguishing of the lights meant danger, either to the baronet or to Ferrers Locke. The baronet was well-guarded, the light still burning in the corridor outside his door. The danger was Ferrers Locke's.

Quietly, softly, Wharton felt his way along the balustrade in the direction of the detective's room.

That room opened from a corner of the gallery that was farthest from the corridor leading to Sir Richard's room. It was consequently the darkest place. The blackness was intense, as Wharton groped along silently, inch by inch.

But he knew that he must be near the detective's room, when a faint sound in the darkness sent a sudden thrill through all his nerves.

He stopped, his heart thumping.

He strained his eyes and could see nothing only blackness. But he was certain that he had heard a sound, he was certain of a near presence in the opaque gloom. A soft and stealthy sound—

Suddenly from the blackness a hand reached out and grasped him. It was a hand of iron, relentless in its grasp. A cold round rim, a rim of steel, was pressed to his breast.

"Don't touch a weapon!" came a quiet, icy voice. "You are a dead man if you do!"

Wharton started convulsively.

It was the voice of Ferrers Locke.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Done in the Dark!

"M R. LOCKE!"

Wharton gasped out the words.

There was a muffled exclamation, and the grasp upon the junior instantly relaxed.

"Wharton!"

"Yes."

"What are you doing here?"

"I—I could not sleep. I—I thought—"

"Silence!"

Harry Wharton stood silent.

He leaned back on the oaken balustrade, staring in the darkness at the detective. He could not see him—only the faintest of black shadows in blackness. The junior's brain was almost in a whirl.

It was Ferrers Locke who was abroad in the darkness, Ferrers Locke who had gripped him suddenly in the gloom, Ferrers Locke whose soft and stealthy movement he had heard; but for whom had the detective taken him, when he grasped him and pressed the muzzle of the automatic to his breast? For the secret assassin, for whom Locke was on the watch! It dawned on Wharton's mind how he might have disconcerted the schemes of the detective by coming down from his room in the dark hours. But it was too late to think of that now.

He made no sound, and there was no sound from the detective, but Wharton knew that he was listening.

Silence, deep and still, reigned in the great house.

Wharton felt the detective approach him more closely. From lips close to his ear a single word was breathed in the lowest of whispers:

"Silence!"

Though there was still no sound he knew that Locke had left him.

Wharton remained where he was, crouched against the balustrade, his heart beating, trying to collect his thoughts. Ferrers Locke was not in his room; he was watching the oaken gallery in the darkness, waiting, watching—for what? For an expected attack, Wharton could see that.

Locke had not slept, and waking, he had been aware that the light had been turned out, and it had warned him that the secret enemy was active. If the man was at hand the whispering voices might have reached him and alarmed him.

Minute followed minute, the schoolboy remaining perfectly still, listening with an intensity that made his eardrums throb, striving to penetrate the darkness with his eyes. Had the unknown come, and taken the alarm and gone? Or was the time not yet? Wharton could not tell; he could only wait and listen. From the bottom of his heart he hoped that his intervention had not defeated some plan of the detective's. But if the man was not yet at hand—

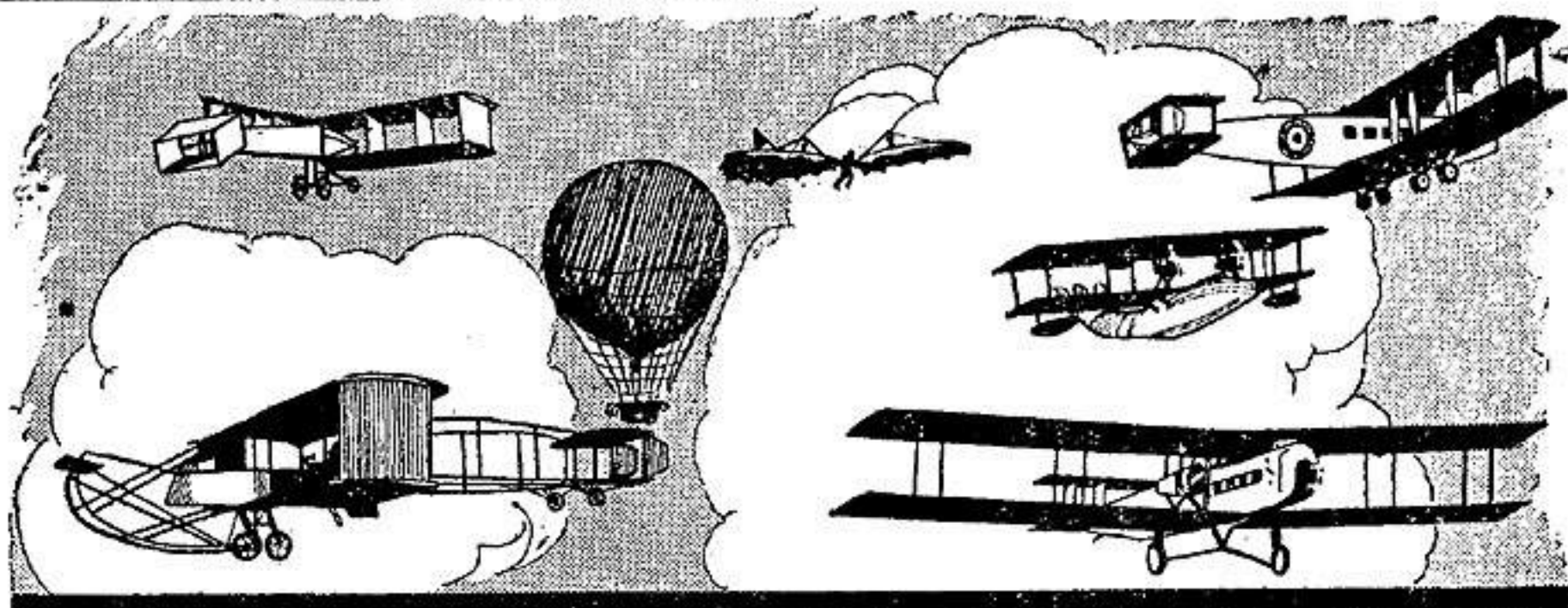
Long, long minutes, hours it seemed to Wharton. But from somewhere in the old house came the chime of one. It was one o'clock; he had been out of his room scarcely half an hour.

Following the stroke came silence again, deeper than ever as it seemed. Silence deep as of the tomb.

Wharton felt it almost impossible to remain still, silent, motionless, there in the brooding darkness. But the detective's injunction held him spell-bound. He had intervened unbidden, and all he could do now was to obey the

(Continued on page 12.)

GET THIS WEEK'S "GEM"
IT'S GOOD!



LEARNING to FLY!

A quarter of a century ago aeronautical pioneers were only just on the point of getting the first man-carrying aeroplane to budge from the ground at all. Yet to-day to India and back by plane can be completed in seven and a half days—and progress hasn't stopped here!

The Gliding Pioneers!

A GREAT flying man is talking of soaring round the world in fourteen days, with twenty passengers, in an enormous Zeppelin. A cool quarter of a million pounds will be swallowed up in that projected cruise!

An England-to-India non-stop flight has recently been successfully completed, in a British plane, by British R.A.F. men, in *two days*. An inventor has just designed a machine in which he says it will be possible to reach the planet Mars from Earth in *ten minutes*. It is to get its energy from the air—from ether waves—and it will, if all goes well, travel at the speed of light—180,000 miles per second.

And yet a quarter of a century ago men were only just on the point of getting the first man-carrying aeroplane to budge from the ground at all! Marvellous isn't the word for the progress which the science of flying has made lately!

Less than two centuries ago, one De Bacqueville thought he had solved at last the problem which had been sending daring experimenters to sudden death for hundreds of years. He fixed to his hands and feet four big wings, shaped like elongated pears, and imagined that with their aid he would be able to flap himself through the air like a bird.

He stopped theorising at last and put his gadget to the test. From a balcony high up over a river he leapt into the air, arms and legs plunging and kicking valiantly. But his whirring wings were unequal to the strain, and down he went—wallop! Not into the river, but into a barge which happened to be in the way. No, the art of gliding, in which the

success of aviation was bound up, was not yet solved!

Daring Stunts of the Nineteenth Century!

THERE were to be many more bones broken before the first successful glide was made. To-day, flying without an engine, in huge machines with a wing-spread of thirty-two feet, and weighing over 160 lb., is a commonplace sport. A skilful pilot of one of these engineless aeroplanes can glide in the air for *hours on end*, and not a teaspoonful of petrol used!

An experimenter named Lilienthal covered himself with eternal glory, in the nineteenth century, by constructing a machine with wings and tail in which he actually did glide a few feet. He carried on his daring stunts until he became bold

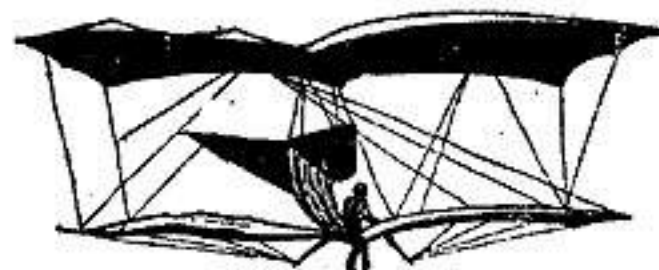
enough to attach a small motor to his glider and thus transform it into a kind of aeroplane.

That motor developed only two and a half horse-power, but it weighed nearly ninety pounds. And there he overdid it. His transformed glider came a cropper and Lilienthal with it. He crashed from a height of fifty feet and broke his spine.

His first apparatus weighed less than fifty pounds, with a framework of willow on which was stretched strong fabric. By slipping his head through a space between the wings he could run or walk forward with it, steadying the weird contrivance by holding two wooden rods.

The wings spanned twenty-four feet, and from tip to tail the glider was eighteen feet. His first test was from a springboard, which shot him into the air a modest three feet. Gradually, as he gained confidence—knowing he was the first man in the whole wide world who had really done this thing—he increased the height of his leap, until he could glide for a very short distance eight feet from the Earth!

They were extremely uneasy glides of his, for the machine, which was provided also with a flexible tail, kept slipping and sliding whenever a wind-gust caught him, and he had to adjust the main weight of the affair—his own body—in the twinkling of an eye, to counter every little wind-buffet.



This fragile-looking contraption fully illustrates the risks daring would-be conquerors of the air took in the not far distant past.

A Glide of One Thousand Feet!

WHEN Lilienthal aspired to greater heights, he actually had an artificial hill constructed specially for his glides—fifty feet high, with gently-sloping sides, down which he could start his glides.

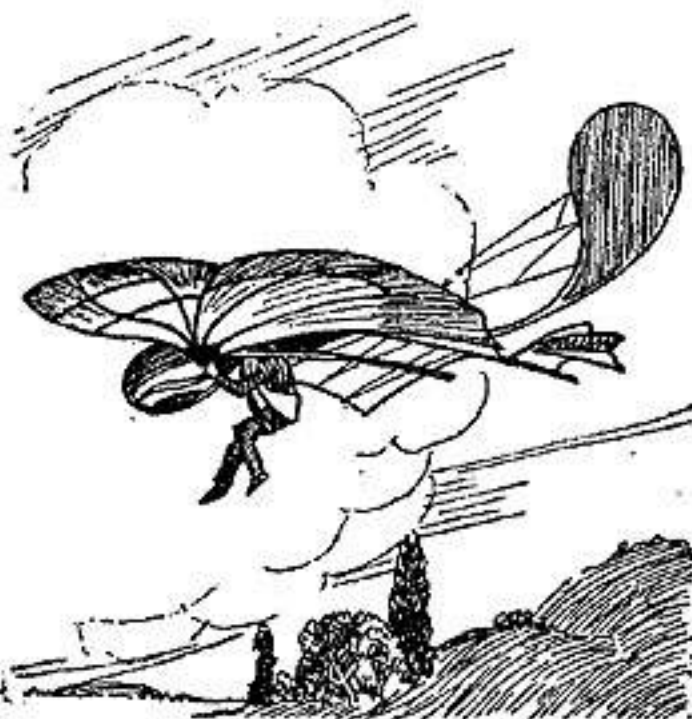
From the top of his hill he managed a glide of one thousand feet. And so he kept at it. But during five years of constant endeavour he did not spend more than a total of five hours in the air—spread over all the five years!

Presently he achieved his great wonder—a biplane glider, and in this he could keep in the air for a little time when the wind was blowing as strongly as twenty-five miles an hour. And now huge passenger planes cleave the skies when tearing storms are raging for hours on end!

But, bit by bit, he was becoming the master of the mysteries of balancing himself in the air, and soon he could take off in his glider from a hill 250 feet high and swoop as much as 750 feet before meeting the ground again. It was when he came to fixing artificial motive power—an engine—to his glider that death came to him, as already mentioned.

From his experiments, all carefully recorded by himself, the brothers Wright, the first men to raise themselves successfully in a machine-driven plane, profited enormously when they began their series of attempts to make a better glider. How these brothers, who ran a bicycle and engineer's shop, slowly set the seal on all previous endeavours to fly—as we understand flight now—will be told in a later article.

(Next week's *MAGNET* will contain another of these interesting flying articles.)



An experimenter of the nineteenth century constructed this weird-looking machine in which he actually did glide a few feet.

THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!

(Continued from page 10.)

order of Ferrers Locke. Where was Locke now? He had gone, silently in the murk; but he might have been only a few feet away for anything that Wharton could tell.

At a distance, far along the long gallery, came the glimmer from the one lighted corridor. But it made the darkness close at hand only the more impenetrable. Nothing was stirring near Sir Richard Ravenspur's quarters. But elsewhere—

A sound came to Wharton, sudden and startling, the sound of an impact. It was as if something had struck, and the sound of a fall immediately followed.

Wharton's heart bounded.

Within nine or ten feet of him, between him, as he judged, and the door of Ferrers Locke's room, a blow had been struck, a man had fallen.

Had Locke met the creeping enemy for whom he had been waiting in the darkness of the oaken gallery? Who had fallen?

For a fraction of a second Wharton stood indecisive. Locke had bidden him be silent; but if it was Locke who had fallen under a treacherous blow in the darkness—Only for a fraction of a second did the junior remain still, then he leaped towards the spot where he had heard the fall.

A startled exclamation came to his ears—not in Locke's voice.

Then Wharton knew that the man who had fallen was the detective. It was some other who exclaimed, startled in the darkness, as the junior rushed to the spot.

A shout left Wharton's lips.

"Help!"

He crashed into something unseen—an ill-aimed blow in the darkness sent him reeling. He rallied, rushed on, and struck back fiercely, but his blows met only empty air. From the staircase came a sound, the sound of swiftly-running feet. Someone unseen was fleeing down the staircase, and on the floor Wharton's feet stumbled on a motionless form. He knew that it was the form of the Baker Street detective. Alive or dead, Ferrers Locke lay at his feet, and the assassin was fleeing, leaping down the stairs three or four at a time, reckless of the darkness, reckless of the danger of a fall.

