



THE ROOKWOOD REFORMERS!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Well!" said Jimmy grimly. "Could you lend me a few pounds?" asked Tubby. "Ha, ha, ha!" The modest request made the end study roar. "Not a few hundred?" asked Raby. "Or a few thousand?" grinned Newcome. "Or a few million?" chuckled Lovell. "A few bob would do," said Tubby, with a look of distress. "I'll let you have it back to-morrow. I shall have plenty of dibs to-morrow."

"What do you want a few pounds for, Tubby?" asked Jimmy Silver quietly. "You don't want to spend a few pounds in tuck, I suppose—even you?" "Oh, no! It's something else."

"What else?" Tubby Muffin crimsoned, but he did not reply. "Get it off your chest!" said Jimmy. "There aren't any quids in this study, but we can manage a few bob if it's important. But our last heba are not going to the tuckshop, my fat tulip."

"It isn't the tuckshop," stammered Tubby. "Then what is it?" "I—I can't tell you, Jimmy Silver! Leggett specially told me not to let you know anything about it! I—I—I mean—"

"Leggett did?" ejaculated Jimmy. "Nonsense!" stammered Tubby. "Nothing of the sort! It's nothing to do with Leggett, of course!" "Don't let whoppers, Tubby! Do you owe Leggett money?" "Oh, no!"

"That rather Leggett lends money running the hide at a penny a bob interest," said Lovell. "Awful outsider!" "He hasn't lent me any money," said Tubby. "I've asked him, and he won't."

"Then what do you want it for?" "I—I'm not going to tell you." "Something you can't tell us—what?" "Well, you fellows wouldn't understand," said the fat Classical. "You're not sporting chaps!" "Sporting chaps!" repeated Jimmy.

"Yes. You're not the sort to have a flutter," said Tubby loftily. "You haven't any go in you, Leggett says." "Oh, he does, does he?" "Nonsense! I—I mean, Leggett never said anything of the sort!" said Tubby in alarm. "Look here, you're not going to bump me! Can you lend me some tin?"

"Not for a little flutter, you duffer!" "Then you can go and eat cake!" said Tubby independently, and he snuffed, and rolled out of the study. Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath. "What do you think of that?" he exclaimed. "There's something going on that's awfully fishy, and that cad Leggett is mixed up with it. Moreover, it's something that wants looking into, and Uncle James is going to look into it. Come on!"

And the Fistical Four left the study in an unusually thoughtful mood. It was only too clear that something of a mysterious nature was going on in the Fourth Form at Rookwood—something from which they were being carefully excluded. And the captain of the Fourth was quite convinced that it was high time for "Uncle James" to look into it.

But on the present occasion Adolphus Smythe favoured the Fistical Four with his most friendly smile.

"The fact is, I've been lookin' for you," said Smythe, in a very cordial manner. "You'd hardly believe it, dear boys, but I'm hard up, and if you've got a quid to lend—ahem!—I'm your man."

The juniors simply stared at Smythe. Adolphus was one of the wealthiest fellows at Rookwood. It was miles below the dignity of the dandy of the Shell to borrow cash in the Fourth—especially of the disrespectful Four, who had so often knocked his gleamery that the great Adolphus was so hard pressed for money that he had forgotten all about his dignity—a very important thing in Adolphus' eyes.

"You, too?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Yes, those things will happen," drawled Adolphus. "Sorry we can't oblige," said Jimmy Silver. "Why don't you try Howard, or Tracy, or Seleyen, or your Form? They're rolling in ool."

"All stony," said Adolphus. "Look here, you know I don't generally borrow of fags, but I'd take it very kindly if you could lend me a quid!" "Nothing doing," said Lovell. "Then you can go and chop chips!" snapped Adolphus. And he walked away, evidently in search of someone else with a quid to spare.

"So the Shell are in it, too," said Raby. "My hat, it's a jolly queer business!" "Hooker and Jones minor were chatting in the quad as the Fistical Four came by. The chums of the Fourth caught a remark from Jones: "I've got an idea for to-night, though. What about backing red all the time, and—"

Jones minor caught sight of Jimmy Silver & Co., and ceased speaking. "Go on!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Don't leave us out of the little secret, Jonesy." Jones minor turned red. "Oh, rot!" he said uneasily. "What the thunder do you mean by backing red?" "Oh, non-nothing!" "Is it a game?" asked Lovell, mystified.

"Come on, Hooker!" said Jones. "We shan't get our prep done in time if we stay here jawing." The two juniors walked away quickly. The Fistical Four were left blinking in astonishment. "Backing red!" said Newcome. "Is he potty? If he isn't, what the merry deuce did he mean?" Jimmy Silver shook his head. "Blessed if I know! It beats me hollow."

"Lots of the fellows are in the secret," said Lovell. "They're leaving us out on purpose. They can't treat the end study like that, by Jove!" "They've got a reason," said Jimmy Silver drily. "It's a secret they can't tell us—a jolly shady one, that's clear enough!" "Because we're such good little boys?" chuckled Raby. "Fatehead! Because we should be down on it!"

"But it isn't our bizness." "Who's captain of the Fourth?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "Who's Uncle James—kind Uncle James—to all Rookwood? I tell you this is jolly fishy, and it's got to be inquired into. There's some rotten game going on, and all the nuts are in it—that isn't surprising. But Flynn is a first-rate chap, and he's in it, and he won't let on what it is. And James and Hooker, too—what are they keeping secrets for?" "It doesn't seem much good asking them."

"Hallo, here comes Towle!" Towle of the Fourth, a Modern junior, came up to the four in the quad in a hesitating way.

