

6 GRAND FREE GIFTS Inside!

# The MODERN BOY

2<sup>d</sup>

EVERY SATURDAY  
WEEK ENDING  
OCT. 31<sup>st</sup> 1936  
N9452 VOL18



*All These Magnificent*  
**GIFTS**

ALBUM, ATLAS  
4 COLOURED  
CARDS

**FREE**

INSIDE

Scotland Yard was beaten. Elusive as a shadow, the Wanted Man left no clue—until  
young Len Lex spotted one and straightway blossomed into—

# The SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE



## Through the Window!

**P**ORRINGE sat up in bed, in the Fifth Form dormitory at Oakshott, and listened. The stroke of one had boomed through the quiet night from the clock-tower across the quad. It died away, followed by deep silence. Faintly, in the long dim dormitory, came the sound of the regular breathing of many sleepers.

Peter Porringe, more familiarly known in the Oakshott Fifth as "Pie," was the only fellow awake. But he had good reasons for being sleepless that night—six good reasons, in fact. He was still feeling severe twinges from a "six" administered by his Form-master in prep.

Having listened for a long minute, Porringe put a long leg out of the bed. He kicked a chair in so doing, and there was a jarring sound of scraping chair-legs on the oak floor. That was Porringe all over. What he had on that night required silence and caution. It was like Porringe to begin by making a row.

A sleepy voice came from the next bed.

"Is that you, Pie, you ass?"

"Shut up, Harvey!" whispered Porringe.

"You're not going?" demanded Harvey.

The mystery intruder saw Porringe's white face staring at him in the darkness, gave a sudden spring, and with one blow knocked the boy unconscious!

"I jolly well am! You coming?" whispered Pie.

"I'll watch it!"

"Well, don't wake the dorm!"

"No need!" Harvey's tone was sarcastic. "You'll do that!"

Pie groped for slippers. He dropped one, and there was a light thud. He grabbed after it, knocked his head on the chair, and uttered, sharply and distinctly: "Wow!"

A third voice chimed in. Another sleeper had awakened.

"Who's that? Is that that goat Porringe?"

"Shut up, Banker!"

Like Harvey, Banks of the Fifth sat up instead of shutting up.

"Well, you ass!" said Banks. "You're really going down to Silver-son's study?"

"Didn't I say I would?"

"You'll wake him, fathead! You know his bed-room's next to his study. You'll barge something over, and wake him first shot. Don't you know what a clumsy ass you are?" argued Banks.

"I shan't make a sound." Porringe moved cautiously. "Dash that chair!" There was a jarring sound again. "Blow it! I shall be jolly careful, of course. But if that tick thinks he can give me six for nothing and get away with it he's jolly well mistaken, see?"

"It wasn't for nothing!" Harvey pointed out. "You were assing about in the passages when you ought to have been at prep."

"Oh, shut up!" grunted Porringe. "I'm going! The blighter's going to find his study inked when he turns out in the morning! There's a quart bottle in his bookcase cupboard—I've seen it there. I shan't leave any in the bottle."

"You'll spill half of it over your

The FIRST of a NEW SERIES

By  
**CHARLES  
HAMILTON**

trousers. Silverson won't have far to look for the giddy culprit."

"Oh, rot!" growled Pie, and stole softly out of the dorm.

The interior of the House at that hour of the night was a well of darkness and silence. But Pie was not afraid of the dark. Ass and duffer he might be—and in the opinion of his friends, certainly was; but he had heaps of nerve. He felt his way along walls, and groped at banisters. He stood, at last, in the corridor on which Mr. Silverson's rooms opened. He opened the door and stepped into the study.

It was a large and handsome room, the Fifth Form-master's study at Oakshott. It adjoined his bed-room, the door of which was opposite Porringe as he entered. On his right was a large casement window. The blinds were not drawn, and a glimmer of starlight came in through the panes. It was only a dim glimmer, but it gave Pie light enough for what he had to do.

Cautiously he stepped towards the bookcase. Below the bookshelves was a cupboard, which contained what Pie wanted. He stooped down and opened the cupboard. He knew just where that quart bottle of ink was. But Pie's groping hand, instead of closing on a large bottle, knocked over a pile of school books, which thudded to the floor.

"Oh, scissors!" breathed Pie.

His eyes turned in terror on the communicating door. His heart thumped as he listened for a sound from the bed-room. But there was no sound. After a long, long moment Pie breathed again.

He groped, and this time found the bottle he wanted. He lifted it out, removed the cork, and stepped round the table to his Form-master's armchair, which stood by the fireplace.

Clang! Pie's heart almost died in his breast. He had kicked against the fender, and a poker had rolled over. Once more he stood rigid! This time the game was up—that row would have awakened a heavy sleeper.

He could hardly believe in his good luck when silence, unbroken, followed the clang! No sound came from the next room!

"By gum!" breathed Pie.