Wharton groped to the electric light switch at the head of the staircase. He found it and switched on the lights.

A sudden illumination lighted up the cavern of blackness that yawned below the old oak gallery.

Wharton had a fleeting glimpse of a running figure; it vanished below. In that fleeting glimpse he saw a figure clothed in black, with a black mask covering the whole of the face.

It was gone in the twinkling of an eye.

"Help!" shouted Wharton again.

He ran back to the fallen man.

In the bright light Ferrers Locke lay on the old oaken floor. But he was no longer motionless. He had lifted himself on his elbow, and was making an effort to rise to his feet. His face was white, and from under his dark hair ran a thin trickle of blood.

His eyes met Wharton's.

"Mr. Locke—you are—"

"Nothing," said Locke. He waved the schoolboy back, and gained his feet without assistance. His hand went to his head, and his fingers came away red, and he made a grimace. "A nasty

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crack, my boy—but nothing more—I was stunned for the moment—"

"It was—was—" panted Wharton.

"Our friend the enemy," said Ferrers Locke. "Go back to bed, Wharton—I will speak to you in the morning."

"But—but the man—he ran down—"

"Leave the matter in my hands."

"Oh, of course!" said Harry, and without a word more he went to the staircase that led up to his room—leaving Ferrers Locke to face Inspector Jude and a constable, who had now arrived on the scene from the lighted corridor.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Knocked Out!

"**P**oor Locke!" said Inspector Jude.

Mr. Jude made that remark several times during the day, in slightly sarcastic tones.

Morning had dawned on a troubled house.

Mr. Jude, no doubt, was sympathetic. But to the professional gentleman from the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard there was perhaps something grimly humorous in the disaster that had befallen the famous private detective.

But if Mr. Jude found anything amusing in it, he was alone in that view. To Sir Richard Ravenspur, and to the chums of Greyfriars, it was disaster pure and simple.

They had hoped so much from Ferrers Locke. They had taken it for granted that he would be a match, more than a match, for the secret enemy of Ravenspur. And in the first round of the combat he had failed and fallen.

Locke was confined to his room now, in medical care. Dr. Wood had come from Leyford to attend him. The man from whom so much had been hoped was laid up, helpless and impotent—an invalid in the house of murder and mystery.

What had happened during the night was fairly well known. Locke, instead of going to bed, had waited up, on the watch, in expectation of some move from the secret enemy, against himself or against the baronet. The turning out of the lights had warned him that his expectation was well founded. His course of action was shown by what had occurred when Wharton came down unexpectedly on the scene. Lying in wait for the assassin to creep to his room, intending to take by surprise the villain who was seeking to catch him napping, Locke had waited in the darkness, after that unexpected encounter with Wharton and he had indeed met with the secret enemy, only to fall under a blow from behind.

That Wharton had saved his life seemed to admit of no doubt. Locke had been cautious—but his enemy had been more cunning. He had penetrated the fact that the detective was out of his room—he had succeeded in attacking him from behind, and a heavy blow on the head had momentarily stunned the detective. Wharton knew—everyone now knew—that had not the junior been there, the detective, thus silenced and at his enemy's mercy, would have gone the same way that Inspector Garnish had gone. Wharton knew, and shuddered to realise, that it was his sudden and unexpected rush to the spot, that had prevented a knife from reaching the heart of the man who had been silenced by a treacherous blow from behind.

It had seemed to Wharton, when Locke rose to his feet, and told him to go back to bed, that the detective had

suffered little—perhaps not more than a bad bruise. Locke had seemed almost himself again then. But the morning told a different tale. The juniors had expected to see him at breakfast—but they did not see him. They learned that he was keeping to his room; later they learned that Dr. Wood had come from Leyford, and they did not fail to note the slightly sarcastic expression on the face of Inspector Jude. Ferrers Locke was "hors-de-combat"—knocked out in the first round. It was almost incredible, but there it was—the secret criminal of Ravenspur had been too much for the celebrated detective of Baker Street.

Later in the morning, Harry Wharton was allowed to visit the detective. He found Locke dressed, but stretched on his bed, pillowed on cushions, his head amply bandaged, his face white as driven snow. The ghastly paleness of his face gave the junior a shock as he saw it. So great was the shock, that Wharton stood for a few moments, silent, gazing at the detective, his face clouded and his heart heavy.

Ferrers Locke smiled faintly.

"I have to thank you, Wharton," he said, in a voice whose subdued tones of faintness went to the junior's heart. "I think you saved my life last night."

The terrible thought was in Wharton's mind that, perhaps, after all he had not saved it. Locke looked like a man who hovered on the brink of death.

"I blamed you at first when I found you had come down," said Locke, in the same feeble tones. "But undoubtedly you saved me."

"I am glad I was able to help," said Harry, in a low voice.

"Now I am out of the running for a time," said Locke. "Fortunately, Mr. Jude is well able to care for the safety of Sir Richard, which is the chief matter. I anticipate no danger to him, while Mr. Jude is here with his men, taking such thorough precautions."

"But you, Mr. Locke—"

"It was a nasty crack," said Locke. "But do not be alarmed—I shall recover. For the present, however—" He gave a slight shrug.

"You will not remain alone while you are laid up, Mr. Locke?" asked Harry anxiously.

"No; that would be asking for trouble," said Ferrers Locke. "Even in the daytime that desperate villain may attempt to take another crack at a man no longer able to lift a hand in self-defence. Dr. Wood wishes to send me a nurse—but that is not needed. I have thought that my young friends from Greyfriars might be willing to take turns sitting at my bedside."

"Gladly," said Harry.

"And Packington, who is very kind and sympathetic, has undertaken to find an interval in his duties, and remain with me for an hour this afternoon," said Locke. "He has, of course, asked Sir Richard's permission."

"That's very good of him," said Harry.

"Very," assented Ferrers Locke.

"And to-night?" asked Harry.

Locke smiled.

"I shall not trouble anyone to sit up at night," he said. "I shall lock my door very carefully, you may be sure."

"We should be willing," said Wharton eagerly. "Mr. Locke, you may feel quite sure that no trouble would be too much—"

"My dear boy, I should not think of it. Even the resourceful villain we have to deal with cannot penetrate my room through the keyhole," said Locke, smiling. "Moreover, there is a bolt on

the door, and the bolt will be secured. I shall be quite safe to-night."

"I suppose so," said Harry. "The window—"

"The window will be locked and bolted." Locke smiled again. "You need have no uneasiness for me, and you must not leave your bed again in the night. Last night it chanced to be of great service to me, but you must not repeat the performance, Wharton."

"If you mean that you fear for me, that's nothing," said Harry.

"Not only that," said Locke gravely. "Though that is enough. It is not fit for a schoolboy to cross swords with the kind of man with whom we have to deal, Wharton. I must ask your promise not to leave your bed-room after you have retired for the night, and I expect you to answer for your friends also."

"If you put it like that, I have no choice, of course," said Harry uneasily.

"I do put it like that."

"Then I promise, of course."

There was a deferential cough at the door. Packington came in with a tray. Locke was to take his lunch in bed.

"Your lunch, sir," said the butler's smooth voice.

"Thank you, Packington!" Locke's eyes lingered on the tray. "I understand, Packington, that this lunch has been specially prepared for me?"

"Quite so, sir."

"Under your own eye?"

"Perfectly so, sir."

"You remember, Packington, that attempts have been made to poison Sir Richard Ravenspur," said Locke. "Precautions are now taken against that in the case of Sir Richard. In my own case—"

"In your case, sir?" repeated the butler.

"It appears probable, at least, Packington, that the unknown assassin has free access to this house," said Locke. "It is possible that he may have been able to get at the kitchen—to introduce some deadly potion into the food or drink intended for me. Last night proved that my presence in the house is very unwelcome to him."

"I hardly think, sir—"

"Quite so: it is very improbable, but the chance exists," said Locke. "I have had so very grave a warning, Packington, that I dislike the idea of taking chances. Place the tray on the table, and I will not touch the food until Dr. Wood has been here to examine it."

The butler stood quite still, tray in hands.

"Dr. Wood will examine the food, and if necessary analyse it," said Locke. "In such circumstances one cannot be too careful, Packington."

"I have no doubt you are right, sir," said Packington.

He moved across to the table with his limping step.

Crash! The butler's limping leg seemed to fail him suddenly.

He lurched, staggered, and the tray went to the floor with a crash and a

smash. There had been a carafe on the tray, and it was broken into a score of fragments by the fall, the water spreading in a pool over the floor.

"Oh, sir!" ejaculated Packington. "Please excuse my clumsiness, sir—a twinge in my leg—"

"No harm done," said Ferrers Locke with a smile. "Replace the food on the tray, to wait for Dr. Wood."

"Very good, sir."

Packington placed the tray on the table, and picked up the scattered articles that had fallen from it. Wharton lent him a helping hand, with a feeling of compassion for the butler's confusion. Packington, who openly prided himself upon being a model servant, was distressed by the incident, as his face plainly showed.

He left the room with many apologies.

"Poor fellow!" said Locke, as the door was closing. "Sir Richard has



told me that Packington received his injury in the war, Wharton, so one would have to be very ill-natured to blame him for a slight accident. On the other hand, I am a water-drinker, and the water is spilt. You will find a soda syphon on the table by the window; I must content myself with soda-water."

"But you must eat, Mr. Locke," said Harry, with a glance of uneasiness at the food on the table.

"Not at the present moment, my boy."

Wharton squished soda-water into a tumbler and brought it to the detective. That, apparently, was to be Ferrers Locke's lunch. No doubt the state he was in had taken away his appetite.

Wharton remained with the detective till it was time for his own lunch. Then Locke insisted on his leaving; and the junior left him.

"Ask Nugent to come and sit with me awhile, after lunch," said Locke. "I shall remain alone for a time. I shall lock the door, my boy—you need not be uneasy. Now go to your lunch."

When Wharton was gone, Locke drew himself from the bed and turned the

key in the door. Then he turned the key carefully, so that it entirely blocked the opening of the keyhole and barred it to any prying eye from without. He stepped to the window and looked out; the high window was not overlooked from any point. Locke smiled. The drawn look of suffering was gone from his face now: save for his pallor, he looked little like the feeble invalid who had been stretched on the bed. He un-

"Dr. Wood will examine the food, and if necessary analyse it," said Ferrers Locke. "One cannot be too careful, Packington." "I have no doubt you are right, sir," said the butler. He moved across to the table, with his limping step. Crash! Packington's limping leg seemed to fail him suddenly. He lurched, staggered, and the tray went to the floor with a crash. (See Chapter 7.)

locked a suitcase, took therefrom a packet of sandwiches, locking the paper in which they had been wrapped in the suitcase again. Locke, it was clear, had come to the Grange prepared for the wiles of the secret assassin who did not hesitate to use the dastardly method of poison to accomplish his ends.

He bent over the spot where the tray had fallen; but Packington had carefully wiped up the spilt water: not a drop of it remained. If the water had been doctored, no clue remained to show that it was so.

When, about half an hour later, Frank Nugent tapped at the detective's door, a faint voice told him to come in.

Nugent turned the handle.

"The door's locked!" he called out.

"Oh, of course! Wait a moment."

Nugent heard a slow and feeble step cross the room to the door. The key was turned back, and the door opened.

Locke stood there, his hand to his

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!

(Continued from page 13.)

bandaged head. Packington was passing along the oaken gallery, and he glanced at the detective for a second, in the doorway, as he passed softly on.

"You forgot you had locked the door, sir," said Nugent, with a smile.

"I am afraid that crack on the head may have scattered my wits a little," said Locke. "A slight dizziness—"

He moved back slowly to the bed and threw himself upon it. Nugent, with deep sympathy in his face, followed him into the room and sat down by the bedside. He remained with the detective until the time came for Packington to take his place, then went down to join his chums.

"How's Mr. Locke?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Pretty bad, I think," answered Nugent gravely. "Looks as if he's knocked out for a jolly long time to come."

"It's rotten," said Bob.

"The rottenfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We expected the esteemed Locke to come and see, and conquer, like the ridiculous Julius Caesar; instead of which—"

"Instead of which, he's knocked out in the first round," said Johnny Bull. "But I suppose even a man like Ferrers Locke can't score every time."

"That's so," said Harry. "Still, it's rotten."

"As jolly old Shakespeare remarks, 'Thus do the hopes we had in him touch ground, and dash themselves to pieces!'" said Bob, with a faint grin.

The chums of the Remove went out into the sunny summer afternoon in a somewhat dismal mood. They sympathised deeply with the famous detective whom fortune had failed, but they could not help feeling the disappointment. And that feeling was fully shared by Sir Richard Ravenspur, in whose heart there was something like despair now that his last and strongest hope had failed him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Ravenspur Wastrel!

"PACKINGTON!"

"Sir!"

"Draw the curtain a little—the sun is very hot."

"Very good, sir."

Packington shaded the window with the curtain and returned to the chair by the detective's bedside.

Under his heavy dark eyebrows his eyes watched Ferrers Locke with a curious expression.

Locke lay on the bed, resting on pillows and cushions, white-faced, faint-voiced, bandaged.

He looked as if the secret assassin of Ravenspur Grange had little to fear from him now. He looked as if he would have found it difficult to lift an arm in his own defence had an attack come.

No doubt that thought was passing through the butler's mind, behind his grave, composed face, as he watched the detective.

"You feel no better, sir?" asked Packington in sympathetic tones.

"A little—a little," answered Locke. "But I do not care to be left alone in the circumstances, Packington; if you can be spared from your duties—"

"There is no difficulty about that, sir," said the butler. "Perhaps you

would like me to read the newspaper to you, sir."

"I think I would prefer to talk a little, Packington. While I am on the sick list, my mind is not inactive," said Locke, smiling. "I have, in fact, desired a talk with you, and this is an opportunity. You are, of course, well acquainted with the house and its inmates; a man in your position cannot fail to be."

"That is the case, sir," said Packington. "But I have not, of course, been so long with Sir Richard as his other servants. Nevertheless, sir, I may be able to give you any information you desire. I will do my best."

"You have not been here long, Packington?"

"A little over three months, sir."

"Then you have never seen Sir Richard's nephew?"

"Master Nugent, sir?"

"I am referring to Sir Richard's other nephew," said Locke.

A blank look came over the butler's face for a moment. Then he seemed to remember, and he nodded.

"I have heard, sir, that Sir Richard had an older nephew, the son of his next brother, who was killed in the War. But I have, of course, never seen him, as it is many years since he was here."

"You recall his name?"

"Edward, I think, sir—no, Edgar," said Packington. "His name was Edgar Ravenspur, sir."

"Was?" repeated Locke.