"You chaps in trouble?" he asked. "Not very." "I—I'm hard up," said Towle, colouring. "If you could lend me a few bob till next week—"

"Are you going to back red?" asked Jimmy Silver, watching the Modern junior's face keenly. Towle started violently. "Has Leggett told you?" he exclaimed breathlessly. Jimmy Silver was assailed at that moment by a strong temptation. By affecting that Leggett had "told him," he could evidently have wormed information out of the incautious Towle. But speeding was not in Jimmy's line, and he did not take advantage of the opportunity.

"Leggett hasn't told me anything," he said. "I'm not on speaking terms with that worm!" "Well, he is a worm," admitted Towle. "It's a jolly good thing for him—"

"What is?" "Oh, nothing." "What is Leggett up to?" "En?" Towle was quite on his guard now. "Is he up to anything?" "You know he is!" snapped Jimmy Silver. "Leggett's got something to do with all the chaps being hard up all of a sudden. Has he been getting money out of them with some of his tricks?"

"Better ask him," said Towle, and he walked away without pursuing the subject of the loan he had asked for. "The plot thickens!" grinned Raby. "I've been thinking, too," announced Lovell. "Well, what is it?"

"I've been thinking that if we don't get on with our prep, we shall have trouble with Bootles in the morning." "Ha, ha!" said Jimmy Silver crossly. "Oh, rats!" said Jimmy Silver crossly. "Well, you see, prep's got to be done. Bootles has been waxy lately owing to some of the chaps shirking prep. We don't want lines or detention, fatted; we've got the foster to think of! Do you want Greyfriars to beat us?"

Jimmy Silver grinned, but he acknowledged that prep had to be done. Prep, accordingly, was done in the end study. That night Jimmy Silver went to bed in a decidedly thoughtful mood. It was not agreeable to the captain of the Fourth to be left out in the cold at something as simple as prep, but the Form were concerned. But that was not all. Whatever was going on was of a "shady" nature; there was no need to be secretive otherwise. Uncle James felt that it was his business. But at present Uncle James was quite in the dark.

The 3rd Chapter. Getting Serious! "Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" The voice was the voice of Tubby Muffin, and it was raised in anguish. Jimmy Silver heard it as he was passing the old stone archway that led into Little Quad. And then he heard the angry voice of Higgs, the bully of the Fourth. "Shut up, you little beast!" "Yow-ow! I'll tell Jimmy Silver!"

"Look here—" Jimmy strode through the archway, and came on the scene. "Rescue!" yelled Tubby as he caught sight of the captain of the Fourth. The fat junior was wringing in Higgs' grasp. "Let Tubby alone, Higgs," said Jimmy curtly. "Mind your own business," snapped Higgs angrily. "I won't shell out," howled Tubby Muffin. "He wants my half-quad, and I'm not going to let him have it."

Jimmy Silver's brow darkened. "Higgs, you rotter—" Higgs released the fat Classical, his rugged face growing red. Tubby Muffin promptly dodged behind Jimmy Silver. "Keep him off, Jimmy. He's not going to leave my half-quad. I got the postal-order only this morning, too."

"Look here," said Higgs savagely, "you needn't meddle here, Jimmy Silver. I'm going to borrow a half-sovereign of the little beast, that's all. I suppose you don't think I want to steal his money, do you?" "Well, borrowing it against his will isn't much different from stealing," said Jimmy. "And you're jolly well not going to do it!" "Who's going to stop me?" roared Higgs.

"Uncle James," said Jimmy Silver coolly. Higgs clenched his big fists. The

bully bully of the Fourth had tried conclusions with Jimmy Silver before, in vain. But he was not averse from trying conclusions again. Tubby Muffin cut off through the archway, and Higgs made a prompt pursuit. Jimmy Silver promptly joined in, and collared Higgs by the back of the neck. The bully of the Fourth turned on him, and in a moment they were fighting hammer and tongs. Tubby, quite with his leave Higgs to be dealt with by his champion, scolded away across the quadrangle and vanished.

"Boys!" Mr. Bootles came across Little Quad from the library. "Silver—Higgs—" The combatants, flushed and excited, separated at the Form-master's voice. Mr. Bootles gave them a severe look.

"Take a hundred bars each, Higgs and Silver, and let there be no more of this," rapped out Mr. Bootles. "Yes, sir." Mr. Bootles passed on, and Jimmy Silver and Higgs went different ways, looking grim.

Jimmy looked for Tubby Muffin. He looked in the tuckshop first, fully expecting to find Tubby there, as he was in funds. Most of Tubby's funds went over Sergeant Kettle's counter for refreshments, liquid and solid. But the fat Classical was out there, and the sergeant had not seen him. "Seen Tubby?" asked Jimmy, missing his chums in the doorway of the schoolhouse.

"Yes, he's gone in," said Lovell. "Anything the matter?" Jimmy explained about the scene in Little Quad. Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked serious. "My hat, it's coming to something!" said Lovell, with a whistle. "Higgs is a really nasty little bullying chap into lending him money, is rather the limit."

"It's serious," said Jimmy. "And Tubby's in funds, and hasn't been cutting. That's jolly odd. What is he keeping his money for, eh?" "Because—" "Because of what goes on in the evening, when they sneak out after prep," said Jimmy. "Wherever it is the fellows go, they lose money there, that's plain."

"But—but—I can't understand—" "I can't either, but I'm going to let's go and see Tubby." The Fistical Four went up to Tubby's study. They found the door locked, and Jimmy rapped sharply with his knuckles. "Go away!" came the fat Classical's voice from within. "You're not going to have my half-quad, Higgs!" "It isn't Higgs," said Jimmy. "It's us."

"Oh! Sorry, I'm busy." "Open the door!" "Can't I'm working!" "Don't let whoppers, you fat Prussian," exclaimed Jimmy Silver angrily. "Look here, Tubby, what did Higgs want your money for?" "Because he's a beast."

