



The Prefect's Secret

A SCHOOL STORY.

Mr. Bulkeley opened the wicket gate with his key, and master and prefect passed in, and the gate was locked again.

In the same grim silence they crossed the School Close, and entered the lighted hall of the school house.

Several fellows were looked at them curiously, among the rest of the chums of the Fourth, who did not fail to note Mr. Bulkeley's triumphant look, and the sad expression of the head prefect of St. Kate's.

"What has happened, Pat?" muttered Dick Pongely, in dismay.

"Sure and I don't know, yo gossion," said Pat. "But the Bulker gave a grip on poor old Clavering at last, I should say—the baste!"

"He was watching him after all!"

"Looks like it."

"The cat! He ought to be straggled! He ought to be boiled in oil! Hello! Hello! He's speaking, the rotter!"

Mr. Bulkeley glanced at his silent com-

panion of the Principal's study, and the deep voice of Dr. Biddolph bade him enter.

The form master darted a triumphant glance at Clavering as he went in. But the prefect was not looking at him.

Dr. Biddolph looked up in surprise as the Form master and the head prefect of St. Kate's entered the study.

He could see, of course, by the expression of their faces, that something unusual had occurred and something not of a pleasant nature.

"Yes," he said, adjusting his glasses, "What is it?"

"I have a statement to make to you, sir," said the Form master, quietly. "It concerns Clavering, and therefore I have directed him to be present when I made it."

The Doctor looked amazed.

"You surprise me, Mr. Bulkeley."

"I am afraid I shall surprise you further, sir, before I am finished, but I am sure you will believe that I speak, and have acted, only from a sense of duty, and of what is due to the college and yourself."

"Certainly, Mr. Bulkeley. I am not likely to doubt your motives, or those of any master in the school, I hope. Pray make your statement."

THE TRUTH AT LAST.

Mr. Bulkeley drew a deep breath.

"Very well, sir," he said. "First of all it came to my knowledge some time ago that Clavering was keeping mysterious appointments with someone in Berryford Wood whose existence he never mentioned at St. Kate's."

Dr. Biddolph started an astonished look at Clavering.

"Is this correct, Clavering?"

ing the matter to you, and bringing punishment upon Clavering, I would attempt to find the high place of the scoundrel whom he met, and—"

Clavering made a fierce gesture.

"Measure your words, Mr. Bulkeley," he said between his teeth.

"Silence, Clavering!" said the Head authoritatively.

Clavering bit his lip hard.

"The person he is referring to, sir, is my cousin. Do you see me stand patiently and heard such words applied to him?"

"It would be better, perhaps, to leave out such expressions, under the circumstances, Mr. Bulkeley," said the Head. "Pray continue."

Mr. Bulkeley bowed, though his eyes gleamed.

"Very well, sir. I proceed at Clavering at the rendezvous this evening, with the intention of tracking the—the person, he met, and handing him over to the police. I thought that this would be the simplest way of satisfying justice, and ridding Clavering of an evil companion."

The Doctor nodded without speaking.

Clavering barred my way. He hurled me to the ground—"

"Was it possible?"

"He will deny it."

"Do you deny it, Clavering?"

"No, sir."

"You—yo— attacked a form-master?"

"He forced me to, sir."

"Yes— you— you dare—"

"To tell the exact truth, he attacked me first, and I will not deny that; but he had fastened upon passing me, I should have stopped him by force."

"That is my statement, sir, said Mr. Bulkeley, with a gleam of malice in his eye. "I leave the punishment of him owing to you, if I do not even demand that he be expelled from the college. I am content to leave the matter to your hands."

The Doctor passed his hand over his brow.

Under ordinary circumstances he said, "a boy who struck a form-master would be compelled to quit the school at once. I cannot regret, however, that Clavering is second at the best of any in the college. He has never to my recollection shown anything like an intractable or insubordinate spirit. I cannot imagine that he would suddenly develop suddenly qualities for no reason. At least I shall give him every chance to explain his conduct."

"I certainly have no objection to that, sir, but I think you will find the Professor's Ex-Ex- stated them."

"Clavering, I hope you will conceal nothing from me. As your Headmaster and one who has always been your friend, I am, you I am entitled to your confidence."

"I know it, sir, said Clavering, quietly. "I should not dream of concealing anything from you, Dr. Biddolph, save what the matter has been dragged to the light."

"Good! Whom was the person you met in Berryford Wood?"

Arthur Clavering, sir.

Your cousin, I think you said.

Yes, sir.

It is true that he is in danger from the police?"

Yes, sir. Hear me! He came to the neighbourhood of the school some time ago to ask my help. His own people my own people, had cast him off for a long time, and upon them. We had always been friends. I knew his nature to be foolish and weak. I knew that he had been in debt, and that he was in a bad way. Was it my place to be hard upon him?"

