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NEW SCHOOL STORY BY CHARLES HAMILTON.

Vol. I (New Series), No. 15.



The strange procession marched on in solemn file, while the watching juniors yelled their comments freely.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

A New Tale, by the Author of "The Rivals of St. Kit's."

Mr. Bush is Aggry. BACK went Blagden, staggering helplessly—back and back, right at the doorway of the room, and then he fell backwards through the doorway.

There was a yell at the same moment from some of the juniors: "Look out, Blaggy!"

But Blaggy was in no condition to be seen.

He fell, just as Mr. Bush, the master of the Fourth, came into the doorway. The noise in the common-room, and he was just in time to catch the falling junior on his chest.

Mr. Bush did not intend to so catch him, but he could not help it. He had not seen Blagden till the Fourth-former fell on him. Blagden fell heavily, bumping upon the thin, young master with a terrific crash, and Mr. Bush went flying.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Ow! Oh!"

Then he sat down, and Blagden sat on his chest.

Mr. Bush sat where he had fallen, dazed, for some moments. His senses were swimming, and he was not on the Form-master's knees.

The Fourth-formers stared at the scene with open mouths.

It was comical enough, but no one was laughing. Mr. Bush's hands were a favourite with him, but his reputation would hardly stand there. There was trouble to come.

"By Jove!" said Lord Lovell.

"Pon my word, you know!" Oh, lovely!"

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered the good-natured Newcome.

His lordship looked at him.

"What—what did you say?"

"Shut up!"

"Why? What's that merchant?"

"That's our Form-master!"

"Oh, lovely!" ejaculated his lordship.

Mr. Bush seemed to recover himself suddenly.

He dealt Blagden a heavy box on the ear that sent him rolling off upon the floor, and staggered to his feet.

"How—how dare you!" he panted.

"Blagden, get up at once! Get up at once, I say! How dare you play such a trick on your Form-master!"

Bansford helped Blagden up.

"Blagden wasn't playing a trick, sir," said Skeat.

"Skeat! How dare you—I say, how dare you!"

"But he wasn't, sir; it was the new fellow knocked him into you," said Skeat.

"Cad!" murmured Newcome.

"Oh!" said Mr. Bush, his little narrow eyes glittering with the new boy's eyes. "The new boy, indeed! Ah, the new boy! Where is the new boy?"

"I'm here, sir," said Lord Lovell, coming forward, evidently under the impression that he was the new boy; at all events, the only new boy of any consequence.

"Good-afternoon, sir! I'm here, sir, Adam!"

Mr. Bush stared at him.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I'm Lovell, sir—follows who know

me call me Bunny. I'm sure I don't know why. What?"

"Oh, Lord Lovell!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Bush's manner underwent a change. He had been prepared to snap at the new boy, or at anybody else, but there was evidently something in the title of the new-comer that had a softening effect. Music, it is said, hath charms to soothe the savage breast; and titles have power to placate the snobbish heart.

"Ah, I am glad to welcome you to St. Wode's, Lord Lovell," said the Form-master. "I am glad—indeed, honoured: I trust your lordship has been put up any trouble by any ill-timed levity upon the part of the juniors here. If you have been compelled to knock Blagden down—"

"By Jove, sir, I haven't knocked anybody down, don't you see!"

"It was the Council-school chap, sir," piped Boston.

"Oh," said Mr. Bush. "It is as—as I imagined at first. Boy, what is your name? Penwyn, come forward! Come forward, sir, and don't stand there skulking behind the rest!"

Dick Penwyn came forward with a very red face.

"I wasn't skulking, sir," he said.

"Don't argue with me, boy! You have assaulted Blagden!"

"I have been fighting Blagden, sir."

"Ah, that is how you distinguish yourself on your first day at a respectable school, I see!" said Mr. Bush unpleasantly. "You imagine that you can bring your Council-

school manners and customs to St. Wode's, apparently."

Dick Bushed scarlet.

"The fellows here will tell you whether I began it, sir," he said.

"I do not desire any impertinence from you, Penwyn," said Mr. Bush.

"Very well, sir," said Pen quietly.

"If it is impertinent for me to defend myself, I suppose I had better say nothing."

"Hold your tongue, sir, instantly!"

Pen held his tongue; not without difficulty.

"I need not ask who was to blame in this matter," said Mr. Bush, "when I hear a loud and uproarious disturbance—I say a loud and uproarious disturbance—follow the entrance of a Council-school boy into the room, I do not need to be enlightened. I may say that it is only what I should have expected of a boy of your upbringing, Penwyn."

Dick set his teeth to keep back what he would have liked to say.

"But you will understand," pursued Mr. Bush victoriously. "I say you will understand, Penwyn, that this will not do."

"What will not do, sir?"

"This disgraceful conduct, Penwyn. Don't argue with me!"

