

THE

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

# THE EMPIRE

THE WEEKLY STORY-PAPER.

Vol. 1.  
No. 24

Your Readers are informed that the characters in the following Story are purely imaginary; no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.

A  
CAPITAL SCHOOL STORY.  
— By —  
PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

Miss Letitia Lane, from Australia, arrives. "WHEN did Lane say she was coming, Taddy?" said Gordon Gay, the schoolboy actor, interestedly.

Borned Tadpole, the artistic genius of Rylcombe Grammar School, turned round from his easel in Study II, in the Fourth Form passage of that famous seat of learning, and crinkled his lofty brow in deep thought.

"Let me see, Gay. I don't think Lane knew exactly when his aunt from Australia would arrive. This letter said on Saturday or Sunday, if I remember right."

"Saturday or Sunday—ah!" mused Gordon Gay aloud. "That's good."

"Yes, I am sure that was it," said Tadpole, nodding his head. "The letter said that Miss Letitia Lane— that's Lane's Australian aunt's name— had some other visits to pay first, so could not say to a day when she would be here. I wonder what she'll be like!"

"Hasn't Lane ever seen her, Taddy?"

"No. He said he didn't know anything about her except that she's been in Australia for a long time."

"Good again!" murmured Gordon Gay. "But how did Lane come to tell you all this, Taddy?"

"I was with him and Monk and Carboy in the gym, just now, and Lane read the letter out to us. He was quite excited, naturally, at the prospect of his aunt from Australia coming to see him to-day."

"Or to-morrow!" put in Gordon Gay.

"Yes, to-day or to-morrow, to be exact, Gay. I wonder which day she will come!"

"She'll come to-day," said Gordon Gay, with conviction.

Tadpole stared at his leader in a puzzled way.

"Really, Gay! What makes you so sure of that?"

A gleam of fun twinkled in Gordon Gay's eyes for a moment.

"Oh—er—something seems to tell me that Lane's Australian aunt will come this afternoon, Taddy!" he said gravely. "Perhaps it's intuition, or something."

Tadpole's eyes opened wide.

"Really, Gay, that is very interesting," he observed. "I have often thought—"

"Oh, rats—I—I mean, of course, Taddy," said Gordon Gay, with a grin.

"So have I. Taddy! I'm going to find Jack and Harry Weston. I want to speak to them."

And the schoolboy actor ran out of the study to find his three chums with the air of one who had just been struck with the idea of a life-time.

"Of course, I expect she'll be a beautifully well-fashioned and lady-like-looking old lady—"

"And solo curls," said Lane, rather solemnly, as she strolled out into the atrium, after dinner, with his chums, Monk and Carboy. "She's been out in the backwoods of Australia pretty well all her life, you know."



"Oh, dear me!" Miss Letty charged into the three juniors like a runaway motor-car, and with much the same effect. Monk, Lane and Carboy went flying, knocked off their feet by the shock of the charge.

"Oh, you never know!" said Frank Monk, with a sage wag of his head. "Some of those Colonials are awfully smart and up-to-date, you know."

"Rather!" said Carboy.

But Lane did not seem to be comforted much.

"I don't know whether she's coming this afternoon or to-morrow, either," he went on, still more gloomily. "It's a half-holiday this afternoon, so I shall have to stick about here all the blessed time in case the old lady turns up."

"Never mind, old chap; we'll stick by you," said Monk cheerily. "Let's go and have a turn on the bar in the gym."

"Right-ho, Monkey! You're a good old sort! Come on!" said the three chums had a brisk ten minutes on the bar, and then, feeling

somewhat better, they retraced their steps to the sunlit quad.

"Wish we could go for a walk!" said Lane mournfully. "I don't suppose for a moment Aunt Letty will come this afternoon."

"Oh, both!" said Frank Monk. "She's just as likely to as— Hullo!"

"What's up?" asked Lane and Carboy together.

"My hat!"

"What's the matter?"

"Just look there!"

Monk pointed towards the gate of the Grammar School in high excitement, and Lane and Carboy gave simultaneous gasps.

"Great Scott!"

"My—my aunt!"

