

Hoy

"HOW TO BE FIGHTING FIT!" BY *Jack Dempsey* INSIDE!

The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

EVERY MONDAY.

SIXTEEN BIG PAGES!

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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending July 4th, 1925.]

THE GLORY HOLE GANG WIN THROUGH! BY DUNCAN STORM.

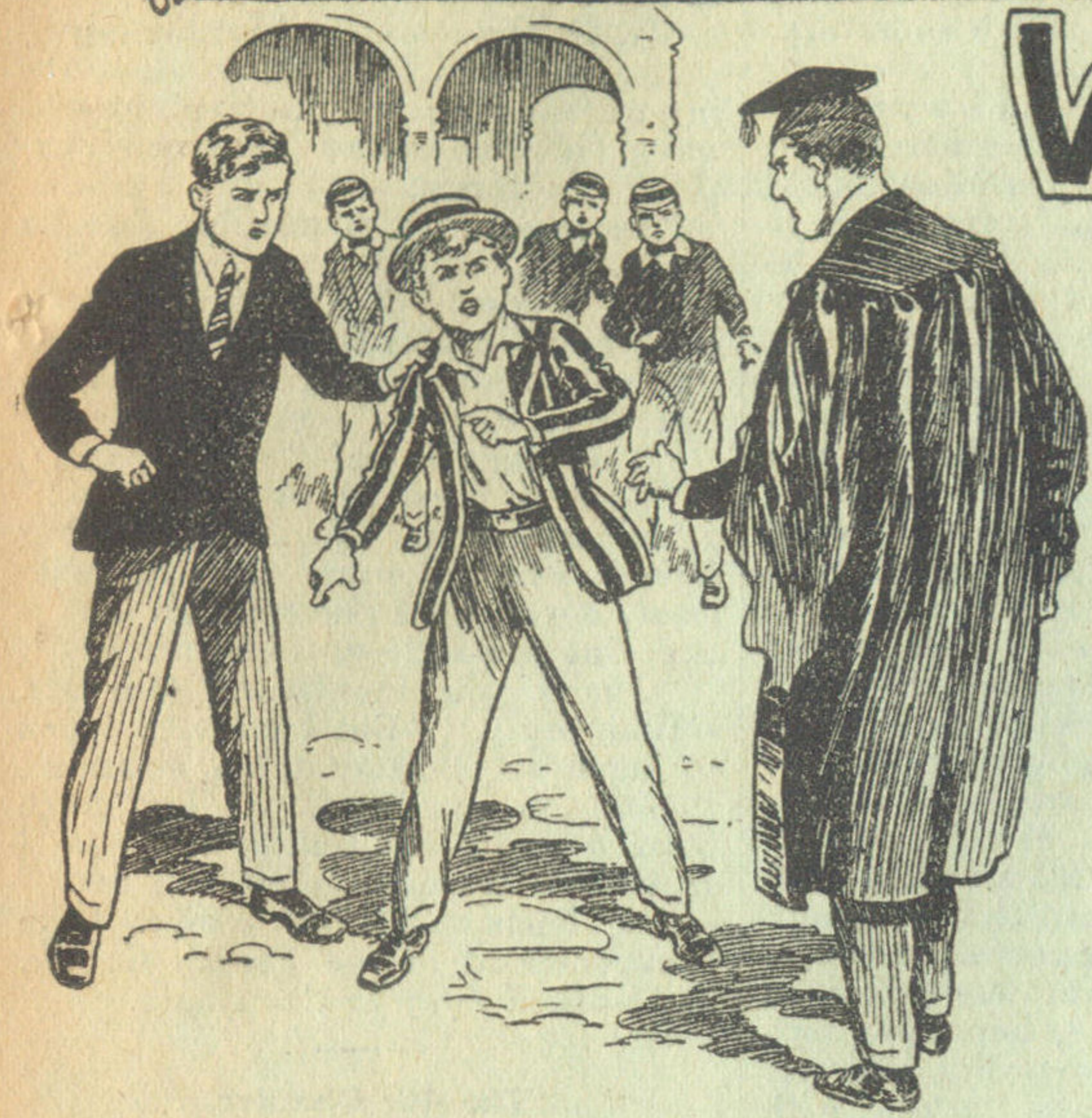


CONKEY IKESTEIN SAVES CHARLIE PEACE BY MEANS OF THE ROCKET GUN!

(An exciting incident from Duncan Storm's great story in this issue.)

6 "J. B. Hobbs" Cricket Bats Must Be Won This Week!

HERE'S ANOTHER LIVELY STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



Well Meant!

By Owen Conquest.

(Author of the tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

Once again Peter Cuthbert Gunner puts his foot in it!

The 1st Chapter. Perplexing!

Richard Dalton frowned. He was puzzled, and he was not pleased.

As a rule the face of the Fourth Form master of Rookwood wore a very cheery expression. He often smiled, and he seldom frowned.

On this particular morning, however, he was frowning, and his looks plainly indicated annoyance as well as perplexity.

He had reason to be perplexed. He was mystified.

It had started at breakfast—a meal which Richard Dalton took with his Form, sitting at the head of the Classical Fourth table.

Now, it was quite true that Richard Dalton, the youngest and fittest and best-looking member of the staff at Rookwood School, was worth a second glance.

Fellows looked at Mr. Dalton incessantly and surreptitiously. For some minutes he really wondered whether he had a smut on his nose, or something of the kind.

It surprised Richard Dalton, it perplexed him, and finally it irritated him, and his brows contracted.

He could not raise his eyes from his plate without meeting a stare, which was immediately turned away, of course, only to return!

If it was a "rag," the whole of the Classical Fourth seemed to be in it—even Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Form. Jimmy, having met Mr. Dalton's surprised eyes, resolutely did not look again.

After brekker the fellows went out, and Richard Dalton took his accustomed walk in the quadrangle before classes.

Not being in the presence of the whole Form at once, as at brekker, he was not subjected to a general broadside of stares.

member of the Classical Fourth without getting a glance, and a second glance, and a third.

His frown deepened. He could only imagine that it was a "rag"—quite an original and peculiar kind of a rag—and Mr. Dalton was not a master to be ragged with impunity.

If this was a rag, it meant trouble for the raggers. And what else could it be?

There was no smut on Richard Dalton's face. He had not forgotten to put on his collar and tie that morning, as the absent-minded Mr. Mooney once had done.

Matters came to a climax when Mr. Dalton came on Gunner and Dickinson minor under the beeches.

Mr. Dalton walked up to them. "What does this mean, Gunner?" he asked.

"You two boys were staring in a very rude and objectionable manner," said Mr. Dalton sharply, his face flushing a little.

"Were we, sir?" said Gunner. "You were!" snapped Richard Dalton.

