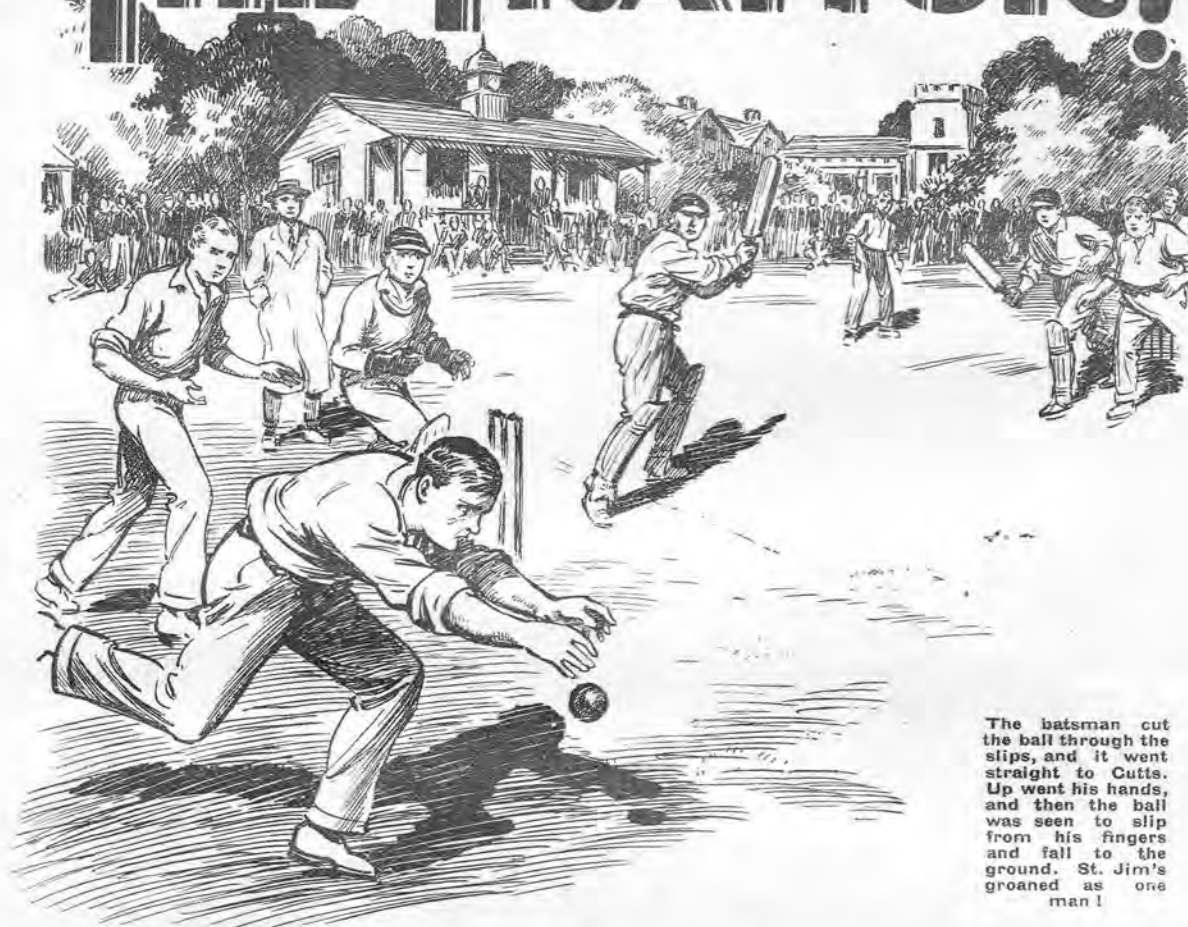


GRAND LONG STORIES OF ST. JIM'S AND GREYFRIARS!

The GEM ^{2d}



THE TRAITOR!



The batsman cut the ball through the slips, and it went straight to Cutts. Up went his hands, and then the ball was seen to slip from his fingers and fall to the ground. St. Jim's groaned as one man!

CHAPTER 1.

Fatty Wynn's Raid!

GINGER-BEER—one dozen."
"Yes, Master Merry."
"Jam-tarts—lemme see, how many jam-tarts?" said Tom Merry meditatively.

"Two dozen," said Monty Lowther.
"Right! And sandwiches?"
"Three dozen," suggested Manners.
"And a cake," said Tom Merry.
"And shove 'em all into this bag," Mrs. Taggles.

Fatty Wynn, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, heard it all as he came up to the little tuckshop in the corner of the quad. And Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther, the chums of the School House, were evidently making extensive purchases, and the mere mention of sandwiches and jam-tarts made Fatty Wynn feel hungry. The mere mention of ginger-beer made him feel thirsty.

Which was not surprising, for it was a blazing August afternoon. The old quadrangle of St. Jim's was shimmering with heat, and the fellows on the cricket field were red and perspiring.

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"Dozen ginger-beer, two dozen jam-tarts, three dozen sandwiches!" murmured Fatty Wynn, as he paused outside the tuckshop. "My hat! If Figgins and Kerr were here, instead of fagging at blessed cricket, what a chance for a raid!"

Fatty Wynn grunted. He knew that a dozen or a hundred jam-tarts would not have fetched Figgins and Kerr away from the cricket.

"They're getting the stuff ready to take over to Abbotsford to-morrow," murmured Fatty Wynn. "And yesterday they raided my steak-pie. What a chance, if only some of the fellows were here!"

Fatty Wynn looked round the deserted quadrangle. But there were no New House fellows in sight—or School House fellows, for that matter. Everybody was on the cricket-ground or on the river. And soon Tom Merry & Co. would be coming out, laden with tuck, and the opportunity would be lost!

"May as well put in some dough-nuts," went on the voice of Tom Merry inside the shop. "And a currant cake, Mrs. Taggles. And half a dozen lemonades."

"Yes, Master Merry."

"Pack them in the bag, will you, Mrs. Taggles? We'll come back for it."

"Yes, Master Merry."

Fatty Wynn's eyes glittered. The three School House fellows were coming towards the door, and in a second Fatty Wynn had dodged round the corner of the shop. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther walked out cheerfully, and strolled off towards the cricket-ground without observing the fat Fourth Former peering round the corner of the tuckshop.

"That will be all right for to-morrow," Tom Merry was saying, "and it leaves us enough tin to get over to Abbotsford for the Wallaby match. It will be a regular picnic. I—"

His voice died away as the chums of the School House disappeared through the elms.

Fatty Wynn grinned and came out of cover and rolled into the tuckshop. Dame Taggles was packing a cricket-bag that lay on the counter, and Fatty Wynn looked hungrily at the good things she was packing into it.

"That's a jolly good order, Mrs. Taggles," said Fatty Wynn carelessly.

"Yes, Master Wynn."

"Who's it for?"

"Master Merry. It's to take away to-morrow," said Mrs. Taggles, "and I 'ope the young gentlemen will have a pleasant day."

"Oh, it will be ripping!" said Fatty

POWERFUL LONG YARN OF SCHOOL ADVENTURE AND CRICKET, FEATURING GERALD CUTTS.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Wynn. "The first eleven are playing the Wallabies, you know, and Kildare's lot are in top form. I shouldn't wonder if St. Jim's pulls off the match, Mrs. Taggles."

"I'm sure I 'ope so, Master Wynn," said Dame Taggles placidly as she packed the last article into the bag and closed it. "What can I get for you?"

"Lemme see," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully, his eyes never leaving the well-packed bag. "I—I say, is that bottle of bullseyes quite safe up there, Mrs. Taggles? Awful smash if it came down, you know."

Mrs. Taggles turned round to look at the bottle of bullseyes, and as she turned her back Fatty Wynn clutched the bag from the counter, and in the twinkling of an eye was outside the tuckshop with it.

"It is all right, Master Wynn," said Mrs. Taggles, looking round again. "I—why, my goodness! Master Wynn, where are you? Good gracious!"

The good dame surveyed the empty shop in astonishment.

Fatty Wynn was gone, and the bag was gone. It took Mrs. Taggles some moments to realise that it was a raid—one of those little "japes" with which the juniors of St. Jim's contrived to enliven existence.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Taggles.

"Ready?" asked Tom Merry, coming into the tuckshop a few minutes later. "Why, where's my bag, Mrs. Taggles?"

"Master Wynn's taken it away, Master Merry," said Mrs. Taggles in distress. "But if you like I will return your money, and send the bill to him."

"Oh, rats—I mean, no, thanks! It's a giddy raid. I didn't see the fat bouncer!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's all right, Mrs. Taggles. But I'll scalp that fat oyster! Manners! Lowther!"

And he rushed from the tuckshop. Manners and Lowther were outside, under the elm. They stared at Tom Merry's excited face in amazement.

"What's the matter?" demanded Lowther.

"New House bouncer—raided the blessed bag!" gasped Tom Merry. "Fatty Wynn—he's bolted with it!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"After him!" yelled Manners.

Tom Merry looked round the quadrangle. There was no sign of Fatty Wynn there.

"Must have gone into the New House with it," said Tom Merry. "We're going after him. He can't have scooped the stuff yet. Come on!"

And the Terrible Three rushed away towards the New House. In other circumstances, it would have been perilous to pursue the enemy into his own stronghold, so to speak, but just then all the New House fellows were out of doors.

The Terrible Three met no one as they rushed into the House and scampered up the stairs to the Fourth Form studies. They burst into Figgins' study with a yell.

They fully expected to find Fatty Wynn there with the plunder. But the study was empty, and there was no sign of the raider or the loot.

"The—the fat rotter!" howled Lowther. "He knew we should come

here for him, and he's gone off somewhere else!"

"We've got to find him!"

And, staying only to overturn the table, and pull up the study carpet, and pitch the bookcase on its side—as a memento of their visit—the School House juniors rushed out of the study and down the stairs again.

But their departure from the New House was not to be so easy as their entrance. They had been seen to come in, and Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence, and a crowd more New House juniors had followed them in, and were waiting for them.

"Hallo!" said Redfern agreeably. "What are you School House chaps doing in a respectable House? Looking for thick ears?"

The Terrible Three exchanged a glance, and made a rush to escape. In a moment there was a wild and whirling struggle in the passage, and then, one after another, three whirling forms descended the steps of the New House and rolled into the quadrangle.

A yell of laughter followed them.

"Come back and have some more!" sang out Redfern.

But the Terrible Three did not accept the invitation. The steps were crowded with New House fellows ready to seize them and hurl them forth again. They picked themselves up,

Faced with heavy gambling losses if St. Jim's win their all-important match with an Australian touring team, Gerald Cutts, black sheep of the Fifth Form, plays the traitor to his own side!

dusty and dishevelled, and limped away, and Redfern & Co. sent a yell after them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" groaned Monty Lowther. "This is where we get it in the neck—ow! Where is that fat beast with our Tommy?"

"Echo answers 'where'!" grunted Tom Merry.

Up and down and round about the school the Terrible Three sought for the raider, but they found him not. In those same moments Fatty Wynn was seated under the shade of a haystack a quarter of a mile away, enjoying himself!

CHAPTER 2.

Crooked!

KILDARE of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, was standing outside the pavilion, with an expression of great contentment upon his handsome, sunny face.

Kildare was feeling contented.

The First Eleven of St. Jim's were at practice, and there was no doubt that they were at their top form.

And Kildare had reason to be pleased. On the morrow the St. Jim's First were meeting the Wallabies, and for that match they needed to be at their topmost form.

The Wallabies, a travelling Australian team, were at Abbotsford just then, and Kildare had been fired by the ambition of meeting them in a match.

The Australian team was certainly a "big order" for the school to take on, but Kildare had high hopes of a win. The Wallabies, having a vacant day, had consented to play, thereby filling the St. Jim's fellows with satisfaction.

From Kildare, the captain of the school, down to the smallest and inkiest fag in the lowest Form, nothing was talked of or thought of just then but the Wallaby match.

Tom Merry & Co. and the rest of the juniors were almost as keen about it as the senior fellows.

They had agreed unanimously to put off their own House match, fixed for the same day, and to follow the first to Abbotsford to watch the Wallaby game.

Which was a great distinction for the first eleven—at least, from a junior point of view.

In honour of that great match, and in consideration of the desire of all St. Jim's to see it, the Head had granted a whole holiday for the famous day—a measure that filled to the full the cup of contentment.

Just now the last practice before the great match was going as well as Kildare could have desired. He had selected five New House seniors for the team—Monteith, Baker, Webb, Gray, and Jones major. The School House portion of the team was composed of Kildare himself, captain, and Darrell, Langton, Rushden, Lefevre, and Gilmore—the last two being Fifth Formers.

There was, of course, some dissatisfaction among players who had not been put in, for there were crowds who wanted to play on an occasion which would become historic in the annals of St. Jim's cricket. Knox of the Sixth had been very keen to play, and had taken his disappointment badly; and Cutts of the Fifth, too, was a pressing candidate. But Kildare had made his selection on his own judgment and that of the cricket committee, and all excepting the disappointed candidates agreed that the eleven was the best that could be found in the school.

Langton was at the wicket now, and Knox was bowling to him. Kildare was watching carefully.

"Langton's in his best form, Darrell," he remarked. "My hat, all the fellows seem to be at top notch! Barring ill-luck, there's no reason why we shouldn't beat the Wallabies."

"It will be a record for us," said Darrell. "It's the biggest order we've ever taken on."

"All the more reason why we must pull it off."

"Right-ho! We're all going to slog, anyway," said Darrell, laughing. "We've never put in an eleven better than this, anyway. There will be a surprise for certain parties at Abbotsford to-morrow if we pull off the match—and not a pleasant surprise, either."

Kildare's brows contracted.

"You mean that there's been betting on the match?" he said.

Darrell nodded.

"Yes, rather."

"Well, if they lose their money, serve 'em right," said Kildare. "It's too rotten that a game like cricket should be disgraced by their filthy betting."

"Quite so," chimed in Monteith. "But I fancy there are fellows in the school who don't agree with your views, Kildare."

Kildare's brow grew darker.

"You don't mean to say that any St. Jim's fellow has put money on the match, Monteith?"

The New House prefect shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know for certain," he said. "But I think it's not very doubtful."

"Well, if we lose, it will be some satisfaction that they will be done in," Monteith laughed.

"They won't be done in if they lay against us," he said.

"Oh!" said Kildare.

Langton came off from the wicket. His sticks had not fallen; it was far more than Knox could do to bowl him.

"Take a turn at the sticks, Darrell, and let's see how you go," said Kildare.

"Right-ho!"

Darrell took his bat and went down to the wicket. Knox was a pretty good bowler, but he evidently had no chance with Darrell. Kildare looked on with great satisfaction.

"All the blessed team at high-water mark," he said, "and we've got first-rate reserves, too. Cutts, at all events, is good enough to be in the team. I was half minded to put in Cutts instead of Gilmore. By the way, where is Cutts? He ought to be here at practice—there's a bare chance he might be wanted to-morrow."

"He's not here," said Monteith, looking round.

Kildare frowned.

"I told him to turn up," he said. "He was ratty at being left out, but a skipper can't put everybody in. He ought to be here."

"I fancy he's gone out," remarked Langton.

"He had no business to," said Kildare sharply. "I shall speak to him about it. I want him to do some bowling against the eleven."

He turned, and called to a group of juniors who were watching the practice.

"Blake! D'Arcy! See if you can find Cutts, and tell him to come here."

"Yes, rather," said Blake.

"Certainly, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. "I suppose you wouldn't care for me to do any bowlin', Kildare?"

"Not just now," said Kildare, laughing.

"You might do worse, dear boy. In fact, I have thought several times that it would be a vewy good ideah to play a few juniors in the team, just to buck it up, you know. You must admit that it's a vewy important occasion, and I should be perfectly willin' to play."

"Come away, ass!" said Blake, dragging his elegant chum away. "Let's look for Cutts."

"Weally, Blake—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was interrupted. There was a sudden shout from the pitch, and the juniors turned back to see what had happened. Knox, the bowler, was standing with a flushed face, and Darrell had dropped his bat, and was standing with a look of pain in his face, and his hand pressed to his hip. He reeled a little, and Kildare ran to him and held him.

"Bai Jove! What's happened?" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"An accident!"

"I—I say, I'm sorry, Darrell!" exclaimed Knox, hurrying along the pitch, and looking very agitated. "I hope you're not hurt? I had a slip—"

Darrell suppressed a groan.

"All right," he muttered. "I know you didn't do it on purpose, if that's what you mean. I—I'm afraid I'm hurt, Kildare. Help me off."

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Kildare, with a set, grim face, helped his chum to the pavilion. The practice stopped; there was a buzz of anxious voices. The Terrible Three joined Blake & Co., looking very serious and concerned.

"Did you see it?" asked Blake.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, and—and I suppose it was an accident."

"Accident be blowed!" said Monty Lowther hotly. "If Knox didn't mean that ball to catch Darrell just where it did, I'll—I'll eat it!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I know it sounds a rotten thing to say," said Lowther, flushing a little; "but we all know Knox. He was wild at being left out of the team, and he's one of the reserves. I don't want to be suspicious, but—"

"He's capable of it," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, I weally agwee to that."

"But he won't get in," said Manners. "Cutts will come first."

"Well, Cutts and Knox are as thick as thieves," said Lowther. "I shouldn't wonder if it's a put-up job between them."

"Better not say so!" said Kerr. "It's a dangerous thing to say. Most of the fellows think it was an accident. Kildare thinks so."

"If Darrell's really hurt—"

Kildare came out of the pavilion, where he had left his chum. His face was clouded. He did not glance at Knox.

"Well?" asked a score of voices.

"Darrell's crocked!" said Kildare shortly. "He's got a lump as big as an egg on his hip, and he will be limping for a week. He can't play to-morrow."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Rotten!"

"You'll want one of the reserves then," said Knox uneasily. "If you want me, Kildare—"

"I shall not want you, Knox," said Kildare, looking him directly in the face, and then turning his back on him. Knox flushed crimson.

"I—I suppose you don't think it wasn't an accident?" he stammered.

"I suppose it was," said Kildare. "If I thought it wasn't, I'd—" He paused. "But an accident like that happened once before when you were bowling, Knox, and I don't like accidents of that kind. I shall have to play a reserve, but I shan't play you. That's final."

And Kildare returned into the pavilion, leaving the crowd of fellows in a buzz.

CHAPTER 3.

Fatty Wynn's Discovery!

FATTY WYNN sat up and listened.

The New House junior was sitting under the shade of the haystack, and half-hidden in the loose hay, where the labourers had been at work.

Close by him was the cricket bag, and round him were crumpled paper bags and empty ginger-beer bottles.

Fatty Wynn had done full justice to the feed he had so cunningly raided from the School House juniors.

Comfortably perched against the sweet-smelling hay, he had demolished sandwiches, jam tarts, doughnuts, and cake, and washed down the solids with copious draughts of ginger-beer.

The feed was unlimited, and even Fatty Wynn had not been able to dispose of all the supplies, but he had done wonderfully well.

After his exertions the fat Fourth Former had fallen asleep, pillowed on the hay, with a drowsy chuckle at his success, and in his slumber a grin of satisfaction played over his plump features.

The sound of voices near at hand had brought him out of his light slumber, and Fatty Wynn sat upright, on the alert at once.

He knew that the Terrible Three would look for him, and if they found him they would execute summary vengeance for the raid. And the thought of being bumped hard when he was so full up inwardly with good things made the fat junior shudder. He would have given what remained of the feed not to be discovered by the avengers just then. He listened to the sound of voices with anxiety. They came from speakers close at hand, but round the corner of the stack.

Fatty Wynn drew a deep breath of relief as he recognised one of the voices. It was that of Gerald Cutts of the Fifth Form at St. Jim's, and it relieved him of his terrors. Cutts was not likely to be helping the Terrible Three to look for the New House raider.

Fatty Wynn hardly noticed what Cutts was saying, but it struck him that the Fifth Former was speaking in low and cautious tones. Another voice replied—a voice Fatty Wynn did not know—a harsh, unpleasant voice, with an unmusical, metallic ring in it.

"I've given three to one, Master Cutts."

"For me, as well as yourself?" asked Cutts.

"Yes, as you told me."

Fatty Wynn sniffed silently.

He understood now well enough Cutts was meeting someone in that hayfield whom he would not have dared to meet within sight of St. Jim's. The haystack which sheltered Fatty Wynn on one side sheltered Cutts and his companion on another.

It was an open secret to a great part of St. Jim's that Cutts was a "dog" of the first water.

He smoked in his study, he played cards for money, he had dealings with disreputable persons who never came to the school, and he was suspected of having paid visits to racecourses on half-holidays.

More than once Cutts had made a "book" on specially big footer or cricket matches played by the St. Jim's first eleven—a fact which would have caused him to be immediately expelled from St. Jim's if Dr. Locke had known of it. But the kind old Head was far from suspecting anything of the kind.

Fellows knew, or suspected, many things about Cutts; but it was not their business to give him away. And Cutts went on his own course, till he should come a "cropper," as was pretty certain to happen sooner or later.

Fatty Wynn shifted a little uneasily. He did not want to overhear Cutts' private affairs. He was not in the slightest degree interested in them, and he was naturally too honourable to listen.

But the weather was hot, and he had eaten more than was good for him. And he was very much disinclined to exert himself by moving—especially as, if the Terrible Three were still looking for him, he might run directly into their hands by leaving his place of concealment.

If he left, too, Cutts would see him, and undoubtedly jump to the conclusion that he had been listening. And

Cutts was a bully as well as a black-guard.

So Fatty Wynn closed his eyes again to continue his nap. The hum of voices was a good thing to send a chap to sleep, as he had sometimes remarked to Kerr, when that youth was reciting Shakespeare in the study of the New House.

But the remarks that followed, instead of sending Fatty Wynn to sleep as he expected, caused him to open his eyes again—very wide. He sat bolt upright, and all trace of drowsiness vanished from his face.

"It will be all right, Crewe," Cutts was saying.

"But you're not in the eleven, Master Cutts."

"I shall be in it."

"You ain't sure of that."

"I am sure of it," said Cutts irritably. "I'm a reserve, anyway, and I'm to go over to Abbotsford with the rest."

