

HOW TO WIN A MOTOR CYCLE. (See page 13.)

The Magnet 1¢ LIBRARY 2

NO. 97.

Complete School Tale for All.

By Frank Richards.

VOL. 4.



A LESSON FOR THE BULLIES!



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The Greyfriars Sweepstake

A Splendid, Long, Complete
School Tale of
The Boys of Greyfriars.
BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. An Amazing Mystery.

HARRY WHARTON, the captain of the Remove—the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars—thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets, and wrinkled his brows. He was looking worried and thoughtful, as if he had something on his mind—as indeed he had.

He was standing by the staircase, at the end of the Sixth Form passage. He had been coming away from Wingate's study, after a talk with the captain of Greyfriars on the ever-important subject of football, when a curious circumstance had caught his attention, and brought him to a stop in a perplexed frame of mind.

A constant succession of juniors, belonging mostly to his own Form, came up to the Sixth Form passage, went along it to Carberry's study, and disappeared there. In a few minutes each would come out, and walk quickly away.

Now, as Carberry was a confirmed bully, and the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars, his study was generally avoided by the juniors. Even when Carberry came to the door, and shouted "Fag!" at the top of his voice—at which signal fags were supposed to hurry up from all quarters—it generally led to the youngsters who were within hearing stealing away on tiptoe. Fagging for the bully of the Sixth was not pleasant and Carberry never helped his fags with their work as the other

Sixth Form fellows mostly did. A chap in a lower Form avoided Carberry's study as sedulously as he avoided the doctor's—as a rule!

But the rule was broken now—with a vengeance.

Harry had felt curious as he saw Trevor of the Remove pass him in the passage, and go into Carberry's study. When Russell and Mayne followed, he was surprised. When Micky Desmond came along and went in, he was amazed. Now he stood at the end of the passage, looking on in blank astonishment. A dozen juniors had passed him, and each had gone in to see Carberry.

Wharton wrinkled his brows deeply. What did it mean?

Unless Carberry had suddenly, without warning, turned over a new leaf, and started in life as an entertainer of fags, there was no explanation—unless the juniors had all taken leave of their senses.

And Harry felt a sense of annoyance, too, from the fact that he was captain of the Remove, and had evidently been left out of the confidence of the juniors.

Something was on—but what? Knowing Carberry's character as he did, Harry Wharton had no difficulty in deciding that it was something of a blackguardly nature. But what? and how came the juniors mixed up in it?

"Harry!"

It was Frank Nugent calling. But Harry Wharton did not heed. Another Removeite was coming along—it was Elliott.

Wharton tapped him on the shoulder as he passed and Elliott looked round.

"Anything on, Elliott?"

"Don't you know?"

"Know what?"

"What's on?"

"No."

"Oh!" said Elliott. "It's no good asking me, then."

And he walked on quickly, evidently to avoid further questioning. Wharton looked after him in silence. Elliott stopped at Carberry's study, tapped at the door, and entered. The door closed behind him.

Wharton rubbed his nose in a thoughtful way. He had never been so perplexed in his life before. What could this succession of visits to the most unpopular senior at Greyfriars mean?

"Harry! Coming?"

Nugent came along to look for his chum.

"Hallo! here you are! What's the matter? Why didn't you come?"

"I'm working out a problem."

"Rats! No time for problems now. Come down to the footer."

"Yes, but this is a—well, a corker," said Wharton. "Look! there comes Ogilvy, of ours. Watch him."

"What for?"

"To see where he goes."

"What the dickens—" began Nugent, in amazement.

"Just watch; that's all."

Ogilvy nodded rather awkwardly to the two chums as he passed, and quickened his pace a little, as if to avoid any chance of speaking. He went on to Carberry's door, tapped, and entered as Elliott had done.

Nugent looked at Wharton inquiringly.

"He's gone in to see Carberry."

"Exactly."

"Well, what about it?"

"What has he gone there for?"

"To fag for him, I suppose."

Wharton shook his head decidedly.

"Not at all. Ogilvy is the fourteenth chap I've watched go into Carberry's study in the last quarter of an hour."

"Phew! The room must be getting full up."

"They're not staying there, only one or two at a time. Look! there's Elliott coming out."

Carberry's door opened, and Elliott stepped into the passage. He glanced towards the chums of the Lower Fourth, and walked up the passage in the opposite direction. As that direction took Elliott a long way round to get out, it was pretty clear that his object was to avoid Wharton and Nugent.

Frank Nugent gave a whistle. He was as perplexed as Harry. Before he could speak, Ogilvy followed Elliott out, glanced down the passage at them, and then walked away quickly in the direction Elliott had taken.

"Well, what does it mean?" said Harry.

"Something on."

"And something rotten, or Carberry wouldn't be mixed up in it."

Nugent grinned.

"Exactly. You have our respected prefect's character to a T. He's trying some new dodge of some sort, and getting all the fools of the Remove mixed up in it."

"There were other fellows as well as ours. Look! here comes Temple and the Upper Fourth crew."

Temple, Dabney & Co. were coming up the passage. They glanced at the two Removites, and Wharton made a step forward to speak. The Upper Fourth-Formers stopped. They were never averse to chipping the Remove at any opportunity, and apparently Temple and his chums saw an opportunity here.

"Hallo!" said Temple, in his bland manner, which the Removites said he had inherited from his uncle, who was a bishop—"hallo! my dear youths! So glad to see you looking well—and with clean collars, too."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Wharton, with Lower Fourth frankness. "Are you going to Carberry's study?"

"Yes."

"Oh, rather!"

"Though I don't see what it matters to a Remove kid," added Fry.

"What's the little game?" demanded Wharton abruptly. "What is it Carberry is getting up, and mixing the Lower Forms up in?"

"You're not in the secret, then?"

"No."

"Well, I suppose it's no good letting Remove kids into it," said Temple loftily. "You'd better go and ask Carberry, if you want to know."

"He wouldn't be likely to tell them, though," said Fry. "The best thing they can do is to go and play hop-scotch, and not ask questions."

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"Look here—"

"Sorry," said Temple blandly. "We haven't time, or we'd be very pleased to stop and contemplate your charming features. Come on, you chaps!"

"Oh, rather!"

And Temple, Dabney & Co. passed on, and tapped at Carberry's door, and disappeared into the study.

Wharton and Nugent exchanged glances of exasperation. They were curious to know what was going on; but that was not all. Wharton naturally felt that as captain of the Form he had a right to know what was toward, and he felt a conviction that it was something that would not bear the light.

"Look here, we're going into this," he said. "Carberry's not going to lead the Remove by the nose if I can help it."

"Rather not!"

"Hallo! here's Blundell and Bland of the Fifth! I wonder if—"

"Ask them!"

Wharton nodded. Blundell and Bland came by, hardly deigning to glance at the two Lower Fourth-Formers, in their great dignity as members of the Fifth. But Wharton spoke to them just as if they had been ordinary human beings, somewhat to their lordly surprise.

"I say, Blundy—"

"Oh, don't bother, kid," said Blundell.

"Are you going to Carberry's study?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Anything going on?"

"Yes," grinned Blundell; "I am."

And he went on, Bland following him with a chuckle. The two Removites looked after them wrathfully.

"Blessed if I don't go into the study myself!" said Wharton, exasperated.

Nugent shook his head.

"It wouldn't do, kid. Carberry's carefully keeping it all from you, whatever it is. You'd get the order of the boot."

"I don't care! I—"

"Hallo! here's Bunter!"

Wharton's face cleared as the fat junior came along the passage. If Bunter was going to Carberry's study, there would be no further difficulty. It was always easy to get anything out of Bunter—anything except money.

"Good!" said Harry. "Stop him; we'll make him talk!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Tells all He Knows.

BILLY BUNTER came along unsuspectingly. He was too shortsighted to notice Wharton and Nugent standing in the angle of the staircase. He was blinking straight ahead through his big spectacles. Blundell and Bland had just disappeared into Carberry's study.

Wharton and Nugent stepped out as the Owl of the Remove came abreast of them, and took him by either arm. Billy Bunter gave a jump.

"Oh, I—I say, you fellows, you startled me!"

"Never mind, Bunt—"

"But I do mind!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at them indignantly. "You know what a jolly weak constitution I've got. I only keep it up at all by taking plenty of nourishment, and I've been kept very short lately. I might have fallen down in a fit. How would you like that?"

"It's more a question of how you'd like it, I think," grinned Nugent.

"Are you going to Carberry's study?" asked Harry.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, you're in it, too, then! Look here, something's going on in the Remove—something with Carberry mixed up in it, and they have kept it dark from me."

Bunter chuckled.

"Stop your cackling!" growled Wharton. "Look here you've got to tell me all you know about it."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Now, go ahead! What's the little game?"

"Well, you see—"

"No beating about the bush!"

"Of course, I wouldn't think of prevaricating," said Bunter with dignity. "I should like to tell you all I know, only—you see—"

"If you've promised, of course that makes a difference," said Harry hastily. "I don't want you to break a promise."

"Oh, no, it isn't that."

"What is it, then?"

"I'd like to tell you all I know, only—only—"

"Buck up—only what?"

"Only I feel so run down for want of nourishment," explained Bunter. "I had hardly anything for dinner—only a cake in addition to the usual feed. They've been talking about reform in public schools lately—what they really ought to

reform is the system of doling out grub. Why can't a chap help himself? That's what I want to know."

"Look here——"
"I'm feeling so weak and faint now that I can't even talk," said Bunter. "I find a great difficulty in dragging myself about. I think perhaps I could get as far as the tuck-shop, if you fellows were going that way, and wanted me to come with you."

Nugent grunted, and Wharton sniffed.
"Oh, come on, you young purposee."
"Oh, really, Wharton, if you don't want to stand me a feed, you need not, you know. I'd really rather go to Carberry's study."

"Come on, Owl!"
And, still keeping hold of Bunter's arms, the two Removites marched him out of the School House, and down towards the tuck-shop across the Close. In the interest of solving the mystery of Carberry's study, even the intended football practice was forgotten.

Outside the school shop a junior was standing with a pink paper in his hand. Now, there are many innocent newspapers printed on pink, but that particular pink paper had a suspicious look about it, and Harry Wharton stopped as he saw it. It was a Removite who was looking at it—Micky Desmond of the Remove, whom Harry had seen enter and leave Carberry's study only ten minutes before.

Wharton caught hold of the paper, and jerked it away. He glanced at the title and, as he expected, found it was that of a well-known sporting paper.

Desmond looked startled and somewhat guilty.
"What on earth are you reading that for, Micky?" asked Wharton in surprise.

The Irish junior reddened.
"I—I wasn't reading it," he stammered.
"What were you doing?"
"Only looking down a list."

"A list of what?"
"Faith, and it's inquisitive ye are to-day, Wharton darling."
"I don't want to be inquisitive," said Harry quietly. "But I'm sorry to see a chap in the Remove—especially a decent chap like you, Micky—reading a paper like that. It won't do you any good."

"Sure and I was only looking down the list of entries for the Burnham Stakes."
"What do you care for the Burnham Stakes, you young ass?"

"Well, I was wonderin' what was the price of the favourite now," said Micky. "Sure ye know that King John is favourite for the race."

"I haven't heard anything about it."
"Faith, you're behind the times, then. King John's a hot favourite, and Bully Boy comes next. You can't get evens on King John."

"You're not going in for betting on races, Micky?"
"Sure no. I wouldn't do it."
"Then what does the price of the horse matter to you?"
"Faith, it's keeping up to the times, you know. Besides"—Micky paused—"besides, you'll know some time."

"Know what?"
"Oh, nothing!"

And Desmond, to avoid further questioning, put the paper in his pocket and walked away. Wharton, looking puzzled and worried, entered the school shop with Bunter and Nugent. Mrs. Mible came out of her little parlour.

"Let me see," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully. "I'd better not make a heavy meal so : m after dinner. I think I'll have something light—half a dozen of those pork pies, please Mrs. Mible, and a couple of the beefsteak puddings—and a cold chicken——"

"Oh, draw it mild," said Wharton. "You can run up to two bob, and not a penny more."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"
"And that's more than I can afford," grunted Harry. "Get the most you can for it. And then get ahead with the yarn—we're wasting time."

Bunter snorted, and modified his orders considerably. Mrs. Mible placed the articles on the counter, and picked up the two-shilling-piece Wharton laid down there. The fat junior commenced operations at once.

"You can talk while you eat," said Harry. "Buck up!"

"I—I feel too faint, you know."
"Rats! You're going to tell us all you know about Carberry's little game. Don't waste any more time."

"I'm afraid I haven't strength enough to talk till I've had a snack."

"Porker!"
"Oh, really, you know——"

But Billy Bunter had his way. He ate quickly, but he had obtained a good deal for the two shillings, and the supply lasted him six or seven minutes. Wharton and Nugent waited as patiently as they could.

"Those tarts are ripping," said Bunter, when the last crumb had vanished.

"Good! Now——"
"Did you say some more?"

