

GRAND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES FOR ALL!

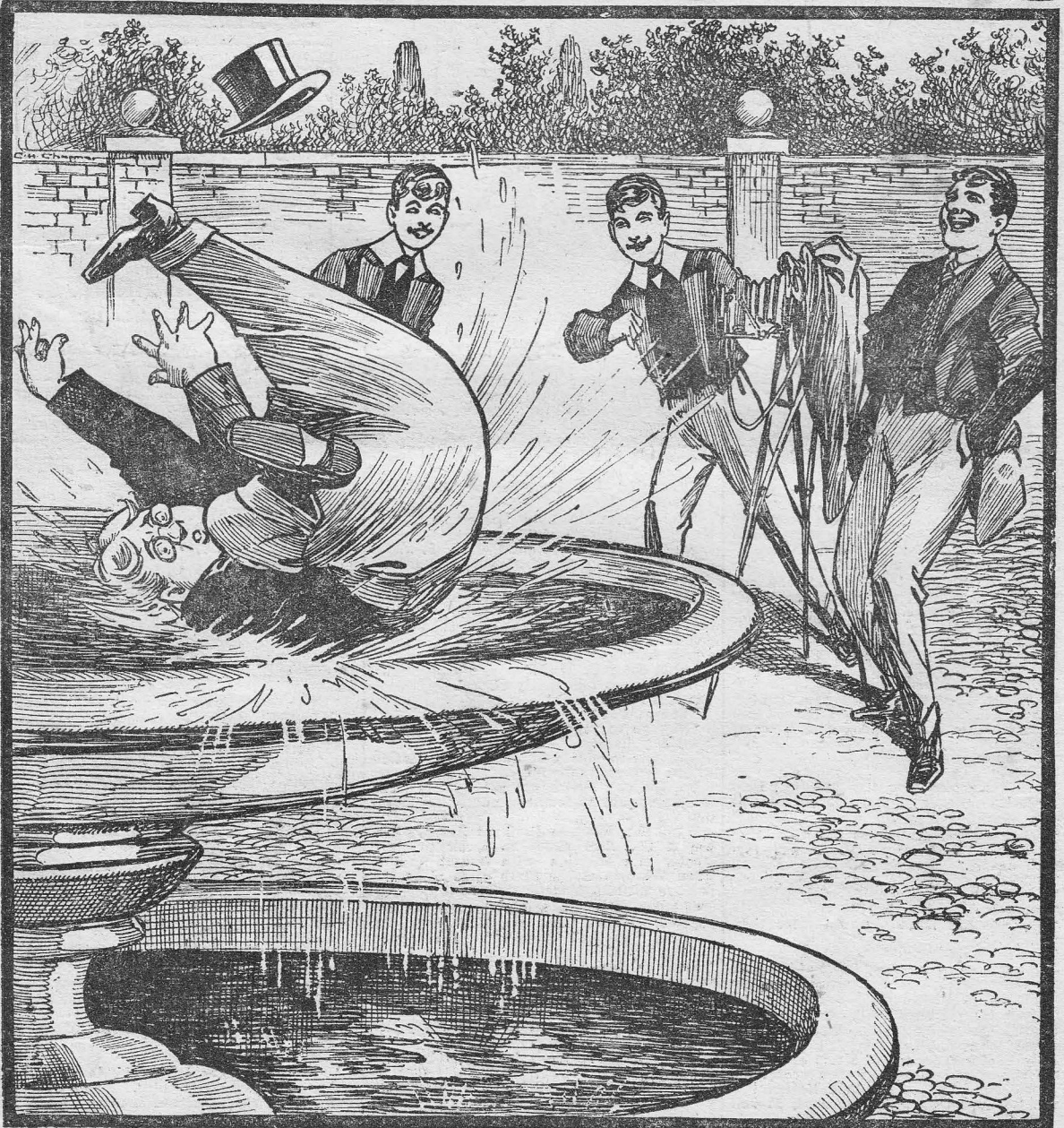
The
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GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



BILLY BUNTER POSES FOR HIS PHOTOGRAPH!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)

Billy Bunter's Prize!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars

.. By ..

FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Great Expectations!

BUNTER, you are not paying attention!

If Mr. Quelch had said that once, he had said it a dozen times. In the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars morning lessons were in progress.

The subject was English history, and Mr. Quelch was subjecting the class to a severe cross-examination.

The eyes of most of the pupils were fixed upon the Form-master, but the little round orbits of Billy Bunter were glued to something on the desk in front of him.

"This continued inattention will land you into trouble, Bunter, if you are not careful," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"What are you doing?"

"Paying strict attention to the subject under discussion, sir."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I regret I cannot believe you, Bunter. Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me where Julius Caesar landed when he came to Britain?"

"Aston Villa, sir."

"What?"

There was a gasp from the class and from Mr. Quelch when that startling answer was given.

"I'm pretty certain it was the Villa, sir," said Bunter. "Or—or p'raps it was Plymouth Argyle."

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Are you demented, boy?"

"No, sir—that is to say, not more than usual, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was an irrepressible burst of laughter from the class, but it died away when the Form-master produced his pointer.

"I will ask you once again—and once only—to tell me where Julius Caesar landed, Bunter?" he rumbled.

Billy Bunter came out of a sort of reverie.

"If the other two guesses were wrong, sir, I should say it was Tottenham Hotspur!"

Mr. Quelch looked utterly amazed, as well as angry.

"You appear to be hurling the names of various football clubs at me, Bunter!" he

said, "Either this is studied insolence, or

The Form-master broke off sharply. His keen eyes had detected something on the desk in front of Billy Bunter—something which ought not to have been there.

"What is that on the desk in front of you, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"M-m-my history book, sir!"

"Yes, yes! But there is something else. Bring it to me!"

Very reluctantly Billy Bunter picked up the periodical with which he had been engrossed, and took it to Mr. Quelch. It was a copy of "Football Chunks," and the Remove-master frowned when he saw it.

"How dare you peruse such abominable trash in the Form-room, Bunter? I shall confiscate this periodical, and shall cane you severely."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Hold out your hand!"

Billy Bunter reluctantly obeyed.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now go to your place," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard. "And I should strongly advise you to give your undivided attention to the lesson, Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch's advice was not wasted. The fat junior gave no further trouble that morning.

When the class was dismissed Harry Wharton & Co. were about to speak to Billy Bunter in connection with recent events, when Wingate of the Sixth came along the passage with his athletic stride.

"Bunter, you fat young rascal!" he exclaimed. "What have you done with my copy of 'Football Chunks'? I saw you bolting out of my study with it, but I was talking to Mr. Lascelles at the time, and consequently couldn't chase you. What have you done with my paper, you worm?"

Wingate's heavy hand had descended on Billy Bunter's shoulder, and the fat junior squirmed and struggled.

"Ow! Leggo! Don't be a beastly bully, Wingate!"

"Where's my paper?" demanded Wingate.

"Yow! Quelchly collared it."

"What!"

"He happened to spot it on the desk, and he made me give it up."

"Is that correct, Wharton?" asked Wingate, turning to the captain of the Remove.

"Yes," said Harry. "And Quelchly described 'Football Chunks' as abominable trash!" he added, with a grin.

Wingate flushed.

"Mr. Quelch never did understand or sympathise with football, and he never will," he said. "Bunter, you young sweep, come along to my study."

"W-w-what for, Wingate?"

"I'm going to lam you!"

"Quelchly's lammed him already, Wingate," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, very well," said the captain of Greyfriars, releasing the Owl of the Remove.

"But if I catch you bagging my paper again, Bunter, I shall come down heavy."

So saying, Wingate strode away.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "Quelchly's a beast! I shall have to buy another copy of 'Football Chunks' now!"

"What on earth do you want with a football paper?" asked Harry Wharton, in astonishment. "You're not a footballer!"

"I am!" said Bunter indignantly. "And I'd have a place in the Remove eleven if it wasn't for personal jealousy on the part of you fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why do you buy 'Football Chunks'?" asked Nugent.

"I don't buy it—I borrow it!"

"Pinch it, you mean!" said Johnny Bull.

"But I'm dashed if I know why you do it!"

"To enter for the competition, of course!"

"The which?"

"The competition. I've been going in for it for weeks."

"My hat!"

"They give you twelve matches," Bunter went on, "and you've got to forecast the results. There's only one prize, but it's well worth winning."

"What is it?" asked Bob Cherry. "A bottle of Antipon?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a motor-scooter," said Bunter. "A really top-hole motor-scooter. They give one away every week, and I'm bound to bag one sooner or later."

"More likely to be later than sooner!" said Nugent.

And there was a laugh.

"If I don't get another copy of 'Football Chunks' by to-night," said Bunter, "I shall be too late. To-morrow's the closing date. Will somebody lend me twopence?"

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be a set of mean beasts!" said Bunter. "Two mouldy coppers won't break anybody!"

The juniors, however, preferred to keep their mouldy coppers in their pockets.

Billy Bunter gave a disgusted snort, and rolled away.

A bright idea occurred to him as he went. He made tracks for the bicycle-shed, calmly appropriated Squiff's bicycle, and rode furiously out of gates, his fat little legs going like clockwork. He reflected that he would just have time to get to the village and back before dinner was served. Dinner was a function which Billy Bunter would not have missed on any account.

The fat junior scorched all the way to Friardale, and dismounted outside the newsagent's.

Leaving Squiff's bicycle leaning insecurely against a lamppost, he rolled into the little shop.

"Good-morning, sir!" said the newsagent politely.

"Good-morning!" said Bunter loftily. "I want a copy of 'Football Chunks,' please, for Mr. Lascelles."

"Certainly, sir."

The man handed over the paper, and waited expectantly.

"Ahem! You might put it down to Mr. Lascelles' account," said Bunter.

"Very good, sir."

Billy Bunter was in the act of quitting the shop when it occurred to him that here was an excellent chance of securing quite a budget of free literature.

"Oh, I nearly forgot," he said, turning back to the counter. "There are some more papers Mr. Lascelles wants. Just trot out the 'Boys' Friend,' the 'Magnet,' the 'Gem,' and the 'Penny Popular,' will you?"

The newsagent looked surprised.

Mr. Larry Lascelles, the mathematics master at Greyfriars, had never before been known to purchase boys' papers.

"You are quite sure Mr. Lascelles requires those papers, sir?" said the newsagent.

"Of course I am," said Bunter. "And he also wants a couple of sixpenny novels. Buck up!"

The newsagent still looked doubtful. Nevertheless, he handed over the papers and the novels.

Billy Bunter was so pleased at the success of his little scheme that he chuckled all the way back to Greyfriars.

But the chuckle soon vanished when Squiff accosted him in the Close.

"My bike!" howled Squiff.

Billy Bunter pretended not to hear. He quickened his pace, and attempted to ride past, but Squiff intercepted him, and made him dismount.

"You fat thief! What do you mean by bagging my bike?" demanded the Australian junior.

"Ahem! I didn't know it was yours, Squiff, old chap. Toddy said I could borrow his, and I must have mistaken yours for Toddy's. I'm a bit short-sighted, you know—Yow-ow-ow! Wharrer you up to, you beast?"

Squiff administered a couple of none too gentle cuffs, which sent Billy Bunter sprawling.

"Keep your grimy paws off my property in future!" said the owner of the bike.

Billy Bunter rolled sadly away. His chuckling had been changed to lamentation.

But the fat junior was not unhappy for any length of time. He remembered that he had obtained a copy of 'Football Chunks,' free, gratis, and for nothing; likewise a nice little budget of boys' papers.

"I'll fill in my coupon for the competition right away!" muttered Bunter.

And with this resolve he rolled along to Study No. 7.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Helping Bunter!

NO sooner had the study door closed behind Billy Bunter than the dinner-bell rang.

The fat junior decided that the football-coupon would have to wait. Not even the prospect of winning a magnificent motor-scooter could distract Bunter from his meals.

It was not until afternoon lessons were over that the Owl of the Remove was able to compile his forecast. He was reclining in the armchair in No. 7, thoughtfully nibbling at his penholder, when the Famous Five strolled in.

"How's the competition going, Bunty?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked at the intruders.

"It's rather a tough job, making out this forecast," he said. "Still, I'm not the sort of fellow to chuck up the sponge. I believe in sticking to it."

"Good!" said Nugent. "That's the spirit."

"I don't know whether to give Chelsea to win or to lose," said Bunter, frowning at the coupon.

"They'll win!" said Wharton.

"They'll lose!" said Bob Cherry.

"They'll draw!" added Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared at the Famous Five, whose assistance was rather bewildering.

"I wish you fellows would stop rotting!" said the fat junior peevishly. "Now, what about Crystal Palace?"

"They're bound to win," said Nugent.

"Provided they don't lose!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, who really knew very little about the form of the leading clubs, had expected to get quite a fund of useful information from the Famous Five. But there was nothing doing.

"The matches are rather difficult to forecast this week," said the fat junior. "But, as I said before, I'm not going to give up. I believe in sticking to it."

The Famous Five chuckled.

"I'll tell you a jolly good way of making out your forecast, Bunty," said Bob Cherry. "Write the names of the teams on slips of paper, put 'em in a hat, and draw them one by one. A maiden aunt of mine, who knew nothing about football, won a hundred pounds once by following that system."

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened.

"Is that a fact, Cherry?"

"Absolutely, old barrel!"

"Then I think I'll do the same as you aunt did."

"Good! You're bound to win the motor scooter that way!"

Johnny Bull scribbled out the names of the teams, and shuffled the scraps of paper in Peter Todd's Sunday hat.

Fortunately, Peter was absent from the study.

Still seated in the armchair, Billy Bunter drew out the folded slips one by one, and filled in his coupon accordingly.

The fat junior was quivering with excitement.

"The motor-scooter's mine for a cert!" he exclaimed. "I shall be sending in a claim to the editor of 'Football Chunks' at the end of the week."

Competitors who successfully predicted twelve correct results were supposed to make a claim. Billy Bunter had been sending in a claim regularly each week, irrespective of the number of correct results on his coupon. So far, no motor-scooter had arrived at Greyfriars; but Bunter's hopes were high.

"You might hand me an envelope, Wharton," said the fat junior.

"Certainly!"

"And you might lend me your fountain-pen—"

"With pleasure!"

"And a three-halfpenny stamp—"

"Anything to oblige."

Harry Wharton handed over the articles in question, and Billy Bunter placed his coupon in the envelope, which he addressed, stamped, and sealed.

"That's that!" he murmured, with a grunt of satisfaction. "I deserve to win, if any fellow ever did. When the motor-scooter comes, it will be the reward of sticking to it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

Billy Bunter was making frantic efforts to rise from the armchair, but for some moments his struggles were in vain.

"M-m-m-my hat!" he gasped. "What the thump—"

"You certainly believe in sticking to it, Bunty!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling rotters!" roared Bunter, whose face was crimson with exertion. "You've been working off some sort of a jape on me!"

"Go hon!"

"We merely plastered your chair with

secotine," explained Nugent. "We thought we'd help you to stick to it."

"And the stickiness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

After a fierce struggle, Billy Bunter succeeded in disengaging himself from the arm chair. The secotine had not improved the fat junior's already soiled trousers.

With many chuckles, the Famous Five withdrew, and Billy Bunter rolled out into the Close to post his coupon.

The Owl of the Remove was cherishing great expectations. He told himself that he would soon be the proud possessor of a magnificent motor-scooter. He had dreamed of it at night; he had looked forward to it by day.

Past experience ought to have warned Bunter that he hadn't an earthly chance of winning the football-contest. He had been in for competitions before, and had made himself the laughing-stock of the Remove.

But the fat junior was blind to his previous failures. He wouldn't fail on this occasion, he assured himself. If Bob Cherry's maiden aunt could win a hundred pounds, then he—Bunter—should have no difficulty in "bagging" the motor-scooter.

Billy Bunter was absorbed in hopeful reflection when a heavy hand suddenly fell upon his shoulder.

"Yow! Gerraway, Bolsover, you beast!"

But Bunter's captor wasn't Bolsover major. It was Larry Lascelles, the mathematics-master.

"You will come with me, Bunter!" he said sternly.

"Eh! W-w-what for, sir?" stammered the Owl of the Remove.

"You will soon learn!" said Mr. Lascelles grimly.

And he marched Bunter away to his study. The fat junior's knees were fairly knocking together.

"I—I—can assure you that you've made a mistake, sir!" he stammered, in his anxiety to avoid punishment.

"Bunter!"

"It wasn't me, sir! I haven't been down to the village at all to-day, and I don't even know where the newsagent's shop is situated sir!"

"Boy!"

"I certainly bought a few papers, sir, but I didn't ask for them to be placed to your account. I shouldn't dream of doing such a thing, sir!"

Mr. Lascelles frowned.

"Your statements are absurd and utterly contradictory, Bunter," he said. "I have seen the newsagent, and he informs me that you ordered a number of periodicals, and represented that I had sent you to the shop for them."

"That newsagent's an awful fibber, sir—"

"Nonsense, Bunter! You are the individual who is departing from the truth. I shall come you severely!"

And Mr. Lascelles did. He chastised the fat junior to such good purpose that Bunter's yells rang through the school building.

A few moments later, a plump and pathetic figure might have been seen emerging from Mr. Lascelles' study.

Billy Bunter was squeezing his hands tightly together, and uttering loud lamentations. He had been made to realise the truth of the saying that the way of the transgressor is hard!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Dream Comes True.

WHEN Saturday evening came Billy Bunter was able to obtain—by his usual methods—an evening paper.

In the "Stop Press" column appeared a tabulated list of football results.

Bunter hurried away to his study, in order to see how he had fared in the competition promoted by "Football Chunks." He had, of course, been careful to keep a copy of his coupon.

The fat junior had quite a shock when he compared his forecasts with the actual results. Only two of them were correct—two out of twelve!

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunter in dismay. "This is the giddy limit! I felt quite sure that Tottenham Hotspur and Swindon would lose, and they've both won! And I've got all the others wrong except two. It's awful!"

Billy Bunter's hopes of winning that motor-scooter were now extinguished. He had swaggered to his schoolfellows that he was a certain winner—and this was the result.

Like many other competitors in the "Football Chunks" competition, the Owl of the Remove received a rude shock that evening. "It's beastly luck!" he growled. "But I shall send in a claim for the motor-scooter all the same!"

And the fat junior proceeded to write the following letter to the editor of "Football Chunks."

"Greyfriars School,
"Friardale."

"Dear Sir—I beg to say that in yore resent football kompetishun I sukcessfully predikted the hole of the matches, and in konsense I heary claim the prize, namely, a magnificent motor-scooter.

"Please put the scooter on sale as soon as possible, adressed to me as above.—Yores truly,
W. G. BUNTER."

Week after week, Billy Bunter had despatched the same sort of letter, but there had been nothing doing. Doubtless the editor had checked Bunter's coupon, found it hopelessly wide of the mark, and dismissed the claim. And it seemed likely that he would follow out the same procedure on this occasion. But there always remained a sporting chance that Bunter's claim would be admitted.

Having cadged a stamp from the good-natured Alonzo Todd, Billy Bunter posted his letter. He was returning across the Close when the Famous Five bore down upon him.

"Any luck with the competition, Bunty?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

Bunter nodded.

"How many results did you get right?" asked Wharton.

"Twelve!"

"You—you mean to say you didn't have a single error?"

"Not one!" said Bunter, with his usual disregard for the truth. "I've just sent in my claim to the editor, and I've no doubt the motor-scooter will arrive early next week."

"My hat!"

The Famous Five were flabbergasted. Billy Bunter spoke with such an air of conviction that the juniors—with the exception of Johnny Bull—believed him. Johnny, however, was sceptical. He did not possess that simple faith which the poet declares to be better than Norman blood.