"Exactly!" grinned Frank Monk. "Your aunt, Lane! Lane's—your Australian aunt, for a pension!"

The figure of a lady could be

plainly seen at the school gates, and, even at that distance, the juniors could see that the lady was elderly and stout, and wore an old-fashioned bonnet and side-curls. The lady who stood hesitating at the gates was, in fact, just the sort of old lady that Lane had expected his aunt from Australia to be.

Lane took one look at the figure, and then started to run towards the gates.

"It's Aunt Letty all right," he said, with something that almost sounded like a groan. "Come on!"

CHAPTER 2.

Miss Letitia on the Run.

LANE sprinted across the quad, and right up to the old lady, who was evidently undecided whether to enter the Grammar School or not.

Lane dragged off his cap as he pulled up, and the old lady immediately addressed him in a somewhat high, cracked voice: "Little boy, could you tell me whether this is Rylcombe Grammar School?"

Lane turned the colour of a well-boiled beetroot, while Carboy and Monk could not help grinning. The old lady—queer figure as she was with her short, stout figure, old-fashioned bonnet and curls, and large green umbrella—looked so kindly and benevolent that she had evidently no idea that she might be wounding Lane's feelings by calling him a "little boy."

"I—I—" stammered Lane. "I mean, yes, madam, this is Rylcombe Grammar School, and—" "I'm looking for—" Master Harry Lane, interrupted the old lady. "Do you know him, little boy?"

Monk and Carboy fairly choked. "I—I am Harry Lane," stammered poor Lane, "and—and you're—"

"Harry!" cried the old lady, clasping him to her in an affectionate embrace, and bestowing kisses freely upon him. "Don't you remember, Aunt Letty from Australia?"

Lane struggled free from his aunt's fond embrace.

"I—I've never seen you before, Aunt Letty, you know!" he gasped.

"Oh, of course! How—how stupid of me!" said Aunt Letty, but little hastily. "But this is a joyful meeting, Harry dear! Who are these little fellows?"

It was then the turn of Frank Monk and Carboy to turn red, while Lane grinned.

"They're two friends of mine, auntie," he explained. "Monk and Carboy."

"Ah! How do you do!" said Miss Letitia kindly shaking hands with the two "Fourth-Formers." "You look quite nice looking, and I think I shall allow Harry to continue to associate with you."

"My—my hat!" murmured Frank Monk, absolutely flabbergasted.

"Did you speak, Master Monk?" inquired Miss Letty pleasantly.

"No, no, Miss Lane!"

"I thought I heard you say something."

"It—it was nothing."

"Ah, then, I was mistaken! Now, Harry, suppose you and your little friends conduct me round the school premises!"

"Sure—certainly, auntie!"

The three boys accompanied Miss Letitia Lane across the quad, at a brisk pace. The old lady seemed to be very active and energetic in spite of her stoutness, and the Grammarians had to walk fast to keep up with her. Miss Lane appeared to notice this herself.

"Step out, my little men!" she said, with a smile of kindly consideration. "I'm afraid you have been allowed to get into slack, slummocky habits, Harry. We'd soon smarten you up in Australia, I'm sure!"

"Really, auntie—" protested Lane.

"It's quite true, Harry. You never see a little fellow in Australia like your friend Master Monk, for instance. Flat chest, flabby muscles, weak knees, big feet—it's terrible! I feel so sorry for the poor boy! The look at Master Carboy! He's worse, if anything!"

Monk and Carboy looked dazed, while Lane grinned helplessly. But Miss Letitia did not seem to notice anything. She bustled along, asking questions and talking all the time, while the three juniors kept pace with her almost automatically.

Many curious looks were cast at

Continued on the next page.



(Continued from the previous page).



By PROSPER HOWARD.

the quartette as they bustled along, and the grins on many of the fellows' faces as they watched Miss Letitia and her escort was the one thing needed to complete the unfortunate Monk and Co.'s discomfiture.

"What is that building over there, Harry dear?" asked Miss Letty suddenly.

"That's the gymnasium, Aunt Letty," answered Lane. "Would you like to look inside? It's a fine gym."

"Certainly, Harry! I should be very much interested," Lane piloted his relative over to the big gym, looking a little relieved. It was possible of his aunt to be interested in the gym, anyway, he thought.