"Sorry, sir! No offence meant!" said Gunner. "You licked me yesterday, sir, unjustly—"

"Unjustly! But I'm not a fellow to bear malice, and I wouldn't hurt your feelings for anything, sir," said Gunner generously.

"You are a very stupid boy, Gunner! Dickinson minor, you have a little more intelligence than Gunner. What does this mean?"

"N-n-nothing, sir," stammered Dickinson minor.

"Is it what the boys call a rag?" "Oh, no, sir!" gasped Dickinson.

"Then what does it mean?" asked Mr. Dalton. "Why are you and the others staring at me this morning as if I were extraordinarily remarkable in some way?"

"Well, so you are, sir, you know," said Gunner.

"I mean, in the circumstances," said Gunner hastily.

"What do you mean? What circumstances?" "Oh, nothing, sir! I'm not a fellow to rub it in!"

"To—to what? To rub what in?" "Nothing, sir."

"I am not to blame for questioning so obtuse a boy," said Mr. Dalton. "I address myself to you, Dickinson minor, once more. Tell me at once what this means."

"Nothing, sir." "Each of you will take fifty lines!" said Mr. Dalton.

The Form master walked away, with a pink spot glowing in either cheek. It was seldom that he was angry; but Richard Dalton had a temper, though it was always kept in good control.

Gunner looked at Dickinson minor and grunted. "Fifty lines each!" he said.

"That's rich! Like his cheek—what?" "I—I suppose he's noticed that the fellows are looking at him," said Dickinson minor.

"Dash it all, they can't help being surprised, if it's true what you've been saying, Gunner."

"If!" roared Gunner.

stared at him, and then jumped as the Form master addressed him sharply.

"Muffin, what is the matter with you?" "N-nothing, sir."

"Is this a concerted piece of impertinence, with the whole Form concerned in it?" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

"Yes—I mean no, sir! I—I don't believe a word of it, sir!" gasped Tubby Muffin.

"Of what?" "Nothing, sir."

"Has anything happened, Muffin?" asked Mr. Dalton, utterly mystified, but a little disarmed by the alarm in Tubby's fat face.

"I mean, about you, sir!" gasped Tubby.

"About me? What about me?" "I mean your brother, sir."

"My brother!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, astounded.

"Yes, sir. I know it's all rot. I know you haven't got a brother, sir," stammered Tubby.

"Eh? I—I hope so, sir!" "I have a brother," said Mr. Dalton.

"It is no concern of yours, but it is a fact. Of what interest is that to you or any other Rookwood boy?"

Tubby Muffin almost fell down. He blinked at Mr. Dalton. He had stared before, with avid curiosity.

Now he blinked in helpless amazement. "Oh dear! You—you own up, sir?" he gasped.



GUNNER LOSES HIS WOOL! "That tramp must think you're the biggest idiot in Hampshire to swallow a yarn like that, Gunner," said Dickinson. "He must really! Ow! Oh! Leggo! Whoop!" Gunner had grasped Dickinson minor by the collar and was banging his head against a tree. Thump! Thump! Thump! "Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" roared Dickinson minor, struggling frantically in Peter Cuthbert's hefty grasp.

"I—I mean, if you've not made a mistake!" "Do I make mistakes?" demanded Peter Cuthbert Gunner truculently.

"I—I mean—" "Are you asking me to bang your napper against that tree, Dickinson minor?" inquired Gunner.

"N-n-nunno!" "Then you'd better shut up." Dickinson minor shut up. It was always safer to shut up than to argue with Peter Cuthbert Gunner of the Classical Fourth.

The 2nd Chapter. Just Like Gunner!

"Muffin!" "Oh!"

Reginald Muffin uttered that ejaculation and jumped, instead of replying "Yes, sir!" as he ought to have done.

Muffin was loafing by the Form-room door, when Richard Dalton came along with knitted brows. It was close on time for first lesson, and Mr. Dalton was going to the Form-room.

As he came up the fat Classical

"Own up!" repeated Mr. Dalton dazedly. "To what? Speak out, Muffin!"

"I—I never really believed it, sir. But if you say it's so—"

"What?" thundered Mr. Dalton. "Nothing, sir!" gasped Reginald Muffin, backing away in terror.

"To what are you alluding, Muffin?" "N-n-nothing, sir."

"I command you to explain at once!" exclaimed the Form master angrily. "Something is going on behind my back, in my Form—something that I insist shall be explained to me at once. You know what it is, Muffin."

"Yes, sir—I mean, no, sir!" "Tell me what it is at once!"

"Nothing, sir," stammered Tubby. How could Tubby Muffin explain to an exasperated Form master that Gunner had made an astounding discovery regarding him—the discovery that Mr. Dalton's brother was a tattered, intoxicated tramp, even now lurking in the fields and paths near Rookwood?

Gunner's amazing discovery had astounded Gunner. It had excited

the Classical Fourth from end to end. Fellows mostly did not believe it, but it centred their attention upon Richard Dalton with an almost painful keenness.

It would have needed a fellow with a nerve of iron, a fellow with a much stronger nerve than Tubby's, to make such an explanation to an angry Form master.

Wild horses would not have drawn it from Tubby.

Mr. Dalton came nearer to the fat and terrified junior, and for a moment it looked as if he would so far forget himself as to box Tubby's ears.

Fortunately for his own dignity—still more fortunately for Tubby's ears—he restrained himself.

With an angry frown he passed into the Form room, leaving Reginald Muffin gasping in the corridor, much relieved to see him go.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tubby. He scudded down the corridor, anxious to escape further questioning from his Form master, equally anxious to tell his news to the other fellows in the Classical Fourth.

He met a crowd of them coming in from the quadrangle, and gasped out: "I say! He's owned up!"

"Who's owned up, to what, fathead?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Dick Dalton! He's owned up to that tramp is his brother!" stammered Tubby. "It's just as Gunner said!"

"Didn't I say so?" chuckled Gunner.

"Rot!" said Jimmy Silver. "Bosh!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "I don't believe a word of it! If Gunner's right—"

"No 'if' about it!" snorted Peter Cuthbert.

"Fathead! If Gunner's right—and there's a jolly big 'if' about it—then Dicky Dalton wouldn't tell Tubby! Utter rot!"

"Piffle!" said Newcome. "He's admitted that he's got a brother!" howled Tubby.

"Well, why shouldn't he have a brother, fathead?" demanded Lovell. "I've got brothers, but they're not tramps!"

"Well, we've never heard of his brother before," remarked Peele.

"No reason why we should have," said Jimmy Silver. "We've never heard of his cousins or his grandfather, if you come to that. But I suppose he has some."

"Well, it looks to me—" said Gower.

"Rats!" "You can talk rot, Jimmy Silver," said Gunner. "But I know what I know. Mind, I'm not going to throw it up against Dicky Dalton! I like him! It's not his fault that his brother has gone to the bad, and turned out a frowsy, disreputable tramp. Still, the fact's there."