"Very well, sir."

"You will learn that you cannot do as you please at St. Wode's; you will learn that this is not a place for low brawling."

Pen was silent.

"Do you hear me, Penwyn?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why do you not answer?"

Pen hit his lip.

He could see that whether he answered or not, he would be in the wrong with Mr. Bush. It was the story of the wolf and the lamb over again.

"This sullenness will not serve you, Penwyn," said Mr. Bush. "Now, as this is your first day at St. Wode's, and you have not had the advantage of a decent upbringing, I shall deal leniently with you. You will write out a hundred lines of Horace to-morrow."

"Shame!" murmured Newcome.

Mr. Bush glanced round quickly.

"Did any boy speak?" he demanded.

"Yes, we will. Understand me, Penwyn, if this occurs again, I shall be severe with you; I say I shall be severe," said Mr. Bush, who had the trick of repeating his words, to lend them greater emphasis.

"Yes, sir."

"Don't speak in that snivelling tone, Penwyn, or I shall increase your punishment."

And Mr. Bush, with a majestic wave of the hand, sailed out of the room.

Dick Penwyn stood silent.

He was almost dumfounded by the Form-master's injustice. To punish him, and let Blagden escape scot-free, without making the least inquiry into the merits of the case—it was astounding to poor Pen.

New Readers should turn to the last of next page.

A New and Interesting School Story for All.

THE RIVALS OF ST WODE'S.

A New School Tale by Charles Hamilton Author of The Rivals of St Kifs.



(Continued from previous page.)

"Well, I back up old Bushy-whiskers this time," Bamford remarked. "He's down on Council-school cubs, that's a cert."

He was different from themselves, and they had no inclination to attempt to bridge the gap. "But he's not looking downhearted, that new chap!" he looked downhearted to Newcome.

And he turned his back upon Pen. Pen stood uncertain how to act. He was greatly inclined to go for Blagden on this spot; but if he brought the Form-master back, there was no telling what might come of it.

Blagden looked at the Fourth-Former without replying for the moment. The question took him by surprise. After the way Blagden had acted, he had expected little kindness or generosity from the juniors of St. Wode's.

"You're jolly wet, Lovell!" he exclaimed. "Let me take you up to the dorm, and get you a change of things."

"I hope not," said Pen. "As a matter of fact, I rather like your looks," said Newcome, in his cheerful, frank way.

"What, that Council-school rotter?" "He's a better man than you are, by Jove!" said his lordship. "Yes, I'm wet! I'd like a rub down, and a change of clothes, and a dressing-gown and slippers, you see, if one of your chair-boys lend them to me."

"I expect you'll go into the empty one," said Newcome. "No. 4 is empty, owing to two fellows leaving at once. It's next door to Blaggy's." "I expect Blaggy asked you to come into his digs while he thought you were in his lordship's."

"This way, my lord," said Jex. "I'll get you a change. This way!" "Oh, how lovely! Thank you very much."

"Fancy Newcome clumping up with that cad like that!" exclaimed Corton. Dick Penwyn, a starchy Cornish lad, attending a County Council school, obtains a scholarship for St. Wode's. He arrives at the school to find he is expected to live with the juniors, but he is received with open arms, his juniors, led by

"Yes, it's rotten, isn't it?" "Oh, it's just like Newcome; he's always doing things like that!" "He can't mean to stick to him!" "I shouldn't wonder."

"The juniors burst into a laugh as Skrat started back in a great hurry. "I'm not going to have anything to say to the cad, anyway," remarked Corton.

"I'm going to speak to him, my lord," said Newcome. "I'm going to speak to him, my lord," said Newcome. "I'm going to speak to him, my lord," said Newcome.

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You'll be ragged in the Form-room tomorrow if you don't do it." "What had I better do, then?" "Well, you should speak to old Bushy."

"Pen was left in a great hurry. "I'm not going to have anything to say to the cad, anyway," remarked Corton.

"I'm going to speak to him, my lord," said Newcome. "I'm going to speak to him, my lord," said Newcome. "I'm going to speak to him, my lord," said Newcome.

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Vernon dragging the language of his eyes, and setting up in the room of his station in the garden. "The juniors followed the passage down the passage."

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FOR MY NEW READERS.

