

THE EVERY WEDNESDAY.



THE EMPIRE 1/2

THE WEEKLY STORY-PAPER.

Vol. I. No. 23

The Scapegrace of the Regiment. A Grand New Tale of Army Life.



PERCIVAL POTT SHUT HIS EYES, AND RUSHED AT HIS ADVERSARY HAMMER AND TONGS.

Readers are informed that the illustrations in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and no reference is made to any living person. Actual names may be occasionally mentioned, but the Editor assumes no adverse personal reflection is intended.

Tossed in the Blanket.

Percival's method of persuasion was to grind poor Pott's nose round and round on the table where they had stretched him. It had been turned so many times that it was quite a wonder it did not break off altogether.

While his other torturers idly watched and squirmed under the blows of a broom-handle which he used as a weapon, he fought and won. His persecutors were too busy to harm him.

Among the rest of the party gathered round one of the blankets from the top and taking hold of the corners, he suddenly dragged off the top and shot into it, hitting the table with a sudden bump.

"Percival, towards, let me up!" cried Pott, trying to regain his feet.

The man who had laid hold of the corners of the blanket, and all was ready to resume part of the programme.

"Up you up—ah!" laughed the man who had laid hold of the corners. "Oh, we'll let you up, enough, you mowdy mowder—up a lot higher than

you think! Go on, boys, on to it! Leave!"

At the word every man flung his weight backwards with a lusty tug. The blanket tautened sluggishly, and Percival was lifted only a bare two feet from the floor.

The second tug, however, lifted him a good five, and the third higher than that, until at last he was whizzing up to the very ceiling.

If he had only had the sense to keep his arms folded and his heels together all would have been well.

Blanket-tossing is a silly sport and a dangerous one, but a man may be tossed in a blanket for hours and hours and come to no harm if he follows this simple rule and if the tossers do not play tricks and let him crash to the floor.

But the higher Percival found himself going the more frantically he clutched and kicked.

"That's had got him bumping the ceiling at last. It was their victim's head that brought that shower of whitewash down, but this only delighted Pasty the more.

"Steady! You'll 'urt him!" cried one.

"'Ert him? I want to 'urt him, you silly fool!" panted Pasty, turning the handle. "Go on, boys, up with 'im! Knock 'is 'ead through the ceiling if we can!"

It was only just then that Jack Lyons, waiting in the coffee-bar and wondering what on earth his chum was doing, suddenly noticed a

mysterious shadow rising and falling on the window of their barrack-room, visible across the square from where he sat.

"Why, what on earth can that be?" he asked himself.

It was something big and bulky, at any rate, and now and then he seemed to see the outline of waving arms and legs.

And then it dawned upon him that this was probably Private Percival Pott leaving some of the corners knocked off him.

In a moment he was on his feet and hurrying to his comrade's rescue.

He knew what blanket-tossing was. He had had some of it at school. What was more, he had seen a boy crippled for life by it, and by lads who wished him no harm, too.

With Percival Pott it was different. If Private Pasty Green was one of the blanket-tossers Jack could see his chum being taken to hospital with a broken leg before the bugles blew "Lights Out."

As Jack Lyon was rushing across from the coffee-bar to the barrack-room to the rescue of his chum, who should he see run full tilt into the barracks Stumpy Sims and Stumpy Private Stuffy Sims.

These two, as the oldest old "trusties" in the section, had been teaching them how to soldier, and generally kept a fatherly eye upon them.

"Hallo, somebody's just told us that they've got your crackpot friend upstairs, tossing him in a blanket!" panted Stumpy, who, like his bosom chum Stuffy, was overfat for sprinting.

"So I thought," answered Jack. "I saw a shadow buzzing up and down the window."

He stood ahead then, speeding up the staircase three steps at a time.

Jack was not above a practical joke and a bit of horseplay himself at times. He revolved in it, in fact, but he drew the line at blanket-tossing when a vicious little beast like Pasty Green was among the tossers.

As like as not they would half kill poor Percival before they had done with him.

Percival was still hitting the ceiling with a leaden lump at every flight when Jack burst into the room. Painful experience fortunately had taught him to give up trying to clutch at empty air, and to use his hands and elbows to protect his skull.

"Hallo! You seem to be thoroughly amusing yourself, you fellows," said Jack quite quietly, for to break up the rag round the blanket suddenly would have meant that his chum would have come crashing to the floor.

As it was, a few of the men turned their heads and as if to leave with the rest. The result was that Percival at the next toss was merely shot out sideways, bowling over two of his tormentors like rabbits.

