

NEWSAGENTS!

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THE POPULAR NEW STORY BOOK

THE EMPIRE

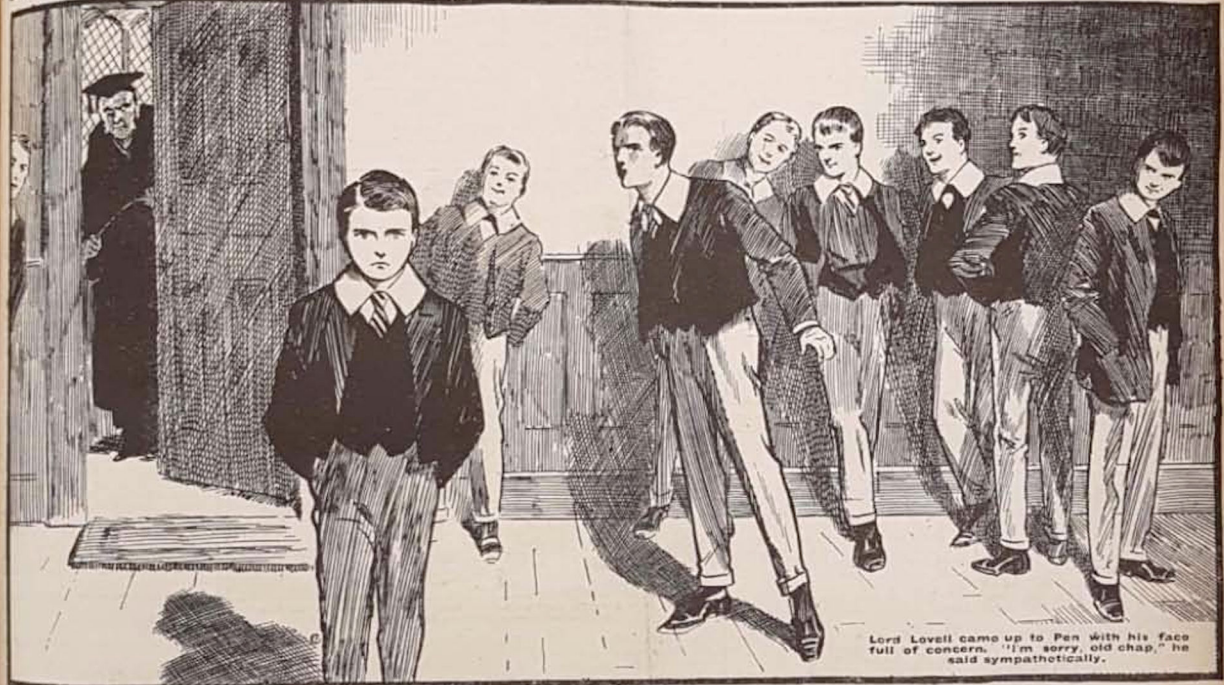
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Vol. I. No. 16.

NEW SCHOOL STORY.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

By CHARLES HAMILTON.



Lord Lovell came up to Pen with his face full of concern. "I'm sorry, old chap," he said sympathetically.

D Blagden is floored. "I'm sure," said Lovell, "I got into a fight once—I forget the chap's name. He gave me a fearful beating, and simply ruined my school. He did, by Jove! If I hadn't happened to be wearing a jacket I should have been hurt."

"Get out of the way, Penwyn!"

"Hah!"

"You Council school cad—"

"Better language, please," said Pen, with a gleam in his eyes. "If you make me hit you, Blagden, we'll get hurt."

"Let that chap alone, then!" Blagden turned a little look upon his viscount. "You coward, to stick yourself behind another fellow!"

"Hold your tongue, Blagden!"

"Coward!"

"Jove," said his lordship, "I'm not afraid of you, you know. I consider you a low cad, you know; but Penwiper is sticking up for me. If you're opening for a fight, Penwiper will fight you like—like anything. What's your name?"

"No, rather?"

"Blagden made a rush, attempting to get past Dick Penwyn."

"But the Cornish lad was ready for him. He caught the bully of the Fourth by the collar, and with a powerful smack of his fist swung him round. Blagden was swept almost off his feet."

He reeled in Pen's grip, and as the new junior released him, he went staggering away, to fall in a heap in a grass plot.

"Oh, lovely!" ejaculated Lord Lovell.

"Hurrah!" said Newcome, who had come up with a crowd of juniors. "Faith, and he's as strong as a horse intirely."

Bamford ran to pick Blagden up. The bully of the Fourth was black with rage.

"Better not go for him, Blaggy," whispered Bamford, as the burly junior pushed back his cuffs with trembling hands. "Remember yesterday—"

"Rubbish!"

Bamford shrugged his shoulders. He saw that there was no restraining Blagden. The bully of the Fourth was in too great a rage for that.

Blagden rushed straight at Dick Penwyn, with hammering fists.

Pen met him coolly.

Lord Lovell stood looking on, as if he were a disinterested spectator, sucking the head of his cane.

"My hat!" exclaimed Rake. "Look at that!"

It was worth looking at.

Pen had swept Blagden's defence aside, and put in a terrific right-hander that swept the junior off his feet, and sent him crashing to the ground.

Blagden fell upon his back, with a grunt, and lay gasping.

Pen waited for him with clenched fists ready. But Blagden did not get up. Either he could not or would not continue the conflict. Newcome patted Dick on the shoulder.

"Well hit!" he exclaimed. "But—but you'd better be careful, you know. You hit too hard for a kid—you might really hurt a chap!"

"He made me do it."

"I know, but— Well, it's your own business."

Newcome walked away whistling. Pen turned towards the house, Lord Lovell linking arms with him as he went.

"Well, done, dear boy!" said the viscount. "I'm proud of you, by Jove, you know. It was lovely! What?"

"I'm glad I was able to stick up for you," said Pen. "Look here, it means a lot to me, Lovell—"

"Bunny, then—it means a lot to me, Bunny, if you stand by me here. I want you to let me do something for you in return."