"Why haven't you laid it in tuck as usual?" "No reply." "What is it you are going to do with your money to-night, Tubby?" Silence. "Will you tell me what's on, you fat idler?"

Said no reply. Tubby Muffin was evidently not to be drawn. Jimmy Silver bestowed an angry kick on the door, and the chums retired. "Whither bound?" asked Raby, as Jimmy went downstairs. "I'm going to see Leggett. He's got a hand in this, and I'm going to know what it is," said Jimmy swagely. "It's as plain as the nose on your face that it's gambling of some sort."

"How?" "And Leggett is making a profit out of it," said Jimmy. "And every silly ass of the lot would be lugged, sacked perhaps, if it came out. And it must come out sooner or later. Come on!"

The Fistical Four met the three Tommies on the Modern side. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Dodd's hand in the doorway of Mr. Manders' house. But Jimmy held up his hand in sign of pass. "No more now," he said gruffly. "We've come over to see Leggett, and you may as well come with us. It's jolly serious."

"He's in his study," Tommy Cook. "I heard him say the word." "We'll jolly soon make him say it." The seven juniors proceeded to Leggett's study, and they found the door locked.

"Tommy Dodd knocked." "Let us in, Leggett." "I'm busy." What do you want, come the then, said Tommy of the Fourth. "Let us in, or we'll bust the lock," said Jimmy in commanding tones. "I give you six months."

"You fool! You'll have Manders' up!" "Let him come. Then you can explain to him your passion for the game," said Jimmy Silver. "What does he want to do?" "The juniors heard a starting to clamour in the study. The door was enough for Leggett. He opened the door. Jimmy glanced round the study as he entered. "What's work?" Leggett had been waiting upon his door at one of the windows. "Greeting up your game," said Jimmy Silver.

Leggett started. "I—I was looking over some papers," he stammered. "Let's see your pocket-book." "My own pocket-book?" "Yes." "I'm not going to!" said Leggett sulkily. "Mind your own business!"

"Look here, what do you want to see, Leggett's pocket-book?" Jimmy Silver exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "I'll explain. There's something going on in the school, you know, that as well as I do. You're in the secret, and I'm not. Lots of the fellows clear off somewhere in the evening, where they lose money. One silly ass has been babbling about backing red, another silly ass has mentioned that he'd had good but another admitted he'd promised Leggett to say nothing about what was going on. I was puzzled at first, but I can see it now. There's a kind of gambling going on, and Leggett is at the bottom of it. He got some dough for winning the other fellows' money, and I want to see his pocket-book for proof."

"What rot!" said Tommy Dodd incredulously. "Look at his face!" said Jimmy critically. Leggett's face had turned almost yellow. Tommy Dodd gave a gasp and started back, and his brow became demure.

Leggett recovered himself a bit. "No, it isn't! It's a Classy yarn of course!" "Well, show us your pocket-book," said Tommy Dodd decidedly. "You've got a lot of money, as Jimmy Silver says, we shall know what you think. Out with it, or we'll call you and make you! Sharp's the word!"

The 4th Chapter. The Rookwood Reformers Meet Business. The juniors gathered round Leggett with grim looks. There was no doubt that the cad of the Fourth had obeyed.

He shrugged his narrow shoulders. "I don't mind showing you my pocket-book, Tommy Dodd. I'm not going to be ordered about by the cad cad!" "Well, that's all right," said Tommy. "It doesn't matter to him as you show it."

"And back up!" said Jimmy Silver. Leggett thrust his hand into his jacket and took out his pocket-book. He opened it for the juniors to see. It contained several letters and a currency note for ten shillings and some stamps. Nothing more.

Tommy Dodd looked relieved. "I thought it was all rot," he remarked. "You're all-right, Jimmy Silver. Better go home and get your own." Jimmy shook his head. "I thought the cad had the money about him," he said. "I suppose he was putting it away somewhere. That's why he had the book locked."

"You can search the study if you like," sneered Leggett. "That means that you've shown your foot into a safe place where couldn't find a" returned Jimmy Silver. "You can think as if you like." "Oh, draw it mild, Jimmy Silver, you pussies!" protested Tommy Dodd. "You're backing on the wrong horse. Moderns don't play that kind of game. The jolly sports are all the Classical side."

"I'm going to ask Leggett for

What did Jimmy mean by talking about backing out?"

"How should I know? Better ask your master."

"Why do a crowd of fellows get off their hands out of sight every evening?"

"Ask them."

"Why did Tubby Muffin promise to tell me nothing about it?"

"Probably he was deceiving."

"How is it that the fellows are all lined up after their mysterious excursion in the evening?"

"Why not ask them?"

"It is no good asking them. It seems that you've made them all promise not to say anything about what's going on. You know that we should be down on it."

"Have they made you Head of Bookwood?" inquired Leggett sarcastically.

"I don't see that it's your business."

"It is my business, as captain of the Fourth and Uncle James of Bookwood," said Jimmy Silver calmly.

"We believe in that you've got up some kind of gambling, and that you're cheating all the fellows."

"Leggett gave a shrug. He was the master of himself now, and it was clear that he did not mean to make any revelations—if he had any to make."

"That sounds awfully thick," said Tommy Dadd. "And I don't see that you've got any proof, Jimmy Silver."

"Not so far," said Jimmy quietly. "I'm going to have some, though."

"Can't you mind your own business?" asked Leggett.

"I don't believe it," said Tommy Dadd. "You've been dreaming, Jimmy. Leggett is a bit of a waster, but he's not such a rotter as that."

"Well, I believe it!"

"It's about time for you to clear out," said Leggett insolently.

Jimmy clenched his hand, but he unclenched it again. It was not much use beginning a scuffle of Classics and Moderns. The matter was too serious to be settled by the punching of noses.