Blagden, the Fourth Form captain, meeting him at the station in the peering rain. The truth is that Blagden's school fell in love with Lord Lovell, who is expected to arrive that day, but Dick has no idea of this.

complexion on matters, and Blagden comes out in his true colours. He attempts to give Pen a licking, but the Cornish junior meets him like a rock, and sends him reeling with a terrific right-hander.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

His destination now that it seemed... he would strike... the door... he had... and I'en realised quite... it was a lot that it was... upon the peculiar performance... the Fifth were not... those blades of the... for amusement... for the doorway...

catch cold in the feet, so perhaps I'd better take them off."... Lovell looked at Jex in some surprise... he pulled his aristocratic leg... and he sat down on a box and stretched out his feet to let Jex take his boots off... Lord Lovell was evidently accustomed to having his boots taken off for him... his lordship shivered, as might have been expected... "By Jove!" he said... "There you are!" said Jex... "That's doocid kind of you, you know, but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"... Jex took the brilliant suit back to the dormitory... His lordship looked up eagerly... "By Jove," he remarked... "Never mind, if you've got the clothes, don't you see."... "Here they are."... Jex spread the clothes out on the bed... The viscount gazed at them... It was already abundantly clear that Lord Lovell possessed a nature of great simplicity... "By Jove!" he said... "There you are!" said Jex... "That's doocid kind of you, you know, but—"

THE EDITOR'S TWO COLUMNS.



When in doubt, or when you feel inclined to criticize, address: The Editor, EMPIRE LIBRARY, 23-29, Boulevard Street, London, E.C.

for one of you is bound to win the prize... If your knowledge you wish to advance... Don't buy any rubbish from France... There was a young fellow of Rye, Who once lighted a squib on the sky...

There was a young maid—a new bride... In a tight hobble-skirt from church hid... When she started to run... And the people around shrieked: "She's tied!"

Why should lots of young people feel sad... When a book of good tales can be had? I mean the EMPIRE... If they read it just once, they'd be glad.

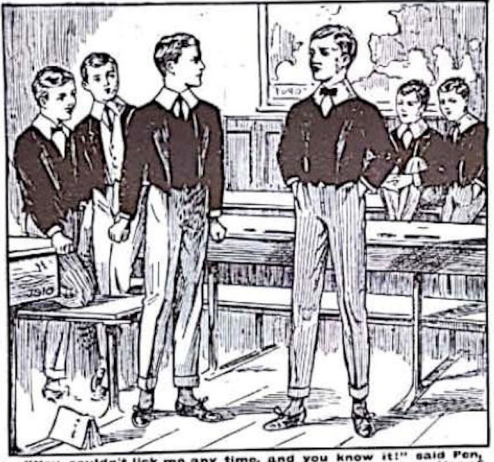
There was a young lady of Ware, Who was famed for her beautiful hair: But the last thing at night, Ere she shut out the light, It was carefully placed on a chair.

There was a young fellow called Tait, Who dined with a girl at eight-eight; But I cannot relate What that fellow called Tait, And his tele-a-tele at eight-eight.

POSTCARD EXCHANGE.

The following readers desire to exchange postcards:

- 39th LIST. J. Murray, 8, Hutton Drive, S. Gowan, Scotland, wishes to exchange postcards with readers in Africa, South America, Austria, Miss T. Morris, 19, Torrance Road, Spreydon, Christchurch, New Zealand, with South Africa. J. W. Clarke, 10, Alliance Street, Adlington, Christchurch, New Zealand, with Gt. Britain. Mr. Walker, 17, Townsend Place, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham, Gloucester, England, with Canada. E. A. Martin, 83, Colston Street, Bristol, England, with London. II. May, 50, Abington Crescent, Dalston, London, England, with New Zealand. L. Ehrlich, 30, Petherton Road, Canonbury, London, England, with India. G. S. "Homeleigh," Montgomery Street, Kozahar, Sydney, Australia, with Sheffield, England. W. J. Read, Nicholson Road, Subiaco, W. Australia, with England. M. H. Hart, 40, Mountfield Street, Brunswick, Melbourne, Australia, with London. J. Collins, 5, Sopwith Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, with South Africa, New Zealand. II. W. Finck, 213, Lechnield Port Road, Birmingham, England, with France, Canada, America, Southland. W. A. Read, 87, Eldon Street, in Sheffield, England, with Mexico, Russia, U.S.A., Texas. Miss D. B. Roberts, 30, Burven Edge, Aintree, Liverpool, England, with South Africa. F. H. D. Shaw, 21, Pelham Street, Middleborough, England, with China.



"You couldn't lick me any time, and you know it!" said Fen... scornfully. Blagdon bit his lip...

Beeton hurled the clothes in a heap into the first room he came to... "It's all right," said Jex... "Oh, lovely," said Lovell through his chattering teeth... "What are you going to give him?" asked the latter... "Ha, ha, ha!"... Jex hurried off to a box-room... "The idea of the noble viscount in the most striking of the whole collection... They were white with broad red stripes—a flaring design that would strike the eye as far as the eye could reach... "He'll have to; he's got nothing else."

