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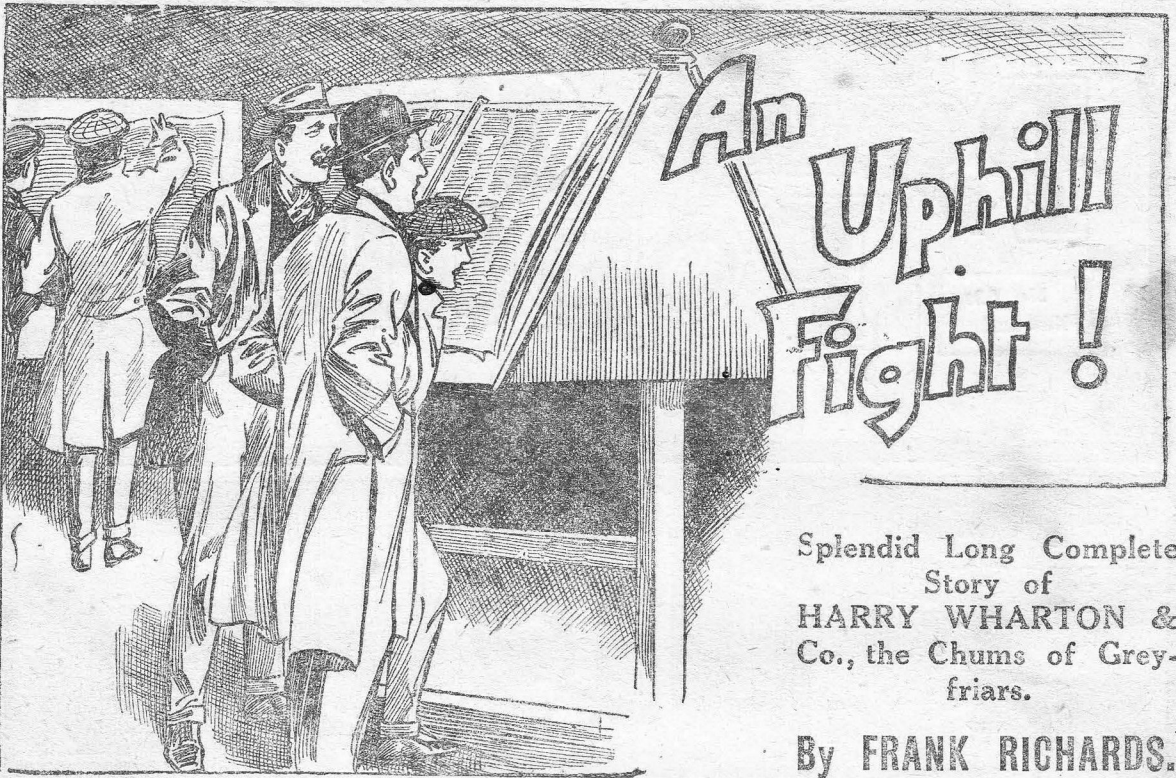
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**CHEERS FOR THE NEW CAPTAIN!**

*(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)*



Splendid Long Complete  
Story of  
**HARRY WHARTON &  
Co., the Chums of Greyfriars.**

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.  
Gentle Persuasion.**

"GONE!" said Bob Cherry gloomily. "Gone for good!" said Frank Nugent. "Poor old Dennis!" Six juniors stepped out of the little railway-station at Friardale and tramped slowly and thoughtfully back to Greyfriars. The Famous Five and Mark Linley had just been to see Dennis Carr off.

Lord Mauleverer and Sir Jimmy Vivian had accompanied them; and those two were still on the platform, although the London train, with Dennis Carr on board, had disappeared some moments since.

Owing to the fact that his father had died in poverty, it had become necessary for Dennis to leave Greyfriars.

The kindly old Head had tried to avert the catastrophe. He had offered to intercede with the Governors of the school for Dennis Carr to remain. But the junior's pride would not admit of his accepting charity of that sort.

Heartrending though it was to have to tear himself away from his familiar associations, Dennis had made up his mind to leave Greyfriars and to go to London, to meet whatever of good or ill the fates had in store for him.

