

Flying, School, Mystery, African, Railway & Humorous Stories!

# The MODERN BOY

EVERY SATURDAY.  
Week Ending May 8th, 1937.

No. 483.  
Vol. 19.

2<sup>D.</sup>



**THE CAMERA SPY!**—Great SCOTTY of the SECRET SQUADRON Adventure!



Searching for his missing chum, the **SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE** hears suspicious noises from behind the shuttered windows of the—

# HOUSE of MYSTERY

## A Dreadful Suspicion!

"THE goat!" hissed Harvey, of the Oakshott Fifth.

"The chump!" breathed Banks.

"Oh, the ass!" said Len Lex. "The silly ass! The howling, unlimited ass!"

They were, of course, alluding to Porringe of the Fifth. Any Oakshott fellow who had overheard their remarks would have guessed that at once. The description fitted so accurately.

The three members of Study No. 8 had played in the Form match that afternoon. Porringe, whose keenness on games was not equalled by his proficiency therein,

hadn't. Pie had been left on his own, and in the stress of an arduous match his friends had forgotten him. They remembered him when they came out of the changing-room, looked for him, and found him not. For some time they went round about Oakshott, asking fellows whether they had seen Pie. Nobody had. Then they looked into the bicycle-house to ascertain whether his jigger was gone. It was! Then they looked at one another with deep feelings.

"The priceless goat!" said Harvey. "Just because we hadn't an eye on him! You know where he's gone, of course!"

"Over to Greenwood Down!" said Banks.

"To kick up a shindy with that nosey sportsman!" said Len Lex.

They had no doubt of it. Since Porringe had discovered his old enemy at the lonely house on Greenwood Down, Porringe's fixed idea had been to root him out and punch his face. Barely had his friends succeeded in restraining him—till now! They had gone even to the length of sitting on him, on the study floor, to keep him off the warpath. This afternoon, Pie had had his first real chance of getting away from his friends! Evidently, he had jumped at it.

By this time, probably, he had also jumped at the man in the shuttered



Pie made a dash at the fags, and sprawled full length on the landing. Root tapped Pie on the back of the head with a book, then bounded out of reach.

house, if he had found him at home!

It was utterly dismayingly to Pie's friends. That vulture-nosed man, no doubt, was an offensive swab. He had lost Pie his train on the first day of term for no apparent reason. Pie's friends sympathised, to a certain extent, with his desire to punch the swab's beaky nose. Still, it was clear that such drastic proceedings could not proceed without a fearful row to follow. Pie did not care about that. His friends did. They knew where he was gone—they had no doubt that he had reached his destination by this time, distant as it was—and they wondered dismally what might be going on there. They had an awful vision of the goat of the Fifth coming home in charge of a policeman!

Harvey and Banks ran through a list of opprobrious epithets, addressed to the absent Pie. Len Lex wrinkled

his brows in thought. The Schoolboy Detective was accustomed to rapid judgment and quick decision. Pie had to be stopped, if possible. He had to be brought off before he gave the beaky man a prize nose to show to the headmaster of Oakshott.

"Cut the cackle, old beans!" said Len, breaking in on his chums' remarks about Pie. "We've got to get after Pie, and snaffle him!"

"Too late, fathead!" replied Harvey. "He's been gone two or three hours. Even Pie wouldn't take that time to cover seven or eight miles on a bike!"

"He's there long ago," said Banks. "And if the man hasn't let him in, he's prowling round, same as he did before, trying to get at him!"

"But the man mayn't be at home," said Len. "And if we catch Pie prowling—well, we'll give him prowling!"

Harvey and Banks looked at one another. They had played a hard game that afternoon, and were not yearning for a hard ride to follow. They were concerned for Pie, as well as intensely exasperated with him; but the prospect was not attractive.

"Eight miles there, and eight miles back!" growled Harvey.

"Might cut off a mile by taking the bridle-path through Oakways Wood!" suggested Banks. "Three-quarters of a mile, anyhow!"

"Cyclists aren't allowed there,

By  
**CHARLES  
HAMILTON**



## House of Mystery

except wheeling the jigger!" said Len. "Think of the jolly old by-laws!"