"Anything you like, old man. People are always doing things for me; I'm sure I don't know why," said Lord Lovell placidly.

Pen smiled.

"Well, I want you to let me fight your battles," he said. "You'd get a frightful hammering, if you stood up to Blagden; you're not hardened

to it as I am. I've had to fight one way or another ever since I could walk. That chap Blagden seems to be a terror among the fellows here, but there were lads in my old Council school who could have knocked him to rags in two rounds. It's nothing to me; but it would make a rotten time for you if that bullying brute got a chance to hammer you fairly. I know you're not afraid—you've shown that plainly enough for all the fellows to see. I want you to let me take the hammerings for you."

Lord Lovell laughed.

"My dear chap, I shall be delighted," he said. "You shall do it, by all means."

"Good!" said Pen.

Mr. Bush met them as they entered the house. He frowned heavily at the Cornish lad.

"I see you are keeping up your conduct in the way you began, Penwyn," he said. "I saw your hooliganism from the window of my room."

Pen blushed. If Mr. Bush had seen the affair in the quadrangle from his window, he must have seen that Blagden was taking the aggressive all the time. But no pretext seemed too mean to Mr. Bush for gratifying his spite against the boy he had so unreasonably taken a dislike to.

"I hope I was not to blame, sir," said Pen, quietly, and speaking as respectfully as he could.

It was not easy for anyone to be respectful to Mr. Bush.

"Don't answer me back, boy!" said the Form-master harshly. "I am sorry to see, Lovell, that you are associating with this boy."

"Jove!"

"He is no fit friend for you," said Mr. Bush. "It is my duty, as your Form-master, to warn you of the fact. Kindly leave him at once!"

"But, sir—"

"Kindly do as I tell you, Lovell. Although I have a great respect for your family, and a kind regard for yourself," said Mr. Bush unctuously. "I must insist in this case upon your obeying my wishes, which are for your own good. I say they are for your own good."

Lovell's hold tightened upon Pen.

"Now, Lovell, leave Penwyn at once," said Mr. Bush.

His lordship's reply was unexpected.

"Oh, rats," said Bunny. "I'm jolly well not going to do anything of the sort!"

Pen in Trouble Again.

MR. BUSH almost staggered. He was not much respected in the Fourth Form at St. Wode's, and he was not liked. Many of the fellows treated him as

New Readers should turn to the foot of next page.

PLEASE LOOK AT THE BACK PAGE.

A New and Interesting School Story for All.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S

(Continued from the previous page.)

disrespectfully as they dared. But he had certainly never been spoken to like this before by a member of his Form.

Pen was dismayed as Lovell asked the Form-master. Mr. Bush's order to Lovell to leave him had stricken Pen hard. He realised that the master would, if he could, break up the only friendship he had formed at St. Wode's, or was likely to form there.

But he had not thought of disobeying. But Lord Lovell had had a previous training. He had generally given orders, not obeyed them. There did not seem anything surprising in the spoiled darling of fortune in this speaking his mind plainly to a little thin man with wisps of hair on his head.

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Bush. "Eh?" "I said I'm sorry well not going to do anything of the sort." "You—you, Lovell!" "Yes, sir."

Pen would have dropped Lovell's arm, but the viscount would not let him. He held the Cornish lad's arm quite tight. "Let go that boy at once!" "Why?" "Because I command you to."

"What?" gasped Mr. Bush. "Do you understand that I am your Form-master, boy?" "My dear Mr. Furze—"

"What! My name is Bush!" "Oh, sorry," said Furze. "Of course, or something," said Lovell. "I'm always forgetting names, somehow. Well, Mr. Bushy—"

"Mr. Bush!" "I mean Bush. Well, Mr. Bushes, I don't think you have a right to interfere with my private friendships, don't you see," remarked Lord Lovell, with perfect coolness. "So long as I obey you in class, I think that's all, isn't that all, you chaps?" he asked, turning to a group of fellows who had gathered to look on.

They were not likely to bear witness against a Form-master. Only a school-giggle answered the viscount's appeal.

Mr. Bush's face was the colour of a well-cooked beetroot. It was really hard upon Mr. Bush, because he had to be very civil to Lord Lovell in order to gain something from the influence of the viscount's father. A word from Lovell's father meant a word from Lovell's father meant a word from a man in Mr. Bush's position. Mr. Bush was consequently ready to do to a large extent to the viscount. But there was a limit beyond which he would not go, not in public, at all events.

"Penwyn!" he snapped out. "Yes, sir," said Dick quietly. "Get away from Lovell."

Pen stepped away from his friend. "Now, look here, Mr. Thicketts!" exclaimed Lord Lovell hotly.

"Bush," shrieked the Fourth Form master. "My name is Bush-I say my name is Bush!" "Really, I do not see much difference. I don't care for a name. My friends always call me Bunmy; I'm sure I don't know why."

"Lord Lovell!" "Now, sir!" "Mr. Bush made a great effort to control his temper. Had Lovell been any other boy, the Form-master would have taken him by the collar, marched him into his study, and caned him severely.

But he did not want to follow that course with a viscount. Yet, to allow his commands to be directly neglected was impossible. Mr. Bush thought he saw the middle course, in turning the vials of his wrath upon Dick Penwyn.

"Penwyn!" he said, with a concentrated gaze of angry indignity at the Cornish lad. "I can see that you have taken advantage of Lord Lovell's simplicity of his—his innocence and inexperience—to induce him to treat his masters with disrespect," said Dick Penwyn's clear eyes met the Form-master's fearlessly.

"I have done nothing of the sort, sir," he replied quietly. "Don't dare to contradict me, boy!" "But I—"

"Silence! You have taken advantage of Lord Lovell's inexperience for your own ends. I am not myself to your object, sir, in making yourself agreeable to a rich and titled boy. It

is what I should have expected from your birth and bringing-up."

Pen turned scarlet. "Jove! That's downright unfair, you know," broke out Lovell. "It was all right, but you're not allowed to advance to Penwyn, sir—I mean, Penwiper. He warned me off, as a matter of fact, you know; but I'm a determined chap, don't you see. Penwiper's my friend, and I'm going to stick to him. What?"

