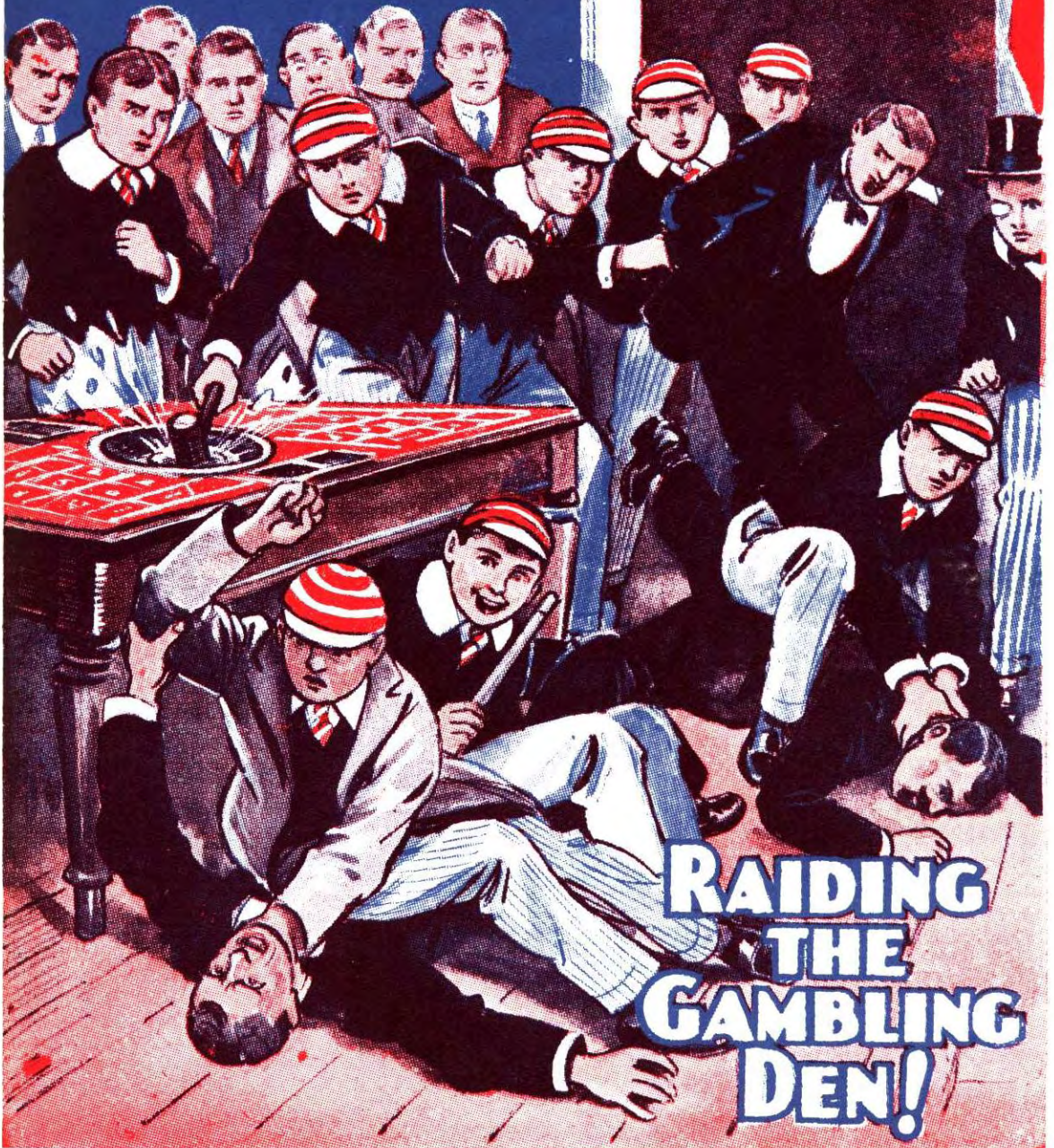


"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!" Read the Gripping Greyfriars Yarn **INSIDE.**

The **GEM** 2d



**RAIDING
THE
GAMBLING
DEN!**

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FOR the HONOUR



Phoop! There was the shrill blast of a police-whistle. "The police!" The words were muttered in fright among the players, and Outts of the Fifth dived through the window! But it was not the police. St. Jim's juniors came surging grimly into the room. "Smash up the place!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

CHAPTER 1.

The Old Manor House!

"**B**LOW the rain!"

Tom Merry spoke with exasperated emphasis.

And Manners and Lowther chimed in, equally emphatic: "Blow it!"

It was really too bad! The chums of St. Jim's had left the school on their bicycles after lessons that day for a long spin, and when they started the weather was all that could be desired. The sun was shining, and all, as the poet says, was calm and bright.

They were a good many miles from home when the sky became overcast; and then the rain began to fall. And it was not merely a shower. It came down steadily, thicker and thicker every minute, and showed no signs of leaving off.

The three juniors had not even brought their macs with them, in their misplaced reliance upon the weather.

They had turned back from Abbotsford, and were cycling along the road over Wayland Moor now, hoping to get back to the school before the rain became too heavy. But their hopes were in vain. It came down in torrents, and the Moorland Road, never in a very good condition, was a sea of mud round the splashing wheels.

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The juniors were pretty well drenched already. In a few minutes more they would be soaked through to the skin, and they were still miles from the school. And on the road over the moor there was no shelter, only a few gaunt trees standing among the drenched gorse.

The Terrible Three of St. Jim's were accustomed to taking things philosophically, but they could not help feeling exasperated now.

"We can't keep on through this!" exclaimed Tom Merry, ceasing to pedal, and free-wheeling on through the mud and pools of water in the road. "We shall have to get under cover somewhere, you chaps."

"Where?" growled Monty Lowther. "There isn't a house for miles!"

"And we shall be late for calling-over, anyway!" said Manners.

"Blow calling-over!" said Tom Merry. "I'd rather miss calling-over and get lines than crawl in like a drowned cat! We must get cover till this blows over."

Monty Lowther grunted.

"I tell you there isn't a house on this road at all."

"But off the road," said Tom Merry. "We can cut across the moor to the old Manor House."

Monty Lowther cast a rather uneasy glance over the darkening moor, drenched with rain.

"Ugh! That's a rotten place at night!"

"Better than getting soaked!" "Blessed asses we are to come so far!" growled Manners. "D'Arcy's standing a feed in Study No. 6—"

"Oh, don't talk of feeds now! I'm hungry enough, anyway. Let's cut across the moor and get under cover."

"And Blake said it would rain!" said Lowther.

"Blow Blake!"

"But you thought it wouldn't rain, you ass!"

Tom Merry snorted.

"Well, it is raining, ass, and if we stay here, fathead, we shall get soaked to the skin, duffer! So we'd better get under cover, chump! Follow me, fathead!"

And with those polite objurgations, Tom Merry turned his bicycle from the muddy road to the drenched moorland beside it. Manners and Lowther grunted and followed him. It was evidently impracticable to keep on to St. Jim's in torrents of rain.

So they followed Tom Merry, driving through drenched and dripping grass and ferns, with the rain beating down upon them.

The darkness was descending over the wide moor, and the gaunt trees were growing dim. In the distance could be seen, dimly, the outlines of the old Manor House, a building long

—READ HOW TOM MERRY & CO. TACKLED THE MENACE TO THEIR SCHOOL. THRILLS AND ADVENTURE THROUGHOUT.

of ST JIM'S!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

since fallen to decay and uninhabited. The upper stories were roofless, and the wind beat in through the shuttered windows. No one had lived there for a hundred years or more, excepting the tramps who sometimes took shelter within the old walls. Round the ruined building were the equally ruined gardens, tangled wastes of wild vegetation.

The three juniors dismounted in the old gateway, and wheeled their bicycles up the muddy drive.

Suddenly Tom Merry halted with an exclamation

"My hat! Did you see that?"

"See what?" growled Lowther.

"I saw a light in that window," said Tom Merry, pointing.

"Some tramp camping out," said Manners. "Well, he can't hurt us. Come on!"

They wheeled their bicycles on into the shelter of the old porch. When the great door was opened, it gave them free admission to the house.

It was very dark inside the old Manor House.

The juniors looked about them rather uneasily. The place was very lonely, and there was a story afloat of a murder that had been committed there, and many of the people of the countryside believed that the old house was haunted. The St. Jim's juniors were too practical to believe anything of the sort, but the deserted house was certainly an eerie old place.

Tom Merry moved along the hall, and looked into the room where he had seen—or fancied he had seen—the light. It was the dining-room of the mansion, a fine old room with panelled walls and shuttered windows, into which the rain was beating.

The room was dark and deserted.

"Nobody there!" said Tom.

"You must have imagined it!" grunted Lowther.

"I didn't!" said Tom Merry warmly. "I tell you I saw a light—just for a second."

Tom Merry moved farther along the wide hall. Several doorways opened from it, and some of the doors were gone. But one was closed. Tom Merry felt the handle and turned it, but the door was fast.

The junior uttered an exclamation.

"Locked!" he said.

"Oh, it's jammed somehow!" said Lowther. "I dare say I could open it."

"Try it, then, fathead!"

Monty Lowther tried the door, but it did not budge.

"By Jove!" said Lowther, getting interested. "It's locked, or else bolted on the inside. That's queer!"

"Jolly queer!"

The three juniors, their curiosity excited, gathered outside the locked door. They had been in the Manor House before, a considerable time ago, during an afternoon's ramble over the moor, and they knew the room beyond the locked door. It was a large room, with french windows looking over what had been the lawn at the rear of the house—now a tangled waste.

Few of the locks in the old house were

in working order, and the keys to them had long since vanished. How, then, did the door come to be locked?

The juniors scented a mystery, though what it was they could not imagine. They listened intently, but there was not a sound from beyond the locked door. Suddenly, from the front of the house there came a sound—a sound of footsteps tramping on the muddy drive, and then up the steps into the stone porch.

"Somebody's coming!" said Manners.

A match struck in the dark hall. The juniors fixed their eyes upon the face that was revealed in the gloom by the flare of the match. It was a face they knew, and they uttered an exclamation all at once:

"Cutts!"

CHAPTER 2.

Turned Out!

CUTTS of the Fifth stared blankly at the juniors.

In the glimmer of the match they could see that his face was startled, and had gone suddenly pale at the sight of them.

"Cutts!" said Tom Merry again.

Cutts disappeared from sight as the match went out. But the juniors heard him striding towards them.

Tom Merry felt the heavy hand of

The honour of St. Jim's means a great deal to Tom Merry & Co.—which is why they were heavy handed in dealing with a matter that threatened to bring St. Jim's and certain of their schoolfellows into disrepute!

the Fifth Former drop upon his shoulder.

"What are you doing here, you young rascal?" said Cutts, in a low, angry voice.

"Hands off, please!"

"Tell me what you are doing here."

"I should think you could guess," said Tom Merry. "We came in for shelter from the rain. I suppose the same as you've done!"

Cutts released him.

"Oh, I see! Yes, I came in from the rain," he said. "It—it startled me to see you here."

"Yes, you looked it," said Lowther dryly.

"What do you mean?" asked Cutts angrily.

"What I say!" said Lowther. "You looked startled—jolly startled! Did you take us for ghosts?"

Cutts gave a short, harsh laugh.

"Well, they say the old manor is haunted," he said. "Have you seen anybody else about here?"

"Expecting to meet somebody?" asked Lowther.

"Of course not. But have you seen anybody?"

"I saw a light in a window," said Tom

Merry; "that's all. But we've just found that this door is locked."

"What does that matter?"

"Well, last time we came in here there weren't any keys to the doors, and all the doors could be opened. It's queer it should be locked up now."

"The owner may have been here since then," said Cutts.

"There isn't any owner; the place in in Chancery. Nobody seems to bother his head about the place at all," said Tom Merry.

"Well, it's no business of yours, any-day!" said Cutts harshly. "You'd better clear out of this place—quick! It's no place for kids like you!"

"We're not going out into the rain!" said Tom shortly.

Cutts uttered a muttered exclamation. It was plain enough to the juniors that he was annoyed at seeing them there, though why was a mystery to them. But they certainly did not intend to go out into the pouring rain to please Cutts of the Fifth.

The Terrible Three were on anything but good terms with Cutts. Cutts was what he was pleased to term "one of the boys," and, in fact, quite a "gay dog." Cutts' doggish ways would have caused him to be expelled from St. Jim's if the Head had known anything about them. It was an open secret that he betted on horse races and gambled on cards, and had all kinds of friends in Rylcombe and Wayland that the authorities of St. Jim's knew nothing about.

The juniors did not believe that Cutts had come to the old Manor House for shelter from the rain, either. It was far more likely that he had made some appointment there with a bookmaker, or some other shady associate—some acquaintance whose existence he was very careful to keep a secret from everybody at St. Jim's. That was probably his reason for showing so much annoyance at unexpectedly finding the juniors there.

Gerald Cutts moved away towards the porch, and stood looking out into the rain. It was still coming down heavily, though it showed some sign of slackening.

"What is he doing here, I wonder?" murmured Tom Merry. "I thought for a minute he had come in out of the rain. But it isn't that."

"One of his giddy appointments," said Lowther. "Maybe going to meet Griggs, the bookmaker, here."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Hark!"

Footsteps on the muddy drive again. A form loomed up in the dimness of the porch, and the juniors heard a voice they knew.

"That you, Cutts? What rotten weather! Is—"

"Hush!"

"What's the matter?" asked Sefton of the Sixth Form at St. Jim's—a New House fellow.

Cutts whispered in reply, and the juniors did not hear what he said, but they heard Sefton utter an exclamation of angry annoyance.

"Sefty isn't pleased!" grinned Monty Lowther. "My infants, we are not wanted here. But we are going to remain till the rain stops."

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"Yes, rather!"

"Is Knox here?" they heard Sefton ask.

"No," said Cutts.

"I'll speak to the young rotters, then!"

Sefton came along the dark hall. In the dimness the juniors could just make him out, overcoated, with a muffler round his neck. He struck a match, and a light glimmered upon their faces.

Sefton's face was dark and scowling.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I'm leaning against the door," said Monty Lowther lazily.

"I'm standing on my feet," said Manners solemnly.

"I'm looking at you, Sefton," said Tom Merry.

Sefton gritted his teeth. The pleasantry of the juniors did not seem to amuse him at all.

"You can clear out of here," he said.

"Thanks! We're not going!"

"Look here, you cheeky young sweeps!" said Sefton, between his teeth. "I'm a prefect, and I order you to get back to the school!"

"In this rain?" said Tom Merry.

"Never mind the rain. If you're afraid of getting wet, you should stay indoors."

"Well, we're not afraid of getting wet, but we're not going to get drenched to please you, Sefton. Why shouldn't we stay here?"

"You will be late for locking-up."

"We'll chance that."

"You won't chance it!" said Sefton savagely. "You'll go at once! If you disobey a prefect, you'll get into trouble!"

"We're not bound to take any notice of New House prefects," said Tom Merry calmly. "We belong to the School House, and you've no right to give us orders, and you know it."

"Are you going?"

"No!"

The Terrible Three drew closer together, quite ready for a struggle, if necessary. It was a point of honour with the School House fellows not to take any orders from the New House. And they were within their rights in refusing to obey a prefect of another House, especially when he ordered them to leave shelter and go out into a heavy downpour of rain.

But Sefton did not touch them. He moved away, and rejoined Cutts in the porch, and the juniors heard them muttering together, though they could not distinguish the words.

"They're expecting more visitors," muttered Lowther—"quite a family party, in fact! I wonder what it all means?"

"Something fishy, or they wouldn't be so ratty at finding us here," said Tom Merry. "We're doing no harm that I can see."

"They're expecting Knox," said Manners. "Sefton said so. Knox is a School House prefect. If he comes—"

"Talk of angels!" said Lowther. "Hark!"

Footsteps on the muddy drive again, and another voice in the porch. This time it was the well-known voice of Knox, the prefect—the bully of the Sixth, and the special enemy of the Terrible Three.

"Hallo, you fellows! Many here?"

"Hush!"

More muttering. Cutts and Sefton were evidently whispering to Knox, so that the Shell fellows could not hear.

Knox came striding down the dark hall. Cutts and Sefton followed him, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,477.

and Cutts had a light now. He had lighted the lamp from one of the bicycles. The rays glimmered on the faces of the chums of the Shell.

"You kids ought to be indoors," said Knox. "You can't stay out so late as this. You know that well enough."

"The rain——" began Tom Merry.

"It's clearing off now," said Knox. "We shall have to stick here a bit longer, as it's a long walk to St. Jim's; but you juniors have your bikes. You'd better clear off at once."

"Look here, Knox!" said Monty Lowther warmly. "We're not going out in this downpour to please you! What is there going on here that we mustn't see?"

Knox started.

"Nothing!" he exclaimed sharply. "What's put that idea into your head, you young fool?"

"Then why can't we stay?"

"Because you're late for calling-over. It's my duty, as a prefect, to send you in. I order you to clear off at once. If you refuse, I shall report you to the Head."

The Terrible Three exchanged glances. They were in a difficult position. Knox was a School House prefect, and certainly had a right to send them home if he considered fit. And the other party were now three—all seniors, and if it came to a tussle there was no doubt that they could eject the juniors by force from the place.

"Now, don't play the fool and make me use force," said Knox. "Clear out at once, and I'll excuse you to your Housemaster for being late in. But you must go immediately. You'll be pretty late as it is."

"Look here, Knox——"

"Anyway, you've got to go!"

"Or you'll be chucked out!" growled Cutts of the Fifth.

There was no help for it. Knox had both authority and force on his side. The juniors were indignant, but they were helpless. Without a word, they moved along to their bicycles, and lighted the lamps.

The three seniors watched them wheel the bicycles out in the rain.

"The rotters!" said Lowther. "They've got us; but we'll make Knox smart for this somehow. We shall be simply drenched."

"Quick's the word!" said Tom Merry.

And they mounted their machines and rode away over the rainy moor. Through the thickly falling rain they took the road for St. Jim's, and they arrived at the school with every article of clothing on their bodies soaked through to the skin.

CHAPTER 3.

Manners is Not Ill!

"BAI JOVE, you fellows look wet!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's made that observation.

He was quite right. The chums of the Shell did look wet—very wet. Fellows gathered round them as they came in, dripping with water and squelching mud and water out of their boots.

"Wet!" growled Monty Lowther. "Yes, we feel rather damp, fathead!"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, catching sight of the Terrible Three in the Hall. "What a dreadful state you boys are in!"

"A little wet, sir," said Tom Merry.

"We were caught in the rain."

"You should have taken shelter!"

"We were late, sir——"

"It would be better to miss calling-over than to get into such a state," said Mr. Railton. "But do not stop to talk; go up and change immediately, and mind you give yourselves a hard rub down."

"Yes, sir."

And the Terrible Three went up to the Shell dormitory.

They stripped off their drenched clothing, and rubbed down their wet limbs with hard towels.

"I wonder what Railton would say if we told him that Knox turned us out into the rain!" growled Manners.

"Can't sneak about Knox," said Tom Merry. "He was a beast; but we can settle with him ourselves without bringing Railton into it."

"Right-ho!"

Several fellows came up to see the Terrible Three while they were changing. Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy, the chums of Study No. 6, were the first. Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth followed them in.

"Must have been looking for trouble to ride through rain like that," said Jack Blake. "Why didn't you get into cover?"

"Yaas, watah! You have ruined your clothes," said D'Arcy.

"I guess you'll be laid up with colds to-morrow," said Lumley-Lumley.

"We did take shelter," growled Lowther, "and Knox turned us out!"

"What?"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry explained as he rubbed himself down with great energy. His skin was soon glowing crimson with his efforts, and there was not much danger of his catching cold.

But Manners was already sneezing.

"Well, the awful rotter!" said Blake, when he had heard the story. "What did he want to turn you out of the place for? It's all very well his ordering you to go, as a prefect; but if you told Railton, he'd be called over the coals for it."

"We'll settle with Knox ourselves," said Tom Merry.

"It was takin' a wotten advantage of bein' a prefect," said D'Arcy. "I vegard Knox as a disgustin' wotah!"

"But why couldn't he let you stay there?" asked Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, in surprise.

"Something going on," said Lowther—"something fishy, of course! Knox, Sefton, and Cutts were there, and they were expecting others—other fellows of the same stamp, of course. I don't know what the game is, but those rotters are using the old Manor House for some purpose or other!"

Lumley-Lumley whistled softly.

"I wonder——" he began.

Then he paused. The juniors looked at him.

"Well, what do you wonder?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, nothing!"

Lumley-Lumley left the dormitory.

The juniors stared after him in surprise.

"Lumley can't know anything about it, surely," said Blake.

"He knows a jolly lot of things, and he used to be very thick with Cutts and his set at one time," said Lowther.

"But that's all over now."

"Yes, but I believe he knows something. Still, if he wants to keep it dark, that's his business. Our business is to make Knox sit up for turning us out into the rain!"

"Yes, rather—atchoo!" said Manners.

"You're catching a cold already," said Tom Merry anxiously. "Perhaps you'd better go to bed, Manners, old man!"

"Rats!" said Manners.
 "Well, you don't want to be ill, do you?"

"I'm not going to be ill—atchoo-choo!" said Manners. "It's only an atchoo-sneeze—atchoo—nothing else—atchoo-choo!"

"Sneezy thing to cure!" remarked Lowther.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the humorist of the Shell with an expression of great surprise.