"Oh, blow the by-laws!" said Harvey and Banks together.

But Len shook his head. The nephew of Detective-Inspector Nixon of Scotland Yard felt bound to respect laws, by or other.

"Stick to the road," he said. "Lamson of the Shell was stopped on that bridle-path last week riding his jigger. He had to get down and walk. We don't want to lose time trying to save it!"

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Harvey and Banks. But when the three wheeled out their machines and mounted, they kept to the highway.

They rode at a good pace, heading for Greenwood. A quarter of a mile from the school a cyclist passed them, and gave them a stare of dislike. It was Tunstall of the Fifth, the new fellow at Oakshott.

Tunstall was a mystery to Len. He alone of all the Oakshott fellows knew that Eric Tunstall had been kicked out of his previous school and would be disinherited by his grandfather, Sir Gilbert Tunstall, if a like fate ended his career at Oakshott. Yet the Fifth Former was deliberately seeking the sack, and Len intended to find out why. But he had no time for Tunstall now.

"What's that slacker doing on a bike?" said Harvey. "Bet you he hasn't done three miles!"

Len Lex glanced over his shoulder, at Tunstall's back, as the new Fifth Former rode on towards the school. Tunstall had come from the direction of Greenwood, and it occurred to Len that he might have seen something of Poringe.

"Might ask him if he's seen Pie—" he began.

"Oh, don't waste time!" grunted Banks. "We don't want to speak to that cad!"

Tunstall, slacker, black sheep, and bad lad generally, was a member of Study No. 8, but he was barred in that study. A minute or two more and he had disappeared in the direction of Oakshott School, and the three forgot him as they pedaled on.

After seven miles by the road they reached the spot where the path branched off, across the rugged down, hardly marked except by the tyres of the car belonging to the man at the lonely house. The winding track was rugged, and they jolted along it. It was not an agreeable ride—by no means a route they would have taken as a matter of choice.

But they had no doubt that they were on Pie's trail—for the tracks of a bike were to be seen on the rough path. Evidently, a cyclist had been there before them, and they could not doubt that it was Pie. That path led nowhere but to the lonely shuttered house.

They came round the base of the hill. The belt of woodland, in which lay the shuttered house, loomed before them. The house itself was not yet visible, but as they rode into the wood they saw the building—the

windows closed with shutters, as on their previous visit; a thin spiral of smoke ascending from the old red chimney indicating that the place was occupied.

The gate was closed. They dismounted, leaned their machines on the fence, and looked round them. Firmly convinced that Pie was there, they had, naturally, expected to see him. But there was no sign of Pie, and no sign of his jigger. There was no sign of any human being. The spiral of smoke from the chimney indicated human presence—but that was all.

"Where the thump is that blithering goat?" hissed Banks. "He can't have gone back to the school—we should have passed him on the road."

Len Lex shook his head. The Schoolboy Detective was puzzled.

Pie, certainly, had had time to get through a shindy and ride back to Oakshott. But in that case why had not his chums passed him on the road? And if he was still here, where was he?

Harvey turned quite pale as a sudden, awful, overwhelming suspicion dawned on his mind.

"I—I—I say, c-e-can the man have given him in charge?" he gasped. "He—he said he would, the other day, if Pie came back again."

"In charge!" gasped Banks. "Gosh, what a mess!"

They gazed at one another in horror. The bare thought of Pie marched off to Greenwood Police Station in charge of a constable was unnerving. It was an awful possibility. If that had happened, what would happen to him afterwards at Oakshott did not bear thinking of!

"Oh, my hat!" said Len. "Look here, we've got to know what's happened to the old ass. That sportsman at the house will tell us if we ask him. Come on!"

The gate was locked, but Len vaulted over it. His comrades followed him. They hurried up the path to the porch. If Pie had been there—and they had no doubt that he had—the man at the house must know what had happened, and he was their only source of information. He was a far from agreeable man, and he had made it very plain that he did not want callers at his lonely dwelling—but that could not be considered now. They reached the porch, and Len grasped the heavy iron knocker on the door and banged.