Safe as houses, after all! It was sheer luck that Silverson was sleeping so soundly that night! But Pie was very careful to make no further sound as he poured ink into the seat of the armchair.

Then he turned to the table. That was to get the next lot. And then, for the third time, he stiffened up, rigid, as a sound came to his ears.

For a second Pie fancied the sound came from the bed-room door. The next, he knew that it came from the window.

Petrified, he stared at the window.

The middle casement had swung wide open. A black shadow darkened the orifice. A figure was stepping in over the low stone sill!

Danger from Silverson in his room Pie was prepared for and watching for. But he had never dreamed of this. Back into his mind flashed at that awful moment the recollection

of a series of burglaries in the neighbourhood of Oakshott School—the work of some unknown prowler of the night, never yet detected. Oakshott fellows had sometimes discussed whether the mysterious burglar would ever pay the school a visit. Pie, staring with horrified eyes at the dark figure stepping in at the window, knew.

He could not stir. He could only stand there petrified, motionless, the bottle in his hand, staring at that dark slinking figure that entered with the stealthy silence of a cat.

The man did not see him—did not know that he was there—evidently had no suspicion that the room was not empty. He turned at the window, closed the casement, and locked it. Even in his dumb terror that action struck Pie as strange.

Swiftly, the man turned from the window again. As he did so, a gasping sound came from him as he saw the white face that stared at him in the darkness. For a split second he stood arrested—then there was a sudden spring and a swift blow. Porringe of the Fifth knew nothing after that, for he lay like a log on the study floor, stunned and senseless.

### The Detective's Problem!

**D**ETECTIVE - INSPECTOR WILLIAM NIXON, of Scotland Yard, grunted, wrinkled his brows, and grunted again. Sitting on a bench in his suburban garden, under a spreading chestnut-tree, Mr. Nixon was thinking, and the expression on his fat and rather shiny face indicated that his thoughts worried him.

When Mr. Nixon was worried, he grunted. His grunts had been almost continuous for an hour or more. They reached the ears of a youth of about sixteen, who was sitting in a hammock under the chestnut-tree, reading. As Mr. Nixon betrayed those signs of mental stress, Len Lex gave less and less attention to his book, and more and more to his uncle. And at last, pitching the volume into the grass, Len spoke:

"Give it a name, Bill!"

Inspector Nixon started. He had quite forgotten that his nephew was there. He stared round at Len, and gave another grunt.

"Young ass!" was his reply.

Len smiled. Slim, athletic, rather handsome, Len did not look much like his uncle, the Scotland Yard inspector.

"They haven't got him yet?" asked Len.

"Got whom?" grunted Mr. Nixon.

"The Sussex Man."

Inspector Nixon gave another start. He fixed his eyes suspiciously on the smiling face of his schoolboy nephew.

"What the dickens do you know about the Sussex Man?" he grunted.

"All that the newspapers know, and perhaps a little more!" answered Len. "I hoped you'd bring him back with you, Bill!"

"How'd you know I've been after him?" demanded his uncle.

"You've been down to Sussex!"

Len chuckled. "You went the day after the latest report of his jolly old activities. You left your table covered with newspaper cuttings—every report of every crib cracked by the Sussex Man since he started in business two years ago. I've read the lot. You came back in the worst temper I've ever seen you in—and that's saying a lot, Bill. Am I wrong in guessing that you went after the Sussex Man, and wasted three days of your valuable time?"

Mr. Nixon gazed at his cheerful nephew. He tried to frown, and only succeeded in grinning.

"You've read the case up?" asked Mr. Nixon.

"Every word! Shall I give you the history of the Sussex Man?" smiled Len. "About two years ago, the silver was lifted from Greenwood Manor, in Sussex. That was the first shot. Since that time, at intervals, there have been mysterious burglaries, all within a radius of about thirty miles, from Greenwood in the north to Lowercroft in the south—Bayc in the east to Woodway in the west. All of them in Sussex—all of them performed in the neatest possible manner by a joker who never left a trace. Not the remotest clue to his identity—they call him the Sussex Man for want of any other name. Now, for the first time, two jobs on the same night—one at Oakshott School, the other at Woodway Court, eight miles away. What did you discover?"

"The Woodway Court job was a safe—clean cracked and no trace left—not discovered till morning. The Oakshott job, the same night, was more out of the usual run, owing to the action of the boy Porringe. This boy was found stunned in his Form-master's study about one in the morning. His Form-master, a man named Vernon Silverson, sleeps in the bed-room adjoining the study. He was awakened by a heavy fall—got out of bed and switched on the light, looked into his study, and found the boy Porringe insensible on the floor.

"He gave the alarm at once. But he did not suspect a burglary at first, as there was no sign of any intruder. He was absolutely puzzled at finding Porringe in that state in his study—senseless, with a bruise on his temple. He gave the alarm. The boy was taken back to his bed, and when he recovered consciousness, told what he knew."