Jimmy left the study without another word, and his chains followed him. Leggett's scolding laugh was heard as they went down the passage. The three Tamesians lingered.

"Look here, Leggett, I suppose there's nothing in what Silver says?" asked Tommy Dadd, scanning Leggett's narrow, foxey face.

"Nothing at all!"

"Because if you did anything of the kind, and we spotted it, we'd simply smash you!" said Tommy Dadd grimly.

"I tell you there's nothing in it!"

"Well, you're a bit of a Prussian, but I suppose I must take your word," said Tommy. "It sounds rather thick, anyway."

"It's only a Classical yarn," said Leggett. "They'll get up anything they could against our side, of course."

"Jimmy Silver wouldn't say it unless he believed it. But I think he's mistaken. I must say, still, there's something going on," said Tommy. "Where is it you burn off to after prep?"

"If you want to know, I'm getting into form because I'm going to take up fencer. I get a sprint round the quad every evening."

"Well, it will do you good," said Tommy, and the Modern chaps left the study.

Leggett scouted when they were gone. He had succeeded in bluffing the inquirers, but he was by no means easy in his mind. The curious game he was playing was attended by many risks.

Jimmy Silver's face was glum as tea in the end study. He was more than ever convinced that Leggett of the Fourth was playing an underhand game by which he succeeded in relieving his Form-fellows of their spare cash. And sooner or later, Jimmy thought, there must be a discovery, and then the disgrace would be terrible. For if this would be Jimmy suspected, there would be drawings, and perhaps expunctions all round. And foolish and reckless fellows who had been tempted by the cunning Leggett would suffer as much as the young rascal himself—perhaps more.

"I don't see that there's anything to be done," said Lovell, breaking the silence. "I suppose we can't start watching the fellows about."

"No, jolly fear!" said Baby.

Jimmy shook his head.

"We can't do that," he said. "But we've got to put a stop to this. It must come out sooner or later. A pretty disgrace for the school then!"

"But—but you're not sure, you know," said Newcome doubtfully.

"I'm sure enough. There's nothing

to account for what we know. It's gambling, and Leggett has got the fellows into it. Tommy & Co. would jump at anything of the sort, of course. But he's got other fellows into it—those rightish ones—Tom and James and Hooker and Tubby Muffin, for instance. I dare say they seem much like a lot of lark. It won't be long before the Head for it."

"There would be an awful row," said Lovell anxiously.

"We've got to put a stop to it," said Jimmy angrily. "This study resolves itself into a Committee of Reform."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"We would find out where the fellows go, and spot the whole game, only—we can't play the rotten spy," said Jimmy, composing.

"Mustn't do anything that could get you into it," said Baby sagely.

"But that doesn't apply to Leggett. My firm belief is that Leggett's getting the fellows to gamble, and winning their money—most likely cheating them, too. Why, it's breaking the law, and the blessed police would be wanting Leggett if they knew. If what I suspect is true, Leggett is liable to be arrested and charged as a police-breaker."

The 8th Chapter.
A Startling Discovery!

Leggett of the Fourth came out of Mr. Mansford's house, and strolled into the dock at the quadrangle. He glanced at his watch as he passed under the old beeches.

From there he strolled away into Lovell's Quad.

And Jimmy Silver, who had spotted him at once, followed softly in the darkness. Lovell and Baby and Newcome were on the watch at different points, but they had not seen the end of the Fourth.

Leggett strolled round Little Quad, with his hands in his pockets, keeping his eyes well about him. The end of the Modern Fourth was on his guard, and after his interview with Jimmy Silver, he suspected that he might be watched. But he did not suspect Jimmy. The captain of the Fourth was a proven scout, and it was not difficult for him to shadow Leggett without giving himself away.

From Little Quad, Leggett saw Lovell enter the quadrangle again, still lined with Jimmy Silver on his track. It was plain to Jimmy that Leggett was simply stammering about to know any possible watcher of the track. The Modern pointer stammered round the

It was Tubby Muffin's lit voice. "He won't be here tonight."

"Not such good coming without any tin," Jimmy recognized Jameson's voice. "I sold my pocket-knife to Leggett—he gave me five bob—six worth for the rotter!"

The two Fourth Formers passed on towards the steps of the vault under the old abbey. They disappeared into the opening.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath. "So it's there!" he muttered.

Quietly and cautiously, Jimmy Silver descended the stone stairs. At the bottom was a strong oak door, generally shut. It was open now, and Jimmy groped his way through.

He stood in the first vault and looked about him.

Ahead, some distance down the series of dusky vaults, was a plimser of light. Keeping close to the wall, Jimmy Silver tapped along.

The light grew stronger.

It came from three or four vaults, barring in the sixth vault.

Jimmy Silver halted in the fifth vault, and, keeping close to the old masonry arch, he looked in.

The scene that met his eyes made him rub them and look again.

That Leggett had started some gambling game into which he had

not to be curious, but who had evidently been unable to resist the temptation.

Before Leggett on the slab was what looked like a box of the first game.

But as Jimmy looked more carefully he saw that it was a wooden wheel set in a wooden base!

Jimmy had never seen one before, but he had read descriptions of such things, and he knew what it was. It was a roulette-wheel.

Jimmy had read of that fascinating game, which is played in continental casinos for the purpose of swindling foolish tourists.

The wheel came together here. It was a roulette-wheel, such as is used at Monte Carlo, though not on the same scale. Leggett had probably picked it up somewhere on a point or so. Jimmy remembered now having heard someone remark that there was such an article for sale at the second-hand shop at Bookham. It was merely a toy, but it answered the same purpose as the real article. It was evidently Leggett had seen it at the second-hand shop, and it had put into his cunning brain the idea of flooring his schoolfellows, as richer victims are felled by older rascals on a larger scale on the Riviera.

