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

No. 234, Vol. V.

EVERY WEDNESDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING JANUARY 11, 1908.



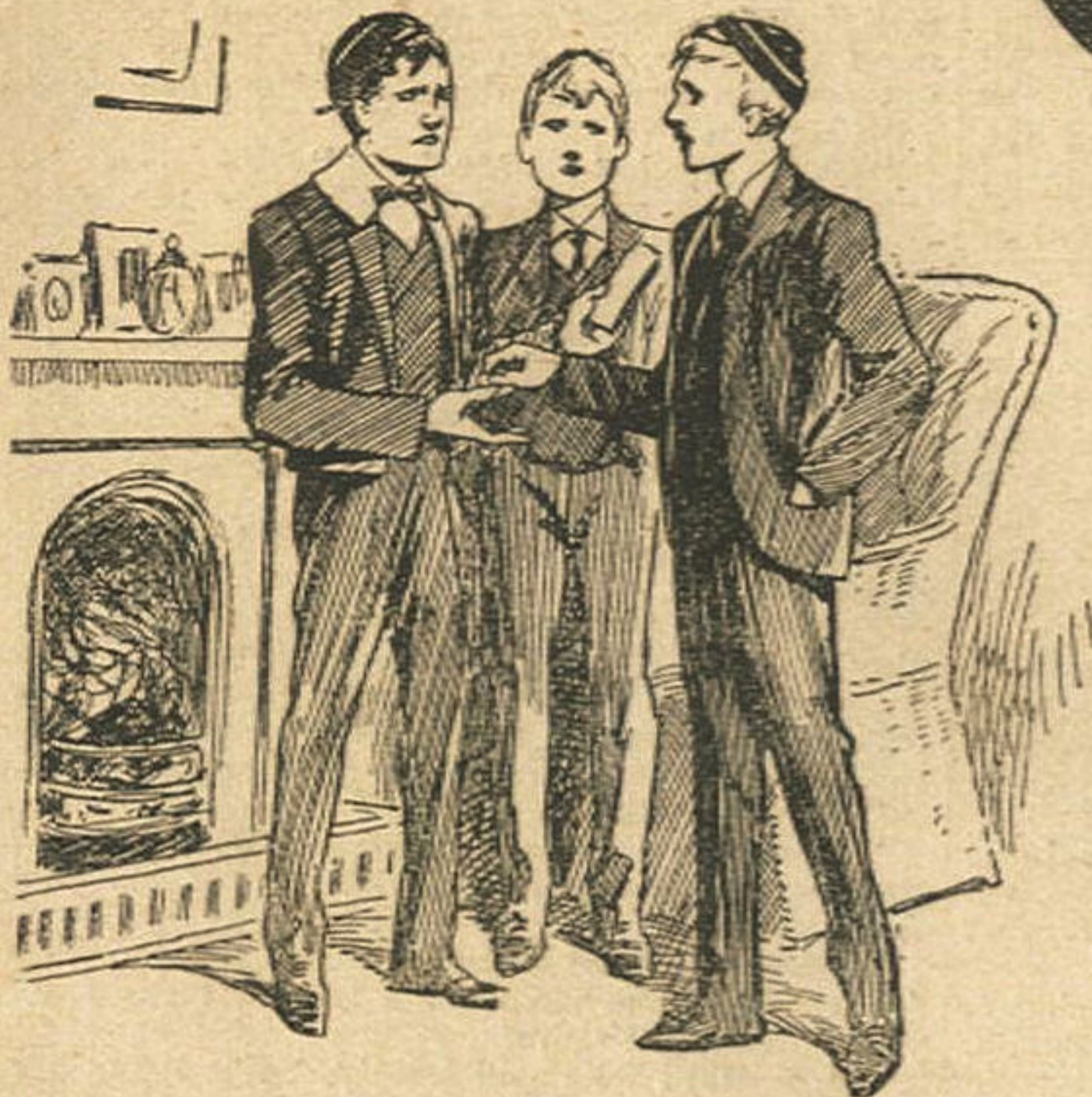
The TERROR OF THE REMOVE

JELLY'S AUNT
VISITS THE
REMOVE CLASS-ROOM
AT AN EXCITING MOMENT.

"Good-evening," said the dame kindly. "You're the Remove, I understand. I'm Jellicoe's aunt." The Form gazed at her in dumb-struck silence. "I've heard you're the best Form in Codrington. I don't know who told me that, but I hope it's true. You look rather a rough lot, but honest—most of you." "Hear, hear!" said De Quincey.

The Cliveden Diabolo Match

Another story brimful of laughs.



The 1st Chapter. Rival Diabolists.

PANKHURST and Price came along the passage, and delivered a simultaneous kick at the door of No. 4 study, tenanted by Poindexter, Neville, and Flynn, the Cliveden Combine.

The door, naturally enough, flew violently open, and there was a terrific yell from inside the study.

"Arrah! Sure and ye've broken me back intirely!"

Pankhurst grinned as he walked into the study.

Poindexter and Neville were sitting on the window-sill, and Micky Flynn was rubbing his back, as far as he could reach it.

He had evidently been standing just inside the door, and had received a violent shock when Pankhurst and Price opened it in such an unceremonious manner.

"Sorry, Flynn," grinned Pankhurst. "How careless of you to be standing there. We've come to see if you kids are ready."

"Faith, and ye might have come in a little more quietly. Sure ye've broken——"

"Are you ready, Neville?"

"Quite," said Dick Neville, getting off the window-sill, and picking up a pair of diabolo-sticks and a spool from the table. "I'm ready to give you your licking, Panky."

"And I'm ready to take it, if you can give it," said the chief of the Old Firm disdainfully. "Micky Flynn, if you don't leave off twisting yourself about you'll give me a pain in my bones, you will really."

"Sure, and ye've broken——"

"Oh, come on!" said Pankhurst. "I'm waiting for you, Neville. Poindexter had better count for me, and Price for you, and that will be square."

"I guess so," said Lincoln G. Poindexter, getting off the window-sill in a leisurely way, and stretching his long legs.

"Sure and ye've broken me——"

"Look here, Micky Flynn," said Pankhurst severely, "we're getting fed up with your damaged back. I've told you it was careless of you to be standing there, and what more do you want?"

"Sure and ye——"

"If your silly back's broken there's a bottle of gum in my study, and you can have it to stick the thing together again."

"Ye red-headed spalpeen——"

But Pankhurst only grinned. Pankhurst and Price had hair of the most vivid auburn, but they were chipped about it too often to care much.