One of these, by the greatest good luck, was Private Green, the master of the revolv. The bewildered and helpless Percival took an involuntary dive into the little Cockney's bread-basket, flattening him out like a pancake.

"Ooo—oop! 'Eip! Ouch—oo-ah!" whooped Pasty, rolling over and over, and fighting frantically for his breath.

Percival, too dazed and dizzy to know what had happened, but determined now that he was on the floor to remain there, had tumbled himself with a despairing grip to one of Pasty's ears.

"'Eip! Ooo! Murder! Leggo!" howled Pasty, for Percival was clinging like a limpet in an Atlantic gale.

Jack, who had come prepared to punch every head in the room if necessary, simply doubled up with mirth to see the tables turned so magnificently.

But Stuffy Sims, as senior of the room, seemed to think that the fun had gone far enough. So, taking Pott by the neck, while Stumpy laid hold of his heels, they tore him from his frenzied grip and hopped him on to his cot.

Percival did not seem to mind where he was, as long as it was not on the ceiling. He was too sick and

Continued on the next page.

The Scapgrace of the Regiment.

...the old lark secret...
...the old lark secret...
...the old lark secret...

are you addressing me?" demanded...
...are you addressing me?" demanded...
...are you addressing me?" demanded...

The Sluggers face was black as...
...The Sluggers face was black as...
...The Sluggers face was black as...

"TOM MERRY'S ISLAND."...
...TOM MERRY'S ISLAND...
...TOM MERRY'S ISLAND...

"A MESSAGE FROM TOM MERRY!"...
...A MESSAGE FROM TOM MERRY...
...A MESSAGE FROM TOM MERRY...

"TWO PAPERS TO GET THIS WEEK."...
...TWO PAPERS TO GET THIS WEEK...
...TWO PAPERS TO GET THIS WEEK...



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

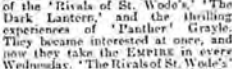
began to eat she opened a slight conversation...
...began to eat she opened a slight conversation...

A REMINDER! My new readers should know that a price of two-and-sixpence is awarded each week for best letters, jokes, recipes, or any item of general interest selected for publication in these columns.

QUITE SATISFIED. Fulham, S.W. "Dear Editor,—Let me thank you for the ripping tales you have published in the famous EMPIRE LIBRARY. A few weeks ago my clams said they were a lot of rot. I soon settled that matter by telling them the 'Rivals of St. Wode's,' 'The Dark Lantern,' and the thrilling experiences of 'Panther' Grayle. They became interested at once, and now they take the EMPIRE in every Wednesday. 'The Rivals of St. Wode's' is the story I like best, and 'The Scapgrace of the Regiment' is the best I have ever read. I was very sorry to hear of Cousin Ethel's departure. The pictures on the back are fine and amusing. I gave a party the other day, and some of my relatives and chums came to it. I told them of the EMPIRE stories, and it formed the chief interest. I had got all the back numbers of the EMPIRE, and I presented each with a copy, and they promised to take it in every week. Besides being a regular reader of this paper, I am also a reader of 'The Gem' and 'Magnet' Libraries.—Yours sincerely, FRED HIBBERD.

MY MESSAGE. "Now I must conclude, but before bidding you good-bye I will meet Wednesday, let me express the hope that you are quite satisfied with this issue of the EMPIRE Library, and that you will try and get me a new reader or two by showing this paper to others when you get a favourable opportunity.

THE EDITOR. HEAR, HEAR!



Jenkins (after painful performance on violin): "What do you think, old chap, of my execution? Musical Neighbour: "I think it would be a very good idea."

POSTCARD EXCHANGE. The following readers desire to exchange postcards:

49th LIST. J. Large-Hill, 8, George Street, Uxbridge, London, England, with Japan, India, Canada, Great Britain.

Miss L. Shoemaker, 206, Brighton Road, South Croydon, Surrey, England, with Yorkshire, England.

S. Nicholls, 63, The Crescent, Stamford Hill, London, England, with Birmingham, England.

I. Freedman, 23, Byron Street, Leeds, England, with U.S.A.

L. C. Sach, 157, Cumberland Street, Ipswich, England, with S. India.

A WONDERFUL FREE OFFER OF FOUR DAYS IN LONDON DURING CORONATION WEEK made by the Editor, and the competition whereby the six readers will be selected is not only a very simple one, but open to readers of all ages between nine and twenty.

THE TWO-AND-SIXPENCE. This week the prize of half-a-crown goes to W. R. Kemp, a Cambridge-alice reader, for the following joke:

WEAK. It was the first morning in his new and his landlady came up with his breakfast, and as he

Look Out for Tom Merry.