"But that's only in case of accidents, I suppose, Master Cutts," said Crewe. "From wot I 'ear, the young gentlemen ain't likely to let accidents 'appen. They are all keen to play against the Wallabies."

"Accidents happen in the best-regulated elevens," said Cutts, with a disagreeable laugh. "I tell you I shall play in the eleven."

"Ow will you manage it?"

"Leave that to me. Have you done all the business in Abbotsford?"

"Yes; but I could do more, if I was certain," said Crewe. "There are a lot who have been watching the form of the school team. The Wallabies ain't up to full strength, as it turns out: two of their men are away, and Trales will be playing reserves. It won't be the same team that beat Oxford. Men who've been looking at the school practice lately think St. Jim's will win."

"Good! You can get the money on at better odds."

"I believe it will be level money on the day, Master Cutts. And if I was sure that St. Jim's would be beat—"

"You may be sure of that."

"But I 'ear—"

"Never mind what you hear!" interrupted Cutts. "The Saints haven't a chance against the Australians—do you understand?—not an earthly! It would be safe to lay ten to one against them—a hundred to one, for that matter. Put your money on at three to one against St. Jim's, unless you can get better terms. It's safe as houses."

Fatty Wynn drew a deep breath of disgust.

"The awful beast! Betting against his own side!" he murmured. "Laying money on a cricket match, the cad! If Cutts was a New House chap, we'd scrag him, Fifth or no Fifth!"

"You're in it for twenty quid now, Master Cutts. That lets you out for sixty pun if the Wallabies lose."

"I know it."

"Look here, Master Cutts, I don't mean anything agin you, but this is the last chance we shall 'ave of talkin' afore the match. But you've only put fifteen pound in my 'ands, and the rest is on your word. S'pose you have to pay up?"

"I can pay. I could get it from my father. But I tell you there isn't the slightest chance of school beating the Wallabies."

"I stand to be a 'undred quid out if they do, Master Cutts. And my pals are in it as deep as I am. We've backed the Wallabies on their record, and a week ago we'd 'ave given six to one. But the way the money has been taken



For a moment there was a wild and whirling struggle between Tom Merry & Co. and the New House juniors. Then one after another Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther descended the steps of the New House and rolled in the quad.

up in Abbotsford and Wayland shows that the local men think a lot of the school's chance, and that makes us 'esitate. I've been thinking it would be safer to hedge, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you can give me some proof that they will beat the school."

"I tell you it's a dead cert! Never mind what form the school is in. Never mind if the Wallabies are off colour—never mind anything! School will lose!"

"I'd like to take your word for that, Master Cutts. But—"

"You needn't take my word. You'll be on the ground to-morrow morning, I suppose?"

"You bet!"

"Then look over the St. Jim's team, and when you see who are in it, you can make up your mind. Time to hedge then."

"Well, that's fair. About puttin' on more money for you—"

"Put it on. Another ten, if you can find takers."

"I can find takers easy enough. I tell you the Wayland and Abbotsford men are keen to back the school, and I may be able to get evens."

"Good. Now buzz off! We mustn't be seen talking together—especially as I'm going to play in the eleven."

"You're sure of that?"

"Quite sure."

There was a sound of footsteps, and the voices were heard no more. The consultation between Cutts of the Fifth and the bookmaker had ended, and they were gone.

Fatty Wynn sat quite silent and still. He understood only too well what the talk meant. Cutts had laid heavy stakes against the school eleven. And if the school should win he would have to pay a sum that he could not possibly

raise. That meant that he must have some means of feeling certain that St. Jim's would lose.

"But he isn't in the team," said Fatty Wynn. "He was talking out of his hat. The reserves won't be wanted. Cutts and Knox are both out of it. I know now what they were so keen to get into it for. But they're out of it, the cads!"

And Fatty Wynn, his drowsiness completely driven away by what he had heard, rose slowly to his feet, and packed the remains of his feed in the cricket-bag, and took his way back to St. Jim's in a very puzzled and thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER 4.

Cutts Gets His Cap!

"CUTTS, dear boy, you're wanted."

"Kildare wants you, Cutts."

Cutts of the Fifth had sauntered in at the gates of St. Jim's, and the juniors who were looking for him spotted him at once. The practice was still going on on Big Side, and the reserve was wanted more than ever, now that Darrell of the Sixth was "crooked."

Cutts glanced carelessly at the juniors. "What am I wanted for?" he asked.

"I'm not in the team."

"There's been an accident," said Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! That silly ass Knox—"

Cutts' eyes gleamed.

"Knox! What has Knox done?" he asked.

"He's crooked Darrell," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! Cwoked him in bowlin'." Waisted a feahful lump on

poor Dawwell's leg, and Dawwell won't be able to play to-morrow," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I'm afraid Kildare is goin' to put you in, Cutts, unless he does the sensible thing and decides to play a juniah. I should be quite willin'—"

But Gerald Cutts was not listening. He walked away quickly towards the cricket-ground. Monteith was at the wicket now, and Langton was bowling to him. Kildare met Cutts with a frown.

"Why weren't you here?" he asked. "I told you to turn up for practice, Cutts."

"Sorry!" said Cutts calmly. "I've been down the river. I didn't think you would be wanting me, as there's no chance of a reserve being played to-morrow."

"I shall want you to-morrow, after all. Darrell's crooked," said Kildare shortly. "You'll be in the team."

"Oh, good! I hope Darrell's not much hurt?"

"He's lamed. That idiot Knox did it bowling. It's the rottenest luck that could have happened to us," said Kildare, frowning. "One of the best bats in the team crooked. It may make all the difference to-morrow."

"Well, I'll do my best for the side," said Cutts. "I'm jolly glad of a chance to play—though, of course, I'm sorry about Darrell."

"Get on to the wicket!" said Kildare. "Right-ho!"

And Cutts went on to practise. Kildare's troubled brow cleared somewhat as he watched him. There was no doubt that Cutts was a fine bat. He was not up to Darrell's form, certainly, but he would do very well, and he would strengthen the bowling considerably. And he was a good man in the field.

Tom Merry & Co. were looking on at the senior practice, and they passed comments freely on the form of the players. None of the juniors liked Cutts, but they all admitted that he was in great form, and the best man that could be found to supply Darrell's vacant place, unless, as D'Arcy suggested, Kildare should play a junior.

"Well, I don't like Cutts," Tom Merry remarked, "but I must say he keeps his end up well. And that late cut of his is a daisy. He's standing up to Langton's bowling—and there are precious few chaps who can do that."

Langton of the Sixth was the champion bowler of St. Jim's, and he was Kildare's chief reliance, so far as bowling went, for the Wallaby match. Figgins and Kerr loyally declared that his bowling was no better than Fatty Wynn's, and, indeed, allowing for the difference between senior and junior, there was little to choose between them. Fatty Wynn was a bowler of dreaded skill, and he was often called upon to fag at bowling for the seniors in their practice—a duty he was always willing to perform.

"Figgins!" called out Kildare.

"Adsum!" grinned Figgins, hurrying over towards the pavilion. "Want me to bat, Kildare?"

The captain of St. Jim's laughed.

"No; I want that fat chum of yours to bowl."

"Good! I'll dig him up," said Figgins. "I expect he's in the tuckshop."

"He jolly well isn't!" growled Tom Merry. "He went off somewhere two hours ago with a bag of tommy—ours!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we're going to scalp him when he comes in!" grunted Monty Lowther.

"Scalping's off now," said Kildare.

"You can scalp him to-morrow. Find him, and bring him here to bowl now! I want him!"

"Anything to oblige," said Tom.

The juniors ran off to look for Fatty Wynn. It was an honour for a junior to be wanted even in practice against the mighty men of the Sixth.

"Here he is!" shouted Monty Lowther, as he caught sight of a plump figure coming in at the school gates.

"And blessed if he hasn't got our bag with him now!"

"Collar him!"

Fatty Wynn caught sight of the juniors bearing down upon him, and made a dash for the New House. The juniors whooped in pursuit.

"Hold on, Fatty!" roared Figgins. "It's not a rag! You're wanted."

Fatty Wynn did not heed. He dashed on to the New House and tossed the bag inside, and yelled to Redfern to take it into his study. Then he turned round cheerfully on the steps to face the juniors.

"You boulder!" gasped Tom Merry. "That's my bag!"

"Well, you can have the bag—when it's empty," grinned Fatty. "It was my steak-pie you scoffed yesterday, you know."

"You're wanted to bowl, Fatty," said Kerr. "Kildare wants you. Come on!"

"It's pax!" said Tom Merry. "Never mind the grub."

"Right-ho!" said Fatty cheerfully. And he came down the steps. "One good turn deserves another, you know—and I'm much obliged for the feed. It was ripping!"

The juniors marched the fat Fourth Former over to Big Side. Fatty Wynn jumped as he saw Gerald Cutts at the wicket.

"What's Cutts batting for?" he asked excitedly. "He's not in the eleven."

"Yaas, he is," said Arthur Augustus. "It's wot, you know—but he is! I considah it would have been bettah to play a juniah—"

"Cutts in the eleven!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Yes," said Figgins. "Darrell's got crooked."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Knox did it—walloped him with a cricket ball," said Tom Merry. "Why, what's the matter with you, Fatty?"

Fatty Wynn staggered.

"Oh, the blackguards!" he gasped. "The rotters! The swindlers!"

Figgins caught his excited chum by the arm.

"Hold on, Fatty! What do you know about it?"

"I know it's a put-up job! I'll tell Kildare—"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "There's Kildare calling to you. If you know anything about it, Fatty, you'd better think twice before you tell Kildare—he would want plenty of proof before he believed it. Let's talk it over first, anyway."

"Yes; not a word now, Fatty," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn calmed down a little.

"I'll tell you fellows later," he said. "Perhaps we'd better think over how we're going to put it to Kildare. But he must be told. All right, Kildare, I'm coming."

The captain of St. Jim's tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn as he came up.

"Give us some of your best bowling, Fatty," he said. "I know you can send down some good stuff when you like."

"I'll bowl 'Cutts out!" said Fatty Wynn vengefully.

And he went on to bowl with a face full of grim determination. The juniors watched him excitedly. They did not understand Fatty Wynn's allusions to Cutts, but they understood the look on the fat Fourth Former's face.

And Fatty Wynn kept his word.

The first ball down was a "snorter," and it was a little too much of a snorter for Gerald Cutts. It whipped his leg-stump out of the ground without giving him a chance.

Cutts' brow was very black as he looked down at his wrecked wicket.

"Bravo!" yelled Figgins.

Cutts favoured Fatty Wynn with a very dark look, to which Fatty responded with a glare of scornful

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The MAGNET

defiance that surprised Cutts. He would have known the reason if he had been aware that Fatty Wynn had heard his talk with Mr. Crewe behind the hay-stack.

Fatty Wynn did a good deal of bowling, and, to Figgins' and Kerr's delight, he was at his top form. Kildare patted him on the shoulder when he came off.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "You'll be champion of St. Jim's when you get into a senior Form, Wynn."

And Fatty Wynn flushed with pleasure. Praise from Kildare was worth having.

"It was a rotten fluke, his getting my wicket like that!" growled Cutts.

"Rats!" said Fatty Wynn promptly.

"You cheeky cub—"

"Cub yourself!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Yes, you can scowl, you rotten cad, but I'm not afraid of you! You ought to be kicked out of the school!"

"Shut up!" said Kildare, pushing Fatty Wynn away.

"You can't talk to a senior like that. Hands off, Cutts! Do you hear? You shouldn't have called him names."

Figgins and Kerr dragged their excited chum away. There was no telling what Fatty Wynn would have said if he had remained. The sight of Cutts seemed to have the same effect upon him as a red rag upon a bull.

Cutts drove his hands deep into the pockets of his blazer, and strode away with a black brow. He did not understand the reason of Fatty Wynn's outbreak—but perhaps Fatty Wynn's remarks had come home to his conscience a little.

Figgins and Kerr and the rest rushed Fatty Wynn off the cricket ground. They were surprised and puzzled by the outbreak of temper on the part of a fellow who was usually the most placid and good-humoured at St. Jim's.

"What on earth's the matter with you, Fatty?" asked Tom Merry. "Have you gone off your rocker, or what?"

"I tell you I've found out something, and I'm going to tell Kildare," said Fatty. "I'll talk it over with you chaps first, if you like, but it can't be kept in. Come up to the study!"

And the juniors, in a state of great astonishment, followed Fatty Wynn up to the study in the New House.

CHAPTER 5. The Only Way!

POP! Fatty Wynn's first proceeding on entering the study was to open a bottle of ginger-beer, with which to slake his thirst. He turned out the contents of the bag upon the study table, and waved a fat hand towards them.

"Go it!" he said hospitably.

Monty Lowther snorted. It seemed to him a little too cool to invite the School House fellows to "go it" with their own provender. However, the invitation was not declined. The ginger-beer and lemonade were refreshing on a hot afternoon, and there were some of the jam tarts and cake left. So they "went it."

"Now then, Fatty," said Figgins, "what's the row? What have you been going for Cutts for?"

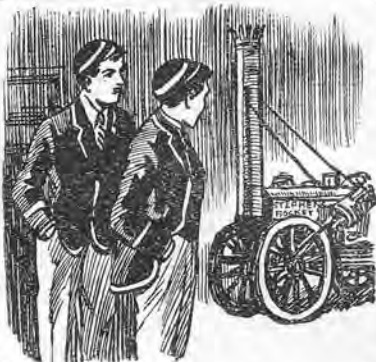
"He's a rotten hound!"

"Gently does it!" said Figgins. "I dare say he is—in fact, we really know he is—but that's a strong expression, so go easy."

"Yaas, wathah! I considah—"

"And a cur!" said Fatty Wynn, growing excited again. "And a rotter! And a thief! And a traitor! And a—"

NOT HIS IDEA!



"I don't know why they make such a fuss about Stephenson. He doesn't seem to have had the faintest idea how to build an engine!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Fraser, 21, Melrose Avenue, Norbury, London, S.W.16.

"That will do to go on with," remarked Kerr. "Let's get to the washing. What has Cutts done?"

"He's laid bets with a rotten book-maker on the Wallaby match!"

"Well, we might have guessed that—of Cutts!" said Tom Merry. "We know he does these things. It's no business of ours."

"He's laid his money against St. Jim's."

"More fool he—he'll lose it."

"Not if he can help it," said Fatty Wynn. "He's going to lose the match, and win the money if he can."

"What!"

"That's what he's in the team for!"

"Hold on," said Jack Blake gravely. "Go easy, Fatty! Cutts couldn't have known he was going to be in the team—he couldn't have foretold that Darrell was going to be crocked."

"Yes, he could—if he arranged with Knox beforehand."

"Great Scott!"

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors stared blankly at Fatty Wynn. The half-formed suspicions in their own minds rose again. They had only half believed that the "accident" on the cricket ground was an accident at all.

"Look here, Fatty," said Figgins, after a pause. "Tell us what you know about it. You say you've found something out. How did you find it out, and what is it?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Fatty Wynn disposed of a third tart, and another bottle of ginger-beer, and explained. The juniors listened in silence while he told of what he had heard as he lay amid the hay. They did not interrupt once, and Fatty Wynn told all he knew, as near as he could remember, in the words of Cutts and the bookmaker.

"Well, what do you think of that?" he concluded.

"Bai Jove! It takes the cake!"

"It fairly puts the lid on!" said Monty Lowther. "You're sure you heard Cutts say positively that he was certain to play in the team?"

"Of course I am."

"That settles that, then," said Figgins. "If any chap in the first eleven was crocked, Cutts was to have

his place—and he could only be certain of getting the place by knowing in advance that one of the team would be crocked. It proves that it was a put-up job between Knox and Cutts. I suppose they've both got money on the match."

"But—but Cutts couldn't be villain enough to give the match away for the sake of winning filthy bets!" said Blake abashed.

"He's villain enough for anything," said Fatty Wynn. "What else can he mean to do? He can't have squeezed himself into the team for the sake of playing hard and losing himself a pot of money."

"Wathah not!"

"He must have got into the team to try to make St. Jim's lose," said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I've ever heard of such a rascal. He ought to be in prison."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"One traitor in the side would be enough to make all the difference," said Figgins. "It means a wicket down for nothing, or next to nothing, in each innings. It means catches being missed when Cutts is fielding, and easy balls for the other side to score off when he is bowling. And the match would be very close in any case. If Cutts is playing this game, he can give the match away."

"I don't know whether a single player could," said Tom Merry meditatively. "But they may be counting on another player getting crocked, and Knox getting in, too. It was between Knox and Cutts for Darrell's place. If another chap was crocked—"

"But the practice is over now," said Figgins. "They won't have another chance."

"No, that's so."

"You never know what dodge Cutts may have in his mind," said Fatty Wynn. "He may have some other scheme up his sleeve. Anyway, he's not going to play for St. Jim's against the Wallabies. When Kildare knows this, he will turn him out like a poisonous reptile—as he is!"

The juniors looked at one another.

"When he knows it," said Figgins slowly. "But will he know it?"

"He'll know it when I tell him," said Fatty Wynn.

"Yes, but—but—"

Fatty Wynn flushed.

"I suppose you don't think it would be sneaking to tell Kildare a thing like this?" he asked. "You don't want me to keep my mouth shut, and see the game given away, do you?"

"I wasn't thinking of that," said Figgins. "Only—only—will Kildare believe it?"

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Cutts will deny the whole story," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "He'll say you were asleep and dreamed it; or else—As a matter of fact, Fatty, it will be your word against Cutts', and Kildare will want a lot of convincing before he'll believe that a St. Jim's fellow could be such an awful rascal."

"My hat!" said Fatty Wynn, in dismay. "I didn't think of that."

"Cutts will deny it, of course," said Manners. "He would have to, and we know what a rotter he is. He's served us rotten tricks ourselves."

"But—but we can't keep it dark and let him go," said Fatty Wynn. "I tell you he means to play into the hands of the other side. It's not fair to them, either. They're a splendid set of chaps, and they'd be wild if they knew the game was being given away to them."

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"I know that. But Kildare wouldn't condemn Cutts on your bare word—turn him out of the team because a junior made a statement about him which he would deny."

"But—but Cutts can't be allowed to play and betray the side!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Suppose we see Cutts, and tell him that we know, and put it to him to play the game?" suggested Blake. "He might be scared off from playing the traitor then."

"He might," said Figgins doubtfully. "Can anybody think of anything better?"

Nobody could. There was no reply. "Then let some of us go and see Cutts—not a crowd, but some of us," said Tom Merry. "I'll go with Fatty Wynn and Figgy and Blake. Four will be enough."

"Pewwaps it would be better for me to go—"

"Rats!" said all the juniors at once. "I trust you will admit, dear boys, that what is required at the present moment is a fellow of tact and judgment."

"Yes, that's why we're leaving you out," said Tom Merry. "Come on, you chaps, and let's get it over. When Cutts knows that we know, he may be afraid to go on with his rascally scheme. It's the only chance, anyway."

"I consider—"

The four juniors did not wait to hear what Arthur Augustus considered. They left the study, and the other fellows anxiously awaited their return.

CHAPTER 6.

Cutts Stands His Ground!

CUTTS of the Fifth was in his study.

He was having tea, and Knox the prefect was with him. Cutts was looking very cheerful and satisfied, but there was a cloud upon Knox's brow. Knox was a rascal, but he was not so great a rascal as Gerald Cutts, and he was far from possessing the iron nerve of the blackguard of the Fifth. Cutts was surveying the clouded brow of his confederate with a grin of cynical amusement.

"What's the trouble?" he asked. "Aren't you satisfied with the way things are going?"

Knox started out of his gloomy reverie.

"Well, yes," he said slowly.

"I'm in the team," said Cutts. "And you'll be in to-morrow."

"If all goes well, yes."

"Why shouldn't all go well?" demanded Cutts. "All's gone well up to now."

"Some of the fellows are suspicious about the way Darrell got crooked. It happened like that once before when I wanted to get into the team," said Knox uncomfortably.

"Yes; but you didn't get in this time—only made room for me," said Cutts, with a grin. "Nobody can see anything fishy in that. And you won't have a hand in dealing with Langton—you're safe there. Keep your pecker up."

"I—I wish we hadn't gone in for it," muttered Knox.

"Getting nervous?" sneered Cutts. "I might have expected that. I stand to clear thirty quid. You stand to clear as much as you've got nerve to stake."

"I'm not going to stake more than I could pay if we had bad luck," said Knox. "You wouldn't if you had any sense. Suppose anything went wrong, and—"

"It's sink or swim with me," said Cutts, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I'm out for a big stake, or bust."

Knox looked at him with a kind of wonder.

"I've not got your nerve," he said.

"You haven't the nerve of a white rat," said Cutts. "But pull yourself together. You've done your little bit, and it's gone like clockwork. The rest is for me to do."

"What are you going to do about Langton?"

"Don't ask questions; it's better for you not to know," said Cutts coolly. "You'd only have another attack of chicken-heartedness."

"It's too thick, Cutts. It's not only giving the match away—that's business—but—but I wish it were well over."

"It will be well over by this time to-morrow, and I shall be thirty quid the richer," said Cutts. "I can do with it, too. The gee-gees have been running away with too much of my tin lately, and—"

Cutts broke off as a knock came at the study door.

The door opened, and four juniors came in—Tom Merry, Blake, Figgins, and Fatty Wynn. Cutts stared at them. He was not accustomed to visits from juniors in his study, and with these especial juniors he was on the very worst of terms. Neither he nor Tom Merry had forgotten the time when he had attempted to inveigle the captain of the Shell into his own blackguardly ways.

"What do you want?" he demanded roughly.

"Only a word with you," said Tom Merry.

"Well, the want is all on your side," said Cutts. "You can get out. Shut the door after you."

"We're not going till we've said what we've come to say," said Blake. "We'll say it out loud for the school to hear, if you like."

"You can say it as loud as you like," sneered Cutts. "What's the row now?"

"Do you want Knox to hear it?"

"I don't care twopence."

"Very well. It's about your dealings with Crewe," said Tom Merry.

Cutts jumped up. Knox of the Sixth sat quite still, looking at the juniors with pallor creeping into his face.