"You can have that bottle of gum," said Pankhurst. "Anyway, don't let us hear any more about your broken back. I'm tired of it."

"Quite so," said Price.

"Let's go and get to business, Neville. Micky Flynn can get one of the Third Form fags to rub his back for him. Come along!"

Pankhurst and Price, the auburn-haired chums of the Fourth, led the way from the study; and Neville followed with Lincoln G. Poindexter. Micky Flynn left off rubbing his damaged back, and followed.

The rivalry between the Combine and the Old Firm in the Fourth-Form at Cliveden had taken a new turn.

The new game of diabolo had caught on at Cliveden, and the rivals of the Fourth, ever ready to give one another what they called the "kybosh," had agreed upon a match, each side being fully determined to knock spots off the other when the match came off.

On the present occasion the competition was fixed between Neville and Pankhurst, in catching the diabolo; but a regular match with two a side was to come off on the following Saturday afternoon.

The catching competition between the acknowledged best diabolists of the Fourth Form excited general interest, and a considerable crowd was waiting in the school Close for the appearance of the rival juniors.

"Here they are!" said Gatty. "Thought you were never coming."

"Yes, here we are," said Pankhurst. "Sorry

to keep you waiting, gentlemen, but we had to stop and sympathise with Micky Flynn about a pain in his back."

"Sure and ye——"

"But we're quite ready now," went on Pankhurst cheerfully; "and if you'll kindly make way, we'll get to the ground and start. Philpot, if you get out of the way I sha'n't have to walk over you. Thanks!"

Philpot, the cad of the Fourth Form, scowled as he made way. He was on the worst of terms with both the Combine and the Old Firm. The juniors marched on to the spot selected for the match, and the crowd made a wide circle round them. They left enough room, for, skilful as the competitors were, there was always a possibility of the bobbin coming down in the wrong place, and a metal diabolo coming down from a height of perhaps fifty feet on to a thin school cap was extremely likely to hurt the head underneath.

"Now then, kids, stand back!" said Lincoln G. Poindexter, with a wave of the hand. The juniors crowded back. Poindexter was sometimes accused by rivals in the Form of putting on exaggerated airs of importance, and indeed, on the present occasion, he had assumed a good deal of the manner of a showman and a master of the ceremonies rolled into one.

"Keep back there! You can see all right without treading on our toes, you know!"

"Yah!"

"Good old Tinned Beef!"

"What price canned rats?"

Such were the replies the Cliveden juniors hurled back at Poindexter. But Poindexter, whose "popper" was a Chicago canning merchant of great wealth, only laughed. He was growing used to allusions to tinned beef.

"Dry up, you kids——"

"Who are you calling kids, Uncle Sam?"

"Yah! What price canned horse?"

But the circle was made, the juniors, for their own sakes, giving the diabolist a wide berth, as we have said.

There were a good many seniors in the crowd, too; among them, Trevelyan, the captain of Cliveden. Trevelyan's presence was sufficient to keep order, if the juniors had been inclined to resent the magisterial manners of Lincoln G. Poindexter.

"Who's going to count?" asked Philpot, who was in the front rank.

"I am going to count for Pankhurst," said the American chum; "and Price for Neville. Of course, all here are above suspicion; still, it's as well to have everything on a proper footing. Ready, kids?"

"Yes, rather."

"Quite ready."

"You know the conditions. It's not a question of fast catches, but of number—the chap who makes the most catches wins the game. Start!"

"Righto!"

Dick Neville hooked his string under the spool as it lay on the ground, and soon had it spinning, with a swift and steady spin.

Pankhurst was only a second behind him.

At a short distance from each other, the rival diabolist spun the bobbins, preparatory to commencing the catches.

The juniors round them looked on with great interest.

Almost the whole of the Fourth Form was concerned in the rivalry between the Combine and the Old Firm, taking one side or the other in the disputes that were ever raging. And the present catching competition would, probably, give some indication of how the great diabolo match was likely to go on Saturday.

Dick Neville's spool left the string first, flying up like an arrow from the tautened cord, and coming down again to be surely caught.

Then the rivals went at it fast and furiously. The spools rose and fell with wonderful rapidity, and the task of the tellers required a quick eye and a ready pencil.

Neville was the first to score a century. The hundredth catch was greeted with a cheer.

But Pankhurst was not far behind. He passed the hundred, and now that he was in good form, he went ahead rapidly. He "bounced" the diabolo from the taut string, scarcely at intervals taking the trouble to give it an additional spin; and the flying spool went up at times almost to the height of the highest building at Cliveden.

"Good!" exclaimed Trevelyan, looking on.

"Bravo, Pankhurst!"

The captain's words spurred on Dick Neville to overtake his rival. Faster and faster he spun and threw, and threw and spun, but he did not quite catch up with Pankhurst.

The latter passed the second hundred, with Dick nine behind, and was still going strong. The interest was most intense.

Two hundred consecutive catches was a record for a lower form boy at Cliveden, and the chief of the Old Firm was going ahead.

With steady hands and set face and unwavering glance, Pankhurst kept his spool spinning; and as he warmed to the work it flew up to tremendous heights, till the eye could scarce follow its flight.

Dick Neville knew by the comments of the crowd that his rival was getting ahead, and he "bucked up" for all he was worth. He began to gain again at last.

"Stand back, there, Philpot!" jerked out Poindexter, as the cad of the Fourth pressed forward.



The next game was looking like another win for the Combine, when Micky Flynn gave a sudden yelp and a jump, and missed the spool. Then every eye was turned upon Dick Neville. The junior had dashed towards the tree, upon the branch of which Philpot was seated, and was trying to drag him to the ground.

Philpot gave him an evil look. The American chum was too busy counting the catches of Pankhurst to be able to do more than snap out those hasty words, and Philpot did not move back.

But Micky Flynn was there. "You're getting in the way, Philpot," he said, tapping the cad of the Fourth on the shoulder.

"Kape back, can't ye?"

"Mind your own business!"

"Sure, and ye'll get back or I'll put ye."

"Stand back there, Philpot!" called out Trevelyan.

Philpot suddenly stepped back, and allowed his heel to grind on the toe of Micky Flynn as he did so.

Micky gave a sharp yelp as his toe was crushed under the heel of a heavy boot.

"Ye spalpeen!" he roared. "You did that on purpose! I'll——"

"Oh, shut up, Tipperary!"

That was too much for Micky.