"I use the past tense, sir, as it is understood that the unhappy young man is dead," said Packington.

"But that is not a certainty, I think?"

"I can scarcely say, sir. Sir Richard assumes that he is dead, and has always treated his younger brother, Captain Ravenspur, as the heir of the title and estate."

"But if this Edgar Ravenspur lives, he is the heir," said Locke musingly. "His father was Sir Richard's next brother, older than Captain Cecil Ravenspur."

"Undoubtedly, sir."

"You know little about him, I suppose?"

"Nothing but hearsay, sir; but, naturally, the servants who have been here a long time remember him, and they have told me various things," said the butler. "I fear that the young man did his uncle no credit. Indeed, I have heard that he was basely ungrateful to Sir Richard, and repaid his many kindnesses with actual dislike, as well as ingratitude. From what I have heard, it seems that he was wild in his ways, and Sir Richard sometimes checked him a little severely."

"He left England rather suddenly, I think?"

"I believe so, sir."

"Is it not the case that he transgressed the law, and that officers came to this very house to arrest him, and that he slipped through their fingers in a very unaccountable manner, and vanished?"

"That is the talk, sir, certainly."

"As he spent his boyhood and most of his youth in this house, it is conceivable that he may have discovered the secret passage that led into the park," remarked Locke. "If so, that would account for his escape on that occasion."

"Possibly, sir."

The butler's manner indicated that he was not interested in the history of the scapegrace of the Ravenspur family. But Locke did not seem to notice it; at all events to heed it. He went on:

"You will gather from what I say, Packington, that I had already looked a little into this strange case before Sir Richard's telegram summoned me here. Sir Richard, in fact, has not mentioned his nephew Edgar to me, and it is from other sources that I have derived my information."

"I understand! It is naturally a case that would interest a gentleman of your standing in your profession, sir." The butler's eyes turned curiously on Locke. "You appear interested in the black sheep of the family, sir."

"You can guess why, Packington."

"You do my understanding too much honour, sir. Master Edgar is dead and gone—at least, that is the common belief—"

"But he may be very much alive," said Locke. "The fact that he is the actual heir to the estate interests me very much. I can speak freely to you, Packington, and rely on your discretion. I came here prepared to distrust every member of the household, but the incident that occurred the evening of my arrival, shows me how much you are to be relied on. You were actually in my presence when the shot was fired at the library window from outside—and that, as Sir Richard remarked, eliminates you from any possible suspicion. I can therefore speak more freely to you than to any other member of Sir Richard's household."

"I understand, sir," said Packington softly.

"You are in a position to help me, if you care to do so," explained Locke. "The servants are all under your observation and control. I need not tell you, Packington, that the enemy of your master has some confederate in the household—the facts speak for themselves. Suppose, for instance, that some old servant of the house may have had an attachment for the scapegrace nephew—it is at least plausible—"

"I follow you, sir."

"And suppose that this wastrel, after a life of reckless and lawless crime in another country—perhaps Australia—may have found his new country too hot to hold him—?" Locke paused. "He may have learned that the affair for which he was once liable to arrest, had been arranged—that the money he abstracted had been repaid by his uncle to save disgrace—that he could, if he chose, return to England a free man—"

"Assuming that he lives, sir."

"Naturally. Now, the crime for which Edgar Ravenspur was once in danger, was nothing less than forgery—the forging of a cheque," said Locke. "We may take it, then, that he is a skilled forger of hands. We know that the secret enemy of Sir Richard is a skilled forger—for he wrote a letter in Frank Nugent's hand which deceived Sir Richard, a short time ago. He may even have obtained a footing in this household by means of this nefarious gift—forged recommendations, Packington."

"You think it possible, sir?"

"I do!" said Locke. "It may be that some old servant, attached to his interests, is acting in collusion with him; or it may be that the young man himself is here, in some disguise, and under an assumed name."

"It sounds a little fantastic, sir," said Packington doubtfully.

"The fantastic may be true, Packington. The young man was abroad for many years, and his appearance would naturally have changed considerably in that time. I think he would be about twenty-five now—and the change from twenty to twenty-five may be considerable in the case of a man

leading a rough and reckless life. Moreover, that the secret assassin is skilled in disguises, is proved by what has happened here—he has twice been seen, and each time in a different disguise."

"That is true, sir," said Packington slowly.

"From what I have learned of that young man, Packington, he was bad—bad to the very core," said Locke. "He repaid a kind uncle with ingratitude, dislike, if not actual hatred and crime. Such a man, older, hardened by a life of reckless ill-doing, might very well conceive the scheme of putting his uncle out of the way and stepping into his shoes. He might take up a situation, as I have suggested, in the very household, and watch for an opportunity to strike his blow by stealth. Something might occur to drive him to act more openly and drastically—the fear, perhaps, of being recognised and betrayed by old associates who had traced him out. It is at least a strange coincidence that the two men, evidently lawless characters, who met their death at the Grange, came here with the name of 'Black Edgar' on their lips. It is not too wide a stretch of the imagination to suppose that Edgar Ravenspur, the wastrel, after he fled from England, became the 'Black Edgar' of the Queensland bush."

Packington nodded slowly.

"Now you see how you can help me, Packington," said Ferrers Locke. "My own examination of the household staff told me nothing—it could scarcely be expected to tell me anything. But you, who come into daily and hourly contact with every one of them—"

"I understand, sir," said Packington. "But there are very few members of the household staff who came into Sir Richard's service since the departure of Master Edgar."

"Then to those few you must devote your careful attention, if you desire to help me," said Locke.

"I will certainly do so, sir," said the butler. "But may I take it, sir, that you definitely suspect Edgar Ravenspur of being alive, and in England, and of being the villain who has attempted my master's life?"

"I will say, at least, that my theory takes that line," said Locke.

"But the young man, sir, could scarcely step into the shoes of a relative he had murdered—"

Locke smiled.

"I am giving him credit for having laid his plans with skill," he answered. "Sir Richard dead, the assassin, undiscovered, will disappear. An interval will elapse—and from some distant country, Edgar Ravenspur will learn, by some arranged chance, of his uncle's death, and will return to England to claim the title and estates. If he has played a part in this household, he will have discarded the disguise he used, and will certainly not be recognisable as that person."

"You give him credit for very great cunning and resource, sir."

"Not more than he deserves, perhaps," said Locke. "The matter is, at present, only theory; but, once I am up and about again, I have little doubt that I shall be able to turn theory into proved fact." The detective glanced at his wrist-watch. "But I am detaining you too long, Packington."

"Not at all, sir."

The butler rose to his feet, however.

"Do you care to be left alone, sir, while I am gone, and before one of your young friends arrive?" he asked.

"Yes, that is all right."

Packington permitted himself a respectful smile.

"I have no doubt, sir, that you have your automatic close handy, in case of need." His glance lingered on the cushion, under which Locke's right hand was slipped, as if carelessly.

Locke smiled, too. He did not answer, but the butler knew that the automatic was there.

Packington went from the room with his sort, limping step, his face very thoughtful. Doubtless what Ferrers Locke had told him had given him food for thought.

A little later Ferrers Locke quitted the room, in company with the Greyfriars juniors, to take a walk on the terrace.

In the bright sunlight his face looked pale almost wan, and many times he leaned his hand on Wharton's shoulder for support. He seated himself at last, and sat resting, silent, for a long time, the juniors sympathetically silent, too.

Locke looked at them at last, with a faint smile.

"I think I had better return to my room," he said.

Harry Wharton helped him back to his room. Packington came to lend a respectful hand. For several hours Locke slept. Frank Nugent had gone to his uncle, but four of the juniors remained with Locke; they were not likely to stir from his presence while his eyes were closed. When he awakened, towards evening, he thanked them with a pale smile. Dr. Wood came, and the juniors left Locke with the medical man. When the latter departed they noticed that his face was grave. It was not a happy day for Harry Wharton & Co. What Inspector Jude might be doing, what progress he might be making in the case, they did not know—and cared little. It was to Ferrers Locke that their faith had been pinned, and though they tried hard to keep that faith unimpaired, their disappointment in the famous detective was deep and bitter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Danger!

HARRY WHARTON caught his breath.

It was ten o'clock, and the Famous Five, in Ferrers Locke's room, were bidding good-night to the detective.

Wharton, uneasy, unquiet, left his chums by the bedside, to look round the room before he went.

He could not help feeling uneasy. He pulled back the heavy curtains at the windows to look at the window fastenings, and found them secure. Then he looked to the door. There was a strong lock on it, but previous experiences had proved that the secret enemy of Ravenspur Grange was not likely to be baffled by lock and key. The bolt was a different matter, if it was in good order, and Wharton looked at it to ascertain that it was so. Then he caught his breath and hurried back to the detective.

"Mr. Locke!"

"Well?"

Wharton sunk his voice.

"The bolt on your door, sir—it has been tampered with!" he breathed.

"Indeed?"

A slight smile crossed the pale face of the Baker Street detective; a smile tinged with sarcasm.

Wharton coloured.

"I assure you that it is so, Mr. Locke," he said. "I have looked at it—"

"You are observant, Wharton."

"It has been tampered with," said Harry. "It must have been done while you were on the terrace this afternoon—"

He broke off, starting, and stared at the amused face of the detective. A strange thought had flashed into his mind.

"Mr. Locke, you knew—"

"Possibly."

"But—but the bolt no longer secures the door, sir! The screws have been taken out—"

"Really—"

"And replaced loosely," said Harry. "I tell you, Mr. Locke, that a push from the outside would open the door, in spite of the bolt."

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"You are sure of this, Wharton?" asked Ferrers Locke quietly.

"Quite, sir."

"Will you be equally sure of one other thing?"

"What is that?"

"Not to breathe a word, not a syllable, of what you have observed," said Ferrers Locke. "Not even in your own room among your friends. Walls have ears in this house, Wharton."

Wharton looked at him in bewilderment.

"You will be alone here to-night, Mr. Locke."

"Exactly."

"And—in your present state—"

"What then?"

"The villain will not be stopped by a lock and key, sir. The bolt will not hold the door. The fact that it has been tampered with shows that the villain is close at hand and means mischief."

Locke's eyes glimmered.

"I can rely upon your silence and discretion, Wharton. Say no more, and do not discuss the matter with your friends. A careless word may undo all that I have done."

"All that you have done, sir!" repeated Harry. So far as the juniors knew, Locke had done nothing since arriving at Ravenspur Grange save to fall foul of the secret assassin, and come off second-best in the encounter.

"Good-night, my boys!" said Ferrers Locke.

"Good-night, sir!"

The juniors, in doubt, and with reluctance, left the detective's room. They stopped outside, to hear him lock the door, and then move slowly and limply back to the bed.

Outside the door of the detective's room was a deep recess, from which the door opened. It gave on to the oaken gallery. For some moments the juniors stood in the recess, hesitating. Then they moved out into the gallery and went along to the staircase that led to their own quarters. They had already said good-night to Sir Richard Ravenspur; and, with the baronet so carefully watched and guarded, they had little uneasiness for him. But their uneasiness for Ferrers Locke was great.

But Locke's order had been imperative. It was true that in Ravenspur Grange walls had ears; a careless word might reach a lurking listener. And discussion, after all, was useless; there was no choice but to give the detective his head, as Bob Cherry expressed it. But it was with keen uneasiness that they went up to their room.

It seemed to Wharton, as he thought the matter over, that he had a half-seen glimpse of something behind this; yet the more he thought it over, the more he was perplexed. Locke knew—had known before Wharton spoke—that the bolt on his door had been tampered with. It had been done cunningly; only a careful examination would have revealed it. Locke, in his present state,

was perhaps not likely to make so careful an examination—the assassin, no doubt, had counted on that. Yet he had known—Wharton felt sure that he had known. Further, it seemed to Harry that, in going out of the room for nearly an hour that afternoon, Locke had given the unknown his opportunity—and dimly it seemed to him that he glimpsed intention in this. Had Locke given his enemy that opportunity on purpose?

Was it, after all, a trap?

But, if so, surely it was madness for a man weak, sick, exhausted, alone in the dark hours, to tempt fate in this way! Sleep might overcome him; the dizziness in his head, the result of the blow, of which he had complained many times during the day, might overcome him. If it was a trap, the detective himself was more likely to fall into it than the assassin. Yet, as Locke undoubtedly knew that his door was insecure, as he had deliberately elected to remain alone in the night, it must be that he looked for an attack, and welcomed it. In his usual state of physical fitness, of clear, cool self-possession, the matter would have been different. But in his present state—

"Better turn in, old man," said Bob Cherry from his bed. "We're not on in the next act, you know."

"I know," said Harry. "But—"

"The butfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the ridiculous commands of the esteemed Locke must be obeyed."

"I know," repeated Harry. "But—"

He broke off.

It was useless to ponder and surmise. Locke had commanded silence, and his command had to be observed. He had exacted Wharton's promise that neither he nor his comrades would quit their quarters that night; and the promise had to be kept.

Wharton turned in.

But he lay long awake in the darkness, unable to sleep. He listened for the faintest sounds in the silent house, listening in vain. His thoughts were busy, turning always on the same subject. Several times he half-rose from his bed, but lay down again. His promise to the detective held him there—not unless there was an alarm in the night could he go down before morning. It was not only concern for his safety that had led Locke to exact that promise, he was sure of that. His intervention might disconcert some plan the detective had formed. But what plan was likely to be carried out with success by a man sick and dazed from the effects of a cruel blow on the head—a man whose faltering footsteps Wharton himself had had to guide in that walk on the terrace? Self-reliant he knew Ferrers Locke to be; but was self-confidence leading the Baker Street detective into the very jaws of death?

The hour of two had chimed from somewhere in the silent distance, and Harry Wharton was still awake. He sat up uneasily in his bed.

"You awake, Harry?"

It was Frank Nugent's whispering voice.

"You, too, Frank?"

"I haven't slept."

"Same here," said Harry.

"The samefulness is terrific," came the murmuring voice of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The sleepfulness does not come, my absurd chums."

"Hark!"

With an effect of thunder in the silent house came a crash, followed instantly by a ringing shot. Wharton bounded from his bed.

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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Face to Face!

SILENCE!

If there was a sound at the door of the detective's room in the deep recess opening off the oaken gallery above the hall it was scarcely audible, even had there been wakeful ears to hear.

Ravenspur Grange was plunged in silence and slumber. The light burned in the old hall, in the corridor that led to Sir Richard's room, and in the baronet's room itself, where Jervis and a Scotland Yard man watched over the master of the Grange. But in the deep old recess outside Ferrers Locke's door all was dusky. And in the deep shadow a shadowy figure stirred, groping over the door with silent hands.

Like a black shadow in shadows. A figure clothed in black, with a black mask covering the face, scarcely discernible in the gloom, even had watchful eyes been at hand. Dark, silent, stealthy, the secret enemy was at the door of the Baker Street detective.

