

MANY SPLENDID COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES INSIDE!

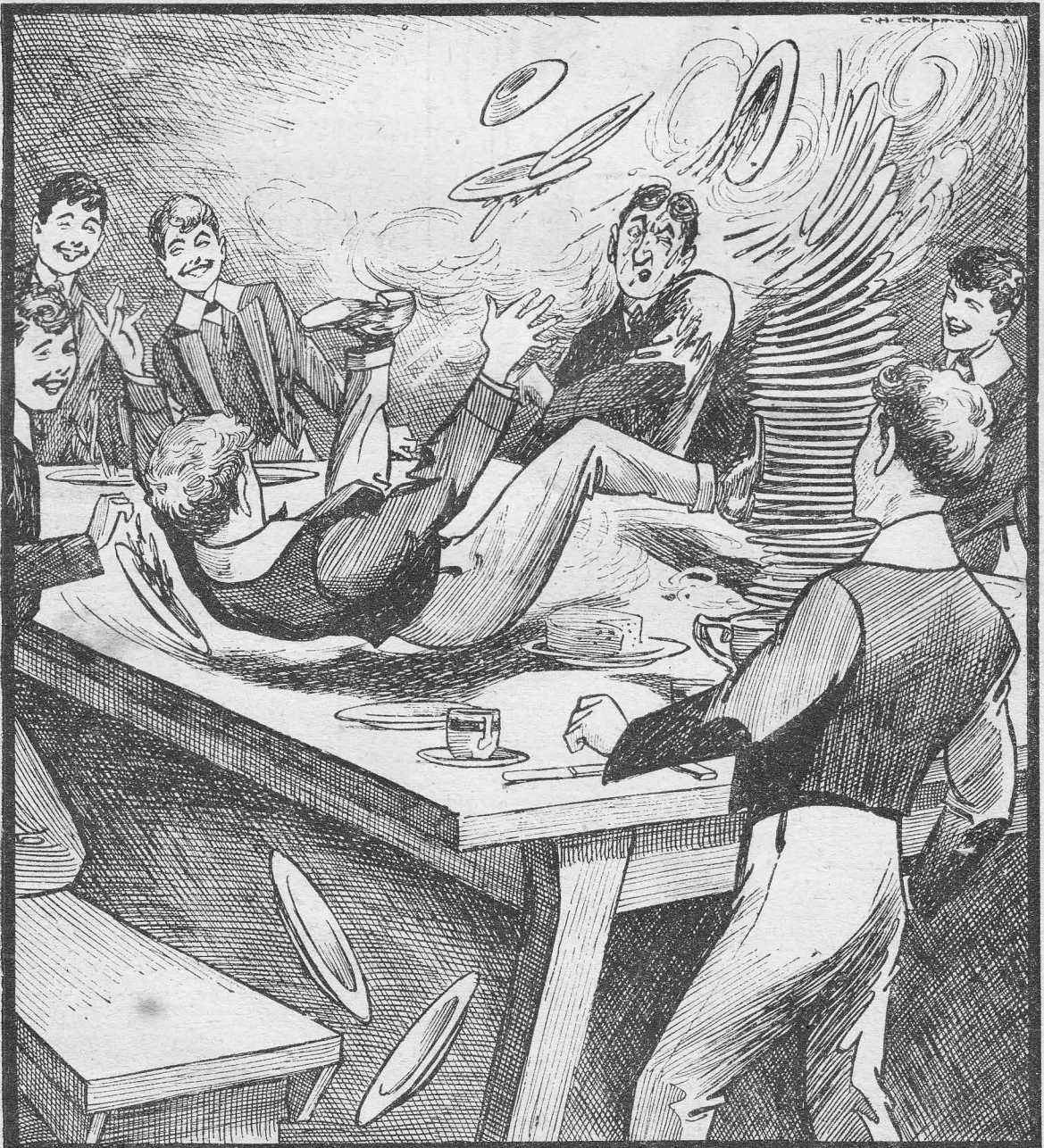
The
Penny  **1½^D**
Popular

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GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



BOB CHERRY GIVES THE NEW CAPTAIN A ROUGH TIME!

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



The School Against Him!

A MAGNIFICENT, LONG,
COMPLETE STORY OF
HARRY WHARTON & CO.,
OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Not Popular!

CLANG, clang!
The discordant notes of the rising-bell rang out on the morning air. Although it was a sunny morning in early May, the occupants of the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars did not budge from their beds.

Harry Wharton & Co. had remained awake half the night discussing the recent exciting events at Greyfriars. Consequently the morning found them heavy-eyed and disinclined to turn out.

"Clang, clang, clang!"
"Gosling seems to be putting in overtime this morning," said Bob Cherry drowsily.

"If he goes on tugging the bell-rope like that," said Denis Carr, "he'll break a blood-vessel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I say, you fellows," said Billy Runter indignantly, "it's jolly nice in bed, isn't it? I could stay here for weeks!"

"Without nourishment?" asked Nugent.

"Well, I shouldn't go so far as to say that," said the fat junior. "But I'd rather be without grub altogether than have to exist on this new hygienic stuff they've been giving us."

"Hear, hear!" said Peter Todd. "For once in a way, I'm in cordial agreement with you, my fat pippin! The new grub is bringing down my grey hairs in snow to the grave!"

"Same here!"

"It's atrocious!"

"Vile!"

"I vote we hunger-strike!"
The new food regulations, introduced by that stern old martinet, Sir Hilton Popper, were not popular at Greyfriars. Wingate of the Sixth had openly protested against them, and he had been deprived of the captaincy in consequence.

The prefects—with one exception—had informed the Head that they could not see their way to support the new regulations.

The exception was Gerald Loder, who had professed to like the new food.

Loder had promised the Head that he would support the new regulations with all his might; and on the strength of this promise Dr. Locke had appointed Loder captain of Greyfriars in Wingate's stead.

The school was in a state of unrest and disorder owing to the hygienic food which was served up at every meal. And if the Head imagined that Loder would be able to

pour oil on the troubled waters, and set things right again, he imagined a vain thing. The appointment of Loder to the captaincy merely added fuel to the fire.

Greyfriars waxed indignant; and the indignation was hottest in the Remove.

"There's absolutely nothing to get up for!" remarked Squiff. "I suppose they'll give us hygienic kippers, or something of that sort, for brekker."

"Groo!"

"Mrs. Kebble told me last night that we were going to have curry," said Harry Wharton.

"Hygienic curry?" asked Johnny Bull. "I suppose so."

The imoira groaned in chorus.

"Did you fellows ever hear the story of poor Murray?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No," said Wharton. "What about him?"

"It goes like this," said Bob.

"There was a young fellow named Murray.

Who sampled some hygienic curry;

Then his face went quite green,

With sea-sickness, I ween,

And he quitted the hall in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no laughing matter!" said Bob Cherry. "It looks as if we shall all share the same fate!"

"Time we turned out, I think," said Mark Limley. "Rising-bell stopped some minutes ago. We shall have Loder on the warpath, if we don't look slippy!"

"Blow Loder!"

"Nobody cares a hang about that beastly upstart!" growled Tom Brown.

"Take a hundred lines, Brown, for impertinence!"

There was a gasp from the Removites.

The new captain of Greyfriars had appeared in the doorway.

"If you young rascals aren't out of bed in two minutes," said Loder, "I'll report the whole jolly lot of you to your Form-master!"

"Sneak!" growled Bolsover major.

When the election fever had been at its height Bolsover major had supported Loder in the fight for the captaincy. But he had since thought better of it.

"Sneak!" echoed several voices.

Loder clenched his hands convulsively.

"That's enough!" he snarled.

But the juniors were not to be quelled.

"Yah!"

"Who's a beastly cad?"

"Loder!"

"Who got Wingate chucked out of the captaincy?"

"Loder!"

"Who curried favour with the Head so that he could get Wingate's job?"

"LODER!"

This plain speaking was altogether too plain for Loder's liking.

"You cheeky young sweeps!" he roared.

"Mr. Quelch shall hear of this!"

"There he goes again!" said Bob Cherry. Another hostile chorus arose.

"Sneak!"

"Get out!"

"We don't want your sort here!"

Loder turned savagely on his heel. He went straight to Mr. Quelch's study.

The Remove-master was up and dressed, and in a very bad humour. He usually was first thing in the morning.

"Well, Loder?" he snapped. "What is it?"

"I have to report, sir, that the boys in your Form are completely out of hand! They are still in bed, and they have no intention of getting up!"

"Good gracious!"

"They are setting my authority at defiance, sir! Doubtless they will remain in bed half the morning!"

"They certainly will not!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I will speedily bring them to their senses!"

So saying, the Remove-master whisked out of the study, and made hurried tracks for the Remove dormitory. Loder followed close behind him.

The new captain fully expected to make things warm for the unruly Removites. But, lo! when he reached the dormitory he saw that a complete transformation had taken place.

Everybody was up, and nearly everybody was fully dressed. In an incredibly short space of time the Removites had rushed through their toilet.

Mr. Quelch gave one glance at the juniors, then he spun round upon the baffled Loder.

"I am astonished, Loder, that a boy of your age and position should seek to play such an absurd practical joke upon me!"

"Sir!" stammered Loder. "I—"

"You assured me that the boys in my Form were still in bed!"

"So they were, sir, up to a minute ago."

"Nonsense, Loder! Are you trying to tell me that in the space of sixty seconds these boys have risen, washed, and dressed?"

"Yes, sir—"

"Do not impose too greatly on my credulity, Loder! I can see for myself that you have either told a deliberate untruth or exaggerated the position!"

"Nothing of the sort, sir! I assure you that these young rascals—"

"Not another word, Loder! I am satisfied that you had no cause for complaint!" Mr. Quelch quitted the dormitory, and Loder, scowling fiercely, followed. When they had gone there was a chuckle from the Removies.

"Our lightning operations proved jolly successful!" said Dennis Carr.

"Yes, rather!"

"Poor old Loder!"

"For goodness' sake don't pity him!" said Wharton. "He got all that he deserved!"

The breakfast-gong sounded shortly afterwards, and the juniors clattered down the stairs and into the dining-hall.

No appetising smell of eggs and bacon greeted their nostrils. Eggs and bacon were things of the past. Instead, there was an offensive odour of curry—not real curry, but a weird and wonderful concoction which was supposed to contain valuable hygienic properties.

Every fellow in the school was confronted with a plate of this dreadful substance, and deep groans reverberated through the Hall.

Even the masters, who on the whole had taken kindly to the hygienic food, had fought shy of that curry. They had all decided to have breakfast in their own rooms, so that the dining-hall was left in Loder's charge.

"The sight of this curry," said Bob Cherry, plunging his spoon into the yellow-looking mass, "makes me feel quite ill!"

"I wish they'd take it away and bury it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The stuff's not fit for cattle!" growled Wharton. "Will you have my portion, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm not going to eat my whack, let alone another fellow's!"

The Removies were not the only people who didn't like the look of that curry.

From the fellows seated at the other tables came deep groans and bitter lamentations.

"The smell of the stuff's enough to put me off!" said Coker of the Fifth. "Can anybody oblige me with a gas-mask?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We must make the most of this delicious curry!" said Blundell mockingly. "There's nothing to follow!"

"There will be a storm to follow, I'm thinking!" growled Potter.

Only one fellow in the hall attempted to eat this curry. That was Loder of the Sixth.

Loder had professed to like the new food, and he was, therefore, obliged to stick to his guns.

The taste of the curry was decidedly disagreeable—Loder nearly choked, in fact, at the first mouthful—but he had to go through with it.

The rest of the seniors were grinning.

"What's it like, Loder?" asked Wingate.

"Groo-ripping!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, an' if you're enjoying it," said Gwynne, "you can have mine!"

So saying, the Irish senior calmly pushed his plate across the table towards Loder.

The others, moved by the same impulse, presented Loder with their plates of curry.

"Don't play the giddy ox, you fellows!" growled the new captain.

"Well, I like that!" said Hammersley.

"We're generous enough to give you our curry, and then you turn and snarl at us. Black ingratitude, I call it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole school had seen what was happening at the senior table; and, taking their cue from the Sixth-Formers, the fellows rose to their feet as one man, and advanced towards Loder with their plates of curry.

"Come along, kids!" said Bob Cherry.

"Let's see that our new skipper has a substantial brekker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows swarmed like bees round Loder of the Sixth, and deposited their plates of curry in front of him.

"Here you are, Loder!"

"Have mine, old chap!"

"And mine!"

"And mine!"

The plates were piled up on top of each other in a sort of pyramid.

Loder waved and gesticulated and protested, but in vain. Plates galore were heaped up in front of him, until they stood almost mountain-high.

"Talk about the house that Jack built!" chuckled Dennis Carr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go easy, you fellows," said Bob Cherry, "or the whole jolly lot will collapse! I'll get up on to the table, and you can hand your plates up to me one at a time."

"Good wheeze!"

Loder was almost obliterated from view by this time. It was, as Peter Todd observed, a case of "curry to right of him, curry to left of him, curry in front of him!" And every second saw a fresh plate added to the pile.

The prefects were too helpless with meritment to take any action against the army of practical jokers. They simply sat back in their seats and held their sides.

Bob Cherry was mounted on the table, receiving every plate as it came, and adding it to the pyramid.

"If Loder gets through this little lot," said Bob, "he'll never need another meal in his lifetime!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder's face was livid with rage and chagrin. For a moment he seemed to be too paralysed to move; and then, spurred suddenly to action, he seized Bob Cherry by the ankle, and gave a downward tug.

The result was appalling.

Bob Cherry came down, and so did the pyramid!

Crash, crash, crash!

Loder backed away, but he was too late to escape disaster.

Some of the plates crashed on to the form and on to the floor; but a good many crashed on to Loder.

By the time the luckless captain of Greyfriars had managed to sort himself out from the wreckage he was plastered from head to foot with curry.

Moreover, the curry was hot—a fact to which Loder's yells bore ample testimony!

"Yow-ow-ow! Cherry, you young demon, I'll see that you're expelled for this!"

Miraculously enough, Bob Cherry had escaped unharmed. He regarded Loder more in sorrow than in anger.

"It's your own fault, Loder," he said. "If you hadn't grabbed my ankle—"

Loder was too furious to say more. He glared first at Bob Cherry, then at the litter of broken crockery, and, lastly, at the grinning crowd. Then he turned on his heel, and strode out of the Hall. Peal after peal of laughter rang out as he made his undignified exit.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"We don't want to lose you, but we feel you ought to go! You look rather unsightly with all that curry clinging to you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder paused in the doorway, shook his fist at the almost hysterical throng, and disappeared.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

No Sympathy!

"BLESS my soul!"

Mr. Quelch stopped short in the passage as a frantic figure came towards him.

"Who—who are you?" he gasped faintly.

Loder, who was on his way to the bathroom, halted in front of the Remove-master. He was spluttering incoherently.

"Why, it is Loder!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, in amazement. "What is the meaning of this? How dare you appear on the school premises in this disreputable state?"

Loder appeared to be on the verge of an apoplectic fit.

"Those reckless young hooligans—" he snarled.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Moderate your language, please, Loder! This is not the first time this morning that you have made yourself objectionable. You appear to be plastered with a peculiar yellowish substance—"

"It's curry!" howled Loder.

"Curry?"

"Yes!" snarled the captain of Greyfriars, who was in too bad a temper to be respectful.

"Is it possible, Loder," gasped Mr. Quelch, "that you have been foolish enough to immerse yourself in a tureen of curry?"

"I didn't do it!" shouted Loder, whose self-control was in rags. "Those unspeakable young ruffians—"

"Be silent!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "If you make use of such odious epithets again, I shall report you to Dr. Locke! Calm your-

self, Loder, and tell me exactly what has happened.

"Would you be calk, sir, if dozens of plates of hot curry came down on top of you?"

"Do you mean to say, Loder—?"

"That I have been the victim of a practical joke, sir? Exactly! Curry was served for breakfast this morning, and those young reprobates—I mean, fellows—insisted on piling their plates up in front of me. Then the whole lot collapsed, and I was smothered with curry from head to foot! It was Gwynne of the Sixth who started it, and all the others took their cue from him!"

Mr. Quelch was neither indignant nor sympathetic.

"You are solely to blame, Loder, for what has occurred," he said.

"I, sir!"

"Yes. You were in charge of the dining-hall, and it was your duty to preserve order. Apparently, you failed to do so. If you allowed the whole school to get out of hand, then it is entirely your own fault that the consequences have proved disastrous to yourself."

"You don't understand, sir—" began Loder, advancing towards Mr. Quelch.

The Remove-master backed away in alarm, "Do not come near me!" he said hastily.

"Your present appearance is altogether loathsome! I should advise you to cleanse yourself without delay!"

Loder passed on, feeling almost homicidal. He had been within an ace of telling Mr. Quelch what he thought of him; and only the fact that he would have been in danger of losing the captaincy prevented him.

The new captain fervently hoped that he would meet no one else on his way to the bath-room. But he was unlucky.

Gosling the porter came shuffling along the passage. He nearly fell down when he caught sight of Loder.

"My heye!" he ejaculated. "Wot I says is this 'ere! Young gents of your hage order know better than to go about like this, Master Loder! You look a pretty guy, an' no mistake!"

"Stand aside!" hooted Loder.

"Wot I says—"

"What you say doesn't count!" snarled the exasperated Sixth-Formers.

And he gave Gosling a shove which knocked him against the wall of the passage.

"You—you—" spluttered the irate porter.

"I'll teach yer to lay 'ands on an old an' respected servant of the school! I'll report yer!"

"Report, and be hanged!" growled Loder.

And he passed on, reaching the bath-room without any further unpleasant encounters.

It took Loder a long, long time to remove all traces of the curry from his face and garments.

When at last he had made himself look presentable he stamped away to the Head's study. He had got no satisfaction from Mr. Quelch, but he fully expected to get satisfaction at the hands of Dr. Locke.

The Head looked up from a batch of examination papers he had been correcting.

"Come in, Loder," he said. "I am sorry to see that you have failed badly in Greek—"

"Excuse me, sir, but—"

"And your Latin papers show lamentable ignorance."

"I wish to speak to you, sir—"

"Your geography needs polishing up also," went on the Head, without allowing the captain of Greyfriars to get a word in edgewise.

"Had I known how badly you fared in the last examination, Loder, I should have thought twice before appointing you captain of the school."

Loder shuffled uneasily.

"I did my best, sir—"

"Then all I can say is that your best is decidedly feeble. However," added the Head, "it does not always follow that the captain of the school is the best scholar. If you are proving a good disciplinarian, Loder, I shall feel inclined to overlook your lapse in the examination. What did you wish to speak to me about?"

"I have a complaint to make, sir—"

The Head frowned.

"You are constantly making complaints, Loder. What is amiss now?"

"I have been insulted and affronted by the whole school, sir—"

"Bless my soul!"

"As you know, sir, I am doing my best to support the new food regulations, and the fellows resent it. Curry was served in Hall this morning, and I was the only person who

ate any of it. Consequently, every fellow brought his portion to me, and insisted that I should eat it."

"Dear me! What a singular proceeding!" It was a most disgraceful practical joke, in which the whole school participated. Plates of curry were piled up in front of me, and eventually the whole lot toppled over. I was smothered from head to foot, sir!"

"Really, Loder—"
"I consider that the ringleaders—who, I regret to say, were prefects—should be severely punished, sir," said Loder.

"One moment, Loder. Who was taking charge of the Hall at the time?"

"I was, sir."
"Then it was your duty to preserve order," said the Head, unconsciously quoting the words of Mr. Quelch.

Loder made a despairing gesture.
"How could I help it, sir? The whole school made a dead set at me!"

"If you cannot keep the boys under control you are not fit to be captain," said the Head curtly.

A gleam came into Loder's eyes.
"Am I to understand, sir, that you intend to take no action in this matter?"

"None whatever," answered the Head. "Disturbances of this kind did not arise when Wingate was captain, and it is entirely your own fault that they should arise now."