At breakfast-time that morning Dennis had thrust his head into the doorway of the dining-room, and bidden the whole school good-bye. This was not good enough for Harry Wharton & Co., who had asked Mr. Quelch to allow them to see Dennis off.

And now the junior had gone. He had sold practically all his belongings, and a few pounds only stood between him and starvation. But from what the fellows knew of Dennis he was not likely to starve.

"A fellow like Carr would always fall on his feet," remarked Johnny Bull. "He's got plenty of savvy, and he's bound to get on." "I fancy he'll find it a stiff struggle," said Harry Wharton. "What with the difficulty of getting a job at the present time, to say nothing of the terrific cost of living, poor old Dennis will find himself up against it."

"He'll win through, though," said Bob Cherry.

"Hope so. If ever a fellow deserved to get on, Dennis Carr did."

"Wonder if we shall ever see him again?" murmured Nugent. "I don't suppose so; and let it be a queer world. Fellows have a habit of bobbing up when you least expect them."

"I rather think Dennis will come back," said Mark Linley, in his quiet way.

"What makes you think that, Marky?" asked Wharton.

"He may win a scholarship," said the Lancashire lad. "He's quite clever enough to do it."

"The cleverfulness of the esteemed Carr is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "All the same, I do not think he would care to returnfully come back as a scholarship boy. His pride would not permitfully allow him to do it."

"That's so," said Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly sorry the fellow's gone, anyway. I've never realised how much I liked him until now."

"That's always the way," said Wharton. "We never appreciate a fellow's worth until he's taken from us."

The juniors tramped on through the snow in silence.

Just before the gates of Greyfriars were reached, Frank Nugent spun round excitedly upon Harry Wharton.

"Do you realise what this means, Harry? The captaincy of the Form is vacant again!"

"My hat!"

In the excitement of the past twenty-four hours the juniors had overlooked the fact that Dennis Carr's departure had created a vacancy.

Dennis had been captain of the Remove—elected by a majority of one. And now his brilliant career had been cut short by the sudden death of his father.

"There will have to be another election, I suppose," said Wharton.

"Half a jiffy!" said Johnny Bull. "Who got the highest number of votes next to Carr?"

"Three of us tied, if you remember. Dick Russell, Billy Bunter, and myself."

"Then the new election—if there is one—will be confined to you three. By Jove, Harry! I can see you winning back your old position, after all!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It all depends on one thing," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"What's that?"

"Whether the fellows who voted for Carr at the last election will vote for Wharton this time."

"We'll canvass them," said Nugent, "and make sure of their votes."

"That's the idea!" said Mark Linley. "There are seven of them altogether—Squiff, Tom Brown, Dick Rake, Bulstrode, Monty New-

land, Mauly, and Jimmy Vivian. All of them are decent fellows, and I can't see them voting for a fat worm like Bunter. The contest lies between Wharton and Russell."

"And Harry's going to win!" said Bob Cherry in tones of determination. "After all, he's the rightful leader of the Remove, and he can skipper the Form a jolly sight better than any other fellow."

"Flattery, thy name is Cherry!" said Wharton, laughing.

The juniors trooped into the school building, and found quite a crowd congregated round the notice-board.

"Hallo! What's going on?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Boisover major, whose burly frame was blotting the announcement from view, was pushed to one side, and the newcomers were able to get a glimpse of the notice, which ran as follows:

**"ELECTION OF A NEW FORM CAPTAIN.**

"Owing to the untimely and regrettable departure of Dennis Carr, a new Form-captain will be elected by ballot in the Junior Common-room on Wednesday evening at 8.

"Three candidates are eligible—viz., H. Wharton, E. E. Russell, and W. G. Bunter.

"It is to be hoped that there will be no boisterous scenes prior to the election."

(Signed) H. H. QUELCH."

Bob Cherry gave a chuckle.

"Afraid there will be plenty of boisterous scenes!" he remarked. "The first will be when we squash Billy Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—" said the fat junior, rolling up in time to overhear Bob's remark. "I refuse to be squashed—see? My name's down for the election, and what's more, I mean to win it!"

