

ANOTHER STORY OF THE CLIVEDEN CHUMS!

(SEE PAGE 265.)

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The **Boys' Herald** 1^d

EVERY BOY'S AND YOUNG MAN'S
STORY AND HOBBY PAPER.

No. 225, Vol. V.

EVERY WEDNESDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 9, 1907.



The **TERROR** of the **REMOVE.**

"The thief was climbing up the ivy to Mr. Lambe's window," said Ferguson, with a fierce glance at the eye-glass. "But perhaps Mr. Lambe can tell you more about it than I can."

The Cliveden Hobby Club

By Charles Hamilton

A Laughable, Complete Tale of the Chums at Cliveden College.



The 1st Chapter.

Pointdexter has an Idea.

LINCOLN G. POINDEXTER was sitting on the table in Study No. 4 at Cliveden, looking very thoughtful. His brow was wrinkled, there was a far-away look in his eyes, and he was absently jabbing a pen into Dick Neville's new Latin dictionary.

Dick Neville and Micky Flynn were busy with their preparation. The autumn evenings had set in, and the shadows were thick under the old elms in the Close. The gas was alight in Study No. 4, and a cheerful fire blazed in the little grate.

"Say," drawled the American chum, starting at last from his brown study, "when are you two kids going to finish? I guess I've got something to say."

"Finished," said Dick Neville, heaving a sigh of relief and pitching his books across the study, not without considerable damage to them. "What's the trouble, Pointbuster? You've been looking like a giddy Sphinx for the last ten minutes."

"I've been thinking," said Pointdexter. "Sure, and it's a new departure for you," said Micky Flynn, looking up. "How did it feel?"

"Don't rot!" said Pointdexter. "I've been thinking, and I've got an idea—a real good idea, I guess."

"Then get it off your chest, my son."

Dick and Micky were all attention at once. The coming of Lincoln G. Pointdexter to Study No. 4 had been attended by friction, but since the three juniors had formed a "Combine," they had pulled together famously. The keen, cute American boy usually had good ideas, and though Dick Neville was supposed to be the head of the study, he was not above receiving suggestions from his chum from Chicago.

"You see, kids," Pointdexter went on, "it's the fall now—you call it the autumn over here—and the winter's coming on. The long, dark evenings are almost upon us—"

"That sounds like a book," said Dick suspiciously. "You've been reading that somewhere, Pointpusher."

Pointdexter blushed, and went on hastily.

"Waal—I mean—anyway, the winter evenings are coming, and—"

"As for long evenings, sure I find 'em too short," said Micky Flynn. "Bed-time always comes round too soon for me. And as for the evenings being dark, it's easy enough to light the gas, isn't it, and then—"

"Look here, I'm speaking seriously," said Pointdexter. "The long, dark evenings are almost—"

"Oh, bless the long, dark evenings! Get to the point."

"I guess I'm coming to it. The long, dark—"

"My hat! He's like a blessed parrot, he keeps on saying the same thing over again," exclaimed Dick. "Look here, Pointpusher, if that's the result of your thinking, you'd better give it up and try something else."

"The long, dark evenings are almost upon us," repeated Pointdexter obstinately, "and the question is, what are we going to do to amuse ourselves when they come?"

"Haven't thought about it," said Dick.

"Sure, and I haven't either!" said Micky.

"Is that what has been creasing your manly brow, Puntbuster?"

The American nodded.

"I guess so. I've thought of a good idea. The long, dark evenings are almost upon us, and my idea is that we ought to start hobbies for the winter."

"Good wheeze," said Dick Neville thoughtfully, and Micky Flynn nodded assent.

"That's the idea," said Pointdexter. "The Study No. 4 Hobby Club" sounds well, and it

will be one in the eye to those bounders in Study No. 10. They haven't thought of anything of the kind. Pankhurst and Price will be left behind this time."

Dick's eyes sparkled. Study No. 4 was always at warfare with Study No. 10, where dwelt Pankhurst and Price, the deadly rivals of the Combine. Anything that would take a rise out of Pankhurst and Price was welcome to the chums of Study No. 4.

"Good," said Dick and Micky together, "jolly good! You get some good wheezes sometimes, Pointbuster, though you were brought up on tinned beef. We'll start a hobby club, and get the whole Fourth Form in it, and we'll let Panky and Price in as a big favour if they like to ask."

"That's it! We'll start the wheeze, and capture the Form, before Panky and Price get on to it," said Pointdexter. "They will be—I say, shut that pesky door, it gets on my nerves, rattling like that!"

Dick crossed to the door, which was partly open, and clicked it shut. Then the three chums put their heads together over the new idea.

"We'll draw up an announcement of the hobby club, and put it up in the Form-room," said Dick. "Mum's the word till we've posted it up. Pankhurst and Price will be dead out of it this time."