"Jove!"... Jex's statement was true enough, but he did not add that the occasion was an amateur entertainment at which the Head had consented to look in for a short time... "Well, if you assure me—" said Lord Lovell haltingly... "Honour bright!" said Jex... "I saw him do it, my lord."... "Jove, you know!"... "Better luck up; you'll catch cold."... "Yes, but—but look here, be a good chap, you know, and get me some other kind of clothes, don't you see?"... Jex shook his head... "Can't be did," he replied... "You see, there's a rule at St. Wode's that—that all our clothes shall be locked up with the sergeant-at-arms while we're not using them... "Jove!" ejaculated his lordship... "So you see how it is," said Jex sympathetically... "Yes, I suppose so," assented Lord Lovell... Jex winked at the ceiling.

(More of this fun serial next Wednesday.)

"THE DARK LANTERN"—and it will open when Charles Peace was quite a boy and the choice of two ways lay before him... "The Rivals of St. Wode's," which has just started, will continue for a very long time...

THE FIRST HALF-CROWN. Out of the following batch of imitations received from S. J. Trott, A. Jackson, Dorothy Luck, T. Parritt, J. Rathbone, and L. Harrison, the first one takes the half-crown. In connection with this little competition I must say that it has proved exceedingly popular...

A Favourite with All.

COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS

A TALE OF TOM MERRY'S CHUM

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

GLANCE OVER THIS.

Ethel Cleveland is a new girl at St. Jim's school...

Ethel takes Dolores over to St. Jim's College, where Arthur D'Arcy, her cousin, is at school...

The afternoon Ethel meets D'Arcy, who tells her that he has thought of a wonderful scheme for smuggling soap into St. Freda's by sending parcels in boxes labelled "Hats," "Rags," etc.

(Lead on from here.)

Fareels for Cousin Ethel.

"DON'T know, mum," said the boy.

"Well, I suppose I must take it in!" said Mrs. Filby.

"Yes, mum."

And Mrs. Puffton's boy retired, leaving the box with Mrs. Filby.

Mrs. Filby carried it off in triumph.

"Dear me!" she said. "Now I see how Cleveland's coming up."

She had hurried in after seeing the van outside, and was ready to take the parcel. The easiest way out of the matter, she thought, was to take whatever was sent to her, and smooth the matter over quietly.

"This is for you, Miss Cleveland," said Mrs. Filby.

"Thank you," said Ethel, taking the box.

"It came by the baker's van."

"Perhaps the milliner asked them to deliver it," said Mrs. Filby, "but it is very odd."

"Well, there it is, Miss Cleveland."

"Thank you."

Cousin Ethel walked away with the parcel in her hand.

"New hats!" exclaimed Dolly Carow, as she met her friend, "Are you going over to St. Jim's again?"

"Yes, Ethel."

"I should not buy a new hat to go there," she said.

"I must have you bought it for me!"

Ethel did not reply to that question.

"Do let me see it!" exclaimed Dolly, with natural feminine curiosity to see that most entrancing object to a girl—a new hat. "Bring it into the dorm."

"I—I—"

"What colour is it?"

"You see—"

"What style?"

"You're going to show it to me, aren't you?" asked Dolly, looking at Ethel's confused face in astonishment.

"Bring it, my dear, what's the matter?"

"You see—"

"Blessed if I do!" said Dolly. "Don't you want to show me your new hat?"

"I—I—"

"New hats!" exclaimed Milly Pratt, coming up. "Who's buying new hats?"

"Ethel is; it's just come."

"Good! I suppose that means that you are rolling in money, as usual, Ethel! Could you lend me sixpence?"

Dolly Carow sniffed, but Milly elaborately took no notice of her.

"I've left my purse somewhere," said Milly. "I shall pay you when I find it. I believe I owe you a shilling from the other day, too. I will set the both together when I find my purse. You haven't seen it about, have you?"

"No!" said Ethel.

"How unfortunate! Can you lend me sixpence?"

Ethel handed over the sixpence, an action that called forth a still more unmistakable snarl from Dolly Carow.

"Do let us look at your hat!" exclaimed Milly, checking her desire to rush off to the tuckshop immediately with the sixpence. "I love new hats!"

"You see—"

"Oh, come to the dorm, and show it to us!"

Ethel, with a troubled brow, carried off the hatbox to the dormitory. She took it into her own cubicle, and Dolly and Milly followed her in, and the hatbox was set upon a chair, and Milly unfastened the string.

"What kind of hat is it?" Dolly Carow asked.

"Oh, it isn't a hat!" said Ethel desperately, at last.

Dolly stared.

"Isn't a hat?" she exclaimed.

"No."

"But it's labelled a hat."

"I can't help that."

"But what is it, then?"

"I'm not sure—jam-tarts, I think."

Dolly Carow gave quite a jump, and Milly's fingers worked faster than ever in unfastening the string.

Milly might like new hats, like other girls, but jam-tarts touched her heart more nearly.

"But how does it happen that you're gazing jam-tarts and you in a hatbox?" exclaimed Dolly Carow, in amazement. "It's never happened to me."