The door did not open. There was no sound from within, after the echoing of the knocks had died away.

"The brute won't answer!" growled Banks.

"I'll make him, if he's there!" said Len, between his teeth. "It was his fault that old Pie's made a fool of himself—he started the trouble, first day of term. I'll make him answer!"

Bang, bang, bang! The iron knocker fairly crashed. The din rang through the wood that surrounded the shuttered house; it echoed over the grassy downs. Len Lex was putting his beef into it. And as there came no reply from within, he put more and more beef! Bang, bang, bang!

Crooked, but Game!

CAYLEY of the Fifth grinned. He was lounging in the doorway of the bicycle-house at Oakshott, when a clinking sound drew his attention, and he glanced round. He grinned at the sight of a Fifth Form man wheeling in a bike. That Fifth Form man looked as if he had hit trouble, and hit it hard. His bike was damaged. Its owner's limp showed that he was damaged, too. And the expression on his face showed that Poringe was in a fearfully bad temper.

"Spill?" asked Cayley, grinning. Pie came to a halt, slammed the jigger against the shed, sank on the bench outside, and rubbed his knee, breathing fatigue and fury.

"No!" he answered. "Knocked over! Has that tick come in?"

"Which?" asked Cayley. "That tick—that swab—that worm—that rotter—that putrid bounder!" said Pie.

"Your friends are all out, I believe," grinned Cayley. "They've been looking for you all over the shop, and then they went out on their jiggers, half an hour ago—"

"I don't mean them, you ass! I mean that swab—that pig—that toad—that new rotter Tunstall!" yapped Pie.

"Yes, he came in soon after your pals went out. Want him?"

Poringe glared. Clearly he wanted Tunstall. He looked as if he wanted him to boil in oil.

"What do you think he did?" he gasped. "That cad—that funky swab Tunstall! Butted his bike into me on Greenwood Down—knocked me over—damaged the bike—gave me a game leg!" Pie gasped. "I've had to walk most of the way back. Game knee! I thought I'd never get in! I'd never have got in, I think, only I cut off the last mile by coming through Oakways Wood by the bridle-path. I had to wheel the jigger—I couldn't ride any farther with this knee—so that was all right. But for that, I think I should have dropped! Ow!"

"Well, my hat!" said Cayley, staring.

He would not have been surprised if Pie had had a spill. Nor if he had run into a vehicle, a hedge, a wall, or another cyclist. Pie was the man for such things. But he was surprised to hear of Tunstall's performance. The new fellow in the Fifth was a reckless ass in some ways—the way he fairly asked for the "sack," for instance. But he was not reckless in the way of asking for fistic combats. Far from that. It was amazing to hear that he had thus provoked Pie's destructive wrath.

"What on earth," said Cayley, "did he do it for?"

"Dunno! It was on Greenwood Down—near that house with the shutters—you know—What are you sniggering at, you ass?"

Cayley was chuckling. All the Oakshott Fifth knew of Pie's feud with the "beaky blighter" at the shuttered house on the down.

"So that's where you've been!" chortled Cayley. "That's why your



pais rushed off after you—what? Ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up, fathead! If they've gone after me, they've missed me. Must have gone by the road, while I was coming through Oakways Wood. Just like the silly asses! I say, that swab Tunstall had been up to the place himself—goodness knows why—and he stopped me going! Got away on his bike, after barging mine over! He didn't want me to go there, the cheeky cad—as if it's any bizney of his! I'll show him!"

Pie gave his painful knee another rub, and, leaving Cayley grinning, he tottered away to the House.

He wanted Tunstall of the Fifth—he wanted him at once—and he wanted him bad! Why Tunstall had taken such drastic measures to keep him away from the house on the down, Pie did not know, and did not care. He knew that he was going to whop the swab till he couldn't crawl. He was going to whop him till Eric Tunstall felt, all over, as Pie was feeling in his right knee.

With these deadly intentions fixed in his mind, Porrhinge tottered on the warpath. Fellows grinned as he went into the House. Pie looked rather a wreck, but he could see nothing funny in a state of wreckage. It seemed that other fellows could.

"Been under a lorry?" asked Oliphant of the Sixth sympathetically.