He went for Philpot with a rush, forgetful of diabolo and of everything else but punching Philpot's head.

"Quiet there!" shouted Trevelyan.

"Sure, and he——"

"Stand back!"

But it was too late.

Dick Neville had involuntarily turned his head as Micky collared Philpot, and a second of inattention was sufficient to spoil his catch.

The diabolo came down, and he made, too late, a plunge at it. It clicked on the end of his stick and dropped to the ground.

"Two hundred and fifty-five," said Price.

Pankhurst was at two hundred and sixty, and still going on.

"You baste," shouted Micky Flynn, "it's all your doing intirely!"

And Philpot went down under a slogging right-hander from the Irish junior.

"Serve him right," said Poindexter wrathfully.

"Now get up, you rotter, and I'll give you another."

But Philpot did not accept that kind invitation. He remained where he was.

Pankhurst allowed his spool to slide to the ground.

"No good going on," he said. "What's the verdict?"

"You've won," said Poindexter.

"That baste spoiled Neville's catch, though," said Micky Flynn.

"You spoiled it yourself, you mean," said Gatty.

"Sure and I——"

"It's all right," said Dick. "I had my attention diverted, but I ought to have known better. That's part of the game. Pankhurst could have looked round if he had liked, but he didn't. Panky wins."

"Quite so," said Price.

"Good Old Firm!" shouted the juniors. "Panky wins!"

"Never mind," said Neville cheerfully. "I hope you and Flynn will have better luck on Saturday, Puntpusher. Panky wins; but I really think we ought to frogmarch Philpot round the Close."

"I guess so."

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Pankhurst. "And duck him in the fountain, too."

"Quite so."

"Faith, and it's a good idea intirely. Collar him! Why, he's gone!"

Philpot had not stayed for the good ideas to be put in execution. He was streaking across the Close as fast as his thin legs could carry him. And the chums, laughing heartily, left the spot in a more leisurely manner.

The 2nd Chapter.

Lincoln G. Poindexter Smells a Rat.

"I GUESS——"

"Don't."

"I guess——"

"Lave off! Sure and ye're interruptin' the work."

"I guess——"

"Aeneas scopulum interea conscendit," chanted Dick Neville as he wrote, in order to drown the voice of Lincoln G. Poindexter, "et omnium——"

"Shut up, and listen to me! I guess——"

"Prospectum lato pelago petit, Anthea si quem——"

Poindexter jerked the Virgil away from his chum, and hurled that ancient Roman poet into the fender.

Dick jumped up.

"I guess——"

"You tinned ass! I've got to get my impot done!" howled Neville. "I've got twenty more lines to write, to be shown up in the morning after prayers."

"Then do them in the morning before breakfast," said Poindexter. "I guess I'm talking now!"

"Sure and ye're always doing that," said Micky Flynn, laying down his pen. "What's the trouble now? Give him his head, Dicky darling, or sure he'll never be done."

"I guess——"

"Ye've said that before."

"Why don't you dry up and give a fellow a chance?" demanded Poindexter.

"Sure and ye——"

"I guess——"

"Faith, don't keep on repeating yourself——"

"Stop interrupting then. I guess that there's something going on in the Fourth Form, kids, that it's the business of this study to look into."

This announcement made a due impression upon the Combine, who arrogated to themselves the duty of looking after the Fourth Form at Cliveden and keeping the members thereof in order generally.

"Faith, and why couldn't ye say so before, Pointbuster?"

The Cliveden Diabolo Match.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Haven't I been trying to say so?"

"No; you've been guessing and gassing—"

"Shut up, and let me finish! I guess there's something going on, and it needs looking into—something to do with that cad Philpot and, I believe, with our diabolo match on Saturday."

"Blessed if I can guess what it is, then," said Dick Neville. "What can Philpot possibly have to do with our diabolo match?"

"I don't suppose you can see it, Dick. You don't ever see anything till I point it out to you, I guess."

"Oh, get on with the washing," said Neville good-humouredly. "What have you got on your brain now? My imposition isn't done yet."

"You know Philpot's little ways," said the American chum. "You remember how we had to drop on him for lending money at interest in the Fourth Form—"

Dick Neville chuckled.

"Yes; and we cured him of playing Shylock, Puntdodger."

"Then after that he tried to sell out the Form football match—"

"And got dropped on again."

"I guess so. But I believe he's up to some game again. In a word, I suspect that he's making a book on the Saturday match."

Micky Flynn stared.

"Making a book on it! Do you mean to say he's writing a book on diabolo?"

"No, ass."

"Then what sort of a book is he making, fathead?"

"A betting book, image!"

"Faith, and I never thought of that intirely."

"I daresay you didn't; but I did. What's the good of being chief of the Combine if I don't think of things that you kids overlook."

Neville and Flynn exchanged a glance.

"Who's chief of this Combine?" asked Neville in a silky voice.

"I guess I am."

"You guess wrong, then! I am—and I'm willing to prove it with or without gloves."

Poindexter laughed.

"Well, never mind that now," he said. "We won't quarrel about who's leader while we've got work in hand. We'll keep that for a slack time."

"Faith, and that's a good idea! It's a janius ye are, Puntbuster. But what's this about Philpot?"

"I've reason to believe that he's booking bets on the diabolo match on Saturday. He's always doing something mean and shady, and that's his latest."

"Another lesson wanted," said Dick Neville, looking round. "Where's my ebony ruler?"

"What do you want it for?"

"Philpot's instruction."

"Treatle and feathers would be better," suggested Micky Flynn.

Poindexter shook his head.

"It would be better still to make sure that he's up to that game before we do either," he remarked.

"Good," said Dick. "If you're leader, you can make sure. Buzz off and do it; and I'll get my imposition finished."

"But—"

"Blow your 'buts'! You've just said that you're leader of the Combine. Go and lead! Go and eat coke! Go and play marbles! Get out!"

And Dick Neville picked up his Virgil and his pen, and began to write. Micky Flynn reopened his Schiller, and followed his example.

Poindexter stared at them for a minute, but he was fairly caught, and at last he grinned and went out of the study.

The 3rd Chapter. On the Track.

TEDDY TRIMBLE, the dunce of the Fourth Form at Cliveden, came out of Philpot's study, and closed the door behind him. He paused in the corridor, and seemed to be wrestling with a mental problem.

"Four to one in tanners against Panky and Price," he murmured. "If the Combine win, I get a tanner—that's right! If Panky wins, I pay out two bob—that's right! But then I'm sure that Poindexter—Hallo, Poindexter, I didn't see you!"