Ethel laughed ruefully. "It's from my cousin Arthur."

"Oh!"

"He has an absurd idea that we like dorm. feeds, the same as we have sometimes at St. Jim's, and he's smuggling these things in to me."

"My word!" said Milly. "She dragged the lid off the box. Great piles of tarts, fresh and flaky and jammy, were inside, wrapped in tissue-paper, and the smell of them was really delicious."

Milly Pratt's eyes danced.

"Oh, splendid!" she exclaimed. "I wish Arthur were my cousin! What a splendid fellow, and what lovely tarts!"

"I wish he had not sent them."

"I wish Arthur were my cousin! I said Mrs Penfold sees them, and there are more things coming."

"Do you want to get rid of them?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Then it's perfectly easy. I'll eat them for you."

"Rely on Milly," said Dolly Carow, laughing. "She will eat anything for anybody. Won't you, Milly?"

Milly did not reply. Her mouth was stopped with the first of the jam-tarts. It was surprising to see how fast her jaws could work.

"My word, though, they look very nice," said Dolly. "I will have one, if I may."

Cousin Ethel nodded.

"Certainly," she said. "Have as many as you like."

"Won't you have some yourself?"

Ethel smiled and took one. The jam-tarts were very nice, and she took another. Dolly managed four, and Milly Pratt was already at her sixth, and still going strong.

"They'd better be put away out of sight somewhere," Dolly suggested, regarding the box of tarts when she had finished. The mass of pastry in the box did not seem to be at all diminished so far.

"Yes," said Ethel. "Where can I put them?"

"Groom!"

"Dear me, Milly! Are you choking?"

"Groom!"

"You shouldn't eat so fast," said Dolly. "Milly Pratt on the back."

"There! Is that better!"

"Oh! No! Leave off! You!"

"You were choking."

"Yes, wasn't?" exclaimed Milly indignantly. "I was only trying to speak, and my mouth was full. I'll scratch you if you punch me in the back again."

"No!" don't be ungrateful, Milly."

"Groom! I was going to say, Ethel, that you needn't trouble about putting the tarts away. I'll look after them for you."

"In fact, Milly will put them away for you," said Dolly sarcastically.

"You were choking," said Milly unsuspiciously. "You leave them to me, Ethel. I'll take proper care of them."

Dolly made a sudden movement.

"Somebody's coming!"

Ethel started nervously. She hated feeling guilty, but she could not help it now. If the great consignment of tarts should be discovered in her cubicle there, would certainly be trouble.

The dormitory door was heard to open.

As all the cubicles were open at the end, one had only to walk down the dormitory to see into each one; so if the now-come came along, the three girls and the tarts could not fail to be discovered in Ethel's cubicle.

Ethel stepped quickly out of the cubicle, making a sign to Dolly to get the box out of sight.

Dolly grasped it and pushed it under the bed. But Milly Pratt's jaunty mouth and sticky fingers remained to betray them if they were seen.

A trim maid-servant had come into the dormitory. She stopped as Ethel hastily advancing towards her.

"Mrs. Filby wants to see you, miss," she said.

"Mrs. Filby?"

"There's a parcel come for you."

Ethel's heart sank.

It was evidently the second of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's consignments.

But she nodded calmly, and took her way with as tranquil a face as she could muster to the housekeeper's room.

Soap!

"MISS CLEVELAND, there is a parcel here for you," said Mrs. Filby, as Cousin Ethel came in; and there was a rather curious expression upon the housekeeper's face. "Were you expecting any soap?"

"Soap?" said Ethel.

"Is—is it here?"

"There is a large parcel for you, labelled soap," said Mrs. Filby, indicating a large package. "It weighs a great deal, and it was quite a trouble to the man to carry it in. Whatever possessed you to order such a quantity, you Miss Cleveland?"

Cousin Ethel did not reply.

She gazed at the large package. It was evidently a case wrapped on the outside with brown paper, and she judged it to contain the ginger-beer.

"Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had not done things by halves."

When the swell of St. Jim's was magnificent, and he had expended his five-vice royalty.

But what Cousin Ethel was to do with the ginger-beer she did not know.

She could see that Mrs. Filby was very curious. After a hat-box delivered in a confectioner's van, the arrival of a great consignment of soap was naturally more surprising than it would otherwise have been. And Arthur Augustus had really not been happy in his selection of labels. Soap was naturally more surprising than it would otherwise have been.

The school provides soap for the girls, and for Mrs. Filby kindly.

"Of course, you are a new girl, you might not have known."

Ethel nodded.

"But in any case, what would you want with so much soap as this?"

went on Mrs. Filby. "My dear child, there must be enough there to last the whole school for a month!"

"It was very thoughtless," said Ethel.

"Yes, indeed. Why did you order it?"