"Seen Tunstall?" asked Pie, without taking the trouble to answer that frivolous question.

"That new man? He went up to the studies."

Pie limped to the stairs. He would have preferred to find Tunstall on the ground floor. Stairs, in the state of Pie's bruised and swollen knee, presented difficulties. But Pie faced the stairs manfully. He would have trailed Tunstall, at that moment, if he had had to follow him up to the top of the Eiffel Tower. Up went Pie—slowly but surely, gurgling occasionally as his leg twinged.

"Dot and carry one!" remarked Root, of the Fourth, over the banisters of the study landing. There was a chortle from a group of fags.

Pie gave them a glare. He could give them nothing more—in his present state. He limped across the study landing. The fags laughed. It was unusual to be able to chip a Fifth Form senior, and get away with it. Pie, obviously, was in no condition to give chase. Root & Co., of the Fourth, were not going to miss this rare treat.

"Here comes an old man from Seringapatam," sang Root, "with one leg shaking!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the fags.

Porrhinge, resting on his sound leg, glared round at them. He would, at any other time, have charged those fags, and sent them scattering with vengeful smites. Now he could not have run a yard after a fag. Standing stork-like on one leg, Pie glared.

Root, greatly daring, buzzed a school book, which he had under his arm. It tapped on Pie's chin, and he gave a roar of rage. The fags gave a roar of laughter. Pie, forgetting his game leg, made a dash. He had to re-

member the game leg the next moment. It crumpled, and Pie was extended at full length on the landing. He yelped as he sprawled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Root & Co. "Wow!" howled Pie. "Wow!"

Root fielded his book. He tapped Pie on the back of the head with it, and bounded out of reach. Pie staggered up on one leg. He hopped at them. Root & Co., yelling with laughter, retreated up their passage.

Porrhinge stopped. He turned, and limped away to the Fifth. He owed all this to that tick, Tunstall. It was one more item for that unspeakable swab to pay for. Breathless with fury, Porrhinge limped on to Study No. 8 and hurled the door of that apartment wide open.

Tunstall was there, smoking a cigarette—he never dared do that when the other fellows were in—but he did not seem to be enjoying his smoke. There was a deeply uneasy expression on his sallow face.

As the game-legged Fifth Former limped in, Tunstall gave a start, threw his half-smoked cigarette into the grate, and jumped to his feet. Promptly he placed the study table between him and Porrhinge.

"You rotter!" gasped Pie. "You swab! Barging a man over on his bike! I'm going to smash you! You wait a minute! Ow!"

He limped painfully to the table, and rested a hand on it. From the other side, Tunstall eyed him. He had been in terror of this meeting. Now his terrors evaporated. Pie came round the table at him, keeping one hand on it for support.

Tunstall retreated round the table. It was easy enough to keep out of the reach of a fellow with a game leg. Pie panted with rage.

"You swab! You tick! You funk! Will you let me gerrat you?" he hooted.

Now that he was no longer between the new man and the door, Tunstall stepped towards the doorway. He looked back, grinning. Pie, leaving the table, limped at him, and to his intense satisfaction, Tunstall did not scoot out of the study. He stood in the doorway, and Pie reached him.

In other circumstances, the weedy, seedy slacker of the Fifth would have doubled up in Pie's grasp. Now it was Pie who doubled up. As he stood, unsteady, Tunstall gave him a violent shove, and Porrhinge went over on his back, with a crash.

He hit the study floor hard. He sprawled on his back, dizzy and spluttering. Tunstall laughed, and walked out of the study.

"Ow!" groaned Pie. "Ow! You cad! Stop! You rotter, come back! Do you hear, you putrid tick? Ow! Wow!"

He sat up, grabbed at the table, helped himself up on his sound leg, and limped to the door. Tunstall was disappearing across the landing, to the stairs, laughing. Pie clung to the doorpost, and gasped.

In Pie's present mood, it seemed impossible to let vengeance wait! But he had to let it wait! With feelings inexpressible in any known lan-

guage, Pie turned back into the study, and slumped limply into an armchair.

### The Shuttered Room!

"G O it!" said Banks.

