

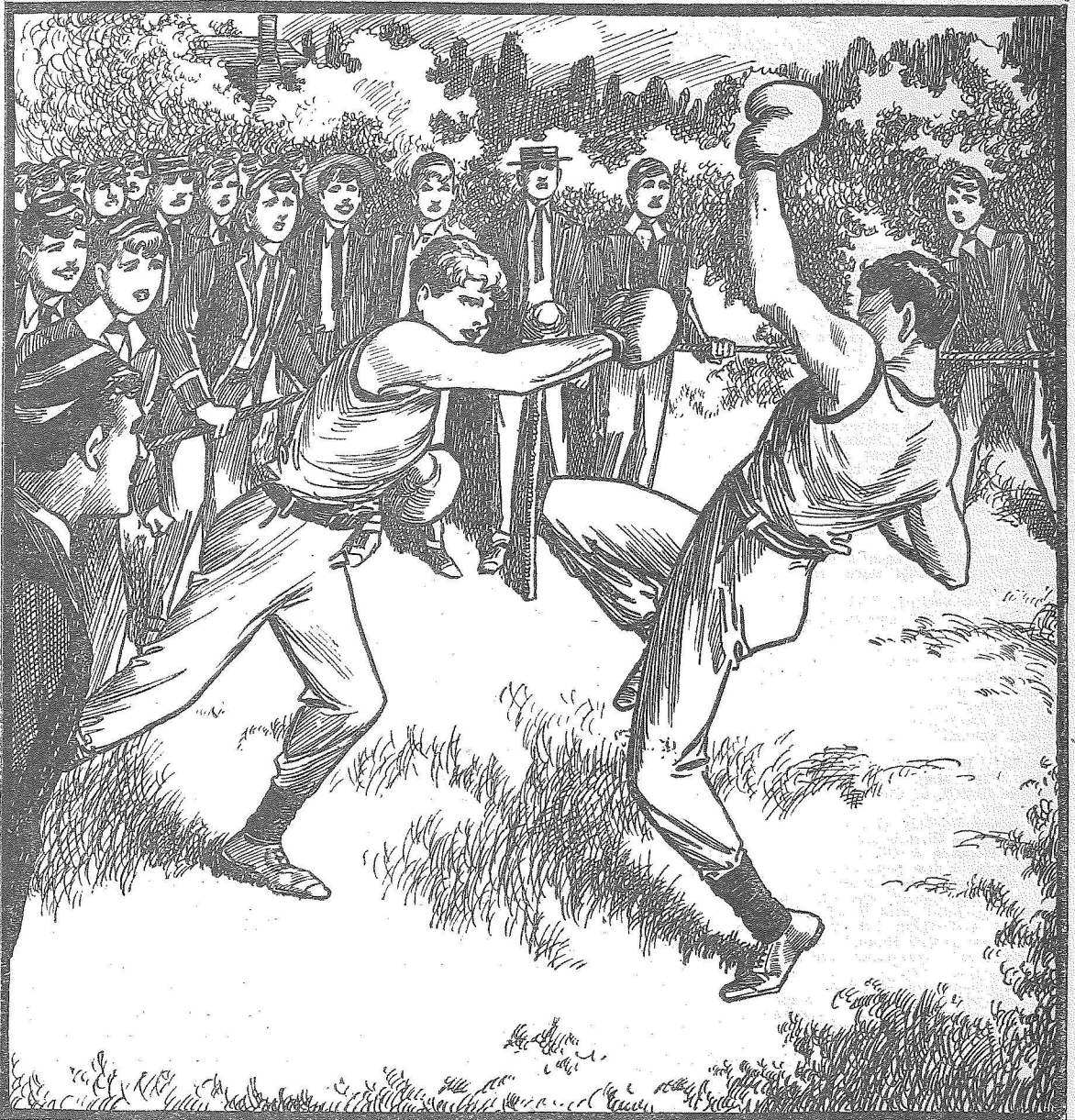
28
GRAND BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER!

The Penny **1½!**
Popular

Week Ending
August 2nd, 1919.

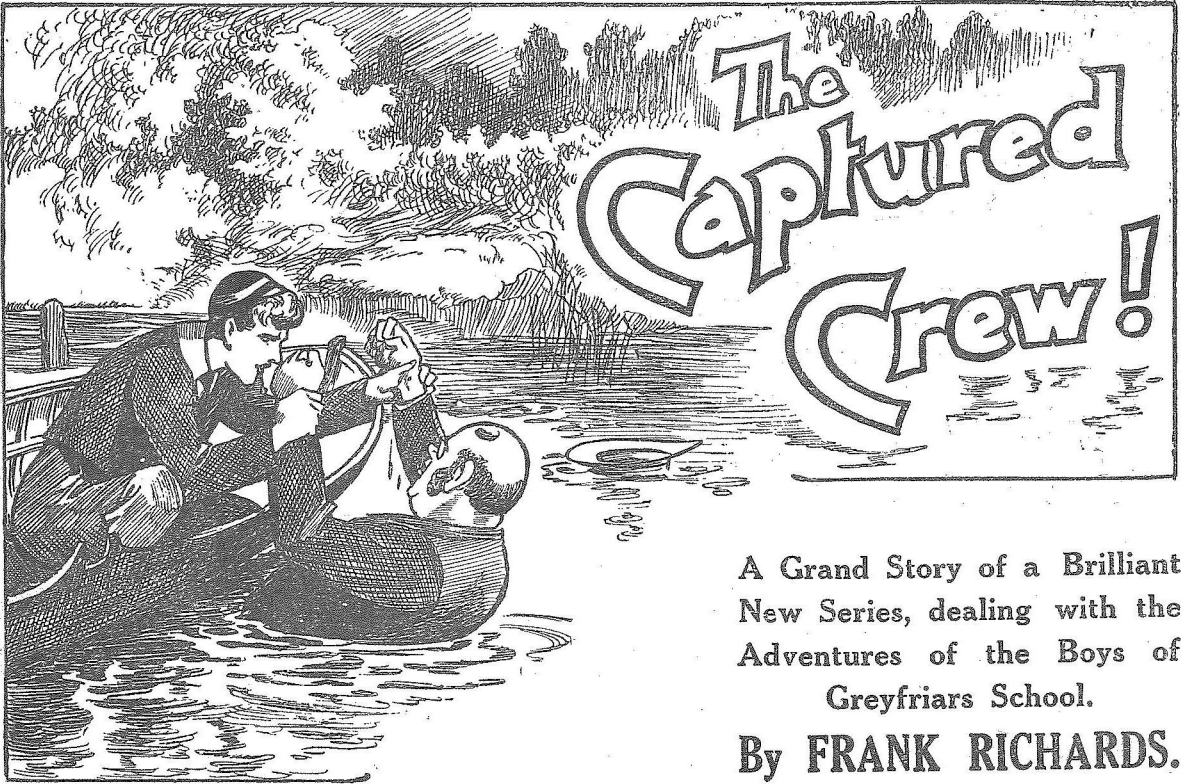
No. 28.
New Series.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & CO.—JIMMY SILVER & CO.—TOM MERRY & CO.



