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NEW SCHOOL STORY BY CHARLES HAMILTON.

Vol. I (New Series), No. 15.



The strange procession marched on in solemn file, while the watching juniors yelled their comments freely.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

A New Tale, by the Author of "The Rivals of St. Kit's."

Mr. Bush is Angry.
BACK went Blagden, staggering helplessly—back and back, right to the doorway of the room, and then he fell backwards through the doorway.
There was a yell at the same moment from some of the juniors: "Look out, Blaggy!"
But Blaggy was in no condition to hear.
He fell, just as Mr. Bush, the master of the Fourth, came into the doorway. The noise in the common-room had brought Mr. Bush on the scene, and he was just in time to catch the falling junior on his chest.
Mr. Bush did not intend to so catch him, but he could not help it. He had seen Blagden till the Fourth-former fell on him. Blagden fell heavily, bumping upon the thin, wooden Form-master with a terrific crash, and Mr. Bush went flying.
"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh! Oh!"
"You're not dead, and Blagden isn't either."
Mr. Bush sat where he had fallen, dazed, for some moments. The boys, whose voices were still ringing in his ears, looked on the Form-master's knees.
"The Form-master!"
The Fourth-formers started at the sound, and Mr. Bush, who had been so much surprised, but so one who was so well known, Blagden rather a favourite with him, but Blagden's fall would hardly stand.
There was trouble to come.
"Down!" said Lord Lovell.

"Pon my word, you know! Oh, lovely!"
"Shut up, you ass!" whispered the good-natured Newcomer.
His lordship looked at him.
"What—what did you say?"
"Shut up!"
"Why? What's that merchant?"
"That's our Form-master!"
"Oh, lovely!" ejaculated his lordship.
Mr. Bush seemed to recover himself suddenly.
He dealt Blagden a heavy box on the ear that sent him rolling off upon the floor, and staggered to his feet.
"How—how dare you!" he panted.
"Blagden, get up at once! Get up at once, I say! How dare you play such a trick on your Form-master!"
Blagden wasn't playing a trick, sir," said Skeat.
"Skeat! How dare you—I say, how dare you!"
"But he wasn't, sir; it was the new fellow knocked him into you," said Skeat.
"Cad!" murmured Newcomer.
"Oh!" said Mr. Bush, his little narrow eyes glittering with the jarrows.
"The new boy, indeed! Ah, the new boy! Where is the new boy?"
"I'm here, sir," said Lord Lovell, coming forward, evidently under the impression that he was the new boy; at all events, the only new boy of any consequence.
"Good afternoon, sir! I'm here, sir, Adam!"
Mr. Bush stared at him.
"Who are you?" he demanded.
"I'm Lovell, sir—follows who know

me call me Bunny. I'm sure I don't know why. What?"
"Oh, Lord Lovell!"
"Yes, sir."
Mr. Bush's manner underwent a change. He had been prepared to snap at the new boy, or at anybody else, but there was evidently something in the title of the new-comer that had a softening effect. Music, it is said, hath charms to soothe the savage breast; and titles have power to placate the anarchical heart.
"Ah, I am glad to welcome you to St. Wode's, Lord Lovell," said the Form-master. "I am glad—indeed, honoured. I trust your lordship has not been put to any trouble by any ill-timed levity upon the part of the juniors here. If you have been compelled to knock Blagden down—"
"By Jove, sir, I haven't knocked anybody down, don't you see!"
"It was the Council-school chap, sir," piped Beaton.
"Oh," said Mr. Bush. "It is as—as I imagined at first. Boy, what is your name?"
"Penwyn, come forward!"
"Come forward, sir, and don't stand there skulking behind the rest!"
Dick Penwyn came forward with a very red face.
"I wasn't skulking, sir," he said.
"Don't argue with me, boy! You have assaulted Blagden!"
"I have been fighting Blagden, sir."
"Ah, that is how you distinguish yourself on your first day at a respectable school. I see," said Mr. Bush appreciatively. "You imagine that you can bring your Council-

