

# 1<sup>D</sup> THE EMPIRE 1<sup>D</sup> 2 THE ENLARGED LIBRARY

Vol. 1, No. 17.

## A DRAMATIC INCIDENT!

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# The Dark Lantern



At the end of the cavern half-a-dozen men were squatting round a barrel playing cards. They were so absorbed in their game that they did not hear Charlie Peace enter.

## START NOW!

### A NEW TALE OF CHARLES PEACE.

This Story Shows the Baneful Influence of Bad Companionship on a Young Boy, and the Result of Weakness of Character Coupled with a Clever but Distorted Mind.

Good-bye to Jagger's crew. AGING like a bull, Milo, took along the message, forgetting his approaching "turn," and when only on his knees, he saw his audacious neighbor standing perfectly cool and collected at the entrance to the ring.

Stella, her face wreathed in smiles, and waving her hat right and left, was "driving off" amid thunders of applause. Charlie joined in, clapping his hands and shouting.

The sight was maddening to Milo, who had tried to make love to Stella, and had been unmercifully rebuffed for his pains. Reluctant as it was to think a boy of thirteen could be his rival, a wave of jealousy swept over the giant. He didn't care who saw him, and he "raked" some "quitted," to take Charlie by surprise.

The cane flourished in the air, but it never reached the mark it was aimed at. Stella's quick eye took in the scene at a glance, and at a young fellow's "kick" "Turpin" bounded forward between Milo and Charlie, and in a flash her riding whip depended on the bully's cheek, leaving a livid stripe as a memento of his visit.

"You crowd!" roared the girl, her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes adding to her beauty.

"I'll have you back for this!" bellowed the giant, panting with suppressed rage. "Ay, not only on the mechin, but on you, too, my grand madman!"

What would have happened but for Jagger, it is hard to say. Stella was, under ordinary circumstances, was the soul of meriment and good humor, but his a tirade when Jagger knew her nature thoroughly.

"Stop it!" he roared. "I'll have no rows while the show's on. I'll be the first to quit you, afterwards, Stella. You're a little silly. You want all your nerve for me, and here you are upsetting yourself."

"It's all right, guv'nor, only an' d'emand that whenever I see this big brute showing off I'll have something to say!" cried the girl.

She darted a glance of defiance at Milo, another of sympathetic friendliness at Charlie, and the horse bore her away.

"Look here, Jagger, I'm not going to stand cheek from anybody. My position is your company."

"Your position," Jim Bulger, is in the ring," cried Jagger. "The crowd are waiting. If you don't pull yourself together and get on with it, you can do the other thing. You know what that is. I've pretty well laid enough of you and your least of a temper!"

That everybody woke up when the great cage of lions was wheeled in on a huge trolley, drawn by one of the elephants. Presently, Stella, on riding, came, stirred, and had a good rest.

Charlie was in the front row. He hardly knew which took his fancy most—Stella or the little steel stool, with their gleaming yellow eyes and their square massive lower jaws.

There must have been something in his blood akin to the nature of the creatures. As a matter of fact, when he had made that terrific spring upon Milo he had drawn himself up precisely as a cat does. Probably Charlie Peace was quite unconscious what a close resemblance he had to an animal.

At all events, he had not been looking long before he quite forgot Stella, and saw only the four legs. In some unaccountable way he seemed to know quite well the nature of each, and he they varied. The biggest, he dived, was stupid and lazy, and would do nothing unless spurred up to his work.

The second was frangible, but was mechanical. The third was clever and handsome, and evidently Stella's favourite. The fourth was a lion-cub, beautifully shaped. Uncommonly clever, she could when in the mood, excel the rest in activity and smartness, but when not so disposed could hardly be induced to do anything.

Charlie Peace read all this as in a book, and he saw also how Stella never took her eyes off the horses. Evidently she mistrusted the creature. But the animal was fairly obedient and nothing happened. For all that, its calmness was that of a fox in St. weather. Just as a gale would transform the rippling waves into a raging mountain of water, so as a fit of irritability would change the placid, graceful lioness into a savage brute, which could not distinguish between friend and foe.

