£10 in Prizes Every Week—See Page 91!

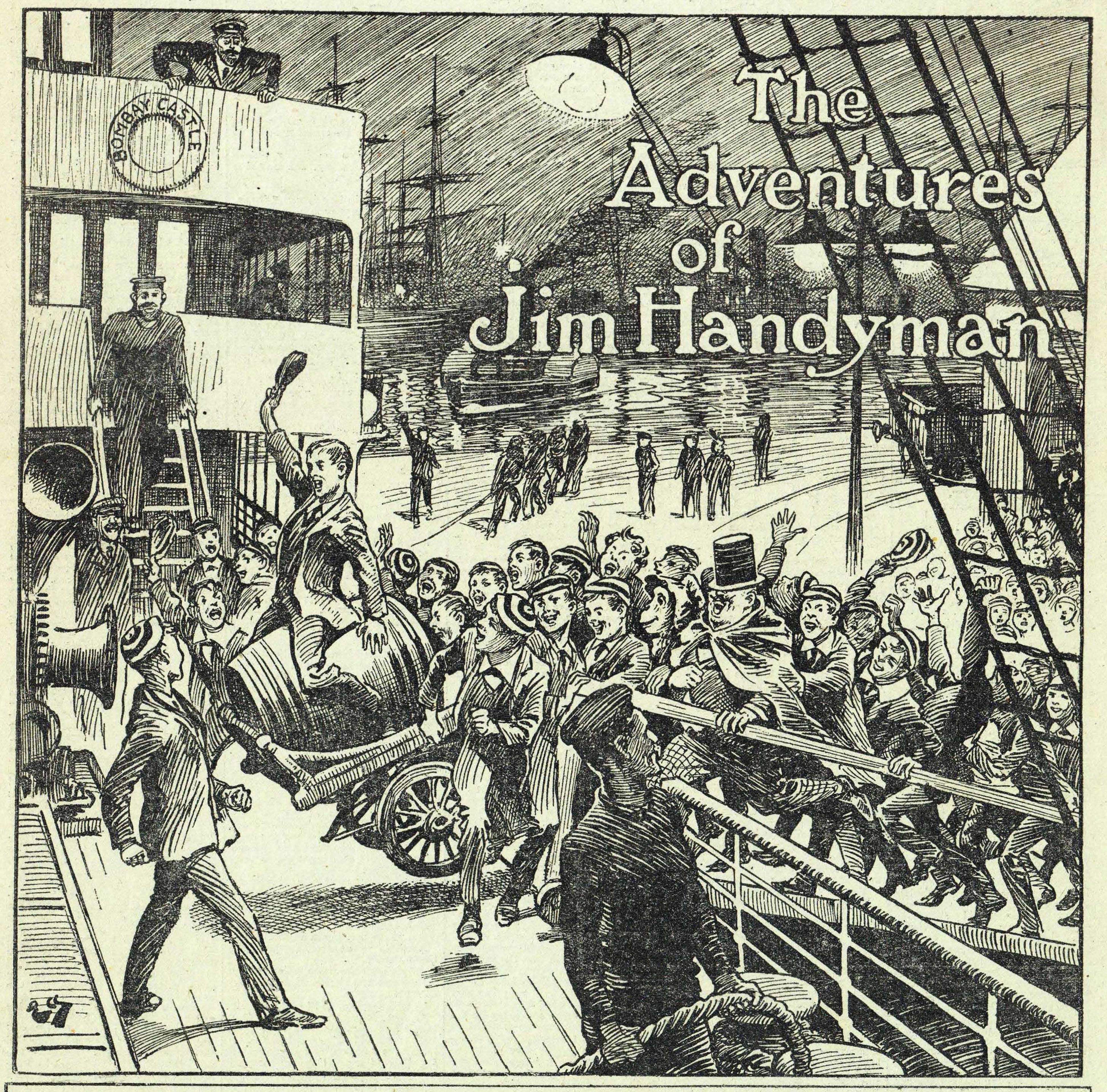
THE BOYS THENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

No. 1,029. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending February 26th, 1921.

A Grand New Yarn of Dick Dorrington Starts To-day!



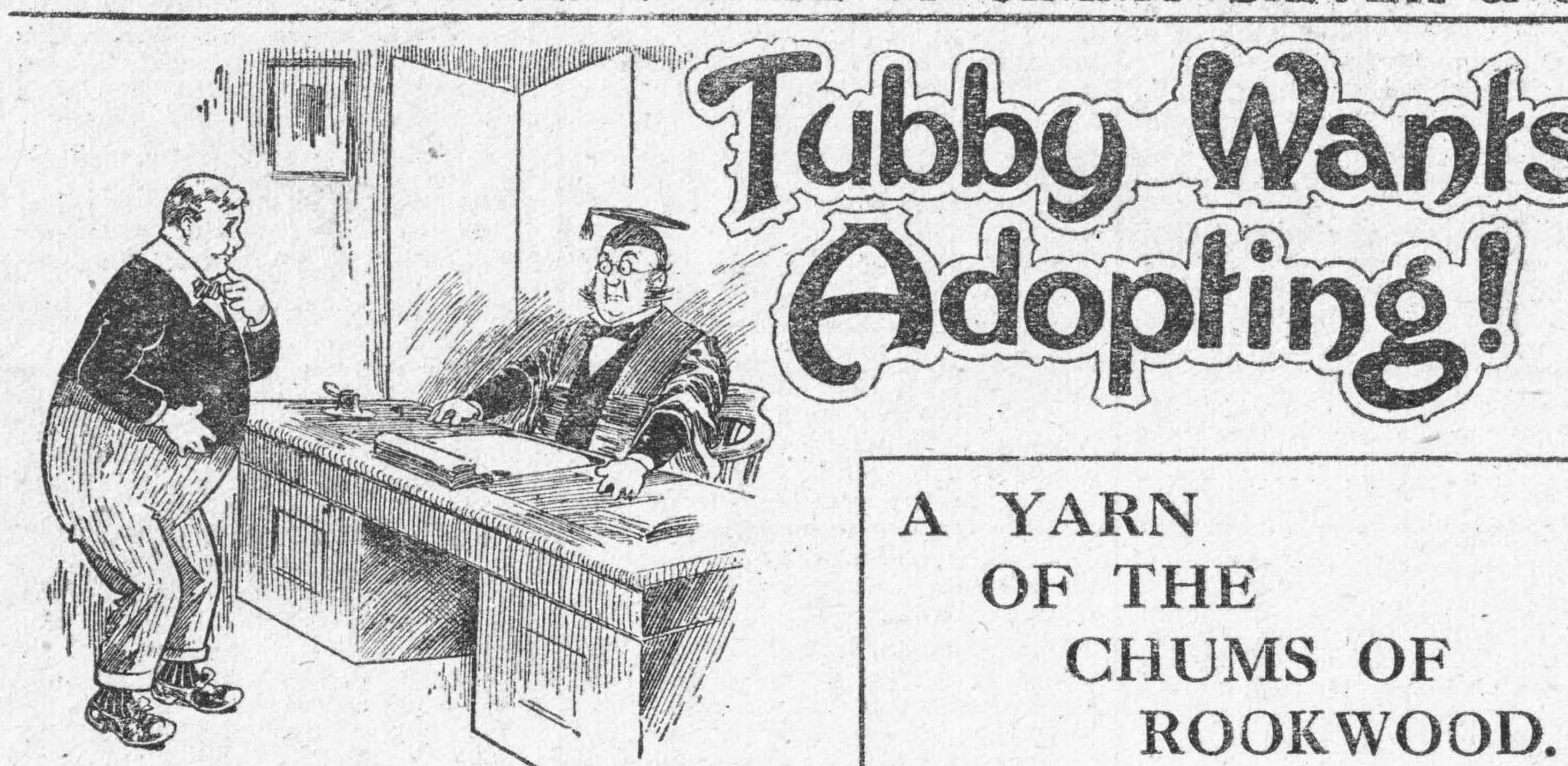
ALL ABOARD!

Just as the old schoolship was about to cast off, a barrow was raced on board and a crowd of juniors following it, among whom were also Cecil, the orang-outang, and Ni. Jollibeis, the new French master. With three yelps of her syren the Bombay Castle started on what was to be one of the most adventurous trips she had yet undertaken.

A GRAND COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.

Fublished

Every Monday



The 1st Chapter Being Nice to Bootles !

"Muffin!" said Mr. Bootles, blinking over the Fourth Form through his glasses. "Muffin is not - ah present!"

Muffin wasn't.

Mr. Bootles was a few minutes late in taking his Form that morning, and all the rest of the Fourth were in their places; but Tubby Muffin was conspicuous only by his absence.

"Silver," said Mr. Bootles, "do you know where—ah—Muffin is?" "No. sir," answered Jimmy Silver "I saw him near the Head's garden just before the bell."

Mr. Bootles shook his head

seriously. "We will - ah - proceed without Muffin," he said. "I shall-ah-speak to Mussin severely. But we will-ah -- proceed without him."

And they proceeded. Everybody was on his best behaviour in the Fourth Form room at Rookwood School that morning.

Master and pupils seemed equally pleased with one another.

Indeed, the excellent behaviour of

the Fourth Form had been remarkable for some days past.