"Bosh!"

"No fellow outside a lunatic asylum would vote for a pudding-headed chump like you!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Don't be too sure!" chimed in Boisover major. "I, for one, intend to vote for Bunter!"

"Then the sooner you're shipped off to Colney Hatch the better!"

As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter had quite a little coterie of supporters.

The fellows who had voted for him at the last election were not likely to change.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott, and others of



their kidney, would be only too pleased to see Billy Bunter at the head of the poll, for the simple reason that under Bunter's leadership they would be able to do pretty much as they liked.

The Famous Five, together with Mark Linley, repaired to No. 1 Study to talk things over.

They had not forgotten poor Dennis Carr, speeding away towards a life of toil and hardship in London; but they knew that Dennis himself would not like them to mope on his account. And so, fighting down their disappointment at Carr's departure, they threw themselves heart and soul into the task of winning back the captaincy for Harry Wharton.

"How much cash have you fellows got?" inquired Bob Cherry.

It was rather a blunt question, but it was promptly answered.

"I'm rolling in it!" said Wharton. "I always am at this end of the term."

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. "My uncle's come down handsomely."

"I, too, am rollfully wallowing in the esteemed shekels," said Hurree Singh. "But why does the worthy Bob ask the question?"

"Because," said Bob Cherry, "I think it would be a rattling good idea to provide a study feed on a large scale, and invite the seven fellows who voted for Dennis Carr at the last election."

Bob's suggestion was carried unanimously, and then the bell rang for morning lessons.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Love's Labour Lost.

**D**URING first lesson, whilst Mr. Quelch was busy at the blackboard, with his back to his pupils, seven juniors were somewhat surprised to receive sundry slips of paper.

Each slip, when unfolded, revealed the following invitation:

"A magnificent spread will take place in No. 1 Study at five o'clock this afternoon. You are cordially invited to attend.

"Ice cake will be provided, and each guest is therefore requested to bring his own hatchet.

"(Signed) HARRY WHARTON."

The seven juniors, on reading this invitation, emitted seven distinct chuckles.

Mr. Quelch spun round from the blackboard. "Cease this unseemly laughter at once!" he rapped out. "What is amusing you, Bulstrode?"

"Ahem! There—there was a bluebottle buzzing about on the back of your gown, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch made two or three revolutions in the hope of discovering the offending bluebottle.

The Remove-master looked remarkably like a cat chasing its own tail as he whisked round and round.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "I fail to identify the insect in question, Bulstrode!"

"I believe it's buzzed out of the window, sir," said Bulstrode calmly.

"Very well. If I see you laughing again I shall cane you!"

Mr. Quelch returned to the blackboard, and the seven juniors who had been invited to the study feed tucked their invitations into their pockets.

After morning lessons the Famous Five went to the tuckshop to make their purchases.

They made them on a most lavish scale. Indeed, Mrs. Mibble's stocks were in danger of being completely absorbed.

"Trot out everything you've got, ma'am!" said Bob Cherry. "We're expecting the Prince of Wales to tea this afternoon!"

"Mrs. Mibbles gasped.

"Lor', Master Cherry! You don't mean to say—"

"The Prince of Wales, the Duke of Blankshire, and the Marquis of Bagsquash!" said Bob Cherry solemnly. "And they've all got healthy appetites. Does the Duke of Blankshire like doughnuts, Harry?"

"I'm sure he does!" said Wharton, laughing. "We'll have a couple of dozen, anyway."

The supplies were taken along to Study No. 1, and the Famous Five bustled about to make that famous apartment look cosy and inviting.

Afternoon school was not a lengthy affair,

and when it was over the guests began to arrive.

Squiff and Tom Brown, Dick Rake and Monty Newland, and Bulstrode and Jimmy Vivian trooped into the study.

"We are seven!" said Bob Cherry. "No, we're not, though; we're only six. Where's Mauly?"

"Snoozin' in his study," said Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"I'll snooze him!" growled Bob. "Hand over that cricket-stump, Johnny!"