"Would you mind explainin' the meanin' of that wemark, Lowthah?" he asked.

"It's a pun," explained Lowther. "It's an easy thing—sneezy thing—see?"

"No, I don't see. You sound to me as if you're wandewin' in your mind," said D'Arcy, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, take him away and bury him!" said Lowther.

"I wefuse to be taken away and buwied, Lowthah. I wegard you as an ass—"

"Atchoo—atchoo-choo!" came from Manners.

"Manners is going to be ill," said Tom Merry.

"I'm not!" roared Manners indignantly.

"Yes, you are, and we're going to scalp Knox for it!"

"We'll give him some knocks!" said Lowther.

"Bai Jove, I suppose that is a pun, too?"

"Of course it is!" yelled Lowther. "Don't you know a pun when you hear one, fathead?"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead. I considah—"

"I've got an idea," said Tom Merry.

"There's some giddy mystery going on at the old Manor House. Knox turned us out into the rain. To-morrow afternoon is a half-holiday, and we haven't got a match on. We'll explore the Manor House."

"Good egg!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's not out of bounds on half-holidays," resumed Tom Merry. "We'll explore the place, and if there is anything fishy going on, we'll show those rotters up. We'll teach Knox to turn us out into the rain, and make Manners ill—I mean, we'll teach him not to—"

"I'm not ill!" yelled Manners.

"You are!"

"I'll jolly well punch your—atchoo!—head if you say I'm ill again—atchoo!" roared Manners. "I haven't even—atchoo—got a cold. Only a little bit of an—atchoo—sneeze!"

"Sneezy than ever!" grinned Blake. "If you haven't got a cold, Manners, I must say it sounds jolly like one. Better go to bed, and have a hot-water bottle and plenty of blankets—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll hot-water bottle you!" growled Manners. And he picked up a sponge from the washstand and dipped it into the water-jug. "What are you Fourth Form kids doing in here, anyway? Clear off!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Arthur Augustus gave a yell as the sponge circled through the air, Manners squeezing it as it circled.

"Yawwooh!"

"Oh, you ass!" gasped Blake, Herries, and Digby together.

They made a simultaneous movement towards Manners. Manners picked up the water-jug, and they changed their direction towards the door. Manners



The three Shell juniors were wheeling their bicycles up the muddy drive of the Manor House when Tom Merry suddenly halted with an exclamation and pointed. "My hat! Did you see that light?" Someone else was in the derelict old house. The St. Jim's juniors little guessed how unwelcome their presence was to be!

chuckled as the dormitory door slammed behind the Fourth Formers. The chuckle turned into a sneeze.

"You've really got a cold, Manners, old man," said Tom Merry anxiously.

"Rats! I haven't!"

Sneeze, sneeze, sneeze!

And Manners, having finished dressing, went downstairs, still persisting that he hadn't a cold and wasn't an invalid.

CHAPTER 4.

Making Up a Party!

THE Terrible Three of the Shell prided themselves upon always being fit. Catching a cold was a sign of unfitness. For that reason, doubtless, Manners persisted that he had not caught a cold. But it was pretty plain to everybody else that he had.

Kildare of the Sixth, catching him sneezing in the passage, called him to account. Kildare was the head prefect of the School House, and therefore supposed to keep a careful supervising eye on juniors; and he performed his duties more conscientiously than some of the prefects—Knox, for example.

"Have you caught a cold, Manners?" Kildare asked.

Manners shook his head promptly.

"Oh, no, Kildare!"

"Then what are you sneezing for?"

"Oh, I was just sneezing, you—you know!" said Manners, as if that fully explained the matter.

Kildare smiled.

"You've got a cold, and you'd better go to bed," he said. "You can leave your prep for to-night; I'll speak to your Form-master."

"If you don't mind, Kildare, I—I'd rather do my prep."

"But I do mind!" said the captain of St. Jim's. "You'll be ill if you don't take care of yourself, you young ass. Go to bed at once, and I'll ask Mrs. Mimms to send you a hot-water bottle."

"I don't want a hot-water bottle!" roared Manners.

"Would you rather have a licking?" asked Kildare.

And Manners groaned and went to bed. Mrs. Mimms, the House dame, sent up the hot-water bottle, and blankets were piled over the unfortunate Manners. He was warned that if he got up he would be licked, and so he had to bear it even if he could not grin. Manners was in a state of sulphurous rage; and his chums shared his feelings. Manners owed his cold to Knox & Co., and Tom Merry was determined that Knox & Co. should smart for it. It was only by luck that Tom Merry and Lowther had not caught cold as well.

"We'll jolly well explore the old Manor House to-morrow," said Tom Merry determinedly, "and we'll go in a big gang, so that if any of those rotters happen to be there they can't stop us."

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther.

And the chums of the Shell made their preparations for the expedition. All the fellows who could be relied upon were taken into the scheme. Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn of the Shell, and Reilly, Kerruish, and Ray of the Fourth promised their aid at once. Then Tom Merry dropped into Vavasour's study to ask him. Vavasour shared the next study to Tom Merry's with Gore and Skimpole. Gore and Vavasour were both in the study when Tom Merry came in, and Gore's looks

showed that there had lately been "words."

Gore, the bully of the Shell, did not get on well with Vavasour.

Vavasour was a very decent fellow in his way. Gore had taken a dislike to him when he first came to the school, chiefly because of his aristocratic name and his extremely aristocratic bearing. But Vavasour had shown that his elegant manners did not prevent him from being a handy fellow with his fists, and Gore had been severely licked when he tackled the new boy.

Then had come the discovery that Vavasour was not really named Vavasour at all. He had been born Smith, and his father had made money and had legally changed his name to Vavasour. It was a great pleasure to Gore to address him as Smith instead of Vavasour, and that always led to trouble. Most of the fellows did not care twopence whether Vavasour was named Smith, Jones, or Robinson. He was a good fellow, and he was simply rolling in money. Even Arthur Augustus did not have anything like the allowance of the rich brewer's son.

Gore was rubbing his nose as Tom Merry looked in.

"Hallo! Fireworks?" asked Tom genially.

Gore snorted.

"I've been giving Gore a lesson in manners, that's all," yawned Vavasour. "He needs these little instructions from time to time."

"I've been having a row with Smith," said Gore.

"Oh, cheese it, Gore!" said Tom Merry. "Why can't you let that drop? It's ancient history now, and fellows are getting fed-up with it. I looked in to speak to you, Vavasour—"

"Smith, you mean," interjected Gore.

Vavasour rose to his feet.

"Come in, Merry! Gore, I don't want to lay hands on you, but if you don't shut up I shall pitch you neck and crop out of the study!"

"Oh, rats!" said Gore. But he did not say "Smith" again.

"What's on, Merry?" asked Vavasour, as Gore turned savagely and sulkily to his work.

"We're making up a party to explore the old Manor House on the moor to-morrow afternoon." Tom Merry explained. "Will you come?"

"With pleasure, old fellow!" said Vavasour.

"There may be a row if we find certain chaps there," hinted Tom Merry.

Vavasour laughed.

"I don't mind," he said. "The more the merrier."

"Will you come, Gore?" asked Tom Merry, turning to the bully of the Shell.

He did not specially want George Gore in the party, but it was only civil to ask him. And Gore, after all, was a good fighting man, if there should be a row.

Gore was looking at him very strangely.

"You're not going to explore the Manor House?" he asked.

"That's the idea!"

"What for?"

"There's something going on there.

One of the doors was locked when we were there to-day, and there's a giddy mystery about it. Knox, Sefton, and Cutts came along and turned us out into the rain. Manners has caught a cold, and he will be laid up to-morrow, and have to stay in most likely. We're going to explore the place, and if Cutts and his friends are there we shall have a scrap with them."

"Better leave it alone!" said Gore abruptly.

"Well, we're not going to leave it alone!" said Tom Merry rather sharply. "You can come or not, as you like."

"You say Knox was there. Suppose he's there again? You can't get into a row with a prefect."

"We're going to chance it!"

"Well, I'm not getting mixed up in rows with prefects," said Gore. "You can leave me out!"

"I'll leave you out with pleasure," said Tom Merry.

"If you take my advice, you'll keep clear of the place," said Gore, as the captain of the Shell turned to the door.

"Well, I jolly well shan't take your advice!" said Tom Merry.

He left the study.

Lumley-Lumley's study was his next destination. Lumley-Lumley was there doing his preparation, with Levison and Mellish, his study-mates. Levison and Mellish, the two cads of the Fourth, looked at Tom Merry very unpleasantly as he came in. They were on the worst of terms with the captain of the Shell. But Lumley-Lumley nodded genially.

"You coming with us to-morrow, Lumley?" asked Tom.

"I guess it all depends on where you're going," said Lumley-Lumley.

Tom Merry explained.

"I guess I'm on!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I was thinking of paying the place a visit on my own. I guess we may make some discoveries there."

Tom Merry looked at him sharply.

"Do you know anything about Cutts' little game, whatever it is?"

"I don't know, but I've got some ideas," said Lumley-Lumley. "No need to tell you what they are, as I don't know for certain."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Just as you like."

And he left the study, and the House, and walked over to the New House. Between Figgins & Co. of the New House and Tom Merry & Co. of the School House there was a keen rivalry, but on special occasions the rival juniors could pull together. This was one of the special occasions. In case of trouble, Tom Merry wanted Figgins & Co. in the party.

And as soon as the matter was explained to them, Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn, and Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence willingly agreed to come.

Tom Merry left the New House feeling very satisfied.

Quite an army would invade the old Manor House the next afternoon, and if Cutts & Co. showed up there, they would find that force was on the side of Tom Merry. The juniors could have it all their own way. But there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, as Tom Merry was destined to discover.

CHAPTER 5.

Out of Bounds!

MANNERS did not come down the following morning. He had a bad cold, and he had been ordered to keep in bed. The Shell missed him from the Form-room, and although missing lessons was not considered a great hardship, it was extremely "rotten" to be kept in on a half-holiday by a cold. And the resentment of the juniors against Knox and Cutts & Co. was very great.

The army were ready and eager for the march on the deserted Manor House, if only for the reason that Cutts & Co. did not want them to go there.

Tom Merry had directed his followers not to talk about the matter outside their own quarters. He did not want to give Knox a chance to stop the expedition before it started.

After dinner the juniors gathered in the quadrangle. Tom Merry and Lowther had gone up to speak to Manners before going out, and to see that he had books and papers and everything that could be provided to relieve the boredom of staying in.

As they came down from the dormitory Lumley-Lumley met them.

"Ready?" asked Tom Merry.

"I guess so, but—did you know Knox was with the Head?"

The VENGEANCE of BUNTER the VENTRILOQUIST!



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"No. What does it matter?"
 "I guess he's going to chip in."
 "Then we'll buck up."
 "Call the fellows together!" said Lowther.

And the juniors hurried out. It was quite possible that Knox had heard something, even that someone had told him. Gore, Mellish, and Levison all knew of the intended expedition, and they might very possibly have dropped a hint to Knox.

At that moment Knox was in the Head's study.

Dr. Holmes, who was taking advantage of the leisure of the holiday to spend an hour or two with Cicero, did not look pleased when Knox came in. The prefect was very deferential.

"If you will excuse me, sir, I think I ought to bring a certain matter to your notice," he began.

"If it is some matter relating to House discipline, Knox, Mr. Raifiton will attend to it," said the Head.

"It is not exactly that, sir. I felt it my duty as a prefect to acquaint you with the matter."

"Very well, Knox," said the Head, with a sigh; "you may go on."

"There is a building on the moor—you may have heard of it—the old Manor House, sir—"

"Yes; I have heard of it."

"It is a deserted place, and the resort of tramps and other disreputable characters, sir. It is not a safe place for boys, especially junior boys, to venture into."

"Very probably."

"I have learned that some of the juniors have taken to haunting the place. I will not say that they made disreputable acquaintances there, or that anything wrong is going on; but all danger of it could be avoided by placing the old house out of bounds. As it is a considerable distance from the school, there is no real reason why juniors should want to go there."

"Quite right, Knox! You say the place has a bad reputation?"

"Yes, sir. A senior boy who was expelled from St. Jim's—Sleath—was known to have had meetings with a bookmaker there."

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Certainly the juniors should keep away from such a place; and, as you say, Knox, they can have no object in going there excepting for mischief. The place shall certainly be put out of bounds."

"Then perhaps you will give me an order, sir, to put on the notice-board."
 "Certainly!"

And the Head wrote out the order, and Knox departed from the study with it, with great satisfaction.

The notice was duly pinned on the board, and there it was read by the prefects who did not attach any special importance to it. It was read by the juniors, who stared at it and frowned.

Tom Merry & Co. had gathered in the quad, and were ready to start, when Cutts came out.

The black sheep of the Fifth glanced over the little crowd of juniors with his usual cynical smile.

"Off on a little excursion, eh?" he asked.

"Yes," said Tom Merry curtly.

"If you are going to the old Manor House by any chance, there is a notice on the board you had better read first," said Cutts.

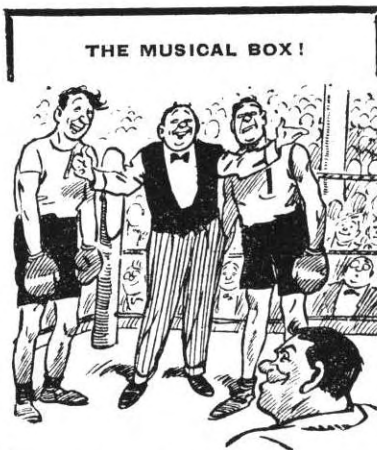
"Rats!"

"That place is out of bounds for juniors," said Cutts, frowning.

"Bosh!"

"Look at the notice, you cheeky cub!"

"Has it suddenly jumped out of



THE MUSICAL BOX!

The boxers were in the ring for the main event of the evening, and the M.C. introduced the contestants in the usual manner.

"On my left, Tom Piper. On my right, Bill Horn."

"What they gonna do, guv'nor?" yelled a voice from the spectators.

"Toss up for the fust blow?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Ferry, 213, Hackney Road, Shoreditch, London, E.2.

bounds?" asked Monty Lowther sarcastically. "It wasn't out of bounds yesterday, or the day before!"

"It is out of bounds to-day."

"Rot!"

"It's true enough," said Kangaroo, coming out of the House. "I've just seen it on the board, Tommy!"

"Seen what?"

"The notice—by the Head."

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a rush of the "army" into the Hall of the School House, to see the notice-board.

The news was true enough. There was the paper in the well-known handwriting of the Head of St. Jim's:

"NOTICE.

"The old Wayland Manor House has been placed out of bounds for all boys below the Fifth Form. All junior boys are strictly forbidden to visit the place, or to go nearer to it than the board.

"(Signed) H. HOLMES,
 "Headmaster."

The juniors read it in dismay.

"Out of bounds," said Monty Lowther blankly.

"What rot!"

"Rotten!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It wasn't out of bounds yesterday!" shouted Blake. "This is some of Cutts' trickery! He has got the Head to do this."

"The Head wouldn't listen to Cutts!" said Piggins.

"Knox has worked it, then!"

"He was with the Head," said Lumley-Lumley.

"The rotter!"

"The cad!"

"But how did Knox know?" said Herries. "Somebody must have told him we were going to the Manor House to-day."

"Some rotten sneak!"

"Was it you, Levison?" demanded a dozen angry voices.

"No, it wasn't!" growled Levison. "What the dickens does it matter to me whether you go to a rotten old Manor House or not?"

"It was somebody!" growled Lowther.

"Well, I'm not the somebody!"

"I wogard it as wotten!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I suppose we can't go now, as the Head makes a special point of it?"

"I suppose not!" growled Tom Merry.

"If we do go it will mean lickings and gatings," grunted Piggins. "You can bet Knox will have his eyes open."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry regarded his followers ruefully.

"I'm afraid the expedition's off," he said. "I'm sorry. We shall have to find some other way of making Knox sit up!"

And the crowd of juniors broke up angrily. Tom Merry and Lowther made their way to the Shell dormitory.

Manners greeted them with a look of surprise.

"Hallo! Ain't you gone? Atchoo!" he inquired.

"Knox has done us in the eye!" growled Lowther. "He's got the Head to put the place out of bounds, and there's a notice on the board in the Head's own fist!"

"My hat!"

"So we've come to keep you company," said Tom Merry. "Like to sit up in bed and play chess, or are you too seedy?"

"I'm not seedy at all."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Then we'll play chess. The ground's too wet for cricket, anyway, and Knox has knocked our expedition on the head. I wonder what the giddy secret is—why doesn't he want us to go to the Manor House?"

Manners shook his head.

"There must be something awfully fishy going on there," he said.

"That's jolly certain. I don't know that I want to get mixed up in it; but I should have liked to give Knox one in the eye," said Tom Merry regretfully.

"We'll find some other way," said Lowther.

And Manners sat up and played chess, and sneezed, and the Terrible Three said things about Knox that were the reverse of complimentary to the unpopular prefect.

But why was Knox so determined that they should not visit the deserted Manor House? What was the secret of the place that Knox knew and was resolved that they should not know? That was a mystery, and the chums of the Shell turned it over in their minds in vain; they could not think of any possible solution.

CHAPTER 8.

Money Wanted!

"VAVASOUR!"

Vavasour started a little.

It was a couple of days after the baffled expedition planned by Tom Merry. Vavasour was in his study, and Gore had just come in.

He addressed his study-mate as "Vavasour"—hence the latter's surprise. It was the first time Gore had called him anything but Smith.

"Hallo!" said Vavasour, looking up.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing!" said Gore.

"You are getting very civil all of a sudden," said Vavasour suspiciously.

Gore forced a laugh.

"I hope you don't mind my cutting up rather rusty with you, Vavasour," he mumbled. "I—I was in the wrong,

I know. But you—you took me down a peg, you know, when you first came here, and I didn't get over it in a hurry."

Vavasour stared blankly. He could not understand Gore at all now.

"You've got over it now, then?" he asked.

"Ye-es."

"Feeling quite friendly?" grinned Vavasour.

"Quite!"

"Well, it will be a change," said Vavasour, as he returned to his work.

Gore regarded him hesitatingly. It seemed that he had something on his lips that he wished to say, but could not, somehow, make up his mind to say it. He grunted, and he mumbled, but he did not speak, and Vavasour looked up again after a few minutes, and scanned curiously the face of the bully of the Shell.

Gore was looking worn and worried, as Vavasour noticed now, and there was a deep wrinkle in his brow.

"Anything the matter?" asked Vavasour. "Seedy?"

"Oh, no!"

"You are looking pretty down in the mouth."

Gore gave a short laugh.

"I'm feeling so," he said. "Look here, Vavasour, will you—will you—"

"Will I what?"

"Help me," said Gore.

Vavasour looked puzzled.

"Well, after the way you've treated me, I must say that's pretty cool," he said. "But I don't bear malice. I'll help you if I can, but I'm not much better than you are at Form work. What is it—maths?"

"No."

"Oh, lines!" said Vavasour. "All right; I'll lend a hand, and I'll make my fist as like yours as I can."

"It isn't lines."

"Then what the dickens is it?" demanded Vavasour.

"I—I've hardly got the cheek to ask you, only I'm in such an awful fix!" said Gore.

"Blessed if I see what you are getting at," said Vavasour in perplexity.

"Have the fellows found out that you sneaked to Knox about Tom Merry's little scheme?"

Gore started and turned red.

"I—I sneaked!" he ejaculated.

"Yes," said Vavasour. "I know it was you. I saw you go into Knox's study, and I saw your face when you came out, and when I learned that Knox had got the Manor House put out of bounds, I guessed that he'd got his information from you. It was a rotten thing to do; but I haven't said a word about it, and I'm not going to."

Gore drew a deep breath of relief.

"I didn't sneak," he said. "I happened to—mention it."

"The fellows would know what to call it if they knew," said Vavasour, with a grin. "Is it that you are worrying about?"

"Oh, no; it's something else—something quite different."

"And I can help you?"

"Yes, if you choose. You've got plenty of money."

Vavasour whistled. He understood now. It was quite true that he was one of the richest fellows at St. Jim's, and it would not hurt him to part with some of his super-abundant pocket-money.

This was what Gore wanted, then! This was why the bully of the Shell had ceased to call him "Smith," and was assuming friendly manners!

There were some fellows at St. Jim's

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who sponged on the rich brewer's son, as a matter of course; and George Gore had never been one of them. Indeed, Gore had always had it "up against" Vavasour that he was rolling in money. And now Gore was hard up, and he was humiliating himself to ask Vavasour to lend him some of the money he had affected to despise so loftily.

"You're hard-up?" asked Vavasour, with a grin.

"Horribly!"

"What is it—remittance delayed?"

"I'm stony, and not expecting anything just yet."

"Hard lines," said Vavasour.

"I—I suppose you think it's pretty queer coming to you!" stammered Gore. "I—I know it is. My own chum, Crooke, is rolling in money, but—but he's as hard-up as I am now, as it happens—quite broke."

"Why, he was changing a ten-pound note only yesterday," said Vavasour, in surprise.

"I was changing a fiver yesterday!" grunted Gore.

"And it's all gone?"

"Yes."

"Well, I must say you make the money fly," said Vavasour. "I never spend a fiver in a day. Still, it isn't my business, and I don't mind making you a loan. How much—half a quid?"

Gore laughed awkwardly.

"That isn't much for a rich chap like you to lend a fellow," he said.

"Oh, I'll make it a quid with pleasure!"

