

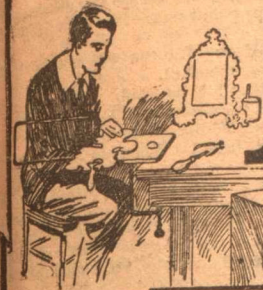
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Boys' Herald 1^d

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



No. 251, Vol. V.

EVERY WEDNESDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING MAY 9, 1908.



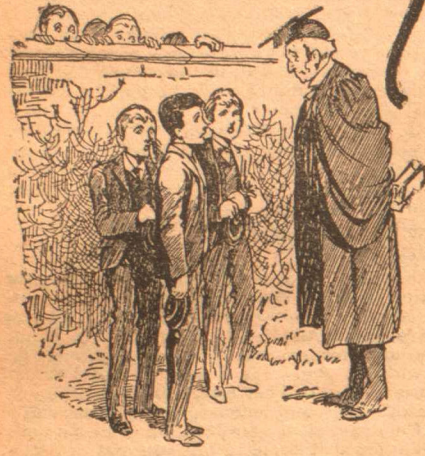
THE WOLF PATROL

A Story of
Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts

By
John Finnemore

Read How Chippy and Dick Captured a German Spy.

May Day at Cliveden



Another of
CHARLES HAMILTON'S
Popular
Complete School Stories.

The 1st Chapter. Poindexter's Point of View.

LINCOLN G. POINDEXTER was first out of bed, that bright May morning, in the Fourth Form dormitory at Cliveden. The rising-bell had not yet rung, when Poindexter opened the window and looked out into the green, old Close.

"Jolly fine morning, kids!" Dick Neville yawned and sat up in bed. "You're lively this morning, Puntpusher."

"I guess so. Don't you know what it is this morning?"

"Fine."

"Ass! I wasn't referring to the weather. Don't you know what the date is?"

"Yes, rather. The date is a fruit that grows on date-trees in tropical countries."

"Oh, don't rot!" said Poindexter. "The date is the first of May."

"It generally is after the last day in April, I believe," Dick remarked innocently. Poindexter sniffed.

"I guess I get that tired feeling when you start being funny," he said. "It's May Day to-day, and I was thinking—"

"Faith, and do ye get up early in the mornin' to do ye're thinkin', Puntpusher?" asked Micky Flynn. "Sure and ye might do it quietly, and not disturb everybody in the dormitory, darling."

"It's time to get up, lazybones. I was thinking—"

"Faith, and can't ye go out in the passage to think, and let a fellow get another snooze before risin'-bell, Puntddodger?"

Lincoln G. Poindexter crossed to Micky's bed, and with a single jerk of his arm denuded it of bed-clothes. Micky started up with a yell.

"Time to get up," said Poindexter. "I don't approve of laziness in the Fourth Form at Cliveden. Besides, we, the Cliveden Combine are bound to show a good example to the Form, and not lie about like hedge-hogs or those red-headed rotters yonder."

"Faith, and I—"

Pankhurst and Price, to whom Poindexter's uncomplimentary allusion was made, sat up in bed. The auburn-haired chums of Cliveden gripped their bolsters.

"Why don't you wake us up, too, Puntpotter?" asked Pankhurst.

"Quite so," said Price, "if you're not afraid to come up to this end of the dormitory, Beef-boiler."

"I guess I'll wake you," said Poindexter, taking a wet sponge from his washstand, and starting towards the Old Firm.

Two bolsters flew through the air with remarkably accurate aim, and Poindexter was bowled over like a ninepin. One bolster caught him on the chest, and the other curled lovingly round his neck. The American chum went over with a bump. He bumped on the floor, and dropped the wet sponge upon his own chest, and as he had nothing but his pyjamas on, he was wet. He gave a breathless gasp. Pankhurst and Price burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Aren't you coming to wake us up, Puntpotter?"

The Old Firm jumped out of bed and grasped their pillows. But Poindexter did not come on to the attack. He scrambled to his feet, and seized a towel and wiped his chest dry. He was grinning good-humouredly. The clang of the rising-bell rang through the fresh morning air.

"Hallo, there goes the bell," said Dick Neville, getting out of bed. "Come and get yourself clothed and in your right mind, Puntddodger. Don't waste time on those two copper merchants."

"I guess I've been thinking," said Poindexter. "I've got an idea."

"Whose?" asked Pankhurst.

Poindexter gripped. "My own, and a jolly good one. It's the first of May this morning—"

"How curious," said Pankhurst. "If it were the thirty-first of April, or the forty-fourth of March, now—"

"Don't be an ass, Panky. It's the first of May—"

"Faith, and we shall know that soon," said Micky Flynn. "Have you got the first of May on the brain, Puntddodger?"

"It's the first of May—"

"Go hon."

"It's May Day—"

"If I had a pencil here, I'd make a note of it, and work it out afterwards on the calendar," said Pankhurst. "As it is, I'll take your word for it, Puntbuster. Don't tell us any more."

"It's May Day," repeated Poindexter obstinately. "And on May Day there ought to be a holiday."

"My dear kid," said Neville, "there ought to be a holiday every fine day."

"Faith, and every wet one, too," said Micky Flynn.

"Well, yes. Every day, in fact."

"It's May Day," said Lincoln G. Poindexter, "and on May Day nearly everybody has a holiday. It's becoming a general holiday everywhere, and a jolly good thing too. My idea is that the sooner the custom spreads to Cliveden College, the better it will be for everybody concerned."

"Hear, hear!"