The faintest of clicks and the lock was no longer a barrier. The faintest of snaps and the bolt no longer held.

But for long minutes the black figure remained motionless, silent, outside the door that was no longer secured.

He was listening intently.

Minutes passed, long minute after minute. From the room within came no sound, no stir.

The figure in black moved at last.

Silently on well-oiled hinges the door slid open inch by inch till the aperture was wide enough for a pair of keen eyes that glittered through holes in the black mask to stare into the room.

The interior was dark, but not so dark as the oaken porch outside. The heavy curtains at the windows had been left a little open, and between them clear summer starlight glimmered into the room.

The light was faint, but it was enough for keen eyes accustomed to the darkness.

Faint starlight fell across Ferrers Locke's bed.

It showed the shape of a sleeper, and a bandaged head resting on the white pillow, a head that was a mass of bandages.

There came a cruel glint into the eyes that gleamed from the holes in the mask.

Silently the door was pushed a little wider, and with a noiseless step the figure in black entered, softly closing the door behind him.

Again he stood still, silent, listening.

Five long minutes crawled by, and still he was motionless, watching the bandaged head on the pillow that never stirred. Reassured at last, the man in black stepped slowly, stealthily, towards the bedside. The starlight that penetrated the room glimmered now on something bright that was grasped in a clenched hand; it glimmered more clearly on the bright steel blade as the hand was raised over the sleeper.

For a second that glittering death flashed over the still form in the bed. Then the hand descended with a cruel, ruthless strength and a blow was struck with all the force of a powerful arm. Through blanket and sheet, through the form beneath, the long sharp blade passed, driven to the very hilt.

Then from the dastard who had struck came a sudden suppressed exclamation.

There was no note of triumph in it.

It was a suppressed cry of surprise—of fear.

For the heavy blow that had buried

the knife to the hilt in the still form had crumpled down the bedclothes into a hollow, showing that it was no solid body that lay beneath blankets and sheets, no form of flesh and blood. Beneath the bedclothes lay a dummy figure in which the blade of the murderous knife was buried, and even as the knife sank home the assassin knew that he had been tricked.

With a snarl on his lips he turned, panting, knife in hand, fear and murderous ferocity in his eyes.

There was a blinding flash of illumination as the electric light was suddenly turned on.

Bright light filled the room, and the eyes that peered wolfishly from the holes in the mask blinked in it.

A dozen feet away stood Ferrers Locke, and the automatic in his hand was levelled at the figure in black that stood breathing hate and rage.

"Stand where you are!"

The detective's voice was cool and clear.

Over the levelled automatic his eyes were fixed on the glittering eyes that looked from the mask.

No word came from the masked man.

He stood quite still, his hand clenched desperately on the knife, his eyes fixed on the detective. For some moments there was silence in the room, broken only by the panting breath under the mask.

Locke broke the silence.

"Lift a hand, stir a step, and I will shoot you like a mad dog!" he said coldly and clearly. "You know me—you know I am a man of my word!"

From Locke's cool, calm face the eyes in the mask turned for a moment to the bed, clearly seen now in the bright light.

But even in the light it was not easy to recognise the sleeper as a dummy. Locke had done his work with care and skill. Only where the murderer's blow had disarranged the carefully-compacted form could it be seen that the figure was not natural. On the pillow lay the bandaged head, strangely lifelike even in the clear light.

The burning eyes returned to the detective's face. There was no bandages on Locke's head now, there was no ghastly pallor in his face. Ferrers Locke looked his usual cool, calm self. The masked man drew a hissing breath.

"Fooled!"

That one word dropped as if unconsciously from his lips.

Locke smiled faintly.

"Quite!" he said.

He made a slight motion with the automatic.

"Drop that knife, Edgar Ravenspur!"

The masked man did not start at the name. It was as if he knew that the Baker Street detective was acquainted with his identity.

The knife dropped to the floor.

The masked man stood unarmed, his fingers hidden in black gloves twitching convulsively.

"Fooled, as you say!" said Locke coolly. "Your blow from behind did not harm me so much as you were led to believe. I have had rather a weary day playing the invalid, but it was worth it."

The eyes in the unseen face burned at him.

"I read your thoughts, Edgar Ravenspur," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "You are a desperate man, and your life is forfeit to the law. Your two old associates of the Australian bush—Inspector Cook, Garnish—four men had perished by your hand, though your uncle yet survives your dastardly

attempts. You go from this room to prison, from prison to the scaffold you richly deserve, and you are thinking that the most desperate chance is better than that. I can only warn you that I will shoot you if you resist."

A hard, bitter, mocking laugh came from the slit in the mask.

"You mistake me, Ferrers Locke. While there is life there is hope!" came the answer of the masked man. "I have been behind bars before, but they have not held me."

"That you still hope, I gather from the fact that you are not at this moment speaking in your natural voice," said Locke. "But if I cannot recognise your voice, Edgar Ravenspur, I shall recognise your face when the mask is removed."

"I am in your hands, Ferrers Locke.

From the well of blackness below came a mocking laugh.

"Not this time, Ferrers Locke!"

Silence followed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Purple Stain!

INSPECTOR JUDE gazed at the dummy figure in Ferrers Locke's bed, with the clean-cut gash of the knife through the bedclothes and the figure beneath. His gaze turned to the knife that lay on the floor. The man from Scotland Yard was the first to arrive on the scene. But Harry Wharton & Co., half-dressed, wildly excited, were at the doorway. The ringing of the shot through the silent night had brought the juniors

evidently had not been a helpless invalid, after all.

"Then it was a trick?" he grunted.

"Precisely."

Another grunt from Mr. Jude. His sarcastic compassion had been wasted on the Baker Street detective, and he was not pleased.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Then you weren't knocked out, after all, by that rap on the head last night, Mr. Locke."

"Not to any great extent," said Locke. "I regret very much, my young friends, that I had no choice but to let you share the belief I desired to impress upon the assassin. I am afraid that it caused you some uneasiness on my account: Sir Richard, too. But I really had no choice in the matter; I had a part to play."

"I understand," said Harry.

"The understandfulness is terrific."

"The villain might never have come here had he not believed that he had a sick and helpless man to deal with," the detective explained. "His reception last night might have altered his plans. As it was, he came—"

Inspector Jude broke in.

"You mean that the criminal knows



"I am in your hands, Ferrers Locke," said the masked man. "You call me by a name that is not my own—perhaps the sight of my face will undeceive you." "We shall see," replied the detective. "Remove that mask." "Willingly." The masked man raised his right hand to his mask, while Locke watched him with the eyes of a lynx. (See Chapter 10).

You call me by a name that is not my own—perhaps the sight of my face will undeceive you."

"We shall see. Remove that mask."

"Willingly."

The masked man raised his right hand to the mask. Locke watched him with the eyes of a lynx, but the man's hands were empty, and he made no attempt to produce a weapon. That he had yet some hope of escape was undoubted; but he was well aware that an attempt to draw a weapon would have drawn the detective's instant fire.

The hand fumbled with the cord that secured the mask in its place. Then, with sudden swiftness, his left hand grasped a pillow from the bed, and with the same movement hurled it at the electric light that shone down from the ceiling. The crash was instant, and was followed by darkness; and through the darkness came the roar of the automatic as Locke instantly fired. There was a racing of feet, and Locke rushed in the darkness towards the door—but it was slammed as he reached it.

Locke tore it open and rushed out into the gallery, weapon in hand.

The fleeing man had already reached the hall below, and his hand was on the electric light switch as Locke leaned over the balustrade and aimed. The light in the hall vanished.

down with a rush. Only the shaded bedside lamp burned in Ferrers Locke's room—the detective had turned it on as Mr. Jude arrived: the ceiling light was smashed and useless. Ferrers Locke, cool and calm, smiled faintly at the startled face of the inspector, and gave the Greyfriars fellows a nod as they stared in.

"Mr. Locke—" exclaimed Harry.

"Nothing amiss," drawled Ferrers Locke. "No occasion for alarm."

"But we heard—"

The juniors looked at the figure in the bed, and understanding dawned on them. They looked at Ferrers Locke's face, normal in its aspect, without a trace of the ghastly pallor that had looked so deathly the evening before. Locke smiled again.

The juniors did not care to ask questions; but the Scotland Yard man broke into gruff inquiry at once.

"What's all this, Mr. Locke? What has happened?"

Locke made a gesture towards the gash in the bedclothes.

"What you see," he answered. "The assassin came; he fancied that I was in the bed, and he struck in the dark."

"But—you were ill. I understood—I supposed—"

"So did he!" answered Ferrers Locke tranquilly.

Mr. Jude bit his lip. "Poor Locke"

everything that goes on in this house, and was aware that you were apparently laid up."

"Exactly."

"And he fell into the trap?"

"As you see."

"But you did not contrive to keep him in it!" said Mr. Jude, with an inflection of sarcasm.

"I admit that he was too quick for me," said Ferrers Locke. "He is a man of resource."

"He got away, at all events."

"He got away," assented Ferrers Locke. "I am under somewhat more restraint than the criminal, Mr. Jude. I could not shoot him unless as a last resource to save my own life. When he smashed the lamp and left us in darkness, I fired—but I fired low, to disable him if possible. Even in the dark I think the shot went very close. However, he got away."

"A clever trap, no doubt," said Mr. Jude, "but as you have caught nothing in it, Mr. Locke, of little benefit to anyone."

"It would seem so," assented the detective, unmoved. "But the man has been here, and you are welcome to any clue he may have left behind."

"There is a possibility of that," said the Scotland Yard man. "With your

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permission, I will make an examination of the room."

"By all means."

Mr. Jude had picked up the knife. A scrutiny of it only elicited a disappointed grunt from him.

"No finger-marks," he growled.

"The assassin is rather a stickler for good form," remarked Ferrers Locke. "He would not dream of making a call without his gloves."

The juniors smiled, and Mr. Jude grunted again. He laid the knife on the table and proceeded round the room, examining it with a keen professional eye.

"The lock was picked?" he said.

"That is so."

"But the bolt—"

"It was tampered with during the day," said Locke.

"While you were here?" exclaimed the inspector.

"No; I spent an hour on the terrace, to give the man a good opportunity for tampering with the bolt," answered Locke, urbanely.

The inspector compressed his lips.

"That sounds a little fabulous, Locke. We know that the man, whoever he is, has free access to the house—no doubt by some secret door or passage similar to that already discovered. But you would imply that he is within the building at all hours, aware of every passing incident."

"I leave you to form your own opinion of that," said Locke. "I cannot, of course, say from personal knowledge what happened in this room while I was on the terrace. But when I returned, the bolt was in its present state."

"And you left it so?"

"Quite."

"Believing that he would come during the night?"

"Knowing that he would," answered Locke calmly. "Since my affected illness imposed upon him, it was certain he would come."

"You could not know for certain that he was imposed upon."

"I had reason to think so."

"What reason?" persisted the inspector.

Locke paused a moment.

"Everyone in the house believed that I was seriously injured," he answered at last, "the assassin among the rest. Dr. Wood's bandages, and a little make-up on my face, convinced everyone of that. I was assured that the assassin believed as others believed."

The inspector finished his examination of the room, and stood frowning. He had discovered nothing of any moment. As always, the secret enemy of Ravenspur had left no trace behind.

"You seem to have had the impression, Locke, that the man feared you to a very great extent, and was more anxious to remove you from his path than to remove myself, for instance."

"It would appear to be the case, since he has attacked me, and not you, Mr. Jude," said Ferrers Locke. "But perhaps your turn is coming."

The inspector started a little.

"He will find me ready, if it does," he grunted. "At all events, if the man stands in my presence, he will not, I hope, slip through my fingers as he has slipped through yours. We have had a dramatic alarm in the middle of the night, but it leaves us precisely where we were."

"You think so?" asked Locke.

"If he has left any clue behind him, except that knife which tells us nothing, I am not clever enough to pick it up," said the inspector sarcastically. "I will

thank you to point it out to me, if it is here."

"He may not have left the clue here," said Locke.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that he may have taken it with him."

The inspector stared.

"If you consider this a matter for jesting, Mr. Locke, I do not agree," he said sourly. "Good-night."

"Good-night, Mr. Jude," answered Locke politely.

The Baker Street detective turned to the juniors.

"You may go back to bed, my boys. There will be no further alarm to-night. Good-night!"

"Good-night, Mr. Locke."

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to their quarters. They went in a relieved frame of mind. Ferrers Locke, after all, was not on the sick list; and they could not blame him for allowing them to share in the belief which had so nearly led to the capture of the mysterious enemy of Ravenspur.

"That merchant knows what he's about!" said Johnny Bull.

"The knowfulness is terrific."

"And we were worrying about him for nothing," said Wharton, with a grin. "Of course, he had to keep it

THIS WEEK'S POCKET WALLET

goes to: A. MacMahon, c/o 228, Union Road, Surrey Hills, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, who sent in this clever limerick.

The Greyfriars fellows
named Todd
Are alike as two peas in a pod.
But, as cheese from chalk
in tastes and in talk,
They differ. Now isn't that
odd?

I've got plenty more pocket-wallets, so don't be afraid to send in your efforts, chums.

dark. But—the man got away, after all."

"But I'll give you ten to one in doughnuts that he's left some clue that Locke's got his finger on!" said Bob Cherry.

"That's my idea, too!"

The juniors had little doubt of that. They would have had still less, had they been able to watch the proceedings of Ferrers Locke, after they had left him.

In his room, with a pocket flash-lamp in his hand, Locke was carefully examining the rug that lay by the bedside. He rose from that examination with a faint purple stain on his finger-tip, where it had touched the rug. He centred the light of the lamp on the spot where the masked man had stood, after turning in alarm from the bedside, and produced a magnifying glass, which he directed on the spot. On the polished floor was a faint purple stain.

Flash-lamp in hand, the detective quitted the room. Below, the great hall glowed with electric lights. From the door of his room to the stairs, Locke proceeded slowly, twice picking up the sign of the purple stain. He descended the stairs and put the lamp in his pocket, and stood for some minutes looking about him and listening. The house was still and silent; but stillness and silence were not enough for the detective. He explored the great hall, and the passages and doorways opening from it, carefully,

and ascertained that no eye was upon him. Then, secure from observation, he examined the polished floor of the hall with the magnifying glass. Whatever it was that he found, it led him across the hall to a corridor at the back, a corridor that, as he knew from his previous examinations of the house, led to two rooms only. The detective seemed satisfied, and, turning back, he ascended the stairs and returned to his own room.