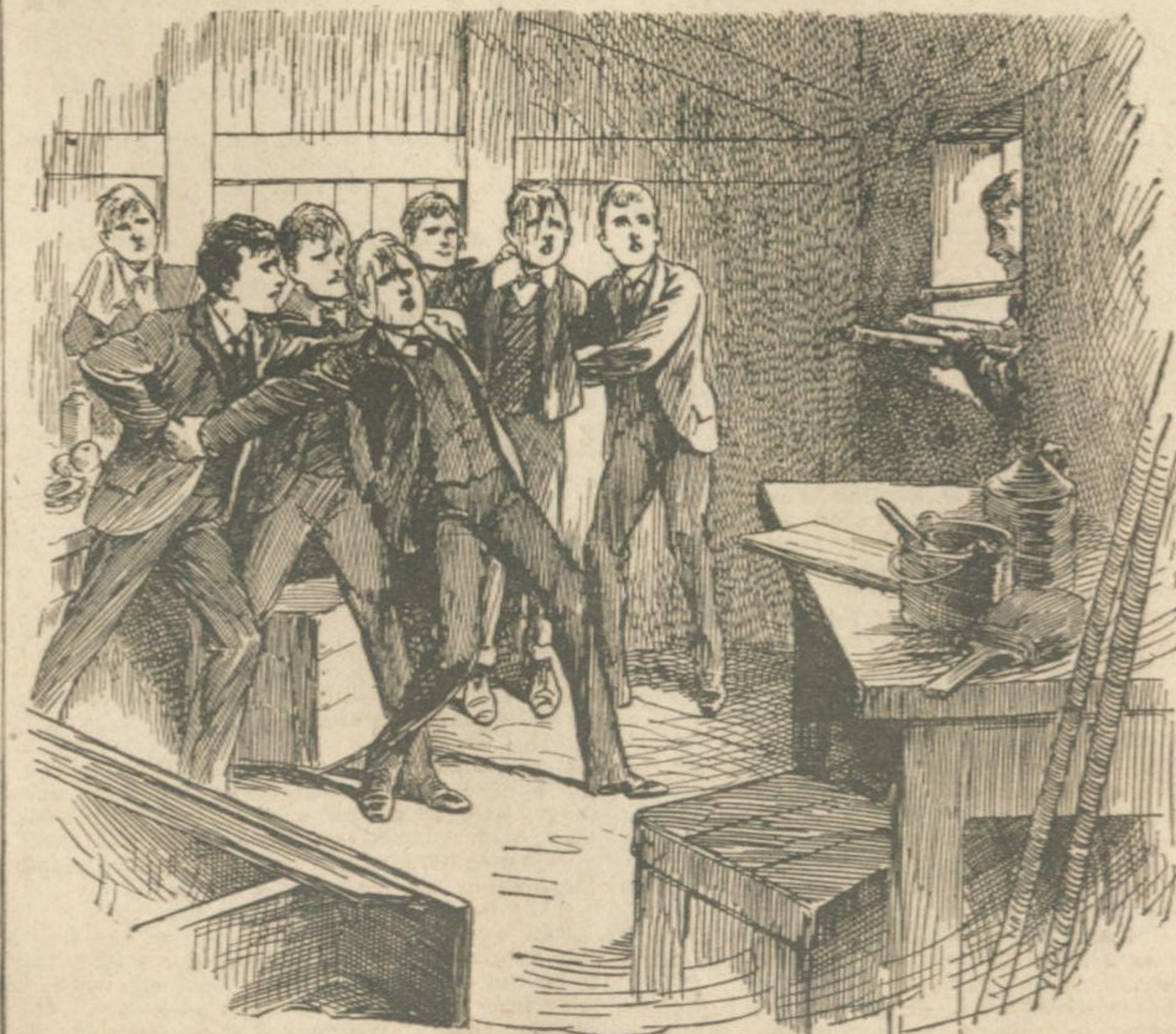
And the Combine, chuckling gleefully, set to work to draw up the notice, which, with many blots, erasures and corrections, was at last accomplished.

The 2nd Chapter.

First in the Field.

HOW the—what the—who the—which—

Pankhurst gasped out that inquiry as an excited form came tearing madly



The unfortunate chiefs of the Hobby Club were dragged forward towards the window, while the Combine held their squirts, full of inky water, ready to fire.

into Study No. 10, and brought up breathlessly against the table, which he clutched at to save himself from falling. Pankhurst was writing out an imposition, and the terrific jolt given to the table scattered a perfect shower of blots from his pen over the almost finished sheet.

He jumped up in amazement and rage.

"Look what you have done!" he howled. "You giddy lunatic! What's the row?"

Had it been anybody but Price who had bolted into his study in such a manner and caused such a catastrophe Pankhurst would have gone for him on the spot, and wiped up the lincolum with him without mercy.

But it was Price—his study mate and partner in the great firm of Pankhurst and Price, rivals of the Combine in the Fourth Form at Cliveden. The two juniors were about the same age, and both had hair of the richest auburn, which was perhaps a bond of sympathy between

them. Anyway, they were true chums and stood by each other through thick and thin—and they were two of the best.

"Sorry!" gasped Price. "Never mind—I—"

"Never mind!" ejaculated Pankhurst. "Well, I like that. It's taken me half an hour to write out that bosh from Racine to please Monsieur Friquet, and now you come in like a wild Hottentot and spoil half of it, and then you say never mind! Are you looking for a particularly big thick ear?"

"Sorry, but I—I—say—"

"Get your breath back, my son," said Pankhurst kindly, thumping his chum on the back with a view to aiding his recovery. "I don't mind helping you. Say when."

"I—I—gerrooh—lemme alone—I—"

"Not got it back yet?" Pankhurst continued to thump. "Don't mind me, I'm not tired."

The unfortunate Price dodged round the table to escape his chum's kindly ministrations.

"Lemme alone!" he gasped, safe on the other side. "You silly ass, you were knocking all the wind out of me!"

"I was trying to knock some in," said Pankhurst. "Accidents will happen. Now, if you've recovered, tell me what you came bolting in like that for?"

"I—I've made a discovery!" gasped Price. Pankhurst's eyes gleamed.

"Anything up in Study No. 4?" he asked.

"Yes."

Pankhurst kicked the door of the study shut, and then turned eagerly towards Price. He was on the alert at once.

"What is it?" he asked quickly. "Some new wheeze? How did you get on to it?"

"Sheer luck," said Price, more calmly now. "I was passing Study No. 4 and the door was half open, and I thought I'd look in on the Combine, and give 'em the benefit of a dose from my new squirt. I thought they'd like to

know I had one, you know, and how well I could aim with it."

"Ha, ha! And did you?"

"No, I didn't—for just as I was going to put my head in I heard Pointpusher say something—and it made me jump. They closed the door a minute afterwards. Of course, you know, Panky, that I wouldn't listen," said Price, "but I was a giddy scout discovering the enemy's plans, which makes the case different."

"Of course. Go on! What's the wheeze?"

"They're going to start a hobby club for the winter evenings," said Price, "and take the whole Form into it. We're to be allowed to enter, but the idea belongs to Study No. 4, and they're to be the head of it, and we're to sing small."

"Yes, I can see us doing it," said Pankhurst scornfully. "A hobby club! It's a ripping good idea, Pricey. Lots of fellows have hobbies of one sort or another, and a hobby club would soon scoop in half the Form, and the fellow who started it would get no end of kudos. Price, old chap, however did we let those bounders get ahead of us like this?"

"But they haven't got ahead of us!" said Price eagerly. "All's fair in war. That's why I came here in such a fearful hurry. The idea flashed into my brain, and I bolted to tell you. They're talking the wheeze over now. Why shouldn't we forestall them, and start the hobby club ourselves before they have a chance?"

Pankhurst gave a regular war-whoop.

"My hat! Price, you're worth your weight in gold!" His fist went up to give Price an approving thump, but Price dodged round the table again in time. "My old pyjama hat," went on Pankhurst, his eyes glistening with glee, "you are a pearl of Price—or a Price of pearl, and no giddy error! We'll do it! Come on! We'll call a meeting in the Form room, and get the club in full swing before those kids wake up to what's going on!"

They rushed from the study. Pankhurst and Price were just the fellows to strike while the iron was hot. They dashed into the Fourth Form-room, which was pretty well filled. A hasty glance showed them that no member of the Combine was there.

The dark evenings had set in, and football had to be left off early. Some of the juniors sprinted round the close after dark, and some were in the gymnasium. Most of the Fourth were in the room, however, chatting, or playing chess or dominoes, or pursuing the avocations that interested them.