"Why should millions of people have holidays on May Day, and fellows like us turn up in the mouldy old class-rooms as usual?" asked Poindexter.

"Echo answers 'why'?" said Dick Neville encouragingly.

"Rats!" said Pankhurst.

Poindexter turned towards him. "Don't you agree with me, Pankhurst?"

"Oh, yes, I agree with you, but not with Neville."

"What do you mean?"

"Neville said that 'Echo answers why?' Echo would answer 'usual,' unless there was something very wrong with the acoustics of this dormitory," said Pankhurst. "Echo answers the last word of a sentence, not the first."

"My hat, what an old chestnut!" said Dick Neville. "Go on with your washing, Puntpusher. We ought to have a holiday to-day, that's a dead cert. Have you thought of any idea for getting one?"

"I guess so."

"Now you're talking! Go ahead!"

"It's admitted, I think, that we ought to have a holiday on May Day, like millions of others," said Poindexter, looking round.

"Millions?" asked Pankhurst.

"Well, thousands, anyway; at any rate, lots," said Poindexter. "That's a point of no importance—"

"Oh, certainly not! I'm not the fellow to be particular for a few millions."

"Lots of people make May Day a holiday, and the Labour Party are trying to make it a compulsory institution," said Poindexter. "Whether that would exactly suit the industrial world, I don't pretend to say, but I know jolly well that it would suit us."

"Yes, rather," said a dozen voices.

"We're unanimous on that point, I guess?"

"Rather!"

"Then we're going to fix it up."

"How?"

"Well, my idea was to get up a deputation to the Head and explain things to him," said Poindexter. "There are lots of things that the Head of a school doesn't notice which juniors like us might point out to him with mutual advantage."

Some of the Fourth Form giggled; others looked startled. The idea of bearding the awesome Head master in his den, as it were, was bold enough. But to ask for an unaccustomed holiday? Most of the juniors wondered where Lincoln G. Poindexter, the chum from Chicago, got his nerve from.

"Good wheeze," exclaimed Gatty. "But who's going to make the deputation?"

"As the proposer of the idea, I head it," said Poindexter. "As the most sensible chap in the Form, I naturally take the part of spokesman."

"But I say, Puntddodger, you'll probably get lines, you know, for your cheek," said Pankhurst.

"Quite so," said Price.

"I don't care! Dr. Rayne is a good old sort. He takes a great interest in our hobby club, and encourages the youngsters to go beetle-hunting in the woods. It will be a jolly afternoon for that. I don't see why May Day shouldn't be a holiday at Cliveden, at least once in a way. Anyway, I guess I'm going to put it to him—like an old sport."

"Faith, and it's a janius ye are, Puntbuster. There's only one point I'm doubtful about," said Micky Flynn thoughtfully.

"What's that, Micky?"

"I think I had better be spokesman, darling. I couldn't very well trust a delicate matter like that in your hands, you know. You are all very well when it comes to canning beef, or rats, and things, but in a matter like this—"

"Oh, cheese it, Micky. I don't think you had better be in the deputation at all. You are sure to put your foot in it."

"Faith, and I—"

"I'll be in it, anyway," said Dick Neville. "I should think two would be enough. As heads of the Form, it's our place to go—"

"Eh, what's that?" exclaimed Pankhurst and Price together.

"As the heads of the Form—"

"Rats! It's a good idea, though, and Price and I don't mind taking it up. You chaps can go and grow whiskers. Pricey and I will interview the Head—"

"I guess not."

"Then we'll make it a general deputation representing the whole Form," said Pankhurst. "We're not out of this, I promise you. A representative and respectable deputation will be sure to make a good impression on the doctor."

"I guess that's so, Panky," said Poindexter thoughtfully. "But the question is, where shall we catch the Head? We can't march into his private house when he's having breakfast in the bosom of his family, and when he comes to take the Sixth it will be too late."

"Faith, and sure I know—"

"Oh, cheese it, Micky! I guess—"

"Sure, and I know, Pointplunger. Shut up and listen. You know the Head always walks in his garden on fine mornings before breakfast—"

"By Jove, so he does!" said Neville. "But we're not allowed in the garden."

"Faith, and I believe we've sometimes been where we're not allowed, acushla."

"Something in that. It isn't a bad idea either," said Pankhurst thoughtfully. "You see, the Doctor will have to be caught young—I mean early—"

"Ha, ha! Good! We'll get down as soon as we can and catch the Head in the garden before breakfast. I guess that's a ripping idea, because he won't have a cane handy to lick us in case he cuts up rusty," said Poindexter sagely.

"Good."

And so it was settled.

The 2nd Chapter. The Deputation.

THE Fourth Form at Cliveden were down unusually early. Trevelyan of the Sixth, the captain of the school, met them on the stairs, and stared.

"Hallo, what mischief are you youngsters up to?" he inquired.

Poindexter looked indignant.

"I guess we're taking up early rising," he replied. "I've heard you recommend it for young athletes, Trevelyan."

The captain of Cliveden laughed.

"Yes, but I don't suppose I'm far wrong in thinking there is some mischief afoot when you come down within five minutes of rising-bell. Cut along with you, and remember I've got an eye on you."



Two bolsters flew through the air with remarkably accurate aim, and Poindexter was bowled over like a ninepin. One bolster caught him on the chest, and the other curled lovingly round his neck. He bumped on the floor, and dropped the wet sponge upon his chest, and as he had nothing but his pyjamas on, he was wet. Pankhurst and Price burst into a roar.

"Sure, Trevelyan, darling—"

But the Cliveden captain was striding on. The Combine hurried out of the schoolhouse into the fresh morning air of the Close, the Old Firm of Poindexter looked round.