The mystery was a mystery no longer.

Jimmy Silver watched in almost stunned silence.

On the stone slab a shabby green cloth was spread, marked in yellow with numbers and spaces.

The numbers corresponded with those marked on the margin of the roulette-wheel. On the wheel each number had a small compartment below it. The game was played by a marble rolling round the wheel. It fell, sooner or later, into a numbered compartment, and that number was the winning number.

The young rascal in the vault had evidently learned the game, probably under Leggett's instruction.

They were "making their game"—placing coins on the numbers they fancied or backing black or red, the numbers on the wheel being coloured black and red alternately.

Leggett, evidently acting as croupier, began turning the wheel.

"Make your game," he said.

The wheel turned in one direction, the ball was thrown round in the other.

Wheel and ball revolved in opposite directions till both closed down and the little ball clicked into one of the numbered holes.

All eyes were turned towards the wheel as it spun.

The ball stopped at last.

"Six, black," said Leggett.

There was a great front from Jameson minor. He had carried out his intention of backing red with dixy-train results.

But Smythe of the Shell gave a chirrup of triumph.

"By gad, I'm on six!"

Smythe was the only winner. Leggett was not provided with a croupier's rake. He gathered in the stakes with greedy hands.

Smythe of the Shell had a suspicion on six. Leggett had to pay him thirty-five shillings, according to the rules of the game.

But as he had staked in thirty shillings at least, he could well afford to do so.

All the same Jimmy observed a discontented frown on Leggett's greedy face.

Like the real professional gambler, he disliked paying out. Gathering it was what he liked.

However, he paid out to Smythe, and the great Adolphus grinned gleefully over his haul of small silver.

"By gad, you have all this luck!" said Howard exultantly. "I'm on four on six this time. Six repeated before!"

"I'm putting half across on six," said Tracy lightly.

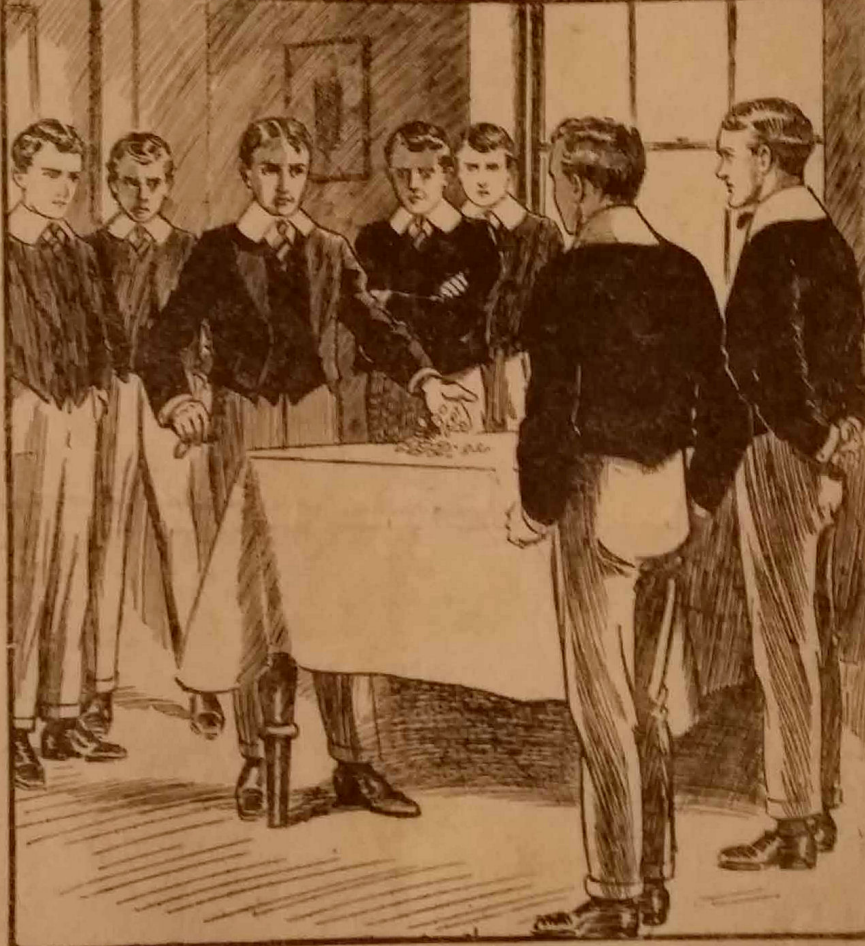
"A hell for me," said Townsend.

"Go it," said Leggett. "Make your game!"

Jimmy was still silent. He was curious to see how that spin would result. Smythe's having won on the number six encouraged the others to follow his example. The number was fairly plattered with coins, from sixpence up to half-a-crown. Leggett's game was on a much smaller scale than at Monte Carlo, where the winning stake is five francs. But if "six" turned up this time, the end of the Fourth would have to pay out something like twenty pounds.

Jimmy doubted whether Leggett had as much as twenty pounds at his disposal for the present game.

He watched Leggett's face in the candle-light. It is pronounced that the looker-on sees most of the game, and certainly Jimmy could see why he was not visible to the croupier pointing



"Shell out!" said Jimmy Silver. And Leggett, grinding his teeth, turned out his pockets on the table. "My hat!" exclaimed Lovell. "The worm has been making money, and no mistake!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Of course, it wouldn't come to that. He knows that. But as Leggett is breaking the law, it's justifiable to shadow him and stop him, you fellows can please yourselves, but I'm going to keep an eye on Leggett this evening."

"We'll help you," said Lovell.

"He's a Jersey bird," said Baby dubiously. "If he's really up to something of that kind he will be on his guard."