"Bosh!" "Rats!" "Piffle!"

"I've met the man. He's told me his story," said Gunner. "I'm not a fellow to be taken in, I hope."

"Oh, my hat!" "He was coming up to the school to disgrace Dicky Dalton, and get money out of him. I chipped in and stopped him. I tipped him a quid to get out and leave Mr. Dalton alone. I did that, mind you, though I was booked for a licking from Dalton. Coals of fire on his head, you know."

"Fathead!" "I'm standing by Dalton," said Gunner generously. "I happen to have made this discovery about him. The man told me all. I want to keep it dark—quite dark—so as to save Mr. Dalton's feelings."

"And this is how you keep it dark?" said Raby sarcastically. "Telling the whole Form, and hooting it along the passages!"

"I mentioned it—" "From the housetops!" remarked Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "But Mr. Dalton is not to know that we know," said Gunner. "Keep it dark. That's the idea. Save his feelings. He can't help his brother being a loafer and probably a convict—he looks one! Not a word about it for Dicky Dalton to hear! Mum's the word! You talk too much, Jimmy Silver."

"What?" yelled the captain of the Fourth. "Same with you, Lovell—" "Me?" hissed Lovell.

"And most of you fellows! You all talk too much. You're like sheep's heads, you know, nearly all jaw. Blessed if I see why you can't

(Continued overleaf.)



Well Meant!

By Owen Conquest.

(Continued from previous page.)

"H'm!" said Mr. Greely. Mr. Dalton suppressed an impatient ejaculation. He was not in the best of tempers that day. His sunny disposition had been rather sorely tried. All day long, in class and out of class, he had been the centre of breathless curiosity on the part of the Fourth, and he knew that something or other must have occurred to account for this. It was no rag. It was something more than that.

But what it was he could not fathom.

It was useless to question the juniors. They evaded questions, they answered craftily or dodgily. They simply would not, or could not, tell him what the mystery was. He realised, indeed, that they dared not. And that made him wonder all the more what the matter was.

Really, it was growing intolerable, and he was getting decidedly "ratty." In that frame of mind he was not prepared to tolerate the ponderous Mr. Greely with his usual patience.

He had observed, too, coming into Masters' room after tea, a certain suppressed movement, an exchange of

"Really, Mr. Dalton, this is hardly what I should expect from you. As a master of senior standing—"

Mr. Dalton rose.

"You are not going, Mr. Dalton?"

"Yes, I am going."

"Upon my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Greely, much offended. "Very well, Mr. Dalton—very well. I will not say what I was about to say. I will not put you on your guard, as I intended. Very well, sir—very well indeed!"

Mr. Dalton walked out of Masters' room, leaving Horace Greely very much offended. The Fifth Form master's last words had excited his curiosity a little, and he wondered whether, for once, Mr. Greely had been going to utter something more useful than unasked advice.

In the corridor Mr. Dalton came on Bulkeley of the Sixth, and Bulkeley's look was curious. Mr. Dalton noticed it, and he stopped to speak to Bulkeley. Whatever it was that had excited his Form, and had been the topic in Masters' room, had apparently reached the ears of the Rookwood captain.

But if Bulkeley knew, he did not care to refer to it.

He spoke to Mr. Dalton about the cricket, carefully avoiding any other topic, and got away as soon as he could.

Mr. Dalton breathed hard as he walked on.

Something was up, that was certain. Something or other was making him the talk of Rookwood, con-

chance. He walked thoughtfully under the old beeches. Gunner and Dickinson minor were going down to the gates together, and they glanced at Mr. Dalton as they went, and then, as they caught his glance in return, hurried on.

Mr. Dalton compressed his lips.

These juniors knew—whatever it was—that was clear. He was tempted to question them and force them to explain. But, after all, how could he force them to repeat the gossip, whatever it was, that was spreading through the school? Such a proceeding would have been too undignified.

Monsieur Monceau, the French master, was taking a little walk under the beeches. Richard Dalton joined him, and the French gentleman greeted him with even more polished politeness than usual. Like many French masters, Monsieur Monceau was a rather neglected and unregarded gentleman, but Richard Dalton had always been very kind and friendly to him, and Mossoo repaid a little thoughtful kindness with a very deep attachment. It was easy to see that Mossoo knew of the mysterious discussion that was going on concerning his friend, hence his particularly polite and cordial manner.

It went against the grain with Richard Dalton to raise the subject of his own affairs, but he decided to do so.

"Can you enlighten me, Monsieur Monceau?" he asked rather abruptly.

"Comment?"

"Something seems to be going on—"

has seen one tramp who say he is your brozzer, and ze story is talked over ze school. I have zink to myself, it is one duty as a friend to warn you of zis."

Mr. Dalton stared at him blankly. He had tried to imagine what the mysterious topic might be; but certainly he had never imagined anything like this.

"Is—is it possible?" he stammered.

"C'est possible! C'est vrai! So one says," said Monsieur Monceau. "Some foolish boy in your Form have started ze story."

"The young rascal!"

"Zere is nozzings in him, vrai?" asked Monsieur Monceau. "Your friends zink no worse of you, monsieur, if you have one relation who is not—vat you call—up to ze marks."

"Thank you, monsieur," said Mr. Dalton dryly. "But I do not happen to have any disreputable relations, that I am aware of. I am much obliged to you for telling me this. I shall investigate the matter at once."

And Richard Dalton, with a grim brow, nodded to the French master, and walked away to the House.

The 4th Chapter.

Good of Gunner!

"The awful rotter!" said Gunner indignantly.

"Eh?" said Dickinson minor.

"The swindling brute!"

Peter Cuthbert Gunner was indignant.

His indignation was just. It was aroused by the sight of a tattered, frowsy fellow sprawling in the shade of a hawthorn hedge; a tattered and battered tramp taking his ease in the grass and the shade in the warm summer afternoon.

"Know that rotter?" asked Dickinson minor in amazement.

"Yes, rather! That's Dalton's brother."

Dickinson minor almost fell down.

Gunner's story of his meeting with Mr. Dalton's brother, the tramp, had spread like wildfire through Rookwood, little believed, but greatly discussed. It was too startling a story to be believed, yet many fellows wondered whether there was something in it. Gunner was every kind of an ass, but he was known to be very veracious. He stated facts so far as he knew them or understood them. He would have disdained to lie, and that quality of his was well known in the Fourth, and so gave some weight to his story. Indeed, as Morny pointed out, Gunner hadn't the brains or the imagination to invent such a story. There was something behind it—whatever it might be.

Now Dickinson minor had a view of what was behind it—this frowsy tramp. He looked on, quite dazedly, as Gunner strode up to the frowsy man sprawling in the grass, and stared down at him angrily. William Henry Dalton, more commonly known as Bill, blinked up at him and grinned.

"You, sir?" he said.