Loder flushed. He did not like comparisons being made between Wingate and himself, to the former's advantage.

"I am well aware," said the Head more kindly, "that there is a certain amount of hostility towards the new food regulations, and that it is no easy matter to keep three hundred boys in hand. However, you should fight your own battles rather than keep coming to me with complaints. You must be firm. You must show the other boys that you mean to stand no nonsense. They will dislike you at first, because of your championship of the new food, but in time they will come to respect you."

Loder looked doubtful. The time would never come, he reflected, when he would command the respect of the whole school.

"I'll try and stick it out, sir," he said at length.

"That is the spirit, Loder. And if you find that the captaincy is too weighty a proposition for you, you must let me know, and I will appoint somebody else."

Loder clenched his hands tightly together. He was determined not to yield his place to another.

The Head waved his hand towards the door to signify that the interview was at an end.

Loder felt very disappointed that Dr. Locke intended to take no action. At the same time, his determination was strengthened by the Head's remarks, and he meant to make the school knuckle under.

As he emerged into the Close he encountered the Famous Five of the Remove.
"Why, here's our old pal Loder!" said Bob Cherry disrespectfully.

"He still reeks rather strongly of curry!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder stopped short in his stride.
"Cherry and Bull, you will each take a hundred lines!" he rapped out.

"Certainly!" said the irrepressible Bob.

"With the greatest of agony!" added Johnny Bull.

Loder scowled.

"Your impositions are doubted!" he said.

"You will each write two hundred lines, and bring them to me by this evening!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Make it billions, old sport!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder's scowl grew blacker. He would dearly have loved to report the juniors for insolence, yet to complain to the Head or to Mr. Quelch would be yet another confession of weakness.

"Cherry and Bull," he exclaimed, "you will report to me in my study after lessons! I intend to lick you both!"

"Anybody would think we were postage-stamps to hear him talk!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind you turn up at the specified time!" snarled Loder.

"Sorry, old bean, but we've got an appointment after lessons," said Bob Cherry blandly. "We're going down to the Cross Keys to play snooker pool."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

Before Loder could reply to this gibe, which had reference to his own visits to the Cross Keys, the Famous Five had passed on.

Loder paused for a moment in uncertainty; then he strode into the building with a scowling brow.

The Head had hinted that he might find the captaincy of Greyfriars too weighty a proposition. And it seemed likely to prove a very weighty proposition indeed!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Sixth!

BOB CHERRY and Johnny Bull failed to put in an appearance in Loder's study after lessons, as ordered.

Loder took no action against the rebellious juniors. He had, in fact, quite forgotten their existence, for after lessons he was engrossed in compiling a list of players for the last senior match of the season—against Courtfield Ramblers.

It did not occur to Loder that he had no right to draw up such a list.

Wingate had been dethroned from the captaincy of the school, but he was still captain of games—a fact which Loder quite overlooked.

After dinner the Sixth-Formers were astonished to find that Loder had posted up the list of players—including his own name—on the notice-board. He had also had the audacity to sign himself as captain of games.

"Well, of all the cheek!" gasped Wingate, when he read the announcement.

"Faith, an' Loder's going too far, intai'rely!" said Gwynne. "Something will have to be done about this, old man!"

"Something will be done!" said Wingate grimly.

And, taking a blue-lead pencil from his pocket, he defaced Loder's announcement by writing across it the word:

"CANCELLED!"

"That's the idea!" said Hammersley. "Now make out your own list, Wingate!"

"I'm going to," was the reply.

Wingate compiled his list of players—carefully excluding Loder's name—and pinned it to the notice-board. He signed it "George Wingate, Captain of Games," and added a footnote to this effect:

"No other person has the right to make use of this title."

"Splendid!" said Faulkner. "This will be a smack in the eye for our new skipper!"

At that moment Loder himself stepped up to the notice-board. He frowned when he saw that his announcement had been tampered with, and his frown grew blacker when he read Wingate's notice.

"You cad!" he exclaimed hotly, facing round upon Wingate. "You've no right to do this!"

"On the contrary, I have every right," said Wingate quietly.

"You've been kicked out of the captaincy—"

"Thanks to your precious scheming! But I have yet to learn that I am no longer captain of games."

"My original notice holds good—"

"Nothing of the sort. I've cancelled it."

"I shall insist upon my orders being carried out—"

"Faith, an' it's yourself who will be carried out—on an ambulance, if you try to set up in opposition to Wingate!" said Gwynne.

"Hear, hear!" said Faulkner and Hammersley together.

Loder glared at the seniors. They returned his glare.

"I've compiled the list of players, and it's going to stand," said Wingate.

Loder took a stride towards the notice-board, with the intention of tearing down Wingate's announcement.

"If you lay a finger on that notice," said Wingate, in measured tones, "I'll give you the hiding of your life!"

Loder stepped back. He had a yellow streak in him, as well as a genuine respect for Wingate's fists.

"Oh, all right," he said. "I'll let you have your own way on this occasion."

"You've no choice in the matter!" said Wingate curtly.

"I'm willing to allow your announcement to stand, on one condition."

"Namely?"

"That you include me in the eleven."

"My dear fellow, I should be out of my

senses if I were to do that! You're not a bad player when you keep fit, but the trouble is that you never do keep fit. Late hours and cigarettes aren't conducive to good football."

"Or to anything else that's worth while," said Gwynne. "You're quite right, Wingate. You couldn't possibly include a smoky boulder like that in the team!"

Loder's eyes gleamed.

"So you mean to boycott me?" he said.

"Put it that way if you like," said Wingate, with a shrug of the shoulders.

And the ex-captain of Greyfriars walked away with his chums.

Loder was furious. He was determined by hook or crook to get a place in the first eleven, and with this object in view he went along to the Head's study.

"Well, Loder," said Dr. Locke, as the Sixth-Former entered, "I trust there have been no further unseemly disturbances?"

"None whatever, sir," said Loder. "I've got the school well in hand now."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Loder."

"There is just one matter, sir," said the new captain, "concerning which I should like to have your advice."

"Yes?"

"Am I to take over the duties of games captain as well as the captaincy of the school, sir?"

"Certainly not! Wingate is eminently suited for the position of games captain, and he will retain the post."

Loder's jaw dropped. He had expected the Head to side with him, but he was disappointed.

"I take it I am entitled to a place in the eleven, sir?" he said.

"Of course!"

"And Wingate has no right to cut me out?"

"Certainly not! Do you mean to say that he has done so?"

"Yes, sir. Feeling is very much against me in the Sixth because I'm practically the only fellow who supports the new food regulations, and on that account Wingate has dropped me from the eleven."

The Head frowned.

"That is unfair and unjust," he said.

"Wingate has no right to bar you from the eleven because you are doing your duty with regard to the new regulations."

"That's just what I thought, sir."

"Send Wingate to me, and I will see that justice is done," said the Head.

"Thank you, sir!"

Loder quitted the Head's study with a triumphant grin.

"Wingate will jolly well have to knuckle under now!" he muttered.

And he went along to the ex-captain's study.

Quite a crowd of seniors were within, and Loder's intrusion was not welcomed.

"Get out!" said Gwynne.

"Run away and pick flowers!" said Hammersley.

Loder ignored the hecklers, and turned to Wingate.

"The Head wants you," he said briefly.

Wingate frowned.

"I suppose you've been pitching him some cock-and-bull yarn about me?"

"I've merely stated the facts," said Loder.

"You sneak!"

"I shouldn't advise you to keep the Head waiting," said Loder calmly. "He's in rather a paddy."

Wingate strode to the door, and the expression on his rugged face caused Loder to beat a hasty retreat.

After an absence of five minutes Wingate returned.

"Well?" said Gwynne. "Been called over the coals?"

Wingate nodded.

"The Head's ordered me to include Loder in the eleven," he said.

"My hat!"

"Didn't you tell the Head that you had no use for a fellow who smoked and gambled?" said Faulkner.

"No. I wasn't going to play Loder at his own game by sneaking."

"Well, here's a pretty go, and no mistake!" said Hammersley. "I'm sorry, Wingate, but if Loder plays I must resign from the eleven."

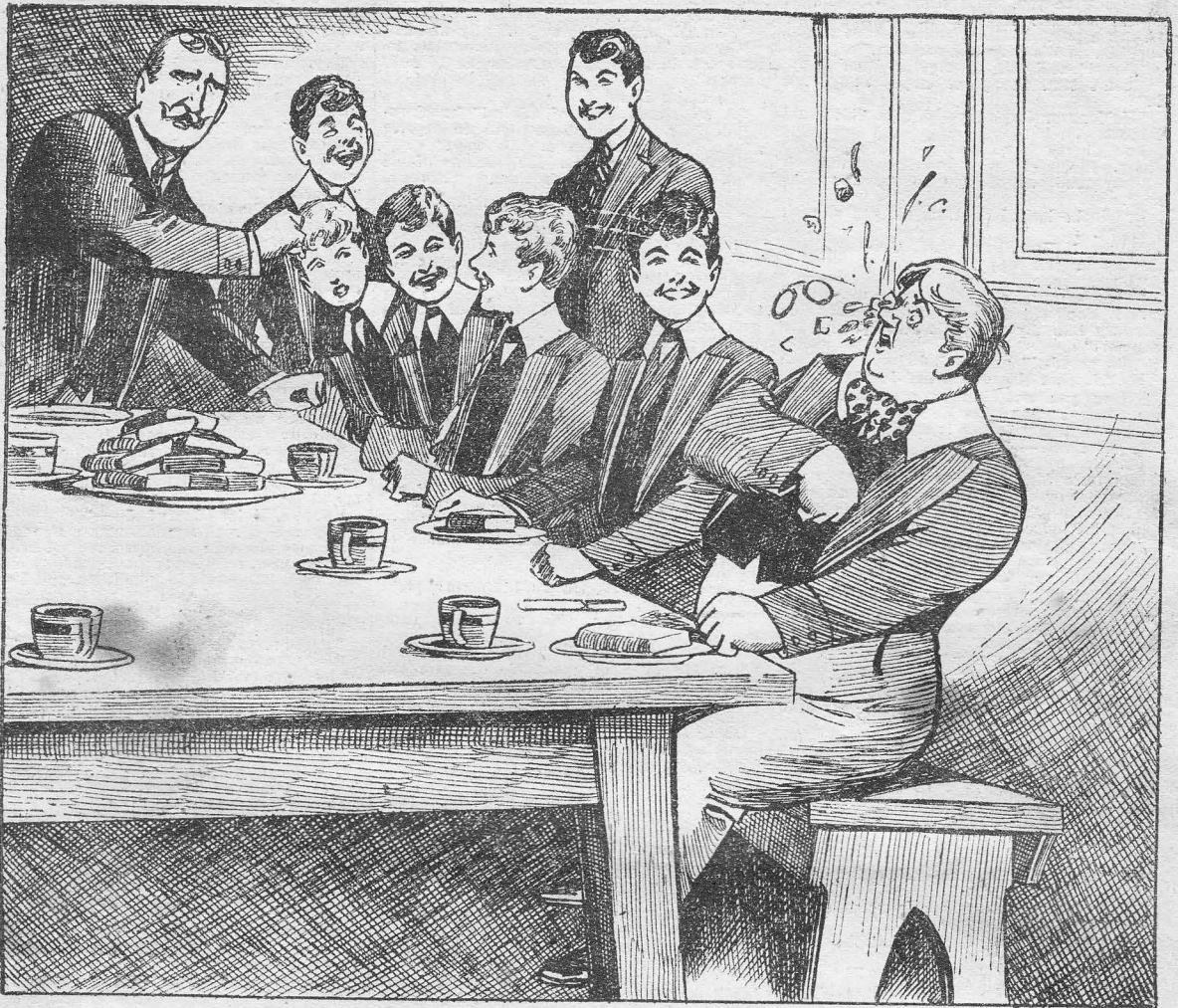
"Same here," said Gwynne and North in chorus.

"I can quite understand how you fellows feel about it," said Wingate. "In fact, I prefer to cancel the match rather than play Loder. Are you all of the same opinion?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then I'll cancel the fixture right away."

And Wingate kept his word. He tele-



Major Cherry hurled the slice of cake from him with terrific force. It struck Billy Bunter on the nose and the crumbs flew in all directions. (See page 6.)

phoned to the secretary of the Courtfield Ramblers Club announcing that the match could not be played.

"I'm letting you know in good time," said Wingate, "so that you can fix up a match with some other team."

"Thanks! We can easily do that," was the reply.

Shortly afterwards there was yet another announcement posted on the school notice-board. It ran thus:

"NOTICE.

The match arranged between Greyfriars First Eleven and Courtfield Ramblers is hereby cancelled.

Signed **GEORGE WINGATE,**
Captain of Games."

Loder fumed when he read this announcement, and he tried to persuade Wingate to reconsider his decision.

But Wingate stood firm, and the fixture with Courtfield Ramblers was decidedly "off."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Major On the Warpath.

"**B**OB, old chap!" Billy Bunter hailed Bob Cherry as the latter came along the Remove passage with his athletic stride.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up, barrel?" "There's a letter for you," said Bunter.

"Where?" "In the post-rack. Your pater's coming down to see you."

Bob Cherry stared at the fat junior in amazement.

"You—you've been reading my letter, you prying worm!" he ejaculated at length.

"I haven't!" said Bunter indignantly. "I hope I'm above doing that sort of thing!"

"How did you know the letter was from my pater?"

"Ahem! I—I recognised the old boy's fist."

Bob Cherry gave a snort.

"If you refer to my pater as an 'old boy' again," he said, "I'll make you see stags! How do you happen to know that my pater's coming to Greyfriars to see me?"

"Pure guesswork, Bob, old chap!" said Billy Bunter hastily.

Bob Cherry went off in quest of his letter.

"If I find you've been tampering with my private correspondence," he said, looking back over his shoulder at Billy Bunter, "I'll make you wish you'd never been born!"

As he approached the post-rack in the hall Bob Cherry was joined by the other members of the Famous Five and Dennis Carr.

"Expecting a remittance, Bob?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"No; but Bunter says there's a letter from my pater. Ah, here it is!"

Bob Cherry took the letter from the rack and examined it carefully.

"The fat worm!" he ejaculated. "He steamed open the envelope so that he could read my pater's letter!"

"Hope he hasn't pranced off with a remittance!" said Dennis Carr.

"If he has," said Bob Cherry grimly, "I'll burst him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It transpired, however, that no remittance had been enclosed with Major Cherry's letter, which ran thus:

"My Dear Bob,—By the time this letter

reaches you I shall be on the way to Greyfriars.

"I have some business to transact in Courtfield, and I cannot neglect this opportunity of popping in to see how things are going.

"I shall arrive about five o'clock with a tremendous appetite, so please have a good tea prepared in your study.

"All the news when I see you.—Your affectionate
FATHER."

Bob Cherry read this brief note aloud to his chums.

"A flying visit, by Jove!" said Harry Wharton.

"And your pater expects tea," said Nugent. "He'll be unlucky, Bob. Under the new grub regulations study feeding isn't allowed."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "It's going to be jolly awkward!"

"You can't very well drag your pater into Hall and make him eat hygienic bread and hygienic margarine," said Dennis Carr.

"Hardly!"

In his perplexity Bob Cherry forgot to punish Billy Bunter for having tampered with his letter. He had, in fact, quite forgotten the fat junior's existence.

"I say, you chaps, this is awful!" said Bob. "We've got no grub in the study, and there's nothing worth buying at the tuckshop. I shall have to get in supplies from the village."

"None of the tradesmen will serve you," said Johnny Bull. "They've had strict orders from the Head that they're not to serve Greyfriars fellows."

"Then what the dickens am I to do?" asked Bob Cherry helplessly.

"If I were you," said Harry Wharton, "I should ask the Head if he could possibly stretch a point and give you a permit to get supplies, as it's a special occasion."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry, brightening up. "I can't send the pater empty away, can I?"

"He'd never forgive you if you did!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry hurried away to the Head's study. In his eagerness to obtain permission to buy food he omitted to knock at the door.

Dr. Locke looked up from his papers with a frown.

"Cherry! How dare you intrude upon my privacy in this way?"

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Your sorrow does not impress me in the least! You will take a hundred lines for bursting into my study in this precipitate manner!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob.

He felt that this was a bad beginning.

"Have you anything to communicate to me, Cherry?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir. My father is coming to see me this afternoon."

Dr. Locke looked rather uncomfortable. Visits from Major Cherry were usually accompanied by outbursts of violence on that gentleman's part. Many a wordy conflict had taken place in the past between the Head and Major Cherry; and the Head had not always come off best.

"Well, Cherry?" he interrogated.

"My father's bringing a big appetite with him, sir, and he expects me to have tea ready for him. May I buy some cakes and things from the village, sir?"

"No, Cherry, you may not!"

The Head's tone was firm and final.

Bob Cherry looked quite distressed.

"Does that mean that my father must go without tea, sir?" he asked.

"Not at all, Cherry. Your father may have tea in Hall."

"But, sir—"

"Do you see anything to take exception to in my suggestion, Cherry?"

"Ahem! The—the new hygienic food isn't likely to appeal to my father, sir!"

"Nonsense, boy! Your father cannot fail to be impressed with the excellent nutritive qualities of the food."

"I—I'd much rather get in some decent grub from the village, sir."

"Are you implying, Cherry, that the school fare is not decent?"

"Nobody likes it, sir, barring Loder; and I believe it's only pretence on his part!"

The Head rose majestically to his feet.

"That is quite enough, Cherry!" he said sternly. "If you utter another word, I shall cane you. The new regulations must be enforced, and I flatly forbid you to purchase any foodstuffs from the village. That is all."

Bob Cherry left the Head's study with a glum face.

"Any luck?" asked Wharton, as Bob emerged into the Close.

"No luck at all. The pater's got to feast on hygienic bread and margarine."

"My hat!"

"He'll be awfully ratty," said Bob. "But I shall explain to him that it isn't my fault."

When afternoon lessons were over, Major Cherry arrived. His tall, soldierly form was first sighted in the Close by Billy Bunter, who lost no time in publishing news of the major's arrival.

Major Cherry greeted his son cordially; then he shook hands all round with Harry Wharton and the others.

"Glad to see you all looking so fit, my boys!" he said heartily. "Getting plenty of fresh air and football—what?"

"Plenty, sir!" said Nugent.

"This way, pater!" said Bob Cherry.

And he escorted his parent to Study No. 13, the other members of the Famous Five bringing up the rear.

Major Cherry fully expected to see a well-laden table on entering Study No. 13. To his surprise, however, the table was barren. It did not even boast a tablecloth.

The major gave a fery snort.

"Huh! What's the meaning of this, Bob? I expressly stated in my letter that I should require tea on my arrival."

"Tea will be served in Hall in a few minutes, pater," said Bob.

"In Hall? Have I got to go and mix with a rabble of schoolboys?"

"I'm afraid there's no alternative, sir."

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chimed in Harry Wharton. "You see, study feeds are barred."

"Barred!" echoed the major. "By whom?"

"By the Head, sir. Every fellow has to have tea in Hall now, whether he likes it or not."

The major frowned.

"A monstrous state of affairs!" he ejaculated. "Dr. Locke has no right to deprive you of your privileges in this way!"

"I don't believe it's the Head's fault exactly, sir," said Dennis Carr. "It's the work of some faddy Governor."

"Then the sooner the faddy individual is thrown out neck and crop, the better it will be for the welfare of the school!" said the major. "Ha! There goes the gong for tea! Lead the way, Robert!"

Robert obliged. He took his father along to the dining-hall, to which scores of fellows were wending their way.

"Better take Mr. Quelch's seat, pater," said Bob Cherry. "He won't be in to tea."

Major Cherry was the cynosure of all eyes as he seated himself at the head of the table.

"Jove! I'm hungry!" he exclaimed. "I've nearly as big an appetite as that young gormandiser Dick Grunter, or whatever his name is!"

"Oh, really sir!" protested the Owl of the Remove. "My name's Billy Bunter!"