Miss Letty uttered an exclamation. "Oh, Harry, how nice! What are those nice-looking boys doing?"

"They're roller-skating, Aunt Letty—see trying to," said Lane. "Oh, how delightful!" cried Miss Letitia, with a beaming smile.

"I should so love to go roller-skating! Try it at once, Harry!" Monk & Co. gasped.

"Try it at once, Aunt Letty!" stammered Lane. "But you can't! Can't," said Lane sharply. "Can't, Harry? We have no such word in Australia. Surely you can get me a pair of these little go-carriages, and—"

"But—but—" Lane's eyes nearly started out of his head. "Would you really like to have a go, ma'am?"

It was Harry Wootton who spoke. He had come to rest just by Miss Lane, and had heard the old lady's curious request.

"Certainly I should, young man," Then pray take my skates, ma'am," said Harry Wootton lightly.

"How kind of you!" gushed the old lady. "It is a pleasure to meet such a kind, polite young fellow, I'm sure."

Harry Wootton grinned, and began to adjust the skates upon Miss Letty's boots, while Monk & Co. looked as if they were about to have a fit.

Surely the old lady did not intend to start to learn roller-skating at her age, they thought. But Miss Letty soon showed that that was just what she did intend.

CHAPTER 3. Two Aunts!

THE fun was worth watching, too, before long. Miss Letty did not seem half so much at sea on the skates as might have been expected, and after sweeping round the gym a few times, supported by the chums, she essayed

And Miss Letitia led "the way out of the tuckshop, followed by the two Woottons.

Lane looked helplessly at his two chums, and then made frantic signs to them.

"You stay and settle up," he whispered anxiously. "Sit for goodness!" And he ran off after his aunt.

He had just caught her up, with his head in a whirl, when young Dobson, of the Third Form, ran up to him breathlessly.

"I say, Lane," gasped Dobson, "you're to come to the Head at once! There's a young lady with him who's come to see you!"

"A—A young lady to see me?" gasped Lane. "But—"

"You'd better go at once, Harry!" exclaimed Miss Lane hurriedly. "But—but you, Aunt Letty! What—"

"Go at once!" snapped Miss Lane. "These two boys will look after me."

"But—how?" "Quick, now!" "Very well, aunt!"

And Lane, feeling absolutely dared, ran off with young Dobson, of the Third Form.

"Now," muttered Miss Lane, as her nephew and the lag dashed round the corner of the school, "I must look—quick!"

The old lady's voice was no longer cracked and high, but bore a remarkable resemblance to the tones of Gordon Gay, of Study 13.

"Rather!" exclaimed Harry Wootton, in dismay. "It's Lane's real aunt, for a pension!"

"Let's run for the gym. There's no one looking," said Jack Wootton, glancing hurriedly round. "Come on!"

And the three juniors—for, of course, Aunt Letty was none other than the schoolboy actor of the Fourth Form—made a bolt for the gym.

Lane's state of mind when Dr. Monk introduced a pretty girl of about five-and-twenty to him as his Aunt Letty from Australia can better be imagined than described.

To do justice to the real state of affairs, now were Monk and Carboy, who had made the discovery that the things that the famous Aunt Letty had ordered in the tuckshop had been paid for in advance.

"I—I think so. Thanks awfully, aunt!" answered Lane, with a sign of satisfaction and a little relief.

(Our Readers are informed that the character in the following Serial Story and any names used are unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor assumes no responsibility unless and until advised to do so.)

THE SCAPEGRACE OF THE REGIMENT. A Grand New Tale of Army Life.

GLANCE OVID THIS FIRST.

Jack Lyon, an officer in the Royal West Lancashire, a crack Yeomanry regiment, is accused by his cousin Monty of cheating at cards in the mess-table. Jack knows that Monty is the real cheat, but is unable to prove it to the satisfaction of all his comrades.

The "Fighting Fifts," as the Wold-shires are commonly called, have a rough lot, but Jack and Percival go on well with them on the whole, though they make several enemies, one of these, Private "Pasty" Green, gets hold of one of Jack's letters containing the startling news that his cousin Montague has been granted the Wold-shires. Pasty Green guesses his things stand, and seeks profit and revenge for himself in the matter.

