

TWO STIRRING SCHOOL STORIES EVERY WEEK!

Week Ending—
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New Series,
No. 144.

Greyfriars

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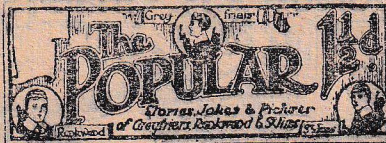


KIT ERROLL'S ASTOUNDING ACCUSATION!

"You are Gentleman Jim, the cracksman, who stole me from my father in my youth," said Kit Erroll grimly. "You are Gentleman Jim—and the game's up!"

(A dramatic incident from the long complete tale of Rookwood Inside.)

**TWO LONG
COMPLETE SCHOOL
TALES
EVERY WEEK.**



**"BILLY BUNTER'S
WEEKLY!"**

Grand Four-page Supplement.
Edited by WILLIAM GEORGE
BUNTER of Greyfriars.



A RASCAL FOILED!

A Splendid, Long, Complete School Story of
JIMMY SILVER & CO.
at Rookwood.

By **OWEN CONQUEST.**

R.P. Boys Friend Year 1917.
Copied from C.D.A. 1953
Page 49 Nov 13th gave
"Gentleman Jim's secret"
Errols old enemy came to
Rookwood as a school ~~Porter~~.

THE IMPOSTERS DOWN FALL

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Missing!**

"SEEN 'Erbert?" Jimmy Silver asked that question as he looked into Mornington's study at Rookwood.

Mornington and Erroll were there, at work on their prep. Erroll was working in his usual quiet, steady way. Morny with many half-suppressed yawns. Work did not seem to agree with the dandy of the Fourth.

"Erbert!" Mornington repeated, looking up. "No. Hasn't he come in?"

"He seems to have vanished," said Jimmy Silver. "He wasn't in to calling-over, and he hasn't shown up since. Mr. Wiggins is waxing wroth. Somebody says he went out after lessons."

"He went out right enough," said Mornington. "He went down to Coombe for me. I thought he was back long ago."

"Well, he doesn't seem to have come in. But I'll tell Mr. Wiggins that he's gone to Coombe."

And the captain of the Fourth left Study No. 4 to carry that information to the master of the Second Form.

Mornington did not resume his work. Erroll looked rather curiously at his chum. Mornington was anxious; he could see that.

Morny had never shown much sign of affection for his cousin Cecil—more familiarly known in the Lower School as "Erbert." But Morny never was a fellow to wear his heart on his sleeve. He certainly seemed concerned now.

Mornington caught his glance, and coloured slightly.

"He's a good kid," he said, half apologetically. "Something may have happened to him. I can't understand why he should stay out till nearly nine. It means a thumpin' lickin' for him when he comes in!" Morny rose from the table. "Get on with your work. 'I'm leavin' mine for a bit.'"

Erroll rose, too. "I'll come with you," he said. "I've nearly finished, anyway."

The two chums left the study. Nine o'clock was sounding from the tower in muffled strokes. It was the bed-time for the Second Form at Rookwood, and the fags were trooping off to their dormitory under the charge of a prefect.

Mornington and Erroll looked them over as they went; but Mornington II. was not among them. He had not come in.

Jones minimus and Snooks and Fisher and the other fags were excitedly discussing 'Erbert's absence as Neville shepherded them off to the dormitory.

"Dashed queer!" said Mornington. "Erbert wouldn't stay out after bed-time unless he'd had an accident of some sort."

"Mornington!"

It was Lattrey's voice, and Lattrey, the cad of the Fourth, came up the stairs.

"Well?" snapped Mornington.

"Mr. Wiggins wants you in his study!"

"All right!"

"Your dear cousin seems to have disappeared," remarked Lattrey, his narrow, sharp eyes scanning Morny's face. "Jolly queer that he should stay out like this. And it seems that it was you sent him down to the village."

"Yes; it's queer."

"An accident, perhaps," said Lattrey.

"No need to be alarmed yet," said Erroll. Lattrey laughed.

"Is Mornington alarmed?" he asked, with a sneer. "If young 'Erbert's had an accident—or vanished into thin air—it may be a very good thing for his affectionate cousin!"

Morny's face flushed, and he made an angry stride towards Lattrey.

"What do you mean, you cad?" he exclaimed fiercely.

"I mean what I say," said Lattrey coolly.

"If your cousin Cecil had never turned up, you wouldn't have lost the Mornington fortune. If he disappeared again, your money would come back to you. You sent him out of the gates, and he hasn't come back. If he doesn't come back, Mornington—"

Mornington raised his clenched hand. His face was dark with anger. Lattrey backed away quickly.

"None of that!" he said, between his teeth. "It may pay you better not to quarrel with me, Morny! It only needs a few words from me to spoil your little game!"

Morny stared at him, and then he burst into a harsh laugh.

"You silly fool!" he exclaimed. "Are you

dotty enough to think that my cousin has been taken away, and that I've had a hand in it? Are you mad?"

"Not quite; but I'm certainly dotty enough to think that," said Lattrey quietly. "In fact, I know it!"

"You know it!" ejaculated Mornington.

"Yes; and Erroll is a party to it! That's why his old cracksman friend, Gentleman Jim, is hanging about Rookwood!" said Lattrey in a low, bitter voice. "I wondered at first what it meant—now I know!"

Erroll started violently.

"Oh, he's mad!" said Mornington contemptuously. "But, mad or not, he's not going to talk to me like that!"

He advanced on the cad of the Fourth, his eyes gleaming.

"Put up your hands, Lattrey, you cad!"

"Mr. Wiggins wants you, Morny," said Erroll.

"He can wait a bit!"

Lattrey was backing away, his face savage and bitter. But he had to put up his hands, for Mornington was attacking him hotly.

"Hallo! What's the game?" asked Jimmy Silver, coming along the passage as Lattrey went to the floor with a crash and a yell.

"More trouble in the family?"

"He asked for it!" said Mornington.

Lattrey raised himself on his elbow, and gave Mornington a deadly look. He did not get up.

"Morny, you hound, I'll let all Rookwood know!"

"Let them all know, you fool, that you're a candidate for an asylum!" said Mornington scornfully. "Do you think anybody will listen to you, unless he's as potty as you are?"

"What the dickens—" began Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"Lattrey's got an idea that I've had my cousin kidnapped," said Mornington. "What do you think of that?"

"Well, of all the howling idiots—" "That's what he's going to tell all Rookwood!" grinned Mornington. "He's welcome to! Are you going to get up, Lattrey? I've got another for your nose!"

Lattrey replied only with a glare, and Mornington, laughing, turned to the stairs. He tapped at the door of Mr. Wiggins' study

a minute or two later. He found the master of the Second looking worried.

"Ah, it is you, Mornington!" said Mr. Wiggins. "It seems that you sent your cousin down to the village?"

"Yes, sir; soon after lessons."

"Where did you send him?"

"To Potter's, sir, for my new footer."

"Nowhere else?"

"No, sir."

"It is extraordinary that he should not have returned," said Mr. Wiggins. "Do you know whether it was Mornington II.'s intention to go anywhere else as well?"

"I'm not sure, sir. He just went down to the village to oblige me," said the Fourth-Former. "I can't understand why he hasn't come back."

"Very well, Mornington. You may go," Morny left the study, and Mr. Wiggins, with a perplexed countenance, proceeded to the Head to acquaint him with the matter. Mornington rejoined Erroll and Jimmy Silver & Co.

"I'm goin' to look for my cousin," he said. "You're comin'?"

"Gates are closed," said Jimmy Silver. "There's the wall, we can get over," said Mornington. "Let's try, anyway. It's half an hour till dorm."

"Oh, well, come!" said Jimmy Silver.

The juniors agreed on that. They climbed the school wall, and dropped into the road, and followed the road towards Coombe.

"We've got time to get to the village an' back before we have to turn up in the dorm," said Mornington. "We'll ask whether he showed up at Potter's. Put it on!"

And the juniors broke into a run, quickly covering the distance to the village. The shops in Coombe were all closed at that hour, but when they reached Potter's, Mornington rang a loud peal at the bell at the side door.

The door was opened by Mr. Potter, the outfitter, himself.

"Good-evenin', Mr. Potter!" said Mornington. "Sorry to disturb you—"

"Master Mornington!" exclaimed Mr. Potter, in surprise.

"Yes. I sent my cousin Cecil here for my new footer this afternoon," said Mornington. "He hasn't come back. Did he come here?"

"Yes, sir. I gave him the football," said the outfitter. "That was a long time ago—soon after five o'clock."

"An' he started back for Rookwood?"

"I suppose so, sir," said the astonished outfitter. "He certainly left here with the football, and went down the street towards the lane."

"Thank you, Mr. Potter!"

The juniors left the shop, and the door was closed. They stood in the street in a puzzled group.

"Well, that beats it!" said Raby. "If he started walking back to Rookwood, why didn't he get there?"

"Let's call at the police-station, and ask if there's any news of an accident," said Erroll quietly.

"Yes; that's a good idea!"

To the little village police-station they proceeded accordingly. P.-c. Boggs was there, and from him they learned that, so far as he knew, there had been no accident in the neighbourhood of Coombe that day.

There was nothing more to be done in the village, and they turned their steps in the direction of Rookwood.

"We've time to get in if we buck up!" remarked Raby.

"I'm n' buckin' up!" said Mornington coolly. "The moon's comin' up now, and we can look for 'Erbert along the road. I'm goin' to, anyway."

"We'll chance it!" said Jimmy.

And, instead of hastening back to the school, the juniors proceeded slowly along the road, scanning the fields behind the hedges, in some vain hope of seeing traces of the missing fag.

What had happened to him was a complete mystery, but it was evident that something had happened.

The moon was high now, shining through the drifting clouds, and they had plenty of light for the search.

But all the way back to Rookwood there was no trace of the fag.

If any attack had been made upon him there he might have dropped Morny's football, or perhaps his cap, or something else, and the juniors had hoped to find some

such clue. But there was nothing to be found, and they arrived at the gates of the school disappointed, alarmed, and tired.

"May as well ring up Brown," said Mornington. "It's nearly ten now, and we've been missed."

Mornington clanged the bell, and the porter came down to open the gates. He stared at the juniors through the bars.

"We've been lookin' for my cousin," said Mornington. "We haven't found him. Let us in, and don't stand starin' man!"

"Certainly, sir! I shall have to report this!" said Brown.

"Report, and be dashed!"

The porter opened the gates, and the juniors tramped in and went into the School House. Bulkeley of the Sixth met them as they came in, with a wrathful brow.

"Oh, here you are, you young rascals! Report yourselves to Mr. Bootles at once!"

"Right-ho, Bulkeley!" said Jimmy Silver. "Anything heard of 'Erbert yet?"

"Nothing."

"We've been out to look for him, you know!" said Lovell.

"Like your cheek! Go in to Mr. Bootles!" Jimmy Silver & Co. presented themselves in the Fourth-Form master's study. Mr. Bootles picked up his cane.

"You have been out of bounds at bed-time!" he exclaimed sternly.

"We went to look for my cousin, sir," said Mornington. "We were anxious about him."

"You should not have done so without permission," said the Form-master. "However, have you learned anything of him?"

"No, sir. He fetched my footer away from Potter's, and started for Rookwood, and seems to have vanished. We hunted all along the road, but there wasn't a sign of him."

"It is extraordinary!" Mr. Bootles laid down his cane. "You may go to your dormitory. I excuse you, but do not let this happen again."

And the juniors, glad enough to be excused instead of caned, repaired to the dormitory of the Classical Fourth.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Lattrey's Game!

ROOKWOOD School was in a buzz of excitement the next morning.

'Erbert had not returned, and he had not been found.

He had disappeared—vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up.

That there had been foul play of some kind was a certainty now.

Unless the fag had deliberately run away from school, there was no other way of accounting for his disappearance.

And it was incredible that he had gone of his own accord, without a word of explanation. There was no motive.

He was happy at Rookwood; he was not in trouble of any kind. He had not taken any of his belongings with him, not even a coat.

He had simply walked down to Coombe to fetch a football from the shop there, and he had started back to school with the football. And then he had vanished.

It was the clearest possible case of kidnapping, and Dr. Chisholm took that view. There was no other to take. The police had been communicated with, and a search was going on over the countryside. That was all that could be done.

After morning lessons a crowd of Rookwood fellows left the school to scour the countryside in the hope of finding some trace of poor 'Erbert.

Jones minimus, who was looking very lugubrious, led out quite an army of the Second Form to join in the hunt. The Fistical Four went with a crowd of the Fourth, Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, joining in with great zest.

But they came in tired and dusty for dinner without having made any discovery.

Lattrey was lounging on the steps when a crowd of the Fourth came in, fatigued and disappointed. He eyed them curiously.

"Found anything?" he asked.

"Nothing!" said Jimmy Silver curtly.

"Morny's been exerting himself, I suppose?" smiled Lattrey.

"Yes."

"Good old Morny! He must be feelin' this deeply."

"He is!" said Jimmy Silver sternly. "And if you dare to hint—"

Jimmy Silver had driven from his own mind the dark suspicion which had for a moment

"I'm not hinting anything," said Lattrey coolly. "Of course poor old Morny is feelin' it. I'm simply feeling sympathetic."

Jimmy Silver gave him a look of contempt and passed in.

After dinner Erroll followed Lattrey to his study, whither Lattrey had retired to smoke a cigarette—one of his delightful customs. He was smiling in his feline way through the haze of smoke when Erroll knocked at the door and went in.

Erroll closed the door behind him, and faced Lattrey, who did not move.

"I want a few words with you, Lattrey," he said quietly.

"Go ahead!"

"You spoke to Morny yesterday hinting that he had something to do with his cousin's disappearance?"

"I talked a bit too freely," said Lattrey, with a smile. "I never intended to shout it out. If Morny had not been so handy with his fists—"

"You haven't said so since?" said Erroll.

"I never meant to. It was Morny repeated what I said to Jimmy Silver. That was his way of brazening it out, I suppose—a bad move, in my opinion," said Lattrey calmly. "No need for anybody to know a word about it excepting ourselves."

"Ourselves!" said Erroll, with a stare.

"Exactly—us three!"

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I fancy you know well enough what I mean," sneered Lattrey. "At present only Morny and you and I know the facts."

"Do you mean to say you believe what you accused Mornington of, then?"

"Of course!"

"And if what you've just said means anything, it means that you think I am a party to it!" said Erroll, in angry amazement.

"Quite so!"

"Are you mad, Lattrey?" exclaimed Erroll, really doubting for a moment whether the blackguard of the Fourth was quite in his senses.

Lattrey smiled, and blew out a whiff of smoke.

"You really think that 'Erbert has been kidnapped through Mornington, and that I was a party to the scheme?" asked Erroll.

"I don't think it—I know it."

Erroll looked at him blankly. The cad of the Fourth spoke with an air of absolute certainty. It was clear that there was no doubt in Lattrey's mind, at least.

"I think you are out of your senses, Lattrey," said Erroll, at last. "I warn you not to repeat a statement like that in public. You will be called to account for it."

"I'm not afraid of being called to account!" grinned Lattrey. "But I don't intend to make it public. That isn't my game."

"Your game?"

"Yes. I've got an axe to grind as well as you."

Erroll was silent for some moments. The cad of the Fourth watched his perplexed face with a mocking smile.

Evidently Lattrey believed that Erroll was playing a part in affecting ignorance, though why that conviction should have been rooted in his mind was a mystery to Kit Erroll.

"Anything else to say?" yawned Lattrey.

"Yes," said Erroll quietly. "I won't discuss your silly suspicions, Lattrey. But yesterday, when you accused Mornington, you mentioned Gentleman Jim."

"Quite so."

"You said he was hanging about Rookwood."

"Well?"

"That's what I've got to speak to you about," said Erroll. "I don't know how you know anything about the man. He was a scoundrel, and he wronged me; he stole me from my father in my childhood, and tried to make a thief of me. He never succeeded, but that was his intention. I knew some time ago that he had escaped from prison, and I had reason to believe that he had gone to America."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will tell you this much," said Erroll steadily. "I had a telephone-call last week from that man, and he told me he was off to America. I believed him."