"Sorry!" said the major. "But I always find it a job to remember the names of insignificant people!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Major Cherry rapped on his empty plate with his knife.

"Bread-and-butter this way!" he commanded.

The dish of hygienic bread was passed up to the head of the table, likewise the dish of hygienic margarine.

With some difficulty, the major succeeded in flattening a portion of margarine on to a slice of bread. Then, with the eyes of the Remove upon him, he took a bite.

"Now for the fireworks!" muttered Dennis Carr.

Even as he spoke the major's face went purple, and he choked and spluttered in a frenzy of rage.

"Geroooooogh! This bread is poisoned!"

"No, sir—it's hygienic!" said Wharton.

"Same thing," said Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With one sweep of his arm the major sent his plate of bread-and-butter crashing to the floor. The plate was shivered to fragments, and there was a clunk to the onlookers.

"I've never tasted such vile cattle-fodder in all my life!" declared the major. "What is that cake like, Robert?"

"Slightly worse than the bread, pater."

"No, no! It couldn't possibly be worse than that! I will sample a small piece."

The major did so, and the next moment he bitterly regretted his rashness.

Raising aloft the slice of cake from which he had taken a bite, Major Cherry hurled it from him with terrific force. It struck Billy Bunter on the nose, and the crumbs flew in all directions.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give me some tea!" thundered the major. "My appetite must go unsatisfied, but I will at least quench my thirst."

"There's no tea, sir," said Peter Todd.

"No tea! Then what the thunder—"

"Our liquid refreshment consists of Milder's Malted Milk, sir," said Dennis Carr. "You have a cup of it at your elbow."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated the major, glaring at his cup. "I thought it was the stop-basin!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Major Cherry raised the cup to his lips. He took one sip of the malted milk, and then—

"Heads!" muttered Bolsover major.

The Remove ducked instinctively as Major Cherry's cup flew through the air.

Crash!

The vessel struck the opposite wall with an impact which caused the fragments to fly in all directions.

Loder of the Sixth rose from his place and advanced towards the irate major.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but that crockery is school property. You've done quite enough damage as it is!"

Major Cherry spun round upon the speaker.

"You insolent puppy! How dare you address me in that manner?"

"As captain of the school, it is my duty to suppress any disturbance that may arise in the Hall," said Loder.

"Captain of the school!" echoed the major. "Since when have you held that position?"

"I was appointed a week ago—"

"Because he's the only fellow who supports the new food regulations, sir!" volunteered somebody.

Major Cherry glared wrathfully at Loder.

"Do you mean to tell me," he exclaimed, "that you are partial to this hygienic trash?"

"That is so, sir."

"Then you are a hypocrite, sir!" thundered the major. "A twofaced, contemptible, cowardly hypocrite!"

"Hurrah!"

"That is the stuff to impartially give him, honoured sahib!" said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You don't deserve to hold any position of trust!" said the major scathingly. "You are an utter worm, and it is small wonder that you seem to be universally disliked."

Stand aside, sir!"

So saying, the major gave Loder a none too gentle shove, and strode to the door.

A few moments later he burst into the Head's study with the velocity of a cyclone.

Before the astounded Head could say a word, the major was at his throat—metaphorically speaking, of course!

"I demand to know, sir, what you mean by poisoning the boys with hygienic concoctions which I should hesitate to present to my pigs!"

"Really, Major Cherry! I—"

"These new food regulations are a scandal, sir! I wonder that the boys have not broken out in open revolt against them! I have just been in the dining-hall, sir, and I was sickened and nauseated by my experiences! Who is responsible for this outrage?"

"If you will be patient, major—"

"Patient!" roared the major. "My patience evaporated with the first mouthful of hygienic bread that I tasted! If you are responsible for these preposterous regulations, sir, then I can only conclude that you are in a state bordering on lunacy! The introduction of such regulations was an act of gross imbecility, sir!"

The Head contrived to get a hearing at last.

"I am not responsible for the new regulations, Major Cherry!" he said tartly. "I am, in duty bound, compelled to support them; but I did not introduce them."

"Then who did? I demand to know the name of the senile, doddering lunatic who was misguided enough to take such measures!"

"The gentleman who framed the regulations," said the Head, "was Sir Hilton Popper."

"Popper—hey? This isn't the first time Popper has been in evidence with his hare-brained schemes! You can tell him from me, sir, that he is a fitting candidate for Colney Hatch!"

"I should prefer that you told him yourself!" said the Head coldly.

"I will!" fumed the major. "By George, I will! It will afford me the greatest pleasure in the world, sir, to give him the dressing-down he deserves!"

"Be calm, my dear sir—"

"Calm!" roared the major. "Would you be calm, sir, if your son was being slowly poisoned to suit the whim of a fanatic like Popper? I understand that the boys are not allowed to purchase food outside the school, and that the privilege of having tea in their studies has been withdrawn?"

"That is quite correct."

"Then I insist upon these absurd restrictions being cancelled at once!"

"It is not within my province to cancel them," said Dr. Locke. "I cannot even hint at their cancellation until the next Governors' meeting."

"Is that final, sir?"

The Head nodded.

"Very well!" snapped the major, turning on his heel. "I can do nothing at the moment; but you may depend upon it, sir, that I shall not allow the matter to rest here. By hook or by crook, sir, I will see that this tyranny is crushed! I am a man of my word, sir, and I shall leave no stone unturned to stamp out this injustice!"

And, with this Partisan shot, Major Cherry quitted the Head's study as abruptly as he had entered it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Last Straw.

AN hour later Bob Cherry saw his father off at the station. The major was going to Courtfield, where he had business to transact on the morrow.

Bob's chums were waiting for him in the school gate-way when he returned.


"Pater gone?" asked Wharton.
 "Yes."
 "In a tearing rage, wasn't he?" said Nugent.
 "Yes; but not with me. He gave me a tanner before he went."
 "My hat!"
 "Fancy having a tanner all to yourself!" said Johnny Bull. "You're a lucky dog, Bob!"
 Bob Cherry grinned.
 "It's not all for me," he said. "The pater says I'm to stand a feed to the whole Form."
 "Great pip!"
 "I told him it was against the rules to smuggle grub into the school," said Bob. "But he said that if any trouble arose I was to let him know."
 "Your pater's a brick!" said Wharton, with enthusiasm. "Rather a fiery brick, but he's a brick, all the same!"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "The question is, where are we going to get the grub?" said Bob Cherry. "They won't serve us in Friardale or Courtfield."
 "True, O King!" said Nugent. "But there's a little shop on the outskirts of Pegg where we shall be able to get all we want. Let uswend our way thither."
 The Famous Five lost no time in getting in supplies. They purchased tuck to the value of ten pounds at the store in Pegg; and they had the provisions placed in a packing-case, which was labelled, "Glass: With Care."
 The packing-case was carried back to Greyfriars, and deposited in Study No. 1 for the time being.
 After "lights out" that evening, Bob Cherry told the whole dormitory of his father's "tip," and how he had been asked to expend it.
 "A midnight feast will be simply stunning!" said Squiff. "But we shall have to keep our eyes skinned for Loder. Last time we had a midnight feast, if you remember, we put Dutton on guard, and the silly ass let Loder pounce on us without giving us warning."
 "I'll keep guard to-night," said Dick Russell. "And I'll give you ample warning if I hear anybody on the prowl."
 "Good man!" said Bob Cherry. "You can take a bag of sausage-rolls to the landing with you to lighten your vigil."
 Shortly before midnight the Famous Five went down to Study No. 1 for the packing-case, and succeeded in bringing it up to the Remove dormitory without mishap.
 The feast proved a most enjoyable one, coming as it did after a succession of hygienic meals.
 Dick Russell kept guard faithfully; but there were no nocturnal prowlers, and eventually the juniors turned in without having been "spotted."
 Next morning, however, Billy Bunter was indiscreet enough to chatter about the events of the night before. He told his minor that the whole of the Remove had participated in a sumptuous spread; and Sammy Bunter, who happened to be fagging for Loder, passed on the narrative to the captain of Greyfriars.
 The result of all this was that Loder laid a full report before the Head.
 During morning lessons Dr. Locke swept into the Remove Form-room. He was looking decidedly angry.
 "I trust nothing is amiss, sir?" said Mr. Quelch.
 "Something is very much amiss, Mr. Quelch! In spite of my repeated warnings, the members of your Form have indulged in yet another midnight orgy!"
 "Bless my soul!"
 "They doubtless imagined," the Head went on, "that there would be safety in numbers, and that if I came to hear of their conduct I should deal leniently with them. They shall be speedily disillusioned. I intend to cane every boy in the Form!"
 The juniors stirred uneasily in their seats.
 "You will come before me one at a time, commencing with Wharton!" commanded the Head.
 What followed was like a painful nightmare to the Removites.
 The Head wielded the cane with great vigour, and every fellow in the Form received three stinging cuts on each hand.
 The majority of the fellows went through the ordeal without flinching; but the yells of Billy Bunter, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott would have awakened the celebrated Seven Sleepers.
 Such a wholesale execution had seldom been known in the varied and extensive history of the Remove.
 When the last victim had been dealt with, the Head, panting from his exertions, frowned upon the class.
 "The chastisement I have just adminis-

tered," he said, "will show you that I am in earnest with regard to the due observance of the new food regulations. If there is any recurrence of last night's disgraceful orgy, the ringleaders shall be summarily expelled from Greyfriars!"
 The Head paused for a moment in order to let his words sink in. Then he withdrew, leaving the writhing and groaning Removites to the tender mercies of Mr. Quelch, who showed them no sympathy.
 When the class was dismissed, Harry Wharton summoned a meeting of the whole Form in the junior Common-room.
 Wharton's face was flushed, and his eyes were gleaming.
 "We owe this to Loder, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "It was Loder who gave us away to the Head. He's a cad and a rank outsider, and he's doing his level best to make our lives not worth living!"
 "Shame!"
 "Down with the tyrant!"
 "Kick him out!"
 "The time for words has gone," continued Wharton. "We must take action against this beastly upstart, who has made things unpleasant for everybody. And when I say we must take action, I mean drastic action!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 The Removites were on their feet, seething with excitement.
 "We're fed up with Loder, and we're fed up with the new grub!" exclaimed Wharton. "Greyfriars will never prosper while Loder's in power! Gentlemen!—Wharton's audience hung on his word—"I propose that we openly rebel against the existing state of affairs!"
 "Hurrah!"
 "Those in favour of a great rebellion, show their hands!"
 A forest of hands went up, the majority of the fellows holding up two.
 "Good!" said Harry Wharton, who was delighted to find that his schoolfellows were with him to a man. "Now we'll organise this rebellion on proper lines. We won't rush wildly into it, or the whole thing will collapse."
 "Why not elect a special committee to map out all our movements in advance?" suggested Dennis Carr.
 "That's the ticket?" said Jobany Bull.
 "We'll call it the Remove Emergency Committee. The members will decide what form the rebellion shall take, and all that sort of thing. What do you think, Harry?"
 "It's quite a good plan," said the captain of the Remove. "We'll elect the committee to-morrow. Meanwhile, I should like to say a word of warning. If any fellow turns traitor and lets our intentions leak out he'll be made to wish he had never been born."
 "That reminds me," said Bob Cherry. "We haven't dealt with Bunter. It was Bunter who told Loder about the spread we had last night."
 "Oh, really, Cherry!" protested the fat junior. "I didn't breathe a word to a soul!"
 "Then how did Loder get to know about it?"
 "Loder's a beastly cad!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "He promised faithfully that he'd keep the information to himself, and he went back on his word."
 "So you admit giving him the information?" said Wharton.
 "Nothing of the sort!"
 "But you've just given yourself away!"

"Oh, bump the fat cad!" growled Johnny Bull.
 "Bumping's not good enough," said Squiff. "Bunter deserves a Form-licking, in my opinion."
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Now, which shall it be?" said Wharton. "Those in favour of bumping Bunter, kindly signify in the usual manner."
 A score of hands went up.
 "Those in favour of a Form-licking!"
 Another score of hands shot up.
 It was observed that Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, had remained neutral.
 "Now, Dutton," said Wharton, "it's up to you to give the casting vote. What shall we do to Bunter?"
 "So am I," said Dutton.
 "Eh?"
 "I'm as hungry as a hunter. The merchant who invented this new hygienic grub ought to be lynched!"
 "He's not the only one who deserves such a fate," growled the captain of the Remove. "I didn't say anything about being hungry. I asked you what we should do with Bunter. What do you think?"
 Tom Dutton looked exasperated.
 "It's not a bit of use asking me what I'd like to drink," he said. "They don't sell minerals at the tuckshop these days. And I don't want any Mildew's Malted Milk, thanks. The last dose I had nearly poisoned me."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Fetch me a megaphone, somebody!" growled Wharton.
 Peter Todd stepped up to his deaf study-mate and bellowed in his ear:
 "Bunter gave us away to Loder, and we mean to punish him. What's it to be—a bumping or a Form-licking?"
 "Wish you'd speak a little louder, Toddy," said Dutton peevishly. "I don't like a fellow to whisper in my ear. However, I just managed to catch what you said, and I think Bunter deserves a Form-licking."
 The fat junior promptly edged towards the door. But Dennis Carr intercepted him, and there was no escape.
 Billy Bunter was compelled to get across a form, and Harry Wharton assumed the role of public executioner. He wielded a cricket-stump with great vigour, and the victim's yells might almost have been heard in Friardale.
 "If you dare to breathe a word about the proposed rebellion," said the captain of the Remove, panting from his exertions, "you'll get another dose!"
 "Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"
 Billy Bunter groaned and writhed in anguish, and he mentally resolved to keep his own counsel on the subject of the rebellion.
 Having dealt with Bunter, the juniors streamed out of the Common-room with grim, resolute faces.
 They had reached the limits of their endurance, and they were ripe for revolt.
 Verily this was the eve of great events at Greyfriars School, and everybody in the Remove awaited with fierce eagerness the commencement of the great rebellion.
 THE END.
 (Another magnificent long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars in next Friday's issue of THE PENNY POPULAR. Order your copy to-day.)

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THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 65.



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. Broad-

worth cinema company. The film company goes on location, where Floyd Unwin, the Broadworth star, is to perform a death-defying feat before the cameras. He is to ride a motor-cycle over a high cliff into the sea, but the opium habit, to which the star is addicted, has undermined his nerve, and he is unable to do the stunt. He insults Mr. Broadworth, and is ignominiously fired out of the company. Seizing his opportunity, Micky leaps on the motor-cycle and performs the stunt himself by dashing over the edge of the cliff into the sea. Afterwards he is given a contract by Mr. Broadworth to appear as star in one production. Late one night Alec P. Figg visits Micky and attempts to blackmail him. He asks for something on account, and this the lad gives him in the form of a knock-out blow and a drenching from a hosepipe. The crook departs, breathing vengeance.

(Now read on.)

The Plotters!

ON the morning following his unfortunate visit to Micky Denver at the home of the Gaylords, Alec P. Figg, expert cracksmen and would-be blackmailer, rose from his bed feeling sore in body and mind.

He gave a mighty groan, as, with the first movement he made, a grinding pain shot through his forehead where Micky's fist had delivered the blow which had knocked him out. His nose, too, was red and swollen as the result of the first "bit on account" which the young film star had given him in response to his blackmailing demand.

Another loud groan escaped the lips of the crook as he called to mind the events of the previous night.

He had entered the garden of Buddy Gaylord's home determined to see the lad with whom he had "jumped" the train from New York, and, after cautiously waiting until the other occupants of the house had retired, had succeeded in his object to that extent.

But he had not anticipated the reception accorded him.

He had had every reason for believing that the English lad, now that he was earning good money and had secured a fine position with the Broadworth Film Company, would pay up the thousand dollars hush-money demanded.

When, in a moment of confidence, Micky had told Figg about his being accused of theft at Beauman's circus in Liverpool, the astute crook had carefully stored the information in his crafty mind with the idea that it might prove useful one day.

His line was cracking safes, but he was not above picking up an easy thousand "bucks" by blackmail if he had the opportunity.

Well, he had had the chance when Micky began to make good in the cinema world, but somehow his plans had gone sadly awry.

Figg guessed—and rightly, too—that the youngster was scared of being apprehended as a thief, and being sent back to the Old Country to stand his trial for the offence of which he had been accused. But Figg, more versed in the law than Micky was, knew well the difficulties of extradition proceedings and the chance that nothing whatever might come of it even if he informed the authorities about the occurrence.

Previous to his disastrous interview with the high-spirited youngster, Smart Alec had had no intention whatever of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs by going to the police about the affair of the circus theft.

And even though the goose refused to lay eggs to order, Alec P. Figg still had hopes of better luck in future, and, despite his aching head, strove hard to think of some plan for dealing with the situation.

In his heart Figg believed Micky innocent

of the theft in the circus, but that consideration weighed not a jot with him.

He breakfasted at the boarding-house at which he was staying, and then went out into the streets of Los Angeles.

The first thing he did was to buy a morning paper—his usual custom. To a gentleman in Mr. Figg's profession the newspapers afforded much valuable information, besides furnishing interesting details about other gentlemen in the same line less fortunate in keeping out of the police-court news than himself.

The crook stopped on the side-walk, opened his paper, and glanced at the contents. At once a paragraph on an inside page caught his eye.

Under a glaring headline it stated that Monkey White, the victim of the mysterious shooting affair which took place whilst the Broadworth film players were "on location" in the San Gabriels, had sufficiently recovered to leave the hospital.

Alec P. Figg gave a sneering laugh as he read the announcement.

"The all-fired four-flusher!" he muttered to himself. "I'm real sorry he didn't peg out! Still, he may be more useful to me alive yet, and I mustn't lose sight of him. Maybe he's still got some of that swag from that li'l crib we cracked together in New York. If he has I'll make him disgorge it or I'll drill his carcase next time so they'll see more daylight through him than through a bricklayer's sieve!"

And the villainous crook ground his teeth together in a manner that boded no good for his erstwhile accomplice in crime, whose convalescence had just been reported.

So thoroughly out of sorts did Smart Alec feel as he continued his aimless walk through the streets that all thoughts of squeezing money out of Micky were driven from his aching head by a mad desire for revenge—some terrible revenge which would wipe off all the scores he had against the English lad at one stroke. But how to go to work was the question.

Eventually he decided to go back to his boarding-house and write an anonymous letter to the police authorities. Alec P. Figg was rather fond of anonymous letters.

In it he would accuse Micky of being a person "wanted" by the British police for the theft of a gold watch in England. It would do Figg no harm and might quite possibly injure the object of his hatred.

This decision being made, he accordingly returned to the boarding-house, and carefully choosing a common piece of notepaper, he printed out his statement in block capitals.

This done, he put on his slouch-hat again, and went out to post the letter.

He had almost reached a post-box when he felt a hand laid on his arm, and a low voice sounded in his ear.

"Good-morning, Mr. Figg!"

Smart Alec swung round like a tectotum, and came face to face with Floyd Unwin, late stunt actor of the great Broadworth Film Company.

Figg recognised Unwin at once, and he had no doubt as to how the ex-star had come to know him by name and appearance. The two men had never met in the opium-den of Li Chang Foo, although both had been in the habit of frequenting the place, but Unwin had been an interested spectator in the court-house when Figg had been brought up to answer the charge of shooting Monkey White.

"Good-mornin', Mister Unwin!" said Figg, eyeing the other narrowly. "Though I ain't had the pleasure o' saying so before, I'm right pleased to meet you!"

Floyd Unwin looked cautiously up and down the street. He was not anxious for any of his large circle of acquaintances to see him talking to a man of the type of Smart Alec.

"I hope I'm not interrupting you in anything, Mr. Figg," he said quickly; "but there's a little business matter I'd like to speak to you about. Have you a few minutes to spare?"

"I guess so!" said the cracksmen. "Good! Then I know a little cafeteria near here where we can get some luncheon and have a pow-wow without interference from anybody. I'm glad you can spare the time, as I'm dead sure the matter will interest you!"