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NEXT WEEK: "THE CHRISTMAS WINNERS."

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"No, I didn't! Will you get on with the washing?" exclaimed Wharton impatiently.

"Oh, very well. You see—I don't know much. I was really going to Carberry's study to find out you know," explained Bunter.

Wharton and Nugent simply stared at him. They could not quite grasp for the moment the fact that Bunter, popularly supposed to be the biggest ass in the Remove, had completely taken them in, and without an effort.

"You—were—going—to—Carberry's—study—to—find—out!" repeated Harry Wharton, in measured tones.

"Yes."
"And you don't know what's on?"

"No!"
"My only hat!" said Nugent. "Let's take him by the ankles, up-and him, and shake the grub out again!"

Billy Bunter backed away in alarm.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I told you I'd tell you all I knew, and I have. I can't tell you what I don't know. I suppose you don't want a chap to tell you lies?"

"We should get nothing else from you, I expect, anyway, you fraud."

"I don't think you ought to call me names, just because I'm too honourable to prevaricate," said Bunter indignantly. "I'm always getting into rows because fellows don't like my high sense of honour. I suppose it makes them feel small."

"You young fraud," said Wharton in disgust, and he turned to leave the tuck-shop.

"Look here, Wharton, wait a minute! If you don't want to stand me this feed, I'm not the sort of chap to take a feed on those terms. It was a measly feed enough, but I'm game to pay for it myself."

"Oh, rats!"
"It's all very well for you to say rats," said Bunter warmly.

"but I suppose I've got proper pride, and I'm not going to sponge on a fellow who doesn't want to lend me money. This came to two bob, didn't it? I'm going to pay the money."

"Don't be a silly ass!"
"You can't refuse to take the money, Wharton. You've no right to place me under an obligation to you against my will; it isn't fair."

"Well, hand over the cash, then," said Nugent, with a grin.

"Ahem! I can't exactly settle in ready cash, as I've been disappointed to-day about a postal-order, but——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I'm rather short of ready money, but I shall put it down on the old account. I'm not going to be under any obligations to you, Wharton."

"Ass!" said Harry shortly, and he walked out of the shop with Nugent. Billy Bunter turned to the counter again.

"They are simply ripping tarts, Mrs. Mible," he said.

"I'm glad you like them, Master Bunter."
"I should really like some more——"

Mrs. Mible smiled grimly.
"Certainly—cash down, please!"

"I'm expecting a postal order this evening——"
"Then you can have the tarts this evening, too, after you've cashed the postal order," said Mrs. Mible, with asperity.

"Now, look here, Mrs. Mible, I want you to take a really businesslike view of this matter——"

"Money down, Master Bunter."
"If you will only take a businesslike——"

"Money down, from you, Master Bunter!"
"Oh, you're just like a woman," said Bunter, exasperated.

"Instead of arguing a thing out sensibly, and taking businesslike views, you keep on repeating a thing, till you think you've beat. Now, I could explain to you——"

"I can't afford to give away my stock, Master Bunter."
"I hope you don't think I want you to give me anything," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "The difference in our stations in life makes it impossible for me to think of accepting a gift from you. All I want to do is to point out——"

Mrs. Mible went back into her little parlour without waiting for Billy Bunter to finish. The fat junior blinked after her discontentedly.

"This is what comes of encouraging the lower classes," he murmured. "They're getting so cheeky in these socialistic days that they don't know how to treat a gentleman."

And Bunter drifted disconsolately out of the tuck-shop.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wharton Makes Up His Mind.

HARRY WHARTON went down to the football with Nugent, and kicked the ball about in an absent-minded manner. He was thinking of other things, and for the first time in football practice, he hardly thought of what he was doing. He miskicked when he was practising at goal, and sent the ball under Bob Cherry's chin, and Bob sat down, looking considerably surprised.

"Oh, sorry," said Wharton.
 "I should say so," said Bob Cherry, staggering up. "Anything the matter?"
 "Oh, no."
 "Are you practising to play Colney Hatch or Bedlam, by any chance?"
 "No, ass."
 "Well, your kicking looks like it," said Bob. "Or perhaps it's a new method you're learning—a combination of footer and a country dance?"
 "Well, I must say that you have been rocky, Wharton," said Mark Linley, laughing.
 "The rockiness was terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.
 "I was thinking of something else," said Harry, looking up at the clock-tower. "It's about time to chuck it now, anyway."
 "Thinking of something else—when you're practising for the Match with the Upper Fourth!" exclaimed Tom Brown of New Zealand, indignantly.
 "Look here, you chaps," said Wharton, "I'd like to speak to you about it. Perhaps one of you can enlighten me."
 The footballers gathered round him. There were only half-a-dozen of them putting in some extra practice before afternoon school.
 "What's the trouble?" asked Bob Cherry.
 Wharton explained concisely what he had seen in the Sixth Form passage.
 The juniors looked at one another in surprise.
 "Do you chaps know anything about it?" asked Wharton in conclusion.
 There was a general shaking of heads.
 "It's curious, then," said Harry slowly. "Nearly the whole Form is in the secret, but I and my personal friends are left out."
 "Well, that's not surprising, considering the terms you're on with Carberry," Bob Cherry suggested.
 "Well, nobody out of the Sixth is on good terms with him," said Harry. "The juniors generally avoid him as if he had the plague. He's a bully and a cad. I can't imagine what it is he's up to; but it's some scheme that he's got the juniors into, and they've been warned to keep it dark. That makes it pretty clear that it's something shady."
 "Pretty certain when Carberry has a hand in it," said Tom Brown.
 "The certainfulness is terrific."
 "I think I ought to do something about it," Wharton said abruptly. "I don't want to be inquisitive, but, hang it all, as captain of the Form I can't allow this to go on without looking into it, especially knowing Carberry's character as I do."
 "That's so."
 "What would you advise me to do?"
 "Take one of the young duffers by the scruff of his neck, and shake the secret out of him," said Bob Cherry immediately.
 "Ask one of them—one of the most decent chaps," said Mark Linley. "I should think Ogilvy, or Morgan, or Russell would tell you."
 Harry Wharton nodded.
 "I can try," he said. "You all agree with me that the matter wants looking into?"
 "Oh, yes; rather!"
 Wharton went into the School-House after leaving the field. As it happened, Ogilvy and Micky Desmond were chatting in the doorway. They stopped as Harry came by, and looked a little uncomfortable. Wharton halted.
 "I want to speak to you chaps," he said. "You've got some secret between you—you fellows and Carberry. What's the little game?"
 "Oh, it's nothing, you know!"
 "Can't you tell me?"
 "Well, you see, it's really Carberry's secret," said Ogilvy uncomfortably. "You can ask him, you know."
 "Just so, entirely," said Micky. "Go and ask Carberry, and I dare say he'll let you into it, and give you an equal chance of making money."
 "Making money!" ejaculated Wharton.
 "Shut up, Micky, you ass!" muttered Ogilvy.
 "Faith, and I was forgetting!"
 "I don't see why you can't tell me," said Wharton. "I'm not inquisitive about the matter, but you ought to remember I'm your Form captain. Can't you trust me?"
 "It isn't that," said Ogilvy uneasily; "but—but you take such blessed straightlaced views about things, you know. You would be bound to think it was wrong, instead of only a little harmless fun, and—and—"
 "If Carberry is in it, it's jolly certain not to be harmless, in my opinion."
 "Well, there you are! We like the idea, and it was decent of Carberry to let us in."
 "Faith, and it's right ye are, and only half-a-crown each, too—"
 "Shut up!"

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"Sure I was forgetting again."
 "Is Carberry getting money out of you?" asked Wharton quietly.
 "No," said Ogilvy irritably. "It isn't that. I know Carberry isn't a paragon, as a general rule, but he's all right in this. He's treating us with perfect fairness."
 "Faith, and he is entirely! We all take equal chances, and when the race—"
 "Shut up!"
 "Faith, and ye're right!"
 "Race!" exclaimed Wharton, startled. "Race! You're getting mixed up in races! That's what you had the sporting paper for, Micky!"
 "Oh, rats!" said Ogilvy. "I'm not going to say a word more."

The bell for afternoon lessons rang at that moment, and the Remove trooped into their class-room. Harry Wharton went in with a troubled face. Micky Desmond had dropped enough information to justify his worst suspicions of Carberry.

That the prefect smoked, and kept whisky in his study, nearly all the school knew, and it was pretty well known, too, that he played cards with a betting set in Friardale, and had money on the races at times. But that he should draw juniors into his wretched practices was infamous. Fags had been sent to fetch him smokes, and that kind of thing; and that was bad enough. But what Desmond had hinted at was worse. As captain of the Form, with a keen desire to do his duty, Harry Wharton could not help feeling that he was bound to take some action in the matter.

But what action should he take?

Harry Wharton was keenly sensitive of the reproach Ogilvy had implied, that he was too straightlaced and held himself above things which the other fellows saw no harm in. It was not pleasant to be looked upon in that light, for Harry had a wholesome horror of anything priggish. The fellow who was thankful that he was not as other fellows are was an abomination in Harry's eyes.

But, knowing what he knew, was he to stand aside and allow Carberry to draw the fellows into doings that any of them might be expelled for? That Carberry would run no risk, Wharton knew full well. The prefect would guard himself in every way; if any suffered, they would be his dupes. Carberry was cunning enough for that.

Harry Wharton thought it out during afternoon lessons, somewhat to the detriment of his studies. Mr. Quelch looked at him curiously several times, but he passed no remark. He knew that Harry was one of the hardest workers in the class, and in a hard worker he could pardon an occasional inattentiveness.

After school Bob Cherry tapped Harry on the arm as they left the Form-room.

"Been thinking it out?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to see Carberry," said Harry Wharton, his lips setting hard in an expression of grim determination.

Bob gave a low whistle.

"There'll be trouble."

"I don't care."

"Carberry is bound to cut up rough. Are you going to his study?"

"Yes. I'm going to speak to him plainly as captain of the Remove."

"Then we'll jolly well be outside the study!" said Bob. "You may want us near at hand. Carberry doesn't like plain English."

Wharton nodded, and walked away towards the Sixth Form quarters. He expected to find Carberry there. Bob Cherry hastily gathered his chums, and they followed in Harry's footsteps. Bob, and Nugent, and Hurree Singh, and Tom Brown and Mark Linley, made a sturdy band, quite able to argue it out with Carberry if he cut up too rough with Harry Wharton. But Harry, without even noticing whether his friends were near, went straight to Carberry's study, tapped on the door, and entered.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In the Lion's Den.

CARBERRY was in his room. He was not alone there. Two of his close chums—Loder and Carne—were in the room with him. The three seniors were sitting round the table, upon which were pens and paper, and several sporting newspapers. Carberry was in the act of lighting a cigarette as the tap came at the door. He threw it into the fire with a hasty jerk of the hand as the door opened, and he scowled darkly at the sight of Harry Wharton. Harry closed the door and advanced into the room, and all three of the seniors rose to their feet and stared at him. Carne contrived to throw a newspaper over the pink papers on the table.

"What do you want here, Wharton?" asked Carberry

angrily. "What the dickens do you mean by walking into my study?"

Loder whispered to the prefect, and Carberry's face cleared a little. He went on before Wharton could reply:

"If you've come to take a hand, it's all right. I don't want to keep any fellow out. Have you been told about the wheeze?"

"No," said Harry quietly.

"You've come here to ask?"

"Not exactly."

"In a word, do you want to come into the scheme, with a promise to keep your head shut about it, or don't you?" exclaimed Carberry angrily.

"I don't!"

"Then what do you want?"

"I want to speak to you," said Harry Wharton, facing the three seniors quietly and fearlessly. "I'm captain of the Remove. You've been roping a lot of the fellows in my Form into some scheme you've got on here—something in connection with the races. I've come to tell you that it won't do."

"It—won't—do!" said Carberry, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Yes," said Harry resolutely; "it won't do. So long as you choose to gamble among yourselves, it's no business of mine; but I won't see fellows in my Form dragged into it. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"You—you dare to say this to me!" spluttered Carberry.

"Would you rather I went and talked to Wingate about it?"

Carne and Loder changed colour. Carberry burst into an angry laugh.

"Do you think Wingate would listen to you, you young fool; or that I should care if he did? But there's one thing I care about, and that's being checked by a fag in my own study. You won't do that twice."

And Carberry stepped between Wharton and the door.

Wharton's eyes glinted, and his teeth came together hard. He knew that the seniors meant mischief; but he did not falter, and his heart did not beat faster for a moment.

"I didn't come here to cheek you," he said calmly. "I came to speak to you as one fellow to another. I'm not going to see a set of young duffers brought into a scheme for swindling—"

"Swindling!"

"Yes, that's the word," said Wharton grimly. "You know jolly well that whoever wins any money in this scheme, it won't be a chap in the Remove. They can contribute their half-crowns if they like, but they won't see them again. That's plain English, isn't it? But even if they stood a chance to win, I wouldn't have it. You're not going to spread your blackguardism to the Lower Fourth."