"Which was—"

"He confessed that he had gone down to rag, as he called it, his Form-master's study. It seems that ink had been spilt about the room—young ass! While he was there, a man entered by the window, spotted him, and knocked him senseless. That was all he knew till he woke up in bed."

"He saw the man?"

"A dark figure in the dark." The inspector grunted. "That's the limit of the description he's been able to give."

"Not very helpful," said Len. "Was there a robbery?"

"None! No doubt the rascal heard Mr. Silverson turning out after he

## The Schoolboy Detective

had knocked the boy down. Must have cleared off by the window as he entered—it was found unfastened afterwards. Porridge appears to have inadvertently prevented a robbery—at the cost of getting his nut cracked. Lucky for the headmaster, if not for Master Porridge!"

"And it was the Sussex Man?"  
"Not much doubt about that. It's on his beat—right in the centre of the district he always works, in fact. A locked window was opened from the outside, clean and neat—no trace left—his style all over. Porridge was knocked out by a fist-blow on the temple. That's how the butler at Shooter's Fell was knocked out. He never saw who hit him. Porridge did. But what he saw is no use. And the rascal was wary—wary as we know the Sussex Man to be. He got in, and got out, without alarming the dog."

"The dog?" repeated Len.  
"Since the Shooters Fell affair, Dr. Osborne had ordered the porter to let his mastiff run loose at night," explained the inspector. "A big, rather fierce brute. I've seen him, of course. He was relied upon to give the alarm if the Sussex Man should pay Oakshott a visit."

"And the mastiff gave no alarm?"  
"Nobody heard him bark, at any rate," grunted Mr. Nixon. "The Sussex Man won't be spotted so easily as that! He came, and he went, as he always does—like a shadow."

"And the local police?"  
"They've asked our help. A fat lot of good it has been to them, so far!" grunted Mr. Nixon. "It's got us all beat! The Sussex Man will never be heard of again till his next job. Then he will get away with it, as clean as a whistle!"

"Unless a schoolboy happens to come down in the night again and spot him at his game!" said Len.

Detective-Inspector William Nixon stared at his nephew.

"Do you think the Sussex Man will turn up at Oakshott School again in a hurry?" he hooted. "Do you fancy that a kid in the school will happen to be awake and up, even if he does?"  
"Yes," answered Len.

"Yes?" repeated Bill Nixon dazedly.

"The answer is in the jolly old affirmative, Bill. I'll bet you ten to one in doughnuts that the Sussex Man will turn up at Oakshott School again, and that a boy in that school will have an eye very wide open for him. I know the boy—a bright lad. He's not an Oakshott boy yet, but he's going to be. You're going to fix that, Bill. You know his name."

"Do I? What is it?"  
"Len Lex!" answered the inspector's nephew.

### The Clue!

**T**HERE was a long silence. Len's words seemed to have taken the inspector's breath away. When he broke the silence at last it was to grunt, a deep frown wrinkling

his brow. For the first time since kind-hearted Bill Nixon had taken charge of his orphan nephew he was angry with him. Having grunted, and grunted again, he spoke:

"That will do, Len! You're only a kid, but you ought to know better than to cut your little jokes when a man's worried. And if you think it's funny—"

"I don't!" said Len. "I'm not joking. I'm going to help."

"What the dickens do you mean?" grunted Mr. Nixon.

"This, Uncle Bill!" said Len quietly. "Here am I, nearly sixteen, landed on your hands because I'm a penniless orphan, and you're just the kind-hearted old duffer to share your last bath bun with a hard-up relative—"

"Don't talk rot!" hooted Mr. Nixon.

"You'd have pinched and scraped to keep me on at an expensive school if I'd let you, and you jolly well know you would! Now I'm willing to give you your head to the extent of a term at Oakshott—on business lines. Now that the Sussex Man has put his foot into it, I'm going to help you land your fish, Bill."

Detective-Inspector Nixon forgot he was angry. An extremely alert look came over his plump face. He leaned forward.

"Len! You've seen something I've missed? Good lad! I'm sorry I spoke so sharp. Len—I might have known you wouldn't pull my leg when I'm troubled. What have I missed?"

"They call him the Sussex Man," said Len, "because all his cribs are cracked in Sussex—the same old beat. No reason for that, except that he's tied down to the quarter where he lives—and where, as he's never been spotted or even suspected, it's clear that he keeps up respectable appearances when he's not on the warpath. He lives in Sussex, and now he's as good as handed you his card, Bill!"

"Len!" breathed the inspector.

"You're getting lazy, Bill!" admonished his nephew. "You've overlooked the dates of the ten jobs done by the Sussex Man. Five jobs last year. Dates: one in February, one in March, one in June, one early in July, one in October. That right?"