"We shall spot him sooner or later. It will be dark, and we can hang round the Modern side and look for Leggett. Whoever spots him is to shadow him and see where he goes and what he does. Then, if it's as I think, we can deal with him."

And the Co. resolved agent.

After tea the Fourth Form hurried through their preparation. And when darkness had fallen upon Bookwood they slipped out quietly into the quadrangle.

The Bookwood Refusers were on the track!

old clock tower, and then, apparently satisfied that he was not watched, he started for the abbey ruins. The ruins of the ancient abbey, though within the grounds of Bookwood, were at some distance from the school. Leggett vanished into the ruins, and Jimmy Silver led him.

Jimmy followed on cautiously.

He had no doubt that Leggett had reached his destination now. If he was playing some nefarious game, the abbey ruins were exactly the spot he would choose. The old abbey was seldom visited by day and never by night.

Under the dark sky the old ruins were silent and shadowed. Leggett had vanished, and there was no sound, no movement, amid the old masses of crumbled masonry. Jimmy, without making a sound, moved in and was looking for a trace of the vanished Leggett. The sound of footsteps fell upon his ears, and he stopped, peering about him. There was a murmur of whispering voices.

"The house waster my ten bob—his lot all his in last night, you know."

travelling fellows better than himself, Jimmy already suspected.

But he was hardly prepared for what now met his eyes.

The candles were burning upon a great slab of stone in the vault.

At the side of the slab, which served as a table, Leggett was seated on a camp-stool.

The candle-light glimmered and flickered upon his sallow, greedy face.

The vault was crowded with juniors, mostly Classics.

There were at least fifteen fellows there, all gathered round the slab. They were standing. Leggett's camp-stool was the only seat in the place.

Jimmy recognized Smythe and Howard and Tracy and Baldwin of the Shell. Townsend and Topham and Green and Pease were there with their own. All the boys of Bookwood had gathered for the "little dinner."

But there were others, too. Tubby Muffin and James minor and Hooker and Tooks and Pilon and Ryas-fellows whom Jimmy knew

Jimmy was still silent. He was curious to see how that spin would result. Smythe's having won on the number six encouraged the others to follow his example. The number was fairly plattered with coins, from sixpence up to half-a-crown. Leggett's game was on a much smaller scale than at Monte Carlo, where the winning stake is five francs. But if "six" turned up this time, the end of the Fourth would have to pay out something like twenty pounds.

Jimmy doubted whether Leggett had as much as twenty pounds at his disposal for the present game.

He watched Leggett's face in the candle-light. It is pronounced that the looker-on sees most of the game, and certainly Jimmy could see why he was not visible to the croupier pointing

The number plain in Leggett's eyes did not escape him.

"If the number six came up, Leggett would be cleared out of money, and the usually proceedings would come in an end."

As it was perfectly certain that Leggett did not intend anything of the sort to happen, it was easy for Jimmy to guess that he had planned something with the roulette-wheel and learned the trick of it.

Jimmy would have been willing to stake his best football that number six would not turn up that time.

In other words, it was clear enough that Leggett was not only cheating, but he was cheating in a well after the fashion of the Continental crooks, whose numbers and customs he was imitating.

His resources were not large enough to enable him to play a fair game; though he would probably not have played fairly in any case. Professional gamblers play to win money, not for the pleasure of the thing, and the trick of the roulette-wheel is easily picked up with practice. The players were too keen on the game to have any eyes for this trickery, which is hardly to be wondered at. For every year millions of pounds are lost at the casinos on the Riviera by foolish gamblers, who never seem to suspect that the numbers come up at the exact will of the croupier.

Every, greedy glances were fixed on Leggett as he turned the wheel and spun the ball.

The spirit of gaming was in every heart, and the boyish faces were hard and eager and greedy.

"Ten, dead!" announced Leggett, as the wheel stopped.

Jimmy Silver smiled grimly.

On the wheel the numbers were not consecutive. Ten was the fourth number from six. Leggett had run no risk of tumbling into that heavily-laden number by chance.

There was a general groan from the punters.

"What rotten luck!"

"By gill!"

"That does it!"

"Oh, rotten!"

Leggett smiled in the stakes solemnly. There had not been a single seizure, and the stakes were very considerable.

"Make your game!" said Leggett once more.

But Jimmy Silver was not listening.

He was breathing away through the vaults with shining eyes. He had discovered all he needed to know, and it was time for the Bookwood Reformers to appear on the scene.

The 6th Chapter.

Jimmy Silver and Co. Take a Hand.

"Where on earth have you been, Jimmy?"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome met Jimmy Silver as he came into the school house.

"I've been bowling out that scoundrel, Leggett," said Jimmy.

"No time for jaw. We've got to get to work. Call the fellows together in the Common-room. All the dead chaps you find indoors. You going over to call Tommy Dodd?"

"But what—?" began Lovell.

"Back up, I tell you!"

"Oh, all right."

Jimmy Silver cut away to the Madras side. The Co. proceeded to call the meeting in the Junior Common-room.

With great surprise, the Fourth Formers gathered to the meeting. Van Hyn and Oswald and Lawson and several more were there with the Co. when Jimmy Silver came in with the three Trustees and several more Madrases. There were nearly twenty juniors in the meeting, and there was a general howl for Jimmy Silver to explain.

Jimmy Silver closed the door, and proceeded to explain.

He was listened to with blank astonishment.

"Houlah!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "You're dreaming!"

"I've seen it with my own eyes," said Jimmy, quietly.

"But—but—but—" spluttered Lovell.

"Why, Leggett would be caught like a shot if it rains out. He could be arrested!"

"That's why he has taken jolly good care to keep it dark," said Jimmy.