Wharton did not care what he said now. His eyes were flashing, and he gave the prefect his words straight from the shoulder, as it were.

Carberry's face was flaming with rage. The truth of the words only made them more bitter. The "sports" of the Sixth might keep faith with one another, but as for giving the Removites any real chances of making money, that was out of the question. All the fags would get would be experience. But it was not pleasant to Carberry to hear his little schemes called by their true name.

"Take hold of the young scoundrel, chaps!" he said in a choking voice. "I'll—I'll cut the skin from his back for this!"

Wharton clenched his hands.

"Mind," he said between his teeth, "I came here to warn you. If my warning's no good, I'll go straight to Wingate."

"Go to him, and be hanged!" said Carberry. "Collar the young cad!"

He turned the key in the lock. Loder and Carne came quickly towards Wharton. He was only a junior against three seniors, but he did not mean to submit quietly. He realised now that he had been rash in entering the lion's den like this, but it was too late to think of that.

"Hands off!" said Wharton.

Loder laughed, and reached out to grasp him. Harry Wharton knocked his hand aside. Carne grasped his shoulder, and Harry struck out.

Boy as he was, he was the finest athlete in the Lower School, and no easy customer even for a grown man to tackle. And Carberry and his friends were not the most athletic fellows in the Sixth by any means. Their habits were not likely to make them so.

Wharton's right, clenched and hard, struck Carne full on the chest, and the senior went down with a crash that shook the study.

Loder uttered an exclamation, and grasped Wharton by the collar, and Harry's left swung round and jabbed in his ribs, and Loder staggered across the fallen Carne and fell upon him.

Wharton sprang quickly towards the door.

Had he had no third foe to deal with he would have had the door open in a twinkling; but Carberry was standing in his way to stop his rush. He warded Wharton's desperate blow, and closed with him.

Against a burly fellow of eighteen the junior had little chance in close grips. But he fought hard. They reeled to and fro, Carberry panting hard and calling to his companions for aid.

Wharton made a desperate effort, and, hooking his leg in

Carberry's, he threw all his weight upon the prefect, and brought him down.

Carberry crashed upon the floor with a stunning shock, Wharton falling on top of him. The prefect lay dazed and helpless.

Harry leaped up, and sprang to the door; but Loder and Carne were up now, and they grasped him ere he could touch the key. He was dragged back, and each of his arms were held with savage force. He struggled in vain to break away again.

"Quiet, you young fool!" hissed Loder, twisting the junior's arm till he turned white with pain. "Stop that fooling!"

"You coward!"

"Hold your confounded tongue!"

Carberry staggered to his feet. His face was like that of a demon. His elbows and the back of his head were aching from the crash upon the floor. He was pale with rage, almost stuttering in his fury.

"Shove him across the table," he stammered. "I'll pay him! I'll make him sorry he was ever born! Hold him there face down!"

"Right you are!"

"You cowards, you cowards!"

Carne and Loder, almost as furious as their leader, dragged Wharton to the table, and wrenched him across it. He was slammed down, and Loder held his arms and head, while Carne grasped his ankles. He could not struggle, though he tried. He was utterly at the mercy of the Sixth-Form bullies.

Carberry picked a walking-cane out of the corner. It was a thick, flexible cane, and it sang in the air as the bully gave it a flourish.

"Hold the young brute down!"

"We've got him," said Loder, between his teeth. "Lay it on."

"Rescue, Remove!" shouted Wharton desperately.

The cane sang in the air and descended. It fell with terrible force, and Wharton writhed with pain as the stroke fell upon his back. At the same moment the door was tried from the outside, and then there was a kick on the panels.

"Rescue!" yelled Wharton. "Rescue, Remove!"

"We're here. Open this door, Carberry!" shouted Bob Cherry.

Carberry laughed savagely. He was not likely to obey an order like that. The cane rose and fell again with savage force.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Lesson for Bullies.

BOB CHERRY kicked savagely at the door. Outside, the chums of the Remove were gathered in force: but the door was of thick oak, and the lock was a strong one. Kicking was not likely to have much effect upon it.

From within the study came the sound of a cane upon a back, and a low gasp of pain. Wharton did not cry out, but he could not restrain that faint sound.

Bob Cherry and Nugent raged in the passage. Their chum was being cruelly used in the study, and they could not get at him.

"Oh!" exclaimed Bob. "Oh, I'll get in if—here, that stool!"

At the angle of the passage there was a heavy oaken stool. Bob's eyes rested on it as he glanced wildly round, and he ran up the passage and seized it. It was almost too heavy for him to carry alone, but Mark Linley was at his side in a second.

Between them they dragged it down the passage to Carberry's door.

"Lend a hand, you chaps."

"Right-ho!"

"Stand clear!"

Swung up in the grasp of Bob and Nugent and Linley, the

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heavy stool crashed on the lock of the study door. The whole door trembled and groaned under the terrific shock.

Within the study Carberry lowered the cane in amazement. He had expected the juniors to rage helplessly outside, and kick the door, but an attack like this he had never dreamed they would venture upon.

"Stop that, you mad young hounds!" he shouted furiously.

"You'll have the door in."

"That's just what we mean to do, you coward!" shouted back Bob Cherry.

"I'll—I'll——"

"Rescue, Remove!" shouted Harry Wharton.

Crash!

The lock cracked open.

One more battering crash, and the door would be through.

Carberry turned towards it in consternation. Loder and Carne unconsciously relaxed their grip on the captain of the Remove.

Wharton seized his opportunity.

He wrenched himself loose and rolled off the table, falling upon his feet. He sprang towards the door.

"Collar him!" muttered Carberry.

The seniors rushed upon him. Wharton hit out furiously, and Loder rolled over, and the next moment Carne and Carberry had the boy on the floor, gasping under their weight.

Carberry, hardly knowing what he was doing in his rage, showered blows upon him.

Crash!

The door flew open, the lock hanging in fragments. The heavy stool thudded to the floor.

Bob Cherry and the rest rushed in.

To hurl themselves upon the seniors, and drag them from Wharton, and hurl them across the study was the work of a few seconds.

Harry Wharton staggered up with Nugent's aid. He was dazed and half stunned by Carberry's savage attack.

The three seniors grouped together, as if anticipating an attack, and they had some reason to anticipate it. The juniors were wild with wrath as they looked at their captain. Unheard of as it was for Fourth-Formers to measure strength with the Sixth, the youngsters did not think of that just then.

"Come on!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Let's wipe up the study with them!"

"Hurrah! Down with the Sixth!"

"Stand back, you young fools!" said Carberry hoarsely. "Get out of my study!"

"Rats! Give 'em socks!"

Harry Wharton's eyes were blazing.

"Close the door, Nugent," he said. "Quick! Shove the table against it before any more of the Sixth come here."

"Stop it!" shouted Carberry.

But no one took any notice of Carberry.

Nugent jammed the door shut and Tom Brown and Bob Cherry dragged the table to it, most of Carberry's papers falling down in the process, with the ink-pot to keep them company on the floor.

Carberry rushed forward furiously, only to find the Removites standing their ground as firm as rocks.

"Now then," said Wharton, between his teeth, "you wouldn't let me alone when I was willing to keep the peace, you won't have any choice now."

"You—you young idiot," said Carberry. "What do you mean? Don't forget that you're dealing with a prefect."

"You seemed to forget it yourself just now."

"Look here——"

"You were three to one, we're six to three, and as we're juniors that's only fair. A fair fight may not suit you, but you're going to have it all the same."

"You dare to touch a Sixth-Former——"

"You shall see."

"Keep back. Get out of my study, and I'll say no more about the matter!" exclaimed Carberry, considerably alarmed now that he saw that—impossible as it seemed—the Remove chums were in deadly earnest.

Harry Wharton laughed scornfully.

"Ah, you have a different tune to sing now! You coward!"

"You young whelp!"

"Come on, you fellows!"

Nothing loth, the chums of the Remove followed their young captain, rushing to the attack. Carberry and Loder and Carne stood on the defensive, hitting out with all their strength. Nugent and Brown and Linley went crashing to the floor, but the other three fastened like bloodhounds upon the three seniors, and fought them desperately. And the three on the floor were up in a twinkling, rushing to back them up.

Fighting fiercely, the three bullies were dragged down, and the juniors sprawled over them, keeping them down.

"Let me get up!" roared Carberry.

"Not just yet," said Bob Cherry, kneeling on his chest.

"Now I'm going to jam your napper on the floor each time you wriggle."

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He gripped Carberry by his rather prominent ears. The prefect struggled, and Bob carried out his threat. Carberry's head went in a postman's knock on the floor. He yelled with pain, but did not struggle again.

The Removites had the upper hand now. The three seniors were helpless in their grip, and Harry Wharton and Co. were masters of the situation.

"What are you going to do?" gasped Carberry, as Wharton rose to his feet, the other five juniors being quite equal to the task of keeping the bullies down.

"We're going to give you a lesson."

"I'll report this to the Head."

"Good! And I'll let him have our side of the story, including the horse-racing and the betting," said Harry quietly.

The senior winced. He knew very well that whatever the juniors did, he would not dare to bring the matter before the Head. That was one of the penalties of wrong-doing. Once he had placed himself in the wrong his rank as a prefect was of no avail.

Harry Wharton glanced round the study. He calmly turned out a chest of drawers by the simple process of pulling out the drawers, and letting the contents stream upon the floor, and then selected a number of neckties, pairs of braces, and so forth, with which he proceeded to tie the hands of the three seniors.

They did not venture to struggle, after Loder's head had been rapped on the floor as a hint of what they were to expect if they did.

"Now yank them over here," said Wharton. "I'll tie their ankles to the leg of the bed, and they won't be able to wriggle away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll break your neck for this," said Carberry hoarsely.

"Oh, shut up!"

"You—you—you——"

"Jam his head on the floor, Bob."

"With pleasure."

"The pleasurefulness is terrific."

Carberry's head was jammed. He did not speak again, but he glared at the juniors with burning eyes.

Wharton used up several expensive neckties in tying three ankles to the leg of the bed. The three seniors sprawled on the floor, foaming with rage, but helpless.

"Next move?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Wreck the study."

"Stop it! Get out, I tell you!"

"Will you ring off?" demanded Bob Cherry. "I can't be put to the trouble of jamming your head on the floor all the time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors set to work swiftly. They knew that they might be interrupted at any moment, and they did not intend to lose any time.

They upset every article of furniture in the study. They mixed up books and papers, they tilted the bookcase over upon the bed, filled the collar-boxes with ink, and poured liquid blacking into the hat-box and the glove-box.

Carberry watched them in spluttering rage.

In five minutes the study was in a state that would have taken the most industrious housemaid more than five hours to set right.

The juniors looked round with great satisfaction.

"I fancy that about finishes it," remarked Bob Cherry, clearing the mantelpiece with a sweep of a chair.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! I'm afraid some of your crocks have got broken, Carberry. Never mind, you'll be able to buy some more if your swindle comes off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better get out," grinned Tom Brown. "This will want a lot of explaining if a master looks in. Better leave the explaining to Carberry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They dragged the table away from the door, and overturned it upon the sprawling seniors, and left the study. All of them had been hurt more or less in the tussle with the bullies, but that did not trouble them. They were chuckling gleefully as they scuttled down the passage.

Carberry pushed off the table, and sat up, glowering. Carne and Loder looked at him in helpless rage.

"My hat!" gasped Loder, "The young scoundrels! Fancy that!"

"I'll make their lives a misery to them for this!" gasped Carne.

"Let's get loose," growled the prefect.

"I can't! Can you?"

"No, hang it!"

"We shall have to call for help."

Carberry ground his teeth.

"We shall be the laughing-stock of the school for the rest of the term if we're found like this," he groaned.

"Well, I'm not going to stick here, anyway. We shall have to call."

"Call, then, and be hanged."

Carne shouted for help.

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"HELP!"

"This way? Help!"
"Ciel! Vat is zat!"

Monsieur Charpentier, the French-master of Greyfriars, looked into the study. He gave a jump as he saw the three seniors sprawling in the wreckage.

He stood in the doorway, as if petrified, staring at them blankly.

"Mon Dieu!" he gasped, "It must be zat I dream viz myself. I refuse to believe zat zat is real."

"Help!"

"Come and let us loose, Mossoo."

"But vat does it mean? Is it zat you play ze shoke?"

"You idiot!" roared Carberry, too excited to remember that it was a master he was addressing. Besides, no one cared for the French master. "Let us loose."

"Vat! You call me idiot! Carberry!"

"Untie us then."

"But I not comprehend viz myself——"

"Help!"

"What on earth's the row here?" exclaimed Wingate, the captain of the school, looking in over Monsieur Charpentier's shoulder. The big Sixth-Former towered over the little Frenchman like a giant. "Why—what—how——"

Carberry was white with rage. Wingate was the very last fellow he would have wished to find him in that plight: but it could not be helped now. The captain of Greyfriars came into the study, blank amazement written on his face.