It was a quarter-past eleven when the performance was over. Charlie filled out with the audience, and when he was outside, paused for a few moments, overcome by a horrible feeling of doubt and uncertainty.

For a night that he could tell he might never see Stella again. He was about to take a leap in the dark. It was vain to resist. All that he could see was that he would have to battle through it he would.

"Shall I get free from the gang to-night, or shall I go on wearing their fetters?" he asked himself.

An old man took him. He had in his pocket a metal lattice. It had dropped from one of Stella's fancy dresses, and he had picked it up and kept it. He tossed the lattice in the air, deciding that if it came down slanting upwards it would mean that the Red Devils would continue to hold him in their clutches.

The lattice rattled on the stones. The slant was downwards.

"Right-ho!" he cried joyfully, and set out for the Ecclestone Road with quite a light heart.

New Readers should turn to the foot of next page.

Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is intended.

The Most Popular School Story. THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S



A New School Tale. BY CHARLES HAMILTON. Author of "THE RIVALS OF ST. MIT'S."

THIS HAS TAKEN PLACE. Pen, a Cornish lad, has been to a Council school and secured a scholarship at St. Wode's. He arrives there to find a rival in Blagden & Co. who are trying to make him for another new school. Lord Lovell, on discovering the rivalry, Blagden & Co. are the enemies of both the friends, who clamor up together. Friendship arouses the resentment of Mr. Bush, the mobster of the Fourth Form, who is a powerful weapon on Pen's side on every possible occasion. Pen, my boy," says Mr. Lovell wisely. "Why do you come down on that? There's the more in this than meets the eye. How do you mean, Bunny?" asks Bunny.

Mr. Bush's face went as white as chalk. He turned his head away and walked on, as if he had not seen the pair. Both of them knew that he had both seen and heard. Bunny gave a soft whistle. "You've got him just right," said Pen. "Did you see his face? I don't see why he should get it so badly." Lovell shrugged his shoulders. "Well, he's no gentleman, or he wouldn't have treated you so he did," said Pen. "I'd tell him so to his face quite willingly. What?" They went out into the quadrangle, Dick Penwyn with a very thoughtful expression on his face. He knew himself to be stronger and cleverer than Bunny. Yet the little vicar had a knowledge of the world that the quiet Cornish lad certainly did not possess. In the room above the gym, Pen was greatly the superior, but it was very probable that in judging men and motives Bunny would be nearer the mark. And Pen wondered whether there was anything in Bunny's surmise that Mr. Bush had some special reason for despising him. But what reason could he have? Pen had never seen him before coming to St. Wode's; he had known him only twenty-four hours. If Mr. Bush had any reason apart from a dislike to Pen, what was it? It was a mystery to Dick Penwyn.

What Mr. Bush Overheard. MEAN that Bushes doesn't dislike you merely for being a Cornish school chap," said Bunny sagely. "You take me—I'm an awfully keen chap on things, though I ain't strong as you are, and I ain't much of a reason for making me for you." "You're not here, suppose he ain't afraid of you?" "I'm not afraid of you," said Mr. Bush. "Not that I know of." "It's queer, then—But how, I know something, this and the vicar, and Mr. Gorse on Bush—has got his reasons."

On the Footer Field. "PARR, there!" "Play up now!" "Kick, you duffer, kick!" Pen's eyes brightened, and he picked up his stick like a charger that snuffed the battle from afar as the studs fell upon his ears. The Fourth-Formers were on the footer ground, playing for practice before term, and Blagden was making all the running. Pen looked on with glistering eyes. He was a keen footballer, and in the village team at home he had been a great hero. What a game would be considered at St. Wode's he did not know. His estimate of himself was always a humble one.