"Good!" smiled Lattrey.

"Now you say he is hanging about Rookwood. If he deceived me, if he really is in this neighbourhood, I shall denounce him to the police if I find him."

"Ha, ha!"

"You don't believe that?"

"Did you expect me to believe it?" smiled Lattrey.

"I suppose an habitual liar believes very little!" said Erroll scornfully. "You can believe or not, as you choose. But if Gentleman Jim is really in his district he must have telephoned to me to deceive me, so as to put me off my guard. It would be like one of his tricks, though I never suspected it till now. Now that I think of it, it seems quite likely enough. I want to know, Lattrey, what you know about this man? If you know anything of him, it is your duty to inform the police."

"Pile it on!" said Lattrey.
"What do you mean?"
"I'll tell you what I mean," said Lattrey deliberately. "You can spin a yarn of being a noble youth who resisted evil if you like, but my belief is that when you belonged to Gentleman Jim's gang you were exactly like the rest. I believe that you and Gentleman Jim were birds of a feather; in fact, I know you were. You may or may not be the son of Captain Erroll, but at least you were hand-in-glove with that cracksmen, and you are hand-in-glove with him still."

Erroll's face was white.
"You dare to say so?" he muttered thickly.
"You know it is the truth," said Lattrey calmly. "When I found that Gentleman Jim was hanging about here I knew it must be with your collusion. I wondered what he wanted here. Another attempt to rob the school was what I suspected. But as soon as 'Erbert disappeared I knew what the real game was."

"Mornington wants his fortune back, and you're helping him, and you called in your old cracksmen pal to work the oracle. That's the game. 'Erbert's vanished, and he won't turn up again. He's gone for good. Sooner or later Mornory steps into his shoes—into his old place again. Then he makes it worth your while to have helped him, and worth Gentleman Jim's while. And—Lattrey spoke with bitter emphasis—"he's also going to make it worth my while to hold my tongue, though he hasn't calculated on that."

Erroll listened without interruption.
That the cad of the Fourth believed every word he uttered was only too clear. Upon his belief was based his own rascally plan of sharing in the plunder.

For the missing fag's fate he cared nothing. He was willing to stand by and see the supposed plot come to success, then to step in and claim a heavy share of the profit as the price of his silence.

Erroll was about to speak, when the door was thrown open, and Mornington looked in. Mornory's face was blazing with excitement.
"Erroll, you here? I've been hunting for you. Come, quick!"

Without a word or a look to Lattrey, Mornington grasped his chum by the arm, and fairly dragged him from the study.

Lattrey grinned, and lighted another cigarette. Matters were going very well with the cad of the Fourth from his own peculiar point of view.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Temptation!

MORNINGTON had gone out into the quadrangle by himself after dinner, while Kit Erroll went to Lattrey's study. The dandy of the Fourth was in a gloomy and dispirited mood.

The disappearance of his cousin weighed upon his mind.

It had hardly occurred to him before to reflect whether he cared for little 'Erbert or not. He had had a kindly regard for him when he had rescued him from want and brought him to Rookwood.

He had been amused, and a little touched, by the fag's loyal and unshaken devotion to him.

For a short time, when 'Erbert, all unwillingly, had supplanted him as head of the Morningtons, he had hated the fag, but that bitterness had soon passed.

Now, when 'Erbert was gone, it was borne in upon Mornory's mind that he did care for his young cousin. Blood was thicker than water.

Now he knew that not all the wealth of Mornington could compensate him if misfortune had fallen upon the waif of Rookwood.

Mornington was thinking of this with a moody brow under the beeches, when he saw the new porter come up to him, touching his hat.

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"Excuse me, sir!" said John Brown, in his suave tones.

"What is it?" asked Mornington irritably.

"A letter for you, sir."

"Oh, thanks!"

Mornington took the letter. There was no superscription on the envelope.
"How did this come?" he asked, in surprise.

"A gentleman handed it me, sir, at the gate," said John Brown. "He said it was for Master Mornington of the Fourth Form. That's you, sir. He said there was no answer, sir."

"Very well, Brown."
The porter retired, his eyes lingering for a moment upon the Fourth-Former, with a peculiar expression that Mornory did not notice.

Somewhat puzzled, Mornington slit the letter, and opened it. He wondered if it was a communication from his old sporting acquaintances at the Bird-in-Hand, whom he had not seen for a long time now.

But as his eyes fell upon the missive he started, an expression of blank amazement coming over his face.

For the letter, in an unknown hand, ran:

"Master Mornington.—Your cousin is in safe hands. It depends on you whether he returns to the school.

"The beggar whom you befriended robbed you of a fortune. That fortune is yours again if you choose to say the word.

"Say the word, and Cecil Mornington vanishes for ever. He will not be hurt. He will be well taken care of, and better off than he was when you picked him up starving on the road.

"You will be called upon to pay handsomely for his keep. You understand? He will not suffer. You will be rich again.

"A FRIEND IN NEED."

Mornington stared blankly at the letter. For a minute or two it seemed to him that he was dreaming.

He had wondered whether 'Erbert had disappeared of his own accord, because it seemed impossible to find a motive for a kidnapping.

Here was the motive.
'Erbert had been removed from his path, and the villain who had kidnapped him evidently supposed that he was base enough to connive in the crime for the sake of the fortune that was at stake.

The hot blood surged into Mornington's face, and his hand clenched convulsively on the letter, crumpling it in his fingers.

Who was it that held this opinion of him, then?

But that mood passed.
A strange, almost terrible, expression came over the schoolboy's face. He thrust the letter into his pocket, and gave a hurried look round—a look that was almost furtive.

He had not done this. He had had no hand in it. But it was done, and if he chose he could reap the profit.

It meant so much to him. Wealth had been his as of natural right. He was born to grace a high position, and what was wealth to poor little 'Erbert? He would never have found his fortune if Mornington had not rescued him from beggary and rags in the first place.

Was it so terrible, after all, that 'Erbert should go back to a lot more happy than had been his when Mornington first found him?

Mornington drew a deep, sobbing breath. He pressed his hand to his burning forehead. He felt giddy. What was he thinking of? Was he capable of this, as once, he felt, with a shudder, he had been capable?

Who was it, then, who knew him so well? "Good heavens!" muttered Mornington. "Good heavens!"

The dark temptation was struggling in his wayward breast. The loyal, patient face of the little fag came before his mind, and he shivered. Was he capable of this?

"Kit!" he called out, forgetting that his chum was not near him. "Kit!"

Instinctively he turned to his comrade at that moment; but Erroll was not there. He made a stride towards the School House, and stopped.

Then, thrusting the maddening temptation behind him, as it were, he dashed towards the house. He caught Jimmy Silver by the arm in the doorway.

"Where's Kit?" Have you seen Erroll?"

"I think I saw him go into Lattrey's study," said Jimmy, with an amazed glance

at Mornington's face, which was almost ghastly. "What's happened? What—"

He broke off in utter astonishment as Mornington ran past him up the stairs.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Lattrey Speaks!

"COME! Come, quick!"
Erroll, in astonishment, allowed Mornington to drag him from the study. Mornory's wild excitement alarmed him.

"What is it, Mornory?"

"Come with me!"
Mornington dragged him into his own study. The perspiration was thick on the brow of the dandy of the Fourth. Kit Erroll had never seen him labouring under such deep emotion.

"In Heaven's name, Mornory, what has happened?" exclaimed Erroll.

"You've got to save me!" said Mornington. "You've got to watch me, and see that I—I—" He panted. "Oh, by gad, you've got to see me through, Erroll, or I may do it yet!"

"Mornory, what—"
"You've never quite known the fellow you chummed with, Erroll," said Mornington.

"By gad, I've never quite known myself till now! This very minute, old chap, I've been as near dipping into crime as a fellow often gets without going over the edge! He knows me well! Whoever he is, he knows me!" He laughed bitterly. "Yes, he knows me, better than you do!"

"Who does? Mornory, what are you driving at, in Heaven's name?" exclaimed Erroll, agast.

"He stepped into my shoes," said Mornington. "Why shouldn't I step into his? Only a word needed—only a word! As I stand here, Erroll, I believe that but for you I should have spoken the word! Read that; you'll understand."

He flung the letter on the table.
Kit Erroll picked it up and read. His face grew blacker as he read.

"Oh, the scoundrel!" he said, between his teeth. "He dares to think that you'd join in the scheme for kidnapping your cousin!"

Mornington laughed harshly.
"He knows me," he said. "It was hard to give it all up, Erroll. I haven't whined over it, but I've felt it—deep! Oh, he knows me! Erroll, I'll tell you something. When I first knew it, that 'Erbert was my lost cousin, and heir to the fortune I believed mine, I—I—"

His voice sank. "I went to Joey Hook, Erroll—you know that rascal—and asked him—"

"What did you ask him, Mornory?" said Erroll quietly.

"I was out of my senses, I think," said Mornington, in a whisper. "I—I asked him to—see that 'Erbert left Rookwood, and—did not return. I was mad at the time, Erroll. Whoever has written this letter to me knows that. He's some man who knows Hook, and has got it from him. And—when I read this letter, Erroll, it came over me—all I'd lost, and only a word needed to make it all mine again, and—"

His voice died huskily.
"You couldn't have done it, Mornory."

"I was near it," muttered Mornington.

"But for you, Erroll. I—I came to you to save me from it!"

"Mornory," said Erroll softly, "old chap, I know you better than you know yourself. You couldn't have done it. But this villain, whoever he is, thinks you could. Oh, the scoundrel!"

"Yes, he's a scoundrel, and no mistake!" said Mornington more calmly. "He knows the whole story, you can see, and he counts upon my being like what I was when I went to Joey Hook. I—I wasn't myself then, but a scoundrel like this man wouldn't understand that. He thinks I meant it—that I'd be glad of the chance. Some of the fellows have been wondering whether 'Erbert was kidnapped for a ransom—to keep him away from Rookwood!"

Erroll compressed his lips.

"He shall suffer for it!" he said.
"But who's the man, Kit? This letter ought to help us to find him, and find poor old 'Erbert, since I'm not acceptin' his offer," added Mornington, with a sardonic laugh.

"I think I know who the man is, Mornory."

"You know?"

"Yes. Gentleman Jim."

"By gad! That rascal! But he's in America," said Mornington. "You told me so yourself."

"He told me that on the telephone to

deceive me," said Erroll, with a darkening brow. "It put me on my guard. After that I never thought of looking for him near Rookwood. That was his game, of course."

"But how do you know?"
 "Lattrey has seen him."
 "By gad! Near Rookwood?"
 "Yes," Erroll set his lips. "Listen to me, Morny. I've got something to tell you of Lattrey."

Erroll proceeded to explain, in quiet tones, what had passed in Lattrey's study. Mornington clenched his hands till the nails dug into his palms.

"The rascal!" he muttered. "He dares to think—"

"He has seen Gentleman Jim," said Erroll. "He believes every word he said to me. He believes that Gentleman Jim is here with my connivance, and that you and I and that scoundrel are in the plot together. Where did you get this letter, Morny—by post?"

"No. Brown brought it to me."

"The porter!" exclaimed Erroll.

"Yes. Someone gave it to him at the gate for me."

"The new porter!" said Erroll, a strange look upon his face. "It came through him. Morny, there has been talk among the fellows about Brown. Tubby Muffin claims to have seen him at the Bird-in-Hand—I've heard Higgs say the same—and that he was talking with Joey Hook. The man who wrote this letter seems to have had information from Joey Hook."

"By gad! You don't mean—"

"Come with me to see Lattrey," said Erroll abruptly. "Lattrey's got to tell what he knows. I'll call Jimmy Silver, too."

The chums left the study, and Erroll called over the banisters to Jimmy Silver, who was chatting with his chums in the hall below.

"Hallo! Anything on?" asked Lovell, looking up.

"Yes; you're wanted."

"Oh, all right!"

The Fistical Four, somewhat puzzled, came up the stairs. To their surprise, Erroll led them to Lattrey's study.

"What's the game?" demanded Raby.

"We don't want to see Lattrey. We're not looking for an after-dinner smoke."

"Come in with me," said Erroll.

He threw open the door.

Lattrey rose to his feet as they came in. There was a cigarette between his thin lips, and he kept it there.

He regarded the juniors with a cool sneer.

"Haven't you come to the wrong study?" he inquired. "I don't remember askin' you in here."

"Come in, you fellows!"

Jimmy Silver & Co., greatly wondering, went in, with Erroll and Mornington, and Erroll closed the door.

"Would you mind telling us what all this means, somebody?" inquired Jimmy Silver politely.

"I'll tell you," said Erroll quietly. "Show them that letter, Morny."

"Great pip!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, as he read the letter. "Is this a joke?"

"It is not a joke! That letter, I firmly believe, was written by Gentleman Jim, the cracksman, and Gentleman Jim is near Rookwood. Lattrey can tell us where he is. He knows."

"Lattrey does?" yelled Lovell.

"He said so."

"Are you mad?" muttered Lattrey hoarsely.

"You fool! What's your game?"

"Our game," said Erroll contemptuously, "is to find 'Erbert, and bring him back to Rookwood."

"What?"

"Listen, you fellows," said Erroll, in deep, steady tones. "Lattrey has found that Gentleman Jim is hanging about Rookwood School. He believes that I was a party to his being here. That Morny and I and the cracksman were all together in a plot to kidnap 'Erbert. Lattrey is willing to keep silence, and let it go on, if we allow him to share the plunder."

"My hat!"

Lattrey was white to the lips now. "As it happens," went on Erroll icily, "he was mistaken. Through judging others by his own standard, I suppose, I believed that Gentleman Jim was in America. Neither Morny nor I, of course, knew anything of 'Erbert's disappearance. Lattrey's evil mind hatched the whole plot. But from what he said, and from this letter, it is pretty clear to me that Gentleman Jim is the kidnapper—and when we find him, we find 'Erbert. Lattrey is going to tell us where to find him."

There was a grim silence in the study till Lovell spoke:

"Take him to the Head!"

"Let him tell us where to find Gentleman Jim," said Erroll quietly. "That's all we need to know. I have a suspicion already. Lattrey has got to confirm it. You understand that you've got to speak, Lattrey."

"I—I—I'm willing to tell you," muttered Lattrey. "I—I thought—"

"Never mind what you thought," said Erroll contemptuously. "Tell us where that scoundrel is—at once."

"The new porter," muttered Lattrey. "John Brown is Gentleman Jim. I—I believed that you knew."

"Excuse me, I do not quite understand. Master Erroll," he murmured. "You called me—"

"I called you Gentleman Jim!"

"Is this a joke, sir?" asked the porter, with an expression of wonder.

"You will not find it one," said Erroll grimly. "You are Gentleman Jim—the cracksman who stole me when I was a child and almost broke my father's heart. You are the man who tried to train me to be a thief, and used me cruelly when you failed. You are the liar who pretended to be going to America, in order that you might play this game under my nose without being suspected. You are the kidnapper who seized



Lattrey raised himself on his elbow and gave Mornington a deadly look. He did not get up. "Morny, you hound," he said, "I'll let all Rookwood know that you have had your cousin kidnapped!" (See chapter 1.)

"The porter!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Impossible!"

"It's true," muttered Lattrey. "I—I've searched his lodge—one night when he was at the Bird-in-Hand. He came back and caught me. He had a revolver. I—I spoofed him into believing that I didn't know—"

"And why haven't you denounced him?" demanded Jimmy Silver sternly.

"I—I thought—" Lattrey's voice failed him. He dared not tell Jimmy Silver what his base scheme had been.

"That's enough," said Erroll. "I suspected it, though till to-day I did not know." He turned to the door. "We've done with Lattrey. Let us go to the lodge. We've got to see Gentleman Jim."

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Gentleman Jim's Last Card!

JOHN BROWN looked surprised when he opened his door at a knock, and found six juniors standing outside. He was still more surprised when they marched into the lodge without waiting for permission.

His eyes gleamed for a moment at Kit Erroll.

"Really, young gentlemen—" he murmured.