"I guess we don't want a crowd in this business deputation, kids," he remarked. "Five are enough for a party."

"Quite enough," said Pankhurst. "More than enough, in fact. It would be safer for you three chaps to travel off, and leave it to us."

"Quite so," said Price.

"Faith, and sure we—"

"We're going to see you do it," said Philpot, grinning. "My idea is that you won't have the nerve."

"That's it," said Gatty. "My sentiments exactly."

"We'll give 'em a chance," said Greene, the amateur photographer of the Cliveden Junior Hobby Club. "I'd be jolly glad to get a snap of them with the Head. Just leave it a few minutes while I get my camera, will you, Puntpusher?"

"I guess not. You are off in this scene, and so is your camera."

"I don't see why I shouldn't snap you," said Greene obstinately. "You five asses jawing the Head will make a jolly good group, and the photo would be unique."

"I'll make you look unique if you— Where are you going?"

"To fetch my camera."

"If you bring your camera near me I'll break it over your silly cocoanut!" roared Poindexter.

But Greene was gone. He was one of the keenest hobbyists of the junior club, and when he had an idea in his head it was not easy to get out again. Poindexter snorted, and led the way across the end of the Close towards the private garden of the Head of Cliveden.

The Fourth Formers followed. They were curious, and perhaps some of them shared Philpot's view, that the deputation would have nerve enough to face the Head when he came to the point.

Poindexter looked round angrily. "Will you fellows sheer off?" he exclaimed. "We can't have a crowd hanging about on delicate matter like this."

"Rats!" said Gatty. "Why shouldn't we look over the wall if we like? We want to see how it turns out."

"I guess you can take my word for it afterwards," said Poindexter. "Now, then! Shouldn't to shoulder! If these silly asses don't scatter the word three, charge!"

"Right!" said Neville and Flynn.

"Good," said Pankhurst.

And Price added:

"Quite so."

"One."

"Look here," said Gatty angrily. "We're going—"

"I know you are! Two."

"I tell you—"

"Three—"

"That's all very well, but—"

"Charge!"

The five juniors rushed forward. There were heavy odds against them, but the Fourth scattered before the rush. But they did not scatter in the garden. They remained in sight of the excited deputation, evidently determined to look on all the same.

Poindexter sniffed.

"No good taking any notice of those silly cuckoos!" he exclaimed.

"That's what I thought all along," remarked Pankhurst.

"Oh, did you!" snorted Poindexter. "Well, come on."

"I'm waiting for you."

"Oh, come on!"

The quintette walked on towards the gate of the Head's garden. It was locked at that time, but it was easy to climb. In a minute the five juniors were over it and in the forbidden precincts of the garden.

"Faith, and I'm thinkin'—"

"No time for thinking now, Micky, even if you could do it. Come on."

"But I'm thinkin'—"

"Cheese it, and come on!"

"I tell ye I'm thinkin' that when the Doctor spots us in his garden, he may not wait to listen to what we have to say, but kick us out at the start."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Pankhurst. "You would expect an idea belonging to the Combine to work out something like that."

"Quite so."

"Mother av St. Patrick, give a chap a chance to finish! I was goin' to say that perhaps you would be better for me to go on alone and get the Head into a good-humour first, and then my fellows can come and back me up afterwards—"

"Ring off, Micky, old chap. I'm a bit nervous. I guess, about bringing you at all," said Poindexter. "Hallo, what's that row?"

It was a sound of boots on wood. The deputation looked back. The gate they had crossed over a minute before was crowded with green juniors. Gatty and Simpson and Teddy Trim and over them, appeared the heads of the deputation, clinging on the gate. Two adventurous youngsters had climbed on the wall itself, and were sitting there as cool as cucumbers.

"Young asses!" said Pankhurst wrathfully. "They'll spoil the whole thing. The Head'll get waxy at his garden being turned into a pig show like this."

Poindexter shook his fist at the Fourth Form. "Get out of sight!" he shouted.

"Here, shut up, Puntpusher; the Head'll get you!"

"Get off that gate!"

"Rats!" came back an elegant defiance to Gatty.

"Then I guess I'll jolly soon shift you!" claimed the American chum.

He rushed back excitedly towards the gate, and, as if by magic, gate and wall were cleared of juniors. They vanished, and Lincoln G. Poindexter gave a satisfied grin and turned round and rejoined his companions.

"I reckoned I'd shift them," he remarked.

"Did you," said Pankhurst, with a grin.

"Look now, then."

He pointed to the gate. Poindexter glanced round. Gate and wall were thick with grinning juniors. The retreat had been only for a moment. As soon as Poindexter's back was turned the inquisitive Fourth Formers had resumed their places.

"Oh, I shan't take any notice of them, I guess," growled Poindexter, feeling that he was powerless to deal with the situation.

"If you had asked me I should have said that from the start," Pankhurst observed.

"But I didn't ask you," said the Chicago chum tartly.

"Oh, keep your wool on, Tinned Beef!"

"If you're looking for a coloured eye, Pankhurst—"

"Rats! Tinned rats! Let's get on with the deputation, or the Head will be gone into the house for his breakfast."

"Oh, come on, then!"

There was a sound of voices in dispute at the gate. The chums stopped again and looked back. Somebody was evidently trying to get upon the crowded gate from the other side. The voice of Greene the amateur photographer could be heard.

"Lemme gerrup, you silly cuckoos! I want to snap them."

"There's no room."

"I tell you I want to snap them."