"That sure sounds like business!" said Smart Alec. "Jest let me post this li'l letter to a friend, and I'll be right along with you!"

"Never mind that now," put in Unwin impatiently; "unless, of course, it's mighty important. Anyway, I guess we'll come across another post-box farther down the avenue."

With a shrug of the shoulders Figg put the letter which he had been about to despatch to the police in his pocket, and, falling into step with the ex-star of the Broadworth company, strode off down the street.

The place selected by Unwin for the confab was ideal for the purpose. It was by no means the kind of place the ex-star had been in the habit of frequenting, but its very situation in a low-class neighbourhood was an advantage, inasmuch that he was not likely to run against any of his fashionable friends there.

A talk with the greasy proprietor of the restaurant secured Unwin a small private room at the back of the premises, and here the precious pair sat discussing general topics until lunch was brought to them and the door closed behind the waiter who served it.

"Now, Mister Unwin," said Figg. "I guess I'm right in presuming you didn't bring me down to this 'joint' jest to give me a meal o' spaghetti and tomatyos?"

Unwin toyed with the piece of bread by the side of his plate, and smiled a low, cunning smile.

"Perhaps not altogether," he murmured. "But as we have at least one mutual friend, I thought we would prove good company for each other—see?"

"I see," said Figg slowly. "the mutual friend" being Mister Micky Denver, I presume?"

"Exactly!"

Floyd Unwin inclined his head, and began to attack the food on the plate before him.

For perhaps half a minute the two men ate in silence, and then it was Floyd Unwin who spoke again.

"I understand you met our mutual friend in the Eastern States, Mr. Figg," he murmured, "and was his travelling companion for some time?"

"Yep, hang him!" snarled Figg. "I met him in an eating-house in the Bowery district o' New York City, and we got kinder pally. Then, being both anxious to get out o' the place for the good o' our healths, we 'jumped' the Chicago Flyer outside o' Central Station. We beat our way West until we got to Kansas City, and then he got my goat, and I told him to get to blazes out o' my sight. After that I never set eyes on him until the goldurned, whining pup got on his hind legs in that court-house, and squealed a lot o' lies about that Monkey White business."

Alec P. Figg finished up his peroration with a snort of rage as he thought of the indignities he had experienced at the hands of the young English lad.

His statement was not calculated to give a very truthful idea of his relations with Micky, for he purposely omitted any reference to his attempt at safe-cracking at the hotel in Kansas City which had been so courageously frustrated by the lad.

Neither did Figg tell Unwin that much of the evidence that Micky had given in the Los Angeles court-house concerning the Monkey White mystery, as it had come to be known, was of things learned from Figg's own lips during their journey together from the East.

Floyd Unwin looked up into the distorted face of the crook, and a tantalising smile hovered about his lips.

Smart Alec did not look a very prepossessing spectacle at that moment. Apart from the hatred which convulsed his face, his nose was rather more red and swollen than it was earlier in the morning. Moreover, his eyes were watering with a cold contracted after being drenched with the water from the garden hosepipe on the previous night.

The sight of Figg's anger and distress greatly amused the ex-film star, but he subdued his strong inclination to laugh outright.

"I may take it, I suppose, then," he said suavely, "that you don't exactly love your former pard, Mr. Micky Denver?"

Smart Alec clenched the knife he was using for his food as though it were a dagger, and leaned across the table until his face was within a foot of Unwin's.

"Love him!" he hissed. "Yep! Like a cayuse loves a rattlesnake that's lying across his path! That's how I love him!"

"Ah," murmured Unwin, "but the cayuse crushes with his hoof the snake that lies in his path!"

"Ay," burst out Figg, bringing his fist with a bang on to the table, "and I'll crush that snake-in-the-grass, Mister Micky Denver, before I've done with him!"

Floyd Unwin smiled a satisfied sort of smile, and raised his finger to his lips.

"Sh-h!" he warned. "Not so loud!" Then he brought his lips closer to the ear of the crook and whispered:

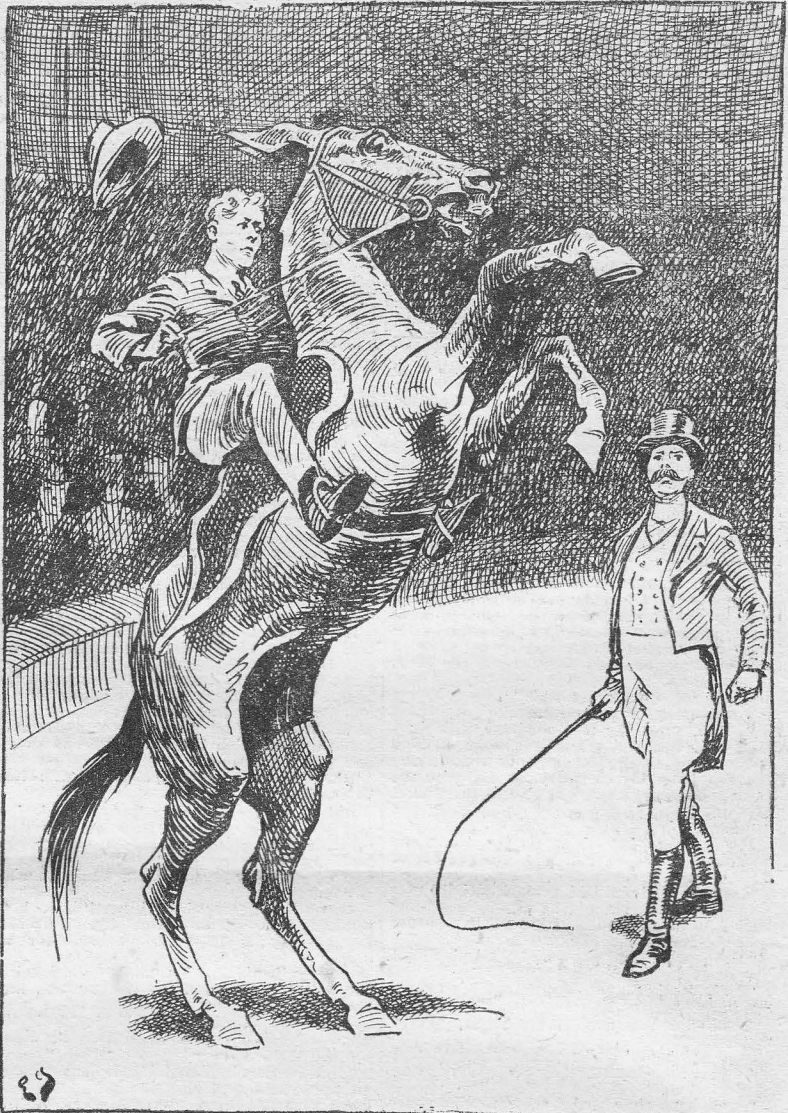
"Now, I guess it won't surprise you any to learn that this Britisher Denver is also in my path, and I have about as much love for him as you have yourself. It struck me, therefore, that, by putting our heads together, we might hit on some scheme for—or—clearing him out of our path. There! I've spoken plainly enough now, and it's about this little proposition I've brought you here, Mr. Figg."

"Waal, I guess you've approached the right man, Mister Unwin," said the crook, "and you kin rely on me to fall in with any good suggestion for puttin' it across that sneakin' young Johnny Bull, and for keepin' my mouth closed about anything that transpires."

"Good! Then in future we can talk our minds freely."

"Sure thing!" said Figg. "As a matter o' fact, I was jest on my way to put a spike in the gun o' Mister Micky Denver when I met you." The crook drew the anonymous letter addressed to the police from his pocket. "This li'l note," he said, tapping the missive lovingly. "is to inform the authorities that our young friend is a thief!"

"A thief?"



Bertram the Bucking Mule stood up on his hind legs and pawed the air with his fore legs. But Micky held grimly on. (See Page 11.)

"Yep. A few months back Mister Micky Denver was a member o' a travelling circus in the Old Country, and one night he boned the gold watch belonging to the proprietor. Then he made his get-away, and smuggled himself into the Yew-nited States."

"Oh, that's kinder interesting!" said Unwin. "A thief, is he?"

"Waal, he was accused o' being one, and the British cops want him, so it's the same thing. One day he told me all about the business, and I've written out a full account o' it in this hyer letter, which I was jest going to post when you came along."

"Pshaw!" said Unwin. "I'm surprised at a man of your intelligence going to work in so clumsy a fashion, Mr. Figg. For one thing, the police know he smuggled himself into the States, and I guess they're keeping an eye on him in a quiet way. No doubt, too, they've communicated with Scotland Yard, giving a description of the kid, and if there's anything against him you can bet your boots he'll soon know about it. Besides, you don't want to appear personally in any affair connected with him."

"Aw, I ain't such a reub as that!" retorted Smart Alec. "You don't think I've signed the letter?"

"An anonymous letter is always dangerous to the sender," said Unwin. "Now, I've got a better plan for putting a stopper to his successful little career."

A startled look came into the lean, evil face of the crook.

"You—you don't mean to kill him?" he whispered.

Floyd Unwin laughed outright, and then lighted a cigarette before replying.

"Oh, no; not at all!" he said smoothly.

"A little accident, that's all."

"Waal, that sounds all right," murmured Figg; "but I want you to recognise that I'm a marked man, and have gotter be mighty keeful in this hyer li'l burgh at present. But, you kin take it from me, I'm all in favour o' an 'accident' happenin' to Mister Micky Denver. I should smile till my face hurt!"

"And that wouldn't take long, judging from your face at present, Mr. Figg!" drawled Unwin. "I hope that our young Britisher friend had no hand—or should I say fist?—in the matter?"

The whole of Figg's face flushed to a colour almost identical with that of his damaged nose. He strongly suspected the ex-film star of being humorous at his expense, and he resented fun of that sort.

Seeing the effect of his factless remark on his companion, Floyd Unwin hastened to placate him.

"Don't think I'm merely being personal for no reason," he said; "but I could not help wondering if by any chance you have been

falling foul of the young whelp we have been discussing."

"Maybe I have," growled Figg. "but the galoot took me unawares. It was lucky for him I wasn't heeled, or I'd have plugged him so full o' lead it would have taken ten guys to have carried his coffin!"

"Ah, I can see you're the right man for a little plan I've thought of, then, Mr. Figg!" said Unwin. "Lately I've made it my business to follow the movements of Mr. Micky Denver rather carefully. Yesterday I took a stroll up to the Broadworth Studios, and asked a few questions of one of the hands. From this man I learned that in two or three days, our young friend is to perform another stunt for the pictures."

"Let's see!" put in Figg, who could not resist the opportunity of getting his own back for the remark Unwin had made about his face. "The last stunt he did for you—a dive over a cliff on a motor-bike, wasn't it?"

It was Unwin's turn to flush red with rage as he remembered his failure to perform the feat which Micky afterwards accomplished successfully.

"Never mind about that!" he snarled. "The next one he attempts may not be quite so successful as his last! And it's when this next stunt comes off that we shall have our chance to put 'paid' to our little accounts with him. Now, listen! You know the Liberty block of buildings?"

"The new skyscrapers? All offices in 'em, aren't there?"

"That's right! Well, they're all twenty-storey buildings, and the next stunt Mr. Micky Denver has to do before the cameras is to make an escape across some telephone-wires from one building to another at a height of nearly three hundred feet above the level of the street."

Smart Alec gave a low whistle.

"Some stunt!" he murmured.

"Oh, I guess the film company will rig a bunch of heavy wires across that a child could crawl along!" sneered Unwin, flicking the ash from his cigarette. "Anyway, the point is that the stunt will give us the chance we want."

"How?"

Floyd Unwin leaned across the table and whispered for some moments into the ear of Alec P. Figg.

When he had finished a startled light was shining in the eyes of the crook, who sank back into his seat without a word in response to the plan of the ex-film star.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Floyd Unwin at last.

"I say," said Smart Alec, "that it's not in my line. Besides, it's too risky!"

"Pshaw! You don't mean to say you're skeered?"

"I'm not sayin' so," rejoined Figg; "but I ain't exactly going to apply for a seat in the electric chair."

"There's no chance of a cute guy like yourself finding your way to the Tombs or Sing Sing over a little job of this sort, Figg," said Unwin persuasively. "I can hire a room at the top of the Liberty building without anyone knowing that either you or I have a hand in the transaction. That done, you can go along in disguise and prepare your plans. Mind, I will pay for the service. If young Denver meets with a serious accident whilst performing his film stunt among the skyscrapers you'll be the richer to the tune of five thousand dollars."

Alec P. Figg pursed his lips and shook his head slowly.

"They say that money talks," he said; "and those five thousand 'bucks' o' yours sure make a whole lot o' noise; but I ain't taking the job on at any price!"

Floyd Unwin gritted his teeth together. He had confidently expected that his offer, which he could well afford, would act like a charm in inducing the crook to accede to his nefarious wishes.

But he had another card up his sleeve, and this he determined to play without beating about the bush.

Unwin had followed with interest the mysterious case of the shooting of Monkey White, and had formed his own opinion about the affair. Much as he disliked Micky, he, nevertheless, believed that the lad had spoken the truth whilst in the witness-box.

Experienced detectives had said that it was next to impossible for Smart Alec to have been on location in disguise, and then to have got back to Los Angeles unobserved before the police arrested him in the opium-den of Li Chang Foo.

But Floyd Unwin thought otherwise. He had no proof it was true, but he gave the

crook credit for being more slippery even than the authorities knew him to be.

It was now his intention to "chance his arm" and try by other means to subdue the crackman and make him fall in with his wishes.

Before speaking he carefully lighted another cigarette and settled himself more comfortably in his chair.

"By the way, Figg," he said, as though suddenly recollecting something, "I've had the pleasure of meeting an old pard of yours to-day. He left hospital this morning, and on my invitation he came straight to me."

Alec P. Figg shot up like a startled tiger.

"Monkey White!" he exclaimed. "What the blazes has he got to do with you?"

"Oh, nothing," said Unwin calmly; "only I was kinder interested in that curious little affair of which he was the victim. I've been interested in criminology for a long time, y'know, and formed my own theories about this shooting business. So for my own satisfaction I invited Monkey White along to my flat, and put a few questions to him about the case."

Figg laughed sneeringly. "And so did the police," he said; "and a fine lot they got out o' him!"

"Quite so," murmured Unwin easily. "But they didn't offer him a thousand 'bucks' just for answering one question."

It was as though the crook had suddenly been stung by a wasp. He sprang from his seat, glaring in evident alarm at the ex-film star, who was sitting so calmly at the opposite side of the little table.

"What the smoke d'you mean?" he cried.

"What game are you trying to pull on me?"

It was with difficulty that Unwin could conceal a smile of gloating satisfaction. His plan had succeeded beyond his greatest hopes. None but a guilty man would have taken the simple announcement he had made in such a manner as Figg had done. It was as plain as a pikestaff that the crook was afraid of something of which Monkey White was aware, and which the ape-like man had not revealed when questioned by the police on his return to consciousness.

But no sooner had Figg leaped to his feet and shot off his remark than he sank back into his chair again with an evil smile on his face. He was more than a little sorry that he had exhibited any emotion at all at Unwin's announcement.

"Pooh!" he sneered. "It must have been a mighty interesting question if you were willing to pay a thousand 'bucks' for an answer!"

"It was," said Unwin; "and it consisted of only three words. I asked White 'Who shot you?'"

"Ha, ha! That's funny!" laughed the crook. "He's already stated that he didn't see the man, and—"

"But he did!" Floyd Unwin was sure of his advantage, and hastened to get his blow home with full force. "And Monkey White's answer to my question was entirely satisfactory."

"Oh!" sneered Figg, with an attempt at nonchalance. "And what was his thousand-dollar reply?"

"Smart Alec!"

This time Figg did not leap to his feet, but, strive as he might, he was unable to conceal the fear and baffled rage which was eating at his vitals.

"He said that, did he?" he muttered, in slow, ominous tones. "And did you believe him Mister Unwin, may I ask?"

"See here, Figg!" said Unwin briskly.

"Let's cut the cackle, and get down to bed-rock business! I'm not going to squeal to the police about the affair—that's between you and Monkey White. But White's information proved to me that you're a man of the right kidney—that is, for doing a little job of the kind that'll write 'Finis' to Mr. Micky Denver's bright young career. Now, my offer of five thousand 'bucks' still holds good, and I guess you'd better take it, Mr. Figg!"

Beneath the oily tones Figg read the menace in the voice of the ex-star, and he hesitated from making the cutting reply which formed itself in his mind. For one thing, he had no reason for thinking that Unwin was telling him a pack of lies.

None knew better than he did that Monkey White was well aware who had fired the shot which had come so near to ending his crooked career. Figg had been double-crossed by his former accomplice in crime, who had made his get-away from New York with the spoils of their last joint safe-cracking exploit.

Wearing a beard, and under the name of Jed Tomson, Figg had obtained a job with the Broadworth Film Company as an extra, solely because he had learnt that White was

turning an honest penny at the same game. Smart Alec had seen the unique opportunity of getting a shot home during the filming of the big fight scene, and, in his hatred, had taken the trouble to reveal his identity to his victim for one brief second before pressing the trigger.

On his recovery, and when questioned by the police, Monkey White had kept his knowledge to himself, for he knew that if he gave Figg away, Figg, in his turn, would reveal details of the New York crime, and get him sent to the penitentiary for a term of years.

But, according to Figg's idea, it fitted well in with the character of his late accomplice to give his secret away in exchange for a fat wad of greenbacks.

The crook had little stomach for the job that Unwin required him to do; but, on the other hand, he did not want to offend a man who possessed such dangerous knowledge of his latest little gunning exploit.

For some moments he considered thoughtfully; his brows puckered in a heavy frown. At last he made up his mind.

"I'll do the job, Mister Unwin," he said finally. "When Mister Micky Denver does his ill' stunt among those sky-scrapers, I'll sure have some dandy surprise waiting for him. Hire the office at the top of the Liberty building, and when I hear from you I'll stroll along and spy out the land!"

"Good!" exclaimed Unwin, with a triumphant grin at the success of his craftiness. "Another day or two, and the newspapers will ring with as fine a sensation as Los Angeles has had for a twelvemonth!"

He clapped his hands for the waiter, and, having paid the bill for the luncheon, took leave of Figg and slipped out of the restaurant.

Ten minutes later both of the precious rascals were strolling their different ways among the pedestrians in the streets of Los Angeles, each concerned with his own thoughts of the vicious plan against the young Broadworth film star.

Bertram, the Bucking Mule!

ON the day following his arduous experience of the filming of interior scenes, with himself as the principal actor, Micky went as usual to the Broadworth studios in the company of Buddy Gaylord, the genial little property-man.

The object of his attendance was that Jeffery J. Romery, the chief director, was anxious to give him as much coaching as possible in the technicalities of film acting, and also to explain the details of the thrilling stunt which the lad was to perform in the course of the next two or three days.

Jeff spent fully two hours with the young star that morning, and Micky, conscious of the tremendous knowledge and experience of film work possessed by the ten-thousand-dollars-a-year director, assimilated every ounce of instruction he could get.

"Some people are born with a natural 'screen personality' such as Micky himself had, and also with a talent for the art of acting. But even as a good voice needs careful training before it is fit to be heard in the solos of grand opera, so a natural bent for film acting has to be developed.

Like many another person, Micky had the idea that he could become a finished film actor by assiduous practice of gestures and facial expressions before the mirror; but he soon found out that he would have to unlearn many of his own ideas of the art and substitute a great deal else in their place before he could hope to be regarded as a front ranker to a professional of Jeff Romery's experience.

Micky had ability even if not fully developed, and he worked hard, and after the business of the morning was concluded was highly gratified when Jeff expressed the opinion that in time he would "make good."

"The next thing I want to do, Micky," said Jeff, "is to take you down to the Liberty building in Los Angeles to give you an even more thorough idea of the stunt. I can't do it this afternoon, and to-morrow I shan't have time to go down town. Could you call for me at six o'clock to-night at my flat, and we'll auto down together?"