"The game's up, Gentleman Jim!" said Erroll coolly.

For a moment the man blanched; but in a second he was himself again, and he looked at the junior with an expression of surprise.

Mornington's cousin, and you wrote the note you handed Mornington this afternoon. You are Gentleman Jim—and the game is up."

"I am quite bewildered, sir," said John Brown simply. "I think you must be a little wrong in the head, sir, if you don't mind my saying so. If this is a joke of you young gentlemen, I don't mind—"

"You deny that you are Gentleman Jim, the cracksman?"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

If John Brown was the cracksman, he was playing his part well and with an iron nerve. But Erroll did not father. He knew Gentleman Jim's nerve of old.

"Morny," he said quietly, "go to Mr. Bootles' study, and ask him to ring up the police-station, and tell them that Gentleman Jim is here."

"Kit!" muttered Mornington. "Do as I ask you, Morny."

"I'll chance it, if you say so." Mornington turned to the door.

It was then that the cracksman dropped the mask.

"You need not trouble to go!" he said. "I warn you, Kit, that if I am arrested here, Cecil Mornington will die of hunger in the old quarry where I have hidden him. You had better make terms, if you care for his life."

"My hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver. Mornington swung back from the door.

(Continued on page 18.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 144.



A Magnificent Long Complete School Story, dealing with the Early Adventures of
HARRY WHARTON & CO. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Meeting the Head's Guest!

THEOPHILUS FLIPPS! My hat! What a name!"

And Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, chuckled. With him were four juniors, also of the Remove. One of them was Harry Wharton, and the others were Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull.

"Representative of the 'Young Health-Seeker'!" chuckled Nugent. "And coming to Greyfriars to study hygienic conditions! Phew! Fancy a fellow studying stuff like that!"

"Bit off his dot, I expect!" said Johnny Bull gruffly. "Anyhow, since the Head asked us to meet him, we've got the afternoon off. Personally, I'm quite anxious to meet Theophilus Flippus. The name seems to portend some fun."

They chuckled again as they walked along the lane towards the village.

They reached Courtfield in good time, and paused at a shop for refreshment in the shape of ginger-beer, and then strolled round to the railway-station.

"Lots of time," said Bob Cherry. "The train's not in yet."

They went on the platform to wait for the train. People going to Friardale had to change at Courtfield, Friardale, the station for Greyfriars, being on a branch line.

The four chums posted themselves along the platform to keep an eye open for Theophilus Flippus, the youthful representative of the "Young Health-Seeker." The train came rolling in at last, and it stopped in the station.

Almost the first passenger to step out was a lad of about their own age, and at the first sight of him the Famous Four felt certain that he was the youth they had come to meet. And with one accord they exclaimed:

"Great Scott!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, Theophilus!" murmured Nugent.

My only grandmother!" said Johnny Bull faintly.

The Greyfriars juniors looked at the stranger.

He was a youth of spare form, clad in Etons, but wearing a cap instead of a topper. The cap had large flaps which came down over his ears, and round his neck he wore a huge muffler, doubled and knotted.

It was a sunny autumn day, and the weather certainly did not seem to require those precautions. The muffled youth

blinked round the station through a pair of large glasses.

"Is it he?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Tis he!" said Nugent dramatically.

"Well, we'd better capture him before the wind blows him away," said Harry Wharton.

And the Famous Four marched up to the stranger.

He blinked at them.

"Good-afternoon!" said Wharton, taking off his hat.

"Good-afternoon!" said the other three, taking off their hats in imitation of their leader; and Bob Cherry waved his round his head before he replaced it, in order to show his enthusiasm in greeting the representative of the "Young Health-Seeker."

The stranger blinked at them again.

"Good-afternoon!" he said.

"We are from Greyfriars," Wharton explained.

"And you're Theophilus Flippus?" asked Nugent.

The stranger nodded.

"That is my name," he said.

"Oh, good! Happy to meet you, Theophilus!"

And the four juniors took their hats off again, and bowed down almost to the platform.

"Dear me!" said Theophilus. "You are exceedingly polite. Pray excuse me if I do not also salute you, as I am afraid of uncovering my head. I have a slight tendency to cold."

"Sorry!" murmured Wharton.

"Not at all. I keep it in check by taking every precaution against catching a chill, and by taking regular doses of the Marvellous Mixture for the Weak and Weary," said the stranger. "I carry a bottle about with me wherever I go, as it is necessary to take it every two hours without fail."

"Oh!"

"Porter! Pray be careful with that box. There is glass inside."

"Yessir."

"You have come to meet me?" asked Flippus.

"Yes," said the juniors.

"You are really very kind. Perhaps you are aware that I represent the 'Young Health-Seeker'?"

"Yes."

"Very good. I have made a study of hygiene, and, young as I am, I think I may say I have mastered the subject. I shall be able to give you many valuable tips. Perhaps you will tell me where I get the local train."

"That's what we're here for," said

Harry Wharton cheerfully. "Does this hatbox belong to you?"

"Yes, please."

"And this Indian club?"

"Yes; I had taken that out of my bag in order to do some exercises en route, as the carriage was empty. It is necessary to keep up one's exercises at regular intervals, as perhaps you are aware."

"Oh!"

"Porter, be careful with that box," squeaked Flippus. "Put it in the train for Friardale."

"Yessir."

"This way!" said Harry Wharton, picking up the Indian club. "You take the hatbox, Bob."

"Right-ho!"

And the four juniors escorted Theophilus Flippus to the platform for Friardale, while the Courtfield porter trundled the box away upon a trolley.

The local train was in, and the juniors led Theophilus into it. Flippus took a corner seat, and Harry Wharton sat beside him, and Nugent and Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry opposite.

They were all smiling.

They could not help it. Dr. Locke's instructions, and the fact that he relied upon them, prevented them from japing the innocent stranger.

But they had never felt more inclined to jape anybody in their lives.

Theophilus seemed to them to be born for the especial purpose of being japed.

"Dear me!" said Flippus. "Would you mind closing the window, my friends?"

"Certainly!"

"And the other window."

"It's a warm afternoon," hinted Bob Cherry.

"But there is a draught in a moving train."

Bob closed the window.

"That is better," said Flippus. "Dear me, how suddenly the train started!"

The juniors exchanged glances.

The train glided out of Courtfield Station, and ran through the green countryside towards Friardale.

Flippus rose to his feet, after glancing at his watch.

"Pray hand me the club!" he said.

"The—the club?"

Flippus nodded.

"Yes; it is time for me to do my breathing exercise."

"My hat!"

Wharton handed Flippus the club. Flippus stood up and waved it gently

over his head. The juniors had imagined that Indian club exercise would be likely to damage the railway-carriage. But the way Theophilus did it, it was not likely to damage a fly if it had smitten one. Evidently the young health-seeker did not mean to run the risks of over-exertion.

He handed the club back to Wharton after making half a dozen passes with it. Then he sat down, breathing hard.

The juniors regarded him dumbly. They had seen all kinds of fellows in their time. Fellows had come to Greyfriars from all parts of the home country and the over-seas Dominions, and there were fellows from India and China. But of all the queer fish that had ever come to Greyfriars this was the queerest. They had never seen anything quite like Theophilus before—in fact, they had never seen anything in the least resembling him.

Theophilus did not seem to realise that there was anything out of the common about him. He smiled a beaming smile at the chums of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Plenty of exercise; that is the secret of health," he said.

"Oh," said Bob Cherry, "that's the secret, is it?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Do you always exert yourself like that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes."

"Don't you find it a frightful strain on the muscles?"

"My muscles are hardened by that exercise," said Flippis, in explanation. "Also, I keep myself fit by taking regular doses of the Mixture for the Weak and Weary."

"Oh!"

Flippis looked at his watch again.

"Another five minutes," he murmured.

"Another ten minutes to Friardale, if that's what you mean," said Bob Cherry.

Flippis shook his head, with a smile.

"Then I shall have to take it in the train," he said.

"Take what?"

"The mixture."

"The — the mixture!" stammered Harry Wharton & Co. all together.

Theophilus nodded.

"Yes. In taking the mixture—or, indeed, any medicine, it is strictly necessary to observe the most exact punctuality," he said. "I have to take six drops every two hours, and in five minutes more it will be time."

"And you're going to take it here?"

"Yes."

"My hat!"

"I have sometimes taken it in railway trains before, and even on an omnibus," said Flippis. "It is most important not to be a moment later—or earlier, for that matter."

"Great Scott!"

"I shall prepare to dose now."

"Go it!" said Bob Cherry. "This is interesting."

Theophilus beamed.

"I am sure you find it so," he said.

"You see, every lad should take a deep interest in questions of health. It is a most important subject."

"Is it healthy to keep wrapped up like that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, certainly!"

"You've got a weak throat?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then what do you muffle it up for?"

"To prevent it from becoming weak."

"Oh!"

Theophilus took a bottle out of his bag, and a little drinking-vessel. The Greyfriars juniors watched him with great interest.

"Pray tell me when it is exactly four!"

said Theophilus, who had both his hands occupied now.

"Nother minute," said Nugent.

"Very good!"

Flippis poured out his dose carefully. The juniors watched him spellbound. They wondered what the Remove would have said if they could have seen Theophilus.

"Four!" said Nugent, putting his watch back into his pocket.

"Thank you!"

Theophilus took off the medicine at a draught.

"May I offer you fellows a drink?" he asked, as he bent over his bag.

"Got ginger-beer there?" asked Bob Cherry.

Theophilus made a gesture of horror.

"Ginger-beer! That is dreadfully unhealthy!" he exclaimed.

"Lemonade, then?"

"That is as bad!"

"You don't mean to say that you carry beer about with you, or spirits?"

"Good gracious, no! Alcohol is another name for suicide."

"Then what have you got to drink?"

"I was referring to my medicine."

"Ow!"

"One dose will make a new man of you."

"More likely to make an old man of me—old before my time," grinned Bob Cherry. "Thanks, I'm not thirsty—not that kind of thirsty!"

"Let me urge you—"

"You can urge me if you like, but you won't get me swallowing any of your marvellous muck!" said Bob.

"Marvellous mixture," corrected Theophilus.

"Same thing!"

"Not at all. Allow me to explain—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! We're getting into Friardale."

"The marvellous mixture is—"

"We stop in a minute."

"It is a—"

"Here we are!"

The train clattered into the station. The Famous Four alighted with Theophilus Flippis, and gathered up his belongings for him. Theophilus blinked round the station through his big glasses.

"I trust there is a vehicle to meet me," he said.

"Ahem! The Head never thought of sending his motor-car," murmured Bob Cherry, "and I've left my own Daimler at home on the piano."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a lovely afternoon for walking," said Harry Wharton, "and your trunk can be sent on by the porter if you want it at Greyfriars."

"My dear fellow, I am going to stay some days, so of course I shall want it. What shall I do otherwise for changes of underclothing?"

"My hat! How often will you want to change in a few days?"

"It is according to the temperature," explained Theophilus. "I may need to change five or six times in one day, according to the degrees of heat and cold. I carry a small thermometer for the purpose."

"Oh," gasped Bob Cherry. "I wish you were coming to Greyfriars for good, kid! We should like you in the Remove! Oh, rather!"

"Shall we walk?" asked Wharton. "It's not very far."

Theophilus shook his head.

"Impossible!" he said.

"Why?"

"Walking induces heat in the system, and heat induced in the system by exercise is liable to neutralise the revivifying effects of the Marvellous Mixture," explained Flippis. "I take the exercise first, and then the mixture. I cannot walk now."

"We could carry you" suggested Bob Cherry solemnly.

"Good!" said Johnny Bull. "We could take a leg and an ear each, and there you are."

Theophilus shook his head gravely. Among his other gifts he had a wonderful impenetrability where a joke was concerned, and was evidently wholly lost to anything like a sense of humour.

"I should not like to give you the trouble," he said. "And, besides, I hardly think you could carry me with any comfort to myself. The strain upon my ears would be painful. Is there no vehicle to be hired in the village?"

"There's the station cab."

"Then pray let us take that."

And they took it.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not Tactful!

"FLIPPIS, sir!"

Harry Wharton announced Theophilus.

Dr. Locke looked up, and then rose to his feet, and came a couple of steps to meet Theophilus Flippis. He extended his hand, which Theophilus took in a very bony paw. The treatment Theophilus was undergoing did not seem, at all events, to make him plump. He was very sparsely covered with flesh.

"I am glad to see you, Master Flippis," said the Head, with a smile of welcome.

"Thank you, sir," said Flippis. "It is a pleasure to me to make your acquaintance!"

The doctor coughed.

"Pray sit down," he said.

"Thank you, I will avail myself of that offer, as I have no objection, founded upon hygienic considerations, to remaining in a perpendicular position."

"Oh!" murmured the Head.

Theophilus sat down. He blinked round the study through his large spectacles, apparently taking in all the details of the place.

Harry Wharton retired from the study, and concealed his smiles in the passage. Dr. Locke looked at Flippis. Now that his visitor had arrived, he hardly seemed to know what to do with him.

"I understand that you will—er—stay a few days, Flippis?" said the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"I trust you will enjoy your stay among my boys."

"I trust so, sir. I shall do my best, sir, to improve their outlook upon matters of hygiene. You may, or may not, be aware that I contribute eight columns weekly to the pages of the 'Young Health-Seeker,'" said Theophilus proudly.

"Indeed!" said the Head.

"Yes, indeed, sir. I do not say that these eight columns are the best stuff in the paper, but others have said so. While I am here, sir, I shall be glad to place my knowledge and experience at the service of yourself and the school."

"Thank you!" gasped the Head.

"Not at all, sir. It will be a pleasure to me," said Flippis. "In the first place, sir, may I make a remark?"

"Certainly."

"I observe that you have the top of your window open?"

"Yes," said the Head.

THE POPULAR.—No. 144.

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE LAST STRAW!"

"That is liable to admit a draught."

"I do not notice it."

Theophilus shook his head wisely.

"You do not notice it, sir, but it is there all the same. I should recommend having the window tightly closed, or else wearing a muffler."

"Wearing a muffler!"

"Certainly, sir, round your neck."

"Oh!" said the Head.

"But, better than that, have the window closed, sir," said Theophilus. "Also have the keyhole stopped with wax or putty, sir. By this means all possibility of draughts is obviated."

"But what about ventilation?" asked the Head.

"It is the question of the more important of two requirements," explained Theophilus. "The lesser must always give way to the greater. I would offer to close your window, but it is only half an hour and three minutes since I took my mixture, and I cannot exert myself in any way until exactly one hour has elapsed."

"You need not trouble," said the Head drily. "I do not require it closed."

"But the draught—"

"It has not caused me any inconvenience for the past twenty years," said the Head. "Probably it will remain harmless."

Theophilus shook his head.

"That is where you make a mistake, sir," he said.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir, indeed. The older you grow, the more likely you are to take colds, and to crack up all of a sudden. A draught which may not hurt a man in the flush of health and strength at forty-five, may knock him completely over at sixty-five. I do not mean to say that you are sixty-five, sir; I am not aware of your precise age."

Theophilus paused, for the Head to enlighten him upon that point. But Dr. Locke did not speak, and the cheerful youth ran on:

"You should remember, sir, that you are now, at all events, well on into middle age, and, in fact, on the downward path."

"Indeed!"

"Certainly. Your powers are failing, more or less rapidly, and it is only a question of time before—"

"Ahem! Ahem!"

"Before the failure is complete, sir. Your object should be to put off that time as long as possible, and by means of strict attention to hygiene—"

"Flippus—"

"Have you noticed, sir, that your digestion has suffered of late years—"

"Boy!"

"Your sight is not so keen, and probably your hearing—"

Dr. Locke rose to his feet.

"I am afraid I am very busy now," he said. "I hope to see you at another time, Master Flippus."

Flippus rose, too.

"Very well, sir," he said. "But pray remember what I have said. I wish my visit here to be of advantage to others besides myself."

"Master Wharton will look after you while you are here," said Dr. Locke, apparently not hearing the words of Theophilus. "I have asked him and his friends to do so."