The mysterious enemy of Ravenspur had fallen into the snare the detective had laid for him, and escaped from it; which, in Inspector Jude's opinion, left matters as they were! But Ferrers Locke had had two strings to his bow. Well as he had laid the snare, he had foreseen the possibility of the assassin's escape—and had taken measures to render it futile. The secret enemy of Ravenspur was still at liberty; but, unless Ferrers Locke was mistaken, that night was the last night of his freedom. And it was seldom that Ferrers Locke was mistaken.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

SIR RICHARD RAVENSPUR stood in the old library of Ravenspur Grange, before the wood fire that crackled on the ancient hearth. The sun of the September morning glimmered in at the tall windows. The baronet was looking better—there was a healthy colour in his cheeks—only the signs of the long strain could be plainly seen. Once the shadow that lay on his life was lifted, the master of the Grange would be himself again; but would it ever be lifted? Sir Richard was beginning to doubt it. But he had drawn hope and renewed confidence from the knowledge that Ferrers Locke, after all, was not "knocked out," as had been believed, and that he had come within an ace of trapping the mysterious enemy of the Ravenspurs.

There was a perplexed expression on the baronet's face now—perplexity mingled with hope. Ferrers Locke had asked him to be in the library at eleven o'clock to hear a communication he had to make. Sir Richard was eager enough to hear it. That it would announce the discovery and arrest of the assassin he did not venture to hope, but he knew that Ferrers Locke would not speak unless he had some matter of moment to communicate. The clock indicated a few minutes to eleven now, and Sir Richard was in momentary expectation of Locke's arrival.

Jervis was in the room with his master, and a plain-clothes man who had come with Inspector Jude. Sir Richard was still under constant watch and ward, irksome as it was to him.

When the door opened, his glance turned to it eagerly. But it was not Ferrers Locke. Harry Wharton & Co. came in.

The baronet gave them a kind nod.

"I am expecting Mr. Locke here, my boys," he said.

"Mr. Locke told us to come, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Indeed! Then you are to hear his communication," said the baronet. "Remain by all means."

The door opened again, a few minutes later, and Inspector Jude glanced in.

"Is Locke here, Sir Richard?" he asked.

"Not yet; I expect him every moment."

"I've had a message from him, asking me to come to the library," grunted the inspector. "If he's not here—"

"I am here," said a quiet voice. Ferrers Locke entered after the inspector and closed the door.

Mr. Jude looked at him. "If you have something to tell me, Locke—"

"I have something to tell Sir Richard Ravenspur, which I believe you would like to hear," answered Locke.

"On the subject of the case in hand?"

"Naturally."

The inspector seemed to hesitate.

"If that means that you have made some discovery, Locke—"

"It means that I hope, at least, to make one," said Locke. He touched the inspector on the shoulder with a friendly gesture. "Come, Mr. Jude. I have worked with the Yard before, and my assistance has not been despised. This case is in your hands, sir. I am here merely at Sir Richard's request, and if I can give you any information leading to the man you want, it is my duty, if only as an ordinary member of the public."

The inspector's manner relaxed very considerably.

"If you can do that, Mr. Locke, I'm ready to own up that they don't over-rate you," he said. "I am quite at your service."

"I think your patience will be rewarded," said Locke. "You may take my word for it that you will not be wasting your time."

"I'm sure of that, Mr. Locke," said the inspector very cordially.

He glanced at Harry Wharton & Co. "These boys—"

Locke smiled.

"These boys have had so much to do with the matter, and have served Sir Richard so courageously and usefully, that I feel they are entitled to witness the last scene," he said.

"The last scene!" repeated the inspector, his manner instantly alert, a keen flash in his eyes.

"That is what I hope."

The inspector drew a deep breath, and the chums of the Remove exchanged quick glances. Sir Richard Ravenspur's lined face lighted up. To everyone present, it was clear that this meeting in the old library was not an idle one—that the next happenings were to be dramatic. But what was to happen was a mystery, so far.

Eleven chimed.

"Sir Richard," said Locke quietly, "I have asked certain persons to come to the house, and they will arrive within a few minutes. I take it that they may proceed to carry out the orders I have given them, unquestioned."

"Most certainly, Mr. Locke."

"I have asked Packington to tell me when they are here," said Locke. "He will come to the library. May I ask you, Sir Richard, to allow your butler to join this meeting—to remain in this room and hear what I have to say."

"If you desire it—certainly, Mr. Locke," said the baronet in wonder. "Packington is a very faithful fellow, and I have no objection whatever."

"Thank you! If Packington does not desire to remain, you will give him an order to that effect?"

"I do not quite understand—"

"Possibly; but you will do as I request? Packington's presence is of some importance."

"I am in your hands, Mr. Locke. Packington shall remain."

"Very well; then we have only to wait."

There was silence in the library. Sir Richard stood on the rug before the low, crackling wood fire, Ferrers Locke nearer to the door, Inspector Jude had

sat down in one of the deep chairs. Jervis and the plain-clothes man were near the windows. Harry Wharton & Co. stood leaning back on one of the tall bookcases, breathing suppressed excitement. Every eye was on Locke, but no eye could read a clue to what was about to happen, in the impassive face of the Baker Street detective.

It was the arrival of Packington that broke the tension.

"Some workmen have arrived, sir!" he said, standing in the doorway. "The men you were expecting, sir."

"Come in, Packington," said Sir Richard.

The butler advanced into the room slowly. He came with his quiet, limping step, his face, under the heavy dark eyebrows, almost expressionless, as usual. Yet to all eyes it was apparent that there was something of reluctance in the butler's manner, and his eyes sought every face in turn with a rapid though almost imperceptible glance. It was as if Packington, the sedate and respectable butler of Ravenspur Grange, had sensed something of hostility in the atmosphere. He moved slowly towards his master, and Locke, behind him, closed the door.

"Please remain here, Packington," said Sir Richard kindly. "Mr. Locke has a communication to make to us, and he desires that you should hear it."

"Mr. Locke is very kind, sir," said Packington smoothly.

"Mr. Locke is aware, as I am, of the loyal interest you take in my safety and welfare," said Sir Richard. "Pray be at your ease, Packington."

"Very good, sir."

Packington's eyes, under the heavy brows, turned on Ferrers Locke. There was a strange gleam in their depths.

"And now, Mr. Locke—" said the baronet.

Locke smiled apologetically.

"I must ask you to wait yet a few minutes," he said. "I can only say that if you wait patiently your patience will be rewarded."

"It is for you to say, Mr. Locke," answered the puzzled baronet.

There was silence.

It was broken, after a few tense minutes, by the sound of knocking. The dull, heavy sound came from some other part of the house—somewhere on the ground floor. The sound, in the stillness, was startling. It was the sound of workmen with their tools. A commonplace sound enough, yet to the startled ears in the library it came fraught with significance, bodeful.

Knock, knock, knock!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

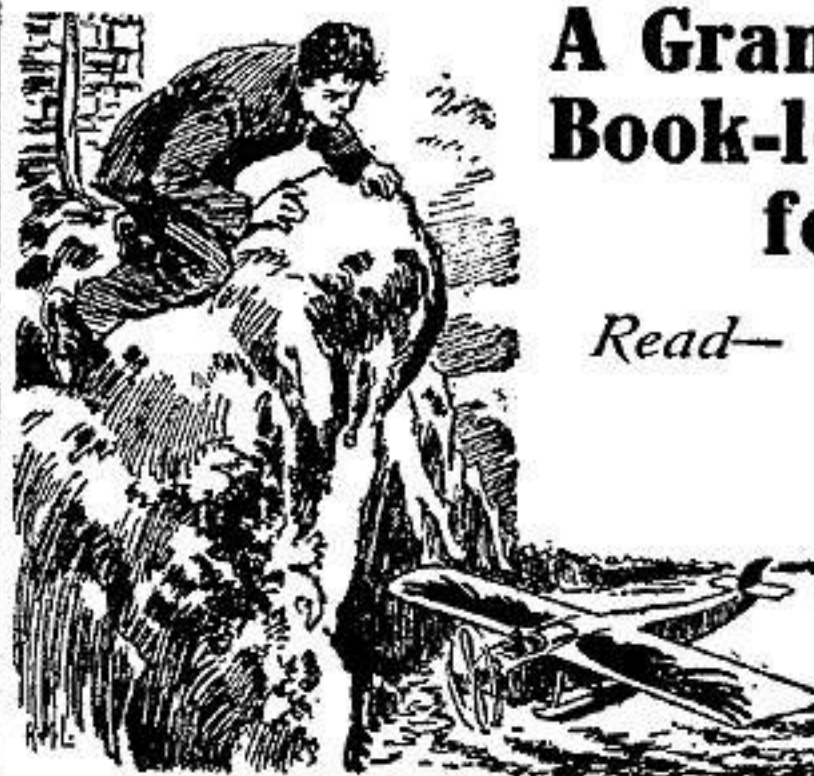
Brought to Bay!

KNOCK, knock, knock!

Sir Richard made a slight movement. Inspector Jude's eyes were keen, alert. The Greyfriars juniors exchanged quick glances. Somehow, they could not imagine how, that unexpected sound of distant knocking had something to do with this inexplicable meeting in the old library—something to do with Locke's insistence upon the butler's presence. They were sure of it, bewildering as it was. Dull, heavy, continuous, the sound of knocking came, fateful, bodeful, as the knocking on the gate in "Macbeth." Packington stood motionless. Only his eyes seemed alive, and they were gleaming and glinting strangely under the heavy brows.

"What is that noise, Packington?" asked Sir Richard at last, breaking a silence in the library that was growing painful.

"I cannot say, sir," answered (Continued on next page.)



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Packington, "but I will go at once and ascertain."

He made a movement.

"It is not necessary," said Ferrers Locke. "The sound is made by the men I sent for, Sir Richard, and who are carrying out the orders I have already given them."

"Then I will ask no questions, Mr. Locke. Remain here, Packington."

"Please excuse me, sir, if I seem to take a liberty," said the butler smoothly, "but if these men are at work in the house—"

"They are," said Locke.

"Then some supervision is surely necessary, sir," said Packington. "Ravenspur Grange is an historic building, sir, and any damage—"

"Some damage must inevitably be done," said Locke, "but I have Sir Richard's warrant for that."

"Certainly!" said Sir Richard.

"Really, sir, it sounds as if the men were breaking through a wall," said Packington.

"I compliment you on your hearing," said Locke gravely. "That is precisely what they are doing, Packington."

"If you have no objection, sir, to my seeing—"

"I have a great objection, Packington, to my men being interfered with in any way," said Locke tersely.

The butler compressed his lips. The sound of knocking was continuous, and every ear in the library was strained to place it, to discover precisely whence it came. That it was on the ground floor, and on the other side of the great hall, was certain. There were sounds of cracking and wrenching, mingled with the steady knock, knock, knock!

"I will not keep you in the dark, gentlemen," said Ferrers Locke. "My men are seeking the opening of the secret passage that led from this house to the old hunting-lodge in the park. As you know, the hunting-lodge was blown to fragments with a charge of dynamite, and at that end the secret passage is buried beyond discovery. At this end I hope to be more successful."

"Then your assistants are removing the panelling of a wall?" said Sir Richard Ravenspur.

"That is so."

"You may be sure, Mr. Locke, that I would allow no obstacle to be placed in the way of your investigations," said the baronet uncasily. "But there are a large number of rooms with ancient panellings of oak in this building, and a search at random—"

"You need fear nothing for your panellings, Sir Richard. The search is not at random. My men are very careful men, too, and I have no doubt that after the investigation is completed the oak panelling may be restored almost unscathed. They are working in one special room, indicated to them by me."

"May I ask, sir, which room?" inquired Packington.

"Certainly. Your own room."

"Mine?"

"Your two rooms, to be more precise," said Ferrers Locke. "I have been guilty of negligence, Packington, in not asking your permission before allowing the men to proceed. But I feared that your genuine concern for your master's valuable property might have led to intervention of some sort on your part."

The butler breathed hard.

"Packington should really have been apprised, Mr. Locke," said Sir Richard uncasily. "A man's private quarters, sir—"

"I am but a servant, sir," said Packington. "No doubt Mr. Locke did not deem me worthy of such consideration."

"Do not say that, Packington," ex-

claimed Sir Richard, really distressed. "In the circumstances, you must excuse this—this—"

"Very good, sir. But as my own private rooms are now, apparently, being demolished and my property handled by strangers, I claim the right to be present."

"Decidedly," said Sir Richard. "You have no objection, Mr. Locke, to Packington going to his rooms to see that no damage is done to his own belongings?"

"Packington may rely upon my men to do no more damage than is essential," said Locke calmly. "I desire him to remain here."

"I am placed in a difficult position," said Sir Richard. "I have no right to order Packington to remain in these circumstances. All the more because he is in my service, I am bound to protect his rights."

"That is what I should have expected you to say, sir," said Packington. "May I go, sir?"

"You may not!" said Locke inflexibly.

"I am addressing my master, sir—not you!" said Packington. "I decline to take orders from a meddling busy-body!"

"Packington!" exclaimed Sir Richard.

"Excuse me, sir, but I must go to my own rooms, since they are being overturned and overhauled by strangers. I insist upon my right to do so."

"I can scarcely refuse it, Mr. Locke."

"Packington must remain!" said Ferrers Locke.

"My good fellow," said Sir Richard. "I have no right to order you, but I request you to remain. The fullest compensation will be made, of course, for any damage to your own property. As a favour to me, Packington, remain here, and let Mr. Locke's men proceed unhindered."

Packington's smouldering eyes turned on Locke, and then returned to the distressed face of his master.

"I decline to remain here in the circumstances, sir," he said. "I insist upon my right to go to my room. I have served you faithfully, sir; but I now resign my position in this household. I am no longer your butler, sir!"

"My good fellow—"

"As I am no longer a servant in this house, sir, I shall go to my room to pack my effects," said the butler.

"I beg you, Packington—"

"Sir, I am not receiving the treatment a butler has a right to expect in a gentleman's household," said Packington. "I refuse to remain!"

He moved towards the door.

Ferrers Locke was standing with his back to it. Inspector Jude was on his feet now, his eyes glued to the butler. All eyes, in fact, were on him. He reached the door, but the Baker Street detective did not stir.

"Will you stand aside, sir?" asked Packington, endeavouring in vain to speak in his usual smooth tones. His voice was trembling with passion.

"No!" said Locke.

"You venture to detain me in this room?"

"As you see!"

"For what reason?"

"Listen!" replied Ferrers Locke.

The knocking that proceeded from the butler's room was the answer to Packington's question.

There was a breathless pause. The eyes of the butler were the eyes of a hunted animal. Locke's inflexible glance met his fierce glare. The man was motionless, but a quiver ran through him and he sprang like a wild beast. But Ferrers Locke was ready, and the butler reeled back from a drive on the chest that sent him spinning.

"Packington!" cried Sir Richard.

The butler did not heed him. In a second he had recovered his balance and was leaping at Locke again, all disguise thrown aside now, all pretence, his face that of a hunted criminal in the grip of the hunter; and as he leaped he tore a revolver from its place of concealment. But Locke was on the watch, and in an instant he was grappling with the man, the wrist was gripped and the revolver pointed upward.