Gore did not look satisfied. A quid was a considerable loan for one junior boy to lend another, especially a fellow with whom he had been on the worst of terms. But Gore was evidently after something much more considerable.

"Could you make it a fiver?" he asked.

Vavasour looked at him hard.

"You are asking me to lend you five quid?" he said. "Excuse me, but I think it's like your cheek!"

Gore flushed.

"I suppose it is," he said; "but—but I—I want it—badly."

A refusal was on Vavasour's tongue, but the white wretchedness in Gore's face touched him in spite of himself, and there was something moving, too, in the humiliation of the bully of the Shell.

Vavasour realised that Gore's affairs must be in a very bad way for him to ask his old enemy for help. Vavasour had plenty of money. He took a leather case from his pocket and selected a five-pound note from several others, and whisked it across the table to Gore.

"There you are!" he said briefly.

Gore clutched at the note as if fearful that the generous junior might change his mind.

"Thanks, Vavasour!" he said.

"You're a decent chap! I—I shan't forget this."

"It's all right; let me have it back when you get your money, that will do."

"I may be able to return it to-morrow," said Gore. "In fact, I think I can with certainty. It all depends, but I think I shall be flush to-morrow."

Vavasour looked curiously at him.

"You're expecting a remittance to-morrow, after all?"

"Not exactly, but I hope to have some money."

"You—you're not getting mixed up in any betting rot, I hope," said Vavasour, looking a little alarmed. "You're not fathead enough to think that you're going to win money on horses, I suppose?"

Gore shook his head.

"I've tried that," he said. "It turned

out rottenly. I'm done with that. I've got something better than that on."

"Not betting?"

"Oh, no!" Gore hesitated. "I say, Vavasour, I'd take you into it, if you liked—if I could depend upon you to keep mum. You've got plenty of money and you'd have a jolly good chance. How'd you like to see life a bit?"

"Depends on what you call life," said Vavasour dryly. "If it's any rotten blackguardly bizney like that Cutts goes in for, you needn't tell me anything about it."

"Oh, if you're so jolly particular—"

sneered Gore.

"Chap can't be too particular in things of that kind," said Vavasour. "Is it something to do with Cutts of the Fifth?"

"He put me on to it," said Gore.

"Then I'd rather not hear anything more about it," said Vavasour.

"Oh, all right!"

Gore left the study. In the passage outside Crooke of the Shell met him, Crooke was looking worried and anxious. Crooke was the son of a financier who had made thousands on the Stock Exchange, and he always had money in his pockets; but just at present Crooke, for some mysterious reason, was as hard-up as Gore. Crooke gave him a quick, inquiring glance.

"Did you work it?" he asked.

Gore nodded.

"How much?"

"A fiver."

"Good egg! That's half each!" said Crooke.

Gore shook his head in a very decided way.

"Can't be done, Crooke. You must raise loans for yourself, if you want them. I shall need all this; it's little enough for what I want."

"Look here—"

fully. "Can't be helped; a fiver isn't too much for me!" said Gore. "Try Vavasour yourself."

"He wouldn't lend me anything."

"Try somebody else, then—Cutts—or Knox."

"I've tried them!" growled Crooke.

"They won't pony up a stiver. Look here! If I can't raise the wind, I can't go to-night."

"Sorry!"

And Gore walked away, leaving his "chum" scowling angrily.

CHAPTER 7.

The Road to Ruin!

TOM MERRY glanced round the Common-room, and spotted George Gore sitting in a corner by himself.

It was nearly bed-time for the juniors. Tom crossed over to Gore, who raised his eyes from a card he held in his hand, and which he was scanning keenly. He thrust the card hastily into his pocket, and coloured a little as he met the eyes of the captain of the Shell.

"I want to speak to you, Gore, if you don't mind," said Tom Merry quietly.

"I don't want to meddle in your affairs; but I think I ought to give you a tip."

Gore frowned.

"You can run on," he said.

"We haven't been good friends," said Tom. "But you've got your good points, and I don't like to see a St. Jim's chap going to the dogs. You had to leave St. Jim's once, and you told us the kind of time your father gave you. If anything should happen to make you

leave the school, your pater would cut up very rusty, wouldn't he?"

Gore shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not afraid of that," he said.

"But you used to be—"

"It's different now. When I had to clear out from here before, I had to go home to my pater—I hadn't any other resources."

"And you have now?" demanded Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"Yes, I have!"

"I don't quite see—"

"No need for you to see," said Gore surlily. "It's my business. But I'm not dependent upon my pater now. I've got other resources. As a matter of fact, I expect to be rich—before I grow up, too. What do you think of that?"

"I think you're talking rot!" said Tom Merry.

"This only makes me sure of what I was suspecting—that you're very thick with Cutts of the Fifth."

"Cutts is a decent chap."

"Not many fellows here think so. Cutts is a rotter, and he makes money—and loses it—out of races. He tried to get me into that kind of thing once, and jolly nearly succeeded," said Tom Merry.

"That's why I'm speaking to you. Cutts doesn't care a rap for any junior; he would make use of you, and throw you aside. So long as you've got any money, he'll let you pal with him; but you'll lose the money, and then it will be the end. I suppose, from what you say, that he's let you into some precious system for backing horses with his friend Griggs, the bookmaker?"

"No, he hasn't. He put me on to a jolly good thing, but it's got nothing to do with horses. I'm done with horses!"

"I'm going to speak out plainly," said Tom Merry abruptly. "If you were an out-and-out rotter like Levison or Crooke, I'd hold my tongue; but you're not, and I'd hate to see you on the road to the sack. You're worth something better than that. I saw you this afternoon in Rylcombe Lane talking to Griggs, the bookmaker, and Tickey Tapp, the billiards sharper, of Wayland—a chap who's been in prison!"

"And you're going to sneak about it?" demanded Gore.

"You know I'm not. I'm speaking to you quietly. What I saw, any prefect might have seen, and you know what that would mean to you. I don't know whether it's horses, or billiards, or some other foolery, but you're getting in with a set of sharpers."

"That's my business."

"Cutts is in with them—but Cutts can take care of himself," said Tom.

"And I can't!" sneered Gore.

"No, you can't. You'll be done brown; and if anything comes out, you'll be made the scapegoat. Cutts won't suffer; he's too jolly deep."

Gore yawned.

"Well, what are you preaching at me for?" he asked. "You're no chum of mine."

"I know that, and I don't want to be. But I'm in your Form, and I think I ought to speak."

"Thank you for nothing."

"Why not chuck it up, Gore?" said Tom Merry earnestly. "You know what it led you into before—the sack and your father being down on you. The game isn't worth the candle. Even if you win, it goes again when you lose—and it's a rotten, blackguardly business, anyway."

"When I want your advice I'll ask for it," said Gore.

Tom Merry crimsoned.

"Well, I spoke to you with good intentions," he said. "You'll be sorry when it's too late. But I'm finished."

"Thank goodness for that!"

Tom Merry moved away, his eyes gleaming. He wanted to help Gore, not to hit him; but he came very near at that moment to planting his fist in the face of the Shell fellow.

He joined Manners and Lowther, who were playing chess.

Manners had recovered from his cold now. Tom Merry stood looking on at the game till Kildare looked into the Common-room, with the announcement that it was bed-time.

The Shell fellows went up to their dormitory.

Kildare saw lights out, and after the usual chatter from bed to bed, the Shell fellows dropped off to sleep one by one.

Tom Merry did not sleep very soon. He was thinking. He had no special regard for Gore, who had made himself unpleasant enough to the Terrible Three on many occasions. But Tom was, as he said, sorry to see a St. Jim's chap going to the dogs.

Gore had shown, at one time, signs of changing from his old bad ways, and of turning over a new leaf, as Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth had done. And it was probably due to Cutts' influence that he had fallen back again.

Tom Merry's resentment towards Cutts was bitter. He could not forget the attempt the blackguard of the Fifth

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had made to initiate him into his own low-down ways, and Cutts had found an easier victim in George Gore.

Gore was convinced of his ability to take care of himself, but in the hands of the astute Fifth Former he was as clay in the hands of the potter.

And if there should be disgraceful revelations and punishments handed out, Tom Merry was quite sure that Cutts would escape scot-free. Gore might be disgraced and kicked out of the school, but Cutts was too keen for that.

Something was going on; Tom knew that. He thought of that curious meeting at the deserted Manor House, and the scheme of Knox and Cutts for getting the Head to place the house out of bounds for the juniors.

Gore was in it; Tom was sure of that. It was probably Gore who had given Knox information of the intended junior expedition. Whatever it was that was going on at the old Manor House secretly, Gore was mixed up in it—with Cutts, Knox, Sefton, and other black sheep. The foolish fellow, who had been saved once from the consequences of his own folly, was on the road to ruin and he scoffed at the helping hand that was held out to him.

But what was it that was going on? Something shady, undoubtedly—some form of gambling, in all probability. That was the reason of Gore's foolish boast that he would be rich; that he had

other resources than going home to his father if anything should happen to him to make him leave St. Jim's.

But the obstinate fellow was bent upon going his own way, and he could not be saved in spite of himself.

Tom Merry was still thinking about the matter when he fell asleep.

He was dreaming—with Cutts, Knox, Gore, and the old Manor House confusedly mingled in his dreams—when he suddenly awoke.

There was a sound in the dormitory; he fancied that he had heard the door close. With the idea of a Fourth Form raid in his mind, he sat up in bed and listened.

The silence was unbroken.

Tom Merry was certain that he had heard the door shut. He listened for a few minutes, but there was no sound in the stillness, save the steady breathing of the sleeping juniors.

It was not a raid from the Fourth; someone belonging to the Shell dormitory had gone out—and Tom Merry guessed whom it was. He stepped out of bed and found a matchbox and struck a light.

In the glimmering light he glanced towards George Gore's bed.

The bed was empty.

Gore was gone.

Monty Lowther opened his eyes drowsily and blinked at Tom Merry as the match went out.

"Hallo! Warrer-marrer!" he murmured sleepily.

"Gore's gone out!" said Tom.

"Rotter!" yawned Lowther. "More of his little games, the silly ass! Well, it's no business of ours."

And Lowther went to sleep again.

Tom Merry returned to his bed, but he did not sleep. The hour of eleven chimed out from the clock tower.

Gore had broken bounds at that late hour. When would he return? Tom had glanced at Crooke's bed, but Crooke was there asleep. Gore had slipped out alone. But Tom Merry had a shrewd idea that, though he had left the dormitory alone, he had not gone out alone from the school. It was Cutts again—Cutts, the evil genius of all the fellows who were foolish enough to come under his influence.

Tom Merry did not sleep.

He was still awake when half-past twelve sounded—and still Gore had not returned.

Then he dozed off; but he awakened as the clock was chiming the hour of two.

Boom, boom!

The sound came heavily through the still night. And there was another sound—a sound of a fellow closing the door quietly and creeping towards his bed.

Tom Merry sat up in bed and peered through the darkness. In the dim glimmer of starlight from the high windows he could make out Gore as he began to undress.

"Is that you, Gore?" he asked quietly.

The Shell fellow started violently.

"So you are spying, Tom Merry?" he muttered.

"No; I'm awake, though. I heard you go out."

"Well, it's nothing to do with you, I suppose," muttered Gore. "Don't talk to me; I'm not in a humour for it." Then his manner changed, and he came towards Tom Merry's bed. "I—I say, Merry, you were saying this evening that—that you'd help me."

"So I would if I could."

"You can if you like," muttered Gore. "I—I'm hard up. If you could lend me

a few pounds until I get some money—"

"You've lost your money, then?"

"Never mind that. I didn't have much; a rotten fever, that's all. Look here, if you could get some capital, I'm certain of making a good thing out of it. Do you know that I came within an ace of making a hundred quid to-night? Only I just missed it."

"You've been gambling."

"I've been playing."

"Playing what?"

"Nevv, mind what. Will you lend me a few pounds?"

"I haven't a few pounds to lend."

"Well, a pound, then. I'll get some more somewhere else, and make up enough to have another try. Lend me what you can."

"I won't lend you a farthing to gamble with," said Tom Merry quietly. Gore snapped his teeth.

"Then shut up and mind your own business!" he snarled.

And Gore turned in, and did not say another word.

CHAPTER 8.

For the Sake of Another!

"I GUESS I'm in a quandary."

Thus Lumley-Lumley.

The juniors were standing by the pavilion, looking on at a Sixth Form match and chatting. The Terrible Three had finished their cricket practice and had come over to the senior ground to watch Kildare's bat.

The captain of St. Jim's was a great batsman, and his batting was worth watching.

The Terrible Three passed cheerful comment upon Kildare's form and upon Sixth Form cricket generally. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was leaning against the pavilion, with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his blazer, and a very thoughtful expression upon his keen face.

"Hallo!" said Monty Lowther, looking round. "What's the matter with you? Don't you think Kildare's batting is the best in the Sixth?"

"Eh? Is Kildare batting?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Frabjous ass!" said Tom Merry. "Haven't you noticed that Kildare's batting, and that he's knocked up 55 against Monteith and the New House lot?"

"I guess I was thinking of something else."

"Then you'd better guess again, and watch the cricket," said Manners.

Lumley-Lumley grinned. In his earlier boyhood he had led a wandering life, and had passed some of his earliest years in America, where he had learned to "guess," and the habit had clung to him.

Lumley-Lumley was a somewhat peculiar fellow. He had roughed it in earlier days in a way that the St. Jim's fellows could hardly comprehend. He had seen many cities and countries, and learned to talk, with more or less accuracy, many languages.

He had a wisdom and a knowledge of the world far beyond his years. In his nature the wisdom of the serpent outweighed very considerably the innocence of the dove.

He had been nicknamed the "Outsider" when he first came to St. Jim's; and, indeed, he had seemed then the rankest of rank outsiders.

But Tom Merry & Co. had done much for him, and the Outsider had learned to see things in a better way; his better nature had come to light, and it had the upper hand now.

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He was still a reckless and daring spirit, not at all averse to dangerous escapades and reckless scrapes. But the blackguardism was gone; he was a chum that Tom Merry & Co. could like.

"Anything up?" Tom Merry asked, noting the wrinkle of thought in the brow of the Outsider.

"I guess so."

"Confide it to your uncle," said Monty Lowther blandly. "I guess I can give you some good advice, right slick."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Do you fellows remember the time when you used to call me the Outsider—you and the rest of the House?" he asked.

"Ahem!" said Monty Lowther. "Don't talk about that! Since you've taken example by me you have been quite a nice boy!"

"But you remember?" said Lumley-Lumley. "I was a wild beggar when I first came here; nothing like what I was before I came here, though!" And he chuckled. "I used to bet on horses, play cards at night, and so forth. Awfully wild and rorty for St. Jim's, but pretty tame to me after punting at a faro bank in the Bowery before I was twelve years old, and playing chemin-de-fer at a dive in Montmartre when I wasn't fourteen."

"You've been a pretty specimen, I must say," said Manners. "Blessed if I know how you've turned out so respectable in your old age!"

"Us good boys did it!" said Lowther. "We Ericked him! We gave him 'Little by Little'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well," said Lumley-Lumley, "I'm not proud of my record, and you chaps are witnesses that I've turned over a new leaf and gone as straight as a die since."

"So you have!" said Tom Merry heartily. "My dear chap, we've forgotten all about that time, and if anybody calls you the Outsider again, I'll punch his head!"

"Thanks! That's why I guess I'm in a quandary."

"You're in trouble?"

"Oh, no! Somebody else is."

"Oh, I see! Pal of yours?"

"No fear. Chap I don't like."

"My only hat!" said Lowther.

"Here's Lumley setting up as a Good Samaritan! We shall see giddy wings sprouting through his Eton jacket soon."

"If you're going to be funny—" began Lumley.

"Shut up, Monty!" said Tom Merry again. "Now, pile in, Lumley!"

"It's a rotten quandary!" said the Outsider. "Considering my record, I'm not the kind of chap to preach to anybody, am I? I'm not in a position to tell a fellow he's on the road to ruin and so forth, and ask him to chuck it. He'd throw my own record up in my face, for one thing, and I shouldn't have a word to say. That's what's worrying me now. I don't like to see a chap going the way I was going, when I had sense enough to draw up. He hasn't sense enough to draw up, and he'll go on till he's ruined if he isn't stopped."

"Chap in your Form?" asked Tom Merry.

"No; in the Shell!"

"Then you must mean Gore?"

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"I do mean Gore," he said. "Gore used to pal with me when I was playing the giddy ox in my first days here. He thought he was a wild beggar and a regular dog, and all that, you know, though I guess I could have opened his eyes to a few things. But when I

chucked it up, Gore didn't. He did have a try once when his pater was down on him, but he's fallen back since, owing to Cutts of the Fifth as much as anything. Now I don't pull with Gore at all; but I used to be his pal, you know, and I don't like to see him going to the dogs. Only it sounds so much like humbug with a fellow of my record to preach at anybody, doesn't it?"

"I've spoken to Gore about it," said Tom Merry quietly. "He wasn't even civil. He doesn't want good advice."

"Well, what do you think?" asked Lumley-Lumley. "Ought a chap to stand by while a fellow is done brown, and perhaps ruined for life?"

"Not if he can do anything to stop it," said Tom Merry.

"That's the quandary I'm in. There's one way, I think, of curing Gore of playing the silly ass—show him that he's being made a fool of and that his precious friends are swindling him and making money out of him. But it's no good telling him that—he would want it shown up pretty plainly."

"I don't see how you're going to do that, Lumley."

"Well, I guess there is a way; but I'm rather doubtful about taking it. Suppose I went in with Gore—let him take me to his giddy little parties where he gets swindled, and point it out to him on the spot—"

Tom Merry looked grave.

"That's jolly serious, Lumley-Lumley. You might do that with a good motive, but you wouldn't find it easy to convince the Head of it if you should happen to be caught there. You might be expelled."

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"That's a risk to run."

"It's more risk than a fellow can be expected to run," said Manners. "I think you're an ass if you run it."

"If anything should come out you'll be judged by the company you keep," said Monty Lowther. "Better leave it alone."

"What do you say, Tom Merry?"

"I think it's awfully risky. Gore goes to some place where gambling goes on, and he would be sacked instantly if the Head knew. Such a thing might come out any day. And if you were mixed up in it you'd suffer the same as the rest."

"I guess that's so. But—"

"But you're going to do it."

"I guess so. I've mentioned it to you chaps in case you should think wrongly about it if you see me chummy with Gore again," said Lumley-Lumley quietly, "and I wanted your advice."

"Well, you've got our advice," said Lowther.

"Yes; and I guess I'm not going to take it," said Lumley-Lumley, laughing. "It's up to me to help that silly fool out of the same scrape; and if there's only one way of doing it I guess I've got the nerve!"

And Lumley-Lumley put his hands into his pockets and walked away, whistling.

The Terrible Three looked rather queerly at one another.

"It's a risky thing for Lumley to do—risky and plucky," said Tom Merry.

"And as for Gore, he's too big a fool to be helped, I believe. Anyway, if anything happens to disgrace Lumley in connection with this we will have to speak up for him, and we'll stand by him—what?"

"Yes, rather!"

And the Terrible Three resumed watching the cricket.

CHAPTER 9.

Red and Black!

VAVASOUR stood in his study with an expression of utter amazement upon his face. He had a card in his hand which he had picked up on the study floor, and he was regarding it with a gaze of astonishment.

It was a peculiar card. It was oblong in shape and ruled down in columns from top to bottom. The columns were headed alternately "Red" and "Black." They were filled with numbers—all sorts of numbers that seemed to have no connection at all with one another.

Vavasour read down the numbers and tried to make some meaning out of them; but there was apparently no meaning to be made. He observed that the numbers entered under the head of "Red" never appeared under the other heading, and those entered under "Black" never appeared under "Red." Evidently the numbers belonged permanently to one colour or other in the scheme under which the card was drawn up.

Skimpole came into the study while Vavasour was staring at the card in his hand. The genius of the Shell blinked at Vavasour through his large spectacles. Vavasour held up the card. "This belong to you?" he asked.

Skimpole blinked at it. "I've never seen it before, my dear Vavasour."

"Know where Gore is?"

"He has gone out with Crooke."

Vavasour put the card in his pocket and left the study. Tom Merry's study was next door, and he could hear the Terrible Three getting tea ready. He knocked at the door.

"Come in!" sang out Tom Merry. Vavasour came in.

Tom Merry was laying the table. Lowther was in his shirtsleeves, poaching eggs, and Manners was telling him

how to do it better—gratuitous information that Monty Lowther received with a series of snorts.

"Just in time for tea, Vavasour," said Tom Merry cheerily. Then, catching sight of the Shell fellow's expression, he added: "Anything up?"

"I've found something jolly queer in my study," said Vavasour. "I don't know whether it's a joke or what it is. Will you look at it?"

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry, in surprise.

Vavasour handed him the card. Tom Merry stared at it blankly.

"You found this in your study?" he asked.

"Yes; it was on the floor."

"You know whom it belongs to?"

"No; it's not mine, and I've asked Skimpole, and he says it's not his, and Gore's gone out. I don't see how it can be Gore's. There's no sense in it, so far as I can see, and if it's a joke I don't see where the joke comes in."

"It's not a joke," said Tom Merry quietly. "But you're not quite right about there being no sense in it. Shut the door."

Vavasour, surprised by the serious look of the captain of the Shell, closed the study door. Lowther had left off poaching eggs, forgetting all about them as he stared at the card with its alternative columns of numbers.