"Thank you, sir! About that window—"

Dr. Locke opened the door of his study.

Even Theophilus Flippus could take that as a hint, and he passed out into the passage.

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE FOLLY OF ADOLPHUS!"

The Head closed the door.

Then he drew a deep breath.

"What a dreadful—dreadful boy!" he murmured. "What an awful person to be in any house. How dreadful for his parents! Thank goodness he has not come to Greyfriars as a pupil."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 1!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had been requested by the Head to look after Theophilus Flippus, and they had made up their minds to do it. To the juniors of the Remove it appeared simple and certain that the best way of looking after a fellow was to stand him a feed after a journey.

It fortunately happened that Study No. 1 was in funds, and the chums of the Remove had laid in a really excellent tea. There was a very appetising odour afloat in the atmosphere as Bob Cherry marched Theophilus in.

"Here he is!" said Bob Cherry.

"Tea ready?"

"Quite ready," said Harry Wharton.

"Just made the tea," said Nugent.

"And I've made the toast," remarked Johnny Bull.

"And I've opened the sardines," said Mark Linley.

"Hurrah! Take a chair, Obediah—I mean, Theophilus!"

Theophilus Flippus regarded the tea-table, which would have made many a fellow's mouth water. But there was an expression of gathering horror upon the face of the youthful representative of the "Young Health-Seeker."

"Do you fellows drink tea?" he asked.

The chums of the Remove stared at him.

"Of course we do!" said Bob Cherry, puzzled. "We don't eat it!"

"Are you not afraid of its effect upon the gastric juices?"

"The—the what?"

"Tea has a most deleterious effect upon—"

"Oh, that's all right!"

Theophilus shook his head.

"Pray excuse me," he said. "I will not take any tea."

"All right. There's ginger-beer."

"Ginger-beer is windy."

"My hat! Will you try lemonade?"

"Lemonade is unhealthy."

"I'm sorry we haven't champagne!" said Harry Wharton, with a heavy sarcasm that was totally lost upon Theophilus Flippus.

"My dear fellow, I could not drink champagne!" said Theophilus. "It is one of the most unhygienic of drinks."

"What do you drink, then?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Pure water, in a small quantity at a time," said Theophilus. "I generally measure it out before drinking."

"Well, there's plenty of water," said Wharton. "You can drink it till you flow over at the ears, if you like!"

"You like sardines?" asked Nugent, as he pushed a chair to the table, and put Theophilus into it.

Theophilus gasped.

"Sardines?"

"Yes."

"Fresh?"

"Well, you see, there aren't any sardines in the fountain in the Close, and they don't live in our river," said Nugent sarcastically, "therefore we're compelled to get them in tins."

"Good heavens!"

"What's the matter?"

"Are you not afraid of ptomaine poisoning?"

"Nunno! Not much!"

"My dear friend, you should never eat anything that has been enclosed in a tin. You run most frightful risks!"

"Will you have some toast?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Thank you!"

Wharton passed the toast, glad that something, at all events, was provided that the peculiar guest could eat. But as Theophilus looked at the toast, he pushed the plate away instead of taking any.

"That toast is buttered," he said.

"Yes. Don't you like it buttered?"

"Thank you! I never eat butter. Anybody who eats butter is in danger of catching some tubercular complaint."

"Ow!"

"Tuberculosis is very rife among cattle. I could give you a description of the bacillus—"

"Don't!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ring off!"

"Gro-o-oh!"

Theophilus blinked round at them.

"I assure you that if I gave you a description of the probable bacilli in that butter, you would never touch it again!"

he said.

"We'd jolly well touch you, though!"

growled Johnny Bull.

"Will you have some dry toast, Flippus?" asked Harry Wharton, with elaborate politeness.

"Thank you, yes!"

"You like jam?"

"Jam!" exclaimed Theophilus, in horror. "Do you know what jam is made of?"

"Fruit, I suppose!"

"And other things," said Theophilus.

"I never eat jam."

"Marmalade?"

"Oh, never!"

"What the dickens do you eat, then?"

"At home," said Theophilus. "I have some very carefully-prepared dried fruits, which I eat with dry toast for tea."

"Oh dear!"

"It is owing to my care with my diet that I enjoy such bounding health," explained Theophilus.

The Removees looked at him, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus looked puzzled.

"I did not intend that remark for a joke!" he said.

"Jokes sometimes come off without a chap intending them," said Bob Cherry.

"Will you have some preserved ginger?"

"What preservative is used in it?"

"Blest if I know!"

"Then I won't risk it, thank you!"

"No; I suppose it wouldn't do to risk losing your bounding health, your athletic figure, and rich complexion!"

remarked Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry reached out under the table to stamp on his foot, as a warning that politeness was required towards a guest. But Theophilus only nodded.

"Exactly!" he said.

"Are you always as careful as this when you go out to a party?" asked Johnny Bull.

And Bob Cherry stamped again.

Johnny Bull was apparently unconscious of it, for he gave no sign, and did not even glance towards Bob.

"Always," said Theophilus.

"You must be exhilarating company!"

said Johnny.

Bob Cherry stamped again, more emphatically than before.

Theophilus stooped and looked under the table.

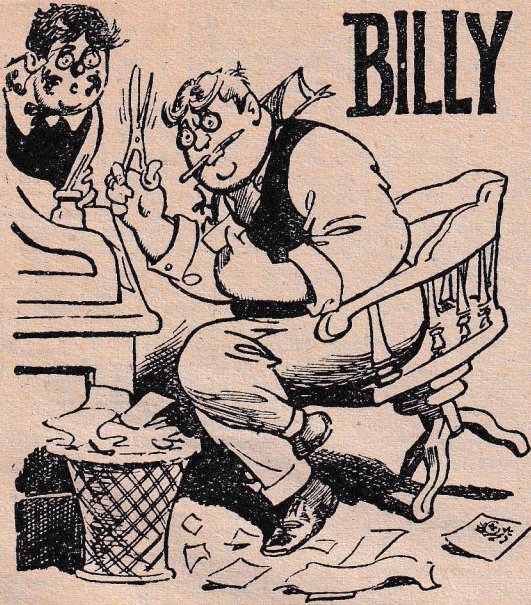
"I hope my foot is not in the way?"

he said.

(Continued on page 13.)

A GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!



A GRAND FOUR-PAGE SUPPLEMENT.

Edited by
WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER of Greyfriars School.

Assisted by
HIS FOUR FAT SUBS—SAMMY BUNTER of Greyfriars, **FATTY WYNN** and **BAGGY TRIMBLE** of St. Jim's, and **TUBBY MUFFIN** of Rookwood.

Contributions from the Three Famous Schools.

MY SPELLING PROGRESS!

By **SAMMY BUNTER.**

Last Monday, in the Form-room, old Twigg gave us a hundred words to spell. When he corrected the eggserises he found I had made ninety-five mistakes. (The remaining five words had been spelt korrekctly by axxi-dent!)

On Tuesday we had a further test in spelling. This time I had only fifty-five errors, and old Twigg said, "Kappital, Bunter, kappital! You are beginning to show a marked improvement."

Next day the number of mistakes I made was reduced still further. I think I had about eighty words right out of a hundred, which you will admit was jolly good. I found myself gradually creeping neerer to the top of the class. I got in frunt of young Nugent, who looked daggers and swords and revolvers at me!

On Thursday I went one better. Out of a hundred words I had only one mistake. I spelt the word cue—a theatre cue, you know—"k-e-w." Twigg said this was all wrong. He said it was spelt "q-u-e-u-e." But, of course, this is all tommy-rot. However, I had to bow to Twigg's sooperior judgment.

On Friday came the climacks. We were again given a hundred words to spell, and—believe it or not, as you like—I spelt the whole jolly lot korrekctly! "Not a single error," said Twigg, beaming all over his face. "Bunter, my dear boy, you have improved out of all nollidge! Go to the top of the class!" I went there, and I've stayed there ever since!

Twigg was so delighted with my progress that he invited me to tea on Saturday, and I jolly nearly ate him out of house and home. Six eggs, three tins of sardines, and a dish of pastries—that's what I demolished. Twigg remarked that my spelling progress was wonderful—but not nearly so wonderful as my appetite!

:: IN YOUR :: EDITOR'S DENN!

By **BILLY BUNTER.**

My Dear Readers,—This editorial will doubtless strike you as being rather strange.

I can picture you saying to yourselves: "Where is the Bunter of old—the Bunter who used to spell 'editor' with two d's, and put 'y-o-r-e' instead of 'y-o-u-r'?"

The fact is, I have reformed. Not in the jeneral sense of the term. Oh, dear, no! I still eat sufficient grub for six; I still lissen at studdy keyholes; I still depart slightly from the trooth. But I have learnt how to spell!

Tell it forth in Gath, publish it in the streets of Askelon. Billy Bunter has learnt how to spell korrekctly!

Glance through this editorial, and you will not find a single word that is wrongly spelt.

I have swotted at dictionaries until my brain has been in a buzz. I have eaten Nutfall, and masticated Dr. Johnson, and devoured the Twentieth Century! I humbly acknowledge all my previous errors, and I promise you that I shall never spell a single work inkorrekctly in future. I have told my skoolfellows that they can fine me a penny for every error I make.

(It may happen that an occasional spelling mistake will crop up. But that will be entirely the fault of the printers! These kompositor chaps are eggssellent fellows—pon my word they are. But they can't spell for toffy!)

You will notiss in this issue the first instalment of a very amusing story by Ogilvy, who describes the doings of the Courtfield Town Council. This yarn will finish next week, and it will make you roar—whether your name happens to be Lyon or not!

I ought to mention, before I konklood, that I have reformed my spelling at the express rekwest of the editor of the kompanion papers. But I still think that the original Bunter style of spelling is quite korrekt, and that the dictionaries are all wrong.

Don't you agree, dear readers?

Ever your learned pal,

YOUR EDITOR.

BILLY BUNTER'S ORDEAL!

(Adapted from "THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE.")

By **DICK PENFOLD.**

Not a sound was made, not a movement heard,

As his form to the bedside we carried;

Not a fellow there uttered a single word

Around by the bed where we tarried.

We laid him out swiftly at dead of night,
And to toss him in blankets were yearning,

By the guttering candle's smoky light
And the lantern dimly burning.

Few and short were the words we said,
And we gave not a sign of sorrow;
But Bunter bellowed, "I'll tell the Head,
You bullying beasts, to-morrow!"

Then up to the ceiling Bunter shot
Like a Fifth of November rocket;
And a pennypiece—'twas all he'd got—
Fell out of his upturned pocket.

The blanket-tossing was barely done,
When the scout gave the sign for retiring;

And two minutes later all traces were gone,

Save the sounds of a porpoise expiring!
Softly old Quelchy crept in at the door,
But we are past-masters at shamming.

We gave a loud grunt and a sonorous snore,
And thus we were saved from a lamming!

Something Grand to Look Forward to NEXT WEEK:

"SPECIAL HOBBIES NUMBER!"

If you have a hobby you will find it in the pages of our next issue.

W. G. B.

.. A ..
Short Story
of the
Fifth Form.



Hard Lines
on
Hansom!

By Val
Mornington.

JIMMY SILVER & Co. were passing along the Fifth Form passage at Rookwood when a startled exclamation from the interior of Hansom's study made them pause.

The door of Hansom's study was ajar, and the Fifth-Former was standing in front of the looking-glass, against which his nose was flattened.

"It—it's coming!" he ejaculated in dismay. "Eh? What's coming, Hansom?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"My moustache!"
"Your—your what?"
"I'm almost certain I can detect a hair on my upper-lip," said Hansom, in tones of deep distress. "This is perfectly awful! If a moustache comes, I shall be the laughing-stock of the school!"

"You're that already!" chuckled Lovell. Hansom did not heed that remark. He was far too worried to take note of personal insults.

"Come in, you kids, and close the door," he said.

Jimmy Silver & Co. cheerfully obeyed. Hansom went to his desk, and took out a powerful magnifying-glass.

"Would you mind having a good look at my upper lip, Silver, and telling me if you can see anything there?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver took the magnifying-glass, said made a minute examination. Then he shook his head gravely.

"Afraid your worst fears are confirmed, old chap," he said. "I can distinctly see a hair, one-sixteenth of an inch in length, and one-hundredth of an inch in breadth."

Hansom groaned.
"It's coming!" he said distractedly. "I knew it was coming!"

Lovell burst out laughing.
"You silly ass! There's nothing to get alarmed about. I know a jolly good way of removing superfluous hair from the upper lip."

"Tell me!" said Hansom eagerly.

"Shave, my dear fellow—shave!"
"My hat!" ejaculated Hansom. "I never thought of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"There's a barber in Latham who will remove that tiny piece of fluff with one sweep of his razor," said Newcome.

"Good!" said Hansom. "I'll go along and see him right away."

A few moments later the Fifth-Former was speeding away on his bicycle in the direction of Latham.

Flustered and breathless, he stood his machine against the kerb, and burst into the hairdressing saloon. Then he threw himself into the barber's chair.

"Haircut, sir?" inquired the barber.

"No."
"Shampoo?"

"Nunno!"
"Face massage? You need one, sir, if you don't mind my saying so. Your face will look much better if all the sharp corners are taken off!"

"Look here," said Hansom desperately. "I—I want a shave!"

The barber looked astonished.
"But there's nothing to shave!" he protested.

"Oh, yes, there is. It's not visible to the naked eye, perhaps, but it's there. Run over my upper lip with a razor, will you? And don't puncture me, for goodness' sake!"

The barber smiled, and got busy. He shaved Hansom's upper lip thoroughly, but he failed to detect the presence of a single hair.

The Fifth-Former went back to Rookwood feeling greatly comforted.

When he arose next morning, however, Hansom received a rude shock.

Gazing at himself intently in the mirror, he discovered, to his horror, that the moustache had started sprouting again. This time there was not merely one hair. There were three or four, and they were plainly visible to the naked eye.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Hansom. "That THE POPULAR.—No. 144.

shave only made matters worse. The beastly moustache is growing quicker than ever!"

During the day Hansom was chipped unmercifully by his schoolfellows on the subject of the moustache.

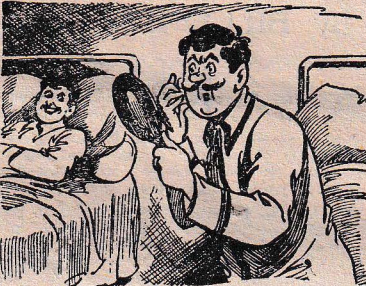
There were some fellows in the Sixth who would have been proud to possess a moustache. But it was the last thing on earth that Hansom of the Fifth wanted. He knew that unless he got rid of those hairs on his upper lip he would be ragged without mercy, from the rising up of the sun to the going down thereof. He would be the target for all sorts of satirical remarks.

"It's no use being shaved again," reflected Hansom. "I shall have to do something else to get rid of this confounded stubble."

And then, chancing to glance through the advertisement columns of the local paper, Hansom came upon the following paragraph:

"HAIR permanently removed from face by simple and inexpensive treatment. No electricity required. Simply buy a bottle of Messrs. Kleen, Shaven & Co.'s 'Moustache Killer,' and smear some of the substance on to the affected part. The moustache will disappear with lightning-like rapidity. 'Mine went in a couple of hours,' writes 'Subaltern.' 'My face fungus was completely obliterated in a day,' writes 'Tarzan.' Send shilling postal-order for a sample bottle! No more unsightly moustaches! No more superfluous hair! DON'T DELAY—WRITE TO-DAY!"

Hansom's face glowed with delight when he read that advertisement. Here was an



Hansom gazed with horror into the mirror. There was a long flourishing moustache on his upper lip.

easy way out of all his afflictions. He would send a shilling postal-order to Messrs. Kleen, Shaven & Co., and his moustache would be destroyed.

Hansom applied for a bottle of the "Moustache Killer," and waited eagerly for it to arrive.

He had to wait a couple of days, during which time his moustache became more apparent. The hairs increased in number, until there were at least a dozen.

Hansom was in such a state that he shut himself in his study in his spare time, and dared not venture forth to face the chaff of his schoolfellows.