There was a general look-up as Pankhurst and Price came in. They marched into the room with an important air that announced without words something unusual was coming.

Pankhurst dragged out a form, mounted upon it, and looked round. Price stood by the form, leaving most of the talking to Pankhurst, as he usually did.

"Gentlemen of the Fourth Form at Cliveden," said Pankhurst, "I hereby, thusly, and likewise call a public meeting to discuss a most important matter."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Gatty, looking up from his stamp album. "Don't bother!"

"If the gentleman who last spoke will come forward," said Pankhurst politely, "I shall have great pleasure in presenting him with a prize thick ear."

The gentleman who last spoke did not come forward, and Pankhurst went on.

"I hereby call a public meeting to discuss the question of forming a hobby club in the Fourth Form. Many of the gentlemen present have hobbies—"

Gatty looked interested now. He was an enthusiastic philatelist, and lived for his stamp album. Medway, who was in the musical line, pricked up his ears. Greene, the photographer, who was playing chess with Simpson, the moth-collector, stopped in the middle of casting. There was, in fact, a general movement of interest.

"My idea," said Pankhurst unblushingly—"my idea is to form a hobby club, including all the chaps in the Fourth Form who have any hobby, and any others who feel inclined to take one up. The winter is coming on, and the evenings will be long, and hobbies are just the thing. Of course, we want a club."

"Jolly good wheeze!" said Gatty heartily.

"I never thought you had so much sense, Pankhurst. We'll call it the Philatelist Club—"

"Rats!" exclaimed Greene. "We'll call it the Photographic Club—"

"Oh, I say, that's rot!" exclaimed Medway. "Talk sense, chaps! It's plain enough that we must have some hobby we can all take an interest in, and that's music. We'll call it the Fourth Form Amateur Musical Society—"

Silence for the chair!" shouted Pankhurst. "I'm talking!"

"Time you left off," said Greene. "I suppose you don't expect us to listen to you all night? Now, chaps, you must admit—"

"Silence!" roared Price.

"Silence!" repeated Pankhurst. "Listen to me, kids! Before we decide about the special hobby under the patronage of the club, we must form the club itself. That's the first step!"

This was agreed to, much to the relief of Pankhurst and Price, who were in fear every moment of the entrance of the Combine to announce the truth concerning the origin of the idea.

"Now," went on Pankhurst, "I've got a book here, all ready, and all you've got to do is to sign your names—"

"What about subscriptions?" asked Greene.

"Leave that till afterwards. As I am to be president, and Price treasurer—"

"Who said you were to be president?"

"Who said Price was to be treasurer?"

The Cliveden Hobby Club.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"We did!" said Pankhurst and Price together defiantly. "It's our idea, ain't it?"

"Well, if they can run a club without subscriptions," said Philpot, the meanest boy in the Fourth—known in the Form as Shylock—"I say, let 'em do it!"

"Good!" said a dozen voices. That was not exactly what Pankhurst and Price had intended, but there was no time to argue. The Combine might come on the scene at any moment.

"Right you are!" said Pankhurst. "Now, all of you come and put your names down. I don't mind saying that Price and I are going to stand a feed to the club as soon as it is formed, in honour of the idea."

There was a rush of eager members to sign their names.

Price had a fountain-pen, and Pankhurst had a book, and the chums of Study No. 10 were kept busy for some time, while the process of signing went on.

Whether it was a keenness for hobbies, or a desire not to be left out, or the prospect of a feed to the early members—whatever the reason was, there was a rush for membership. By the time the signing was done, two-thirds of the Fourth Form belonged to the Pankhurst-Price Hobby Club—the two auburn-haired youths having decided upon that double-barrelled title, so that there should not be any possible doubt as to the originators of the idea.

"Good!" said Pankhurst, closing his book with a snap. "This will be one in the eye for the Combine! I wonder what they will—Hallo, here they are!"

The 3rd Chapter. Forestalled.

POINDEXTER, Flynn, and Neville entered the Fourth-Form room as Pankhurst was speaking. Dick carried a sheet of paper in his hand, and all three of the Combine were looking unusually important.

"Hallo!" said Pankhurst, winking at his chum. "What have you got there, Neville?"

"Oh, a notice!" said Dick loftily. "You can read it when I've put it up. It's a new idea of ours."

Pankhurst and Price giggled. "New ideas seem to be cheap to-night," remarked Pankhurst. "We've just worked off one, and it's a big success. Let's see what yours is."

The juniors gathered round in a curious crowd as Dick posted up the notice in a good light on the wall. Then the Combine retired to a short distance to allow the Fourth Form to read, mark, learn, and admire.

The juniors stared blankly at the notice. It read as follows:

IMPORTANT!

"The long, dark evenings are almost upon us, and outdoor games will soon be off. The heads of the Fourth Form having met in council in Study No. 4, have decided to start a hobby Club, to be called the Study No. 4 Hobby Club. All members of the Fourth Form will be invited to join, and all are welcome."

"Richard Neville, Esquire, the captain of the Fourth, has kindly consented to accept the post of president of the Study No. 4 Hobby Club, Mr. Poindexter that of treasurer, and Mr. Flynn that of secretary."

"The subscription will be one shilling per annum, to be paid in three instalments, on the first day of every term. Members of the Fourth Form are invited to roll up and join the hobby club."

(Signed)

RICHARD NEVILLE, President.

MICHAEL FLYNN, Hon. Sec.

LINCOLN G. POINDEXTER, Treasurer."

The Combine stood in a group and watched the effect of the announcement upon the Fourth-Formers. The effect was a surprising one.

They were prepared for surprise, approval, disapproval, anything in reason; but they were not prepared for a gasp of amazement, and then a general roar of laughter.

Pankhurst and Price led off the laughter, and the rest of the Fourth followed suit, yelling with merriment.

The Combine looked at one another. They were usually very quick to catch on to anything, but they did not understand this reception of their grand idea at all.

They looked amazed at first, and then un-

comfortable, and then annoyed. Their countenances began to assume a warmer hue.

"If you'll kindly explain what you are cackling at—" began Dick, as soon as there was a lull in the laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Pankhurst, leading off a fresh burst; and the room rang with it.

"I guess they're off their rockers," said Poindexter. "Right off, I should say."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and they're a set of lunatics!" exclaimed Micky Flynn. "I never saw anything like it before in me loife!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you silly asses can't explain what you're hee-hawing at—"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Pankhurst, with the tears running down his cheeks. "You three innocent kids will be the death of me! What do you mean by sticking your mouldy old ideas up on the wall? That's what I want to know!"

"It's a new, ripping idea!" exclaimed Dick indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha! He says it's a new idea!" howled Price.