"It—it was ordered for me," said Ethel.

"Oh, a mistake, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed, very great mistake."

"Then it can be sent back," said Mrs. Filby. "But it is a mistake, it would be absurd for you to pay for a great heap of soap you do not want."

"It is already paid for," said Ethel, hastily.

"Oh, that alters the case, of course. But it will be useless to you," said Mrs. Filby. "I had better have it placed in the housekeeping stores, and Miss Penfold will allow you the value of the soap in money."

It was really the most natural suggestion to make, and it was kind and considerate of Mrs. Filby to suggest it; but it was not exactly what Ethel wanted.

She could imagine the look upon Miss Penfold's face when the boxes were opened, and instead of packets of soap, bottles of ginger-beer came into view.

At all costs the box must be got away from the housekeeper's room unopened. But how? Ethel could not even lift it from the floor.

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Filby," she began.

"Not at all, my dear child. You may need that I will speak to Miss Penfold about it, the housekeeper."

"Thank you, but—but I would rather take the box, if you don't mind," said Cousin Ethel, flushing a little.

Mrs. Filby regarded her in astonishment.

child, there must be enough there to last the whole school for a month!"

"It was very thoughtless," said Ethel.

"Yes, indeed. Why did you order it?"

"It—it was ordered for me," said Ethel.

"Oh, a mistake, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed, very great mistake."

"Then it can be sent back," said Mrs. Filby. "But it is a mistake, it would be absurd for you to pay for a great heap of soap you do not want."

"It is already paid for," said Ethel, hastily.

"Oh, that alters the case, of course. But it will be useless to you," said Mrs. Filby. "I had better have it placed in the housekeeping stores, and Miss Penfold will allow you the value of the soap in money."

It was really the most natural suggestion to make, and it was kind and considerate of Mrs. Filby to suggest it; but it was not exactly what Ethel wanted.

She could imagine the look upon Miss Penfold's face when the boxes were opened, and instead of packets of soap, bottles of ginger-beer came into view.

At all costs the box must be got away from the housekeeper's room unopened. But how? Ethel could not even lift it from the floor.

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Filby," she began.

"Not at all, my dear child. You may need that I will speak to Miss Penfold about it, the housekeeper."

"Thank you, but—but I would rather take the box, if you don't mind," said Cousin Ethel, flushing a little.

Mrs. Filby regarded her in astonishment.

"But, my dear child, the soap will be useless to you," she exclaimed.

"There must be between a quarter and a half-hundredweight of it!"

"Yes, but—"

"You had better let me use it, as I said, and Miss Penfold will return you the money for it," said Mrs. Filby.

"But I did not pay, myself."

"You can return the money to the person who sent it, of course, if you wish," said Mrs. Filby, with a smile.

Ethel felt almost cowered.

"But—but I would rather have the packet taken to my room," she said.

"My dear child—"

"I think I will better take it."

"Oh, very well," said Mrs. Filby. "It is extraordinary, but you may certainly have the packet if you like."

"Thank you so much, dear Mrs. Filby."

The school porter was called in.

The old corner looked at the package in surprise, but he was used to obeying orders without making remarks. He shouldered the box, and marched off with it, followed by Cousin Ethel, who was as content as relieved to get the thing out of the housekeeper's room without any more questions being asked.

"I'll take it, miss!"

(Continuation of this splendid story next week.)

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Grammar School Ventriloquist

A Tale of the Chums of Rylcombe Grammar School.

— By — PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

Harry Wootton Does a Little Practising.

GROO! Groo! Groo-oh! Oo-oooh! "My hat!" "Great Scott!" "Groo-oo-oo-oo-oo!" "My only bunk!" "Jumping wallabies!" "Dear me!" "Groo! Groo! Groo-oo-oh! Groo! Groo-oh! Groo-oo-oh!"

Gordon Gay looked at Jack Wootton and Tadpole looked at each other and at Gordon Gay. The hair-raising sounds were coming from Study No. 13 in the Fourth Form passage at Rylcombe Grammar School, outside the door of which the three members of the famous Co., who inhabited the study were standing gazing at each other in consternation.

"Groo! Groo-oh! Groo!" "My only Panama hat! What on earth is it?" gasped Gordon Gay, as the fearful groans and gasps and grunts continued with unabated vigour.

"Somebody suffocating, I should think," whispered Jack Wootton, looking alarmed.

"Good gracious, yes!" exclaimed Tadpole, the grunts and, incidentally, the nuisance of the Fourth Form. "I am certainly convinced that someone is in the last stages of dislocation!"

"And in our study, too!" ejaculated Gordon Gay. "My only grandmother! Just listen!" "Groo-crouch! Gargle, gargle! Groan!"

The three chums listened awestruck. The sounds were positively terrific, and it certainly seemed as though someone were suffering terrible agony inside the study.