Readers are informed that the characters in the following story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Any similarity between the characters and persons named is entirely coincidental, and no adverse personal reflection is intended.

Our Amusing Complete School Tale.



Gordon Gay's Disguise.

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

CHAPTER I. The Fourth Form Juniors and Miss Halloway.

LAWSON, the heroism captain of Rylcombe Grammar School, was not looking serious, and Gordon Gay, the leader of the Fourth Form, and a junior of the Fourth Form, was looking positively free.

Two Grammatians were in conversation with the captain's captives, and it was obvious that the subject under discussion was a subject of some importance for Gordon Gay's usually care-free face was now clouded with a serious expression.

"I'm sorry, Lawson, old son," said Taddy after an extra long pause. "It's a rotten thing to say, but not to be a ruler of the Fourth Form and to turn out on Wednesday night at Mulberry College—not a word excepting my name."

"Well, why won't they?" he exclaimed. "Things are coming to a sorry pass at Rylcombe, here and there, and if you're not in luck enough in an important match!"

"You seem so jolly mysterious about it, too," muttered Gordon Gay. "It seems to me a number of us are hanging about the village looking as though they had lost a bob of a found tanner."

"The young idiots must be in it," he said. "I saw Monk and the other fellows who were in the Long Rectory Lane only this afternoon. They both looked as though they could have assaulted a stranger, and that isn't usual for boys of their age."

entered there was a confused scuffling, and three pieces of note-paper were put hurriedly under three pieces of blotting paper.

"Hallo, kids!" he said. "There's no need to be afraid. What's the matter?" Writing secret documents of various kinds.

Jack and Harry Wootton and Horace Tadpole each gave a nervous laugh. "No, Gay," said Horace Tadpole; "but mine is an important letter, and I would ask you to desist from interrupting it."

"Oh, dry up, you duffer!" interrupted Gordon Gay, grinning at the long-haired artist of the Grammar School. "I'm going to draw up the team for Wednesday's match against Mulberry. If the chaps won't turn out, Lawson says he'll scratch the last games of the season."

Jack and Harry Wootton coughed nervously, and then resumed their writing. Gordon Gay seated himself at the table, and commenced writing on a strip of paper.

"How come you kids'll turn up?" he asked. "I know I can rely on you, Harry Wootton cleared his throat. "That for Wednesday?" he asked.

"Ahem! Afraid I can't turn out," he said. "I'm very sorry, but I've got to go home on Wednesday. You will remember I mentioned it before."

Gordon Gay looked at his Australian chum in amazement. "What?" he said. "You can't turn out? Why can't you?" Harry Wootton shuffled his feet uneasily. "I-I-I rather want to make a call," he replied. "Just a just a personal matter, you know. He, he."

With a grin. "They're sorry, but it can't be helped." Gordon Gay crumpled the slip of paper up, and then threw the pencil on to the table. "Then we can't play Mulberry College!" he growled. "We can't play because the Fourth Form is in low ebb!" "Tshaw!"

CHAPTER 2. The Love-Letters. My dear Horace, - I am writing to ask you to try and meet me at Rylcombe Station tomorrow afternoon about five o'clock. I wish to see you very badly, and you will probably be more than surprised at what I have to say.

"I shall consider it an honour if you wear a large yellow chrysanthemum in your buttonhole. I know they are out of season, but I can get a beautiful one at the Rylcombe General Stores. Will you please wear one, so it is my favourite flower?"

"Mind you do not keep me waiting—Yours, MARGE HOLLOWAY." Jack Wootton and Horace Tadpole stared at their study-mate in amazement.

"What?" he said. "You can't turn out? Why can't you?" Harry Wootton shuffled his feet uneasily. "I-I-I rather want to make a call," he replied. "Just a just a personal matter, you know. He, he."

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"I thought you said something about chrysanthemums," persisted Tadpole. "Are you quite sure you didn't?" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the dazed Wootton. "What if I did—oh, you duffer!"

Horace Tadpole's hand flew to his chest-pocket to see if his love-letter were safe, and then he blinked stupidly at the grinning junior standing before him. "It must have been my fancy," he said. "I-I-I was thinking what a ripping artist Horace the chrysanthemum is. Do—do they grow real ones about here at this time of the year?"

"No, no, I don't think they do," Tadpole replied. "Jack Wootton, I wish they did!" Horace Tadpole blinked again. "Why—why do you wish they did?" he asked quickly.