school manners and customs to St. Wode's, apparently."
Dick Bushed scarlet.
"The fellows here will tell you whether I began it, sir," he said.
"I do not desire any impertinence from you, Penwyn," said Pen quickly.
"Very well, sir," said Pen quickly.
"If it is impertinent for me to defend myself, I suppose I had better say nothing."
"Hold your tongue, sir, instantly!"
"Pen held his tongue; not without difficulty.
"I need not ask who was to blame in this matter," said Mr. Bush, "when I hear a loud and uproarious disturbance—I say a loud and uproarious disturbance—follow the entrance of a Council-school boy into the room. I do not need to be enlightened. I may say that it is only what I should have expected of a boy of your upbringing, Penwyn."
Dick set his teeth to keep back what he would have liked to say.
"But you will understand," pursued Mr. Bush victoriously. "I say you will understand, Penwyn, that this will not do."
"What will not do, sir?"
"This disgraceful conduct, Penwyn. Don't argue with me."
"Very well, sir."
"You will learn that you cannot do as you please at St. Wode's; you will learn that this is not a place for low bragging."
Pen was silent.
"Do you hear me, Penwyn?"
"Yes, sir."
"Then why do you not answer?"
Pen lit his lip.

He could see that whether he answered or not, he would be in the wrong with Mr. Bush. It was the story of the wolf and the lamb over again.
"This silliness will not serve you, Penwyn," said Mr. Bush. "Now, as this is your first day at St. Wode's, and you have not had the advantage of a decent upbringing, I shall deal leniently with you. You will write out a hundred lines of Horace to-morrow."
"Shame!" murmured Newcomer.
Mr. Bush glanced round quickly.
"Did any boy speak?" he demanded.
"There was no reply."
"Very well. Understand me, Penwyn, if this occurs again, I shall be severe with you; I say I shall be severe," said Mr. Bush, who had the trick of repeating his words, to lend them greater emphasis.
"Yes, sir."
"Don't speak in that mocking tone, Penwyn, or I shall increase your punishment."
And Mr. Bush, with a majestic wave of the hand, sailed out of the room.
Dick Penwyn stood silent.
He was almost dumfounded by the Form-master's injustice. To punish him, and let Blagden escape scot-free, was not making the least inquiry into the merits of the case—it was amounting to pure Pen.

New Readers should turn to the foot of next page.

A New and Interesting School Story for All.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.



A New School Tale by Charles Hamilton Author of The Rivals of St. Kifs.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Well, I jacked up old Busby-whiskers this time," Blamford remarked. "He's down on Council-wood rails, that's a rest."

from the fight—the flush of excitement was followed by an agonizing back feeling of fatigue—of disgust with everything. He walked to the door, followed by the eyes of most in the room.

"And he tared his back upon Pen. Pen stood uncertain how to act. He was greatly inclined to go for Blagden on the spot; but if he brought the Form-master back, there was no telling what might come of it."

Blagden looked at the Fourth-Former without replying for the moment. The question took him by surprise. After the war Blagden had asked, he had expected little kindness or generosity from the juniors of St. Wode's.

"You're jolly wet, Lovell!" he exclaimed. "Let me take you up to the dorm, and get you a change of things."

Blagden smiled. "I'm sure you're very obliging," said Lord Lovell. "I believe I'm rather wet. It's raining, isn't it?"

"What, that Council-school rotter?" "He's a better man than you are, by Jove!" said his lordship.

Blagden grimaced. He knew that Jex was an inveterate practical joker, though that knowledge had, of course, yet dawned upon his lordship.

Blagden grinned. He knew that Jex was an inveterate practical joker, though that knowledge had, of course, yet dawned upon his lordship.

Dick Penwyn, a sturdy Cornish lad, attending a County Council school, obtains a scholarship for St. Wode's. The arrival of the real Lord Lovell, however, puts a different complexion on matters, and Blagden comes out in his true colours.

"Yes, it's rather, isn't it?" "Oh, it's just like Newcome; he's always doing that kind of thing!"

"Look here, O'Donovan, if you're going to look up the young Council-schooler—"

"Oh, rats!" said O'Donovan. And he walked out of the room.

"The sound of running water in a bath room guided O'Donovan, and he found the door, who was lathering Pen's face with a sponge under a streaming tap."

"I shall keep clear of him if I can in the future. Newcome shook his head.

"Don't let him see you doing it, then," said O'Donovan. "He'll think you're afraid, and he'll begin on you again."

"Oh, I see," said Pen slowly. "Newcome, throwing down the sponge."

"Pen frowned his face. "Rake looked in. "How long are you going to be?"

"What do you want?" "As! Have you forgotten prep?" "Oh, better prep."

"Newcome made a grimace. "I shall have to cut along now, Penwyn," he said.

"Oh, come on!" said Hake, turning back, following down the passage. O'Donovan followed him, but Newcome paused to reply to Pen.