He recognised the Rookwood junior. He was not likely to forget Gunner. The fellow who had been asinine enough to swallow his yarn of being a relation of Mr. Dalton's was not easily forgotten. The similarity of name and the obtuse credulity of Gunner formed the foundation of the story, though Peter Cuthbert, of course, could not be expected to guess as much. He was far from being aware that he was obtuse and credulous. Indeed, his fixed belief was that he was a very keen and knowing fellow.

"You rotter!" roared Gunner.

"Eh?"

"You rascal!"

"What's biting you, sir?" asked William Henry, grinning up lazily at Gunner.

"I tipped you a quid to clear off!" said Gunner. "You're not gone! What do you mean by hanging about here after I tipped you a quid to go?"

Bill Dalton sat up.

"Wot's a quid?" he said.

"Why, you thundering rascal—"

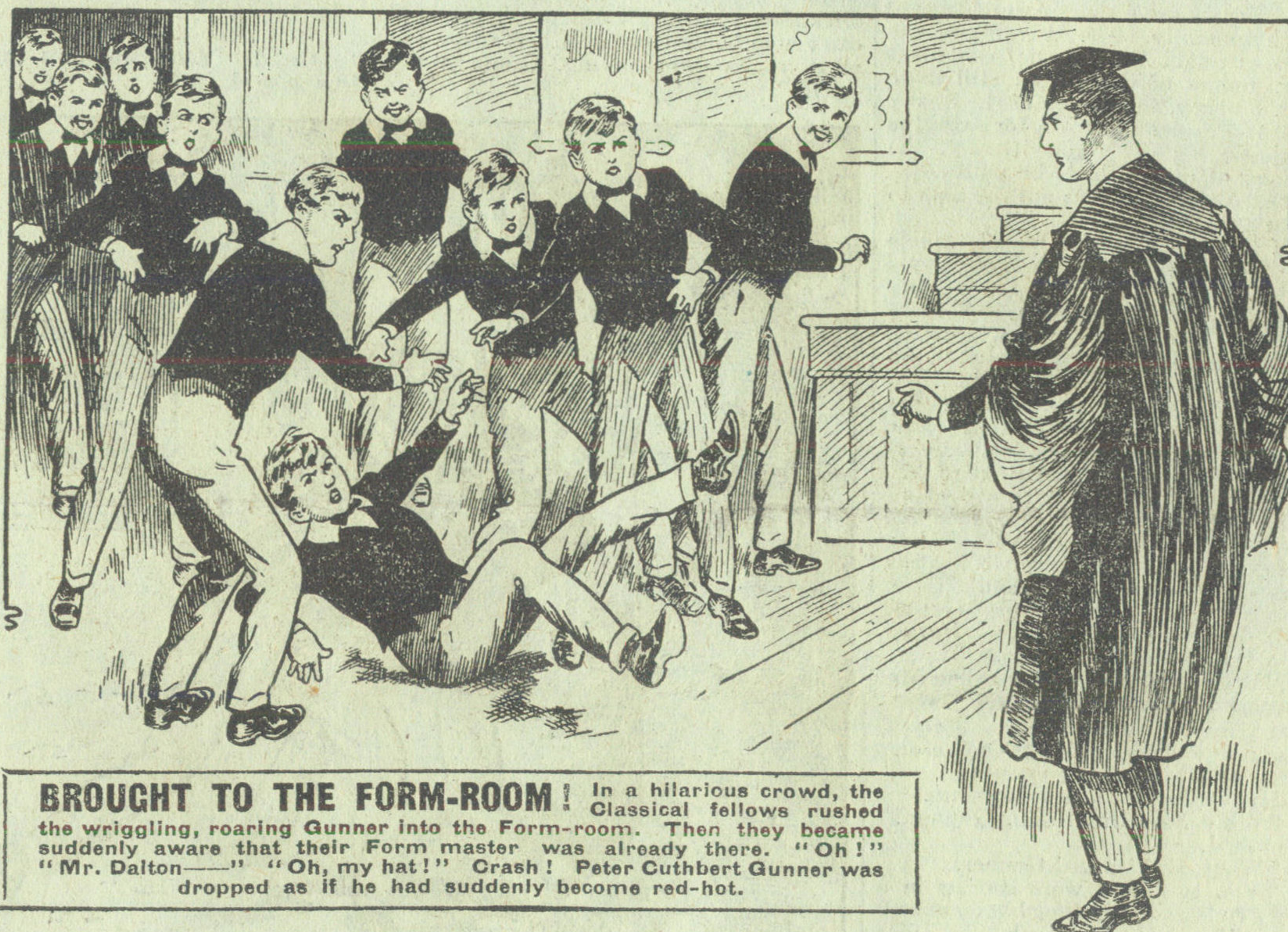
"Ain't I got a brother doing well at your school?" said William Henry.

"Ain't it his dooty to help a pore relation? I'm going up to Rookwood, I am, to see whether Richard won't 'elp a bloke."

"You promised to clear off if I handed you a quid," said Gunner, greatly incensed. "I handed you the quid, you rotter!"

"Now, you hand me another, if you don't want me to walk into Rookwood School," said William Henry, eyeing Gunner. "That's business."

William Henry spoke truculently.



BROUGHT TO THE FORM-ROOM! In a hilarious crowd, the Classical fellows rushed the wriggling, roaring Gunner into the Form-room. Then they became suddenly aware that their Form master was already there. "Oh!" "Mr. Dalton—" "Oh, my hat!" "Crash! Peter Cuthbert Gunner was dropped as if he had suddenly become red-hot.

take example by me—strong and silent, and that sort of thing," said Gunner.

Jimmy Silver & Co. gazed at Gunner.

Peter Cuthbert Gunner prided himself upon being the "strong, silent" kind of character. In actual fact, Peter Cuthbert was the fellow at Rookwood who gave his chin most exercise.

It was Gunner who made this so-called discovery about Richard Dalton's shady family connections. It was Gunner who had made the supposed discovery the talk of the Classical Fourth. Gunner who had made the attention of the whole Form centre on Richard Dalton with burning, painful curiosity. And it was Gunner who cheerfully told the other fellows that they talked too much, and advised them to take example by him. It was just like Gunner. Gunner all over, in fact.

Gunner was a fellow with whom it was useless to argue. His powerful intellect was impervious to argument. But there were other methods of dealing with Gunner.

"Collar him!" said Jimmy.

Gunner was promptly collared.

"Here, I say—leggo!" roared Peter Cuthbert indignantly.

"Gunner, you ass! Gunner, you chump! Gunner, you frabjous burler!" said Jimmy Silver, in measured tones. "You've found out a mare's nest, and you've made Dicky Dalton the talk of the Form, and soon he'll be the talk of the school. And there's nothing in it, only your fatheadedness. Bump him!"

"Yaroo!" roared Gunner.

"Give him the frog's-march to the Form-room."