"I am sorry to see that that had boy's obnoxious influence is already so strong," said Mr. Bush. "You will be punished, Penwyn, for egging on Lovell to show this impertinence to his Form-master."

"I have not done so, sir." "Go into my study!" "Very well."

"Oh, I say, Mr. Thick-lash," exclaimed Lovell, in dismay. "You're not going to cane poor old Penwiper, are you? He's a sport, you know, I say—"

"I am certainly going to cane him." "Jove, you know! I—I'd almost rather be caned myself, you know, only it's so really painful," said Lord Lovell, in great distress.

The juniors chuckled. "It's all right, Bunmy," said Pen quietly. "I can stand it." "Yes, old fellow; but—but you haven't done anything, you know." "That doesn't appear to make any difference," said Pen bitterly.

"No insolence, Penwyn!" exclaimed Mr. Bush angrily. "Go into my study at once!" Pen obeyed.

The Fourth Form master followed him in, and closed the door. He selected a cane from the table, and then stepped towards the Cornish lad. Pen's head was beating hard. He was a powerful lad, and Mr. Bush was a wisp of a man, in poor condition. Pen could have felled the mean, cowering man with a single blow of his strong fist.

He was strongly tempted to do so. Why should he be touched like this, for nothing—to gratify a cruel man's spiteful dislike? But he controlled his temper. Pen had had a hard life already, and had learned self-control.

He knew that his life was to be harder at St. Wode's than it had ever been in the old Council-school days. He knew that he would need the strength and all his wits. He could not begin by knocking down a Form-master. That would mean expulsion from the school the day after his arrival there. And yet Mr. Bush, if he had only known it, had a very narrow escape at that moment.

But he did not know it. He blinched spitefully at the handsome, quiet lad with his quiet watery eyes. "Hold out your hand, Penwyn," he said.

Pen held out his hand, and his courage, he could hardly restrain a cry as the cruel cane descended, with all the force that Mr. Bush's puny arm could put into it.

Pen held it out quietly. Three times again he felt the lashing cane, till every nerve in his body seemed to be tingling with pain. "The other hand!" Pen held out his other hand. For very shame's sake the Form-master could cano him no more. He threw down the cane, and made a gesture towards the door.

"You may go, Penwyn," he said. "I caution you to be more careful in the future." "I shall be careful, sir." "Go," said the Form-master. Pen went quietly.

A crowd of juniors were in the passage, waiting for him to come out. They were curious to see how the Council-school brawler had taken his punishment. They saw nothing in Pen's face to indicate that he was hurt save a slight tightening of the muscles of his face full of kind concern.

"I'm sorry, old chap," he said. Pen tried to smile a little. "It's all right," he said bravely. "I say, but you are a brick, you know," said Bunmy. "You're just immensely, you know. You don't feel I've wanted all my life, don't you see. What?"

Bunmy scents a mystery. "I WONDER how young Council-School will shape in the Fourth school," Bamford remarked to Blagden, when the Fourth Form came out after breakfast—a meal that was generally alluded to as breaker by the St. Wode's fellows. Blagden sniffed.

"Frightful dancer, of course," he said. "I don't see why," remarked Newcome. "He must have mugged up a lot of things to get the scholarship." "I don't see; but I shouldn't be surprised if he gets put at the top of the class, all the same," said Newcome.

"Top of the class! A Council-school brawler!" "He's not half such a brawler as you are," said Newcome, in disgust, "and go easy on the Council-school, Blaggy. Who would you have gone for your governor had been poor?" "My governor isn't poor," said Blagden lofly.

"As a matter of fact, I believe the

at the top of any class of which Mr. Bush was master. When the Fourth Form assembled for lessons, the Form-master picked out Pen at first for special attention, but not in a kindly spirit. It was clear to the whole class that he was trying to catch Pen tripping, and so strong was the prejudice against the Council-school lad that most of the Fourth were inclined to approve of old Bushy's conduct for once.

But Mr. Bush did not succeed in his amiable intentions. Pen soon showed that he was quite in form, as much with his work as he had been with his fists.

He construed better than any other fellow in the class, with the exception of Newcome, and perhaps Blagden. Mr. Bush listened to him in surprise and disappointment.

It was well known in the Fourth that Mr. Bush was a little weak in the knees himself, and when he slacked off on the new boy some of the fellows suspected that he had been in danger of getting out of his depth.

That one experience was sufficient to fill the measure of Pen's scorn for his master. He knew now that, besides being hard and unjust, Mr. Bush was a pretender. He certainly knew enough to fill his position, but he was probably never looked at a book out of the classroom. That was not the kind of master Pen could respect.

Pen was surprised to see the difference between Mr. Bush's treatment of

"You who deliberately decreased what you know to be the rules."

Pen was silent. It was utterly fair of Mr. Bush to put it like that. A great many fellows who had been getting lines, but who were accused of deliberately decreasing what they knew to be the rules. They were simply given the lines.

"This is another instance of the dishonesty you seem to be determined to have in your own self-interest, Penwyn."

It was worse than useless to argue with Mr. Bush—Pen realised that. He tried to take the bad temper as an injustice of the kind master as usual would take had or any something to be unpleasant that couldn't be proved.

"You say that you seem to be determined to show disrespect to the laws and customs of this school," said Mr. Bush angrily. "I do not see any particular objection to my maintaining my private relations."

"Do you wish me to speak, sir?" "I do not wish you to speak, sir. You are quite mistaken. Penwyn, in imagining that you can that you have been accustomed to your previous school."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Blagden. He did not know how to get up to see that that boy's attitude in position in the Form," said Mr. Bush. "You must be more careful, Penwyn. The brutal customs of your school are not to be continued at St. Wode's."

"I have not been accustomed to any brutal customs, sir." "Don't be impertinent, Penwyn. You will take fifty lines for impudence and fifty for talking in class."