BOB CHERRY'S GREAT CONTEST!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of Greyfriars in this issue.)



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Modest Hero.

"PULL, you beggars—pull!" Round a bend in the River Sark, close to Greyfriars, appeared a sturdy, athletic boat's crew. The timely plashing of their oars made merry music.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, were putting in some hard practice on the river.

They were visiting Chester next day, to hold a sports' tournament with the boys of Cheshire, and a boat-race had been included in the list of events.

Dicky Nugent, who was acting as cox, yelled cheerfully at the Remove oarsmen.

"That's the style! Strong and steady does it! Buck up, No. 4!"

No. 4 was Dicky Nugent's major, who was taking things a trifle more easily than he should have done.

"Don't get excited, Dicky," said Frank. "I'm saving up my powers till we get to Chester. That's when we shall need to go all out. By all accounts, the Cheshire fellows have got a first-rate crew."

Harry Wharton, at stroke, set a hot pace for the last quarter of a mile, and the juniors were panting and puffing when they drew level with the boat-house.

"Well rowed!" said a quiet, approving voice.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "It's Miss Phyllis!"

Phyllis Howell, of Cliff House, was on the towing-path.

She smiled brightly at the juniors as they stepped out of their boat.

Harry Wharton & Co. chatted with their girl-chum for a few moments, and then disappeared into the boat-house, with the exception of Bob Cherry, who lingered behind.

"Buck up, Bob!" said Harry Wharton.

"Ahem! I—I think I'll stroll with Miss Phyllis as far as Cliff House," murmured Bob.

"Good idea!" murmured Frank Nugent. "I'll come along, too."

"Same here!" said Wharton.

"I, too, will helpfully assist to escortfully take the charming Miss Phyllis to Cliff House!" murmured Hurrey Singh.

Bob Cherry flushed.

"Don't be a set of asses!" he said. "Keep off the grass! Two's company, you know."

"I believe," said Nugent solemnly, "that our Bob's fallen head-over-ears in love!"

"You champion ass—"

"I see all the symptoms," said Squiff. "Bob's very badly bitten. Note his nice

clean rowing-jersey. Note also the fact that he's washed his neck."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe he's cultivating a growth on his upper-lip, too!" said Tom Brown.

"Of all the prize idiots!" growled Bob Cherry.

And, slamming the door of the boat-house in the faces of his humorous chums, he joined Phyllis Howell on the towing-path.

"What's the joke, Bob?" asked Phyllis.

"Oh, nothing!" said Bob. "I'm going to see you as far as Cliff House, if I may."

"Of course you may! And you can stay to tea, if you like! Our study isn't in funds, but I believe that Flap Derwent mentioned that there was a stale sardine in the cupboard, and a kipper of advanced age."

"Then it will be a high tea," said Bob, laughing.

Phyllis laughed, too.

"By the way," she said, "why were you rowing at such a pace just now?"

"We're having a boat-race with the Cheshire fellows in a day or two on the River Dee."

"Splendid!"

"I think we shall pull it off," said Bob.

"Wharton's been keeping us up to the mark."

Phyllis nodded.

"One of these days," she said, "you must have a boat-race with Cliff House."

"Eh?"

"We'll challenge you to a race on the river!"

"You're joking, of course!" grinned Bob.

"Why, we should simply knock spots off you!"

"You think girls can't row!" exclaimed Phyllis, with a flash of indignation.

"Well—er—not exactly," faltered Bob.

"But you wouldn't be quite up to our weight."

"How long is the course you covered just now?"

"Half a mile."

"Well, provided you give us two hundred yards start, I'll guarantee to raise a crew of girls that will beat you! Is that a bargain?"

"Oh, quite!" said Bob.

He smiled at the prospect of a boat-race with the Cliff House girls. He recalled sundry contests between the girls and boys at cricket, football, and hockey—contests in which the girls had been hopelessly out-classed.

Cliff House had never met Greyfriars on the river; but, even with two hundred

yards to help them, there was not much doubt that the girls would be whacked to the wide.

"That's a go, then!" said Phyllis. "Directly you come back from Chester we'll hold the race. Of course, if you feel like backing out—"

"Not a bit of it!" said Bob.

When Cliff House was reached the scheme was propounded to Flap Derwent, who cheerfully remarked that Greyfriars would be beaten to a frazzle.

Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevelyan, who came into the study during the conversation, emphatically declared that Cliff House could hold its own on the river against all comers.

"Of course," said Bob Cherry, "you might beat us if Billy Bunter was stroke. But you'll find Wharton a very different proposition."

To which Miss Clara retorted in her emphatic, boyish way:

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry partook of his "high" tea—which wasn't so bad, after all—and set off for Greyfriars by way of the towing-path. He chuckled to himself as he went.