Len Lex was going it. Bang, bang, bang! went the iron knocker, on the door of the lonely house in the wood. Nobody within that house—or for a considerable distance round—could have failed to hear it. Thunderous bangs woke every echo. That there came no answer from within did not convince the Oakshott fellows that no one was there. They supposed that the man with the vulture nose did not choose to answer.

Quite unaware of Pie's strange misadventures, the three were convinced that he had been there—and that he had not gone back to Oakshott. The traces of a bike they naturally supposed to be traces of Pie's bike—knowing nothing of Tunstall's visit to the place. And knowing nothing of Pie's game leg, they never imagined him wheeling home afoot, and thus taking the bridle-path where cyclists were not allowed to ride. Either he was still at the shuttered house, or he had departed for parts unknown—possibly in official custody—so far as they could see. And they were going to know, from the man in the house—if banging with an iron knocker could do it.

But Len Lex stopped, at last. The thundering echoes of the knocker died away.

"Is the brute there, after all?" muttered Len.

"Just sticking there, and waiting for us to go!" said Harvey. "That's the sort of unpleasantness he is. We'll jolly well see, anyhow!"

Leaving the door, the three Oakshott fellows moved round the house, looking at the windows. They were protected by thick wooden shutters, fastened inside. In so solitary a spot, it was no doubt natural for the nosy man to be careful; but he certainly seemed to have taken excessive care to keep possible intruders out of the building. All was silent within, and though the spiral of smoke from the chimney told that a fire was burning, it looked as if the house was unoccupied. To make sure, Len banged with his knuckles on each shuttered window as he passed it.

"Hark!" he exclaimed suddenly.

He had banged on the shutter of a back room. From within, a faint sound came to the keen ears of the Schoolboy Detective.

"Did you hear that?" breathed Len.

"Eh? I heard nothing!" said Banks doubtfully.

"Same here!"

Harvey shook his head.

Len held up his hand.

"Listen!"

They bent their heads, listening intently. In the silence, a sound came again from the shuttered room. Exactly what it was, even Len could not have said. It was such a sound as might have been made by a dog stirring within; but a dog, assuredly, would have barked, or growled. It



## House of Mystery

was not a dog. Something living, at all events, was there. The sound ceased—and was renewed. This time another and more definable sound came with it—a scrape, as if a chair-leg had moved on a floor. Then silence again.

The three stared at one another. There was something strange, something almost uncanny, in this. If they could have supposed that some helpless invalid, hardly able to stir in his chair, had tried to move, in answer to the rap at the window, that would have accounted for it.

"Queer!" murmured Harvey. "That can't be the man! Somebody's there, though."

"After all, we don't know that he lives alone here," said Banks. "We saw nobody else when we came, that's all. Might be some doddering old bean, afraid to open the door."

"I wonder!" said Len.

"Nothing doing, anyhow!" said Harvey. "If the brute's there, he doesn't mean to answer."

"He's not there," said Len. "Somebody is, but not that beaky blighter. If we can get a squint into the garage, we can see whether the car's gone."

Close by the house was a building, little more than a shed, where they had no doubt the car was kept. But the double doors were locked, and further secured by a padlock. There was a small window, but it was shuttered, like the windows of the house. They found it impossible to get a glimpse into the interior. The three Oakshott fellows stood and looked at one another, dubious, angry, exasperated.

"If he's gone out—" began Harvey.

"He has!" said Len. The Schoolboy Detective had no further doubt of that.

"Might have gone to Greenwood with Pie!" muttered Banks. "I don't see how he'd get a bobby here—no telephone wires! Might have bagged Pie, and run him across to give him into custody."

"Goodness knows!" said Len. "Anyhow, we shan't find out anything here. It will be a close fit to get back for roll-call."

They went back to their bicycles, worried, anxious for Pie, but at the same time feeling an intense desire to boot him. What had happened to the goat of the Oakshott Fifth? Who was the mysterious occupant of the shuttered house, who stirred, as if with difficulty, at the knocking on his window, and yet did not speak? It was a strange puzzle, but one thing at least was clear—there was nothing doing, and they could only ride back to Oakshott School in dread of what news they might hear of poor old Pie, when they got there.