"Yes, sir," said Pen quietly. "And don't sit there looking like a snoring dog, and in the meantime I was aware that it was something, sir."

"You are aware of it now, seeing that I have told you. When you are among gentlemen, Penwyn, you should try to imitate their manner. It is a great opportunity for a boy of your extraction."

Pen's heart was bursting with rage. The gross unfairness of the matter upon him would have enraged a calmer-tempered lad. But he knew that if he replied to Mr. Bush in bad matters would be worse. To reply to the lordly, arrogant form-master was an almost unheard-of proceeding, and for all Pen knew the Hard matter he just as unfair and had to the scholarship itself, and in the Fourth room Mr. Bush was master of all he surveyed.

The greatest virtues he had to that man, vain man, dressed in a brief authority, plays a far more tricks before a high Heaven as mine the angels weep. Mr. Bush was dressed in a little brief authority, and being a very small-minded man, was naturally proceeding to make the mischief worse.

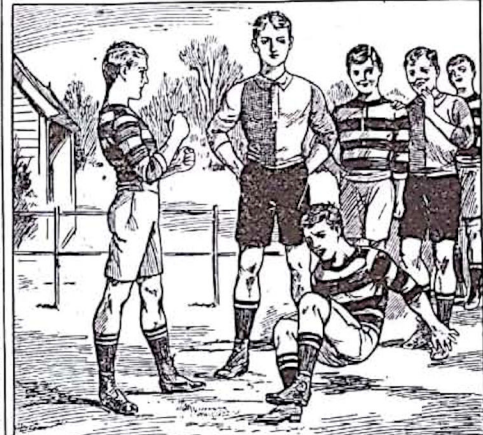
It was useless to reply, and useless to complain. He could only grin and bear it. For how long was to be continued to bear this mean and petty persecution?

Glad enough was Pen when the class was dismissed. It was a pleasure to get away from Mr. Bush's spiteful face and voice. Lord Lovell slipped his arm through Pen's as they went out into the passage. The little viscount was very sympathetic.

"Mr. Thicketts—I mean Blagden—is awfully down on you, old chap," he remarked. "What have you been doing to him?" "His eyes gleamed.

"Nothing! I'd like to do more than that, though! I wish he were here with me in Cornwall, and I could give him just one left hander!" "Oh, lovely!" he said. "I'd have nothing you do anything at all to him."

"What that I know of."



Pen put in a terrific right-hander that swept Blagden off his feet and sent him crashing to the ground.

chaps get a better education there," said Newcome, with a grin. "Oh, don't be an ass!" "It's a fact. When they leave, they're able to earn their living, and they have to pay a few many of us will be able to do that when we leave."

"I shall never have to, for one." "Well, that's all luck, and nothing to be proud of." "I suppose Newcome's got some relations in the workhouse himself, stand up for 'em in this way!" remarked Blagden with a sneer.

"No, I haven't," said Newcome cheerfully. "We may all come to it, though, you know." "What rot!"

"I don't know that that's rot. Things are getting harder every year for the unemployable classes," said Newcome imperturbably; "and we're unemployable, if anybody ever was."

One thing was pretty certain, and that was that the new boy, whatever his abilities, would not be placed

Pen and his treatment of the viscount. Lord Lovell's construing was a come remarked in a whisper to Rake. It would have made the Third Form smile. But it did not make Mr. Bush angry. He would help out the stumpling viscount with the greatest willingness. Lord Lovell came through the lesson without a word of blame or reproof. But if he had happened to be Dick Penwyn, Mr. Bush would have had many excellent openings for his cruel tongue and for the use of his pointer.

Lenient as Mr. Bush was with him, the viscount sat down, looking quite tired. Lord Lovell was evidently not built for brain work.

Pen glanced at him with a smile, and Lovell leaved over to speak. "Horrid bore, this, ain't it, Pen?" he remarked.

The viscount forgot to lower his voice—he was not yet accustomed to the discipline of the Form-room. "Yes," said Pen. "Quiet, though."

Mr. Bush swung round. "Yes, you were talking, Penwyn." "I spoke, sir."

"Indeed! Are you not aware that speaking is against the rules in the class-room during lessons, Penwyn?" "Yes, sir."

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE.

Following Lord Lovell. On discovering their mistake, Blagden & Co. become bitter enemies of both the new juniors, who chum up together. Blagden challenges Lovell to a fight, but Penwyn interferes.

"I want you to leave this chap to me, Bunmy," he says—"Bunmy" being Lord Lovell's nickname. (Now go on with the story)

NOVEL TALE FOR ALL

COUSIN ETHEL'S
SCHOOL DAYS.
A tale of
TOM MERRY'S CHUM
by
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.
Ethel Craven, of St. Freda's, is
sent to school at receiving a success-
ful parcel from her cousin,
Tom Merry, containing forbidden
articles, disguised under innocent
names, such as "Soap," or "Toilet
brush." Miss Penfold, the principal,
sees the deception, and Ethel's
uncomfortable quarters of an hour,
during which she meets her friend
Dolores. The latter hands her a note
addressed to her in the garden.
"Dear Ethel—As you were by the
gate—Arrata," reads Ethel by
the gate.
"What fun!" exclaims Dolores.
(What fun from here.)

D'Arcy is Surprised.
MISS PENFOLD would be
angry if she knew!" said
Ethel.
"Whether Miss Penfold!"
said Dolores recklessly.
Ethel looked really shocked, as she
said:
"Oh, Dolores!"
"Oh, it's fun!" said the Spanish
girl impatiently. "I'm tired of
going exactly as I'm told, and saying
to Miss Penfold, and 'No, Miss
Penfold, I won't!'"
"My dear Dolores—"
Dolores paid a pretty little hand
to Ethel's mouth.
"No, I won't be lectured this
time," she exclaimed. "Let us
go and see Arthur. I am dying to
see somebody."
"But—"
"Take me with you, Ethel. I'm
sure to extinction."
"Oh, very well."
Ethel's tone was not so gracious
as usual. Dolores did not appear
to notice it.