"Phyllis has put her foot in it this time with a vengeance!" he murmured. "If we don't lick Cliff House to a frazzle I'm a Dutchman!"

Bob Cherry was still amusing himself with his reflections, when he sighted a plump and portly gentleman on the opposite side of the river.

The gentleman was evidently in a great hurry, for, although he carried a considerable amount of overweight, he was coming along at a canter.

A plank had been placed across the river at that part, as a temporary means of crossing.

No doubt a young and agile person could have crossed the plank in safety, but it was a risky undertaking for a stout gentleman in a hurry.

Bob Cherry saw the portly person heading for the plank, and he gave a shout of warning.

"I shouldn't try the plank if I were you, sir! It's safer to cross by the foot-bridge lower down."

The stout gentleman took no heed.

He puffed his way towards the plank, and plunged across it.

Bob Cherry looked on breathlessly. "The mad idiot!" he muttered, as the plank



The portly gentleman paused in the middle of the swaying plank uncertain whether to turn back or go on. Somehow he lost his footing, and with a cry of alarm he struck the water. (See page 3.)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Captured!

YOU won't be ever wantin' a dog, now?"

Skinner gave a start, as the words were addressed to him.

He was taking a solitary stroll through the streets of Chester, in the cool of the evening.

"A very cute an' intelligent animal!" continued the voice.

Skinner turned, and was confronted by one of the most repulsive-looking men he had ever seen. He was holding a pugnacious-looking dog, duly muzzled, on a lead.

"The fact is," said the man confidently, "I'm 'ard up, an' the only way I can raise the wind is to part with my best pal. I don't want to lose 'im, but I feel he ought to go. Are you game to make me a bid for 'im, young gent?"

"I don't want a dog," said Skinner shortly. "But this 'ere is a sooper-dog—a most intelligent critter!"

"Nothing doing!" said Skinner.

He was about to move on, when it occurred to him that he might make good use of this repulsive-looking man.

"You say you're hard up?" said Skinner.

"Which I ain't touched a mouthful of food for days!"

The statement was perfectly correct, so far as solid food was concerned. The "Puncher," as he was known in Chester, was in the habit of taking his food in liquid form.

"Look here," said Skinner. "I'll tell you an easy way of earning a fiver!"

The Puncher's eyes glittered.

"I'm your man, every time!" he said.

"You want a little job done?"

Skinner nodded.

"I want eight fellows to be put out of the way for a day or two," he said.

"You want 'em kidnapped—what?" said the Puncher, all attention.

"That's rather an ugly word. I don't want any violence used, if that's what you mean. I just want them safely shut up under lock and key."

"A fiver ain't much for a risky job of that sort!" said the Puncher.

"I'll cap it with another fiver when the job's finished," said Skinner.

"That's better! An' 'ow am I to get 'old of these kids—I take it they're kids?"

"They're just about my own size and weight."

"Then they won't give much trouble!" said the Puncher, with a contemptuous glance at Skinner's weedy frame.

"You'll have to get a couple of fellows to help you," said Skinner.

"That's soon done!"

"Good! The eight kids will be going for a bathe in the river at six o'clock in the morning. The coast ought to be quite clear then. Where do you propose to take them?"

The Puncher reflected a moment.

"There's an empty 'ouse a couple of miles beyond the town," he said. "I'll see that the kids are stowed away safe in the cellar."

"That's the idea!" said Skinner.

He rummaged in his pocket, and produced a five-pound note—the sum total of his resources.

It went very much against the grain to have to part with the fiver, but Skinner reflected that the kidnapping of an entire crew was bound to cost money.

"I leave the details to you," he said, as he handed over the note. "Mind you make a good job of it."

"Trust me!" said the Puncher cheerfully.

Skinner walked back to the hotel with his heart beating fast.

He had played a good many low-down parts in his time, but none so base as this.

Supposing the Puncher made a hash of it? Skinner scarcely dared to think of the consequences.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in bed when the cad of the Remove reached the hotel.

The eight members of the boat's crew—the Famous Five, Squiff, Mark Linley, and Monty Newland—had arranged to retire early, and to turn out at six in the morning for a swim.

There was no sleep for Skinner that night. He had a room to himself, the rest of the juniors having no use for his company; and he tossed restlessly in his bed all night.

Blissfully unconscious of the fact that they would be walking into a trap, the eight members of the crew awoke early, and set out with their towels and costumes.

"What a topping morning!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"It's ideal for a dip," he said.

"Don't seem to be many people about," remarked Nugent.

The juniors struck off down a deserted side-street.

The next moment a big car came crawling towards them.

There were three men in the car, which slowed up as it approached the Greyfriars fellows.

What followed happened so swiftly and suddenly that the juniors had no time to put up a fight.

The three men leapt out on to the pavement, and Harry Wharton & Co. were bundled into the car.

"What the thump—" began Bob Cherry. And then he found himself, lying gagged and bound and helpless, on the seat.

The rest of the juniors shared the same fate. And then the car bounded forward.