"Groan! Groo-oh! Groan! Gargle! Here, I can't stand this any longer!" said Gordon Gay at last. "Come on!"

"Right-ho!" said Jack Wootton valiantly. "Let us enter!" said Tadpole, somewhat nervously.

"Then, here goes!" Gordon Gay gently pushed open the door, which was on the latch, and the three chums entered the study, not without some trepidation as to what fearful sight might await them there. To their intense amazement, not a soul was to be seen.

The chums gasped with astonishment, and Jack Wootton had just opened his mouth to give vent to an amazed ejaculation, when all three suddenly jumped clear into the air, as the ghastly sounds broke out again, this time nearer and louder than before.

"Groo-oh, ger-oooh! Graw! Groan! Gargle!"

Gordon Gay gazed round the little study with startled eyes. This was

too absurdly uncanny. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation. He had caught sight of a head of curly hair sunk in the depths of the one and only armchair the study boasted.

Gordon Gay knew that head of hair well. It belonged to Harry Wootton, the Australian, the youngest member of the Co., and Jack Wootton's brother.

So the fearful sounds of agony were coming from Harry!

Gordon Gay took a quick step to the armchair, and Jack was by his side in a second. Tadpole was still gazing like a fish out of water and gasping open-mouthed at the ceiling.

Then, lying back in the big chair, was Harry, with his eyes shut. He had a look being face downwards on his knee, and his face was as red as a beetroot.

Even as the juniors gazed at him in horror his mouth opened, and deep groaning sounds came from his lips. "Groo-oh! Groo— Yow! Yow!"

Harry Wootton's note suddenly changed to a shrill yell as Gordon Gay, quick as thought, seized a jam-jar full of dirty paint-water which he had laid on the table, and dashed it over the young Australian's face. At the same time Harry, with a gasp of alarm, made a dash at his brother, seized his arms, and commenced to work them madly up and down like pump-handles.

Then Harry Wootton, who had looked to his alarmed chums to be at the point of death, became suddenly very much alive.

With startled yells, he bounded up in his chair, only to be pushed back again by his alarmed brother, who continued to pump away at his arms like a steam-engine gone mad.

"Quick!" shouted Jack excitedly. "Get some more water, Taddy! Help me hold him down, Gay! He's got a fit or something! My hat!"

Harry shrieked and struggled like a lunatic. Whatever ailed him, it did not seem to have sapped his vigour. The scuffling was something terrific.

"Yow! Ouch!" spluttered Harry, the dirty paint-water running down his face in streams. "Leggo! Leggo! Lemme go, you asses! Have you gone dotty, or what! Leggo!"

"What's you that's dotty?" roared Jack excitedly. "Hold him, Gay!"

"What-ho!"

The three excited juniors—with Tadpole hovering round distractedly—heaved and struggled, till at last the armchair fell over backwards with a crash.

"Oh! Owl! Help!" groaned Harry, who was crushed nearly breathless by the combined weight of the other two falling on top of him. "Oh, you dangerous lunatics! I'm squashed! Dye!"

"Are you feeling any better now,

Harry?" inquired Jack excitedly, sitting up rubbing his head. "You better!" howled Harry. "Why, you headless chumps, do I look as if I feel better? Why, I'm—I'm half-killed!"

Gordon Gay, also sitting on the floor, looked at the indignant Harry with a peculiar expression.

"Look here, Harry—" "First I'm half-drowned, then I'm sat on by you two dangerous maniacs, and then I'm squashed to death, and then that dummy asks me if I'm better!"

And Harry looked to be on the point of exploding with indignation.

"But—but you were in a fit, or something—" began Jack doubtfully.

"Fit be blowed!" roared Harry. "It tell you—" "But that awful row you were making—" gasped Gordon Gay.

Harry Wootton snorted. "Row, dummy! What row? I was only practising!"

"Only what?" howled Harry's assailants together. "Practising!" bellowed Harry. "I was just practising throwing my voice a bit."

"Whatting?" "Throwing my voice, you—your silly asses! I was practising ventriloquism!"

Didilum tells you how to do it, and I was practising out of the school, and out of the parish, if you like, next time," remarked Jack Wootton. "Blessed if I ever heard such a ghastly, horrid row in my life!"

"Oh, rats!" "Can you do it at all, though, kid?" asked Gordon Gay curiously.

"I'd be a good whizzer if you could. We could score off Frank Monk & Co. till further orders if you could ventriloquise."

"Well, I'm not quite perfect yet," said Harry modestly. "But I jolly soon shall be. I've got the hang of it, but it wants a lot of practice, you know. I shall make a jolly good ventriloquist."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "There was a tramping of feet in the passage, and Frank Monk, the captain of the Form, and Gordon Gay's great, but friendly, rival put his head in.