"You're fibbing, as usual!" growled Johnny.

"Oh, really, Bull— You wait till my scooter comes!"

"Seeing's believing!" was the retort.

There were no developments until the following Tuesday morning. Then a letter arrived for Billy Bunter. The back of the letter bore the imprint of "Football Chunks."

Bunter opened the letter with feverish fingers.

Quite a crowd of fellows stood near the post-rack, and they watched the fat junior curiously.

"Postal-order arrived at last, after wandering all round the world?" inquired Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it from a titled relation, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd.

"No; it's from 'Football Chunks.'"

"My hat!"

The interest and excitement grew. And it fairly reached its zenith when Billy Bunter declaimed the letter aloud:

"Dear Sir—I have great pleasure in informing you that your claim in connection with our football competition has proved to be correct, and you have been adjudged the winner of the magnificent motor-scooter which represents the prize. The scooter has been put on rail to-day, addressed to you at Friardale Station, to be called for. I shall be glad to receive your photograph for publication in 'Football Chunks,' also a brief sketch of your life history. This will act as an incentive to other competitors.

"With hearty congratulations on your success,—I am, yours faithfully,

"THE EDITOR."

"Great jumping crackers!" gasped Bob Cherry, in awe. "Bunter's won!"

"He's bagged the motor-scooter!"

"The lucky dog!"

The juniors were greatly surprised, and the most surprised person of all was Billy Bunter himself. He knew that he was not entitled to the motor-scooter, and the letter from the editor of "Football Chunks" almost deprived him of breath.

But Bunter did not betray his surprise. He behaved as if he had quite expected to be the prizewinner.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 61.

"It wasn't luck," he said. "It was pure skill."

"Dashed if I can see where the skill comes in!" said Nugent. "The names of the teams were shuffled in Toddy's topper, and by a most miraculous fluke you've managed to draw the winners."

Billy Bunter gave a chuckle.

"It's no use your being jealous, Nugent," he said. "I've won the jolly old motor-scooter, and, what's more, nobody's going to ride it except myself!"

"Not even me?" said Skinner. "Oh, come, Bunty! I've been your pal ever since you were quite a young porpoise!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nobody's going to lay a finger on my property," said Billy Bunter firmly. "You fellows have always been jolly mean in refusing to cash my postal-orders in advance, and now it's my turn to be mean. I'm going to keep that motor-scooter to myself."

At that moment the breakfast-bell rang, and the juniors trooped into Hall.

"Well, you could knock me down with a feather!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Bunter's bagged the prize!"

"And we thought he didn't stand an earthly!" said Nugent.

"I don't believe that Bunter's won the motor-scooter," said Johnny Bull in his direct way.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry. "There's the editor's letter—"

"Which is probably a fake!"

"What!"

Johnny Bull's chums stared at him in astonishment.

"This sort of thing has happened before," said Johnny. "Bunter's gone in for a competition, and some fellow, by way of a jape, has faked a letter from the editor of the paper, and sent it to Bunter."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Wharton. "I didn't think of that!"

"We shall be able to tell by the post-mark," said Nugent. "If it happens to be a local one, we shall know it's a jape."

Billy Bunter was asked to produce the envelope, and Harry Wharton examined it at the breakfast-table.

"It's London," he announced.

"Then it must be genuine!" said Bob Cherry.

And even Johnny Bull was forced to admit that there was something in it.

During breakfast the Remove was in a buzz.

Billy Bunter, the most brainless fellow in the Form, had won a motor-scooter! True, he was not yet in possession of his prize, but there could be no doubt that the scooter was waiting for him at Friardale Station.

Bunter himself was immensely excited. He was not too excited to eat his porridge; but he quite forgot to ask for a second helping of eggs-and-bacon.

The fat junior felt that he was now a person of considerable importance, and his flabby cheeks wore the flush of victory.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Trials of a Prizewinner.

BEFORE breakfast was finished Billy Bunter rose in his place.

"Well, Bunter?" said Mr. Quelch, who presided at the head of the table.

"May I leave the Hall, please, sir?" Mr. Quelch frowned.

"You may go when the word of dismissal is given—not before," he said.

"But, sir—"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"It's like this, sir. I want to go and collect—"

"You will collect an imposition if you say another word, Bunter."

The fat junior dropped into his seat with a grunt. He had been hoping that he would be able to collect his motor-scooter in the interval between breakfast and morning lessons, but he now realised that the interval would not be long enough.

During first lesson, Bunter was restless and inattentive. When asked to name the principal exports of Lancashire, he replied "Motor-scooters, sir!" and received a hundred lines for his pains.

"You are the most ignorant boy in the class, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch. "The time you spend in this room is completely wasted, since you learn absolutely nothing!"

"In that case, sir," said Bunter, without in the least meaning to be impertinent, "may I be excused from lessons?"

"W-w-what?" gasped Mr. Quelch, wondering if he had heard aright.

"May I go along to the station for my motor-scooter, sir?"

"No, Bunter, you may not!" roared Mr. Quelch. "You will take an additional four hundred lines, making five hundred in all!"

"Oh crumbs! What—what's that for, sir?"

"For unparalleled impertinence!" thundered the Form-master. "If you dare to make such an impudent request again, I shall cane you!"

"But—but you said that I was wasting my time in the Form-room, sir—"

protested Bunter.

"Silence!"

Mr. Quelch's tone was so fierce and forbidding that the fat junior promptly subsided.

But Bunter found it impossible to concentrate on the lesson. He was thinking of the motor-scooter, and was picturing himself flashing along the country lanes—the observed of all observers. He was positively pining for an opportunity of going to the station.

And presently an opportunity came.

"Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, "I am going to see Mr. Prout, for the purpose of borrowing his map of the British Isles. Kindly preserve order in my absence!"

"Very good, sir!"

Scarcely had Mr. Quelch quitted the room when Billy Bunter rose to his feet, and made tracks for the door.

Instantly a buzz of voices arose.

"Bunter!"

"Come back, you fat duffer!"

"What's the little game?"

Billy Bunter paused in the doorway.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to collect my motor-scooter. I don't suppose Quelch will miss me when he comes back, but if he does you might tell him that I feel queer, and I've gone up to the sanny."

"You fool!" ejaculated Harry Wharton, who was really alarmed for the fat junior.

"Come back!"

But Bunter did not heed. He was thinking of the motor-scooter which awaited him at the station, and in his crass stupidity he did not realise the enormity of his offence.

The fat junior rolled out of the Form-room, and as he emerged into the passage there was a grinding collision.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

After a very brief absence, Mr. Quelch was in the act of returning. Billy Bunter had been too short-sighted to observe the Form-master, and the latter had not been sufficiently agile to skip to one side. The result was that they cannoned violently into one another.

Mr. Quelch was the first to recover from the shock.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed, in sulphurous tones. "Where were you going?"

"Oh crumbs! I—I—"

"Answer my question, boy!"

"I—I was going along to the sanny, sir. The fact is I feel very groggy!"

Mr. Quelch glared at the fat junior.

"I have reason to believe, Bunter," he said, "that you were about to set me at defiance by going to the railway-station! You doubtless hoped that on my return to the Form-room I should fail to discover your absence."

So saying, Mr. Quelch grasped the Owl of the Remove by the arm, and propelled him into the Form-room. Then he brought the pointer into play, and Billy Bunter experienced a very uncomfortable three minutes. His yells of anguish fairly awakened the echoes.

"In addition to the punishment I have just administered, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard, "you will be gated for the rest of the day. Should you attempt to leave the school premises you will be taken before Dr. Locke! Now go to your place!"

And Billy Bunter went, ruefully reflecting that he would not be able to obtain his motor-scooter that day.

The remainder of morning lessons passed without incident.

When the class was dismissed Billy Bunter found himself hemmed in by a crowd of fellows.

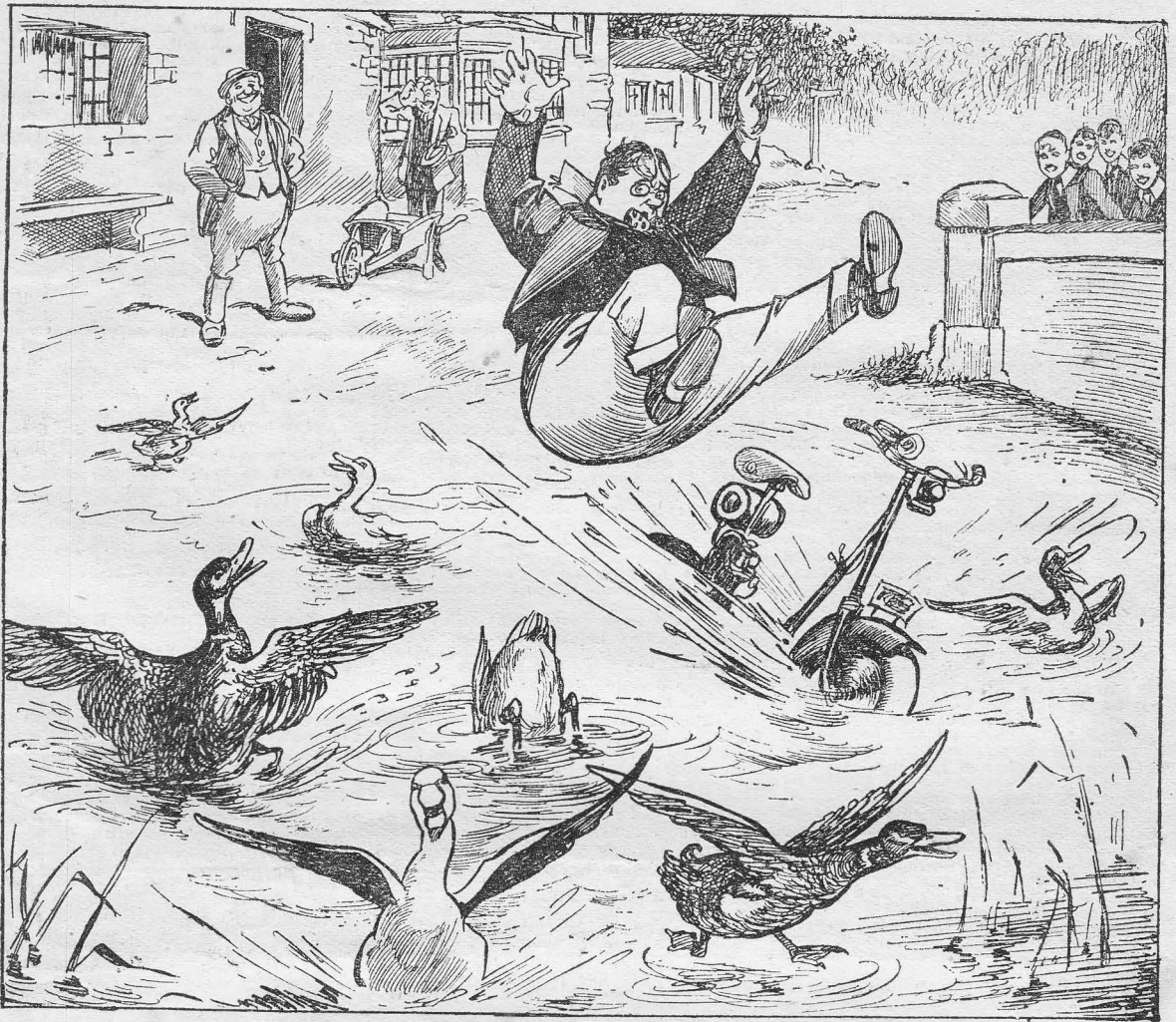
"Hard, luck, Bunty!"

"Awful pity you're gated!"

"Would you like me to go to the station and fetch your scooter?"

The last question was asked by at least a dozen juniors, who were very eager to have a ride on a motor-scooter.

Billy Bunter, however, preferred to be a dog in the manger. He couldn't fetch the scooter himself, and he was resolved that nobody else should fetch it.



The motor-scooter came on with a mighty rush, and plunged into the pond, where it lay embedded in the ooze. As for Billy Bunter, he turned a somersault over the handle-bars, and descended with a terrific splash into the water. (See page 7.)

"I sha'n't allow anybody to tamper with my property," he said. "The scooter can stay where it is till to-morrow!"

"I suppose you'll start breaking records when you get it?" said Dick Russell.

"He'll break his neck more likely!" growled Ogilvy. "And I, for one, sha'n't be sorry!"

Doomed to a day's detention, Billy Bunter chafed and writhed.

After dinner, however, a bright idea occurred to the fat junior. He would have his photograph taken for "Football Chunks," and he would also write his life history.

Having formed this resolve, Bunter looked round for an amateur photographer who would be willing to "take" him.

There were a good many photographers in the Remove, but they looked askance at Bunter when he made his request.

"I say, Newland, old chap," said Bunter, addressing the Jewish junior, "will you take my photograph?"

Monty Newland shook his head.

"I don't want to smash my camera," he said.

"Beast!" growled Bunter. "What about you, Bulstrode?"

"I'm a beast, too!" said Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a snort of disgust, Billy Bunter rolled away. He approached everybody in the Remove who possessed a camera, but there was nothing doing.

Finally, however, Coker of the Fifth consented to photograph the fat junior.

Coker had just received a new camera—a present from his devoted Aunt Judy—and he was anxious to set to work with it.

"I'll take you," he said. "But you'll have to make yourself look respectable first."

Accordingly, Billy Bunter betook himself to the Remove dormitory, where he changed into his Sunday best.

It was a very resplendent Bunter that appeared in the Close half an hour later. The fat junior sported a spotless suit of Etons, and he wore a pink carnation in his button-hole. On his head was a shining silk topper.

Harry Wharton and Co. were punting a football about the Close. They desisted from their exertions when Billy Bunter appeared.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Do my aged eyes deceive me, or is that really our Bunter?"

"It is—it are!" murmured Nugent. "Looks like an inflated Beau Brummel, doesn't he?"

"What's the game, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton. "Been invited out to dinner?"

Before the fat junior could reply Coker of the Fifth jostled his way through the crowd of Removites.

"Stand clear, you fags!" he said, in his magisterial way. "Now, Bunter! Plant yourself against that fountain!"

The Owl of the Remove perched himself on the bowl of the fountain, while Coker manoeuvred into a good position, with the sun behind him. A grinning crowd of juniors looked on.

"Pile in, Coker!"

"Don't smash the plate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Having adjusted the camera to his satisfaction, Coker glared at Billy Bunter.

"Don't sit looking like a stuffed owl!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Coker! Do you want me to smile a bit more?"

"No, thanks! You're all teeth already! Try and look a bit dignified!"

"That's the idea!" said Johnny Bull. "Put on the proud prizewinner's expression!"

"And sit farther back!" shouted Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter obeyed this injunction, and the movement proved fatal. The fat junior overbalanced, and landed with a mighty splash in the deep, wide bowl of the fountain.

A peal of laughter rang through the Close. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll up and see the human porpoise!" clucked Squiff.

And from Billy Bunter came a wild wail:

"Yaroooooh! Help! I'm drowning!"

Almost doubled up with merriment, the Famous Five went to Bunter's assistance. By a tremendous effort, they succeeded in pulling him out and dumping him on to the flagstones, where he lay like a floundering fish.

"Now's your chance, Coker!" shouted Peter Todd.

Click!

Billy Bunter was "snapped"!

"Good!" said Coker, with a grin. "I'll have this developed by to-morrow, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The owl of the Remove picked himself up, and squelched away, leaving a trail of water behind him.

The fat junior was swamped from head to foot, and he was beginning to feel that being a prizewinner was not all honey!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. A Lively Afternoon!

BILLY BUNTER soon recovered from the effects of his immersion. He decided to devote the evening to writing the necessary article for "Football Chunks," and he intended to have another photograph taken next day by a professional photographer.

After a couple of unsuccessful attempts to write his life history in brief, Billy Bunter sought the assistance of Skinner. He explained what was wanted, and asked Skinner to give him a hand.

"I can't write to-night," he said. "My beastly fingers are numbed. You see, I happened to fall into the fountain—"

Skinner nodded sympathetically. "That's all right," he said. "I'll see the job through for you."

And Skinner did. He was a humorist of a sort, and the article, when complete, ran as follows:—

"We publish in this issue of 'Football Chunks' a photograph of Mr. William George Bunter, the clever winner of our latest football contest.

"Interviewed by our special representative, Mr. Bunter stated that he was fifteen years of age, and had been participating in competitions for the past sixteen years. 'During that period,' said Mr. Bunter, 'I have won all sorts of handsome prizes, many of which adorn my study at Greyfriars. Among the items are a grand piano, a weight-reducing apparatus, a book entitled "How to Mind Other People's Business" and a box of tin soldiers.'

"And to what do you attribute your success?" inquired our representative.

"To the fact that I am a great athlete," was the reply. "With due modesty I think I may say that I am the finest goalkeeper in the South of England. I take up such a lot of room between the posts that the ball cannot possibly be driven past me. I have studied football from the cradle, and I am thoroughly familiar with the form of the leading clubs. Winning the competition in "Football Chunks" was dead easy."

"And what do you intend to do with your magnificent motor-scooter?" asked our representative.

"Ride it, of course! That is to say, I shall ride it until it goes bust, and then I shall put it up for auction. I dare say it cost about sixpence-halfpenny when new, so I ought to realise at least twopence when I sell it."

"Precisely! And what is your advice to your fellow-competitors?"

"Stick to it!" said Mr. Bunter promptly. "Tell them to put their beef into it, and they're bound to win. The most skillful method of forecasting results is to shuffle the names of the teams in a hat, and draw them one by one. This is the surest way of spotting winners. Some call it luck, but I am convinced that it requires a high standard of skill."

"Our representative found Mr. Bunter a handsome, charming young gentleman, as his photograph will amply testify."

Skinner read this extraordinary document aloud to Billy Bunter, who expressed his approval from time to time by means of a grunt.

"Of course, it's not strictly true," he said, when Skinner had finished.

"Of course not, fathead! These interviews with successful competitors seldom are. You never see it stated that a prizewinner is an ugly freak, for instance. Why, if I had told the plain truth about you, the editor of "Football Chunks" would have had a fit!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Skinner through his big spectacles.

"Look here, if you're not trying to be rude—" he began.

"I'm not," said Skinner solemnly. "I respect you far too much for that, Bunt. You won't forget to post this article as soon as your photo is ready, will you?"

"Of course not!" said Bunter.

And he locked the manuscript in his desk. The fat junior dreamed that night about his motor-scooter. He saw himself whizzing along the country lanes, scattering fowls right and left. He saw himself riding in triumph through the streets of Courtfield, and he fairly shouted with joy.

The shout of joy rapidly changed to one of wrath.

Billy Bunter opened his eyes to find that Bob Cherry was standing over him, squeezing a sponge.

"Rising-bell, you fat slacker!" said Bob.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 41

For once in a way Billy Bunter turned out with alacrity.

He was no longer "gated," and he intended, if possible, to go to the station and collect his motor-scooter before breakfast.

It was not until the afternoon, however, that the Owl of the Remove was able to go out of gates.

It was a half-holiday, and Bunter told himself that it was going to be the happiest half-holiday of his school career.

The fat junior slipped away unobserved. He did not want a crowd at the station, in case the fellows took liberties with his beloved scooter.

Bunter reached the railway station in record time. He was panting and perspiring when he rolled into the parcels office.

"Is my motor-scooter here?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes, Master Bunter," said the man in charge. "Sign this receipt, please. And there's fourpence to pay."

"Look here, none of your larks. That scooter was sent carriage paid."

"But it's been stored here for a day," said the man, "and we make a charge of fourpence for that."