Crack!

The bullet shattered a gash in the ceiling. The next moment Inspector Jude's grasp, as well as Locke's, was on Packington, the revolver was wrenched away and the handcuffs clicked on the wrists of the butler of Ravenspur Grange.

— — —

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Wanted Man!

PACKINGTON!" "Impossible!" "Good heavens—Packington!" said Sir Richard Ravenspur dazedly.

Packington, handcuffed, furious, a hunted wild beast who was now in the toils of the hunters, was scarcely recognisable. The hitherto calm and sedate face was distorted with rage, the eyes rolled and glared, the lips snarled, the teeth gritted. Harry Wharton & Co. stared at him as if fascinated, the baronet with almost unbelieving eyes. Was this desperate villain, writhing and grinding his teeth in an access of impotent fury, the impassive butler of the Grange? It seemed scarcely credible. But it was Packington, and all now knew and realised what Packington was. The man who had leaped on Ferrers Locke like a tiger, the man who had attempted to use the revolver, the man who was raging in manacles, was the secret assassin of Ravenspur Grange, discovered and cornered at last. All realised it, though they were as yet far from understanding.

Curses, a stream of savage oaths, poured from the lips of the captured man as he struggled madly to wrench asunder the handcuffs.

But the strong steel held fast, and the grip of the Scotland Yard inspector was on the shoulder of the maddened rascal.

"You are my prisoner!" said Inspector Jude.

A torrent of rage was the only answer.

"Good heavens!" repeated Sir Richard Ravenspur aghast. "What scoundrel, what ruffian have I taken into my house?"

"A scoundrel, a ruffian with few equals in abandoned villainy," said the quiet voice of Ferrers Locke. "A villain who has eaten your bread and taken favours at your hands, while seeking your life, sir, while plotting and scheming incessantly for your destruction."

"He is—is—is—" The baronet faltered.

"The wanted man," answered Locke. "I can hardly believe—"

"No doubt; but proof will be forthcoming. Silence, scoundrel!" added Locke, turning his glance on the enraged rascal.

Packington panted.

"You've got me, Locke. You've got me! A thousand curses—"

"Curses will not harm me, nor serve you," said the detective tranquilly,



"Packington!" cried Sir Richard Ravenspur. The butler did not heed. He tore a revolver from its place of concealment and leaped at Ferrers Locke. But the detective was on the watch, and in an instant he was grappling with the man, the wrist was gripped and the revolver pointed upward. Crack! (See Chapter 13).

"and your treachery will never threaten any man's life again."

"You cannot prove—"

"I think ample proof will be forthcoming. In the meantime, this man is your prisoner, Inspector Jude."

"You—you say he's the man, Locke?"

Inspector Jude was as surprised as any other in the room.

"I do!"

"He's shown his character pretty plainly, at all events," said Mr. Jude. "A revolver is not part of the equipment of an ordinary butler. We can hold him, at any rate, for drawing the revolver on you, and we shall see. Packington, if that is your name, you are cautioned that anything you may say will be taken down to be used in evidence against you."

Packington gave a scoffing laugh.

He had recovered his coolness now; the first fierce burst of savage rage was over.

"Take down what you like!" he sneered. "I know the game is played out, or Ferrers Locke would not have sprung this on me."

"You are right," said the Baker Street detective. "And the men who are unveiling the secret recesses behind the walls of your room will find whatever proof may be lacking."

Sir Richard passed his hand over his brow.

"I cannot understand it," he said. "I see now that this man is a ruffian, a desperate scoundrel. But I am quite astounded. I would have trusted Packington with my life. He has always seemed—" The baronet broke off. "Man! How have I ever injured you that you should seek to harm me?"

"Ask Ferrers Locke!" jeered Packington. "He can tell you the whole story."

It was evident that the desperado had no hope now. The knocking that sounded from the butler's room sounded the knell of doom to the impostor and

assassin. The knocking still continued, a muffled accompaniment to the strange scene in the library.

Packington jerked his shoulder from the inspector and threw himself into a chair, his manacled hands on his knees. There was a grin of cynical disdain and indifference on his face. The expression of that face was so altered that it was difficult to recognise it as Packington's. The sedate butler had vanished; the cynical and reckless criminal had taken his place.

"Even now I can scarcely believe it," said the baronet in a low voice. "I—I trusted him. I regarded him as beyond suspicion, even if it had fallen on others. Mr. Locke, he was present in this room on the evening of your arrival, when the shot was fired at the window. That seemed to place him at least beyond doubt—"

"And was intended so to do," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "That shot at the window was fired at random, Sir Richard. The angle at which it entered showed that it was fired from well below the level of the terrace outside, and could not have been expected to strike anyone in this room. But it had an object, which it did not accomplish. It was that shot which in the first place turned my suspicions on Packington."

"You amaze me! I concluded the reverse."

"As Packington did," said Locke, with a faint smile. "But consider; immediately after my arrival a shot, apparently from the assassin who has fired at you before, was fired at this room. Necessarily, if it came from the hand of the assassin, it exonerated anyone who was in this room at the time. Packington was in the room. Therefore it exonerated him, had I believed that the shot was fired by the assassin. But—"

"You did not?"

"I did not."

"But why—"

"Many reasons, sir, too trifling to engage your attention. Packington, for one thing, made an excuse to linger in the room after showing me in, and so was present when the shot rang out."

"I recall that; but that alone—"

"That was not alone. A constable was on the terrace outside the windows, servants were in the gardens, keepers in the park, yet no sign was seen or found of the man who fired—in broad daylight. The search was instant, but it revealed nothing. This, added to the fact that the shot could scarcely have been expected to take effect on anyone in the room, convinced me that it was a trick. The man who fired was not found, for the simple reason that no man fired."

"Mr. Locke!"

"I mean, the firearm that was used was placed in readiness, in concealment, fixed with the muzzle aimed at these windows," explained Locke. "It was designed to explode while I was in this room, and the assassin in my presence."

"A time-fuse?" said Inspector Jude.

"Either that or some similar device, and set in motion as soon as the scoundrel knew I was about to arrive," said Locke. "I have no doubt that the mechanism was set in action when Packington knew that my car was at the gates. At all events, it was ready, and all he needed to do was to be in the room when the shot was heard. For that purpose he lingered here after showing me in, effecting his purpose. Unfortunately for him, I did not believe, as you believed, Sir Richard, that the assassin had fired the shot. A very few minutes sufficed to convince me that the whole thing was a trick, designed to ward off suspicion and investigation from any person who was present here at the time, and beside yourself and the schoolboys, sir, only the butler was present."

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"And that—"

"That turned my attention very specially to Packington," said Ferrers Locke. "Then I learned from you, Sir Richard, that he would never have been in this household but for a savage attack made three months ago on your former butler by some unknown burglar. That brought in the possibility that that savage attack had been intentionally made to create a vacancy in your household, which Packington might hope to fill."

"Good heavens!" said Sir Richard.

"Mere surmise so far," went on Ferrers Locke. "It might have been a clue, or it might have meant nothing. But the arrival of the man Hedge, as I remarked to you, forced the villain's hand. He had satisfied me—in his own belief—that he was outside the radius of suspicion, and I have no doubt that he intended to lie low so long as I was here and take no risks. But the sight of the man Hedge, the knowledge of what that man could have told me, drove him to instant action. He shot the man dead from a window—promptly, ruthlessly, remorselessly, and stilled his tongue for ever. He saved himself—for the time—but at the price of demonstrating to me, beyond doubt, that the assassin was in the house—that he was a member of your household. From that point he had a right to conclude that it was merely a matter of time for me to put my finger on the right man."

"And so—"

"And so his plan, as I conceive it, was changed; and, knowing that it must come to death-grips between us sooner or later, he determined to strike the first blow. Anticipating it, I was on the watch; but for the intervention of Wharton, the desperate villain would have effected his purpose, and one more mystery would have been added to those already shadowing this house. Ferrers Locke, like Inspector Cook and Mr. Garnish, would have been found dead—murdered—and the villain would have been rid of another enemy."

The baronet shuddered.

"I escaped that peril," said Ferrers Locke calmly, "and it gave me my opportunity. Assuming to be disabled by the blow I had received, I deluded the villain into making a second attack, which has placed him in my hands."

"But he got away, Locke—" said Inspector Jude.

"Taking a clue with him, as I said at the time, sir," said Locke with a smile. "I counted on seizing him red-handed, but I was prepared for accidents. When he stood by my bedside and plunged his knife into the dummy figure I had placed in the bed, he necessarily stepped on the bedside rug."

Packington started.

"So that was how—" he began, and broke off with a glance of deadly hatred at the Baker Street detective.

"That was how!" assented Ferrers Locke. "The man in the mask stepped on the rug, which had already been treated by me with an indelible purple stain. The stain was so composed that, while adhering to the soles of the shoes, it would leave marks where those shoes trod afterwards, so slight as only to be discernible under a magnifying glass—but unmistakable. Later I traced this stain to the door of Packington's room."

Inspector Jude gave a nod of admiration.

"From that moment the man was in my hands," said Locke. "Obviously he had fled to Packington's room, and Packington, had he been asleep, would have been awakened like the rest of the household by the alarm, and the man could not have entered his room undetected. The inference was clear—he was Packington."

Sir Richard Ravenspur drew a deep breath.

"Had not the villain attempted your life a second time, Locke—" said Locke tranquilly; "for, having my very strong suspicions fixed on Packington, I caused him to sit with me for a time during my affected illness, and confided to him my theory of the assassin's real identity. That I suspected him in his character of Packington he did not dream—but that I knew the assassin's real name, he learned from me—and he could not afford to let me live, as it was his object, when he had finished here as Packington, to come before the world in his true name. After he had left me that afternoon I knew that, if he were the secret assassin, he would leave no stone unturned to accomplish my death and secure my silence."

"Very clever!" commented Packington nonchalantly. The man was listening to Ferrers Locke with an air of cool detachment, as if genuinely interested but not immediately concerned. Locke gave him a glance.

"And you had already escaped the poison," said Packington regretfully. "I suppose my dropping the tray in your room was a help?"

"That, and other incidents, confirmed my theory," said Locke. "The villain!" said Sir Richard in a low voice. "I have been dreadfully deceived; but the man came to me, Mr. Locke, with the very best recommendations. He must have deceived others before me—"

"He came to you with forged recommendations, sir," said Locke. "Forgery is not new to him, if his real name is what I believe it to be."

"Then his name is not Packington?"

"I imagine not," said Locke dryly. "He borrowed the name—and the limp—of a man who served honourably in the War, and forged papers to suit."

"The limp!" repeated Sir Richard. He started.

There had been no sign of Packington's limp when he rushed on the detective in his fierce effort to escape from the library.

"The limp was a pretence, as are the lines of middle-age on his face," said Locke. "It was a cunning device, and served him well. Who could have suspected a man over forty, with a limping leg, of climbing a swinging rope-ladder, or of escaping pursuit with the fleetness of a deer? The masked man who fled from my room last night had no limp—neither has Packington, if examination should be made. And if the extremely artistic touches should be wiped from his face, I have no doubt that the middle-aged butler would be seen to be a young man of not more than twenty-five."

Locke's hand moved suddenly and swiftly, passing across the face of the butler. The heavy dark eyebrows came away in his hand, leaving the man with a strangely changed look.

Sir Richard looked at him hard, with something of recognition dawning in his bewildered eyes.

"There is something familiar—" he stammered.

"No doubt."

"But there is one thing you have not explained, Mr. Locke—and perhaps even you cannot explain."

"What is that?"

"Whoever this man may be, why has he sought my life? What have I done to incur such deadly and remorseless enmity?"

"Nothing," said Locke. "Nothing but the fact that you are Sir Richard Ravenspur, master of Ravenspur Grange and ten thousand a year, sir—and that at your death all this passes to your nephew, Edgar Ravenspur."

"Edgar Ravenspur!"

"Unless I am mistaken, sir, the man before you is the scapegrace nephew who fled, after a crime, from this country many years ago; who repaid your kindness with ingratitude and hatred, and who had planned to remove you from his way by another crime, and step into your shoes! The man you have known as Packington is Edgar Ravenspur, heir to Ravenspur Grange!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Passing of a Ravenspur!

HERE was a deep silence in the old library.

The baronet broke it.

"Edgar Ravenspur!" he said in a hushed voice. "I believed him dead—I even hoped him dead, for the sake of the name he bore."

"And he lives!" said Ferrers Locke.

"Edgar Ravenspur, the forger and thief, the shame of his family, the disgrace of his name!"

"All that and more!" said Packington—or Edgar Ravenspur, to give him his true name. "Black Edgar of the Queensland bush; Captain Raven, the pearl-poacher of the South Seas, and many things more, old fool that you are! You believed me dead—and dead to the world I should have remained until you were out of my way—but for this meddling detective."

The man's ironed hands moved. He lifted them to his face for a moment and dropped them again.

Locke made a swift step towards him.

A mocking grin met him.

"Too late, Ferrers Locke!" said Edgar Ravenspur. "I have always been prepared for this. I tempted fortune, and knew that fortune might turn against me. The poison that failed to reach my uncle, that failed to reach you, has saved me from your hands. Fools! A tiny lozenge—very tiny for the deadliness it holds—I have already swallowed it!"

Inspector Jude compressed his lips.

"You've lost your prisoner, Mr. Jude!" grinned the wretch in the chair. "But you never would have had a prisoner but for Ferrers Locke!" He turned his head towards the horrified baronet. "Take comfort, my beloved uncle, the name of the Ravenspurs will not be sullied by a death sentence in a crowded court—if I am the shame of my race, at least I will not bring upon it the disgrace of the hangman's touch. In a few minutes I shall be a dead man—escaping even Ferrers Locke."

He leaned back in the chair, every eye fixed on him in horror. A deadly pallor was already creeping over his face, and it was evident that his words were true. Cool, mocking, cynical to the last, he looked round on the startled, horrified faces.

"It was a desperate game," he said, "and sometimes I thought that I was tempting fortune too hard. Yet I should have succeeded, but for chances against which no man could guard. Even Ferrers Locke could not have defeated me, unaided by chance. At Scotland Yard I snapped my fingers."

"Unhappy man!" said the baronet in a breaking voice. "You, of my own blood; you, whom I cared for as my own son—"

"And checked, and lectured, and reproved," said the other mockingly.

"Bah! I have no regrets—except that

(Continued on page 28.)

YOU'LL ENJOY EVERY LINE OF THIS AMAZING STORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION!

THE SHADOW of the GUILLOTINE!

"Do you know that the Chevalier de St. Clair is of the blood of the Marquis de Fontnoy, who slew your father?"



Will o' the Wisp.