Johnny Bull made a warning gesture.

"You mustn't commit assault and battery on Mauly," he said. "We want to capture his vote. I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter from the guests.

Johnny Bull had let the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. And Squiff & Co. no longer wondered why they had been invited to the feast.

Bob Cherry went along to Lord Mauleverer's study, and returned in a few moments, accompanied by his languid lordship.

"Come along, Mauly!" said Nugent briskly. "Make yourself at home!"

"Grog!"

"What's the matter?" asked Wharton, in alarm. "Are you ill?"

"No—merely a little drowsy, dear boy. It'll pass off, I expect, when I've sampled some of those rock-cakes. I shall start friskin' about like a young lamb!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five spared no effort to make their guests comfortable.

A cheerful fire crackled and sputtered in the grate, and by its blaze Hurree Singh was busy with a frying-pan. Exactly what he was doing nobody seemed to know, but he assured his chums that he was preparing an Indian dish of great flavour.

"It will soon be done to an esteemed turn!" he murmured.

"Are you referring to your face, Inky?" inquired Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The best of Inky's chocolate-coloured complexion," said Bob Cherry, "is that he can scorch it without anyone noticing it!"

And there was renewed laughter.

The feast was soon in full swing, and all went merrily.

The only interruption came from Billy Bunter, who, after asking for a share in the feed, and being refused, loudly accused Harry Wharton of bribery and corruption.

Johnny Bull snatched up the poker, and the Owl of the Remove left the study in a hurry. Had he lingered a moment longer he would have left it on an ambulance!

When the feast was over, and the guests were leaning back in their chairs with expressions of contentment on their faces, Harry Wharton deemed it time he made a speech.

"Gentlemen," he began, "and Lord Mauleverer—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The schoolboy earl glared.

"If it wasn't so frightfully fatiguing," he said, "I'd go to the extent of punchin' your nose, Wharton!"

"You misunderstood me, ass!" said Wharton. "I didn't mean to imply that you weren't a gentleman. I simply wanted to separate you from the common herd—"

"Who are you calling the common herd?" demanded Tom Brown wrathfully.

Wharton groaned. He realised that he had made an unfortunate beginning in his campaign for votes.

However, Bob Cherry poured oil on the troubled waters, and Wharton went on with his speech:

"As you are aware, gentlemen, the election of a new Form-captain takes place on Wednesday evening, owing to poor old Carr having slung his hook. You all voted for Carr at the previous election, and I admire your judgment. Now that another election's under way, I'm going to ask you, straight from the shoulder, to vote solidly for me!"

The guests grinned. They had been expecting this little oration all along.

"Without in any way wishing to blow my own trumpet," continued Wharton, "I think I may say that I shall make an ideal Form-captain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I admit I came rather a cropper before, but that's past history, and there will be no repetition of it. I urge you to do your duty to the Form by seeing that I am elected by a thumping majority. If I become skipper,

you can rely on me to rule with an impartial hand. I shall be a staunch supporter of freedom, and, at the same time, I shall have a word to say for slavery. I shall but down tyranny, and also back up the tyrants when necessary. I shall advocate compulsory games, but all those who do not wish to play will be excused—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton's speech—which he did not intend in the least to be funny—evoked roars of merriment.

The speaker glanced round at the grinning faces.

"I trust I make myself clear, gentlemen?"

"Clear as mud!" said Squiff.

"I am out to study your interests, individually and collectively. There will be no favouritism of any sort; but I shall be particularly lenient with you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall see that the strictest discipline is enforced; at the same time, those who wish to slack may do so."

"Help!" sobbed Monty Newland. "I shall bust a boiler in a minute!"

"In conclusion, gentlemen," said Harry Wharton, who was not a little flustered by this time, "let me urge you to rally round and see that I finish up at the top of the poll—"

"You're up the pole already!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton ignored the insult.

"My final advice to you," he said, "is just this: Vote for Wharton, who will combine freedom with slavery, liberty with bondage, and slackness with discipline! It's up to you, each one of you, to do the decent thing—"

"All serene!" said Squiff, moving to the door.