They were so good that Mr. Bootles hardly knew them; for it must be ! confessed that, as a general rule, they were not specially and strikingly good. I

But they were losing Mr. Bootles | soon-that was the explanation. Only for a few days more was little, kindhearted Mr. Bootles to wield the pointer in the Fourth Form room. For Mr. Bootles had come into a fortune, and he was a millionaire; and he was keeping on his duties ! for a little longer only to oblige the Head until a new master was appointed. Jimmy Silver & Co. had always liked Mr. Bootles, and they desk." were determined that when he left ! Rookwood he should take with him only pleasant recollections of the Fourth Form.

So anything in the nature of a jape, or pulling Mr. Bootles' leg, was severely frowned upon by the Fistical; Four, and for his last week at Rookwood Mr. Bootles' lines were falling | in pleasant places.

Jimmy Silver mentally resolved to shake Tubby Muffin for being late in class that morning. At such a time, Jimmy considered, even Tubby might have been punctual.

But the Fourth Form had not proceeded far, when the Form-room door opened and Reginald Muffin scuttled in.

Mr. Bootles turned towards the fat Classical, and all the juniors stared at

was red and breathless. But that was | could guess his motive. Tubby not the remarkable thing about him. | Muffin, since Mr. Bootles had become What was remarkable was that he a millionaire, had been thinking carried in one fat hand an enormous | chiefly of Mr. Bootles' posy of flowers.

were very handsome flowers, and evi- himself somehow into Mr. Bootles' dently expensive at that season of the | good graces to such an extent that the year. Where the impecunious Tubby | millionaire Form-master would be inhad obtained that handsome bouquet | duced to adopt him. That wonderful was a mystery. But there it was, scheme had been working in Tubby s

as astonished as the juniors.

"Muffin--" "Yes, sir?" gasped Tubby. "Am -am I-l-l-late, sir?"

"You are six minutes and a half late. Muffin!"

"Sorry, sir! I--punishments—ah—but I cannot en- | clining years? courage slackness and-ah-unpunctuality. I---"

"What?" "Some - some flowers, sir--" the most important point.

stammered Tubby. why you had brought that - that | desk, and quite brightened up the enormous quantity of - ah - flowers | dusky old Form-room. into the Form-room," said Mr. Muffin-"

"I-I thought you'd like some fresh flowers for your desk, sir," said Tubby minutes late getting them, sir. I hope you'll excuse me?"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles.

He was touched. He was well aware that all his pupils were being very good because he was going away: but, really, this houghtfulness on the part of Reginald Muffin was something out of the common.

Moreover, the flowers were evidently from a hothouse, and ex- that---"

—far from that. thoughtful of you, Muffin," said Mr. | boys." Bootles. "I shall—ah—excuse your unpunctuality on this occasion. You how sad it will be when you're gone may place the flowers on my desk. | away, sir," said Tubby brightly. Such things are too expensive---"

"I - I got them rather cheap,

about to leave you, is-is gratifying; he did not want to underdo it. The but I should not like you to expend position was really a delicate one, your pocket-money recklessly." requiring all Reginald Muffin's tact. "I-I'm glad you like them, sir" Lessons proceeded in the Fourth

said Mr. Bootles graciously. "You hour later, there came a sudden may—ah—find something—a jar or— I thump at the door, and it was hurled or dish, or some such receptacle to open. It was Mr. Fripp, the Head's contain water, and place them on my | gardener, who appeared in the door-

"Oh, yes, sir."

again, with a beaming smile on his to efface his portly figure behind

Tubby Muffin arranged the flowers. He had to leave the Form-room to find a jar and fill it with water, and that task and the arranging of the flowers occupied him while Latin was "on" The astute Tubby escaped his construe by that kindly act.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were not nearly so touched as Mr. Bootles by Tubby's thoughtfulness.

Certainly he had not bought that bouquet, for Tubby was known to be in his usual hard-up state; only that morning he had made an unsuccessful search up and down the Fourth for a "bob" in the way of a loan. And the bouquet was worth at least ten shillings. Where he had obtained Tubby Muffin was in haste, and he | it they could not guess; but they "quids." And the astounding scheme It was a gigantic bunch, and they | had entered his fat brain of wedging and the Fourth-Formers stared at it. I brain for some time, and he had taken Mr. Bootles blinked at it. He was I counsel on the subject, evoking howls of laughter in the Fourth Form passage thereby.

But Tubby was not to be deterred by ill-timed merriment.

Mr. Bootles was a bachelor, and Fourth knew now whence had come what was more natural than that he | that beautiful bouquet. should like to adopt a handsome, well-"I fear, Muffin, that I must give | mannered, graceful, creditable sort of | frowning portentiously. you fifty lines!" said Mr. Bootles. | chap like Tubby, to be the comfort | "I am - ah - unwilling to impose of his age and the prop of his de- flowers from the Head's garden?"

considered that it would be quite a I Mr. Bootles.

"I've brought you some flowers, I good thing for Mr. Bootles. And there was no doubt that it would be a good thing for Tubby-which was

Hence the beautiful bouquet that "I was about to ask you, Mushn, gleamed and glowed on Mr. Bootles'

Muffin dropped into his place in the Bootles, blinking at him. "Really, Form-when it was too late to be called on to construe—with a satisfied

"Old Bootles is no end bucked-Mussin. "It - it made me a few what?" he whispered to Jimmy Silver.

> "Br-r-r-r!" was Jimmy's reply "Did you think he gave me a rather affectionate look, Lovell?" whispered Tubby.

Arthur Edward Lovell snorted.

"I say, Raby--"

"Shut up!" grunted Raby. Tubby Muffin looked indignant, and turned to Newcome for sympathy.

"Newcome, old chap, did you think pensive, and Tubby was not wealthy . "I fear that someone is talking an the class," said Mr. Bootles gently.

"This is very-ah-kind and-and You must not talk in class, my dear "I-I was only saying to Silver, sir,

But you must not—ah—do this again. | "Ahem! You must not talk in class, Muffin."

And Tubby Mussin gave it up. He felt that perhaps his last remark was "I am glad of that, Muffin. This overdoing it a little, and he did not - ah - kindly thought, when I am | want to overdo it. At the same time,

"I like them very much, Mussin." Form room till, about a quarter of an way, with a frowning and excited face, and at sight of him Tubby Mr. Bootles turned to his class | Mussin gave a faint squeak, and strove Jimmy Silver.

The 2nd Chapter. Not Quite a Success!

Mr. Bootles glanced at Mr. Fripp in surprise. It was quite unheard of for lessons to be interrupted in this

"Really, sir--" began Mr. Bootles, with dignity.

"Oh, there they are!" exclaimed the gardener, as his eyes fell on the handsome bouquet glimmering on Mr. Bootles' desk. "That young rascal Muffin, sir--''

"What?" "I saw him!" exclaimed Mr. Fripp breathlessly. "He didn't know I saw him. The young rip, sir! Muffin!! Young rascal! Stealing flowers out o' my 'ot 'ouses, almost under my very

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.

"Which," continued Mr. Fripp, "I've had trouble before, with the boys pinching flowers from the 'Ead's garden, sir, and me responsible. But going into the 'or'ouse, sir, almost under my very nose, sir--"

"One moment, Mr. Fripp! Muffin!" " Oh !"

"Oh dear!"

"Stand up, Muffin!"

Tubby Muffin dragged himself up in the midst of a smiling class. The Bootles was not smiling. He was

"Muffin, did you obtain those "Oh, sir!"

stuttered Tubby. "I-I didn't know he could see me, I sir. I-I mean, I---'

Three Halfponce

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence! Mussin, how dare you take flowers from the hothouse? You -you are a young rascal, Muffin! Mr. Fripp, kindly remove the flowers

at once. I shall cane Muffin severely." "Ow!" Mr. Fripp, still wrathful, carried off the flowers, and Mr. Bootles picked

up a cane "Come here, Muffin!" it, Tubby!" murmured | phiz if you did!" Lovell, with a grin. "Do you think

he looks affectionate now, Tubby?" Tubby Muffin groaned. He rolled out before the class in a state of dismay. It was not only the caning, though Tubby hated caning. But the effect of his thoughtful, kind action had been quite spoiled. Raiding the Head's garden was a serious matter. Mr. Bootles swished his cane.

"Hold out your hand, Muffin!"

"Oh, sir! I-I--" "Your hand, sir!" rapped Mr. Bootles.

Tubby jumped, and held out his

Swish! "Yoooop!"

"Silence, Mussin! Go to your place!" rapped Mr. Bootles. "Oh dear!"

place, squeezing a fat hand under a podgy arm.

He was met by a grinning class. In all the Fourth, Classical, and Modern, there was no sympathy for Reginald Muffin.

He sat dolorous until morning lessons were over.

But his fat brain was working. When the Fourth were dismissed Tubby remained in the corridor near the door of the Form-room.

Mr. Bootles came out a few minutes later, and he was surprised to see Tubby Muffin wiping his eyes with his sleeve, and gasping.

a very kind and tender heart, and he was moved.

Muffin!" said "Ahem! Bootles.

gave him a grieved blink. "Ow! Boo! Wow!"

"My dear-ah-Muffin!" said Mr. Bootles. "I am sorry—ah—that I was compelled to cane you this morning. Your-ah-fault was very serious, though I am sure your-ahmotive was good. Pray do not-ahcry, my boy!"

"I-I'm not crying because of the caning, sir," snuffled Muffin. "Oh! Ah! Indeed! Then why

are you-ah-crying, Muffin?" "Bub-bub-because-" " Well?"

"B-b-b-because you're going away,

"Bless my soul!"

That answer was really heaping coals of fire upon Mr. Bootles' head. He looked at Tubby curiously, very curiously.