"It's a rotten swindle!" said Bunter. But he was lucky enough to possess the required amount, and he paid up.

The motor-scooter had arrived in a crate, and Bunter lost no time in unpacking it.

Deprived of all its trappings, it looked a very fine contraption indeed. There was a seat to it, for which Bunter was duly thankful. He didn't relish the idea of a standing-up ride.

"Are you going to ride it back to the school, Master Bunter?" inquired the man in the parcels office.

"Of course!"

"In that case I'll give you a start."

The scooter was pushed out into the roadway. Billy Bunter surveyed it rather doubtfully.

"How do you start the blessed thing?" he exclaimed.

"You leave that to me," said Bunter's companion. "Just you get astride, and I'll do the rest."

Accordingly, Billy Bunter perched himself up on the seat.

Then the railway official turned on a switch, and gave the scooter a mighty shove. It bounded forward like a live thing, and Bunter hung on desperately.

"Yow! Stop it! It's going too fast!" he screamed.

But the railway servant was unable to stop the scooter, for two reasons. In the first place, he could never have caught it up; and, secondly, he was too much overcome with merriment to budge from where he stood.

Meanwhile, the motor-scooter went careering away with its human freight. Away and away, with its unwilling passenger shouting at the top of his lungs for help.

Billy Bunter hadn't the foggiest notion how to stop the scooter. He was entirely at its mercy. The perspiration streamed down his flabby cheeks, and his eyes were starting from their sockets.

"Oh dear! Oh, help! I shall be killed!" The gateway of Greyfriars came in sight, and Bunter made a desperate effort to steer the scooter into the Close.

But that scooter was as obstinate as a mule. It preferred to stick to the road, and it went whizzing away in the direction of Courtfield.

Peter Todd and Mark Linley had been chatting together in the school gateway when Bunter went past. They stared at each other in blank amazement.

"Who—what—" gasped Peter.

"It was Bunter!" exclaimed Mark Linley. "And his motor-scooter's out of control!"

"My hat!"

The two juniors rushed out into the roadway, anxious to save Bunter's skin, if possible. But lot when they reached the road the Owl of the Remove was out of sight.

"The mad idiot!" ejaculated Peter Todd. "He's bound to come to grief!"

"Absolutely!"

"What can we do?"

Mark Linley shrugged his shoulders. "Afraid we're helpless," he remarked. And so, for that matter, was Billy Bunter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The End of the Joy-ride!

ARM-IN-ARM, the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove strolled along the High Street of Courtfield. They were on a shopping expedition, and Bob Cherry had a brand-new football under his arm.

Bob was walking on the extreme right in the roadway, as the pavement did not admit of five people walking abreast.

"It's a topping afternoon!" said Harry Wharton. "If we get our shopping done in time we'll have a game of footer."

"Yes, rather!"

"Wonder if Bunter's got his motor-scooter yet?" said Nugent. "If he has, I'll try and squeeze a ride out of him."

"Same here," said Bob Cherry. "I'm simply dying for a spin on one of those things. I wonder—"

What Bob Cherry wondered was never made known, for at that moment there was a sudden whirring sound close behind him, which caused him to jump.

"Look out!" hissed Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry had a miraculous escape from being knocked down. Something swept past him like a cyclone, and disappeared rapidly along the street.

"Bunter!" gasped Nugent. "The esteemed and ludicrous Bunter!" muttered Hurree Singh. "He is scootfully scooting on his worthy scooter."

"And he jolly nearly ran me down!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I should say he was travelling at about sixty miles an hour," said Harry Wharton. "If old Tozer should spot him—"

P.-c. Tozer had already "spotted" Billy Bunter. The constable's portly form loomed up at that moment.

"The young rip!" he growled. "Which he's exceedin' of the speed-limit! I'll 'ave 'im harnested for this 'ere!"

"First catch your porpoise, and then arrest him, Tozey!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was lost to sight by this time; and the chances of P.-c. Tozer catching him were, as Johnny Bull pointed out, about a billion to one against.

Harry Wharton & Co. remained on the pavement, wondering what had become of Bunter. They were wondering, too, if they would ever see him again.

A quarter of an hour passed; and then there was a repetition of the whirring sound, and once again the motor-scooter whizzed through the High Street.

The Famous Five shouted to Bunter, but he did not heed. It was doubtful if he heard, so great was the speed at which he was travelling.

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That was Bunter's second fleeting visit! What do you make of it, you fellows?"

"I should imagine that the scooter was out of control!" began Wharton.

"Any ass can see that!"

"And that Bunter's going round and round in a circle, and passing through Courtfield every quarter of an hour!"

"Great pip!"

"I think Harry's right," said Nugent. "Let's wait another quarter of an hour, and see"

Sure enough, at the end of a further fifteen minutes, Billy Bunter again appeared.

The Famous Five scarcely recognised their schoolfellow. His fat face was plastered with mud, and his clothes were equally muddy.

Bunter was almost hysterical by this time. He was at the mercy of the scooter, and he hoped and prayed that when it stopped—as it was bound to do in the long run—it would deposit him in a soft place. The bare thought of crashing into a brick wall struck terror into Bunter's heart.

"The young warmint!" growled P.-c. Tozey. "He'll 'ave to be stopped!"

"Then why not stop him, Tozey?" said Johnny Bull, with a grin.

"If he shows up here agen, I will!" answered the minion of the law.

The portly constable then took up his position in the middle of the street. There was a ferocious expression on his florid face, and he looked as if he meant business.

After a time, the new familiar whirring sound became audible in the distance.

"Here he comes, Tozey!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"This is Tozey's supreme moment," said Nugent. "He'll either be promoted to the rank of sergeant, or be smashed to bits!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Once again the motor-scooter careered wildly along the High Street.

Mr. Tozer stood, with feet apart and with folded arms, like a Napoleon. He remained in this attitude until the scooter was almost upon him; then, with a yelp of terror, he made a dash for safety.

The Famous Five were doubled up with merriment.

"Good old Tozey!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "You stopped him a treat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Tozer clenched his hands convulsively. "The young rip!" he snarled. "Which I'll 'ave the lor on 'im for this 'ere!"

And he stamped away—probably to enlist the aid of his fellow-constable in checking the merry antics of Bunter's motor-scooter.

The Famous Five set off in the direction of Greyfriars. They realised that something would have to be done to check Bunter's mad career.

Exactly what steps to take they did not know; but they discussed the matter as they went along.

They had reached the foot of a steep hill, which they were about to climb, when the motor-scooter came in sight again.

Lying just off the road, close to where the juniors stood, was a slimy and unsavoury duck-pond.

Billy Bunter was aware of that fact, and, instead of keeping to the road, he headed straight for the pond. The fat junior realised that it was his only hope of getting out of his unfortunate predicament. He would get a nasty ducking, he knew; but far worse things might happen if he remained on the road.

The Famous Five stood rooted to the spot, their eyes fixed on the motor-scooter. It came on with a mighty rush, and plunged into the pond, where it lay embedded in the ooze.

As for Billy Bunter, he had turned a complete somersault over the handlebars, and descended with a terrific splash into the water.

Now that the tension was over, the Famous Five laughed long and loudly. They saw that Billy Bunter was not seriously hurt; indeed, he was already crawling out of the pond.

"Oh, dear!" sobbed Nugent. "I'm sure I shall bust a boiler in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" At this point, a hefty-looking young man, who had been seated on a stile at the side of the road, came forward aggressively. He strode up to Billy Bunter, who looked a pitiable object, covered as he was with ooze and slime.

"I'll trouble you to hand over my motor-scooter!" exclaimed the hefty-looking person.

Billy Bunter blinked at the newcomer. "Tain't yours!" he said. "It's mine!"

"Where did you get it from?" "I won it as a prize in 'Football Chunks.' These fellows will bear me out," said Bunter,

waving a wet hand towards the Famous Five.

"That's so," said Harry Wharton, turning to the stranger. "The scooter belongs to Bunter."

"It certainly belongs to Bunter," was the reply, "but not to that Bunter. It belongs to me—G. W. Bunter, of Courtfield."

"What rot!" said Bob Cherry incredulously. "I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "this fellow's trying to be funny. Duck him!"

Bunter's namesake drew a letter from his pocket, and held it up for inspection. "Read that!" he said.

The Famous Five and Billy Bunter perused the document. It was from the editor of "Football Chunks," and ran thus:

"Dear Sir,—Owing to an unfortunate error on the part of our adjudication staff, the motor-scooter won by you in our recent football contest was forwarded to W. G. Bunter, of Greyfriars School, Friaradale.

"If you will kindly approach the individual in question, and explain to him that a mistake has been made, he will doubtless hand the scooter to you. Should he decline to do so, perhaps you will be good enough to let us know, and we will institute proceedings for the recovery of the scooter.

"With sincere apologies for the error, and for the inconvenience you have been caused, I am, yours faithfully,
"THE EDITOR."

The Famous Five gasped when they read that letter; and so did Billy Bunter.

"It's a rotten swindle!" roared the fat junior. "I don't believe your name's Bunter at all!"

"Whether you believe it or not," retorted the hefty-looking individual, "I'm taking that motor-scooter! It's mine, and I won it fairly. I gave twelve correct results in the football-competition—"

"So did I!" howled Bunter. The man shrugged his shoulders.

"You're more likely to have given about two correct results!" he said. "But that's neither here nor there. Hand over that scooter!"

Billy Bunter appealed to the Famous Five. "This outsider is trying to pinch my scooter," he said. "What are you fellows going to do about it?"

"Nothing!" said Harry Wharton. "What!" almost screamed the Owl of the Remove. "You're going to stand by and see me robbed?"

"Don't be a silly young ass! You can see for yourself that a mistake has been made, and that the scooter belongs to this gentleman!"

"I should think you'd be only too glad to see the back of the beastly thing!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!" "Well, I shouldn't have ridden it again after what I've been through this afternoon," said Bunter. "But I was thinking of putting the scooter up for auction."

"That would be quite all right if it was yours; but, unfortunately, it isn't," said Nugent. "You'd better fish it out of the pond, and hand it over. Mr. Bunter looks rather impatient."

Billy Bunter realised that he would have to bid a fond farewell to the motor-scooter. He resigned himself to the loss. But he was determined not to venture into that duck-pond again.

"I'm not a deep-sea diver!" growled the fat junior, turning to his namesake. "You can jolly well fish the beastly thing out yourself!"

So saying, Billy Bunter turned away, and set off in the direction of Greyfriars.

The Famous Five followed, with many chuckles, leaving Mr. G. W. Bunter, of Courtfield, to carry out his salvage work as best he could.

All Greyfriars was highly amused that evening on hearing of Billy Bunter's recent trials and tribulations.

But there was precious little sympathy for the Owl of the Remove. He had sent in a false claim to the editor of "Football Chunks"; and a fellow who did that sort of thing deserved all he got. That was the general opinion, anyway.

From that time forth Billy Bunter fought shy of football competitions. He was heard to say that they were a snare and a delusion.

In due course there appeared in "Football Chunks" a photograph of the winner.

The photograph was of Bunter; but not, needless to state, the Greyfriars Bunter.

Greyfriars laughed loud and long over the events of that memorable afternoon; and for some time afterwards the Owl of the Remove was compelled to hide his diminished head.

THE END.

(Another grand, long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "Ructions at Greyfriars!" Order your copy EARLY!")

GOOD STORIES!

A DROUGHT!

A small Scottish boy was summoned to give evidence against his father, who was charged with causing a disturbance in the street.

"Come, my wee little mon," said the magistrate kindly. "Let us know all you can about this little affair."

"Weel," began the laddie, "d'ye ken Inverness Street?"

"Yes," replied the magistrate encouragingly.

"Well, ye gang along there, and turn to the right into the square, which you cross. An' when ye've crossed the square ye turn to the left into the High Street, and oop along it 'till you coom to a pump."

"Yes, I know the pump well myself," said the magistrate.

"Weel," said the laddie, with the utmost simplicity, "ye can go an' pump it, for ye'll no' pump me!"

STILL CURIOUS!

Little Willie was a source of great worry to his nurse. To put it in a nutshell, he was curiosity itself.

"You had better keep quiet, or something will happen to you," said his nurse one night, after having answered endless questions. "Curiosity once killed a cat."

This made a deep impression on little Willie, and, remarkable to relate, he was actually quiet for the space of five minutes. Then, with a thoughtful frown on his manly brow, he turned to his nurse.

"I say, nursie, what was it the cat wanted to know?"

Mother: "Johnny, you have been a naughty boy all day! You can just go off to bed without any supper!"

Johnny: "Well, mother, what about the medicine I've got to take after meals?"

BREAKING IT GENTLY!

"If you please, mamma," said Clarence, aged ten years, "will you kindly lend me a pencil?"

"But," exclaimed mamma, "I left a pen and ink for you to do your lessons on the nursery table. Why don't you use that instead of pencil?"

Clarence hesitated. "Don't you think that the 'Gem' is rather a good paper?" he said at length.

"Of course I do!" replied mamma. "But I—"

"Well, you see," the lad explained, "I want a pencil to write and ask the Editor how to remove ink-stains from a carpet."

Magistrate: "You were found guilty of knocking down the plaintiff and robbing him of everything except a gold watch. What have you to say?"

Prisoner: "Had he a gold watch?" Magistrate: "Certainly!" Prisoner: "Then I put in a plea of insanity!"

NONE TO SPARE!

The motor-car rushed along the country road at breakneck speed, much to the disgust of a tramp, who failed to get out of its way in time, with the result that he had his foot run over.

The driver immediately stopped, got out of his car, and went over to the tramp to express his sympathy and to ascertain the extent of his injuries. His exclamations of sorrow failed to appeal to the tramp, whose only thought was for damages.

"Forty pounds damages—that's what I want!" said the tramp.

"What! Forty pounds for a slightly-injured foot!" said the motorist. "I'm not a millionaire!"

"No," replied the tramp; "and I ain't a centipede!"

PROBABLY NOT!

Shopkeeper: "Can't I sell you a bicycle, sir? Only six pounds."

Farmer: "Oh, no, thank you! I can buy a good cow for that!"

Shopkeeper: "But, my dear sir, you'd look rather funny riding a cow down the street."

Farmer (cortly): "Not so funny as I should if I were seen riding a bicycle."

THE HANDY MAN!

The colonel wanted a manservant, so he inserted an advertisement in the local weekly, and received a great many applications, but none of them suited his requirements. But at last an Irishman was shown into his presence.

"What I want," said the colonel, "is a useful man—one who can cook, drive a motor, look after a pair of horses, clean boots and windows, feed the poultry, milk the cow, and do a little painting and paperhanging."

"Excuse me, sor," cried Murphy, "what kind of soil hev yer here?"

"Soil!" rasped the colonel. "What's that got to do with it?"

"Well," replied Murphy, "I thought that if the soil was clay I might make bricks in my spare time!"



Our Grand New Serial, dealing with the
Adventures of a Young Acrobat who Rose
to Fame and Fortune as a Cinema Star.

By STANTON HOPE.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Micky Denver, an orphan lad, is an acrobat in Beauman's Gigantic Circus. One night, in Liverpool, he is accused unjustly by the bullying proprietor of having stolen a gold watch. Micky is arrested, but escapes to the river-front and stows away on a tramp-steamer. In New York Harbour Micky gets through an open port and swims ashore. There he meets a slim, red-headed American, Alec P. Figg, who is also anxious to get out West. With him Micky "jumps" the "Chicago Flyer," and by stages, they beat their way to Kansas City. Figg, known as Smart Alec, is one of the most expert cracksmen on the continent, and he attempts to crack the hotel safe. Micky frustrates him, and makes the rest of his way to Los Angeles alone. Once in the city he loses no time

in trying to get taken on at the cinema studios, but without success. One day he visits Santa Monica, on the coast, and there he rescues Mary Maidstone from the surf. In consequence, Micky is given a job as assistant to Buddy Gaylord, the property-man, in the great K. N. Broadworth's Cinema Company. One day the company goes "on location" in the San Gabriel foothills, and during the filming of a big fight scene a super called Monkey White is shot. Alec P. Figg, who has a grudge against White, is arrested in Los Angeles in connection with the affair, but is finally released. Shortly afterwards Micky receives an anonymous letter, warning him of impending trouble. Curious to learn more, he sets off on the evening appointed for the address given in the note.

(Now read on.)

The Secret of the Chinese Store.

IN the mysterious missive he had received Micky was asked to call at No. 13, West Canton Street between the hours of eight and eleven. But the clock had barely struck seven-thirty on Thursday evening when Micky put the book he had been reading aside.

"I think I'll go for a stroll," he announced. "I shan't be very late, but don't wait up for me, anyway!"

Buddy Gaylord and his goodly spouse looked up in surprise.

"I shouldn't stay out long, then, Micky!" said the genial little "Props." "It looks kinder stormy to-night."

Not for worlds, however, would the kindly couple interfere in any way with the lad's movements, for they liked and trusted him too much for that, and Micky, for his part, was only too glad, as a rule, to stay in the cosy home in which he was treated as kindly as if he had been an only son.

With a cheery word of assurance to Mr. and Mrs. Gaylord and a sharp order to Chappie—who had sprung alertly to the door—to lie down again, he secured his cap and left the house.

From the pretty suburb in which the home of the Gaylords was situated, he reached Los Angeles by trolley-car, and then inquired his way to West Canton Street.

After some difficulty he found the thoroughfare, and for the first time he began to wish he had not come on his mad errand.

He realised clearly that more likely than not he was putting his head into the lion's mouth in thus venturing into the shadiest quarter of the city. In the note he had received he had been warned of impending trouble to himself, and now he was asking for it as plainly as it was possible to do.

But Micky's make-up comprised even more than the average allowance of that spirit of adventure which has caused Englishmen to revel in perilous undertakings in every corner of the globe, and which, incidentally, has built the great British Empire on which the sun never sets.

But West Canton Street was enough to cause the keenest adventurer to quail momentarily.

It was a narrow, evil-looking thoroughfare in a district known as Chinatown, and the inhabitants were Asiatics of the lowest order.

Almost every city in Western America has its Chinatown, which, like a great canker, is a source of pollution and danger to the whole community. Perhaps the Los Angeles' Chinatown as a whole was not so bad as most, but West Canton Street concealed as much evil for its size as any street in the American continent.

Micky did not hesitate long. He took his courage in both hands, for he was too proud to turn back, and strode down this disreputable street in search of No. 13.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 61.

At length he found it—a small, evil-looking grocery shop, inside of which stood a fat, bland Chinaman behind a counter.

Thinking he must have made a mistake, Micky walked past, and, under the light from the next shop window, he drew the mysterious missive from his pocket and scanned the contents again.

But there was no error. After its warning of threatening trouble to him, it plainly stated that if he called at No. 13, West Canton Street the anonymous writer would show Micky how the trouble could be avoided.

The whole tone of the communication seemed more ridiculous than ever, and again prudence advised him to go straight home and forget the matter.

But the idea of returning home when he had got thus far was against the rest of the lad's nature, and he only went back as far as the little grocery shop. Then, bracing himself up, he entered the place.

"Good-evening!" said the fat Chinaman, in oily tones. "What you likee—eh?"

Not knowing whom it was he wanted to see, Micky's position was decidedly awkward.

"I—I received a letter the other day!" he stammered. "It—it requested me to call here."

"Callee here!" said the Chinaman. "What for tellum you callee here?"

"I—I thought you might know," said Micky. "This is No. 13, West Canton Street, isn't it?"

"That's allee light," replied the Clink; "this allee same No. 13."

Then a knowing light began to dawn in his almond eyes, and he regarded the lad quizzically.