"Half a jiffy!" exclaimed Wharton, in alarm. "Where are you going?"

"To have a jaw with Russell."

"With Russell! But why?"

"I want to have a chat with him about the election," said Squiff calmly. "You see, I've promised him my vote!"

Wharton gasped. So did the other members of the Famous Five.

"You—you mean to say you're going to vote for Russell?" gasped Bob Cherry.

Squiff nodded. And Tom Brown and Bulstrode nodded, too.

"But—but why not vote for Wharton?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"For the simple reason," said Squiff, "that we've already promised Russell our votes. He stood us a feed this morning, you see."

"What!"

The Famous Five nearly collapsed.

They had imagined that, by inviting the seven juniors to a study feed, they would make certain of seven votes. But Dick Russell had forestalled them. He, too, had given a feed earlier in the day, and had secured, in advance, the votes of Squiff, Bulstrode, and Tom Brown.

It was a bitter pill for the Famous Five to swallow, but they realised that they had not themselves to blame. They had not shown such initiative and promptitude as Dick Russell.

"Ta-ta, you fellows!" said Tom Brown. "Thanks very much for the feed. It was stunning!"

"Sorry we can't vote for you on this occasion, Wharton!" said Bulstrode. "But we'll bear you in mind another time. So-long!"

And the three grinning juniors whom Harry Wharton had relied upon to support him marched out of the study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Election.

**C**HARRY ME home to die, somebody!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Fancy those bounders letting us down like that!" said Nugent.

"After they'd stuffed themselves at our expense, too!" growled Johnny Bull. "Pity we didn't give them a jolly good bumping before they went!"

Harry Wharton turned to the four guests who had remained in their seats.

"Whom do you fellows intend to vote for?" he inquired.

"For you, of course!" said Dick Rake. And Monty Newland and Jimmy Vivian also signified their willingness to vote for Wharton.

"Well, that puts a better complexion on the situation, anyway!" said Harry. "Would

you mind waking Mauly up, Bob, and asking him who he's going to vote for?"

"Delighted!" said Bob.

And he aroused the schoolboy earl by the simple expedient of tweaking his nose.

"Yarooooh!"

Mauly shot up with a start.

"Thought that would do the trick!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Who are you going to vote for, Mauly?"

"Nobody, begad!"

"But there isn't a fellow of that name on the list of candidates!"

Lord Mauleverer sighed drowsily.

"I'm not goin' to vote at all," he said. "I shan't even turn up at the election!"

"Why not, you ass?"

"Too much fag, dear boy!"

"You—you—"

"If you don't come," said Johnny Bull grimly, "we'll visit you in your study at a fixed time every day, and explode jumping-crackers behind you!"

"Oh, begad!"

"Now, are you coming, or are you not?"

"Well, if you're goin' to perform stunts of that sort, I think I'd better!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You promise faithfully that you'll turn up in the Common-room on Wednesday night?" said Bob Cherry.

"Yaas."

"And what will you do when you get there?"

"Go to sleep, I suppose."

"Don't you dare—not before you've voted for Wharton, anyway! Once you've given your vote, you can curl up like Rip Van Winkle, and sleep for umpteen years at a stretch; but you've got to clearly understand that the vote comes first, and the slumber afterwards!"

"Oh, all right!" said Mauly, with a yawn. "Any old thing?"

And the next moment he had leaned back and closed his eyes again.

"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "I never saw such a glutton for sleep! He makes quite an orgy of it!"

"Listen, you fellows!" said Harry Wharton, who had been jotting down a list of names on a sheet of paper. "So far as I can see at present, I'm one vote better off than Russell."

"How do you make that out?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, to begin with, we each had seven supporters. And now he's got an extra three, and I've got an extra four."

"One minute!" said Bob Cherry. "We've forgotten somebody!"

"Whom?"

"Smithy, of course!"

"Great Scott, yes! Smithy was one of the fellows who voted for Carr, and we've left him out of our calculations. Wonder who he intends to vote for this time?"

"Let's go and ask him!" suggested Monty Newland.

