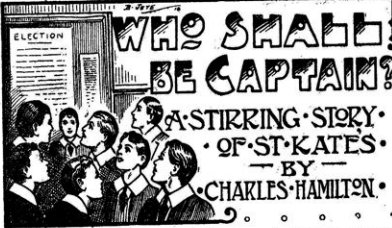


THE EDITOR'S CHAT.



MR. BULKELEY MAKES A SPOONSTORY.
Who he was disinclined to, his rival
was hard at work.
Cunningham could offer few inducements
to the better class of fellows to vote for him.
But the meaner sort found plenty of reasons.
Cunningham lacked up facing, and even
hobby in the Sixth could wag the joints at his
own sweet will if Cunningham got in as captain.
Cunningham favoured the claims of the Fifth.
Cunningham had a good head, and
admitted, plumped for him.
And so, though as a schoolfellow even his
friends did not care much for him, he found
a powerful backing.
Which would win was a secret as yet to
the keenest observers.

Clavering now," said Kenny. "They wanted
to vote for him all the time."
"I understand." I'll remember Pat O'Neill,
and give him a return for his favours, with
interest, at the earliest opportunity," said
Cunningham, with a savage glitter in his eyes.
"But for him the election would have been
a walk-over for me."
"That's certain."
"As it is, how do you make the figures in
the Fourth?"
"Six for you, and thirty-four for Clavering."
"In the Fifth it's twenty-two for me, and six
for Clavering. That makes a total of forty
for Clavering, and twenty-eight for me, in
all."

Some of the fellows were Clavering's colours,
and some Cunningham's, the former being red
and the latter blue, and the red favours were
about equal in number with the blue.
"But a good half of the voters did not show any
decided sign of preference as yet, either for
personal comfort's sake, as with the juniors
or to enhance their value in the eyes of the
candidates."
As so the result remained quite uncertain
through Wednesday, the evening of which had
been fixed upon for the election.

"That's bad!" But how does it go in
the Sixth?"
"Sixteen for me, and four for Clavering
as far as I can make out."
"That would make the numbers just equal."
"True, but there are some doubtful ones.
Some of the fellows have made up their minds
not to vote, at any one of those I am counting
on may fall me."
"Then it looks as if Clavering will have it."
"Yes, and by only a few votes—three or
four at the most," said Cunningham, with a
dark shade settling upon his brow. "Any-
way, it will be a very close thing. I wish you
could have brought me a better report from
just a few of the Sixth."

It was to come off at seven o'clock in the
big school lecture hall, and as the doors were to
be closed at seven, most of the fellows had
made up their minds to be in their places early.
Nobody left outside after seven would not be
admitted, as the counting would then be proceed-
ing.

"I wish I could!" but now the youngsters
are no longer afraid of voting as they like, the
tide has set against us too strongly."
"Kenny must find a way," said Cunningham,
abruptly.
Kenny looked uneasy.
"I don't see how I can find a way," he said.
"Make the young rascals good for votes. Look
here, I'll stake half-a-crown apiece for votes to-
night, five shillings if possible. Will that
make all right?"
Kenny hesitated.

"The senior looked up, and laid down his
pen, as Kenny entered.
"Well, how are matters going in the
Fourth?" he asked.
"Rather." Mr. Kenny's cheerful reply.
Cunningham scowled.
"You mean that things are going against
me?"
"All along the line." It is due to Pat O'Neill,
of course. But for him, had he done Pat O'Neill
would have voted for you, and lots of the others
would have cut the election and not voted at
all."

"Speak, can't you?" said Cunningham,
roughly.
"Well, it might work, Cunningham, but if
I were counting money for votes, I should get
into a fearful row."
"Don't get caught then. Cut along!"
"Just as it is," said Kenny.
"Oh! I go and do as I tell you."
Kenny slowly left the room. He passed Mr.
Bulkeley, the master of the Fourth, in the
passage, and turning his head, saw the former
master enter Cunningham's study.

"But now—"
"No every member of the form has promised
to vote."
"Not for Clavering."
"All except six will be voting for Clavering."
"You are sure?" I have only six backers
in the Fourth!" asked Cunningham, with
a dark look on his face. "What about the
Lower Fourth—the Remove?"
The senior included this question.

"Cunningham looked surprised as Mr. Bulkeley
came in to his study and closed the door.
He was not in the habit of receiving visitors
from the form-masters.
Mr. Bulkeley glanced at him and nodded with
as much of a smile as he could manage to com-
municate on his own face.
"I have just looked in for a chat, Cuning-
ham."
"Yes, sir," said the Sixth-former under-
standingly.