"What name belong you?" he asked.

"Denver—Micky Denver."

"Allee light; you waitee here. I see if other men savvee."

Micky gazed round him, and as he did so he saw a pair of dark, evil eyes gleaming through a slit cut near the top of the door leading to the back of the shop. It was only a momentary glimpse, for the fat Chinaman opened the door and passed through, apparently without encountering anyone.

In less than a minute he returned, and, coming round behind the counter, leaned across to Micky.

"You go to that door at back of shoppee," he whispered; "your fiend waitee in loom for you. Wanchee velly nice pow-wow, me tinkee."

Micky knew it was useless to inquire what the "velly nice pow-wow" or confab might be about. He turned away, and was about to walk to the door, when a tall, slim seaman in blue dungarees and a cap pulled down over his eyes entered the store.

"Hi, Johnny!" he said to the fat Chinaman. "You play chuck-a-luck in this 'ere joint?"

"No savee play chuck-a-luck!" said the Clink, eyeing the newcomer.

Micky had heard of chuck-a-luck, which,

with fan-tan, patience, and other gambling games, was played wherever Chinamen congregate either in the Old or the New World.

"No savee, eh?" said the sailor, with a lurch. "Well, what's the chance o' gettin' a pipe for a quiet smokee-smokee?"

"No savee smokee," said the Chinaman imperturbably.

The sailor leaned across the counter.

"Well, say, do you savee this, old puddenface?" he said. And he drew from his pocket a wad of notes as thick as a man's arm.

The fat Chinaman's eyes lighted greedily.

"You waitee two, tlee minutes," he said. Then, noticing Micky still standing by, he waved his arm in the direction of the door at the back of the store.

Again the lad caught a glimpse of two dark, gleaming eyes looking through the aperture in his direction.

Without further hesitation he walked across the shop, and, to his astonishment, the door opened noiselessly before him, revealing a dark and narrow passage.

He halted momentarily on the threshold, but, summoning up his resolution, quickly stepped inside. As he did so the door swung noiselessly to again.

"Walkee staight on, please!"

Micky turned sharply in the direction of the voice, and beheld indistinctly in the darkness of the passage the form of a Chinaman standing on a wooden stool behind the door he had just entered by.

This was the solution to the puzzling glimpses of the pair of gleaming eyes he had obtained while standing in the store. It became increasingly clear there was some underground game afoot behind the innocent-looking little Chinese grocery store, for this watcher was obviously at his post commanding a view of the shop for the purpose of giving warning in case of the advent of the police or any suspicious-looking strangers.

"Walkee staight on, please!"

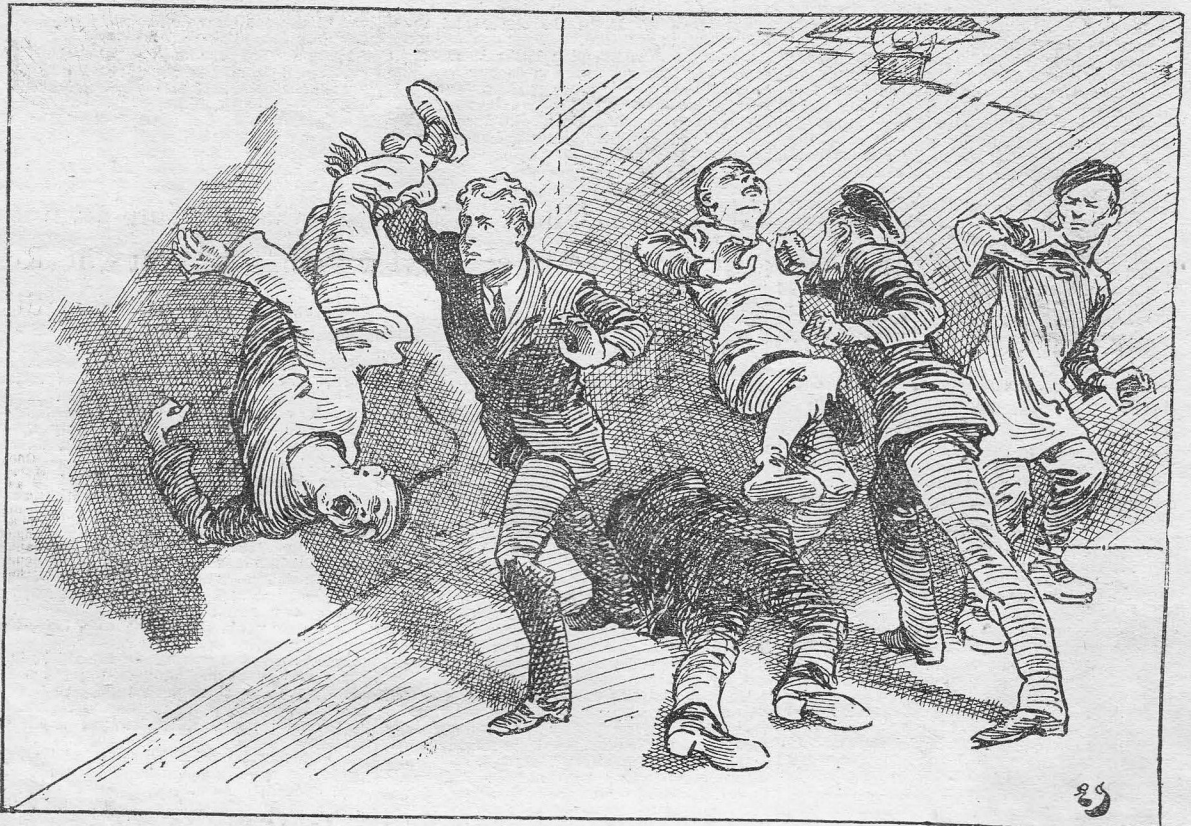
This time Micky heeded the order, and, feeling rather than seeing his way, he proceeded down the narrow passage.

Altogether, he guessed, he walked at least a hundred yards through that narrow corridor, and during his journey no less than four doors, each fully a foot in thickness, opened automatically before him and closed noiselessly when he had passed.

It was a weird journey, and it was not without considerable trepidation that he made it.

No matter what lay before him, it was too late to turn back now; but Micky gave more than one longing thought to the peaceful little home on the outskirts of the city which he had left to embark on this mad adventure, and to the genial Buddy and his buxom spouse who would be looking forward to his return.

Micky had just reached the stage of wondering whether he had been trapped for some fell purpose in this endless passage, when another heavy hardwood door swung



Micky gripped the lithe form of Li Chang Foo, who was nearest to him, firmly round the waist, swung him from his feet, and slung him against the wall. (See page 10.)

open on well-oiled hinges before him. As it did so he caught a glimpse of yellow lamps, and a rush of blue fumes enveloped him.

Instantly he knew the nature of the premises behind the grocery store. The place was an opium den!

When he stepped into the room the last door closed behind him as noiselessly as the others had done.

For a few seconds Micky stood gazing in amazement about him. It was as though he had been transported suddenly across the wide Pacific into some place in far-off China.

A number of wooden couches stood in a row on either side of the long room, with a passage-way between. Nearly every couch bore its occupant in the form of a reclining figure of a Chinaman or a white man of the seafaring type, either lying back motionless with wide-open eyes, or lighting the opium pellets and inhaling the smoke from the pipe at his side.

Canny accomplices of the Chinese who ran the "joint" had smuggled the drug into the United States by way of the Western seaboard, and now for a dollar or two the habitués of the sinister den could hire a pipe and smoke a few pellets of the dream-inducing narcotic.

One or two attendants in greasy jackets and loose trousers were moving with catlike tread among the couches attending to the wants of the opium smokers.

Micky was about to approach one of these when a small, wizened Chinaman appeared through the blue haze, coming towards him.

With a start the lad recognised the cruel yellow face. The man was Li Chang Foo, the keeper of the den, and the principal witness for Alec P. Figg in establishing an alibi when the crook had been charged with the shooting of Monkey White.

"Good-evening!" said the Chinaman, with a grin which revealed an uneven set of filed teeth. "You come to see your friend, eh?" "I've come to see someone," said Micky "and I should be glad to know who it is."

But the first sight he had caught of Li Chang Foo had told the lad that his first guess that Figg was the writer of the mysterious missive was the correct one.

"You follow me," said the Chinaman. "Your friend waitie in little loom top-side those stairs. All nice and quiet there for pow-wow."

As Micky started to follow Li Chang Foo the door leading to the long passage opened, and there entered the same slim seaman whom the lad had previously seen in the grocery store, and who had so unwisely showed his wad of notes.

"Hi, Johnny," shouted the man to Li Chang Foo, "bring me a pipe and plenty opium—heap quick!"

Li Chang Foo took no notice of the man, but clapped his hands twice. Immediately one of his underlings slithered over, and the keeper of the den issued some sharp orders in Chinese.

As Micky stepped out again in the wake of the Chinaman he saw the boisterous seaman being escorted to a vacant couch, and wondered how soon he would be robbed of the roll of notes lying tucked away in one of his pockets. He felt sorry for the man in spite of his folly, and mentally determined that if any shindy started he would render what aid he could.

As he followed Li Chang Foo up the two or three rickety stairs leading to the other room Micky glanced back again. The eyes of the man in the blue dungarees were gazing in his direction, and Micky noted something strangely familiar about the attitude of the fellow as he lay reclining on his wooden couch.

But he gave no further thought to the matter, for at that moment Li Chang Foo knocked at a door at the head of the stairs, and ushered Micky into the room beyond.

The room was barely furnished with a couple of ancient settees, a few chairs, and a small table. But Micky hardly took stock of these at all, for his eyes immediately lighted on the solitary occupant of the room, who was sprawled on one of the settees on the far side, opposite the door. It was with no surprise that he recognised Alec P. Figg, the cracksmen, with whom he had "jumped" the "Chicago Flyer" when beating his way West from New York City.

The Raid!

"A H, good-evening, Mister Micky Denver!" murmured Figg, in oily tones. "So you summoned up sufficient courage to come to-night, then, did you?"

"Yes, here I am. I guessed it was you who wrote the anonymous letter. Now, what have you got to say to me?"

"Say, I guess you're in an almighty hurry for a Britisher! Sit down."

While this conversation was going on Li Chang Foo stealthily crept from the room and closed the door.

Micky dropped into a chair and faced the crook.

"Now, what have you brought me here for?" he demanded.

"Say, you ain't inclined to be over-polite, kid," said Smart Alec. "However, as it's a li'l business proposition I want to discuss, it don't matter much. Now, firstly, I guess you've been kinder wondering why I didn't split to the police about that li'l theft o' yours in Mister Beauman's Gigantic Circus in Liverpool a few months back?"

Micky rose to his feet, his face flaming.

"Look here, Figg!" he cried. "What the dickens are you bringing that up for? You sent word you could show me how to avoid some trouble that was threatening me. Now, if you've got anything to say on the subject you mentioned in the note, say it! If you haven't, I'm going."

"You're optimistic, kid," murmured the cracksmen. "But sit down again, and get wise to what I'm going to tell you. It's gospel true that serious trouble threatens you, and it's up to me to show you the way out."

Micky reluctantly sank into the chair again. He knew only too well that it was not likely he would be allowed to leave the opium den as easily as he had entered it, if he were not tractable.

"See here, Figg," he said, "I remember that in Kansas City you were mighty keen to have plain speaking. Well, let's have some of it now. What's this trouble that you say threatens me?"

"Jest this," said the crook evenly. "In less than a week the police will be next to that li'l robbery o' yours at the circus in Liverpool."

Despite his effort to preserve his composure, Micky paled visibly. He knew nothing of the law governing the extradition of alleged criminals, and he saw all his fine castles in the air collapse like packs of cards. To lose his job in the Broadworth Cinema Company and be sent back to the Old Country to stand his trial for a criminal offence he had never committed was a fearful prospect indeed.

Alec P. Figg watched the lad's face narrowly, and a gloating smile hovered about his thin lips.

"So that's the trouble that threatens me?" said Micky, with an effort. "I might have guessed you'd take revenge for the opinion I stated in court, and which I still hold—that you and that chap Jed Tomson, who beat it after the shooting of Monkey White, were one and the same person!"

An expression of hatred disfigured the cracksmen's face, and his eyes flashed dangerously.

"You thieving, British whelp!" he snarled. "You thought you were almighty cute in finding that out! But Smart Alec's got more cuteness in his little finger than you, those cinema boobs, and the whole force o' sheriff's officers have got combined in all your bodies!"

Suddenly the crook's anger melted, and he assumed the oily tones with which he had opened the conversation.

"But let's quit the quarrelling, kid," he said. "I didn't ask you to beat it right here to Chinatown to-night jest to loose off a bunch o' that brand o' tongue-fireworks. I want you put you wise to the means whereby you kin escape this hyer trouble."

"Well, get it off your chest!" growled Micky. "It's getting late."

Alec P. Figg sat up on the settee and leaned forward a little.

"The way out is as simple as cracking cheap safes," he said. "You plank down a thousand 'bucks' and I'll keep my mouth shut about that li'l robbery which was the cause o' your beating it from the United Kingdom!"

Micky sprang from his seat and took a swift step towards the crook, his fists clenched and his eyes flashing dangerously.

"I understand!" he hissed. "Not content with cracking cribs for a living, you've added blackmail to your other shady business!"

Like lightning Smart Alec dropped his hand into his jacket-pocket.

"Get back into your seat, you crazy young galoot!" he hissed. "Unless, o' course, you want a hole drilled through you!"

Micky did not obey the command, but he stopped short to think the situation out. He was perfectly aware that the crook had him covered with the automatic-pistol or revolver concealed in his jacket-pocket; and he knew, moreover, that Smart Alec was quite capable of using the weapon if he considered it expedient.

It was Micky's intention now to get out of No. 13, West Canton Street as soon as possible, but no way of doing this safely seemed feasible for the moment.

Alec P. Figg saw the lad was revolving something in his mind and drew his own conclusions.

"I kin see your difficulty, kid," he said more pleasantly. "You're wondering how you're going to raise a thousand 'bucks.'"

To give himself more time, Micky decided to encourage the idea in the other's mind.

"Well, you don't think I've saved a thousand dollars in a few weeks out of a salary of three 'bucks' a day, do you?" he said. "I'm a property-man's assistant, not a giddy magnician!"

Figg let go the automatic, and drew a cigarette-case from his pocket.

"Ah, but I see you're coming to reason," he said. "It's come to my ears that you saved the life o' Mary Maidstone, the Broadworth star, not long ago. Now, I guess the gel or else one o' the bosses o' the company would oblige you with a li'l advance if you ask them nicely for it. Tell 'em you've got an old mother ill at home in the Old Country. Think o' the trouble you'll be saved from jest by ponying up a li'l wad o' greenbacks."

Micky's lip curled contemptuously. He was too open and honest by nature to play for safety with the unscrupulous crook.

"You rotten outsider!" he said. "I

wouldn't go to any of my friends for money to give you—no, not if I knew I'd get five years in gaol as an alternative."

The crook rose from the settee and stood facing the English lad.

"All right, Mr. Thieving Micky Denver!" he snarled. "But get this before you go. Unless a thousand bucks are paid to me in this room a week from to-day, I'll brand you as the thief you are! And, what's more, the first I'll tell is that li'l candy-kid you're so keen on—Mary Maidstone!"

The name of the young actress on the sneering lips of the calous crook acted as a goad to Micky. His left fist shot out straight from the shoulder, and Alec P. Figg crashed to the floor with as clean a knock-out blow to the point as was ever seen in any boxing-ring.

Micky heard the handle of the door turn, and as he swung round saw Li Chang Foo, the keeper of the opium-den, come gliding into the room.

The Chinaman took the situation in at a glance, and a long knife which had been concealed in his sleeve appeared in his hand with all the dexterity of a conjuring trick.

Micky threw himself forward and clutched the Chinaman's wrist in a grip of steel. The knife clattered to the floor, and Li Chang Foo let out a howl of anguish as his wrist twisted beneath the strain.

But as Micky tried to slip through the doorway two other Chinamen appeared on the scene and attempted to grab him. But the lad's training as a circus-acrobat now stood him in good stead. He fell back on to the little table, turned a complete somersault, and landed on the other side of the room.

Then, picking up a chair, he dashed across the form of Smart Alec at his assailants. The first man Micky laid out with a swinging blow, but the Chinamen were reinforced quickly by other attendants of the den.

Hissing, snarling, and muttering guttural oaths in their own native tongue, they threw themselves on the plucky lad. Each Asiatic grasped a wicked-looking knife in his hand, and things began to look serious.

In the first mad rush of the infuriated Celestials, Micky was bowled clean off his feet, and as he sprawled on his back on the floor, he caught the gleam of steel in the uplifted hand of one of the Chinese.

But the blow intended for him was never delivered, otherwise this story would have been cut short abruptly.

Like nine-pins deftly struck by a well-aimed shot, the Asiatics suddenly went flying on either side as the sailor whom Micky had seen enter the opium-den a short time before, charged among them lashing out with both fists.

Then a strong hand hauled Micky to his feet, and a familiar voice rang in his ears. "Weally, my deah boy, we must be getting out of this heastly place! Eh, what!"

To say that Micky was astonished would be putting the situation mildly. It seemed inconceivable that this unprepossessing individual in the peaked cap and dungarees could be Reginald Clarence Eton, the immaculate dude of the films!

However, there was no time for explanations. Micky was only too glad to have found so able and timely an ally, and as the Chinamen returned to the attack, he got busy with both hands.

He gripped the lithe form of Li Chang Foo who was nearest to him firmly round the waist, swung him from his feet, and slung him against the wall.

The wall was considerably harder than Foo's head, and the keeper of the "joint" subsided in a heap on the floor to take no further interest in the proceedings.

Then, swinging swiftly round again, the lad planted his fist full in the face of another of his opponents.

"Bwavo, Micky!" cried Reggie, who had either disregarded his assumed sailor's dialect. "That's the pwopah way to deal with these vermin! Give 'em what for, deah boy!"

Fighting shoulder to shoulder, the two edged backwards through the door. There was little of the foppish dude in the manly, straight-from-the-shoulder blows which Reggie handed out liberally among the cursing Celestials. It was the first time that Micky had seen the film-actor in action, and his admiration for his fellow-countryman extended by leaps and bounds. He could never quite understand how it was that Reggie, the bored and immaculate dude, could have won the D.S.O. for courage during the war; but the fact did not seem at all strange as he noticed one after the other of the Chinese

go down before the onslaught of his companion.

After a couple of minutes' fighting, Reggie and Micky got clear of the room and banged the door behind them.

Now a loud commotion could be heard proceeding from the room below the short flight of stairs where the opium-smokers were lying.

Reggie, who had started to lead the way down, sprang to the side of Micky again.

"The police are waiding the place, deah boy!" he announced. "It wouldn't be pleasant for us to be caught in heah, so we must find some othah way out!"

It was true, as the dude said, that the police were raiding the opium-den. For some time, detectives had been watching the Chinese grocery store at No. 13, West Canton Street, and now, after raiding several other "joints" in the locality, they were giving Li Chang Foo's place a turn.

But, much as Reggie and Micky might have welcomed the advent of the police had the fight with the Chinamen taken a different turn, they were now by no means anxious to be mixed up in any more trouble.

"Follow me, deah boy!" cried Reggie. "There is always a secret back-way out of pwemises like these, and, with luck, we may find it."

The fumes of the opium wafted in blue clouds up the stairs as the police swept through the room below, arresting the smokers and commandeering the pipes and other apparatus used in the preparation of the sleep-inducing drug.

There was not a moment to lose, and Reggie and Micky darted down the passage-way in which they found themselves.

In a few yards they came to a halt, their further progress barred by a door.