"Pen coloured. "I was going to ask you a question, Newcome."

"Newcome stared at him. "Prep," he said. "But what is it?" "Preparation!"

"Newcome burst into a laugh. "Oh, I see!" he exclaimed. "You see, we have to prepare next morning's lessons, that's all."

"You'll be ragged in the Form-room to-morrow if you don't do it."

"Pen was hit. "Newcome's manner had been so different from the usual form-master's study."

"Pen knew very well that the trouble was to face the Form-master's study. A yell of laughter from the direction of the big staircase caught his ear, and he looked round quickly to see the cause of it."

"There was nothing for it but to apply to the Form-master again; and he had to make up his mind to it."

"The lad made his way slowly to the door. He took the Form-master's study. A yell of laughter from the direction of the big staircase caught his ear, and he looked round quickly to see the cause of it."

"A Queer Wage. "LOOK out!" "Clear the way, you ass!" "Careful, there!"

"The lad was a subject of laughter from all the lads, who saw the curious scene. Pen could not help joining in it."

"Each of them was blinded, so that he could see nothing, and each of them was carrying some plate or dish laden with wet clothes."

"It was evidently a jape of some sort, and Pen, curious to see what would St. Wode's custom this night, he followed on the scene in wonder."

"The other fellows roared with laughter. "Go it, Crawcrow!" shouted O'Donovan, "mind that pile doesn't topple over!"

"The fourth fellow in the file had tripped over, and gone to the floor with what he was carrying."

"There was a ringing crash, like a peal of brass, and a yell of laughter from the juniors."

"The fifth-formers marched on unheeding. They were evidently far too high and too proud to care for the comments of the juniors of St. Wode's night pass upon their actions."

"The lads looked at him, leaving forward in solemn file, leaving a complex on matters, and Blagden comes out in his true colours."

"He attempts to give Pen a licking, but the Cornish junior meets him like a rock, and sends him reeling with a terrific right hander."

"Vernon drawing the landscape all his eyes, and sitting up on the point of his head, he said, 'Vernon was a jolly fellow!'"

"The juniors followed the captain's procession down the passage. Vernon was curious to know what it would lead to."

"There was a sudden crash as the floor and ceiling crashed. Vernon looked at Penge."

"The further they proceeded, the more uncertain they grew. The boys thought they knew the passage, but Blagden's knowledge makes the most familiar places strange."

"Lacy ruminated upon the wall, and his cargo went toppling and Lacy fell. "Heaven, Lacy!"

"Lacy drew the landscape of his eyes. He blinked, and seemed to be astonished to find that he had run into the wall."

"The boys were creeping so cautiously now. Crawcrow, by some instinct, was because perhaps the landscape was as close over his eyes as it was of the others, was keeping a very straight course."

"Bravo was working off towards the wall on the right. The spectators waited quietly. Not a word of warning was given by Bravo, who was marching straight to his doom."

"Right to the wall Bravo walked, and with a sudden shock, and went with a crash to the ground."

"Bravo started back with an exclamation of astonishment. "What a w—!"

"There was a yell from a distance, some exclamation of astonishment. "What a w—!"

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FOR MY NEW READERS.

Blagden, the Fourth Form captain, meeting him at the station in the evening rain. The truth is that Blagden's school fall of double as to how he will be received by his future schoolfellows.

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THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

...the decision now that it seemed... would strike... down... the wall... with his burden... and I've realised quite... that it was a lot that de-... the Fifth were not... that peculiar perfor-... for amusement... as Craw-... was an unkind... appeared the doorway.