It did not crawl this time. It fairly

already begun to suspect that it was Skinner who had hidden his bat.
Fortunately for the cad of the Remove, Bob Cherry did not put his suspicion into words.
All the same, Harold Skinner was not destined to go scot-free!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Rascal's Reward!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. took no further part in sport that day. The strain of the boatrace had temporarily crippled their energies. Next morning, however, the swimming contests took place.
Out of seven events the boys of Cheshire won four and Greyfriars three.
Shortly afterwards Bob Cherry came face to face with Jim Challoner in the boxing-ring.
The Cheshire skipper had earned the title of "Jim the Slogger" on the cricket-field; but the nickname applied with equal truth to his performances in the ring.
Although a clean fighter, he was not a scientific one. He believed in hitting hard and hitting often; and had Bob Cherry not stopped one of his sledge-hammer punches, the sledge-hammer punch in question would have stopped Bob Cherry!
But Bob's defence was perfect, and he gave his opponent no chance to break through.
At the end of the third round Challoner was caught napping.
He lowered his guard for an instant, and Bob Cherry sailed in with a blow which would have knocked the stuffing out of a better man than Challoner.
The Cheshire boy went down for the count; and a storm of applause greeted the victorious Greyfriars boxer.
"Here endeth the tour!" said Squiff. "Methinks we've done extremely well!"
"Did I hear you say that the tour was ended, Squiff?" inquired Bob Cherry.
"Of course!"
"Well, it isn't!"
The juniors stared at Bob Cherry.
"There are no other events, that I can see," said Harry Wharton. "We cut out the running races, and had the boatrace instead."
"And now we're going to have another!" said Bob Cherry. "Just before we came away I arranged, on behalf of the Remove, a boatrace with the Cliff House girls."
"My hat!"
"We're giving the fair damsels two hundred yards start in a course of half a mile," said Bob. "And if we don't lick them, we shall never hear the end of it!"
"Oh, we'll lick them all right!" grinned Nugent. "When's the race coming off?"
"To-morrow afternoon. I expect all the nobility and gentry will turn out to see it."
Bob Cherry was right.
After dinner next day, when the juniors were back on their native heath, the banks of the River Sark were crowded with spectators.

Greyfriars had turned out to a man to witness the extraordinary event; and a good many local people were present.
The Removites seemed to regard the affair as a huge joke.
Not so the Cliff House girls.
Before the race started, Phyllis Howell put her crew over half the course, and the onlookers, many of whom had come to scoff, began furiously to fume.
The girls were in fine trim.
Wingate had good-naturedly volunteered to start the race; and at his direction the two crews took up their positions, with the girls two hundred yards in front.
"That two hundred yards," said Squiff, casting his eye along the river, "will take some picking up. I'm not at all sure that you weren't a champion ass, Bob, to arrange this fixture!"
Bob Cherry was beginning to doubt the wisdom of his action, too. He had left out of his calculations the fact that, while the Greyfriars tourists had been in Cheshire, the Cliff House girls had been putting in some strenuous practice on the river.
"We simply must win!" said Harry Wharton. "If we lost, I should never be able to look the girls in the face again."
"They'd chip us for ever and ever!" said Nugent.
The Greyfriars crew, after seeing their opponents perform, no longer looked upon the affair as a farce. They were anxious and uneasy.
The Cliff House girls, on the other hand, were calm and confident.
"We simply must win!" said Phyllis Howell, unconsciously quoting Wharton's own words. "They think that we girls can't row, and we're going to teach them not to jump to hasty conclusions!"
"Hear, hear!" said Clara Trevlyn. "Cliff House isn't going to be licked by mere boys!"
"No, rather not!" said Flap Derwent.
"Now we're off!" said Clara. "Let her rip, girls!"
"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie Hazeldene. But Marjorie's voice was lost in the uproar which followed.
The pistol cracked, and the race started, to the accompaniment of a deafening roar from the crowd on the bank.
"Go it, Greyfriars!"
"Come on, Cliff House!"
Harry Wharton meant to leave nothing to chance. He set just as fast a stroke as he had set on the River Dee, against the boys of Cheshire.
And he had need to, for the girls were going strong.
Phyllis Howell rowed vigorously, and the other girls kept time with her with perfect precision.
For a time, the distance between the two boats did not seem to lessen.
But the boys naturally had more stamina, and the pace which Phyllis Howell had set at the start was not maintained for long.
Harry Wharton, on the other hand, did not

slacken his stroke, and the Greyfriars boat drew nearer and nearer, the blades of the oarsmen cleaving the water in union.
"Good old Friars!"
"Drive her through, Wharton!"
The Cliff House girls had slackened considerably, but Phyllis Howell rallied them again when the winning-post came in sight.
Harry Wharton darted a quick glance over his shoulder.
And then the Friars made their final spurt. The boat leapt through the sparkling water like a live thing.
Six more strokes, and the Greyfriars boat was level. Eight more, and the race was over and won.
Harry Wharton & Co. had achieved a thrilling victory on the post.
Phyllis Howell stepped up to Bob Cherry, and extended her hand with a frank smile.
"We give you best," she said.
"You put up a great show!" said Bob Cherry chivalrously. "I take back all I said about girls not being able to row. You made us go all out!"
At that moment, Mr. Quelch came on the scene, with a portly gentleman in tow.
"Well done, my boys!" he said, with a smile.
The portly gentleman was about to add his congratulations to those of the Form-master, when his eyes lighted upon Bob Cherry.
"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "There is the boy who saved my life!"
"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob. "That's fairly put the golden helmet on it!"
For the portly person was none other than the Mayor of Courtfield!
Mr. Quelch started just as violently as Bob Cherry had done.
He turned to the mayor.
"I fear you are labouring under a delusion, sir," he said. "The boy who saved your life is not present."
"Nonsense! My eyesight is not failing me, Mr. Quelch. That is the boy!"
"But it was Skinner who rescued you——"
"Is not that boy's name Skinner?"
"Certainly not! That is Robert Cherry!"
The mayor blinked at the bewildered Bob.
"But you told me——"
"That my name was Skinner? Yes, sir. I—goodness knows what made me say it! I suppose it was because I didn't want a lot of fuss made about the affair."
"Cherry!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Do you mean to say it was you who saved this gentleman's life?"
"That's so, sir."
"Then Skinner has been taking credit for the action of another! He made no attempt to contradict the report in the Press. I shall have to deal most severely with Skinner!"
"I didn't mean to cause trouble, sir," faltered Bob Cherry.
"It was very wrong of you to withhold your correct name, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "However, as you were prompted by feelings of modesty, I shall say no more about it. I——"
Just then Mr. Quelch caught sight of Skinner, and swooped down upon him like a wolf on the fold, as Squiff expressed it.
"Skinner!" Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the rumble of thunder. "Come with me at once!"
The cad of the Remove backed away in alarm.
"Come!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "I trust you do not wish me to use force, Skinner?"
"Nunno, sir!"
"Very well, then. You will accompany me immediately to my study!"
And Skinner reluctantly obeyed.
Mr. Quelch did not spare the rod. The wretched Skinner was grovelling on the Form-master's carpet when the castigation was over.
And Skinner went, giving the impression that he was trying to fold himself up like a penknife.
But he had got no more than he deserved. Indeed, if the full chapter of his offences had come to light, he would not have seen another sunrise at Greyfriars. On the whole, he had got off very lightly.