"Only six backers in the Fourth Form
and the Remove," said Cunningham, with an
ugly look in his eyes. "As a result I shall
remember that, if I am in a way—I mean
well, as a matter of fact, Cunningham, you
are so rough on the kids, especially
leaving the Fifth far behind, that it's no wonder.
Of course, that's got you the votes of the
Fifth. The Fifth is practically solid for
you."
"Cunningham nodded.
"Yes, I have been making a calculation.
There are only half-a-dozen in the Fifth who
will vote for Clavering, and they are rapid
followers, who admire his play."
"Only there are a good many more fellows
in the Fourth than in the Fifth Form," said
Kenny, and so—
"That was counting upon better
luck than the Fourth."
"The fact is, Pat O'Neill has made the juniors
look up, and they're not afraid to vote for

"It's about the election."
"Yes, sir; I am one of the candidates."
"And Clavering is the other."
"Just as it is."
What Mr. Bulkeley could possibly have said
to say to him about the election passed Cuning-
ham's power of fathoming. He knew that the
master of the Fourth Form hated Clavering,
and therefore would probably wish for the
success of the prefect's rival. But it was
impossible for a form-master to interfere in the
matter at all.
"I do not like the idea of Clavering becoming
captain of St. Kate's," said Mr. Bulkeley,
looking at the senior.
"There are a good many who don't, sir."
"I understand that, but since the latest news
of O'Neill's, feeling has gone very much against
you in the lower forms—the Fourth Form and
the Remove."
"Yes," said Cunningham, snapping his teeth.
"I thought so! Instead of the easy victory

you expected over Clavering, you will have a
hard fight to maintain your own ground."
"That's how the case stands at present, sir."
"I am sorry for it. I sincerely hoped that
you would become captain of St. Kate's, and
I wish I could help you. But of course that
is impossible."
"You are very kind, Mr. Bulkeley."
"Not at all. I can remember some school
elections in my youth where all sorts of means
were used to ensure my success, but of course
you would hardly do for St. Kate's."
Cunningham pricked up his ears.
"I don't know so much about that, sir,"
he said slyly. "I shall stop at a captain
to prevent Clavering from getting in as a title
of the school."
"Oh! I was thinking of what would be
really a bad thing," said Mr. Bulkeley,
laughing. "Nothing you would care to do, of
course. For instance, the doors of the hall are
to be fastened at seven o'clock to-night, and
one will be allowed in after the counting has
once commenced."
"That's so, sir. Anybody arriving late will
be shut out, and will have to wait until a
jolly good care that none of my fellows turn up
late."
"Will Clavering be so careful, do you think?"
Cunningham laughed.
"I'm sure," said Mr. Bulkeley, "He's going
through this election business with his nose in the
air, and won't sell his fingers with any electrifying
business, you see."
"I see," said Cunningham, "Suppose some friends of yours
were to make sure of the absence of some of
his voters till after the doors were locked—"
Cunningham started.

"Of course, I know we would not be a party
to anything of the kind," said Mr. Bulkeley,
"I was only telling you of incidents in school
elections in my younger days. I can remember
one occasion when about a dozen lads were
locked up in a coal cellar, and kept there till
the voting was over."
"But didn't they sneak afterwards?"
"They could not sneak of course—"
"That's true."
"And in any case, the election was settled,
and could not be undone."
"Quite true."
"Of course, nothing of the kind would be
possible here," said Mr. Bulkeley. "I am
sorry to hear that you fear a defeat so much,
but I must say that in such matters were going
on. You have my best wishes."
"And with a friendly nod the form-mas-
ter left the study."
Cunningham remained alone, with a thought-
ful frown upon his face.
Exactly how the election would go no one
could determine until it actually took place,
but it was certain to be a very close one.
A few votes on either side would certainly
turn the scale.

It half-a-dozen, or even three or four, of the
Clavering voters could be kept away from the
hall, the matter would be decided.
Cunningham began to pace his study, a gleam
in his narrow eyes. He understood well
enough that Mr. Bulkeley had meant.
Without venturing to speak out plainly, the
master of the Fourth had given him a strong
hint as to the course he might pursue.
Why not?
After the election, whatever complaints were
made, the result would be fixed; a complaint
from one side could not be met with one from
the other, and the result would resolve itself
into a matter of mutual recognition.
Cunningham would be captain of St. Kate's!
His eyes flashed at the thought!
Cunningham looked up and down the
matter at all; it would be easy to act through
Kenny, and if there were trouble afterwards
the whole affair could be attributed to a quarrel
between his own faction, of which the Sixth were quite
ignorant.
"I'll do it, by jove!" muttered Cunningham.
There was a bump at his door, and it flew
open. Cunningham turned round with a gasp,
and then gave a yell of astonishment at the
sight that presented itself in his view.

It was Kenny—but the cad of the Fourth
was not alone. He had two companions with
him.
His collar was torn out and his hair ruffled,
his face smothered with a mixture of red and
black ink, and his whole appearance suggested
madness. He looked put through with a good
consciousness and thorough-going manner.
Cunningham stared at him in blank amaze-
ment.
"What does this mean, Kenny? How dare
you come to my study in this state?"
"Do you think I've done it on purpose?"
howled Kenny.
"I don't know. It means?"
"I've been ragged by Pat O'Neill and his
friends, through trying to carry out your
orders," howled Kenny.
"Cunningham help grinning at the
wretched-looking cad of the Fourth. Kenny
had certainly had a hard time of it.

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Cricket Competition on page seven. Please
remember that those of you who send in six
copies of the weekly paper have a splendid
chance of winning that lovely Gold Watch-
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then, chums, I know very well you would like
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You are specially invited to enter the Weekly Crick-
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Pat O'Neill and told him what I had said."
"And what then?"
"Then all the beasts got hold of me and frigh-
tened me round the class-room, and down
the passages, and smothered me with ink."
"You mean that things are going against
me?"
"All along the line." It is due to Pat O'Neill,
of course. But for him, had he done Pat O'Neill
would have voted for you, and lots of the others
would have cut the election and not voted at
all."

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