catch cold in the feet, so perhaps I'd better take them off."
Lovell looked at Jex in some surprise, but it did not seem to occur to him that the humorous jester might be pulling his aristocratic leg, and he sat down on a box and stretched out his feet to let Jex take his boots off.
Lord Lovell was evidently accustomed to having his boots taken off for him, but if he expected to be able to continue luxuriating in that sort, he had come to the wrong place in coming to St. Wode's.
But it suited Jex to "stuff up" the noble viscount for the present. He took his lordship's boots off, and then his beautiful silk socks, and then helped him off with the rest of his attire.
His lordship shivered, as might have been expected, for the dormitory was decidedly cold and draughty.
"Is it you, you know?" Lord Lovell remarked. "It's jolly cold, you know—bestly, jolly cold, old son—what?"
"Yes," said Jex. "It's due to the weather, you know."
"Is it? Well, it's cold! Where's the other clothes?"
"I'll send those away to be dried," said the sergeant. "Wrap a blanket round you while I get the others, will you? Here, Beeton, take these clothes down to the sergeant-at-arms and tell him to have them dried at once."
Beeton grinned and took the clothes.
The sergeant-at-arms was a creation of Jex's fertile imagination.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Jex took the brilliant suit back to the dormitory.
His lordship looked up eagerly.
"By Jove," he remarked, "I'm exceedingly well. It's jolly beastly weather for sitting about in your underclothes, you know! You've been a long time, Quax."
"Never mind, if you've got the clothes, don't you see."
"Here they are."
Jex presented the clothes out on the bed.
The viscount gazed at them.
It was already abundantly clear that Lord Lovell possessed a nature of great simplicity, and that suspicion had no part in his composition. But at the sight of that nigger minstrel string he seemed to be very much taken aback.
"By Jove!" he said.
"Here you are!" said Jex. "I've had a lot of trouble getting them, but there you are. I'm always willing to help a new chap."
"That's a special kind of you, you know, isn't it?"
"Very, but—"
"I'll help you."
"Look here, you know, I can't wear those things," said Lord Lovell. "Don't be an ass, you know. You don't mean to say that you wear that kind of clothes at St. Wode's, you know?"
"By my dear chap," said Jex. "I've worn them, with a dozen other chaps, for a whole evening in the presence of the Head and the masters."



"You couldn't lick me any time, and you know it!" said Fen. He glared down at him, as a matter of fact, only too well.
Beeton hurled the clothes in a heap into the first room he came to.
The viscount watched the further progress of Lord Lovell.
His lordship was sitting on a bed, wrapped up in a blanket, and shivering.
"It's all right," said Jex. "I'll have the change here in a jiffy."
"Oh, lovely," said Lovell through his chattering teeth.
Jex left the dormitory with Beeton.
"Where are you going to give him?" asked the latter.
"By the minstrel togs we used at the concert."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Jex hurried off to a box-room, where he opened a large trunk, from the trunk he selected a really striking costume.
There was a musical society in the Lower School at St. Wode's, and the members of it sometimes gave musical entertainments. They had not reached a higher level of art, so there, than an imitation of a Christy Minstrel performance, where they wore startling striped clothes and blacked their faces.
The clothes Jex now selected were the most striking of the whole collection. They were white with broad red stripes—a faring design that would strike the eye as far as the eye could reach.
The idea of the noble viscount in these clothes made Beeton roll.
"Cheese it!" grinned Jex. "Don't let him into the wicker! Wear those!"
"By Jove, you're right!" said Beeton. "He'll have to; he's got nothing else."

THE EDITOR'S TWO COLUMNS.



KIND WISHES.
I shall be my pleasant duty, first of all, before dealing with our next week's stories, to thank all my readers for their kind Christmas and New Year greetings. I found on my desk this morning a big batch of Christmas cards from my colonial friends, and it was very pleasing to me to know that there are so many over-seas who can spare a moment's thought for their Editor. Needless to say to my readers at home and abroad I reciprocate their good wishes, and I here express the hope this New Year will bring them all the very best.
Now to deal with our programme FOR THE NEW YEAR.
In a week or so's time you will find in these pages a new story, dealing with the boyhood, escapades, and adventures of that notorious character,

When in doubt, or when you feel inclined to criticize, address: The Editor, EMPIRE LIBRARY, 23-29, Boulevard Street, London, E.C.

for one of you is bound to win the prize.
If your knowledge you wish to advance,
Don't buy any rubbish from France.
But provided he's British,
His Empire you'll see at a glance.
There was a young fellow of Rye,
Who once lighted a squib on the sky.
He went off with a bang,
And the neighbours now think him a gup.

There was a young maid—a new
In a tight hobble-skirt from church
hid.
When she started to run,
She afforded great fun.
And the people around shrieked:
"Sh! she's hid!"

Why should lots of young people feel
sad
When a book of good tales can be had?
I mean the Empire,
Which I'm sure they'd admire;
If they read it just once, they'd be glad.

There was a young lady of Ware,
Who was famed for her beautiful hair;
But the last thing at night,
She shed her tresses with a sigh.
It was carefully placed on a chair.

There was a young fellow called
Tait,
Who dined with a girl at eight-eight;
But I cannot relate
What that fellow did at eight-eight.
And his tote-a-toe ate at eight-eight.