The Head was silent.

"The Good Books say, sir, judgment, that ye be slow to anger," said Clavering. "I knew Arthur had done wrong but I knew too that he was not half as bad as those who had led him in it, and when the law would not touch."

"I understand your feeling, Clavering. Yet in helping a fugitive to escape from the police, you risked not only punishment there, but actual imprisonment and disgrace."

"I understand, sir, said Clavering.

Could I abandon my own flesh and blood in distress, sir? He begged for help with tears and promises of reform."

"You had helped him?"

"I raised the money from various sources and sent him to Liverpool to take ship for America."

But it seems that he is still here?"

He has not, sir, said Clavering. "I do not deny, sir, that he has been careless and selfish to an extent almost criminal. But I pitied his weakness. He came back for help, and you know my feelings. I thought he had not done so, that he was still in danger, owing to my help."

I can feel for you, Clavering."

"Thank you, Dr. Biddolph. I ought to give him one more chance before I deserted him entirely."

The Doctor nodded.

Whether his mind showed merely sympathy (Continued on page 7.)

Pat O'Neill, of the Fourth Form of St. Kate's, was out walking when he met a she by individual, who gave him a letter to deliver to George Clavering, the head prefect. Clavering called him to speak of the incident some way to his than. Kenny, the she, read the letter, and listened to the conversation, and promptly informed the Master of the Fourth, the Master of the Fourth, Mr. Bulkeley, who was awaiting him and his friends with Clavering, and had spent upon him before, decided on having the she's account of the matter, to follow Clavering, and one that he could not do so without a letter signed.

Mr. Bulkeley cracked through the wicket gate and heard the conversation carried on between Clavering and Arthur. Clavering arranged to help Arthur once again, and to meet him the following evening. Pat decides to shadow the Bulker. Dick protests Kenny following Pat. Pat returns and gives an account of matters. The Bulker spent on Clavering again. Overhearing of the conversation between the two, he decides to follow Arthur at a head of him over to the school. Pat has a narrow escape, but the Bulker was following him, and in preventing him following Arthur, brought him to his ground.

TAKEN BEFORE THE HEAD.

But nothing was farther from Mr. Bulkeley's thought at that moment than renewing either the recall with Clavering or the pursuit of the mysterious "Arthur."

He knew that the latter must be far away by this time without a trace left behind to guide a she, and as for announcing the prefect again, Mr. Bulkeley had had too severe a lesson to dream of doing so.

He staggered to his feet. His face was white and strained, and his arms and ribs ached from the terrible grip that had been put upon them.

Clavering looked at him calmly.

"You— you have attacked me, Clavering," said Mr. Bulkeley, in a quivering voice. "For the second time in your career, you have dared to lay hands upon a form master."

"You forced me to, sir."

"We shall see the Head's opinion about that."

"Clavering's face went a shade paler."

"When you intend to take this matter before Dr. Biddolph?"

"I do."

"You will do as you like."

"Perhaps you have some regrets now," sneered Mr. Bulkeley. "You do not feel so bold as you did ten minutes ago?"

"You are quite mistaken," said Clavering calmly. "I have no regrets concerning my action— unless I believe to have been perfectly right and justifiable."

"We shall see whether you will be able to justify it to the Head."

"I shall try."

The form master pulled himself together, and started off towards the school.

"Come with me, Clavering," he said.

The tone was imperative, but Clavering, though his lip curled, took no other notice of the new assumption of authority.

It was his intention to go with Mr. Bulkeley in order that the Head of St. Kate's might hear him out of the case.

He walked in grim silence by the side of the form master.

Not a word was spoken as they covered the distance between Berryford Wood and the ancient school of St. Katherine's.

He felt fully justified, in his own mind, in the course he had taken, but it was extremely disagreeable, if the Head of St. Kate's would take that view.

Clavering was not even to fear the consequences of any action he committed, but the sentence of expulsion from a public school was a terrible one, and it might mean his ruin.

He had black and bitter food for thought as he walked up to the ancient gates of the school with the grim, silent form master.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bulkeley knocked at the door



"Pray calm yourself, Mr. Bulkeley."

"Yes, sir."

"Go on, Mr. Bulkeley."

"I do not wish it to look into the matter, especially as some of the boys of St. Kate's have been led away by blackguardly associates into betting habits, and as I came to my knowledge that Clavering was in debt among his Form-fellows."

"Is that correct, Clavering?"

"Quite correct, sir."

"You are in debt to members of the Sixth?"

"I have borrowed money, sir; but I am certain that it never came to Mr. Bulkeley's knowledge until last night, when he believed he belonged to a private conversation between myself and another person."

The Doctor frowned slightly.