"Right!"  
"Same number this year, counting the two latest—one in March, one in June, one in the middle of July—and now these two in September."

"Well, then, Bill, look at those dates, and read the Sussex Man's address!"

Inspector Nixon's jaw dropped. He gazed at his nephew open-mouthed. Astonishment, for a long minute, held him dumb.

"The—the—the dates?" he stammered at last. "What are you giving me, Len? How can those dates tell a man anything, except that the Sussex Man works all the year round?"

"Every one of those dates, Bill, is between the beginning and the end of an ordinary school term. The Sussex Man," grinned Len, "takes his holidays at the same time as schoolboys and schoolmasters."

"A—a—a school!" said Mr. Nixon.

"A post in a school, covering up his real game! Len!"

Len Lex took a notebook and pencil from his pocket. He proceeded to make a rapid sketch. His uncle watched him.

"What the dickens is that, Len?" he demanded at last.

"A sketch map of part of Sussex. Look." Len held out the sketch map. "I've marked every crib that the Sussex Man has cracked in the last two years. Look at it, old man."

Mr. Nixon looked at it. In fact, he devoured it with his eyes. But his expression did not reveal that it conveyed anything special to his mind.

He saw that ten places (Greenwood, Parsely, Bingham, Trant, Baye, Oakshott, Woodway, Shooters Fell, Lowcroft, and Charne) were marked, and that with the exception of Oakshott, each had a number after it.

"The numbers," said Len, "are miles—"

"From where?"  
"From Oakshott School, in the centre."

"Oakshott School?" repeated the inspector. "Yes, Oakshott's right in the centre of his beat. A thirty-mile beat from end to end—but worked from the centre, never outside fifteen miles."

"Exactly. Given a school as his headquarters, to begin with—"

"Given a school!" repeated Bill Nixon. "Yes, you make that out, Len! Likely, at least, from the dates—all in the school term."

"And finding a school in the centre of the beat," said Len, "doesn't it look as if the Sussex Man worked round from Oakshott, Bill? Now he's put his foot in it, and told you so."

"Has he?" said Bill dubiously.

"Woodway Court was robbed that night, Bill. The man that Porridge saw getting in at the study window was not after a crib. He was a night-bird coming home to roost. He knocked the boy out, not to clear his way to a crib, but to prevent recognition. The boy might have had a flash-lamp—very likely had! He couldn't run the risk. He tapped him hard and quick."

"But—"  
"And the proof is, what the mastiff did!" added Len.

Bill Nixon blinked.  
"The mastiff did absolutely nothing!" he answered.

"That's the proof!" said Len. "The dog knew him and did not bark!"

Mr. Nixon leaned back against the chestnut-tree, wrinkled his plump brows, and was silent for many minutes. Len Lex swung in the hammock. Mr. Nixon was thinking over his problem from a new angle now.

"You'll pack your box to-morrow, Len," he said, at last.