"You know what it means, Tom Merry?" asked Vavasour.

"Yes; it's a roulette card."

Vavasour gasped. "Roulette!"

"Yes."

"What on earth do you know about it?" asked Vavasour curiously.

"We had a vacation once on the Riviera," said Tom Merry. "We visited Monte Carlo, where they play this game at the casino. We had an opportunity of seeing the game played. It's a game played with numbers on a wheel, and the players take down the

numbers every time on cards to calculate the run, though I expect the croupiers know pretty well in advance what sort of a run there is going to be. This is the same thing, only this card says 'Red and Black' instead of 'Rouge et Noir.' This card has been written down by some utter idiot who has been gambling here."

"But roulette isn't allowed in England," said Vavasour, in astonishment.

"I know it isn't; but you see every now and then in the papers that gambling places are raided by the police, and they find roulette machines," said Tom. "It's done against the law—in secret. There are silly mugs everywhere who want to get rich quick, and are willing to be fleeced for the chance—not that they have any chance, the silly asses! This card belongs to Gore. That's what he has been sneaking out at night after lights-out for, the awful idiot. Some utter scoundrel is running a gambling den in this neighbourhood, and Gore is one of the silly idiots being swindled there."

"Great Scott! If it came out—"

"If it came out," said Tom Merry grimly, "Gore would be flogged and sacked from the school on the spot, and serve him right!"

"It would serve him right," said Vavasour. "But—but we've got to keep this awfully dark. Gore isn't a pleasant chap, but we don't want to have a hand in getting any fellow the push."

"Quite right!"

"He ought to be stopped, though," said Monty Lowther.

"Better destroy this," said Tom thoughtfully. "You can see the state of reckless idiocy the fellow is getting into by his leaving it about the study. Why, any fellow might have seen it—a prefect, or a master even. The crass idiot!"

Tom Merry shoved the card into the fire, and it was soon consumed. That



Gore tapped three times on the door and it was opened by a coarse-looking man. Just inside the doorway heavy curtains shut off the light from the interior. "What's the game?" said the man. "Red and black," replied Gore. "Step in!" was the response.

evidence of Gore's guilt, at all events, was gone.

"Better tell Gore when he comes in," added Tom Merry. "But mind, not a syllable on the subject to anybody else."

Vavasour nodded and left the study.

"Well, I think that takes the cake!" said Manners.

Tom Merry's face was grim. "That lets out the secret of the old Manor House," he said. "That's why the door of a certain room is kept locked; that's why the blackguards have been going there; that's why Tickey Tapp and Griggs are always about the neighbourhood now."

"You think—"

"I'm sure of it. Some gang of awful rascals have started a secret gambling den in the lonely house, and they play roulette there."

"And St. Jim's chaps go there to play."

"That's it."

"But—but if the police came down on them—"

"They would be arrested—St. Jim's chaps and all," said Tom Merry. "A pretty disgrace for the school! Tickey Tapp and Griggs would have to pay big fines. But those rotters can afford that. They make profits enough in this way to cover ten times the fines they'd have to pay. And then they'd start the whole thing afresh in some other place, and keep it up till the police got down on them again."

"The rotters!"

"The police ought to be told," said Manners.

"It's not our business to give information to the police," said Tom Merry. "But I think we ought to make it our business to stop St. Jim's chaps playing the fool in this way, and bringing shame on the old school. There's Gore, and, I think, Crooke, and Cutts, Selton and Knox; very likely some more. My sons, we are going to turn this over in our minds, and think out a plan of campaign, and come down heavy on it."

To which, Manners and Lowther fully agreed, and over tea the Terrible Three discussed plans of campaign.

CHAPTER 10.

Gore's Loss!

GEORGE GORE came into his study with an anxious frown upon his face. His brows were puckered up, and his eyes gleamed furtively.

Vavasour was at work in the study. Gore did not speak to him. He looked round the room anxiously, as if in search of something he had lost.

Vavasour knew very well what he was looking for, but he did not speak. He waited for his study-mate to ask him.

Gore stammered out a question at last. "I—I say, Vavasour, have you seen a— a card anywhere about the study?"

"A card with columns of figures on it?" asked Vavasour.

"Yes. You've seen it?"

"It belongs to you?"

"Yes. Where is it?"

"I picked it up," said Vavasour, looking at him steadily. "I showed it to Tom Merry, and he told me what it was—a roulette card!"

"Hush!" muttered Gore. "Do you want all the House to hear you, you ass? Where is the card? It's very important."

"You have been playing roulette?" said Vavasour.

"No business of yours if I have! I suppose you're not thinking of giving

information to the Housemaster, are you?" sneered Gore.

Vavasour shook his head.

"I'm not a sneak. But it was for that that you borrowed five pounds of me last week?"

"Yes, it was."

"You can't settle up, by any chance?"

"I've lost," said Gore sullenly. "If you like to hand me over a tenner for capital, I'll get the five back, and a hundred quid along with it."

Vavasour gave him a compassionate look.

"You think they'd let you?" he said.

"You don't know anything about roulette," said Gore. "They can't help it if you win. If your number comes up you get your money. They can't help the number coming up."

"Then if you had a run of luck, you might clear them out of every quid they've got?"

"Of course I might!" said Gore eagerly. "If you like to lend me a tenner—"

"Do you think they'd run the risk of being cleared out by a fellow with a run of luck?" said Vavasour.

"They can't help it."

"Do they ever go broke?"

"Well, no."

"Then I would suggest that they can help it," said Vavasour dryly. "You ass! It must be as easy to cheat with a roulette-wheel as with a pack of cards."

"You don't know anything about it," said Gore. "You needn't lend me money if you don't want to. Where's my card?"

"I gave it to Tom Merry, and—"

"Oh, you fathead!"

Gore did not wait for Vavasour to explain further. He hurried out of the room and opened the door of the next study. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had finished their tea, and they were doing their preparation.

Gore dashed into the study and closed the door behind him. The Terrible Three looked up from their work.

"You've got something of mine, Tom Merry," said Gore. "Vavasour said that he gave it to you. It's mine, and I want it!"

Tom Merry looked at him steadily.

"You mean the roulette card?"

"Yes."

"I've burnt it."

Gore started back.

"You've burnt my card!" he exclaimed hoarsely.

"Yes. It wasn't safe to leave it about, you ass! Do you know that you would be sacked if it were found?"

"You—you meddling fool!" hissed Gore. "You've burnt my card, and I hadn't a copy of it!"

"What on earth did you want a copy of it for?"

"For the numbers, you fool! I was making a system on the run of numbers—and now it's mucked up! Oh, you cross idiot!"

"I should have burnt it all the same if I'd known," said Tom Merry. "Have you got the awful cheek to tell us that you go out gambling at some secret den, and that you're making a system? You idiot!"

Gore clenched his hands.

"You fool!" he muttered.

"I don't think I'm the fool in this case," said Tom Merry, rising to his feet. "I won't lose my temper with you, Gore. You're more a fool than a rascal; I can see that. Do you know you'd be sacked if this came out?"

"I don't care if I am!"

"You don't care if you're sacked?" said the Terrible Three together.

"No, I don't!" said Gore defiantly. "Do you think I want to go about fooling over Latin and mathematics in a Form-room when I've got a system for making a fortune? I don't care two-pence!"

The chums of the Shell looked at him blankly.

To be kicked out of the school, disgraced—it was the heaviest punishment that could fall upon any fellow. And Gore did not care.

It showed the depth to which he had fallen, and the extent to which the madness of the gambling fever had taken hold of the wretched boy.

"I think you must be mad!" said Tom Merry at last.

"Oh rats! I suppose you think you've got me under your thumb now you've found this out!" said Gore savagely. "Well, I tell you that you can go straight to the Head, if you like, and give me away. I don't care two straws!"

"We shan't do that," said Tom Merry. "But you ought to see that you're ruining yourself. If you keep on like this, it will come out some time; and if it comes out that we know of your rotten doings, it will get us into trouble."

"Mind your own business, then," said Gore. "It was like your rotten cheek to burn my card! If I lose now, I shall owe it to you!"

"Oh, rot!"

Gore left the study and slammed the door after him.

"Well," said Manners, "I always knew that Gore was an ass; but I never thought he was quite so asinine as that!"

"It's got to be stopped!" said Tom Merry. "He's simply going mad with it, and he's not going to ruin himself if we can stop it, fool as he is! He doesn't seem to have any sense of shame left."

"If he had the sense of a worm, he wouldn't go to a gambling-den expecting to get fair play there. It stands to reason that he's being cheated. They don't make their profits by playing the game fairly. The silly ass, if he got sacked from here, and depended on that for a living, he would find that it was a pretty rotten reed to lean on!"

"Though you bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him," quoted Monty Lowther.

And certainly that seemed true enough of George Gore.

Gore returned to his study with a scowling brow. His precious card was gone, and his equally precious "system" was suffering in consequence. Gore scowled savagely at Vavasour.

"You've cost me hundreds of pounds, very likely, by giving that card to Tom Merry!" he said bitterly.

Vavasour grinned.

"More likely saved you money," he said.

"Look here, after what you've done, I've a right to ask you for a loan," said Gore.

"You can ask!"

"Will you lend me a tenner?"

"No, I won't."

"A fiver, then?"

"Not fivepence!"

"Hang you!"

And Gore stamped out of the study. He turned his steps in the direction of Lumley-Lumley's quarters. Gore was "stony." His wonderful prospects of wealth had not panned out very prosperously so far, and the Outsider of St. Jim's was his only hope now.

CHAPTER 11.

For Old Times' Sake!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was not surprised to see Gore, and he could read in the Shell fellow's face what he had come for.

In times past the two had been very "thick," though at last the parting of the ways had come, and they had gone their different roads.

Lumley-Lumley was alone in his study, and Gore was glad to see it. He came in and closed the door, and the Outsider of St. Jim's nodded genially.

"Long time since you've dropped in to see me," he remarked.

"Not my fault," said Gore.

"No; mine!" said Lumley-Lumley, with a smile. "You're looking rather seedy."

"I'm not seedy; I'm bothered," said Gore. "What would you feel like if you had a fortune right in your hands and couldn't collar it because you hadn't a little capital?"

Lumley-Lumley tried not to smile.

"I guess I should feel rotten!" he said.

"That's how I feel. Look here, Lumley," said Gore, "we used to be very good chums. You used to be in with me, and Cutts, and Tickey Tapp, and Griggs, and the rest. You know how to look after yourself, and they never got much change out of you. You chucked it all. I dare say it was sensible. But you must be getting fed-up with being a good boy by this time. I could show you life now—something a bit better than you used to get—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gore glared at him.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"My dear chap, I know all about it," said Lumley-Lumley. "I've had kind offers from Tickey Tapp to take a hand in it."

"Oh!" said Gore, evidently taken aback. "Why don't you go in for it, then?"

"I've chucked all that rot. It's rotten and it's stupid. Besides, I've got all my wits about me, and when they used to try to swindle me at nap, I could keep my end up. But their latest dodge is too deep for me."

"You know what it is?"

"I know they've got a roulette machine in the old Manor House, to run a gambling club there till the police drop on them," said the Outsider coolly. "Tickey Tapp used to run one in Southampton, and he was fined hundreds of pounds over it. He was imprisoned in Manchester for the same thing. But he always comes up smiling. There's always a supply of mugs—the supply of silly idiots will never run short. There isn't a town in England where you won't find chaps who want to get rich quick, and think they can beat professional swindlers at their own game."

"But this isn't a swindle," said Gore. "You don't understand. They've got a roulette machine exactly the same as at Monte Carlo. You stake on the numbers, and if the numbers come up you win. They can't help it!"

"Much the same as staking on the thimble that the pea's under," said Lumley-Lumley. "Have you ever tried that way of making a fortune?"

Gore frowned.

"Don't talk rot, Lumley! How can they possibly cheat with a roulette-wheel?"

"You poor old innocent!" said

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling!



Hallo, everybody!
There are eight horses in a field full of buttercups. What time is it? Summer-time.

Twenty-five hounds are chasing a fox. What time is it? Twenty-five after one. Gosh, you are slow to-day!

Story goes they don't measure Bunter of Greyfriars for his suits; they weigh him!

Brief One: "Guilty or not guilty?" asked the judge. "Guilty, I think," replied the prisoner, "but perhaps I'd better be tried to make sure!"

"Cobwebs are unhealthy," I read. They never looked strong to me.

"We have the measure of crime in England," says an authority. By the Yard, of course!

"What is modesty?" asks a reader. Modesty is when a chap has plenty of cash, but keeps it dark so that another fellow will stand him a lemonade!

Story: There was once a chap who thoroughly enjoyed learning deponent verbs. The End.

Then there was the deep sea diver who wouldn't come up until it had stopped raining!

They say Crooke is a bit of an artist. Well, he always draws a long face.

Did you know that magistrates are very chilly mortals? Yes, they are just-ice!

Lumley-Lumley compassionately. "Have you ever handled a roulette-wheel?"

"Of course I haven't!"

"Well, I have! When I was half your age, Gore, I was in some queer places in the world, and there are precious few gambling games that I haven't had a hand in. I've had a lot of experience, and I've learned one lesson—that it's all rot—cheating from beginning to end without a chance for the outsider. The way to make money out of roulette is to start a casino in some rotten country where it's allowed; that's the only way."

"Rot! Every player has a chance."

"Every player has exactly the chance that the croupier allows him and no more," said Lumley-Lumley. "Look here, Gore, I want to back you up for the sake of old times. You know my pater wasn't always a millionaire. I've been through some rough times. When I was a mere kid I had a job in San Francisco—the pater was laid up with a bullet in his leg that he'd got in a row there—and I had to get in the money somehow. Well, I had a job in a roulette den that was run in Chinatown there to swindle the sailors off the ships. After the game was over for the night, and the punters had gone, I used to amuse myself sometimes with the roulette-wheel, practising."

"Practising what?"

"Bringing up the numbers the same as the croupiers do," said Lumley-Lumley coolly.

Gore jumped.

A well-known centre-forward spends the summer months fishing. Still "netting."

South Sea Islanders beat tom-toms all day for rain. All we have to do is fix up a cricket match!

When is a cake like a famous school? When it's "Eton."

What are the most unsociable things on earth? Milestones—you never see two together.

The Head's gardener tells me he has seen a crow pull up twenty crocuses and fly away without eating one of them. Sheer crow-cussedness, of course!

Burglars who broke into a Wayland chemist's took a number of bottles of perfume. The police are hot on the scent.

"The Channel is only 21 miles wide," said Gore. "I could practically swim that." "If it were only 20 miles, 1,750 yards narrower, you could quite swim it!" smiled Blake.

"We stand behind every car we sell," said the salesman. Very wise. The front is the dangerous end!

Headline: "English Explorer Lost on Elephant." No doubt he had heard an elephant never forgets.

Story: "I must insist on no noise," warned the landlady.

"Well," said the nervous boarder, "I ought to tell you that I wear a rather loud pair of mauve pyjamas!"

An opera singer complains that his false teeth have changed his voice. Rendering him false-setto!

Last shot: A Scot gave a waiter a penny tip. The waiter said: "What's this?" The Scot said: "Heads!" and took it back again!

Chin, chin, chaps!

"Do you mean to say that they can bring up what numbers they like?"

"I guess so. I know they'd be sacked if they couldn't."

"But—but it's impossible!"

"It's easier than bowling at cricket—easier than making a good break at billiards. After one hour's practice, I was able to bring up zero whenever I wanted to. After I'd practised an hour a night for a few weeks, I had as much command of the roulette-wheel as I have now of my bicycle or my cricket-bat. It's quite easy. The wheel goes round in one direction, the ball in another. You put exactly enough speed on both to make them slacken down at the right moment, and the ball drops into whichever hole on the wheel you have calculated upon—the number you want. It looks difficult to an outsider—same as it looks difficult to see a billiards chap making a long break, with the balls in a position that looks impossible to the amateur. But they can do it."

Gore drew a deep breath.

"But in roulette you're allowed to lay your stakes on the table after the ball has started," he said. "They can't alter it then."

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"And suppose some lucky player jammed down a big stake on the number the croupier intended to bring up?" he said. "Do you think the bank is prepared to pay out a big sum of

money for want of taking a few precautions?"

"But they can't alter it when the ball has started."

"Rats! They have different methods. Some roulette-machines are made with a secret brake to make the wheel slacken down in time to avoid a number. Some of the rotters have other dodges. But they never let you win unless they choose."

Gore shook his head.

"I can't believe all that," he said. "It sounds too thick."

"I guess I don't expect you to believe it. A gambler won't believe anything that will stop him from gambling," said Lumley-Lumley. "I don't say people never win. At that den in Frisco I used to watch the gamblers. Newcomers were generally let win to encourage them to come again with more money. By the way, did you win at first at Tickey Tapp's place?"

Gore turned red.

"I won jolly well for three nights," he said. "Then the luck changed."

"Ha, ha, ha! It wasn't the luck that changed—it was the croupier's mind that changed!" chuckled Lumley-Lumley. "Roulette isn't a game of chance, my infant; it's a game of dead certs, with all the certs on the side of the bank."

"And do you mean to say that only newcomers win?"

"Oh, no! I used to see sharps win—keen fellows who knew the game. They'd wait till nearly every number on the green cloth was loaded up with heavy stakes. Then they'd put small stakes on the other numbers and win!"

"Oh!" said Gore.

"Only, after they'd done that a dozen times or so, they'd be spotted," said Lumley-Lumley. "Then they had to quit. The bank would put up some employee in plain clothes to collar the stakes and pretend they were his—or else he would be accused of passing false money and kicked out."

"Oh!"

"You see, I saw the game from the inside," said Lumley-Lumley.

"But all the places aren't run on the same lines."

"Not all, certainly; but in results it comes to the same thing. Different places have different dodges, that's all."

"I believe Tickey Tapp plays squarely."

"I guess you'll go on believing that so long as you can raise a red cent to play with. Lots of people go on playing after they have found out that they're being welsed. It's a kind of fever—they can't help it. But you didn't come here for good advice—you were here to borrow some tin."

Gore grinned rather sheepishly.

"Well, yes," he said.

"You want to play after what I've told you?"

"I think Tickey Tapp is all right. After all, what you saw happen in a den in San Francisco mightn't happen everywhere."

"Suppose I prove it to you?"

"You can't."

"I guess I'll try. When are you going to Tickey Tapp's place again?"

"To-night."

"I guess I'll come with you."

"And—and you'll lend me some money?"

"I'll lend you a couple of quid, if you like, though it's simply throwing money away."

"I—I want a good sum to play on big lines," said Gore, hesitating. "Twenty

pounds would do. Then I could make a big win."

"My dear chap, I haven't twenty quid to throw away!" said Lumley-Lumley in astonishment.

"Your pater's a millionaire—"

"But he wouldn't hand out sums like that for me to give away, you ass!"

"I'll pay it back to-morrow!"

"After you've won?"

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gore scowled savagely.

"Look here! You might lend me the money. I'm getting desperate. I owe money to a lot of fellows. I've sold a lot of my things—my bat and bike and fishing-rod—and now I'm stumped. If I don't win, I'm done in. I must win. And I must have some capital to play with if I am to win. If you could hand me twenty quid, it might save me from doing something desperate."

"But you'd be in the same state to-morrow. You wouldn't win!"

"I shall win—I must!"

"I guess I've heard that kind of talk before. When you get into that frame of mind you lose whatever chance you might have had—you simply chuck money away."

Gore rose to his feet.

"I'll find some way," he said.

"Look here!" said Lumley-Lumley, eyeing him narrowly. "Don't play the fool, Gore. You don't want to be sacked from the school, and perhaps sent to a reformatory."

"I know what I'm going to do."

"I'll make it a fiver," said Lumley-Lumley, "on condition that you promise to chuck it up if I prove to you that they cheat!"

"Done!"

And Gore left the study feeling satisfied. Lumley-Lumley wrinkled his brows in thought. He was in a troubled frame of mind.

"The silly ass!" he muttered. "I guess I know what's in his mind—taking somebody else's money to play with. Those rotters will get him sent to prison before they're through with him. I guess it's high time I put a spoke in their wheel!"

CHAPTER 12.

The Gamblers!

"ARE you there, Lumley?"

Gore whispered the words.

It was very dark in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, with a dim glimmer of starlight falling upon the dark elms.

Gore had stopped under the shadow of the school wall, where he had arranged to meet the Fourth Former. He was trembling with anxiety and eagerness. The gambling fever was upon him, and all other considerations had vanished from his mind. The risk of being caught out of bounds, of being expelled from the school, weighed nothing. Nothing mattered—nothing but the numbers on the green cloth, the piles of money he hoped to draw from the clutches of the croupier.

"I guess I'm here."



Vavasour went to the desk and examined it, and found which was broken. "Somebody's been here!" "The birds

Lumley-Lumley stepped from the shadows. Gore drew a deep breath of relief.

"I—I was afraid you—"

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Afraid I'd alter my mind?" he said. "Well, here I am. Come on!"

They climbed the school wall, and dropped into the road. Hardly a word was said as they tramped down the dark road and along the footpath through the wood, and came out on the road over the moor.

Lumley-Lumley was unusually quiet and grave.

He was doing a dangerous thing. If his night's exploit should be discovered, he knew what it would mean—the same punishment for him as for Gore.

Why was he doing it?