(Read on from here.)



Lane's astonishment when Dr. Monk introduced a pretty girl of about five-and-twenty can better be imagined than described.

Sluggish's Parent Skin-Headcase. R. MONTAGUE LYON would want a soldier's errand when he arrived, and Pasty, by hook or crook, meant to get told off for the job himself.

Meaning, the story of Jack's challenge to the Sluggish had flown from lip to lip until the whole barracks were in a ferment of excitement.

Even the officers got wind of it. Some of these were for getting the colonel to prohibit the contest as brutal and dangerous.

The colonel thought it over for a few minutes, and decided to let it proceed.

"A little bloodletting would do both of the scoundrels good," was his verdict. For Jack was generally looked upon by the officers as one of the scapegraces of the regiment.

In fact, the attitude of two grand-motherly old ladies on the subject annoyed him that he ended up at last by announcing that he would be hanged if he did not go and witness the contest himself.

"But cher, Sluggish! 'Eard the news!" sang out Private Stumpy Higgs, popping his head in at the barrack-room door.

His appetite at dinner that day had not been up to its usual mark. He had thick slices of meat and his potatoes were just sufficient for his usual invalid of his physique, he had a collection of patent medicines before him, and was regarding them hungrily.

He was just wondering what reviving effect equal parts of three headache cures and a hair tonic would have, if mixed and taken together, when his old pal Stumpy looked across his dreams.

"Wec' ions!" he demanded sulkily. "Why, the fight between your rookin' and Sluggish?"

"Wec' ions, young Jack! You don't mean to say 's' at it again?" exclaimed Stuffy slyly.

"Yes; but not fasts this time, Stuffy," explained Stuffy. "They're going to fast it out, stripped to the waist, and the first one as shows a hundred stripes on his back is a winner."

"Great sea-lawy!" gasped Stuffy, feeling his backbone rattle at the thought of such barbarous chastisement.

"But Sluggish will mop him to a jelly. Young Lyon don't stand as fairly against him." What made 'im accept the challenge?"

"'E didn't," explained Stuffy. "It was 'im challenged Sluggish. Sluggish was leathering young Crook in the gym, pretending he was fouling 'im, and Lyon dropped in 'im. But can't stop any longer, old son, 'im on fatigue. Tatta!"

"But here—" roared Stuffy after him. His pal, however, had barned on his way.

Stuffy was going to ask him whether Jack Lyon realized what a particularly hot customer he had taken on, but this cheerfully.

"The young man be splintered to himself," why Sluggish 'em to ribbons. He's about the best workman in the blessed drink."

It is in picturing the condition of his protégé after Sluggish had done with 'im, Stuffy quite forgot his own imaginary slingshot.

It occurred to him that he would be better employed, perhaps, in inventing some new factitious work to harden Jack's hide for him as to rob Sluggish's cuts of half their sting.

The same medicines, no doubt, whether it mixed a little differently, he decided.

He might add a double quantity of the hair tonic, perhaps, and there was a little quantity of "cum cury" in his kit-bag somewhere, which he had never been able to use up hitherto. That should be a distinct improvement.

Then there was some alum also, and a lump of pipeclay.

(Author of these amusing, complete tales under Wootton, edited "The Black Champion of the Fourth," by Prosper Howard. Order your EMPIRE Library in advance. Price One Half-price.)



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# THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

A Grand School Tale. By Charles Hamilton.

### GLANCE OVER THIS FIRST.

Dick Penwyn, a student of Cornhill, had who has been to a Council-school, obtains a scholarship at St. Wode's. On his arrival there he is received with open arms by Blagden & Co., who mistake him for another new fellow—Lord Lovell. On discovering their mistake, Blagden & Co. become bitter enemies of both the new juniors, who clamour together. To the disgust of his Form-fellows, "Bunny" Essex is taken up by Crawcour & Co. of the Fifth, whose companionship, Pen sees plainly, is doing the easy-going young vicount good.

With the help of a friendly junior named Newcome, Pen brings off a scheme in which Bunny's promise not to enter Crawcour's study is obtained.