Micky feared it was one of the thick, hard-wood variety he had seen during the course of his journey through the passage leading from the grocery-store to the opium-den, but Reggie did not hesitate to put it to the test.

He quickly turned the handle, and gave a push. To the astonishment of them both the door opened at once.

A wild yell from behind announced that some of the Chinamen were again on their track, and they darted into the room and slammed the door in the nick of time.

On a settee in the far corner they noticed the form of a man with an opium-pipe at his side, but they had other things to think about without troubling about him.

From the centre of the room they dragged a heavy table, and piled it, together with some chairs and a big settee, against the door.

"Seems to me we're twapped, anyway, deah boy," murmured Reggie, mopping the perspiration from his brow with a dirty red handkerchief, very unlike the immaculate silk article he usually sported. "Howehav, we've managed to secure bweathing time."

"Who's that? Who's that?"

It was the man on the settee who asked the question. He had half raised himself, and was gazing stupidly at the two intruders.

In a flash both Reggie and Micky recognised the opium-smoker.

"Floyd Unwin!"

Dazed with the fumes of the opium-pellets he had been inhaling, the cinema star yet had sufficient sense left to recognise Micky.

"Say, what the blazes are you doing here, young Johnny Bull?" he mumbled. "I want none of your interference. You and your low sailor pard can hit the trail out of it as soon as you like!"

Reggie Eton darted across the room, and grasped the film actor firmly by the shoulder.

"It is I—Weggie, you know, deah boy!" he cried. "Come, get a move on! We've got to get out of heah—the police are waiding the place!"

"Lemme be!" yelled Unwin. "That cuts no ice with me!"

"Don't be an ass, Unwin!" cried Micky. "You don't want to be nobbled in a police raid!"

"Raid!"

Floyd Unwin fully grasped the situation now, and was as eager to get out of the Chinese den as were Reggie and Micky. Moreover, hammering blows on the door and a desperate scuffle outside, acted as a spur to his resolve.

"Is there any way out of this woom, deah boy?" asked Reggie hurriedly. "If not, I'm afraid we're caught like wats in a twap!"

Floyd Unwin lurched across the room and opened a cupboard, and fumbled inside with his hands.

"Here's one of the secret ways out of this 'joint,'" he said. "I guess the police aren't wise to this!"

Reggie Eton and Micky darted after Unwin, and as they did so the Chinamen smashed down the door and scrambled over the obstructions into the room.

But they were a couple of seconds too late. The secret door concealed at the back of the cupboard was of hardwood and fully a foot in thickness, and this Micky banged to in the nick of time.

Assisting Unwin who was very unsteady on his feet, Reggie and Micky made their way through the passage which led from the opium-den to a small Chinese laundry in a narrow thoroughfare a couple of blocks away from West Canton Street.

The Chinamen in the laundry who were in league with Li Chang Foo were startled at the knowledge that a police raid was in progress, and immediately set about shutting several heavy doors which had been left open along the secret passage.

The three cinema people did not waste any time in getting out into the street and walking rapidly away, thankful to have got out clear of the "joint" so successfully.

While this was going on, the police were making things warm in Li Chang Foo's opium-den.

They had obtained access to the place through the medium of a spy who had cleverly jammed the machinery for closing the hardwood doors while the police had entered the store. Thus, when the raiders had knocked down the first door with axes and sledgehammers the path through the secret passage was clear for them.

In consequence, they had caught the opium-smokers in the very act.

On previous occasions they had not been able to collect any apparatus, for Li Chang Foo had been too smart for that, but this time the wily Chink had been caught napping.

Had it not been for the fight with Micky

and Reggie, it is quite possible he might have met even this desperate situation; but he had delayed too long, and now thought only of flight. His head, which had been bumped against the hard wall, was aching painfully, but his senses were as alert as those of a cornered rat.

Alec P. Figg recovered from the knock-out blow delivered by Micky, and slowly sat up.

"What the smoke's happening?" he gasped.

Li Chang Foo helped the cracksmen to his feet, and pointed dramatically to the door.

"Your fliend beatee it!" he announced. "Now policeman come to my nice smokee-room!"

"The police!"

Smart Alec gazed open-eyed through the door down to the scene of confusion in the room below.

The police, who were in plain clothes, were having an easy task with the habitués of the den, many of whom were already wearing the "darbies." Two or three of the officers were collecting armfuls of pipes and other apparatus used in the smoking of the sleep-inducing drug.

Figg drew back hastily.

"Show me a way out o' this tarnation 'joint' o' yours, Foo," he hissed; "and get a hustle on!"

Foo drew the crook back into the room, and closed the door.

"Can do," said the Chinaman. "You standee on that table and slidee back that velly nice panel in ceiling."

Figg lost no time in following Foo's instructions, and had the satisfaction of making an opening whereby he could climb out on to the roof.

Li Chang Foo was about to follow the crook as he disappeared through the aperture, when the door burst open and his legs were grabbed by a hefty sheriff's officer.

"Hold out your mitts, Foo!" said the policeman. "I guess you'll agree the game's up this

time! It's been a dandy raid, and I kinder opine the chief'll be mighty pleased!"

Foo merely shrugged his shoulders with Oriental calm. He knew a heavy fine would be his portion. But what of it? He would start again.

As usual, he would also pay the fines for all his customers. His huge profits easily permitted the expenditure, and he kept his clients by this means.

Meanwhile, Reggie Eton, Floyd Unwin, and Micky were marching rapidly out of Chinatown.

The fresh air revived Unwin somewhat, but he showed little gratitude towards his two companions for their assistance. Indeed, he seemed rather to be labouring under the impression they had merely visited Li Chang Foo's place for the purpose of spying on him.

"I say, Unwin, deah boy," said Reggie, as they reached a more respectable quarter of the city, "why don't you cut out this wotten game? It'll play the pwopoh dickens with your nerves, y'know, if you keep on!"

"You keep your nose out of my business, you boob of a Britisher!" growled Unwin. "Anyway, I guess you've got no call to yap, seeing that you and this other Johnny Bull were both 'hitting the pipe' yourselves!"

With this Floyd Unwin left the other two, and made off home alone.

But Reggie shook his head sadly. He knew that on the following day Unwin was due to perform one of his most thrilling stunts for the films, and would need nerves as steady as a rock.

What would be the result of the actor's sojourn that evening with the opium-pipe in the foul den of Li Chang Foo?

Little though they knew it, the outcome was to change the whole aspect of life for Unwin and Micky!

ANOTHER LONG INSTALMENT OF THIS MAGNIFICENT SERIAL STORY OF THE CINEMA WILL APPEAR IN NEXT FRIDAY'S "PENNY POPULAR."

D'Arcy Decides!

A SHORT STORY OF ST. JIM'S.

COMING to the Gayford match on Saturday, Gussy?"

Thus Jack Blake, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, to his aristocratic chum, the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" replied that elegant youth in his well-known diction. "We'll have a cah and go ovah to Gayford in style. It's up to us to back up the First Eleven, you know!"

"We can back it up just as well if we go over to Gayford by train, like anyone else, fathead!" said Arthur Digby, who was blessed with a liberal allowance of commonsense.

"Hear, hear!" said Herries. "I'm stony, for one, and a car would cost a lot of money."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "We can't go ovah in a beastlay cwovded twain, deah boys. We must have a cah."

Blake snorted.

"Who's going to pay for it, ass?"

"Weally, Blake, I stwongly object to that wemark!"

"Well, I'm broke, for one," rejoined Blake.

"Blessed if I know where the train fare to Gayford's coming from even!"

"Oh, we'll dig that up from somewhere," said Herries optimistically.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus again firmly. "We must have a cah, deah boys!"

"But—"

"I shall stand it, of course!" continued Arthur Augustus in his stately way. "Wely on me, you know."

"But I thought you were hard up yourself, Gussy?" said Blake. "A car to Gayford will cost three or four pounds."

Arthur Augustus waved an elegant hand. "That's all wight, deah boy! Leave it to me. I shall write to my govnernah for a fivah!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"The question is, will you get it?" grunted Digby.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye, and gave Digby a freezing glance.

"I suppose my govnernah would not be likely to wefuse to accommodate me in a twifling mattah of this sort, Dig! I shall wegard it as vewy bad form on his part if he does not send the fivah by weturn!"

"Oh, very well," grinned Blake. "We'll leave it at that! Gussy's on the giddy high horse now, so there's no arguing with him."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a lofty look at his chums, Arthur Augustus proceeded to write the letter to his noble "govnernah," Lord Eastwood, which was to produce the required "fivah."

It was two days later that Arthur Augustus, coming out of morning school, found a letter in the rack addressed to him in Lord Eastwood's well-known handwriting. He hurried up to Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage to read it.

"Dear Arthur," it ran,— "I was very surprised to receive your request for five pounds for the hire of a car to the football match next Saturday. In my opinion this would

be a piece of unjustifiable extravagance, which I refuse to countenance. Your allowance is already more than ample; but in case you are short of money at the moment, I enclose a postal order for five shillings and ninepence, which is, I believe, the amount of the first-class return fare from Rylcombe to Gayford.—Your affectionate father,
"EASTWOOD."

Arthur Augustus' face was a picture as he read this terse epistle.

"Bal Jove!" he exclaimed, in utter dismay. "I wegard that as not playin' the game on the govnernah's part! I must weally write him a stwong lettah! Bal Jove!"

"Hallo, Gus!" exclaimed Jack Blake, coming into the study with Herries and Digby at that moment. "Got the fivah? We'll run down to Rylcombe after dinner and order the car."

"Ahem!"

Arthur Augustus' face assumed a beautiful red tint.

"I—I think pewaps, on second thoughts, Blake, it would be wathah extwagant to have a cah," he said rather feebly.

"What?"

"You fellahs must get used to twavellin' by twain, like anyone else," he went on, in his most fatherly manner. "It's cwovded, of course, but you must put up with it!"

Blake, Digby, and Herries could only stare at their chum and gasp. Arthur Augustus fairly took their breath away.

"Well, my—my hat!" stuttered Blake. "I thought you—"

Arthur Augustus waved his hand in an elegant gesture.

"It's settled, deah boy!" he said firmly. "We'll go ovah to Gayford on Satahday by twain!"

THE END.

"TOM MERRY & CO.'S NEW ROLE!"

is the title of a grand, complete story of Tom Merry & Co.
at St. Jim's, appearing in next week's issue of The "GEM."

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THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 61.

Two Short, Complete Stories of St. Jim's.

A Slight Mistake!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Preparations!

"CHAPLAIN is coming—"
Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, and Manners, the chums of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, heard Mr. Railton, their Housemaster, murmur those three words.

Tom Merry & Co. were not of the kind that pays heed to anything they might hear not intended for their ears. But, as Mr. Railton was talking to Mr. Selby as they passed the masters in the corridor, they could hardly help hearing.

"My hat!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, with a sudden intake of breath. "Chaplin coming to St. Jim's!"

"Charlie Chaplin!" ejaculated Manners. "The film chap!" murmured Tom Merry. Lowther opened the door of Study No. 10 in the Shell passage, which the Co. generally occupied. There was surprise depicted on the juniors' faces.

"My hat!" said Monty Lowther again, as he literally threw himself into an armchair. "Fancy that giddy Chaplin-chappie coming to St. Jim's!"

"Must be a mistake!" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "Charlie is busy making films in the United States or California."

"But—but you heard Mr. Railton say that Chaplin was coming?" said Manners. "I guess there's nobody else of that name who is likely to come to the old school!"

"Can't be!"

"Never heard of any other celebrity bearing the name of Chaplin, either!"

Tom Merry & Co. lapsed into silence. Monty Lowther, being of a humorous turn of mind, was probably the most interested in the famous film star.

He looked up suddenly, his eyes gleaming. "Perhaps he's coming to see if he can find any really funny chaps!" he said quickly. "By Jove! I'd like to go and act in a giddy old film!"

Manners snorted. "If it was a funny-faced merchant Chaplin wanted, you'd be the first he would take!" he said. "It's only—"

"Look here—"
"I have, and I don't like it!"
Monty Lowther glared.

"Dry up!" said Tom Merry. "Do you chaps want Figgy & Co. or Blake & Co. to get hold of the wheeze?"

"Eh?"

"As Charlie Chaplin is coming to St. Jim's, it's up to us to entertain him, isn't it?" went on Tom Merry. "It isn't every day we get a chance to entertain a giddy comedian like Charlie Chaplin, is it?"

"My hat!"

Manners and Lowther forgot all about their difference as they grasped the meaning of Tom Merry's remarks.

"You mean, get up a stunning feed—"
began Lowther.

"And grab old Charlie by the neck when he comes" put in Manners.

"Something like that!" agreed Tom Merry, with a grin. "A bit more gentle; perhaps he—"

Knock!

"Hide it!" whispered Tom Merry, hastily pushing the paper upon which he had been writing under the blotting pad.

"Pway allow me to entah, deah boys!"

"Gussy!" grinned Lowther. "Come in, sweetheart!"

The door opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the noble swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, entered quietly, and closed the door behind him.

"Anything we can do, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I came to see if I might bowwow a tie-clip, as I have, unfortunately, mislaid mine."

"I can oblige!" said Tom Merry, with a smile.

And he went to his desk and took out the required clip. D'Arcy accepted it with a graceful bow, and retired from the study.

But he had seen the paper Tom Merry had hastily pushed under the blotting pad, and promptly went to Jack Blake, his study

leader and chum, and announced that Tom Merry & Co. were preparing a rag. Blake, Herries, and Digby decided to lie low, and watch!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not Quite Right.

"WHO is coming?"
A dozen voices asked Kildare that question as he waited in the Fourth Form dormitory to turn out the lights. Kildare had just given instructions that the juniors were to turn out smart and smiling the following morning.

But he had given no reason. "Never you mind; something will probably surprise you!" said Kildare, with a smile. "Mind, clean collars, clean necks, and all smiles! And get your best voices ready for a cheer!"

And with that Kildare switched off the lights and shut the door.

"My hat!" said Jack Blake. "I'll wager Tom Merry and his chums know all about it!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "You're quite wight, Blake, deah boy!"

There was much debating upon the question of the identity of the visitor. But the juniors had to give it up; they did not know who was coming to St. Jim's.

But Tom Merry & Co. were up earlier than usual the next morning, and were down in their study hard at work before most of the juniors had thought about rising.

But it was not work of a studious nature that occupied Tom Merry & Co. until breakfast time. They were scrubbing out the study on their knees, cleaning the windows, and polishing the pictures and brass until they could see their faces in them.

For Tom Merry & Co. meant to entertain the distinguished visitor, whose identity was so puzzling to St. Jim's, to tea. It was no puzzle to the chums of the Shell. Charlie Chaplin, the world-famous cinema star, was to visit St. Jim's!

Half the school was in the quadrangle when the carriage bearing the visitor arrived. Tom Merry & Co., only just down in time from laying the table, was almost breathless with excitement.

They half expected Charlie Chaplin to crawl out through the window of the carriage which was bringing the visitor from the station to the school. That would only be like Charlie Chaplin as half the world knew him.

The carriage stopped, and the door opened. But the comical figure of Charlie Chaplin did not step out. A tall, well-built man, wearing the uniform of a chaplain of the Forces, stepped quickly, almost nervously, from the carriage.

The Head moved a pace forward, and shook hands warmly with the visitor, then turned to the crowd of juniors and seniors.

"Boys!" said Dr. Holmes, a wealth of pride in his voice. "This is Mr. McIntyre, the V.C. chaplain, an old St. Jim's boy, who brought credit and fame to the school! Show him how the present day boy appreciates the fact!"

For a moment the fellows hardly grasped the situation, but when they did, they roared applause in a manner that literally shook the famous old school. Everybody cheered—Tom Merry & Co. with the rest, although their eyes were nearly starting from their heads.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Some slight mistake!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Lowther. "All that work! We'll ask the V.C. chaplain to tea!"

Monty Lowther finished his remarks more brightly than he had started. He was disappointed. He had dreamed of Monty Lowther on the films—had thought of nothing else since they overheard Mr. Railton in the corridor.

This chaplain was hardly likely to assist him in that direction!

But the chums of the Shell yelled lustily with the other fellows. The V.C. chaplain saluted, and bowed his acknowledgments.

And later, when he was being conducted on a tour round the school and studies, the chaplain peered in Tom Merry & Co.'s study. He saw the great feast on the table, and inquired if that was the usual tea for juniors.

"No, sir!" said Monty Lowther promptly. "We—er—ahem—"

"Are you expecting a visitor?" asked the Head quietly.

"We got it ready for Chaplin, sir!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Then I'll stop!" said the V.C. chaplain. "And he did!"

THE END.

THE END.

Figgins Scores!

"YOUR move, old son!"
Thus Reginald Talbot, of the Shell Form at St. Jim's. He and Manners were seated at a small table in the former's study, deep in a game of chess.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, Manners' chums, Blake & Co., and several more fellows of the Shell were interested spectators of the game, which was a very keen one, both Manners and Talbot being clever players.

"There you are, then!" said Manners, moving one of his pieces.

"I reckon that's pretty nearly dished him," murmured Jack Blake to George Herries.

"Humph! Not so sure; but—"
"My hat! What's up?"

The exclamation burst from a dozen juniors at once as the door suddenly flew open, and Figgins of the New House dashed in.

"Hi, you fellows!"
"What the thump—"
"Look out, you chump— Ah!"

Figgins in his mad rush appeared to have overlooked the chess-table, with the result that he lurched into it, sending table, chess-board, and pieces flying in all directions.

"You clumsy idiot!" roared Manners. "Look what you've done!"

"Come and look—quick!" shouted Figgins, ignoring Manners' angry exclamation.

"Look!" shrieked Jack Blake. "Look at what you've done!"

He pointed to the scattered chessmen; but Figgins took no notice.

"Out on the landing!" he exclaimed quickly, turning towards the door again. "Come and have a look!"

"What the dickens—"
Figgins rushed from the study, with a last shout to the others to follow.

"By Jove! We'd better see what's up!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Come on, chaps!"

He ran from the room, followed by Lowther, Manners, Talbot, Herries, and two or three others. The next moment there was a yell, and Tom Merry measured his length on the floor of the passage.

"Yarooogh!"
"Yah-ow-ow-ow!"
"Oh, crumps!"

One after the other the rest of the juniors fell across the forms of the fellows in front, unable to pull up in time. Tom Merry himself had tripped over a cord which had been stretched from one side of the corridor to the other.

"That rotter Figgins has done us in the eye!" shouted Monty Lowther as he extricated himself from the crush on the floor.

"Rather! After him!"

The juniors clambered to their feet, and dashed on towards the head of the stairs. Down they went, two or three steps at a time, Jack Blake leading the way.

"Oh-ow-ow-ow!"
"You wretched boys! Oh, dear me!"

Mr. Ratcliff, the irate House-master of the New House, fell back gasping as Blake, dashing round a corner of the stairs, closely followed by the remainder of the outraged juniors, pelted right into him.

"Oh—er—sorry, sir!" gasped the juniors.

"Sorry, indeed! I should think you were sorry! This rough behaviour has got to be stopped! I shall send a note at once to your House-master!" spluttered Mr. Ratcliff.

Then, with whirling gown, he hurried on.

"Oh, my hat! That's done it!" gasped Tom Merry.

And it had indeed done it! Ten minutes later Mr. Railton, the School house-master, sent for the boys who had been reported by Mr. Ratcliff, and they were awarded impositions of five hundred lines each.

As they left the master's study, Figgins was reporting to his chums, Kerr and Fatty Wynn, the success of the wheeze, and they laughed loud and long when they heard of the School House fellows' encounter with Mr. Ratcliff.