"Oh, let him come up!" said Gatty. "You can get down, Philpot."

"I can't! I shan't, anyway!"

"Yes, you will. I'll shove you off if you don't get off. What do you mean by standing in the way of a hobbyist?"

"You can get down yourself."

"That's different."

"I don't see—"

"Well, you ought to. Don't argue. Get off the gate."

"Rats!"

"Off you go!" said Gatty, and he gave Philpot an elbow in the ribs which sent him rolling off the gate. "Here you are, Greeney, old son; here's room for you, vice Philpot, retired."

"Thanks, Gatty; I'll do as much for you some time," said Greene. "Give us a hand up."

"Here you are!"

Greene was quickly on the gate. He had his camera under his arm. The deputation stared at the grinning row in wrath, but there was evidently no help for it.

"Sure, we can't get rid of them without a row, and the Head may hear it," said Micky Flynn.

"He can't be far away, either."

"I guess that's so. We must try to spot him somewhere out of sight of the gate, that's all," said Poindexter, frowning.

"Quite so."

"Let's get on—Hallo!"

Poindexter ceased abruptly. A well-known figure loomed up from a path behind the rhododendrons.

"What are you juniors doing here?"

It was the Head!

The 3rd Chapter.
A Holiday that Didn't Come Off!

D R. RAYNE looked at the juniors. The juniors looked at the Head. For a moment there was a dead silence.

The doctor adjusted his glasses, and looked at the five youngsters again. He was evidently surprised to see them, and by the wildest stretch of the imagination it could not be supposed that he was pleased.

"What are you boys doing here?"

Micky Flynn was the first to find his voice. There were few situations in which Micky remained silent for long.

"Faith, and if you please, sir—"

"If you please, sir," said Poindexter, recovering himself. "we—"

"It's like this, sir—" Pankhurst commenced.

"Faith, and can't ye dry up, ye gossoons, while I explain to the doctor."

"I guess—"

"Look here—"

"You have not explained yourselves yet," said the Head. "Am I to understand that this is a deliberate trespass?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You know that juniors are not allowed to walk in this garden without permission?"

"Sure, and we weren't walking, sir!"

The Head smiled slightly.

"We weren't just here to walk, sir," explained Poindexter. "As a matter of fact, sir, we—we—"

"We're—"

"Faith, and sure we—"

"Don't all speak at once, please. You can explain, Poindexter."

"Certainly, sir. Shut up, Micky Flynn!"

"Sure, and I—"

"Cheese it! You're keeping the doctor severely, we came here this morning to see to see me!" exclaimed the doctor, raising his eyebrows.

"Yes, sir. It was important for us to see you, Poindexter explained.

"Indeed! And why was it especially necessary to see me before morning school?" asked the Head quietly.

"The fact is, sir—"

"Faith, sir, we—"

"Will you shut up, Micky Flynn, and let me explain to the doctor?"

"Sure, and it's thryin' to help ye out, I was."

"Let Poindexter speak, Flynn."

"Certainly, sir. I was only going to say—"

"That will do," said the Head. "Go on, Poindexter."

"The fact is, sir, we're—we're a deputation."

"A what?"

"Deputation, sir," said five voices, in a sort of chorus.

The Head looked puzzled.

"I don't quite understand."

"We're a deputation, sir, representing all that's best and most intelligent in the Lower School," said Poindexter, with a vague remembrance of a political speech in his mind, and shaping his explanation on somewhat the same lines. "The enlightened and self-respecting Fourth Form at Cliveden—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Poindexter!"

"Eh?" said Poindexter, astounded out of his respect for a moment.

"Tell me in plain English what you mean."

"Well, sir, it's the first of May to-day."

"I am quite aware of that fact, but I fail to see what bearing it has upon your visit to my private garden."

"Being May Day, sir, it's—it's May Day, you see."

"Yes, I see that quite clearly, Poindexter. Have you anything else equally obvious to point out to me?"

Poindexter coloured. Somehow the interview did not seem to be shaping exactly as he could have wished. The idea of "putting it to the Head like an old sport" did not seem so feasible in the actual presence of Dr. Rayne.

"I mean, sir—what I mean is—"

"Faith, and sure—"

"It's Flynn keeping on interrupting me that prevents me from explaining clearly."

"Oh, sure, Puntty darling—"

THE COMBINE LAUGH THIS TIME!



There was a biff as the two Jacks came into violent contact. The music ceased, and the musician backed away from the toppling hawthorn erections. The crowd of juniors had yelled with laughter. The discovery of the identity of the Jacks-in-the-Green had swiftly spread, and it was a complete "give-away" for Pankhurst and Price.

"You see, sir, being May Day, it's a holiday."

"I was not aware of that."

"I mean, it ought to be a holiday," explained Poindexter. "The Labour Party are trying to make it a national holiday."

"But I do not think it has been done yet."

"No, sir; and so I thought it would be a jolly good idea to start it at Cliveden, and give the thing a sort of send-off," explained Poindexter. "It being admitted that everybody ought to have a holiday on the first of May—"

"Admitted by whom, Poindexter?"

"Oh, the whole Fourth Form agrees on that point, sir."

The doctor could not help smiling.

"I am afraid I cannot agree with the Fourth Form in the matter, Poindexter. Lessons will proceed to-day the same as usual. When May Day is made a national holiday, we will reconsider the matter."

"But, you see, sir—"

"Come, Poindexter. This interview savours very much of impertinence."

"Oh, sir! You know we wouldn't dream of anything like that."