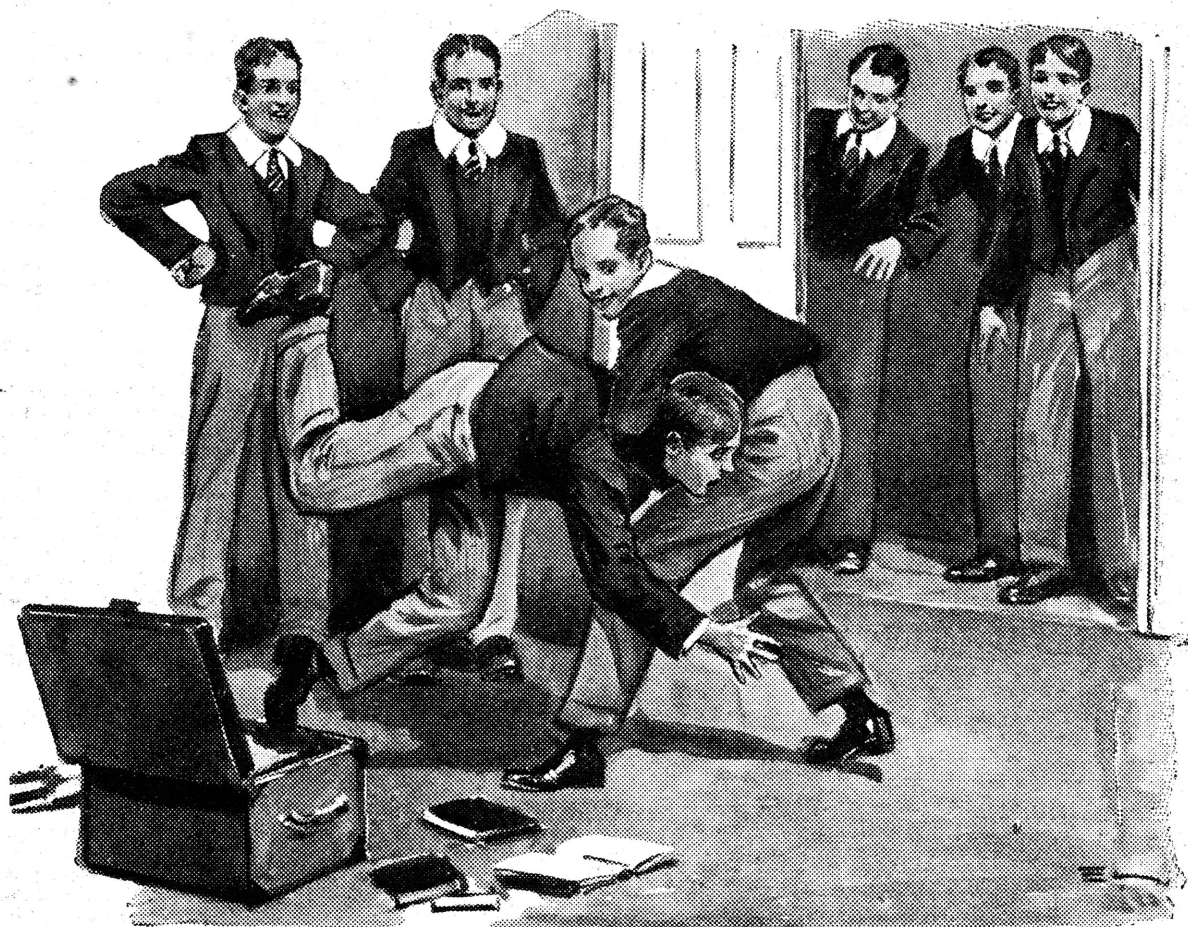
### Study No. 8

**L**EEKS?" asked Porridge of the Fifth.

"No; Lex!"  
"Lex!" repeated Pie. "That's a queer name."

"Queerer than Porridge?" asked Len.

"Porridge, fathead, not Porridge,"



said the Oakshott Fifth Former, with a frown. Harvey and Banks, standing in the doorway of Study No. 8, grinned.

The new boy at Oakshott had arrived that day while the fellows were in Form. Dr. Osborne had brought him to the Fifth Form Room to present him to Mr. Silverson. The Fifth had looked him over; and he had looked over the Fifth. He was unpacking books in Study No. 8 when Porringe & Co. came up after Form.

To the Head, as to the rest of Oakshott, Len was a boy who had left his last school with an excellent reputation. His uncle had entered him at Oakshott chiefly, it was to be gathered, because of the extremely healthy situation of that establishment in the Sussex Downs.

Len was rather glad to find that he had been assigned to Porringe's study. The police were in possession of all that Porringe could tell them, but Len thought it probable that in the careless talk of the study little overlooked details might come to light—trifles that might have an importance unsuspected by Porringe.

But if Len Lex was pleased to find himself in Porringe's study, Pie, on the other hand, was far from pleased to find Len Lex there. He did not seem in the least gratified to learn that the new fellow was assigned to Study No. 8! His friends, Harvey and Banks, shared his feelings. Who the dickens was this fellow, who blew in after the term had started, and

As Pie stumbled towards him, Len Lex threw an arm round his neck and held it in a vice-like grip.

fellows had settled down, and barged into a fellow's study? There was comfortable room for three in Study No. 8, though sometimes Porringe was requested by his friends to hang his long legs out of the window. Four was a crowd.

So Porringe's idea was to point out to the new kid, gently but firmly, that old Silverson had made a mistake in bunging him into Study No. 8. That mistake could be rectified by shifting himself and his belongings along to Study No. 7, where there were only two fellows, Borrow and Worrall. Silverson would give him leave if he asked.

Pie was going to point this out, gently but firmly. But the back-chat he received from the new fellow caused Pie to cut out the gentleness and concentrate on the firmness. He turned to Len again.

"Look here, young Leeks——"

"Looking, young Porridge!" answered Len cheerfully.

"If you call me Porridge again, I'll jolly well punch your head!" roared Pie. "Look here, Silverson can't have meant to plant you in here. He must have meant Study No. 7. See? The best thing you can do is to get along to Study No. 7. I'll help you carry your books, if you like!" added Pie, more graciously. "Silverson's sure to let you change if you like——"

"But I don't like!" smiled Len.

"Well, I do!" snapped Porringe. "We don't want you here, if you want me to be plain——"

"My dear man, I don't want you to be plain. Nature must have wanted it, I suppose, to give you that set of features."

"You cheeky tick!" exclaimed Porringe; and he made a warlike stride towards the new man.

Harvey and Banks stepped in quickly and pinned his arms.

"Chuck it, Pie!" said Harvey. "Don't rag! You don't want to get into another row with Silverson."

"I don't care two hoots for Silverson! I suppose I can punch a new tick if I like!" roared Porringe.