POSTCARD EXCHANGE.

The following readers desire to exchange postcards:

- 39th LIST.
J. Murray, 5, Hutton Drive, S. Govan, Scotland, wishes to exchange postcards with readers in New Zealand, South America, Austria, Miss T. Morris, 19, Terrance Road, Spreydon, Christchurch, New Zealand, with South Africa.
W. Clarke, 10, Alliance Street, Adlington, Christchurch, New Zealand, with Gt. Britain.
Mr. Walker, 17, Townsend Place, Newbushy Road, Cheltenham, Gloucester, England, with Canada.
F. A. Martin, 23, Colston Street, Bristol, England, with London, England.
H. May, 50, Abington Crescent, Dalston, London, England, with New Zealand.
L. Ehrlich, 30, Petherlon Road, Canonbury, London, England, with India.
G. H. H. "Homebick," Montgomery Street, Koragar, Sydney, Australia, with Sheffield, England.
W. J. Read, Nicholson Road, Subiaco, W. Australia, with England.
M. H. Hart, 40, Mountfield Street, Brunswick, Melbourne, Australia, with London.
J. Collins, 5, Spowith Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, with South Africa, New Zealand.
H. W. Fendon, 213, Lechfield, Port Road, Birmingham, England, with France, Canada, America, Scotland.
W. S. Brown, 87, Eldon Street, St. Leonards, England, with Mexico, Russia, U.S.A., Texas.
Miss D. B. Roberts, 30, Boreen Drive, Aintree, Liverpool, England, with South Africa.
F. H. D. Shaw, 21, Pelham Street, Middleburgh, England, with China.

...Can he break off, frozen with... to see Mr. Bush, and... had been speaking in... to a Form-master.
Mr. Bush, almost flaming with... from his eyes. He was... that some-... had got into his... as he was... the matter... "You... meddling jockanoo!"
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(More of this fine serial next Wednesday.)

They are sure to like it!

A Favourite with All.

COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS A TALE OF TOM MERRY'S CHUM

M. MARTIN CLIFFORD

GLANCE OVER THIS.

Ethel Cleveland is a new girl at St. Jim's school on her first day at school... Ethel takes Dolores over to St. Jim's College, where Arthur D'Arcy, her cousin, is at school...

Ethel did not reply to that question.

"Do let me see it!" exclaimed Dolly, with natural feminine curiosity to see that most entrancing object to a girl—a new hat... "What colour is it?" "You see—"

Favels for Cousin Ethel.

"DON'T know, mum," said the child... "Well, I suppose I must take it in!" said Mrs. Filby... "Dear me!" she said. "Now I—"

"No!" said Ethel.

"How unfortunate! Can you lend me my money?" Ethel handed over the sixpence, an action that called forth a still more remarkable snarl from Dolly... "I should not buy a new hat to go over there," she said.

Milly might like new hats, like other girls, but jam-tarts touched her heart more nearly... "I wish Arthur were my cousin!" "Oh!" "He has an absurd idea that we like doria, foels, the same as we have sometimes at St. Jim's, and he's smugling these things in to me."

"My word!" said Milly. "She dragged the lid off the box. Great piles of tarts, fresh and flaky and jammy, were inside, wrapped in tissue paper, and the smell of them was really delicious... "I wish I had not sent them!" said Ethel, but it would be true if Mrs. Penfold were there, and there are more things coming."

"I wish I had not sent them!" said Ethel, but it would be true if Mrs. Penfold were there, and there are more things coming... "Then it's perfectly easy. I'll eat them for you." "Rely on Milly," said Dolly. "She'll eat anything for anybody. Won't you, Milly?"

"I should not eat so fast," said Dolly. "There's a lot of jam-tarts in the box. There's a lot of jam-tarts in the box. There's a lot of jam-tarts in the box... "Yes," said Ethel. "Where can I put them?" "Groom!"

"Groom!" "Yes, I was going to say, Ethel, that you needn't trouble about putting them in a way. I'll look after them for you... "But it's labelled a hat." "I can't help that." "But what is it, then?" "I'm not sure—jam-tarts, I think."

Ethel started nervously. She hated feeling guilty, but she could not help it now. If the great consignment of tarts should be discovered in her school, there would certainly be trouble... "Mrs. Filby wants to see you, miss," she said.