Then, without a word, he turned and walked away. His gown rustled down the passage and disappeared. As soon as he had turned the

corner Tubby's weeping ceased suddenly, and he grinned.

"Rather neat that, what?" he asked, addressing Putty Grace across the passage.

"You fat fraud!" answered Putty: "I say, Putty, old man, if you'd help me You've got a lot of tact," said Muffin, lowering his voice. "I--I've always admired your tact. Putty. Look here! You help me out, and I'll stand you something when-

"Help you? How?" asked Putty.

"I-I believe old Bootles likes me, said Tubby. "He can't really help that, can he? At home I'm considered a lovable boy." Putty gasped.

"They must have weird ideas about lovable boys at your home," he remarked. "What on earth makes them think that?"

"Oh, don't be a beast, Putty! Think of poor old Bootles, too. All alone in the world-"

"He won't be alone in the world when his relations hear that he's become a millionaire," grinned Putty. "He will be considered the flower of the family. Everybody will remember what a nice boy he was, and how they always thought he would turn out well. Don't you worry about Bootles. He will be anything but

Being old and rusty and crusty. and all that," pursued Tubby, "don't it stand to reason that what he wants to make him happy is a son who's fond of him, and admires him-an adopted son, I mean? I-I wouldn't Bootles, and-and inheriting the seen my French lines, Muffin?"

million pounds. I'd sacrifice even the name of Mussin for Mr. Bootles' sake!" said Tubby heroically. "And it's something, I can tell you, to give up an old historic name--"

"Ye gods!" said Putty. "I think I've heard about the Muffins. Aren't they closely connected with the

Crumpets?" "But the thing is to get Mr. Bootles to think of it," said Tubby. "I-I can't very well suggest it myself, can I?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I can fancy Bootles"

"You could suggest it, Putty."

"What?"

"Suppose—suppose you got talking

with him, and-and mentioned how

fond I am of him," said Tubby. "Tell him how I keep on crying in the study because he's going away-" "But you don't." "what does that matter, fathead?

I'm saying what you're to tell Bootles. Tell him you're nervous about my health if he goes, becausebecause I've come to look on him as a second father."

"Great Scott!" "Then you can mention that old bachelors have adopted chaps, you know, and-and then Bootles may

jump at the idea-" "More likely to jump at me, I think," chuckled Putty. "Well,

Tubby Muffin crawled back to his Tubby, I'll do what I can for you." Muffin brightened up. "You'll help me, Putty?"

"Certainly! I won't go to Bootles and tell him lies for you, but I'll do what I can. I'll pull your ear for being a fat, little lying spoofer!" "What?" yelled Tubby. "Yarocoh!

Leggo, you beast!" Putty Grace dutifully pulled Tubby's fat ear, a long and a strong pull. Then he walked away, smiling, feeling that he had done his best for

He left the fat Classical rubbing his ear, and roaring.

Tubby did not request Putty The Form-master paused. He had | Grace's assistance in his little scheme any more. He was still determined to get himself adopted-if possible-Mr. by the millionaire Form-master; but it was clear now to his fat mind that Tubby removed the sleeve, and he would have to do it on "his lonely

> The 3rd Chapter. Toffee and Trouble!

"Tubby! What the thump--" Jimmy Silver & Co. came into the end study for tea-hungry after football practice in a keen February wind. The end study was not vacant, as the Fistical Four expected; it was already occupied. Reginald Mussin was there, and he was very busy.

There was a big fire in the grate, which was agreeable enough. Tubby Muffin was bending over the fire, stirring the contents of a frying-pan. He blinked round, rather startled, as Jimmy Silver & Co. tramped in.

"What's the game?" demanded Lovell. "I-I thought you fellows were at footer--"

"Too dark for any more footer, fathead! What the thump are you doing in our study?" asked Raby. "I'm making toffee."

"Can't you make toffee in your own

study?" demanded Jimmy Silver. Tubby Muffin stirred his concoction in the frying-pan before replying. "You see, that beast Higgs might knock the pan over," he said, "and Jones minor would want some of the toffee. And Putty would very likely

make a fuss about my using his fresh half-pound of butter. He's mean!" "If you used my butter, there'd be a fuss, I know that!" remarked Newcome. "I'd scalp you, if I were

Putty! Take your rubbish away!" "Don't interrupt me, you fellows!" said Tubby. "You can wait for tea, I suppose?"

"We're hungry!"

"Don't be greedy, you know!" urged Muffin. "I never could stand a fellow who was greedy! Just wait patiently. I shall be done in ten minutes. This is rather special toffee -for Bootles!"

"Bootles!" yelled the Fistical Four, in a breath.

Tubby nodded and grinned. "Yes. Rather a bright idea-what? It came into my mind quite suddenly. I was thinking how rotten it was to be stony, and that I'd like some toffee, and then I thought of Bootles. Youknow how fond I am of Bootles! Such a nice old man, you know; got such a kind face!" said Tubby.

"Br-r-r-" "He can't help being an old fright." said Tubby. "Chap must make allowances. I like him no end, you know, and if he adopts me, I shall remember you fellows!"

"Some ass has moved the impot I left on the table!" said Raby. Tubby thought it a good idea. He "Without permission?" thundered even mind taking the name of "Fifty lines-for Mossoo. Have you

the frying-pan--"

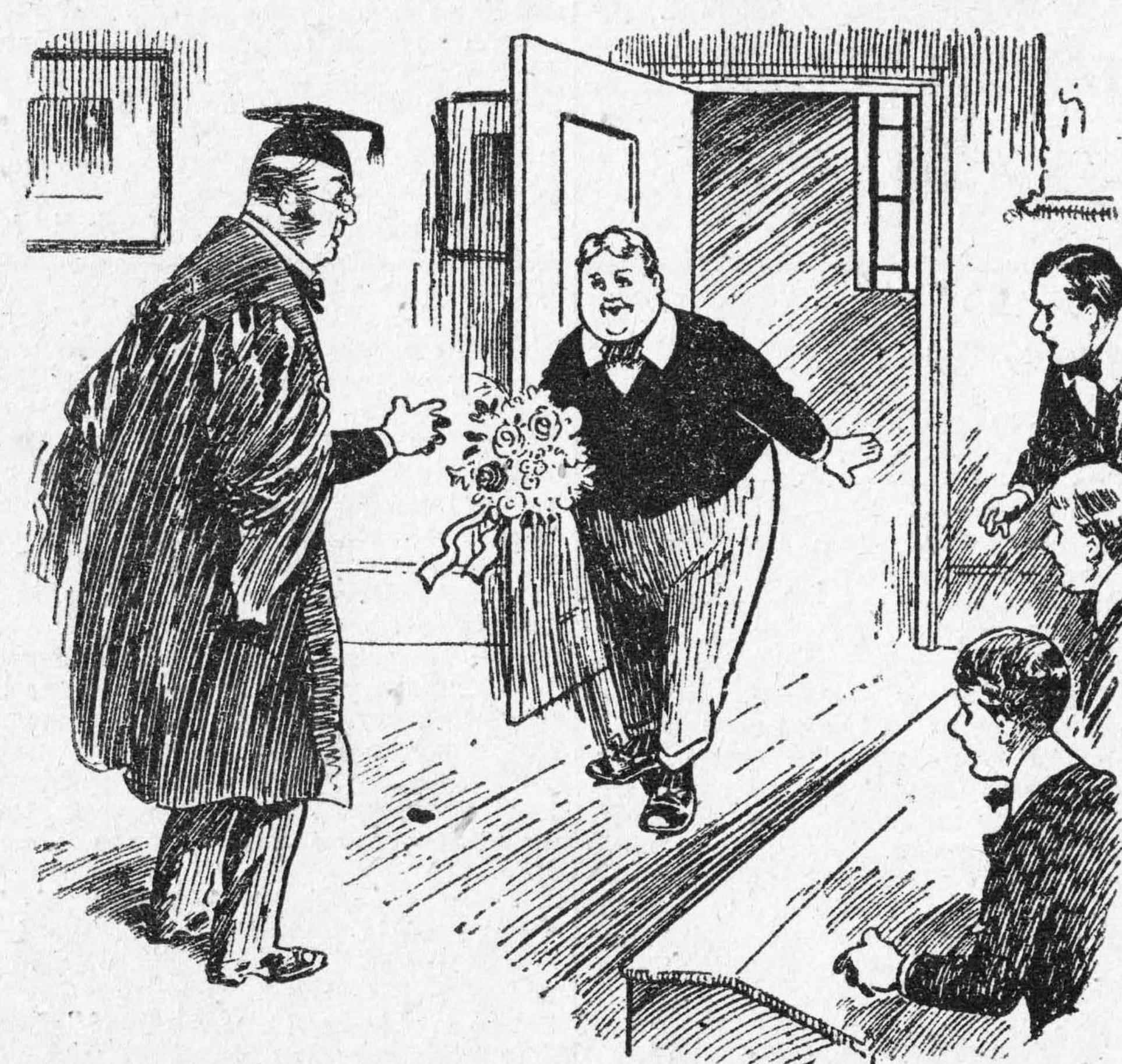
Raby gave a roar.

-I-I'll---''

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy cared much for toffee, anyway.