They covered the ground at unusual speed, on that ride back to school. The bell was ringing for calling-over when they got in at last, tired, breathless, anxious. With a last spurt, as it were, they barged into Hall, just as the big doors were closing. Fifth Form men looked

curiously at their crimson faces, and an utterly unexpected voice greeted them from the ranks of the Fifth.

"I say, you've only just done it, you fellows! You're jolly late."

They gazed at Porrhinge.

He was there!

"Porrhinge!" gasped Len.

"Pie!" howled Banks.

"Pip - pip - pop - Pie!" stuttered Harvey.

Pie nodded.

"You see—" he began.

"Silence!" called out Campion of the Sixth. The Fifth Form master was calling the roll.

It was no time, or place, for slaughtering Pie. That had to wait till after call-over. Three tired, aching, infuriated Fifth Formers looked forward to it with eager anticipation.

### Not to be Found!

PIE, unslaughtered, told his tale later, in Study No. 8. His chums were, in the first place, disarmed by the sight of poor old Pie limping out of Hall after roll, on a game leg. They spared him, provisionally, as it were, till Pie had time to explain. After which they were too amazed to do anything but stare at him blankly. Len Lex, already puzzled and perplexed by the new man in the Fifth, saw his puzzlement and perplexity trebled—which was very unpalatable to the Schoolboy Detective, seldom at a loss for a solution to a problem. As for Harvey and Banks, they fairly blinked.

"But why the thump," articulated Harvey, "should Tunstall care two hoots whether you went to that house on the down or not?"

"Don't ask me!" said Pie. "I don't know. I know he did. He stopped me by crocking my jigger, and me, too, and I'm going—"

"I fancied he knew the johnny there," said Banks. "He gave it away in his ugly face when he heard us talking about the man in this study. But that's no reason why he should play a dirty trick to stop you going there."

"So this silly owl," said Len, "was walking his bike by the bridle-path, while we were going all out on the road. I dare say he'd only just got off the road when we passed—and that tick Tunstall was coming back from the house on the down when we passed him. But why—"

"He passed me coming back, before I turned into Oakways Wood," said Pie. "I'd have had him off his jigger and mopped him up there and then only he didn't stop."

"Haven't you strewn him in fragments all over Oakshott already?" asked Harvey. "What have you let him live for?"

"He pushed me over, in this study," said Pie, breathing hard. "With this leg, you know, I went right over—whop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackle!" said Pie bitterly. "Funny, ain't it? Well, it won't be funny for that swab when I get him. He'll have to come up for prep—and I

suppose I can rely on my pals to see that he doesn't dodge a chap who can't hop after him on one leg? I'm going—"

"Better leave it over till your leg mends, old man!" said Len, laughing.

"I'm not going to leave it over a minute after I can get at that cur!" said Pie. "You wait and see!"

His friends waited—but they did not see. According to rule, Tunstall had to come up to the study for preparation. The four naturally expected him to come. They did not expect him till the latest possible moment, in the circumstances—but they did expect him. They were disappointed. He did not come.

Prep or no prep, Pie would have sallied forth in search of him, but for the handicap of a game leg. He was not restrained by the strict rule that fellows had to be in their studies at prep; he was restrained by that game leg. He could not go hunting Tunstall up and down the House. Much against the grain Pie had to let vengeance wait till after prep.

Prep had little attention from Pie that evening. His gammy knee ached a good deal, and the study reeked with embrocation, and echoed with Pie's painful yelps.

Free at last, however, Pie did sally forth—his friends in his company. Root of the Fourth grinned at him, on the study landing—but alas for Albert Root! That afternoon he had not merely grinned at Pie, but buzzed a book at him, and rapped his head with the same, escaping with impunity, and bragging of his exploit up and down the Fourth Form studies. Now a mere grin cost Root dear.

Porrhinge was as powerless as ever, but his chums grabbed Root, bumped him, then jerked off his collar and stuffed it down his back, and finally left him breathless and dishevelled on the landing. After which they went down with Pie, who, whatever his troubles, had no more check from the Fourth to worry him.