"What do you mean, you young cad?" asked Cutts furiously.

"Tell him, Fatty."

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed as they met those of the angry Fifth Former.

"I was by the haystack this afternoon," he said.

Cutts, in spite of his nerve, turned pale. For a moment there was terror in his face as he looked at Fatty Wynn.

"You were—what—where?" he stammered.

"I heard all you said to Crewe, and what he said to you," said the fat Fourth Former steadily.

"You spying young scoundrel!"

Fatty Wynn turned crimson.

"I wasn't spying!" he said indignantly. "I was there before you came, and I woke up and heard you talking."

"All of you happened to be there, and happened to be asleep!" sneered Cutts.

"I was there by myself," said Fatty Wynn.

Cutts drew a deep breath. That was what he had wanted to discover—whether the junior had any witnesses to what he had overheard. Cutts had been confused for a moment, but only for a moment. He was at once his cool, collected self again.

"So you say you heard me talking to

Crewe?" he said calmly. "Who is Crewe?"

"I don't know. A bookmaker, I suppose."

"And you saw us—ch?"

"I didn't see you—I heard you."

"A precious story!" said Cutts, laughing, with so hearty a ring in his laugh that the juniors looked at one another dubiously. "You fall asleep by a haystack, and you think you hear voices, and want to make out that one was mine, talking to a man you don't know. You had better think of something a bit more likely than that. As it happens, I was down the river, and I could prove it, if necessary."

"You were in the hayfield, talking to a man you called Crewe," said Fatty Wynn steadily. "You have been laying money against St. Jim's on the Wallaby match, and you told Crewe that you were certain of playing in the match. When I got back, I found that you were in the team, because Knox had crooked Darrell with a cricket ball. Then I knew it was a put-up job between you."

"You cheeky young rascal—" began Knox.

"And you've got the cheek to come here with a cock-and-bull story like that!" said Cutts, with an air of contemptuous amusement. "You've got the nerve to tell it to a Fifth Former and a prefect of the Sixth! I suppose you know that you'll get a hiding!"

The four juniors drew closer together.

"You won't gain anything by bluffing, Cutts," said Tom Merry. "You know it's true! You mean to play to lose to-morrow!"

"You think so?" said Cutts banteringly.

"I know it!"

"And what have you come here to tell me this for?"

"To ask you to stand out of the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can give Kildare any reason you like," said Figgins, "but you can't play for St. Jim's, considering what we know of your intentions!"

Cutts laughed scoffingly.

"Do you see that door?" he asked.

"Well, get on the other side of it—sharp!"

"You won't—"

"I won't bandy words with cheeky juniors!" said Cutts. "You'll get out of my study, or I'll throw you out!"

"Do you want us to go to Kildare and tell him?"

"My dear young ass, you can go to Kildare, or go to the dickens!" said Cutts. "Tell anybody you like! Shout it in the passages! Yell it from the tops of the houses! Only get out of my study! I'm fed-up with you!"

Cutts picked up a cricket stump.

"Are you going?" he asked.

The juniors exchanged dismayed looks. They had not been able to guess how Gerald Cutts would take it, but they had certainly not expected him to take it like this. Was it possible that his coolness and unconcern were merely acting? Or—or was it possible that Fatty Wynn had made some horrible mistake?

There was nothing for it but to go. They left the study, and they heard Cutts' laugh ring out as they went down the passage.

The discomfited juniors returned to Figgins' study in the New House, where they explained the result of their mission to Cutts. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head sadly.

"You see, it would have been better to place it in my hands, dear boys," he remarked. "I don't want to wub it in; but, weally—"

"The question is—what's going to be done?" said Tom Merry.

"I think I ought to go to Kildare," said Fatty Wynn, but very doubtfully.

"And suppose Cutts made the matter public—insisted upon an investigation by the Head—and brought some precious witnesses to prove that he was down the river at the time you heard him talking by the haystack?"

"Oh, I—I—"

"He's got nerve enough for anything," said Figgins. "He's all nerve. If he wasn't such an awful rascal, one couldn't help admiring his nerve."

"There's no proof. And Cutts is cunning enough to have witnesses if he wants them," said Tom Merry. "Fatty, old man, you would get it in the neck. If you weren't looked on as a slanderer, you—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You'd be supposed to have dreamed it. I—I say," added Tom Merry hesitatingly. "I—I suppose you didn't dream it, did you?"

Fatty Wynn gave a groan.

"Blessed if you're not beginning to disbelieve me yourselves now!" he exclaimed. "I can see how much good it would be asking Kildare to believe me, then! I'm mum!"

"But what's going to be done?" asked Figgins helplessly.

"We must think it over and see," said Tom Merry.

And the juniors thought it over, but at the end of thinking it over they had to admit that they did not "see."

CHAPTER 7.

Bad News!

"WHERE'S Langton?"

"Haven't seen him."

Kildare wrinkled his brows a little, and Lefevre of the Fifth, to whom he was speaking, grinned. It had grown to be a joke among the members of the eleven that Kildare was as anxious about his team as a hen about her chickens. Considering the kind of match they were to play on the morrow, Kildare's anxiety was justified; but some of the fellows looked on it rather humorously.

"He ought to be in by now," Kildare remarked. "He went down to Todger's to see about the coach for to-morrow, that's all. Only it's his bizney to-night to see lights out for the Shell. I can do it for him, but—but I wish he'd come in."

"Oh, he's all right!" said Lefevre. "He hasn't fallen into a ditch, you know, or been carried off by a wicked uncle! Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare laughed, too.

"I'm feeling anxious about the match," he said. "It's the biggest thing we've ever undertaken, and we've got a splendid chance of winning—of beating the Wallabies. Darrell's getting crooked has got on my nerves, and that's a fact. I've got a feeling that something else may happen before to-morrow. Of course, there's nothing in it."

"That's what I say," said Lefevre. "There's nothing in it. Langton will be in a minute or two—right as rain."

Kildare nodded, and walked to the door of the School House. Cutts met him there, and glanced at him curiously.

"You're looking downhearted, Kildare," he remarked. "Not feeling that we've taken on too big an order—eh?"

"No. I'm thinking about Langton. He hasn't come in yet."

"Langton?" said Cutts. "Has he gone out?"

"You remember he was going down to Todger's to see about the motor-coach," said Kildare.

A JOB FOR THE FLYING SQUAD!



Old Lady: "Oh, constable, I've lost my canary! Would you mind notifying the Flying Squad?"

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"Oh, was he?" said Cutts carelessly.

"Yes. Surely you haven't forgotten asking me if I'd arranged it, and I told you Langton was going down to tell them the time we wanted it?"

"I'd forgotten," said Cutts carelessly. Kildare looked out into the quadrangle. It was a soft summer's night. The stars were sparkling in the deep blue heavens, and a light breeze stirred the foliage of the old elms and oaks.

"Looks like good weather to-morrow for the match," Cutts remarked.

"Oh, the weather will be all right!"

"And the team will be all right, too."

"Yes, I hope so."

"Not getting doubtful at the last minute, Kildare?" asked Cutts, with his keen eyes on the face of the captain of St. Jim's.

A doubt crossed his mind for a moment as to whether Tom Merry & Co. had spoken to Kildare after all.

"No," said Kildare. "I wish Langton would come in. What happened to Darrell has made me feel on tenterhooks a bit."

Cutts smiled genially.

"Nothing's likely to happen to Langton," he said. "It's true there were some footpads hanging round the lanes a week or two ago; but the police were

hunting for them,

and they have cleared out—so they say, anyway."

Kildare started.

"I never thought of that," he said.

"Langton would take care of himself," said Cutts.

"Yes, of course. I wish he'd come in, though."

Cutts smiled again and strolled away. He went into his study and sat down in his armchair, and took a little book from his pocket. There were mysterious-looking initials and figures entered in that little book; but they seemed quite intelligible to

Cutts, who read them over with great satisfaction.

He thrust the betting-book hastily into his pocket as the door opened, and looked up, frowning. But it was only Knox the prefect.

Knox was looking clouded and worried, as he had been looking ever since the accident on Big Side. He came into the study and closed the door, and came over towards Cutts. Cutts lighted a cigarette.

"Better not let Kildare see you doing that, the night before the match, too," said Knox.

Cutts shrugged his shoulders.

"Might be the night before Waterloo, by the fuss that's being made," he said. "As a matter of fact, it will be Kildare's Waterloo. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't feel like laughing," said Knox. "Do you know that Langton went down to Rylcombe two hours ago, and hasn't come in yet?"

"Kildare's just told me so."

"He needn't have been gone more than an hour," said Knox.

"I dare say he'll turn up sooner or later," said Cutts carelessly. "If he doesn't, it won't keep me awake all night crying."

"Look here!" said Knox. "Have you any reason to think that he won't turn up?"

"I? Of course not. How could I have?"

"I—I don't know. But—"

"In fact, I know he will turn up," said Cutts calmly. "It's quite possible that he may run into a ruffian in the lane, and there might be a tussle if the man tried to rob him; but he will come back safe and sound."

Knox turned pale.

"Cutts, you—you awful villain!"

"Knox, you—you awful funk!" said Cutts, imitating the prefect's gasping voice. "My only hat, if I had no more nerve than you, Knoxe, I'd read 'Eric,' and take up Ericking as a regular business—I would really! Little by little, or bit by bit!"

"Look here, Cutts, you didn't tell me—"

"Aren't you glad I didn't tell you?"

"Well, yes. I wouldn't have had a hand in it. Cutts, this is—is too thick. It's the kind of thing people get put in prison for," said Knox in an agitated voice. "How can you be mad enough to run such risks?"

"I'm not running any risks."

"But—but you said a ruffian attacking Langton—"

"I shan't know anything about it till

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it happens. The man may meet Langton by chance in a dark lane, may have a scrap with him, may fetch him a swipe with a cudgel on his arm or wrist. The result may be that Langton won't be able to play to-morrow; but I can't see that I can be connected with it in any way. I'm here in my study all the time talking to a prefect of the Sixth—a chap as much above suspicion as Caesar's wife."

Knox moved restlessly about the study. There was something very like fear in his face as he looked at Cutts. The cold-blooded coolness of the rascal of the Fifth seemed to terrify him. Gerald Cutts was of the stuff of which criminals are made. There was no doubt about that, and at that moment Knox wished fervently enough that he had never entered into the schemes of the rascally Fifth Former.

Knox stopped suddenly in his agitated pacing of the study, and bent his head to listen. He held up his hand nervously.

"Hark! What's that?"

There was a loud buzz of voices in the passages without. Cutts threw his cigarette into the grate.

"Langton come back, perhaps."

"Then—then something's happened and—"

"I shouldn't wonder. Let's go and see. For goodness' sake, pull yourself together, man, and don't look like chalk or cheese! Do you want to be suspected?"

"I—I'll stay here," muttered Knox. "You can come and tell me."

"Perhaps you'd better," said Cutts contemptuously.

He left the study and strolled carelessly into the hall. There was a buzzing crowd gathered there, and in the midst of them stood Langton of the Sixth, his face pale and contracted with pain. He was speaking as Cutts came along.

"The brute jumped on me in the lane. I suppose he wanted to rob me. I caught his cudgel on my arm."

"You're hurt, Langton," said Kildare, and his face was as pale as Langton's.

"My arm is hurt, that's all. I—I shall have a 'game' arm to-morrow, Kildare."

"Then you can't bat?"

"Or bowl," said Langton. "I'm sorry—more sorry than I can say, old chap. It's a thing that couldn't possibly have been foreseen."

Kildare groaned.

For a moment he was not thinking of Langton or his hurt—he was thinking of the Wallaby match; and it was pardonable. One of his best batsmen was crocked, and now his best bowler was incapacitated. It was too much. The high hopes he had formed for the morrow seemed to sink down to zero.

CHAPTER 8.

To Speak or Not to Speak!

THERE was a buzz of voices round Kildare—in various tones of anger, dismay, and indignation. Langton was crocked.

That was the thought that was uppermost in every mind. The champion bowler of St. Jim's would not be available for the great match.

It was the cruellest of cruel luck.

Tom Merry & Co. had joined the crowd there, and there was black suspicion in their minds, as well as anger and dismay.

The thought that flashed into their minds at once was whether this was a

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new move in Gerald Cutts' treacherous game.

Tom Merry and Lowther and Manners, and Blake and D'Arcy exchanged glances as they drew aside from the crowd. Figgins & Co., of course, were not there. They were in their own House, and knew nothing of the catastrophe.

"Langton clobbered!" said Arthur Augustus, in a low voice. "I—I say, you chaps, do you think it was done on purpose?"

"Goodness knows!" said Tom Merry.

"If Cutts had a hand in it—" murmured Blake.

"It's no good saying anything of the kind; there isn't an atom of proof," said Tom Merry. "It would sound absurd to say so."

"Yaas, but—"

"I can't help suspecting it."

"Same here!" said Blake.

"Mum's the word!" said Monty Lowther. "It looks bad, but it's no good uttering mere suspicions. It would look like slandering Cutts. Everybody knows that we're on bad terms with him, too."

"I can't quite think he'd be villain enough for this, either," muttered Manners.

Langton, leaning heavily on Kildare's shoulder, went into his study. The crowd broke up, excitedly discussing the happening.

Mr. Raiton, the master of the School House, was at once informed of what had happened, and the Housemaster immediately rang up the police station in Rylcombe, and telephoned information there. It was not likely to be of much use, as Langton was unable to give any description of his assailant, save that he was a burly man, muffled up.

He had sprung upon the Sixth Former in the lane, and had fled when Langton showed fight—after dealing that one blow with his cudgel. But whether the ruffian was caught or not mattered little to the St. Jim's fellows. What troubled them was that Langton would have a "game" arm on the morrow, and would not be able to bowl against the Wallabies.

Tom Merry & Co. retired to the study in the Shell passage to talk it over. They had taken a good many of their friends into their confidence over the matter—in the counsel of many there might be wisdom. Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, Glyn, Herries, Digby, and Reilly came to the meeting in Tom Merry's study.

But talking it over did not seem to help them at all.

The juniors were ready to believe almost anything of Cutts of the Fifth. But that he would set on a ruffian to "crock" Langton seemed, as Kangaroo remarked, a little too "thick" to believe without the plainest proof.

"And even if we believed it, Kildare wouldn't," said Kangaroo, with a shake of the head. "If you went to Kildare with such a suspicion he'd ask what proof you had."

"And you haven't any," said Digby. "Excepting that Cutts is a rascal," said Clifton Dane.

"And Kildare doesn't know that as we do," said Monty Lowther. "The fact is, if we told Kildare we thought that this had been arranged by Cutts he would kick us out of his study for suggesting such a thing."

"I suppose that's so," said Tom Merry.

"Do you believe yourself that Cutts fixed this up?" asked Herries.

Tom Merry hesitated.

"It looks like it," he said at last.

"But—but I don't know that I'd think it, even of Cutts, simply on suspicion."

Herries grinned a little.

"Well," he said, "you can't think of bringing an accusation that you don't quite believe in yourself, you know."

"I suppose not."

"Impossible, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If there's any doubt about the matter, even a wascal like Cutts ought to be given the benefit of the doubt."

"Faith, and ye're right," said Reilly, with a nod. "That's my opinion, entirely. It would be rotten to make an accusation you couldn't prove."

"And it wouldn't do any good now," said Kangaroo. "The harm's done."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry moved restlessly. He knew all that as well as his chums did; and yet he felt that it was "up" to the juniors to do something, knowing what they did.

"Knox will play now, instead of Langton," said Digby. "That's what makes it look most suspicious—the place must go to Cutts' chum."

"And suppose this isn't the end of it?" said Tom Merry. "Suppose there is something more to come—some fresh accident or other."

"Bai Jove!"

"I don't see what we can do," said Manners.

"There's one thing," said Tom. "We know, as well as we can know anything, that Knox and Cutts intend to give the game away to-morrow. Can we keep silent and let them do it, without warning Kildare?"

"He wouldn't believe it."

"I wish now we'd let Fatty Wynn go straight to Kildare," said Tom Merry miserably.

"But he wouldn't have been believed."

"Fatty will have to speak to him, all the same," said Tom firmly. "We'll tell Fatty about this in the morning, and then he can go to Kildare. Whether he's believed or not, it's the best thing to do."

"Pewwaps you're wight, dear boy."

"I must admit that I began to think, myself, that perhaps Fatty had been dreaming," confessed Tom Merry. "But what's happened to Langton lets in more light on it. Cutts is simply a criminal! If—if—"

"If it could be proved," said Manners. "Only there's no getting out of the fact, Tommy, that we can't say anything of our own knowledge. It all rests on what Fatty heard behind the haystack—it's simply his bare word against Cutts—and our opinion on the subject won't matter a straw."

"That's the worst of it; and Kildare will think we're likely to take the worst view, as we're on bad terms with Cutts."

"Perhaps we are," said Lowther.

"Well, yes. All the same, I believe every word Fatty told us, and I'm quite sure that those two scoundrels mean to give the match away to-morrow. Anyway, if Fatty does tell Kildare, we shall have it off our conscience—we shall have done everything that we could do."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And that was all the decision the juniors could come to.

But they went to bed in a worried frame of mind. Knowing what they did, it seemed impossible to them to leave Kildare in the dark, and allow him to play two traitors in the most important match of the season—the match he had set his heart upon. And yet there was the almost certainty that Kildare would not believe a word of such an accusation—and there was the very

real danger that Fatty might be condemned as uttering a reckless slander on a fellow he was known to dislike.

As for Tom Merry & Co., they, of course, would not expect to be listened to—they only knew what Fatty Wynn had told them.

The juniors would have been a little more easy in their minds, perhaps, if they could have heard what passed in Kildare's study after they had gone to their dormitory.

Kildare, Darrell, and Rushden were there, in glum consultation, when Knox came in. The prefect had pulled himself together, and the fact that no suspicion had been excited had restored his courage. Whenever he felt that there was no danger, Knox was quite hand-in-glove with Cutts.

"I've just heard about Langton," said Knox. "It's a rotten thing, Kildare—the rottenest thing that could have happened to us!"

"It is," said Kildare shortly.

"I looked in to see whether you'd want me," said Knox. "As I'm a reserve, I suppose you will be playing me now."

Kildare did not reply immediately. Knox watched his face anxiously. As he was a reserve, it was taken for granted that he would play in Langton's place, and he had only put the question to Kildare in order to have the matter definitely settled. But the expression on Kildare's face seemed to hint that it was not quite the certainty he had supposed.

"I—I say," stammered Knox. "I suppose you want me, don't you? Cutts and I were put down as reserves, and Cutts is in the team now."

"I'll tell you to-morrow," said Kildare at last.

"But why not to-night?" said Knox sulkily.

"I've got to think it over."

Knox set his lips tight.

"I don't see that there's anything to think over," he said tartly. "When a

member of the eleven is crocked, it's generally a matter of course to play the reserve."

"I've given you my answer," said Kildare.

And Knox left the study, his brows knitted, and uneasiness in his heart.

CHAPTER 9.

Fatty Wynn Speaks Out!

TOM MERRY & Co. turned out at the first clang of the rising-bell the following morning.

It was a glorious summer's morning, and the St. Jim's fellows turned out in a state of unusual cheerfulness. It was a whole holiday that day, and a day without lessons was always welcome. After morning prayers, the fellows had the day to themselves till evening preparation, and that prospect was enough to make them feel very cheerful. And the great Wallaby match would fill up the day in the most agreeable possible manner.

The St. Jim's fellows eagerly discussed the form of the Wallabies—Tralee, their skipper, the famous bat, and Kelly, the great bowler, and the rest. And there were few fellows at St. Jim's who would not have given half a term's pocket-money to see the school beat the famous Australian team. But win or lose, it was certain to be an exciting and closely contested match, and it was looked forward to with the greatest keenness.

The unfortunate "crocking" of Darrell and Langton were, as Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth put it, the only flies in the jam.

It was taken for granted that Knox of the Sixth would play. And there was some surprise that his name was not already upon the list in the hall.

Figgins & Co. learned of Langton's accident quite early—before breakfast. Their views on the subject were the same as Tom Merry's. They traced

Cutts' hand in it, and they realised that it was useless to say so.

But Fatty Wynn had made up his mind now.

"I'm going to see Kildare, and tell him what I know," he said. "I've got to do it. I don't care if he doesn't believe me—that's his business. If he chooses to play those rotters after what I tell him it's his look-out, and not mine. But I've got to get it off my mind. I can't keep it dark and let those rotters give away the side."

"Yas, I quite approve of the ideal, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If you like, I will come with you and do all the talkin'!"

"I'll go and see Kildare after brekker," said Fatty Wynn, apparently not hearing D'Arcy's kind offer. "He can do as he likes about it; but I'm going to tell him."

And the juniors agreed that it was the best thing to be done, if Fatty Wynn was willing to do it.

Fatty was more than willing, he was determined, and when the Welsh junior made up his mind, argument was wasted. But no one wished to say him nay on this occasion. It was the only thing to be done, though the juniors could not help feeling that it would be useless.