And, breaking loose from the detaining grasp of his friends, Pie made a jump at Len Lex.

It was like Pie to overlook a stack of books which Len had placed on the floor in the process of unpacking.

He stumbled over those books; and, instead of reaching the new fellow with his hands, he hurtled at him and reached him with his head!

The crown of his head tapped on Len's waistcoat. In a split second, Len had thrown an arm round his neck. Pie, staggering wildly, found his head in chancery, tucked away under the new fellow's arm. He staggered and struggled and wriggled.

"Oh! Ow! Oh!" spluttered Porringe. "Let go my head! Leggo my napper!"

(Continued on page 18)

## The Schoolboy Detective

(Continued from page 15)

Porringer, lean and long, was nearly a head taller than the new fellow, though Len was sturdy enough. Len had twice his muscle. He held the captured neck with a grip that Pie could not begin to unloose, with all his frantic efforts. Pie only succeeded in very nearly garrotting himself. His face was crimson, his eyes bulging, and he gurgled for breath. He spun round Len, his long legs thrashing wildly. Harvey and Banks yelled with laughter. Three or four more of the Fifth came along the passage and looked in, and yelled, too. Pie gurgled and guggled.

"Urrgh! I'll punch you! I'll slog you! Urrgh! Leggo my napper, will you?" gurgled Pie.

"Not till you make it pax."  
"Better make it pax, old man, before your napper comes off!" suggested Banks.

"I—I—I—I'll—urrgrgghh! Oh, scissors!" gasped Pie. "Leggo—you're cracking my neck! I'll make it pip-pip-pip-pax! Do you hear, you rotter? Leggo!"

Len let go, and Pie tottered away from him. He leaned on the study table, gasping for breath, his face like a fresh-boiled beetroot. As he recovered his breath a little, he clenched his hands. But "pax" was sacred. Pie gave the new fellow a long, expressive look, and stalked out of the study, still gasping for breath. His friends, chuckling, followed him, and Len was left to finish his unpacking.

### The Suspected Man!

"GOOD dog! Good dog!"

Len glanced round. It was after tea, and he was taking a walk round his new school, on his own. He wanted to give Oakshott the once-over, and pick up the lie of the land.

He had stopped to speak a word or two to Mr. Wegg, the school porter, at his lodge near the great bronze gates. A rather burly man in a bowler hat and overcoat came in, and stopped to pat the porter's dog in passing.

Wegg's big mastiff was not an attractive-looking animal. Len had already made overtures of friendship, but Biter rather looked as if he would have liked to live up to his name. But he nuzzled his rough head quite good-temperedly under the broad palm that patted it; and Len quietly watched the burly, red-complexioned man who fondled Biter. The man gave Wegg a nod as the porter touched his hat, took no notice whatever of Len, and walked on to the House—a burly, stocky figure with a firm and heavy tread.

"Who's that, Mr. Wegg?" asked Len casually. "A master here, I suppose?"

"Mr. Bullivant, the games master, sir!" answered Wegg.

Len strolled away, with his hands in his pockets. He was faintly interested in Mr. Bullivant, games master at Oakshott School. Biter, the mastiff, had been running loose the

night of Porringer's midnight adventure, and had not barked. Len was interested in any man at Oakshott who took particular pains to keep on amicable terms with Wegg's mastiff.

Lock-up was early; the autumn evenings were drawing in. The sound of a bell and the scurrying of feet warned Len that it was calling-over, and he joined the mob pouring into Hall. Mr. Silverson, the master of the Fifth, was taking the roll. He was a dark, handsome man in the early thirties, with a slight dark moustache.

"Spot his boiled shirt?" Len heard Banks whisper to Harvey. "He's dining with the Big Beak to-night!"

Mr. Silverson called the names and hurried away immediately he had finished roll. Len went with a crowd of his Form to the senior day-room, where, he found, the Fifth Form most did congregate. When the bell rang for prep, he was left alone there.

As a new boy, he had no preparation that evening. Not till the Fifth were well on with prep did he saunter out in the direction of his Form-master's rooms.

Inspector Nixon, in his official visit to Oakshott, had examined the room by which the Sussex Man had entered, and where Porringer of the Fifth had been found unconscious. Len was keen to give it a careful survey, and the opportunity had come, on his first evening at Oakshott. Mr. Vernon Silverson, at dinner in the Head's house, was safely off the scene.

Mr. Silverson's rooms were the only two in the passage off which they opened. Once in that passage, a fellow was safe out of the general view. Len tapped lightly at the study door. There was, as he expected, no reply to the tap, and he opened the door.

The study was dark, only a faint glimmer coming from a dying fire, and a fainter glimmer from the casement window. Len stepped in, and closed the door quietly after him.

He stepped across to the bed-room door opposite and tapped. Silverson, by some remote chance, might be in his quarters; and the new fellow in the Fifth could not afford to take chances. But there was silence.