And then, after forty-eight hours of weary waiting, the "Moustache Killer" arrived.

With feverish fingers Hansom untied the string around the little packet, and a bottle of greasy substance, not unlike vaseline, stood revealed.

"At last!" exclaimed the Fifth-Former in great relief. "I'll smear some of this stuff on my upper lip, and when I wake up tomorrow morning there will be no trace of a moustache!"

Hansom rubbed the "Moustache Killer" well into the skin, and awaited developments.

Before retiring for the night he made an examination in the mirror, but the superfluous hairs were still there. Hansom had no doubt, however, that on getting up in

the morning he would find that his upper lip was perfectly smooth once more.

Comforted by this reflection, Hansom fell asleep.

When he awoke, roused from his slumbers by the shrill clanging of the rising-bell, his hand went instinctively to his upper lip.

Horror of horrors!

Instead of finding a smooth surface, Hansom's fingers came into contact with a number of hairs. Not short, insignificant hairs, but really long and bushy ones!

With a gasp of alarm, Hansom sprang out of bed, and picked up a hand-mirror. He gazed into it, and then recoiled with a start.

The "Moustache Killer," so far from fulfilling its object, had given him a flourishing moustache!

When the Fifth-Formers beheld the condition of Hansom's upper lip they laughed loud and long.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just look at Hansom!"

"He's got a moustache like the Kaiser's!"

"It won't take long, at this rate, before he has a beard and side-whiskers!"

Poor old Hansom had a terrible time that morning. He was chipped without cessation. His moustache was pointed out as one of the sights of Rookwood. And some of the masters who were clean-shaven were seen to cast envious glances at it.

Hansom wrote and told the "Moustache Killer" people exactly what he thought of them. And he didn't mince his words.

For upwards of a week he went about with his upper lip bristling with hairs. And he was obliged to screen himself from the public gaze as much as possible.

Then relief came.

Hansom had occasion to pop up to London to see some relatives, who were horrified when they saw his moustache. They promptly took him off to the West End in a taxi, to a place where he was able to get the hairs destroyed at the very roots by electricity.

It was a rather painful process—worse than having teeth out, Hansom thought—but he endured the ordeal manfully, knowing that it meant the end of his troubles.

When he returned to Rookwood his upper lip was as smooth as the surface of a billiards-ball. The superfluous hairs had vanished as if by magic.

Hansom has decided to refrain from having a moustache until he arrives at years of discretion.

That means that he will have to wait for another fifty years!

TUBBY MUFFIN'S LAMENT!

Dear Readers,—I've been crowded out: A jolly shame, without a doubt. Next week, though, I shall have some stuff in: I am, yours truly—TUBBY MUFFIN.

ANOTHER JOURNALISTIC EFFORT!

Tubby Muffin describes his Thrilling Adventures in the Arctic Regions in next week's issue, in

"MY POLAR ADVENTURE!"

THE TOWN CRIER OF COURTFIELD.

By DONALD OGILVY.

THE other evening, for want of something better to do, I attended the meeting of the Courtfield Town Council, and I wouldn't have missed it for a whole term's pocket-money. It was better than a pantomime!

Courtfield's "ragtime" council is represented by five people.

Sir Richard Pompuss, J.P., is the chairman. Then there's the town clerk, who hates the chairman like poison, and rags him unmercifully. There is also Mr. Fossil, an aged, bearded, deaf old jossler who is in his dotage. And to complete the charmed circle we have Lady Pompuss and Mrs. Marmaduke Miggs. Lady councillors are not at all uncommon these days.

The chairman, rising to his feet, opened fire as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen! We are here to-day—"

"And gone to-morrow!" murmured the town clerk.

The chairman frowned.

"Be silent, sir! Since the fatal day on which you were elected town clerk by a number of priceless lunatics, you have done nothing but interrupt my discourses. As I was saying, we are here to-day to discuss the burning question—"

"Eh? What's on fire?"

The chairman's frown deepened.

"I don't know what's on fire, but I know something that will be put out if it doesn't behave itself! I would have you know, sir, that this is a council meeting!"

"Gee! I thought it was a musical comedy!" said the town clerk, as Mr. Fossil, the aged member of the council, emitted a loud snore.

The chairman seized Mr. Fossil by the shoulders and shook him.

"Wake up, sir—wake up!"

Mr. Fossil slowly opened his eyes, and placed his hand to his ear.

"Eh? Did you speak, sir?"

"Yes, sir, I did!" hooted the chairman.

"Wish you wouldn't whisper. I can't hear a word you say!"

The chairman snorted.

"We are here, sir, to discuss an important matter—"

"Who's as mad as a hatter?" demanded Mr. Fossil aggressively.

Sir Richard Pompuss heaved a deep sigh.

"A megaphone—a megaphone! My kingdom for a megaphone!" he exclaimed. "This man's deafness is not only an affliction to himself, but to everybody concerned. We are here, Mr. Fossil, to discuss the appointment of a town crier—"

Mr. Fossil rose indignantly to his feet.

"Liar, am I? Don't you start flinging fancy names at me, you—you pie-faced proffert!"

There were cries of "Order! Order!"

"Yes, he needs a warder!" said Mr. Fossil.

"He's on the wrong side of the asylum wall!"

"If you continue to insult me, sir," said the chairman, "I shall march out from the chair!"

"Mad as a March hare, am I? If you say that again I'll tweak that bulbous nose of yours!"

"Sir! I will not stand—"

The town clerk jerked the chairman into his seat.

"Sit down, then, and let's get on with the washing!" he said.

"Really," panted Sir Richard, "I—I am in danger of losing my head—"

"Good old Charles the First!"

"Since I have been chairman of this council, I have suffered—"

"So have we!"

"I have suffered innumerable insults! It is most ungalant of you to abuse me in the presence of Lady Pompuss!"

Lady Pompuss smiled.

"Don't mind me, Richard—don't mind me! I just love it!"

Sir Richard threw a reproachful glance at his wife.

"My dear, your remark covers me with confusion—"

The town clerk grinned.

"The other day I saw you covered with a pink-and-green bathing costume!"

The chairman spun round angrily upon his colleague.

"If I had my own way, sir, I should expel you from this council!"

"Oh, I'm used to being expelled! I was expelled from Eton for setting the Thames on fire! By the way, do you know Eton?"

"What?"

"Eat an enormous dinner!"

"Dear me! What a harrowing pun!" murmured Lady Pompuss.

The chairman banged the table with his clenched fist.

"Let this tomfoolery cease!" he exclaimed.

"It is high time we got down to business. Now, it has been deemed desirable that a town crier be appointed for Courtfield. I beg to move—"

"Thinks he's playing chess now!" murmured the town clerk.

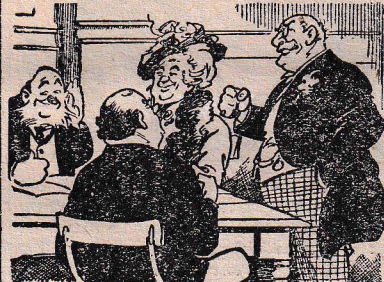
"I beg to move that a man be appointed to fill that office."

"Where do the women come in?" demanded Mrs. Marmaduke Miggs.

"They don't, Madam—they stay out!" said the town clerk.

"Impertinent jackanapes!" snapped Mrs. Miggs. "I think you will agree, Sir Richard, that women are better criers than men."

"Most emphatically, madam! My wife is



The chairman banged his clenched fist on the table. "Let this tomfoolery cease!" he exclaimed.

always weeping, except during meals and at council meetings."

"The latter would make a cat laugh!" said the town clerk.

"Be careful, sir!" said Lady Pompuss. "Do not allude to me as a feline creature!"

Again the chairman thumped the table.

"To come to the point," he said, "I think, in the circumstances, we will admit applications from both sexes for the post of town crier."

At this juncture the town clerk produced a bundle of letters.

"There are several applications to hand already," he said.

"Then why couldn't you have said so before, you drivelling dunderhead? I will trouble you to read the applications to the council."

"All serene, old sport. Now, the first is from Mr. Fungus, who is our oldest inhabitant. Mr. Fungus' application will, I feel sure, add considerably to the gaiety of nations."

"Read it, man—read it!" roared the chairman.

The town clerk cleared his throat, and began:

"Dear Sir,—Which I hear as how you wants a town crier to go round shouting the odds. Me being the oldest inhabitant, having lived in this town, man and boy, for nigh on eighty year, I reckons as how I'm the right man for the job. I can write King's English, and speak it, and I've got a wunnerful voice,

seeing as how I have sung in the Courtfield choir since I was in knickerbockers.

"Hoping you are quite well, as it leaves me at present with the roomatics, and thanking you in a dissipation,—Yours truly,
"SILAS FUNGUS."

"H'm!" said the chairman. "I don't like the idea of a doddering, decrepit Methuselah crawling around the town in his bath-chair to announce public events. Still, Mr. Fungus shall take his chance with the rest of the applicants."

"The next application," said the town clerk, "is from Mr. Adolphus de Vere. He is of the nuts nuffy. Listen to his heartrending appeal:

"My Dear Old Bean,—During the late war I served my country faithfully as Director of Movements. There were no movements to direct, but that doesn't matter. The fact is, I found myself out of a job when the armistice was signed, and I have been jobless ever since.

"I see that you are in need of a town crier. I am just the man for the job, begad! I can cry like a two-year-old. My voice is as mellow as an overripe plum. Give me the job, for the love of Mike, or I shall have to live on my wits, which will be rather awkward, as I don't possess any.

"I hope the salary you propose to give will resemble my face; in other words, that it will be a handsome one.

"Chin-chin, my dear old fossil.—Yours hopefully,
"ADOLPHUS DE VERE."

There was a snort of contempt from Mrs. Marmaduke Miggs.

"Bah! A fool! A fop! A faddy fanatic! Are there no woman applicants?"

"There is one, madam," said the town clerk. "Here we have a letter from Mrs. Sarah Stiggins. She is already in the employ of this council as a charwoman, and she is now looking for fresh worlds to conquer. She wants to become town crier—or town cryer. I suppose one ought to call it. Mrs. Stiggins writes her letter all in one breath, so to speak. In has no punctuation marks. Listen!

"Dear sir having been employed as a charwoman by the Courtfield Council for fifteen years come Michaelmas and seeing as how a town crier is wanted for this vice-inty I begs to apply for the job which my dear husband when he was alive said would suit me down to the ground me having such a commanding voice and I feel sure if you will give me a trial I shall come up to the scratch like I did when I was a Suffragette in the happy days of yore ever remaining your humble servant Sarah Stiggins p s the Rev Mr Lambe of Friardale will answer for my character so there will be no need to send you a reverence."

The town clerk paused, pumping in breath. "Any more applications?" inquired the chairman.

"Yes, sir. A Mr. Ephraim Snorter has written. He says he will gladly take on the job of town crier if the council will pay him fifteen hundred a year, provide him with a house, and exempt him from paying rates and taxes."

"The man is an arrant fool!" growled Sir Richard.

"Any relation, sir?" murmured the town clerk.

And there was a titter from the ladies.

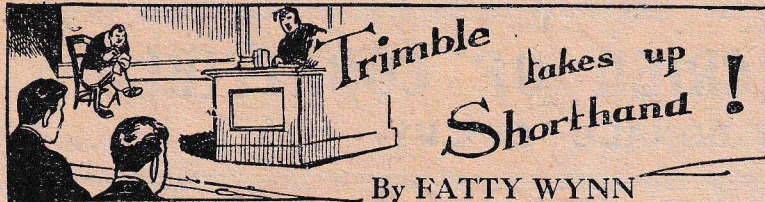
"If you like, my dear," said Lady Pompuss to her husband, "I will interview the various applicants. I can clearly see that a woman's judgment is needed in this matter. Let these people come before me in the morning, and I will put them through their paces."

"So be it, my dear," said the chairman.

And the meeting adjourned.

(To be concluded next week. When Ogilvy will describe some more screamingly funny incidents in connection with the appointment of a town crier for Courtfield.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 144.



By FATTY WYNN

IN some ways I can't help admiring my colleague, Baggy Trimble. There are times when he displays great cleverness—or cunning, whichever you prefer to call it.

Like many of us at St. Jim's, Baggy hates lessons. He regards Form-work as drudgery. And if he can hit upon a scheme for reducing the amount of drudgery, he loses no time in putting it into operation.

Mr. Linton isn't a master who is often caught napping. But Baggy Trimble fairly pulled the wool over his eyes, so to speak, when he went up to him one day and said:

"Please, sir, I should like an hour off from lessons every afternoon."

"What?" gasped Mr. Linton.

"I don't mean that I want to devote it to idle pleasure, sir," said Baggy piously.

"Then what?"

"I want to take up the study of shorthand, sir."

"Oh!"

"It's impossible to swot up shorthand in the Form-room, where there's a constant murmur and buzzing going on," continued Baggy. "A fellow must have absolute quiet. So if you will allow me to learn shorthand in my own study, far from the madding crowd, I shall be ever so grateful, sir."

Mr. Linton looked keenly at the fat junior. But Baggy seemed perfectly earnest and sincere.

"Very well, Trimble," said the master at length. "A knowledge of shorthand is beneficial to every boy. Have you any books?"

"A complete set, sir, from the elementary exercises to the advanced ones."

"Splendid! You will be allowed to retire to your study for one hour every afternoon, in order to pursue the study of shorthand."

Baggy Trimble could scarcely believe his good fortune.

By a simple ruse he had secured for himself an hour's extra freedom each day.

Was it Baggy's intention to shut himself up in a study and swot?

No jolly fear!

What Baggy intended to do was to make tracks for the tuckshop directly the hour fixed for his special lesson arrived.

He did so—and he continued to do so every day without being spotted.

At the end of a week Mr. Linton asked him how he was progressing with his shorthand.

"First-rate, sir!" said Baggy.

"You have mastered the first lessons—the elementary ones?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I'm doing the advanced stuff now. I can read 'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Robinson Crusoe' in shorthand."

"Excellent! You appear to be making meteoric progress, Trimble. Very soon you will be able to report meetings, and so forth. I must congratulate you upon your zeal and industry."

Baggy Trimble continued to take an hour off every afternoon, ostensibly to swot shorthand, but in reality to visit the tuckshop.

He hadn't a great deal of money to spend, but he would buy a couple of doughnuts and a glass of ginger-pop, and make them last the hour.

When this amazing piece of bluff had been going on for a fortnight it came to a dramatic climax.

All good things come to an end, and this was no exception.

One evening Mr. Linton stopped Baggy Trimble in the corridor.

"Are you still making good progress, my boy?" he inquired.

"Yes, rather, sir! I'm a first-rate shorthand writer now, sir."

"Then perhaps you would be good enough to fetch your notebook—"

"Eh?"

"And accompany me to the lecture-hall. I am about to lecture to the Sixth Form on eugenics, and I should like the lecture to be taken down in shorthand."

Baggy Trimble turned pale.

THE POPULAR.—No. 144.

"Ahem! I—I've got my prep to do, sir!" he stammered.

"I will excuse you from preparation this evening, Trimble."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Pray be good enough to fetch your notebook at once."

There was no opportunity for further argument.

Baggy Trimble obtained a notebook and pencil, and accompanied Mr. Linton to the lecture-hall.

The fat junior was in a terrible plight, for his knowledge of shorthand was absolutely nil!

Mr. Linton's lecture was a lengthy one. It lasted nearly two hours. And all the time the master was speaking Baggy Trimble scribbled all sorts of weird and meaningless signs in his notebook. He pretended to be an expert reporter.

When the lecture was over Mr. Linton crossed over to where Baggy was sitting.

"Have you got it all down, Trimble?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I will trouble you to transcribe it



Very reluctantly Trimble produced his notebook, and handed it to Mr. Linton. The master gazed with amazement at the weird assortment of lines on the front page.

into longhand. There is no great hurry. Bring the manuscript to me by Wednesday evening."

"Very good, sir."

Wednesday evening came, but no manuscript.

Mr. Linton despatched a special messenger for Baggy Trimble.