"It's clear that every fellow who's been let into the game has given a promise to say nothing about it. And the howling cat has got decent fellows into it, too, as well as the rotters. Billy nasal! This is where the Bookwood Reformer chip in."

"By George, yes!" said Tommy Dodd. "Why, every silly one of them would be flogged if it came out. And Leggett, at least, would be expelled."

"None of the others, too," remarked Lawson.

"Perhaps the lot," said Oswald.

"Nice for their people. And a money profit might have got on to it."

"They're at it now," said Jimmy Silver. "We're going to join them, and help in the little game. Come on. But mind nobody spots you. We don't want prefects on in this scene. Come separately to the ruins, and meet at the vault steps."

"Right ho!"

There was need for caution. The Bookwood Reformers meant to make a clean sweep of Leggett and his precious game; but they naturally did not want to betray the foolish juniors to severe punishment. Nobody would have been sorry to see the rascally Leggett expelled from the school, but they did not want to have a hand in it.

But there was punishment to be meted out all the same. Jimmy Silver would see to that.

The party met in the old ruins, and Jimmy Silver led the way down the stone stairs into the vaults.

Quietly they trod through the vaults towards the glimmering candle-light ahead.

They reached the arch of the sixth vault, and looked in.

All the eyes of the punters round the roulette-table were fixed on the game, and not one thought of looking round, though some were facing the new-comers, not an eye was raised to them.

Leggett was turning the wheel once more.

"Make your game!" he was saying.

Coins were being played on the numbers, and are red and black. Some of the players stood idly apart, evidently out of money, but looking on with undiminished eagerness.

"Make your game!"

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver. He stride into the vault.

Leggett sprang to his feet, his face turning white. The punters round the slab stared at the new arrivals.

"Hallo, you going to have a hand in the game, Jimmy Silver?"

Jimmy smiled grimly.

"Yes, I'm going to take a hand," he said. "Line up there, you fellows, and see that nobody gets away!"

"What ho!"

"Look here, you're not going to interfere, Jimmy Silver," blurted Townsend. "Go on with the game, Leggett."

"Get away from that wheel, Leggett!" rapped out Jimmy Silver. Leggett hesitated.

Tommy Dodd took him by the hair.

Then Leggett left the wheel, with a lot of anguish.

"Keep him there," said Jimmy.

"We've not done with Leggett yet."

"I've got him," grinned Tommy. "He won't get away in a hurry!"

"You-ow-ow!" Leggett!

"Look here, you only clear off!" shouted Smythe. "I'm warning, and I'm not going to be meddled with!"

"Would you rather be fetched by Bullock?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"You—you rotter! Are you going to attack?"

"If I'd wanted to sneak, I'd have brought Bullock with me," said Jimmy quietly. "But I advise you not to make a row, or somebody may hear."

"Bump, it's a basis go are, Jimmy," mumbled Flynn. "Faith, I've lost nearly all my money, and I was going to win it back."

"It would take you all your time, you fathered. Haven't you sense enough to see that Leggett was cheating you?"

"Heard mother as Miss!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Sure, I am ashamed of myself," confessed Flynn ingenuously. "I know it's a dirty blaggardly game, but, sure, it does draw ye on, you know, and—"

"And it's the first and last time it's going to be played at Bookwood," said Jimmy Silver grimly.

"Here, yank that fool back!"

Topham was sidling away to escape. Lovell took him by the collar and spun him back, and Toppo sprawled on the stone flags with a yell.

"Listen to me," said Jimmy Silver. "We are the Bookwood Reformers, and we mean business. Leggett is a scoundrel, and you fellows are all fools. We're going to give Leggett a lesson he won't forget. You rotters are going to run the gauntlet, and then you can go!"

"Look here—"

"Line up—"

A dozen of the Bookwood Reformers lined up for the gauntlet, the rest keeping guard in the archway to stop a rush to escape.

"You first, Smythe," said Jimmy.

"By gad! I won't!"

Jimmy Silver clenched his fists and advanced upon the dandy of the School. And Adolphus, though he had said he wouldn't, decided hurriedly that he would.

He made a rush between the lines of waiting juniors, and blows came down on him on all sides.

Adolphus was yelling with anguish when he escaped into the next vault. He did not linger there. He fled.

"Now, Howard—"

Jimmy Silver's boot helped Howard to make up his mind, and he ran the gauntlet. The other nuts followed his example, one by one, and they were pretty severely punished by the time they escaped.

"Go a bit easy with the rest," said Jimmy Silver. "They're silly fools, and I suppose they can't help it."

"Sure ho!"

There was no help for it. Flynn and the rest ran the gauntlet in turn, but they were let down lightly. When the last of them had gone, the Bookwood Reformers gathered round Leggett with grim looks.

The 7th Chapter.

The Way of the Transgressor.

Leggett was wriggling in the grasp of Tommy Dodd.

He was not to escape so lightly as the others.

His sallow face was almost yellow with apprehension.

"Look here," he mumbled.

"Hands off, you rotter! I—I—I'll complain to Beesley if you—"

"Yes, you'll be glad to tell Beesley about this—I don't think!" he remarked. "Take up all that money from the table, Leggett!"

Leggett, in wonder, obeyed the command.

Jimmy Silver stripped the green cloth from the slab, pushed it with his pocket-knife, and tore it into fragments.

Leggett watched him with burning eyes. Then Jimmy took the roulette wheel, and dashed it against the stone slab, with a force that smashed it to pieces.

"You rotter!" shrieked Leggett. "I gave a pound for that!"

Jimmy Silver did not reply. He stamped on the fragments of the roulette-wheel till they were reduced to atoms.

"Now bring the cad along!" he said.

"We're going to rag him, surely!" exclaimed Oswald.