"I saw you, though, Teddy," said Lincoln G. Poindexter, his hand dropping lightly on the shoulder of the junior.

"Yes, I've just been in to see Philpot."

"What about?"

"Oh, that's a secret!" said Teddy, looking mysterious. "Philpot said I wasn't to say anything about it, especially to those cads in No. 4—meaning you and Neville and Flynn—Ow!"

Teddy Trimble rubbed his ear ruefully.

"It was Philpot said that, not I," he protested. "Keep your beastly long fingers to yourself, you tinned-beef bounder. And I'm not going to tell you anything, either."

"Not that you've been making bets?"

"How did you know?" asked Teddy in wonder.

"Then you have?"

"Oh, no, I haven't, not in the least."

"Then what do you mean by four to one in tanners, that you were muttering about, you young ass?" demanded the chum from Chicago.

"Oh, that was only—only—only just a calculation I was making," stammered Trimble. "It hadn't anything to do with betting, or with the diabolo match on Saturday. Philpot said that

if you knew we were betting on the diabolo match, there might be a row, and he would not be able to pay me if I won, so I'm not going to say a word about it to anybody."

Poindexter laughed.

"Well, you've given it away this time, Teddy," he remarked. "And you've been betting on our side, have you?"

"Well, I think you and Flynn will be able to beat Pankhurst and Price," said Teddy. "I think it's safe enough. Panky himself says that he thinks it's an open question which will win, and if he admits that much, you can feel pretty certain he doesn't feel very sure about it."

"But the other fellows who have been betting with Philpot?" asked Poindexter. "Which side are they backing?"

"There aren't any other fellows, and I haven't been betting," said Teddy promptly.

"Now, look here, Trimble—"

"Oh, it's no good your questioning me," said Teddy. "I'm not going to say anything about the bets, and I haven't been betting, either. I told Philpot I wouldn't say anything or let on to you that there was anything going on at all, and the other fellows promised the same, so—"

Poindexter inserted a couple of fingers into Teddy Trimble's jacket collar.

"What are you up to?" demanded Teddy.

"Let me alone! I'm not coming with you."

"I guess you are," drawled Poindexter. "You're coming into No. 4 for a little talk. Don't be afraid, you're not going to be hurt; but you're going to talk."

"I'm not—I won't—I—"

But even while Teddy Trimble protested, he was yanked along the passage, and into No. 4 study, and Poindexter followed him in and closed the door.

Neville and Flynn looked up from their work.

"Hallo, what have you got there?" asked Dick curiously.

"A reckless, desperate, betting man, caught in the very act," said Poindexter, with a terrifically stern brow. "A desperate young rascal, bent upon ruining himself and bringing down his whole family's ginger whiskers with sorrow to the cemetery."

"Ha, ha!"

"This is not a laughing matter, Richard Neville. The future of this young desperado is at stake."

"Let me get out," whined Trimble, quite in the dark as to whether the American chum was serious or jesting. "I haven't done anything, and—"

"Kindly give us the particulars of your betting transactions with Philpot," said Poindexter.

"Speak freely, my child, and you have nothing to fear. Remain obstinate, and you will be put to the horrid torture. Take your choice."

"Look here, Philpot will lick me if—"

"Philpot shall be licked right out of his boots if he touches one of your giddy eyelashes," said Poindexter. "You're not going out of this study till you've told us what we want to know. Why, you young scamp, who is it stands between you and Philpot's bullying, and the lickings Crane and Cuffy of the Fifth used to give you? You can't afford to get on the wrong side of this study, kid."

"Well, if you put it like that," said Trimble, with a longing glance at the door, "I'll tell you. As you know so much about it, there can't be any harm in telling you the rest. I've laid four to one in tanners against Pankhurst and Price in the match."

"Faith, and ye show a proper appreciation of us," said Micky Flynn, with a nod. "Ye're a little rascal, but as far as judgment goes, it's a janius ye are."

"How many other fellows have betted with Philpot, Teddy?"

"More than a dozen, I believe. I know Hill and Greene and Simpson have."

"And which side do they condescend to favour with their blackguardly support?"

"Oh, Philpot is only taking bets against you," Poindexter nodded.

"I thought so!"

"I don't see how you could think so," said Teddy Trimble. "It seems to me that Philpot is an ass. He must have quite a pound laid against you, and there's a general opinion in the Fourth that you will win, though Panky did beat Neville yesterday."

Poindexter threw open the door.

"Get out!"

"Don't you want me any more?"

"No. Travel!"

Teddy Trimble travelled. Poindexter closed the door, and came towards his chums with a cloud upon his brow. Neville and Flynn looked at him curiously.

"Well, what do you make of it?" asked Dick.

"It's curious about Philpot. He must know that we have at least as much chance as the Old Firm in the diabolo match, and it's not like him to risk money on an even chance."

"I guess so."

"Faith, but he's done it," said Flynn.

Poindexter shook his head.

"If Philly has laid money against us, kids, it means that he has a good reason to believe that we shall lose," he replied.

"But how—"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Poindexter, his teeth coming together hard. "You remember how he made himself objectionable yesterday, and spoiled Dick's catch. Of course, we should guard against his being too near the court in the match. But he may have some other rascally trick in his mind."

Neville started.

"Could even Philpot be such a rotten cad, Poindodger? I don't like to suspect even him of that!"

"There's not much doubt about it, to my mind. I was quite prepared to learn that he was laying his bets entirely against one side—and as he detests us a little more than he does Panky and

Price, it's up against us. He's got some trick in his mind for making us lose the match."

"But what is it?"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Poindexter grimly.

The 4th Chapter. Mossoo's Mishap.

"CIEL!" Monsieur Friquet, the French master at Cliveden, uttered the exclamation, as he came down the stairs. "Mon bleu! It is ze diabolo—and ze diabolo—and ze diabolo again, and I vish zat ze game had nevair been invented."

There was a crowd in the Close, and a considerable amount of noise was proceeding from the juniors congregated there. Poindexter and Flynn were practising passing the spool, in readiness for Saturday's match, and they were giving quite a first-class display.

Some other juniors, armed with sticks and spoons, were also at work, and the shouting of voices and tramping of feet made quite a din.

There was a terrific crash as the French master put his head out of the door, which made Monsieur Friquet almost jump out of his little Parisian boots.

"Ciel! Vat is zat?"

"It's a window gone, sir," said Trevelyan, who was standing on the steps, looking round.