"Go on, Mr. Bulkeley," he said again. The Form-master's cheek was red at Clavering's cutting words, but he went on in a calm voice.

"I therefore resolved to keep an eye on Clavering, to warn him of his danger if he fell into bad ways, or to bring the matter to your notice, sir, as Head of St. Kate's, if the thing had gone too far for a mere reprimand from a master to have any effect."

"I therefore followed him, and found out whom the person was whom he was meeting secretly after dark in the wood. It was a man who is habitually in the police."

Dr. Biddolph started violently.

"Are you quite sure of this, Mr. Bulkeley?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"But how do you know?"

"It came from his own lips."

"Oh! Go on."

I referred very deeply upon the matter, sir, and came to the conclusion that before mention-

THE PEEPER'S SECRET.

(Continued from page 2).

for the protest or approval of his action, it was difficult. But Mr. Bulkeley's face grew dark. He felt the ground slipping from under his feet, as it were. This was not the attitude he had expected the Head of St. Kate's to take.

"I have made arrangements to sell my watch, sir, to help him go. Until I can do so he is hiding in the neighbourhood. I may say further, that your course would be to release him from former employers, they knew that he was less guilty than others, and are quite content that he should escape punishment by leaving the country, as they have explicitly informed his mother. It is only because of the machinery of the law, once in motion, cannot be stopped that Arthur Clavering is still in danger from the police."

Mr. Bulkeley sneered, with the view of casting doubt upon this statement, but the sneering faded from his face as he caught the glance of Dr. Biddish, which had been very stern.

"I quite believe you, Clavering," said the Head, with marked emphasis. "I am certain of the absolute truth of every word you have uttered."

Mr. Bulkeley attempted to follow Arthur with the view of betraying him to the police, said Clavering. "I stopped him. Can you blame me, sir? He thought of waddling into evil company. Yet he admits at the same time that he overheard our talk, and therefore must have known that Arthur was fugitive when I was helping whom I met unwillingly, from a sense of duty."

"That is your version," said Mr. Bulkeley. The Head looked at him very coldly. "It is a version I am convinced is true, Mr. Bulkeley. I think you have misjudged Clavering, and that you have been very hard on him."

"Dr. Biddish—"

"Clavering has acted rashly, perhaps, but he cannot be accused of anything but an ill-judged generosity."

The form master was silent.

"He had spoken just then he would probably have uttered words which would have rendered it impossible for him to retain his position at St. Kate's."

The Head turned to Clavering again. "I should have been better satisfied," said Clavering, "if this matter had not been brought to my attention. I do not feel called upon to interfere. But I cannot allow you to sell your watch."

"Clavering's face fell."

"One moment. I cannot allow you to sell your watch, but I can advance money to you if you are in need of it, and I will do so."

"The form master made a gesture of rage."

"Dr. Biddish! You will aid in cheating justice—"

"The Head gave him a stern glance."

"I beg your pardon, but it is possible—"

"The fact is, Mr. Bulkeley, that having meddled in an affair that would have been better left alone, you have forced us all in an awkward position," said Dr. Biddish. "The master was entirely out of your jurisdiction as a form master, especially as you are not the sixth, the sixth, the form to which Clavering belongs."

"If I discover that someone is entering into speculations calculated to bring disgrace upon the school—"

"Exactly, but you discovered nothing of the kind with reference to Clavering. His cousin appears to have been more deserving of pity than the punishment and Clavering himself has only acted with ill-adviced generosity."

"So he says—"

"He does not say so; I may so, after hearing the facts! His tale is—"

"His tale is true, Mr. Bulkeley; I fully credit every word he has uttered."

"Bulkeley bit his lip till the blood ran. "There is no more to say, sir, as I have said, placed us both in an awkward position; we are, in fact, confederates in the case of Arthur Clavering."

"No, sir," he said, after a pause. "I am sure I can rely upon you, Mr. Bulkeley," said the Head, in a marked tone. "The unhappy matter will terminate at once. I do not think you need stay any longer, Mr. Bulkeley. I fully appreciate the zeal you have shown in this matter, but it is misdirected, and that I am forced to regard as a complete exculpation of Clavering."

Mr. Bulkeley quoted the Head's study with feelings that may be better imagined than described. His thunderbolt had been hushed; and had recoiled upon him. He deserved nothing better; but that did not make it easier to bear.

"Now, Clavering," said the Head, "I will hand you immediately the money you require. Seek out your cousin at once and let him go. I do not know whether I am acting quite rightly in this matter, but I believe it is never very wrong to do a good deed."

"God bless you, sir," said Clavering, and the tears were standing thick in his eyes. And Clavering left the Head's study in a much more cheerful mood than he had entered it in. Mr. Bulkeley's hatred had not ruined all; it had opened the way to relief from an intolerable situation, much against the intentions of the spiteful form master.