"What does this mean, Carberry?"

"Can't you let us loose instead of asking questions," snarled the prefect.

"There's been a lot of row going on here," said Wingate. "I heard somebody calling for help. What does it mean?"

"It's a rag," said the prefect, sullenly.

Wingate was opening his pocket-knife.

"Don't cut my neckties to pieces," growled Carberry. "Can't you untie them?"

The Greyfriars captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Looks to me as if it would take an hour," he remarked.

"You're all knots. I'll cut your hands loose, and you can untie the rest."

"Oh, all right."

Wingate sliced through the neckties with his knife, and Carberry's hands were freed. The prefect began to wrestle with the knots. But the juniors had tied them with great thoroughness—and it is always easier to tie knots than to untie them. Carberry said things as he tackled those knots—things that made the brows of the Greyfriars captain darken ominously.

"You can stop that," he said. "If you use that language, Carberry, you'll get a fist jammed in your mouth, and quick."

The prefect muttered under his breath.

"Who did this?" exclaimed Wingate, looking round. "The place has been wrecked. This is going altogether too far for a rag."

"Your favourite, of course," hissed Carberry. "The brat of a junior you make so much of, and encourage to cheek the Sixth."

"That's rot, Carberry, but I can make allowances for your temper," said Wingate, sternly. "I suppose you are referring to Harry Wharton?"

"You know I am."

"Do you mean to say you fellows, in the Sixth, allowed yourselves to be tied up like this by juniors," said Wingate, scornfully.

"There were six or seven of them," howled Carberry.

"It's no good telling me they would venture to do this for nothing," said Wingate, after a pause. "What had you been doing to them?"

"I had been giving Wharton a licking."

"For what?"

"As a prefect. He checked me in my own study."

"Well, this will have to be taken before a master," said Wingate. "If you say that Wharton wrecked the study like this, he will have to be taken before the Head. I know him well enough to know that he will have a defence to make."

"I don't want to go before the Head with it," said Carberry, hastily, realising that he had said a little too much.

"Why not?"

"I can punish Wharton myself."

"You don't seem to have made much of a success at punishing him," said Wingate, with a grin. "It looks to me as if you've had the punishment so far."

"Ciel! I zink zat is so," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I zink, too, zat Carberry is a bully, vat you call a rottair, and zat Wharton must have been badly treated, n'est-ce-pas?"

And Monsieur Charpentier walked away. Wingate's expression showed that he fully shared the opinion of the French master.

"You seriously mean that you don't want to make a complaint about this, Carberry?" he said, looking at the prefect, who was still struggling with the obstinate knots.

"Yes," growled Carberry.

"I suppose you know what I must infer from that?"

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"THE CHRISTMAS WINNERS."

"You can infer what you like."

"I infer," said Wingate, sternly, "that you know you are in the wrong, and dare not let the matter go before the Head."

"I don't care for your opinion."

"Very well. Only bear this in mind—you won't punish Wharton."

"Who'll stop me?" demanded Carberry, fiercely.

"I will. If you don't take the matter before the Head, and let him punish Wharton, it shows that you're in the wrong, and you shan't touch Wharton. Mind, I mean it. Lay a finger on Harry Wharton, and I'll lay a fist on you, and jolly quick. You know I'm a fellow of my word."

And Wingate walked out of the study.

"That's the way our captain upholds the authority of the Sixth," said Carberry. "It's time Greyfriars had a new captain. I think. I can't undo these knots—I shall have to cut them."

"Cut them, for goodness' sake," said Loder, "the fellows will be round here in crowds soon. We shall never hear the end of this."

Fellows of the Sixth were already looking into the study, with broad grins. By the time Carberry had finished cutting his companions loose, there was quite a crowd in the passage, and they were all laughing and asking questions.

"Is that a new game, Carberry?"

"I hear you've been licked by your fags. Is it true?"

"Going to make patchwork of those neckties?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carberry slammed the door in the grinning faces.

"Help me get this beastly room to rights," he growled.

"I'm jolly well going to get myself to rights," said Loder.

"I'm smothered with dust and ink. I feel as if I'd been through a saw-mill."

"Same here!" said Carne.

And they promptly quitted the study. Clearing up the wreckage was not an attractive task to them. Carberry snarled savagely as they went out, and began work himself. But he soon gave it up. Ten shillings to the maids to do what was wanted was the only possible way of ever getting the study clean and in order again. And so Carberry left it as it was—and his feelings towards Harry Wharton & Co. can be better imagined, perhaps, than described.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Sweep.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stopped in No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage, panting a little from their exertions, and still chuckling. They had scored a victory over the bullies of the Sixth, and they had little fear of hearing any more of the matter.

Although all of them had received some hard knocks they were too tough to care for that. Harry Wharton had fared the worst, but he bore it quietly enough, although his back was still aching with pain from Carberry's brutal blows.

"Well, we've dished them this time," grinned Bob Cherry, seating himself upon the table, "Carberry & Co. have come out at the little end of the horn, and no mistake."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"It's the giddiest time I've had since I've been here," remarked Tom Brown of Taranaki. "Carberry will be wild, I think. It will take the maids hours to clear his study up, and they won't do it unless Carberry shells out. So it's all for the good of trade."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only we haven't got any forrardor on the other matter," said Harry Wharton, as he set his collar straight. "About the betting scheme I mean."

"Well, as far as that's concerned," said Nugent, "your visit to Carberry's study can't be regarded as a howling success."

"No, but there's Wingate left."

The chums looked very grave.

"You're going to Wingate!"

"What can I do? I know now for certain that Carberry is getting the kids into a gambling scheme. Can I allow it to go on? If it all comes out, for one thing, people will want to know what the captain of the Remove was doing all the time?"

"Yes, that's true."

"And besides, I know very well it isn't even a sporting scheme, though that would be bad enough. I firmly believe that Carberry is swindling the young fools. They haven't the ghost of a chance of seeing their money again."

"The certainfulness is terrific."

"Only it's rotten to set up to judge chaps, I know," said

ANSWERS

Harry. "It isn't all lavender to be Form captain. I don't want the fellows looking upon me as a giddy Pharisee. Only if I let everything slide, and allow that brute to rope them into his blackguardly schemes, what's the good of pretending to be Form captain at all?"

The juniors nodded. They agreed with Wharton, yet they, as well as he, felt how extremely unpleasant it was for him to appear to set himself up as better than others. It was hard that Wharton could not do his duty without appearing in the light of a prig to many of his Form-fellows.

"Well, I don't see what else is to be done," Nugent remarked.

There was a tap at the door, and Russell of the Remove looked in. Russell nodded awkwardly to the chums, looking very self-conscious and uneasy. Micky Desmond was behind him in the passage, looking very awkward, too.

"Come in!" said Harry.

"Oh, you're all here, then!" said Russell, coming in, and signing to Desmond to follow. Micky coughed, and shut the door behind him. "I want to speak to you chaps."

"Go ahead!"

"It's about the affair in Carberry's study. I hear you have been making a row about it—about what's on, and that you're going to keep it up."

"I don't know what to do yet; I'm trying to think it out."

"Well, I want to put it to you straight," said Russell. "You fellows are about the only ones in the Lower Fourth who are left out of the game. I don't mind explaining the whole affair—you're bound to know it if you're going to make a fuss. But mind, if you interfere, there will be a row in the Remove."

"I'm not afraid of a row," said Harry quietly.

"Oh, I know that—you're such a blessed uncomfortable chap to get on with, Wharton."

Wharton coloured.

"I hope not. You ought to make allowances for my position as Form captain. You know I should be held responsible."

"Well, yes; but there's no harm in this—is there, Micky?"

"Faith, and it's all right intirely!"

"You see——" went on Russell. He paused as the door was cautiously opened, and Ogilvy, Hazeldene and Skinner looked in. As they saw that Harry Wharton was present, the three came in, and Skinner closed the door. The chums looked at them inquiringly.

"We've come to explain," said Skinner. "We want you to see the right thing, Wharton, and not to rush in and make a muck of things, as you seem to be going to do."

"That's it!" said Hazeldene.

"You see, this is how the case stands," said Ogilvy.

"We——"

"All right—Russell is explaining already."

"Oh, all serene—go ahead, Russell!"

"Well, this is the how of it," said Russell. "Carberry has been getting up a sweepstake, and he let us into it. Well, it wasn't really Carberry getting it up, but he's managing it for somebody else, see. Now, there's no harm in a sweepstake, is there? It's simply a sort of raffle."

"That depends."

"You know how we work it. You take a race—the Burnham Stakes, for instance. There are thirty entries. Well, the names of the horses are written out on slips, and put in a bag, and all the chaps in the sweep take one each. The chap who gets the winner gets the whole pot when the race is run. It's not gambling, you know—it's not what you would call betting on horses."

"Of course not," said Skinner.

"What would you call it, then?" asked Harry quietly.

"Well, it's—it's sport, you know," said Russell uneasily.

"Every fellow has an equal chance. The chap whose paper has the winner's name on it bags the whole pot—that's thirty half-crowns, and a big sum, too, for any chap to bag, I say."

"Jolly good!" said Skinner.

"It's all somebody else's money, though" said Wharton. "It's gambling pure and simple, and money you win at gambling is not your own. It's only one degree better than stealing it. The fellows who lose it don't get any show. Besides, you know that gambling on horses is forbidden in the school."

"You never break any of the rules, of course!" sneered Skinner.

Wharton flushed hotly.

"Yes, I do—I don't claim to be better than anybody else!" he exclaimed. "I'm in trouble, I suppose, as often as any of you; but you can't say you ever knew me to do anything blackguardly."

"So you call us blackguards?" said Hazeldene.

"No, I don't—but gambling is blackguardly, and there's no getting out of that. You have been taken in—but Carberry is a swindler, and nothing else. He knows it's gambling, if you don't. Winning other fellows' money is gambling, just as much in a sweepstake as if you bet directly."

"It's a kind of raffle."

"Rats!"

"Well, look here, we're in for it now," said Russell. "We've

all paid up our half-crowns to-day. There are a lot of the Fifth and the Upper Fourth and the Shell in it, too. If you start mucking it up, you'll have a big job on your hands."

"I'm not afraid of the Fifth and the Shell."

"There are sixty fellows at least in it," said Skinner. "Some of us have clubbed together, you see, for a half share of a ticket, or a third, or quarter share. There are kids in the Third who have put up threepence each, and have a ticket between six of them. They share if they get the winner. As a matter of fact, you'll have all the lower school against you if you interfere, and half the Fifth and Sixth."

"It's no good putting it like that to Wharton," said Russell bitterly. "He likes to buck up against the whole school, and the more unpleasant a thing is, the better he likes doing it."

"That's not true," said Wharton. "Can't you see for yourselves how rotten it is? You say that kids in the Third Form are being let into it—kids of twelve and thirteen. It's disgraceful! Carberry ought to be put in prison."

"Oh, come off your blessed pedestal, for goodness' sake!" said Skinner. "What you really want is a job as missionary in China. You're wasted in the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars."

"Exactly," said Bulstrode, opening the door, and coming in with two or three more of the Remove. "Wharton's job is preaching. He's too good for this world—I believe he thanks his lucky stars every night that he's not a common human sort of chap the same as we are."

And the juniors chuckled.

"Oh, hold your tongue, Bulstrode!" said Wharton angrily. "I might have guessed you were in this. You wouldn't miss a chance of mixing up in a blackguardly swindle."

"It's not a swindle. It's a sweep."

"Look here!" exclaimed Wharton. "Supposing you go on with it—do you think you'll get fair play? Thirty half-crowns is three pounds fifteen. Do you think Carberry will hand that over to a junior if he wins it?"

"Of course he will!"

"Why, it would be stealing for him to keep it."

"Oh, you duffers!" exclaimed Wharton, in disgust. "Can't you see? Haven't you any sense? If Carberry or one of his friends gets the winner, the thing will be run fair and square. If one of you duffers gets him, he'll make out there's some mistake or other, and you won't get the money."

"Oh, rats! Carberry's not a thief!"

"Faith, and I think he's all right!"

"He can't pretend there's a mistake," said Russell. "We're all going to draw the slips fairly out of the hat. There's no getting out of that."

Wharton looked decidedly worried.

"It would serve you right to lose the money!" he exclaimed.

"You can say what you like, but you know as well as I do that it's gambling, and that gambling is a low, caddish thing to do. You know, too, that if it comes out—as it very likely will—I shall be held responsible for allowing it to go on without speaking to Wingate."

"I see—you're afraid for your own skin," said Bulstrode.

"That's not it, only——"

"Well, it's either that, or else you yearn to make us as good and virtuous as you are," grinned Bulstrode. "Now, even if this affair is stopped, I can't ever hope to attain such a height of virtue. I couldn't do it. I'm not strong enough. Besides, it would make me sick."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Wharton," said Skinner, "we don't want any of your blessed preaching! Let us alone; that's all we want."