PAUL DARC'S thoughts drifted back to that day of spring, three years ago, when his friendship with the chevalier had come to such tragic termination. He remembered the letter which a few days later had reached him in Paris; a letter in which the chevalier in tearful and almost hysterical terms had denounced his uncle, the Marquis de Fontnoy, as a monster unfit to live; a letter in which, unashamedly, he had expressed his staunch and unwavering love for Paul and his determination to some day make all amends in his power for the unhappiness which his friendship had brought on Paul.

Poor, unhappy boy, now lying in the Luxembourg prison, with the shadow of death heavy over him. Was this, then, the amende which Fate had decreed that he should make?

"He shall not die!" whispered Paul, with savage reiteration. "He shall not die!"

He had used those words before; had used them to Sansarge when discussing with him the possibility of the chevalier's arrest. And Sansarge had shaken his great bearded head and warned Paul to be careful.

"You are a leader of the people, Paul Darc," he had said, "and, what is more, a leader whom they like and whom they trust. But never forget that they can break you as easily as they made you. And should you offend them they will break you!"

And that was why Sansarge, fearing

what Paul might do, had added the postscript to his letter:

"Keep out of Paris until this is over."

Before leaving Paris, Paul had made him swear to send word at once should the chevalier be arrested in his absence. And Sansarge had kept his word. He dared not have done otherwise, else there would have been a reckoning with Paul little to his liking. For Paul was powerful. Yes, and a friend of Robespierre as well.

Fickle the mob that raises an obscure citizen to the important post of Commissioner of the Revolutionary Tribunal, for that same mob can as speedily break the man they made if the fancy moves them!

And it was of this power and this friendship with Robespierre that Paul was thinking now. Were they strong enough to enable him to save the chevalier from the guillotine?

God send they were. For if they were not, then some other way to save the boy must be found.

Abruptly Paul straightened up and, turning, walked quickly to the door.

"Send the citizen-captain to me," he said sharply to the soldier lounging on the landing outside. "Then bid my men saddle my horse. I leave for Paris at once!"

The soldier hastened to obey, and a few moments later the captain clumped into the room.

"You will convey the Citizen Fontnoy to Paris," ordered Paul curtly, "leaving

By Popular

GEO. E. ROCHESTER.

(Introduction on next page.)

here with the dawn. Yourself and two soldiers will be sufficient escort, and you will use one of the Fontnoy coaches. Here are the papers."

The citizen-captain pocketed the papers, without so much as a glance at them. For what use was there in looking at them when he couldn't read?

"You will select the most comfortable coach you can find," went on Paul. "This being in all probability the last journey the Citizen Fontnoy will make, you will endeavour to render it as pleasant for him as the circumstances permit. You understand?"

"Yes, citizen-deputy!" grinned the captain.

"You appear amused, citizen-captain!" observed Paul coldly.

The captain's grin vanished with extraordinary celerity.

"I am leaving for Paris," went on Paul, "and you will be responsible for the safe delivery of your prisoner to the gaolers of the Luxembourg. Should he escape—"

He concluded the sentence with a shrug more eloquent than words, and proceeded to don his black riding cloak.

"He shall not escape, citizen-deputy," the captain hastened to assure him. "He shall not slip through my fingers."

"Then see that he does not!" returned Paul grimly.

Ten minutes later he was out under the stars, riding madly through the night towards Paris, two hundred kilometres distant. And more than once, voicing the hope and dread which battled in his heart, he muttered:

"God grant that I am not too late!"

Paris—and the sunset hour!

Sport is over for the day in the Place de la Revolution where the guillotine rears itself stark and grim against the red after-glow of the setting sun.

And what sport it has been. Forty-three heads have tumbled into the blood-soaked sawdust of the executioner's basket since noon; forty-three noble, be-powdered and aristocratic heads, severed by that zealous and untiring guardian of the people's rights, the national razor.

But now is the hour for the closing of the city barricades, and in order that the people might not be cheated of one iota of their fun the slaughter in the Place de la Revolution has ended for the day. For there is further, excellent sport, to be witnessed at the barricades.

It comes about in this way. In spite of the vigilance of the committee of public safety, there are aristocrats in Paris who have so far evaded arrest; traitors who cower in hiding, shrinking from the warm embrace in which Madame Guillotine is eager to enfold them.

And before the barricades are finally closed for the night there are generally a few poor misguided fools amongst

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these traitors who try to pass through—who attempt to flee from Paris and the vengeance of the people.

Of course, they are always in some disguise or other. But what disguise! Mordieu, they would not deceive a child, let alone the lynx-eyed soldiers who guard the barricades.

And they are clever, these soldiers. Especially those at the northern gate. That is the citizen-sergeant Cassolat and his men. Sergeant Cassolat allows none to slip through his fingers. He can smell an aristocrat. And also he is a man of marvellous humour.

Suppose that an aristocrat in disguise presents himself at the northern gate, craving permission to pass through? Does Sergeant Cassolat pounce on him, denounce him for what he is, tear from him his disguise, and have him hurried to the safe keeping of the Conciergerie or the Luxembourg?

Not he. That would be to rob the people of half their sport. No. Sergeant Cassolat is infinitely more subtle than that. He plays with that aristocrat like a cat with a mouse, keeping the fool fidgeting with fearful apprehension. He will ask a question or two; harmless questions, easy of answer. Then he will bid the soldiers open the gate to permit the aristocrat to pass through, then send the soldiers to bring him back.

And what glorious fun this is. The traitor is stripped of his disguise and sent under escort to the prison, there to await his trial and execution.

Sometimes it is a woman who falls into the clutches of Sergeant Cassolat, and then, if you are lucky, you may be afforded the comic spectacle of seeing eyes once so proud and scornful, now glistening with unshed tears. It would be more comic still if only these cursed aristocrats were not blessed with such a stubborn spirit. There was that aged marchioness, for example, who on being brought back by the soldiers cursed Sergeant Cassolat for the favourite son of the devil and consigned him to blistering and permanent perdition with scorching words which fell ill from such noble lips.

But Sergeant Cassolat has now been promoted to the command of the western gate through which lies the road to Calais and the coast. And this evening which finds Paul Darc nearing Paris on the last stage of his journey from Chateau Fontnoy, also finds the crowd flocking to the western gate to witness the droll antics of the humorous Cassolat.

There was a reason—a very special reason—for this sudden promotion of Sergeant Cassolat to the command of the Western Gate. For, of late, aristocrat after aristocrat had succeeded in escaping from Paris via that route with a regularity which had had the effect of reducing the Committee of Public Safety to a wild, if impotent, frenzy.

These escapes had already cost two sergeants their heads, and the Committee of Public Safety were determined to see what Sergeant Cassolat could do towards putting a stop to them. The maddening part of it all was that the aristocrats had not escaped by any effort of their own. At least, by little, if any, effort of their own.

They had been spirited out of Paris by a certain mysterious and bafflingly elusive Englishman named Will o' the Wisp!

Oh, yes, the Committee of Public

Safety knew his name, but that was all they did know, although their spies and agents were searching assiduously night and day for him, and had combed and re-combed Paris without finding the slightest clue as to either his identity or his whereabouts.

They had learned his name because of his cool impudence. More than once, both the Public Prosecutor, Citizen Fouquier-Tinville, and the head gaoler of the Luxembourg, had received brief, warning notes signed by this cursed Will o' the Wisp. And always following the receipt of such notes, some aristocrat would be spirited out of Paris from under the very noses of his gaolers, and conveyed in safety to the coast, where he would be put aboard some vessel and sent to England.

The people knew these facts, of course, and knew that the Committee of Public Safety was looking to Sergeant Cassolat to capture this impudent dog of an Englishman should he ever again attempt to smuggle some wretched aristocrat through the Western Gate.

And Sergeant Cassolat would prove more than a match for him. There was not the slightest doubt about that. He would not fool Sergeant Cassolat as he had fooled the two previous sergeants, who had paid for their stupidity by losing their heads beneath the guillotine.

So it was, with their zest whetted by expectation, that the crowd surged around the western barricade that evening. If only Will o' the Wisp would attempt to win passage through it. Sergeant Cassolat would get him, and then the vengeance of the mob would be something terrible to see.

If only they could get their hands on him! They asked no more than that. He would suffer as never man had suffered before. And eager as any to capture him was Sergeant Cassolat.

"Ten thousand francs!" he announced, pacing with pompous tread beside the barricade. "That is the reward offered by the Committee of Public Safety for the arrest of the dog! Ma foi, but should he come this way, then I will find ten thousand francs most easily earned!"

"What one would like to know," growled his corporal, "is whether he is in Paris or whether he is out?"

INTRODUCTION.

It is the year 1789, when the first rumblings of the coming revolution in France are heard. Paul Darc, a peasant, and the Chevalier de St. Clair, an aristocrat, both young lads, are staunch chums, but they are soon forced to realise the barrier that lies between them. For daring to bathe in the lake at Chateau Fontnoy, Paul is brutally flogged at the order of the Marquis D'Ermonde de Fontnoy, the Chevalier's uncle, who gives further evidence of his fiendish cruelty by killing Paul's father. The lad swears vengeance on the tyrant and is sent to Paris by a revolutionary named Sansarge, there to be placed in the charge of the notorious Robespierre. Three years pass, and the long-threatened revolution has burst into flame. The shadow of the guillotine lies over France, and Paul Darc, now Commissioner of the Revolutionary Tribunal, returns to his native village with orders for the arrest of the hated Marquis de Fontnoy. Paul, however, has no wish for the score between him and his enemy to be settled by the guillotine, and he offers to fight a duel—the marquis, if he wins, to be given a chance to escape with his life. The lord of Fontnoy at first receives this proposal with scorn and, later, when he decides to accept the challenge, it is too late. He must go to Paris. Paul receives a crushing blow when he learns that his friend, the Chevalier de St. Clair, has been arrested while trying to leave the country and now lies in the Luxembourg prison awaiting trial. Nothing, Paul tells himself, can save the chevalier, innocent though he is, from the fury of the mob!

(Now read on.)

"It matters nothing where he is!" returned Cassolat loftily. "If he is out of Paris, then he will return. And if he is in Paris then he must, sooner or later, endeavour to get out. They say he passed through this Western Gate four times in all last week."

"That is correct, Citizen Cassolat!" shrilled a filthy old hag squatting in the mud of the gutter. "Four times he passed whilst I sat here. Sacrenom, had I but known it was him I would have sunk my nails deep in his cursed English throat!"

Sergeant Cassolat laughed condescendingly.

"Ah, but you wait, mother!" he promised. "Next time he comes this way I will smell him out, no matter his disguise, and then your itching nails can do their work!"

"I'll wash them in his blood," screamed the vile bundle of rags whom he addressed, "and dry them on a handful of his hair!"

A howl of laughter from those who stood by greeted the words, and from beneath her tattered blouse the hag produced a bundle of long, blood-stained curls.

"See!" she cried, holding the ghastly things aloft with fiendish glee. "I got them to-day when the heads rolled into the basket! Look! These golden ones came from the head of a white-faced chit scarce old enough to have left her nurse! And these ones were her mother's! Pretty, pretty things!"

She fell to stroking them, and crooning over them, with mumbling, toothless gums. And more than one who stood there, hardened creatures though they were, turned away from the hideous sight with a shudder.

But not so Sergeant Cassolat. Let each citizen have his or her enjoyment. Some liked one thing, some another. And the collecting of aristocratic curls was a harmless enough occupation.

"This Englishman, now," he went on to the corporal, harking back to the subject nearest his heart, "has a variety of disguises. Sometimes he passes as a peasant and sometimes he is an old hag. Never the same thing twice, you understand. And although you may not believe it, citizen-corporal, he once rode through this very gate in the midst of a body of soldiers!"

"And was he dressed as a soldier?" demanded the citizen-corporal, with interest.

"Of course, fool!"

The citizen-corporal spat disgustedly.

"Then the sooner he is laid by the heels the better!" he growled. "A soldier, you say? Curse the impudence of the dog!"

He stepped aside as a couple of carts, driven by aged and foul-mouthed viragos, rumbled up to the barricade, outward bound from Paris.

After a brief interrogation of the drivers, Sergeant Cassolat permitted them to pass, then turned his attention to a dirty, tattered, rascal of a fellow who was slouching in through the gate, leading a half-starved-looking horse by a rope halter.

"And where may you be going?" he demanded authoritatively.

"To the nearest cavalry stables," leered the fellow. "I hear the soldiery is in need of remounts."

Sergeant Cassolat scowled. This impertinent rascal was attempting to poke fun at him, it seemed.

"You will hear something else in a moment," he said roughly, "which you will find less amusing. Where are you going with that broken-kneed brute?"

"To the slaughter-house, citizen-sergeant," whined the fellow. "He is worth a few francs."

"Few," grunted the sergeant, somewhat mollified by this more fitting change of tone, "is correct."

Then he put a number of searching questions, all of which the fellow answered readily enough. Satisfied, the sergeant waved a gracious hand.

"Pass on!" he said. "But had you been a few moments later, my friend, you would have been shut out for the night. The barricade is about to be closed."

With a grin, the fellow passed on, slouching away along the cobbled street, leading his sorry-looking nag. Sergeant Cassolat turned to the crowd who still lingered about the gate.

"We are about to close the gate, citizens," he announced, "and none now will be able to pass in or out till morning. We have had poor sport this evening, but there is always a to-morrow. I never despair, and if that Englishman—"

He broke off as there came a furious clatter of hoofs, and a Captain of the Guard, accompanied by three mounted soldiers, dashed up. Reining in his horse almost to its haunches, the captain threw himself from the saddle.

"Who has passed in?" he shouted.

Sergeant Cassolat surveyed him calmly. He was used to panicky questions such as these. But usually the inquiry was as to who had passed out, not who had passed in.

"Who has passed in, you stupid fool?" bellowed the captain, seizing him savagely by the arm.

"None has passed in," replied the sergeant, his tone one of gentle reproof at this undignified exhibition which the captain was making of himself. "None, that is, of any importance."

"Has a man passed through leading a horse?" shouted the captain. "A man in rags—tattered red blouse and red woollen cap. Answer me, you fool! Has he?"

Sergeant Cassolat stared at the captain, a sudden dread at his heart.

"Yes—" he answered weakly. "Yes—but a few minutes ago."

The captain's eyes blazed.

"Then do you know who it was, you blundering clod?" he shouted. "It was the Englishman—that cursed Will-o'-the-Wisp!"

At the Rue Couteau!

THE sergeant's face became grey with the fear which showed in his eyes. If this was true, Madame Guillotine would doubtless have something sharp and acrimonious to say to him.

"The—the Englishman?" he stammered. "But how do you know?"

"How do we know?" snarled the captain. "How do we know anything he does? Twenty minutes ago, whilst passing through the press in the streets, a missive was thrust into the hand of Citizen Fouquier-Tinville. It warned him that Will-o'-the-Wisp would enter Paris by the Western Gate before the barricades were closed for the night. It described the disguise he would wear, and was signed by the dog himself."