The room rang with laughter again.

"I say, you're late with your new ideas!" grinned Gatty.

"And you're off the track with your subscriptions," remarked Philpot. "Our hobby club is going to be run without subscriptions, Neville."

"Eh?"

"Are you going to stand a feed to new members, Neville?" demanded King, the greediest boy in the Form.

"No; certainly not!"

"Oh, come, don't let Panky put you in the shade like that! I don't mind belonging to two hobby clubs at once," said King, "if it means two separate feeds."

"Pankhurst! Hobby club! What are you driving at?"

"Oh, I say, you do it well, Neville!" said Jeffreys. "But it's no good pretending that you didn't know."

"Didn't know what?" roared Dick, getting exasperated. "I know you're a set of silly asses, if that's what you mean!"

"That isn't what I mean. I mean that you know very well that Pankhurst and Price have just started a hobby club, and taken down all our names as members. Then you come along with your mouldy old ideas. Yah!"

"Pankhurst—and—Price—have—just—done—what?" gasped Dick, faintly.

"Do you mean to say you didn't know—you hadn't heard something—?"

"Of course, I didn't—I hadn't—I wouldn't—I wasn't," said Dick, somewhat incoherently.

"Do you mean to say that—that—that—?"

"Well, this gets me," said Jeffreys, shaking his head. "It's the most remarkable coincidence I ever heard of."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Pankhurst and Price. The Combine looked at one another helplessly for a moment. The same idea had flashed into three brains at once. Pankhurst and Price had somehow discovered the idea, and had forestalled them. They glared wrathfully at the auburn-haired two, who were almost hysterical with laughter.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Dick.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You pair of—of horrid, rotten plagiarists—"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"You've boned our idea!"

"He, he, he!"

"You—you—you rotters—you pinchers—you burglars—you've boned the wheeze!"

"Well, I like that," exclaimed Pankhurst. "We start a hobby club, and take down the names of the members, and then Neville marches in and tries to do the same thing over again, collars our idea under our very noses, and then says we've boned his wheeze! I like that."

"It's no good, Neville," said Price, shaking his head solemnly at the Combine. "You're bowled out—fairly bowled out! That cock won't fight."

"What do you mean?" almost shrieked Dick. "I—I—say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was our idea," yelled Poindexter. "I tell you, chaps, we've been half an hour talking it over, and then we came—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and it's solid fact," exclaimed Micky Flynn. "We came here to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole room rang with laughter. Pankhurst and Price were doubled up with merriment. The Combine were growing more and more excited. Dick exchanged a glance with his chums, and went for Pankhurst and Price. Poindexter and Micky backed him up in a twinkling.

The two plagiarists went rolling on the floor underneath the wrathful Combine.

"Buck up!" gasped Price. "Members of the clobby hub—I mean the hobby club—lend a hand."

The members of the hobby club obeyed the voice of their president. The Combine were dragged off their foes, and ignominiously hurled forth into the passage. They jumped up again and rushed back to the attack, too furious to care for the odds—but the odds were too heavy. Forth they were hurled again, and yet again, and then they gave it up as a hopeless task, and retreated to their study.

Three dishevelled, dirty, exhausted juniors crawled into No. 4, and sank down gasping for breath. It was a crushing defeat for the Combine for once, and Pankhurst and Price, their rivals, reigned supreme.

The 4th Chapter.

The Combine Seek Vengeance.

NEEDLESS to say, the Combine were mercilessly chipped by the Fourth Form over that hobby club idea. Nobody believed that the idea had originated in Study No. 4, the most charitable of the juniors regarding it as a coincidence, the rest accusing the Combine of an attempt at the most barefaced plagiarism.

Pankhurst and Price said nothing. It was the biggest joke they had yet worked off on the Combine, and they were not going to spoil it. They did not say that the idea was their own. They simply said nothing, and the form jumped to conclusions—wrong conclusions, like most that are jumped to.

The Combine, of course, were furious. Their protestations were received with ribald laughter, and they soon gave it up. Besides, if they had convinced the Fourth Form, it was too late now to be of any use.

The Pankhurst-Price Hobby Club was in full swing. Wherever, and with whomsoever the idea had originated, it was in going order now, and Pankhurst and Price had all the credit of it. There was no room in the form for two hobby clubs. All the hobbyists had joined the Pankhurst-Price institution, and it was out of the question to start an opposition one with no prospect of getting members.

The Combine had to admit that they were done.

"They boned the wheeze," said Dick Neville, at a council held the next day in No. 4.

"They've worked it out, and they've got all the hobbyists into it. We're done. But are we going to take it lying down?"

"I guess not," Poindexter remarked. "They've collared all the hobbyists, I know, and it's no good trying to start a club with only ourselves as members. We should be grinning to death. We're getting enough grinning and chipping as it is."

"Sure, and it's the same I'm thinking," said Micky. "If we don't score off Panky and Price soon, life won't be worth living at Cliveden, kids."

"We're going to score off them," said Dick Neville decidedly. "They've collared our hobby club, and started it without us, and not to put too fine a point on it, they've made us look asses in the eyes of the whole form."

"I guess so."

"We're going to get our own back, that's settled. And my idea is, to bust up the hobby club, and stamp it out. Then we might start one."

Poindexter and Flynn looked doubtful.

"How are you going to do the trick, Dicky, darling?"

"First of all," said Dick, "Panky and Price are giving a feed to the early members of their giddy hobby club. That was what brought in such a rush of membership, I fancy; the greedy bounders thought that the early bird would catch the worm. To do Panky justice, he is keeping his word nobly. I saw the two Refuses in the school shop laying in the provisions, and they're bluing ten bob on it, if they're bluing temperence."

"A giddy treat for those kids," said Poindexter, "and cheap at signing your name in a book, I guess. Then there's no subscription; that's where Panky comes in strong, too."

"Well, about that feed. There are twenty-five members, I believe, to the hobby club. Anyway, there are too many for Panky to be able to make it a study feed. As a matter of fact, I've learned that he's going to give it in the wood shed."

"He's forgotten to ask us," said Flynn.

Dick laughed.

"Only members of the club are going," he said, "and we've kept out of their mouldy old club. But we shall be there, all the same."

"And what are we going to do when we get there?"

"You are aware, my infants, that there is only one door to the wood-shed, and only one window," said Dick, with the air of an oracle. "The window is small, rather too small for any kid to climb out easily. The door opens outwards. A wedge of wood placed under it when it's shut would keep it shut if there were an elephant inside trying to get out."

"You think we can make them prisoners—?"

"I know we can, but that's not all."

"Go on!" said Poindexter, deeply interested.