"Exactly! Let us alone; mind your own blessed business!"

"Besides, the money's subscribed now," said Russell. "We paid it all up to-day. The drawing for the slips is this evening. If we backed out of it, Carberry wouldn't return the money. He couldn't be expected to."

"If I lose my half-crown through your interference, Wharton, there will be trouble," said Bulstrode.

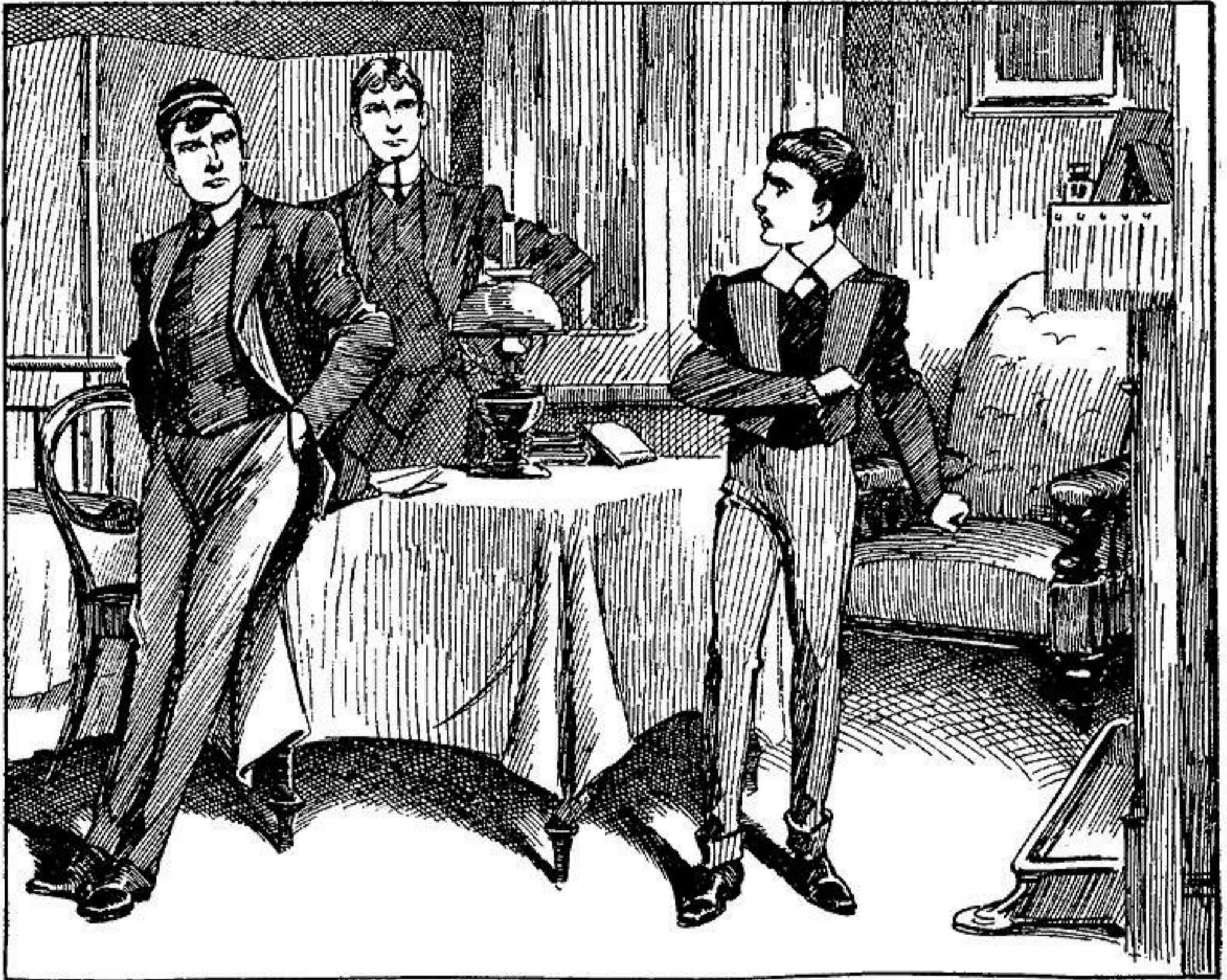
Wharton's eyes blazed at him.

"I'm not afraid of trouble," he said. "If it were only that, I'd go straight to Wingate and tell him the whole affair, though the whole Form were against me."

"I believe you would," said Hazeldene. "Why can't you shut up, Bulstrode? The more you threaten Wharton, the more likely he is to mess the thing up. I think it ought to be put to him in a friendly way."

"Well, that's how I'm trying to put it," said Russell. "Look here, Wharton, we've paid our money up, and we don't want to lose it. We think we've got a right to go in for a little sweep if we like. You think differently. Well, every chap to his own taste. We don't ask you to take a ticket. Only let us alone. As for its coming out, that's not likely, and then if it did, I suppose Carberry would have to stand the racket. Let the whole thing alone."

"And don't blessed well meddle with other fellows' business," said Ogilvy.



Harry Wharton faced the seniors without flinching. "I'm not going to see the Remove swindled!" he said hotly. "Swindled!" Carberry's face was aflame with wrath.

"Very well," said Harry abruptly. "I don't know what I ought to do—but I'll let the matter alone. Do as you like, and I won't interfere."

"Hurray!" said Bulstrode.

"Ob, shut up!" said Russell. "I say, Wharton, I don't want you to feel rotten about it, you know. Only I really think you ought not to interfere."

"Well, I won't! And now get out of my study, all of you."

And the juniors, satisfied to have gained their point, left the study. Wharton's face was very gloomy.

"Well, it was a rotten position," said Nugent, after a pause. "But I think you've done right, Harry. You know what the good Book says, 'Be not righteous over-much.' If you had insisted on stopping the sweep, the whole Remove would have been ratty, and you would have had pecks of trouble over it."

Wharton nodded without speaking. He could not make up his mind what he really ought to have done; and certainly in a case of doubt, it was best not to make himself disagreeable to his Form-fellows. But he had an uneasy feeling in his breast that he had taken the easier course instead of the right one.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. The Drawing.

"HALLO!" said Bulstrode, a couple of hours later, stopping outside Carberry's study. "Look at that!"

There was a paper notice pinned on the door. The notice was in Carberry's hand, and it ran—"Meeting in Loder's study."

Ogilvy chuckled.

"Wharton and his lot wrecked the place," he remarked.

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"Carberry hasn't been able to get it straight yet. Let's get along to Loder's."

And a stream of juniors poured along to Loder's study. It was time for the drawing of the slips for the sweepstake, and the amateur gamblers were all excited. It was the feverish, unhealthy excitement inseparable from gambling. For although the juniors tried to make themselves believe that a "little sweep" was not really like betting on horses, they knew very well in their hearts that it was. And the circumstance that they were risking money they could ill spare, in the hope of gaining what was to them a very large sum, gave them all the unpleasant feelings of a gambler on the racecourse. Most of them had already spent the winnings—in prospect—and some were already thinking of further sweeps to recoup themselves if they lost. For, although all systems of winning money by gambling are visionary, there is one system that a gambler never deserts—that of throwing good money after bad.

Carberry and Carne and Loder were in Loder's study, ready for the drawing. The study, of course, would not accommodate a half or a quarter of the fellows who had taken shares in the sweep, and Micky Desmond had suggested having the drawing in a class-room. That cheerful suggestion—which if acted upon would have drawn the attention of the whole school to the matter—was frowned out of court at once. Carberry had arranged that where a ticket was taken in shares, the partners were to depute one of their number for the drawing ceremony, and the rest to remain away. Even so, there were thirty fellows to draw slips, and they had to enter the study in turn.

About a dozen or fifteen fellows crowded in to see the proceedings from the start, the rest waiting in the passage or the adjoining rooms.

Carberry knew the value of keeping up a strict appearance of fairness, and for the time he had curbed his usual insolence.

and paid great attention and consideration to the juniors. Fellows of all Forms were in the study to watch him at work, so that there could be no complaint afterwards. For if Carberry or one of his own gang won the sweep, the fairer the proceedings the better. And if one of them did not win it—but Carberry had his own ideas about that.

Bulstrode and Skinner, Micky Desmond and Ogilvy and Russell, of the Remove, were in the room, as well as Blundell and Bland of the Fifth, and Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, and Hoskins and Higgs of the Shell. There were several Sixth-Formers, too, who had an interest in the proceedings.

Carberry was writing out the names on slips of paper. He had a sporting newspaper before him, with the list of entries for the Burnham race. There were thirty horses mentioned in the list. Carberry knew perfectly well that five or six of them had been "scratched"—that is to say, withdrawn from the race—since the list was printed. But he wrote the names down all the same. They would be as good as blanks for those who got them. And if Carberry or Loder or Carne got one of them, what was easier than to suddenly discover that the horse was "scratched," and to rectify the mistake by having a second drawing? There were to be no actual blanks in the sweep, and that made it additionally attractive to the juniors. Every fellow would get a horse, or a share in a horse. The fellow who drew King John or Bully Boy would be fortunate. But the others could console themselves with the reflection that the favourite did not always win, and that a rank outsider might carry off the race.

Thirty slips were written out, Carberry writing them carefully and legibly, and they were then blotted, and slipped into a bag.

The fellows in the study eyed the bag eagerly.

A piece of paper worth three pounds fifteen for somebody was in that bag, and to the Lower Form fellows the sum seemed immense.

"That's done," said Carberry. "Now, you fellows, understand the rules? Each chap who has a share—or represents a group holding a share in common—has one dip into the bag and takes a slip. If the horse wins, he wins, and takes the whole pool. Nothing whatever is deducted for expenses, or for my time and trouble; I take exactly the same chance as the rest of you, and do the work for nothing."

"Jolly good," said Bulstrode.

If the juniors had not been so keen on the sweep, they might have wondered at so much disinterestedness on the part of a fellow who had certainly never shown any signs of it before. But they did not think of that now.

Carberry shook up the slips in the bag.

"Now, come and take your turns," he said. "The Sixth Form first, and so downwards. Of course, that's only a matter of form; it makes no difference whether you draw first or last; the chance is the same."

"Exactly the same," agreed Skinner.

"Well, begin," said Temple.

"You first, then, Loder."

Loder drew a slip from the bag. Carne was next. He uttered an exclamation.

"Here, this won't do!" he said. "This is Silver Spray—and he's not running."

"Eh! How's that?" asked Carberry, with perfect gravity, as if he hadn't had the faintest previous knowledge that Silver Spray was scratched for the race.

"I heard to-day that he was not running."

"Well, in that case, chuck the slip into the fire, and we'll start fresh," said Carberry. "Of course, any horses scratched afterwards can't be helped; but we must start fair. Put your slip in the bag again, Loder, and yours in the fire, Carne."

"But there will be only twenty-nine slips now," said Blundell, "with thirty fellows to draw from them."

"Oh, I'll put in a blank."

"But that slip would have been the same as a blank," said Skinner.

"I suppose you want to start fair," said Carberry.

Skinner did not look quite satisfied, but he said no more. A blank was put into the bag, and it was shaken again.

"Now, go ahead," said Carberry.

Loder and Carne drew again, and were satisfied. Carberry himself drew next, and his eyes glistened as he read Bully Boy on the slip. Bully Boy was second favourite for the race. But he said nothing, putting the slip quietly into his pocket.

Several other Sixth-Formers drew, and left the study with their slips, and then the members of the Fifth followed suit. Then came the Shell, and then the Upper Fourth. Temple, Dabney & Co. drew, and walked out looking chagrined. They had drawn a selection of the rankest outsiders. Then came the turn of the Remove.

"Faith, and King John's not drawn yet!" Micky Desmond remarked. "If he had been, the gossoon who had him would have sung out, I'm thinking."

"The Remove will score, then," grinned Bulstrode.

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They drew in turn. Micky Desmond gave a grumble. "Faith, and I've got Son of Mine!" he exclaimed. "The paper says he hasn't the ghost of a chance. Begorra." "Well, you're welcome to him," said Snoop, with a chuckle. "I've got King John!" "What!" "You!"

Snoop held up the slip. The words were plainly written on it—"King John." The sneak of the Remove had captured the favourite.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Favourite.

THE drawing of the slips from the bag was finished in silence. The fellows all felt that the excitement was over. Snoop had captured King John; and the rest was only a matter of form. The fact that outsiders frequently won races was not much comfort to them now that they actually saw the favourite in Snoop's hands.

Envious glances were cast upon Snoop, who was chuckling gleefully. The sneak of the Remove already, in his mind's eye, saw the three golden sovereigns and fifteen shillings in his hand. There was ill-nature in the glances cast towards him. The spirit of gambling was inevitably followed by greed and envy.

"Oh, stop that cackling!" said Bulstrode irritably. "King John may not win, after all, and I jolly well hope he won't."

"Oh, he'll win!" said Snoop.

Carberry rose from the table.

"Well, it's over," he said. "Good-night, you youngsters."