If his theory was correct, that the mystery man was an unsuspected inmate of Oakshott School, Mr. Silverson's study offered an almost ideal mode of egress and ingress. Anyone could cross that room, stepping lightly, to or from the window, without much danger of awakening Mr. Silverson in the next room. It was easy—still more easy, Len reflected, if the Sussex Man was Silverson himself.

Mr. Silverson was his Form-master, but the schoolboy detective was prepared to find the Sussex Man in any adult inmate.

As he stood in semi-darkness, Len reconstructed Porringer's midnight raid and its sequel.

Had that goat, Porringer, noticed in which direction the intruder turned from the window—whether towards the bed-room door or the passage door? A great deal depended on that, if he had. Did the Sussex Man, when he left his unsuspected

lair, issue from Silverson's bed-room, or did he come from some other quarter, down that secluded passage, and cross the study from the passage door to the window?

Len stood deep in thought, the ruddy glow of the firelight playing on his face. All was silent. Oakshott was a rather rambling, ancient building, and the Fifth Form-master's rooms were somewhat secluded from the rest of the House. His heart gave a sudden throb as the study door opened. A bulky figure stepped in and closed the door again swiftly and silently.

For one bitter instant he fancied that Mr. Silverson had returned from the Head's house and fairly caught him. His presence in the unlighted study would be hard to explain to his Form-master. The next, he knew that it could not be Mr. Silverson entering his own study so swiftly and silently and without turning on the light. Silverson was slim, almost dapper, and this was a burly man.

As the startling newcomer turned from the door, Len saw his face—the stout, red face of the man he had seen fondling the porter's mastiff—Bullivant, the games master.

Mr. Bullivant saw him at the same moment.

They faced each other—two startled faces lighted by the ruddy gleam from the fireplace. Len heard the burly man draw a quick, hard, choking breath.

The boy drew back sharply. He remembered what had happened to Porringer. But the burly games master did not lift his hand—did not approach him. He knew, of course, that Len had seen his face—it was as clearly revealed to Len by the firelight as Len's to him. He stood like a man thunderstruck, rooted to the floor, staring at the boy, unable to speak. If ever Len's eyes had read guilt and terror in a face he could read them now in the face of Mr. Bullivant, games master of Oakshott.

What did it mean? What could it mean, but one thing? Bullivant, of course, knew that Silverson was over in the Head's house that evening. Would he, but for Len's unexpected presence, have crossed to the window, to step out? Was another "crib" marked down by the Sussex Man to be cracked that night? Len's heart beat fast.

"Who are you?" Mr. Bullivant spoke at last. "What are you doing here? Who are you?" His voice came cracked and husky.

"Lex of the Fifth, sir!" said Len, in quite a casual tone.

"Lex! I have not seen you before—are you a new boy?" The man was pulling himself together.

"Yes, sir! I came to-day."  
"You are in the Fifth? What are you doing here, in your Form-master's study, in his absence?"

"I've no prep, sir, on my first day, and I was looking round. No harm done, sir, I hope?"

"Have you played some foolish trick here?"

"Oh, no, sir! You'll see I've done nothing if you switch on the light."

(Continued on page 32)

## Biggles Fights Alone!

height we ought to be able to see the Star in about ten minutes."

Ginger's face appeared in the doorway, and he handed Biggles a slip of paper on which he had jotted down the Star's last position. Biggles passed it to Algy, who, after a glance at his chart, altered his course a trifle.

Nothing more was said. The minutes passed slowly. Algy continued to fly mechanically, depressed by a sudden sense of calamity that he could not throw off. Ginger remained in the cabin, still trying to make contact with the Star, while Biggles sat in the spare seat beside Algy, scanning the sea methodically, section by section, hoping to see the Star's masts appear above the horizon.

But when some time had elapsed, they knew it was no use trying to deceive themselves any longer. The Bengal Star had disappeared!

"Let me have her for a bit," said Biggles, and, changing places with Algy, he began to climb, at the same time turning in wide circles.

Suddenly Algy, who had opened the side window of the windscreens and was staring down at the sapphire sea, caught Biggles' left arm with his right hand. "What's that?" he said, pointing.

Biggles, tilting the Nemesis over so that he could look down, followed Algy's outstretched finger.

"Wreckage, I fancy," he said quietly, at the same time beginning to sideslip towards it.

A minute later they were not more than a thousand feet above a number of miscellaneous objects that were floating on the surface of the tranquil sea. "I think I can see oil-stains, too. Is that a man? Look! Yes! By gosh! There's somebody there. I saw an arm wave. Down you go!" shouted Algy.