"The window is where we come on the scene. We are going to take three garden squirts, and a pail of water carefully mixed according to prescription—one part of red ink to three parts of water—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And when we open fire," said Dick, with a smile of seraphic satisfaction, "I think it's very likely that Panky and Price will wish they hadn't boned our idea, and that their giddy members will wish they hadn't joined the hobby club in such a hurry."

"My hat! What a ripping wheeze."

"Of course, our intentions are of the best. We approve of hobby clubs, but we like 'em to be run on a sound business footing—none of your free feeds, and no subscription rot," explained Dick. "We regard it as our duty to bust up this special hobby club, and start a better one, under better management—er, our own management, in fact."

"Righto!" exclaimed Flynn. "Dick, sure ye talk like a dictionary."

"It's a go, then, kids?"

"I guess so."

"Sure," said Micky.

"Then we may as well prepare the ammunition," said Dick. "The feed is coming off some time this afternoon, as it's a half-holiday, and we'd better get ready."

And the chums of the Fourth were soon busy. To borrow three large-size garden squirts of Bunter, the school-porter and gardener, was the work of a few minutes—and sixpence. To scout round in the deserted studies for bottles of ink, and commandeer them, and make a large collection of them in No. 4, took longer, but it was accomplished at last.

Poindexter came in with half a dozen bottles under his arms, and deposited them on the study table.

"That makes eleven," he said. "I guess that's enough. We—hallo, Panky!"

Pankhurst put his head in at the door.

The Combine stared at the beaming face of the auburn-haired junior in chilling silence.

"Hallo!" said Pankhurst. "I hear that you haven't joined the hobby club yet."

"You know that we haven't," said Dick.

Pankhurst shrugged his shoulders.

"How should I know?" he said, loftily.

"That's the secretary's business, not mine. You are not on the roll?"

"No, and are not going to be."

"Well, I'm sorry for that, because we're just giving a ripping spread in the wood shed to all members," said Pankhurst, "and I'd like you three to come—as members."

"You won't get us inside your mouldy hobby club, Panky, so you can travel."

"Oh, please yourselves," said Pankhurst indifferently. "Thought you might like to come to a feed, that's all. If you prefer to subsist wholly upon tinned beef—"

Poindexter turned red.

"Oh, travel along!" he exclaimed.

"Sorry, Puntpusher," said Pankhurst. "I forgot that you were in the potted-horse line. I say, you chaps, I really advise you to come. It's a ripping feed, and beats anything that was ever potted in Chicago, whether bovine or equine. I—"

"Are you going to shift?" roared Poindexter.

Poindexter's "popper" had made a fortune out of canning beef—and other things—in Chicago, and the Cliveden boys did not allow the American chum to forget it. The juniors affected to believe—led by Pankhurst—that when the Combine took meals in their own study, they were feeding upon canned beef specially sent from Chicago by Poindexter's "popper," a fact that was extremely exasperating to the three chums.

"Yes, I'm just going," said Pankhurst. "Don't get waxy. A change of diet would do you good, even if the stuff your governor sends is really beef; and you know that that's open to grave doubt. I say, Neville, do you know that the fellows have started calling this study the Jungle?"

The Combine made a simultaneous rush for the doorway, and Pankhurst sprinted down the passage. He vanished round a corner as the three rushed through the doorway, and they halted in the passage.

"Never mind," said Dick. "we'll see him again at the meeting; and if the Panky-Price Hobby Club enjoy that feed, I'll eat Micky's hat!"

The 5th Chapter.

Brought to Terms.

PANKHURST looked round the woodshed with an eye of pride.

The preparations for the feed were really on a fine scale.

There was a clear space of considerable extent, and in this a large table had been made by placing planks across boxes and benches. Benches and faggots made the seats, and if the quarters were somewhat rough-and-ready, the guests were not epicureans, and were not inclined to grumble at trifles.

A bribe of sixpence to Bunter had secured the woodshed for the afternoon. Bunter was always amenable to tips. As we know, he had received a similar sum from the Combine, and whether he connected the borrowing of the garden squirts with the feast in the woodshed in his sagacious mind, we cannot say. At all events, he understudied Brer Fox, and said "nuffin." "Least said, soonest mended," was Bunter's motto, and it was no business of his. And to spoil a joke planned by the Combine would have been more than his comfort for weeks was worth.

As the afternoon was a fine one, some of the juniors had suggested having the feast al fresco; but Pankhurst knew better. Predatory fellows in the Fifth Form would not have been above making a swoop upon the feasters, and commandeering the tastiest morsels. And the woodshed was really roomy, considering, and quite comfy.

"Well, we're all here," said King, who had been the first to arrive, and who had been eyeing the provisions with wolfish glances ever since. "About time we started, ain't it, Panky?"

Pankhurst counted the guests. All the members of the hobby club were there; they were not likely to be found wanting upon such an occasion.

"Righto!" said Pankhurst. "Fasten the door, Pricey. We don't want any of those Fifth Form rotters swooping down on us, or those kids out of Study No. 4, either. Gentlemen, this is where we feed."

"Fall to!" said Price. And the gentlemen fell to with a will. There was plenty of "tommy," and the hobbyists evidently intended to do it full justice. Pankhurst and Price attended to the wants of their guests with true hospitality, without looking out for themselves. King started eating at the first signal, and always had something in each hand to keep up a continuous supply to his mouth. "This is ripping!" said Gatty. "I say, Panky, you know how to give a feed, if you don't know anything about philately. I like this!"

"What terms?" howled Jeffreys. "We'll agree to anything!" "It's for Pankhurst and Price to agree." "They shall agree! We'll kill them if they don't!" "Make 'em come forward, then!" "We sha'n't—we won't!" shouted Pankhurst and Price. "You will!" howled a dozen juniors, who had had quite enough. "You got us into this. Come on!" And the unfortunate chiefs of the hobby club were dragged forward. The Combine held their squirts ready to fire, but as yet withheld the jets. "What do you want, you rotters?" howled Pankhurst. "We want you to own up," said Dick coolly. "You've got to confess, before all the club, that you boned our idea, and that it was us first thought of starting a hobby club."

take these squirts back to old Bunter. Panky, old man, we'll send a fag to let you out in five minutes." The Combine disappeared. Wrath reigned in the wood-shed. The feast was spoiled, the feasters feeling very damp. They were indignant with Pankhurst and Price, who had led them into such an unpleasant experience, and even if Dick had not made it a condition, it was pretty certain that the hobby club would have been dissolved on the spot. In fact, Pankhurst and Price looked like being mobbed, when the door of the shed was opened by a Third Form fag, and the prisoners were let out. They marched out dismally. "I say, buck up, you fellows!" exclaimed Pankhurst persuasively. "Let's go and scalp those rotters for this beastly trick! Come with me!" "Catch us!" said Gatty. "We've had enough of you two," growled Jeffreys. "Rather!" echoed King. "The feed was spoiled. Are you going to stand another?" "Not much!" "Then I consider you're a rotter! I consider—"