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yarooop—yoop! Leggo! Oh, my hat! Oh, scissors! Whoop!" raved Gunner, as he went down the corridor in the midst of a crowd of laughing juniors, tapping on the floor as he went.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In a hilarious crowd, the Classical fellows rushed the wriggling, roaring Gunner into the Form-room.

Then they became suddenly aware that their Form master was already there.

"Oh!"

"Mr. Dalton—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Crash!

Peter Cuthbert Gunner was dropped as if he had suddenly become red-hot. The Classical Fourth rushed to their places. Gunner sprawled on the floor, dusty and breathless, gasping, under the astonished eyes of Richard Dalton.

"What does this mean?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"We—we didn't know you were here, sir!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Gunner sat up, spluttering.

"Ow, ow! Wow! Groogh!"

"Gunner, go to your place!" said Mr. Dalton.

And Gunner went, gasping.

The 3rd Chapter.

Mossoo Explains!

Mr. Greely coughed.

Horace Greely, master of the Rookwood Fifth, had a little, fat, important cough, generally the preliminary to fat, important remarks. Ponderous Mr. Greely looked more ponderous than ever as he approached Richard Dalton in Masters' Common-room and opened his batteries, so to speak, with that fat little preliminary cough.

Richard Dalton's look was not welcoming. Often and often Mr. Greely weighed in to help his younger colleague with advice, in the majestic kindness of his heart. He had, perhaps, a dim perception that his homilies were not welcomed. But no doubt he put this down to youthful self-sufficiency and ingratitude on the part of his colleague.

glances, among his colleagues. Mr. Wiggins had actually coloured, Mr. Bohun avoided his glance, Mr. Mooney spoke to him with an exaggerated cordiality. He knew that he had been under discussion, and that his entrance made all these gentlemen feel uncomfortable.

They drifted out one by one soon afterwards, with the exception of Mr. Greely. Horace Greely stayed, and approached the Fourth Form master with a sonorous "H'm!"

"H'm!" repeated Mr. Greely.

"You will excuse me, Mr. Dalton—h'm—"

"What is it?"

"As an older man," said Mr. Greely, "as a master much senior to yourself, both in years and in standing—"

Richard Dalton interrupted. He had heard an exordium like that many times before, and he was feeling too impatient on this occasion to let Horace Greely progress, slowly and ponderously and impressively, from the exordium to the peroration.

"Yes, yes. What is the matter, Mr. Greely?"

"Your boys, sir," said Mr. Greely, with dignity.

"Kindly say no more, Mr. Greely."

"What?"

"I have no doubt your motives are kind," said Mr. Dalton. "But you must have observed, Mr. Greely, that I never interfere in the affairs of the Fifth Form, from motives kind or otherwise."

It was a snub, and Mr. Greely flushed. However, he had received snubs before, in his career as adviser-in-chief to the Rookwood staff, and he recovered.

centrating on him the curious attention of the whole school. What was it?

In the morning he had noticed it in his own form only. But now he saw that it had spread. Bulkeley of the Sixth knew—the masters knew—Mr. Greely had probably been about to explain what it was when he was cut short. The Shell knew—Mr. Dalton had seen Smythe and Tracy and Selwyn, and some more of the Shell, whispering and regarding him with grinning glances. The Fifth knew—he had had unmistakable looks from Hansom and Lumsden and other Fifth Form fellows.

But what was it? What did it mean?

Really, it was beginning to get on Richard Dalton's nerves a little. The mystery of it was worrying.

He walked out of the House. Jimmy Silver & Co. were at cricket practice on Little Side, and Mr. Dalton turned his steps in that direction. He often gave the Fourth Form fellows tips at cricket, being a tremendous cricketer himself. But now he paused and turned back. He did not feel that he wanted to be in the presence of his Form, the subject of surreptitious glances and suppressed breathless whispers.

He began to wish that he had let Mr. Greely run on. But he did not seek Mr. Greely to give him another

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

Gunner did not doubt his claim to be Richard Dalton's brother—amazing as his crass credulity was, he did not doubt it. Gunner was standing between his Form master and this disgraceful relation, who threatened to "show him up" at Rookwood. It was good of Gunner, considering that he was far from being a favourite of Mr. Dalton's. In fact, it was too good of Gunner! Had he not taken Mr. Dalton under his kindly protection William Henry would not have consumed a pound's worth of strong drink at the Bird-in-Hand, and would not have been lingering in the neighbourhood of the school at all.

That day William Henry had been sleeping off his potations under the hedges. Now he was thirsty again, and the sight of Gunner was like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years.

Whether the same chicken would fight a second time William Henry did not feel sure. But it was worth trying. Gunner, apparently, was fool enough to be "stuffed" to any extent. Stuffing fools was an old game with William Henry.

He drew himself out of the grass and blinked at Gunner.

"You mind your own business, young gentleman," he said. "It ain't for you to butt in 'tween me and my relations. I'm jest on my way up to the school, and I was taking a bit of a rest. I'm going up there now. What does it matter to you, I'd like to know?"

"Do you think I'm going to have my Form master disgraced by a rotten outsider like you butting in and giving him away?" demanded Gunner. "Dickie Dalton is a good sort, and I'm looking after him, you see? You come up to Rookwood, and I'll knock your nose through to the back of your head, to begin with."

William Henry Dalton grinned. Certainly he had no intention of going anywhere near Rookwood. But he did not tell Gunner that.

"What's a man to do?" he asked. "A bloke's got to live! A quid would see me clear. I 'ad to pay that quid you gave me to a blooming inn-keeper for—for food. Make it another quid, and I'll hook it!"

He eyed Gunner cunningly, wondering whether the chicken would fight.

Gunner glared at him.

He, on his side, was debating whether he should "pitch into" William Henry Dalton, and knock him right and left. There would be satisfaction in it; but would it keep the rascal from blackmailing Mr. Dalton at Rookwood? That was the doubtful point—to Gunner.

"How's a fellow going to believe you?" said Gunner at last. "You promised to go last time!"

"I mean it this time, sir! I'd have gone afore, only I 'ad a bill to pay—on my davy! I've got a job waiting for me in Sussex, if I could get there. Make it a quid, sir."

Gunner hesitated.

Dickinson minor said no word. He was staring on in blank astonishment. Astonishment deprived him of speech. Dickinson minor, being Gunner's study-mate, knew his friend's asinine qualities. He had supposed that he knew every kind of silly ass Gunner was. But this was a discovery to him. Evidently he had not quite known Gunner.

"Look here, my man!" said Gunner, making up his mind. "I'll give you another chance. I haven't the money about me now—"

"Oh!" said William Henry surlily.

"I'll come out again after tea, and meet you here, and give you the quid," said Gunner, "and I'll jolly well walk with you to the station and see you on the train. See?"

William Henry had his own ideas about that. But he nodded. The "quid" was the important matter, in William Henry's estimation.