Mystery of the Garden. "You mean," the Panther came looking the interception, but presently in fact, the matter was something for Mr. Bush, realising that it was in the garden of this which was empty at the time. Mr. Wakenly was wanted for quite a while. I believe he was not a personage in criminal society. Thus, when both men were caught, Mr. Marley got a longer term of imprisonment than our friend Mr. Snapper.

Naturally imagined that with public school advantages the St. Wode's fellows would play footer ever so much better than he did. But as he looked on at the practice he saw reason to change his opinion. The play was average junior play, neither better nor worse than might have been expected. But Pen's keen eyes noted the passing, the passing of the dribbling, with the shooting—in fact, with pretty nearly every branch of the play. Newcombe was a keen player, and Blagden a powerful

one, but the rest seemed to Dick Penwyn's eye to be merely fumbling. He made no remark on the subject, but stood looking on. Lord Lovell yawned a little. "Do you play footer, Pen?" he asked. "Yes, rather. Don't you?" The vicar smiled. "I do a little, but not much. You must be a good deal better than I." "Oh, it's ripping!" "You'd like to play now?" "Yes, rather." "You'd like to play now, naturally." "Don't mind me, I'd like to watch you." Dick Penwyn hesitated. He wondered what the fellows on the footer ground would take his joining them. He had a right to join them—in fact, he knew that it was a rule at St. Wode's that a certain amount of footer practice was compulsory. "Go on, lad!" said Newcombe. "Newcombe, who was playing, caught sight of Dick Penwyn at that moment, and noted the keen and eager expression upon his face. "Come to play!" he called out. "I'd like to." "Come on, then! I've a man less than Blagden, and you can play. Where do you play footer?" "Wing, as a rule, but I can take half."

"Here you are—right wing forward!" "Goal!" Dick Penwyn ran on the ground. There was a roar from Blagden, and he stopped playing. "Get off the ground, you Cornish school blunder!" "Hurry, hurry, hurry, Blagden!" shouted Lord Newcombe. "I've asked him to play." "Hut! He's not going to play!" "He isn't!" "Hut!" Dick Penwyn's face flushed crimson. "I'll go, then," he said quietly. "Oh, shut up, you sniggering Newcombe. Don't take any notion of Blagden—he's always a pig, you know." "Look here, Newcombe—" "Play up, Penwyn!" "Lord Lovell shouted encouragement to his friend. "Penwyn! Play up, you know!" Blagden came forward with a furious face. "If you think I'm going to play footer with you, you're mistaken!" He bawled. "He'll go off the ground or I will!" "Go off, then, Blagden!" "No, I'll be an eye quietly. I don't want to cause trouble." He walked back towards Lord Lovell, Hawke of the Sixth, the burly captain of St. Wode's, had just strolled down, and he had tapped Lovell on the shoulder. "Not playing!" he asked. "Come back now," said Bunny. "Why not?" "Awful lagged after lessons."

"Oh, rot!" said Hawke. "Pile in! Don't be a duffer." "Well, you know, don't you see—" "Hallo! Had enough already?" exclaimed Hawke, as Pen came off the footer. "Come, this won't do, young'un!" "It's Blagden won't let him play!" yelled Newcombe indignantly. "What's that?" raged out Hawke. "What's that? Go on and play at once, Penwyn! You hear?" "I—I tell you!" "There was no ginsaying that. Pen rejoined Newcombe. Blagden, with a furious scowl, strode towards the right. "Hawke shouted after him. "Are you going, Blagden?" "I'm going in." "Look here, Hawke," yelled Blagden, "I'm not going to play with that workhouse ruffian! That's flat!" "Hawke's eyes gleamed. "You're going to play with Penwyn