"It is Gatty's spool gone through the window of the porter's lodge."

"It eez terrible!" said Monsieur Friquet. "It eez terrific! If I were ze Head of zis school, I should be incline to forbid ze dangerous game."

"Oh, youngsters will be youngsters, you know, sir," said the captain of Cliveden, good humouredly.

"Oui, I know zat, Trevelyan, and I nevair would be hard on ze garçons," said Monsieur Friquet. "But I zink zat I vill remonstrate viz zem on zeur recklessness."

The captain of Cliveden smiled as the little Frenchman descended the steps.

Monsieur Friquet was going out, and rumour had it that his visits to the village of Clivebank were made with the object of capturing the heart of a lady of uncertain age—but certain property—who was the head of a girls' school there. Certainly, whether the rumour was true or false, the little gentleman from Paris was always arrayed in his very best when he took his walks to the village.

He was going there now, as Trevelyan guessed from his attire. He wore a frock-coat that fitted like a glove, a silk hat that had been polished till it reflected the surrounding objects like a mirror, lavender kid gloves, a gold-headed cane, and neat little spats over his neat little boots.

"I say, sir," said Trevelyan, "better give the devils a wide berth—"

The little Frenchman turned round.

"Trevelyan! Vat a shocking vay to speak of ze boys, who, after all, only amuse zemselves in zat mannair because zey not zink—"

The captain of Cliveden laughed.

"I wasn't speaking of the boys, sir, but of the spoons—bobbins—diabolos—devils for short, you see."

"I see. Zat is different, and—"

"It's dangerous to get too near when they're practising," said Trevelyan. "Some of them are only beginners, and—"

The French master waved his hand.

"It eez enoff, Trevelyan. I sall not shrink from ze path of ze duty because I am afraid of ze devils."

And the little Frenchman walked towards the crowd in the Close.

"My boys, listen to me—"

"Get out of the way!" yelled Poindexter, who was sending a low, fast shot to Micky Flynn. The Frenchman had walked between, unconscious of the spinning spool in the air, which it was, of course, not in Poindexter's power to stop when once it had left his string.

"Get aside!"

"Bunk!"

"Zat is not ze vay to speak to—Ah! Mon bleu! Ciel! Gr-r-r-r-r-r!"

The spinning diabolo crashed against the Frenchman's silk hat, and carried it away as a cannon-ball might have done.

The Frenchman, startled out of his wits, jumped a foot into the air, as his hat sailed away and he suddenly found himself bareheaded.

"My hat!" gasped Poindexter.

"His hat, you mean," grinned Dick Neville.

"Ciel! Mon chapeau!" screamed Monsieur Friquet. "Mon chapeau! Ow! My hat!"

He dashed after the silk hat, which had been caught by the breeze and was apparently bent upon making a journey to the football field. Naturally enough, he got into the way of the other diabolo players, and they were too busy and excited to know or care whether he was a master or not.

"Get away!"

"Scoot!"

"Bunk!"

"I vill not scoot, parbleu! I vill not bunk viz myself! I vant my hat!"

"Look out!" yelled Pankhurst, as he sent his diabolo humming towards Price. "Catch, you fathead."

Price backed away to take the spool as it came down, and trod with both heels right on Monsieur Friquet's neat little Parisian boots.

Mossoo had crammed a pair of good-sized feet into those neat little boots, with the result that there were corns concealed by the shiny leather; and the descent of the heavy junior upon those corns was excruciating.

The little Frenchman gave an ear-splitting yell, which made Price jump, and as a natural result he missed the diabolo, which came with a crash on his chest, and knocked most of the breath out of him.

"Ciel! I am keeled—I am murdered!"

"Quite so!" gasped Price.

"My feet! Ow! Mon chapeau! Mes pieds! My hat! My feet!"

"Faith, he's in trouble at both ends," said Micky Flynn, sympathetically. "I wonder whether he feels the pain most in his hat or his feet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were not unsympathetic—they were sorry for Mossoo—but the spectacle of the little man, hopping about first upon one foot and then upon the other, was so absurd that they could not restrain their merriment. The Close rang with laughter.

"Ciel! My hat! My feet!"

Micky sped after the Frenchman's hat, and stopped it in its wild career. He stopped it by the simple process of taking a flying leap and coming down on the hat with both feet. Then, having captured it, he picked it up.

"Faith, and it looks a little damaged," he murmured, "but sure, I had to stop it for the poor old bhoy, and there was no other way intirely."

And Micky carried the battered hat back to its owner.

The diabolo players were laughing too much to play diabolo. The little Frenchman realised that hopping on alternate feet was not exactly a dignified occupation for a master, and he came to a halt at last. He looked round for his chapeau.

"Vere is my hat viz itself?"

"Here you are, sir," exclaimed Micky Flynn, dashing up, triumphantly, with it. "I stopped it for you, sir."

Monsieur Friquet looked with feelings too deep for words at the wreck of a hat that the Irish junior held out to him.

"Zat—zat!" he said faintly, "Zat is not my hat!"

"Yes it is, sir."

"Zat! Zat fearful-looking zing! My new hat!"

"I'll straighten it out a bit for you, sir," said Micky Flynn. "If I had stopped to think a minute, I might have collared it some other way. You see, sir, I came down on it with both feet, and it was bound to damage the hat a little. Very few hats would stand that without showing signs of wear and tear."

Micky punched out the sides of the crushed top. The Frenchman watched him as if fascinated.

"Zat! Zat my hat!"

"There you are, sir," said the zealous Micky, giving the hat a final punch which made his fist go clean through the side. "Faith, I've overdone it now. It still looks a little bit squashy, but you might use it for an opera hat—"

Biff!

Monsieur Friquet snatched the hat from Micky Flynn with one hand, and gave him a sounding box on the ear with the other.

"Ow!" roared Micky, "Mother av St. Patrick! what's that for?"

But the French master was striding off with the wrecked tile in his hand, and wrath on his brow. Micky rubbed his ear ruefully.

"Faith, and that's what I call gratitude," he exclaimed. "I caught his hat for him, and straightened it out, and he gives me a biff on the ear! What do you think of the beast, kids?"

"Awful ingratitude!" grinned Pankhurst.

"If you treated a hat of mine like that, Micky, I wouldn't give you a biff on the ear, I'd boil you in oil! Come on, Price, and let's get on with the practice."

The 5th Chapter. The Diabolo Match!