In the senior day-room they looked for Tunstall, and in Hall, but found him not. He had cut prep—a rather serious matter—obviously because he dared not show up in the study, and must have lain pretty low to avoid being spotted out of his study, but where was he now? No doubt he knew Pie would be on his trail, as soon as prep was over, and was dodging Pie—but how, and where?

Other Fifth Form men, grinning, helped in the hunt. Every man in the Form agreed heartily that a tremendous hiding was due to Tunstall, and hoped to see Pie administer the same.

The hunt went on, with growing merriment—it was getting to be quite a joke towards dorm. Up and down the House went Pie, in the lopsided state of the Old Man of Seringapatam, his sympathetic but grinning friends with him. Sixth Form men stared at him and laughed—juniors called out encouragement.

"I say, Pie, look in the lockers!" "Squint up the chimney in Hall!" Pie did none of these things, but he



hunted in places almost as unlikely, as well as in all likely spots. It was Oliphant, the captain of Oakshott, who enlightened the hunters at last.

"I hear you're looking for Tunstall," said the Sixth Former, coming up to the hunting-party with a grinning face.

"Know where he is, Oliphant?" gasped Pie.

"He's with Bullivant in his rooms. He's got keen on games—all of a sudden!" said the Oakshott captain, and walked on laughing.

Pie looked at his friends eloquently. If the tick was with a master, even Pie couldn't think of rooting him out and punching him. And the games-master of all masters! The fellow loathed games—old Bully had ragged him for slacking at games—threatened to whop him more than once! Perhaps old Bully, unaware of the man-hunt that was going on, was pleased to see that seedy slacker developing an interest of his own accord, in a subject so near to old Bully's heart, and welcomed him like a wandering sheep into the fold. Anyhow, he was letting him stay in his rooms to talk games. It was the very last cover Pie would have thought of drawing.

"That games dodger—talking games—with old Bully!" gasped Pie. "Can you beat it?"

Len chuckled.

"He's beaten you, old man! You can't walk in on old Bully, and yank the fellow out by his ears! After all, he'll keep!"

"Keep!" said Pie. "Wait till after lights out, that's all!"

It looked as if there was going to be a little liveliness in the Fifth Form dormitory that night.

#### Light at Last!

LEN LEX sat up in bed, and smiled.

It was a quarter of an hour since the master of the Fifth had put out the light in his Form's dormitory. Len rather expected Pie to leave it a little later, in order to make sure that there was no interruption. But as he heard a creak of some fellow getting out of bed, he had no doubt that Pie's impatience had been too strong for him, and that he was getting going. Harvey and Banks sat up, too. Nobody in the dormitory, in fact, was asleep yet. A dim figure was seen moving in the glimmer from the high windows.

"That you, Pie?" called out Harvey. "Chuck it, old man—wait a bit later! Beaks all over the shop now!"

"Eh? I'm not up!" came Pie's voice from Pie's bed.

"Somebody is!"

Len Lex turned on a flashlamp. It shone on a fellow who was standing by his bed, dressing. It was the new man in the Fifth. Pie was not out of bed at all. But as he saw his enemy in the light of the flashlamp, Pie bounded out—and yelled as his painful leg twinged.

Harvey lighted a candle—Banks another. All the Fifth stared at Tunstall. Many of them gave him sneering and scornful looks. The

fellow was not, of course, thinking of dodging Pie by going down from the dormitory; that was impossible, with masters and prefects about. They knew what his game was—breaking out after lights-out; his dingy manners and customs were well known in his Form. He was not thinking of Pie at all, but of some appointment with shady acquaintances at the Peal of Bells. He glanced round sullenly at staring, contemptuous faces and went on dressing.

Pie's bound landed him on the floor, as his game leg doubled up. Tunstall gave him no heed, but hurried with his dressing. Len, sitting up in bed, watched the fellow—puzzled, curious, mystified. Pie, impatient as he was, had been going to leave the scrap till it was later, and safer. Tunstall, bent on breaking bounds, was risking it, with his Form-master hardly clear of the dormitory. Any fellow breaking out at night would have left it till later—unless he wanted to be spotted and caught and sacked. And that was what Tunstall wanted!