"Mrs. Filby?" "Yes, indeed! There's a parcel come for you." "Ethel's heart sank. It was evidently the second of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's consignments... "But she nodded calmly, and took her way with as tranquil a face as she could muster to the housekeeper's room."

"MISS CLEVELAND, there is a parcel here for you!" said Mrs. Filby, as Cousin Ethel came in... "Thank you, but— I would rather take the box, if you don't mind," said Cousin Ethel, flushing a little... "But, my dear child, the soap will be useless to you," she exclaimed.

"But— I would rather have the packet taken to my room," she said... "I think you'd better take it," said Mrs. Filby... "Thank you so much, dear Mrs. Filby."

"The school porter was called in. The old porter looked at the package in surprise, but he was used to obeying orders without making remarks... "Thank you so much, dear Mrs. Filby."

child, there must be enough there to last the whole school for a month!" "It was very thoughtful," said Ethel... "It—it was ordered for me," said Ethel.

"Oh, that alters the case, of course. But it will be useless to you," said Mrs. Filby... "Thank you very much, Mrs. Filby," she began.

"Not at all, my dear child. You may think that I will speak to Miss Penfold about it," said the housekeeper... "Thank you, but— I would rather take the box, if you don't mind," said Cousin Ethel, flushing a little... "But, my dear child, the soap will be useless to you," she exclaimed.

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Grammar School Ventriloquist

A Tale of the Chums of Rylcombe Grammar School.

By PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

Harry Wootton Does a Little Practising.

GROO! Groo! Groo-oh! Oo-ooch! "My hat!" "Great Scott!" "Groo-oo-oo-oo-oo!" "My only aunt!" "Jumping wallabies!" "Dear me!" "Groo! Groo! Groo-oo-oo!"

Gordon Gay looked at Jack Wootton and Tadpole, and Jack Wootton and Tadpole looked at each other and at Gordon Gay.

The hair-raising sounds were coming from Study No. 13 in the Fourth Form passage at Rylcombe Grammar School, outside the door of which the three members of the famous Co., who inhabited the study were standing gazing at each other in consternation.

"Gross! Gross! Gross!" "What on earth is it?" gasped Gordon Gay, as the fearful groans and gasps and grunts continued with unabated vigour.

"Somewhat suffocating, I should think," whispered Jack Wootton, looking alarmed.

"Great gracious, yes!" exclaimed Tadpole, the genius and, incidentally, the nuisance of the Fourth Form. "I am certainly convinced that someone is in the last stages of dislocation!"

"And in our study, too!" ejaculated Gordon Gay. "My only grandmother! Just listen!" "Gross-croo-ah! Gurgie, gurgie! Groo!"

The three chums listened awestruck. The sounds were positively terrific, and it certainly seemed as though someone were suffering terrible agony inside the study.

"Gross! Groo-oh! Groo! Gurgie!" "Here, I can't stand this any longer!" said Gordon Gay at last. "Come on!" "Right-ho!" said Jack Wootton valiantly.

"Let us enter!" said Tadpole, somewhat nervously. "There, here goes!" Gordon Gay gently pushed open the door, which was on the latch, and the three chums entered the study, not without some trepidation as to what fearful sight might await them there. To their intense amazement, not a soul was to be seen.

The chums gasped with astonishment, and Jack Wootton had just opened his mouth to give vent to an amazed ejaculation, when all three suddenly jumped clear into the air, as the ghastly sounds broke out again, this time nearer and louder than before.

"Groo-oh, groo-ooch! Groo! Groo! Gurgie!" Gordon Gay gazed round the little study with startled eyes. This was

too absurdly unnecessary. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation.

He had caught sight of a head of curly hair sunk in the depths of the only and only armchair the study boasted.

Gordon Gay knew that head of hair well. It belonged to Harry Wootton, the Australian, the youngest member of the Co., and Jack Wootton's brother.

So the fearful sounds of agony were coming from Harry!

Gordon Gay took a quick step to the armchair, and Jack was by his side in a second. Tadpole was still gazing like a fish out of water and gasping open-mouthed at the ceiling.

Harry lay back in the big chair, was Harry, with his eyes shut. He had a look lying face downwards on his knee, and his face was as red as a beetroot.

Even as the juniors gazed at him in horror his mouth opened, and deep groaning sounds came from his lips. "Groo-ooch! Groo— Yow! Yow!"

Harry Wootton's note suddenly changed to a shrill yell as Gordon Gay, quick as thought, seized a jam-jar full of dirty paint-water which Tadpole had left on the table, and dashed it over the young Australian's face.