"Good-night, Carberry."

"Stop a minute, Snoop: I want to speak to you."

Snoop started, and clutched his precious slip tighter. He looked, very plainly, anxious to get out of the study while it was still safe, but he did not care, or dare, to refuse Carberry. The other Removites left the study, and Snoop remained alone with the three seniors.

Carberry, Loder, and Carne exchanged glances.

"Shut the door, Snoop, old fellow," said Carberry.

Snoop closed the door.

"Sit down," said the prefect, in a jovial tone, pushing an arm chair towards Snoop. "Shove your toes on the fender. It's cold this evening."

"Yes, it's cold," agreed Snoop.

He sat down, on the edge of the chair. He would have given a week's pocket money to be safe out of the study. The three seniors were looking very agreeable. Carberry produced a cigarette case, and opened it.

"Smoke!" he said.

"I—I—no, thanks!" stammered Snoop.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Carberry. "I'm sure you smoke. I suppose you're not one of the straitlaced crew that suck up to that cad, Wharton?"

"Oh, no!"

"Well, suit yourself; but they're good Turkish."

"I'll have one, thanks," said Snoop.

And the four of them began to smoke. Snoop felt a little more at ease. It was very pleasant being chummed up with like this by the smartest men in the Sixth.

"Now, about that horse," said Carberry meditatively.

"Were you thinking of parting with your ticket, Snoop?"

"Oh, no; I'm going to keep it!"

"Come to think of it, the favourite doesn't pull off a race, as a rule," said Loder. "I don't know that I'd give much for King John's chance."

"Just what I was thinking," agreed Carne. "As a matter of fact, I'd rather have bagged an outsider."

"Well, you did," said Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Carberry. "Very good. Very sharp of you, Snoop, indeed. Ha, ha, ha!" And all three of the seniors laughed. Snoop had not been aware of saying anything extra sharp, but he was pleased with appreciation like this. He began to assume an absurd air of knowingness.

"Still, I don't want Snoopey to be let down," said Carberry. "I should be willing to buy his ticket, and save him possible loss, say for half the face value."

"Fifteenpence," said Loder thoughtfully.

"Yes."

"Well, really, Carberry, I think you might do a generous thing, and take the ticket off Snoop at the face value, as much as he gave for it," said Loder. "Give him the half-crown, and call the matter settled."

"Well, I don't mind if I do," said Carberry. "Hand over the ticket, Snoop, and here's your half-crown, and you don't run any more risk."

"I—I don't want to sell," stammered Snoop.

Carberry stared at him in great surprise.

"You don't want to sell!"

"No, please."

"But, my dear chap, my idea is to save you risk and worry. I'm making you the offer quite for your own sake."

"Oh, yes, I know that, Carberry," said Snoop, who knew the contrary very well. "But I'd rather not sell, if you don't mind."

"Nonsense!" said Carberry, a little less pleasantly. "Look here, I'll do the generous thing; I know you don't have much pocket-money. I'll give you five bob for the ticket."

"I'd rather not sell."

"How much do you want?"

"I—I want to keep the ticket, please," said Snoop, casting a longing glance towards the door, and wishing that he had the courage to make a run for it.

"Now, look here," said Carberry abruptly. "I want that ticket. I've made you an offer. Put a figure on it. You don't want to quarrel with me, I suppose."

"Oh, no, indeed, Carberry!"

"Then put a price on the ticket. King John hasn't much chance, as I happen to know; but I'm not a fellow to give up a thing. I've told you I'll take the ticket, and you ought to be glad to get rid of it, considering. Now, name a figure."

Snoop let the cigarette drop upon his trousers. He understood fully now that he would not be allowed to get out of the study without giving up the ticket. As if he had read the junior's thoughts in his eyes, Loder strolled between the arm chair and the door.

"Of course, I wouldn't dream of forcing you," said Carberry smoothly. "There are some fellows who would take you by the neck, and shake you till you gave up the ticket, or lick you with a cricket-stump till you agreed to sell for a shilling. Now, I'm not that sort of chap. I'm going to do the fair thing. Name your price."

"Well, three pounds," said Snoop weakly.

Carberry burst into a laugh.

"I suppose you're joking," he said.

"N-n-no, Carberry, really."

"The horse only stands to be worth three pounds fifteen to the owner of the ticket, if he wins. Now, be sensible, Snoop."

"Well, two pounds," said Snoop.

"I suppose it's no good talking to you," said Carberry. "Mind, I want to be your friend, Snoop. You're the kind of chap I like, and we could be very useful to one another in a lot of ways. It may be useful to you to have a prefect for a friend, when you want a pass out of bounds—a prefect who won't ask too many questions about where you're going, you know. If you make a friend of me, you can always depend on me. I hope you won't make me an enemy."

"Oh, Carberry! I—I—"

"Well, then, be sensible, Snoop."

"Well, give me a pound, and you can have the ticket," said Snoop desperately. "I—I won't part with it under a pound I—I'll tell Wharton—"

"Now, then, no blubbing," said Carberry, a little ashamed of himself, as he saw the water coming into the wretched junior's eyes. "Don't be a fool. Light your cigarette again, and be a man and a sportsman. If you don't want to part with the ticket, you can keep it. Did you say fifteen shillings?"

"No, a pound."

"Let the young ass have the pound," said Loder.

And after some grumbling, Carberry agreed. The three seniors made up the sovereign in silver in equal shares, and it was handed over to Snoop. He gave the precious slip bearing the name of King John in return.

Snoop's face brightened considerably as he received the money. There was a very pleasant feeling in slipping that little heap of silver into his pocket. After all, he had won a pound for his half-crown, and it did not matter to him if King John won or lost. And, after all, favourites often failed to win.

"Well, that's settled," said Carberry. "You can go, Snoop."

"Thank you, Carberry."

And the Remove left the study. Carberry spread the precious slip on the table with a grin of satisfaction as the door closed.

"We're all in this equally," he remarked. "Lucky for you two chaps you stood in with me, as I have drawn Bully Boy."

"Good!" said Loder. "If King John doesn't pull off the race, Bully Boy is bound to. The money is ours. Deducting three half-crowns, and a pound Snoop extorted from us, that leaves two pound seven-and-six to divide after the race."

"Exactly."

"Jolly good pay for an hour's work, I say," said Carne.

"Yes, and it would have paid better if we had drawn the favourites ourselves," said Carberry. "But that is a risky business to arrange beforehand; some of those kids are as sharp as needles. It's all right. It's King John's race, and Bully Boy is the only other geegee in the list who can touch him. All's serene."

"I don't see that we need wait till after the race to divide the pot," said Loder. "Joliffe is expecting us at the Golden Pig this evening. We may as well have a little flutter."

"Oh, yes, it's a dead cert."

And a little later in the evening the three worthies sallied out. The fellows who had taken tickets in the "little sweep" would have had a shock if they had known that the pool was being taken out of the school for a "little flutter" at the Golden Pig in Friardale.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CHRISTMAS WINNERS."

EVERY
TUESDAY, The "Magnet" ONE
LIBRARY. HALFPENNY.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Carberry Wishes to Buy.

THE next morning was an anxious time for half the fellows at Greyfriars. Every fellow who had a share, or a fraction of a share, in the sweep was keen to hear the result of the race. It was to be run at eleven o'clock, and the landlord of the Golden Pig in Friardale always had the results from Burnham by wire, and he had arranged to send a man up to the school with a message to Carberry, to inform him of the result. Of course, for verification, it would be easy to look in the next day's paper.

The amateur sportsmen were anxious and uneasy, and mostly discontented. The fellows who had drawn rank outsiders tried to hedge by selling their tickets, but they found few buyers. The morning paper had given a list of scratchings, as well as Silver Spray, which disqualified seven or eight of the tickets. As a matter of fact, there were not likely to be more than twelve runners at the most, in spite of the large number of entries.

Micky Desmond bemoaned his fate in drawing Son of Mine especially. Son of Mine had not been scratched, but he was supposed to have the rottenest chance of all. Micky's friends tried to console him by pointing out that the rankest outsiders sometimes won at long odds. But Micky shook his head.

"Faith," he said, "the worst of it is, that it's a fortnight's pocket-money gone in advance, and I shall be stony all the time. This gambling is rotten, you know. Faith, I'm thinking that Wharton was right all the time."

"Sell your ticket," said Bulstrode.

"Will ye have it at half price?" asked Micky

Bulstrode laughed.

"Not much!"

"Give me a bob for it."

"Not twopence!" said Bulstrode, walking away.

"Who'll spring a tanner for a ticket?" said Micky Desmond.

"I say, Snoopey, you've done jolly well, getting a pound for your slip. Make it a tanner for Son of Mine."

Snoop grinned, and shook his head.

"Not half!" he said. "Chuck it in the fire! It's no good."

"No, I won't do that, bedad!" said Micky Desmond, shoving the slip back into his pocket. "Ather all, outsiders sometimes win."

"Ha, ha, ha! Son of Mine won't!"

Micky had little hope; and after morning school he almost forgot about his ticket. After dinner he went down to the football field, where there was to be some practice before afternoon school. Harry Wharton & Co. were there, kicking a ball about in the bright winter sunshine.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Made a fortune yet?"

"No, bedad!" said Micky, with a grunt. "I've drawn the worst of the lot. Snoop's made a pound by selling his ticket to Carberry. He says Carberry made him sell."

"He had the favourite, I suppose?" said Harry.

"Faith, and he did."

"Then he might have guessed that Carberry wouldn't have let him keep it," said Wharton scornfully. "I'm surprised at his getting a pound. Come and play footer, Micky, and don't waste any more time on that rotten bosh!"

"Faith, and I'm thinking ye're right."

"Desmond! Desmond!"

It was Carberry's voice. The juniors glanced at the Sixth-Former. Carberry was smiling agreeably, but Wharton could see that there was an anxious expression in his eyes.

Micky Desmond looked round carelessly.

"Faith, do ye want me, Carberry? I'm just going to play footer."

"Oh, I only want to speak to you a few minutes, Desmond. Come along."

"Can't ye speak here, then, intirely?" said Micky, who had a very wholesome distrust of the Sixth Form bully, and preferred not to go alone with him. "It doesn't mather about these gossoons hearin'."

"It's about the sweep."

"Well, Wharton knows all about that."

"I hear you want to sell your ticket," said Carberry, lowering his voice. "You seem to think you're very unlucky in drawing Son of Mine. I don't want any fellow in the sweep to think he's hard done by. I'll give you a shilling for the ticket."

"Faith, and ye're welcome," said Micky Desmond, feeling in his pocket for the slip.

Harry Wharton caught his arm and stopped him, and Micky stared at the captain of the Remove in surprise.

"Faith, and what's the game, Wharton darling?"

"Don't be in a hurry to part with your ticket, Micky. What does Carberry want it for?"

"Mind your own business!" exclaimed Carberry furiously.

"Hand me the ticket, Desmond. Here's your shilling."

"Faith, I know it's no good," said Micky confidentially.

"It cost me half-a-crown, Wharton, but Snoop wouldn't give a tanner for it. It's not worth the paper it's written on."

"Is Carberry the kind of fellow to give you hard cash for a thing that's not worth the paper it's written on?" asked Wharton quietly.

Micky gave a jump. It had not struck him in that light before.

"Sure, and ye're right."

"You've agreed to sell me the slip now," said Carberry, with a venomous glance at Wharton. "Here's your shilling."

"Don't give it him, Micky," said Harry.

"Faith, and I—"

"Hold your tongue, Wharton!" said Carberry savagely. "Mind your own business! You're not in the sweep at all."

"No, and I was against Micky going into it; but now he's in it, I won't see him swindled," said Wharton.

"Swindled!" exclaimed Carberry, trembling with rage.

"Yes, that's the word."

"You dare to suggest—"

"I know that you would not give Micky twopence for the ticket if it were really worthless, as you say."

"Sure, and ye're right, Wharton darling. Anyway, I'll keep the ticket," said Micky. "It's a chance to win."

"You've agreed to sell it now," said Carberry fiercely.

"Hold on," said Wharton. "The result of the race was to be known in Friardale before twelve, so Russell told me, and a man was to bring the news here. You must know the result of the race by this time, Carberry."

"Mind your own business!"

"Bedad! do you know the winner, Carberry?"

"Well, yes, I do," said the prefect, driven into a corner. "It's not confirmed yet, but I hear that King John has won. I bought King John of Snoop, so I take the pool: and I was going to take your ticket off your hands out of sheer good-nature."

"Faith, and if King John's won, the ticket isn't much good intirely, Wharton, and he may as well have it."

"He does not venture to say outright that King John has won," said Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "My opinion is that King John hasn't won."

"Begorra!"

"It's far more likely to my mind that Son of Mine has got home, by some chance, and that's why Carberry wants to buy your ticket. I know that he must know the result of the race by this time."

Carberry's face was a study. The expression of it alone was enough to show the juniors, watching him keenly now, that Wharton was not far wrong. Micky Desmond thrust the ticket deep into his trousers pocket.