"I'll wait 'ere for you, sir," he said.

"Wait till I come," said Gunner.

And he walked back towards Rookwood with Dickinson minor. That astounded youth found his voice at last.

"Is—is that the man, Gunner?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"He's really made you believe that he's a relation of Dicky Dalton?" gasped Dickinson minor.

"His name's Dalton—"

"Well, I suppose there are hundreds of Daltons, if not thousands," said Dickinson minor. "His name might be Gunner, but that wouldn't make him your brother, would it?"

"Don't be an ass, Dickinson minor! I suppose you don't think the fellow could take me in, do you?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Am I the kind of fellow to be taken in?" demanded Gunner.

"Look here!" gasped Dickinson. "That fellow's pulling your leg, Gunner. Why, I never heard of such a transparent yarn! He must think you're the biggest idiot in Hampshire to swallow a yarn like that. He must really. Ow! Oh! Leggo! Whoop!"

Gunner had grasped Dickinson minor by the collar, and was banging his head against a tree.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" roared Dickinson minor, struggling frantically in Peter Cuthbert's hefty grasp.

"Say when!" said Gunner.

"Yaroooh!"

"Do you think I'm a fool to be taken in—what?"

"Ow! Yes—no—yaroooh! No! Oh, no!" yelled Dickinson minor.

"Good!"

Gunner released the hapless junior. Dickinson minor rubbed his head, and glared at Peter Cuthbert. Gunner strode on towards Rookwood, unheeding him further, having reduced Dickinson to a proper state of discipline.

Dickinson minor followed him, still rubbing his head.

The 5th Chapter.

Dicky Wants To Know.

"Dicky—ahem!—Mr. Dalton!" Jimmy Silver & Co. jumped up. The Fistical Four were at tea in the

who states that his name is Dalton, and who claims to be my relation."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"The boy's name?"

Jimmy was silent.

Gunner deserved to be licked, if ever any fellow did, for his asinine credulity, and for making such a sensation in the school, with Dicky Dalton as the victim of it. Still, the juniors were disinclined to give even the egregious Gunner away.

"I—I think the fellow meant well, sir," said Lovell. "He can't help being a born idiot, sir—the biggest fool at Rookwood!"

Mr. Dalton looked at Lovell.

"You prefer not to give me the boy's name?" he asked.

"If—if you don't mind, sir—"

"Very well. No doubt I shall find him."

Mr. Dalton left the study.

The Fistical Four exchanged glances.

"Isn't he a jolly good sportsman?" murmured Raby. "Lots of masters would have had the name out of us fast enough, or made us squirm."

"One of the best," said Jimmy.

"Just like Gunner to fix his silly story on the best man at Rookwood!"

"Oh, just!"

"Dicky is sure to bowl him out," said Lovell.

"Sure to—now you've given him the clue!" chuckled Raby.

"Eh? What clue did I give him?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell.

"You said it was the biggest fool at Rookwood."

As a matter of fact, Dicky Dalton had guessed—possibly from Lovell's description of the unknown junior, but partly from the remembrance of some remarks Gunner had made to him, which he had not understood at the time. It was Peter Cuthbert Gunner, the most egregious duffer at Rookwood School, who was responsible for this amazing story. And Mr. Dalton proceeded along the Fourth Form passage in quest of Gunner. He looked in at No. 7, and found it vacant. Gunner and Dickinson minor had not yet come in. Inquiry in the other studies did not unearth Gunner.

Finally the Fourth Form master left word that Gunner was to be sent to his study immediately he came in, and went down the stairs.

He left a buzzing crowd in the Fourth Form passage.

The Classical Fourth were highly excited. Whether there was "anything" in the strange story or not, it was fairly certain that there was trouble ahead for Gunner. Indeed, Peele remarked that the more truth there was in the story the more ratty Mr. Dalton would be, and the heavier would be Gunner's punishment.

"Here he is!" called out Mornington a little later.

Gunner came up the stairs, followed by Dickinson minor.

Dickinson minor was giving his head an occasional rub, as if it had lately come into rough contact with something hard.

pulled, of course," said Dickinson. "But he thinks he's keeping a shady relation of Dicky's away, and he's agreed to meet the man again after tea and give him another quid to go."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Tell us all about it," said Jimmy Silver.

Dickinson minor gave a graphic description of the meeting with William Henry Dalton in the lane. The juniors listened—Jimmy Silver with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

"So the man's waiting there for Gunner?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes."

"I know the man. We met him ourselves, I think," said Jimmy. "I remember a frowsy tramp who told us his name was Dalton. He didn't tell us he was our Form master's brother, though."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only Gunner gets information like that!" chortled Mornington.

"If he's waiting for Gunner, we can drop in on him," said Jimmy. "Look here, you chaps! This story of Gunner's is simply silly; but some of it will stick to Dicky Dalton if it's not knocked on the head. That rotter, Bill Dalton, had better be made to own up."

"How?" asked Lovell.

"He's waiting for Gunner in the lane. We'll go instead of Gunner, and ask him to step in at Rookwood—to see Mr. Dalton."

"He jolly well won't come!" grinned Lovell.

"He won't be able to decline."

"Eh? Why not?"

"Because we shall have hold of his ears. Come on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're all in this!" chuckled Morny. "Come on! All the whole giddy family! We'll make it a procession, with Dicky's brother in the place of honour."

"Good egg!"

"Come on, Dickinson, and point him out," said Conroy.

"Right-ho!"

And a crowd of the Classical Fourth marched off to interview William Henry Dalton, now waiting in Coombe Lane for Gunner. He was not to see Gunner, after all, but an army of Gunner's Form-fellows instead, which would probably not be so satisfactory to William Henry. Meanwhile, Peter Cuthbert Gunner, in his study, finished his tea in leisurely comfort, blissfully regardless of the fact that his Form master was expecting him. Tea finished, Gunner left his study—but not to visit Richard Dalton.

Mr. Dalton had left word for him to come, but Gunner could not help that. It was for Richard Dalton's own sake that he was negotiating with William Henry, and Gunner felt that it would be judicious to get finished with William Henry at once. Suppose the fellow, thinking Gunner had failed him, came on to the school? In the actual circumstances it was not probable, but to Gunner it seemed very probable. He walked out of the House—with the promised pound note in his pocket—and started for the gates.

"Gunner!"

It was Mr. Dalton's voice from his study window.

Gunner heard it, but he affected not to hear. He quickened his pace a little, that was all.

"Bulkeley, stop that junior, please!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth strode after Gunner, who was running now. His grasp dropped on Gunner's shoulder before he reached the gates. And Mr. Dalton, with a grim and frowning brow, came striding up from the direction of the House.

The 6th Chapter. Own Up!

"Gunner!"

"I'm in rather a hurry, sir!"

"You impertinent boy!"