The keen desire for adventure, perhaps, was partly the cause. But his chief reason was a generous desire to save a fellow who had once been his chum, and who was driving recklessly and insanely on the road to ruin. Lumley-Lumley had had the strength of mind to turn his back upon his old blackguardly pursuit. Gore was not made of the same stuff. And it was worth a little effort, and a little danger, to save him.

Lumley-Lumley, with his own record in his mind, was conscious of the fact that it was not for him to "preach" to Gore. But if he could prove to the foolish fellow that he was being swindled, without a chance for his money, Gore could hardly persist.

Dark and lonely loomed up the deserted Manor House on the moor. Not a gleam of light came from the shuttered building.

Anyone passing along the road at that late hour would have supposed that the place was utterly deserted. Tickey Tapp & Co. could not have found a safer place for their nefarious work. In Wayland and Rylcombe and Abbotsford



exclamation. He pointed to the drawer, the look of there?" asked Tom Merry. "No," replied Vavasour. "It is gone!"

Lumley-Lumley gazed about him with cool, keen eyes.

The room was a large one. It was sparsely furnished—a table and a number of plain deal chairs. The windows were thickly covered with hangings of coarse canvas to keep the light from escaping.

There was a crowd in the room.

The table was covered with a green cloth, marked out in thirty-six numbers for the game of roulette, and with the squares of red and black, pair and impair, passe and manque, and the spaces for the "dozens" and "columns."

In the centre of the table was the roulette machine.

A deep, wooden bowl, with a revolving wheel in the centre. The wheel was marked off into thirty-seven compartments—one for each number and one for zero.

At the wheel sat Tickey Tapp in person—a low-browed, cunning-faced man in evening clothes, which seemed to show up, as no other attire could have done, his half-bullying, half-cajoling countenance.

Tickey Tapp was acting as croupier—doubtless having more reliance upon his own skill with the wheel than anyone else's.

Behind him Mr. Griggs, the bookmaker, sat on a raised chair, acting the part of chef-de-partie, or overlooker of the game.

Two or three other men in dingy evening clothes sat at the ends and sides of the long table, acting as croupiers for paying out or placing the stakes.

Round the table was a crowd. Lumley-Lumley looked them over with great interest. Except for the bareness of the furnishings, the room was very much like gambling dens he had seen in many a low quarter of a Continental town.

But the visitors of Tickey Tapp's precious establishment were different.

There were St. Jim's fellows there. Lumley-Lumley recognised Cutts of the Fifth, Knox and Sefton of the Sixth. They were "seeing life," and paying pretty handsomely for the sight.

There were others that Lumley-Lumley knew by sight; tradesmen from Wayland, also seeing life; shop assistants and betting men; men and youths of all classes and stations.

There were fifty or sixty people in the room altogether.

Tickey Tapp had his hand upon the wheel as the juniors came in, and was inviting the punters to play.

"Make your game, gentlemen!"

He gave Gore a nod and smiled to Lumley-Lumley. Evidently he was glad to see the millionaire's son coming back to the fold.

"Glad to see you again, Lumley-Lumley," he said.

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

Stakes were being placed on the green cloth. The simplicity of the punters made the Outsider of St. Jim's smile compassionately. It did not seem to occur to most of them that Tickey Tapp had any control over the wheel, and could bring up any number he chose. Even before the roulette-wheel started on its revolutions the players mostly put down their money. Coins were scattered

over the numbers, or in the places devoted to the colours.

Some, however, seemed to know the game better. They waited till Tickey Tapp had started the wheel and sent the ball whizzing round the bowl before they laid down their stakes. They knew better than the others, or they suspected. But they did not suspect that Tickey Tapp could control the wheel up to the very last moment when the ball dropped into one of the sockets.

"Make your game!" said Tickey Tapp. "Game made? Rien ne va plus!" he added in French, in the approved style of a Continental croupier, meaning that it was now too late to place fresh stakes, or to alter those already laid.

The ball was still whizzing round.

It slackened and sloped down the rim of the bowl towards the still revolving wheel, and clicked as it came into contact with it and rolled into one of the sockets.

The hole into which it fell was numbered five in red.

"Five, red, impair, and manque!" said Tickey Tapp.

Lumley-Lumley closed one eye at Gore.

Number five had not been staked at all, but there were plenty of stakes on other numbers—all of which were immediately raked in by the croupiers.

Gore avoided Lumley-Lumley's eyes.

CHAPTER 13.

The Hawk and the Pigeons!

"MAKE your game, gentlemen!" A new round was commencing.

Lumley-Lumley did not play; he stood looking on with his hands in his pockets. Gore changed his five-pound note and began to stake.

A fat gentleman in evening clothes was staking heavily. The fat gentleman's face looked something like a boxer's. He seemed to have plenty of money. On number five he placed six pounds. As the bank paid out thirty-five times the amount of a stake on a winning number, he stood to win two hundred and ten pounds if number five came up.

Lumley-Lumley watched with a cynical smile.

He knew that number five would come up, unless Tickey Tapp missed it by accident as sometimes happens to the most skilful croupiers.

Lumley-Lumley had, as he had told Gore, seen the game worked from inside, and he knew at a glance that the fat gentleman was a "stool-pigeon"—one of the gang whose business it was to win with large stakes to encourage other players. For if the fat gentleman won over two hundred pounds on a single coup, and was paid out on the nail, how could the other players suspect that the bank was dishonest? The unfortunate dupes did not know that it was all part of the scheme, and Tickey Tapp could afford to pay out money to his partner, as every pound of it remained, of course, in the firm.

"Make your game, gentlemen!"

The ball whizzed round again.

Click!

It dropped into No. 5.

"By Jove, five's repeated!" said Cutts, with quite the air of an old habitué of casinos.

Gore had lost his money; he had played on No. 36. He turned to Lumley-Lumley, with a sneer on his face.

"What does that look like?" he said in a low voice. "You see that fat chap's won!"

"I guess so."

"Tickey Tapp has to pay him over two hundred quid! Look at him handing over the banknotes!" said Gore enviously.

"They won't go far."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I mean that people who win big sums at roulette are either newcomers who are being encouraged to play, or 'stool-pigeons' employed by the bank to encourage the fools! That money remains in the firm."

"Oh, I don't believe it!"

But Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if it's true," said Gore, "I can win by backing the same number."

"Ass! It won't come up, then!"

"I won't put my money down until after the ball's started."

"I guess it will come to the same thing."

"I'm going to try."

Gore approached the table again.

He waited till the fat gentleman was playing. The heavy punter placed five pounds on No. 17. Gore waited till Tickey Tapp had started the wheel and the ball, and then placed five shillings beside the five pounds.

Tickey Tapp had his eyes on the table. He gave Gore a quick, searching look. That look said as plainly as words could say: "So you tumble, do you?"

The next instant Tickey Tapp's face was quite expressionless again.

Gore watched to see whether he meddled with the wheel in any way.

There was no evidence that he did. But when the ball dropped into a hole, it was into No. 34, the next number to 17 on the wheel.

The fat gentleman had lost his five pounds. Gore had lost his five shillings. If Lumley-Lumley was not mistaken, the bank made more profit out of the five shillings than out of the five pounds.

Gore looked blank for a moment.

What had happened had borne out Lumley-Lumley's warning to him.

But a gambler is the last person in the world to take a warning. He would rather play and lose than not play at all.

Gore went on playing.

In a quarter of an hour his five pounds had melted away, and he came over to where Lumley-Lumley was standing watching the game.

"All gone?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

Gore nodded.

"Sorry, old man!" said Lumley-Lumley. "But you've got no chance, you know."

Gore gritted his teeth.

"I'm just getting on to the game," he said, "and I don't believe a word about their cheating. Lend me a quid!"

"What's the good?"

"Lend it to me!"

"Look here," said Lumley-Lumley, "there's a chap there—he's a grocer in Wayland, and can't be one of the gang. He's backing red with two pounds a time. Put five shillings a time on black, and you'll win—excepting when Tickey Tapp makes a mistake, and lets the ball drop into red."

"I'll do it, if you'll lend me the money."

Lumley-Lumley handed Gore a pound. Gore changed it into silver, and took his companion's advice. He won on black, and won again; and, in spite of himself, he had to admit that Lumley-Lumley had given him good advice. Tickey Tapp was regarding him very queerly. Gore determined to make a

good thing out of his chance while it lasted, and he placed all he still had on black for a run of colour. The Wayland grocer was still playing on red, and he had placed a five-pound note there.

And it was red that came up!

The Wayland grocer—who had just sworn inwardly that if he lost that fiver he would clear out—won! And he went on playing—and that fiver did not remain his very long. It departed, and drew other money after it! Gore had lost, and was cleared out!

He came back to Lumley-Lumley.

"The chap won on red!" he muttered.

"Yes, when you doubled on black, ass, and allowed Tickey Tapp to see what you were doing!" growled Lumley-Lumley. "Why couldn't you be satisfied with what you could get?"



Sergeant: "Did you shave this morning?"

Recruit: "Yes, sergeant."

Sergeant: "Use a glass?"

Recruit: "Yes, sergeant."

Sergeant: "Well, use a razor next time!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Stacey, Erdingley, Bingham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Notts.

"Lend me another fiver!"

"I guess not."

"A quid, then?"

"I've only got one more quid with me."

"Lend it me. Luck may change, after all."

Lumley-Lumley made a grimace, and handed out the pound. Gore hurried to the table with it. If he could win with a pound on a number, it would mean thirty-five pounds—all his losses recovered, and a good sum in hand. He resolved to chance it. He scanned the board. The punters were playing heavily now, and nearly every number had piles of silver. Of all the numbers, only No. 6 was left untouched. Gore placed his pound on No. 6—after the wheel had started. If there was anything in Lumley-Lumley's description of the game, he ought to win now.

He waited feverishly for the announcement to come.

The wheel slacked down; the ball clicked into a socket.

"No. 27, red, impair, and passe!"

No. 27 was the next number to 6 on the wheel. Gore's chance was gone by a single hole! The wretched boy

gritted his teeth.

What had happened bore out only too well what Lumley-Lumley had told

him. Tickey Tapp had intended No. 6 to come up in order to clear the board. By some unknown and mysterious means the wheel had been checked after Gore had laid his money on No. 6, and the next number had come up. On No. 27 was a half-crown, and the bank had to pay out thirty-five times that amount to the winner. But it had been saved from paying out thirty-five pounds to Gore.

The Shell fellow clenched his hands.

"Had enough?" asked Lumley-Lumley, as George Gore retreated, disgraced and wretched, from the table.

"Got any more money?"

"No!"

"You saw what a narrow shave it was!" muttered Gore. "The next hole on the wheel—the very next number!"

"But I told you that—"

"Oh, rot! I don't believe a word of it! He can't control the wheel!"

"If you still believe that, old man, I'm afraid you're a hopeless case, and it's no good my staying here!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Anyway, you're stony now, so let's go!"

"I'm going to speak to Cutts."

Gore approached Cutts, Knox, and Sefton in turn. He was evidently trying to borrow money, and his face, when he rejoined Lumley-Lumley, showed that he had not succeeded.

"Sure you've got nothing left?" he asked desperately.

"Quite sure."

"You might have brought some more with you."

"For you to chuck away—thanks!"

"Oh, let's get out!" said Gore miserably.

They left the place. Gore hardly spoke a word as they tramped away over the moor and back to the school, under the midnight sky.

It was not till they were within the walls of St. Jim's that he revealed what was working in his mind.

"Look here, Lumley!" he muttered, catching the Outsider's arm. "You've got some more money in your study—"

"Well?"

"Lend me some, and I'll go back, and—"

"You haven't learned your lesson yet, then?"

"I know I can win, with sufficient capital."

"After what you've seen with your own eyes?"

"Oh rot! I don't believe a word of it. It's all chance—and luck must change."

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"You're a bigger ass than I took you for, that's all!" he said. "You've had seven pounds from me, and you'll never be able to pay a shilling of it back! I've tried to get you out of this, for old times' sake. If you can't be cured, I'm done. And I've got no more money to chuck away to those thieves!"

"I'll pay it all back—"

"When you win?"

"Ye-es."

"When the cows come home!" said Lumley-Lumley contemptuously.

"Rats!"

"You won't lend it to me?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then go and hang yourself!" snarled Gore. "I'll get it from somewhere else somehow—and I'll break that bank yet!"

"Gore, where are you going?"

"Mind your own business!"

Gore disappeared into the darkness. Lumley-Lumley followed him more

(Continued on page 18.)



Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums! Another grand number of the GEM will be waiting for you at your newsagent's next Wednesday. You have my personal guarantee that it will provide you with more hours of first-class entertainment than a visit to the pictures. And, of course, the cheapest seat at the "flicks" is not to be compared with the low price of the old paper.

The star feature of our next programme is a powerful yarn from our old friend, Martin Clifford. It is entitled:

"THEY CALLED HIM A COWARD!"

It is a thrilling story of real human interest—the type of school tale that has always given the author the greatest pleasure to write. Filling the title-role is Harry Manners, who, although he is in the forefront of the juniors at St. Jim's, has seldom played the leading part.

Manners' pluck has never before been questioned, and his worst enemy would never have accused him of cowardice. Yet in next week's yarn, Manners finds his best friends calling him a funk! He behaves in an unaccountable manner in a moment of grave danger—deserting Cousin Ethel, who is on a visit to St. Jim's, when dire peril threatens her. Naturally, Tom Merry & Co., witnesses of the whole scene, are simply astonished at Manners' display of the white feather, and they cannot find it in their hearts to forgive him. The unhappy junior has an excuse to offer, but it only makes matters worse, for to his chums it seems hopelessly weak.

Troubles never come singly, and subsequent events place a bigger barrier than ever between him and his former friends, until he is despised by all—a coward, and an outcast!

You will vote this one of the most appealing and enthralling stories you have ever read; so take my advice, chums, and see you don't miss it.

"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!"

Letters are still rolling in about this wonderful Greyfriars yarn. One very interesting letter reached me from T.

Crane, a staunch supporter of the GEM and the "Magnet." He says: "I have just finished reading 'The Making of Harry Wharton.' I think it is a grand story. Do you know, I read that story when the 'Magnet' first came out. How many years ago is that? It seems but yesterday. Anyway, although I am now a man, I still like to read the GEM and 'Magnet.'"

That is a splendid tribute to the sustained, unbeatable excellence of the stories in the companion papers over more than a quarter of a century. For your information, Mr. Crane, the "Magnet" was first published on February 15th, 1908. So you have been a reader of the companion papers for over twenty-eight years. I wonder if there are any other readers who can boast such a long-standing association with these two publications? I should welcome letters from them.

In next week's chapters of Frank Richards' gripping story you will read how Harry Wharton fares in his fight with Bulstrode. The bully of the Remove is a tough customer to tackle, but whatever faults there are in Wharton's character, lack of courage is not one of them.

In addition to our fine feast of fiction there will be another selection of illustrated, prizewinning jokes, and "Just My Fun" will give you not a few chuckles. Don't forget to order early, chums!

THE BOY GIANT!

Eight feet four inches tall, twenty-eight stones in weight—and still growing! Who's this—another Carnera? No; he's just a youthful giant living in Illinois, U.S.A., with no boast to boxing skill. But he can boast of other things. At the age of eighteen Robert Wadlow must be the biggest boy in the world—and he's still putting on three inches in height and eighteen and a half pounds in weight every year. It is said

that, by the time he's finished growing, he'll be in the region of nine feet!

Naturally, for one so tall, Robert has an appetite in proportion to his size, and his ability to pack away outside meals puts even Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's in the shade! When he sits down to table, he thinks nothing of polishing off four helpings of everything!

But it's not all honey being a big fellow. All sorts of difficulties confront him, and he has to have his wits about him all the time. It's no joke to keep biffing your napper every time you pass through a doorway! And travelling about in buses and trains is not the least bit comfortable for Robert. And, of course, he has to have everything specially made for him—his bed, his chair, and his clothes, and the trouble is he grows out of his things so quickly. He takes size thirty-six in shoes, which are eighteen and a half inches long, and twelve inches wide, and cost no less than forty pounds a pair!

PROUD PUSS!

While we are in America, so to speak, if it were possible for you to observe the fire-engine of one of Seattle's fire brigades rushing through the streets to the scene of a blaze, you would have to rub your eyes to make sure you were awake. For sitting proudly on the hose-pipe would be a black cat! She's the mascot of the brigade, and wouldn't miss a fire for anything. In fact, to make certain she goes to every one, she sleeps on the hosepipe, and has done for five years!

Cats, by the way, have very often shown an uncanny instinct for danger. Before the Empress of Ireland left Quebec on a voyage which proved to be her last, the ship's cat deserted the liner with her two kittens just before it sailed. Something must have warned the cat that the liner would be lost at sea.

A SURPRISE CATCH!

A competitor who had entered for an angling competition held on Southend Pier had a catch recently he's never likely to equal again, and he had it before he even thought of throwing a tempting hook to unwary fishes! As he opened his basket for the judge's inspection, imagine the surprise of both when they saw inside—five baby robins! Apparently the angler's basket had been hanging in a shed, and mother robin had thought it an ideal nest for hatching out her eggs. That explained why a robin followed the angler from his home and back again! Mother robin was anxious about her little ones. But she needn't have worried—they were returned safe and sound to her.

TAILPIECE.

Teacher: "Can any boy tell me where Ben Nevis is?"

Bright Boy: "He doesn't belong to this class, sir!"

PEN PALS COUPON

6-6-36

THE EDITOR.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Miss Barbara Beresford, 36, Boyle Street, Cremorne, N.S.W., Australia; girl correspondents; age 20-26; music, riding, stamps.

Walter Baldwin, 43, Milner Street, Burnley, Lancs; age 16-17; overseas; films, pets, books.

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slowly towards the School House. He climbed in at the box-room window, and went to the Fourth Form dormitory. But Gore had not gone to the dormitory; he had gone to his study—the study he shared with Vavasour.

CHAPTER 14.

The Thief!

TOM MERRY moved in his bed and awoke.

It was very dark in the dormitory, and in the darkness someone was standing beside his bed and shaking him by the shoulder.

"Groogh!" murmured the captain of the Shell. "Warrermarrer? 'Taint rising-bell!"

"Wake up!"

It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's voice.

Tom Merry started up in bed. It was past midnight, and he was amazed. He was wide-awake enough now.

"That you, Lumley?"

"I guess so."

"What on earth are you doing out of bed at this time of the night?"

"Trying to wake you up, I guess."

"Well, I'm awake now. What's the matter?"

"Matter enough." Lumley-Lumley struck a match. "Look at Gore's bed!"

Tom Merry blinked in the light of the match. George Gore's bed was empty; the black sheep of the Shell was absent again.

"He's gone out, then," said Tom. "It's happened before, Lumley. How did you know?"

"Because I've been to the old manor with him."

Tom Merry started.

"You have?"

"I guess so. I told you I was going into the game with him to teach him better. I've tried it."

"What are they doing there?" asked Tom in a low voice, as the match went out.

"Playing roulette."

"And Gore—"

"He played, too—and was swindled like the rest."

"Blessed if I know where he gets the money from!"

"I guess he got some from me; and he's sold things, and owes money all round. He was swindled under his very nose but he wouldn't believe it. I came back to the school with him, but I guess I didn't go back to bed. I waited to hear if he came up to the dorm."

"And he didn't?"

"No. He's gone out again."

"Gone out again!" said Tom Merry.

"Gone back to that place?"

"You bet!"

"But what's the good of his going back if he's got no money?"

"I'm afraid he's found some," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley quietly.

"That's why I've come to you, Tom Merry."

Tom drew a deep breath.

"Do you mean to say that—that he's taken money that isn't his?" he asked in a hushed voice.

"I know he's gone back, and he wouldn't go without money—and he had no money of his own."

"My hat!"

"I want you to come down with Vavasour."

"Why Vavasour?"

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"To see whether he misses anything from his study. You know he shares his study with Gore, and Gore would know where he keeps his valuables—and he's always got such a blessed lot of 'em."

"I understand."

Tom Merry slipped out of bed, and stepped to Vavasour's bedside. He woke as Tom shook him.

"Hallo!" he said drowsily.

"Will you get up, Vavasour, and come down to your study? It's important," said Tom Merry, in a low voice. "Don't talk now; I don't want the fellows to hear."

"Right-ho!" said Vavasour quietly.

Tom Merry and Vavasour dressed quietly and quickly in the darkness. Lumley-Lumley waited for them. They left the dormitory silently, leaving the rest of the Shell asleep.

Vavasour followed his companions to the study without a word. He knew that something unusual must have happened, and he waited patiently to be enlightened.

"What is it?" he asked at last, as they stopped in the Shell passage.

"Come into your study."

"My study?" said Vavasour.

Tom Merry nodded and opened the study door. The door was closed and the blind carefully lowered before Lumley-Lumley switched on the light. Then Vavasour looked at his two companions in amazed inquiry.

"What on earth does this mean, Tom Merry?"

Tom Merry's face was pale and excited. Lumley-Lumley's was hard and grim.

"Do you keep any money in the study?" Tom asked.

"Yes; in my desk."

"Much?" asked Tom.

"I have twenty pounds there."

"See if it's safe!"

"Oh!" said Vavasour. He went to his desk and examined it, and uttered a sudden sharp exclamation. "Somebody's been here!"

"Is the money there?"

"No!"

Vavasour pointed to a drawer of which the lock was broken. It had evidently been forced open with some tool.

"I guess that settles it," said Lumley-Lumley.

"You know who did it?" said Vavasour.