"Because they're my favourite flower," replied the Australian junior, giving a deep sigh. "And—passionately fond of them. They're a bit big for buttonholes, but—"

"Thump!" The study door was flung open, and Harry Wootton rushed into the room and effectually interrupted his brother.

"A letter for me!" he demanded. "Where is it? Ah, here it is; Gay said there was one, and I half expected it."

and the next moment was engrossed in reading the contents of the envelope. "My only fat aunt!" he exclaimed. "This is a damn-fool 'o'clock-chrysanthemum!"

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body got a gardening-book to lend me for half a shilling?" Horace Tadpole blinked at Lane. "No," he said. "But I've got a book on 'How to Mix Colours and Use Them,' and also a book on 'Colours and How to Blend Them.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors; "The 'How to Blend' book did give Frank Monk scrambled to his feet. "You know, Lawson, Law!" he roared. "What on earth if you want to shoot me through the door like a 16-gauge rati-squaw!"

"And what do you want a book on gardening for?" asked Jack Wootton. Lane grinned. "Just want to look something up," he replied. "Want to see if chrysanthemums really do grow in season. Funny thing! Old Carlow, Morgan, Preston, and Carpenter are out on the same tack."

"Oh!" murmured the group of Grammatians. "Yes," said Lane sharply. "Now, his anybody got a book on gardening?"

"I-I-I haven't!" volunteered Harry Wootton. "No, no," said Lane. "Doesn't matter very much. Tatt!" And the Fourth Former turned on his heels and went stamping down the passage in great possession of an exclusive letter from the pretty Miss Midge Holloway, and little knowing that Gordon Gay had just worked to save his team from disgrace.

CHAPTER 3. The Love-Sick Grammatians are Disillusioned. EXCEPTING at the beginning and end of each term, Rylcombe Station is noted for its "rushes," and on the morning of the 10th of September, when Frank Monk stamped into the book-keeping office, at four-thirty, on this Tuesday afternoon, the ordinary quiet station atmosphere of the moment combined but little in a rare state of excitement.

"You ain't going away, Master Monk?" he asked, looking at his cap respectfully. "If I might be so bold as to say so, sir, you look a bit 'bladdered'."

Frank Monk flushed slightly, and then grinned. "Oh, no, Banks," he said. "I'm not going away. I'm just going to meet a friend to have a smoke." The station-master screwed his saucer face up, and winked knowingly. "I know," he said. "I know that be a beautiful bloom that 'antimony you be wearin'. An' I can smell the lodour from ere."



"I consider you a lot of naughty boys," said the girl, facing the crowd of juniors. "Why aren't you practising for to-morrow's important football match?"

Horace Tadpole blinked in amazement as he finished reading the effusion. Then he read it again, and gave a deep sigh as he folded the letter up and inserted it in his breast-pocket.

"What a lovely letter!" he murmured. "And fancy calling me 'dear Horace'! Fancy writing me at all! I can hardly realize it, as Madge has always been so very terse to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Wootton, forcing a loud laugh. "Of course I didn't, Taddy! What made you think I did?"

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...

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S. A Grand School Tale. By Charles Hamilton.

ANCE OVER THIS FIRST. Penney, a sturdy Cornish lad who had been to a Council school...

out "to go to play cards in Crawcour's study, when Newcome, of the Fourth, seeing Pen's distress, proposed a plan to stop Crawcour & Co.'s little game, and Pen listens eagerly.

the viscount was well supplied with money, there was a limit to his resources. He did not like the idea of again writing to his father for money; but unless luck changed soon, he would have no alternative...

Crawcour sprang to his feet in alarm. If it were another fellow of the Fifth or even a prefect, he did not care so much; but the sharp, imperative knock sounded like that of a master.

The Blades remained pale and trembling. In the dusk of the passage, they had caught sight only dimly of the master's form—they knew the gown, and they saw a gray beard and dark wrinkles on the face, that was all.

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THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"My hat!" shouted Crawcour. "What's the matter?" "We've been done."

"Yes, sir." "I have found you gambling." "Only having a little flutter, sir."



In the doorway stood a bearded figure in cap and gown, it did not enter the study, but raised a hand and pointed to Bunny.

out disturbing Bunny, who was already asleep. The next morning, when Pen rose, he looked curiously at the vicarant.

"Thanks very much, Crawcour! But it can't be done. I'm sorry!" "Why not?" he asked.

ACH! BUT DER GOLF VOS A ROTTEN GAME!!



1. Being a great admirer of loud checks, the old Herr thought that he would take up 'das golfspiel'...



4. The splinters was flying, the Herr was hopping about in amazement, and Ferdie ed me was dancing with er-correr...