"GUESS I haven't quite got on to Philpot's little game yet," Poindexter remarked, in a thoughtful way, on Saturday morning.

"Tired of leading the Combine, yet?" grinned Dick Neville, "you'd better confess that the job's a bit above your weight, Puntsquasher, and leave it to me."

"You'll make a muck of it, you know."

"Well, it seems to me that you'll have to," remarked Neville. "You haven't discovered what card Philly has up his sleeve, you see, and now it's Saturday, and this afternoon we meet the Old Firm in mortal strife."

"Faith, and that's so intirely," said Flynn, "As Poindexter and meself are playing the ginger-top firm, you'll have to keep an eye on Philpot, Dicky."

"That's what I was thinking."

"I may have been too suspicious," Poindexter said slowly, "but I don't trust Philpot an inch. He hasn't risked his money on even chances. The fact that he has booked bets only against us shows that he has some reason to suppose that we shall lose. He must have some treacherous plan in his head for interfering with the match, and spoiling our game."

"Likely enough. But if I keep him in sight all will be well, I should think. After you get into the diabolo court, I'll haunt him like his shadow."

"I guess that will be all right. Trevelyan has promised to umpire for us, or else we should want you. Don't let the cad get out of your sight for a moment."

"Righto. But what about stopping that betting business? We can't allow him to start his blackguardly racecourse tricks here in Cliveden. The bets will have to be called off."

Poindexter grinned.

"Oh, I've got ideas on that subject. Philpot has laid the odds against us. If we win he'll have a sum of money to part with which will break his heart to pay away."

"Then if we win you won't interfere?"

"I guess that's it. If he burns his fingers severely over this affair, it may be a better lesson to him on the evils of betting than any other we could give him, even with the help of an ebony ruler."

"Ha, ha! But if we lose?"

"If we lose the match—as we may—Philpot will win his bets—only he won't get the cash. I

Know pretty well all the juniors who have betted with him, and I shall see that they don't pay. Betting is a rotten game, anyway, and it's not allowed by the Head, or by good form. The young rascals ought to be licked—and they will be, if they pay Philpot."

Neville and Flynn understood, and they roared.

If Philpot lost his bets, he was to pay; if he won them, he was not to be paid. It was about as neat an idea for punishing the rascal as could be hit upon.

"And we'll explain to the beast," went on Poindexter, "that our noble eye will be on him in the future, and that whenever he is caught betting, the result will be the same. I really think that in the long run we shall cure Master Philpot of the desire to make money by this kind of speculation."

"I shouldn't wonder," grinned Dick. "But we're going to win if we can. Panky and Price are in good form, but so are we, and we ought to lick them. But mind you don't lose sight of Philly, that's all."

"Rely upon me." Morning lessons that Saturday were voted a bore by most of the juniors at Cliveden. The diablo match of the afternoon was looked forward to with as keen an interest as the best football match of the season.

The day turned out bright and fine, and after dinner the rivals prepared for the match. There had been some discussion as to the nature of the match, and the rivals had agreed upon diablo tennis, more popular at Cliveden than French diablo. In diablo tennis the scoring is, of course, the same as in lawn tennis, the game itself being a good deal more difficult. Instead of a ball to catch on a racket, there is a spinning spool to catch on a slim string, and, of course, the half-volley is barred.

Poindexter and Flynn came out of the house in tennis costume and shoes, with the sticks under their arms. Pankhurst and Price followed, and they made their way to the diablo court, which had been carefully marked out. Trevelyan, as umpire had seen to the erection of the net. There was a crowd of juniors round the ground, and some of the Upper Form fellows too.

A game of football was going on on the footer ground; but, as a matter of fact, the junior diablo match had attracted a larger number of spectators.

Poindexter looked round him in his cool way as he arrived on the ground.

"Buck up, Tinned Beef!" came a friendly shout.

"Ginger for pluck!" came a counter-yell.

"I guess we toss up, Panky," the American chum remarked, producing a coin from his pocket.

Pankhurst nodded. "Righto! Toss away!" Poindexter spun the coin.

"Head!" cried the chief of the Old Firm. The American uncovered the coin.

Head it was, and Pankhurst had the choice of courts, or of serving. He chose the court which had the breeze behind it, and the duty of serving first fell to Poindexter and Flynn.

Poindexter glanced round in search of Dick Neville.

Neville was not at the front of the crowd of spectators, as might have been expected. He had drawn to the rear. His object was to keep an eye on Philpot. The latter was looking on from a coign of vantage, being seated on a low branch of a tree close outside the diablo court.

The cad of the Fourth sat on the branch, holding on with one hand, with the other in his jacket pocket. As he was further back than the crowd, not a single eye was likely to be turned in his direction—with the exception of Neville's.

Neville, while keeping up an appearance of watching the game, had the corner of his eye on Philpot all the time.

He was convinced that the cad of the Fourth had taken up his position with the view of causing Poindexter and Flynn a disadvantage in some way, though in what way the junior could not guess.

But whatever treachery Philpot might be planning, he could not carry it out without Dick Neville being instantly on the scent.

"Play up!" "Serve, and don't be all the afternoon about it!"

The juniors of Cliveden were impatient. Poindexter, in his cool way, took no notice of them. He was accustomed to going on his own way, undisturbed by, and regardless of criticism.

The partners had agreed that Poindexter should serve first, and the American chum soon had the spool spinning on his string.

Pankhurst received the spinning spool from the American, and returned it. Pankhurst was as good with the left hand as he was with the right, and his return was masterly.

The spectators looked on with deep interest. Micky Flynn was the first to let the diablo fall to the ground.

He paused for a moment to scratch his nose, when a tearing shot was coming over the net, and made a wild plunge at the spool too late.

The diablo crashed on the grass. Poindexter looked daggers at his partner. "You—you ass!" he exclaimed.

The Combine were getting ahead. Then the Old Firm pulled ahead again, and Trevelyan called deuce.

The interest in the game was now growing more exciting than ever.

Although the set consisted, of course, of six games, the result of the first game was considered to be a pretty sure indication of how the match would end.

Pankhurst scored advantage; but then the spool slid from Price's string, and the score was deuce again.

Poindexter was the next to score advantage and then game.

"Good old Poindexter!" shouted Dick Neville, as the result of the first game was declared in favour of the Combine.

"Bravo, Tinned Beef!" shouted the juniors. "Buck up, Panky!"

"Go ahead, Canned Rats!" Dick Neville glanced out of the corner of his eye at Philpot.