A howl of fury rose from the surging, jostling mob around the two men. The cursed Englishman had fooled them again; had walked coolly into Paris beneath their very noses!

But he was in Paris. That was something to know. He was in Paris, and this time the soldiers and the people would see to it that he never got out! Never!



"And where may you be going?" demanded Sergeant Cassolat of the dirty, tattered rascal who was leading a half-starved looking horse by a rope halter. "To the nearest cavalry stables," leered the fellow. "I hear the soldiery is in need of remounts!" (See Page 26).

"Close the gate!" rapped the captain. "Sangdieu, but you will be fortunate if this does not send your head to the basket!"

Tremblingly, Sergeant Cassolat turned away to give the necessary order, then paused as a black-clad figure mounted on a foam-flecked and lathering horse came spurring in through the gate.

"It is the citizen-deputy, Paul Dare!" muttered someone, and as Paul brought his horse to a sliding halt the crowd greeted him with a ragged cheer.

For he was popular with the people, this young, pale-faced commissioner. Some there were, perhaps, who thought he might display a little more venom when dealing with the aristocrats. But there, all could not be as tigerish and as savagely denunciatory as, say, Citizen Fouquier-Tinville. The citizen-deputy, Paul Dare, had served the people well, and if he did not go shouting his hatred of the aristocrats from the roof-tops, he lost nothing by that. Tight-lipped and silent men were often more deadly than loud-mouthed and vociferous ones.

So the crowd looked on with an eager interest as, leaning forward in his saddle, Paul addressed the citizen-captain.

"What is the matter here?" he asked sharply.

The captain told him in brief, terse words. And, as he listened, cold anger crept into the eyes of Paul Dare.

"You have placed Sergeant Cassolat under arrest?" he rapped.

"No, citizen-deputy," began the captain, "but—"

"Then do so at once!" cut in Paul harshly. "The blundering fool! See that orders are given at once for a thorough search to be made of the city. It may be possible, also, that the barricades will not be raised in the morning. We must get this impudent Englishman at all costs."

Gathering up his reins, Paul Dare rode quickly on through the darkening streets. He had scarce been out of the saddle since leaving Chateau Fontenoy the night before. And now that the length of a few more streets would see his journey at an end, there came to him with redoubled force the dread that he might be too late to save the Chevalier de St. Clair.

Turning into the narrow and evil-smelling Rue Couteau, Paul pulled up in front of the house of old Dupont, the harness maker, where he shared lodgings with Sansarge. Dismounting, he knocked, and was admitted by Dupont himself, whom he bade look to the horse. Then, ascending the narrow staircase, Paul opened the door of his humble apartment and strode in.

Sansarge was at home, his great, burly form sprawled with red shirt unbuttoned, in a high-backed, wooden armchair.

At sight of Paul, Sansarge started upright in his chair, and, removing his short, blackened clay pipe from his bearded lips, sat with mouth agape.

"What—you?" he exclaimed, recovering from his astonishment.

"Yes," replied Paul; then added quickly: "Tell me! What is the news of the chevalier?"

Sansarge ignored the question. Slowly he replaced his pipe; slowly he shook his head.

"I knew it!" he growled, leaning back in his chair. "You are mad!"

"Never mind my madness!" rapped Paul. "Tell me of the chevalier. Does he still live?"

"He comes before the tribunal in the morning," replied Sansarge sullenly.

"Ah!"

Only that softly-breathed exclamation told of Paul's relief; of the sickening weight which the words had lifted from his heart. His dash from Chateau Fontnoy had not then been in vain.

Sansarge, watching him, read something of his thoughts.

"I told you," he growled, "to keep out of Paris till this was over. You can do nothing, Paul Dare."

"That remains to be seen, my friend," replied Paul, doffing his riding cloak.

"You intend to aid him?"

"To the utmost of my power!"

Sansarge crashed clenched and angry fist to the table.

"Do you forget," he roared, "that he is of the blood who slew your father—that he is kinsman of you animal of Fontnoy?"

With quick movement he gripped Paul by the arm, thrusting his flushed and bearded face close to that of the boy.

"Is it that you are weakening, Paul Dare?" he demanded hoarsely. "Is it that you are tiring of Madame Guillotine? Have a care, for she can deal with fickle lovers as easily as she now deals with cursed aristocrats!"

(Although it savours of disloyalty to his people and in the end might even cost him his life, Paul Dare is determined to do his utmost to save his old and faithful friend, the Chevalier. Whether he succeeds or not you will learn, chums, when you read next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful serial.)

THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!

(Continued from page 24.)

I have failed. And I should not have failed had not my past risen against me. Lane knew too much—and had he died under my bullet in the bush, all would have been well. But he lived. He knew where to seek me—and he came. I met him, and shot the black-mauling hound as he deserved. Would that the bullet in the bush had gone as true to its mark. But that was my undoing—I was driven to act, instead of biding my time. Hedge, I knew, might come—and others—others who had known or suspected! I dared not waste further time—but does not the proverb say, 'More haste, less speed'? It was my undoing, after all. And yet—Inspector Cook would have dug up the old hunting-lodge, and traced the secret passage to the house—to my room—ha, ha!—had he guessed it. But he died—"

The man broke off, his deathly face twitching.

"Then came the man Garnish—and he knew! Do not flatter yourself, Ferrers Locke—Garnish was before you! He knew that I had blown up the secret passage—he came to my room, in the night, to meet me as I returned from that deed—but he did not know with whom he had to deal. My knife found his heart—they picked up his body next day far from the house, but it was in my room that he died—the room your men are now searching—where, behind the walls, they will find mask and disguise, weapons and poison, and—if they search far enough—the body of Jim Lane, buried deep."

He broke off, panting.

"A clever trick, Locke, a clever trick—to keep me here while your men hacked in my room—to force me to betray myself—and where I had no chance to use a weapon! You win, Ferrers Locke! But the gate of death is open for me to escape you!"

"Edgar!"

The old baronet stood over him.

"Edgar, had you come to me openly, whatever you had done, you would have found a friend in me. My brother's son! Now I can do nothing but forgive you."

The man looked at him. The hard, cynical expression died out of the deathly face; something of human feeling replaced it. He made a feeble motion with his manacled hands; Inspector Jude silently removed the handcuffs.

"You forgive me?" muttered Edgar Ravenspur. "After what I have done—after all that I have done—"

"Freely and fully."

"Heaven forgive me, too!" muttered Edgar Ravenspur. "I repent—while there is time to utter the words, I repent—God have mercy on me, a sinner!"

They were the last words of Edgar Ravenspur.

The mystery of Ravenspur Grange was a mystery no longer.

It was one more triumph for Ferrers Locke, though he made little of it, leaving the Grange the following day, and the matter in the hands of the man from Scotland Yard.

Harry Wharton & Co. remained till the end of the vacation; and ere they left they were glad to see their kind host restored to his usual health, though the shadow of the tragedy weighed longer upon his heart.

What had happened seemed like some evil dream to the juniors, growing fainter and fainter in their memories as the days passed, and they found themselves once more in the life and bustle of Greyfriars School at the opening of the term.

And they were glad to forget.

THE END.

(There will be another grand Lygarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "THE BOY WITHOUT A FRIEND!" If you miss it, chums, you'll be missing one of Frank Richards' best stories.)

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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER.

"WINKLESEA the worried Jack Jolly, of the Fourth form of St. Sam's, asked that question as he came across Mr. Lickham reclining in a deck-chair on the sands at Winklesea.

The master of the Fourth was looking distinctly peeved. His brow was wrinkled with thought, and he kept on blowing his nose repeatedly—a little habit he had when worried.

"Something very annoying has just happened, Jolly," he said, in answer to Jack Jolly's question. "Something has cropped up that darkens the brightness of my life."

"Found sixpence and lost a bob, sir?" suggested Jack Jolly sympathetically.

"No, Jolly. If anything, it is even worse than that. To get down to brass tacks, Jimmy Jester, our principal comedian, has left the Jolliboy to join Corkbrow's Classic Entertainers."

"Never!" cried Jack Jolly, against "Fact!" almost wept Mr. Lickham. "That villain, Corkbrow, has evidently offered him a tempting financial inducement, and he has sold his birthright for a pot of mess—age—I mean a mess of porridge."

"In other words he has joined Corkbrow's show for the mere sake of an increase in wages, I suppose?"

"Exactly!"

"Well, that's ruff, sir, and no mistake," said Jack Jolly. "What on earth are we going to do now?"

"That's just what's worrying me," replied Mr. Lickham. "Without Jimmy Jester to keep the pot boiling, I can see the giddy show going to rack and ruin."

"Can't we find another comedian, sir?" asked Jack Jolly. "I should think there must be one or two comedians available at the local labor exchange."

"Impossible, I'm afraid. There's not another comedian to touch Jimmy Jester within fifty miles of Winklesea."

"Then why not take on the job yourself, sir? You're funny enough, if you just remain natural."

Mr. Lickham turned as red as a pony.

"How dare you, Jolly! You know very well that vulgar comedy is unsuited to a man of my disposition. My superb baritone voice would be wasted on comic songs. I refuse to blemish my plate for a moment singing anything else but classic stuff from grand opera masterpieces like 'Werther' or 'The old brown son, how are you?' or 'Settema'."

You see my point, Jolly?"

"Hem! Exactly, sir!" grinned Jack Jolly. "Well, don't go and mope over it. Come and cheer yourself up with a glass of jinger-pop at my expense."

Mr. Lickham accepted that invitation, and walked over to the Hotel de Swagger with Jack Jolly.

Frank Fearless and Micky and Bright of the Fourth were taking their ease in the lounge of the palatial hotel, and no sooner had some jinger-pop appeared than Dr. Birchmell, the puffed and mystic Head of St. Sam's, trotted up.

"Good-morning, sir!" cooed the party, in respective tones.

"Jinger-pop so early in the morning?" The Master Literary—No. 1125.

No pierrot show can expect to do any good without a comedian, as Jack Jolly and his Jolliboy know full well. But fate and Dr. Birchmell combined gave Jack Jolly's troupe a ready-made comedian and Winklesea the best laugh of the summer.

The HEAD'S FUNNY TURN!



DICKY NUGENT

"But you can't rest for toffs, and you can't act for nuts!" cried Mr. Lickham.

"Can't I?" grunted the Head, giving his subordinate a rather unpleasant glare. "Are you asking for a thick ear, or a couple of black eyes, Lickham?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then don't make libellous remarks about my abilities again!" growled Dr. Birchmell.

"Anyway, it's settled that I join your pierrot-party to give Shakespearean recitations at a salary of ten pounds a week, and I'm not going to argue the loss over it any longer."

With that dignified remark the Head stalked off, leaving Mr. Lickham and the chums of the Fourth staring at each other in utter dismay.

II.

ROO to his promise, Dr. Birchmell turned up for the evening performance. Mr. Lickham and Jack Jolly & Co. pleaded and begged him not to proceed, but all their pleas and arguments fell on deaf ears. The Head was adamant.

When he saw how firm the Head was, Mr. Lickham made the best of a bad job and dug out some pierrot clobber for him. Grinning all over his face, Dr. Birchmell put on the gay costume and smothered his face with red grease-paint. Then he surveyed himself in a mirror with considerable satisfaction. It couldn't be denied that his bony frame and venerable beard showed to great advantage in the pierrot costume. Altogether, he looked a very impressive figure.

"Now don't forget to cut your part of the programme as short as possible, Lickham," he said when they were all ready.

A few minutes later the show began. It was obvious from the beginning that something was lacking. After the first half-hour the show began to flag a bit, and Mr. Lickham began to feel worried.

Meanwhile, Dr. Birchmell was feeling impatient behind the scenes, and as the others showed no signs of leaving the stage he eventually decided to go on uninvited.

Accordingly, he seized the opportunity when they had just finished a song and strode on to the platform. "Ladies and gentlemen!" he yelled. "As these cheeky bouncers seem to be monopolising the performance, I'm going to give you my self-branded classic turn fifthwith—I mean, fourthwith, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience, thinking Dr. Birchmell was a comedian.

"Silence! How dare you laugh at a performance. I am a refined classicist, and I am giving you a refined classicist performance. I am a go, Lickham, or I'll dot your eye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the spectators, imagining it was all for their amusement.

Mr. Lickham was inwardly groaning. "Look here, sir, can't you postpone it till another time?" he pleaded.

"No! I jolly well can't! If you don't leave my arm, Lickham—I'll Crash! Bang! Wallop! Wallop! His patience exhausted, the Head

flushed out, and his bony knuckles came into violent collision with Mr. Lickham's fizzes.

"Yaroooo!" roared Mr. Lickham. Once again the audience laughed. Un-expectedly the Head's appearance seemed to be provoking as much amusement as Jimmy Jester had ever caused. The Head faced the crowd and laughed.

"And now I'll kick off," he said. "All my recitations, ladies and gentlemen, will be from the works of the self-branded poet and playwright, Shakespeare."

Striking a dramatic pose, he began:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your thick ears."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not 'thick ears'!" said Jack Jolly, in a hoarse whisper.

The Head snorted.

"Well, thin ears, then."

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your thin ears. Or close the wall up with our English dead. And when the blast of war sounds let me have men about me that are fat."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jack Jolly. "Aren't you getting a bit mixed up, sir?"

"Don't be rood and interrupt while I'm doing my dramatick recitations!" snapped the Head. "Now, ladies and gentlemen give me your close attention while I recite one of Shakespeare's most famous poems, 'The Ruck of the Hesperides'!"

"It was the skooner Hesperus 'That sailed the wintry sea And got an awful wallop When she struck the Nancy Lee."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the crowd. "Silence! Now for the second verse!"

"The boy stood on the burning dock, Whence all but he had fled. 'Tis kaptin hurried him a look of reproach, And the boy just ducked his head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Dr. Birchmell concluded his dramatick recitations the crowd was simply helpless with laughter. The Head took his bow to terrific cheers. In his impudence he imagined the people were cheering his classic poetry, but the truth was that they all believed him to be a comedian!

Even Mr. Lickham felt a little mollified when he heard the deferring applause. He felt more mollified still when he took the collection, for it was the biggest haul he had ever had.

After that nobody objected in the slightest to Dr. Birchmell's classic performance. For the rest of the holidays he was the greatest attraction on the beach at Winklesea, and the Jolliboy's managed to draw the crowds away from the rival show in spite of the loss of Jimmy Jester.

And when the time came at last to leave the seaside and return once again to St. Sam's, Jack Jolly & Co. all agreed that the most amusing episode of the week had been the Head's funny turn.

THE END.

(Look out for the first tale in a grand new "Thought-provoking" series next week, chums, entitled: "REMEMBER THE REMARKABLE!" It will make you laugh louder than ever!)

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