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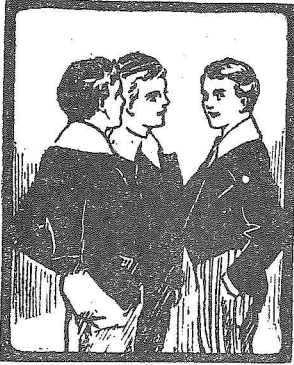
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PRICE FOURPENCE PER VOLUME.

There was a great celebration in Study No. 1 that evening, and Bob Cherry occupied the place of honour at the head of the table.
The startling news that Bob, and not Skinner, had been instrumental in saving the mayor's life, spread through the Remove like wild-fire.
Bob Cherry was the hero of the hour. And as for Skinner, he was sent to Coventry for a week to brood over the complete failure of his plot in connection with the Captured Crew!

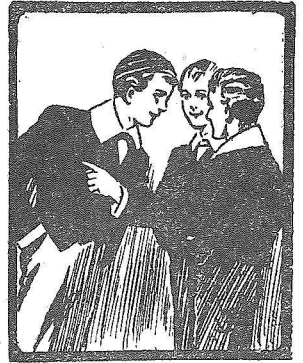
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THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 28.



THE MISCHIEF MAKERS!

A New Long, Complete Story
of JIMMY SILVER & Co., the
Chums of Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Tommy's in Trouble.

"WHY should Tommy Doyle was a fat-head?"

Tommy Doyle stopped suddenly as he heard his name mentioned. He was walking under the trees bordering the Rookwood playing-fields, and for once he was alone.

He waited for the answer to the question.

"Why, Tommy Dodd!"

Tommy Doyle peeped through the bushes, and looked towards the speaker. It was Peele, the cad of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, and he was talking to Gower and Lattrey, his chums.

"Tommy Dodd said Doyle was a fathead!" exclaimed Gower. "That's enough, my son. Why, they are pals!"

Peele sneered.

"Even pals have things said about them," he said. "You can be sure Tommy Dodd made certain Doyle was not knocking about when he said it."

Tommy Doyle flushed, and clenched his fists hard. But he did not speak.

"What was biting Tommy Dodd, then?" asked Lattrey.

"Something to do with a remittance Doyle had received from Ireland," explained Peele. "Of course, I don't know all the facts. I just happened to hear Tommy Dodd speak of Doyle as a fathead."

"Perhaps he didn't share the remittance with them—Dodd and Cook," suggested Gower. "I always did say that the greatest of pals are not always open-hearted to each other."

Tommy Doyle bit his lip hard.

His hot Irish blood urged him to use his fists as an effective means of staying the words that Peele was uttering. But surely, where was the need for Peele to lie to his friends when he could not know that Tommy Doyle was listening?

Tommy Doyle hesitated, and a feeling of bitter resentment swept over him. He certainly had had a large remittance from home, and he had not told Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook, who were his staunchest friends in the Modern House at Rookwood, that he was in funds.

It was Tommy Doyle's plan to invite his chums to a picnic on the river on the coming Saturday afternoon. Funds were low with the Modern House Co., and Tommy Doyle was looking forward with keen pleasure to the surprise and gratification of his chums.

But Peele's words cast a damper over those pleasant thoughts.

He did not move as Peele & Co. jumped to their feet and walked away towards the Classical House. He felt very much like punching their heads.

"Sure, it's rot!" he muttered, and sat down to think the matter over.

Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook had always been his closest friends, and many pleasures and many dangers had they passed through together.

But now—

Why should Peele, without knowing that he—Tommy Doyle—was listening, openly say that Tommy Dodd had been running him down behind his back?

That was the question which literally burned in Tommy Doyle's brain as he sat under the trees by the playing-fields of Rookwood, and for an answer to which he would cheerfully have given the whole of the remittance recently received.

But Peele & Co. could have enlightened him on the subject.

Up in their study in the Classical House, the

three cads were sitting down, chuckling and gurgling with laughter.

"I'll bet he bit that little lot, Peeley!" chuckled Gower. "It's a good job I saw him coming. Now perhaps the cheeky snobs will be quarrelling amongst themselves."

Lattrey snorted.

"That doesn't do us much good," he said warmly. "If I had not mentioned that Tommy Doyle was in funds, and suggested borrowing something from him, you'd never have thought of pitching that yarn!"

Peele laughed.

"My dear ass," he exclaimed, "that's where the jolly part comes in! You sowed the seed, so to speak, and my imagination did the rest! I'll bet there's a to-do over at the Modern to-night!"

"Mischief-making, that's all it is," snapped Lattrey. "However, it's none of my business, and I don't care what comes of it!"

"But we do!" chuckled Gower. "I'd give something to see Jimmy Silver & Co. fall out, and then Tommy Dodd & Co.—a jolly old bust-up all the way round!"

Peele, Gower, and Lattrey had not forgotten the humiliation and punishment they had received from the two famous Co.'s on account of their caddish ways.

Gower had stuck the "treatment" longer than the others, but had been made to eat humble pie, after all. And Gower was of a vindictive nature.

If Tommy Doyle could have heard the conversation in that study, everything would have been all right. But unfortunately he did not.

He could find no answer to that burning question, and made up his mind to tackle Tommy Dodd himself. But even as he was on his way to the Modern House he changed his mind.