The cad of the Fourth was sitting close to the trunk of the tree now, with a leg on either side of the low branch, leaning back. Both his hands were free now, as he was not under the necessity of holding on. His hands were in his pockets, but Dick saw his right hand slip up to his mouth.

Neville began to think they had misjudged Philpot for once.

He seemed to have taken up his position there simply to get a good view, and was filling up the time by eating toffee.

And Neville turned his attention to the match, and thought less of watching the cad of the Fourth.

The 6th Chapter.

Philpot's Little Game—A Win for the Combine.

THE players had changed sides, and the second game of the set had commenced. The diabloists were warming up to their

work now, and the spool hummed to and fro over the net with the speed of an arrow.

It was a fine exhibition of skill, and many of the seniors joined in the cheers which greeted any specially smart return of the whizzing diablo.

Micky Flynn did not leave off to scratch his nose again, and the second game was decided like the first, in favour of the Combine.

"Hurrah!" yelled Dick Neville, flinging his cap into the air.

"Bravo, Tinned Beef!" shouted the juniors. "Good old Ireland!"

Micky took off his cap, and bowed in response to the cheers.

Pankhurst and Price were looking more serious now.

The first two games had gone to the Combine, and the outlook was serious for the Old Firm, if they did not "buck up," and constrain the fickle Dame Fortune to favour them.

The third game was long and uncertain before the result finally declared itself.

Three several times the score of deuce was called. But at last the game was called for Pankhurst and Price, and the old Firm scored their first victory.

Pankhurst, whose face was almost as red as his hair with the healthy exercise of the game, heaved a sigh of relief.

"We've started now, Pricey," he remarked. "Keep it up."

"Quite so," said Price. "We hadn't got our hand in at the start, you know. We're going to lick them now."

"Quite so!" The fourth game started, and it finished more quickly, the Old Firm's luck being quite out, in spite of Pankhurst's determination, and Panky's score was still at love when game was called for the Combine.

"Canned Rats and Ireland will have it," was the general verdict.

But Pankhurst and Price wore a determined look, and there was a factor in the problem which nobody counted upon.

Even Dick Neville had almost forgotten Philpot by this time.

The fifth game was at fifteen-love when Poindexter made his first mistake.

The diablo was coming to him like an arrow,

when the American gave a sudden start, and missed the stroke entirely, and the spool thudded on the grass.

"Clumsy!" said Gatty. Micky stared at his partner in amazement.

"Faith, and what's the matter wid ye, Point-plunger?" he asked. Poindexter looked bewildered.

"Blessed if I know," he said. "Something stung me in the face."

"Eh, what? Is it draming ye are? What could sting ye?"

"It—it felt like a wasp." "A wasp at this time of the year? Poindexter, old son, the tinned beef is getting into your head—"

"Well, it was something," growled Poindexter. "Never mind, we're well ahead."

The game went on, and the Old Firm scored, and the score was at fifteen-forty when Poindexter gave another jump in making a return, and the spool slithered along his string and plunged into the net.

There was a shout, and Micky Flynn fairly howled.

"What's the matter wid ye?" Poindexter passed his hand over his face, and screwed his knuckle into his left eye.

"Behold, he weeps!" said Gatty. "Behold, the hero weeps over his defeat—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Poindexter. "I guess I'm not a weeper. Something popped into my eye, and made me miss the diablo."

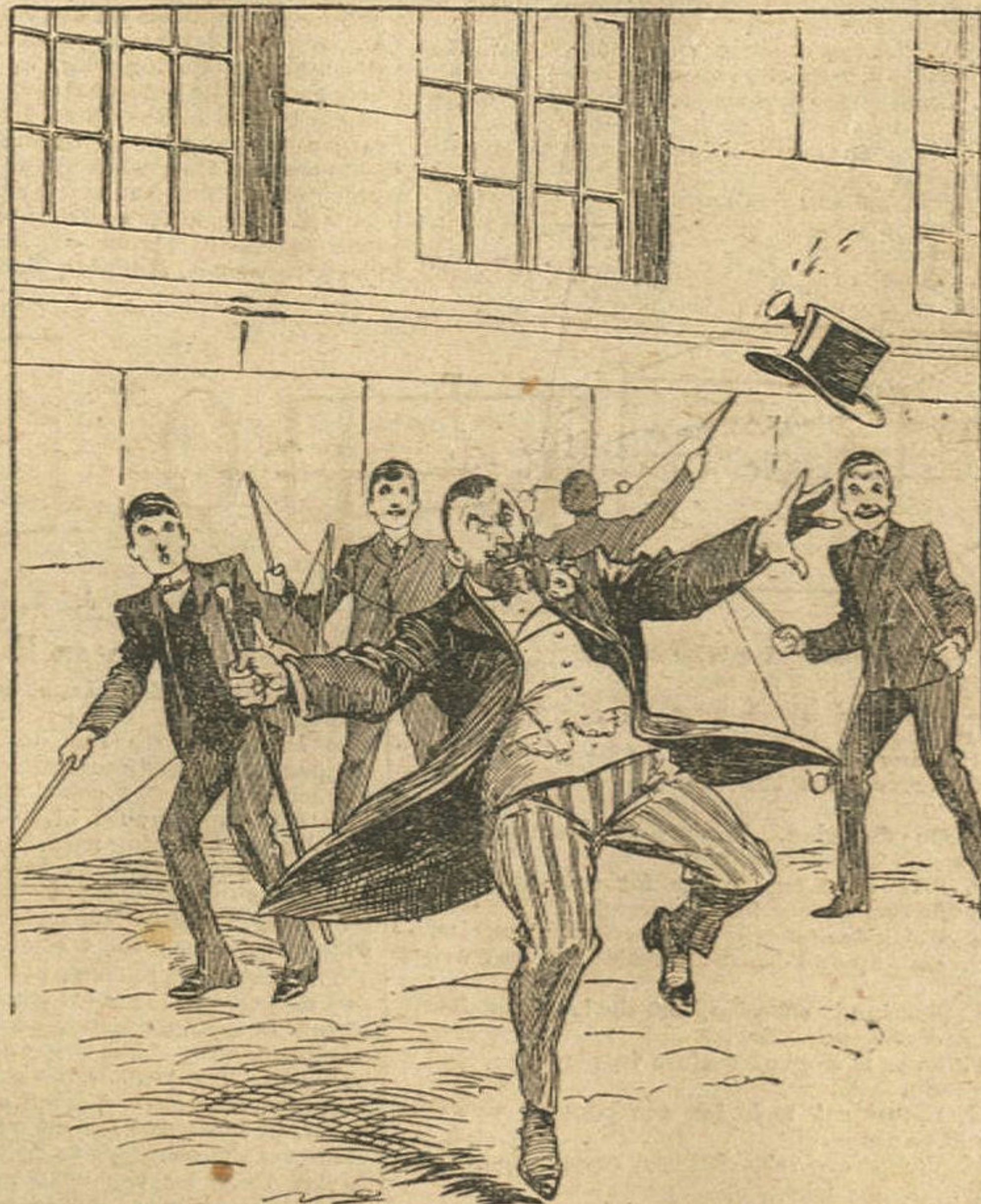
"Rats!" was the general verdict. "I tell you it was so."