The arrangement having been made, Micky bade Jeff good-morning, and, followed by Chappie, who had been asleep in a snug corner of the studio all the morning, he started to leave the lot.

Outside he met Mary Maidstone, the charming star, together with Reginald Clarence Eton, the Dude of Filmland.

"Bai Jove, heah's the wascal we've been

looking for!" cried Reggie, as he spotted the lad through his beautiful rimless monocle.

"Come heah, deah boy, and wead this!"

In Reggie's hand floated a large, coloured handbill.

Thinking the dude was enticing him to some new jolly game, little Chappie darted forward with a sharp bark of delight. Reggie quickly drew the handbill out of the ferrier's reach, however, and passed it across to Micky.

The youngster greeted his two friends, and then perused the announcement.

It was headed "The Event of the Year!" and announced the visit to Los Angeles of

"SINGER'S WORLD-FAMOUS AMERICAN CIRCUS."

The description that followed concerning the epic event was enough to make any mouth water! Elephants, tigers, bareback riders, clowns, equilibristas, and last, but not least, "Bertram, the Bucking Mule"—all appeared in one stupendous programme. Adjectives such as "gigantic," "wonderful," "astounding," and "sensational," were scattered liberally throughout the whole handbill.

Micky's eyes sparkled as he read the glowing account of the show.

Most of his life had been spent in a circus, and although his experiences had not always been happy ones, yet the lure of the sawdust ring still permeated his veins.

"Well, what d'you think of it, deah boy?" demanded Reggie, tapping his gold-handled walking-stick impatiently. "Will you come?"

"What!" exclaimed Micky. "Are you contemplating paying a visit to the show, then, Reggie?"

"Wather!" cried Reggie. "I'm awfully keen on the beastly circus, and—"

"He's nothing of the sort, Micky!" put in Mary Maidstone. "But I am! The place where the circus is being held is not far from here, and I asked Reggie to take me this afternoon. He suggested a matinee instead, but I insisted on having my own way. And now we both want you to come along, too."

Micky flushed with pleasure at the request of the charming young film star. Apart from the excitement of glimpsing the sawdust and finsel of the circus again, there was the pleasure of spending the afternoon in such delightful company as that of the winsome young actress and the priceless dude.

Accordingly, the arrangement was made, and in the afternoon Reggie called for Mary Maidstone and Micky in turn, and whizzed them along to Singer's World-Famous Circus in his choice runabout car.

The three secured seats near the ringside, and Mary Maidstone and Micky settled down in great glee to watch the performance. Reggie regarded the sawdust ring and the vast crowd under the yawning canvas of the tent through his rimless monocle in a manner suggesting he would far rather be elsewhere. Listening to the orchestra in the luxurious lounge of the Palm Beach Hotel was more Reggie's idea of indoor recreation.

A couple of acrobats reminded Micky of his own erstwhile act on the flying trapeze with Mike Megan, but the antics of the Singer clown, in his opinion, did not approach within a mile of those of good old Clancy.

A thrill of expectancy ran through the audience as there galloped into the ring Bertram, the Bucking Mule!

The ringmaster flicked his long whip, and proceeded to issue his usual challenge in stentorian tones.

"Ladies and gen'l'men," he roared, "one hundred dollars will be paid to any person who kin ride the world-famous bucking mule, Bertram, three times round this hyer ring! Now, don't all rush at once!"

At first the response was very meagre. Bertram's wicked, bloodshot eyes and lean, black flanks were not exactly inviting.

"Weally, deah boy," murmured Reggie, rising. "I've a good mind to have a twy myself, y'know."

"Same here!" said Micky, springing up.

"Sit down, both of you!" cried Mary Maidstone, with a laugh. "You can come back to-morrow and break your necks when you haven't the responsibility of seeing little me home!"

Reggie and Micky exchanged pathetic glances, and sank back into their seats.

Two or three men had gone into the ring in response to the challenge, and soon Bertram was engaged at his usual tricks of shooting one after the other over his head or his tail with practised dexterity.

During this performance a young ex-cavalry-

man sitting behind Mary Maidstone rose to his feet, but he was restrained from going out by the aged lady sitting by his side.

"You're a good son, Arthur," she murmured affectionately, "but your leg ain't right from that wound you got in France, and you might get hurt badly."

"Never fear, mother," said the fellow. "I've handled lots o' mules in my time. I guess we need that hundred dollars, and I'm going to hev a try for it."

So saying, he made his way to the front, walking with a slight limp.

"Poor lad!" whispered Mary Maidstone to Micky. "I do hope he succeeds."

When his turn came the ex-cavalryman mounted Bertram, and the mule at once began his vicious antics. But if the young fellow's leg was not sound, his wrists were, and he held the reins with a grip of steel.

Bertram had a mouth of iron, and perhaps for the first time in his gay career he was really hurt by the bit. He galloped twice round the ring without stopping, and loud cheers broke from the audience. The ex-cavalryman gave him a gentle kick, and then the mule shot forward with lightning speed.

But never once had Bertram lost that hundred dollars for his master, and it was not the intention in his evil head to begin now. He shot all four legs out suddenly, and came to a dead halt. His rider tried to check himself, but he had been just a second too late in anticipating the trick, and he shot like a bullet from a gun over the mule's head.

The ex-cavalryman, who was fortunately unharmed, walked back to his seat, whilst Bertram let loose a derisive bray.

"Hard luck, na!" he said to the aged lady. "But I had to try it. That hundred dollars was over her illness."

Suddenly Micky gave an exclamation of surprise, and half rose from his seat. Crawling under the tent, unobserved by the attendants, came little Chappie! Tired of being left at home, the little terrier had set out to find his young master, and with that wonderful instinct which is so highly developed in both the canine and feline species he had found his way right into Singer's Circus.

Micky gave one sharp whistle, and Chappie bounded across the ring. Bertram, the Bucking Mule, saw him out of the corner of one of his wicked eyes, and lashed out with his left hind hoof. Fortunately for the little dog the blow was but a glancing one, but it made Chappie let out a yelp that woke the echoes.

A loud laugh broke out from those who witnessed the incident, but Micky's face flamed. He felt he had a score to pay off on Bertram, and without a word to his companions he leaped into the sawdust ring. He paused but for one moment to order Chappie to lie down by the wooden rail that bordered the ring, and then he approached the Bucking Mule.

The ringmaster gave a smile as he saw the fresh victim, and he willingly gave the lad a hand on to the mule's back.

For a moment Bertram stood thinking. Then he swung his head round and tried to fasten his great yellow teeth in Micky's leg. But Micky was a second too quick for him, and just evaded the bite. Next moment Bertram shot into the air with his back arched. His four feet came down almost within the circle of a foot in circumference, and the jar sent a spasm through the whole of the lad's body. Then the Bucking Mule stood up on his hind legs and pawed the air with his two forelegs. But Micky held grimly on.

Micky had often ridden in the circus in the Old Country, though he was not an absolutely expert rider by any means. But his wrists were as strong as steel, and his courage unbounded.

Seeing that he could not induce Bertram to go forward round the ring at any price, he adopted different tactics. He allowed the vicious mule to back as much as he liked. Several times he was nearly unshipped in the process, but he had the satisfaction of getting completely round the ring once by these tactics. The ringmaster had not specified which way round the ring the mule had to be ridden, and loud cheers from the audience greeted Micky's generalship.

Bertram plunged, reared, and strove by every trick in his repertoire to unseat the tenacious lad on his back, but to no avail. Slowly but surely, though, he backed round the ring again, and so the third lap began.

A flush of excitement lighted the soft cheeks of Mary Maidstone as she watched the plucky English lad, whilst Reggie roared encouragement in no uncertain way.

Almost the mule had backed round the ring for the third time, when Micky began already to feel the hundred dollars safely stowed away in his pocket. But in this he made the mistake of the young cavalryman in somewhat underrating his mount. Micky was not the first rider who had attempted to back him round the ring, and Bertram had a big surprise-packet ready to spring. Behind those wicked eyes he evolved his plan for allowing this persistent rider to almost grasp the prize before adding him to his hundreds of other victims.

He gradually backed to within almost ten yards of the starting-point, and the crowd cheered frantically. For one fleeting second Micky caught a glimpse of his friend the young film actress, and the sight of her spurred him on to complete the task he had undertaken.

Bertram backed another yard, and then slowly rose on his hind legs. His intention this time was Business with a capital B! He was going to unseat his persistent rider if he had to fall over backwards on top of him. And this was exactly what he intended to do.

As if by magic the intention communicated itself to a portion of the audience, and loud shouts, interspersed with cries of alarm, escaped a thousand lips.

"Slip off his back, kid! He'll kill you!"

But, Bertram was not destined to fulfil his evil intention, for at that moment little Chappie sprang into the ring and fastened his sharp teeth in the mule's hind leg. With a snort Bertram came to earth at once, and before he could recover from his astonishment Micky backed him to the point from which he had started his ride.

A thunder of applause broke out from every part of the building, but the ringmaster's face was as black as thunder.

"It's not fair!" he cried. "I refuse—"

"Yah!" howled the crowd. "Pay up and look pleasant, you pinhead!"

The ringmaster demurred no longer. From a business standpoint he saw the wisdom of the advice, so he paid up and looked pleasant about it, although he didn't feel as happy as he looked about the affair.

Flushing with happiness, Micky sought his seat again next to Mary Maidstone, with the wad of greenbacks clasped in his hand, whilst his two friends and the audience showered congratulations on him. Chappie, too, came in for a tremendous amount of petting; but his pleasure lay in the fact that he had had his revenge on Bertram, the Bucking Mule.

Going out from the great circus tent, Micky excused himself for a moment and sought out the young ex-cavalryman and his mother.

"Excuse me," he said confusedly. "I don't want to butt into your affairs, but I couldn't help hearing what you were talking about during the show. You put up a jolly plucky show on that mule for the sake of somebody who is lying sick. For her sake please accept this!"

Micky thrust the wad of notes into the hand of the astonished ex-soldier, and darted away among the crowd.

There were tears of gratitude in the eyes of that ex-soldier and his aged mother as they made their way homewards, for that hundred dollars meant more to them than Micky or anyone else in the world could possibly guess.

Micky rejoined Mary Maidstone and Reggie Eton with an expression of innocence upon his face. He felt quite sure that his action had not been witnessed, but had he known more about the nature of the opposite sex he might have read differently in the look of pride and approbation that the young actress accorded him on his return.

Refusing a pressing invitation to go into Los Angeles to tea, the young film star took leave of his two friends at the home of Buddy Gaylord.

The afternoon had been spent in holidaying, but there was his business with Jeff Romery to be attended to at six o'clock.

Micky was anxious to view the great skyscrapers among which he was to risk his life for the cinema.

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

THE STOLEN MOTOR.

A SHORT STORY OF ST. JIM'S.

"HOW much longer is Gussy going to be?"

Tom Merry, of the School House at St. Jim's, uttered that remark in tones of deep disgust. There were several juniors with him who wore the badge of St. Jim's, and they one and all looked as disgusted as Tom Merry of the Shell.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, had gone into a shop in Wayland to purchase some new socks. He had said that summer clothes called for summer socks.

All the juniors knew what the socks would be like. They would be of the multifarious colours that would look ridiculous on any other person than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"The silly ass!" growled Jack Blake. "If I thought it would do any good I would go into the shop after him."

"He'd simply turn round and tell you not to put a chap in a fuddle!" said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

And the juniors again relapsed into silence whilst they waited impatiently for the swell of the Fourth to finish his shopping.

Some of their wrathful expressions disappeared as an enormous racing motor-car turned the corner of the lane and roared its way towards the juniors.

"My hat!" ejaculated Jack Blake. "That's a topper!"

The juniors moved away from the shop window, and turned their attention to the great car. It was painted a dark grey, and the long bonnet told of the massive engines which purred beneath. A man sat at the wheel, a leather helmet almost covering his face.

"I'll wager she can move!" said Tom Merry, who knew a little about cars.

"I'd like to take her for a run round the country," said Manners, with a sigh.

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"You'd never hold her in," he said. "I should just about give you two seconds in the car—and about ten years in a hospital!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Another car moved up, unnoticed by the juniors, and drew to a standstill at the rear of the great racer. A man jumped out and hurried into the sports shop opposite.

Tom Merry gave him but a casual glance, and returned to the examination of the racer. They could not see the engine, but they could see the pedals, levers, and various switches on the dashboard of the car; and therein the juniors found much to interest them.

An attendant stood outside the sports shop, and Tom Merry, peering round to see if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had yet put in an appearance, noticed a man saunter towards him.

"Thanks very much, my good fellow!" said the man, slipping a coin into the attendant's hand. "I'm always fidgettily afraid my car will be stolen!"

The attendant started, but pocketed the coin. Tom Merry, half listening to the remarks of his chums and half listening to the drawing voice of the stranger, glanced again at the man.

He did not look very much like the man who had jumped out of the car behind the racer, but the attendant seemed to know him. He had accepted the tip apparently for looking after the car. There could be nothing wrong, after all.

He watched the man as he left the attendant and sauntered slowly towards the car. He frowned as he noticed the familiar manner in which the stranger started the car and the casual manner in which he got into the driving-seat.

"My hat!" he murmured. "I don't know, but—"

"What are you cackling about, Tommy?" asked Manners, looking round.

"That chap at the back," said Tom Merry. "He looks different from the chap who got out. Here, wait a minute!"

On the impulse of the moment, Tom Merry ran across the road to where the attendant was idly gazing up and down the street.

"Did that chap ask you to look after that car?" he demanded curtly.

The attendant turned round with a start.

"Eh? Did I what?" he asked. "Well, between you and me and the gatepost, young gentleman, I didn't know the blessed car was there. But when a gent pops up and slips you a couple of bob for lookin'—after a car which you ain't looked after—well, I asks you, does the working-man get so much in wages that he can afford to pretend he don't know nothing about the car?"

Tom Merry did not stop to answer that question. He dashed across the road to where the smaller car stood. At the same moment he saw the driver's eyes flash with anger.

"Stop him, you chaps!" yelled Tom Merry. "He's stealing that car!"

Manners and Lowther dashed forward, to be followed an instant later by Blake, Herries, and Digby. But they were too late.

Small though the car was, it was powerful, and as the thief dropped in his gear she literally leapt forward.

"Stop, you rotter!" roared Tom Merry.

But the car gained too much speed in the first few yards for Tom Merry ever to hope to catch up with it. As the man reached the corner he looked behind, and with an insolent wave of his hand, disappeared.

"The rotter!" gasped Tom Merry. "I thought—Oh, my hat! I was beastly slow that time!"

The real owner of the car came out of the sports shop at that moment, and Tom Merry hastened towards him.

"Your car, sir! I believe it's been stolen!" he said quickly.

The man looked up from the parcel he had been tying, and glanced mechanically across the road to where he had left his car.

"Good heavens!" he gasped. "Where, boy—where? Why didn't you stop him?"

Tom Merry stuttered an apology for being slow, although he could hardly be blamed. He had not taken very much notice of the owner of the car when he had gone into the shop. And, besides, it looked very natural that the attendant should receive a tip for looking after it. He had thought the owner had sent the attendant out of the shop for that purpose.

But Lowther was thinking quickly, and no one missed him as he slid into another shop where he had seen the driver of the racer disappear. The man was at the counter, and turned as Lowther touched him on the shoulder.

"A rotten thief has bunked with another chap's car, sir—not yours—" he began.

The motorist stared.

"Bunked? You mean driven off?" he asked sharply.

"Yes, sir! Tom Merry spotted him, but he was too late to stop him."

"Come on, then!"

The motorist left his purchases on the counter, with a brief word to the salesman that he would return.

"Do you know the roads whereabouts?" asked the motorist, as soon as they reached the roadway.

"Like a book!" said Monty Lowther instantly.

"Then hop in, and we'll chase the rotter!" said the motorist.

He climbed into the driving seat, and Monty Lowther climbed into the back of the car almost as quickly. Tom Merry and Manners, without being asked, jumped up beside their chum. Blake & Co. would have followed suit, but the car started too suddenly.

They jumped clear as the great racer roared, and looked with envy at the backs of Tom Merry & Co. as, the car having turned, they raced to the corner of the road and disappeared.

"Straight on, sir!" said Monty Lowther, speaking into the driver's ear, for the wind simply roared past them. "The road leads to the coast; there's hardly a turning for two miles, then only enough for one car to get along."

The motorist nodded, but kept his eyes fixedly before him. The St. Jim's fellows, with their eyes unprotected by goggles, could only peer through their fingers.

The speedometer showed that they were speeding along at forty miles an hour almost before they had turned out of sight of Jack Blake & Co. Fascinated, they watched the

little hand mount up—fifty—sixty—seventy. "My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I—I—gee!—I said she'd move!"

Lowther and Manners did not answer.

"Sharp corner to the right, sir!" roared

Lowther in the driver's ear.

Almost instantly the car slackened, but the rate they went round the corner almost brought the hearts of the juniors to their mouths. The next instant they were speeding along at sixty miles an hour, and then hove in sight the man in the stolen car.

"Got him!" muttered the motorist. "He's got as much chance of getting away from this little 'bus as a river from its bed!"

Tom Merry & Co. saw the thief turn as he heard the roar of the great, powerful engine behind, but the speed of the car did not seem to increase. At any rate, the speed at which Tom Merry & Co. were travelling in the racer would not permit of their noticing any decrease or increase in speed of the car in front.

As they drew nearer and nearer to their quarry they saw the man jump out of the car—it had not even appeared to have stopped—and leap for the side of the road. The next moment he had disappeared into the woods which bordered the road.

"Let him go!" said the motorist, as he pulled the great racer to a standstill. "You just watch the car while I run back and find the johnnie it belongs to!"

Tom Merry & Co. sprang out, and the racer was turned and set off in the direction of Wayland.

But the racer was hardly turned out of sight when another car dashed up from the opposite direction. There were four men in it—two in the back, and one beside the driver.

"Hallo, young gentlemen!" hailed the man beside the driver. "Is that your car?"

"No—wish it was!" said Tom Merry. "We chased a rotter who bunked with it—"

"Ah! Didn't hear him speak, I suppose?"

"Yes, rather," said Tom Merry quickly.

"He drawled—got an accent, so to speak!"

"That's the fellow!" exclaimed one of the other passengers. "Where did he get to?"

"He bunked into the wood—we were in a racing car," explained Manners. "The chap who drove us has gone back to fetch the owner of this 'bus."

The men turned out of the car, and stood muttering together in low tones. Then they left the driver in charge of the car, and dashed off into the woods.

"You chaps give a hand!" said Lowther.

"I'll watch the car."

Tom Merry and Manners nodded, and set off after the men. They had rightly guessed that they were police-officers.

It was the little start that the police-officers had that proved the undoing of the car-thief. Tom Merry and Manners were about two hundred yards behind them as they crashed through the bushes, looking to right and left as they ran.

"They make enough row to scare the rotter!" grunted Manners. "Why can't they do the trick as Boy Scouts would do it—track him down?"

Tom Merry did not answer, but grabbed Manners by the arm and pulled him down into the bushes.

Twenty yards in front, and just off the path along which they had been running, stood a stately oak-tree. And, from the lower branches there suddenly appeared two legs.

"That's the rotter!" whispered Manners.

"Let him get down—then we'll collar him!"

The thief dropped to the ground, hesitated a moment, as if undecided which way to run, and then came towards Tom Merry and Manners. The instant he was abreast the Shell fellows sprang out upon him. Two minutes' silent fighting and the man was a prisoner.

The police were called back, and the thief handed over.

"Thanks, young gentlemen!" said an officer. "Just the man we're looking for!"