"I-I used something to clean out | for Mr. Bootles!" pleaded Muffin. | "You fellows would like old Bootles to have some really ripping butter-"You've used my French impot to | toffee, wouldn't you? I-I thought clean out the frying-pant You've it would please him. I-I must say given me fifty silly lines of rotten | you're heartless, considering that Henriade to do over again! Why, I | Bootles is going away--"

Peele interrupted Tubby Muffin. "Keep off!" shrieked Tubby Peele did not feel Mr. Bootles' ap-Muffin. "You'll upset the toffee! proaching departure very keenly; and an extent? Tubby's own fat heart Putty hasn't any more butter, and perhaps he thought that a middle-Peele hasn't any more sugar--" aged Form-master wouldn't have



TUBBY'S PEACE OFFERING! Tubby scuttled into the form that was usual-but what was unusual was the large posy of flowers he held in his hand.

Raby. "Fifty lines of Henriade | the study, and collared Mussin, and | sugar, Peele," he said scornfully. to do over again! I'll spiflicate | bestowed upon the fat youth a series |

alarm.

But the exasperated Raby didn't keep off; he grasped Tubby Muffin by the collar, and shook him vigorously. As Tubby was holding | the handle of the frying-pan, Flynn. "Give him some for me! balancing it on the fire, the result | Me illigant syrup all gone! Give him was disastrous—to the toffee. It some for me!" swamped over the side of the pan, and there was a hissing and spluttering and roaring in the grate.

Tubby. "Look at my toffee!"

Shake, shake! "Ha, ha, ha!"

"There!" gasped Raby. "Now you won't take a fellow's lines to clean a frying-pan next time-"

going to give to Bootles!" wailed Tubby Muffin, surveying the blackening wreck in the fire in utter dismay. Putty Grace looked in at the door-

-- Oh, here he is!"

"Gone! Burnt! Spoiled! Raby, | And, with that direful threat, the you rotter, you'll have to pay for hapless Tubby rolled away, disthat toffee!"

"Jolly nearly put the fire out!" growled Lovell. "Gerrout of the way, Mussia! I want to put the kettle on!"

"Where's my butter?" shouted

Putty Grace. Tubby Mussin pointed to the blackening sticky mass in the grate. "There!" he answered. "And Peele's sugar and Flynn's syrup-all

wasted!" "Why. I'll--"

Before the indignant Putty could finish, he was pushed aside by I'm sure you're welcome to it!"

another junior, who stared in at the Reggie- blinked at him. This Classical Fourth. Peele's face was red and wrathy.

"Muffin-here he is! He's bagged stared at Peele in astonishment. my sugar! If he's given you fellows my sugar, you can hand it out--"

"Ha, ha, ha! We shall have Flynn like Bootles?" after his syrup next!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Muffin, you fat burglar,

"Arrah, and was it Muffin, then?" exclaimed Flynn's voice, as he looked in over Peele's shoulder. "Muffin. ye thate of the world--"

"Take him out into the passage to slaughter him!" said Lovell. "You can't kill pigs in this study!"

"My sugar--" "My butter--"

"My syrup---" "I-I say, I-I was making toffce he gasped.

you upset that lot!" | lost, he felt entitled to take it out of | already full of importance. "I'm going to squash him!" roared | Muffin's fat skin. So he charged into of terrific thumps, which caused "Keep off!" yelled Tubby, in Tubby's anguished yells to ring the butter, Putty." length of the Fourth Form passage. "Fathead!" was Putty's reply.

Thump, thump, thump, thump! "Yow-owcocoop! Help!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give it to the baste!" howled

Thump, thump, thump! "Here, that will do, Peele!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Enough's "Ow! You silly ass!" shrieked as good as a feast, you know! Don't be a bully!"

Thump, thump! "Yaroooooop!"

With Raby's help, Reginald Muffin got out of the study-in a heap. Putty, Peele, and Flynn all made "My toffee-my toffee that I was | it a point to tread on him as they | walked away. The door of the end study slammed on him.

Tubby Muffin sat, and gasped for

breath.

consolate.

The 4th Chapter.

Glorious News for Muffin!

"Muffin, old chap!" Cyril Peele's voice was soft and silky; but Muffin looked round in alarm. Study No. 2 were at prep when Peele looked in.

But Peele's expression was disarming. He smiled sweetly at Tubby

"I haven't come about the sugar," he said "Never mind that, Reggie.

was a change from Peele's mode of address at their last meeting. Higgs and Jones minor and Putty Grace

"What's the game?" asked Putty. "Has Tubby come into a fortune,

"Not exactly that," said Peele blandly. "But I suppose he will come into the same fortune some day, when Bootles adopts him." "Ass! As if Bootles would!"

"That's all you know," said Peele mysteriously.

Tubby Mussin started. If the millionaire Form-master had decided to adopt the affectionate Tubby, certainly that would account for Peele's changed and honeyed manner.

"Has he-has he said anything?"

He jumped up from the table. when such a beatific possibility had | grub alone!" dawned upon Tubby's horizon? Was it possible that his blandishments had had their destined effect on the Formmaster? That touching scene in the corridor, for instance. Had it really touched Mr. Bootles' heart to such throbbed.

."He wants you in his study," said Peele.

"I-I say, that may only mean a licking," said Tubby anxiously. "He was reading a big law-book,"

said Peele. "A-a law-book--"

"Yes, and it was opened at "Adopted Infants."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tubby. "Of course. I don't know what he intends," said Peele. "I may have my own suspicions. Because what he

"Wha-at did he say, Peele?" "Well, he asked me- But perhaps I oughtn't to repeat it-" "I-I say, go on old chap-do go

on!" gasped Tubby. "Well, he asked me whether you had any brothers at home-"

"D-d-did he?" "And when I said 'Yes,' he said, 'Ah, then, perhaps Muffin's parents would-ah-consent to his being adopted by-ah-a man of extensive

"He-he-he said that, Peele?" "Of course, he didn't exactly say what he meant by it," said Peele gravely. "I drew my own conclusions. Muffin, old chap, I hope you don't bear any malice about that sugar. I really beg your pardon! I-I hope you'll ask me to see you in your new home, when you're

quite humble and pathetic.

Tubby smiled.

He drew his fat little figure up to its full height-which was not very extensive. His glance at Peele was lofty-patronising. The prospective Silver. "Mind the toffee, Raby! | Peele wanted his sugar for tea; | adopted son of a millionaire was an Our butter and augar will go next, if and, as his sugar was irretrievably important person, and Tubby was

"You were cheeky about the

"I-I was--" stammered Peele. "You were cheeky about the

"Don't be impertinent, Grace." "What?" yelled Putty.

"I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to take any further notice of you, Grace, when I'm a millionaire. sha'n't be snobbish, of course. But a fellow must draw the line somewhere. You will be hardly classy enough for my new surroundings."

"Why, I-I-" gasped Putty. Tubby Muffin, with a contemptuous sniff, rolled out of the study. In the passage he came on the Fistical Four. Tubby Muffin passed them with his fat little nose in the air. Jimmy Silver & Co. stared after him.

"What's the matter, idiot?" called out Arthur Edward Lovell.

Muffin paused for a moment to look the Fistical Four up and down with great contempt.

"Don't be cheeky!" he said. "Yah! Cads!" he spluttered. "I "Mind your manners when you speak "Have you fellows seen a fat jolly well won't lend you anything to me, Lovell! You'd better take villain with half a pound of butter | if Mr. Bootles adopts me! I'll rattle | care, I can tell you, if you want to "My toffee!" wailed Tubby. you. Yah!" my pocket and laugh at continue to know a millionaire's adopted son!" "My hat!"

> Tubby rolled on victorious. On the stairs he met Mornington and Erroll.

"Hallo, Tubby looks chippy!" remarked Mornington "Anybody lent you a tanner, Tubby?" Sniff!

"Keep your distance, please!" said Muffin.

"Eh?" "I decline to be familiar with poor rotters like you, Morny!"

Tubby rolled on-rather hastilyfor Mornington, astonished as he was, was drawing back his boot. In high feather, the fat Classical pur-

sued his way to Mr. Bootles' study. Possibly he would have been a little less elated if he had heard what was said in Study No. 2 after his departure. Putty Grace and Jones and Higgs were all looking very suspiciously at Peele.

"Look here, Peele!" said Higgs. "What's this blessed spoof? Tell us what's really happened in Bootles' study." Peele raised his eyebrows.

"How should I know?" he asked. "I haven't been there." "You-you haven't been there

"But you told Muffin-" ejaculated Jones minor.

Peele shrugged his shoulders. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Higgs.

"If the fat rotter doesn't want his object. I want to meet all your Prep was forgotten. What was prep, | leg pulled, he should leave a chap's | wishes-daddy."

> "Ha, ha, ha!" And Cyril Peele strolled, smiling, out of the study.

The 5th Chapter. Declined Without Thanks!

Mr. Bootles glanced up as a tap came at his door, and Tubby Mustin's beaming face was disclosed as it opened.

"Ah, Muffin!" said Mr. Bootles. "You may come in, Muffin!"

Tubby rolled in. He gave the Form-master a very affectionate smirk, as he stood facing him, but Mr. Bootles did not appear to recognise that it was an affectionate smirk. He started "Bless my soul! Are you ill,

Muffin?" "Nunno, sir!"

"Your expression was-ah-extraordinary!" said the puzzled gentleman. "You are sure you have no pain?"

"Oh, no! N-no, sir! Not at all." "Very good. What do you want with me. Muffin?"

"I-I've come, sir."

"Quite so, but what for?" "I-I've always liked you, sir." said Muffin. "I--I always looked on you as a sont of father, sir!"