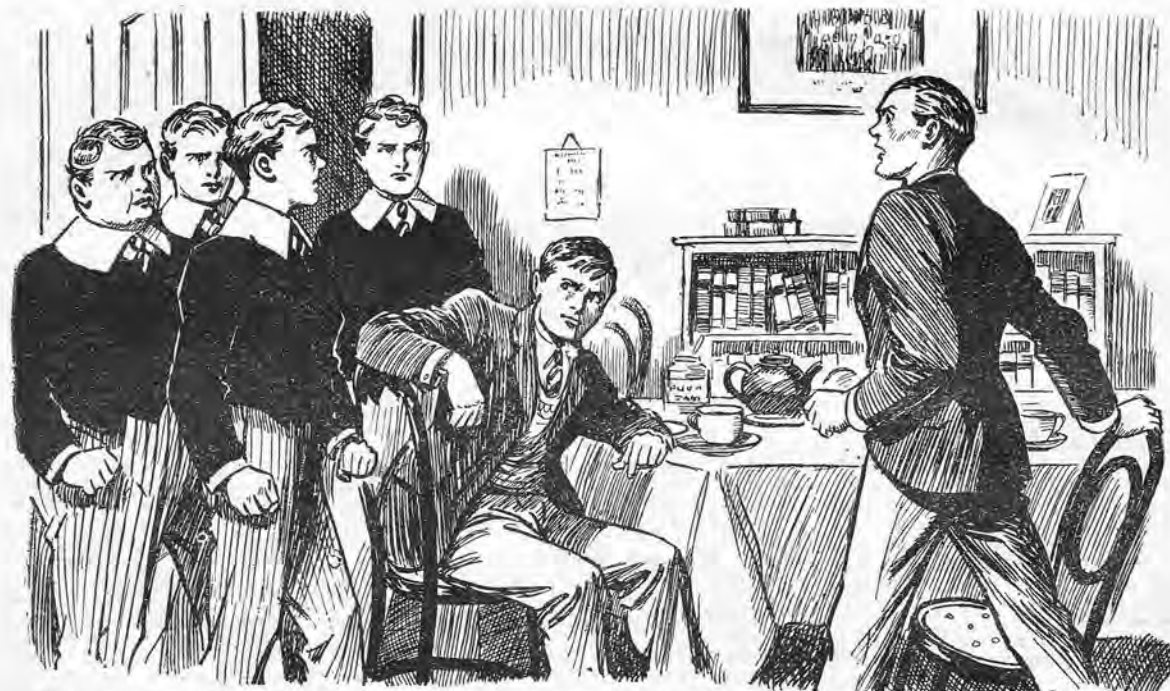
After breakfast Fatty Wynn presented himself in Kildare's study. The captain of St. Jim's was talking there with Darrell and Langton and Monteith of the New House. There was a wrinkle of troubled thought in Kildare's brow. He was discussing with the seniors whether Knox was to be played, and he was not pleased at being interrupted.

"Cut off, you young ass," said Monteith, as Fatty Wynn marched in. "Kids are not wanted here! Clear!"

"I want to speak to Kildare!" said Fatty Wynn sturdily.

"Don't bother now, kid," said Kildare, kindly enough. "Buzz off! Another time!"

"Another time won't do. It's about



"Do you want Knox to hear what we've come to say?" asked Tom Merry. "I don't care twopence!" said Cutts. "Very well! It's about your dealings with Crewe, the bookmaker!" said Tom. "What do you mean, you young cad?" asked Cutts, jumping up furiously.

the Wallaby match. I know something that you ought to know," said Fatty.

Kildare looked impatient.

"Well, look sharp, then, and get it over!" he said.

"There's a chap in the eleven who's going to give away the match if he can," said Fatty Wynn, plunging head over heels into his subject.

The Sixth Formers stared at him blankly.

"Are you dotty?" asked Langton.

Kildare pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said briefly.

"I—I say, I've got to tell you, you know," stammered Fatty Wynn, rather taken aback. "It's true, Kildare. I tell you I heard him talking it over with a bookmaker."

"What utter rot!" said Monteith irritably. "If you're saying a thing like that about a fellow of your own House, Wynn—"

"It's a School House fellow," said Fatty.

Monteith looked a little more placable. Although he was on the best of terms with Kildare, it was possible that he would not have been sorry to hear anything to the discredit of the School House. Monteith had not quite forgotten the time when he had opposed Kildare for the captaincy of St. Jim's, and had been beaten hollow in the election.

"Let him get it over, Kildare," said the prefect. "If he's talking out of his hat, I should recommend a licking with a cricket stump."

"Of course he's talking rot!" growled Kildare. "Do you think I'd believe such a thing of any St. Jim's chap; never mind his House?"

"It's true!" howled Fatty Wynn.

"It's Cutts of the Fifth!"

"Rubbish! Cutts didn't know till yesterday that he was going to be in the team at all!" snapped Kildare.

"Yes, he did. He fixed it up with Knox to crock Darrell."

"What!" exclaimed Darrell.

"Nonsense!" said Kildare; but he spoke less decidedly now.

He remembered the vague suspicion that had come into his own mind when that unlucky ball placed Darrell out of the running for the Wallaby match.

Monteith closed the study door.

"You'd better out with it," he said.

"Better hear him, Kildare," said Langton. "He's got something in his silly head, and you may as well hear it."

"Well, out with it sharp, then!" said Kildare.

And Fatty Wynn blurted out his story.

The four seniors listened with incredulous looks. Fatty Wynn gasped it out breathlessly, afraid that he would be interrupted before he could finish, and perhaps his account was a little incoherent.

"You say you heard all this yourself?" said Kildare, when the fat Fourth Former came to a breathless stop at last.

"Every word."

"Have you told anybody?"

"Yes; all my chums."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

"We talked it over and agreed that you very likely wouldn't take much stock in it," said Fatty Wynn ruefully. "We went to Cutts instead, to put it to him that he had better get out of the eleven, as we knew about him."

"And what did Cutts say?"

"He—he said he'd kick us out of his study," confessed Fatty Wynn.

"No wonder! The wonder is he didn't do it, you young ass!" said Kildare. "Did he ask you not to tell me, or seemed alarmed?"

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"Well, no. He said I could go to true, you, or go to the dickens."

"That doesn't look as if he was afraid, does it?"

"Oh, it was bluff!" said Fatty Wynn confidently. "He's got heaps of nerve. He thought he would bluff me into not coming to you. And—and perhaps I wouldn't have come, only for what happened to Langton."

"What on earth has that got to do with it?" demanded Langton.

"You're crooked, too, and that's let Knox into the team," said Fatty Wynn.

"I don't say there's any proof; but it looks jolly suspicious."

Kildare frowned darkly.

"You're not accusing Cutts of having set that footpad on Langton last night, are you?" he asked roughly.

"I say it looks jolly suspicious!" said Fatty Wynn. "It made me decide that I'd better come and tell you what I knew."

"It doesn't seem to me that you know anything," said Kildare. "You say you were asleep behind the haystack, and you had been feeding."

"Yes."

"Overeating yourself as usual, I suppose, and having dreams," said Monteith.

"Oh, I say, Monteith, I don't overeat myself! I—"

"Even if you heard all this, what it amounts to is that Cutts said he was certain to play," said Kildare. "It doesn't prove that he knew anything was going to happen to Darrell. He might have been talking out of his hat. A good many fellows thought they were certain to play, and they won't."

"But he's laid money—a heap of money—against the side," urged Fatty Wynn.

"Did you actually hear him say that a member of the team would get crooked to make room for him?" asked Darrell.

"No; he didn't say that. But as soon as I heard of what had happened to you, and that Cutts was in the team, then I knew—"

"You didn't know," said Kildare.

"You suspected. It's more likely than not that you were half asleep, and mistook what you heard."

"Oh, no, I didn't! I—"

"Are you willing to repeat all this before Cutts?"

"Yes, rather! I'm not afraid of him!"

"Call Cutts here, will you, Monteith?"

Monteith left the study. Fatty Wynn waited unabashed for the rascal of the Fifth to enter. He was not afraid of Cutts, as he had said; but he could not help realising that his story had not made much impression upon the seniors. Such an accusation required the plainest possible proof, and of proof there was little or none.

Cutts came into the study a few minutes later with Monteith. His manner was perfectly calm and composed. He glanced carelessly at Fatty Wynn, as if surprised to see a junior there, but took no more notice of him.

"Monteith says you want to speak to me, Kildare," he said.

"Wynn has just told me a yarn," said Kildare. "I want you to hear it, too, as it concerns you."

Cutts laughed.

"No need for that—I've heard it," he said. "I suppose it's the same yarn you told me in my study yesterday, isn't it, Wynn?"

"Yes," said Fatty, with a glare of defiance at the Fifth Former. "And

every word of it, as you know jolly well."

"I suppose you haven't sent for me to ask me if this is true, Kildare?" said Cutts quietly. "I should take such a question as an insult."

Fatty Wynn snorted.

"Be quiet, Wynn," said Kildare. "I don't believe it, Cutts; but I'm bound to take some notice of it. I suppose it isn't true that you've been making bets on the match?"

"Of course not."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

"Do you know a man named Crewe at all?"

"Not that I remember."

"Were you in the place Wynn has named yesterday?"

"No."

Fatty Wynn gasped.

"How a chap can roll out lies like that—"

"Hold your tongue!" said Monteith.

"I think I can explain this," said Cutts calmly. "I gave Wynn a licking the other day, and he owes me a grudge for it. When he found that Darrell had been crooked, and I'd got his place, I suppose he saw an opportunity of scoring over me, or thought he did. So he made up this yarn."

"More likely he dreamed it all," said Monteith. "I don't think Wynn is a kid to tell barefaced lies. He's a silly young ass; but I can't think he'd do that."

"Dreams or lies, it's all the same to me," said Cutts. "There's not a word of truth in it. He came threatening me yesterday that he would tell Kildare, and he can tell you how I answered him. The young duffer thought he would be able to frighten me into standing out of the match. He didn't know me."

Kildare looked very worried.

"If you think there's anything in it, Kildare, you'd better turn me out of the eleven," said Cutts coolly. "But to condemn a chap on the bare word of a kid who has a spite against him, I must say—"

"I'm not likely to do that," said Kildare gruffly. "I've told you that I don't believe it. Wynn must have dreamed it, or he heard somebody else talking, and thought it was you. You don't say you saw Cutts, Wynn?"

"No. He was round the haystack."

"Then you only knew him by his voice?"

"I know his voice well enough, don't I?" said Fatty Wynn.

"It's easy enough to be mistaken in voices—especially when you're half asleep and drowsy," said Kildare. "I should want some better proof than this before I condemned a cat for stealing milk. But, to make all clear, would you mind telling us, Cutts, just where you were at the time Wynn fancied he heard you talking behind the haystack? I should like Wynn to be satisfied that he's made a mistake."

"No fear of that," said Fatty Wynn.

"What time does the young idiot fancy he heard me there?" asked Cutts.

"It was about half an hour or three-quarters before I howled for you in the practice, Kildare," said Fatty Wynn.

"That would be about half-past five," said Kildare. "You might tell us where you were at half-past five yesterday, Cutts? You were out, I remember. I wanted you for the cricket practice, and you couldn't be found."

"I was down the river," said Cutts.

"I told you that when I came in."

"I hope there was somebody with you?"

Cutts laughed.

"Perhaps it's just as well that I can prove an alibi," he remarked.

"You can't!" yelled Fatty Wynn.

"Shut up, Wynn!" said Kildare angrily.

"But he can't prove that he wasn't where he was," gasped Fatty Wynn. "It isn't possible. I tell you—"

"Will you hold your tongue?"

"There wasn't anybody actually with me," said Cutts. "But, as it happens, I met a St. Jim's fellow on the towing-path, roughly about half an hour before I got in here and you saw me on the cricket ground. It was a Fourth Form kid—Levison—"

"Levison!" muttered Fatty Wynn.

"I don't know whether Levison remembers it, but you can ask him," said Cutts. "I don't mind the thing being put to the proof."

Fatty Wynn gave a sort of yell.

"You've fixed that up since I spoke to you yesterday. Levison is a liar—he'd say anything for a bob—and you're very thick with him, anyway. You've arranged it—"

"That's enough!" said Kildare.

Cutts shrugged his shoulders.

"It seems that everybody is a liar who says anything that doesn't agree with your yarn, Wynn," he remarked. "Now, look here, you've said too much already, and you'd better hold your tongue. I'm willing to believe that you went to sleep and dreamed it, or that you heard somebody else talking and fancied it was I. But you've got to ask my pardon for having made this accusation."

"Catch me!" said Fatty Wynn disdainfully.

"You'd better, Wynn," said Kildare.

"I'm not going to ask pardon for telling the truth," said Fatty Wynn.

"Well, kick him out, and have done with it," said Monteith.

"Hold on!" said Cutts grimly. "That doesn't satisfy me! I've been accused of having dealings with bookmakers—of laying money against the team I'm playing in—of all kinds of rotten conduct! I'm not going to take it lying down! Either Wynn will withdraw his words, here and now, and beg my pardon, or the matter must be taken before the Head!"

CHAPTER 10.

Knox Left Out!

THERE was a grim silence in Kildare's study.

If Cutts had been innocent, undoubtedly he was taking the right course; and if he was guilty, it showed a nerve on his part that was almost incredible.

It only needed his word to convince the seniors, if they had had any doubt before, that he was innocent of what he was accused of.

Even Fatty Wynn was staggered.

For if the Head should hear of the matter and make an investigation, and facts should come to light proving the accusation against Cutts, there was only one thing that could happen. He would be expelled in disgrace from St. Jim's.

Was it possible that, guilty, and knowing himself to be guilty, he could have the iron nerve to face such a test?

For a moment Fatty Wynn wondered whether, after all, he had been dreaming, or had mistaken somebody else's voice for Gerald Cutts'.

"Well, what do you say, Wynn?" said Kildare, at last.

"I say that every word I've said is true!" Fatty Wynn exclaimed.

"Cutts is willing to let it go that you were mistaken."

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling!



Hallo, everybody. I hear they are asking for suggestions for improving pound notes. For one thing, there should be more of them!

"I hate a stamp with the gum off," says Reilly. I can't stick anything like that, either.

Herries says he wasted much of last vac, with a fishing line. Ah, you had nothing at the end of it!

A Wayland chemist is selling a new beauty cream to take the sting out of tanning. The fags are simply queuing up to buy it!

News: A gardener says stone fruit pays best. The "plums" of his profession?

"A good specimen of a giraffe will fetch £100," we read. Where from?

Then there was the temperamental tennis player who always insisted on having his racket highly strung.

Young Gibson's mother complains that he refuses to do his piano practice during the vacation, though she has offered him sixpence every time. Perhaps one of the neighbours has offered him a shilling!

Try this: "Fleeing from a raging lion," said the hunter, "I leaped up

"I wasn't mistaken."

"Will you beg Cutts' pardon?"

"No, I won't!"

"That settles it," said Cutts. "You will come with me to Dr. Holmes, Wynn, and repeat your yarn before him. You had better come, too, Kildare."

"I'll repeat my yarn before anybody you like," said Fatty Wynn defiantly. "I'm not afraid to tell the truth!"

"Very well. Come!" Cutts turned towards the door.

"Hold on!" said Kildare. "We haven't time for all this, Cutts. Have you forgotten that we have got to get to Abbotsford, and the match begins early."

"My reputation is more important than a cricket match—even the Wallaby match. I hope!" said Cutts.

"Well, yes; but—"

"And I can't have that young liar repeating that yarn up and down the school. He's told it to the juniors already, I suppose. It will be all over St. Jim's soon."

"It will be against Wynn, and not against you, for nobody will believe it," said Kildare. "I shall show my opinion of it by playing you in the team just the same. Cutts, I really think this matter ought to go no further. Wynn has made a silly mistake, and he ought to own up to it—"

"He's got to own up to it," said Cutts.

"Wynn, you must beg Cutts' pardon," said Kildare. "You've made a bad mistake, and you owe it to him."

"I haven't made a mistake."

"Obstinate little cad!" said Cutts. "We'll see how the Head will deal with

at a branch fifteen feet from the ground." "Did you grab it all right?" asked his listener. "I didn't grab it going up," explained the hunter, "but I got it coming down!"

"I collect all the fares on the bus in two minutes," said the conductor of one of the new Wayland buses. A lightning conductor.

Tom Merry complains that some contributors have no sense of punctuation. No comma sense, in fact!

Mr. Ratcliff was playing golf. "What's old Ratty's handicap?" asked Kerr. "His face," said Figgins.

Next: "I hear you've left your job?" asked Smidgkins. "Yes," replied Boffkins. "My firm insulted me." "How?" asked Smidgkins. "They took my name off the payroll," said Boffkins.

Advert from "Wayland Courier": Rare Japanese Tea Set offered for sale, by lady slightly chipped." Well, that's better than being cracked!

I hear a furniture polisher has just written his life story. A work of friction.

Overheard on the tennis court: "I'm terribly off my game to-day," panted the rabbit. "Are you?" retorted his partner. "By the way, what is your game?"

Seaside story: "I suppose you sailors try to be as careful as possible?" asked Dame Taggies, on a seaside cruise. "On the contrary, ma'am," replied the old salt, "we try to be as 'wreckless' as possible!"

"Wreck"—on I'm off! Chin, chin, chaps.

him for bringing an accusation like this against a Fifth Form chap."

"Will you let it drop, as a favour to me, Cutts?" said Kildare. "I've special reasons for not wanting Wynn to get into trouble to-day."

"I will, if Wynn begs my pardon," said Cutts inflexibly.

"Now, Wynn—"

"I'm not going to do it," said Fatty Wynn. "I came here to warn you, Kildare—to do you a service—and you oughtn't to treat me like this. Nobody's ever called me a liar before."

"I don't call you a liar," said Kildare. "You've made a ridiculous mistake, and I think you will see it yourself in time. Wynn, I will tell you the reason why I want you to do the right thing now. You know Langton isn't playing, and we haven't a bowler. I want you to bowl for the first eleven."

Fatty Wynn almost fell down.

"You—want—me—" he stuttered.

"Yes; I have decided to play you as a bowler."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"We were talking it over when you came in," said Kildare. "We had already decided that your form as a bowler was better than Knox's, and we're strong enough in batting. I know it's a bit out of the common to play a junior in the first eleven—especially in the most important match of the season—but we want a bowler. And if you bowl to-day as you bowled yesterday, we shan't be sorry we played you."

"Oh crumbs!" repeated Fatty Wynn dazedly.

The prospect overwhelmed him.

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To play in the first eleven—and against the Wallabies!

It seemed too good to be true. And there was no wonder that the fat Fourth Former was overcome, and wondered whether he was dreaming.

Cutts' face was a study.

With all his self-possession, he could not restrain the look of fury that flashed over his hard face as Kildare spoke the fateful words.

"But—but Knox!" Cutts exclaimed.

"You're playing Knox, Kildare."

Kildare shook his head.

"I had already decided against Knox," he said.

"But—but a junior kid—"

"He took your wicket."

"That was a fluke—a rotten fluke!"

"No, it wasn't a fluke, Cutts. Wynn has taken my wicket in practice bowling, too. Of course, his batting won't be much use against the Wallabies, but we've got good bats. We want him simply to bowl; and he will be useful to us now Langton's crooked. Langton agrees with me."

Langton nodded.

"I suggested it," he said.

"But—but what will the Sixth say at a Sixth Former being left out to make room for a junior?" said Cutts.

"This is the first time I've heard you worry about the Sixth," said Kildare dryly.

"Well, the Fifth, then. There are lots of fellows in the Fifth who—"

"Excuse me, Cutts; this is my business," said Kildare. "I believe I'm captain of the first eleven."

"Then you've fully decided not to play Knox?" Cutts asked.

"Yes. After the way he crooked Darrell yesterday, I don't care to play him."

"What! You believe—"

"I believe it was an accident. But I don't like such accidents—and I'm not going to risk crippling one of the Wallabies with Knox's precious bowling!"

"Knox has a right to—to—"

"Knox has no rights in the matter whatever. The rights are to the best players."

"And you say that kid is better than Knox—"

"I'm not going to play him because he's worse, certainly."

"I think it's rot! I—"

"Thank you. I don't care to hear your opinion," said Kildare icily.

Cutts made a great effort to control himself. It required all his nerve and determination not to display his rage. His cunning device had succeeded in one half—he was in the team in Darrell's place. But the more risky and dangerous trick had been utterly useless. Langton was out of the team, and his place, instead of being given to Knox, was handed to a rank outsider.

It was enough to enrage Cutts. The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang oft a-gley, a great poet has told us. And Cutts' scheme had "ganged a-gley" in the most unexpected manner.

But he realised that the worst thing he could do for himself was to show his rage in Kildare's presence. It would not alter the captain's determination, and it might cause suspicion, if he showed how keenly bent he was upon having Knox in the team. It might even lend colour to Fatty Wynn's accusation.

"Well, you'll do as you think best," he said shortly. "I was only speaking for the sake of the team—as I see the matter. But that doesn't alter what we were speaking about. I expect an apology from Wynn, whether he's in the first eleven or not."

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"You jolly well won't get it!" said Fatty Wynn.

"You will tell Cutts you are sorry, Wynn," said Kildare. "I order you to, as head prefect of your House. I'm satisfied that you've made a mistake, and that's enough. Tell Cutts you are sorry."

"Or come with me to the Head," said Cutts.

Fatty Wynn paused.

"If you order me to, Kildare, that's another matter, but I don't do it of my own accord, mind, and I don't mean it!"

"Oh, get it over, and shut up!" said Kildare.

"Well, I'm sorry—as you say I'm to say it," said Fatty Wynn.

"That's enough."

"It's not enough for me!" said Cutts grimly. "I'm going to have a proper apology without any reservations, or else an appeal to Dr. Holmes."

"You can be satisfied with that," said Kildare.

"I hope you won't give me the impression that you're trying to make trouble, and to get the match snucked up."

Kildare's look and voice were very stern now, and Cutts realised that he had gone far enough. Kildare made a gesture to Fatty Wynn, and the Fourth Former left the study.

"Well, if you want me to drop it, I'll do it," said Cutts, after a pause. "If you think it's plainly enough established that there isn't a word of truth in the accusation, I'm willing to let it go at that."

"I shall show you what I think by playing you against the Wallabies," said Kildare shortly. "I've said that already."

"Then I'm satisfied."

And Cutts left the study. He smiled as he went down the passage. He had bluffed his way through poor Fatty's accusation.

But the smile died off his face as he remembered the news he had for Knox. The prefect was waiting for him in his study with an anxious brow.

"Is it all right?" he asked.

"I've settled that young fool!" said Cutts contemptuously. "Kildare made him apologise to me."

Knox drew a deep breath of relief.

"Then it's all plain sailing," he said.

"Yes, so far as that goes. But you're not in the team."

"Did Kildare say so?"

"Yes."

Knox gritted his teeth.

"Hang him! Who's he put in, then?"

"That fat kid—Wynn."

"Impossible!" howled Knox. "He couldn't—he wouldn't dare to put a Fourth Former in the first eleven, over my head! I—I wouldn't stand it!"

"You've got to!" said Cutts shortly.