"Bump him, head!" exclaimed Tommy Doyle indignantly.

"Later," said Jimmy cheerfully. "He's got to disclose the plunder first; what he's got about him, and what he's got hidden in his study."

"Oh, good!"

"I—I won't!" gasped Leggett, in Jimmy's name.

"We'll see whether you won't! Bring him along!"

Jimmy Silver took one of Leggett's arms and Tommy Dodd the other. The cad of the Fourth was walked off between the two juniors.

Lovell blew out the candles, and the Bookwood Reformers followed.

The party broke up in the quadrangle. The Pastoral Four and the three Trustees accompanied Leggett to the Madras side.

The wretched trickster did not venture to resist.

Only a whisper of the story had to come to the masters' ears for him to be flogged and expelled from Bookwood. Whatever the junior reformers intended to do, it would not be quite so serious as that.

Leggett's study was reached, and the shivering young rascal was marched in in the midst of the seven.

Tommy Cook closed the door and turned the key.

"Shell out!" said Jimmy Silver coolly.

Leggett, grinding his teeth, turned out his pockets on the table. He turned out four pounds.

"Get the rest off him!" said Jimmy.

"Look here—" hissed Leggett. "Hold your tongue!"

Leggett held his tongue, quivering with rage, while the juniors methodically searched him. Six more pounds were added to the money on the table.

"At last! The worm has been making money, and no mistake!" said Lovell with a whistle.

"It's mine!" hissed Leggett.

"Now turn out what you've got hidden in the study!" said Jimmy Silver.

"There's none."

"Bump him!"

"Bump!"

"You-ow-ow!"

"Better not yell, dear boy," advised Jimmy. "If Mr. Manders comes up here, he will want to know what it's all about."

Leggett ground his teeth in helpless rage.

"Bump him till he shells out!"

"Let me alone!" snarled Leggett. "I—I—I'll get the money."

"Back up, then!"

With a groan the unhappy swindler turned back a corner of the study carpet, and removed a loose board.

He took out a cardboard box.

"There it is, hang you!"

Jimmy opened the box and examined the contents. Currency-notes and silver lay inside.

"Total, nearly twenty quids," commented Jimmy Silver.

"Some of that's mine!" howled Leggett. "I—I had five pounds of my own."

Jimmy shook his head.

"I don't say some of it was yours," he assented. "You must have started with some of your own, I suppose. But I don't know how much, and I'm

not going to take your word. All cash is going to be confounded!"

"Wipe, you rotter—"

"If you lose any of your cash, as well as what you've stolen, you may consider it a fine for certifying and expelling Jimmy, and the money refunded."

Leggett's face was a study.

"You—you've got all my money, you're leaving me alone!" he panted.

"Why not? You've made lots of other fellows stony," said Jimmy coolly. "Don't fancy we're going to keep this 'ere lot of notes down to your level. Tommy Dodd is going to take 'em down and put 'em in the Red Cross collection-box in the Hall, ho!"

"Tommy!"

"What a ripping idea!" chuckled Tommy Dodd. "It will do some good that way. Leggett, old chap, you have the satisfaction of knowing you've done some good for the wounded Tommy!"

Leggett ground his teeth. Apparently he failed to derive any satisfaction from that circumstance.

Tommy Dodd gathered up the money and left the study. Leggett sank into a chair, white and collapsing.

Lovell and Raby went with Tommy Dodd. The three returned in a few minutes.

"All serene!" said Lovell, "as far as the collecting-box—every blessed bob! They'll be pleased when they open that box for the Red Cross."

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Go up, Leggett!"

"What do you want, hang you?" growled Leggett, eyeing Jimmy Silver apprehensively.

Jimmy had taken a cricket-stump from the cupboard.

"You haven't been flogged yet?"

"Flogged!" howled Leggett. "Certainly! If the Head found you out he would flog you and sack you. We can't sack you, unfortunately; but we can flog you, and we're going to!"

"I—I—I'll yell!"

"Then you'll get the flogging from the Head and the sack will follow. Please yourself."

Leggett gave the captain of the Fourth a look like a demon. But he did not yell. He was in the hands of the Philistines, and there was no help for the rascal of Bookwood.

"Pitch him across the table!" said Jimmy. "He's going to have twenty well laid on. If you'd prefer a brush to a stung, Leggett, you can go to the Head."

"Ha, ho, ha!"

The shivering rascal was Hubert's face down on the table. Then Jimmy Silver commenced operations with the stump.

Whack, whack, whack, whack! Jimmy had said that the strokes were to be laid well on, and they were, there was no doubt about that. Jimmy seemed to think he was breaking a carpet.

Leggett snarled and gasped and uttered suppressed howls, but, painful as the infliction was, he dared not yell aloud. Jimmy's arm was a little tired when he had finished, but he did not leave off till twenty terrific whacks had been administered.

Leggett rolled off the table, quivering and groaning. Jimmy tossed the stump into a corner.

"That job's jobbed!" he remarked.

"Leggett, if ever you want to start again, go ahead, and keep your weather-eye open for the Bookwood Reformers."

The juniors crowded out of the study. Leggett was left groaning on the floor. He shook his fist furiously after the avengers; but that was the only satisfaction he had left. His ill-gotten gains were gone, and his own money with them. He naturally came had been stopped for good, and he had received a flogging that the Head himself could not have made more severe. And Leggett, with many groans, realized the painful truth of the old adage, that the way of the transgressor is hard.

"Rather thick," remarked Jimmy Silver, as the Pastoral Four discussed a sherry supper in the end study.

"I rather think that there won't be any more roulette at Bookwood—what?"

And the Co. chuckled and agreed. They thought so, too. Leggett was not likely to risk repeating his experiments at the hands of the Bookwood Reformers.

THE END

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