"What?" "I did, sir. I never thought you a beast, sir!" said Tubby confidentially. "If anybody tells you said you were a beast, sir, at any time, don't you believe them! Besides, a Form-master can't help being a beast, can he? I know how to make allowances."

"Upon my word!" "I'm sure I shall be very happy with you, sir!" continued Tubby, beaming. "I like the idea no end. Would you like me to change my

"Change your name!" said Mr. Bootles. He was getting seriously alarmed

about the state of Muffin's intellect. "Yes. I shouldn't mind changing my name, though it's an old and aristocratic one, if you wished, sir. In fact, it would be better for me to adopt the name of Bootles-". "Eh?"

"It would make it simpler, sir, to Ow!" put me in your will to inherit all your

money, wouldn't it?" Mr. Bootles gazed at Muffin. As he was quite unaware of the fact that Peele had been pulling the fat Classical's leg, he was taken utterly by surprise. He could only conclude that Reginald Muffin was out of his senses. Tubby did not quite understand Mr. Bootles' fixed stare, but he thought that perhaps the little gentleman was overcome with joy.

"I'm willing to meet your wishes! A few days later Mr. Bootles de-

Mr. Bootles woke up, as it were, at last. He had been scanning Muffin's face for traces of insanity. But all he could find there was smug and fatuous satisfaction. Mussin was not mad. But if he wasn't mad, what did he mean? Mr. Bootles wanted to know.

"Muffin!" he gasped, at last. "Hadn't you better call me Reggie,

"Call you Reggie, boy? Certainly

"But-but if Leall you daddy-" "Boy," shrieked Mr. Bootles, "if you dare to apply that—that epithet to me again I will ask the Head to administer a flogging!"

Muffin jumped. "Eh?" he stuttered. "You-you don't want me to call you daddy? But -- but when you adopt me,

"Adopt you!" stuttered Mr. Bottles. "Is the boy insane? Muffin, how dare you-"

"I-I-I came here to tell you I should like you to adopt me, sir," stammered Tubby. "I-I'm going to be a prop to your-your declining years, sir. The the comfort of your old age, daddy!"

Mr. Bootles sprang to his feet. "Muffin, at first I thought you were out of your mind---"

"Wha-a-at!" "But now, sir," thundered Mr. Bootles, "I can see that this is impertinence! How dare, you, sir! Adopt you? Upon my word! How dare you jest upon such a subject to me, sir, your Form-master!"

"I-I-I wasn't-" Mr. Bootles grabbed up a cane. "Hold out your hand, Muffin!" "B-b-but, sir--'

"You hear me?" thundered Mr. Bootles. "B-b-but," stuttered Tubby Muffin, quite flabbergasted, "d-d-don't you

want to adopt me, sir, to be a prop Yaroooooh!" Mr. Bootles, quite angry for once, caught Tubby Muffin by the collar, as he did not hold out his hand. His cane came down across Tubby's fat

shoulders, and there was a fiendish yell from Tubby. Whack, whack, whack! "Yow-ow-wow! Yoop! My bat!

"Now leave my study!" fulminated. Mr. Bootles... "Not another word!

Impertinent young rascal! Go!" Mr. Bootles raised the cane again. and Tubby did not stop for another. word. He went. Like the gentleman in Macbeth, he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once. He fairly sprinted out of the study. slammed the door behind him, and fled for the Fourth Form quarters.



TOFFEE FOR BOOTLES! "Now then Tubby, what's the game?" growled Jimmy Silver. "Just making some toffee for Bootles!" was the calm reply from the fat junior before the fire.

in every way, sir," he said brightly. | parted from Rookwood, taking with father now, wouldn't you?"

Mr. Bootles was still speechless. "Or daddy?" said Tubby Muffin. "Bless my soul!"

"I-I suppose I needn't do any prep this evening, daddy?" said Tubby Muffin. "P'r'aps you'd like | ("The Amazing New Master!" is a

"Of course, you'd like me to call you | him the kindest wishes of the Rookwood Fourth. But the face that was most mournful was that of Reginald Muffin, abandoned without even a lingering hope of being adopted by a millionaire!

THE END.

me to-to sit in the study with you | fine Rookwood tale of Jimmy Silver "He's gone to Bootles to be adopted, and-and talk a bit-about the & Co., which you must not miss. and and Bootles doesn't know-" future? If you want to make me a | Order your copy of next Monday's "Can't know, can he?" said Peele. | very liberal allowance I shall not | Boys' FRIEND now!)

A Long Complete Yarn of Frank Richards & Co.!



A STORY OF THE CHUMS OF THE BACKWOODS SCHOOL.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter. A Startling Scheme!

"I've got it!"

Frank Richards made that statechums with a glimmer in his eyes.

The Co. were sauntering in the playground after morning lessons at Cedar Creek School, engaged in a very deep discussion.

Or, to be more correct, Bob Lawless and Vere Beaucierc were engaged in the deep discussion, Frank some time, with a deep wrinkle of thought in his boyish brow.

The topic was a very important f one, from the point of view of the chums of Cedar Creek. It was the question of punishing Mr. Peckover, the headmaster of Hillcrest School, for his many delinquencies. Punishing Mr. Peckover was, perhaps, important: but there was no doubt that it was, as Bob Lawless described it, a "hefty" job! The chums of Cedar Creek were determined upon it; but they were a little perplexed.

Bob Lawless, whose ideas were always a little drastic, had suggested "roping him in" with a lasso, and bundling him along through the snow at the tail of a horse--a suggestion which his chums vetoed at once. The consequences of that drastic action were likely to be a little too severe!

"Oh, you have got it, have you, old scout?" said Bob Lawless. "Well, let's hear it! What have old Peckover." you got?"

"The wheeze!" said Frank.

"Yes," Frank Richards laughed. I going to play Mrs. Peckover!" "The idea, anyhow, for making Mr. | "What?" yelled Bob.

Peckover sit up and feel sorry for himself."

"I'm blessed if I can think of any- prise, and undoubtedly he had made thing. We can't deal with the brute | an impression openly. Miss Meadows would be no end waxy if we snowballed him, or scalped him-or roped him in as Bob suggested."

"I guess she would!" said Bob. "But I don't see how he's going to cultbe dealt with without Miss Meadows hearing of it. And he's got to be dealt with! He got Franky into a row with popper, and nearly got him the cowhide! He's got to suffer for his sins!"

."Go ahead, Frank," said Beauclerc.

Frank Richards glanced round. Chunky Todgers was hovering in the offing, so to speak, and Frank Richards did not want his 'wheeze' to be overheard. He signed to his chums, and the trio moved away out of hearing of the fat Chunky.

"Sure!"

with it?" inquired Beauclerc.

an old bachelor. I dare say that's question of nerve, and I've got the The wrath which Ephraim Peckwhy he's such a cross-grained old nerve. Catch on?" brute. He lives in the schoolhouse at Hillcrest, with his own fascinating society to keep him company, and a Chinese servant. Well, suppose Mrs. Peckover turned up one day--"

"Mrs Peckover?" ejaculated

"Mrs. Peckover!" assented Frank.

"Haven't you just said he's a pesky and I'm going to do it. It will be no

"But there are lots of single men in | we tell them about it afterwards. the Thompson Valley who've left shall take them in as well as Peckment quite suddenly, looking at his | wives in other parts. Nobody would | over-" be surprised if a Mrs. Peckover turned up."

"But I don't catch on!" "You've heard of the Cedar Creek

Thespians," said Frank. "Our theatrical society! What about it?"

Richards having fallen silent for Cedar Creek Thespians?" demanded the same time?"

"Me, I suppose." "Ass!" said Frank Richards for a special occasion." witheringly. "Who's the best actor | "But you can't tell her-" in our show. Cherub?"

man," said Frank Richards. "I'm me for nearly landing me with a not bragging, of course-"

'Ophelia'?" said Frank Richards. | crest and make Peckover think that

"You fellows told me I did it well." "So you did," agreed Bob, "with your soft face--"

"Ass!"

"And soft head---" "Look here---"

part," concluded Bob. "But I don't | crest after lessons, anyhow, Franksee what 'Ophelia' has to do with if it comes off."

"You wouldn't," said Frank. But if I put it in words of one! "You mean the stunt?" asked syllable, you may catch on presently, feasibility of the scheme, the chums

"Frank!" gasped Beauclerc.

Frank Richards smiled serenely. "Good man!" said Beauclerc. He had taken his chums quite by sur-

"I can make up for the part," he said. "We've got all the things we need in our property box I needn't make up as very good-looking--"

"Nope; that would be a bit diffi-"Don't interrupt, fathead! I can

make up as a lady of uncertain years, and-and certain temper-" "Ha, ha!" "And drift into Hillcrest one

morning when lessons are on, and claim Peckover before all the school---"

"You wouldn't have the nerve!"

roared Bob. "Peckover had the nerve to come here and get me into a fearful row," said Frank. "I've got as much the creek, while they pursued this nerve as that old bounder! I'll make him look a silly ass before all Hill-"Peckover's got to go through it," | crest, and I'll lay into him with an | feeling very cheery.

deserted wife at all," said Frank. described it, a "holy terror." Bob and Beauclerc stared at him. I "I tell you I could do it with my The affair at Cedar Creek had "What the thump has that to do | eyes shut. Anybody could make up | made Mr. Peckover's temper worse for such a part-a masculine-looking than ever, and his pupils had the "Lots!" answered Frank. "He's lady would fill the bill. It's only a benefit of it.