The two girls made their way to
the side gate, a pattern that
led, as a rule, only by the mis-
takes of Miss Penfold. At the
gate was half-hidden by the
masses of ivy that grew on the walls.
The gate was not barred, and it was
easy to see over. But as the girls
were close to it, the sound of their
steps probably reached the ears
of someone waiting on the other side,
and a pair of hands appeared between
the bushes on the top of the gate,
and a face rose into view, sur-
rounded by a silk hat.
It was the face of the swell of St.
Jim's.

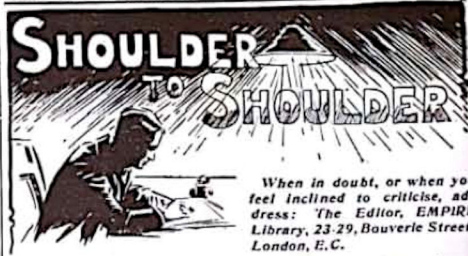
"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.
He let go with his right hand to
touch his hat, but his left did not
move. He was equal to the strain of sup-
porting himself, for he suddenly
disappeared.
Dolores laughed softly.
In a few moments, however, the
bell was rung on the top of the
gate again, and Arthur Augustus
popped over with a flushed face.
"I'm glad to see you!" he ex-
claimed. "And you, too, Miss
Penfold. You find either of my
notes?"
"Either!" exclaimed Ethel.
"Yes, wathiah!"
"I found one," said Dolores.
"You did not throw over any
of them?"
"I explained, Ethel, in dismisy."
Arthur Augustus nodded.
"Yes, wathiah!" You see, I
have over one, and I wanted a bit,
I mean to give over the other in a
week's place. Then I waited here,
and I didn't come soon, I was going
to give over another.
"Really, Arthur, you silly fellow!"
exclaimed Ethel.
"Yes, and it may fall into my Form-
mistress's hands!" Ethel exclaimed
fiercely.
"Bai Jove!" she fell.
"You know," noval thought of
D'Arcy.
"You would not?" agreed Dolores.
"I'm afraid so," said Dolores.
"Miss Penfold has discovered the
notes you sent?"
"Great Scott!"
"Ethel has had a lecture,
and she's wathiah!"
"Bai Jove!" Ethel's wathiah
was all right," said Ethel.
"She told was very kind. She
said that it was a ridiculous
idea of mine to blame."
"Yes, indeed!"
"I am very angry with you, Arthur!"

You must never, never do such a
thing again," Cousin Ethel exclaimed.
"But, my dear gal—"
"Hush!" exclaimed Dolores, sud-
denly holding up her hand.
"Really, Miss Penfold!"
"Hush! Someone is coming!"
"Bai Jove!"
There were footsteps behind the
shrubbery near the gate. Arthur
Augustus dropped out of sight in a
moment, and Cousin Ethel and
Dolores turned to face the new-comer.

Caught!
ENID CRAVEN came down the
garden path, with a keen
suspicious look upon her face.
She glanced inquiringly at
Cousin Ethel.
Dolores was perfectly cool, and
showed no sign of being disturbed in
any way, but there was a blush on
her cheeks. She lifted her hand to
her forehead, as if to brush away a
suspicion of having seen a secret and
making concealments.
"But there was no help for it now."
Enid Craven halted.
"I thought I heard someone talking
here," she said.
"We were talking," said Dolores.
"Wasn't there anybody else?"
asked Enid.
"Cousin Ethel was silent."
"Why should you think there was
anybody else?" asked Dolores coldly.
"My narrow eyes glared."
"I believe there was!" she ex-
claimed.
"To that the only reply of Dolores
was a laugh of the shoulders."
"I believe I heard a boy's voice!"
said Enid.
"No reply."
"What do you tell me?"
"Silence."
"Miss Penfold would have some-
thing to say if she knew that you were
meeting boys in secret, Ethel."
"How dare you say that?" she ex-
claimed.
"Isn't it true?"
"You have heard upon us!" said
Dolores contemptuously. "Then you
know that there is no harm in what
Ethel is doing."
"I know there is a boy about here
with a comb and kerchief, and placed it
on his head."
"Then he smiled at Ethel in a re-
assuring way."
"It's all right, I assure you!"
"Heard Arthur—"
"Really, Ethel—"
"You foolish, foolish fellow! There
will be trouble at once if Miss
Penfold could find you in the
grounds—"
"But I am going to explain—"
"You are going to do nothing of
the kind," exclaimed Ethel, while
Dolores laughed. "It will only cause
more trouble."
"Really, Ethel—"
"You must go away at once!"
"If Ethel," exclaimed Dolores,
"catching Ethel's arm." "Here they
come!"
"Bai Jove!"
Cousin Ethel pushed Arthur
Augustus into the shrubbery, where a
great bush of laurel hid him from
sight.
"There is no one here!" she whispered
breathlessly.
"Ethel did not wait for Arthur
Augustus D'Arcy's "but," and
Dolores, and into the shrubbery on
the other side.
A few moments later Miss Tyrrell
and Enid Craven came down to the
gate. Miss Tyrrell's face wore an
annoyed expression.
It was quite easy to see that she
did not feel pleased at Enid's con-
duct in the shrubbery, but she
was so kind, and she had been so
kind to look into the matter. She stopped
near the gate, and glanced round.
"There is no one here!" she ex-
claimed.
"There was a few minutes ago,
Miss Tyrrell." Enid said tartly. "I
suppose they have gone. There was
a boy talking over the gate—one of
the St. Jim's boys."
"Are you quite sure?"
"Miss Tyrrell's tone implied a bur-
king doubt of Enid Craven's veracity,
and Enid felt it, and turned red with
anger.
"Yes, I am quite sure."
"Miss Tyrrell looked over the gate.
She was tall enough to see over it.
There was no one in sight.
"There is no one here now, Enid."
"Then he is gone?"
"Yes, Miss Tyrrell. I thought it
my duty to tell you," said Enid. "I
know how wrong it is to receive
notes from boys outside the school."
(Another instance of this splendid school
story again next week.)