"The fact is, sir, I've an appointment to keep," said Gunner.

"Kindly tell Bulkeley to let me go at once, sir!"

"From certain words you have let fall in speaking to me, Gunner, I have reason to believe that you are the author of a wicked and ridiculous story now circulating in the school!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton sternly.

His voice was sharp and clear, and it drew a good many Rookwood fellows to the spot, exchanging curious glances. Most of them had wondered how long the story would take to reach Richard Dalton's own ears. Evidently it had reached them now.

Gunner glanced round.

"Better let it drop, sir," he said.

(Continued overleaf.)



WILLIAM HENRY GOES THROUGH IT! "Let a bloke alone!" William Henry Dalton was yelling as he was propelled into the gateway. "I ain't going in—yaroooh! Leggo my years, will you, you young rip? Yoop! Stop kicking a cove! Ow! Ow! It was all a joke—ow! Wow! Leave off kicking a cove!" "Ha, ha, ha! In you go!" chuckled Lovell.

end study when there was a knock at the door, and Mr. Dalton presented himself. Most of the Classical Fourth had come in to tea, and there was a clatter of crockery and a buzz of cheerful voices along the Classical Fourth passage.

"Come in, sir!" said Jimmy Silver. "Very kind of you to come to tea with us, sir."

Jimmy Silver spoke hospitably, but a little uneasily. As a matter of fact he was well aware, from Mr. Dalton's expression, that Dicky Dalton had not come to tea in the end study.

"A certain matter has come to my knowledge, Silver," said the master of the Fourth. "I have come to you as head boy of my Form."

"Oh, yes, sir!" stammered Jimmy. "That ass Gunner!" murmured Lovell.

All the quartette knew now why Richard Dalton had called.

"I have known all day that something unusual was going on in my Form," said Mr. Dalton quietly. "Now I know that I have been made the subject of a ridiculous and impertinent discussion. Some member of my Form has started an absurd story concerning me—concerning some supposed relation of mine. You are aware of it, Silver?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Jimmy.

"We never believed a word of it, sir," murmured Newcome.

"Thank you! Some boy claims to have seen a disreputable tramp, I understand, whose name is Dalton, or

Lovell grinned.

"Yes, Dicky might guess from that. Ha, ha, ha!"

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Well Meant!

By Owen Conquest.

(Continued from previous page.)

"What?"

"Dash it all, there's twenty fellows hearing every word you say!" urged Gunner.

"Do you suppose, you stupid boy, that I object to anyone hearing me?" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

"Well, if you want to shout it all over Rookwood, sir—" said Gunner resignedly.

"You have invented a silly, stupid, and wicked story, Gunner—" said Dalton.

"Nothing of the kind!" said Gunner hotly. "I've done my best to keep it dark! I've tipped the man to keep away! A fellow couldn't do more!"

"What man?" roared Mr. Dalton.

"Your brother, sir, if you will have it out before all the fellows!" said Gunner.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bulkeley.

"My brother is in India," said Mr. Dalton, glancing round. "This incredibly stupid boy has been imposed upon by a tale of some charlatan, if he is not inventing the whole story himself!"

"Well, I like that!" said Gunner indignantly. "I never expected any gratitude, sir. But this is really too thick. I stood the man a pound out of my own pocket to go. I'm going out to see him now, to give him another quid, to clear off. I really think, sir, you might thank a fellow for trying to save you from an awful show-up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Dalton's face was crimson.

"You stupid boy! You have been imposed upon! The man you speak of, whoever he is, is no relation of mine!"

Gunner winked.

"All right, sir. Let it go at that!" he said. "Can I go now?"

"No!" thundered Mr. Dalton.

"You'd better let me go, sir," urged Gunner. "For your own sake, really, sir!"

"For my own sake? How? What do you mean?"

"I mean that your brother may come up to the school this blessed minute, if I don't go and stop him!" exclaimed Gunner desperately.

"The man is not my brother, or any relation of mine!" almost shouted Mr. Dalton. "Gunner, I shall report

up and make him own up it was a lie, sir."

"You silly ass!" roared Gunner. "You've done it now! Didn't I warn you to keep it dark?"

"Oh, dry up, Gunner!"

"I did my best, sir," said Gunner. "I tipped the man to keep away. I should have kept it all dark, sir. I tried—"

"You crassly stupid boy! Is that the man who claimed to be a relation of mine?" thundered Mr. Dalton.

William Henry fairly quaked as he eyed the athletic young master, towering over him.

"Oh, gum!" he gasped. "You, Mr. Dalton, sir?"

"Yes, you rascal! And you claim to—"

"Nothink of the kind, sir!" spluttered William Henry. "Oh, no, sir! I beg your pardon, sir! Name of Dalton, sir, that's all, sir! That young cove, sir, fairly begged and prayed to be took in, sir, and him being such a fool, and me 'ard up. I did pull his leg, sir, that's all!"

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Greely.

"Let a bloke mizzle, sir!" gasped William Henry. "I'll clear out of the county, sir, I will that, and glad to go, sir! 'Tain't my fault that the young cove was such a blithering idjit, sir, and fairly begging to be took in, sir. 'Ow was I to know he was silly enough to swaller such a yarn, sir? I put it to you, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar. Even Mr. Dalton's angry face relaxed. As for Peter Cuthbert Gunner's face, it was a study in changing emotions.

"You—you—you villain!" he gasped. "You—you took me in! You—you're not Mr. Dalton's brother! You—you—"

Words failed Gunner. He rushed at William Henry. And then words did not fail William Henry. He poured out a stream of words—very expressive words—as Gunner got to work with right and left.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Gunner!"