"Done in the eye!" was Monty Lowther's summing-up of the case.

THE END.

THE END.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. No Room for Mornington!

FLYNN in goal!" said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome nodded.

They were helping the junior captain of Rookwood with the footer list—at all events, they were listening to his remarks and nodding assent.

One of the big matches of the season was due on the following day, and Jimmy Silver was going over the list for the last time.

After tea it was to be posted on the board for all Rookwood to read—for the Lower Forms to read, at least. Great and important as the matter was, it was not likely to interest the Fifth and Sixth very much. But of the juniors there was hardly a fellow who was not looking forward keenly to the posting of the footer list. Fellows who had no chance whatever of getting into the team to play St. Jim's hoped against hope that they might, after all, find their names in the list.

For Jimmy Silver was a first-rate footer captain, and was certain to look for talent wherever he could find it—either on the Classical or the Modern side. So every fellow who felt an inward conviction that he was a budding International hoped that Jimmy Silver's well-known good judgment would lead him to the same opinion.

"Backs—Raby and Jones minor," said Jimmy.

"Hear, hear!" said Raby. "One's jolly good, anyway!"

"Halves—Rawson, self, and Doyle," said Jimmy. "Centre-half is about my mark, I think."

"Doyle's a Modern bouncer!" grunted Lovell.

"He's a good half," said Jimmy; "and the Moderns have got to have a show in the team, anyway."

"Yes. It's rotten, but I suppose so. Where do I come in?" asked Lovell.

"Forwards—Oswald, Lovell, Tommy Dodd, Towle, and Cook," pursued Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, and where do I come in?" demanded Newcome warmly.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"You don't come in at all, old chap."

"Well, my hat!"

"Football comes before friendship," explained Jimmy Silver. "I've left you out but Towle in."

"Let me out for a measly Modern!"

"Yes. You'll have to wire in, you know. But I couldn't pass over Towle, could I?"

"This study ought to be always in the eleven," said Lovell, with a shake of the head.

"Quite so," agreed Jimmy Silver. "But this study will have to be the best of the bunch in that case. And at present Towle is rather ahead of Newcome."

"I don't quite see that," remarked Newcome.

"But it is so, old fellow."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I think that's about the best team we could get together," said Jimmy. "Smythe & Co. will be snorting about the Shell being left out. But the Shell will have to buck up if they want to play for Rookwood. Morn-

ington and his pals will be raging, too. Can't be helped."

"Mornington's been shaping jolly well at the footer," remarked Lovell. "Some of the fellows expect him to play."

"Blessed are those that don't expect, then," said Jimmy calmly. "Mornington doesn't play in my team."

"He makes out that you only play your own pals."

"Well, I'm playing four Moderns," said Jimmy, "and I've left out one of my own pals—Newcome. Morny can say what he likes. I'm sorry, Newcome, old chap, but it can't be helped, you know. Don't you begin to jaw me, as the others will."

Newcome grinned.

"Oh, all serene! I think you're an ass, that's all."

"So will twenty other chaps when they see the list," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Can't expect more than eleven chaps to be satisfied with a footer team, really. I suppose Jones minor will tell me he's best at centre-forward, and Doyle will suggest changing with me at centre-half. Never mind; it's all in the day's work. Hallo! Come in!" added Jimmy, as there was a tap at the door.

Mornington of the Fourth came into the study.

"List not posted up yet?" he remarked.

The dandy of the Fourth spoke quite agreeably, apparently oblivious of the fact that he was on the worst of terms with Jimmy Silver.

When it suited him, Mornington could drop the superciliousness of his usual manner.

"Just going to take it down," said Jimmy.

"My name in it?"

"No."

Mornington's eyes glittered.

"You're leaving me out, then?" he asked.

"I don't know about that. I'm certainly not putting you in."

"May I look at the list?"

"Certainly!"

Mornington ran his eye over the names.

"You've seen me at practice," he said very quietly. "I ask you candidly, Jimmy Silver, do you think Towle is a better forward than I am?"

"No."

"But you've put him in and left me out!"

"Exactly."

"Is that what you call playing the game?"

"Quite," said Jimmy Silver, undisturbed.

"I've put Towle in because he's a good footballer and plays the game. He won't keep the ball to himself whenever he has a chance, and muck up the game for the rest. He won't try to bring off risky shots from the touchline to cover himself with glory, instead of centring when he ought to centre. He won't go all out for limelight, and let the game go hang. You would."

Lovell & Co. chuckled. Jimmy Silver's plain speaking tickled them.

"You'd be a better man than Towle if you played the game," continued Jimmy Silver.

"But you don't. I think you can't, in fact. You played me too many dirty tricks for me to trust you. Once bit, twice shy, you know."

"You mean that I'm not going to have a chance in the footer because we're on bad terms personally?" sneered Mornington.

Jimmy yawned.

MORNINGTON'S PLOT!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

A MAGNIFICENT LONG
COMPLETE STORY OF
JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE
CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

"You can think so if you like," he remarked. "You know it isn't true; but you can think so. I don't mind."

"I've heard how you used to gird at Smythe when he was skipper, before I came, for makin' up a team of his own pals," said Mornington. "You're doin' the same."

"Not quite. But I don't mind you thinkin' so," said Jimmy blandly. "It's a free country, and you can think what you like."

Mornington clenched his hands hard. It was not easy to "draw" the imperturbable Jimmy.

"Does that mean that I'm not going to have a chance?" he asked.

"You won't play for Rookwood so long as I'm skipper unless we have a mighty big change in your manners and customs," said Jimmy. "We play footer matches to win, you know; not to give a swanking ass chances to show off to the gallery."

"It's no good my telling you I'll play up my best for Rookwood?"

"No good at all. If anything happened to upset your majestic serenity, you'd be quite capable of giving the game away out of sheer malice."

"So I'm left out?"

"Exactly!"

Mornington gritted his teeth.

"Well, I'm going to play," he said.

Jimmy whistled.

"I'm goin' to play in the St. Jim's match," said Mornington deliberately. "So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Jimmy Silver!"

"And how are you going to manage it?" grinned Lovell.

"That's my bizney! But you can't pass over me like this. I'm not standin' it."

"Bow-wow!" grunted Raby. "What do you care for footer, anyway? Smoking cigarettes and playing nap is more in your line. Go back to your smokes, and shut up!"

"Hang the footer!" said Mornington coolly.

"But I'm not goin' to be passed over—that's my point. I'm goin' to play in the St. Jim's match."

And the dandy of the Fourth turned on his heel and strode out of the study. He left the Fistical Four chuckling. Mornington was a determined fellow, and he was going to be unscrupulous and to stick at little in gaining his ends. But it was really a little difficult to see how he was going to play in the St. Jim's match without the consent of the skipper.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Morny's Little Game.

ROTTEN!

"Beastly shame, you know!"

"Just like Jimmy Silver!"

It was Wednesday, and morning lessons were over at Rookwood.

Immediately after dinner the Rookwood footballers were to start for St. Jim's. It was a good journey, and there was no time to waste.

Mornington's pals, the elegant Nuts of Rookwood, were sauntering in the quad, with the dandy of the Fourth, waiting for the dinner-bell. They were full of sympathy.

Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower, did

not understand or share Mornny's desire to shine as a footballer, certainly. They regarded football as a beastly fag, and "dodged" the practice whenever they could. But as Mornnington wanted to play in the junior eleven, they agreed that it was a rotten shame that he was excluded, and that it was like Jimmy Silver's cheek to exclude a member of their noble society.

But while they sympathized with Mornnington, they "rubbed it in" a little. Even his own dear pals and faithful followers were not sorry to see that the lofty Mornny could not have everything his own way.

And so they smiled as they made their sympathetic remarks.

Mornnington was looking grim.

"I'm playin' all the same," he said. Townsend winked at Topham, with the eye that was furthest from Mornnington.

"Playin' all the same, Mornny?"

"Yes."

"Without Silver's permission?"

"Yes."

"By gad! How are you goin' to do it?"

"You fellows are goin' to help."

"Any odd thing," said Peele. "But I don't see—"

"The team's goin' over by train," said Mornnington quietly. "It's a rather expensive journey, you know, and nobody else is goin'.

Only Newcome. They generally have a crowd to watch them when they go to Bagshot, or any place near. But a railway journey to St. Jim's is rather a big order for the pleasure of standin' about with cold feet."

The Nuts chuckled.

"But we're goin'," added Mornnington.

"We are?"

"Exactly!"

"My dear chap," protested Townsend, "we're not, you know. I'm not goin' to take a journey like that. No fear. Too fargin'.

And I don't want to watch 'em play. I don't care a merry copper whether they beat St. Jim's or not."

"Same here," said Gower. "What's the good of wastin' money on railway tickets to watch those duffers faggin' after a muddly ball?"

"I shall stand the tickets, of course," said Mornnington, "and anythin' else that turns up."

"Well, that's all right; but it's wastin' an afternoon," urged Townsend. "We're goin' to get up a game of bridge in Smythe's study, too."

"Bridge can wait," said Mornnington coolly. "We're not goin' over to watch them play, of course. It's a wheeze."

"Blest if I see it."

"Only Newcome's goin' over with the team. If anything happened to any of the players, that means only one reserve for Jimmy Silver to call in."

"But nothin' will happen to them," said Townsend in astonishment.

"They won't fall out an' break their necks to please you, Mornny. They won't, you know," argued Topham.

"At least two of them won't turn up at St. Jim's," said Mornnington calmly. "Two, at least, will get left behind somewhere. Jimmy Silver can call in Newcome, but he'll still be a man short. He will have to play 'em."

"Oh!" ejaculated Townsend.

He understood now the cunning scheme that was working in Mornnington's brain.

Certainly Jimmy Silver was not likely to be on his guard against tricks of that kind.

"Oh, my hat!" said Peele, with a whistle.

"They have to change trains twice, at least," said Mornnington. "There's a good wait at each place. I've looked up the trains. Easy as winkin' for a chap to get left at the last minute—with somebody to help him."

"Oh, by gad!"

"And a later train wouldn't be any good. A chap left behind would come on too late for the match. I don't mean you're to collar 'em by the neck and drag 'em out of the train," grinned Mornnington. "It's all goin' to be done under the rose, of course. First change at Rookham, with ten minutes to wait. Well, when they're catchin' the second train one of you gets into a fight with one of them, and that one loses the train! What!"

"Oh!"

"Same thing happens at Laxham, and Jimmy Silver finds himself two men short at St. Jim's. Plays Newcome and me," smiled Mornnington. "One man short wouldn't do. He'd play Newcome, not me. But two does the trick."

"Well, you are a deep boulder, and no mistake!" said Townsend admiringly. "I don't see why it shouldn't work."

"The PENNY POPULAR.—No. 61.

"It will work, of course. I mean it to work," said Mornnington arrogantly; "and at St. Jim's, even if Jimmy Silver didn't want to play me, the fellows would make him. The match will be touch-and-go, anyway, and playin' a man short simply means askin' for a lickin'."

"No doubt about that," chuckled Peele.

"And Jimmy Silver will be dished this time," said Mornnington.

"Ha, ha!"

"But—but he'll smell a rat," said Gower. "He'll tumble to it that you've worked it, Mornny!"

Mornnington shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him!"

"Hallo, there's the dinner-bell!"

The Nuts of the Fourth went in to dinner. They were grinning with great delight over Mornnington's precious plan. It really looked as if Jimmy Silver did not know that anybody else was accompanying the team.

But when the dozen juniors started from Rookwood to walk down to the station at Coombe five more fellows joined them.

Jimmy regarded the Nuts with surprise.

"Coming to see us off?" he asked.

"Comin' to see the match," said Townsend.

"What!"

"I suppose you'd like some Rookwood chaps there, to cheer your goals? What!" grinned Topham.

"You're going to make that journey to watch the game?" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, the Rookwood centre-forward.

"Yaas."

"Blest if I know why you don't take up footer, then, if you're so jolly interested in the matches," said the Modern junior, puzzled.

"I suppose we can come? What!" said Mornnington.

"Certainly!" said Jimmy Silver. "No harm in your coming. You're not asking the club to pay your fares, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha!"

The footballers were considerably puzzled. As a rule, the Nuts of the Fourth did not even turn up to see the home matches. It was astounding that they should make a long railway journey to see an away match.

Still, Jimmy was willing to regard it as a sign of grace; and he had no objection to Mornny & Co. accompanying the team.

The party arrived at Coombe, and swarmed into the train for Rookham, the junction where the first change was made.

Mornny & Co. travelled in a first-class carriage by themselves. Jimmy Silver and his team, who saw no object in wasting money, travelled third.

But they met again when the train stopped at Rookham, where there was ten minutes for the party to wait.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Left Behind.

"PUT that out, you ass!"

The Rookwood juniors were waiting on the platform at Rookham, when Townsend selected a cigarette from his case, and lighted it.

Jimmy Silver snapped at once.

He had no mind for the Rookwood party to be made ridiculous in the public eye by the nutty manners and customs of the giddy goats of Rookwood.

"Oh, rot!" said Townsend airily. "Why shouldn't a fellow smoke?"

"Well, one reason is that it makes you look a silly ass, and us, too, as we're with you!" growled Lovell. "Put it out!"

"Oh, rats!"

Lovell's eyes gleamed.

"Did you say rats to me, Towny?"

Townsend nodded coolly.

"Yes. Rats, dear boy, and many of 'em!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter," roared Lovell, greatly incensed by this unexpected bravado from Townsend, the slacker and dandy, "do you want me to mop up the platform with you?"

"You couldn't do it, dear boy!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"You couldn't, you know. Rather above your weight, I think," said Townsend, blowing a puff of smoke fairly into Lovell's face.

Lovell was crimson.

"By jingo, I'll show you whether I could or not!" he exclaimed, clenching his fists.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Raby. "The train's coming in."

"Blow the train! It won't take me ten seconds to mop up that slacking duffer!"

"Hold on, Lovell!" said Jimmy. "Never mind mopping him up now. He can wait."

Lovell grunted.

But he dropped his hands. It was not a judicious moment for a scrap. The train puffed into the station and stopped.

Townsend burst into a laugh.

"Well, of all the funks!" he ejaculated.

Lovell had opened the carriage-door. But he spun round as Townsend spoke, his face crimson with wrath.

"You called me a funk!" he stuttered.

"Yes, rather! When is that mopping comin' off?" jeered Townsend.

"Get into the train, Lovell!"

"Look here—"

"Get in, you ass!"

Lovell swallowed his fury with difficulty, and turned again to follow his comrades into the train.

Townsend made a clutch at his collar and whirled him back. Mornnington & Co. got into the next carriage, and they were watching Townsend from the window with grinning faces.

"Go it, Towny!" yelled Topham.

Jimmy Silver put his head out.

"Lovell, you ass, jump in! The guard's waving his flag."

"I'm coming!" panted Lovell.

He shook Townsend off fiercely, and made a rush for the train. But Townsend was not done with yet.

He rushed after Lovell, and grasped him again, and whirled him away from the carriage.

They stumbled over a trolley and rolled on the platform together.

"Right away!"

"Lovell!" roared Jimmy Silver.

He jumped out of the train, in great anxiety.

"Lovell!" yelled Raby. "Buck up! The train's going!"

"Lovell, you duffer!"

Lovell was struggling on the platform a dozen yards away. Townsend was holding grimly on to him.

Jimmy Silver ran towards them, but the guard was waving his flag, and he was holding the carriage-door to shut it.

"Jimmy!" shouted Newcome.

Jimmy bounded back to the carriage.

There was not half a second to lose. Lovell had to take his chance. It looked as if the captain of the football eleven would be left behind, too.

"Stand back—"

"Hold on a second!"

"Too late!" snapped the guard. "Stand back!"

But Jimmy fairly dragged the door open and hurled himself in. The train was moving.

The guard slammed the door angrily.

On the platform Lovell sat up breathlessly, and blinked after the moving train. He had shaken Townsend off at last.

Towny was panting, on his back. Lovell leaped up and raced after the train. A porter dragged him back; but there was no chance.

The junior stood in utter dismay as the train swept out of the station.

He was left behind!

Lovell clenched his hands hard. That unlucky "row" with Townsend had settled his chance of playing in the match at St. Jim's.

There was only one consolation left—to hammer Townsend till he howled. As the train disappeared out of the station, Lovell turned back to where he had left the slacker of Rookwood, with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

But Townsend was gone.

He had known what to expect, and he had not waited for it. Lovell raged in search of him in vain.

And the train rushed on towards Laxham, bearing the Rookwood junior team—minus its inside-right.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tommy Dodd Has Bad Luck.

"SILLY ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Of all the duffers—"

The remarks of the Rookwood footballers made on the subject of Arthur Edward Lovell were not complimentary.

Jimmy Silver was frowning.

He had a time-table in his pocket, and he took it out and consulted it anxiously. But he shook his head.

"No train?" asked Raby.

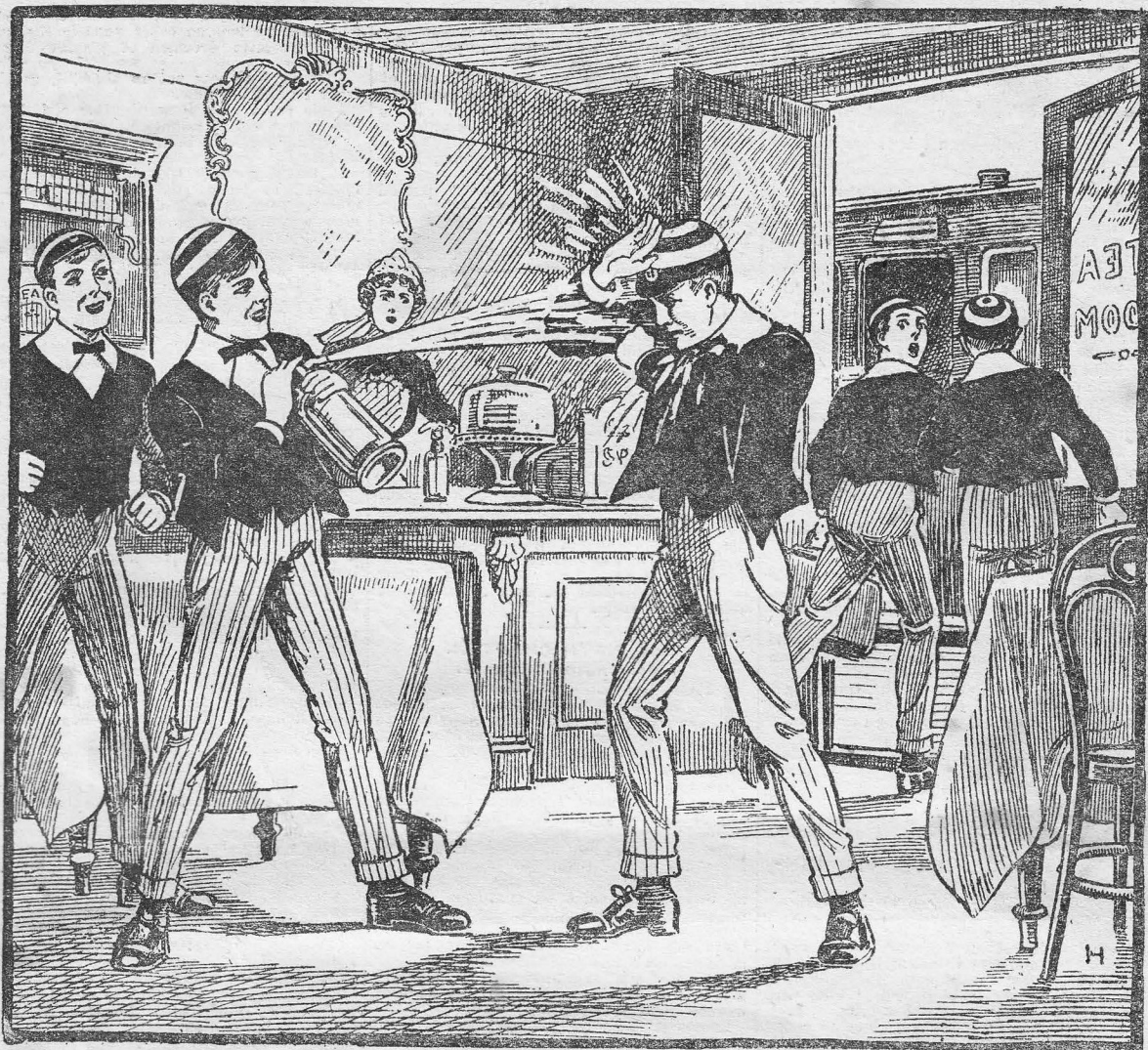
"Not for two hours. Lovell can't come on."