"Where is my lecture, Trimble?" he demanded, when Baggy rolled in.

"Ahem!"

"Have you transcribed the notes?"

"Ahem!"

"You appear to be troubled with a cough!" said Mr. Linton. "Answer my question! Have you transcribed the notes, or not?"

"N-n-not, sir."

"What!"

"You see, it—it's like this, sir—"

"Have you the notes in your possession?"

"Yessir."

"Show them to me!"

Very reluctantly Baggy Trimble produced his notebook, and handed it to Mr. Linton.

The master glanced at the weird assortment of what appeared to be pothooks and hangers, and his face became livid.

"Why, this is not shorthand at all! Boy! Trimble! You have wantonly deceived me! You have obtained an hour off each day by false pretences!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"This is a very serious matter," said Mr. Linton. "You will accompany me to the headmaster's study."

Poor old Baggy rolled away like a lamb to the slaughter.

He caught it hot and strong.

Next time Baggy Trimble wants to secure an hour off from lessons he will have to think of a more ingenious ruse!

THE END.

TUCKSHOPP TOPPICKS!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.

I rather fancy I have maid one or two spelling mistakes in the above title. If this is the case, dear readers, I claim your kind indulgence. Rome was not built in a day, and I can't become a perfectly good speller all at once. But I am making very good progress, and I shall soon be able to spell long words like "soop," and "eggs," and "fish." It's only a matter of time.

* * *

Bizzness has been very brisk at the tuckshopp during the last week. Now that winter is here, and the weather is warmer, Dame Taggles has been doing a roaring trade in minerals and storberry ices. The hot baked chessnut trade will have to wait till next July, when the weather is colder.

* * *

Quite apart from grub, Dame Taggles is displaying fireworks in her window, ready for the Fifth of November. She has got jumping crackers, and golden rains, and whizz-bangs, and rockitts, and all sorts of things. But I can speak of them without emoshun. I've got no use for fireworks. You can't eat them!

* * *

I have spent the best part of the week in the tuckshopp waiting for sumboddy to come along and treat me. But the St. Jim's fellows seem to be drained dry of the milk of human kindness. They never take kompassion on me. They simply let me stand there and starve. But wait! Wait till my remittance comes! Then, when they all flock around me, cading for the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table, so to speak, I shall say, "Keep your distanse! You wouldn't help me in my eggstremity, so I won't help you in yours!"

* * *

I only wish I had some kappital. I should start a tuckshopp of my own. I should get an enormous stock of grubb in every day, and every night I should eat the surplus myself. How glorious that would be! But castles built in Spain are castles built in vain. So away with these idle dreams!

* * *

By the way, Fatty Wynn tells a story about me in this week's issew. Don't you beleeve him, dear readers. He's trying to make out that I know nothing about shorthand, but that's all rot. I've got at least a duzen sustifficates and diplomers, and if you doubt my word, call in at St. Jim's any time you happen to be passing, and you shall see the things for yourselves. There's noboddy that can teach me anything about shorthand. There's noboddy that can teach me anything about anything, come to that. Bekawse, you see, I'm "It"!

THE HEAD'S GUEST!

(Continued from page 8.)

"Of course not!" said Harry Wharton. "There's plenty of room."

"It is very extraordinary!" said Theophilus, in surprise. "I have received three distinct concussions upon my foot!"

Bob Cherry turned crimson. He understood now why Johnny Bull had not heeded his secret signals. Theophilus had received them.

"I—I—I'll get you some water!" said Bob, jumping up to hide his confusion. "Do—do you like it warm or cold?"

"Cold, please!"

Bob Cherry fetched in a jug of water. The juniors had their tea, Theophilus contenting himself with dry toast and water.

"I suppose you're not afraid of growing too fat on that diet?" Johnny Bull remarked.

"If I saw any signs of that, I should reduce the amount of toast," said Theophilus. "I have myself weighed every day, of course."

"Of course!" grinned Johnny Bull. "It is most important to know whether one is losing or gaining weight," said Theophilus. "By the way, you have never tried the Mixture for the Weak and Wary, I believe?"

"Never!" said Wharton.

"I have a bottle in my pocket—"

"Better keep it there!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"I should like you fellows to try it. It can be taken in tea, if you persist in drinking that unhealthy beverage—"

"Improves the tea, I suppose?"

"Well, it gives it a flavour."

"I've no doubt it does," grinned Nugent. "But we'd rather stick to the old flavour, if you don't mind."

"Perhaps you will allow me to add a few drops to each cup," suggested Theophilus.

"No fear!"

"It will do you good."

"Make us as healthy as you are?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, in the course of time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray allow me!" said Theophilus, taking a bottle out of his pocket.

"Ring off!" roared Johnny Bull, jerking his teacup away as Theophilus reached towards it. "If you put any of that muck in my tea, I'll—I'll—"

"My dear friend—"

"Rats!"

Theophilus replaced the bottle in his pocket with a sigh.

"Once I put some in a friend's tea without his knowledge," he said. "He made quite a fuss about it but I'm sure it did him good. Unfortunately, he was offended. I do not know why. And I have not seen him since."

"Go hon!"

"Will you have some more toast, Flippo?"

"Thank you, no; I have eaten four ounces."

"Oh!"

"More water?" asked Bob Cherry hospitably. "Don't limit yourself with the water."

"Thank you—a half-pint is exactly enough."

Theophilus rose from the table. He glanced at his watch.

"Pray excuse me now," he said.

"After a meal it is advantageous to lie in a horizontal position for five minutes, in order to allow the process of digestion

a fair start. I will therefore retire to the dormitory."

And he did.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. They waited till Theophilus' footsteps had died away down the passage before they gave expression to their feelings. Then they yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Medical Treatment!

"I've been looking for you!"

It was Bolsover major who spoke.

Theophilus Flippo looked up with an agreeable smile. He was seated upon the lowest step of the staircase, with his legs crossed, and a gigantic volume in his hands, which he was reading with the profoundest attention. Bolsover, Vernon-Smith, and Snoop came along the passage, and they grinned at the sight of Theophilus.

"Looking for me?" said Theophilus.

Bolsover nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Where have you been?"

"I have been taking a short rest in a horizontal position, after partaking of a light and frugal refreshment," said Theophilus.

"Did you eat a dictionary among the other things?" asked Vernon-Smith.

Theophilus looked astonished.

"Certainly not!" he said. "What an extraordinary question!"

"What's the book?" asked Bolsover, with a nod towards the big volume that rested upon the knees of Theophilus.

"How to Get Well and Keep well,"

said Theophilus. "It is written by a very great authority—Professor Flabb. Would you like me to read you—"

"Yes, some other time," said Bolsover.

"There is no time like the present,"

said Theophilus. "I shall be at Greyfriars but a short time, and—"

"You can read it to us in the dorm

to-night," said Vernon-Smith.

"Good!" said Bolsover. "It will be as good as a sleeping-draught. But look here, Flick—"

"Flippo," said Theophilus.

"I mean Flippo. I understand that you are an authority upon the subject of—of hygiene, and—health and things," said Bolsover.

"In my humble way," said Theophilus, with a beaming smile. "I shall be very

very pleased to afford you any information in my power. Have you a pain anywhere?"

"Oh, no!"

"An ache in one of your limbs?"

"Not at all."

"A feeling of vacuity and general emptiness in the head—"

"Eh?" said Bolsover suspiciously, while Vernon-Smith and Snoop giggled.

"If you have, a dose of the Marvellous Mixture will set you up as right as rain,"

said Theophilus. "I have several bottles with me, and I shall be very, very pleased to hand you one. If you find it beneficial, you can then expend a part of your pocket-money in the purchase of further supplies."

"Yes, I can see myself doing that—I don't think!" said Bolsover. "I'm not ill, and I don't want any medical muck. I'm thinking of another chap—"

"A friend of yours ill?" asked Theophilus eagerly.

"Yes, that's it."

"I will gladly do anything I can—"

"He has been ordered by the doctor to take a sudden shock," said Bolsover, watching the simple face of Theophilus as he spoke. "You see, he needs a shock to buck up his circulation, and that's what's been ordered."

"Dear me!" said Theophilus.

"What is required is a chap to administer it," explained Bolsover. "As you take such an interest in hygienic matters, I thought you might do it."

"I should be very, very happy to oblige!"

"Sure it won't be troubling you too much?"

"Quite, quite sure!"

"Well, the chap's name is Coker," said Bolsover. "I usually administer this treatment to him myself, but just now I—I've got an engagement."

"I shall be quite pleased to take your place, my dear friend."

"He has to have a pail of water thrown over him quite suddenly," said Bolsover.

"That is the treatment."

Theophilus opened his eyes wide.

"What an extraordinary treatment!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Bolsover. "But that's what the doctor ordered. You see, it gives him a shock to the system which bucks up the circulation."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, exactly."

"I have never come across that treatment before," said Theophilus, with intense interest. "I shall be very glad to see it and make a note of it. Do you know the name of the medical man who ordered it?"

"Yes," said Bolsover, with perfect calmness. "Coker had a specialist down about it, and it was ordered by Dr. Gobble. You've heard that name, of course?"

Theophilus wrinkled his brows in thought.

"The famous specialist," said Vernon-Smith.

"I do not recall the name," said Theophilus. "However, what you tell me is most interesting. Does Coker strip for this treatment?"

"No. You see, the special benefit of the treatment is that it gives him a sudden shock," said Bolsover.

"Yes, I see."

"And for that purpose it has to be administered at an unexpected moment."

"Quite, quite so!"

"Therefore, when I administer it, I generally wait for him outside his study and bung the water over him as he comes out," said Bolsover solemnly.

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE LAST STRAW!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

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"A very good idea, considering the object you have in view," said Theophilus, with a nod. "I suppose you are sure there is no mistake?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"It is really a very unusual treatment."

"Yes, that's what all the fellows say; but it seems to do Coker good. If you'd care to save me the trouble to-day, Flippo—"

"Oh, certainly! I shall be delighted!"

"Good! I'll show you Coker's study, if you'll come with me."

Theophilus rose, with his book under his arm.

"Better give me the book," said Vernon-Smith. "I'll take care of it for you."

"Thank you, my dear friend!"

Bolsover led the youthful health specialist away. Vernon-Smith and Snoop looked after them open-mouthed.

"My only hat!" murmured the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Great Scott!" said Snoop. "Is he really going to do it?"

"Looks like it!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The silly, awful ass!"

"Shush! Don't let him hear!"

And Snoop giggled more quietly.

Theophilus, evidently without a suspicion, followed Bolsover major to the Fifth Form passage. In an angle of the passage a bucket was waiting—of water, in which a considerable quantity of soot had been mixed. Bolsover pointed it out to his companion.

"That's the water, Flippo," he said.

"Very good!"

"There's Coker's door. As soon as it opens bung the water over the chap who comes out, without saying a word."

"Yes," said Theophilus.

"You see, the more sudden the shock the better."

"Yes, I quite—quite understand."

"When you've finished you might come and tell me. You know my name?"

"No. I think I have not yet heard your name, my dear friend."

"Brown," said Bolsover—"Tom Brown."

"Very good."

And Bolsover departed. Theophilus stood guard over the bucket, and waited.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Coker Gets the Shock!

"READY?" said Coker of the Fifth.

"Yes," said Potter and Greene together.

"Come on, then!" said Coker.

"Let us go."

Coker of the Fifth was in riding-breeches and boots, and he looked very like a sporting gent. It was Coker's ambition to look horsey, and he succeeded very well indeed. He liked himself in riding clothes. He was going out for a ride now, and was taking his two chums with him in order that they might form an admiring audience. Potter and Greene were quite willing to do that, as Coker was to pay for the hire of a pair of nags for them.

"Where are the gees?" asked Potter.

Potter had learned from Coker to call horses "gees." It sounded very sporty.

"They're in Courtfield," said Coker.

"We're walking there?"

"Yes."

"Right-ho! I'm ready."

Coker opened the door of the study, and the three Fifth-Formers strode out.

Swoooooosh!

Swish!

Splash!

"Yarooooooooooop!!!"

"Oh!"

"Yah!"

Theophilus had done his duty!

The contents of the bucket swooped upon Coker & Co. as they issued from the study, and Coker had the chief benefit of them.

He staggered back wildly, yelling.

Theophilus lowered the pail to the floor.

The three Fifth-Formers gouged the sooty water out of their eyes, and glared at Theophilus as if they would eat him.

"You—you—" bellowed Coker.

"You—you—" shrieked Potter.

"He's mad!" gasped Greene. "He must be mad!"

"Mad or not, we're going to slaughter him for that!" yelled Coker.

The three chums of the Fifth rushed at the startled Theophilus.

Three pairs of hands grasped the surprised youth, and he was whirled over upon the floor with a terrific concussion.

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

"Now bump him!" yelled Coker.

"Roll him in the water! Yow!"

"Squash him!"

"Slaughter him!"

"Ow!" roared Theophilus. "Groo. Yow! Leggo! What are you up to? I trust a mistake has not been made! Ow!"

"You've made a mistake in biffing that stuff over me!" shrieked Coker.

"I'm going to smash you baldheaded!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Bump, bump!

"Yaroooh! Help! Oh!"

"Good heavens! What is the matter?" exclaimed Wingate of the Sixth, dashing along the passage. "Why, what—what—"

The captain of Greyfriars broke off in sheer amazement at the sight of the three drenched and dripping Fifth-Formers. Coker glared at him.

"Matter!" he roared. "This cheerful idiot has biffed a pail of dirty water over us; that what's the matter! We're slaughtering him, that's all!"

"Ow! Help!"

"Hold on!" gasped Wingate. "He's a guest at Greyfriars—"

"Let him behave like a guest, then!" yelled Coker. "Guests don't bung pails of sooty water over their hosts, as a rule, I believe!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Flippo, what does this mean?"

"Ow, ow!"

"Answer, you idiot!" roared Coker, banging the head of the unfortunate Theophilus against the linoleum.

"Speak, can't you!"

"Ow! Groo! Ow!"

"Answer, you fathead! Explain yourself!"

Bump, bump!

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Stop it, Coker!" gasped the captain of Greyfriars. "How can he answer when you're bumping his napper on the floor? Let him alone!"

"Ow! Help!"

Coker unwillingly desisted, and the unfortunate Theophilus sat up. He put his spectacles straight on his thin nose, and blinked at Wingate and gasped.

"Ow, ow! I am hurt! Groooh!"

"What did you do it for?" demanded Wingate.

"Groo! Ow! I think—Ow—"

"What did you bung that water over these chaps for?"

"Ow! I think there is a—yow—mistake!"

"You chucked the water over us!" yelled Greene.

"Ow! Is one of you Coker?"

"Yes, ass! I'm Coker!" said Coker.

"Very well; the water was intended for you, not for the others!" gasped Theophilus.

Coker stood almost petrified.

"Intended for me!" he stuttered.

"Yes, my dear Coker."

"You did it on purpose?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Then you want squashing!" bellowed Coker.

And he hurled himself upon Theophilus again.

"Yaroooh!" roared Theophilus, as he bumped upon the floor. "Help!"

Wingate grasped the infuriated Coker, and dragged him back.

"Hold on!" he gasped.

"Lemme gerrat him!"

"Chuck it—"

"I'm drenched!"

"Yes, but—"

"I'm soaked to the skin!"