"Phew!" said Bob.
Beauclerc whistled.

stunt?" demanded Frank Richards. | Mr. Peckover had never believed | Bird joyously.

"Georgeous!" said Bob. require a new one.

"But—" Dicky Bird & Co. were chatting

"But there isn't any Mrs. Peck. pair of billy-goats!" said Frank. "I for afternoon lessons, and they were satisfaction as they went. "Shame!" howled Dicky Bird. over," said Bob, in amazement. | fell you it's the stunt of the season, | not looking forward to afternoon in | Mr. Peckover, if he was a married | "Shame!" roared all Hillcrest.

old bachelor?" end of a joke on Hillcrest, too. "Quite so," said Frank Richards. Dicky Bird & Co. will be wild when

> "You've said that before!" remarked Frank sarcastically.

"There you go again!"

"But--"

"But," roared Bob, "how are you going to show up at lessons at Hill-"Who's the best actor among the crest, when our lessons here are at

> "Easy enough. I shall get leave from Miss Meadows. I can do that

"Ha, ha! No. But I can get "Little me!" grinned Beauclerc. | leave. Miss Meadows is very kind to "Oh, don't be funny! I'm the me just now-sort of making it up to Hogging the other day on account of "Aren't you?" asked Bob, in sur. Peckover's rot. That will be all right," said Frank confidently. "No, ass; simply stating a fact. | "You fellows can help me to make Now, when we did our 'Hamlet' | up' in the timber before lessons toonce, and Molly Lawrence wasn't morrow afternoon; then you come able to take her part, didn't I do on here as usual, and I go on to Hill-

> "Oh! If it only comes off all right!" chuckled Bob. "By gum! guess I'd like to be there to see

life isn't worth living."

"Same here!" said Beauclerc, "You're just cut out for a girl's laughing. "We'll trot along to Hill-

"It's going to come off!" said Frank Richards determinedly.

And from the discussion of the if you exert your intellect. I'm of the backwoods school turned to i the consideration of ways and means. and their considerations were punctuated with many chuckles.

The 2nd Chapter. A Surprise for Hillcrest!

"It's rotten!" grumbled Dicky

"Beastly!" said Blumpy. "I guess I'm tired of it!" remarked Fisher.

"Fed up to the chin!" said Watson dolorously.

"And we can't get back on him," resumed Dicky Bird. "Even snowballing the pesky brute is out of the question now. He would guess that it was us." "Sure!"

"Oh, it's rotten!"

Dicky Bird & Co. were loafing on the path that led up from the Thempson trail to Hillcrest School, close by rather dismal discussion. The Hillcrest fellows were not

said Frank. "We've agreed on umbrella—".

that—" was not a good-tempered gentleman "And clear off without anybody at the best of times. But for the last "He's an old bachelor," said knowing that it wasn't really a few days he had been, as Dicky Bird

over would have liked to wreak on Frank Richards & Co. fell upon the audacity to deny his dear Sempronia. devoted heads of Dicky Bird and his | Take me to him, little boys." "Well, what do you think of the comrades of Hillcrest School.

Dicky Bird & Co. were chatting | Hillcrest. "Blessed if you don't butt like a | dolorously as they waited for the bell | They exchanged looks of happy | not a married man."

anticipations. They expected to find Mr. Peck-

the school-room with any happy

over as tartaric as usual, and they were not likely to be disappointed. "There goes the bell!" said Fisher.

The brazen clang of the school bell rang out over the playground and the frozen creek and the leafless woods that surrounded the school.

"Come on!" said Blumpy. Dicky Bird hesitated.

"What about hooking it this afternoon?" he suggested. "We could get out our skates, and-"

phatically. "I guess I shouldn't care | the playground almost in triumph. to face Peckover to-morrow if we The other fellows were hurrying did. I jolly well wish we were at Cedar Creek instead of Hillcrest!"

day. But I wish we had Miss Meadows here instead of Peckover"

son. "It means a row if we're not late. They felt that Mr. Peckover's in on time."

"Oh, come on!" grunted Dicky on this unique occasion. Bird.

"Little boys!"

A rather high-pitched voice fell as they were turning towards the school.

Dicky Bird glanced round. He did not like being addressed

as a "little boy"; but Dicky was very polite, and as he saw a feminine form coming up the hilly path, he raised his cap.

The Hillcrest fellows looked rather curiously at the newcomer.

They saw a rather short and dumpy lady, hardly taller than themselves, though in appearance very much older.

She was shabbily dressed, and wore an old-fashioned bonnet and a rather thick, spotted veil, and carried a fat umbrella in her black-gloved hand. Through her veil could be seen a freckled face, with a suspicion of a moustache on the upper lip, heavy eyebrows grizzled in hue, and a rather red nose. Two black gaps showed in her front teeth.

The lady could not be considered beautiful, from any point of view whatever.

Perhaps all the more for that reason Dicky Bird was politeness itself. "Yes, ma'am," he said. "Can I his waistcoat.

do anything for you?" "Please tell me if this is Hillcrest," said the lady, pointing towards the school with her "gamp."

"Sure." "Is my husband at home?"

Dicky Bird jumped. Hillcrest was a small school, and there was only one master-Mr. Peckover. The only other man about the place was the man-of-allwork, who couldn't possibly have been this lady's husband, because he had a wife on the premises. The Hillcrest schoolboys blinked in sur-

husband!" "Your-your-your ejaculated Dicky Bird.

"Yes, little boy." "Wha-a-a-at's his name, ma'am?" babbled Fisher.

"Ephraim." "Holy smoke!" stuttered Watson. "Is-is-is it Ephraim Peckover, ma'am?"

"Yes, little boy." "But-but," stammered Dicky Bird, "are—are you Mrs. Peckover,

then, ma'am?" "Did you not know that Mr. Peckover was a married man?" exclaimed the visitor,

"Nunno!" "Has he kept it a secret?" "I guess he has," said Dicky Bird. "Nobody in Thompson knows that

Mr. Peckover was ever married---' "The wretch!" "He's that, right enough," said

Fisher heartily. "I-I-I think it's a shame!" "Shame!" echoed Blumpy.

"Have you come after him, ma'am?" asked Dicky Bird eagerly. His eyes were dancing now.

If this determined-looking lady with the umbrella was "after" Ephraim Peckover, the afternoon was not likely to be so dismal as the Hillcrest fellows had feared.

"Certainly!" rapped out the freckled lady. "Perhaps it will surprise him!" She gripped her umbrella. "Take me to him! Take me to him at once! We shall see whether he will have the dastardly.

"This way, ma'am!" said Dicky

man, had certainly concealed the fact with great success. To have him "shown up" like this was pure joy to his pupils. And if Mr. Peckover attempted denial or repudiation, Sempronia looked quite able to take care of herself. She was already gripping her umbrella in a businesslike way. The thought of that umbrella landing upon Mr. Peckover was sheer bliss to Dicky Bird & Co. Without giving the slightest consideration to the probable rights and wrongs of the matter, they became Mrs. Peckover's devoted champions on the spot.

"No jolly fear!" said Blumpy em- They marched Mrs. Peckover across

towards the schoolhouse, anxious not to be late. Nobody wanted to catch "Oh, rate!" said Dicky uneasily. I the baleful eye of Ephraim Peckover "We're better than Cedar Creek any by being even a few seconds after

But Dicky Bird & Co. did not care, "We'd better get in," said Wat- for once, if they were whole minutes attention would not be given to them

Mr. Peckover was already in the school-room, with a sour visage. The bell had ceased to ring, and he noted upon the ears of the four schoolboys | that four places were still empty. He was prepared to deal with Dicky Bird & Co. when they hurried in. His eyo was on the doorway sourly. He started as the quartette appeared. with a feminine figure in their midst.

Sempronia halted in the doorway, and glanced in. "There he is, ma'am!" whispered

Dicky Bird. "What-what-who is this?"

ejaculated Mr. Peckover. The next moment he was astounded.

Mrs. Peckover rushed into the room, and, to the amazement of the school, bore down upon Mr. Peckover with open arms.

"Ephraim!" "What--"

Ephraim!"

"Oh, Ephraim!" Mr. Peckover stared and blinked. His eyes almost started from his head, and he jumped back from the outstretched arms.

But Sempronia was not to be She fairly rushed upon Mr. Peck-

and clasped him, and sobbed upon "Oh, Ephraim! Aren't you glad to see your little Sempronia? Oh,

over, and threw her arms round him.

The 3rd Chapter.

Mrs. Peckover Means Businesa!

Hillcrest School was all on its feet. A thunderbolt in the school-room would not have startled the Hillcrest

fellows so much. Mr. Peckover was even more astonished than his class.

He staggered back as the dumpy lady clasped him and sobbed.

Amid the exclamations of astonishment there were several loud chortles from the Hillcrest fellows.

Sempronia was short and dumpy, and Mr. Peckover was tall and angular, and he was head and shoulders over the bonnet of the freckled lady who sobbed upon his waistcoat.

"Madam!" gasped Mr. Peckover. "Ephraim!"

"Woman!" "Dear Ephraim!" "Release me!" "Darling Ephraim!"

"How dare you, madam!" shouted Mr. Peckover, struggling to release himself. "Madam, who-who are you? How dare you come here! Have you been drinking? Release me at once!"

"Dearest Ephraim!" "Woman," shrieked Mr. Peckover. "I-I order you to release me! Stand back! Away! Good heavens, go!" The astounded schoolmaster gave

Sempronia a violent shove, and he was released at last. The veiled lady staggered back.