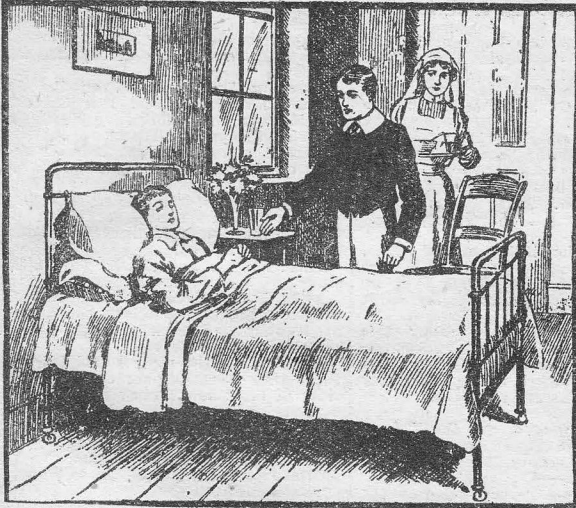
Five minutes later the thief was on his way to prison, and the racer was back, with the owner of the stolen motor.

Then, to Tom Merry's and Manners' amazement, Lowther coolly asked if he—the motorist—would mind giving Blake & Co. a spin.

Further to their amazement, the motorist agreed, and Blake & Co.—with D'Arcy and his new socks—were picked up and transported many pleasant miles round the beautiful county of Sussex.

It was an unexpected end of the afternoon's adventure.

THE END.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Fourth Form Mean Business.

"BLESSED my soul!" said Mr. Bootles, in astonishment.

The master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood had called out "Come in!" in response to a respectful tap at his study door.

The door had opened, disclosing to Mr. Bootles' astonished eyes about half the Fourth Form crammed in the passage.

The Fistical Four of the Fourth—Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome—were in the lead. After them came Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern side. Then there were Oswald and Flynn and Rawson, and Van Ryn and Towle and Tubby Muffin, and a dozen more fellows, Classics and Moderns. And they were all looking excited.

They marched into Mr. Bootles' study—eight or nine of them, the rest crowding the doorway and the passage outside.

"Bless my soul!" he repeated. The Form-master's study had never held so many of his Form before at once. It was a regular invasion.

"What does this mean?" asked Mr. Bootles, still blinking. "What do all you juniors want here?"

"If you please, sir, we're a deputation," said Jimmy Silver, speaking up as captain of the Fourth.

"Representing both sides of Rookwood, sir—Modern and Classical," said Tommy Dodd.

"Classical and Modern, you mean," remarked Lovell.

"I mean Modern and Classical!" said Tommy Dodd warmly.

"Look here, Tommy Dodd—"

"Look here, Lovell—"

"Ahem!" said Mr. Bootles.

Tommy Dodd and Lovell, with a mutual glare, ceased to debate the question of precedence. Mr. Bootles' study, they realised, was not the right place for such a debate, important as the question was.

"Shut up, you two!" said Raby. "Mr. Bootles is waiting."

"Really—"

"The fact is, sir," said Lovell, "we're a deputation, representing all Rookwood."

"Hear, hear!" said the deputation with one voice.

"We want to speak to you, sir—"

"About Mornington, sir—"

"That rotten cad, sir—"

"He hasn't gone—"

"We want him to go—"

"He's got to go—"

The deputation were all speaking at once, and excitement was growing. Jimmy Silver waved his hand for silence.

"Order! Let Lovell speak!" Lovell's spokesman!

"If you have anything to say, I will listen to you," said Mr. Bootles. "But pray be brief."

"Go it, Lovell!"

"It's about Mornington of our Form, sir," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "You know what's happened, sir. Mornington of the

Fourth and Beaumont of the Sixth planted a banknote on Jimmy Silver, and got him accused of stealing it. If old Rawson hadn't got at the truth, Jimmy would have been sacked from Rookwood. He was sacked, in fact, but he wouldn't go—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, we hear that Beaumont and Mornington have been expelled for their dirty trick," went on Lovell.

Mr. Bootles nodded.

"Both have been expelled from Rookwood," he said. "Beaumont has already left the school. Mornington will follow."

"That's the point, sir," said Lovell. "We saw Beaumont go—and a good riddance to him! But Mornington hasn't gone."

"And we want to see the last of him!" said Rawson.

"Hear, hear!"

"They were sacked yesterday for their dirty trick," resumed Lovell. "Beaumont left yesterday afternoon. Mornington didn't. Well, we expected to find that he had gone this morning. But this morning he hadn't gone. His box is still in the dormitory, and his things are still in his study. We haven't seen him about, but we know he's still in the school."

"Shame!" came a howl from the passage. "Under the circumstances, sir, we've come to you as a deputation," said Lovell. "We want Mornington to go. The Fourth Form of Rookwood, sir, can't stand him."

"Never!"

"We don't think it's possible that the Head would think of allowing him to stay after what he's done. But he hasn't gone, and it's twenty-four hours since he was found out. Why hasn't he gone, sir?"

"That's the question, sir," said Tommy Dodd. "The Fourth Form feel that they have a right to know, sir."

"Sure, if he stays here, we'll slaughter him intaiely," said Flynn.

"We'll scalp him!" roared the deputation from the passage.

Mr. Bootles waved his hand.

"Silence, please!"

"Shut up!" said Jimmy Silver. "Silence for Mr. Bootles!"

The Fourth Form-master coughed.

"My boys, I am not surprised that you are indignant and disgusted at Mornington's heinous conduct. He attempted to fasten a false charge upon Silver; he had been compelled to confess his guilt. Silver stands before you cleared of any suspicion, without a stain on his name—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo, Jimmy!"

"Mornington is under sentence of expulsion. His accomplice left Rookwood yesterday, never to return. Mornington has not yet gone, but he will be removed from the school as soon as possible."

"Why not at once, sir?" asked Lovell.

"Because he is ill."

"Wha-a-at?"

"The wretched boy appears to have suffered severely from the shock of the discovery and the punishment that followed," said Mr.

Bootles. "He fell in a faint in the Head's study, and was removed to the sanatorium. The school doctor is now in attendance upon him. Mornington appears to be suffering from a nervous breakdown. In such a state he cannot leave the school."

"Oh!"

"As soon as he is sufficiently recovered for removal, he will be taken away from Rookwood," said Mr. Bootles. "You may rest assured of that. Such an unmitigated young rascal could never be allowed to remain here."

The juniors looked at one another. They knew Mornington—they knew the cunning, unscrupulous, and audacious nature of the cad of the Fourth.

There was only one thought in the minds of Jimmy Silver & Co. The dandy of the Fourth, in spite of the discovery of his rascality, in spite of the sentence of expulsion, hoped yet to escape the degradation of being kicked out of Rookwood. His illness was one more of his many tricks.

There was a murmur from the deputation—a murmur of disgust and indignation.

"You may go!" added Mr. Bootles.

But the deputation did not go.

"Excuse me, sir," said Lovell, "we don't believe a word of Mornington's yarn about being ill—do we, you chaps?"

"Not a word," said Jimmy Silver.

"Not a giddy syllable," said Tommy Dodd emphatically.

"It's only some more of his lies, sir," said Rawson.

"It's a trick to stay at Rookwood," said Oswald. "Morny thinks it will blow over in time, and his nobby relations will get round the Head."

Mr. Bootles frowned.

"The matter is not for you to decide," he said. "It is in Dr. Chisholm's hands. Now, please leave my study."

Mr. Bootles waved his hand to the door. The deputation, with grim looks, filed out of the room at last.

But outside in the passage there was a roar of angry voices. Mornington's latest trick roused deep anger in every breast.

"Rookwood won't stand it!" exclaimed Lovell furiously. "I know the game, just as if the cad had told me. He's going to put on illness for a week or two, while his titled connections have time to talk the Head over. He thinks he's going to stay when it's blown over."

Jimmy Silver set his lips.

Jimmy had had a narrow escape from expulsion and disgrace, owing to the machinations of his old enemy. He did not mean to run any more risks of that sort.

"He's got to go!" he said. "Gentlemen of the Fourth, if the Head lets this matter slide I vote that we take it into our own hands."

"Hear, hear!"

"So long as Mornington is in the sanatorium we can't touch him; there's a bare possibility that he's really ill, and we can't handle a chap who may be seedy. But the

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minute he comes out he goes out of Rookwood."

"Suppose the Head—" began Higgs. Jimmy Silver interrupted. "If the Head gives way, we sha'n't," he said firmly. "We're all together in this, and we're resolved that Mornington's going. The minute he shows up outside sanny, we march him out of the gates, and kick him out, whether the masters like it or not."

"Oh, my hat!" "And if he comes back, we'll tar and feather him, and kick him out again!" said Jimmy Silver. "Rookwood's fed up with Mornington, and he's got to go!"

"Hear, hear!" "And while he's here, nobody's going to speak a word to him," said Jimmy. "He's got friends here—the merry Nuts. They're going to send him to Coventry, the same as we do, and we'd better go and tell them so."

"Good egg!" And the excited juniors streamed away towards Townsend's study, to interview the Nuts of the Fourth.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Nuts and the Nut-crackers.

TOWNSEND & Co. were in their quarters, looking decidedly dispirited. The exposure of Mornington's rascality and his expulsion from the school had come as a heavy blow to the noble society of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood.

Mornington, with his decided character and his unlimited wealth, had been the chief of the Nuts, and ever since he had been at Rookwood Townsend & Co. had been his humble followers.

Even Smythe of the Shell, the great Adolphus himself, had taken a second place to Mornington.

The Nutty Co. were discussing the matter in Townsend's study, with the assistance of some of Towny's special cigarettes.

Townsend and Topham and Peels and Gower of the Fourth, and Smythe and Howard and Tracy of the Shell, were there.

And though they could not exactly uphold the dastardly trick by which Mornington had sought to rid himself of his rival in the Fourth, they agreed that it was thoroughly rotten that old Morny should have to go. Rookwood wouldn't be like itself without Morny—they agreed on that.

"After all, that cad Silver is a meddlin' rotter," said Smythe, through a cloud of cigarette smoke. "He's always meddlin' with somethin'."

"He's shifted us out of the footer," said Howard.

"He won't let a chap into the eleven if he goes in for a smoke now and then," said Topham indignantly.

"And won't give a chap a chance unless he slogs at practice, an' makes regular dashed work of it," said Peels.

"An' thinks nothin' of knockin' a fellow's hat off if a fellow turns up his nose at him," remarked Tracy.

"Of course, it was a bit thick, what Morny did," said Townsend. "I don't say I approve of it. In fact, it was caddish—awfully caddish. But, after all, he's always been at loggerheads with Jimmy Silver, and all's fair in war. That's how Morny looked at it."

"Well, Morny was always rather a cad," said Smythe. "Still, I'm sorry he's goin', I'd rather Jimmy Silver went."

"Yes, rather!" "Perhaps he ain't goin', though," said Townsend, with a grin. "He's in sanny now."

"Ill! What?" said Smythe. "So he says."

Smythe turned his eyeglass upon Townsend in surprise. "By gad! Do you mean to say he's spooin'?" he asked.

Townsend chuckled. "Of course he's spooin'! You never knew Morny ill, did you? He's as hard as nails. As for gettin' a bad shock through bein' shown up an' sacked, that's all rot. It may do for the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "He's goin' to be ill just long enough for the row to blow over," said Townsend sagely. "He's goin' to give his people time to get to work on the Head. He's got heaps of titled relations, awfully powerful people. One of 'em is a Governor of Rookwood. They'll all begin on the Head, an' I don't

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact that Smythe & Co. were 'stickin' to Mornington after his confession of guilt was more, than enough to exasperate them to the ragging pitch. They were determined that Mornington should have no help from his former friends in his attempt to remain at the school."

The "Giddy Goats" had to receive a lesson, and Jimmy Silver meant it to be a severe one.

see how the Head is to stand it. Money talks, you know, an' influence counts. Morny's people have no end of influence."

Smythe whistled. "But the Head couldn't let him off!" he said. "He simply couldn't! The fellows would never stand it!"

"Oh, things blow over in time. The fellows will be thinkin' about somethin' else in a few days."

"Well, there's somethin' in that." "It may be worked for Morny to leave at the end of the term without bein' sacked. Then they'll work it somehow for him to come back next term. These things can be wangled when you've got influential people."

"Ha, ha ha!" "Well, I wish him luck," said Smythe. "I don't believe he can work it, but I hope he can. We shall all miss Morny, but we can't keep our end up against Jimmy Silver without him."

"I'm goin' to see him in sanny this evenin'," said Townsend. "I'll jolly soon see whether he's spooin', anyway! The medical johnnie can't tell; Morny's too lolly deep for him. Medical johnnies don't know much!"

Crash! The study door flew open, and the Nuts of Rookwood started to their feet in alarm. Jimmy Silver & Co. crowded in.

"What the dickens—" began Townsend. "What the thunder do you want?" demanded Topham.

"Just a word with you chaps!" said Jimmy Silver grimly.

"You needn't trouble. Get out!" "It's about Mornington."

"I don't care to discuss Mornington with you," said Townsend loftily.

"Never mind whether you care or not. You're going to!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Look here—" "Mornington's sticking in the sanatorium, pretending to be ill," said Jimmy Silver.

"You know it as well as I do." "The Nuts exchanged startled glances."

"He is ill," said Topham. "He's spooin', and you know it! Well, we can't yank him out of sanny by his ears, though we'd like to. We're going to kick him out of Rookwood as soon as he comes out!"

"Perhaps the Head will have somethin' to say about that!" sneered Peels.

"The Head won't be allowed to chip in if he wants to!" said Jimmy Silver coolly.

"Oh, by gad!" "Morny's goin'! But while he sticks in the school lying about being ill he's going to be cut by all Rookwood. You know what he's done, and I suppose you don't quite approve of it, though you're not very particular."

"That's our bizney." "Morny's our pal," remarked Peels. "We're stickin' to him!"

"Not goin' to desert a chap who's down on his luck," remarked Adolphus Smythe very loftily.

"Well, that's all right," said Jimmy Silver. "But being found out to be a criminal isn't exactly being down on his luck! Stickin' to a slanderer and liar is only proof that you're as bad yourself!"

"Look here—" "And it's not going to be allowed!" roared Lovell.

Smythe shrugged his shoulders. "Who's goin' to stop it?" he inquired.

"We are." "And how are you goin' to do it?" sneered Adolphus.

"The order's gone forth that Mornington's to be avoided while he stays in the school. Nobody's to visit him in sanny, and if he sneaks out nobody's to speak to him!"

"Rats!" "That's the order of the Fourth!" "Hang the Fourth!"

"And anybody disobeying the order of the Fourth will be given a Form ragging!" said Jimmy Silver. "And as you seem inclined to kick against the order, you measly collection of smoky cads, you're going to have a ragging now to begin with to show you what to expect."

"Hear, hear!" shouted the Fourth-Formers. "Keep off, you cad!" yelled Smythe. "Collar them!"

The Fourth-Formers swarmed in. The fact that Smythe & Co. were "stickin' to Mornington after his confession of guilt was more, than enough to exasperate them to the ragging pitch. They were determined that Mornington should have no help from his former friends in his attempt to remain at the school."

The "Giddy Goats" had to receive a lesson, and Jimmy Silver meant it to be a severe one.

The Nuts were collared on all sides. Some of them put up a fight, but they were not great in the fighting line. As judges of neckties or of a brand of cigarette they had no equals in the Lower School. But when it came to fistieuffs their ability was not conspicuous.

Adolphus Smythe rolled on the floor in Flynn's loving embrace, and his carefully parted hair was rubbed vigorously in the ashes of the grate. Townsend, in the grasp of Lovell and Raby, was bumped energetically on the carpet. Topham sat on the floor in the grip of Oswald and Jimmy Silver, while Van Ryn poured the inkpot over his head. And the rest of the Nuts sprawled about the floor, being bumped, hustled, rolled over, inked, and cindered.

There was a chorus of wild yells in Towny's study.

After five minutes the study looked as if a cyclone had struck it, and the Nuts looked as if they had been through five or six cyclones.

By the time the raggers had finished with them they were gasping on the floor in a state of breathless dismay and dishevelment. "I think that will do," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Have you had enough, Smythe?"

"Grooogh!" gasped Smythe, frantically clutching at the ashes in his hair. "Have you had enough, Towny?"

"Yow-ow-ow!" "What about you, Toppo?"

"Gurrrrrg!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here endeth the first lesson!" chortled Lovell. "And if you ever want another, there's another ready."

"Ha, ha ha!" The Fourth-Formers streamed out of the study roaring with laughter.

Towny & Co. sat up and blinked at one another. It was a sorry spectacle.

"Oh, by gad!" groaned Smythe. "The young beasts! Ow! The rotten hooligans! Yow!"

"Look at me!" moaned Topham. "I'm all ink! Look at me!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" "Gerroogh!"

"Oh dear!" "All the same, I suppose we're goin' to stick to Morny!" mumbled Townsend.

With one voice the Giddy Goats responded:

"Hang Morny!"

And they drifted away disconsolately to seek the bath-room. One lesson had been enough for most of the merry Nuts of Rookwood, and they had made up their minds to leave Mornington severely alone. As Smythe of the Shell remarked dolorously, as he combed ashes out of his hair, it was not good enough!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mornington's Game.

MORNINGTON of the Fourth lay in bed in the ward.

He looked up as Townsend came up to the bedside. Mornington was a little pale, and his face was darkly lined. But he did not strike Townsend as looking like an invalid.

He nodded to his visitor. "Well, how are you gettin' on, old chap?" asked Townsend.

Mornington grinned in a sneering way. "I'm gettin' on all right. Is that nurse gone?"

"Yes. She's comin' back in ten minutes to turn me out."

"Then we can talk," said Mornington. "I'm all right! Of course there's nothin' the matter with me."

"I guessed that much." "Does anybody else guess?"

"I'm afraid so. Jimmy Silver said so." Mornington scowled.

"Hang Jimmy Silver! I suppose he would guess! He's no fool! Still, the Head thinks I'm ill, and Jimmy Silver don't matter. The doctor is a bit puzzled; but I have spoofed him all right. I'm booked for a week in sanny, at least."

"But after that?" said Townsend. "I'm stayin' at Rookwood, I hope. I've written to Sir Rupert Staepoole, my guardian."

"You've told him the whole story?" "I've had to. The Head's told him, you see, in a letter. I've softened it down as much as possible. Made out that it was Beaumont who was the head cook an' bottle-washer in the affair. I was under his thumb, an' he was a bully, an' all that. As he was in the Sixth, that sounds reasonable."

"You were always jolly deep, Morny," said Townsend admiringly. "Will your guardian back you up, then?"

"I think he will. He don't want the disgrace of havin' his nephew expelled from school. It will make him awfully wild. Besides, he don't want me at home," grinned Mornington. "I'm a bit of a handful at home. As for sendin' me to another school, what decent school could I get into after bein' expelled from Rookwood? It means no end of trouble for old Stacpoole, and he's sure to do his level best to smooth the matter over and keep me here."

"But the Head?"

"That's a difficulty. The Head's frightfully ratty about it," said Mornington. "But he will calm down. I dare say he'll take old Stacpoole's view that I was simply a tool in Beaumont's hands. And Beaumont's sacked! So there's one victim to satisfy justice, you know. He's gone, hasn't he?"

"He went yesterday," said Townsend. "He looked a miserable bounder when he went. Poor beast!"

"He owed me a good many quids, and I shall never see them again!" growled Mornington. "Hang Beaumont! After all, with one party sacked, a floggin' ought to meet the case for the other. Don't you think so?"

Mornington eyed Townsend anxiously. He spoke in a confident manner, but it was easy to see that his confidence was assumed.

"Well, I don't!" said Townsend frankly. "I'm afraid the game's up, Morny! The Head simply can't let you stay. He can't! And—and I don't see how your guardian could have the cheek to ask him. He would refuse, anyway!"

"Well, you're a pretty Job's comforter!" snarled Mornington.

"And there's the fellows!" said Townsend.

"It will blow over. Everythin' blows over in time!"

"I'm afraid this won't! The Fourth have got up a deputation to Bootles about it already."

"Hang them!"

"And—and they mean business."

"I suppose my friends are stickin' to me?" growled Mornington.

Townsend hesitated.