"Yes—"

"I'm sooty! I'm wet! Look at my

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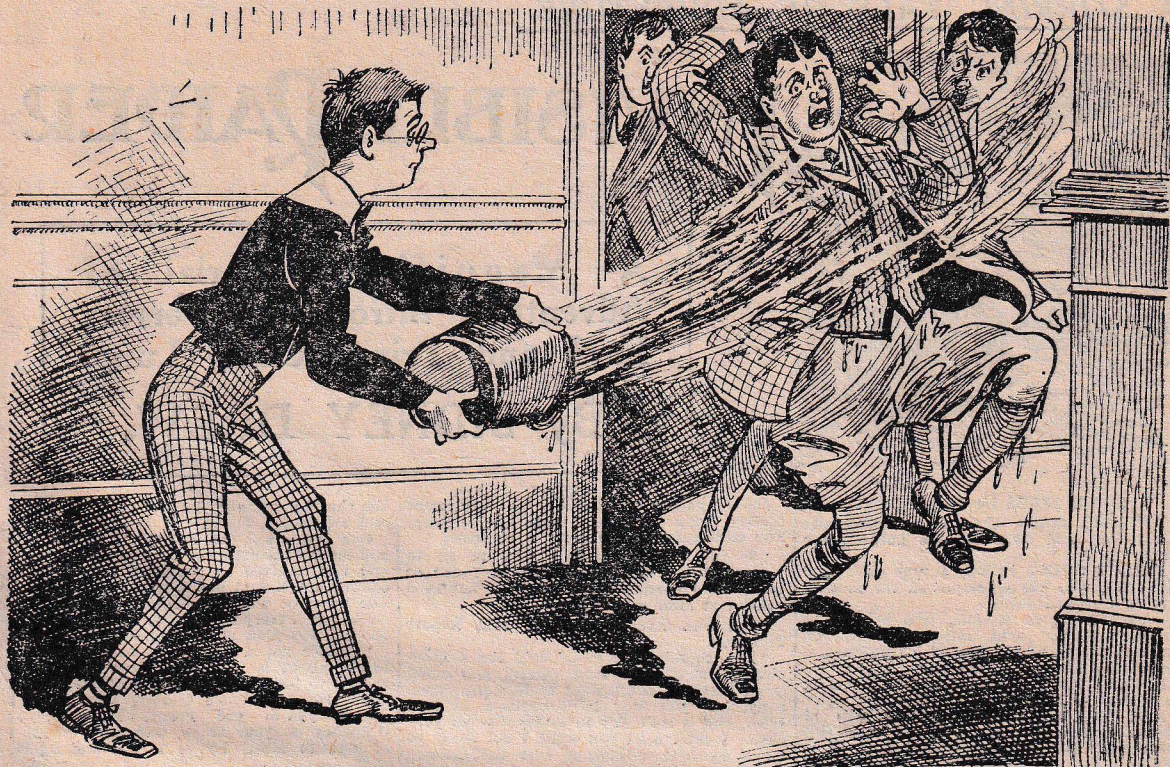
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NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE FOLLY OF ADOLPHUS!"

A GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.

By OWEN CONQUEST.



As Coker flung open the door of the study Theophilus did his duty. The contents of the bucket swooped upon the three Fifth Formers just as they emerged into the passage. (See Chapter 5.)

bags!" shrieked Coker. "Look at my chivvy! Look at my hair! Look at me! I'll—"

"Groo!" groaned Theophilus. "This is the last time I will attempt to do you a favour, Coker. Ow! You are a violent person, and I shall never attempt to administer your medical treatment again!"

"Medical treatment?" gasped Coker. "Yes, certainly!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wingate, gasping with merriment. "Was that intended for medical treatment?"

"Certainly," said Flippis, in surprise. "It is his usual treatment, is it not?"

"Eh?"

"So I understand, at all events." "What does he mean?" gasped Coker. "If he isn't a raving lunatic, what is he jabbering about?"

Wingate laughed. "I think it's a jape," he said. "I fancy the ass has been taken in, though how he could be such an ass— Look here, Flippis, did somebody tell you that that was Coker's medical treatment that he was in the habit of taking?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Oh, my aunt!" "And you believed it?" gasped Wingate. "Of all the silly chumps—"

"Dear me!" said Theophilus. "If I have been misinformed, and the victim of an absurd joke, I am sure I am very very sorry."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It is not a laughing matter for the joker!" yelled Coker of the Fifth. "As for you, you jabbering baboon, you've been licked, and you'll do! I want to know who put you up to this."

Wingate staggered away, doubled up with merriment. That any fellow should be so simple as Theophilus had proved

himself to be was amazing, and Theophilus was evidently quite unable to see any comic side to the affair.

Coker grasped the youthful representative of the "Young Health-Seeker" by the shoulder and shook him.

"Who put you up to this?" he roared.

"Oh, Brown—Tom Brown!"

Coker started.

"Tom Brown of the Remove?"

"I suppose so."

"The New Zealand chap?"

"I really do not know; but certainly his name is Tom Brown," said Theophilus. "If he has deceived me, I consider—"

"There's only one Tom Brown at Greyfriars," said Potter.

Coker's eyes gleamed.

"And we'll make him browner," he said. "Come on!"

And, leaving Theophilus struggling to his feet, the three Fifth-Formers rushed away, on vengeance bent. At the end of the Remove passage they encountered Bolsover and Snoop and Vernon-Smith.

"Hallo!" said Bolsover, with a grin. "You chaps been taking a bath with your clothes on?"

"Have you seen Brown?" demanded Coker, without heeding the question.

"Tom Brown? He's in his study."

"Good!"

Coker & Co. rushed on. Bolsover major and his friends walked out into the Close, smiling serenely. They were on the worst of terms with Tom Brown and his study mates, and they did not care what happened in the New Zealand junior's study. That something would happen was quite certain.

Something did happen. Tom Brown received the bumping of his life before he could convince, as distinct from inform, Coker & Co. that he had not

thrown anything at them, nor told the simple Theophilus to throw anything over them.

When at last he did manage to convince them, the wrathful Fifth-Formers hurried away for Flippis. They cornered him at last, and, naturally, he failed to recognise Tom Brown as the junior who had asked him to soak Coker & Co. Bolsover wisely kept in the background.

The Head's guest had not had a very successful day for his first at Greyfriars. Some Removites thought that Flippis had given them as much amusement as it was possible to give them.

But there was worse to come

THE END.

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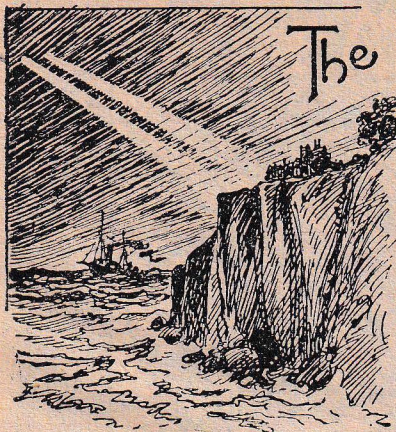
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RUPERT THURSTON, a young Englishman, and friend of Lord's.

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KARL VON KREIGLER, a mysterious professor, who has great power in Germany, and who holds the secret of Germany's great treasure-chest. Ferrers Lord has ferreted out one or two of the professor's secrets, and Von Kreigler realises that Lord is a very dangerous man. After this attack, Ferrers Lord despatches Rupert Thurston, with Honour and Ching Lung, with a message to Kreigler.

They are detained, but escape, after many exciting adventures. In the underground passages of the Schloss Schwarzburg, where they have been imprisoned, they discover a great treasure which Von Kreigler has been hiding from the Allies.

Thurston & Co. return to the yacht, where Ferrers Lord has been waiting for them. Hindlop, the operator of the Lord of the Deep has been instructed by Ferrers Lord to look out for a certain message to come through. He has been waiting for some time when the sudden flashing of the wireless attracts his attention. He turns to the instrument.

(Now Read On.)

Cornered!

"SHORT and sweet," said Hindlop, "One word and an initial only." He pencilled down the message, and put it in an envelope. "If you're thinking of shifting, Joe, you might take it up for me, and save my legs. It's for the Chief. I tried to get him on the 'phone just now, but he wasn't in his cabin."

The wireless was from Harold Honour, and was characteristic of the man in its brevity—"Working.—H." Joe climbed to the bridge of the yacht, and gave the envelope to the millionaire, who stood behind the wind-screen in dripping oilskins. A gusty head wind brought flurries of rain with it. Ferrers Lord nodded, and tossed the sheet of paper and the envelope into the air. They fluttered away into the murk astern.

"From Honour," said Ferrers Lord to Rupert Thurston, who was beside him. "He merely sends us the quite unnecessary information that he is working."

"Very unnecessary, for he is always working," said Thurston. "It also means that he arrived safely wherever he went to. Ugh! What a beast of a night!"

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On the port side a long line of misty lamps marked the promenade of some seaside town. The millionaire signalled for more speed.

"If you and the prince wish to go to London, I can drop you either at Dover or Deal," said Ferrers Lord. "I shall not need you for at least a fortnight."

"But Von Kreigler's spies," said Rupert Thurston.

"Yes, there's that risk," said the millionaire. "But if you were careful you could avoid them. I don't want to lose your company, but you may have business to look after, and it isn't fair to monopolise all your time. I shall need you when I am ready to make my final settlement with Goltzheimer and the professor."

"I can't speak for Ching, but personally I think I'd better stay with you and be safe, Chief," said Rupert Thurston. "It would be a great pity to spoil things."

"I'd prefer it, too. Unless we make some foolish blunder now, I have Von Kreigler and the general in the hollow of my hand. As long as they remain under the mistaken idea that your bodies lie under the ruins of Schloss Schwarzburg they are a couple of lost souls. Should they learn the truth, the end would be just the same, although not quite so dramatic. I want to make a complete surprise of it if possible. Do you mind speaking to Ching Lung? We shall be off Dover in half an hour. There's a nasty sea running, but not too heavy for the launch if he should want to go ashore."

The prince had no urgent business in London, and professed his willingness to stay on the yacht. On his way back Rupert Thurston met Hindlop. The little man was yawning lazily. He had another hour to go before the second operator relieved him.

"Any particular news up?" asked Rupert Thurston.

"Tottenham Hotspur won three goals to nothing, and Burnley drew with Preston North End," said Hindlop, yawning. "I wonder if they played in the dark. Fancy getting the results of a couple of football matches at this time of night. The other results came through about six o'clock. Somebody on the Caritania were asking about the Tottenham and Burnley result very anxiously, so I expect they had a sweepstake. A wonderful game, football, sir, when people in mid-ocean want to know what teams won. What else was it? Oh, yes. The Coalition candidate got in for Churston by a four hundred majority."

"That doesn't excite me very much, not nearly enough to keep me awake," said Rupert Thurston, with a laugh. "Good-night, Hindlop!"

"Good-night, sir," answered the operator. "Once I get between the blankets nothing will waken me, unless the boilers blow up. I'm as sleepy as a dormouse."

The operator went down to his room. It was oppressively hot there, and the yacht was pitching a little. Hindlop switched on the electric fan to create a draught and cool the air. Sparks crackled from his fingers when he touched the switch. The whole place seemed saturated with electricity, but Hindlop was used to that.

"Good-evening. Sparks, old dears!" said

the cheerful voice of Gan Waga. "All merry and brightness, hunk?"

Gan Waga was not a frequent visitor. He had meddled a little too much there one day, and had received an unexpected and painful electric shock that had taught him prudence. The operator was not displeased to see him. He had still forty minutes to remain on duty, and he was glad of a companion.

"There's not a fat lot of the merry and bright about me to-night, blubberbiter," he said. "I've been yawning my head off. What's your trouble? Who's chasing you now? I expect you've got Prout, Maddock, or O'Rooney on your track, and have waddled in here to hide. You're in mischief again, eh?"

Gan Waga grinned rather feebly. It was not his usual joyous and expansive grin, but the operator did not notice that.

"I not talks to those chaps now," he said, with a furtive glance about him. "Where we bound for now, hunk?"

"How the thump do I know? Why don't you go and ask the Chief?" said Hindlop. "And what does it matter to you where we're bound for? As long as you can stuff yourself with candles and butter and linsed oil, what difference does it make to your fatness whether we're going or coming back?"

The Eskimo closed the door, and put his back to it. His right hand came from behind him, and the astounded operator saw a curious-looking revolver pointed at his head.

"Drop that thing, Gan, and don't play the silly goat," said Hindlop. "There's no fun in japing with a gun, you ass! Drop it, you lunatic!"

It was not Gan Waga; it was another person! The amazing truth flashed through the operator's brain. There was the same thick-set body, the pyjamas, the bare feet, the olive skin, the coal-black hair; but it was not the Eskimo. The face was not broad enough, the eyes were not beady enough, and the oily hair was palpably a wig. Hindlop gave a gulp.

"What's the game?" he asked.

"Your safest game is to keep very quiet," said the man with the weapon. "The thing I have pointed at you may be a novelty to you. It fires a charge of gas, and makes very little noise. I was going to knock you over, and do the little job myself, but I've been unfortunate. Ferrers Lord never seems to do anything like other people do it. I don't understand that instrument. It's as new to me as this pistol is to you. If I'm compelled to give you a dose of gas and knock you out, I may get the hang of the thing before I'm disturbed. I don't want to knock you out, or use any violence at all if that can be avoided, so please keep your hands up and your mouth shut tight."

The man spoke quietly, with just a faint trace of a foreign accent. He pushed back the wig, showing the closely cropped fair hair beneath it.

"Don't ask for the gas," he went on. "Though it's not likely to kill you dead, it's beastly stuff. You'll be ill for weeks after it—a regular nervous wreck. I'm going to make you a big offer, a stupendous offer. Even if I'm captured no one will be the wiser, for I'll not give you away. Look here, man—look here!"

NEXT
FRIDAY!

"THE FOLLY OF ADOLPHUS!"

A GRAND STORY OF THE ROKWOOD CHUMS.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

He held out a bundle of banknotes. "A thousand pounds—a thousand pounds in your own English money! All for four words—four little words! Tap them off for me, and the stuff is yours."

"What are the words?" asked Hindlop, and licked his dry lips.

"Just these: 'Von Kreigler, Berlin—Alive.' Nothing more than that. It's that or the dope. Don't have the dope, for they tell me it's horrible. You might not get really over it all your lifetime. If I only understood that cursed machine, I wouldn't be wasting my breath on you. Not that I want to hurt you. I'm not an assassin, but a patriot. Don't imagine I'm taking these desperate risks for gain. It's for a cause which I know is a just and right cause, for the sake of my country. Will you send that short message, or must I shoot and try what I can do myself? There's no alternative, so make up your mind."

"What's the message, again?" said Hindlop, striving to gain time, for at any moment help might come.

"Only this," said the spy quickly. "'Von Kreigler, Berlin—Alive.' A thousand pounds for nothing, man, and your secret safe. Ferrers Lord will never know who sent it. I got aboard this yacht without being seen, and I can get off her again without being seen, so you're safe enough."

Hindlop blinked at the gaspistol, which still remained in a line with his head. He had plenty of courage. Had it been an automatic pistol, or a revolver, he would have bunched himself together and made a dive at the odd-looking interloper, trusting to his own quickness to dodge the bullet, and grapple with the man. But Hindlop had been gassed once during his soldiering days, and he had not forgotten the horror and agony of it. He was afraid of gas, but he did not intend to send the message, even if the worst happened.

"It can't be done," he said, folding his arms. "I'd like the money, but I can't do a thing—"

At that moment the bell of the telephone rang. The man took a step forward, driving the operator back into a corner. Dropping the notes, and still menacing Hindlop with the pistol, he lifted the receiver, and put it to his ear. Rupert Thurston was speaking from the bridge of the yacht.

"Are you still there, Hindlop?"

"Yes, sir," answered the spy, his eyes watching the operator.

"Orders from the Chief. When your second relieves you, tell him that if there are any messages to go out to-night he is to use the 'B' code."

"Yes, sir."

"That's all."

Hindlop was straining his ears intently, but he could hear no hopeful sounds, only the buzzing of the electric fan and the throbbing of the engines.

"You're a stubborn beast," said the spy. "In fact, there are two of us. I'm just as determined to send that message as you are determined not to send it."

"Then get on with it," said the operator grimly. "If you can work the thing, work it. You'd better be quick about it, for I'm going off duty in a few minutes."

"Yes, I heard something of the kind just now, when I answered the phone. I'm getting desperate. Will you, or won't you? I don't want to shoot."

"I tell you there's nothing doing!"

Hindlop fell back against the bulkhead. He felt no actual pain, only a dull sense of weight pushing against him. There was a sound like the bursting of an inflated paper bag, as the spy pulled the trigger of the pistol. He pressed his hand over his mouth and nostrils. Hindlop's arms dropped. He stared glassily with wide-open eyes that saw nothing, and then slid sideways. The man caught him, and let him down gently. Round the whirling fan were little grey wisps of vapour that were swiftly sucked into the ventilator. For a few seconds the spy bent over the unconscious man, and then turned to the instrument.