"You must go now, Arthur," said
Ethel hurriedly. "Enid will tell about
this, and perhaps my Form-mistress
will come here."
"Bai Jove, that would be wathiah!"
"I'm away at once. I am very
much obliged to you for your good
intentions, Arthur, but I must see you
never, never to do anything of the
sort again."
"Really, Ethel—"
"And never do run away!"
"But—"
"Lose no time, Arthur!"
The swell of St. Jim's shook his
head decidedly.
"You are quite wrong, dear gal!
You think that that young person
will tell your Form-mistress about
your meeting me here?"
"She will contrive to let Miss
Tyrrell know, at all events."
"Bai Jove! I should wait her, then!
We always wait for tales at St. Jim's."
"Yes; but go now."
"There's no how, wathiah!"
"Yes, yes, yes! There is a hurry!
Do go!"
"Not at all! You see, if your
Form-mistress questions you, you will
be in a dreadful awkward position. I had
better tell her to speak up for you."
"You?"
"Yes, wathiah! I shall have to ex-
plain to Miss Tyrrell, you know."
"Assure you that I am quite
wight, dear gal! You can always
trust a fellow of tact and judgment,
you know."
"My dear Arthur—"
"It's all right! I'm comin' in!"
"And the swell of St. Jim's swung
himself over the gate with great
agility.
Ethel uttered a little cry of dismay.
She was far from sharing D'Arcy's
own unbounded faith in his tact and
judgment, and she was more than
afraid that his proposed explanation
to the junior mistress of St. Freda's
would only make matters worse.
But it was too late to stop him now.
Arthur Augustus was in the garden.
His silk hat had rolled on the ground,
but the swell of St. Jim's recovered it,
and brushed it carefully with a
corner of his kerchief, and placed it
on his head.
Then he smiled at Ethel in a re-
assuring way.

THE EDITOR'S TWO COLUMNS.



WHAT DO YOU THINK
of the principal and new feature in
this issue, or, in other words,
WHAT DO YOU THINK
of our back page?

I should very much like to have
your candid opinion; and if you can
tell me that the pranks of the Bunsby
Boys and Mike's Moke have pleased
you, and caused a laugh that you have
been able to share with a chum, then
I shall feel encouraged to continue in
the same way, and even perhaps give
you a little more of the same thing.

PICTURES.
I know, are very attractive, and if
you like them, please drop me a
postcard.

NOW OUR STORIES.
Because we have something new,
we must not desert our old friends,
"Pantler Gray," "The Rivals of
St. Wode's," "The Dark Lantern,"
"Cousin Ethel," and "Two Little
Wails," and I must tell that, as, in
this issue, you will find again next
Wednesday the usual good and in-
teresting instalments of our serial
stories, and the usual full-of-incident
complete tales.

THIS WEEK
Jack J. Allen takes the two-and-
sixpence for the following letter and
rhyme:

London, N.W.
Dear Editor—"A curly-haired boy
sat on the table in the common-room
at the Rylecombe Grammar School.
"I am thinking of starting a proper
theatrical society," he said. "You're
what?" said Frank Monk. "That is,
I think, almost word for word of the
first number you issued of the famous
"yes, famous—Ernie, I can't tell
you the pleasure I derive from perus-
ing your faultless choice of good
writers' best efforts—what? I am
personally sorry that 'Rivals of St.
Wode's' has finished. I thought that
an absolutely tiptop unbeatable yarn,
but Mr. Charles Hamilton has, in-
deed, surpassed himself in the
"Rivals of St. Wode's."
You asked for a perfectly candid,
critical letter on your stories. It is
like a race, "Cousin Ethel" and
"St. Wode's" are almost dead first.

KNOW BETTER.



"Why don't you stop into your
hatters and get that hat
ironed?"
"Not me, Ma might want me
to settle his bill!"

I have read the "Gem" Library
long before it was enlarged to one
penny, so that makes "Cousin
Ethel" seem none familiar. I think
Mr. Martin Clifford is in the front
rank with A. S. Hardy, Charles
Hamilton, S. Clarke Hook, R. M.
Ballantyne, and a desperately fond
of detective yarns, but I always read
Mr. Jack Lancaster's weekly.
When you start "The Dark
Lantern," please do not, under any
circumstances, drop "Cousin Ethel."
It was that story that formed a solid
foundation for the enlargement.
You may not have been a reader, but I
did not read an advert, enlightening
me. It will have to be a top-up
twist "Two Little Wails" and "In
the Land of Illah." Sign glad
to hear about Gay and Monk in it.

When in doubt, or when you
feel inclined to criticise, ad-
dress: **The Editor, EMPIRE
Library, 23-29, Bouverie Street,
London, E.C.**

I haven't got any more time to
spare at present, so, hoping to have a
sports year in your pages soon, I
remain, Your true reader,
JACK J. ALLEN.

Two faults: Too small. It ought to
be a penny.
Too long to wait. It ought to be a
bi-weekly.

Why is the EMPIRE like an acre
plane?
'Cos it's above all.

HEAVY AND A BIT THICK.



"No," said the gent in the bald
head, "I ain't much of a singer,
but I might ought to hear my
brother!"
"Is he much?"
"No, but his voice is so heavy
that it makes him bowlegged to
carry it!"

To a football match I once did go,
It did not rain, nor did it snow,
But the fog was thick, I couldn't see,
But I had the Empire long with me.
I got home just in time for tea,
Said they: "How much football did
you see?"
"I saw none, though I had to go,
So I took my Empire long with me."
The plan is good, to ask, I own,
Especially if you go alone,
A friend you'll have, firm, good and
true,
If you only take that book with you.
JACK J. ALLEN.

J. J. Allen has my compliments,
but I should advise him not to carry
his paj-making too far in public; but
I dare say J. J. A. can look after
himself.

LIMERICKS.
For a wonder, the limericks and
jokes sent us week are scarcely
up to the mark, and I must remind
you that there is a prize of 2s. 6d. for
the best one sent in. By the way,
you will find a note over the
"Molly" set of pictures on the back
page. If you like the idea, I may be
able to start a simple little picture-
collection competition. Please drop
me a postcard.