"Well, I know you would not intentionally, Poindexter," said the Head, relaxing a little. "But really this is all too absurd. If I granted holidays whenever the boys wanted them, how much school work would be done?"

Poindexter rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"Come, go in to your breakfasts," said the Head. "Lessons will proceed the same as usual. The days are getting long now, and you can have a pleasant outing after school. You may go."

"Sure, Poindexter, it's yerself that's spoiled it

all," said Micky Flynn, in a whisper that was perfectly audible to the doctor. "You said ye were going to put it to him like an old sport—"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Faith, and I—"

"You may go, boys," said the Head, repressing a smile. "Dear me, what are all those lads doing on my gate? The place seems to be crowded. Tell them to go away at once."

"Poindexter hasn't explained properly, sir," remarked Micky Flynn. "If ye'll listen to me, I'd explain everything fully in a quarter of an hour."

"You may go, boys."

"Yes, sir; but sure—"

Snap! It was Greene's camera. The Head looked up with a start, and frowned. He turned and walked away up the garden, and the disappointed deputation slowly returned to the gate, to be greeted with grins and ironical questions by the juniors there.

The 4th Chapter.
The Old Firm's Little Secret!

GOT the holiday?"

A dozen voices asked the question.

"Oh, rats!" said Poindexter irritably.

"No, we haven't."

"Oh, too bad," said Gatty. "Wouldn't the Head listen to the voice of the charmer? Rather unreasonable of him, don't you think so, chaps?"

"Well, rather," said Greene. "Poindexter's eloquence would melt a heart of stone or a tin of canned rats, I should think. Never mind, I've got my snapshot."

"If I get hold of that camera—" began Poindexter.

"But you won't," said Greene promptly, and

he scuttled off with the precious instrument under his arm.

"Did you put it to the Head like an old sport, Poindexter?" asked Teddy Trimble.

"Oh, shut up!"

"But didn't you explain to him that on May Day everybody ought to have a holiday, and that we're standing up for our rights?" asked Jeffreys.

"Are you looking for a thick ear, Jeffreys?"

"But what I want to know is—"

"Oh, it's no good," said Pankhurst. "Something might have been done, but these bounders would spoil it."

"Quite so."

"Sure, Pank—"

"My opinion is that they ought to be chained up when there's any delicate negotiations to be carried out," Pankhurst remarked.

"You'd better keep your silly cackle till we're chained up, then," said Poindexter. "I guess otherwise you're in danger of being used as a duster!"

"If anyone here can use me as a duster—"

"I guess I can, for one."

"I'd like to see you do it."

"You shall feel me do it, if you like," exclaimed Poindexter, seizing Pankhurst; and in a moment they were reeling to and fro in a terrific combat.

"Go it, Pank!" said Price. "Down with the Tinned-Beef Combine!"

"Perhaps you can do something in that line?" said Dick Neville, witheringly.

"Well, I dare say I could knock you into a cocked hat, Neville."

"Better try, then," said Dick promptly.

And Neville and Price were staggering about

in a deadly embrace the next moment. They bumped into Pankhurst and Poindexter, and they bumped into the wall, and they bumped into a tree. But it made no difference to them.

Micky Flynn squared up to Gatty.

"Come on, ye spalpeen!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Gatty, retreating a pace or two. "I'm not going to fight with you, Flynn. What the dickens is there for us to fight about?"

"Faith, I'm not going to stand by idle when there's a fight going on," said Flynn. "Come on, ye spalpeen!"

"You utter idiot! I've no quarrel with you!"

"Yes, you have; I can't remember now what it's about, but I'm sure we've got something to settle."

"You confounded ass!"

"Sure and I'm bound to avenge an insult to the descendant of the ancient kings of Ireland. When anybody calls me an ass I usually kill him."

"I take it back."

"No, ye don't. I won't let ye. Come on, ye spalpeen!"

And the excited Micky danced round Gatty, giving him taps on the nose and chest, till Gatty got excited too, and started fighting.

"What's all this row about?" exclaimed Trevelyan, coming upon the scene. "Why aren't you youngsters in to breakfast? Stop that row!"

The combatants were too excited to heed. The Fourth-Formers were standing round in a circle, laughing like hyenas.

"Go it, Pank!"

"Buck up, Canned Rats!"

"Good old Ireland!"

"Stop it, I say!" exclaimed Trevelyan; and he advanced upon the combatants, cuffing right and left; and under these persuasive methods the juniors separated at last.

"What is this fighting about?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Pankhurst. "What were we fighting for, Puntdodger?"

"Ask me another," said Poindexter. "I'm not good at riddles."

"Faith, and we—"

"Get in to breakfast, you young rascals!" said Trevelyan, laughing. "Mind, no more rowing, or you'll hear from me."

"Faith, and that would be a pleasure intoirly, Trevelyan."

"Oh, get along!"

The juniors went in to breakfast. The fistical encounter had relieved their feelings after their disappointment at the result of the interview. There was a plentiful distribution of bruises; but the Cliveden juniors were accustomed to hard knocks and there was nothing "soft" about them. Pankhurst and Price were grinning and talking together as they went in, and Poindexter eyed them suspiciously.

"Those copper merchants are up to something," he confided to Dick Neville. "It was rather a frost, my idea of getting a holiday."

Dick Neville laughed.

"A regular freezer, Pintpotter."

"It couldn't be helped. It might have worked out better if I had been backed up better," said Poindexter. "Never mind that, though. But we don't want that rotten Old Firm to come out with some new wheeze, just after we've been done in."

"Faith, and it's right ye are, Puntbuster."