After a long scrutiny he wiped his perspiring forehead with his sleeve. The green lamp lighted up. The spy fitted the cap over his ears, and sat down. It was another message from the liner, Caritania, and not intended for the Lord of the Deep. Suddenly the spy uttered a nervous laugh. He thought he understood. He gave another glance at Hindlop over his shoulder. The operator still lay limp and motionless. Slowly the spy began to tap out his fateful warning.

"B-e-r-l-i-n—V-o-n K-r-e-i-g—?"

His hands were shaking, and his stained face was wet with perspiration.

"Berlin—Von Kreigler—A—"

The electric fan stopped whirring, and the light went out. The current had been cut off. The spy heard shouts. He started up from the chair.

The door was dashed open, and the light from a powerful electric torch streamed in on him.

"All right," he said, raising his hands above his head. "You've just beaten me by a second. I surrender! It's the fortune of war!"

Ching Lung stood in the doorway, with half a dozen men behind him.

The Prisoner!

BEFORE the war Adrian Luss had been one of Germany's most popular comedians. His fame had not been confined to Germany, for he was well known in all the European capitals, and the plump-like comedian had hosts of friends and admirers. Ching Lung knew him well. It was at the prince's rooms in the Arcombey, where he had dined with Ching Lung and Rupert Thurston, that he had given an imitation of Gan Waga so clever and lifelike that they had been convulsed with laughter. The war had shattered all such friendships. It had shown that even the most gifted Hun had the wild beast in him. Luss was eating his breakfast with a very good appetite when the sailor on guard outside his cabin opened the door to admit Ching Lung.

"Good-morning, your highness," said the German. "How's the wireless chap? I haven't hurt him, I hope."

"Oh, he'll recover, Luss," said Ching Lung. "I've just been along to see him, and he looks fairly lively. I say, Luss, how did you manage to get aboard?"

"That's my little secret, and I don't intend to betray it," said the actor. "What I want to know is how you happened to find me."

"You overdid it," said Ching Lung. "We knew Von Kreigler had plenty of spies about, though I wasn't aware that you had given up the stage to become a member of that doubtful fraternity. Gan Waga sold you. When he declared he had not been in the booby-hutch, and one of our men swore he had, something came into my mind like lightning—the memory of an evening in my rooms in London."

Luss poured out a cup of coffee and nodded.

"When I gave you an imitation of your Eskimo friend. Ah, yes! That fellow amused me so much that I made a study of him. That was the idea that came to me. I failed through bad luck and over confidence, perhaps. I was too sure of myself, prince, and I was tired of hiding in the dark. Only a second or two more, and I should have won. But it was a good job. You may not believe it, for I know you think that every German is a bloodthirsty monster, but it was against my wish that I gassed your operator. With me my country comes first. Hun, if you like, prince, but a patriot."

"I'm not sitting in judgment, Luss," said Ching Lung. "I'm not fond of your boss, Von Kreigler, but every man to his taste. He pays well, eh?"

"I don't work for money," said the German. "I was doing my duty. Can you tell me what Mr. Ferrers Lord intends to do with me now that I am captured?"

"That's the very last thing I could tell you, but you may be sure it will be nothing very severe. I fancy he is rather more amused than angry. That stuff you had in a bottle to give Hindlop did you a good turn."

"Ah, the antidote for the gas! Yes, that is good stuff. I am to be kept as a prisoner, then?"

"It will surprise me a good deal if you're not," said Ching Lung. "I don't know the full sentence, but you have been fined."

"Fined! What can you mean by that?"

The prince laughed.

"We picked up a thousand pounds in Bank of England notes on the floor of the wireless-room," he answered. "That sum is to be paid over to the operator as compensation. When I broke the news to him he was quite cheerful. He is very much obliged to you."

"What are you, then?" asked the German, glaring. "A gang of robbers? A fine, you call it. It is stealing, theft, piracy! It is the act of rogues!"

"I thought you did not work for money, but for the pure love of the Fatherland," said the prince, with another laugh. "And

don't call us names, Luss. I don't suppose Von Kreigler will miss that money. I'll send you a few cigars along for it. They'll only cost you a few hundred pounds apiece."

The dramatic capture of the spy had resulted in another close search of the yacht, for more of these undesirable gentlemen might be lurking on board. Luss had admitted that he was alone, but they did not place much reliance on his word. To Ferrers Lord even, he refused to tell how he had managed to smuggle himself into the yacht and where he had been hiding. It almost seemed that he had a confederate, that one of the crew was a traitor.

"No, I don't think that," said Ferrers Lord, when Thurston hinted at it. "All my men are loyal. Luss is a plucky fellow in his way."

"His trouble is a swelled head," said Ching Lung. "He makes a marvellous Gan Waga. He needn't have gone into the booby-hutch at all to show himself off, but he was so cocksure of his own abilities as a character actor that he couldn't help himself. I wonder if he's lying to us about the wireless."

"No; he is an excellent actor, but he was not acting when he told us that," said the millionaire. "He was angry and disappointed. If you had been a minute later he would have got in the word 'alive.' I am quite grateful to you, prince. Your initiative was almost an inspiration."

"An absolute inspiration," said Ching Lung. "I'm patting myself on the back about it. Of course, we had been speaking about spies, so I must have had them on my mind. When Gan told Prout he hadn't been in the booby-hutch all day, Prout's face was something to remember, for though Gan Waga is good at a fairy-tale, he'd never tell a deliberate lie. If Gan had not been there, his double or his ghost had been, I knew that. And all in a rush I remembered an evening long ago in my rooms. I remembered Adrian Luss waddling up and down, imitating Gan Waga till he made us roar. Gan to the very life, his waddle and his voice, and his grin, though not the full-sized one, for even Luss could not manage that."

"A sort of second-sight business," said Thurston. "It's almost incredible. How you could have even dreamed that Adrian Luss was about beats me!"

"I'm not attempting to explain it, old lad! I'm only giving you the facts!" said Ching Lung.

"I think you can't be well, and ought to consult a brain specialist," said Rupert Thurston. "Don't do things like that very often, or I shall get anxious about you. After imagining Luss, the rest is perfectly natural. You knew that his aim was to get a wireless through to Karl von Kreigler to inform him that we were very much alive, and kicking hard, and your thought would be to see that the wireless was safe. That's all as clear as the most translucent mud, but the first spasm, though a very useful one, is alarming. See a doctor and take something for it, Ching. It quite alarms me!"

They laughed, and Ferrers Lord went to his private room. There was a heavy mist on the sea, and the yacht was nosing her way cautiously through it at half speed, her siren grunting at intervals. Prout wiped the fog from his beard as he grasped the wheel. Barry O'Rooney joined him.

"Bedad, Tom!" said the man from Ballybunion. "O'ive had frightful dhreames! In fact, bhoy, O' was afraid to go to slape, for the minute that O' shut me oies there they were. Arrah, there was a clammy sweat on me noble brow, and me terrified heart bate loike fifty sledge-hammers! Awful!"

"By bhoney, if you'd cut out the pickles at supper, and eat slow instead of bolting your food like a hungry wolf, you wouldn't dream!" said Prout.

"Ut wasn't that, and O' don't know what ut was!" said Barry. "Phwat did O' have to ate except a morsel of porrk-pie and two mutton chops and a few spuds? Not enough to kape a canary aloive! Ugh! That horrid dhrame! There were two Gan Wagas—two! When O' shut me oies, I saw a brace!"

"By bhoney, that was some dream!" said Prout. "You must have suffered, Barry. Two Gan Wagas! You must have been glad when you woke up!"

"Och, glad is ut? O' was so happy, Tom, O' could have kissed a policeman, and ye want to be pretty merry and bright to do that!"

(To be continued next week.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 144.

A Rascal Foiled!

(Continued from page 5.)

"You—you confess?" he ejaculated. John Brown shrugged his shoulders. "Tell me!" exclaimed Erroll sternly. "Where is Cecil Mornington?" The cracksman laughed.

"By gad, I have played a bad hand!" said Gentleman Jim. "But the trump is still mine. Cecil Mornington is where he could not be found in weeks of searching. Listen to me! When he left school yesterday I followed him in the trap, and I met him on the road as he returned, and offered him a lift to the school. It was simple, was it not?"

"In the trap I took the road over the heath, and as soon as the boy grew suspicious a chloroform pad silenced him. There was no one to witness it. Where I placed him is my secret. I intended to take him food at night. He lies, bound, a prisoner in his hiding-place. If I am handed over he will perish of hunger. Take your choice." He laughed again.

"I will guide you to the place if you will give me half an hour before you speak," he said. "This is all I ask!"

The juniors looked at one another. It was their duty to hand the rascal over to justice. But a still nearer duty was to save poor little 'Erbert from the fearful fate that threatened him. As the cracksman had said, he held the trump card.

Erroll looked at his comrades. "Let it go at that," said Jimmy Silver at last.

"Then I am at your service," said Gentleman Jim coolly.

Six members of the Classical Fourth had failed to turn up in the Form-room for afternoon lessons.

Naturally, the master of the Fourth waxed wroth.

It was not till the Form was dismissed from lessons that a shout in the quadrangle announced the return of the missing juniors. Mr. Bootles whisked out of his study, thoughtfully taking a cane with him.

"Bravo, Jimmy! He's got him!" roared Conroy.

"'Erbert! Here he is!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. Six juniors, dusty from their long tramp, marched up to the schoolhouse, and in the midst of them, pale and worn, but looking very happy, was 'Erbert of the Second Form!

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Bootles. "You—you have found Mornington II. My dear boys, I excuse you for missing lessons, though it was very irregular—very irregular. Mornington secundus, where have you been all this time?"

'Erbert grinned.

"I been kidnapped, sir, by a rotten bloke, and 'id in a quarry!" he said—"that there new porter cove, sir—Brown!"

"Good heavens! Come to the Head!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

And Jimmy Silver & Co. a few minutes later had the pleasure of explaining to the astonished Head of Rookwood. Lattrey was not mentioned, but all the rest was told.

As the juniors left the study the Head picked up the telephone-receiver, and in a few minutes the hue-and-cry after Gentleman Jim had begun.

That evening, in Study No. 4, Mornington grinned as he took out his books to "swot." "I'm after that dashed scholarship, Erroll, an' I'm going to bag it if it turns my hair grey," he remarked. "I wonder, old scout, whether I've played the fool to-day, after all!"

But Erroll only smiled. "You've played the man!" he said. "Gentleman Jim made a mistake. Now, then, where's cheery old Xenophon?"

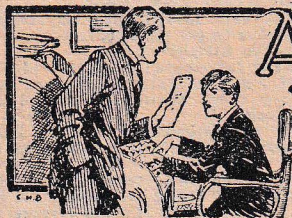
"Dareiou kai Parysatisdos gipnomiai paides duo—" grinned Mornington.

And the chums settled down to work.

THE END.

(For full particulars of next week's story see next column)

THE POPULAR.—No. 144.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

FOR NEXT FRIDAY!

I have in preparation a splendid budget of stories for next week's issue of the POPULAR. There will be another long, complete story dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, entitled:

"THE LAST STRAW!"

By Frank Richards.

This story deals further with the impossible Theophilus Flippis, who has caused such a sensation at Greyfriars with his weird hygienic ideas, and Flippis finds himself in hot water with both the masters and the juniors. The story is splendidly written, and Mr. Richards quite surpasses himself. If you want a good laugh you must not miss this story.

To follow this will be another tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood, which Mr. Owen Conquest has called:

"THE FOLLY OF ADOLPHUS!"

Our yarns of the merry Rookwood chums have always been up to a very high standard, but this, Mr. Conquest's latest, had topped them all. You simply must not miss reading this story, so I advise you to take the old precaution of ordering your copy of next week's issue well in advance.

BILLY BUNTER'S LATEST EFFORT.

A very important item in the programme is the grand four-page supplement, edited by the great and only William George Bunter, which will be funnier than ever. He is calling it a

SPECIAL "HOBBIES" NUMBER,

and it will contain some good contributions from the juniors of the three famous schools. Of course, there will be the usual contributions from the four fat subs, whose views on the subject of hobbies are both weird and wonderful, as you will see. Then there will be the conclusion of Ogilvy's story, "The Town Crier of Courtfield," which will be very funny indeed; and last, but not least, Dick Penfold comes forward with his usual column of poetry. In all you have a great feast of stories and articles to look forward to.

OTHER FEATURES.

There will be a further instalment of our grand serial of adventure, "The Invisible Raider," by Sidney Drew, and it will be as exciting as ever. I am also offering another FOOTBALL, and Ten Prizes of FIVE SHILLINGS each, in connection with our "POPLETS" COMPETITION No. 39.

A SPLENDID CHANGE FOR YOU!

"Poplets" Competition No. 38.

First Prize: A MATCH FOOTBALL.
Ten Prizes of Five Shillings.

Select two of the examples, and make up a sentence of TWO, THREE, or FOUR words having some bearing on the example. ONE of the words in your sentence must commence with one of the letters in the example.

1. All "Poplets" must be written on one side of a POSTCARD, and not more than two "Poplets" can be sent in by one reader each week.

2. The postcards must be addressed "Poplets" No. 38, The "Popular," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

3. No correspondence may be entered into in connection with "Poplets."

4. The Editor's opinion on any matter which may arise is to be accepted as final and legally binding. This condition will be strictly enforced, and readers can only enter the competition on this understanding.

5. I guarantee that every effort will be thoroughly examined by a competent staff of judges, PROVIDED that the effort is sent in on a POSTCARD, and that it is received on or before October 27th.

Examples for this week:

- Grundy Singing.
- In Clover.
- Cards with Lattrey.
- Fancying Himself.
- Introducing a Stranger.
- Mauly's New Waistcoat.
- Dreams and Realism.
- Nearing the End.
- Too Thin.
- Would-be Hero—
- Dealing in Finance.
- Past Believing.

Don't forget! Another FOOTBALL and TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS next week!

Result of Competition No. 30.

- S. Lonsterdene, 33, Charles Street, Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts.
- Harry W. E. Thom, 26, Ruvigny Gardens, Putney, S.W. 15.
- F. W. Elliston, 9, Cantrell Road, Bow, E. 3.
- Percy Lynch, 8, Greenhough Street, Ancoats, Manchester.
- A. Baker, 20, Green Lane, Stoke Newington, N. 16.
- Ernest Denyer, 13, Lyons Cottages, Dorking, Surrey.
- A. Reeves, 86, Lancaster Road, East Ham, E. 6.
- Bessie Stobart, 5, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon.
- Jessie Bassett, 453, Dudley Road, Wolverhampton.
- Lilian Rapley, 1, Dene Street Gardens, Dorking, Surrey.

Your Editor.



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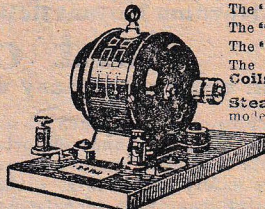
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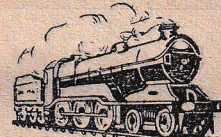
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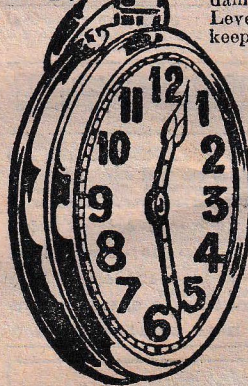
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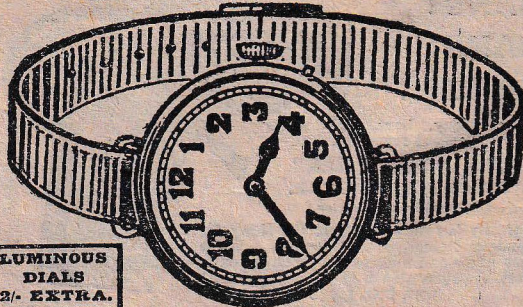
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