or you're coming to my study to have the biggest hiding you ever heard of!" he said grimly. "You can take your choice." Blagden hesitated in dismay. Cranour and some of the fellows in the Fifth sometimes deserted Hawke's authority as captain of the school, but it was quite impossible for a junior to do so. "Look here, Hawke—" began Blagden. "Hold your tongue, and obey orders!" Blagden walked back among the footballers with a look as black as his face. Newcombe met him with a grin. "Play up, you fellows!" he said. "The play recommenced, Blagden played with a brow as black as thunder. He was in so great a rage that he did not even attempt to conceal it. So long as Hawke remained looking on, Blagden had to play; and as to increase his fury he found that the Cornish school blunderer played better footer than he did. Pen rubbed him of the ball with ease, and sped goalward with it. "Oh, lovely!" exclaimed Lord Lovell. "Goal!" said Hawke. "The goal-keeper tried in vain to stop the ball. Pen did it with a whirling shot that was not to be denied. There was a general gasp from the players. "Goal!"

Goal! Goal! "Goal—that blunder!" "The outsider—goal!" "Hut!" "Fluke, of course." "Oh, no course! It was a goal!" Even Newcombe stared. There was only one fellow who looked pleased, and that fellow was Lord Lovell, who clapped his hands, and shouted: "Oh, lovely! Hurrah!" Hawke grinned. "That was a decent goal," he said. "Oh, lovely!" "Rot!" growled Blagden to his comrades. "That's a rotten fluke in my eye." "I should jolly well say so!" agreed Corton. "See the ruffian swanking about it, though," said Bamford. "That was very unjust. Pen was not swanking in the least. As a matter of fact, Pen wasn't aware that there was anything to swank about. He was a keen, level footballer, and he found the St. Wode's footer ever so much better than what he had been accustomed to among the hardy lads on the Cornish coast. He had taken that goal with scarcely an effort. He kicked the ball so hard that a goal every five minutes the play lasted if he liked. He was far and away above Fourth Form style at St. Wode's. He would have laughed aloud at the idea of swanking over his success even if he had been invited to and a crowd of school boys. But Blagden & Co. gave him dark looks. Pen's quiet, composed manner was irritating to them, quite as much as if he had stuck his hands in his pockets and grinned at them. Whatever the Council school lad did, as a matter of fact, was pretty sure to be wrong in the eyes of Blagden & Co. It was the case of the wolf and the lamb over again. The lamb had no chance whatever of being in the right. Pen cared less than nothing, if possible, for Blagden's dark looks. He walked back to Lord Newcombe to the centre of the field. Newcombe looked at him curiously. "Was that a fluke?" he asked. "No," said Pen. "No, you were sure of your kick." "Quite sure."

"You seem to have plenty of confidence in yourself, young Penwyn," said Bamford, with a wholly pleasant look. "Well, it was easy enough," the Panther replied. "I didn't believe in ghosts, and I know that your house was pretty close to Lord Roubitrick's place. I remembered the burglary there, and how the spoils had never been recovered. It set me thinking, and I went down to Scotland Yard to make a report. Of course, when I heard that Jake Snapper had recently been released from prison, I knew exactly what was happening, and came down here when the robbery of the case practically at my fingertips." Mr. Wakenly nodded.

"I can play footer." "As we play it?" asked Plummer, with rather a sneer. Then Pen smiled. "No," he said, "not as you play it." Plummer was about to make a hot retort, but Newcombe intervened. "Look here," he said. "No good jawing. Play!" "Oh, all serene!" The side-lined up again, Blagden had been speaking but his followers on a low tone. He had tried to mark the new boy. Blagden might say that the goal was a fluke, but in his eyes Blagden knew very much better than that. Blagden had little doubt that the Cornish lad would score again. To be scored even once by the lad he hated and despised was too humiliating. Blagden would have given any length of time to see how he considered it. It really occurred as if Blagden considered that a Cornish school lad had no right to play footer at all. And with Hawke's looking on, too, with an approving eye? It was undoubtedly like the Council school fellow's choice. "Play that again!" "Go it, Blagden!" "Play up, Newcombe!" Blagden & Co. came down in a heavy charge. "The ball started the ball, and was speeding on to goal, when the Cornish lad, with scarcely an effort, rubbed him of the leather. Pen dribbled the ball up the field, and passed to Newcombe. "Ripping!" shouted Newcombe. "Goal!" muttered Hawke. "That was a goal, and it was a goal, and rushed it on. Blagden's men had no chance of stopping him, and Rake was all ready to receive a pass if necessary. Blagden gave Pen a bitter look. He exchanged a quick muttering word with Corton, and the two were across to goal. The Cornish lad, with a quick touch of the foot charge, went heavily to the ground. Corton fell across him, and was screaming at him. Pen lay still for a moment, with Corton's weight on him, and then he struggled. The shot was to have scored him. "Clumsy one!" muttered Blagden. "Why wouldn't he keep out of the way?"