THE EDITOR.

POSTCARD EXCHANGE.
The following readers desire to ex-
change postcards:

42nd LIST.

- J. White, care of Blair Bros.,
Morven, South Canterbury, New
Zealand; desires to exchange
postcards with readers in France.
- W. N. Middlecott, 101, Durlston
Road, Upper Clapton, London,
England, with Canada; Aus-
tralia; New York, U.S.A.;
United Kingdom.
- B. Gard, 70, Campbell Road, Fin-
bury Park, London, England, with
A. Barry, N.S.W.
- H. A. Haskins, 13, Collyhurst Street,
Collyhurst, Manchester, England,
with Japan; Wales.
- W. Lutins, South Coler, Bedale,
York, England, with Singapore;
U.S.A.; Australia.
- W. E. W. Dora Road, Small Heath,
Birmingham, England, with
British West Africa; New York,
U.S.A.; Ceylon.

THE DARK LANTERN

(Continued).
too much. Snatching up his cap, which at that moment came to light, he sprang to his feet, and found himself facing Milo, in his war-paint. The strong man had forgotten the chalked handscrip, and this to give his hands a firm grip, and he had brought him back.

Milo was a lanky bully, ever six feet high, enormously strong, but fast to be called well-proportioned. Charlie Face stared contemptuously at the giant, and there must have been a look in his deep-set eyes which was puzzling. Milo, who was about to burst into a torrent of abuse, stopped short.
"Say that again—call me a thief!" said Charlie in a low, grating voice.
"Don't you cheek me," blustered

the giant, "or I'll dust your jacket! A sound hiding'll do you a power of good."
"Out of the way! I've no time to waste over your sneaking!" Milo breathed hard.
"I've got a couple of minutes before my turn comes on, and a little exercise'll put me into form. Come here, you monkey!"
Milo roared this out in a voice like a megaphone. He had in his

time seen many a poor, frightened lad creep to him, cowed into obedience, and he expected Charlie Face to do the same.
What he saw Charlie do amazed and puzzled him.
"At once," Charlie arched his body slightly, bent forward, his eyes glowed like live coals, and the strength he had been accumulating in his contracted muscles was suddenly put into a marvellous flying leap, and into the

torow with which his head—had been driven even at the risk of throwing his stomach into Milo's arms, he was like the stroke of a lightning bolt. A loud "Dun!" of a hammer on a nail, no longer and no more. Down he went, no longer and no more. He had struck with his feet, Charlie Face had gone.
(Another long instalment of this thrilling story.)

A Capital Complete Tale.



A TALE OF
Gordon Gay & Co.
by
PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

GORDON GAY and his two study chums Jack and Harry Wootton, came striding along the fine red-brick building of Rylcombo Grammar School they each gave a gasp of relief.

"Is his name Gargo?" simpered the old lady, with a giggle. "Oh, no, my dear boy's name is Lucas. Gargo? Well, I never! He, he, he!"
"My only fat aunt!" muttered Harry Wootton. "This is awful!"
Gordon Gay cleared his throat.
"I—I'm sorry, ma'am!" he said.
"But I did not ask whether his name was Gargo, I said—"
"Eh?"
"I say I did not—"
The frock-coated gentleman stepped forward, clutching the woody-looking youth at his side by the hand.

and long. His tie was out of all proportion to his size, and, in fact, Taddy looked "all the artist." As he caught sight of his study chums, he blinked in amazement at the strange trio Gordon Gay & Co. were escorting.
"Hallo, Gay!" said Tadpole. "I've been hunting all over the place for you. Wootton asked me to be certain to have tea ready to-night past four, and it is now nearly ten-to-five. I had to hurry like anything to finish that picture which—"
"Dix up, dunnny!" interrupted Gay. "We can't help being late, and we can't have tea yet, because we've promised to show these people"—and the three straight-stirred visitors who were peering at the papers on the school's notice-board—"over the school."

"What a shady-looking character to be sure! He—"
"Really, madam!" interrupted Taddy, blinking indignantly.
"I say he doesn't even look honest," continued the strange old lady. "I'm sure my darling here would never make a companion of such a shady-looking, ink-stained, laddy-dressed, long-haired, half-dart—"
"Really, madam!"
"I say half-dart, thick-thumbed, thin—"
"Really, madam!"
"Oh-h!" And Mrs. Hall-Basket gave a shiver.
Gordon Gay & Co. were grinning in spite of the unwarranted attack on their study chum's appearance; but Gordon Gay came to Horace Tadpole's rescue at last.
"I think we had better go up and

that he would have to go through with things now, so with a curt quest to the three visitors that they should follow him, he led them down to the school.
"Oh, my dear lad!" said the old lady, as Gordon Gay closed the door. "I'm sure my darling here will be coming in here if we decide to let him join the school!"
"I'm sure, ma'am," said Mr. Hall-Basket. "I shall drawled Mr. Hall-Basket. "And what a lovely young boy! mamma? I feel so lumpy!"
Gay yawned, "pie," muttered Gordon said: "Well, let us have a tea at once. Will you please sit down?"
Gordon Gay waited until the three visitors were seated, and then passed the eatables round, and then passed could hardly eat with three extra people at the same table. In fact, the Hall-Basket family made the good things disappear like magic. In a space of an hour's time every morsel of food had gone, and, wiping his perspiring forehead with his handkerchief, Gordon Gay suggested that they should now see over the school.

"At last!" exclaimed Gordon Gay. "Thank goodness," said Wootton I; and, after a second's pause, Wootton minor, with a broad grin on his face, ejacured:
"Ho-jolly ray!"
"I reckon we've done that journey from the village in about record."
"Hallo!" finished Gordon Gay, in astonishment. "What on earth are those people glaring at?"
As the three juniors approached the big iron gates they stared in no little amusement at the three strange personalities who were standing in the middle of the lane regarding the school building with obvious interest.