If Tommy Dodd had passed that remark, then surely it was not up to him to ask for apologies! That was how Tommy Doyle, hot with anger, looked at the matter.

As far as that went, however, it was hardly right for Tommy Doyle to listen to the cads of the Classical House without giving his own tried chums a hearing.

But Tommy Doyle's hot Irish blood would not admit that Peele & Co. could have been speaking otherwise than quite innocently.

He reached the study, and promptly took up a book and started to read.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Dodd were there, but to them he paid not the slightest heed.

Tommy Dodd looked up in surprise.

"What's biting you, honey?" he asked.

Tommy Doyle did not reply.

"Been ragged by the Classics?"

"No!"

"Been gated?"

"No!"

"Bulkeley been cutting up rough?"

"No!"

Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook stared.

Doyle had always been of a communicative nature, and kept nothing back from his chums. But he was evidently keeping something back now. He was, moreover, unusually sulky.

"Let him alone, Tommy," whispered Tommy Cook. "He'll be all right in a few minutes."

Tommy Doyle turned over the pages of the book listlessly, but although he must have heard Tommy Cook's whisper, he made no sign of the fact.

"Sulky little ass!" snapped Tommy Dodd. "He's got something on his mind, and won't tell us!"

"Shush!" murmured Tommy Cook.

Tommy Doyle bit his lip hard. His face flushed and his eyes gleamed angrily as he heard Tommy Dodd's remark.

Sulky! That was the first time any suggestion of that sort had been laid at his door, and Tommy Doyle felt bitterly angry and deeply resentful.

"Sure, there's nothin' the matter with me, entirely," he said suddenly. "I'm all right, and I'm not sulky!"

"Then what on earth's the matter with you?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "You look as though you'd lost sixpence and found a bob, or the other way about."

"Can't help my looks, can I?" asked Doyle warmly.

"But you don't usually go about with a face as long as a fiddle," put in Tommy Cook quietly.

"Nor walk in the study and sit down without a word," added Tommy Dodd.

"Suppose I can do as I like?" snapped Tommy Doyle. "If yez—"

He was interrupted. The door suddenly opened, and Jimmy Silver, Arthur Edward Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, the chums of the Classical House, who were known as the Fistical Four, came in.

There was a cheerful grin on Jimmy Silver's face.

"Hallo, my chip-chips!" he said gaily. "Did I hear voices raised in anger?"

"It's bad for little boys to quarrel," added Newcome solemnly.

Tommy Dodd glowered.

"Rats!" he said warmly. "If you chaps don't want to go out on your necks, you'd better not make fatheaded remarks!"

"We're not quarrelling, either," snorted Tommy Cook. "Over here we are at peace—not for ever kicking up a shindy like you chaps do in the Classics."

Jimmy Silver chuckled as he looked from one to another of the Modern House Co. His glance rested on Tommy Doyle, who had proceeded with his reading as soon as he was interrupted.

"It looks as if one member of the Co. that never quarrels has got the pip," he said lightly. "I'd like to warn you, my good young fellow—"

"Rats!" snapped Tommy Doyle.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared, and Tommy Dodd and Cook flushed uncomfortably.

It was not what Tommy Doyle said that made the Classical Co. stare. It was the tone in which he spoke.

"My hat!" said Jimmy Silver. "What's the matter, Tommy?"

"Nothin'!" answered Tommy Doyle shortly.

"And if you're going to stand there gassing rot, sure, then I'm off!"

And, taking his book, Tommy Doyle rose from his chair and left the study. He closed the door behind him with a slam that reverberated throughout the House.

Jimmy Silver & Co. simply gasped.

"My hat! I've never seen our Tommy like that!" said Jimmy Cook, in surprise. "Blessed if I know what's the matter with him!"

"Nor I!" said Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver shook his forefinger reprovingly at the leader of the Modern juniors.

"Tommy Dodd, I'm surprised at you!" he said solemnly.

"And so are we!" murmured Raby.

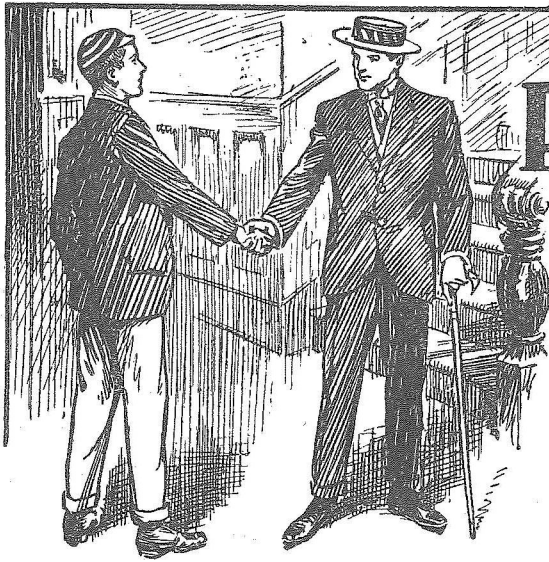
"Look here—" began Tommy Dodd heatedly.

"Naughty boys to quarrel!" interrupted Jimmy Silver. "As one chap—"

"We haven't quarrelled!" howled Tommy Dodd excitedly. "We've never had a word! I tell you—"

"Better leave it to them to make it up!" said Newcome slowly. "Come on, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. turned and left the study, shaking their heads sorrowfully.



THE RECKONING!

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

A Magnificent New, Long Complete School Tale of TOM MERRY & Co. at
: : St. Jim's. : :

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Three Minors Are Asked to Tea.

PARDON me, but you are a St. Jim's boy, aren't you?" Frank Levison, of the Third Form, turned at that question, addressed to him in a sweet and pleasant voice.

It was a lady who had put the question—a young lady, and a very pretty one. He knew her at once, though he had never spoken to her before.

He raised his straw hat, and answered politely:

"Yes, Miss Graeme."