"I guess we're going to start a hobby club now," remarked Poindexter. "Panky's club has gone up, but we want one in the Fourth. We'll carry out our original idea, and we'll make Pankhurst and Price join it, too." "Begorra, and how?" asked Micky. "Persuade 'em!" grinned Poindexter. "There are lots of ways of persuading a fellow besides pulling his ears. I guess that that's what we want now, to prove beyond all cavil that we're the bosses of the Fourth Form—a hobby club of our own, and Panky and Price to join it as members." "If we can fix it—" said Dick thoughtfully. "I guess at the present moment," said Poindexter, "they're preparing for a raid on this study. Did you see young Frere, of the Third, pass the door just now?" "No. What about him?" "Well, I saw him, and I saw what he was carrying; and if he wasn't carrying it to No. 10, I'll eat my hat!" "What was he carrying?" asked Dick and Flynn together. "A—Hollo! There he is! I say, young Frere!"



The Combine stood in a group and watched the effect of their notice. The effect was a surprising one, for the Form burst into a roar of laughter.

"Humbugs!" "Impostors!" The hobby club members howled these opprobrious terms and many others into the ears of Pankhurst and Price. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dick. "You've come down off your perch this time, Panky, with a vengeance! Well, now you've owned up, we'll let you off the rest of the washing. You've each got a lovely complexion." "Now, to give the members a little more," said Poindexter, "I guess we're going to bombard them till they all resign membership in the hobby club." "Begorra, and it's a fine idea!" exclaimed Flynn. "Make ready! Present—"

The 6th Chapter. The Wheeze that Didn't Come Off. "HA, ha, ha!" "Ho, ho, ho!" "He, he, he!" Loud sounds of laughter were proceeding from Study No. 4. It was the hour of the triumph of the famous Combine. They had triumphed over their rivals of the Fourth Form in the most complete manner, and they had reason to be satisfied. "Ha, ha, ha!" They laughed themselves almost into hysterics in Study No. 4, at the recollection of the adventure of the wood-shed. "We've done 'em!" gurgled Dick. "The hobby club is busted first try, before it had time to do any hobbying." "The noble president and hon. sec. have got the order of the boot," chuckled Flynn, "and before they had time to do any presiding or hon.-seeking!"

The Third-Former was passing the doorway on his return. He looked in and stopped. In a moment Poindexter had him by the collar. "No; don't be scared," said the American reassuringly, "I only want to ask you a question, kid. Was that a tin of pepper you were taking up the corridor just now?" "Yes," grinned Frere. "You were taking it to No. 10?" "Ye-e-es." "Panky sent you for it?" "I—he—" "Out with it, or we'll wring your youthful neck, dear infant!" said Poindexter. "I guess you've got to own up. Out with it!" "Yes," said Frere. "Pankhurst gave me twopence to bone it out of the kitchen. He wanted it for something, and he said he would be spotted if he went down." "I see. Nice of him to bone other people's pepper!" "Oh, he'll pay for it!" said the Third-Former. "That's all right! Scat!" The youngster scuttled away. Poindexter turned to his chums with a broad grin. "You see the wheeze?" he said. "The moment I saw that kid pass, I guessed he was going to No. 10, and I knew what the game was. Come along!" "But what—" "We're going to hoist the engineer on his own giddy petard! Follow me!" "Righto!" And Dick and Micky hurried after the American, who led the way with his long strides to Study No. 10. The door had been left open by the youthful Frere, and the chums, advancing on tiptoe, peered into the study. Pankhurst and Price were in full view. They had cleaned themselves up after the adventure of the wood-shed, and now they were looking decidedly gleeful. The large tin of pepper was open on the table. Pankhurst was scooping it out into a thin paper bag. Price was sniffing. "Of all the wheezes we've ever worked off on those rotters," said Pankhurst, "this is about the best! I fancy it will make them sorry they squirted us in the shed, Pricey!" "I fancy so," said Price. "You see, as we're two and they're three, it's not much good trying to lick them," said Pankhurst, "and we can't get anybody to back us up just now. They're all wild at the way the feed turned out." "They are, old chap. They're more inclined to go for us than to back us up." "But we shall get our own back with this wheeze," Pankhurst remarked, with a grin. "It will beat that squirting business hollow. We've only got to open the door of the study, and chuck the bag of pepper into the middle of them. It will burst, and they will have the highest old time they've had in all their innocent little lives." "Ha, ha, ha!" "If I have time," said Pankhurst, "I'll sneak the key, and lock the door on the outside. I think we shall bring 'em down off their perch this time, Pricey. We'll get the whole Form round the door to hear 'em sneezing." "Ha, ha, ha!" "There, I think that's enough— Look out!" The warning came too late. As Pankhurst caught a glimpse of the Combine at the door, the three chums rushed in, and in a second the unprepared two were seized, and they went sprawling on the floor with the victorious Combine on top of them. "Got 'em!" roared Poindexter.

The 7th Chapter. Victory—The Hobby Club. PANKHURST and Price struggled furiously. But they were at a disadvantage, and they had no chance against the Combine. Poindexter and Flynn held them pinned down, while Dick Neville seized the bag of pepper. A gush of the fiery condiment escaped the bag and scattered itself over the upturned faces of the two prisoners. "Ow!" yelled Pankhurst. "Ow! You—ccccccc—atchoo—ccccccc!"

(Continued on the next page.)

The Cliveden Hobby Club.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Atchoo!" sneezed Price. "At-at-atchoooooo!"

They sneezed together, they sneezed alternately. They sneezed solo and in a duet. They gasped and sneezed till they were crimson in the face, and the water ran in streams from their eyes.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dick. "How do you like it, Panky? This is the little treat you prepared for us, isn't it?"

"You—you b-b-beasts—atchoo—beasts—atchoo-oo-oo-oooo!"

"Rotters!" gasped Price. "Choo-oo-ooo-ooo—atchoo-oooo!"

"Ha, ha! What's sauce—or, rather, pepper—for the goose, is pepper for the gander," said Dick. "Nice little treat you had ready for us."

"Give 'em some more!" exclaimed Micky. "Smother 'em!" shouted Poindexter.

The auburn-haired two struggled desperately. But it was in vain. They were pinned down, and they could not escape. Dick Neville balanced the bag of pepper thoughtfully over their upturned faces.

"You were going to give us the lot," he remarked. "I suppose we had better let you have it. There's nothing mean about us."

"Don't!"

"Oh, don't!"

"We give in!"

"You'll choke us!"