"May we come in?" he asked cheerfully. "It's pax this time. I only want to have a confab about the footer match with the St. Jim's chaps."

"Right-ho, then; in you come!" said Gordon Gay heartily.

Frank Monk, followed by his chums Lane and Carboy, who were members of the Monk & Co., entered the study,



"That's rotten ventriloquism, Wootton!" said Frank Monk, with a sniff. "I should never mistake that for old Adams's creaky, grumpy voice—like filling a rusty saw!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Surprise for Frank Monk.

IT was, at least, a quarter of an hour before Harry Wootton got over his indignation, and the chums finished laughing over their little mistake. In the opinion of Gordon Gay and Jack their mistake was a very natural one; but Harry regarded them as chumps and fatheads and asses for having made it, and did not hesitate to say so.

"Anyone who knows anything about ventriloquism, would have known that I was only throwing my voice!" he growled. "Professor

leaving the door slightly open behind them.

"By the by, what was that I heard about ventriloquism as I came in?" said Frank Monk curiously, as he took a seat on the coal-locker, with his back to the door. "I couldn't help hearing, you know. One of you chaps taking it up!"

"Yes," said Harry Wootton, rather shortly. "Ha, ha! I know what amateur ventriloquists are like!" grinned Frank Monk. "As a rule, their performances wouldn't deceive an infant in arms!"

Harry Wootton turned red.

"Rats! I bet I'd jolly soon do as well as he growled, Frank Monk!" remarked again.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Harry! Have a try! You couldn't clear his row redder than ever, and—" "You dummy!" whispered Gordon Gay. "You'll let him score off you, you young ass! Ring off!"

"Rats!" howled back Harry him: "Just you watch me! I'll score off him."

There was silence for a few moments, while Frank Monk & Co. grinned broadly, and Gordon Gay & Co. looked anxious.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a sound like deep and unobtrusive voice—which appeared to come from Harry's boots:

"Hoys! Monk!" Harry was as red as a turkey-cock with his efforts, and his lips moved visibly.

There was a roar of laughter from his audience.

"Ha, ha, ha, Ho, ho, ho." Harry looked highly indignant. He had intended to throw the voice, which was supposed to be an imitator of a stout, old, English, Fourth Form-master, in the vicinity of the door. But nobody even glanced towards the door. They all looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Frank Monk. "This is too rich! I suppose that meant for Adams's voice, which was supposed to be an imitator of old Adams, and, besides, it came from you, you young set!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You—you dummy!" growled Harry. "I'll show you!"

"Hoys! Monk!" A voice came again, this time faintly from the region of the door.

"Hoys! Monk!" The juniors looked astounded. The voice was Mr. Adams's, the Fourth Form-master, in the vicinity of the door. But nobody even glanced towards the door. They all looked at him.

But Frank Monk was not going to admit it yet, after his arduous remarks.

"Rotten!" he remarked, with a sniff. "I should never mistake that for old Adams's creaky, grumpy voice—like filling a rusty saw!"

The juniors stared at Harry Wootton in amazement.

"The voice was absolutely Mr. Adams's!" Harry himself looked dazed.

"Monk! Do you hear me, Monk! Answer at once, sir!"

There was a terrific gasp from the juniors, as every eye was turned towards the door.

There, framed in the doorway, flung Frank Monk with gimlet eyes, stood Mr. Adams.

"Monk!" said Mr. Adams, in an awful voice. "I went to your study to see the imposition I gave you this morning. But I was told you were here. Without any intention of eavesdropping, I have heard you allude to your Form-master with distinct disrespect. Monk—distinct disrespect! Your remarks are so—ab—voice were rude in the extreme. I am, therefore, constrained to double your imposition, Monk, as a slight reprimand to remind you of your manners!"

Mr. Adams strode off, his gait seeming to rustle with indignation, before the unfortunate Monk had time even to stammer out an apology.

And so Harry Wootton scored, after all—mostly by luck, it is true. But, still, he scored; and Gordon Gay & Co. triumphed.

THE END.

(Another of these amusing complete tales after two Wednesday's.)

Wandering Willie's Little Wile.



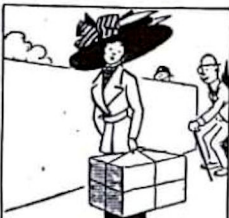
1. While having a general survey and clear up in a pantry he had come across, Wandering Willie is discovered by the cook, who informs "the missus."



2. This good soul orders the servant to put Wandering Willie in the river, and place our hero in a box for that purpose.



3. While the girl is putting her hat and jacket on, and arranging her hair, &c., &c., Tommy, the grassman, lets Wandering Willie escape.



4. When quite ready the girl widens to the river on her dandy errand, trying to look oh so grievous!



5. But when she reaches the water she finds Wandering Willie already arrived, and is waiting for the performance to start.