"I'm keepin' this," he remarked.

"You young rascal, you agreed to sell it," said Carberry. "You've got to hold to your bargain now."

"You were deceiving him, and Micky is quite right to draw back," said Harry Wharton. "Stick to it, Micky."

"Faith, and I mean to intirely."

"I'll make it five bob," said Carberry.

Harry Wharton laughed scornfully.

"Five shillings for a worthless slip of paper! You must think that Micky is a fool, if he's to believe that, Carberry."

"Will you hold your tongue?" yelled the enraged prefect.

"No, I won't. This whole business is blackguardly enough, without any racecourse welshing added to it. I'm going to see fair play."

Carberry looked as if he would spring upon Wharton for a moment. Then he controlled himself, and turned to Desmond again.

"Will you sell me the ticket, Desmond?"

"Faith, no!"

"I will give you ten shillings."

"I'm going to keep it."

"Fifteen shillings, then?"

"Three pound fifteen, if you like," grinned Micky Desmond.

"Sure, Carberry darling, ye're givin' yerself away entirely."

"Very well," said the prefect, between his teeth; and he turned and walked quietly away.

Micky Desmond turned a triumphant glance upon the chums of the Remove.

"All right, now," he grinned. "Son of Mine must have won, Wharton, darling!"

"It looks like it."

"Faith, and I've got three pound fifteen to draw from Carberry!"

"Yes," said Harry grimly: "if you can get it!"

"Why, he's got to hand over the pool, you know. He's no choice in the matther," exclaimed Micky. "He can't keep my money."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. He did not believe for a moment that the prefect would hand over such a sum as three pounds fifteen shillings to a junior. Whatever pretext he might make, it was pretty certain that he would not part with the money. Wharton knew Carberry too well to doubt that for a moment.

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GET THE "PLUCK" LIBRARY, AND WIN A MOTOR-CYCLE OR A PAIR OF ROLLER-SKATES.

But Micky Desmond, with Celtic optimism, had no doubts. He walked off full of jubilation, forgetting all about the football practice; and he was soon the centre of an admiring and envious group of Removeites. Carberry's character was so well known, that his attempt to purchase Micky's ticket was taken as evidence by nearly all that Son of Mine had won the race; and Micky received all sorts of congratulations, especially from those who had not lost any money.

Ere long the Irish junior was in Mrs. Mumble's tuck-shop, standing treat; and Mrs. Mumble, assured by the general evidence that Micky was shortly to receive a considerable sum of money, allowed him to run up a bill of ten shillings in treating the Remove. And Micky would have run up three times as much if she would have allowed it.

Micky Desmond went in to afternoon lessons as if he were waking on air. When Mr. Quelch asked him what nine cucumbers at three-and-threepence a dozen would fetch, Micky answered, "Three pounds fifteen," and received fifty lines on the spot from the astounded Form-master.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

No Cash for Micky!

MICKY DESMOND rushed off in search of Carberry immediately the Remove were released from class. Carberry had promised news of the race for mid-day, but since that interview on the football ground, Micky had not seen him, and neither had any of the other holders of tickets received a word from him. But by this time, Micky thought, the news must have been received, and he wanted to have his belief confirmed that Son of Mine had won, and to have the pool handed over to him.

Several of Micky Desmond's friends accompanied him to the study, eager to see the cash handed over, and to help Micky to spend it. They found Carberry there, restlessly walking up and down the room; but neither Loder nor Carne was to be seen. Micky knocked at the door, and rushed into the study.

"What do you want?" growled Carberry.

"Faith, I've come for my money!"

"What money?"

"Why, my winnings, sure!" exclaimed Micky, indignantly.

"Son of Mine has won—"

"Have you had news from the races?"

"No; but you said—"

"I don't know anything about it. The chap who was going to send me a message has forgotten, I think," said Carberry. "I shan't know till I look in the paper to-morrow morning."

Micky's face fell.

"Faith, and then phwy did ye want to buy my ticket?" he asked.

"I told you the reason. The offer's still open."

"Sure, I'll keep the ticket!" said Micky. "I'll see you again to-morrow morning, Carberry, darling."

And the juniors quitted the study, angry and disappointed. Not one of them believed Carberry's statement. As a matter of fact, the prefect had been seen speaking at the gate to a man known to belong to the Golden Pig. Billy Bunter had seen him, and made mention of the circumstance. The prefect's denial of the obvious truth could only be explained by the fact that he was not yet prepared to hand over the money.

"Son of Mine must have won," said Ogilvy. "If any other horse had won, Carberry would tell us. He knows."

"Of course, he knows!"

"Faith, and I believe you!"

"It begins to look to me as if Wharton was right," said Russell slowly. "He said it was a swindle, and we had no chance all along. It looks now as if Carberry means to keep the money."

"Bedad! But he can't! It's mine!"

"You can't force him to give it up, come to that," said Russell.

"Faith, I'll make a row about it! I'll complain—"

"To whom? If you let the masters know you've been mixed up in a sweep, you'll get a licking, and Carberry will crawl out of it somehow. He always squirms out of scrapes."

And Micky Desmond looked considerably blue. However, he still hoped for the best. On the morrow morning they would know for certain whether Son of Mine had won or not, and then Carberry would have at least to come out in the open.

The juniors could not get an evening paper. Carberry perhaps had one; but, if so, he kept it to himself. But they must know in the morning. There were several morning papers delivered at Greyfriars every morning, and it was not difficult to obtain one after morning school.

When morning lessons were over, Micky Desmond lost no time in securing a newspaper, and he carried it out into the Close, amid a crowd of Removeites, to consult the racing columns.

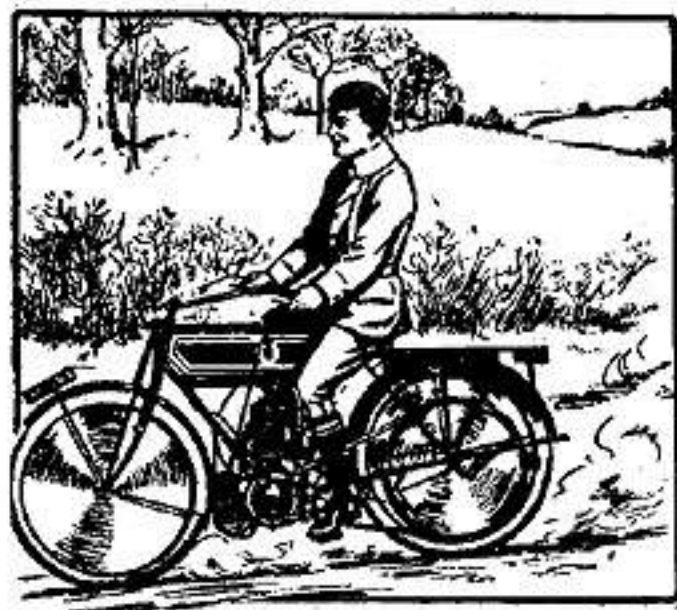
Micky was not used to looking for racing news; but he found

(Continued on page 14.)

Billy Bunter won't get it, but **You** may!

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the sporting page at last, and scanned it till he came to "Yesterday's Races." Then he eagerly ran down the list of the races run the previous day, till he came to the Burnham Stakes.

"Faith, and here it is!"

"Who's won?"

"Read it out."

"Begorra! I suppose the horse at the top of the list in capital letters is the winner?" said Micky, his voice trembling with excitement.

"That's right," said Bulstrode.

"Son of Mine," read out Micky. "That's the first; then there's Bully Boy and Green Tea. Faith, and King John comes sixth—no, seventh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "That's rough on Carberry. You did jolly well out of your ticket, Snoopey!"

Snoop chuckled gleefully.

"Mind Carberry doesn't get it back," said Bulstrode. "He made you sell the ticket, and he may make you buy it back."

"He can't," said Snoop. "I've spent the money. I was afraid there might be some sort of trouble, and I've spent every penny. Carberry wouldn't take the things I've bought—besides, they wouldn't be any good to him."

"You ought to be in the city," said Bulstrode admiringly. "Blessed if you wouldn't make a company promoter, and Carberry another."

"Micky's won," said Russell; "there's no doubt about that. Carberry's got to hand him over three pound fifteen."

Micky folded up the paper. His hands were shaking with excitement.

"I'm going to get the money," he said. "You fellows come with me. If Carberry means any welshing, it's better to have some witnesses."

And quite a crowd of Removites proceeded to Carberry's study. The prefect was not there. They looked into Loder's study. Carne was there, but the prefect was not.

"He's keeping out of the way," said Stoff.

"We'll find him, bedad!"

They left the schoolhouse again, passing Harry Wharton at the door. Micky Desmond held up the paper, folded at the racing list, for Harry to see.

"Son of Mine has pulled it off, Wharton darling!"

"Good," said Wharton. "Show me the money when you get it."

"Have you seen Carberry?"

"I think he's gone out."

Carberry could not be found anywhere about Greyfriars, so the juniors had to conclude that he really had gone out. It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and Micky hoped to spot the prefect sooner or later. He kept his eyes open, but Carberry did not return till call-over in the evening. The juniors guessed that he had been avoiding them, and Micky was feeling decidedly anxious about his three pounds fifteen. When Carberry came in, he went into Loder's study.

Five minutes later he was tracked there by the eager sweepstakers. Micky Desmond knocked at the door, and opened it and marched in with the paper in his hand, and a dozen of the Removites at his heels.

Carberry faced them, looking very worn and worried. Loder was scowling uneasily. The wretched gamblers had fallen into their own snares. The little "flutter" at the Golden Pig had not been a success; the sweepstake money had been gambled away to the last shilling. Carberry could not now pay if he wanted to. But he had never had any intention of paying.

"Hallo, Desmond!" said Carberry, clearing his face as much as he could, and putting on an expression of geniality. "I wanted to see you."

"Faith, and ye've been keeping your distance, too!" said Micky.

"I've been busy. Let me see, you've come about that sweepstake affair, haven't you?"

"Faith, and I have!"

"All right. Got your ticket, I suppose?"

"Here it is," said Micky, producing it; at the same time bestowing a triumphant glance upon his comrades.

"You other kids can get out," said Carberry, glancing at them. "Son of Mine won the race, and you've got nothing to draw."

"Wait for me in the passage, then," said Micky.

The juniors went out and the door closed. Carberry drew a pocket-book out and looked through it. Micky stood waiting expectantly, with the slip of paper in his hand.

"Let me see," said Carberry. "H'm! It's very unfortunate—"

"Three pound fifteen!" said Micky.

"I'm sorry it's turned out like this; but there's been a mistake."

Micky's heart almost stopped beating.

"A mistake!" he repeated. "What mistake?"

"It's very unfortunate, but it might have happened to

THE MAGNET—No. 97.

anybody," said Carberry blandly. "It's all through that second drawing we had, owing to my putting a scratched horse in by error. You remember?"

"What's that got to do with it?" said Micky, beginning to tremble.

"Why, you see, it happened like this. I had the slip right at first—I'll swear to that—but when they were put into the bag a second time, an extra one got in somehow. I had written Son of Mine twice, because the first one was a little smudged, and I wanted everything to be quite plain. I ought to have thrown the first one into the fire, but I left it on the table, and the second time the slips were put into the bag it got shoved in with the rest. You see how it was? Son of Mine got drawn twice, and one slip was overlooked and left in the bag."

"Faith, I—I——"

"The smudged one was the one that doesn't count," explained Carberry. "Let me look at yours? Yes, you see, there it is—the 's' is smudged."

Micky did not speak—he could not for the moment.

"The other Son of Mine was drawn by—let me see—oh, Carne," said Carberry. "I remember now Carne telling me he had drawn a rotten outsider, and I laughed."

"Do you mean to say that I'm not going to have my money?" said Micky, in a shaking voice.

Carberry made an impatient gesture.

"You young fool! It's not your money, as you haven't won it!"

"Sure, Son of Mine——"

"You had the wrong slip, as I explained to you."

"Do you think I believe such a lie?" said Micky. "Ye--ye thafe! Give me my money!"

"I tell you——"

"Three pound fifteen!" almost yelled Micky. "Give me my money, ye thafe!"

"I'll give you the half-crown you spent on the chance," said Carberry. "That's treating you generously, as it was all a mistake."

"Ye're a liar! Give me my three pound fifteen!"

Carberry frowned heavily.

"I've explained to you," he said; "you're not entitled to anything; but you can have this half-crown. Now get out of the room."

Micky hurled the half-crown into the fire.

"Now give me my money, ye thafe—ye thafe!"

"Get out!"

"I won't go without the money. Three pound fifteen—three pound fifteen."

Micky's voice rose to a wild yell. Carberry took him by the collar, yanked him to the door, and flung him out into the passage. Micky crashed into the waiting juniors, and half of them went rolling on the floor.

"Hallo!" gasped Russell. "Got the money?"