"I know that Gore came in here. I suppose he knew that you kept money there?"

Vavasour nodded.

"Yes, he knows that, of course, so does Skimpole. But—but has Gore taken it? He's got his faults; but I should never have believed him to be a thief."

"The next step to gambling is stealing," said Tom Merry quietly. "Gore isn't in his right mind now; he's like a madman. He's done this—the fool!"

"The rascal, you mean!" said Vavasour.

"Rascal, too, but more fool than rascal!" said Tom. "He's been gambling to-night, and Lumley-Lumley has seen him swindled. The idiot has gone back for a last chance—not that he has any chance—but he's taken your money to play with. I don't think he means to steal it. He's going to put it back when he returns—if he wins—"

"But he won't win."

"No; and that makes him a thief—but he doesn't mean to be one. It's in your hands, Vavasour, to show him up, disgrace him, and get him kicked out

of the school. And he hasn't treated you well!"

"He hasn't," said Vavasour grimly. "He showed me up once—you remember that?"

"I haven't forgotten it. Only—"

"Only what?"

"You've the right and the power to get him sacked," said Tom Merry. "Only—he's a St. Jim's chap and he's more fool than rogue. I wouldn't be hard on him if I were you."

"I can't lose twenty pounds."

"I don't mean that. We shall have to stop him and take the money back—and then I think we might keep him."

"That's what I was thinking, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley. "I was taking a hand in this game to save him, not to ruin him."

"I'll do as you think best," said Vavasour, after a pause. "The money isn't very much to me; though, of course, it would be a big sum to lose. But I don't want to be hard on Gore. I think he must be feeling pretty bad as it is—he must have been simply desperate before he came to this."

Tom Merry's face lighted up.

"Then you'll help us to save the poor idiot instead of crushing him down?"

"Yes, I will."

"You won't be sorry for it, Vavasour. And we shall get the money back."

"I guess I've got that cut and dried," said Lumley-Lumley. "You fellows and the others will have to come. There's only one way of stopping this game."

"Informing the police?" asked Vavasour.

"That's one way. It would serve Tickey Tapp right. But it would mean utter ruin for the St. Jim's chaps mixed up in it. I dare say they deserve it, but we don't want to be the cause of it."

"Then what can we do?"

"Take the law into our own hands," said Lumley-Lumley coolly.

Tom Merry looked at him quickly.

"You—you mean—"

"I mean, take a big gang of fellows we can rely on and smash up the place!"

CHAPTER 15.

On the Warpath!

TOM MERRY drew a deep breath.

Tom and his chums had discussed the matter more than once, trying to think of some plan of campaign for rescuing Gore from his evil associates and punishing the rascals who were leading him to his ruin.

But any scheme so daring as this had not occurred to their minds. Yet it was very daring recommended it, to Tom Merry.

"Good egg!" he said.

But Vavasour looked very startled.

"Smash up the place?" he repeated blankly.

Lumley-Lumley nodded coolly. "I guess that's my idea. Look here, the place is run against the law. If the police knew they'd raid the old Manor House and arrest every man-jack found in the place. Well, we don't want to get the police in, so we'll raid it ourselves."

"Great Scott!"

"I was there," said Lumley-Lumley. "There were about fifty or sixty people. But they wouldn't show fight. At the first alarm they'd be scared to death of being recognised and had up before the magistrate. You must have heard of gaming dens being raided by the police. At the first alarm there's a rush to escape. It's nobody's business to put up a fight for the croupiers. Everybody

wants to get away without being recognised. But even if some of them showed fight we could handle them."

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry. "It means breaking bounds at night—going to a place out of bounds, too," said Vavasour. "There would be an awful row if it came out."

"It won't come out. Knox, Cutts, and Gore won't tell the Head they were found in a gambling den, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Tickey Tapp & Co. will be glad enough to clear off without making a fuss. They're liable to arrest, and they know it."

"That's so!"

"Then where's the danger for us? I guess it will be all serene. And we'll make it impossible for the scoundrels to carry on their business there any longer. We'll take tools with us and break up the roulette machine, for one thing."

"Good egg!"

"It's a go," said Tom Merry. "We'll wake up the fellows, and they'll come right enough. What Gore's done we'll keep dark among us three. We'll take twenty chaps and raid the show. If I'd thought of the idea myself I should have done it. It's a bit startling at first, but it's a good idea."

"I'll go!" said Vavasour.

"I'll call the fellows," said Tom Merry. "I wish we could have Figgins & Co. with us, but we can't wake them up in the New House. But there are plenty of School House chaps game for it, I know that."

"Sooner the quicker," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'll get the Fourth, and you get the Shell fellows out. Every chap takes a cricket stump, or something, in case it's wanted."

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry and Vavasour returned quietly to the Shell dormitory, and Lumley-Lumley to the Fourth Form quarters.

It was long past midnight, and all the fellows were fast asleep. The last light in the last window below had long been extinguished.

It was a risky proceeding that the heroes of the School House had undertaken; but Tom Merry did not shrink from it, and neither did his chums, when they were awakened, and it was explained to them.

Tom Merry called Manners and Lowther first, and then Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, Bernard Glyn, and several others.

There was a slight buzz in the sleepy dormitory.

Other fellows whom Tom Merry had not called woke up, and wanted to know what was going on. Crooke was specially curious.

"You fellows going on the razzle?" he asked.

Tom Merry did not trouble to reply. "I guess it won't be much of a razzle for the other party!" chuckled Buck Finn, the American junior, who was one of the party.

"Quiet!" said Tom Merry. "If we get a prefect down on us, all the fat would be in the fire."

"Yes, rather!"

The Shell fellows dressed themselves, and, taking their boots in their hands, they descended the stairs to the study passage.

There they were joined by Lumley-Lumley and the members of the Fourth Form who had joined the expedition.

Blake & Co. had risen as one man when they heard the news from Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

Blake, Digby, Herries, and D'Arcy

were all there, with Reilly, Kerruish, Ray, and Page, and several more.

Taken altogether, Shell fellows and Fourth, the party numbered twenty.

And in their studies they provided themselves with cricket-stumps, to be armed in case of a tussle at the old Manor House on the moor. They did not mean to stand upon ceremony. They had the right on their side, and they had the law on their side, and they meant to come down very heavy on the secret gambling den.

Most of the fellows regarded it as an adventure, and were very keen about it, for that reason; but some of them took a more serious view of the matter.

The crime of George Gore was kept to the three fellows who knew of it;

the ground floor, and most of the glass is gone. They've got hangings inside to keep in the light, and we could have 'em down in a jiffy."

"Bai Jove! It will be wathah a surprise for the wottahs."

"They'll think the police have got on to 'em!" chuckled Jack Blake. "I've got a police-whistle, by the way. Might give 'em a toot on it to scare 'em when we rush in."

"Good egg! That will send them bolting!" laughed Tom Merry. "And then we can take our time to wreck the show."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Mind, not a sound as you get out," whispered Tom Merry, as he led the



One after another the "army" of raiders lowered themselves from the box-room window to the roof of the outhouse below, and thence to the ground. The juniors were full of excitement. The midnight raid on the old Manor House was an adventure that appealed to them!

if Gore could be saved, they would keep his miserable shame a secret.

Monty Lowther struck matches in his study to sort out his tool-chest. Lowther, like Blake of the Fourth, was an amateur carpenter. When he mended things the results were not always satisfactory. But this time he was only required to destroy, and there was no doubt that he would excel himself.

"They won't get that roulette-wheel round again when I've once got to work on it with my hammer," he said confidently.

"It would be a good idea to take a crowbar," Arthur Augustus remarked thoughtfully. "The wottahs may try to keep us out, and we may have to break in!"

"I guess that's all right," said Lumley-Lumley. "I know the password, and they'll open the door to us. If they don't, we can smash in the windows of the roulette-room. It's on

way to the box-room at the back of the House.

One after another the "army" lowered themselves from the box-room window to the roof of the outhouse below, and thence to the ground.

Tom Merry was the last, and he closed the window carefully after him. Like dim shadows the silent juniors flitted across the quadrangle.

The school wall was climbed, and they dropped into the road. Under the glimmering stars they set off at a swinging pace.

"We shan't catch Gore before he gets there, I guess," Lumley-Lumley muttered.

"Before he has lost the money, I hope," said Tom Merry. "Still, Vavasour knows the numbers of the notes, and he can claim them in any case."

"I guess so."

The party swung on through the dark wood, their hearts beating fast with

excitement. They came out on the road over the moor.

Dim and dark the old Manor House loomed up from amid the gaunt trees in the ruined and tangled wilderness of neglected gardens.

"Pewwaps I'd bettah go and scout first, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a thoughtful sort of way.

"Perhaps you hadn't," murmured Blake, taking hold of his elegant chum's arm. "Perhaps you'd better be quiet."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Follow your leader!" said Tom Merry, and he left the road and plunged away through the ferns and straggling gorse.

Five minutes, and they were in the dark hall of the old mansion. Lumley-Lumley groped his way on, and tapped at the locked door in the same way that George Gore had tapped earlier that night.

The door opened.

CHAPTER 16.

The Raid!

TICKEY TAPP looked at his watch.

The roulette-room was still crowded, though a number of the gamblers had gone, for the hour was growing very late.

The meetings of the secret gambling club were held at night, and at a late hour, for very good reasons—to escape discovery by the police and to enable the foolish punters to come and go unseen. When he had a good crowd there with money to lose, Tickey Tapp would keep the wheel spinning till close upon dawn.

Tickey Tapp knew that the game could not last long in any one place, and he wanted to make hay while the sun shone—to extract all that was to be extracted from his victims before the police fell upon him and closed his nefarious establishment.

It was close upon two o'clock now, and the crowd was thinning off, and Tickey Tapp was thinking of closing down the game.

George Gore had re-entered, and Tickey Tapp's eyes glimmered as he saw him come back. He knew that the foolish lad had been away for more money, and had come back to try his luck once more; not that "luck" had much to do with the game of roulette, but George Gore believed that it had.

Gore walked up to the table and laid down a five-pound note to be changed.

Money was handed out for it in pounds, and ten shillings, and half-crowns. Half-a-crown was the smallest stake allowed at Tickey Tapp's table.

Tickey Tapp decided to run on the game a little longer. He could see that Gore was in funds again, and he intended to have those funds before he stopped the roulette-wheel for the night.

And in order to induce the reckless and stupid boy to plunge, and to get it over, he gave him a win to start with. Gore laid down a couple of pounds on red, and, as another punter had placed an equal amount on black, Tickey Tapp lost nothing by letting red win. A win of a couple of pounds to start with, encouraged Gore; his luck had changed at last, and he was going to break the bank. His eyes gleamed, and his breath came thick and fast.

He deserted the colours, and began to play on the numbers. Gore observed that the numbers were nearly all covered, and remembering, in spite of himself, Lumley-Lumley's warnings, he dropped a pound on zero after the ball

had started. Then he placed half-crowns on numbers 26, 32, 3, and 15—the numbers each side of zero on the wheel. If the wheel stopped anywhere near zero, he was sure to score now.

The wheel slackened down.

"Nineteen, red, impair, and passe."

Gore clenched his hand. Nineteen was the next number to 15; he had missed a win by a single hole again.

And in doing so he had lost his pound and his four half-crowns with which he had covered up so many numbers in order to make sure. He anathematised his stupidity in not putting an extra half-crown on 19, refusing to believe that if he had done so, 19 would not have been the number to come up.

"Make your game, gentlemen!" said Tickey Tapp blandly.

Knock, knock, knock!

It was a newcomer at the door. The punters were placing their stakes, and they did not take any notice of the knocking at the door. But as the door was opened by the man in charge, there was a sudden disturbance.

Instead of the password being given, there was the sound of a tussle, and the man in charge of the door came whirling through the heavy canvas hangings, dragging them down from the hooks with his weight.

Pheep!

It was the shrill blast of a police whistle.

Tickey Tapp turned pale.

"The police!" muttered Cutts of the Fifth.

"The police!" The words were repeated in various tones of fright among the players. "The police!"

Cutts made a dash for the window. He dragged away the canvas hangings there, and plunged headlong through the window, rolled in the ragged bushes outside, and picked himself up and ran. He had money on the table, but he left it there. He was only thinking of escaping without being recognised. Even Cutts' nerve shook at the thought

WATCH OUT FOR THIS COVER, CHUMS!



A feast of holiday fun and adventure in this week's grand school yarn of HARRY WHARTON & Co., at Greifriars.

of being arrested and taken to the local gaol, to be bailed out by the Head in the morning. It would have been a sudden and disgraceful termination of his career at St. Jim's.

Knox and Sefton of the Sixth followed him like lightning. They were out of the window, and running as if for their lives, almost before the blast of the police whistle had died away.

Some of the players followed them through the window, and some fled by another door. Some stood transfixed, too scared and startled to act.

Among the latter was George Gore. Tickey Tapp & Co. could not bolt. They had too much money on the table. And in another few moments they saw that it was unnecessary to run.

It was not the police. The fellows who came crowding in at the doorway, pitching the doorkeeper out of the way, were certainly not policemen.

They were juniors of St. Jim's. Tickey Tapp glared at them in angry amazement. He was relieved to find that his den had not been raided by the police. His sudden terror and dismay had changed to rage.

Gore swung round, and looked at the juniors blankly.

"Tom Merry!" he muttered. "You here!"

Tom Merry's hand was on Gore's shoulder the next moment.

"Where is Vavasour's money?" he said in a low voice.

Gore blushed.

"Vavasour's money! What do you mean?" he muttered thickly.

"I mean that you have taken twenty pounds from Vavasour's desk, and you are going to give it back to him."

"Is that what you've come for, hang you?"

"That, and other things."

"Hang you!"

Vavasour and Lumley-Lumley took Gore by the arms. The rest of the juniors had other work to do. Tom Merry left the bully of the Shell to Vavasour, while he devoted his attention to Tickey Tapp & Co.

"My banknotes, Gore," said Vavasour quietly. "Don't be afraid. We're going to keep it dark on conditions. But you've got to hand back the money."

Gore groped in his pockets, and without a word he handed the money back to its owner.

Vavasour slipped it into his pocket. "Now get out, and leave me alone," muttered Gore.

Vavasour shook his head.

"We've come here to shut up this place," he said.

"What!"

"And you're going to promise never to see that gang again, or else you're going to be exposed to the public as a thief!"

Gore groaned.

"Let me go! Hands off!"

Lumley-Lumley tightened his grip on Gore's arm.

"I guess we're sticking to you," he said.

Tickey Tapp and his associates had drawn together. The players had gone, or were going; they had no wish to be mixed up in a row. Only the gang remained—among them the fat gentleman whose great winnings had excited Gore's envy earlier in the evening. The way he acted now was a plain enough proof that he was a member of the gang. He was helping Griggs to collect up the money on the table. Some of the punters had grabbed some of it in the confusion, and some was scattered on the floor.

Tickey Tapp brandished a heavy fist at Tom Merry.

"How dare you come here?" he roared.

Tom Merry eyed him scornfully. "We've come to get a school-fellow out of your clutches, you swindling thief!" he said contemptuously.

"Don't you call me names," said Tickey Tapp furiously. "I'm an honest man, and I run a fair game!"

"Rats!"

"You've got him, anyway," said Tickey Tapp. "Take him away! Clear out!"

"We're not finished here yet."

Tickey Tapp clenched his fists.

"You impudent young scoundrel! What do you want?"

"We're going to smash up the place, and to-morrow the police will know that a gambling club has been run here," said Tom Merry calmly. "You'd better clear out while you've got time, Mr. Tapp."

"I tell you—"

"Shove the table over!" shouted Blake.

"Hurrah!"

"Ovah with it, deah boys!"

Tickey Tapp simply danced with rage.

"You let my property alone!" he roared. "You—you young villains!"

"Shut up, or we'll shove you over, too!" said Blake.

"Hands off my property—"

"Now, then; all together!" said Kangaroo, grasping the roulette-table.

Crash!

Tickey Tapp and Griggs and several more rascals rushed at the juniors to rescue their property. Tom Merry gave a shout:

"Collar them! Bump them! Wallop them!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hurrah!"

The excited juniors piled on the gang of gamblers. Tickey Tapp & Co. were simply overwhelmed by numbers. They were bumped on the floor, and rolled over, and sat upon by a dozen fellows, and pinned down helplessly.

In that position they had the pleasure, or otherwise, of watching the remorseless destruction of their property.

Tickey Tapp, who had paid twenty guineas—of somebody else's money—for that roulette machine, groaned as Monty Lowther's hammer descended upon it.

Crash, crash, crash, crash!

The wheel flew into pieces under Lowther's hammer.

Meanwhile, the other fellows were busy on the table and the chairs and everything that belonged to the gambling club.

Smash! Crash! Smash! resounded on all sides. The gambling gang looked on in fury.

"There! I think I've about finished that!" said Monty Lowther, surveying his handiwork at length with justifiable pride.

He had finished it; there was no doubt about that. The roulette-wheel was in fragments, and the bowl it had revolved in was in fragments, too. Tickey Tapp would require a new outfit when he restarted his sporting club in some other quarter.

Tom Merry looked round the wrecked room with a grin.

"I fancy that's pretty complete," he said. "Now for those swindlers! They ought to be put through it a bit."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Don't you dare to lay your 'ands on me!" roared Tickey Tapp. "I'll 'ave the law on yer!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, I think I can see you having the law on anybody!" he said contemptuously. "The law would be very glad to get hold of you, Mr. Tapp. You know very well that if the police had found you here, you would have been shoved in prison. There ought to be a law for giving rotters like you the cat. As there isn't, we'll give you the stump!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Roll 'em over, and give 'em a dozen each!" said Blake.

"Hands off!" shrieked Tickey Tapp.

"Lemme alone!" roared Mr. Griggs. But the juniors did not heed them.

Each of the gang, in turn, was rolled over and given a dozen cuts with a cricket stump. They roared, yelled, and struggled, but that was all they could do.



A new R.A.F. officer, stationed somewhere in Egypt, was carrying out exercises in navigation while over the Pyramids. Discovering the exact geographical position of the plane after a series of involved calculations, he suddenly yelled to the pilot in the forward cockpit. "Here, take off your flying helmet!" "Why?" shouted back the pilot. "Because, according to my calculations, we're now inside St. Paul's Cathedral!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Cooke, 29, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

"I guess we're finished here," drawled Lumley-Lumley. "Tickey Tapp, you'd better vamoose the ranch. The police will be looking for you to-morrow. Gentlemen, chaps, and kids, it's time we got back to bed!"

And the raiders, quite satisfied with the results of their visit to the old Manor House, crowded out of the wrecked room.

They left Tickey Tapp & Co. swearing fluently and vowing vengeance. But vengeance was not likely to be within their reach.

Tickey Tapp was pretty certain to take Lumley-Lumley's advice, and clear out of the neighbourhood while there was yet time. His game was up in that quarter, and he knew it.

Gore did not utter a word during the tramp home to St. Jim's. The juniors reached the School House, but as the Shell fellows went into their dormitory there was a sudden exclamation:

"So I've caught you!"

A light gleamed out. Knox was there! The prefect eyed the juniors with a malicious satisfaction.

"Caught!" he said. "Out of bounds at three in the morning!"

Tom Merry looked at him steadily.

"Do you know where we've been, Knox?"

"I don't!" said the Sixth Former. "But you'll have to explain to the Head in the morning! You're caught at last!"

"You'd have seen us if you hadn't been in such a hurry to get through the window," said Kangaroo.

"What!"

"We've been to the old house on the moor," said Tom Merry quietly.

"Wh-what!"

"We've smashed up the gambling club and wrecked the place, and we're going to set the police after those scoundrels to-morrow," said Tom Merry.

"It—it—it was you!" stammered Knox.

"Yes. And if you want the matter out before the Head, we're quite ready to tell him the whole story!" said Tom Merry scornfully.

"I—I—I shan't report you!" muttered Knox. "I—I'm willing to look over this. I—I shall let the matter drop."

"You'd better," said Manners.

Knox slunk out of the dormitory. He had discovered that Tom Merry & Co. were absent on his return to the school. And he had anticipated a triumph over his old enemies in the Shell. His triumph had been short-lived. Knox was not likely to have the matter carried before the Head.

Tom Merry put out the light, and sat on the edge of Gore's bed to speak to him before he turned in himself.

"Gore!"

"What do you want?" muttered Gore sullenly.

"I want to tell you that if you stop this foolery—and you'll have to stop it now—you've got nothing to fear."

"Vavasour—"

"Vavasour has agreed not to say a word. Lumley-Lumley knows, and he's going to keep mum. If you run straight after this, not a word will be said about your taking Vavasour's money."

Gore drew a deep breath.

"You haven't told the others?"

"Not a syllable."

"I've been a fool," muttered Gore—"a confounded fool! I was a fool to think I could beat Tickey Tapp at his own game! Now I've had time to think over it, I can see that Lumley-Lumley was right—the game isn't run fairly. And—"

"Chuck it right out of your mind, Gore, old man. There are better things to think about than rotten gambling."

"You're right, Tom Merry. I've made up my mind about that. And—and if you fellows keep dark what I've done, I swear that I'll never make a fool of myself like that again!"

Tom Merry's hand gripped Gore's in the darkness.

"Stick to that, old man, and you'll never be sorry for it," he said.

And Gore did stick to it; and certainly he had every reason to be thankful that Tom Merry & Co., in upholding the honour of St. Jim's, had saved him from disgracing himself.