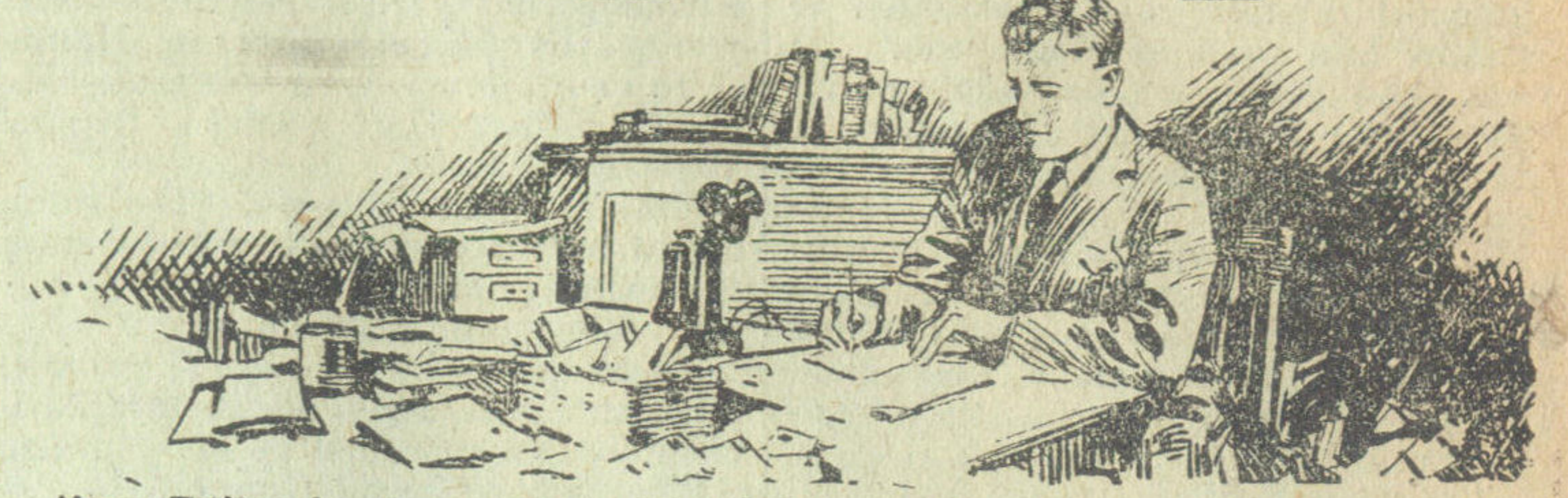
William Henry scrambled away and fled for his life, and a yell of merriment followed him as he darted through the gates of Rookwood and vanished.

Gunner was not licked, as most of the fellows expected. Gunner, indeed, could not see that he deserved to be licked. Apparently Mr. Dalton shared his view, and Gunner escaped. Perhaps Richard Dalton realised that Gunner had meant to be good, though altogether it was too good of Gunner.

THE END.

(It's a treat—"Done in the Dark!" Neat Monday's exciting long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School. Don't miss it, chums! Order your copy of the Boys' Friend in advance and thus make certain of obtaining it!)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

"HOW TO BE FIGHTING FIT!"

Nobody can afford to miss the grand article in this week's number. It is an article to read, to send to a chum, and then, of course, you want to file an extra copy for future reference. Jack Dempsey's advice is of first-rate value.

Just a word here about our competitions. This week is special. We have No. 4 of the A.B.C.'s with six "J. B. Hobbs" cricket bats as prizes. Hobbs is doing greater things than ever these days, and a bat with his name on it should work like a charm. So get busy. There will be further chances next week. By the way, the result of Bullseyes No. 7 will be found in this issue.

A BUNCH OF WINNERS.

Next week's number will contain a lively Jimmy Silver yarn called "Done in the Dark!" with Carthew making himself unpopular, as is his nature to. Carthew is a prime meddler, and if he finds himself up a tree—it ought to be a medal-tree—it is his own fault. "Holding the Fort!" is another draw for Monday next, and you will be interested in the brisk action of the Bombay Castle fellows, for they give the cheery old Marquis King Ho a mighty useful leg-up in a difficulty. Don't miss the dramatic wind-up of "The Lion's Revenge!" and the equally gripping close of "Kings of the Main!" "Called Back to the Team!" is another star turn in next Monday's bill. It is Arthur S. Hardy's best. While I am on the subject of fiction I cannot do better than draw your attention to "The Three Gold Feathers!" a positively amazing mystery serial, and "Knights of the Wheel!" a motor-racing yarn, which are shortly due in our pages.

OUT ON FRIDAY!

That refers to Nos. 7 and 8 of the "Schoolboys' Own Library." Order them straightaway, or otherwise you may miss a real pleasure. The new numbers contain stunning yarns of the famous schools.

WHAT DOES HE WANT?

A letter reaches me from far up-country in Western Australia, and it contains a wail. Frankly it puzzles me a bit. The writer is a thoughtful fellow who builds up a regular fairy legend of the past. You know what that means. We all do it at one time or another. That is, we set the imagination busy and weave dreams about things that have vanished. In this dream the holiday we enjoyed a few years back becomes the grandest holiday that ever was. Then, too, the yarn one reads a few seasons since is magnified tremendously. It assumes an even greater excellence than one originally gave it. But when my Western Australian friend tells me that the Boys' Friend of the present day would be better if it gave tales by Sidney Drew and David Goodwin, my answer is that the old "Green 'Un" is doing so, and, in fact, has never ceased from doing it. There are important serials by these favourite writers now on the stocks. It is topping to glorify the past, but it has to be remembered that the present has first claim on us all. Of one thing the correspondent in question can be well assured—namely, that the programme of stories in the Boys' Friend has continued steadily to improve all the time. So it will be

in the future. I have a magnificent array of fine features coming.

AN INTERESTING QUERY.

A Hants reader asks me whether I can tell him the name of the first British collector of birds' eggs of whom there is any mention. I have managed to track the fact down. The naturalist who figures specially in this way is the great Sir Thomas Browne, of Norfolk, who wrote of many learned matters in the reign of the Merry Monarch. Sir Thomas used to collect eggs, and it was his custom to put his specimens in the crown of his hat, a somewhat risky proceeding, as accidents do happen to the best eggs.

PAINTING THE SCENERY.

Duncan Storm tells me that in his younger days he was engaged in scene painting for the theatre. He had to dash in bold effects, and it appears he was extra good at mountains. He was a dab, too, at sunsets, but that's nothing, for Storm is a dab at most things. He has lived a roving life, and heaps of the things he writes about are personal experiences he has encountered.

NOTHING TO GRUMBLE AT!

An ambitious chum of mine tells me he took a cheap trip over to France, and, though he had been swotting up French no end, he always found that when he asked a question of a Frenchman the latter carefully repeated the query, and pronounced the words differently. I think that is just inevitable. A Frenchman is never satisfied with a foreigner's way of handling the language. My correspondent ought to be jolly pleased that his remarks were understood. He has got on very well, and he will soon get a truer accent if he perseveres.

FESTINA LENTE—MAKE HASTE SLOWLY!

Don't be in such a tearing hurry! It is a pity this advice was not rubbed into a reader of the old paper. He tells me he had a good post as a messenger a few years back, but he was too eager for promotion. As his next step up had to be waited for, he cut himself adrift and sought pastures new. From that time on bad fortune dogged him. Things did not turn out well, and he writes to me concerning the loose end which is at present his portion. Now, you cannot blame a fellow for being in a raging hurry to rise in the world; but, for all that, you want discretion to be busy, and to pepper in some patience. The French say that everything good will come to the man who knows how to wait—"qui sait attendre." That's the idea! In the case of my correspondent things will shape all right. He has had his bit of experience and will profit by it, for he is a sticker.

A WATERPROOF TENT.

A correspondent who is going camping and wants to make his material waterproof asks for particulars for doing this. He must soak the calico first in a solution of linseed oil, and then in a solution of alum. He will find this method perfectly satisfactory.

Your Editor.

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