And the juniors went along the passage, and swarmed into Vernon-Smith's study.

The Bounder looked up in surprise at the invasion.

"What the thump—" he began.

"I say, Smithy," said Harry Wharton, "can I count on your vote at the election?"

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"You can count on it as much as you like," he said, "but I'm afraid you won't get it!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You see, I've already sworn allegiance to Russell."

The faces of Harry Wharton & Co., which had been beaming radiantly when they entered the study, were now as long as fiddles.

"Is that final, Smithy?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes, as final as the editor's decision!"

Johnny Bull glared at the speaker.

"You mean to say that you consider Russell a better man than Wharton?" he exclaimed.

"Well, there's precious little to choose between them. They're both equal to the job. But, personally, I prefer to see new blood introduced."

"Then there's nothing more to be said?" queried Nugent.

"Nothing!"

Harry Wharton & Co. retreated from the Bounder's study as if they were returning from a funeral.

"That gives you and Russell eleven votes each," remarked Monty Newland to Wharton.

Always provided that the same fellows who voted for Bunter last time intend to vote for him again," said Nugent.

"They do!" said Bob Cherry. "I was

jawing to Skinner about it, and he was very emphatic on the point. The silly ass! I suppose he thinks he'd have a slack time if Bunter held the reins."

"The election's going to be a jolly close thing!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter will be out of it, of course. He hasn't a dog's chance. But with Wharton and Russell sharing twenty-two votes—"

Frank Nugent uttered a sudden exclamation.

"My only aunt!"

Everybody stopped short.

"Anything wrong, Franky?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I've just called to mind three more fellows whom we've left out of our calculations."

"Three more! Who on earth are they?"

"Peter Todd, Alonzo of that ilk, and Tom Dutton."

"My hat!"

"Peter was up for election last time, you will remember, and Alonzo and Tom Dutton voted for him, as it duty bound. Now, the burning question of the moment is, who will they vote for on Wednesday?"

Harry Wharton's eyes sparkled with a new hope.

"Come along, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "We ought to be able to capture three votes this time!"

"Unless Russell has forestalled us again!" growled Johnny Bull.

The juniors hurried along to Study No. 7, which was tenanted by the two Todds and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior.

"Anybody at home?" inquired Bob Cherry, administering a couple of lusty thumps on the door.

"Yes; walk right in, fathead! And bring all the little fatheads with you!"

It was Peter Todd who spoke.

Peter was no less surprised than Vernon-Smith had been at the wholesale invasion.

"Is it peace or war?" he asked, his hand groping for a cricket-stump.

"Peace if you promise to vote for Wharton—war if you're going to rally round Russell!"

said Bob Cherry.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"In that case," murmured Peter, "me-thinks it's war!"

The invading party stopped short.

"You mean to say you're a Russellite?" gasped Nugent.

"Right on the wicket!"

"Then you deserve to be shot at dawn, that's all I can say!" said Johnny Bull.

"Talk about rank disloyalty!"

Peter Todd shrugged his shoulders.

"I was under no obligation to vote for Wharton," he said. "He's not a bad sort of chap, I know, except that he's got an unfortunate face, but my preference runs in favour of Russell."

Harry Wharton & Co. groaned in dismal chorus.

"It may give you some consolation to know that Alonzo is voting for Wharton," Peter went on. "He's rather a duffer to do it, but on this occasion I'm giving him his head."

Wharton brightened up a little, and so did his followers.

"That gives Russell and you twelve votes apiece, Harry," said Bob Cherry.

"Everything depends on Tom Dutton," said Nugent. "Which way is he going to vote, Tiddy?"

"Better ask him," said Peter. "I'd ask him myself, only I happen to have mislaid my megaphone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton stepped up to Tom Dutton, who was reclining in an armchair, absorbed in a book.

"I say, Dutton!" he exclaimed. "Who are you going to vote for at the election?"

"Sorry," said Dutton, "but I'm stony!"

"Eh?"

"It's no use talking to me about a collection."

Harry Wharton gasped.

"You silly duffer!" he shouted. "Who's talking about collections? It was the election that I was referring to—the election of a Form-captain. Who's your favourite candidate?"