"Kildare's made up his mind, and told Wynn. You're left out, Knox; and I shall have to work alone. It's rotten, after all the trouble we've taken. But who could have foreseen a thing like this?"

"You couldn't," sneered Knox. "So this is the end of a quid you paid to a

rough; and Langton knocked out. And the police started snuffing about our business. This—"

"Hold your tongue, you fool! Walls have ears! It's rotten that you can't get into the team. But a giddy prophet couldn't have foreseen that Kildare would play a junior in the place of Langton. How could anyone guess that?"

"It's a rotten shame! The Sixth ought to make a row about it! To put a junior over my head—"

"Oh, never mind the gas!" said Cutts.

Knox scowled.

"I'm in," said Cutts. "I shall manage it—you'll see. They're going to make that fat brute chief bowler. But I'm second fiddle, at least, and the Wallabies will score enough off my bowling to knock the school sky-high."

"I've told you all along that—"

"Oh, blow what you've told me all



"I've been accused of having dealings with bookies playing in. Either Wynn will beg my pardon, he

along! I tell you it will work out all right!" said Cutts irritably. "It isn't the certainty we reckoned on, owing to that freak of Kildare's, but it's as safe as houses. And you run less risk, too, by keeping out of the team."

"I shall speak to Kildare about it."

"It won't do any good."

Knox stamped out of the study without answering. He went at once to see Kildare; but his angry face, when he left him a few minutes later, showed that he had not prospered.

CHAPTER 11.

Wynn of the First Eleven!

TOM MERRY & CO. gathered round Fatty Wynn as he came out of the School House. The round plump face of Fatty Wynn was very like a full moon to look

at now. It was beaming with excitement and satisfaction.

"Well, is it all right, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Fatty Wynn nodded cheerfully.

"Right as rain," he said.

"Cutts isn't playing?" asked Figgins eagerly.

"Oh, Cutts! Yes, he's playing."

"Playing!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Didn't Kildare believe you, then?"

"Not a word."

"Bai Jove, I weally fail to see what you are lookin' so extremely chippy about, deah boy, in the cires!"

"Cutts denied it, of course?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, the rotter! He's got an alibi. Levison of the Fourth saw him on the towing-path at the time he was talking to the bookie at the haystack. Of course, he fixed that up with Levison after we visited him yesterday. We all know Levison."

out as if you were walking on air?"

demanding Tom Merry indignantly.

"You made me think it was all right."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Fatty Wynn chuckled with satisfaction.

"So it is all right," he said. "I haven't told you all about it yet. I'm to play."

"What?"

"Knox has got left," grinned Fatty Wynn.

"Instead of Knox being put in in Langton's place, I'm going in!"

What do you think of that?"

"Gammon!"

"Rot!"

"Wats!"

"Honest Injun!" said Fatty Wynn seriously.

"I'm going over to the New House for my togs now. Kildare told me I was to play. He's got it up against Knox about crocking Darrell, you see, and he doesn't want him to crock the Wallabies. And I'm a better bowler than Knox, any day in the week. I admit I'm not up to Langton's form; but I'll bowl against any other chap in the Sixth, and chance it."

"So you would, old fat son!" roared Figgins, giving his fat chum a mighty slap on the shoulder, which made Fatty Wynn yell. "My only hat, this is news, and no mistake! Of course, we said all along that what they really wanted was a junior in the team."

"Yaas; but a School House chap—"

"New House!" grinned Kerr.

"This is gorgeous! Fatty, you fat boulder, if you don't do the hat-trick to-day, we'll scalp you bald-headed!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I'm jolly glad to hear this!" said Tom Merry heartily.

"I'd have given a little, too, to play myself. And if they'd wanted a bat, I might have had a chance. But I'm glad you've got your chance, Fatty, and I wish you luck."

"Thanks!" said Fatty Wynn.

"If I don't get stage fright, I shall do all right, I think. Better than Knox, anyway — especially as he was going to lose, if he could."

"Bravo, Fatty!"

"Three cheers for gallant little Wales!" roared Figgins.

"Hurrah!"

"And another for the gallant little Whale!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a suggestion to make, Wynn, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"You are weally thinkin' of the school in this mattah, and not of yourself?"

"Both," said Fatty Wynn, after a moment's consideration.

"But you ought to think most of the school, deah boy."

"H'm! P'raps!" said Fatty Wynn.

"What are you getting at, anyway?"

"I was thinkin' that, for the sake of the school, you might point out to Kildare that there is a weally more reliable all-wound cwicketah in the Fourth Form."

"But there isn't," said Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn— You might

point this out to Kildare, I say, and offah to-wesign in my favah."

"Oh, this is a cricket match, not a screaming farce, you know!" said Fatty Wynn cheerfully; and he walked away with Figgins and Kerr, leaving Arthur Augustus almost speechless.

"Bai Jove," ejaculated D'Arcy at length, "I wegard that remark—"

"The team is going to start soon," said Tom Merry.

"We'd better take a bag of grub with us, as we're making a day of it. I don't grudge Fatty that feed now—he's welcome to it—especially as it doesn't make any difference now. But we want more tommy."

"I was speakin', Tom Mewwy—"

"Yes, you generally are. This way to the tuckshop."

The news that a junior was to play in the first eleven soon spread over St. Jim's. Many of the fellows refused to believe it at first.

But it was soon beyond doubt, for a crowd watched Kildare pin the list up in the hall, and there was a rush to read the names, and among the names was that of Wynn of the Fourth.

That settled it.

The school simply buzzed with the news.

The Fourth Form were delighted—in fact, almost all the juniors rejoiced, irrespective of Form or House.

Two or three, like Levison, Mellish, Crook, and Gore, were found to sneer, but they were ignored in the general satisfaction.

Among the seniors, however, the satisfaction was by no means the same.

Fellows in the Fifth and Sixth who had been passed over felt the indignity, and they scoffed at the idea of a junior doing more than they could do. Knox was furious, and a good many fellows shared Knox's feelings.

Even those who fully relied on Kildare's judgment felt that he was taking a very risky and serious step.

Indeed, several fellows in the Sixth ventured to remonstrate, and Kildare was patient enough to listen. They pointed out that Fatty Wynn was only a kid, and a very fat kid into the bargain, and added explanations of their own uncommon merits.

"You see, how can a junior kid bat against bowlers like the Wallabies?"

Prye of the Fifth objected. "Now, my batting—"

"I don't want him to bat," said Kildare. "He will go in last, and stonewall as long as he can. I want him to bowl."

"The Australians will cackle when they see a kid like that in the team," said another.

"Let 'em cackle," said Kildare, unmoved.

"It's jolly hard on Knox!" said Sefton.

"It's hard on every chap who can't play," said Kildare. "If the Wallabies would agree to play a team three hundred strong, I'd shove in every blessed chap in the school. But they wouldn't, you know."

And with that humorous reply Kildare walked away, and the discussion ceased.

The quadrangle was crowded when the motor-coach came to bear the eleven and their companions over to Abbotsford.

There was a loud cheer as the crowded coach drove off. After it went a score or more of other vehicles, hired by the fellows to take them over, and an army of cyclists followed them.

Fatty Wynn had an envied place in the cricketers' coach, and sat, fat and smiling and contented, among the

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id Cutts—"of laying money against the team I'm, or the matter must be taken before the Head!"

"Jolly deep of him," said Manners.

"But it will see him through. So Kildare's playing him after all?"

"Yes, They all agreed that I dreamed it, or else mistook somebody else's voice for Cutts," said Fatty Wynn.

"Kildare ordered me to tell Cutts I was sorry."

"Gweat Scott!"

"But you didn't!" exclaimed Figgins, Kerr, and Redfern.

"I had to—captain's orders. But I explained that I didn't mean it, so that's all right. They can't say I didn't say it out plainly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it comes to this, then," said Tom Merry.

"They've allowed that you didn't make up a yarn about Cutts; but they don't believe either, and he's going to play for St. Jim's to-day, all the same?"

"That's it," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then what do you mean by coming

mighty men of the Sixth. And on that great occasion Fatty Wynn might truly have said with the Roman poet of old: "Sublimi feriam sidera vertice," only there were, of course, no stars in the daytime.

CHAPTER 12.

The Wallaby Match!

TRALLEE, the Wallaby captain, greeted the St. Jim's eleven with great cordiality when they arrived on the ground at Abbotsford.

He was a big, handsome, Irish-Australian, with a hearty manner. It was just possible that the Wallaby captain regarded the schoolboy match somewhat in the light of a humorous experiment, and did not anticipate any difficulty in dismissing them after a little run, so to speak.

He had not taken the trouble to have his team up to its full strength; but the Wallaby eleven, as it stood, was an extremely difficult nut to crack. They had recently won three matches with first-class sides in succession, and so it was really rather a "big order" for the St. Jim's First to tackle them at all.

And yet that the Saints were not the only ones who believed that they had a chance was proved by the betting on the match, if anyone had cared to look into that wretched side of the affair.

The miserable spirit of gambling, which has utterly ruined so many sports that once were honoured, and which has spread its unclean tentacles over modern football and cricket, was not absent from the scene.

There was a big crowd of spectators to see the famous Wallabies play, and among them were two or three loudly dressed gentlemen who were not above turning a dishonest penny on the result of the match.

And punters who wanted to put their money on the famous Wallabies found that there were local enthusiasts ready to take them up at very slight odds.

Mr. Crewe was in sight among the crowd, when Cutts of the Fifth looked round for him. The two rascals could not, of course, venture to speak to one another in a public place; but the book-maker grinned when he saw that Gerald Cutts was in the eleven, and he made a sign that was only perceptible to Cutts, to intimate that he had carried out his instructions.

And Cutts smiled to himself.

When the Wallabies had won that match he would have between thirty and forty pounds to draw from persons who had backed the travelling team, and that was an exceedingly pleasant prospect to Cutts.

The only drawback was that, as he had had to lay the money at odds, he would have to pay out a hundred pounds or so if the Wallabies were defeated. And he could no more have paid a hundred pounds than he could have flown.

But the risk did not perturb him; his machinations had succeeded, and he was in the team. And in such a closely contested match one traitor would be sufficient to lose the game, even if St. Jim's looked at any time like winning, which Cutts doubted very much would be the case.

The money was as good as in his pocket. If Knox had been in the team, too, it would have made assurance doubly sure; but Cutts felt sure enough as it was.

It was a glorious day, and there was a crowd of people from Abbotsford and

Wayland and Rylcombe, as well as nearly all St. Jim's, and a crowd of fellows from Abbotsford School, and a crowd more from Rylcombe Grammar School.

Tom Merry & Co. had selected a good position and occupied it, and entrenched themselves there, as it were. And when Gordon Gay and his comrades from the Grammar School tried to rush them, they were repulsed with ease.

But all ragging and chipping ceased when the serious business of the day began.

Kildare won the toss, and elected to bat first. And he opened the innings himself with Cutts of the Fifth at the other end.

The bowling was to Kildare first, and he hit out at it in a way that made the St. Jim's crowd yell with delight.

That over gave Kildare 12, and it made the Wallabies open their eyes.

IN OTHER WORDS!



Teacher: "Paraphrase the line, 'The shades of night were falling fast.'"

Pupil: "Please, sir, the people were pulling down the blinds!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Byrne, 291, Farranboly Cottages, Dundrum, Co. Dublin.

The schoolboy team was evidently a little tougher than they had anticipated.

When the field crossed over, Tom Merry & Co. had all their eyes upon Cutts of the Fifth. Cutts stood up to the bowling very well, and knocked away the first two balls of the over very neatly, though without scoring.

The third ball whipped his middle stump out of the ground. Then the juniors looked at one another.

"Wicket down for nothing," said Tom Merry. "If that doesn't make Kildare open his eyes, they want opening with a chisel."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's jolly good bowling, though," remarked Kangaroo. "The wicket might have gone down if Cutts was doing his best."

"It might."

"Yaas; but we know, Kangaroo, deah boy. It's the game the wottah is playin'. We knew he'd lose his wicket for a duck's egg."

"Same in the second innings, I'll bet you!" said Monty Lowther.

Kildare gave Cutts a sharp look as the Fifth Former went off the pitch. The Australian bowling was undoubtedly good, and the wicket might have

been honestly lost. The St. Jim's captain was the most unsuspicious of fellows, and he would have seen nothing to remark in the occurrence but for the communication Fatty Wynn had made. Cutts' quick dismissal certainly coincided with Fatty Wynn's accusation.

But Kildare had already resolved that there was nothing in that, and he would not allow suspicions to wake in his mind. And as Cutts passed him, he called out cheerily:

"Hard cheese, old man!"

Cutts nodded and flushed as he went on to the pavilion. It is possible that even the blackguard of the Fifth felt ashamed of himself at that moment.

The crowd were cheering the bowling, and a strident voice was audible near where the juniors were crammed together at the ropes.

"Bray-vo! Bray-vo!"

Fatty Wynn looked round quickly as he heard that voice. Fatty Wynn was with his chums now till he was wanted to bat. He had been put down the last man in, so it was likely to be some considerable time before he was wanted.

The fat Fourth Former fixed his eyes upon a stout man in a check suit and a bowler-hat, from whom the strident voice proceeded.

"The rotter!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn.

"Hallo, what's the matter with you, Fatty?" demanded Figgins, in astonishment. "What's the chap done to you?"

"That's him!" said Fatty Wynn emphatically and ungrammatically.

"Eh? He's who?"

"The man who was talking to Cutts behind the haystack yesterday. I know his voice again. Sounds like sharpening a saw," said Fatty. "I'd know it anywhere."

All the juniors looked at the man in the bowler-hat. Monty Lowther moved a little towards him, and touched him on the elbow. The stout man looked down at him.

"Would you mind telling me if you are Mr. Crewe, sir?" asked Lowther, with great civility.

The man nodded.

"That's my name, young gent."

"Thank you, sir!"

"What did you ask him, Monty?" asked Tom Merry curiously, as the Shell fellow rejoined his comrades.

"Whether his name was Crewe," said Lowther coolly. "He says it is. You're quite right, Fatty. He's the man right enough. If we could get Kildare to know this, it might make a difference."

"Too late now," said Tom Merry.

"Cutts is in the team; he's batted, and he can't be shifted out now. Hallo! There goes Kildare's sticks!"

The captain of St. Jim's was out for 24—not a bad score against strong bowling. Baker of the New House took his place, Webb being at the other end. The innings went on, with ups and downs, the St. Jim's fellows keeping their end up very well, and certainly better than the Wallabies had expected. Gray followed, and then Rushden, and then Monteith.

"Five down for 56," said Tom Merry. "There goes Rushden!"

Lefevre was in next, and then Gilmore. Monteith was still keeping his end up. Fatty Wynn left his chums and joined the batsmen outside the pavilion. Last man in would be wanted soon.

He was wanted when the score stood at 68. Fatty Wynn, looking a little red and nervous, came out on the pitch, and there was a grin round the crowd at the sight of the junior. Monteith spoke to him as he passed.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, kid, and

(Continued on page 18.)

The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal!
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
The Editor, The GEM,
Fleetway House, Farring-
don Street, London, E.C.4.



HALLO, chums! There is a gripping sequel to the powerful yarn which appears in this number, and you will have it in your hands next Wednesday. It is called:

"THE BLACK SHEEP'S DUPE!"

Gerald Cutts, whose traitorous scheme for enriching himself at the expense of the St. Jim's cricket team has come a cropper, is right up against it to save himself from disgrace and what will inevitably follow—expulsion! For unless the black sheep of the Fifth can pay his gambling losses, he is threatened with exposure before the Head of St. Jim's. But even in this moment of danger, Cutts remains a cool, cunning rascal. He evolves a treacherous plot to save himself from ruin, with the unsuspecting Arthur Digby of the Fourth as the dupe of his scheming. That the success of his plot means the blackening of the name of an innocent junior doesn't enter the mind of the cad of the Fifth. To save himself is all that concerns Cutts!

You will greatly enjoy reading this gripping story, which Martin Clifford tells in his most masterly and compelling style. Don't miss it.

"THE FAMOUS FOUR!"

Continuing the early adventures of the chums of Greyfriars, Frank Richards is once again at his best in the next exciting chapters of this grand yarn. Melchior and Barengo, the gipsies, have come off worst in their encounter with the Famous Four, but they are still at large. The lure of the diamond Harry Wharton possesses, coupled with the desire for revenge on the junior, brings Melchior to Greyfriars by a secret passage in the dead of night! What follows provides a thrilling experience for Harry Wharton and his chums.

Illustrated jokes, for which readers are awarded 2s. 6d., and more wit and wisecracks from Monty Lowther put the finishing touch to another ripping number. Remember my oft-repeated advice—order in advance.

If you are enjoying the yarns dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co.—and there's no doubt you are—you will absolutely revel in the new and extra-special cover-to-cover stories featuring these world-famous characters which appear every week in our companion paper—the "Magnet." This week's super story:

"NOT WANTED IN THE CIRCUS!"

is one long reel of thrills, fun, and adventure. Billy Bunter, the prize

"porpoise" of the Greyfriars Remove, has run away from school to join Muccolini's Magnificent Circus. To say that Billy is having the time of his life is putting it rather mildly. Never before has the fat junior been able to throw his weight about as he is doing now. And why? The answer is to be found in this tip-top tale by famous Frank Richards. Be sure and read it!

"SWAN-UPPING."

"Swan-apping" is an annual process carried out every August on the Thames, F. Rayner, of Salisbury. The young swans are rounded in, and a mark of ownership put on their bills. The swans on the Thames belong to the King and the London City Livery Companies of the Dyers and Vintners, to whom the privilege is reserved. The King's swans bear no mark, but those belonging to the Dyers' Company have one notch on the bill, while the Vintners' Company's swans have two.

The swan frequently appears in legend and fable. There is a legend that the swan was first brought to England by Richard Cœur de Lion, who was presented with a pair when he was shipwrecked on the island of Cyprus. Possibly this legend, and perhaps the stately dignity of the swan, is responsible for it being formerly a royal bird. At one time in England no one could possess a swan without a licence from the Crown, and there is a law still in existence which makes the killing of a swan punishable by death!

WORLD'S SMALLEST POSTAL ORDER!

We consider a farthing of little enough value, and it's often regarded as a nuisance. Yet in the Travancore State, India, where they have their own currency, there is a coin which has a value roughly of a seventh of a farthing! Just imagine buying your copy of the GEM with these coins—you'd only need about sixty of 'em!

Besides possessing a coin of such little worth, Travancore also issues a postal order for the value of .035 of a penny! It is claimed to be the smallest postal order in the world. One of them was taken out by someone and sent through the post—yes, and it was delivered safely!

ODD WAGERS!

Do you think you could eat forty melons at one sitting? It's a pretty tall

order, but a bookseller in Belgrade once did it to win a wager of five pounds. I should imagine he hated the sight of a melon after getting outside that lot!

Not quite so difficult, but a little more daring, were the wagers a man used to make with strangers in the street. He would go up to a man whom he had seen light a cigarette with a lighter and bet him a level half-crown that his lighter wouldn't work first time. He made it quite a profitable venture, too—winning about ten pounds a week!

But the most amazing wager I've heard of for some time was that of a Lancashire labourer who betted some friends he would eat a bale of straw, two blankets, two pounds of butter, and a loaf! He burnt the blankets and straw, mixed the ashes with the butter, and spread the paste on slices of bread! Not very tasty, but cute, eh?

REPTILE RAT-CATCHER!

Rats that infest a certain house in Kimberley, Cape Province, are having a very rough time of it, and their enemy is not a cat or a dog, but a venomous snake! The resident had the snake as a pet, and he found out one day that it was a very good rat-catcher. So every night now the snake is allowed free run of the house and the garden, and it's ridding the place of the vermin quicker than any cat could. The snake likes its job, too, for it returns every morning, when it is given a saucer of milk, and is put back in its box to sleep.

PEN PALS.

W. G. van Heerden, P. O. Box 24, Craddock, South Africa; age 17 up; stamps, sports.

Miss Iris Eaton, 145, Umbilo Rd., Durban, Natal, South Africa; girl correspondents; age 18 up.

L. Dobbs, 149, Rokely Rd., c/o. Miss Bishop, Subiaco, Western Australia; stamps, cycling, fishing.

Rodney Lam, 828, Jalan Pelandok, Pudu, Kuala Lumpur, Federated Malay States; stamps, photography, scouting.

Miss Audrey M. Doel, Box 91, Hebdon St., Lockhart, N.S.W., Australia; girl correspondents; age 17-27.

Yeoh K. Chong, 11a, Jones Rd., Penang, Straits Settlements; stamps.

Tan Khong Eok, 6, Barrack Rd., Penang, Straits Settlements; stamps, postcards, snaps.

TAILPIECE.

Jones: "I believe baldness can come on quite suddenly."

Bones: "Yes—hair to-day and gone to-morrow!"

PEN PALS COUPON
15-8-36

THE EDITOR.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No 1,487.

stonewall as much as you can. Keep your end up, and leave me to get the runs."

"Right-ho, Monteith!" said Fatty. And Fatty Wynn, with the eyes of all the juniors of St. Jim's upon him, faced the deadly bowling of the Wallabies. His momentary nervousness had departed, and he was as cool as a cucumber. He was not there to distinguish himself by hitting—he knew that. So long as he kept the innings open for Monteith he was satisfied. And there was a cheer from the juniors when he had lived through an over.

"Good old Fatty!" roared Figgins. "Keep it up!"

In the next over Monteith started with 3, which gave Fatty Wynn the bowling again. At the next ball Fatty stole a single run with great cleverness, thus giving the bowling to Monteith again. The juniors clapped like clock-work.

"Good old Fatty! He's broken his duck, at any rate!" grinned Figgins.

"And there goes a good one from Monteith."

"Bravo!"

Fatty Wynn was playing a cautious game, and he played it well. Monteith was a brilliant batsman on his day, and this seemed to be one of his days. He had brought the score up to 80, when Fatty Wynn was bowled at last.

"All down for 80," said Tom Merry. "Not so bad."

Kildare clapped Fatty Wynn on the shoulder as he came off, red and perspiring.

"You've done jolly well, kid!" he said gratefully. "You've backed Monteith up, and that was what was wanted. Some kids would have been nervous, and been bowled out first ball. You've done well—very well indeed!"