This arrangement does not suit Crawcour, however, who attempts to persuade Bunny to break his word by force, crawling him and shaking him savagely. "Here, I say, drop that!" stutters Lord Lovell. "What's the little game?"

(See page on with the story.)

"Rescue, Fourth!" roared Crawcour.

"I'll lick you to a jelly if you don't apologise immediately." "Oh, I'll apologise," said Bunny. "Let rest, I don't mind apologising. But what for? Leggo! You're crinkling my collar, don't you see?" Crawcour released him.

"You're coming to the study this evening?" he asked. Bunny shook his head. "No; I've promised not to."

"I tell you you were being spoiled by some cheeky junior—some cad who had taken a master's gown."

"That makes no difference, I promised."

"Good!" said Pen. Crawcour gave the scholarship-junior a savage look.

"Hold your tongue, you work-house cad!" he exclaimed. "Now then, Lovell—"

"Hold on!" said Bunny. "You mustn't call my friend names, you know. I don't like it. It's childish, you know."

"Upon the whole," said Bunny liberally, "I think I'd rather drop your acquaintance, in any case, Crawcour. You're a cad. You don't treat Pen decently, and I don't like the way you shove your paws on a fellow. I don't think I shall know you any longer. What?"

Smack! The angry Fifth-Former's hand came swinging on Bunny's head, and the vicount reeled across the passage and fell.

With the spring of a tiger Pen lurched into the locker as he was about to follow up his attack. "Black, you low cad!" shrieked Crawcour.

But Pen did not recede. His fists beat upon the Fifth-Former's face, and Crawcour staggered back. Then the powerful Fifth-Former grasped the scholarship-boy and put forth his strength, and Pen was availing of his feet in the air and lunged fiercely to the wall. He crashed upon it and fell, and Crawcour, who was beside himself with rage, kicked him as he lay stazed on the floor.

There was a yell of indignation from Newcome, who was coming out of the Fourth Form dormitory with a crowd of juniors. Even Blagden joined in the shout.

"Shame!" Pen tried to stagger up, but Crawcour's hand pressed him down ere he could gain his feet.

"Rescue, the Fourth!" shouted Newcome.

A crowd of juniors rushed down the passage, and in a moment Crawcour was swept off his feet. He went, rolling and tumbling along the passage, hustled and shoved by the Fourth-Formers. Till, throwing his dignity as captain of the Fifth to the winds, he fairly took to his heels and ran.

Go!

"DONOVAN helped Pen to his feet. A crowd of the Fourth gathered round the new boy, with real sympathy in their faces. They had seen him tackling Crawcour of the Fifth—Crawcour, the chief of the Blades—Crawcour, who was never interfered with by the prefects, and who could defy the captain of the school! Pen had tackled him in defence of his friend! It had a strange effect upon the juniors.

There was not a fellow there who would have ventured, in like circumstances, to raise his hand to Crawcour. Only Newcome had had the audacity to propose rushing the Fifth-Former by force of numbers.

The Fourth had been carried away by indignation as they saw the way Crawcour was treating Pen. But some of them were already thinking of the possible consequences with dismay.

But the whole Form seemed to have forgotten for the moment that the boy whom Crawcour was silencing was the unpopular scholarship-boy.

"Did he hurt you much, old chap?" asked Newcome.

"Sure, the basto was kicking him when he was down!" "Finesse the kid standing up to Crawcour!" exclaimed Hake. "Why—well, my hat!"

"Plucky, and no mistake!" said Bamford, full indignantly.

"Sure, he's been lannered by a Fourth-Former," grinned Cotton. "He can't get out of that. He can speak as good as he likes, but we can always remind him of that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Blagden had walked on. He would not join in the ovation Pen was receiving. But even Blagden was feeling the general influence.

When he met Pen at the breakfast-table a little later he stoutly told a little later he stoutly told the schoolboy that he was a good looking fellow, and ready gibes were wanting.



As the vicount reeled across the passage and fell Pen hurried himself upon the bully with the spring of a tiger.