"No!" shrieked Micky. "He won't give it to me—he says there was a mistake—I'm not to have it. The thafe!"

"The swindler!" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Faith, and I'm going to Wharton. He'll make him pay!"

And Micky rushed off, blazing with anger and excitement, to No. 1 Study, followed by the equally excited juniors. They rushed into Wharton's study, where the chums of the Remove were quietly doing their prep. Wharton and Nugent jumped up.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Carberry Pays the Piper.

"WHAT on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Harry.

"The thafe—the thafe of the worruld!"

"Eh! What is it?"

"Micky's won, and Carberry won't give him the money," said Hazeldene. "You knew the rotter better than we did. He says there was a mistake."

Wharton smiled grimly. Micky burst into a breathless explanation, to which the Captain of the Remove listened quietly.

"What do ye say, Wharton darling?" concluded Micky. "I'm going to have the money out of him, ain't I?"

Harry shook his head.

"It serves you jolly well right," he said.

"Phwat!"

"I mean what I say. You ought not to have entered into the thing at all. You knew you were doing wrong, and you forced me to let you do it. You deserve to lose your money, and it serves you right!"

"Begorra, it's a Job's comforter ye are, intirely."

"Carberry is a thief not to pay, I know," went on Harry.

"You can't do anything. You can't make a complaint without admitting that you've been gambling, and getting a flogging for it. And you'd get the flogging for nothing, for the Head certainly wouldn't allow you to keep money won on a race. You've got to take it quietly, and Carberry knows it," went on

Wharton. "You can't do anything—and it serves you right! I can interfere, however, as I haven't had a hand in the foolery, and have nothing to fear if it comes out."

"Ye'll make him pay up, Wharton darling!" said Micky coaxingly.

"I won't make him pay you a penny. You don't want money that doesn't belong to you; and it's no good pretending that this money belongs to you. It doesn't. But Carberry is a thief to keep it, and I'll make him disgorge, if you like."

"Faith, that would be better than nothing. But how—"

"I'll make him pay three pounds fifteen into the chapel poor-box," said Harry. "That's all. You won't touch a penny of it, but Carberry won't be allowed to keep it. That's all I can do. I told you I was against gambling from the start, and I won't have a hand in helping you to get hold of other people's money."

Wharton went directly to Loder's study. He walked in with quiet calmness, and met Carberry's angry glance with fearless eyes.

"I want to say a few words to you, Carberry," he said. "I'm speaking to you before going to the Head. You've cheated Micky Desmond out of three pounds fifteen—"

"I'll break your—"

"Let me finish, please. Micky's not going to have the money, because he's no right to it; but you are not going to keep it. You are going to pay it into the chapel poor-box, and I'm going to see you do it."

Carberry gasped for breath.

"You cheeky young hound! I—"

"Or else," said Wharton quietly, "I shall go directly to Dr. Locke, and explain the whole thing to him. Micky dares not let it be known that he has been gambling. I have nothing to be afraid of. You understand me? You'll pay out every penny of the money, or you'll be up before the Head this evening."

"You dare not!"

"Refuse—and see!"

"I—I haven't the money. I—I've lost it."
 "If you are going to lie again—"
 "I mean I've lost it on cards—I haven't half a sovereign left," said the prefect desperately.

"Lost it!" echoed Wharton. "Lost the sweepstakes money! You cur!"

Carberry bit his lip till the blood came.

"I'll give you till Saturday, then," said Harry, after a pause. "You'll raise the money, and you'll pay it into the poor-box in my presence on Saturday, or the matter will go to the Head. That's final!"

And he walked out of the study. Carberry ground his teeth with rage. But rage could not help him. He was in the Remove captain's hands, and he knew it.

How he raised the money Wharton did not know. But he did raise it, and on Saturday three sovereigns and a half, and five shillings, were slipped into the poor-box under the watchful eyes of the captain of the Remove.

And although Bulstrode and a few others sneered at the Remove captain, there was no doubt that Wharton was backed up by most of the Form, when they had thought calmly about the matter. And there was no doubt, either, that he had scored a big victory over Carberry of the Sixth; and that alone was enough to make Wharton's popularity greater than ever after the affair of the Greyfriars Sweepstakes.

THE END.

(Another splendid tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday, entitled "The Christmas Winners," by Frank Richards. Order your "Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)



ONE OF THE RANKS

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A BRIEF RESUMÉ OF THE EARLIER CHAPTERS.

Ronald Chenys is forced to leave Sandhurst through the treachery of his stepbrother Ian, and enlists in the Wessex Regiment under the name of Chester. Unfortunately for Ronald, Ian joins the Wessex as a subaltern, and, assisted by Sergeant Bagot and Private Foxey Williams, does his best to further disgrace Ronald. The unscrupulous Bagot, however, gets caught in his own toils, and is publicly degraded to the ranks. Foxey Williams meets his death mysteriously in a burning barn. The Royal Wessex are forming the garrison of Eastguard Forts, near Plymport, during manoeuvres. After some nights' weary vigilance, the enemy make an attack, and the Fort's guns cannot be supplied quickly enough with powder and blank-shot. Ronald is told off with a party of men to help in the magazine. Bagot, the ex-sergeant, attempts to blow the place up, and when Ronald captures him the two fall into the sea. They are, however, rescued by one of the enemy's torpedo boats and, are eventually put ashore. From that moment the two men disappear, so Gussie, one of Ronald's comrades, goes to Lieutenant Bob Fairly, and tells his superior officer some strange news.

(Now go on with the story.)

Gussie Keeps His Eyes Open!

When, on the night of the torpedo attack, Ian watched Ronald topple backwards, locked in Bagot's arms, from the steel-faced glacis of the fort, and drop a hundred feet into the sea, he could have cried out for sheer joy. When later, too, the boat returned, reporting that it had seen nothing of the

drowning men, his triumph was complete. But then came that spectral craft foaming by, bathed in the silver flood of the searchlights, and there, on its deck stood Ronald. There was no mistaking him. Once again he had returned from the dead to mock him. If only there had been live shell in the breach that night, Ian would readily have laid a gun himself to blow his enemy to pieces.

After that, dizzy hopes and dismal fears crowded thick and fast upon him. Once again days passed, and still there came no news of the missing men. Was Ronald dead, after all? If he were alive, he would have reported himself by hook or crook; trust him for that. He must be dead! If Ian could only have been sure of that—sure that he was out of his path for ever, that a new life, free from gnawing fear, was opened to him!

So he marched beside his men, his face haggard, his eyes moving restlessly from face to face of the groups watching from the pavement as if he more than half expected to see Ronald standing there.

So intent was he on every new face, and so careless of the ones already scanned, that he had no eyes for a figure slinking along a little in rear of the party.

This man, with a shambling gait, moved steadily, keeping pace with them on the flank, taking small interest in the troops apparently, yet every now and then shooting a side-long glance at the young subaltern, marching with feverish stride scarcely twenty paces ahead of him.

Gussie, whose eyes were as keenly on the watch as

Ian's, took stock of the man. There was a curious twist in the fellow's jaw which gave the pasty face a sinister expression. The next time he turned his eyes to see if he was still following, the man had vanished!

From the dock-gate to the station is but a mile, and in a few minutes the baggage-party was swinging into the yard.

"Form two deep!" commanded Ian, as the men entered the doorway. And he halted to see the last file through.

The light from the booking-office fell upon his careworn features. Gussie, as he drew abreast, watched the face grimly. He was thinking what a net was being gradually drawn round this young scoundrel to drag him to justice.

Then, just as he was passing him, the light fell upon a second face—the twisted face of the man who had followed them from the dockyard gates. In the bright lamp-rays it looked more sinister still, as it appeared suddenly at Ian's shoulder. The subaltern looked round, startled at the apparition.

"Name of Chenys?" whispered the man, with scarce a movement of his lips.

Ian nodded, too taken aback to speak. The next second a greasy envelope was thrust into his hand, and the man was gone again, swallowed up in the gloom. The rear files of the party had already disappeared on the platform.

"Curse it! What's the meaning of this?" exclaimed Ian, still holding the note crushed up in his hand. With one swift, furtive glance, he looked at the scrawled direction of the envelope. There was no mistaking the villainous fist.

"Pushoffsky!" he whispered hoarsely to himself. "He's in England, then! Here in Plymport! What news has he to send?"

Gussie Resolves Upon a Bold Game—A Reconnoitring Expedition.

Only one other saw the passing of that letter, and that was Gussie. He heard the whispered inquiry, and saw out of the tail of his eye the hand thrust forward; and then he had filed past. He dared not turn his head, and there is no hanging back in the ranks.

There may be ten thousand wrong ways of setting about a thing, and only one right, but there is always a chance, nevertheless, of hitting on the right way at the very outset.

By some strange intuition Gussie jumped at once to the correct solution of the mysterious performance he had just witnessed. Only an instant before his thoughts had been running upon Ian's villainy, that reckless plot aimed at the life of one and bringing down another.

Now, without effort, the two things connected themselves instantly in his mind. Was this note from Pushoffsky? Why not? Pushoffsky was still at large. Plymport was convenient to Woolchester. It afforded many a secure hiding-place, and later, when the vigilance of the police had relaxed, a hundred opportunities for escape out of the country.

Yes, Pushoffsky was in Plymport, and this mysterious letter to Ian was from him. Something was dinning this belief into Gussie's brain as he stood in the ranks, leaning upon his rifle.

And if the the wrestler was skulking here, was it not possible that Fate had thrown Ronald into his clutches, and that he was held prisoner, awaiting the sentence which his note demanded?

Gussie found himself becoming so convinced that all this was fact, and not the mere creation of his imagination, that he set himself to laugh at himself. But no. The conviction took a still stronger hold upon him, and at last he almost felt like breaking from the ranks to pursue the man with the twisted face, and track him down.

"Mills and Smythe!"

Mouldy and Gussie sprang to attention as the sergeant called their names.

"Leave your kits, and go over with the porter to the goods yard. You'll find there a bale of stuff consigned to the Wessex regiment. Bring it across, and we'll take it on the train with us. Hurry up, for you've only a couple of minutes to spare."

Mouldy and Gussie set off down the platform and across the metals, stumbling over the points and rails, at the heels of their guide.

Gussie was wondering whether this was not an act of Providence to give him the chance of pursuit he yearned for. He wanted time to think, and he determined to make it.

There was the bale, but it was heavy, and Gussie swore that it could not be moved without a barrow. So away he went in search of one. When he got it, the signals were down and the lights of the approaching train were visible. Then, by the time the bale, which, through Gussie's blundering had been twice capsized, once bowling Mouldy off his feet, and pinning him by the legs, the train was in and gone.

"See what you've done with all your clumsiness, you flat-faced, pudden-headed donkey?" roared Mouldy. "Now we'll have to wait for the next train."

"Which'll be to-morrow morning," chipped in the porter, with a contemptuous sniff.

"What?" yelled Mouldy.

"Unless you like to order a special. There ain't no more trains to Woolchester to-night." And the man went off, whistling, to the lamp-room, leaving the two to their own devices.

"I believe you done this on purpose!" snarled Mouldy.

"Well, I don't know now that I didn't," answered Gussie coolly; and then added, just in time to prevent Mouldy's eyes dropping out of his head altogether with surprise: "A plan just came into my head when we two got told off for this job, and I wanted a little time to think it out."

"Oh, indeed!" sneered Mouldy.

"Yes, I was thinking of Chester, and that place, Castle Gate. I was thinking that if you and me were going to pop down there and see if we can chance upon his tracks, the sooner we start the better."

Mouldy took his pipe from between his teeth, knocked it out, refilled and lit it, without ever once taking his eyes off Gussie's face.

"What about this for an opportunity?" asked Gussie, meeting the gaze. "Here we are stranded for eight hours, at least. We've no orders to bother about, and nowhere to go, for we can't get back to Eastguard to-night. What do you say to getting into walking-out rig, leaving the rest of our traps, and hooking off to Castle Gate now?"

"What as?" gasped Mouldy.

"Deserters, if you like," responded Gussie coolly; "or chaps who mean to desert if they can. Do you think you could recognise that pub. if you saw it again?"

"I might," said Mouldy.

"Very well. We're as much entitled to go in there as anybody else. We'll just walk in and have a quiet look round, and see what we can see. If anybody asks any questions, no doubt we shall find an answer for them. Only we'll take our side-arms, in case of a kick-up. No scabbards, but just the bayonet down our trouser-leg."

(Another long instalment of this thrilling serial next Thursday.)

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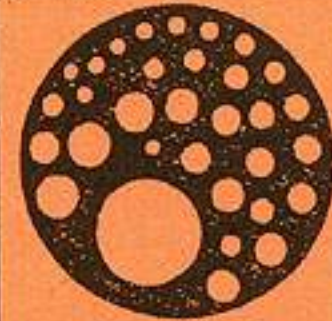
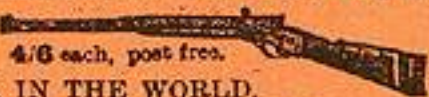


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