And Fatty Wynn's fat face was glowing with pleasure as he rejoined his chums. They simply hugged him.

"If it had been Knox, the innings would have ended at 68 instead of 80," said Blake. "Fatty, old man, you're doing them in the eye!"

"Yaas, watah!"

"But wait till he bowls!" said Figgins. "That will be an eye-opener for some parties!"

And, indeed, as it turned out, it was an eye-opener for all parties.

CHAPTER 13.

Fatty Wynn to the Fore!

THE Wallaby innings opened, and Fatty Wynn went out with the rest to field. Kildare had given the ball to Cutts for the first over. He impressed upon Cutts the necessity of bowling as he had never bowled in his life before, and Cutts appeared to be very keen. He went to the crease with a manner of great determination; but there was great scepticism in the looks of Tom Merry & Co. as their eyes followed him there. The scepticism was justified.

Certainly the bowling was good; but even an unprejudiced observer might have fancied that Cutts was trying to give the batsmen chances. Every ball he sent down was knocked away with perfect ease, and the batsmen crossed and recrossed the pitch at a great rate, taking threes whenever it was not a boundary.

That single over gave the Wallabies 21 runs—more than a quarter of the score in the total of the school's first innings.

The St. Jim's faces looked rather blank now.

Kildare told Fatty Wynn to take the

ball for the second over. He did not distrust Cutts, but he was disappointed in him, and selected Monteith to change-bowling with Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn did not take a wicket in that over, but no runs were taken; so, after the unpleasant beginning, he well deserved the cheer his friends gave him.

Then Monteith bowled. A wicket fell to Monteith, and the Saints gave a cheer of relief. It was a start, anyway.

Then Tralee, the Wallaby skipper, came in to bat. Monteith finished the over against him in vain, Tralee knocking the leather where he liked. Then Fatty Wynn tried his hand on Tralee, with the same result. As the field crossed over once more, Cutts approached the captain of St. Jim's.

"Give me another chance, Kildare," he muttered. "I hadn't got my hand in in the first over, and the batsmen are hard to beat. You can see that the junior's no good. If you put me off the bowling, it looks as if you don't trust me, after what's been said."

"Try another over," said Kildare shortly.

Cutts took the ball again.

Tom Merry groaned aloud as he saw it.

"I'd hoped Kildare was tumbling to the game," he muttered. "Here goes another twenty for the enemy! Rotten!"

Tom Merry was right. Cutts, whether purposely or not, was bowling in a way that would have given poor batsmen good chances. And he was dealing, not with the poor batsmen, but with first-class men. His bowling was knocked far and wide, and the over added nineteen to the Wallaby score, without the loss of a wicket. The total was now nearly fifty, for one wicket.

"I'm sorry, Kildare," Cutts remarked, as the field crossed.

Kildare looked at him hard. In spite of himself, the accusation against Cutts was taking ground in his mind. A duck's egg in his innings, and utter failure as a bowler, after the form Cutts had often shown in practice!

If Fatty Wynn had never accused Cutts, Kildare would have attributed it to nervousness in playing a celebrated team—though Cutts was not given to nervousness as a rule—or else to sheer bad luck. But as it was, the captain of St. Jim's could not help an uncomfortable feeling of suspicion rising within him.

"Well, you're off your form," he said. "I shan't want you to bowl again this innings."

"I've had bad luck."

"So has the side. Don't say any more."

And Cutts went to his place in the field with a clouded brow.

But he had done harm enough. Monteith bowled again, and the Wallaby score leaped to seventy. Then Fatty Wynn was given the ball, Kildare not appearing to notice the glance Gerald Cutts gave him.

And now came the surprise of the day.

Fatty Wynn sent the ball down to Tralee, who was perhaps getting a little careless from unbroken success. If so, he paid dearly for it!

There was a clack, and the leg-stump and the balls went flying. And from all the St. Jim's fellows there came a wild roar:

"Bravo, Fatty!"

"Well bowled, St. Jim's!"

"Hurrah!"

The Wallaby skipper carried out his bat. Next man in, to his great astonishment, found his wicket broken, and went bootless home. And the Saints cheered wildly.

But that was not the end, for the next man in, who was looking for the slow teaser that had dismissed his predecessor, failed to be on his guard against a lightning ball that came down like a four-point-seven shell, and whipped his middle stump out of the ground before he knew what was happening.

Then the Saints let themselves go! There was a roar of voices, a thundering of hand-claps.

"Well bowled!"

"The hat trick!"

"Bravo, Fatty!"

And Fatty Wynn grinned broadly. The next batsman came in, and the over finished without a run.

The next over was a maiden, and in the next after that Fatty Wynn bowled again, and added another wicket to his list of scalps.

"What did I tell you?" chortled Figgins gleefully. "Didn't I tell you that the New House would put the lid on, hey? Didn't I tell you that Fatty would wipe 'em all over the ground—what?"

"I do not wemembah your makin' any remarks to that effect, Figgay."

"Well, I make 'em now," said Figgins. "Bravo, Fatty! Good old oyster!"

The tail of the Wallaby innings was running out now. Very much to their surprise, the Wallabies found their innings over in time for lunch. They finished with a level hundred for their score—twenty ahead of St. Jim's—but as they had intended to declare for a couple of hundred, and save batting a second time, it was quite clear that St. Jim's had done remarkably well.

Kildare shook hands with Fatty Wynn as he came off.

"Thank you, Wynn," he said. "You've done better than I could have expected. I shan't forget this. If ever you want me to do anything for you, kid, you'll only have to say the word."

"Good egg!" said Fatty Wynn promptly. "I'll hold you to that."

Kildare laughed.

"You want to ask for something?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Go ahead, then."

"Don't let Cutts bowl again."

Kildare knitted his brows.

"No, that's not fair, Wynn. Look here, kid, are you still sticking to what you said about Cutts?" said Kildare, in a low voice.

"More than ever! Doesn't his play prove what I said?"

Kildare was silent. Distrust and suspicion were alien to his frank nature; but he could not help admitting the force of Fatty Wynn's words.

"But whether you believe it or not, you can see that Cutts is no good, Kildare," Fatty Wynn urged. "If he isn't playing the traitor, he's playing the giddy ox!"

Kildare smiled a little.

"He certainly seems off his form," he said.

"Leave him out of the bowling, then. I'll bowl for you like billy-oh! And Monteith is a good change bowler; so is Rushden."

"I'll think about it," said Kildare shortly.

Fatty Wynn, half-satisfied, went away to join his chums. Cutts of the Fifth

stopped him on his way, with a savage leer on his face.

"You are getting a lot of kudos for those flukes, you cheeky cub!" he remarked.

"Flukes be hanged, and cub yourself!" retorted Fatty Wynn. "I'm not playing against the Wallabies so much as I'm playing against you, Cutts! I know you are trying to lose the match, and I'm going to prevent you if I can! See?"

Cutts clenched his hands. "You touch me, and I'll call the chaps up, and we'll bump you before the crowd!" said Fatty Wynn coolly. "I'm not afraid of you, you traitor!"

Cutts turned away, gritting his teeth. The chill of doubt was entering his heart now, and a dreadful thought haunted him. What if the Wallabies should be beaten, after all?

And at that thought, Cutts would willingly have hit the fat Fourth Former with his bat. But that, fortunately, was not practicable.

CHAPTER 14.

Cutts Does His Worst!

TOM MERRY & CO. surrounded Fatty Wynn during the lunch interval, very much like loyal subjects surrounding a great prince.

Fatty Wynn was the hero of the hour, and there was not a spark of jealousy at his success. The juniors rejoiced at the triumph of a Fourth Former, and the New House fellows specially rejoiced.

Everybody knew that only Fatty Wynn's "hat trick" had prevented the Wallabies from running up a terrific score that the Saints could not hope to have beaten. If Fatty Wynn had not been a level-headed youngster his head might have been turned. As it was, however, he was thinking chiefly about lunch.

But at lunch his admirers turned themselves into keepers. Fatty Wynn was prepared to distinguish himself even more at lunch than at cricket, but Figgins said him nay, and the other fellows vigilantly backed up Figgins.

The great bowler was not to be allowed to spoil his form for the afternoon by stuffing himself with pastry; and Figgins and Kerr carefully considered every helping before he was allowed to touch it.

Fatty Wynn grumbled in vain.

Figgins was not to be denied, and the unfortunate Fatty had to content himself with only enough for two ordinary fellows.

"Think of the feed you're going to have afterwards," said Tom Merry consolingly. "We're going to celebrate this in the School House, you know. We've clubbed up for it, and when you've finished your feed to-night, Figgy and Kerr will have to roll you home across the quad."

"But I'd like a bite or so now," said poor Fatty. "I'm peckish, you know. I've only had a cold chicken and a chop."

"Must be famished!" said Blake sympathetically. "But we want you to bowl, Fatty. We don't want you to roll the pitch with, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "We'll fill you up to the chin aftah the match, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Think of cold chickens, and saveloys, and mashed potatoes, and fwied onions, and nice gammon washahs—"

"Oh, don't!" groaned Fatty. "You're torturing me!"

"And ham and eggs, and seed cake, and cuwwant cake, and jam tarts—"

"Shurru!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"I wouldn't care to be in Cutts' shoes now!" Monty Lowther remarked. "Look at him over yonder, talking to Knox! Look at their chivvies!"

The juniors looked at Knox and Cutts. Certainly they did not look very cheerful. Knox's face was clouded, and Cutts was biting his lip, and there was a restless gleam in his deep-set eyes.

It was easy enough for the juniors to guess the desperate thoughts that were in his mind. If the match was lost by the side he had backed, he was ruined; he was in a "hole" from which all his

He turned away without waiting for Cutts' reply.

The innings opened with Kildare and Monteith. It started well, both the batsmen being in great form, and having taken the measure of the bowling in the first innings. Monteith's wicket was the first to fall, but not till the partnership had put on 30 runs. Baker went in to join Kildare, and after him went Rushden, the score piling up steadily. There were loud cheers for old Kildare when the fourth wicket went down, and he was still in.

"First in and not out—bet you my hat!" said Blake.

The Wallabies were exerting themselves now. Rather late in the day, they were realising that they had



There was a dead silence as Fatty Wynn bowled that fateful ball. Then: "Middle stump—middle stump!" roared Figgins. "Oh, my hat!" "Well bowled!" "Hip, hip, hurrah!" The St. Jim's juniors fairly let themselves go as that last wicket fell!

coolness and cunning could hardly extricate him. And now, with his confederate left out of the team, and unable to help him, and the unexpected recruit showing wonderful form, and Kildare distrusting him and perhaps refusing to let him bowl again, Cutts' prospects looked very dark indeed.

And yet, the wretched schemer said to himself again and again, the Wallabies must win. Even without treachery on the St. Jim's side, the famous team must win on their form.

It was probable enough, and yet—

Yet there was a doubt, and that doubt was like a canker in the schemer's breast—a torturing thought that would not leave him. Cutts had learned by previous experiences that the way of transgressors is hard. But he had never found it quite so thorny as he found it now.

"You will be the last man in, Cutts!" Kildare said abruptly, when the Saints were getting ready for their second innings.

dangerously underrated their schoolboy opponents.

But the best of the bowling could not beat Kildare's bat.

Six were down for 80 when at last Kildare was caught out by Tralee himself.

"Seven down for 80," said Tom Merry. "Well, it's better than the first innings. Three more to go down—"

"Two!" said Figgins. "Cutts will throw his away!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go it, Lefevre!" shouted the fellows, as the captain of the Fifth went to the wickets.

Lefevre was a good, steady batsman, never to be tempted into recklessness, and he had Gray for a partner. The runs piled up.

"If only old Darrell were there!" sighed Blake. "Darrell would make the fur fly now! What would you give to scrag Knox for crocking him?"

"Bai Jove! I'd give a fivah, deah boy!"

"So would I!" said Monty Lowther. "I'd give Gussy's fiver, or anybody's fiver!"

"Lefevre's keeping his end up," said Kangaroo. "I didn't expect so much of him. My hat! There goes a boundary! Bravo, Fifth!"

By the time Lefevre's wicket was down, the score was 94. Fatty Wynn was next man in, and his chums gave him an encouraging yell.

"Go it, Fatty! Roll on!"

Fatty Wynn grinned, and rolled on. Cutts stood gritting his teeth. He stole a glance at Kildare's face, but it was impassive. Did the St. Jim's skipper suspect him at last? It looked like it. If he joined Fatty Wynn at the wickets, it would not do so much harm if he threw his wicket away, so far as his partner went, for Fatty was not expected, naturally, to score against the Wallabies bowling. As it happened, he came in as Fatty's partner, Gray being bowled when the score was at a level hundred.

He scowled at Fatty Wynn as he passed him going to the wicket.

Fatty glared back defiantly.

"Chuck it away!" he called out, loudly enough for the fieldsmen to hear. "We all know you're going for a duck's egg!"

Cutts swung round on him savagely.

Fatty Wynn took a businesslike grip on the cane handle of his bat, and it was so evident that he would bat Cutts if the Fifth Former touched him, that Cutts changed his mind, and went on his way.

"Play up, Cutts!" shouted the St. Jim's fellows. "No duck's eggs this time!"

Cutts' face was flushed. He felt Kildare's eyes upon him. He could not take a duck's egg, and turn his score into a "pair of spectacles" without danger of betraying his real intentions. But he dared not score. Suspicion, condemnation, would not be so bad as allowing St. Jim's to win the match.

The bowling was to Fatty Wynn, and he blocked it, that was all. Then an over was bowled to Cutts.

Cutts stopped ball after ball, but took no runs. The St. Jim's fellows began to shout to him to buck up.

"Play up, Cutts!"

"Hit at it!"

"Don't go to sleep!"

Cutts did hit at the last ball of the over, and missed it, and his middle stump was knocked back. There was a groan from the school crowd.

"Out!"

"Pair of spectacles, by thunder!"

"Rotten!"

Cutts came off the pitch with a sullen brow. St. Jim's were all down for a hundred in the second innings.

"Not out, Wynn!" grinned Figgins.

"Fatty Wynn not out! Come and be hugged, Fatty!"

"I'd rather have some ginger-beer," said Fatty.

"Here you are, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus.

The ginger-beer gurgled down Fatty Wynn's throat.

"Got any jam-tarts?"

"You can have a sandwich," said Figgins, after due consideration.

"I say, Figgy, I must have a solid foundation, you know, if I'm going to do any really good bowling," urged Fatty Wynn.

Figgins chuckled.

"That's just what you're jolly well not going to do," he remarked. "You can have one sandwich to last you till the tea interval. It won't be long, my fat tulip."

The sandwich disappeared in the twinkling of an eye.

"Hundred and eighty for the two innings," Tom Merry remarked. "They've got to get eighty to tie, eighty-one to win. Fatty, if you let them get eighty-one, we'll boil you in oil!"

"We want another hat-trick, Fatty," said Figgins. "Or, rather, two of 'em,

or three if you can manage it. Or four—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Figgins.

"Well, I don't see where four hat-tricks are to come from in one innings, unless Fatty bowls the umpires," grinned Tom Merry.

"Well, three will do," said Figgins, laughing. "Three, Fatty, or we'll scalp you! Think of Cutts' chivvy when the bookies come round asking for their cash."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, it will be wathah a lesson to Cutts!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "I trust he will profit by it."

"It's the only profit he'll get out this match, anyway," said Monty Lowther. "That is, if I'm a prophet."

"Oh, don't!"

"Got another sandwich, Figgy?"

"Not a ghost of one," said Figgins. "Look out, the Wallabies are going in again! Remember, you've got a standing order for hat-tricks!"

"Yas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Kildare led his men out to field, to play out the last round of that exciting game.

CHAPTER 15.

A Close Finish!

THE excitement on the Abbotsford Athletic Ground was intense now.

The crowd had thickened as the news spread of the stand the school-boys were making against the famous Wallabies.

If the latter did not improve on their first innings they would beat the school only by a wicket or two. And it was quite well known that they had expected to have an innings to spare.

PEN PALS

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Miss M. Finn, 141, Hartington Rd., S. Lambeth, London, S.W.3; girl correspondents; age 17-20; books, films, dancing.

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Ernie Sinton, 46, Macdonald St., Te Hapara, Gisborne, North Island, New Zealand; stamps.

Bernard Donnelly, 351, St. Asaph St., Christchurch, New Zealand; pen pals, age 12-15.

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And if they did not improve upon it, then the Wallabies would have found their Waterloo at the hands of the St. Jim's First.

That thought was enough to fire the Saints to tremendous exertions. They went on with the determination to do or die.

Kildare tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn for the first over, as a matter of course. Fatty was on his mettle. Hat-tricks are not as common as blackberries; but when Fatty could not take wickets he could keep down the runs, and that was the next best thing. The over proved a blank, and then Monteith bowled. Then the runs began to come, Tralee starting with a four for the Wallabies.

Having broken their duck, the Wallabies piled in, and the runs went up fast. But there was a check when Fatty Wynn was bowling again. Then Rushden took the ball, and the batsmen made the fur fly once more.

When the field crossed over again, with thirty scored for no wickets, Gerald Cutts came over to Kildare.

"You want me to bowl sometime, I suppose?" he said. "You can't leave me out of it, Kildare. I'm in better form now. Give me a chance."

Kildare shook his head.

"Wynn's the man," he said. "He's jolly near up to old Langton's form. And Monteith and Rushden are good for change bowlers."

"Then I'm not good enough even for a change bowler to a Fourth Form kid?" said Cutts, with a bitter sneer.

"No," said Kildare.

"I suppose that means that you don't trust me?" said Cutts, between his teeth.

Kildare looked him squarely in the face.

"I don't know what to say to that," he said. "But as you ask me, I'll speak out. I didn't take any stock in what the kid said against you. I proved that by playing you. You've got two duck's eggs, and you've bowled like a duffer in his first term. It begins to look very queer. I don't say I suspect you, Cutts. It would take a lot to make me suspect any St. Jim's chap of such filthy treachery. I can't believe it of you. But you're not bowling a single over in this match, and that's flat!"

Cutts would have spoken again, but Kildare walked away from him, and the rascal of the Fifth had to go to his place in the field.

He went with a black brow. His chance was gone; he had to trust to luck now. Only by misfielding could he contribute to the success of the other side, and by missing any catches that came his way. He felt that he owed it all to Fatty Wynn. Kildare, though he would not admit it to himself, was suspicious. But even without being suspicious, the captain of St. Jim's would have been more than justified in refusing to give another chance to a bowler who had failed so signally to do any good to his side.

It all depended now on Fatty Wynn.

Without his brilliant bowling the game was lost. If only Knox had been playing, instead of the junior! Cutts ground his teeth as he thought of it. Like many clever fellows, he had been a little too clever.

To wait and watch the chances of the game, with so much at stake upon it, was anguish to the plotting Fifth Former.

But he had to endure it. In spite of his self-control, his rage and chagrin were visible in his face. Most of the fellows who observed his looks attributed his bad temper to the fact that the bowling had been taken away from him. Tom Merry & Co. knew better,



and they did not pity the rascal whose schemes were recoiling on his own head.

Cutts' face brightened somewhat as the innings went on. Cricket is a game full of glorious uncertainty. And it seemed as if the fickle goddess, Fortune, intended to favour the traitor, Forty runs for one wicket looked very promising for the Wallabies. They wanted now forty-one to win, and had nine wickets in hand at the tea interval.

But then came a change. Fatty Wynn was bowling, and a mighty cheer rang over the ground as the stumps were spreadeagled.

"Well bowled, Fatty!"

"Go it, St. Jim's!"

Then another wicket went down.

"Hurrah!"

All eyes were on the next ball. The batsman cut it through the slips, and a fieldsman was just where he was wanted to catch it. Up went his hands, and the fellows were ready to cheer the hat-trick again. But that fieldsman was Cutts of the Fifth.

The ball glided from his fingers and fell to the ground. St. Jim's groaned as one man.

"Muffed, by George!"

"Oh, rotten!"

"Chucked away!" said Tom Merry, his face pale with anger. "If that isn't plain enough to Kildare he must be blind."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Cutts did not dare to meet his captain's eyes after muffing that catch. His heart was beating hard now. He knew that that wicket saved to the enemy might mean all the difference in the finish.

Fatty Wynn bowled again, and there was a roar:

"Well bowled, Fatty!"

And Kildare's face cleared.

Four down for 40. And they were four of the best. In the next few overs the runs crept up, and the wickets went down—fifty for six wickets. Fifty-five, fifty-seven, sixty, sixty-one! Twenty wanted to win.

Monteith was bowling again. Away went the ball from the Wallaby bat, and the batsmen were running; but there was a roar.

A plump form had leaped into the air, a fat hand swept up. Smack! Fatty Wynn held up the ball.

"Well caught! Hurrah!"

Seven down for 61. Then more runs; then a splendid catch by Kildare. Eight down for 70. Eleven wanted to win, and two more wickets to fall. Then a smart ball from Monteith that caught the batsman napping. Nine down for 74.

"Last man in!" gasped Figgins. "Oh, my hat, I feel as if I were at the dentist's!"

"Bai Jove, seven to win!" said Arthur Augustus. "It will be frightfully close if they beat us. I feel in an awful flutah, deah boys."

"There goes a boundary!" groaned Blake.

Seventy-eight; then a single; 79.

"One more to tie; two more to win!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "Somebody hold me up!"

The excitement was intense as Fatty Wynn went on to bowl again.

All knew that this over was the finish—victory or defeat for one side or the other.

Down came the ball. Click! It was stopped dead on the pitch.

"Oh, Fatty!" murmured Figgins.

"If they get that othah wun I shall say dash!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Look out, there he goes!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"The middle stump—the middle stump!" roared Figgins. "Fatty, you tulip! Oh, my hat! Here, I must thump somebody!"

"Yawwooh!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"Well bowled!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

No wonder they roared, and yelled, and raved and tossed their caps into the air, not caring in the least whether they ever came down again.

For the last wicket was down, and St. Jim's had won that historic match by a single run! They had beaten the Wallabies!

The field, up to then dotted with white-clad figures, was black now with a yelling, swarming crowd.