The play had stopped. Pen was standing to the Fourth-Form bully with blazing eyes and clenched fists. "You cad!" he roared. "You cad! You ruffian!" "What do you mean?" demanded Blagden, changing colour. "How was I to be a footer would stick in the way like that?" "Liar!" said Newcombe. "What?" "It was a foul charge, and you know it. You did it on purpose, both of you!" shouted Newcombe. "Hawke! You saw that! Wasn't it foul?" "It was foul," he exclaimed. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Blagden." Blagden's eyes glittered fiercely. He realised, too late, that he had been a little too open in his methods. A little more concealment would have served his purpose better. "I thought he would clear out of the way," he muttered. "Don't be a sniggerer," said Hawke sharply. "You meant to bump him over." "Look here, Hawke—" "Blagden was to be subdued wholly, even by the captain of St. Wode's. But Hawke cut him short sharply enough. "Get off the field!" he exclaimed. "Get off, I say!"

Another longer outburst of "The Rival of St. Wode's" next Wednesday. "All the same," he said, "it was pretty smart work." And I agreed with him. Poor Mr. Wakenly had to sacrifice his garden. Next day the police arrived with enough gardening implements to fill a barn, but as night fell they had recovered Lady Roubitrick's lost jewels. Mr. Jake Snapper returned to Scotland Yard. I believe he has not yet been discharged. (Next Wednesday—"The Man from India," another splendid Panther story.)

explained everything satisfactorily. Mr. Wakenly will you be good enough to send somebody for the police! An hour later, after Mr. Jake Snapper had departed, his Eugene Aram, with gyves upon his wrists, came on the scene, and partaking of light refreshment in Mr. Wakenly's private sanctum. You haven't yet told us how you came to know who that fellow was," Wakenly said, referring to the prisoner.

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An Amusing Complete Story.

# GORDON GAY'S WAGER

A Splendid Tale of the Chums of Rylcombe Grammar School. By PROSPER HOWARD.

**CHAPTER I.**  
Tadpole is Puzzled.  
**"SNOW!"**  
Harry Wootton, of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School, sprang out of bed at the first sound of ringing bell, and looked out of his bedroom window just over his head.

He gave this startling piece of information in a tone of great satisfaction, and there was a general chorus of approval.

"Snow!"  
"My hat!"  
"Good egg!"  
"What was a snowball-fight?"  
"Hear, hear!"  
The juniors sprang up with quite unusual alacrity. As a rule, most of the dormitory slept peacefully in good ten minutes' snooze after ringing-bell had gone. But this morning they were anxious to be up and out, to take the finest advantage of the late fall of snow which Harry Wootton had been the first to announce.

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"Well, really," he murmured, returning again to the trying of his flowing tie. "I don't understand Gay this morning. I wonder why he should make me feel my hairless neck that persons who habitually indulge in snow-fights are generally devoid of any sense of the artistic!"

But a perfect yell of laughter from the dormitory was the only answer Tadpole got to his murmured question.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

### CHAPTER 2.

The End of the Snowball Fight.  
**"O!"**  
"Sock it to 'em!"  
"Huck it!"  
"Stick it up, Study!"  
"Give 'em beans, Study!"  
"Snow!"