"Oh, rotten!"

"The silly ass, to get left behind!" growled Tommy Dodd. "Just like a Classical, I must say! You can't say I didn't warn you to put one or two Moderns in the team, Jimmy Silver!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Sure, it wasn't really Lovell's fault!" said Flynn, the goalkeeper. "That thafe of the wourld fairly fastened on him, you know."



Whiz-sizz! A stream of soda-water caught Tommy Dodd full in the face. It was more than flesh and blood could stand. He rushed at Topham with blazing eyes, and struck out angrily. (See page 16.)

Faith, it's the first time I've ever seen Towny spoilin' for a fight!"

"Well, it can't be helped," said Jimmy Silver. "Keep smiling! Lucky Newcome's with us."

Newcome chuckled.

"You'll want me now, Jimmy?"

"Yes, fathead!"

"Quite sure I'll do?" asked Newcome, rather sarcastically. "You've got the Nuts to choose from, you know. There are four of them in the next carriage."

"Fathead!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"It's hard cheese on Lovell!" remarked Raby. "Still, Newcome will play up all right. It won't make much difference in the match."

"Pity a few Moderns didn't come along," said Tommy Dodd. "Too many Classical duffers in the team, anyway, if you ask me!"

"Well, I don't ask you," said Jimmy Silver politely.

"Mind some more of your Classical asses do not get left behind!" remarked Tommy Cook. "We've got another change at Laxham, you know."

"If anybody gets left behind, I'll scrag him!" growled Jimmy Silver. "We can't play St. Jim's a man short. It wasn't really Lovell's fault; it looks to me as if that cad Townsend was making him lose the train on purpose. I've never seen him on the war-path like that before."

The train rushed on, the juniors chatting

over the prospects of the match at St. Jim's. Lovell would be missed from the front line, but Newcome was able to fill his place pretty well—he was a quick and reliable forward. It was distinctly fortunate, Jimmy reflected, that Newcome had decided to come along and see the match. If he had taken his exclusion from the team as some fellows did, he would not have been available.

Matters might have been worse, and Jimmy Silver lived up to his own maxim, and "kept smiling."

"Laxham!" said Tommy Dodd, at last.

The train stopped, and the Rookwooders poured out of it. Mornington & Co. alighted from the next carriage.

Mornington glanced over the footballers as they gathered on the platform.

"Hallo, lost one of your men?" he asked.

"Lovell lost the train at Rookham!"

grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Oh! Like me in his place?"

"No, thanks!" said Jimmy curtly.

"I'm willin' to play," said Mornington. "I don't bear any malice. Say the word, and I'm your man!"

"Newcome's playing."

"Not much good against St. Jim's," said Mornington, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Why, you cheeky rotter," exclaimed Newcome indignantly, "I sha'n't kick the ball through my own goal if I get into a wax! You would!"

Mornington gave another shrug and strolled away with his friends. The footballers fol-

lowed them to the other platform, where they waited for the train for Wayland.

Topham and Peele and Gower were looking a little uneasy. It was nearly time for the second trick to be played, and the Nuts did not feel keen to be selected for it. Mornington regarded them with an ironical smile.

"You're the man, Topy!" he remarked.

"Oh, gad!" said Topham.

"I suppose you want Jimmy Silver to be dished, don't you?"

"Ye-es; but—"

"Collar Tommy Dodd!" said Mornington. "I rather fancy his place in the team—centre-forward suits me."

"Lots of limelight!" grinned Peele.

"I—I say, that Dodd beast is rather a tough beast," said Topham uneasily. "He's a beastly hard hitter, you know."

"Yaas, that's so. Gower had better lend you a hand!"

"Oh!" said Gower.

"I suppose you can handle him between you?" sniffed Mornington.

"Oh, yes. But—"

"It'll save you the trouble of comin' on to St. Jim's. I suppose you're not specially keen to see the match?"

"No jolly fear!"

"Well, you two keep an eye on Tommy Dodd, and collar him when the train's going. Mind they don't smell a rat, of course!"

"I—I say, how are we goin' to get up a

row?" said Gower uneasily. "He won't row with us for smokin', as Lovell did!"

"Well, chip him about bein' a Modern cad, and mop him up," said Mornington coolly. "It won't look suspicious, Classicals rowin' with a Modern cad!"

"Yes, that's a good idea; but—"
"They're goin' into the buffet," said Mornington. "Come along! You may be able to keep Dodd back when the others leave to catch the train!"

"Oh, all right!"
Jimmy Silver & Co. had gone into the station buffet, which opened from the up platform, to while away the quarter of an hour they had to wait. Mornington and his friends joined them there.

The juniors discussed ginger-pop and the coming match and the weather, and the minutes passed.

Towle looked out on the platform. "Train's signalled," he remarked. "Get out, then," said Jimmy Silver. "Don't get losing the train any of you!"

Jimmy settled for the ginger-beer, and turned to the door. Mornington made a sign to Gower and Topham, and sauntered out with Peele.

Topham took hold of a syphon of soda-water. Tommy Dodd finished his ginger-beer, and turned away from the table. As he did so a sudden stream of soda-water caught him behind the ear.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Tommy Dodd, spinning round. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You clumsy ass!" exclaimed Cook wrathfully.

"Do you want some?" grinned Topham. "Why, you— Yow—ow—grooogh!"

Tommy Cook jumped back as the stream was turned on him. Jimmy Silver's voice was heard from the platform:

"Come on, you duffers! The train's in!"
"Coming!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Come on, you chaps! No time to scrag those cheery cads now!"

The three Moderns rushed for the platform. Whiz-sizzzzz!

A fresh stream of soda-water caught Tommy Dodd in the back of the neck.

"Give it to the Modern cad!" howled Gower. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Dodd turned back with blazing eyes.

"Come on!" called out Doyle. "I'm coming!"

Sizzzzz!

It was more than flesh and blood could stand. Topham was deliberately sizzling the soda-water over the Modern junior, drenching him. Tommy Dodd rushed at him, with blazing eyes, and struck out angrily. "Yow-ow!" roared Topham; and he rolled on the floor, and the soda syphon went down with a smash.

Tommy Dodd did not wait for more. He turned to rush out, and rushed over a foot Gower put out just in time. The Modern junior stumbled and rolled over.

Topham staggered up.

"Collar the cad!" he panted.

"Come on, Tommy!" yelled Cook from the platform. "They're shutting the doors!"

Tommy Dodd scrambled up, only to find himself in the grasp of Topham and Gower, and to go down sprawling with them.

"Let me go!" yelled the junior, struggling fiercely. "You rotters, you want me to lose the train!"

"Sit on him!" panted Gower.

"Leggo!"

"Ha, ha! Sit on the Modern cad!"

Tommy Dodd struggled fiercely, and though the Nuts were two to one, he hurled them off at last, and picked himself up.

He rushed breathlessly out of the buffet to the platform.

The train was vanishing down the line. Tommy Dodd had lost it by a good minute.

The Modern junior stood rooted to the platform.

He had lost the train. The match at St. Jim's was to be played without him as well as without Lovell.

"M-m-my hat!" stuttered Tommy Dodd.

Two dishevelled youths looked out of the buffet. They grinned as they saw Tommy Dodd standing in dismay on the platform, staring blankly in the direction the express had gone.

"Done!" grinned Topham.

"Done to a turn!" chuckled Peele.

But they left off grinning and chuckling as the Modern junior of Rookwood came towards them.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 61.

"You've lost me the train!" said Tommy Dodd, between his teeth. "You've done me out of the match, and goodness knows how it will go now! You did it on purpose!"

He pushed back his cuffs.

"I think I can see the game. Towny at Rookham, and you cads here—a sneaking game to muck up the team for the St. Jim's match! Well, you've done me, and now I'm going to do you. Come on!"

"I—I say—" stammered Topham, backing away.

"Keep off, you Modern cad!" panted Gower. "There's two of us, and—"

"I don't mind the two of you!" said Tommy Dodd disdainfully. "I shouldn't mind half a dozen of your sort! Come on; you're going to have it!"

And as the slackers of Rookwood did not come on, Tommy Dodd came on—like a whirlwind.

Topham and Gower put up the best fight they could, and they were two to one. But the indignant Modern junior made short work of the two weedy slackers of the Fourth.

Right and left, left and right, he piled in, till Topham and Gower lay sprawling on the platform, and refused to rise for any more. They were likely to show serious damages when they returned to Rookwood.

Tommy Dodd turned away with a black brow.

He had made the Nuts suffer for their sins, and that was a solace. But he was out of the St. Jim's match now, and the Rookwood skipper was a man short. And Tommy Dodd anatomised his luck as he waited wearily for a train.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. MORNINGTON'S CHANCE.

JIMMY SILVER'S face was a study.

The loss of Lovell had been serious enough, but there was Newcome to take his place more or less effectively. But the loss of Tommy Dodd was a knock-down blow.

Jimmy sat silent, in utter dismay, as the train buzzed out of Laxham Junction. It was hard under the circumstances to "keep smiling."

The eleven had lost its centre-forward, and there was no one to fill the place.

Tommy Dodd was one of the very best men in the team, and there was not even a reserve to fill the gap.

Jimmy could hardly blame himself. He could not have foreseen that two players in succession would lose the connection.

"The silly ass," said Jimmy at last, "to get into a row with those fellows just at that minute—just as Lovell did!"

"Sure, it wasn't Tommy's fault!" said Tommy Doyle loyally. "I tell ye Topham was squirting soda-water all over him, bedad! He was lookin' for a row!"

"Looks to me like a rotten trick!" said Rawson, the right-half of the team. "Towny at Rookham, and Toppay at Laxham—it's a game to muck up the team!"

"A rotten Classical trick!" snorted Towle. Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"That's why they came!" growled Raby. "They meant to play that game all along! It's just as plain as the nose on your face, Jimmy!"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Jimmy Silver slowly.

"And now we're a man short!" said Rawson. "What are you going to do, Jimmy?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"I saw Morny and Peele get in farther down the train," said Towle. "You'll have to play one of them!"

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"Peele's not a bad forward, if he chooses to buck up," he said thoughtfully. "I might play Peele!"

"Better Peele than nobody."

"Well, yes."

"My hat! Was that the game, then?" exclaimed Topham Cook. "Did they play those rotten tricks to give Peele or Morny a chance?"

"I shouldn't wonder." Jimmy set his teeth.

"Still, those cads are always up against us. I don't see any evidence that Mornington or Peele had a hand in it. Anyway, we must have another player, as the matter stands, and Peele will have to play."

It was evidently the only thing to be decided on—unless Mornington was to be chosen.

Mornington was far and away a better player than Peele—indeed, he was very nearly as good as Tommy Dodd himself when he

chose. But Jimmy knew the unreliable temper of the cad of Rookwood too well. Not until he had no other possible resource would he have dreamed of playing Mornington.

Jimmy's face was not so cheerful, as the train rushed on, now.

Peele could play forward after a fashion, but he was out of condition, and at the best he would not have been a patch on Tommy Dodd.

It meant a weak spot in the team that required to be at its very best for the match. Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's were foemen worthy of the steel of the best footballers that Rookwood could send out.

But it could not be helped, and Jimmy took it as cheerfully as he could.

The train stopped in Wayland at last.

The footballers alighted, and Mornington and Peele stepped out of a carriage farther along.

They did not join the footballers, however. Mornington was sure of his point now, and he would not appear eager. It suited him to be approached by Jimmy Silver now that he regarded himself as indispensable.

Jimmy hurried towards the two Nuts as they were leaving the platform. Mornington regarded him with an insolent smile.

"Hallo! Lost another man?" he remarked.

"Yes. I shall want you, Peele."

Peele started, and a steely look came into Mornington's eyes. He was not, after all, indispensable. It had never even occurred to him that Jimmy Silver might choose Peele instead.

"I—I'm wanted!" repeated Peele, equally surprised.

"Yes. Tommy Dodd's left behind at Laxham, and he can't get here in time for the match. I shall put Oswald in the centre, and you can play on the wing. I suppose you're willing to play?"

Jimmy added that as an afterthought. Most Rookwood juniors would have jumped at the chance of playing for the School, but Peele was a well-known slacker.

"I—I've got no things here, you know," stammered Peele, quite taken by surprise.

"I've got Lovell's things in my bag—that's all right."

"Lovell's things wouldn't fit me."

"Oh, don't be an ass! A football field isn't a monkey-parade in Bond Street!" snapped Jimmy Silver. "They'll fit you near enough!"

Peele hesitated.

As a matter of fact, slacker as he was, he would have liked to bag the distinction of having played for Rookwood in a big match.

He looked doubtfully at Mornington.

The dandy of the Fourth met his eyes, his own gleaming with menace. If Peele trumped Mornington's trick in this manner, he knew the deadly enmity and malevolence he had to expect afterwards. He was not prepared to quarrel with the leader of the Rookwood Nuts, and to make an enemy of the richest fellow at Rookwood.

He shook his head.

Jimmy stared at him. He could hardly comprehend, for a moment, that the slacker of the Fourth was refusing a place in the eleven.

"Sorry!" said Peele at last. "I can't do it."

"You can't do it!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Sorry! No; I'm not in form for footer."

"It's for me to settle whether you are or not. I'd rather play you than play a man short. Will you play—yes, or no?"

"No!" said Peele, driven to a plain answer at last.

"Why, you unspeakable cad," broke out Dick Oswald savagely, "do you want to leave your own school in the lurch?"

"Ye thafe of the worruld—"

"There's Morny," said Peele, a little alarmed by the looks the footballers bent upon him. "Morny's a better man than I am, and he's willin' to play."

"Quite willin'," said Mornington, smiling.

Jimmy Silver paused. Peele's refusal left him no resource but to play Mornington, or to play a man short against St. Jim's. That, of course, was asking for a tremendous licking. And Mornington, if he chose, could play a good game. Would he choose? Certainly, he seemed keen and willing now.

Jimmy Silver made up his mind.

"I'll play you, Mornington," he said abruptly.

"I'm your man."

"I suppose you won't mind if Lovell's clobber don't fit you to a hair?" added Jimmy bitterly.

"Not at all!" said Mornington laughing.

"Then you're in the team. As for you,

Peele, you cad, you won't come on to St. Jim's. And before I leave you, you'll put up your hands."

"I—I say—"
Peele did not have time to say anything. The angry and indignant football skipper was already hitting out, and the Nut of Rookwood had to put up his hands. His hands did not help him much, however.

Jimmy left him gasping on the platform, to be picked up by a porter, and the footballers streamed out of the station.

Mornington went with them, smiling. The unfortunate Peele had the pleasure of nursing his nose at the station till a train came in to take him home. By that time he had repented very sincerely of his share in Mornington's plot. But the plot had succeeded, and the dandy of Rookwood was a member of the Rookwood team.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Checkmate.

"**B**AI Jove, heah you are, deah boys!" The dulcet tones of Arthur D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's greeted the Rookwood footballers as they came out of the station.

A brake was waiting for the team outside, and Tom Merry and D'Arcy were seated in it. The Rookwooders clambered in.

"Had a good journey?" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"Oh, ripping!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Topping!"

"First-rate!" said Mornington, laughing. Jimmy Silver shot the cad of Rookwood a suspicious glance as he sat down in the brake.

There was no direct evidence to connect Mornington with the disasters that had befallen the Rookwood team, but Jimmy could not help being suspicious.

It was true that Townshend & Co. were "up against" the Fistical Four and all their works, yet it was surprising that they should have taken so much trouble to "dish" the footballers, unless there was some strong motive behind it.

Was Mornington at the bottom of it? Peele's refusal to play was the last straw. Peele could have had only one motive for refusing—to leave the place open for Mornington.

Did that mean that Mornington had plotted the whole business, and all that had happened on the journey was due to the machinations of the cad of Rookwood?

Jimmy remembered Mornington's declaration in the end study the previous day—that he would play in the St. Jim's match in spite of Jimmy Silver. Had he planned all that had happened in order to carry out his boast?

It looked like it. But there was no proof, and without proof Jimmy Silver could not act. If it was so, he was playing into his enemy's hands. He was rewarding him for his treachery with a place in the team. The thought of that made him set his teeth hard. But there was no proof.

Jimmy was almost silent as the brake rolled away to St. Jim's. Mornington was in great spirits, however, and he chatted cheerily all the time. The brake arrived at the old school, and the Rookwooders followed Tom Merry and D'Arcy to Little Side Tom Merry's team were on the ground already, punting a ball about.

The visitors went into their dressing-room to change. Mornington, fastidious as he

usually was, made no objection to donning Lovell's football shorts and jersey, though they were considerably too large for him.

Tommy Dodd's clobber was available for Newcome.

"You'll go in the centre, Oswald," Jimmy Silver remarked, as the juniors changed: "Newcome, inside-right; Mornington, outside."

Mornington looked up quickly from lacing his boots.

"What's that?" he exclaimed, his brow darkening.

"You heard what I said."

"I understood that I was going to take Tommy Dodd's place. I'm best at centre-forward."

"Isn't that for me to judge?" said Jimmy quietly.

"You'd better play me in the centre. I like the place better," said Mornington. "Oswald won't be much good there, in my opinion. He's a pretty fair winger."

"Your opinion doesn't happen to matter," said Jimmy Silver icily. "My opinion is that Oswald is worth about three of you at centre-forward, and my opinion happens to be the one that counts."

Mornington's face was dark as he left the dressing-room with the rest. St. Jim's were waiting in the field.

"You won't give me the place I want?" Mornington asked, joining Jimmy Silver as he went into the field.

"No, I won't!" snapped Jimmy. "Shut up!"

Mornington's eyes gleamed.

"You've got into the team, and that's more than enough for you," said Jimmy. "Don't let me have any more of your chin-wag; I'm fed up with it!"

Mornington laughed mockingly.

"I told you I should be in the team," he sneered. "You are not quite the great pandrum you fancy, Jimmy Silver. I told you I should play in the St. Jim's match, and I'm goin' to play. That's good enough for me, after all!"

Jimmy stopped dead.

"Does that mean that you fixed this up for me, Mornington?" he asked in a quiet voice. "You planned fixing me like this?"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders. He was utterly reckless. He was convinced that Jimmy Silver could not do without him now at any price; and he was keen to enjoy his triumph.

"What did I tell you?" he sneered. "If there isn't one way, there's another, and I told you I should play against St. Jim's. So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Jimmy Silver!"

"Come on, Jimmy," said Raby anxiously. "The fellows are waiting for us."

Jimmy did not move.

"Mornington's owned up that he planted this on us," he said. "He put Townsend and the rest up to their game. I suspected it; but the cad has owned up now!"