He was going to leave the House with rather the certainty than the risk of being spotted—and the "sack" to follow. He had tried on that very game, as Len knew only too clearly, half a dozen times already, and one chance or another had cropped up to knock it on the head. This time he was leaving nothing to chance. This time he was going to be spotted and expelled!

But Tunstall's game was not to be a success that night any more than on earlier occasions. Pie Porrhage had to be reckoned with.

Pie did not care a hoot whether Tunstall got himself sacked or not. He did care whether the tick got out of reach of his avenging knuckles. He picked himself up, and limped towards the new fellow. Harvey and Banks, and three or four others, were out of bed now. They gathered round Tunstall, who gave them dark looks.

"Keep the cad from bolting!" said Pie. "I can't chase him up and down the dorm with this leg! Put up your paws, you swab!"

Tunstall scowled at him blackly.

"Don't be a fool! I'm going out."

"Going out, are you?" said Pie grimly. "Well, if you want to go out, after I'm through, I won't stop you. Just at present I'm going to handle you for what you did on Greenwood Down this afternoon. Will you put up your hands?"

"No!" said Tunstall, through his gritted teeth. "If you want to scrap, you fool, leave it till you're fit!"

"Something in that, Pie, old man," said Harvey.

"I'm fit enough to thrash that swab!" said Pie. "Fit or not, I'm going to do it! Don't let him run away, that's all—I can't get after him with this leg! Now, then, you worm—"

Smaek! Pie's fist came home in Tunstall's scowling face. The latter had nearly finished dressing. He never quite finished. Pie followed up that punch with another, and another.

Tunstall put up his hands—he had no choice about that. Half a dozen of the Fifth, clustered round, cut off his retreat. In sheer desperation, he threw himself into the scrap, and for several hectic minutes there was fierce fighting.

Twice Pie's game leg failed him, and he went down. Each time he scrambled up somehow, and renewed the fight with undiminished vim. Pie was no whale on boxing, but he had a hefty punch—and it landed on Tunstall hard and often. Every anguished twinge in his damaged knee added to Pie's force and fury—and in five minutes the Oakshott Fifth witnessed such a thrashing as they had never witnessed before.

It was not till Tunstall, in a groaning heap on the floor, was obviously unable to carry on, that Pie tottered back to his bed, battered, breathless, but victorious.

Tunstall lay where he was, groaning and gasping, till Harvey gave him a hand. Harvey had to help him get his clothes off—he was too far gone to do it unaided. He collapsed in his bed, and lay there gasping. Breaking out that night was no longer a thing possible for the bad hat of the Fifth. He could hardly have crawled out on his hands and knees!

Cayley blew out the candles. The Fifth Form settled down to sleep—except for Pie, his usual healthy slumber disturbed by his painful knee, Tunstall groaning over his damages—and Len Lex!

Len was not sleeping. He was thinking, and the look on his face was strange. Tunstall, groaning in his bed, was safe for that night—saved, as the fellows supposed, from the risk of detection and the sack; defeated, as the Schoolboy Detective knew, in his amazing scheme for getting himself expelled from Oakshott. Why, was the question that had hammered unanswered in Len's brain—till now! Now, like a gleam of light in the dark, it had come to him—so strange, so startling, that it made him catch his breath.

He could not be surprised that he had not thought of it before—so strange and startling was it. He had never seen Eric Tunstall before the first day of that term at Oakshott—if he had seen him then! Had he?

Eric Tunstall, due for disinheritance if he was expelled from Oakshott School, could not imaginably want to be sacked.

Tunstall of the Fifth was seeking by every stealthy and surreptitious means to get himself sacked from Oakshott.

Therefore, Tunstall of the Fifth was not Eric Tunstall!

Who was he? And where was the real Eric Tunstall? Much remained to be discovered. But the Schoolboy Detective had his finger on the clue!

With a clue to work on, Len's a mighty swift worker. Look out for startling developments in next Saturday's Schoolboy Detective story, the KID-NAPPED FIFTH-FORMER!