"My wife is deaf, my dear boy," he explained—very deaf, I might say exceptionally deaf at times. Do not shout, however, too loudly; but speak very distinctly."
"Y-yes, sir," said Gordon Gay. "Perhaps it would be better, if you explained how I can help you."
"Thank you, my lad," replied the man. "My name is Mr. Hall-Basket, and we wish to place our dear Lucas in a nice, comfortable school which is free from damp, and where there is no fighting!"
"Ha, ha!—er— mean yes, sir!" spluttered Gordon Gay.
"We have been regarding this beautiful red-brick edifice for some considerable time, and I wonder if you could be so good as to let us have a glimpse at the inside?"
"I am sure the dear, sweet boy will be glad to do so," said Gordon Gay. "We will show you over if you like, sir. Would you prefer me to take you direct to the Head?"
"The Head isn't in, fat—er—I mean oh no, no, no, no, I should say, my dear lad," replied the strange, frock-coated gentleman. "Just let us have a glimpse inside, and then perhaps it will be disposed to leave dear Lucas here, we will crave an interview with your head-master."

"I—I—er, that is—we can give her something to do if you like, sir," said Gordon Gay, after a pause. "If you'll come along to Study 13, we have tea with us, we—we shall feel highly honored."
"Mr. Hall-Basket stopped groaning, and once more beamed on Gordon Gay.
"What a sweet boy you are!" she said. "Such a much nicer face than those companions of yours. Why, gracious me, who ever's this?" And she pointed her finger derisively at

have tea now," he suggested. "It will be quite dark soon, and you will not be able to see the school to advantage."
"Quite right, my dear lad," replied the old lady—"quite right! But I cannot sit down to the same table as your three extraordinary companions. Of course, they'll not mind waiting outside, will they?"
Harry Wootton glared; but Frank Wootton took the cue from Gordon Gay, and with a pleasant smile said that he and his brother and Tadpole would not mind absenting themselves.
"Come on, kids!" he whispered hurriedly. "We'll clear out and leave Gay to these freaks!"
The next moment Gordon Gay was left alone with Mr. and Mrs. Hall-Basket and son. The latter blinked stupidly through his big blue spectacles in the direction of the two Woottons and Tadpole.
"I'm glad those nasty boys have gone, papa!" he drawled. "I didn't like their faces. They had nasty, ugly, unkind faces, didn't they, papa?"
"Yes, my boy," sniggered Mr. Hall-Basket. "Now, what about tea?"
Gordon Gay frowned, but he saw

There was much grumbling of teeth in Study 13 when Gordon Gay & Co returned to find their school absoic deserted, and the famous juniors might never have been seen that they had been harassed if they had not seen the lastly-seated noise pinned to the table, which read:
"SOLD AGAIN!"
"Signed,
"FRANK MONK (alias Mrs. Hall-Basket)."
"CARROY (alias 'Darling' Lucas)."
"LANSO (alias Mr. Hall-Basket)."
THE END.
(An amusing, extra-long tale of the lives of Rylcombo Grammar School, with every chapter entitled "Gordon Gay & Co. Prosper Howard. Order your EMPIRE advance. Price One Halfpenny.)



As the sound of Gordon Gay's footsteps died away down the corridor an extraordinary change came over the Hall-Basket family.

"It looks like a new kid with his ma and pa!"
"What a freak!" muttered Harry Wootton. "Presumably a leetroot that has got fossilised by—"
"Good-afternoon, my boys!" interrupted the old lady, breaking away from the affectionate clutches of the frock-coated gentleman and the Eton-suited boy, and intercepting Gordon Gay & Co, as they reached the gates.
The three juniors raised their caps respectfully.
"Good-afternoon, ma'am!" replied Gordon Gay. "Can I help you in—"
"Yes, yes—I am sure you can, my sweet boy!" interrupted the old lady effusively. "I am sure you can. I was only just telling dear Lucas that we had better wait for a few moments."

Gordon Gay stared somewhat hard at the three strangers for a moment or two, and his close scrutiny seemed to put the worthy Mr. and Mrs. Hall-Basket into a nervous flutter.
"Will you come this way, sir?" said Gordon Gay at last; and the four and three juniors led the way through the handsome iron gates of Rylcombo Grammar School.

"But tea's all ready, Gay!" piped Taddy. "There's a jolly good feed, and I've cooked the kippers, and made the toast, and opened the sardine-tin—"
"Oh-h!" Mrs. Hall-Basket gave vent to a deep groan, and Horace Tadpole stopped short in his explanation.
"My lad!" muttered Gordon Gay.
"What's that?"
"It's—its my wife!" said Mr. Hall-Basket. "She's come over faint. Have you a little tea or something to give her, my lad?"
"Oh-h-h!" groaned the old lady again, and the four juniors looked at her in alarm.
"I—I—er, that is—we can give her something to do if you like, sir," said Gordon Gay, after a pause. "If you'll come along to Study 13, we have tea with us, we—we shall feel highly honored."
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CHAPTER 2.

Sold Again!

GORDON GAY & Co. were just entering the main entrance when the general nuisance, and the fourth member of Study 13, came striding along the front lawn.
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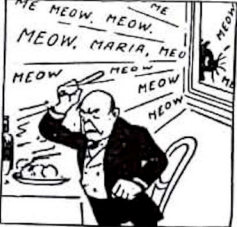
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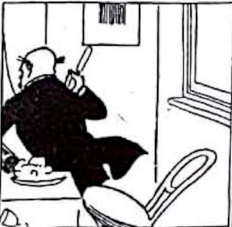
Wily Willie Wanders to a New Home and Catches His Dinner.



1. While basking in the sunshine upon a window sill Willie's quick eye, noticing a nice hot dinner about to be



2. Attacked, he decides to make a bid for it. So he starts singing a popular song, in his own unspeakable style.



3. He hasn't rendered more than a couple of bars, however, before the door, wishing Willie would desist—



4. Decides to stop the row. Rushing outside, he affords Willie the opportunity he desires—



5. After which our hero has a little chat with the inner cat satisfied!