At the same time Jack Wootton, with a gasp of alarm, made a dash at his brother, seized his arms, and commenced to work them madly up and down like pump-handles.

Then Harry Wootton, who had looked to his alarmed chums to be at the point of death, became suddenly very much alive.

With startled yells, he bounded up in his chair, only to be pushed back again by his alarmed brother, who continued to pump away at his arms like a steam engine gone mad.

"Quick!" shouted Jack excitedly. "Get some more water, Taddy! Help me hold him down, Gay! He's got a fit or something! My hat!"

Harry shivered and struggled like a lunatic. Whatever ailed him, it did not seem to have sapped his vigour. The scuffling was something terrific.

"Harry?" inquired Jack excitedly, sitting up rubbing his head. "You better!" howled Harry. "Why, you finished chumps, do I look as if I feel better? Why, I'm—I'm half-killed!"

Gordon Gay, also sitting on the floor, looked at the indignant Harry with a peculiar expression. "Look here, Harry—" "First I'm half-drowned, then I'm sat on by you two dangerous maniacs, and then I'm squashed to death, and then that damny snake me if I'm better!"

And Harry looked to be on the point of exploding with indignation. "But—but you were in a fit, or something!" began Jack doubtfully. "Fit be blowed!" roared Harry. "I tell you—"

"That that awful row you were making!" gasped Gordon Gay. "Harry Wootton snorted. "Row, damme! What row? I was only practising!" howled Harry's assistants together.

"Practising!" bellowed Harry. "I was just practising throwing my voice a bit!" "Whistling!" "Throwing my voice, you— you silly ass! I was practising ventriloquism!"

Didillon tells you how to do it, and I was practising out of the book!" "You can practise out of the study, and out of the parish, if you like, next time!" remarked Jack Wootton. "Blessed if I ever heard such a ghastly, horrid row in my life!"

"Oh, rats!" "Can you do it at all, though, kid?" "You asked Gordon Gay curiously. "It'd be a good show if you could. We could score off Frank Monk & Co. all further orders if you could ventriloquise."

"Well, I'm not quite perfect yet," said Harry modestly. "But I jolly soon shall be. I've got the hang of it, but it wants a lot of practising, you know. I shall make a jolly good ventriloquist!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "There was a trampling of feet in the passage, and Frank Monk, the captain of the Form, and Gordon Gay's great, but friendly, rival put his head in.

"Any one come in?" he asked cheerfully. "It's pax this time, I only want to have a confab about the footer match with the St. Jim's chaps." "Right-ho, then; in you come!" said Gordon Gay heartily.

Frank Monk, followed by his chums, Lamp and Carley, the two senior members of the Monk & Co., entered the study.



"That's 'rough' ventriloquism, Wootton!" said Frank Monk, with a sniff. "I should never mistake that for old Adams's creaky, grumpy voice—like filing a rusty saw!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Surprise for Frank Monk.

IT was, at least, a quarter of an hour before Harry Wootton got over his indignation, and the chums finished laughing over their little mistake.

In the opinion of Gordon Gay and Jack their mistake was a very natural one; but Harry regarded them as clumps and fatheads and axes for having made it, and did not hesitate to say so.

"Anyone who knows anything about ventriloquism, would have known that I was only throwing my voice!" he growled. "Professor

leaving the door slightly open behind them.

"By the by, what was that I heard about ventriloquism as I came in?" said Frank Monk curiously, as he took a seat on the coal-locker, with his back to the door. "I couldn't help hearing, you know. One of you chaps taking it up!"

"Yes," said Harry Wootton, rather shortly. "Ha, ha! I know what amateur ventriloquists are like!" grinned Frank Monk. "As a rule, their performances wouldn't deceive an infant in arms!"

Harry Wootton turned red.

1. While having a general survey and clear up in a pantry he had come across, Wandering Willie is discovered by the cook, who informs "the missus."

2. This good soul orders the servant to put Wandering Willie in the river, and places our hero in a box for that purpose.

3. While the girl is putting her hat and jacket on, and arranging her hair, &c., &c., Tommy, the greenie, lets Wandering Willie escape.

4. When quite ready the girl wanders to the river on her dream errand, trying to look oh so grieved!

5. But when she reaches the water she finds Wandering Willie already afloat, and she is waiting for the performance to start.

Wandering Willie's Little Wile.