(Next Wednesday: "THEY CALLED HIM A COWARD!" Condemned as a funk, shunned by his school-fellows, and an outcast, Harry Manners is fairly up against it in the next powerful yarn of St. Jim's. Look out for it!)



With the angry Removeites in hot pursuit, Hazeldene came tearing along under the elms. He reeled and fell at Harry Wharton's feet, utterly exhausted with running. "Wharton!"—his voice came hoarse, broken, gasping—"Help me!"

The Siege of a Study!

HARRY WHARTON looked up from his work in Study No. 1 at Greyfriars, and uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"What the dickens is all that row about?"

For some minutes there had been a terrific din in the corridor, composed of shouting, cat-calling, and kicking at a door. The noise was simply deafening, and Harry Wharton, who had been trying to work, naturally found it exasperating.

Nugent, who was sitting on the fender, looking after some chestnuts roasting at the study fire, glanced up and shook his head.

"Blessed if I know!" he replied. "Sounds as if some of the fellows are trying to get into a study farther up the corridor and can't manage it. It's only a Form row, I suppose."

"How the dickens am I to work while it's going on?" growled Wharton.

"Chuck it for a bit and have some chestnuts," was Nugent's practical suggestion.

"I want to get finished."

There was a fresh roar in the corridor, a renewed stamping of feet, and the crash of heavy boots kicking at oaken panels.

"Open this door!"

"Come out, you cad!"

"Let us in!"

The confused and mingled shouts came to the ears of the fellows in Study No. 1. The noise was increasing instead of diminishing, and Harry Wharton laid down his pen and rose from the table.

"Where are you going?" asked Nugent, getting up from the fender.

"I'm going to see what that row's about."

"It's no good interfering."

"They've no right to kick up such a disturbance when a fellow's trying to work!" growled Harry. "They ought to be at work themselves, as a matter of fact."

Nugent laughed.

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The MAKING of HARRY WHARTON!

By Frank Richards.

"Not much use your preaching industry to a crowd of the Remove, Harry," he remarked. "You're not exactly popular enough in the Form for your words to carry much weight."

Harry Wharton flushed angrily. "You needn't keep on reminding me that I'm unpopular," he said sharply. "I know that well enough, and I don't care a rap."

"I didn't mean to remind you of it, Harry, but—"

"Well, I suppose I can go and see what the row's about, anyway," said Wharton, crossing to the door. "Even so unpopular a person as myself may ask a civil question and get an answer, I suppose?"

Frank Nugent made no reply. He knew of old how useless it was to oppose Harry when he had made up his mind. He gave an expressive shrug of the shoulders, and followed his intractable chum from the study.

The roar of voices in the corridor increased in volume as the door was opened.

"Come out, you rotter!"

"Open this beastly door!"

"We'll burst it in if you don't!"

Wharton and Nugent looked along the corridor. Nearly a dozen fellows belonging to the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars—were collected outside the door of Study No. 3, shouting, kicking at the panels and thumping at them furiously. Conspicuous in the crowd was the burly Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove.

Wharton walked quickly along the passage, Nugent at his heels.

"Hallo! What's the matter here?"

Most of the fellows stared round at him. Bulstrode gave him a particularly aggressive look.

"What has that got to do with you?" he demanded rudely.

"I'm trying to work and this fearful row is stopping me, that's all," replied Wharton angrily; "and I think that's enough, too."

"Trying to work, are you? You never seem to be doing anything else that I can see, you beastly swot!" said Bulstrode. "Want to carry off another prize, eh?"

"That's my business!"

"Well, run away and work, if you want to," said Bulstrode. "I know you've had a mighty good opinion of yourself since you won the Seaton-D'Arcy prize, but you are not yet the head of the Remove. You can't give orders to the Form just yet."

"I don't want to, but—"

"So the best thing you can do is to hook it," said Bulstrode. "I advise you as a friend."

"Keep your advice till I ask for it!" snapped Wharton. "I tell you I can't work with this confounded row going on in the passage, and so I ask you, as decent fellows, to stop it."

"Rats! Catch us stopping it for you!"

"You see, this is how it is, Wharton," said Trevor. "We want to see Hazeldene, and he's locked himself in his study, and we've got to get hold of him."

"What has he done?"

"You ought to know better than we

—MORE STIRRING CHAPTERS OF HARRY WHARTON'S EARLY ADVENTURES AT GREYFRIARS

do, Wharton," said Trevor. "We've had a Form meeting and decided that Vaseline has got to be punished for that dirty trick he played over the Seaton-D'Arcy affair."

"I thought it had been decided to send him to Coventry for a time."

"You see, he takes that so calmly that we're bound to make him sit up somehow. Some of the Upper Fourth fellows have got hold of the story, and started chipping us about it. The Fifth and the Third will have it soon, and we shall never hear the end of it. We've got to show a proper regard for the dignity of the Form by making a public example of Vaseline."

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Well, we thought of a frogmarch round the Close," said Russell of the Remove. "Something like what we gave you the time you wouldn't come to football practice, you know, Wharton."

Harry Wharton turned red.

"Well, I don't care if you frogmarch Hazeldene round the Close, or round the country!" he exclaimed. "But I do object to this fearful row going on outside my door!"

"It's really too bad," said Nugent pacifically.

"Well, you see, we must have Hazeldene out."

"Of course we must!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "I don't see what we're wasting time on Wharton for! Hallo, in there!"

"Hallo!" came back the voice of Peter Hazeldene, the cad of the Remove.

"Open this door!"

"Shan't!"

"We'll burst it in!"

"You'll get into a row if you do!" "I don't care. We're going to make an example of you, Vaseline. You'll get off cheaper by facing the music at once."

There was no reply from the study. Hazeldene had evidently made up his mind not to face the music.

"He won't come out, the obstinate brute!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "We shall have to make him open the door."

And he delivered a tremendous kick at the lower panels, which made the door shudder.

That kick was the signal for a renewal of the attack on Study No. 3.

The juniors hurled themselves upon it, kicking and thumping and shouting out threats of the things that would happen to Hazeldene if he did not open the door.

Harry Wharton stood looking on in anger. Nugent pulled him by the arm, but Harry would not move from the spot.

"Better come, Harry," muttered Nugent. "It's no good rowing with half the Form. Besides, Hazeldene deserves to be ragged for his rotten trick over the exam!"

"I don't know about that. Bulstrode is a beastly bully, and he's making this the excuse to rag a fellow who hasn't pluck enough to stand up for himself," said Harry.

Nugent looked at him in astonishment.

"Surely you're not going to stand up for a fellow who played you such a dirty trick and nearly robbed you of the Seaton-D'Arcy prize?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I don't care what he did to me!" he exclaimed. "I don't like this sort of thing, and I think Bulstrode ought to be made to shut up. He's always on the

look-out for a chance to bully somebody."

"Well, there's something in that, but I don't see what you can do."

"This row has got to stop!" growled Wharton. "I'm not going in to-morrow with my preparation undone to please these silly asses. And I can't work with a row like a lunatic asylum broken loose in the passage. I say, Bulstrode, stop that row!"

"Yes, I can see myself stopping at your orders!" said Bulstrode, with a grin, and he delivered a tremendous kick at the door.

Harry Wharton made a stride forward.

The bully of the Remove was quite ready for him, and in another moment the two old enemies would have been grappling.

But at that moment came a sudden interruption.

"Boys, how dare you make that disturbance in the corridor!"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, and a sudden silence fell upon the juniors as he strode to the spot.

Detention for the Rioters!

MR. QUELCH stared angrily at the group of juniors and then at the bruised panels of the door. The din in the passage had brought the Form-master up from

When Peter Hazeldene was called upon to face the consequences of his cunning but futile scheming, the fellow who stood by him was his intended victim—Harry Wharton!

his quarters on the lower floor. In their excitement the juniors had not even remembered the existence of the Remove master.

"Boys, I am amazed! How dare you make such a disturbance!"

"You see, sir—" began Trevor.

The Form-master was frowning darkly.

He was a good-tempered man as a rule, but it was very clear that he was angry now.

"So no explanation is forthcoming!" he rapped out. "You belong to the Remove at a Public school, and you have acted like a gang of hooligans!"

The Removites turned red.

"I see that you, Wharton, are a prime mover in this disturbance."

Harry Wharton gave a start. As he had come out of his study to put a stop to the noise in the passage it was rather hard to be taken for one of the rioters, but the Form-master's mistake was a natural one.

"If you please, sir—" said Nugent.

"I did not ask you to speak, Nugent."

"But—"

"Silence!"

Nugent was silent. The Remove master's angry glance swept over the group of juniors.

"This afternoon," he said, "is a half-holiday. You will occupy it by writing out 200 lines each of the *Æneid*, and will not leave the school until they are written out and handed to me in my study."

Utter dismay fell upon the Removites.

The Form-master's sentence would interfere with the football practice, with the various excursions they had arranged for the afternoon—with everything, in fact.

But they knew that it was useless to argue with the Form-master. A bitter look came upon Harry Wharton's face. He felt the injustice of the sentence as far as it applied to himself, but he was too proud to make any attempt to explain. Mr. Quelch would probably have cut him short. Nugent made one attempt without success.

"May I speak, Mr. Quelch?"

"No, you may not!" snapped the Form-master. "You may do 200 lines of Virgil, as I have said, and take care that you bring them to me this afternoon!"

And Mr. Quelch stalked away, with his gown rustling behind him. The Removites looked at one another.

"Well, that is coming it strong and no mistake!" said Bulstrode. "There goes our half-holiday up the spout! All that rotter Hazeldene's fault!"

"All your own fault!" snapped Harry Wharton. "If you had shut up when I first asked you, this would not have happened."

"Quite true," said Trevor, with a nod.

"Well, it's one comfort that Wharton's dropped in for it, too," grinned Bulstrode. "Fancy old Quelch being in such a tantrum! I suppose we were making a bit of a row. Hope you'll like this way of spending a half-holiday, Wharton. You're fond of work, so there's some more for you to do."

"Somebody ought to have explained to Quelch," said Trevor, who was a good-natured fellow enough, though, like the rest of the Remove, he had little liking for Harry Wharton, who was too proud and reserved to be anything like a favourite. "It's beastly hard on Wharton, as he had nothing to do with the row."

"Serve him right for interfering!"

Harry Wharton went back to his study with Nugent. He was deeply annoyed, as the dark shadow on his face showed. There was an unpleasant glitter in his eyes.

"Hard cheese, Harry!" said Nugent, as he hurried over to the fire to look after his chestnuts. "Hallo! Burnt, as I expected."

"It's a beastly injustice!" said Harry angrily.

"Oh, don't get your back up against Quelch!" said Nugent. "Of course, finding us all there together, he thought we were all in it."

"He wouldn't allow us to explain."

"Well, he was in a temper," said Nugent. "And no wonder, considering the row those fellows were making. You were in a temper yourself."

Wharton grunted and sat down at the table.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It was a cheery voice at the door as a pleasant cheerful face looked in. It was Bob Cherry of the Remove.

Wharton looked up for a moment, and nodded without speaking, and Nugent grinned from the fender. Bob Cherry looked from one to the other.

"Not been rowing, have you?" he asked.

"No," said Nugent, laughing.

"I heard a fearful row in the corridor just before I came up—"

"That was Bulstrode and his lot trying to get into Hazeldene's study."

"Oh, they're after poor old Hazeldene!" grinned Bob Cherry. "His

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slimy ways have got him into trouble at last. Serve him right!"

"And got us into trouble, too," said Nugent. "Quelch heard the row, and came up and made himself unpleasant." "Lines, eh?" said Bob Cherry. "Never mind. I say, I want you two fellows to come out with me this afternoon. I'm thinking of getting a car in the village, and going for a drive."

"Can't come," said Wharton, without looking up.

"Booked for the afternoon?"

"We're detained," explained Harry Wharton. "We were in the passage when Quelch came down on Bulstrode's gang, and he lumped us all together, and gave us two hundred lines each of Latin, to be done this afternoon."

"My hat, that was coming it rather strong!"

"Beastly injustice!" growled Wharton. "I was getting my prep done early so as to have the afternoon and evening free, and now——"

"It's rough. But weren't you really mixed up in the row?"

"No, of course not. I went out to stop it?"

"Ha, ha! But why didn't you explain that to Quelch?"

Harry Wharton was silent.

"He wouldn't listen," said Nugent. "I tried to, but he was in a tantrum."

"Well, that's soon settled," said Bob Cherry. "I'll explain to him if you like."

Harry Wharton made a hasty movement.

"Don't do anything of the kind!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?"

"We can stand it. He was unjust, but I'd rather do two hundred lines than ask anything at his hands!" said Wharton savagely.

"Rot!" replied Bob Cherry promptly. "There's no sense in sulking under a sense of injustice when the thing can be set right by a few words."

Nugent looked at Wharton. He agreed with Cherry, but he did not like to try to overrule his obstinate chum. Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I tell you, I don't want you to go to him, and that settles it!" he exclaimed.

"Not by long chalks," said Bob Cherry coolly. "It doesn't settle it. If you don't consent to my going to the Form-master——"

"I don't, I tell you!"

"Well then, I dare say I can manage to do it without your consent," said Bob Cherry, going out of the study and closing the door with a slam.

Wharton sprang up and tore the door open; but Bob Cherry was already at the end of the corridor, and going down the stairs three at a time. Wharton turned back into the study with an angry exclamation.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said Nugent. "Cherry means well, and if he gets us off that detention it will be a jolly good thing."

"I won't have any meddling with my affairs!" exclaimed Harry angrily. "I suppose I can do as I like without being dictated to by Bob Cherry?"

"Well, you see, I'm concerned in this as well as you," said Nugent. "I don't want to lose my half-holiday if I can help it."

Harry Wharton gave a scornful laugh.

"I would not ask anything of Mr. Quelch now for a dozen holidays!" he exclaimed.

"Neither would I if he were the tyrant you are trying to make him out to be," said Nugent quietly. "But he's

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a decent master, labouring under a mistake, and there's nothing mean or mission-guided that I can see in pointing it out to him."

Wharton did not reply. He sat down angrily in the chair and took up his pen, but he did not resume his work. A quiet mind was needed for that. He waited, with a gloomy frown on his brow, for the return of Bob Cherry.

No Thanks!

BOB CHERRY looked back as he reached the bottom of the stairs, and, seeing that he was not pursued, took his way at a more leisurely pace towards the Remove master's study. There was a genial grin upon Bob's features. He was interfering in the matter from a natural desire to see right done, and to save Nugent from an unjust detention.

Towards Harry Wharton his feelings were different. It was very difficult to like Harry. Bob Cherry was growing to understand what splendid qualities might be hidden behind the proud, reserved nature of Wharton. But Wharton's pride was not pleasant to those who felt, as it were, the keen edge of it, and it is to be feared that the mischievous Bob sometimes found amusement in provoking the hasty, passionate temper of Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry knocked at the door of the Form-master, and Mr. Quelch bade him enter. Bob Cherry entered.

"Ah, it is you, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch. "You have come, I suppose, to bring me the lines I gave you for inattention in class this morning?"

Bob Cherry coloured.

"N-no, sir," he replied. "I—I haven't done them yet. I was thinking of doing them this evening, sir, if you don't mind."

Mr. Quelch smiled. Like nearly everybody at Greyfriars, he liked Bob for his frank and open-hearted ways.

"Well, well, Cherry, I dare say that will do," he said. "But what is it now?"

"I want to speak to you about Nugent and Wharton, sir."

Bob Cherry hesitated, and the master of the Remove signed to him to go on, though he was looking a good deal surprised.

"About their detention, sir," said Bob Cherry, encouraged. "I have just heard that they have to stay in this afternoon to do lines."

"For taking part in an unprecedented and outrageous riot in the upper corridor," said Mr. Quelch, with a majestic wave of the hand.

"But they didn't, sir."

"Eh? I do not understand you, Cherry."

"They didn't take part in the row, sir. They went out of their study to see what it was all about, and then you came up."

A shade of vexation crossed Mr. Quelch's face.

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, sir, that's how it is!"

"How do you know this, Cherry? You were not there."

"They've just told me, sir."

"Ahem! I know you to be a truthful boy, Cherry. You are certain of what you say?" said the Remove-master.

"Quite certain, sir."

"Then—ahem!—you may tell Wharton and Nugent that they are relieved of their detention," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry they did not explain at the time. Perhaps, however, I did not give them the opportunity. You may give them my message, Cherry."

"Thank you, sir!"

"And, in consideration of your having brought this unfortunate misapprehension to my notice," said Mr. Quelch, "you are excused your own lines."

Bob Cherry turned red.

"Oh, sir, I—I didn't mean that! I—I——"

"I know you did not mean that, or anything like it, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch, smiling genially. "You are not the kind of boy to think of a reward for doing your duty. That is why I wish to recognise your conduct in this way. You are excused the lines. You may go."

"Thank you very much, sir!"

And Bob Cherry left the study in a very genial and grateful frame of mind. He ascended the stairs to take the good news to Study No. 1. Bulstrode was coming along the passage. He stopped Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, Cherry!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you know half the Form's detained this afternoon through that young cad Hazeldene?"

"I thought it was for making a row in the passage," said Bob innocently.

"Well, so it was; but we were making the row because he wouldn't open the door. He had locked himself in his study when he found we were after him."

"I see. What were you going to do to him?"

"Make an example of him to the whole school. We thought of a frog-march round the Close, and then making him run the gauntlet in the gym, and then——"

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"Then I don't wonder at his locking himself in his study," he remarked. "He wouldn't exactly be looking forward to that sort of entertainment."

"He's got to go through it, though," said Bulstrode, "especially now he's got us detained for the afternoon. The kids in the Third Form have been chipping us about cheating at exams."

"Why, you haven't been cheating at exams, have you?"

"No," howled Bulstrode; "but Vaseline has! He tried to do Harry Wharton out of the Seaton-D'Arcy prize by a mean trick, as you know as well as I do."

Bob looked the bully of the Remove straight in the eyes.

"I know all about it," he said. "But he's been sent to Coventry, and now I think the matter ought to be allowed to drop. It's time!"

"Utter rot!" said Bulstrode. "I stopped you to ask you if you were going to take a hand in the game this afternoon."

"What game? I thought you were detained."

"We shall be out before tea-time, when we're going to put Vaseline through it."

"Better leave him alone."

"Rats! I didn't ask you for any advice on the subject, Bob Cherry. I want to know whether we're to depend on you to lend a hand in ragging that young cad."

"No, you're not!" said Bob tartly.

"Go and hang yourself, then!" said Bulstrode, turning away. Bob Cherry tapped him on the shoulder and stopped him.

"Look here!" said the new boy in the Remove. "I know you, Bulstrode. You've had some quarrel with Hazeldene, I suppose, and are spiteful about it, and you're a bully of the first water! You don't care a rap about the trick he played on Wharton. You were pleased when you thought Wharton had lost the Seaton-D'Arcy, and you couldn't hide your disappointment when the

truth came out and he won it. You've picked on this as an excuse for ragging Hazeldene because you're a beastly bully!"

Bulstrode's face had gradually assumed the hue of a well-boiled beetroot as he listened to Bob Cherry's plain speaking.

"You—you cheeky cad!" he howled at last. "Do you want me to wipe up the passage with you?"

"Yes, if you can do it!" said Bob Cherry calmly.

Bulstrode looked at him. He was a head taller than the new boy of Greyfriars, and, in fact, old enough and big enough to have been in the Shell long ago, if he had not been too idle and careless to get his remove. But there was something in Bob's look which made him hesitate to attack the junior.

"Now you know my opinion of you and your precious ragging!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm not going to have a hand in it, and I look on you as a rotten bully! That's straight from the shoulder, and you can put it in your pipe and smoke it!"

And Bob Cherry walked away, leaving Bulstrode standing there, scowling with rage.

Bob entered Study No. 1, and bestowed a hearty slap on Nugent's shoulder. Harry Wharton did not look up.

"You've seen Quelch?" asked Nugent.

"Yes, I've seen him, and he's listened to reason. I've explained, and you're let off your detention," said Bob.

"Good! What do you think of that, Harry?"

"I think it's like Bob Cherry's check to meddle in my affairs—at least, without being asked!" retorted Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry turned red.

"Is that how you look at it?" he asked. "Is that what you call gratitude, Wharton? I've got you out of a scrape—"

"Unasked!"

"Oh rats! You are a sulky beast, that's what's the matter with you!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warmly. "You ought to be sent to Coventry!"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet, his eyes gleaming.

"Do you want to be thrown out of this study, Cherry?" he asked, his voice trembling with anger.

Bob Cherry's eyes were gleaming, too.

"You tried to do that once before, if you remember," he said. "I don't think you made much of a success of the job!"

Harry Wharton made a swift step forward, but Nugent pushed him back.

"None of that, Harry!" he said. "Bob Cherry has come here as my friend."

Harry's hands dropped to his sides again.

"Have your own way," he said sulkily; "I don't care!"

Bob Cherry's face relaxed; his brief anger passed.

He was never angry for more than a few moments.

"I say, what's the good of rowing?" he said. "I have done you a good turn, at all events. It's going to be a jolly fine afternoon. You're not detained now. Will you both come out with me in the car? I've hired the car already for the three of us, and it's my treat. I'll be glad for you to come!"

"I will, with pleasure," said Nugent, "and thank you!"

Harry Wharton was silent. Bob Cherry looked at him.

"Well, and you, Wharton?"