The rival Co's were in the thick of a wild and whirling combat, and the snowballs were being flung like the Grammar School gun.

"That wouldn't be fair, anyway," said Harry Wootton. "We're four, and you only two."  
"That's true," assented Jack Wootton.

Gordon Gay's following consisted of the two Woottons and Tadpole, while Frank Monk had only two study mates—Carboy and Lane.

"What's that?" roared Gordon Gay.  
"Ha, ha, ha," yelled the juniors. "Oh, shut up, you racking dummies!" said Gordon Gay crossly. "Come on, you chaps, let's get out-side."

"Well, really," he murmured, returning again to the trying of his flowing tie. "I don't understand Gay this morning. I wonder why he should make me feel my hairless neck that persons who habitually indulge in snow-fights are generally devoid of any sense of the artistic!"

"Blazes! How—how dare you!" Mr. Sharpe was by no means an easy-going individual at the best of times. He had a very nasty temper, and it was not likely to be improved by the forcible application of snow.

"An accident! Sorry!" he gasped, controlling himself, but with his greenish eyes glowing indignantly. "Don't tell her!"

"Silence, boy! I say it was an accident! You were behaving like a crew of loafers, and so coming out to cheer your discomfited behavior, I am grossly aggrieved! I warn you to offer me no further impertinence."

"That's true," assented Jack Wootton.

Gordon Gay faced the unpopular master of the Third. "You are a bully!" he said in a queer, level voice.

"What's up?" he asked quickly. "Shove a few things on, and come quietly, and watch me," said Gordon Gay impressively.

"Well, I have a great mind to report you all to Dr. Monk for a flogging, which is what you undoubtedly deserve. As it is, however, you can catch do me five hundred lines, to be shown up on Monday if you do not wish them doubled."

"I've a jolly good mind to do so," said Gordon Gay slowly.

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"You are a cad and a rascal, bully!" said Gordon Gay, in the same level, queer voice.

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COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOL DAYS. A TALE OF TOM MERRY'S CHUMS BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"Ethel Cleveland, of St. Freda's, is a girl of sixteen, and is receiving a note from her mother to meet her cousin, Arthur D'Arcy, at the school gates...

FROM FRED A'RCY.

"It is certainly very wrong and very bold to set such a trap for me, but I am almost impossible for me to believe that Ethel Cleveland would be guilty of such an act. But I shall certainly question her."

"OH! YOU ARE ETHEL'S COUSIN?"

"Yes, madam!" he said. "I was surprised to see you here, but I am glad to see you. You are very kind to speak, and what you just said..."

"Have you met Ethel?" "Yes, madam!" "Then I am afraid you have made it necessary to punish her."

"But I love her! I am speaking now so that you will know that Ethel was not to blame in the matter, you see."

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"Goodbye, Arthur!" "The wall of St. Jim's quitted the study. He went down to the school-house door, and found that Miss Tyrell had carried out instructions..."

"I trust you won't come down here on Ethel, Miss Penfold!" he said. "It was all my fault, I know, from first to last. Ethel told me I was a silly ass to start with..."

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Dolores was laughing. Ethel had tried to keep a grave face. "So there won't be any more food after all, Ethel!" said Dolores, taking Ethel's arm, and walking down the garden with her."

AU REVOIR.

"THERE'S a letter for you, Ethel," Dolly Crave remarked. "How do you like it? Arthur one morning, a week or two ago..."

"It is from my mother," she exclaimed. "Oh!" said Dolly. "Ethel did not net the cynical disapproval in Dolly's tone. She smiled the letter away to a quiet corner with trembling hand..."

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"Yes, madam!" he said. "I was surprised to see you here, but I am glad to see you. You are very kind to speak, and what you just said..."



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced back over his shoulder. He could see that the girls were laughing, and his crimson complexion grew more crimson.

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