"You can lick him at Rookwood," said Raby. "Come on now!"

"Mornington isn't going to play," said Jimmy quietly.

There was a buzz among the Rookwood footballers.

"Not going to play!" ejaculated Rawson.

"No!" Jimmy Silver's eyes were gleaming. "Whether we win, or whether we lose, Mornington doesn't play for Rookwood. He's dodged Lovell and Tommy Dodd out of the team to steal their place; and I'm not back-

ing up a plotting thief! Mornington won't play!"

"I—I say, Jimmy—"
"It's settled!" said Jimmy Silver, frowning. "But we shall be a man short!"

"Better than than play a rotten, scheming rascal. Get off the field, Mornington!"

Mornington's face was white with rage and chagrin. He had never dreamed of this. He had deemed it safe to triumph over the football skipper he had so cunningly outwitted. But he did not know Jimmy Silver.

"You—you—" he panted. "I tell you I'm goin' to play!"

"You're not!" said Jimmy Silver tersely. "Get out! If you don't want the St. Jim's fellows to see you kicked off the field, you'd better clear at once!"

Mornington stood, rooted to the ground for a moment. It looked as if there would be a scene; Jimmy's hands were already clenching. But the humiliation of being kicked off, under the staring eyes of the St. Jim's crowd, would have been too bitter. The dandy of Rookwood, deadly white with passion, turned on his heel and strode away.

In silence the footballers went into the field. The die was cast now. And the Rookwooders, now that they knew the truth, did not blame Jimmy Silver. Better to take any chances than to play the traitor in the ranks. But their hopes of a win in the first big match of the season had sunk to zero.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
A Fight to a Finish.

TOM MERRY looked rather curiously at the Rookwooders as they came on. "Man short?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver nodded shortly.

"Yes; one of my men can't play," said Blake. "It won't be much of a match, otherwise."

Jimmy Silver paused.

Naturally, he wanted to play that match with a wholly Rookwood team. But the suggestion was good; and the looks of his followers showed him that they thought so. He nodded at last.

"Thanks!" he said. "If you can lend me a man—"

"A dozen, if you like," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "Of course, we've got the best in the team, but there are others jolly good!"

"Bai Jove! I will play for Wookwood, you know," said D'Arcy generously. "We mustn't give a visitah a second-wate playah. Is it a forward you want, Silvah, deah boy?"

"Yes; outside-right."

"Then I'm your man!"

"Take D'Arcy, if you like," said Tom Merry. "I'll put in young Julian; he's quite as good."

"Weally, Tom Mewyan—"

"Well, if D'Arcy's agreeable—" said Jimmy Silver.

"I am quite at your service, deah boy."

"Then it's a go. Thanks!"

"If you have any clobber for me, I will change."

"That's all right. Come with me!"

Mornington came out of the dressing-room, in his Etons, with a bitter look on his face. He gave Jimmy Silver a dark look, and went into the crowd round the ropes. He had one consolation left—that of watching the Rookwood team thoroughly licked by St. Jim's—as he fully anticipated.

D'Arcy entered the dressing-room, and
(Continued on page 19.)



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ON THE QUI VIVE.

It is encouraging to see how very keen my friends are, not merely on the stories, but as regards any little mistake which may crop up. In a recent story a certain individual was reported to be chewing at his moustache. It is just like the discomfited villain in the play when he sees his best-laid schemes going agley. But this personage had previously been shown as not possessing a moustache at all. The assumption is that he must have chewed it all up and swallowed the ornament! Anyway, according to the artist, "he had not got his moustache with him."

It is an interesting point this about hirsute decoration. Some people carry moustaches in their pockets for use when necessary. One may take it that on cold days they will clap on a real bushy affair. There is something in the idea. Some modern moustaches are so small and insignificant that they really might as well not be there at all. Most likely the portable variety is best. By contrast with the very small moustaches you see regular droopers, which must be very inconvenient at times. But apart from all this there is nothing to be said against the fellow who starts out in the morning with a moustache and half-way through the day decides that he will let a barber have the appendage as he personally finds it a nuisance.

VERY PARTICULAR.

Again, we have the fastidious critic upholding the stories of many years since as against the yarns to-day. It is just the question of the old days—and the effect of memory. Memory plays many weird tricks. Nothing, of course, in all this is intended against the old-time tales, but when you hear some dear old fogey talking in this strain you know at once he is just a victim to the impressions of the past—and hardly a victim, for nobody can object to his liking the stories of his early days, or pity him for the penchant, but he need not decry what is doing now. What such a critic thinks is just about what Tom Hood wrote:

"No skies so blue or so serene
As then—no leaves look half so green
As clothed the playground tree!
All things I loved are altered so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
That change resides in me."

But that is precisely where the disparager fails. He cannot see that he has altered in himself. He gets up from his armchair and talks in this wise: "The stories for boys these days are nothing like as good as those I read when I was a lad. They lack in grip, in human nature, and the fellows described are not the magnificent young heroes we used to know."

ALL A MISTAKE.

We know in ourselves that it is all erroneous. Most likely the party who sweeps present-day stories off the board, or tries to, knows it as well himself.

Remember, he is thinking of the times when he was a boy. He pictures the little window where the sun came peeping in at morn. He casts a glamour over the old days, the old home, the garden, the village shop where he bought his books, the school where he fagged through the hot summer days. And then—Oh, there are a lot of other things as well! He dreams of what was not real—something that has matured since in THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 61.

his mind. Well, it was because he was unconsciously treasuring up impressions for future pleasure.

Of recent weeks I have seen many fascinating articles in the papers dealing with the world of forty and fifty years ago. The writers extol everything that existed those decades back. Not a single word you notice of appreciation for what is doing now. They simply dislike the new.

Blame them! I would not blame them. It is human nature—delightful human nature, that's all. You must go easy in these matters. Remember the new generation would not care for the slower methods of romance which were the vogue in the long ago.

We must have sympathy for sundry characteristics. We shall be having the said old characteristics ourselves if we have long enough for cultivation of same. People have to be humoured. It is so in fiction, clothes, food; any old thing.

"There was an old major of Bude,

Who would have his caviare stewed.

"I never did hear!" cried the chef in despair.

He takes my creations for food!"

If the major wanted his caviare served up piping-hot he had to have it. Some people think we ought all to wear green trousers and crimson coats, just to make the streets look pretty and impart a dash of colour to the somewhat sombre scene.

But, after all, it is stories with which for the moment we are concerned. The comparisons to which I have referred are generally misleading. Writers in these days have to write of motor-cars, of aeroplanes, of a hundred-and-one contraptions which simply did not exist some years since. The whole atmosphere has changed. You can't compare! It is not cricket.

Then, to a very large extent, the way of thought has changed. Why, just think what has occurred since the Eighties, and though they were not yesterday, they were not considered—are not by some, anyhow—as ancient days. London has moved. Lumps of it have been taken away in carts and will be seen no more. The big things remain—the ideas about how to play the game, the need for acting along certain broad lines of thought—but, in the main, the wand of the enchanter has caused a revolution. It is so. For good or for ill, it had to be. Small wonder, then, if the new stories which mirror the new life seem strange, and perhaps a shade cold in style to the individual who dwells in the sunny imaginations of his own youth. I should like to have had "Algy," who writes in this strain of discontent, with me on a recent jaunt I took. By the way, this Algy is not the same person cited in the honourable legend:

"Algy went for a walk with a bear.

The bear was bulgy—

The bulge was Algy."

Nothing of that sort. It was another gentleman of the same name of whom I am thinking.

It was this way. I had occasion to enter the offices of a publishing-house which has in its time supplied some of the best fiction of the world. It was an ancient building, and the stairways were quaint and venerable, and everything was redolent of the past—a particularly romantic and impressive past when the world was much younger. Robert Louis Stevenson had passed that way. In fact, most of the famous men of a few decades back had written for this house.

There were associations here out of the days when Gladstone was thundering against the Turk, when Disraeli was planning great schemes for the advance of the Old Country, when Holywell Street was still in existence, and the metropolis was full of smart hansom-cabs—the fastest things on the road, then!—and yellow and blue and green horse-drawn omnibuses, with straw inside to keep the feet warm. They were the days when the first yarns about giants were popular—and how these thrilled!

But these little memories can have their place without upsetting the things that exist now. I much doubt whether the most hardened old fogey would really care to go back to the past, for he would find himself up against a thousand inconveniences of which he has little idea. He thinks of the old place of entertainment, with the rosy face of the chairman looming amidst the smoke, and he conjures up visions which are interesting enough, but which are seen without the awkward et ceteras, the little worries and drawbacks which were there. No electric-light, remember! None of the hundred comforts which inventors as clever as Bernard Glynn have brought in!

AND THE "PENNY POPULAR."

This brings me back to the complaint just received about the "Penny Popular." You would scarcely imagine there were any complaints. It was not half such an amusing world before the "P. P." came out every Friday. A reader in Edmonton, where John Gilpin lived, does not altogether approve of the changes made in the paper. I am sorry for this; real, right-down sorry. But what will you? There is no pleasing everybody, try as you may.

My friend up north wants St. Jim's tales, also Greyfriars stories but not quite so much of Billy Bunter. Go bon! Where would the yarns of historic Greyfriars be minus the rotund presence of the Owl with his glasses and his remarkable way of saying the thing that is not?

I am bound to feel there is a mistake somewhere when a correspondent says he does not want to hear about Bunter. For the porpoise is liked by so many thousands of readers, or, if not liked, certainly appreciated as a mirth-provider.

AN EXTRA PAGE.

Too much space given to advertisements is the growl of a reader who is minus name and address—anyway, he does not include them in his communication. He thinks if there must be advertisements they should be put on an extra page.

That extra page! It sounds so simple. Simon's nothing to it. But if my chum could understand only a portion of the difficulty of clapping on a supplementary page to a weekly paper he would be sorry he spoke, or wrote—same thing. And if he realised what advertisements mean, it would be better still. Papers in normal times all have "ads." whatever they may have done in the extra pressure days of the war.

Your Editor

MORNINGTON'S PLOT!

(Continued from Page 17.)

Jimmy picked up the "clobber" Mornington had thrown savagely on the floor.

"I won't keep you three seconds, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus.

As a matter of fact, D'Arcy kept him fully five minutes; changing clothes was not a rapid process with the swell of St. Jim's.

But he was changed at last, and he returned to the football-field with the Rookwood skipper.

Julian of St. Jim's was already in football garb, and in the ranks of the Saints.

Tom Merry's team was ready.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took his place on the right wing as the Rookwood team lined up.

The kick-off fell to Tom Merry, and the ball rolled as Lefevre of the Fifth blew his whistle.

The great match began.

The Rookwood footballers realised at once that they were "up against" a very tough proposition in Tom Merry and his team. And, although they found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a first-rate winger and decidedly useful in the front line, they had the disadvantage of having a stranger in the ranks—a player with whom they had never practised, and whom they knew nothing of.

Jimmy had trained his team to work together like clockwork; and there was a loose screw, as it were, in the machine. But D'Arcy was doing his very best for his adopted side; and his best was very good indeed.

The first goal came to Talbot of St. Jim's, after a struggle that had lasted for twenty minutes without a score on either side.

But close on half-time the Rookwood forwards made a hot attack on the home goal, and D'Arcy centred to Oswald in the nick of time, and the Rookwood junior put the ball into the net in spite of the efforts of Fatty Wynn in goal.

The score was level when the whistle went for half-time.

Mornington, looking on, ground his teeth.

It was anybody's match, so far, and it was quite on the cards that he would be deprived of the consolation of seeing his side defeated.

Rookwood kicked off for the second half, Mornington's sulky eyes watching them from the crowd.

The wind was behind the Rookwooders now, and they took full advantage of it. They came down on the home goal with a rush.

Twice Fatty Wynn in goal narrowly saved before the struggle went away to mid-field.

The game was hard and fast all through, and both goals were in danger incessantly; but Flynn for Rookwood and Fatty Wynn for St. Jim's proved equal to the test.

The referee looked up at the old clock-tower above the trees.

Five minutes to go, and the score level.

Tom Merry's men came on gallantly, and there was a fierce struggle before the Rookwood goal, and the ball went in, only to meet a quick Irish fist and come out again like a pip from an orange.

This time Raby cleared, and Jimmy Silver saw his opportunity, and sent the ball out to D'Arcy on the wing.

The Rookwood forwards were away again. The ball came in to Newcome, who centred to Oswald as he was tackled, and Oswald rushed it on.

The St. Jim's backs accounted for Oswald, but not before he had passed to Towle, who rushed on and kicked. Fatty Wynn made a leap too late, and the leather reposed in the net.

"Goal!"

Towle panted and blinked. He had had good luck.

"Goal!" gasped Jimmy Silver, as he thumped Towle on the back. "Good for you, you Modern boulder! Rookwood wins!"

"Hurrah!"

Rookwood had won, for the whistle went, and the game was over.

Mornington, with a scowling face, tramped away, after seeing the Rookwood team victors in the hard-fought match.

But nobody missed Mornington.

Tom Merry & Co. took their defeat cheerfully enough, and they entertained the Rookwood footballers in great style till it was time to start for the station.

Jimmy Silver & Co. departed in great spirits. The first match of the season had been won, after all, and without Mornington. The cad of Rookwood had plotted in vain, and Jimmy Silver could afford now to dismiss him contemptuously from his thoughts.

"Morny, how did it go, dear boy?" Mornington arrived at Rookwood before the footballers. He had caught an earlier train. Lovell and Tommy Dodd were there, eager to know how the match had gone. Townsend & Co. greeted Mornington as he came in.

But Mornington scowled.

"You played, of course?" said Topham.

"No."

"My hat! Why?"

"Hang them!" was Mornington's reply.

"Then they lost?"

"No; they won!"

"By gad!"

"Rookwood's won?" asked Tommy Dodd.

"Oh, good! What are you scowling about, you image, if Rookwood's won?"

"Go and eat coke!" was Mornington's reply.

He went sullenly to his study with the Nuts. A little later the merry voices of the returning footballers were heard. Jimmy Silver & Co. had scored a victory to open the season, and they let all Rookwood hear their delight.

Mornington gritted his teeth.

"No good grousing, old chap," remarked Townsend. "Can't be helped! Jimmy Silver has all the luck!"

"His luck is goin' to turn!" said Mornington, his eyes gleaming.

Jimmy Silver! There isn't room at Rookwood for Jimmy Silver an' me!"

Townsend stared.

"What the dickens — He won't leave to please you, Morny."

"He may be made to!" said Mornington, in a low, tense voice.

"I tell you there's no room at Rookwood for the two of us; and Jimmy Silver is getting near the end of his tether!"

"What the dickens are you drivin' at, Morny?" muttered Townsend uneasily.

But the dandy of Rookwood did not reply. Only the savage gleaming of his eyes told of the dark thoughts that were working in his brain.

In the end study the Fistical Four were rejoicing. Little did Jimmy Silver dream of the black thoughts in the mind of his enemy, and little would he have cared if he had known. But he was not done with Mornington yet.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood School, next week, entitled "FOUND GUILTY!" Order your copy of "THE PENNY POPULAR early.)

READERS' NOTICES.

Correspondence, Etc., Wanted.

Miss Lillian Waugh, c.o. Sargood Brothers, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, with girl readers anywhere, age 14-15.

George Duckett, 33, Edgwick Road, Foleshill, Coventry, with readers anywhere.

Tom Nye, 25, Spring Gardens, Admiralty, Whitehall, with readers anywhere.

Will readers who go to either Edward VI. Grammar School or Abbots Archbishop School at Guildford please write to R. H. Kemp, Orchard Villa, Morten Road, Colchester, Kent?

Members wanted for the Chums Correspondence Club, competitions, etc., entrance fee 6d. per month. Write, President, 12, Tavistock Place, Bloomsbury, W.C. 1.

Jack Todman, Queen Street, Ellerslie, Akland, New Zealand, with readers anywhere, age 15-17.

P. Bovey, Lochnagar, 8, Hanks Street, Ashfield, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, with readers anywhere.

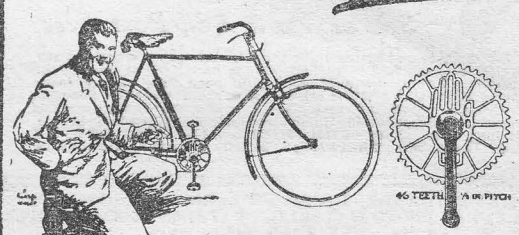
James R. Low, 16, Bargates, Whitechurch, Salop, with readers anywhere.

E. Bagshaw, 52, Pembridge Villas, Bayswater, W., wants readers for his amateur conjuring paper, the "Wand," 2jd., post free.

Miss V. L. Hill, 7, Thorburn Street, Edge Hill, Liverpool, with readers anywhere, 18 or over.

Jack Lindell, 76, Primrose Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria, Australia, with readers anywhere, with a view to exchanging stamps.

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Correspondence, Etc., Wanted.

C. Hunt, 22 Sunnyside Road, Smithills, Bolton, wants "Magnets" and "Gems" before 500. Write first.

W. R. Barnes, 18, Railway Avenue, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, South Africa, offers good price for "Bob Cherry's Barring Out."

M. Bestor, Castle Brewery Cottages, Woodstock, C.P., South Africa, offers 6d. for the "Greyfriars Herald," No. 6.

G. L. Anderson, 62, Luxmore Road, Walton, Liverpool, wants "Bob Cherry's Barring Out." 6d. offered.

Fred. Proctor, 16, Old High Street, Ynysddu, near Newport, Mon., wants "The Disappearing Fourth." 6d. offered.

Miss M. Clark, 36, Leighton Road, Knowle, Bristol, wants "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "Coker the Joker," "Billy

Bunter's Birthright," and "Figgins' Fig-Pudding."

I. H. Reynolds, 46, Darnley Road, Hackney, London, offers 5s. for "Magnets," Nos. 1 and 2; 2s. 6d. for "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "Figgins' Fig-Pudding," "Through Thick and Thin," and "The Boy Without a Name."

S. Bush, 55, Buckland Road, Leyton, E. 10, offers good price for Nos. 1 of the "Magnet" and "Gem"; also Christmas Nos. for 1914.

Jim Carrington, 49, Mayfield Road, Moseley, Birmingham, offers 6d. for "Magnet," No. 617.

Members wanted for the Eton Club. Write, C. A. Martin, junr., 45, Hope-town Street, Paddington, New South Wales, Australia.

J. F. Poulton, Sutton Courtney, near Abingdon, Berks, wants "When Rogues Fall Out," "Wally's Wheeze," and "Bunter's Aunt Sally." 3d. each offered.

C. Williams, 2, Bay Street, Botany, Sydney, Australia, wants "Tom Merry for England," "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "Kildare for Ireland," "Inky's Peril," "Tom Merry Minor," and "Flooding Fishy." 3d. each offered.

F. Hangar, 38, Hyde Park Gate, Kensington, S.W. 7, wants early series of "Nelson Lees." 2d. each. Also Nos. 1 of the "Gem" and "Magnet." 6d. each offered.

F. Stockton, 132, Sewerby Street, Moss Side, Manchester, wants "Gems." Nos. 610, 611, 613-615, 619, 621, and 623. 3d. each offered. Also "Penny Populars," Nos. 30-33, 35, 40, 44, 47, and 51. 3d. each offered.

D. Carlson, Moss Cliff, Selcroft Road, Purley, wants early stories of Cardew. Will pay 3d. each for them.

J. Beetson, 12, Albert Street, Bury, Lancs., wants "Magnets" entitled, "Under Bunter's Thumb," "Bunter the Blade," and "Billy Bunter's Reformation." 2d. each offered.

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