"More rats!" "Faith, and if ye're going to be stung by wasps, and have things pop into ye're eye, Punt-dodger, it's a bad partner ye'll make," said Micky Flynn.

"Can I help it?" howled Poindexter. "I'm blessed if I know what it is. But there you are, it's happened."

"Bedad, I suppose it did, but—"

"It's mighty queer," Dick Neville remarked, as the players changed sides after the game,



"Ciel! Mon chapeau!" screamed Monsieur Friquet. "Ow, my hat!" Naturally enough, the hat, when caught by the breeze, got in the way of the diablo players. "Scoot! Bunk!" shouted the boys. "I will not scoot! Parbleu! I vill not bunk viz myself! I vant my hat!" shouted the French master.

"I can't quite get on to it, Poindexter. Does your eye hurt now?"

"I guess so," said the American chum, who had his left eye half closed. "I shall be playing cock-eyed now. It won't be necessary for Philly to chip in, Dick, if this goes on. I'm blessed if I know what's the matter."

Dick Neville gave a jump. The mention of Philpot brought back the cad of the Fourth to his mind, and he remembered that he had forgotten to keep an eye on him. He determined to repair that omission now, for a suspicion was already working in his mind.

The Combine's score was three games to two now, so they were still ahead. The next game was won by the Old Firm, and the score was three games all.

Then fortune favoured the Combine again, and they had four games to their credit. The next game was looking like another win for them, when Micky Flynn gave a sudden yelp and a jump, and missed the spool.

"Your turn now," grinned Poindexter. "What are you at, image?"

"Sure, and something stung me on the nose." "Ha, ha, ha!" "It's no laughin' matter, Pointshaker!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure and—but faith, what is Dick Neville at?" Every eye was turned upon Dick Neville. The

junior had dashed towards the tree, upon the branch of which Philpot was seated, and had seized one of Philpot's ankles, and was trying to drag him from the branch to the ground.

"He's off his rocker!" "Gone balmy in the crumpet!" "He'll have his leg off in a minute."

Players and spectators alike were staring at Dick in amazement, and the match was momentarily forgotten.

"What's the matter, Dick?" bawled Poindexter. "The cad!" howled Dick Neville. "I saw him!"

"You saw what?" "I'll show you!" "Help!" yelled Philpot, clinging to the branch. His face was very pale. Trevelyan ran quickly to the spot.

"What does this mean, Neville?" exclaimed the captain of Cliveden sternly. "What are you making this disturbance for?"

"The rotter!" howled Dick. "I tell you I saw him do it!" "You saw him do what?"

"He's got a pea-shooter, and he was shooting peas at Flynn; I saw him! That's what hit Poindexter and put him off his game; this beast was pelting him!"

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Poindexter. "I never thought of that!" "Howly St. Patrick!" cried Micky Flynn in astonishment.

"Is this true, Philpot?" exclaimed Trevelyan, roughly jerking the junior from the tree.

"No, no! I—I—" "Look there!" exclaimed Dick Neville, as a peashooter fell out of Philpot's breast-pocket under Dick's vigorous shakes. "And lock there!"

A shower of hard peas accompanied the shooter. Philpot's jaw dropped. It was hardly necessary to ask more; his guilt was in his face.

"Why did you do this, Philpot?" "I—I—I—" "Get out of my sight!" said Trevelyan scornfully. "I shall expect to see you in my study after this match, Philpot, and I will give you the biggest thrashing you have ever had, unless you prefer an interview with the Head?" added the captain of Cliveden significantly.

And Philpot slunk away, followed by hoots and hisses. Poindexter slapped Dick Neville on the shoulder.

"Good for you, Dick! You've saved the match!" "I say," exclaimed Pankhurst, "this won't do, you know! The match will have to be off, and—"

"Rats!" said Poindexter cheerfully. "The score is level, four to four, and we're going to beat you, kid."

"But—" "But no buts; play!" "Oh, all right!" said Pankhurst. "Play it is!"

And the match recommenced. The next two games fell one to each side. The score was now games all, and the spectators watched eagerly for the final encounters. Poindexter won the next game, and the excitement was now thrilling. If Poindexter won the next game the victory went to the Combine; if he lost, the score was games all again.

But Poindexter did not lose. His play was perfect. Never had a player shown so absolute a mastery over the spinning diablo. And Micky, if he was not the equal of the chum from Chicago, was very good, and he made no mistakes this time.

The score crept up. Love-fifteen, love-thirty, fifteen-forty, game!

"Hurrah!" "Good old Tinned Beef!" "Bravo, Tipperary!"

Pankhurst looked disappointed for the moment. But he was not the fellow to take a defeat to heart. He grinned at Poindexter through the net.

"Good for you, Canned Rats!" he said. "We'll get our own back some time."

"I guess so," said Poindexter cheerfully, and he shook hands with Pankhurst over the diablo net. "I reckon No. 4 is top study, and—"

"Rats! Tinned rats! I—I—" "Let me finish. It is the duty of the top study to stand a feed."

"Oh, that alters the case, of course!" grinned Pankhurst. "Quite so," said Price.

"Well, you've won the beastly match," said Pankhurst considerably. "You can call yourselves top study for one afternoon, and we'll come to that feed."

"Quite so." And at the time Philpot was wriggling under the cane in Trevelyan's study, the Old Firm and the Combine, on the most amicable terms, met and feasted within the walls of No. 4, and Pankhurst and Price shouted with laughter as the Combine's plan for curing the cad of the Fourth of his betting proclivities was explained to them.

After his licking at the hands of the captain, Philpot had the pleasure of settling up his various little accounts. But in No. 4 study peace and contentment reigned, and rows were "off" for a whole day in the Fourth Form at Cliveden.

THE END.

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