"All right. Don't get excited. I'm going down as fast as I can," replied

Biggles, pulling the throttle right back and leaning over to see where he was going. "We've only got to knock a hole in our hull in one of those lumps of timber to complete a really good day's work," he added, as he flattened out and prepared to land. "Call Ginger to stand by to help you get him aboard," he snapped, as the keel of the Nemesis kissed the water and cut a long, creamy wake across its blue surface. The port engine roared, and the wake curved like a bow as the Nemesis swung round to come alongside the flimsy piece of timber to which the sole survivor of the ill-fated vessel was clinging.

"Look out! He's sinking!" cried Algy suddenly. "I'll—" The sentence was cut short by his splash as he struck the water in a clumsy dive—clumsy because of the movement of the aircraft and the angle at which he had to take off to avoid a bracing strut.

He was only just in time, for the man had already disappeared beneath the water when he struck it. For a few seconds he, too, disappeared from sight; then he reappeared, catching his breath with a gasp, with the unconscious sailor in his arms.

"Quick!" he spluttered.

Ginger was already out on the wing, lying flat on his stomach, hand outstretched over the trailing edge. Still clinging to his unconscious burden, Algy seized it, and Ginger began to drag him towards the hull.

At that moment, another movement caught Biggles' eye and he drew in his breath sharply. Cutting through the water towards the commotion was the black, triangular-shaped fin of a shark!

*Next week's instalment of this splendid new "BIGGLES" story by Flying-Officer W. E. Johns more than maintains the promise of the start. Amazing happenings crowd on the com-rades, and the mysterious enemy strikes harder still!*

## The Schoolboy Detective

(Continued from page 18)

Mr. Bullivant did not switch on the light.

"You should not have come here, Lex! Possibly, as a new boy, you know no better, but you should not have come here. Mr. Silverson would be very angry if he knew. However, as you are a new boy, I will not report your action to him. You must not let it occur again."

"Thank you, sir," said Len humbly. "I shouldn't like to get into a row on my first day here."

He did not need assuring that Mr. Bullivant would not report him to his Form-master. He was quite sure that the games master did not want Mr. Silverson to hear of his own visit to the study.

"I fancied that some rag was going on." Mr. Bullivant was quite cool now. "I heard a sound in the room, and knowing that Mr. Silverson was absent, stepped in to see."

"Oh, not at all, sir!" said Len. "On my word, sir, I was not thinking of a rag, or anything of the kind."

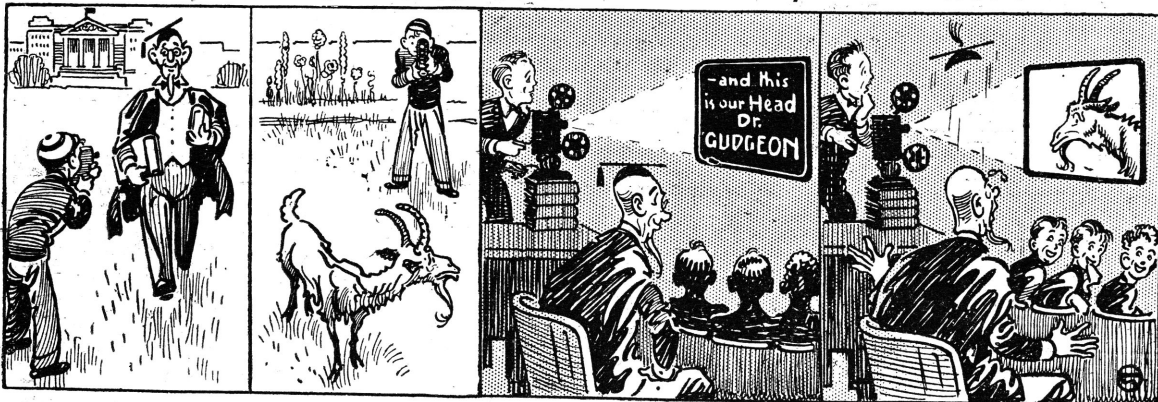
"Very well, Lex. I accept your word. You had better go."

Mr. Bullivant opened the door again. He followed the new Fifth-Former from the study. They went out of the passage together, and Mr. Bullivant walked away at once to his own rooms, which were on the first staircase. Len Lex went back to the senior day-room—with plenty of food for thought; thought which, however, was driven from his mind when, at the end of prep, a crowd of the Fifth came scampering in. And Len, dismissing the Sussex Man and all his works, ceased to be a detective and became a schoolboy again!

*More excitement—and fun—next week, when Len gets hot on the trail again and picks up a startling clue. And next week you'll be collecting three more Fighting Planes cards for your Album!*

## DON DRAKE'S DIARY

Laugh every week with the schoolboy artist of St. Michael's!



Gibbons minor took a film of the school. He filmed everything from the Head—

—down to the garden-er's pet goat, Eustace. Then he began to pre-prepare his film for a show.

The whole school turned up, and the Head took his seat eagerly, anxious to see himself on the screen.

It was a pity that Gibbons had been in such a hurry, and joined up his "shots" in the wrong order!—Don Drake