"You see, it's jolly difficult!" he said. "We'd have stuck to you, though what you did was awfully thick, you must own that! But—but Jimmy Silver & Co. won't have it. The rotters came and ragged us in our study. Wrecked the dashed place! They won't even let a chap visit you here. They'll be lookin' for me when I go back, I believe."

"Oh, by gad!"

"They're talkin' about tarrin' and featherin' you as soon as you come out of sanny. The game's up, old chap! Even if the Head could be talked over, all Rookwood would cut up so rusty you'd have to go. And the Head couldn't be talked over, either. You think your dashed money can buy everythin'; but it can't!"

Mornington's face looked scowlingly from the pillow. He realised the truth of his friend's words. "His conduct had been too black, and there was no pardon for it. Yet he clung to a straw of hope.

"Well, I'm not goin' to give in!" he said at last. "I'm not goin' to be kicked out an' disgraced for life if I can help it. I shall play the game out to the finish!"

"I wish you luck!"

"But you won't help me!" sneered Mornington. "You mean that, even if the Head lets me stay, I should have all the school against me, includin' my old pals?"

Townsend was silent; but his answer could be read in his face. The kind of fellows who would stick to Mornington after his treachery were not the kind of fellows to face a storm for him. If he returned to his place in the school, he had no friends to reckon on. At the best, he would be sent to Coventry, and his old pals would pass him by lest worse should befall them. It was not a happy prospect. But Mornington's face hardened indomitably. By sheer determination he would make his way, if only he were given a chance.

The nurse came in, and Townsend rose from the bedside.

"Well, good-bye, old chap! Best of luck!" said Townsend half-heartedly.

Mornington did not answer, and he did not glance at Townsend as he went. The bounder of Rookwood was still determined. He meant to fight it out to the very last; but deep down in his heart he knew that it was all in vain, and that his career at Rookwood School was closing in disgrace—for ever!



There was a gasp of relief from the boys gathered below as Mornington was seen again. He was on the sill, clinging blindly, his clothes charred and singed by the flames. But Bulkeley was rushing to his aid. The Rookwood captain's strong grasp closed upon him, even as his hold was relaxing. (See page 17.)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Nice for Towny!

"WAITING for you, dear boy!" Rawson slipped off the gate as Townsend came across the Head's garden. Townsend paused and bit his lip in anger.

"What do you want?" he growled.

"You!" said Rawson cheerfully.

"Look here—"

"You've been to see Mornington," said Rawson coolly. "You know Mornington's barred. Come on!"

The sight of Tom Rawson sitting on the gate had drawn other fellows to the spot. Quite a little army of the Fourth were waiting for Townsend.

The Nut of the Fourth looked alarmed. He remained where he was.

"Look here, I've only been to have a word with Morny!" he argued.

"One word too many!" remarked Lovell.

"I've simply been tellin' him that I can't come to see him again," said Townsend.

"You should have left him to guess it intirely," said Patrick O'Donovan Flynn.

"Come on and be ragged, darling!"

"I'm not comin' out, then!"

"Don't make us come into the Head's garden to mop you up!" said Raby. "You're going to be mopped up in any case."

"Better get it over," suggested Tommy Dodd.

Townsend breathed hard. The gate was lined with Fourth-Formers—Modern and Classical—waiting for him. And certainly he couldn't remain a fixture in the Head's garden.

Already Towny was repenting that he had paid that last visit to the "spoofer" in the sanatorium. Certainly he was not likely to pay another. But the Fourth were in grim earnest. Mornington could remain at the school so long as he succeeded in spoofing the Head and the school doctor. But while he was there he was to understand that he was an outcast, avoided as a thing unclear. Townsend had failed to "toc the line" with the rest of the Lower School, and he could not say that he had not received a warning.

"Are you coming?" demanded Newcome impatiently.

"No; I'm not!" growled Townsend. "I'm stayin' here, hang you!"

"Then we'll come for you!"

"Mustn't have a row in the Head's garden," said Higgs.

"Oh, rats! We'll chance that!"

Newcome vaulted over the gate, and half a dozen juniors followed him without hesitation.

Townsend took to his heels, desperately racing up the path among the shrubberies.

"After him!" shouted Tommy Dodd.

"After the spalpeen!" yelled Flynn.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp!

The shouting crowd of juniors rushed after Townsend. He dodged round the greenhouse, and dodged again, and uttered a yell of terror as he was run down, and three or four pairs of hands closed on him.

"Got him!"

"Bump him!"

"Hurrah!"

Bump, bump!

"Yarcooh!"

"Give him another!"
Bump!
Townsend made quite an impression on the gravel path. He roared and wriggled in the grasp of the avengers.
"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Yaroop!" he shrieked.
"Leggo! Oh, my hat! Yah!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Give him another!"
Bump, bump!
"Yow-ow! Help!"
"Now, are you goin' to spake to that thafe of the wurruud again intoirely?" roared Flynn.
"Ow-ow! Never! Yow-ow!"
"Honour bright?" demanded Lovell.
"Yow! Ow! Yes!"
"Then we'll let you off with one more! All together!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Yoop! Help! Yoyp!"
"Stop at once!" exclaimed a feminine voice. And Miss Dolly came out of the shrubberies, frowning.
"Oh, Miss Dolly!" ejaculated Lovell.
The juniors dropped Townsend as if he had suddenly become red-hot. They blinked sheepishly at the imperious little lady.
Afterwards Townsend told his chums his firm conviction that Miss Dolly had been looking on from the shrubbery for some time without caring to interfere. His opinion, therefore, was that Miss Dolly was a little mix. But perhaps Miss Dolly considered that Towny deserved some punishment. She had interfered at last.
"Go away at once!" said Miss Dolly loftily.
"Ahem!"
"Only a lark, you know!" murmured Lovell.
"Only bumping a rotter, Miss Dolly!" said Rawson.
"Go away!"

The juniors sheepishly withdrew. Townsend staggered to his feet, breathless and gravel-stained. He blinked at Miss Dolly, and gasped for breath.

"T-t-thank you!" he stammered.
"Serve you right!" said Miss Dolly unexpectedly. "You are a horrid boy—as horrid as Mornington! I don't like you!"

"Oh, I say—"
"Oh, go away!"
Miss Dolly turned her back, and Townsend tramped away, gasping and feeling very badly used. He had to dodge some of the Fourth in the quadrangle, and he reached the School House at a run.

As luck would have it, he ran right into Mr. Bootles as he dodged breathlessly into the House.

"Townsend!" rapped out the Form-master. Townsend halted, panting.
"You are in a disgraceful state!" said Mr. Bootles, eyeing him with great disfavour. How dare you go about in such a dirty and untidy state, Townsend?"
"I—I—I—", stuttered the unfortunate Nut of the Fourth.

"That will do! Go and make yourself tidy at once, and take a hundred lines for dirtiness!"

Townsend almost choked. Lines for dirtiness for one of the most elegant and fastidious Nuts at Rookwood amounted to insult added to injury.

"I—I—I—", he gasped.
"Enough!" said Mr. Bootles majestically. "Go at once! You are a disgrace to your Form, Townsend!"

And Townsend, with feelings that would have done credit to a Hun, went.

"Seen Morny?" asked Topham, meeting him on the stairs.

Townsend snorted.
"Blow Morny! Hang Morny! Confound Morny!"

And he tramped on savagely, leaving Topham staring.

Townsend was done with Mornington.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"Fire!"

"WHAT the merry dickens—" murmured Jimmy Silver.
The captain of the Fourth sat up in bed in the Fourth-Form dormitory.

It was past midnight, and the dormitory was in almost pitchy darkness.

Jimmy Silver was usually a sound sleeper, and he wondered what had awakened him as he sat up and blinked about him in the gloom. Then he noticed a flickering red light reflected on the wall.

"Fire!"
Rookwood was on fire!
THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 65.

"Wake up, you chaps!" he shouted.

"Hollo!"

"What's the row?"

"What's that?"

"Fire!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Oh crumbs!"

The word was enough. A group of fellows in the dormitory were out of bed in a twinkling, and most of them rushing to the window.

The door opened.

"Are you awake, my boys?" It was Mr. Bootles' voice, but the Fourth could only see a dim shadow of their Form-master in the gloom. "Yes, I see you are! Do not be alarmed!"

"We're not alarmed, sir!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"Dress yourselves quickly, and come downstairs," said Mr. Bootles. "There is probably no danger, but we must take reasonable precautions!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Bootles moved away in the darkness, and the juniors proceeded to dress themselves, some of the clothes getting mixed in the gloom.

"Who's got my jacket?" demanded Higgs, in a sulphurous voice. "What silly idiot has got my jacket?"

"The same silly idiot who's got my socks, very likely!" said Townsend savagely.

"Where's my blessed waistcoat?"

"What thumpin' ass has collared my trucks?"

"What the dickens does it matter?" said Jimmy Silver. "We're not going to be presented at Court, are we? Buck up, and don't jaw!"

Against the black sky danced a ruddy gleam from a burning building. Sharp and shrill a whistle rang out, the signal of the school fire-brigade.

Jimmy Silver, half-dressed, rushed to the door, and tore downstairs, with a crowd after him. Below, there was already a crowd—juniors and seniors and masters mingled.

The word ran from mouth to mouth:

"It's the Head's house!"

"It's on fire!"

There was a rush out of doors. The Head's house was in flames. And in that building were Dr. Chisholm and his wife and child! Little Miss Dolly—she was there!

Jimmy Silver's heart turned sick at the thought.

A crowd rushed towards the House, trampling through the gardens. Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, was rapping out orders to the school firemen, Mr. Bootles tried in vain to keep the juniors indoors.

Lovell caught Jimmy Silver by the arm in the quad.

"What about Morny?" he muttered.

"Hang Morny!"

"He's in the sanny, you know. It may catch—"

Jimmy halted.

"Quiet, please!" It was Mr. Manders' voice. "Everyone is safe; all are out of doors. Quiet, please!"

Jimmy drew a sobbing breath.

"Thank Heaven! Miss Dolly's safe, then! I'll get Morny out, Lovell; the cad may not be able to get out, if he's not spoofing."

Jimmy Silver darted away to the sanatorium. But when he reached the wards he found the beds there empty. Mornington was already out.

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders as he saw the turned-back bed, and noted that the invalid's clothes were gone. The alarm had been sufficient to cause the invalid to recover all of a sudden, and Mornington was probably one of the first up.

Jimmy left the sanatorium again. Against the sky there was a red glare; the flames were bursting from the windows of the Head's house.

Dr. Chisholm had carried his wife, fainting, across to Mr. Manders' house on the Modern side, out of all danger. But where was Miss Dolly?

Lovell rushed up to Mr. Manders, and caught him by the sleeve—hardly aware of what he was doing in his excitement.

"You said they were all out, sir—where's Miss Dolly?"

Mr. Manders was very white.

"I thought so—I certainly thought so. But—but—"

"Is she in there?"

"I fear so."

Lovell groaned.

The Head's house was a raging furnace. The school fire-brigade were at work, pumping sheets of water upon the flames. But the water sizzled into the fiery furnace with little effect. It was evident that the burning would be gutted.

Jimmy Silver came up breathlessly.

"Morny's not there," he said. "He had got out—What's the matter, Lovell?"

He stared at his chum's ghastly face.

Lovell pointed to the burning house.

"Miss Dolly!" he muttered.

Jimmy turned white.

"Manders said—"

"He was mistaken. The Head brought Mrs. Chisholm out; Miss Dolly's still there."

"Good heavens!"

Jimmy gazed in horror at the flaming house. Miss Dolly was there—there, in that fierce furnace—overcome by the smoke, perhaps, for not a cry had been heard.

It seemed to Jimmy Silver that a hand of ice gripped his heart. He pulled himself together, and rushed towards the house.

Bulkeley caught him by the shoulder and swung him back.

"Out of the way, you young fool!"

"She's there!"

"What—who—"

"Miss Dolly!"

"My daughter!" It was the Head's voice.

"Let me pass, Mr. Bootles; let me pass, I say! My child is there!"

"Let go, Bulkeley!" yelled Jimmy Silver furiously. "I'm going in, I tell you! Let me go, hang you!"

The Sixth-Former held him fast.

"You're not going in! Stand back! This is a job for me!"

"Bulkeley," shouted Mr. Bootles, "stay where you are! There is no hope; it is certain death!"

"I must try, sir!" panted Bulkeley.

"Dr. Chisholm—"

The Head groaned.

"Stay, Bulkeley! You shall not sacrifice your life. I order you to stay! There is no hope. Heaven have mercy!"

"I will try, sir!"

"Stop! I command you!"

Bulkeley hesitated. He still held Jimmy Silver. The junior would have rushed in, hardly conscious of danger. It was true that there was no hope. The stairs had been heard to fall with a fearful crash and a myriad of rising sparks. It was death to enter; and there was no chance of reaching the girl's room. Neville and Knowles had rushed away for a ladder. Dr. Chisholm covered his face with his hands.

"You're sure she's there, sir?" muttered Bulkeley.

"I called her; she followed me," said the Head, in a trembling voice. "My wife had fainted; I was carrying her. I thought Dolly was close behind me. The smoke must have overcome her. Heaven be merciful!"

"The ladder!" yelled Lovell. "Buck up with the ladder!"

Jimmy Silver ground his teeth.

"You fool, Bulkeley! Let me go! I tell you I'm going in!"

Bulkeley shook his head, and held him. It was death; and the sacrifice would have been useless.

"Look!" yelled Oswald suddenly.

He pointed to a window.

The glass, cracked by the heat, had fallen out. Behind the blackened framework of the window a smoke-grimed face appeared.

Blackened as it was, the juniors knew it.

"Mornington!"

"Mornington!" cried the Head. "What is he doing there?"

"He was in the sanatorium!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "In Heaven's name, how did he come in the Head's house?"

All eyes were upon the window, fascinated. It was almost the only spot in the facade where the flames were not rolling and biting.

Mornington's blackened face looked down on the sea of faces, and his blackened lips curved in the sneering, ironical smile the Rookwood juniors knew so well. What was he doing there? The Rookwood fellows soon knew.

Neville and Knowles rushed the ladder towards the window. Whatever Mornington was doing in the Head's house, he had to be saved.

"Climb out on the sill!" shouted Bulkeley.

Mornington did not climb out on the sill. He was smashing out the sashes with des-

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Hero!

"MISS DOLLY!"

"Where's Miss Dolly?"

It was a cry of alarm in the crowd of Rookwood fellows.

Mrs. Chisholm had been seen—the Head had been seen.

Dr. Chisholm had carried his wife, fainting, across to Mr. Manders' house on the Modern side, out of all danger. But where was Miss Dolly?

Lovell rushed up to Mr. Manders, and caught him by the sleeve—hardly aware of what he was doing in his excitement.

"You said they were all out, sir—where's Miss Dolly?"

perate hands, as if to make a larger passage. Then he disappeared for a moment from view.

The hearts below hardly beat. There was a buzz, deepening to a roar, as Mornington reappeared at the window. He had something in his arms—a bundle rolled in a blanket. He pushed it through the window, and held it while the ladder was planted below. From the rolled blanket a tress of golden hair escaped. Then they knew!

"Miss Dolly!" Jimmy Silver breathed the words. Dr. Chisholm gazed at the blackened face of the expelled junior, and at the bundle he held by main strength on the sill out of the rolling smoke and licking flame.

"My daughter!" The ladder crashed on the wall. Bulkeley rushed up it, his feet seeming scarcely to touch the rungs.

Mornington grinned down at him through the smoke. In that fearful moment he was the same Mornington as of old—cool, mocking, reckless.

"Take her, Bulkeley! She's not hurt—only fainted!" Bulkeley, without a word, took the insensible girl in his strong arms. He descended the ladder with her carefully.

Miss Dolly was passed into her father's arms, and his tears fell upon the calm, unconscious face, smoke-grimed, but unhurt—not a hair of her head had been harmed. And it was Mornington, the cad of Rookwood, the blackguard, the expelled rascal, who had saved her!

Could he save himself? As Bulkeley ascended the ladder again, there came a gust of smoke and flame from the window where Mornington stood, and for an instant he was hidden from sight.

A groan went up. All Mornington's faults, all his rascality, all his treachery, were forgotten then. At that hour he was the hero who had saved a child from a fearful death in the fiery flames, and risked his own life in doing it!

There was a gasp of relief as he was seen again. He was on the sill, clinging blindly; his clothes charred and singed by the flames; blind with pain, with smoke—at the end of his strength.

But Bulkeley was rushing to his aid. The Rookwood captain's strong grasp closed upon him, even as his hold was relaxing. In Bulkeley's strong arms he was brought down the ladder. And as Bulkeley landed on firm earth there was a shout of warning: "Stand clear!"

The crowd surged back. The wall was falling inward—the ladder with it. The escape had been terribly narrow.

Bulkeley laid the junior on the ground. His eyes had closed, but they opened again, and Mornington looked round him wildly. His face was burned; his hands burnt; his hair was almost gone, his eyelashes were gone. He was hurt—terribly hurt—and he knew it.

"Morny!" panted Jimmy Silver, with tears in his eyes. Jimmy had more than forgiven his old enemy now.

Mornington grinned—a twisted, blackened grin.

"Hallo! You knew I was spooin' in the sanatorium. I sha'n't be spooin' this time, by gad—what! I wonder if this is the last lap? Well, I shall be game to the finish, you can bet on that! Is she safe?"

"My dear, dear lad!" The Head bent over the blackened dandy of the Fourth—not

much of a dandy now. "My brave, noble lad! She is safe, and you have saved her from a fearful death! Heaven bless you, Mornington!"

"All serene, sir!" said Mornington coolly. And then Mornington, hard as he was, fainted.

Rookwood was in a huzz of excitement the next day.

The Head's house was a blackened ruin. But few heeded that. No lives had been lost. The grim tragedy that might have cast its gloom over the school had been averted.

And Mornington? Miss Dolly had been saved. She was not hurt, apart from the shock.

Mornington had found her overcome by smoke, and, with strange coolness in the hour of fearful peril, he had wrapped her carefully in blankets before he moved her, and then he had fought his way through flame and smoke to the window.

He had entered the burning house even before the Head had emerged from it. No one had noticed him then.

Perhaps some thought had been in his mind of rendering prompt assistance, and thus improving his chances of eluding the sentence of expulsion. He had found her and saved her, but the flames he had so carefully protected her from had taken their vengeance upon him. Mornington of the Fourth lay in the sanatorium, a "spoofer" no longer, but terribly ill, torn with pain, and enduring his pain with grim, cool stoicism.

There was no mention of expulsion for Mornington.

Jimmy Silver, whom he had so cruelly wronged, was the first to ask the Head if Mornington might be allowed to remain. And the Head's answer that Mornington was pardoned, more than pardoned, gave satisfaction to all the school.

When Mornington recovered he was to take his old place in the Fourth Form at Rookwood, and the Fourth were content to know it.

It was long before the dandy of the Fourth was destined to rise from the bed of illness. But as soon as he was able to see visitors, the Fourth-Formers were eager to pay him visits, and Jimmy Silver was the first.

A scarred face grinned at Jimmy from the white bed.

"Don't I look a picture?" said Mornington. "But the doctor says it will go in time. By gad, I shouldn't like to keep a chivvy like this! And I'm not going to be sacked!"

"And I'm jolly glad of it!" said Jimmy.

"I'm going to be a thorn in your side still!" chuckled Mornington. "When I'm back in the Form I'm goin' to give you a tussle, Jimmy Silver. I'm goin' to be captain of the Fourth yet!"

"More power to your elbow!" said Jimmy. "But there's only one thing I'll say," said Mornington, after a pause. "I've been doin' a lot of thinkin' while I've been lyin' here. I'm sorry I played that dirty trick on you—real sorry, and there's my fist on it, if you like to take it!"

And Jimmy Silver took it, with all his heart.

THE END.

(Another splendid long complete story of Rookwood School will appear in next Friday's PENNY POPULAR, entitled: "Morny's Minor." Order your copy at once.)

GOOD STORIES!

SELF-DEFENCE.