Fatty Wynn was grasped in the hands of his enthusiastic chums, and borne bodily off the ground.

They shook hands with him, they thumped him on the back, they punched him in the ribs, they held out glasses of ginger-beer and lemonade by the dozen.

Fatty Wynn grinned and enjoyed himself.

All St. Jim's was rejoicing—with perhaps two exceptions. Cutts of the Fifth changed out of his flannels, and strode away, almost dazed. Grim ruin stared him in the face. He had played for a big stake—and lost. And he groaned as he thought of the ruin that must come.

But none of the fellows gave a thought to Cutts, or to the ruin his rascality had brought upon him.

The cricketers bade good-bye to the Wallabies on the best of terms. The motor-coaches and the army of cyclists, rolled home to St. Jim's in the greatest of spirits.

And at the old school the rejoicing was renewed.

The old quadrangle rang with the cheers of the returning cricketers and their comrades.

The Head himself came out at the sound, and congratulated Kildare, and shook Fatty Wynn by the hand when he learned how much the Fourth Former had contributed to the glorious victory.

(Continued on page 28.)

TWO ESCAPED CONVICTS AND A VALUABLE DIAMOND GIVE THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS AN EXCITING ADVENTURE!-

Caught in the Act!

CLICK!
Harry Wharton gave a start. He was coming along the passage at Greyfriars towards the door of Study No. 1, the famous apartment occupied by the chums of the Remove.

His chums—Nugent, Cherry and Hurree Jamset Rain Singh—were waiting for him below, and Billy Bunter was in the school shop. Harry was going to the study for his cap, which he had happened to leave there. The sudden click from the room he had supposed to be empty naturally startled him.

It was evidently the sound of a key in a lock, and, as the five occupants of the study were out, certainly no one had a right to be unfastening a lock there.

Harry Wharton smiled rather grimly at the thought of catching the unknown prowler in the act. He stepped quietly forward to the study door, which was half open, and looked in.

A fellow was bending over Harry's desk, which he had just unlocked. His back was turned towards Harry, but the latter knew him at a glance.

"Hazeldene!"

The junior in the study gave a guilty start as he heard his name spoken, and he turned swiftly round. His eyes met Harry Wharton's and his face crimsoned, and then turned pale.

"W-W-Wharton!" he stammered.

Harry stepped into the study.

"What were you going to my desk for, Hazeldene?"

The other stared at him dumbly.

Hazeldene was generally called "Vaseline" by the Remove fellows at Greyfriars, on account of his oily and conciliatory ways, and an explanation—false or true—was generally the last thing he was likely to want.

But he certainly had not one ready now.

He stared dumbly at Harry Wharton, so utterly taken aback that he could not find words.

Harry glanced at the desk and then at the key in Hazeldene's hand.

"So you have a key that fits my lock?"

Hazeldene turned red again.

"Where did you get it?"

"I—I—"

"You had better explain yourself, Hazeldene," said Wharton quietly, closing the door of the study. "I've found you going through my desk. I keep valuables there—money and something else, too, worth more money than I've ever had. How did you happen to have a key that fitted my desk?"

"I—I— Skinner has a desk like yours," stammered Hazeldene, "and I thought the key might fit it—so—"

"So you borrowed a key off Skinner?"

"Ye-es."

"Or took it without his knowing, I expect?"

"He—Skinner always leaves his key in his desk."

"Not a very safe practice with a fellow like you in the Form," said Harry Wharton contemptuously. "I always knew you were a rotter, Hazeldene, but I never expected this of you. You've shown once or twice that you had good points, but—"

"I—I—"

"What were you at my desk for? There's nothing there to interest you in any way. I can only come to one conclusion."

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THE FAMOUS FOUR!

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

"What—what is that?"

"That you went there to steal!"

Hazeldene went white again.

"Take care what you say, Wharton!"

"Give me some better explanation, then. I don't want to think worse of you than I can help," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I keep money in that desk and the big diamond Hurree Singh gave me the day he left Greyfriars. What else was there in my desk to make you unlock it?"

"I—I was only going to look at the diamond," gasped Hazeldene with painful hesitation. "The—the nabob's diamond, you know."

Harry looked at him searchingly.

"You only wanted to see the diamond?"

"Ye-es, that's it."

"Why didn't you ask me to show it to you, then? I've shown it to lots of

Once again the hasty temper of Harry Wharton causes him to fall out with his friends. But when he is in need of help, it is his chums who are on hand to give it!

fellows, and I would willingly have shown it to you."

"Well, we haven't been on very good terms—"

"And so you took Skinner's key, and opened my desk in my absence, just to have a look at the diamond out of curiosity?" said Wharton.

"Ye-es."

"That's rather steep, Hazeldene."

"It's—it's the truth!" muttered the cad of the Remove.

"I hope it is. I can't quite swallow it, but I'll give you the benefit of the doubt, at all events."

"You—you're not going to chatter about this?" asked Hazeldene eagerly.

"No need to tell the fellows. They would be certain to place a wrong construction on the matter."

Wharton smiled grimly.

"A right one, you mean, Hazeldene,

I fancy. But set your mind at rest; I shan't talk it over the school. I mean to give you a chance. If I tell anybody, it will only be my own chums, who know how to keep their mouths shut. But mind, no more tricks. I shall warn Skinner not to leave his key about in future."

"You—you won't mention—"

"No, I won't mention your name. Put the key back where you found it and say nothing. And now—get out of my study!"

Hazeldene crossed the study to the door and looked back at Harry Wharton.

"Wharton, I—I hope you'll believe—"

"I'll believe as much as I can. It's not pleasant to think there's a thief in the Greyfriars Remove," said Harry shortly.

"I swear—"

"You'd swear anything, I believe. Get out!"

And Hazeldene, with a crestfallen look, left the study. Harry Wharton stood still for some moments, and then gave an impatient shrug of the shoulders, as if dismissing unpleasant reflections from his mind.

He stepped to the desk and opened a little drawer and took out of it a small leather case. He touched the spring and the case flew open, and there was a glitter from the velvet lining. A diamond lay there—a large and valuable stone, which had once shone in the diadems of the Nabobs of Bhanipur.

The junior looked at it for a moment or two, and then closed the case and slipped it into his pocket. The diamond was evidently no longer safe in the desk, with a duplicate key in existence and a fellow like Hazeldene in the Remove.

Harry locked the desk, picked up his cap, and left the study. His chums were getting rather impatient, and they hailed him as he came downstairs.

"Thought you had gone to bed, Harry," said Nugent.

"Or fallen down and broken your neck," Bob Cherry remarked.

"The delayfulness has been great," remarked Hurree Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, in his purring, Oriental voice. "The wastefulness of the time has been a consequence of the delayfulness of our respectable chum."

Nobody ever talked English like Hurree Singh, the Hindu member of the Greyfriars Remove. His knowledge of our language was fearful and wonderful, and a source of never-ending mirth to his chums and to Greyfriars generally.

Harry Wharton smiled.

"It wasn't my fault, Hurree Singh," he remarked. "As a matter of fact, old chap, it was yours."

The nabob stared.

"I fail to see how the faultfulness rests upon my honourable self," he replied. "But if so, the apologise is great."

"How was it Hurree Singh's fault?" asked Bob Cherry. "I don't see how you can make that out, Harry."

"Blessed if I do, either!" said Nugent.

Wharton laughed.

"It was all through that diamond Hurree Singh gave me the day he left Greyfriars," he explained. "Come out into the Close; I don't want everybody to hear. You remember that diamond you gave me, Inky?"

"The rememberfulness is great," replied the nabob with a nod. "I thought I was leaving the honourable school for everfulness, and I bestowed

FRANK RICHARDS IS IN FIRST-CLASS FORM WITH THIS GRIPPING STORY OF THE FAMOUS FOUR'S EARLY SCHOOLDAYS.

upon you the parting gift of a grateful heart."

"It was a jolly sight too valuable to give away!" said Wharton.

Hurree Singh waved a dusky hand. "It was as nothing to a nabob of Bhanipur."

"It might be nothing to a nabob of Bhanipur," said Wharton, laughing, "but it's a lot to an English schoolboy. It's worth a hundred pounds at least. I have been rather bothered about it, as a matter of fact. It's too valuable to keep lying about; it might tempt people to steal."

"The wrongfulness would be extreme. Why not exert the lockfulness of the desk?"

"I have kept it locked up in my desk, but—" Wharton paused. "Of course, you understand that what I'm going to tell you is among us four only?"

"Rather!"

"Certainly!"

"Well, I just found a fellow at my desk. He had it unlocked with a duplicate key. He was after the diamond."

The chums gave a simultaneous whistle.

"He explained that he only wanted to look at it," said Wharton. "But he could have looked at it at any time by asking me."

"Rather a lame explanation," remarked Bob Cherry.

"So I thought," said Harry with a nod. "It looks to me very much as if he meant to bone it. As he opened the desk with a key, there wouldn't have been a trace left behind as to how it went. I might even have suspected Skinner, if it had come out that the key of his desk fitted mine."

"That's serious."

"I should say so."

"You needn't tell us who the chap was," said Bob Cherry. "I fancy we can guess, anyway. But I say, it won't be safe to leave the diamond there any longer."

Harry Wharton tapped his breast pocket.

"It's safe here," he said.

"You're carrying it about with you?"

"For the present, yes. I'm blessed if I know exactly what to do with it to keep it safe."

"Nobody will know you are carrying it about with you," Nugent remarked.

"It's all right for the present, anyway. Let's get off!"

The chums walked down to the gates of Greyfriars. It was a half-holiday at the school, and a fine afternoon. The chums of the Remove were going down to the village, and the affair in the study had delayed them.

As they approached the great stone gateway of Greyfriars they saw Wingate, the captain of the school, standing there in conversation with a man in uniform, whom they recognised as the inspector from the local station. The inspector walked away as they came up, and Wingate glanced at the juniors.

"Anything up, Wingate?" asked Wharton, as he saw the grave expression of the captain's face.

"Ah, I wanted to speak to you, Wharton!" said Wingate. "Do you remember a row you had with some gipsies the other week, when Hazeldene's sister was kidnapped?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I was not at the honourable establishment at that time," said Hurree Singh, "but I have heard of the adventure."



As Harry approached the chapel ruins a head was raised above a broken casement. The junior's heart stood still. For he knew the face! It was the gipsy whom he and his chums had once brought to justice for kidnapping!

"The two gipsies were taken to the county prison," said Wingate. "What were their names? I forget."

"Melchior and Barengro."

"Ah, that's right! Well, they escaped from prison, the inspector just told me."

Wharton started.

"Escaped!"

"Yes. They are two dangerous ruffians, as you know. They are not, of course, likely to venture into this neighbourhood. All the same, as you had a hand in their arrest, you'd better look out."

"Thank you, Wingate! I will."

"You are going out now?" asked Wingate, looking doubtfully at the chums of the Remove.

"Yes, down to the village."

"H'm! Well, of course, there's no real danger, I suppose. But you had better keep together; and don't go wandering into the woods."

"We'll look out, Wingate," said Wharton. And the juniors hurried on before the captain of Greyfriars could extract a more definite promise from them.

The Gipsy's Warning!

"KIND gentlemen—" The chums of the Remove stopped. They were passing the cross-roads when the voice suddenly broke on their ears.

An old gipsy woman, with a coloured shawl over her head, was seated on the milestone. She had looked up at the sight of the juniors, and it was her voice that had arrested them.

Harry Wharton glanced at her pityingly. He could see little of her

face under the red shawl—a dark brown face, with two glittering eyes of coal-black, and white teeth glistening. But it was evident to him that the woman was tired; her whole attitude told of fatigue, and perhaps hunger. The schoolboy's hand went at once to his pocket.

"Young gentlemen—"

"Poor old soul!" murmured Nugent. "Looks as if she's tramped it a lot, doesn't she? Can we help you?"

The black eyes turned on him, and the hard glitter in them softened.

"You are in want?" said Harry Wharton.

"I am no beggar," said the gipsy, a note of pride in her voice. "But I will tell the young gentlemen's fortunes if my palm is crossed with silver."

Harry Wharton smiled. He drew a shilling from his pocket and dropped it in the extended dusky palm of the old gipsy. The black eyes sparkled for a moment, and then they sought the junior's face earnestly.

"You do not believe in the power of the gipsy?" she asked.

Wharton shook his head.

"Well, I don't, as a matter of fact," he said. "But I'd like to have my fortune told, all the same."

"The tellfulness will be interesting, though the truefulness will be in lack," murmured Hurree Singh.

"Old Nadesha tells only the truth, even if her knowledge is not all drawn from the stars," said the gipsy. "The eyes of the old can read the face and penetrate the secrets there. The hand, too, tells much." She took Harry Wharton's hand and fixed her eyes on it, and then raised them to his face

again. "Shall I tell you what your nature is, young gentleman?"

"Yes," said Harry, smiling.

"You are proud and reserved and hot-tempered, not always just, and sometimes taking offence for a trifle," said the gipsy.

Wharton turned red. The chuckle with which his chums greeted the gipsy's words showed how true they were—at least, in the opinion of the Removites.

"Oh, rats!" muttered Harry.

"You have been in danger of your life," said the gipsy, "and will be again, and your danger came from a Romany."

Wharton started.

"Hot and wilful and reckless," murmured the gipsy, half to herself; "but sound at heart, high-spirited, a born leader of boys, and then of men. Yet your life may be wrecked, and, if so, the danger will come from yourself—from your own temper and impatience."

Harry laughed rather uneasily.

"You are not flattering," he said.

"Nadesha does not flatter." The

gipsy dropped his hand, and her eyes were fixed earnestly on his face. "Young lad, you are brave and generous, but beware! The danger I speak of is very near. I cannot tell you more, but for safety's sake return to the school you came from, and do not stir beyond its walls again."

"Do you think I'm a coward?" said Harry Wharton.

"There are dangers too great for a boy to face."

"I would not run away from them if there were. But what danger is this that you speak of? And what is it?"

"I cannot tell you more."

Harry laughed again and stepped back. The chums had their fortunes told in turn, each crossing the dusky palm with silver. Harry stood with a thoughtful brow, hardly listening. The gipsy's words had made a strange impression on him. What danger could be threatening him?

"How many wives am I going to have?" Bob Cherry was asking the gipsy. "Will they all be dark or fair?" Nadesha smiled as she dropped his hand.

Bob was the last, and the chums of the Remove went on their way, the old gipsy looking after them with a wistful expression on her dusky face.

The shade of thought was still on the brow of Harry Wharton. In spite of himself, the gipsy's words clung to his memory.

"I say, you're not letting that worry you, are you, Wharton?" asked Bob Cherry, looking at him.

"Oh, no! But—"

"She seemed curiously in earnest," said Nugent. "Of course, there was nothing in it. Reading the stars is all bosh!"

"She said she did not get her knowledge wholly from the stars," said Wharton slowly.

"You mean she may have some information?"

"Yes."

"But how do you mean?"

"You remember what Wingate told us as we were coming out about Melchior and Barengro escaping from the county prison?"

"Yes, but she—"

"She is a gipsy, you know."

"My hat! Of course. She may know those rotters—may be a connection of hers—may know that they are in the neighbourhood, perhaps!" exclaimed Bob Cherry excitedly.

"That's what I was thinking."

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"That puts a different complexion on the case," Nugent remarked. "If Melchior is about here anywhere, there is certainly danger for you, Harry, and for us, too, as we backed you up that time against the kidnappers. If the old lady knows them, and knows they're after you, it was decent of her to put you on your guard. They might knock her on the head if they knew about it."

"But how could she know Harry by sight?" said Bob.

"May have seen him about the village and learned his name."

"The probablefulness is extreme," said Hurree Singh. "I think we have hit on the correctness of the matter. There are many astrologers in my native country, who tell the fortunes of princes from the stars, and they are greatly believed in. But I have heard my father say that their skill is what you English call spookfulness."

"More spook than anything else, I fancy," said Bob Cherry. "But here we are at the tuckshop, and it's Inky's treat."

"The treatfulness is great. Give the orders for the grubful supplies, and I will perform the payfulness with the cheerful countenance."

And the chums of the Remove made a raid on the supplies of the village tuckshop, which delighted the heart of Uncle George, the deaf old gentleman who kept the shop, and who depended chiefly on the custom of the boys of Greyfriars for his livelihood.

Hurree Singh, being a prince in his own country, had ample supplies of pocket money, which he was anxious to spend on everybody he met. The chums of the Remove, however, were very strict on that point. Hurree Singh had been admitted on an equal footing to Study No. 1, but it was on condition that he supplied just as much as anybody else to the common stock, and no more.

But every now and then the chums allowed him to stand an extra treat, delighting his generous heart by so doing. This was one of the rare occasions, and Hurree Singh did things in style.

The chums had purposely dealt very lightly with dinner at Greyfriars so as to have room, as Bob Cherry expressed it, for the feed at the village shop, and they did full justice to the treat. They were getting towards the finish when Bulstrode and Hazeldene came in. The latter turned red at the sight of Harry Wharton.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove. "I see you're standing treat, Inky. Well, it's only right that a confounded nigger should pay his footing, so I'll have some of those tarts!"

"Good idea!" said Hazeldene. "So will I!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh flushed under his dusky skin.

The term "nigger" was freely applied to the nabob by the more ill-natured juniors in the Remove, and Hurree Singh objected to it strongly—not because it was anything disparaging in itself, but because it was applied in a disparaging sense.

"These are jolly tarts," said Bulstrode. "It's Hurree Singh's treat, Vaseline. Hand over half a dozen of them, Uncle George. No objection to my making it half a dozen—eh, Inky?"

"Certainly not!" said the nabob quietly.

"I'll have some ginger-pop, too—eh?"

"I have no objectfulness."

"And some of those cream puffs?"

"Just as you like, my esteemed fat-head!"

"And a few chocolate biscuits?"

"Order as you fancy, my worthy friend."

The chums of the Remove looked at Hurree Singh in surprise. It was not for them to interfere; but they had not expected him to take Bulstrode's bullying manner so quietly.

The Nabob of Bhanipur was the quietest and best-natured fellow in the Greyfriars Remove; but they knew well that he did not want for courage, or for determination when it was needed.

"Good!" grinned Bulstrode. "This is all right. Get a move on you, Uncle George!"

"It's the rheumatiz, Master Bulstrode—"

"Hang the rheumatiz! Back up! I'll have some milk chocolate, too, to shove in my pocket. No objection—eh, Hurree Singh Jampot?"

"Certainly not!" said the nabob placidly. "Why should I object to your ordering anything you like, my honourable and respectable Form-fellow?"

Bulstrode stared at him.

"Well, you're going to pay, you know. It's your treat."

Hurree Singh shook his head.

"You are labouring under great mistakefulness, I think," he said. "It is my treat for my chumful friends, not for any esteemed rotter who may happen to come into the shop."

Bulstrode glared, and the chums of the Remove chuckled. They saw now that Hurree Singh had been pulling the Remove bully's leg.

"Do you mean to say that you're not standing treat?" roared Bulstrode.

"I am standing treat to my honourable chums."

"Are you treating me?"

"Oh, no!"

"You—you black rotter! You can shove all those things back, Uncle George! I shan't want them!" growled Bulstrode.

The old man gave something like a growl.

"But you ordered them, Master Bulstrode," he said, eyeing the Remove bully with no small disfavour.

"I tell you I don't want them. Do you think I've come here to buy up your shop?" snarled Bulstrode.

"Put them over this side, my esteemed Uncle George," said the nabob. "We can perform the consumefulness."

And Uncle George grinned as he obeyed. Bulstrode watched the good things with an hungry eye.

"If you care to make the great apologise, Bulstrode, you may perform the consumefulness," said Hurree Singh, relenting.

"I'll see you hanged first!" grunted Bulstrode. "Give me a bottle of ginger-pop, old rheumatiz. That's all I want."

Uncle George slammed it down on the counter with no very good grace. Bulstrode was not a good customer. He generally wanted to run accounts, and Uncle George knew by experience that any account Bulstrode ran was likely to keep running.

The Remove bully drank his ginger-pop, signed to Hazeldene, and left the shop. But Hazeldene did not follow.

"I'll join you with pleasure, Inky," he said. "It's awfully jolly to have you at Greyfriars, and I'm glad you came back."

"The gladfulness is of a grubful sort, I think," said the nabob. "But the joyfulfulness is welcome, and the grubful supplies are great."

And Hazeldene certainly distinguished himself by the way he wired into those grubful supplies. Hurree Singh settled up the bill, over which Uncle George was beaming with delight, and the chums of the Remove left the shop, leaving Hazeldene finishing up the remains of the feast.

There was a gentle smile of satisfaction on the olive countenance of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The smile broadened as he met the glance of Bulstrode, who was waiting outside the shop for Hazeldene.

"It was great joyfulfulness to pull the august leg of the esteemed rotter," murmured the nabob. "The bullyfulness of Bulstrode requires to be taken down pegfully, as you English express it."

"Well, where are we going now?"

Study No. 1. "Are you going to begin ragging again?"

"I'm not beginning ragging!" said Wharton shortly.

"Neither am I," said Bob Cherry. "I'm blessed if I can see what Wharton wants to keep on catching a fellow up for! That old gipsy had him down fine, and no mistake!"

"What do you mean, Cherry?" asked Harry Wharton hotly.

The candid words of the old gipsy were rankling in his mind, and this allusion to the unflattering character old Nadesha had given him made his quick temper flame up.

"Oh, nothing!" said Bob, wishing he had not spoken as he saw Wharton's flushed and angry face. Then a feeling of impatience came over him. Why should he always be bearing with Harry's hasty temper? And he went on sharply: "Well, as a matter of fact, the old lady had your character to a T, and you can't deny it, so you

always polite, would have passed them over. But Bob Cherry's temper could be as hot as Harry Wharton's, on occasion, and the present was one of those occasions.

"I don't deny it, for one!" he exclaimed. "I quite agree with the gipsy, if you want to know. If you get into trouble in your life it will very likely be due to your rotten, uncertain temper, and that's my opinion."

"Thank you!" said Harry. "And what's yours, Nugent?"

"Hang it, you seem to be in a beastly temper this afternoon, Harry, and I'm blessed if I can see what all the fuss is about."