"We'll keep an eye on them," said the American chum. "They're up to something; I'm jolly sure of that."

Poindexter did keep an eye upon the Old Firm, but without much result. Morning lessons passed off as usual, save for a good deal of whispered chaff in the Fourth Form class-room, on the subject of the deputation to the Head.

Pankhurst and Price certainly had something up their sleeve, but what it was the Combine could not discover. In the interval before afternoon school, Poindexter observed the Old Firm exchanging whispers with several members of their party in the Fourth Form; but when he strolled by with exaggerated carelessness, they at once ceased. Poindexter's curiosity was piqued, and he was a little uneasy, too. A scheme on the part of the Old Firm generally meant the discomfiture of the Combine, or, at least, an attempt in that direction.

It was Neville who caught a hint of what was going on. After school he was going up to No. 4 study for his bat, when a few words, from Pankhurst's open door, by chance caught his ears.

"How much do you expect to raise, Pank?"

"I shouldn't wonder if it totted up to a sovereign," replied Pankhurst.

"Well, you know best, Pank; but it's a bit risky to my mind."

"Where does the risk come in, Pricey?"

"I mean if the Combine got on to the wheeze. You remember how they tried something of the sort once, and toggged themselves up as minstrels, and we spotted them and gave them a regular ragging."

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather."

"It would be no joke."

"They can't possibly spot us, Pricey. You know that we shall be covered up."

"Quite so; but—"

"It's a perfectly legitimate way of raising money," said Pankhurst. "It's a custom as old as any in England, and it ought to be kept up."

"Quite so."

"Besides, the Combine have had a shot at celebrating May Day, and failed. Now, we're going to have a shot at it, and hit the mark."

"That's all right, but—"

"Oh, don't be a croaker. Come, get your cap on; it's time we were gone."

"You've arranged with the fellows?"

"Rather. That's all right."

"What about the music?"

"I've fixed that up with Medway. Come on. If it tots up to a sov, we shall have a ripping feed!"

MAY DAY AT CLIVEDEN.

(Continued from the previous page.)

The Old Firm came out of their study. Dick Neville dodged into the next one in time, and the Old Firm passed on unsuspectingly. When they were gone Neville did not trouble to fetch his bat. He had something other than cricket to think about now. He tore off in search of Poindexter and Flynn, and joined them in the quad, breathless with excitement.

**The 5th Chapter.
Baffled!**

"FAITH, and it's excited ye're lookin'," said Micky Flynn. "Sure and what's the matter with ye intirely?"

"I guess he's found out something," said Lincoln G. Poindexter. "What is it, Dick? Have you got on to the wheeze Panky has been whispering about all day?"

"Not quite," gasped Dick. "But I'm on the track. Panky and Price have just gone out. They're up to some scheme to raise cash and to give a feed."

Poindexter wrinkled his brows in thought.

"Oh, that's it, is it?"

"Yes; and it's something in the line of the minstrel dodge we got up when we were trying to raise tin for Philpot that time, you remember?"

"I remember. But—"

"Listen, and I'll tell you the lot, so far as I know it."

"Faith, and ye—"

"Cheese it, Micky!"

Dick Neville explained almost word for word what he had heard said by the Old Firm, and his chums looked decidedly puzzled.

"Blessed if I can make anything of it," said Poindexter, rubbing his chin. "They're up to some scheme for raising the wind for a big feed, and they think they won't be recognised. And there are other fellows in it with them. And Medway has arranged about the music. I really don't quite catch on."

"Faith, let's go and see Medway."

"He's not likely to tell us anything."

"Sure, and he'd do anything for a fellow who would listen to him playing the concertina," said Micky Flynn sagely.

"Well, there's something in that. We may as well chance it, anyway. We're not bound to listen to the concertina unless he makes it worth our while, I guess."

"Ha, ha! that's so. Come on."

And the Combine hurried off in search of Medway, the amateur musician of the junior hobby club. But Medway was not to be found. His study was drawn blank, and he was not on the cricket ground or in the gym. Micky Flynn suggested that he might be practising in some corner with his concertina; but Poindexter pointed out that in that case some of the agonising strains of that instrument of torture would be audible.

"He's gone out, I expect," said Neville. "The May is in blossom in the lanes, you know, and lots of the fellows have gone out to gather it to put up in their studies. Let's find Gatty or Ferrers or Clarke. They were doing most of the whispering with Panky and Price to-day."

"Good; we may get something out of them."

And the Combine hunted for Gatty and Ferrers and Clarke. But, curiously enough, none of the three were to be found. A sudden thought struck Poindexter.

"I guess we're a set of asses!" he exclaimed.

"Why—"

"Speak for yourself, old son. I've no doubt you're right to that extent, but—"

"Look here, we've overlooked one thing. The whole gang of them are gone out. That means that Panky's scheme of raising the wind, whatever it is, isn't to be carried out in the school here. They've gone out, and it will be all over before we can get on their track. They've dished us."

"My hat! I didn't think of that. I took it for granted that whatever it was, it would be done here in Cliveden."

"Well, it was a blunder," grunted Poindexter. "We're dished, so we may as well go and get some cricket practice. There's plenty of light for more than an hour yet."

Poindexter was evidently right. It was useless to attempt to track the Old Firm now, for more than half an hour had elapsed since their leaving Cliveden. In a somewhat dissatisfied frame of mind the Combine went down to the cricket practice.

"Still, we may come on in the feed scene," Poindexter remarked. "Now we know it's coming off, we'll look out for it."

And the juniors fell to batting and bowling with all the ardour of shining lights of the Fourth Form cricket eleven.