"You'll smother us!"

"Don't! Oh, don't!"

"Make it pax!"

"Pax, pax!"

"Ahem!" said Dick. "I don't know about making it pax. You bounders borrowed our idea and spoiled it. Still—"

"Let 'em off if they come to our terms," said Poindexter.

"Begorra, yes; if they don't, smother 'em, Dicky darling!"

"Right-ho! Panky, we are going to start a hobby club in the Fourth Form—not a rotten half-baked hobby club like yours, but a really good and sensible hobby club, run on first-class business principles."

"Gr-r-r!"

"Atchoo—o-o-o-ooo!"

"We intend to get the whole of the Fourth into it, if possible," went on Dick, "and we want you two to join to give the thing a start."

"Shan't!"

"Won't!"

"Very well, here's the rest of the pepper, if you particularly want it—"

"Ow! Don't!"

"Don't!"

"Are you going to join the hobby club?"

"No! Yes—yes—yes!"

"Yes—yes—yes!"

"Good! Mind, it's honour bright!"

"Honour bright!"

"Then we'll make it pax," said Dick graciously, putting down the bag of pepper.

"Let 'em rise to the occasion, kids!"

Pankhurst and Price staggered to their feet. They were blind with sneezing, and they sneezed and sneezed again, as they bolted from the study to the nearest bathroom to plunge their burning faces into cool water.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the Combine. "Once more we knock 'em! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the three marched off arm-in-arm, and eke-walked into the Fourth Form room in high glee.

Pankhurst and Price were very sore—especially about the nose—but they were fellows of their word. The hobby club was started, and they joined it, under the presidency of Richard Neville, Esquire, and it flourished. And, as the juniors of Cliveden were at bottom, very friendly foes, and never bore malice, they pulled together very well, and the Cliveden Hobby Club was quite a success.

THE END

(Another of these grand stories will appear next Wednesday. It is entitled—

"THE FIGHT WITH THE FIFTH."

It is the best complete story that Charles Hamilton has ever written. Order your copy early.)

HINTS FOR BIRD-KEEPERS.

PIGEONS.—Pigeons bred chiefly for the table and shooting purposes are best when flying about at full liberty. For show purposes they are best mated and kept together. Now is the time to buy pigeons, as fanciers are clearing out their lofts. Keep your place wind and water tight; if not you will regret it, for you may lose a valuable bird.

BRITISH BIRDS.—Now is the time to gather all kinds of wild seeds, of which the birds are very fond. Birds which have been outside all through the summer should be taken in now, as the cold nights and mornings would soon kill them. Birds are to be bought cheaply during this month. Make it a rule to clean them out on a certain day each week.



THE COSTER KING.

A ROUSING STORY OF EAST END LIFE.

In this Week's Chapters Mr. Humm, the Human Sleuth-hound, is Again on the Warpath.

(New friends should read the brief summary on this page before commencing this superb story.)

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING CHAPTERS

For years Costers' Mile, one of the busiest market-places in the squalid neighbourhood of Bethnal Green, has been free to the costers to pitch their stalls in. But Josiah Pounce, the proprietor of Pounce's Stores, and a member of the Borough Council, gets a resolution passed to clear them out of it.

They all clear out at the word of Inspector Salt, with the exception of an old man named Harry Higgins. The police are called upon to forcibly clear his barrow away, and in a rush made by the mob someone throws a stone, which kills Inspector Salt. Higgins is taken up for the murder.

Old Nathan Flint holds papers disclosing some of Pounce's shady business transactions, which he uses to blackmail the Borough Councillor. To rid himself of so odious a person, Pounce secretly informs Dirk the Butcher that Flint means to betray him to the police.

During the night, Dirk kills the old Jew. In his hurry, the murderer leaves behind a scrap of paper and a piece of cloth torn from his neckerchief. These fall into the hands of Fighting Jess, who immediately sets out in search of her one-time lover, Dirk.

Sexton Blake, hearing of the murder and of Jess's disappearance, instructs Tinker to follow the girl with the aid of Pedro. Obtaining one of Jess Flint's scarfs, and accompanied by Shanksy, Tinker starts upon his mission.

Meanwhile Dirk the Butcher is attempting to sleep in his retreat down by the canal. He is suddenly aroused by hearing his name called. With beads of sweat upon his brow and his limbs all a-shake, Dirk the Butcher starts up and glances at the window from whence the voice appeared to come. It shows a white face—the face of Jess Flint.

(Follow on now with these exciting chapters.)

Face to Face—A Mission of Vengeance and How It Ended—The Dark Canal and Its Dark Secret.

"DIRK!" The voice came again, in that same low, deep tone—a tone that had in it no touch of alarm or anger, but which was strangely impressive, nevertheless, from its very intensity.

There was a warning in it that might have struck a less hardened or reckless man. But Dirk the Butcher felt no sense of foreboding, no omen of coming peril. The changed ring in the girl's voice conveyed no warning to him.

He had been so long accustomed to regard Jess Flint as the mere slave of his will—an infatuated slave who would never turn against him, let him do what he would, that he had no fear of her now, although he readily guessed that she had discovered her father's murder, knowing as he did that she was in the house at the very hour when the thing was done.

"No, she will storm a bit at first—after all, the old hunk was her father, and I suppose she cared for him after a fashion," was the villain's rapid train of reflection as he calmly watched the face at the window from the dark corner where he lay. "But I'll take the high hand with her," was his next easy reflection—"that's always the best plan with Jess. I'll tell her that I had a straight tip that her father meant to betray me—that it was his life or mine. That will fetch her. The lives of a thousand fathers wouldn't weigh with Jess against the least danger to me."

"She'll do a burst of tears—she is only a woman, after all, although she's got the pluck of a man. Then she'll come round, and be a bigger fool than ever. I'll be able to twist her round my little finger. And, by Jove, I'll make use of her visit! I'll make her take this bit of swag and sell it, and bring the money to me here! It's a bully idea, that. I can't venture to London myself: and Portland Bill is not to be trusted with the stuff. No: Jess shall dispose of it, and bring the rhino to me here. Then I'll get away from this infernal country—and from her, for I'm about tired of her soft, fawning ways. A fellow soon tires of a girl once he knows she is his, body and soul!"

With all this agreeable train of thought, he had a smug smile upon his handsome, wicked face.

Then the voice came again:

"Dirk!"

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, as if suddenly awakened. "Who is there?"

"It is I—Jess," was the reply.

"Jess!" he repeated in pretended surprise.

"What brings you here to this place? What has happened?"

"Much," came the response in a voice without the slightest trace of emotion—"much has happened. But I cannot tell you from here. Let me in."