"Why, you know my name—or, at least, my stage name!" said the pretty young lady, smiling down upon him.

"Oh, yes. I—you see, we've seen your photo outside the Empire, and—and—but I thought you had gone!"

Frank's confusion was evident. He and his chums had talked a good deal about Miss Nora Graeme during the last week or so. There had been trouble at St. Jim's, and she was mixed up in it. Just how she came to be mixed up in it they did not understand, and it was by accident they had come to know about it. But they were sure it was not in any way her fault.

This confidence in her was based on the fact that she looked not only very pretty, but also very nice. It was not, perhaps, an absolutely conclusive argument; but it was good enough for Wally & Co. They were ready to rank Nora Graeme with Wally's Cousin Ethel and Doris Levison, Frank's sister, which was giving her very high rank indeed.

But Frank felt confused now. He thought Miss Graeme must guess that she had been talked about at St. Jim's, and he suspected that she might not like it.

She did guess that, and it is possible that it did not exactly please her. But Frank Levison's face pleased her. It was such an honest face, and Frank's smile so winning.

"We are not playing anywhere this week," the girl answered, "and I am staying on at Wayland for two or three days, with my friend Miss Mandeville, who has just gone into a shop. I saw you standing there, and I felt sure you would not mind my speaking to you."

Frank would have said he liked it, but he was too shy. So he said:

"I'm waiting for someone who's gone into a shop, too—at least, two fellows—D'Arcy minor and Manners minor. I stayed to watch the bikes, you know; there have been quite a lot stolen lately."

"D'Arcy minor—why, that must be one of Lord Eastwood's sons, surely! Which is it—Wally or Arthur?"

"It's Wally—Arthur is Gussy, and Gussy's D'Arcy major, of course. But it's queer you should know Wally—he doesn't know you."

"He wouldn't—not by the name I bear now," replied the girl. "And I don't suppose he would remember me. I was a schoolgirl when I met him, and he was a dear little kiddie in frocks."

"Oh, I say, though, don't you remind Wally of that!" said Frank, aghast. "He'd hate it frightfully, you know. Fancy Wally in frocks!"

"I will be discreet, I promise you," said the pretty young lady, smiling very charmingly. "But I really must speak to Wally. By the way, you haven't told me your name."

"I'm Levison minor, Miss Graeme."

"And I'm really Miss Dalgleish, not Miss Graeme at all. That is only my stage name. Oh, here's my friend Miss Mandeville!"

A stout lady, quite nice-looking, Frank thought, but very much older and stouter than Nora Graeme, came bustling out of a draper's shop.

"I've matched it, dear!" she said gaily.

"Oh, you've found a friend, I see!"

"Yes, a new friend; but one of his chums is quite an old one, I find, and I'm waiting to see him. This is Levison minor. I don't know his Christian name."

"Frank," murmured the Third Former, colouring.

"That is Frank Levison. That's ever so much better than Levison minor, isn't it? And this lady, Frank, is my very best chum, Miss Mandeville."

"Mabel Mandeville," said the leading lady, with a wink that Frank did not fail to see.

"But you need not call her Mabel until you know her better," said Miss Graeme, with a silvery little laugh.

"Oh, I shouldn't think of it!" murmured Frank.

He rather wished Wally would appear. He was quite equal to talking to Miss Graeme; but he felt that Wally was needed to cope with the other lady.

And at this moment Wally and Reggie Manners appeared.

"Hallo, kid!" began Wally. "Why didn't you—"

Then he stopped short, seeing the two ladies, and both he and Reggie doffed their hats.

"Why, it's Miss Graeme!" Frank distinctly heard Reggie whisper.

"You wouldn't know me, Wally, but I knew you when you were quite a small kid."

"Don't say 'in frocks!' He'll be awfully wild if you do!" whispered Frank.

"And perhaps you may remember my name—Nina Dalgleish," went on the pretty young lady, just as if Frank had said nothing.

"Why—but you—you're Miss Graeme!" said Wally, in amazement.

"That's my stage name, as I've already explained to your chum, here."

"Well, this is a corker!" cried Wally. "I seemed to know your face all along—"

"You never said so," put in Reggie Manners. "It was me that remembered her. I saw her in the piece last Christmas hols, you know."

"Shut up until you're introduced, you silly ass!" muttered Wally wrathfully.

"We must have introductions all round, I think," Miss Graeme said.

The introductions were duly made. Then Wally said:

"Why, I remember now! You're Kildare's cousin! That—that explains a lot, doesn't it, you fellows?"

"Quite a lot," observed Miss Mandeville, in rather a dry way.

And Frank was sure that he saw her wink again.

"Will you all come and have tea with us?" asked the younger lady.

Wally and Frank and Reggie looked at one another. All three wanted to accept the invitation, but each wanted to see first what the others thought about it.

The hesitation was only momentary. Wally saw that Frank and Reggie were willing to go, and that there was no likelihood of his being chipped later, and he replied:

"Oh, rather! Thanks awfully, Miss Dalgleish! I say, though, what ought I to call you? It's a bit difficult when anyone has two names, you know."

"Perhaps I had better be Miss Graeme for the present, Wally."

"Or Nora," put in Miss Mandeville slyly.

"Oh, that, if you like! I don't mind a bit, I'm sure!" replied the girl gaily.

They all thought her no end of a good sort, and only Frank suspected that there was a special motive behind the invitation to tea.

"Where shall we go?" she asked.

"Let's go to our digs," said Miss Mandeville. "But we'll get in plenty of good things first, as we've three squires to carry them."

Miss Mandeville knew that her friend had an object in inviting them. Frank was sure of that, too. Of course, it would be easier to talk at the ladies' lodgings than at a teashop.

Wally and Reggie both seemed pleased with the notion of going to tea with the two actresses. It made them feel manly, and just a bit doggish, perhaps. Frank liked it, too, but his feeling about it was rather different from theirs.