"By Jove, old fellow!" Lord Lovell remarked to Pen, when they went out into the quadrangle after breakfast—"By Jove, you know, the fellows seem to like it famously, what you did to Crawcour, you know!"

Pen laughed. "I believe most of the Fourth hate that swanking bouncer," he remarked. "But, I say, Bunny, I want to finish what I was telling you when Crawcour interrupted me."

"Go ahead!" "You're done with Crawcour now!"

"Yes, rather! I wouldn't be found dead of the study," said Pen. "Yes, the same story with him!" said his lordship emphatically. "No fear! What?"

"Well, listen. I know who it was played the master last night in Husky's car and gown," said Pen. "It was fixed up between Newcome and me."

"We worked it up to give those Fifth-Form cads a scare, and to get out of the study," said Pen. "Newcome was the chap, and I was backing him up."

"Oh!" "If I've offended you by interfering," said Pen, "you can punch my head if you like, and I'll say nothing, but—"

"Bunny burst into a laugh. "My dear kid, it's all right! I know what Crawcour is like now, and I'm glad to be rid of him. Do you know, I went on Bunny seriously."

"I rather think now that Crawfish was taking me in all the time, and wasn't at all the kind of fellow he represented himself to be."

Pen laughed. "Go on!" he remarked. "I dare say you've set it all along."

"Look here, old man, you say?" Cotton said to him. "I know the fellow's a Council-school bouncer, and all that, but there's no denying that he's got a good stick."

Blagden snifled. "What's that got to do with your demands?" "It's a beauty! Give me that same fellow in the collar, ain't it?"

"Well, the Fifth haven't wanted over us so much lately," said Cotton. "And they don't strut down the Fourth-Form passage as if they owned it. Besides, that chap Bunty is quite decent, and I suppose we can speak to a fellow a vicount clumps up and—"

"Well, you wanted to be chummy with him, yourself, old Blaggy?"

"Ret!" "Ret!" he, Bamford!

"I suppose so, when he marched in all down in the rain to meet the chap when he came to St. Wode's," said Bamford.

Blagden sneered bitterly. "I suppose this all means that you're going to take up the Council-school bouncer?" he exclaimed fiercely.

"Well, not exactly like him up," said Bamford. "But there's no harm in being civil to a chap, I suppose."

"That's it," chimed in Stat. "You see, Blaggy, it's not a bit of good going against public opinion in the Form."

"That's so, Blaggy?" "Take it like a pull, old man!" said Bamford.

Blagden glared at them. "You fellows won't have anything to do with the Council-school outsider!" he exclaimed fiercely. "That's settled!"

(This popular school tale will be concluded shortly. Look out for "Tom Myrtle's Tale," a grand new story of schoolboy adventures, by Martin Clifford, to commence soon.)

### WHY CLARA WANTS A NEW YOUNG MAN!



1. "I say, Tommy, I can learn your father coming," said Clara's latest young man hurriedly. "Can you tell me where to hide?"



3. Then Tommy locked the cupboard door, and the house-pier that was sleeping inside proceeded to introduce himself to Mr. Hanker.



2. "Certainly!" said the obliging little fellow. "Step in here, Mr. Hanker, and you'll be all right."

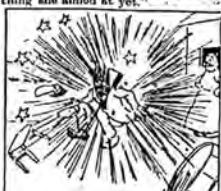


4. The noise of the arguments speedily brought Clara and her par on the scene, and Mr. Hanker was discovered looking the wiser for wear.

### HOW'S THAT, UMPIRE?



1. Mike: "Throw away, Marier. I've never known a woman hit anything she aimed at yet."



2. Marier: "Certainly, Mike! You didn't know I'd joined the Suffragettes, did you?" Whoopster! Wallah!

### A N-ALE-ING TRICK!



1. Mr. Spatts had sent Bertie Bounce out for a glass of ale, which the dutiful Bertie fetches and places on old Spatts's desk.



3. As O'Deac expected, Bertie is unable to resist a "taster" before old Spatts comes to refresh himself. Olog-glug!



2. Noticing this, and also that Spatts is engaged in another part of the office, O'Deac places a headdress powder in the ale.



4. With the result that Bertie spends the rest of the day sneezing, causing old Spatts to have several fits.