"I won't come."

"Don't be a cad," said Nugent.

"Come with us, Harry. Why can't you?"

"Because I don't choose."

For once Nugent looked angry. His patience had many times been sorely tried by Harry's intractable temper, and it looked like giving way now.

"Well, do as you like," he said. "I don't see why I should refuse Cherry's offer because you choose to be sulky. I'm going."

"Go, and be hanged!"

Nugent relented again.

"I wish you'd come, Harry."

"I won't come!"

"That settles it!" said Nugent, turning to Bob Cherry with a set face. "I'm coming with you, Cherry. What time do we start?"

"The car's going to be ready at half-past two."

"I'll be ready, then."

Bob Cherry nodded. He cast a

car, you know. I'll come with you, if you like."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"You can come, if you like, Bunter. Meet you at the door at two-fifteen, you two."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

"I won't be late," promised Billy Bunter, blinking at Bob Cherry. "I'll be there, and if you take my advice, Cherry, you'll have a lunch-basket—"

But Bob Cherry was gone.

The Hunting of Hazeldene!

THE Close was quiet and deserted under the old elms. The spring sunshine fell brightly upon the old trees, glimmering on the budding green in the twigs, and falling in patches of light amid the shadows of the great branches.

Harry Wharton was walking alone there, with a book under his arm.

In the Remove-room in the great



As Wharton and Nugent came hurriedly along the corridor they saw a crowd of Removites collected outside Hazeldene's study, shouting, kicking at the door and thumping on it furiously. "Come out, you rotter! Open this beastly door! We'll burst it in if you don't!"

curious glance at Wharton, who had opened his books again, and was working. His face was hard and sullen.

"I say, you fellows—"

It was Billy Bunter's voice. Billy Bunter, known in the Remove as the Owl, on account of the huge spectacles that adorned his visage, shared Study No. 1 with Wharton, Nugent, and Bulstrode. He had just come in in time to hear the last few words.

"Hallo, Owl!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows," repeated Bunter, "I hear you want a third party in your car. I'll come, if you like, as Wharton won't. Wharton is a sulky boulder, you know, and it's no good trying to persuade him. Besides, I'm much better company than he is. I'd offer to pay my whack, you know, but my postal order hasn't arrived. I've been expecting a postal order for some days now, but it has got delayed somehow. You had better take a lunch-basket in the

building nearly a dozen juniors were suffering detention, and wearily writing out line after line of the great classic which, from being used as a form of punishment, was growing stale and wearisome to them, instead of glowing with the light and life of grand old days. The detention was growing near its end now, save for the very slow workers.

Harry Wharton was not thinking of them, nor of his escape from similar punishment by the intervention of Bob Cherry. He was thinking of himself mainly—a fault his solitary nature frequently caused him to fall into. He was feeling lonely and depressed.

Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Billy Bunter had gone off cheerfully enough at half-past two in the car hired from the village. A drive through the pleasant country lanes in the springtime of the year was decidedly pleasant, and,

with a swelling heart, Harry Wharton thought of them bowling along gaily.

He had acted unreasonably, he knew, but he had hardly expected Nugent to take him at his word. He could not admit to himself that he had grown so accustomed to Nugent's patience as to presume upon it. His hasty word had been taken; Nugent was gone, and Harry was feeling lonely and deserted.

Most of the Greyfriars fellows were beyond the school walls. From the Sixth Form ground came the distant shouts of footballers practising. The Lower Forms were out of gates, except for Harry, strolling moodily under the elms, and the detained dozen, writing away wearily in the Form-room.

Harry looked round at the sound of a footstep, and saw Hazeldene. Hazeldene nodded to him with an ingratiating smile. The cad of the Remove was not looking very happy. He had a worried expression which was new to him.

Hazeldene had earned the nickname of Vaseline in the Greyfriars Remove by his oily and insinuating ways, and he usually contrived to keep on good terms with most of the fellows, though none really liked him.

But he had overreached the mark at last.

The attempt to win the Seaton-D'Arcy prize by an unfair trick had roused the indignation of the Remove to a high pitch, and it was impossible for Hazeldene, with all his cunning, to pacify his incensed Form-fellows.

More than once Hazeldene had lent a hand in ragging some fellow or other who had been obnoxious to the Remove, Harry Wharton among others. But he had no desire to take a dose of the same medicine himself. He had quivered like a cornered rabbit in his study that day with the Remove hammering at the door. Now he went about in momentary anticipation of trouble.

Strangely enough, Harry Wharton, the boy whom he had injured, was the only fellow in the Remove whom he did not fear now.

There was something about a nature like Harry's which reassured him. Harry Wharton, at a word, was as likely to knock him down as look at him. But even in the contempt he knew Harry felt for him, Hazeldene found a feeling of security. He knew that Harry, though he had most cause to complain, would never have a hand in the persecution he was subjected to.

Harry gave him a cold look as he came up, almost squirming in his desire to be agreeable.

"Hallo, Wharton!" he said, with painful affability. "I see you've not gone with Nugent."

"No!" said Harry shortly.

"Feel inclined to come for a stroll?"

"No."

"I suppose you don't know when Bulstrode will be coming out?"

"No."

"He's a rotten bully!" said Hazeldene viciously. "He's started all this against me because I wouldn't lend him ten shillings when I had a tip from my pater yesterday."

Harry Wharton was silent.

"I see you're not taking part in it, Wharton. As a matter of fact, old fellow, it was really a joke more than anything else—what I did over the exam, you know. I never meant to keep the prize."

"Don't tell lies!"

"But, really—"

"Oh, don't talk to me!"

Hazeldene's lips were drawn tightly over his teeth. He looked as if he

would have sprung upon Harry Wharton just then, if he had dared, as was indeed the case.

"Well, you needn't be so rotten about it," he growled, after a moment.

"I've been put through it enough, I think, since it happened. The whole Form's down on me. Bob Cherry said I ought to be thankful for not being given away to the Head and expelled. But what's the good of sticking it out here if it's going to be like this? I'm sick of it—I can tell you!"

Harry Wharton's face relaxed a little. He had known what it was like to be solitary and disliked, and he felt a touch of compassion even for the cad of the Remove.

"Well, it was your own fault," he said, after a while. "You knew what you were risking when you played that trick. And you were lucky not to be expelled."

"If you call this luck," said Hazeldene, "I've had enough of it. I'd cut it all, and leave Greyfriars if it were not for the mater and—and my sister. She would be disappointed—What's that?"

It was a loud shout, ringing across the Close. It told of the juniors released from detention. Hazeldene changed colour.

"They're out!"

He gave a quick glance round and hurried away. Harry Wharton sniffed contemptuously. He would never have thought of showing such a craven spirit.

The detained Removites were at liberty. There was reason for Hazeldene's uneasiness, for it was extremely probable that their first thought would be to get to close quarters with the fellow to whom they considered that they owed their detention. There was a rush of feet under the elms in the quiet corner of the Close.

"There he is!"

A moment more and Harry Wharton was surrounded by Removites. There was a general exclamation of disappointment.

"It's not Vaseline."

"It's the Wharton beast!"

Bulstrode came up to Harry with an aggressive manner.

"Where's Vaseline?"

"If you mean Hazeldene, I don't know," said Harry.

"Haven't you seen him?"

"Yes."

"How long ago?" demanded half a dozen voices.

"A few minutes."

"Good!" said Bulstrode, with great satisfaction. "You can come along with us and lend a hand, if you like, Wharton. Which way did he go? We're going to put him through it this time, and no mistake. He's mucked up our half-holiday, and we're going to make him properly sorry for himself."

"Rather!" said Trevor. "Which way did he go, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton did not speak.

"Which way?" bawled Bulstrode. "Quick! We want to collar him before he can hide himself anywhere. He'll skulk about till tea-time if we give him a chance. He knows we can't touch him when the masters are about."

"I'm not going to tell you."

"Why not?"

"I don't like this idea of ragging Hazeldene."

"You cheeky cad!" roared Bulstrode. "Tell us where he is, or we'll wipe up the mud in the Close with you."

Harry's face set obstinately.

"This way!" yelled a voice farther off under the elms. "He's dodging round the gym. I saw him."

With a yell the crowd of juniors rushed off, leaving Harry by himself. The Removites disappeared round the gym, on the track of the unhappy cad of the Form, and silence fell in the old Close again.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders carelessly. He was sorry for Hazeldene; but, after all, the fellow was a cad, and deserved punishment. It was no business of his, anyway.

But he had not seen the last of the affair, as he thought. There came a sudden pattering of feet, and a white-faced junior came tearing along under the elms. He reeled and fell at Harry Wharton's feet.

It was Hazeldene, and he was utterly exhausted with running.

"Wharton!" His voice came hoarse, broken, gasping. "Help me!"

Not All Bad!

HARRY WHARTON stood hesitating. The sheer terror of the cad of the Remove touched his heart strangely.

The whooping of the fellows in pursuit could be heard coming closer. They had evidently caught Hazeldene once, and he had got away. Now they were close upon the track again, and to avoid them was impossible.

As Harry stood looking at the wretched junior, the Removites came rushing on the scene and surrounded them. Bulstrode and King thrust themselves between Harry Wharton and the cad of the Remove. The wretched junior was grasped in half a dozen pairs of hands and hauled to his feet.

"Got him!" roared Bulstrode.

"Keep under the trees!" exclaimed King. "We don't want to be spotted from any of the study windows."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Bulstrode; and the victim of the Remove's wrath was dragged away farther into the shadows of the thick old elms. "Keep him tight!"

"We've got him!"

"Don't you struggle, you fool! You'll only get it worse!"

"Keep still, you young idiot!"

Hazeldene was struggling savagely. He was fighting with his hands, feet and nails, and several of the Removites reeled away with red marks scored down their faces.

"The—the wild beast!" howled Trevor. "He's scratching like a cat! Hold his beastly hands!"

"Tie his wrists together with his handkerchief!" said Bulstrode.

"Let me go!" shrieked Hazeldene.

"Let me go! Help!"

"Shut up, you fool!"

"Stick a lump of turf in his mouth! Anybody would think we were killing him!" said Trevor, in disgust. "He's not getting it half so bad as he helped to give it to Wharton once himself."

"Rotten coward!" said King.

"Let me go!"

"Not this time, Vaseline! Keep his hands tight, or he'll start scratching again. Here's his handkerchief," said Bulstrode. "Hallo! What's this?"

He held up a locket which had fallen from Hazeldene's pocket in the struggle. The catch had been sprung, and it was open, and, to Bulstrode's amazement, the photograph of a girl was revealed—the face of a young girl with laughing eyes.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Look here!"

The grip of the juniors on Hazeldene was relaxed, and they crowded round, staring at the locket.

"Hallo, didn't know Hazeldene was in love!"

"Jolly good-looking!" said King. "But fancy her taking notice of a squirming little cad like Vaseline!"

"By Jove!" said Bulstrode. "I like this chivvy. Can I have it, Hazeldene? I'll stand you a tanner for the locket."

"Give it to me!" shouted Hazeldene furiously.

"Rats! I'll give you back the locket presently," said Bulstrode, putting it into his pocket. "But I'm going to keep the photo."

"Give it to me!"

"Yes, we'll give it to you—the raging!" grinned Bulstrode. "Collar him!"

Hazeldene struggled furiously in the hands of the Remove.

"You coward! Give me my sister's photograph!" he yelled.

Bulstrode stared at him.

"Your sister!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Russell. "Fancy that squirming young cad having a stunning sister like that! I don't believe him!"

"I don't, either," said King. "We should have heard of it before if he had a sister like that. It's a whopper!"

"She's my sister, and—"

"Rats!" said Bulstrode. "Anyway, I'm going to keep the photo. If she's your sister, you shall introduce me some time. Meanwhile—"

"Will you give me that photograph?"

"No, I won't! Now—"

"Let me go!" shrieked Hazeldene, struggling. "You cads, let me go! If Bulstrode won't give it up, I'll fight him for it, and I call on you all to see fair play."

The Remove was so astonished that they let Hazeldene go at once. The idea of Hazeldene—the fellow who had been known to let a Third Form fag bully him—fighting the burly Bulstrode seemed comical.

Bulstrode, the bully of the Form, could have licked any fellow in the Remove, with possibly a couple of exceptions, and he would not have thought of making more than a mouthful, so to speak, of Hazeldene.

After the first moment of amazement the Removites burst into a roar of mocking laughter.

But Hazeldene, for once in his life, was in earnest. He stood free for the moment and did not attempt to escape. He strode up to the bully of the Remove, his eyes flashing angrily.

"Will you give me that photograph?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Then take that, you coward!"

And Hazeldene's open hand came with a smack across the cheek of the bully of the Remove.

Bulstrode staggered back, more from surprise than anything else. There was a murmur of amazement from the Remove. The fellows looked at Hazeldene with a new respect, and not a hand was raised to touch him.

Bulstrode recovered himself in a moment. His face was suffused with rage as he glared at the cad of the Form.

"You—you idiot!" he muttered hoarsely. "Do you know what you're doing?"

"Give me my locket."

"Collar him, chaps! He shall have it a bit stronger for that!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

Not a Removite made a movement to obey.

"Collar him yourself!" said Trevor. "He has challenged you to a fight, and I don't see how you can get out of it."

"Get out of it! Do you think I want to get out of it?" yelled the infuriated Bulstrode. "Don't talk rot, Trevor! You know I could lick him with one hand!"

"Well, you had better take up his challenge, then!"

Bulstrode glared at Hazeldene, breathing fury.

"Do you mean that, you young fool?" he snarled. "Do you want to fight me?"

"You've got to give up that locket or fight me," said Hazeldene, with a determination of manner no one had ever observed in him before.

Bulstrode laughed harshly.

"Well, it won't be much of a penalty to fight a cad like you!" he exclaimed.

"Take off your jacket and come on!"

Hazeldene hesitated for a moment. He had little pluck, and he was no match for Bulstrode. He had taken on a task from which fellows in the Remove who had twice his pluck would have shrunk.

"Will you give me that locket, Bulstrode?"

"I'll give you a thick ear!"

"Then come on!" said Hazeldene, setting his teeth. "You—you thief! Come on!"

And Bulstrode came on, his eyes a gleam, his fists clenched, only to be swung back by a sharp grip on his shoulder before he could touch the cad of the Remove. He turned round savagely, to find himself looking into the face of Harry Wharton.

Hazeldene Faces the Music I

WHARTON'S hand dropped from the bully's shoulder, but his glance was calm and steady as he met Bulstrode's furious look. Harry had remained a spectator of the scene, amazed as anyone by the new development in the character of the boy who had been regarded in the Remove as a funk. An impulse had moved him to interfere now—a generous impulse, which was as much a part of his nature as was the hot temper which had so often brought him into difficulties.

"What do you mean, Wharton?" asked Bulstrode savagely. "What are you interfering for?"

"To see fair play. In the first place, Bulstrode has no right to keep the photograph of Hazeldene's sister."

"Mind your own business!"

"As Hazeldene says, he's a cad and a thief to keep it!" went on Harry, unmoved by the threatening looks around him. "Hazeldene's plucky to fight him for it—a better fellow than I ever suspected him of being—a better fellow than Bulstrode will ever be! If Bulstrode weren't a cad he would give up the locket."

"That's not the point now," said Trevor. "He's going to fight Hazeldene, so stand back and let them get to business before any prefects come down on us and put a stop to it."

"Stand back, Wharton!" shouted Bulstrode.

"Very well; but if there's going to be a fight, it's going to be a fair one, that's all," said Harry composedly. "I'll be your second, if you like, Hazeldene."

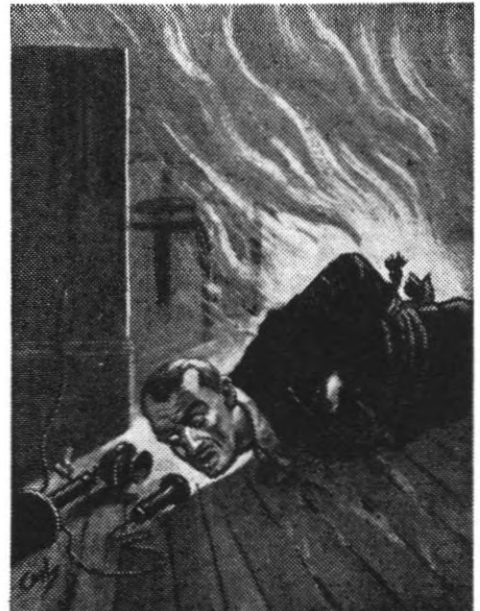
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No other fellow there would have offered to be second to the cad of the Remove, and Hazeldene gave Wharton a grateful glance.

"Thank you, Wharton," he said in a low voice.

"Get your jacket off," said Harry. "You'd better form a ring, you fellows, and give them plenty of room. Stand back!"

It was strange how the Remove obeyed the directions of the most unpopular fellow in the Form.

The ring was formed, and Bulstrode, who had intended to rush the affair through, as beneath his dignity to take seriously, sulkily removed his jacket and rolled up his sleeves.

Harry Wharton helped Hazeldene off with his jacket. The cad of the Remove was very pale, but the new determination was still in his face.

The Removites looked on with interest and wonder as the combatants faced one another. Hazeldene was appearing in such a new light that they could not get used to it yet. A ring of interested and amazed faces looked on as the cad of the Remove faced Bulstrode.

Bulstrode began with a savage attack, which was intended to send his adversary flying, but he found that his task was not so easy as he flattered himself it would be: Hazeldene had never been known to fight if he could help it, but he knew how to box, and he was no weakling. Some of Bulstrode's blows came home, but most were guarded, and Hazeldene put in several smart counters.

"By Jove!" murmured King, in utter wonder. "The fellow can fight!"

Hazeldene certainly could fight. Had the foes been anything like equally matched physically, the cad of the Remove would probably have won. But it was not so, and Bulstrode was pretty certain to pull off a victory, if only by sheer weight and size.

Finding that he could not carry it all his own way by his rushing tactics, the bully of the Remove took matters more calmly, and brought science to his aid. And then his strength and reach gave him a big advantage.

Twice Hazeldene went down heavily under savage blows, and each time he came up to the scratch again, looking more and more groggy.

Three rounds had been fought out when Hazeldene fell for the second time, and then he gasped painfully when time was called. He sat panting on the knee Harry Wharton made for him.

"Are you done?" asked Harry.

Hazeldene gritted his teeth.

"Not unless he gives me the locket!"

Harry glanced across at Bulstrode. The latter seemed to be little the worse for the encounter so far. He was breathing rather quickly, and rubbing a bruise on his cheek. He was plainly in much better form than Hazeldene.

"Will you give up the locket now, Bulstrode?" said Harry.

Bulstrode laughed scoffingly.

"No, I won't!"

Hazeldene rose to his feet at the call of time.

"I'm going on, then!"

The fourth round was all in Bulstrode's favour. He hit out with left and right, and almost every blow came home on Hazeldene's face, and the latter's counters were feeble and ineffective.

At the end of the round, Hazeldene lay gasping on the earth.

Harry Wharton bent over him. Two or three fellows moved forward to lend a helping hand, and Hazeldene was placed in a sitting posture on Wharton's knee, and Harry wiped his hot face.

"Better give it up," he whispered. "You can't go on!"

Hazeldene shook his head without speaking.

"You've got no chance left."

"I'm going on, though."

"Time!" called out Trevor.

Hazeldene staggered into the ring Bulstrode faced him with a savage grin. At the first blow Hazeldene reeled, and as he reeled, Bulstrode's left came up in a savage upper-cut, and he was fairly lifted off his feet and hurled to the ground. He went down like a sack of coal.

"One, two, three, four—"

Hazeldene made a wild effort to rise. But he sank back again. He could not stand upon his feet, let alone continue the fight.

"Finished?" grinned Bulstrode. "My hat, you asked for it, and now you've got it!"

"I'm not done!" groaned Hazeldene. "I'll fight you till you give me my locket!"

Bulstrode laughed mockingly.

"You shall have the locket, but I'm going to keep the photograph!"

"Shame!" murmured several voices. "Give him the photograph. It's his!"

"I won't give it to him!" said Bulstrode deliberately. "And if there's a fellow in the Remove who can make me, let him come here and do it!"

The bully looked round the ring of faces with a cold sneer upon his lips. He knew his power. He had presumed on it too often not to know it well enough.

"I'm going to keep the photograph," he repeated, "if only to punish Hazeldene for his confounded cheek!"

"You're not!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, springing to his feet from the side of the gasping Hazeldene. "You're not going to keep it, Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode gave him a glare.

"What have you got to say about it, Wharton?"

"This much!" snapped Harry angrily. "That you're a cad and a thief to keep the locket, and that if you won't give it up I'll make you—or have a jolly good try!"

"Bravo!" cried two or three voices. Bulstrode sneered savagely.

"You'd better try, then," he said, "for I'm not going to give it up! My hat! I'll teach you to check me!"

His clenched fist flew out, but Harry Wharton stepped back and avoided the blow. Hazeldene staggered to his feet. Harry Wharton tore off his jacket and threw it to the defeated junior. He rolled up his sleeves, and faced Bulstrode with clenched fists.

"Now I'm ready for you, Bulstrode!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter here?"

It was the well-known cheery voice of Bob Cherry, who, with Nugent and Bunter at his heels, burst upon the scene.

(How will Harry fare in his fight with the bully of the Remove? You simply must read all about it, so don't miss next week's stirring chapters. See that your GEM is booked for you.)

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