Micky Flynn was at the wicket a little later, facing Poindexter's bowling, when there was a sudden shout from the direction of the gates. Micky Flynn looked across to see what it was about, quite forgetting that the ball was coming.

It came—and Micky gave a terrific howl and leaped a couple of feet into the air, his bat falling with a crash upon his wicket.

"Out!" yelled Dick Neville.

"Och! Sure and it's murdered I am intirely!" howled Flynn, dancing on one leg and clasping the other.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Poindexter. "You're out! Leg before wicket! You ought to know better, Micky, you ought really!"

"Ye silly spalpeen, I wasn't looking—"

"Well, you ought to have been. Out!"

"Rats!" Micky was still rubbing his leg tenderly. In his interest in the crowd gathering at the gate, he had stepped before the wicket, and he had suffered for it. "Sure, and phwat's goin' on yonder?"

Poindexter glanced in the direction of the crowd.

"I guess it doesn't matter," he replied. "Get on with the cricket!"

"But sure—"

"There's something on," said Neville, shading his eyes with his hand to look. "We've done enough practice for a bit, Puntodger. Let's go and have a look!"

"Sure and I'm off!" said Micky, and, putting his bat under his arm, he started off to discover the cause of the gathering of the crowd. His chums followed him, and as they arrived near the gates, a curious scene met their gaze.

The 6th Chapter.

Jack-in-the-Green.

"MY hat!" exclaimed Poindexter. "It's a May Day celebration!"

"Sure, and that's what it is intirely!"

The chums looked on with interest, as did a score of other fellows gathered round the spot. It was a curious sight, recalling an old English custom now falling into abeyance, though still sometimes kept up in rural quarters.

Two curious-looking figures had entered the gates of Cliveden. Some of the boys had seen Jacks-in-the-Green before, and knew what they were, but they were strange enough to the American chum.

Each of the figures showed only boots and trousers, above the waist being concealed by a curious framework thickly covered with hawthorn blossoms and other flowers. The heads and bodies were totally hidden, not a hair showing through the covering of May flowers. The identity of the "Jacks-in-the-Green" it was impossible to discover, but their height indicated that they were youthful.

A third figure followed the first two. He wore an old coat and trousers much too large for him, and his face was covered by a mask of coloured paper. He carried a large German concertina under his arm.

The Jacks-in-the-Green advanced into the precincts of Cliveden with perfect coolness, as if sure of their ground.

The boys greeted them with a cheer.

Any old custom recalling the past naturally appeals to the heart of an English lad, and anything in the form of an entertainment was welcome to schoolboys on a half-holiday.

Poindexter looked puzzled.

"I guess I don't get the hang of this biz, anyway!" he remarked. "I reckon it's a May Day celebration, hey?"

"You've hit it!"

"But what do you call those two funny merchants?"

"They're Jacks-in-the-Green," explained Neville. "They dance while the other chap plays the music, you see, and then collect coppers."

"Oh, I see, there's a financial side to the matter, of course?"

"Well, rather, you see we live in degenerate days!" grinned Neville. "They want to raise something to pay for their trouble. If the musician gives us a good tune, and those chaps put up a good dance, it's worth a few coppers."

"I guess so. But there ought to be May girls, and so on—"

"You don't see much of it now. They used to have a May pole in Clivebank, but it's down years ago. This is the first May celebration I've seen about here. We'll shell out if it's any class. It ought to be encouraged."

"Faith, and ye're right intirely!" said Micky Flynn. "But I say, those chaps Clarke, and Gatty, and Ferrers have come back. See, they're following the Jacks-in-the-Green."

Poindexter nodded.

"Yes, I see them. Medway isn't with them, or Panky and Price, either."

"Look out, he's going to strike up!" said Neville.

The three visitors had halted under a tree inside the gates. The boys, crowding round from all quarters, formed a circle for the entertainment. Poindexter looked curiously at the musician.

"Is it usual for the music merchant to be masked on occasions like this, kids?" the American chum inquired.

Neville shook his head.

"I believe not."

"Sure, and he doesn't want to be known at all," said Flynn. "Perhaps he's some daacent chap doin' this to raise the wind, ye see, and wouldn't loike to be recognised at all, at all!"

Poindexter started.

A curious idea had shot into his brain, but he did not speak. His eyes were fixed upon the May Day trio with very keen interest and attention.

"Hallo, there goes the music!"

"Sure, and it ought to be a fiddler intirely!"

"Oh, a concertina's all right if it's played well!" said Greene, joining the chums. "All concertinas aren't like Medway's horrible thing, you know!"

"This one is, I reckon," said Poindexter.

"Listen!"

Weird strains were proceeding from the concertina in the hands of the masked musician.

One of the "Jacks" bent towards him, and a sprig of May tickled his ear, he jumped, and the music ceased suddenly.

A mumbling voice came from under the paper mask.

The Jack-in-the-Green muttered something fiercely, and the masked musician was silent.

Poindexter grinned.

There seemed to be something in the sight of the May Day trio which the American youth found very funny.

"Play a tune, you ass!"

That was what Jack-in-the-Green whispered to the masked musician.

The whisper was overheard by a number of the interested spectators, and there was a general chuckle.

"Why don't you play a tune?"

"I was playing a tune," came the mumbling voice, under the paper mask.

"Tune! You were just pulling the concertina in and out."

"I was playing the Blue Danube."

"Were you? It sounded like the Dead March in Saul if it was like anything. Play a jolly tune for us to dance to."

"A fellow can't do more than his best."

"Oh, rats! Buck up!"