Dirk was puzzled. Hers was not the tone of a girl who had come straight from beside her father's murdered body; it was calm—strangely calm for Fighting Jess.

She could not have discovered the crime—that was evident. What, then, had brought her here? The robber, in spite of all his hardihood, began to feel a vague sense of alarm. Perhaps Portland Bill had blown the gaff; his retreat was discovered; and she had come to warn him.

The villain felt no gratitude for this. It was only another instance of her blind infatuation for him. And he would make the most of it. If the alarm was up, and instant flight was necessary, Jess should get the money for him somehow—the money he needed before he could make good his flight from England—and from her.

"Dirk, let me in!"

That same strange tone again! So intensely deep and yet so calm. What did it mean? What was the matter with the girl?

"All right!" he said. "Half a minute, whilst I undo the door."

He slipped off his rough bed and crossed to the door. It was fastened with a heavy iron bar let into a couple of stout staples—fittings that he had added himself from the wreckage of the old lock gates as an additional safeguard to the one rusty old bolt that formerly alone secured the door.

His hand was on this bar, and he heard Jess's footsteps outside the door, when he suddenly paused and scowled, as a dark suspicion crossed his mind.

What did that queer voice mean? Jess was wont to be excited in moments like this. Such a journey, such a visit, to say nothing of the chance of seeing him—the man she almost idolised—would at another time have thrilled her with great excitement; her voice would have been quick and eager in its tone.

Now, there was something suppressed and unnaturally calm about her manner. What did it mean? Ha! Was it a trap? Who had come with her?

What a clever dodge it would seem to use the girl as a means of trapping him into opening the door! He had many enemies beside the police. Against the police Jess would have been upon her guard; no threats would have induced her to aid them in his capture. But he had other foes to fear—treacherous pals and tools of his own class, who might turn against him, with the hope of reward, feeling certain that the gallows would put a stop to any fear of his revenge.

There were some clever men amongst them—fellows that could fake any dodge, and do it well. A hint to Jess that he was in danger of being tracked; a supposed plan to help him get safely away; any plausible ruse might induce Jess to disclose his hiding-place, or even to lead the would-be traitor there. For the coster amazon, big, strong Fighting Jess, was as simple as a child in many things.

Quick as lightning, this train of suspicions flashed through Dirk's brain. The villain was in a desperate position, and could afford to take no risks. He halted with his hand upon the bar, then called through the door:

"Jess, who is with you out there? Are you alone?"

"No one is with me; I came alone," was the girl's answer, in that same dead, level tone, as though the abruptness of his question and the ring of suspicion in his voice neither startled nor alarmed her.

The robber breathed more freely. A dark smile crossed his face. He knew that she spoke the truth. Fighting Jess was incapable of a lie. Only cowards lie; and fear was unknown to Jess Flint. The last remnant of Dirk's suspicions vanished. It was only her love, her mad, infatuated love for him, that had brought her there. And he meant to make good use of the visit.

"Dirk, let me in!" came that deep voice from

the other side of the door. "Why do you keep me waiting? Are you afraid?"

Afraid! He started at the word, and once again withdrew his hand from the bar. Then he laughed to himself. Afraid! Why should he be afraid if she were alone?

Other men might fear Fighting Jess because of her great strength; but his was still greater. He was more than a match if it came to a struggle. But it would never come to that. Jess would tremble at his mere frown, as she had always done.

"Open the door," came her voice again.

"All right, no hurry—the bar had stuck," he said, willing to lie rather than she should dream he had hesitated from fear.

He drew the bar from its staples, and opened the door. But his hand was on that ever-ready knife as he did so, and he cast a quick, suspicious glance out into the moonlight, holding the door but partly open the while.

But a hand almost as strong as his own forced it wide, and Jess Flint entered.

She entered without haste and without hesitation, throwing no glances of fear or doubt around her, but taking her stand at the further side of the little room, and watching Dirk in silence as he closed and rebarred the door.

This done, he stood erect with his back to it, and looked at her.

The shaft of misty light from the tiny window fell full upon her, and gave to her superb figure the additional grandeur of mystery. Her face—white as that of a marble statue—had never, he thought, looked so supremely beautiful as now.

Even the gleam in her eyes, darkly mysterious, like the glint of lightning from under the edge of a thundercloud, allured and charmed him. It was fierce and wild, like his own dark, fiery nature.

In that moment Dirk loved Jess as he had never loved her before.

Some minutes passed like this, and neither moved. Jess did not speak, and at last her silence made him vaguely uneasy. He knew those great eyes were fixed upon him, and was glad his face was hidden in the shadow.

He began to feel afraid of her—of Jess, the puppet he had so despised!

The girl seemed unreal, like one of those dream shadows that had haunted his sleep. Flesh and blood could never daunt him, but the silence became unbearable. His flesh began to creep.

At length he broke the silence himself with an uneasy attempt at a laugh.

"So you've come to see me, eh, Jess?" he said.

"Yes."

"And you've come alone? Will you swear to that?"

"Quite alone. Who was there to come with me? He could not, for he, you know, is dead."

Quite calmly the girl said this, in that slow, passionless, deep voice.

"Ah—her father! So she has found his—his body. It is that that has brought her here!" was the villain's instant thought. "Well, it is nothing. A few tears, perhaps. But I'll soon dispose of that trouble!"

"But how did you find your way here? How did you know this place?" he asked.

"I was brought here once, years ago—by him," Jess answered. "But even if that had never been, I would have found my way to you. Do not forget that, Dirk; somehow I should have found my way to you!"

Dirk smiled again in the darkness. So his old power was still there—she was still his slave!

"Yes"—the voice came again in that deep, even tone, still without the least trace of passion—"yes, Dirk; had you hidden deep under the earth and left no clue, something would have led me to you, something would have brought me to tell you, face to face, that you, and you alone, murdered my father!"

Dirk started.

Ha! he was afraid of her, then. He had expected this. But he had expected it to come in an outburst of passionate grief—a torrent of tears. But there was no trace of either, and her strange calm daunted him. And being afraid, he attempted to deceive her.

She might have suspicions, but she could have no proof. He had left no clue.

"Your father murdered!" he exclaimed in a tone of well-simulated surprise. "Good heavens—when?"

"It was last night," she said. "You cannot have forgotten."

"Forgotten! How could I forget a thing I never knew? And how should I hear of it, shut up in this place!" Dirk demanded.

"You knew it first of all," said the girl; "for you knew it even before, the thing was done, when it was only a dark thought in your wicked brain."

"What! Good heavens! Do you think I did it?" he exclaimed, as though in indignant horror.

"I know you did it," was the calm response; "know it as well as though I had seen you strike the blow."

"Jess, you rave—you talk like a fool! Why should I kill your father?"

"Because you feared he would betray you