Mamma: "Good gracious, Tommy, what have you been doing?"
Tommy (showing signs of a recent conflict): "Keeping a boy from getting whacked, ma."
Mamma: "What boy?"
Tommy: "Me, ma!"

A NATURAL ANXIETY.

Teacher: "Why were you not in school yesterday?"
Sammy: "Please, miss, there was a burglary in the West End, and mother sent me round to see if father was the one that was caught."

ONE FOR THE LITTLE 'UN.

The Little 'Un: "I would have you know, sir, I've been well brought up!"
The Big 'Un: "Perhaps so; but you weren't brought up far enough, you see!"

"What did you think of that cigar I gave you? It was an Admiral, you know."
"Well, well, how appropriate! There's something about that cigar that's suggestive of an admiral."
"What's that?"
"It's rank!"

Magistrate: "How came it that you dared to break into this gentleman's house in the dead of night?"

Prisoner: "Why, your worship, the other time you reproached me for stealing in broad daylight. Ain't I to be allowed to work at all?"

Willie: "Say, sis, is a dog a quadruped?"
Sister: "Yes, Willie. An animal with four legs is a quadruped."
Willie: "Well, Rover's got one of his legs cut off. What's he now?"

"Who signed Magna Charta?" asked a school-inspector. There was no answer.
"Who signed the Magna Charta?" fumed the inspector, walking up and down the floor. A very small, delicate boy raised his hand timidly.
"Please, sir, I didn't!"

Young Mother: "Now, Harold, whom do you love most—papa or me?"
Little Harold: "Papa."
Young Mother: "But yesterday you said you loved me most."
Little Harold: "Yes; but I've thought it over since, and decided that we men must stick together!"

"Now, gentlemen," spoke the auctioneer, as he leant over the rail of his perch, "what can I say for this beautiful old master—a genuine Raphael? Somebody give me a start."

"Five bob!" came from a voice in the crowd.
"What!" yelled the indignant wielder of the hammer.
"Ah," spoke the voice again, "I thought that would give you a start!"



Miss Priscilla

—Form Master!

A Tale of
TOM MERRY & CO.
At St. Jim's

The GEM
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TWO SHORT STORIES OF ST. JIM'S.

Kildare to the Rescue.

"HALLO, deah boy! Where are you off to?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the Swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, had just turned into the High Street at Rylcombe, with his chums Blake, Herries, and Digby, when he ran into his young brother, Wally D'Arcy of the Third.

"Hallo, Gus!" cried Wally cheerily. "Where are you off to?" repeated Arthur Augustus.

"I've just been, and I'm on my way back, old top!" answered Wally cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Blake, Herries, and Digby.

"I don't like being weferred to as 'old top'!" snapped Gussy.

"Right-ho, Gussy, old son!" said Wally, more seriously. "I'm just on my way back to the school; I've had Pongo out for a run. By the way, where is the bounder?"

Pongo was Wally's small, shaggy dog, a mixture of every breed ever known—or so the rest of the fellows said—and Wally looked around him and then up the street.

"My hat!" he exclaimed, in a startled voice.

His alarm was due to the fact that he had just caught a fleeting glimpse of a dog disappearing round the corner of the street, a large piece of raw meat in his mouth.

"Bai Jove!" cried Arthur Augustus. "There's a nice thing! That beastly mongrel has stolen a joint of meat!"

As though to confirm his statement, there was a sudden commotion from a shop a few yards away, and a butcher came running up the street—or, rather, limping, for he kept clutching one leg as he hurried along.

"I say, I shall have to go after him!" cried Wally.

"Hi!" shouted the butcher, as Wally began to run. "Was that your dog that just went round the corner with a lump o' meat?"

"Yes," answered Wally promptly, who was nothing if not honest.

"Well, you'll ear more about this, I can tell you!" roared the butcher angrily. "He's bit me, too!" He added the last item of information as though he had just thought of it, and at the same time grasped his leg.

"I sincerelay hope it's not sewions," put in Arthur Augustus concernedly. "Shall I take you to a doctah?"

"Doctor, be blowed!" yelled the butcher. "I'm after that there dog, and then I'm a-comeing up to the school to report this to the 'eadmaster!"

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Wally D'Arcy as he set off at top speed towards the end of the road round which he had seen the dog disappear.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who always claimed to be a fellow of tact and judgment, certainly showed something of those qualities on this occasion, for he detained the butcher while Wally got a good start.

In fact, by the time the angry fellow continued the chase, Wally had come upon Pongo, who was fighting fiercely with another shaggy terrier, and the joint of stolen meat was lying between them, though Pongo appeared to have held it last, for he was standing over it.

"You young scamp!" yelled Wally frantically, as he dashed up to the two dogs. And, shoving Pongo on one side, he grasped the piece of meat and hurled it away as far as he could.

Pongo's enemy immediately raced after it, and Pongo himself turned upon his master with an angry growl.

"I've a good mind to give you a walloping!" exclaimed Wally, breathless through running so far. "You've let me in for something now!"

Wally always talked to Pongo as though he were human and quite able to understand every word that was said; but he quickly remembered that he was not yet out of danger of another encounter with the butcher, and he hardly dared think of what would happen to Pongo if the irate man got within easy distance of him. So, giving a short, sharp whistle, he hurried along the road, with Pongo following behind.

He was obliged to continue the road in which he had found the dogs fighting, as he

dare not go back the way he had come. Consequently, he had to take a very much longer route back to St. Jim's, and it was nearly an hour later that he reached the school.

He was greeted by Jack Blake & Co. and a crowd of Third-Formers, all with longfaces. "Oh, heah you are at last!" said Arthur Augustus, with a sigh which sounded as though it was partly relief and partly anxiety. "I'm afraid there's goin' to be an awful wow, deah boy!"

"Well, you needn't look so jolly worried about it," Wally replied.

"But that twifghtful butchah chap is here!" went on Gussy gravely. "Old Taggles has taken him up to the Head!"

At that moment Taggles reappeared, with the information that Wally was to go up to Dr. Holmes' study immediately upon his return.

"Right-ho, Taggy, old sport!" cried Wally. "Here goes!"

"Wot I ses is this 'ere——"

But what Taggles was about to say Wally did not stop to hear; he hurried through the quad and up to the Head's study.

It was a stern "Come in!" which answered his tap upon the door, and a stern headmaster who looked at him with a penetrating look as he entered the study.

"That's the little 'ound!" exclaimed the butcher, who had been giving an elaborate account of what had happened that afternoon.

"Kindly leave the matter in my hands now!" said Dr. Holmes coldly, with a quick glance at the butcher.

Then he turned to Wally.

"A most disgraceful disturbance has been caused in the village this afternoon through the fact that your dog was not under control," said the Head to Wally. "This gentleman has complained to me that he has been bitten by the animal, and also has had a large joint of meat stolen."

"Yes, sir——" began Wally very meekly.

"Silence!" barked the Head. "It is only through an act of grace on my part that you have been allowed to keep the dog here, and this complaint convinces me that it is a privilege which must cease. Your dog will have to be sent away!"

Wally could hardly realise what the Head was saying. He would rather have been flogged every day for a week than that Pongo should be sent away. Then he burst into an explanation of the case from his own point of view.

The butcher immediately interrupted him.

"That dog'll have to go away!" he exclaimed. "Nothing less than that will satisfy me."

"There is no need to say any more about the matter!" snapped the Head.

Meanwhile, Eric Kildare, the popular captain of St. Jim's, had entered the gates and come upon the group of solemn-looking juniors. In answer to his question, they at once explained what had happened. When they had finished a smile spread over his face, and he at once hurried into the school without a word to them.

Straight up to the Head's study he went, and reached there just as Wally was coming out, with a face as long as a fiddle.

"Wait out here a moment," said Kildare, and, tapping at the door of the study, he entered in response to the Head's call.

Wally waited outside, wondering what was going to happen.

"Ah, Kildare!" said Dr. Holmes.

"I should just like to say a word about this affair of young D'Arcy's dog, sir," said Kildare at once. "I witnessed the stealing of the meat from the shop this afternoon, and it was not D'Arcy's dog that did it, but another animal rather like him."

"Indeed!" said the Head, in surprise.

"Yes, sir," went on the captain. "I was in the tailor's shop opposite, and saw exactly what happened, but I could not get out at the time, as I was being fitted for a new coat."

Dr. Holmes accepted Kildare's word at once, and sent for Wally again. The order about Pongo was thereupon rescinded, and the Third-Former took his departure again—this time with joy.

As for the butcher, he was thoroughly angry, and quite plainly accused Kildare of inventing the story to shield Wally. But the Head signified that he was not prepared to argue further about the matter, and he took his departure growling and scowling.

"That's the narrowest escape you've ever had, my boy!" said Wally to Pongo, five minutes later. And he was right!

THE END.

Trouble for Trimble.

"BY Jove! What an awful smell of burning!"

Tom Merry made the exclamation as he entered the School House with his chums, Manners and Monty Lowther. Behind the Terrible Three were Jack Blake & Co., and several other Shell and Fourth Form juniors, who were just going in to prepare for tea.

"What the dickens can it be?" said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, somebody's thrown some rubbish on the fire, or something of that sort," said Blake casually.

"But there aren't any study-fires this week, remember," put in Tom Merry.

"My hat, no; I'd forgotten that!" said Jack Blake.

The weather was particularly warm, and the study-fires had ceased a few days before.

"Supposing the blessed school's on fire?" suggested Herries dramatically.

"It's quite possible, deah boys!" put in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I think we'd better investigate at once!"

The juniors hurried up the stairs, the burning smell growing stronger as they went. They turned into the first corridor, and hastened from one study to another, throwing open the doors to see if a conflagration was commencing in any of them.

Everything was quite normal in the first corridor, however, the grates being empty.

"It's not along here, anyway!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors hurried further up the stairs, other juniors adding themselves to the party en route, and then they turned into the Fourth Form passage.

Here the smell was much stronger, and smoke was rolling along the passage.

Mellish, who was in the crowd, turned pale. The smoke was drifting from the study which he shared with Baggy Trimble, the fat junior of the Fourth.

"Come on!" shouted Jack Blake. "It's a fire!"

The crowd rushed along the corridor frantically, for they could now see the smoke coming from under the door of Baggy's study; and it was almost suffocating.

Tom Merry fairly threw himself at the door, and as it flew open a cloud of thick, stifling smoke poured out into the passage.

"Oh crumbs!" came the alarmed voice of Baggy Trimble. And when the smoke had cleared a little they saw the fat junior bending over the fireplace, a large jug of water in his hand. He had poured a great deal of the water into the fire to extinguish it, explaining that he had been cooking a kipper when the fish had fallen into the fire, causing the suffocating smoke which filled the room.

But the biggest shock came a moment later.

"My hat!" cried Jack Blake. "There are the remains of my old sports-coat!" He pointed excitedly to one or two shreds of cloth which were hanging over the bars of the grate.

"And my old cricketing-pads!" yelled Lowther.

During the next two or three minutes half a dozen juniors discovered the remains of some old relic among the now smouldering embers.

It then transpired that the fires not being laid, Baggy had made a tour of the studies, collecting up all old articles that would burn, for the purpose of making a fire to cook his kipper.

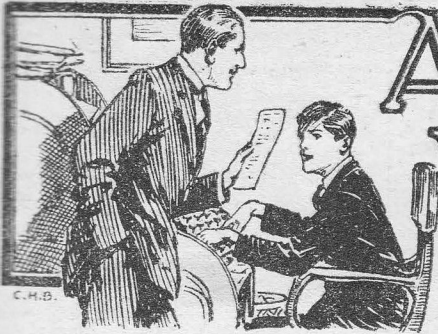
"Now you've cooked your kipper we'll cook your goose!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Bump him, chaps!"

A moment later Baggy's yells were ringing out in the Fourth Form corridor, as he received his just punishment.

"Thank your lucky stars that old Lathom didn't catch you!" said Tom Merry, as Baggy received his final bump.

"Yarooogh!" was Baggy's only reply.

THE END.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASSED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "PENNY POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

COMIC RELIEF.

"A Well-Wisher from Canada" likes the Companion Papers immensely, but he hates Bunter. He wants to know whether I could not take some steps to remove the porpoise. At least, that is what my correspondent really means, and I am afraid I do not see my way to act as he suggests.

Bunter is so much comic relief. He is not disliked by the majority of readers. They want to have a laugh when they pick up a story, and in one way and another Bunter supplies them with the means. If Bunter has a lion's share of the limelight it is just because my chums will have it so, and that's all there is to it.

A SMALL WANT.

Robert D. A. Gilmour and David Watson want to obtain some of the older editions of the "Boys' Friend Library." I am bound to tell them that most of these books are out of print, but as a rule copies issued within the last three months may be had from the Publisher, at these offices, at the usual rates.

ST. FRANK'S.

"Edinburgh" wants to know why Nipper & Co. of St. Frank's are not mentioned in the Companion Papers. The reason is quite simple. They do not come into the stories because there is practically no association between Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood and St. Frank's. Sorry, but there it is.

As matters are, I see no prospect of a change in this respect, seeing that there is only just enough room to do justice to the three schools. I will see if there cannot be some inter-school matches next season.

WELL DONE, "HARRY"!

There is no other name, and no address attached to a fine account of pit-life which I have just received. My chum gets ready for work at half-past five in the morning. As soon as breakfast is over he starts for the pit-head, meeting other boys on his way. The safety-lamps are tried and tested by the fireman, and then they descend the shaft. The cage gets going.

The shaft is like a well with damp walls. The sides of the shaft shoot up with the terrific speed of the cage. At the bottom the workers start off in a maze of different directions, and are soon swallowed up in the network of tunnels.

At the face-working clothes are taken off; the men are naked to the waist, or with a thin vest or sweater. A man and a boy work together. The haulier arrives with a tram pulled by a pit-pony, which kicks up an awful cloud, considering its size. The tram is filled with coal. When half the shift is done the workers stop for food.

In the distance there is the dull rumble of an electric pump or engine; the roof cracks with a sound like a pistol-shot, which nearly makes you jump out of your skin; there is a halt into the nearest air-way, and a pause there until it is safe to return.

Perhaps some of the timber supports have failed under the enormous weight. Now and then a passage-way is blocked up with debris. The fall is reported to the fireman; then there is the cage and sunshine again.

We go home as happy and as black as niggers, and when we do get home we have to explain to our mothers the cause of the cuts, blisters, and torn clothes. We never tell the real truth of the affair, as those at home would only worry themselves over nothing.

I am very much obliged to my correspondent for his fine letter. This is the only way I can thank him.

"All you need know," he says, "is that I work in a South Wales coal-field. I don't want my friends chipping my head off."

AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.

D. Landon sends me a capital account of a little experiment he tried. He has been reading the Companion Papers for eight years, and refuses to feel too old for the stories.

Quite right, too! He tried the experiment described in the "Magnet" recently. It was the one in which you "had to take a candle and put it in front of a looking-glass so that a light was thrown on the wall. Anyhow, to cut it short, your writing had to appear on the wall.

"Well, I collected two of my friends, and told them to be seated. Putting a screen in front of them, I just told them to watch the light on the wall. Of course, they could not see what I was doing. Suddenly one of my friends, Frank Stewart, saw some writing on the wall, and he rose from his chair and backed to the door. But when I switched on the light he saw the trick, and he rushed at me, and"—well, the report stops there. My correspondent had to make himself scarce. Some fellows can never see a joke, you know!

FIRST CLASS.

My loyal supporter, Victor M de Lima e Santos, of Laurel Bank House, Partick, Glasgow, tells me he has just started an amateur magazine called the "5A Magazine," for it is written by members of that Qualifying Class. It is composed of a serial, four short stories, a football-page, a joke-column, to say nothing of big coloured plates, cartoons, etc. It is typed on foolscap, and is let out at a penny a night—three-halfpence for the week-end.

This seems to me a model amateur magazine. By the way, I am sure my chum will allow me to give the clever verse he sends. The first letter of each line spells the name of the gentleman concerned:

"Where is there a finer man?
Ask and find him if you can!
The whole success of Hyndland School
Seems most dependent on his rule.
Over the 'Qualy' he'll preside,
Not a failure—or woe betide!"

Good! I hope to hear from Partick again.

REAL LIVE PEOPLE!

A letter I was very proud to get comes from E. Garside, of Roose Barrow, and in the course of a good many illuminating remarks the writer speaks of real live people. He is good enough to think that I am real and alive.

Well, well, it is not much use being out unless you are alive. You know the old catchphrase, "He don't know he's alive!" It is a

pretty bitter taunt. But there are folks who do not get hold of this amazing piece of intelligence. It is their misfortune. As a rule, they get pressed back against the wall, because they will not take the trouble to keep safely in the stream.

Now, being alive does not imply that a fellow is going round shoving others off the path. My chums are alive and alert enough, as letters to hand show plainly enough. Hermits are out of fashion. I saw in a paper the other day the case of a sad individual who had been shut up in a house in Sussex for forty years, never going out, hardly even showing a face at the window. Hurt about something which happened in the back ages, most likely.

Well, everybody gets hurt and trampled on now and then. It is practically impossible to avoid mishaps, but see what it would be if the miserable experience were allowed to weigh down the victim for the rest of his life! We all have to be up and doing.

Some of these melancholy people should take a lesson from some of the active workers—the lad who sits on the tailboard of a delivering-van, springs down, lugs out a parcel, hands it in to a house, dashes out, shuts the gate, and is back on his perch with the van racing off like Billy before you can say "knife."

There is the busy chap on his motor-cycle out with merchandise, and a fair load, too!



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THE GIANT FLAGSTAFF AT KEW.

You ought to make sure of having a good look at this giant post when you visit Kew these fine spring days. The staff is worth seeing. It has quite a history, and the task of setting it up was a tough one, taking a company of men skilled in the work several weeks.

There is another wonderful sight at Kew—namely, the Ginkgo, a tree which has been at the Gardens since the year 1760, and has only now borne fruit. Waiting for the crop in a case of this sort is apt to get tedious. For long-drawn-out methods the Ginkgo, with its funny name, heads the list easily. Gardeners are proverbially patient people, otherwise some of them long ere this would have grown weary of the old Ginkgo with its habits of procrastination and turned it out of the place.

A SUMMER TRIP.

A couple of fellows who want to see a good bit of the country within fairly easy reach of London should try a route I heard

described the other day. Start down the western road, passing Hammersmith, Brentford, Hounslow, and Bedford, then going via Staines and Woking to Guildford, where the night can be spent.

The second day you go to Odiham, a cheery little town of the quietest kind, far from a railway or a cinema-show—but you can do without pictures this journey. The next point is Reading, then High Wycombe, from which the track leads down through Uxbridge back to town.

CARAVANNING.

I am constantly being asked for stories about caravanning, and I shall try to have something in this line. There will be no room for surprise if there is far more caravanning this season than ever before, seeing the shortage of houses.

Oh, there is a lot to be said for a van as a living place. It is far more comfortable than a bathing-machine. Say what you like, a bathing-machine is draughty and it is apt to prove unsteady when you get up in the morning and start prowling round seeking for your boots.

A good van is even equal to a railway-carriage, though there is something to be said in favour of an old saloon car which has settled down after many journeyings and let itself out as a living place.

There are plenty of such railway-coaches being used like this. You have the various

rooms all divided up, and all that is needed is some bright wall-paper. Then a few flowers for the windows will not come amiss.

But a travelling van enables the experimenter to see the country. He can sit at his ease of an evening after he has done the washing-up and given the horse its oats. He has change of scene every day, and if he strikes a place where the neighbours seem short-tempered he can move on in the morning to pleasanter surroundings.

Caravanning has heaps of advantages, and if you see that the provisions do not get jolted into a general mix-up, and that the horse does not run off with the whole business, there may be many happy days.

PRINCE OF WALES BOXING TROPHY.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief of the Cadets of the Territorial Army, has presented a handsome shield for competition, with the view of encouraging boxing among the Cadets. The shield will be fought for annually, and will be held by the unit to which the winner belongs.

Your Editor

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