As Clavering passed the stairs there was a terrific yell, and a figure came bolting down. The prefect stopped in amazement.

A strange figure, blue and streaming with tar, which had been swamped in huge quantities over his head, and had smothered his face and back, and run in streams down his clothes.

"Mr. Bulkeley, sir!"

The affair of the tar was inquired into, but the delinquents were never discovered. The chums of the Fourth could have told, but they kept their knowledge to themselves. It was one of the possibilities Mr. Bulkeley had to pay for his zeal in unearthing "THE PEEPER'S SECRET."

THE END.

Practical Advice.

MR. LOVELER was one of those people who on every possible occasion consulted his solicitor. Nothing pleased him more than to go to law. The lawyers regarded him as an invaluable asset.

"I have been grossly injured!" he exclaimed, rushing into the office of his solicitor the seventh time in three days.

"In what way?" asked the solicitor, somewhat wearily.

"My next-door neighbour has declared he will pull my nose next time he meets me. What shall I do about it?"

"Well," said the former, as if he had given the case due deliberation, "I should sue the fellow. My bill will follow in due course."

Poor Payment for the Doctor.

A PROMINENT physician in an Arkansas town has an extensive practice among the labouring classes where economy is the best policy.

One day the little daughter of one of the

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No, Letty Gros-mith, we cannot give more room to stories and less to pictures. You must remember PICTURE FUN was started to give a real picture paper for those who like illustrated fun, and if we do by the success that has attended our efforts we know the majority are in favour of as many pictures as possible.

YOUR EDITOR.

Surprised the Inspector.

It was the yearly inspection of the school, and the inspector, a tall, thin, wizen-faced gentleman, was questioning on the meanings of words contained in the reading lesson.

"The spectre from behind him rose," quoted he. Then, turning his eyes upon a girl in the front desk, he asked: "What is the meaning of specter?"

"The little girl's face paled as she rose. "Please, sir, I don't know," she admitted shamefacedly.

"Just think, girl," he said. "The man was dreadfully frightened, and the spectre rose behind him and frightened him still more." She was going to say something, but stopped. "Come on, girl," said the inspector, "speak out. Don't be frightened. I'm not going to eat you. Now, what is this spectre that usually frightens people?"

He waited in silence, then the little girl suddenly beaming her eyes up, answered: "The school 'specter, sir."

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Mr. Bulkeley set his teeth.

A crowd gathered at once. Among them, of course, were the chums of the Fourth, who led off with yells of laughter at the sight of the tarry form master.

"Sure and he's been taking a bad tar," ejaculated Pat.

"What has happened?" demanded the Head, coming out of his study, disturbed by the rill of laughter, that rang through the building.

"Someone placed a pan of tar over the door of my room," screamed Mr. Bulkeley, trying to wipe the tar out of his eyes and look about him. "It fell upon my head as I entered, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The laughter rang long and loud.

The Doctor could not help smiling at the ridiculous figure the form master cut.

"Pray, calm yourself, Mr. Bulkeley—"

"Calm myself! I demand—"

"The matter shall be severely punished." Mr. Bulkeley muttered something which was fortunate for him the Doctor did not hear, and made a bee line for the nearest bath-room.

He left a trail of sticky tar wherever he moved. The Doctor, unable to quell the general merriment, retreated to his study, and Clavering went his way, but it was long before he was laughing again, broke up, and his chums finally hugged each other over the success of their little "joke."

"Now and it worked," said Pat, "and to want my way; but it was long before he was laughing again, broke up, and his chums finally hugged each other over the success of their little 'joke.'"

"Hurrah!" shouted Dick.

men became very sick, and the doctor was hurriedly called in.

He arrived, and administered a soothing treatment to the patient, who was soon sleeping soundly, and upon leaving prescribed some medicine which was to be obtained at the drug store.

The next day the visit had to be repeated, and some more medicine bought. This was kept up until the little girl was entirely well when the father went to see the doctor to settle the bill.

As his purse was rather slim, he approached the doctor with many misgivings.

"Here is your bill, sir," began the doctor, handing him the paper. This for the drugs from the store, and this for my visit."

The poor man looked and was horrified at the amount requested, realising that he could not pay it all. Then, after thinking a moment, he took out his purse and laid some pieces of change in the physician's hand, saying: "Here is the money for the drugs, doctor, and—for we return your coin."

In School.

SCHOOL-TEACHERS must often find it difficult to preserve their gravity on hearing the replies to one of their questions. The following instances have been brought to our notice and will doubtless make our readers smile:

Teacher: "What do you think the brothers said when the cup was found in Benjamin's rack?"

Girl of five: "Wicked words!"

Teacher: "What do you suppose happened after the thin cow had eaten the fat one?"

Answer (girl of five): "They busted."