"Shame!" yelled Dicky Bird indignantly. Mr. Peckover's glare blazed round.

"Who-what--" he spluttered. "Shame!" yelled a dozen voices.

"Boys, be silent! I--"

"Shame!" "Ephraim," shrieked Sempronia, "don't you know your own darling little Sempronia?"

"Woman!" "My husband!"

Mr. Peckover jumped as if he had been electrified.

"Husband!" he stuttered.

"My dearest hubby!" "Tiptop!" said Beauclerc. in sparing the rod; but just now he The four Hillcresters gathered "I am not!" yelled Mr. Peckover, seemed likely to wear it out and round this welcome visitor like a utterly aghast. "I am nothing of the bodyguard, and escorted her into kind! Woman, you are an impostor, or you are out of your senses! I am

respect for the master now. For one thing, it was pretty clear that Sempronia could deal with him But, for her! He leaped up and dashed apart from that, the Hillcrest fellows | were shocked and indignant.

With natural chivalry, they took the lady's side in the dispute. Besides, the facts seemed to speak for themselves. The woman was a stranger in the Thompson Valley, she had known Mr. Peckover at once, and she claimed him as her husband!

"You disown me, Ephraim?" she shrieked.

."I do not know you!"

"You repudiate me?" "Most certainly!" gasped Mr. Peckover. "You are an impostoran unpudent impostor! I order you to go! I-I will appeal to the law! I will have you put in prison! I-

"Wretch!"

"Go!" raved Mr. Peckover.

"Dastard!"

"Silence! Boys, go to your places! Woman, I-I--- Oh! Ah! Yarooh!" yelled Mr. Peckover, as Sempronia rushed at him and smote him with her umbrella.

A wild, backward leap just saved Mr. Peckover from the swiping gamp. The hapless Mr. Peckover dodged round his desk, in terrified dismay.

"Go!" he spluttered. "You-you are mistaken. I am not your husband. You-you have mistaken me for some other man! Yooooop!"

The umbrella got home this time. It came down with a mighty swipe on Mr. Peckover's head, and he staggered and yelled with anguish. "Go it!" velled Dicky Bird. "Give him another, ma'am!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Woman, desist! Upon my word! Good heavens!"

The umbrella was swiping again, and Mr. Peckover fairly fled for his life. Heedless of the yells of laughter round him, he dashed for the open doorway, and streaked into the playground at a speed that was very creditable to a gentleman of his years.

"After him, ma'am!" shouted Blumpy.

But Sempronia did not need telling. She was after Ephraim like a shot, with uplifted umbrella, and as the chase swept out into the playground, all Hillcrest rushed out, quite forgetful of lessons. It was the most enjoyable afternoon ever known in the history of Hillerest.

The 4th Chapter.

Treed !. "Ephraim, stop!"

"Oh dear!" "Wretch, stop!"

"Oooooo!" gasped Mr. Peckover. Ephraim had no intention of stopping. Wild horses would hardly have stopped him at that moment.

He streaked across the playground in great style, with the militant

female close behind him. He dodged round the wood-pile, and Sempronia dodged after him. He cut round the cabin of the man of all. work, and Sempronia cut round on his track. The umbrella reached Mr. Peckover again, and he howled, and put on desperate speed.

The Hillcrest fellows were roaring with laughter. Never had the school playground witnessed so extraordinary a scene:

Mr. Peckover, with the enemy close behind, rushed into the house again, and up to his bed-room.

He hoped to lock the door before that fearful female arrived, and to get a breathing-space. But the pursuit was too close. As Mr. Peckover fumbled with the key, Sempronia reached the door and hurled herself

against it. The door flew open, and knocked Mr. Peckover spinning. He sprawled in the middle of the room, and the next moment the umbrella was lash-

"Yoop! Stoppit! Help! Police!"

shricked Mr. Peckover.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Some of the ribs of the umbrella burst in the vigcur of the swipes that landed all over the hapless master. The umbrella was suffering, but not to the same extent as Mr. Peckover.

The bony gentleman wriggled and squirmed under the shower of blows, and at last gained his feet, and dashed out of the room.

Sempronia was after him like a

As Mr. Peckover dashed down the narrow staircase, the umbrella landed on him from above, and he gave a

bottom. "Stop!" shrieked Sempronia. With remarkable activity for an

fiendish yell, and stumbled to the

They had quite lost their fear and | elderly lady, she came down the stairs | three at a time.

Published

Every Monday

out into the playground again.

He was almost at his wits' end. He had a vague thought of fleeing into Thompson and placing himself under the protection of the sheriff! But he had no chance. Semprouia gained on him in the playground, and the umbrella came into play again, amid yells of delight from Dicky Bird & Co.

"Go it, ma'am!" "Give him beans!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Stop!" raved Mr. Peckover. "Madam, I entreat you, stop, have mercy! I-I am not your husband -yarooh-I have never seen you before. Oh, my head! I do not i know-ow, ow! I repeat, madam; I repeat-yaroooop!"

Swipe! Swipe! Some of the fellows began to think that if Sempronia really was Mrs. Peckover, the unhappy Ephraim might have had good reason for bolting from his happy home.

But all their sympathies were with Sempronia. To see Mr. Peckover thrashed was like a golden dream coming true.

"Give it to him ma'am!" "Let him have it!"

"Yaroooh!"

Dicky Bird cut back into the school, and rushed out with a chair. It was But Mr. Peckover was too quick | planted under the tree, and Mrs. | Peckover sat down.

> Evidently she was going to wait right. for Mr. Peckover to fall into her hands, as it were, like a ripe apple!

Mr. Peckover gazed down at her, palpitating. For a quarter of an hour or so he was only too glad to be able to rest, though his perch in the forked branch was far from comfortable. The Hillcresters stood round in a crowd. The opossum was "treed," as Dicky Bird remarked, and they waited in joyous anticipation for him to drop into the clutches of the justly-incensed Sempronia. But Ephraim Peckover was far from sharing their joyous anticipation.

The tree was frosty, and a cold wind blew from the Rocky Mountains. Mr. Peckover was soon shivering and chattering with cold.

Sempronia waited grimly. "Midam!" pleaded Mr. Peckover, at last, feebly.

"Will you come down, Ephraim?" "I repeat, that I am not your husband, madam--"

"I am going to wait till you come ! down, Ephraim. I am going to take you back to Athabasca with me," said Mrs. Peckover. "You will not be allowed to run away again."

"Yarocop!" and brandished the umbrella in her

"Now, come along!" she said

grimly. "I-I will not. I-I"-Mr. Peckover dodged the umbrella-"I--I mean, I-I will come. Let me return for my hat---"

"Come as you are!" "Madam. I-I--"

"Will you come?" shrieked Mrs. | Frank Richards demurely. Peckover, uplifting the umbrella.

Mr. Peckover gasped helplessly. "No-yes-yes-I-I will come! Pray release me, and I-I will come

"I guess I'm not giving you a chance to desert me again, Ephraim!" answered Mrs. Peckover grimly.

The hapless master resigned himself | Mrs. Peckover came for him; her to his fate. Sempronia led him down the path, with a grip on his sleeve. Dicky Bird & Co. followed in a joyous

"What a day!" gasped Dicky Bird, | "what a merry day! And what a sight for Thompson Town when she gets there with Peckover!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" But Sempronia did not get as far as Thompson with Mr. Peckover. Perhaps she thought that gentleman | Hillcrest crowd, in great enjoyment. had suffered enough for his sins. Her grasp on him relaxed in the trail, "Hurray!" gasped Dicky Bird. and Mr. Peckover suddenly jerked "Hooked it, somehow," said Dicky

Hillcrest. There was a buzz of ex-Sempronia caught hold of Mr. cited voices on the trail outside the Peckover's sleeve with her left hand, | school gates-Dicky Bird & Co. were still there, discussing breathlessly the amazing events of the afternoon.

"Hallo! Anything happened here, you galoots?" asked Bob Lawless.

Dicky Bird chuckled joyously. "You bet! What do you think? Peckover's been through it---" "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Dicky's comrades.

"But what happened?"

"Mrs. Peckover turned up!" said Dicky Bird impressively. "Mrs. Peckover!" exclaimed

Frank. "Sure!"

"Is Peckover a married man, then?" asked Bob innocently. "He must be, you see, because

name's Sempronia--" "And she's a hely terror!" gasped

Blumpy. "Chased him round with a gamp!"

yelled Fisher. "Laid into him no end!" roared

Watson. "He ran for his life---"

"As if a Red Indian was after him with a scalping-knife-"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the whole "Jolly queer!" said Beauclere, "and where is the lady now?"

Mr. Peckover dedged out of the | Mr. Peckover groaned. He really | himself away. He fled along the | Bird. "Peckover was treed at firststuck up in that tree to get away from Sempronia--"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Then he lit out for Thompson, with Sempy after him," chortled Dicky Bird. "I suppose he's at Thompson now; but we missed Mrs. Peckover on the trail; she must have given in, and gone. She looked a bit dumpy for running! My hat! This will finish Peckover here! only hope Mrs. Peckover gets hold of him again, and takes him back to Athabasca!"

"Yes, rather!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. chuckled. "You're sure it was really Mrs, Peckover?" asked Frank.

Dicky Bird nodded. "Well, there's only her word," he said. "But I'm sure enough. If she wasn't Mrs. Peckover, sho couldn't want him, I guess. Blessed if I know how any woman could have married Peckover, with his face and manners. But she must have done.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow. I hope she'll get him," said Dicky Bird. "She's welcome to the beast-quite welcome."