The concertina struck up again, an easy dance tune. The two Jacks-in-the-Green commenced to dance. One of them was a really graceful dancer, and he pirouetted and shuffled in good style, but the other was evidently not so complete a master of the light fantastic toe.

He danced clumsily, and several times narrowly escaped collision with his more skilful companion, and once he brought his cover-work of flowers heavily against a tree, and almost wrecked it.

It was a curious sight to see two pairs of legs dancing to the music, with the masses of hawthorn blossom above, and neither body nor face to be seen. The masked musician pumped away at the concertina in splendid style. It was true that he seemed to have very little sense of time, but as each dancer was keeping a different time, and neither paid any attention to the music, that really was not of great importance.

"Bravo!" shouted Greene. "Bravo! I'll stand a penny, at any rate, if it's only for the worst tune and the rottenest dance I've ever oome across."

"Ha, ha, ha! That concertina sounds familiar!" said Poindexter.

"Oh, you're thinking of Medway's instrument of torture!" said Neville.

Poindexter chuckled.

"Look at it again, Dick! Don't you know that concertina?"

"My hat! It looks like Medway's."

"And if that paper mask were off, I imagine the music merchant would look like Medway himself," Poindexter remarked.

Neville and Flynn stared at the American chum.

"Medway! Then—"

"Don't you remember Panky and Price's wheeze for raising the wind?" chuckled Poindexter. "Haven't you tumbled to the little game?"

Micky Flynn gave a yell.

"Sure, and those two Jacks-in-the-Green are—"

"Panky and Price."

"My only hat!"

**The 7th Chapter.
Shown Up!**

THE concertina was still braying forth something resembling a tune. The Jacks-in-the-Green kept up the rhythmic dance—more or less rhythmic! But schoolboys are not hypercritical. There were cheers, and many fellows felt in their pockets for coppers.

The Combine pushed their way to the front of the crowd. They remembered how Panky and Price had shown them up on the occasion when they played nigger minstrels, and the time had evidently come to get their own back.

The clumsier of the two "Jacks" was evidently growing fatigued. He was dancing more clumsily than ever, and presently he lurched with his covering of hawthorn flowers close to Poindexter.

The American chum winked at his comrades, and putting out both hands caught hold of the framework supporting the masses of blossom.

"Hallo! nearly over that time, I guess," he exclaimed.

The Jack-in-the-Green tried to get away, but he could not pull himself away from Poindexter's grip without pulling his flowery covering to pieces.

"Are you all right?" asked Poindexter, grinning. "Shall I let you go?"

"Yes!" came a muffled voice.

"Eh! Speak plainly."

"Yes."

"Why don't you speak plainly?"

"Yes; let me go!" roared an exasperated voice.

Poindexter roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Doesn't that voice sound familiar, kids? Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe I've heard it before," said Greene.

"By jove! Yes. It sounds like Price."

"Let me go."

"My hat! It is Price."

"Will you let me go?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme go, you Yankee bounder!" roared Price, forgetting himself entirely in his exasperation. "I'll punch your beastly head for you tinned-beef beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other Jack-in-the-Green had ceased to dance. He came towards his hapless comrade. The latter endeavoured to twist himself loose. Poindexter gave him a whirl round, and pushed him against his companion, Jack.

There was a bif between the two Jacks came into violent contact. The music ceased, and the musician backed away from the toppling hawthorn erections. The crowd of juniors had yelled with laughter. The discovery of the identity of the Jacks-in-the-Green had spread, and it was a complete "give-away" for Pankhurst and Price. The unfortunate pair of the matter, for them, was that, in violent colliding their erections of frame and May blossoms had somehow become hooked together, and was impossible for them to separate. The effort to tear themselves apart made the junim shriek with merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Poindexter. "Spray a copper for an Old Firm gone bankrupt."

"Coppers, kind gentlemen, for two unfortunate copper merchants," shouted Dick Neville.

"Faith, and sure it's foightin' they are!" cried Micky Flynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pankhurst, why don't you get loose?"

"Price, you idiot, what are you hanging on to me for?"

"I'm not hanging on to you—you're hanging on to me."

"Ass!"

"Who are you calling an ass?"

"You, you asinine lunatic! Get away, you!"

"Get away yourself! It's all your fault anyway. I had my doubts all along, and now it's a regular muck-up."

"You confounded ass—"

"You silly cuckoo—"

The two Jacks-in-the-Green were getting excited. They twisted about till the frame became loose, and then they crashed together in hostile encounter.

"You ass! You've mucked it up."

"You idiot! You've spoiled the whole show!"

"Duffer—"

"Imbecile—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Combine. "Go!"

There was a crash as the two Jacks-in-the-Green rolled on the ground in a deadly embrace.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crash on the ground broke up the frame work upon which the hawthorn blossoms were twined and fastened. Pankhurst and Price disclosed in their true identity, sat up among the ruins of frames and hawthorn, and blimied at each other and at the convulsed crowd. Pankhurst shook his fist at the American chum.

"You tinned-beef rotter!" he yelled. "You're at the bottom of all this."

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Poindexter. "Here's a picture for you. Come along, kids, and let them to sort themselves out. But, I say, Panky, I hope you will invite us to the feed you are going to give with the enormous funds you have raised by this giddy entertainment. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Combine in chorus, and they marched off, leaving the Old Firm and their music merchant the centre of a yelling crowd. As Poindexter remarked, although the holiday had not come off, they had had one of the funniest entertainments Cliveden had ever seen, and it was likely to be some time before they forgot that May Day.

THE END

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