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders—a shrug he had which was irritating to those who liked him best.

"Well, you don't want a fellow with a beastly temper chumming with you for an afternoon!" he exclaimed. "So long!"

And he turned on his heel.



An exclamation of astonishment broke from Melchior as he opened the case he had taken from Harry Wharton's pocket. Barengro fixed his eyes on it greedily. "Burn me!" cried the gipsy. "A diamond!"

said Bob Cherry, looking round. "We were thinking of the chapel in the Friar's Wood, but in the circumstances we—"

"Why not go there?" asked Wharton. "Well, it's possible that those gipsy rotters are hanging about the neighbourhood—"

"Oh, who's afraid of the gipsies?"

"Nobody, that I know of," said Bob, rather nettled. "But—"

"I haven't seen the old chapel," said Wharton. "I want to see it, and have a look at that subterranean passage that leads to Greyfriars. We've seen the Greyfriars end of it. Hang the gipsies!"

"You remember what Wingate said about—"

"Oh, hang Wingate!"

"That's all very well, but you wouldn't say hang Wingate if Wingate happened to be in hearing," said Bob, rather irritated by Harry's manner.

"Oh, keep your wool on, you two!" exclaimed Nugent, the peacemaker of

can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Harry Wharton!"

Old Foes!

THERE was a painful silence for a moment or two. Harry Wharton's face had gone hard and set. The wilful temper he had been learning of late to keep in check was out of hand now.

"Oh, shut up, Bob!" said Nugent uncomfortably. "Don't—"

"Oh, it's always I that have to shut up!" said Bob Cherry. "Why shouldn't Wharton do some of the shutting up, for a change?"

"The shutfulness should be bothful and—"

"Oh, you may as well out with it, all of you!" Harry Wharton exclaimed. "The old gipsy said I was a pig-headed beast, or something to that effect, and you all think so, so you needn't deny it."

The words were a challenge. Nugent, always pacific, and Hurree Singh,

Bob Cherry did not make an effort to detain him, and Hurree Singh, new to these outbreaks of temper, did not know what to do. Frank Nugent made a step after Harry.

"Where are you going?"

"Where you needn't follow!"

And Harry Wharton strode away and disappeared among the trees of the lane. His last words had been too much even for the pacific Nugent, and he turned back to Bob Cherry and the nabob.

Harry Wharton walked on.

It seemed that the savage temper, so long controlled, was rejoicing, like some evil spirit, in its freedom at last. It had mastered him, and he did not regret a single word he had said, or his abrupt leaving of his chums.

He strode on, and took the first footpath he came to, leading away into the thick woods.

He did not glance back once, but he knew that his chums were not following. They had taken him at his word.

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and he was to have the afternoon to himself.

Harry knew whither the footpath led—to the ruined chapel, in the heart of Friar's Wood.

In the ancient days the chapel had been connected with the Greyfriars Abbey, and the existence of the secret subterranean passage connecting the two places was much talked of by the boys of Greyfriars.

Many of the juniors, especially the adventurous ones, were anxious to explore it, but such a proceeding was strictly forbidden by the Head.

The subterranean recesses of Greyfriars were too dangerous for them to be placed within bounds.

Wharton was curious to see the old chapel in the woods, and to look for the hidden passage, and it had been with the intention of exploring the ruin that the chums of the Remove had left the school that afternoon.

The quarrel with his friends made no change in Harry's intention. In fact, the obstinacy of his temper made him more determined to carry out his original plan.

He strode on through the woods, following the tangled footpath, till, amid the oaks and beeches, he came in sight of the ruined chapel.

It was a wild and beautiful, but very lonely spot. The woods had once been cleared around where the chapel was built, but since the building had fallen to ruin the vegetation had encroached on its ancient domain.

Young trees grew amidst the masses of broken masonry, and ivy and creeping plants grew thickly over shattered casements and broken walls. Moss-encrusted flagstones were half-buried in soil. The grass was thick everywhere. A lonelier or more secluded spot could hardly have been found within the county.

The ruined chapel was rarely visited, save by the Greyfriars fellows on half-holidays, and the village folk for picnics. There was no one in sight as Harry Wharton advanced towards the ruins, pushing his way through the clinging bushes.

But suddenly, as he came within full view of the ruins, he started.

A head was raised above a broken casement, a dozen yards from him, and a pair of keen, black eyes looked towards the wood.

A man in the ruins had evidently been disturbed by the sound of the junior forcing his way through the brambles.

Harry's heart stood still for a moment.

For he knew the face!

A dusky, brutal face—the face of a gipsy, an outcast of the Romany tribes, as he knew, for the man was no stranger to him.

It was Barengro, the comrade of Melchior, who had kidnapped Hazeldene's sister and robbed her, and had been brought to justice by the efforts of the Greyfriars juniors.

In a moment Harry realised how true had been the warning of Nadesha.

If Barengro was here, Melchior was not far off, and Harry Wharton realised at once the danger he was in.

The gipsies, after their escape from the county prison, had made for this secure hiding-place, undoubtedly remembering it from their previous sojourn in the neighbourhood.

Harry Wharton drew back quickly into the bushes. For the moment he hoped that he had not been seen.

But that hope only lasted a moment. The savage look that came over the dusky face as it peered from the broken

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casement told him that he had been seen and recognised!

A shrill whistle burst from Barengro's lips. Harry Wharton turned to run; but the whistle was answered from the wood, and the next moment a burly figure came bursting through the bushes.

A powerful hand gripped Harry Wharton by the shoulder, and he was dragged through the thickets, struggling ineffectually for freedom.

He was as a child in the powerful hands of his assailant, who did not even look at him, but dragged him hastily towards the ruins, and drew him within the shelter of the crumbling walls.

The ruffian's manner was full of uneasiness. He threw the boy to the ground, and set a knee in his back to pin him there. Then he turned his glance towards the wood, and listened with intensity.

The silence of the wide woods seemed to reassure him. Barengro came from the broken casement, his black eyes glittering, and joined the ruffian.

"Melchior! So you've caught him?"

"I heard somebody in the wood," muttered the gipsy. "I was following to see who it was—whether a keeper or perhaps a warder. When I heard your whistle, I knew there was danger. But, see, it's only a boy."

"Boy or not, he had seen me and knew me."

Melchior started.

"He knew you?"

"Yes. And don't you know him?"

"I haven't seen his face properly."

What do you mean?"

Barengro grinned evilly.

"He's an old acquaintance, that's all."

Melchior dragged Harry to his feet and looked at him. Then a savage oath broke from the ruffian's lips.

"You!"

With a ruffian on either side of him. Harry had no chance of making a dash for freedom. But even at that moment his courage did not fail him.

"Yes, it is I," he said calmly.

"I hoped that I might meet you!"

sneered Melchior.

A look of ferocity was in the black, glittering eyes and distorting the dusky face. The gipsy's hand went to the belt under his ragged coat.

On the Warpath!

HARRY WHARTON'S heart was beating hard. He knew that the gipsy's hand was grasping a weapon, and that the ruffian was in the humour to use it. He faced the scoundrel with a calm face, but a feeling of despair was creeping into his heart.

But Barengro laid a hand on his companion's wrist. Melchior shook it off and glared at him angrily. Barengro spoke in a low voice:

"Don't be a mad fool!"

"Let me alone!"

"Do you want to make it a hanging matter?"

"I'll not let this cub escape! Besides, he knows the secret of our hiding-place now. He will bring the police here on us."

"If you finish him, they will search for him, fool! Don't be a mad idiot!"

Melchior hesitated. Then he withdrew his hand sullenly. Whether or not murder had been in his mind, he had given up the thought of a savage deed for the moment.

"Have your way!" he snarled.

"It's better for both of us."

"Bah! I'm sick of your cowardly fears. You've trembled at every sound since we left the cell."

"And no wonder! Every sound may be the footstep of a policeman!" said Barengro. "I tell you that if I'm caught, I shall go back to the prison, but not to the hangman. Don't be a fool! We cannot remain here!"

"But for this cub—"

"Others of his fellows might come at any time. Let us see what he has about him. Perhaps enough to see us on our way."

"If we go, what of Nadesha?"

Harry Wharton started. His surmise that there was a connection between the old gipsy and these scoundrels was evidently correct.

"She can follow," said Barengro. "She will know where to find us, with what she can bring. That will be easy."

"I do not wholly trust her!" muttered Melchior. "She—"

"She is a true Romany. She would never betray us."

"I don't trust her. But no matter. Let's see what this brat has about him, and then we can leave him tied up to one of these trees, so that he cannot follow us, or give information of our movements to the police."

"Good! And Nadesha can release him when she returns."

"Or he can remain here all night!" said Melchior, with a brutal laugh.

Harry Wharton set his teeth. That shouldn't happen if he could help it. He could offer no resistance to the ruffians. Barengro held him in an iron grip, while Melchior went through his pockets.

Harry's heart sank as the gipsy thrust his hand into the breast pocket of his jacket. He remembered the nabob's diamond reposing there in the leather case.

The ruffian's hand was on it. He drew out the case and looked at it in some surprise. He felt for the catch, and the lid opened. A cry of amazement broke from Melchior, and was echoed by his companion.

"Burn me!" cried Melchior—his usual oath. "A diamond!"

"A diamond?"

"And a prize stone, too!"

Melchior held the diamond up to the light. Barengro fixed his eyes on it greedily. In the excitement of finding the prize, the two ruffians gave little attention to Harry Wharton. The boy's heart beat fast. Here was his chance at last.

It was hard to abandon the diamond in the hands of the thieves, but to escape now was the best way to get a chance of recapturing it.

He drew quickly back, jerking himself from the relaxed hold of Barengro, and then turned and darted away. The gipsies turned swiftly round. Melchior sprang after him with an oath.

"Seize him!"

But it was too late. Harry Wharton sprang recklessly through a broken casement, plunging into a mass of nettles and ferns outside.

Melchior, with a savage snarl, leaped after the boy, caught his foot in a stone, and rolled over in the nettles, yelling with pain and rage.

Wharton had stumbled, but he was on his feet again in an instant, and tearing away into the woods. Crashing through the thickets, he dashed on; and then, struck by a sudden thought,

he paused to listen to hear if he were pursued.

There was no sound of footsteps behind him. He turned back and peered through the thickets. The thought was in his mind that the gipsy had been injured by his fall, which had been a heavy one. He half-expected to see Melchior groaning amidst the ferns.

Instead of that, he saw the ruffian bending down, muttering curses, and evidently searching for something that had dropped into the ferns.

Harry Wharton laughed slightly. He guessed that it was the diamond that had fallen as the gipsy rolled over, and fear of losing the valuable stone had stopped the pursuit.

But it was no time to linger. Melchior might find the stone any second, and there was Barengro, too, to deal with.

Harry Wharton turned again, and ran into the woods, and found his way to the footpath by which he had approached the old chapel. There he dropped into a slower pace. What was he to do now?

His brows wrinkled as he thought of the position. His first thought had been of flight, to save himself from the brutal violence of the gipsies; his second, to save the diamond from the clutches of Melchior.

But how was that to be effected? Long before he could bring the police on the scene the ruffians would have vanished. If only his chums were there!

Harry's face flushed deeply as he thought of it. He had risked his life at the ruins through going there alone—all through a hasty word or two, in which he had himself been mostly to blame.

The shock of the adventure he had just been through had cleared the air, as it were, and there was nothing like rancour in Harry's heart now.

His chums were, doubtless, not far away: perhaps within sound of a whistle, the signal of the Greyfriars Remove. But he shrank from the thought of calling them to his aid. He had deliberately broken with them. He did not wish the breach to remain unhealed, but the overtures must come from the other side.

He walked along slowly, his brow moody with thought, when all of a sudden there was a rustle in the wood. He started, and sprang to the middle of the path, his fists clenched, the thought of the gipsies in his mind at once. But a cheery hail relieved his ears.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It was Bob Cherry's cheerful voice. Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Singh came out of the trees, and all three of them looked curiously at Harry Wharton. Harry unclenched his fists and turned crimson.

"So it's you!" he said, forcing a laugh.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Did you think we were going for you?" he asked.

"Oh, no!"

"Then what did you jump for, like a startled hare?"

Harry Wharton laughed rather uneasily.

"You startled me. I—I thought it was the gipsies!"

"Got the gipsies on the brain, haven't you?"

"I've just met them," said Harry Wharton, taking no notice of Bob Cherry's tone, which was just a little inclined to be chipping.

This piece of information, however, was quite sufficient to banish every

other thought from the minds of the chums of the Remove.

"You have met them!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, at the old chapel."

"My solitary hat!" exclaimed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You have been in dangerfulness since you left us, my worthy chum."

"Yes. They collared me at the old chapel. They're in hiding there!"

"Good! We'll bag them, shall we?" said Bob Cherry.

"There are enough of us to do it. We're four to two, and we can easily cut ourselves cudgels in the thicket."

Harry Wharton hesitated.

"But how did you get away from them, Harry?" asked Nugent, speaking in his usual, quiet, friendly way, just as if nothing had happened between the chums.

"They have taken the nabob's diamond," said Harry, dropping into the old, chummy way at once. "That gave me a chance to give them the slip."

"Have they collared the diamond? My hat!"

"We'll get it back again!" said Bob Cherry.

"Certainly. The robfulness ought to be punished, and the rascally rotters ought to be laid by the heels."

"Rather!" said Nugent.

"I say, you chaps," said Harry Wharton hesitatingly. "I—I'm sorry I bolted off like that. I was a bit out of temper—"

"That's all right," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "As a matter of fact, we thought you were probably gone to the ruins, and we were coming after you when we ran into you here. Let's

get some sticks and go on the giddy warpath."

"The stickfulness will be the powerful argument with the esteemed ruffians," said Hurree Singh. "It is what you call a good wheezy idea."

The juniors all had pocket-knives, and they were not long in cutting four stout cudgels in the thicket.

Thus armed, they followed the footpath swiftly towards the old chapel.

If the gipsies were still there, there would be a fight for the nabob's diamond!

Juniors Against Gipsies!

HUSH!" Harry Wharton muttered the word as he caught sight of the ruined walls of the chapel through the green trees.

The Greyfriars juniors came to a halt.

Gripping their cudgels firmly, they peered through the leaves towards the ruins in search of a sign of the foe.

There was nothing to be seen of the gipsies.

Had they already taken their departure? It was less than ten minutes since Harry had left Melchior searching for the dropped diamond among the ferns.

"Better go and see," said Wharton.

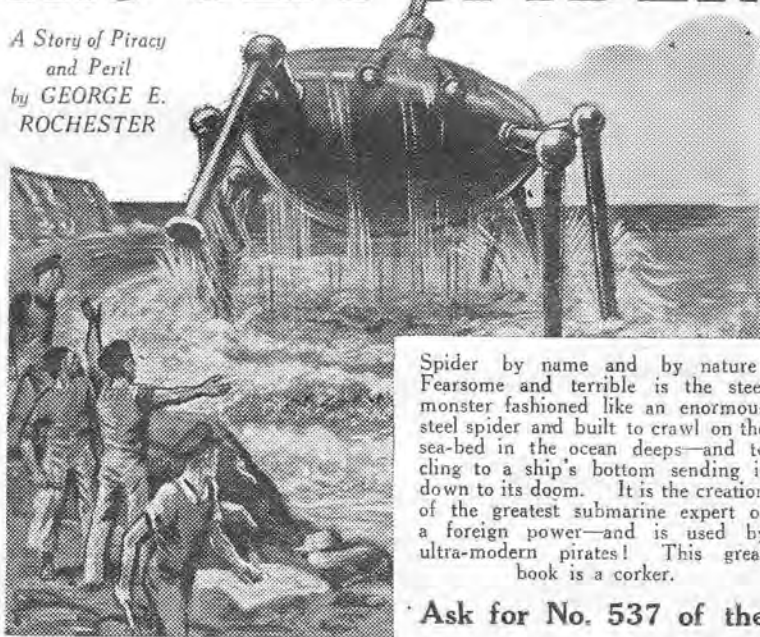
"Lead on, Macduff!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"We are ready to follow the leadfulness of our esteemed and ludicrous chief," purred the nabob.

Harry Wharton led the way from the trees towards the ancient doorway of the chapel, now crumbled into mere ruins.

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The masses of ancient masonry prevented the juniors from seeing into the interior of the building till they were close to the gaps in the wall.

Then Harry came to a sudden halt. "Look!" he muttered.

His hand rose to point. Through a gap in the old stone wall they caught sight of two ragged figures. Melchior and Barenegro were still in the ruins.

The Greyfriars juniors crept nearer. "Now you have found it, let us go," Barenegro was saying.

"I'm quite ready."

"There is little to carry," said Barenegro, "so the sooner we are gone from here the safer we shall be."

"If you had not let him get away, we—"

"Bah! It was your fault as much as mine!"

"Your infernal clumsiness—"

"If we waste time here bawling words, we may finish our dinner in a prison cell!" snarled Barenegro. "I'm going, whether you come or not!"

"Burn me! I'm coming!"

Harry Wharton glanced at his comrades.

"They're coming out this way!" he muttered. "Down among the stones, quick, and jump out on the rotters as they pass."

"Good!"

"Silence now!"

The juniors crouched in cover, waiting with fast-beating hearts for the gipsies to pass. Courageous as they were, they knew that it was no light task to tackle two desperate ruffians who would stick at nothing for their liberty.

The heavy footsteps of the gipsies crunched on the stones, and the two burly forms came slouching by.

Harry Wharton sprang to his feet.

"Sock into 'em!" he shouted.

The ruffians were utterly taken aback. Before they could make a movement the four juniors were upon them with whirling cudgels.

Melchior received two of the blows on his arm and went to the ground, yelling with pain and rage.

Barenegro dodged and darted off into the woods, with Hurree Singh and Nugent in hot pursuit.

Harry Wharton dropped his cudgel and flung himself on Melchior.

The gipsy struggled savagely, but Bob Cherry took a grip on his collar and held him down to the ground, while Harry knelt on his chest.

"You're our prisoner!" said Harry.

The only reply was a savage oath.

"Where is the diamond?"

"Find out!"

"I intend to. Hold him fast, Bob, and crack him over the head with your cudgel if he struggles."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Trust me!" he exclaimed. "Now, you rotter, keep still, or I'll crack your topknot like a walnut. Do you hear?"

Melchior ground his teeth, but Bob Cherry was flourishing the cudgel in a rather dangerous way. So the gipsy contented himself with oaths and ceased to struggle.

Harry Wharton was fairly certain that

the diamond would be on Melchior, and he was right.

In a minute or less he fished the leather case out of an inner pocket in the gipsy's rags, and opened it to ascertain that the diamond was there.

"Got it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

And Harry Wharton snapped the case shut and slipped it into his pocket.

"Good! Now we'll get this scoundrel to the lock-up."

"Where's the other, I wonder?" muttered Wharton, looking round.

Barenegro was not to be seen. Hurree Singh and Nugent were returning to the spot, with disappointment written on their faces. Barenegro had evidently given them the slip in the wood.

"Never mind!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "We've got the worst of the two rotters. Here, hold him! He's wriggling like a beastly eel! Hold him, I say!"

Harry grasped the struggling ruffian.

Melchior was throwing all his great strength into a terrific effort to free himself.

The sight of the two juniors returning from the unsuccessful pursuit of Barenegro warned him that if he was to

escape he had not a moment to spare. With four foes to tackle his chance would be gone.

So great was the strength of the gipsy that he gained his feet, and in the struggle Bob Cherry was dashed against a fragment of masonry, and he released his hold on Melchior with a sharp cry of pain.

Harry Wharton clung desperately to the ruffian, shouting to Nugent, and Nugent and the nabob dashed towards them at full speed.

But with a tremendous effort Melchior tore himself free from Wharton, and hurled the junior to the ground just as Nugent and Hurree Singh came up.

Hurree Singh stumbled over Wharton and fell to the grass, and Nugent made a clutch at Melchior, and was hurled aside by a savage blow.

The gipsy fled away into the woods, and in a few seconds disappeared among the trees.

(But that's not the last the charms of Greyfriars are to see of Melchior. In next week's exciting chapters, the gipsy is out for revenge—and the diamond! Order your GEM early.)

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THE TRAITOR!

(Continued from page 21.)

"Well done, my lad!" said the good old Head. "Well done indeed!"

"Well done, porpoise!" said Monty Lowther, as the juniors marched Fatty Wynn into the School House. "This is where we celebrate. Roll up, all of you! Gussy, where's that giddy fiver?"

"Here you are, dear boy."

"This way, Fatty! Carry him up!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Oh, I see," gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Shoulder high! Up the stairs!" said Manners. "It will bust the stairs if he falls, but never mind the stairs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Up the stairs, shoulder high, went the hero of the hour. He was swept into Tom Merry's study in triumph—and with a narrow escape of being brained in the doorway. But little things like that did not matter at such a moment.

They plunged him down, gasping, in the stairchair, and the best of them were proud to act as waiters just then, and supply the wants of the fat hero of the Fourth.

To judge by the juniors rejoicing, Fatty Wynn might have beaten the Wallabies single-handed, without any assistance at all from Kildare and the first eleven. Indeed, in the blaze of enthusiasm the juniors almost believed that he had.

An ecstatic smile overspread the plump visage of Fatty Wynn as he gazed at the good things spread upon the table before him. He did not gaze long—about a second—and then his jaws were busy. And to all subsequent remarks addressed to him Fatty Wynn replied only with a sound of steady chewing.

"Bal Jeye!" said Arthur Augustus, in the midst of the rejoicing. "I wonder what that wretched Cutts thinks of it?"

"Probably saying things by this time!" guessed Tom Merry. "Perhaps making up reasons why he can't receive visits from his friends—the bookies."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind, Cutts," said Figgins. "He's got it in the neck! And it was Fatty that did it! Good old Fatty!"

"Yas, wathub! Hurway!"

"It was Kucels for Cutts, and a Wynn for us!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

And in their joyous humour the juniors rewarded Monty Lowther's pun with a laugh. And all that evening, in the quad, or the passages, or the studies, cheering would break out in spasms, as the St. Jim's fellows celebrated their victory in the great Wallaby match.

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