A visit to one or two confectioners' provided quite a load for each of the three. It seemed that Miss Graeme meant to do the thing in style, and that she had plenty of money.

The digs were very pleasant, and the landlady gave the trio a smiling welcome. Not until tea was fairly under way did Miss Graeme begin to ask any questions. And then she asked them in a manner that seemed quite natural, even to Frank, who was waiting for her to begin.

"So you remembered that I am Eric Kildare's cousin, Wally?" she said.

"Oh, rather!" replied Wally. "Pass those sausage-rolls, Reggie, you slacker! Miss Mandeville hasn't anything on her plate."

"Of course, you know my cousin very well?" went on the girl.

"What do you think? I fag for him, you know!"

"Do you? How nice! And it's an honour to be fag to the captain of St. Jim's, isn't it?"

"Yes; if you look at it that way. Old

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 28.



Miss Nina Dalglish and Wally D'Arcy & Co. marched into the local confectioners, and proceeded to purchase large quantities of eatables of every variety. (See page 11.)

he hasn't reported them yet, or us either. We've been caned; but he said he was going to report us as well when the Head came back. And the Head came back on Saturday evening. But he hasn't done a thing yet, and I don't see how he can if he lets it slide much longer."

"I believe Cardew's wangled it somehow," Frank said thoughtfully.

"Oh, you think Cardew can do anything!" retorted Wally. "This kid believes no end in Cardew, you know, Miss Graeme. I admit that the chap is jolly crafty, but I don't see how he could get round old Selby, especially after he'd done him down like that—pretending to be you—er—I mean, to be a girl."

"Did Mr. Selby ever report that?" asked Miss Mandeville.

"I don't know. No, I suppose he couldn't have done," Wally replied.

"Cardew would have been sacked if he had," said Reggie.

"I know he didn't," Frank said. "I sacked Cardew. I was afraid he would get sacked. And he said that dear old Selby had been merciful to him. You fellows know the mocking way he says things."

"Crums!" cried Wally, looking at his watch. "We shall have to scoot, and ride like one o'clock, or we shall be late for prep! You won't think us rude to bolt like this, will you, Miss Graeme, and Miss Mandeville, too?"

"Not in the very least!" answered Nora Graeme.

"You mustn't give your tyrant a chance by being late for—what-is-it?" added Miss Mandeville.

The three shook hands and darted out to their bikes, which had been left just under the window.

They were mounted and away within forty seconds of Wally's glance at his watch. Even so, they knew that they must do the ride across Wayland Moor in something like record time in order to be back for prep.

"The dears!" said Miss Mandeville. "I should have kissed them all if they had only given me time. And I fairly love the quiet youngster!"

She meant Frank Levison.

"They are dear little chaps," said Nora. "Mabel, I'm beginning to see through things a bit, and I'm afraid that that exceedingly perverse boy Cardew is really at the bottom of Eric's trouble."

"Old Gruff-and-Grim's at the bottom of it, and it's old Gruff-and-Grim you're beginning to see through!" replied Miss Mandeville.

She had taken a very strong dislike to Mr. Selby.

"Yes, I'm very much afraid he hasn't played fairly, Mabel."

"I can see through the business with the erratic Master Cardew, anyway. Of course, he didn't report the boy! He dared not! It would have made him look such a figure of fun, you see. And if it is true that the boy has prevailed upon him not to report the fight he has done it through that—working upon Gruff-and-Grim's fears, you know."

It was a shrewd guess. Miss Mandeville had seen a good deal of the world, and, though her acquaintance with men of Mr. Selby's type was small, she had sized him up better than Nina Dalglish had.

But now Miss Dalglish had also taken Mr. Selby's measure pretty accurately.

"I think you're right, Mabel," she said.

"I know I'm right, ducksy! I always am!"

"There's more fun in it than that, though. Mr. Selby blurted out to me the story of young Cardew's trick. He was very angry about it; and I was silly enough to laugh. Before that we had been on quite friendly terms. I had told him about my relationship to Eric, and had asked him, if he reported the dear boy, to tell the whole story, so that it might look less black against him. I don't see how any reasonable person could blame Eric much if they knew everything, do you, dear?"

"Schoolmasters are not reasonable persons!" snapped Miss Mandeville.

"Oh, but I think Dr. Holmes is, and Mr. Railton, too! Well, I believe that Mr. Selby played me false. I know he was bitterly incensed with me for being amused by Cardew's trick, and I think that he made up his mind to be revenged upon me as well

as upon Eric. So he reported Eric without saying anything about what I had told him. I'm sure of it!"

"So am I! I'd believe anything black about old Gruff-and-Grim! And, of course, that would make a bad case against Master Eric. To break bounds—isn't that what they call it?—to run after a flighty actress person—why, it might have been me just as well as you! But what are you going to do about it, dear? I know you mean to do something by that very resolute mouth of yours."

"I'm going to St. Jim's to see Dr. Holmes and tell him the whole truth!" flashed Nina. "Then, perhaps, it will be that horrible Mr. Selby who will be sacked, and not Eric!"

And with that she threw herself upon the couch and burst into tears.

"There, there, dear!" said Miss Mandeville, stroking her hair. "Don't take on! You shall go to-morrow, and I'll go with you!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Stopped on the Road.

"I SAY, Kildare!"

"What do you want, kid? You ought to be in bed, you know!" returned the Sixth-Former.

He had been sitting moodily by the window of his study, looking out upon the quad, when Wally D'Arcy had stuck his head in at the door.

"That's all right," answered Wally. "It wants five minutes to time yet. I should have come along to you before, only we had to ride like blue blazes to get back from Wayland in time for prep. We just managed it, though."

"But I didn't send for you. I don't want you," Kildare said, rather puzzled.

"Oh, I know that! It's because I've news for you that I've come."

"News! What news?"

"About your cousin!" replied Wally, with a half-suppressed chuckle.

He was prepared for the start Kildare gave at that.

"What cousin?" asked the senior sharply.