"I'm afraid she won't get him," said Frank Richards, laughing. "J think her performance was for one afternoon only."

Dicky Bird stared at him. "What do you know about it?" he

asked. "Lots!" chuckled Frank. And he went on, suddenly, in a high-pitched voice, "Is my husband at home, little

Dicky Bird jumped. "Why, that-that-that's her

voice," he stuttered. "How-what "I've ruined an umbrella," said Frank. "But it was in a good cause. Thank you very much for standing

by me as you did, little hoy!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "You!" yelled Dicky Bird. "You!"

"Jevver hear of the Cedar Creek. Thespians?" chortled Bob Lawless. When it comes to acting we canlay over Hillcrest every time. You won't see Mrs. Peckover again. Sempronia's Christian name is Frank! Ha. hi. ha!"

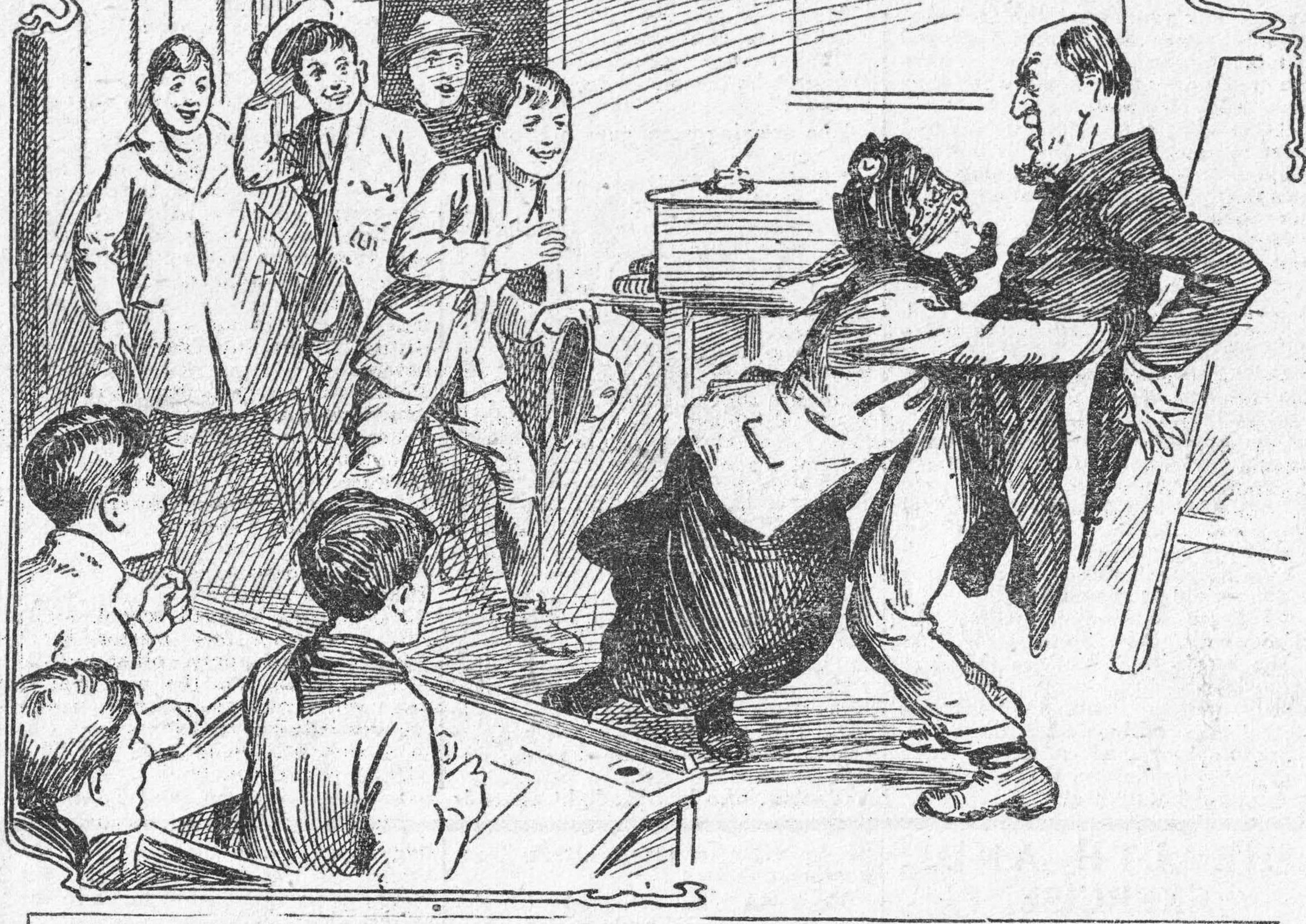
Dicky Bird gasped. "You!" he repeated dazedly. And Frank Richards & sauntered away, leaving Dicky Bird still dazed.

"Frank!" Mrs. Peckover was never seen

Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclere | The amazing happenings at Hill-

fingers were freezing, and he began saw him thus occupied. appearance of the claimant gradually gave colour to his strenuous denials. It was admitted at last that Sembranches. Sempronia watched him | "Tip-top! Wait till I've become | pronia must have been an impostor. master never dreamed; and few ever played in the coming of Mrs. Peckover. THE END.

after him in a flash, and she overtook formed again into Frank Richards: of formed \$10.000 Trail" is a fine, "Bravo!" chortled Dicky Bird. him before he had covered a dozen Cedar. Creek. The disguise was long, complete yarn of Frank bundled up and left in a hollow tree, Richards & Co. in next Monday's



"Ephraim," exclaimed "Mrs. Peckover," alias Frank-Richards, "aren't you glad to see your darling little Sempronia?" Hillcrest school roared. Such an event as this had no

precedent in the annals of the school.

gateway, with Sempronia on his wondered whether this formidable I trail towards the town, fear lending track, and all Hillcrest bringing up | female would actually be able to | him wings. the rear in a yelling crowd. | carry him off, against his will, to | "Stop!" shrieked Sempronia. The hapless master essayed to flee Athabasca.

down the trail towards Thompson. "Madam!" he protested weakly. "I stop. He ran as if for his life, and He stumbled in the snow, and came | swear-I-I assure you I-I have | Sempronia ran in pursuit; but, as a down, and the umbrella started in | never seen you before! It is some | turn of the trail hid her from the eyes again. Mr. Peckover picked himself other Ephraim Peckover you-you are of the Hillcrest fellows, she darted up again and ran, with swipes rain- in search of! If-if you will allow me into the timber and vanished. Dicky ing on him from behind. Despair to explain-" lent him energy. He scrambled fran tically into a tree, and dragged him-

self up out of reach of the umbrella. He squeezed into a forked branch, and held on, gasping for breath, and I in the post-waggon. You are coming I staring down at the baffled Sempronia | home. Ephraim."

with affrighted eyes. Under the tree Mrs. Peckover halted, gasping, too-her exertions had left her a little out of breath. She brandished her umbrella-now "Wretch, take that—and that—and almost a wreck—at the terrified

> schoolmaster. "Come down!" she shrieked.

"Groooogh!"

"Unmanly monster! Come down." "Oh dear! I-I refuse to come down," panted Mr. Peckover. "I repeat that I am not-groogh-your husband. I repeat that I am not a-groooooch-married man at all! Bless my soul! I-I will invoke the law. I-I will have you locked up! I-I----'

"Will you come down, Ephraim?" "Certainly not! Oh dear!"

Mrs. Peckover grimly.

"Shall I fetch you a chair, ma'am." "Thank you, little boy."

"I will allow you to come down," said Sempronia, "and as soon as you come down I am going to take you | could still see Mr. Peckover, streakinto Thompson, and take you away |

"Madam, I-I swear-" "Come down!" "Oh dear! Bird-Blumpy-run

the sheriff here!"

down to Thompson at once and bring

home with Mrs. Peckover?" "That-that female is not Mrs. Peckover-"

"Rats!" said Dicky Bird. to fear that he would not be able "How did it go?" exclaimed Bob. to keep his hold on the frozen Frank Richards chuckled. with a grim eye.

ground on the opposite side. Then | With the aid of his chums, Sem-"Then I will wait for you!" said he ran for it. But Sempronia was pronia Peckover was soon trains yards.

Whack!

Mr. Peckover was not likely to Bird & Co., sweeping round the bend, missed the warlike lady from the trail; but far ahead of them they ing for Thompson, with the speed of a greyhound.

The 5th Chanter The Last of Sempronia!

"Frank, old scout-"

"Catch us!" said Dicky Bird dis- came suddenly on Frank Richards, crest were the talk of Thompson for respectfully. "Why can't you go in a shady glade in the timber. Most quite a long time, and during that of Sempronia's gear had been taken time, Mr. Peckover was a very suboff, and Frank was removing freckles | dued gentleman, much to the benefit from his face, and stain from his of his pupils. Public opinion in exebrows, and black patches from his Thompson quite condemned Mr. Mr. Peckover groaned again. His teeth. His chums grinned as they Peckover at first; but the non-

Frank Richards again, and we'll go Who or what she was, the Hillcrest The hapless man made an effort at lalong and see the Hillcrest fe'lows. last. He squirmed round the tree- There's been no school at Hillcrest | knew the part Frank Richards had trunk, and slithered down to the this afternoon-but no end of fun."

and the three chums hurried on to Boys' FRIEND.)