Tom Dutton rose to his feet in wrath.

"Oh, you do, do you?" he said.

"Do!" echoed Wharton. "Do what?"

"Regard me with candid hate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a spontaneous burst of laughter from the juniors. Tom Dutton's affliction was a sore trial, not only to himself, but to all who endeavoured to hold converse with him.

"I don't hate you!" roared Wharton, though he looked very much as if he did. "I'm very much attached to you, as a matter of fact!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what I want to know is"—Wharton was fairly bellowing by this time—"can I rely on your vote?"

"Of course!" said Tom Dutton, comprehending at last. "Why didn't you ask me this before, instead of beating about the bush?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Harry Wharton was exasperated, but his delight exceeded his exasperation. Tom Dutton's vote would put him one above Russell.

"Good old Dutton!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "He's a brick! Let's give him three cheers! They'll only sound like a faint whisper to him, but no matter!"

"Ha, ha; ha!"

Three ringing cheers were given for the deaf junior; and then Wharton and his supporters, hugely elated, quitted the study.

There were no startling developments between then and Wednesday evening.

True, Billy Bunter had secured an extra supporter in the person of Fisher T. Fish, who at the last election had remained neutral. But the addition of Fish would not help the Owl of the Remove much.

The junior Common-room was packed on the evening of the election.

Mr. Quelch conducted the proceedings, as formerly; and the excitement was at fever heat.

Ballot-papers were distributed, and in the short space of five minutes they had all been filled up.

The juniors had come into the Common-room with their minds made up, and it was without hesitation that they placed crosses by the names of their favourite candidates.

Harry Wharton had figured it out that he would receive thirteen votes, and Russell twelve; but he could not be certain, for one or two fellows might have changed their opinions, and those one or two would make all the difference between a victory and a defeat.

Mr. Quelch collected the ballot-papers, and sent for a couple of prefects to act as scrutineers.

Walker and Gwynne performed this function, and there was a hush whilst the votes were being counted up.

What would be the result?

Would Harry Wharton just manage to scrape home, or would that energetic and forceful fellow, Dick Russell, prance off with the captaincy?

These questions were soon answered.

Mr. Quelch surveyed the silent but tensely eager throng.

"My boys," he said, "I will not unduly prolong your suspense. The result of the election is as follows:

"W. G. Bunter, eight votes—"

The fat junior gave a grunt of dissatisfaction. He muttered something to the effect that there must have been foul play.

"R. E. Russell, twelve votes—"

Wharton's eyes shone with a great hope.

"And Harry Wharton, thirteen votes!"

"It's an unlucky number, but it's a lucky day for you, Harry, old man!" said Bob Cherry, who was the first to clap his chum on the back.

And then, in the presence of Mr. Quelch and the prefects, the supporters of Harry Wharton set up a ringing cheer.

"Hurrah!"

"Wharton's won back his old position!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Dick Russell, defeated by a single vote, stepped up to Wharton and extended his hand.

"Congrats!" he said, with a smile. "You've licked me fairly and squarely, and now that I can't be skipper myself, you can rely on me to back you up—all along the line!"

"Thanks!" said Wharton breathlessly.

And then his supporters surged round him, swung him off his feet, and carried him in triumph from the Common-room.

Mr. Quelch made no attempt to stop the demonstration. He smiled, and congratulated Harry Wharton on his success.

There was great rejoicing in Study No. 1 that evening, and Harry Wharton's return to the captaincy was heralded with laughter and cheers.

But in Study No. 7, whither Billy Bunter had wended his weary way, there was weeping and gnashing of teeth!





"This is a respectable office," said the junior clerk, "and we don't want your sort here! You can jolly well—!" Biff! Dennis Carr shot out his left in the approved Greyfriars fashion, and the weedy youth went to the floor with a crash. (See page 6.)

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
Driven to the Wall!**

**M**EANWHILE, what of Dennis Carr? Dennis had arrived in London with a few pounds in his pocket, and with high resolve in his heart. He had hoped to obtain employment, but the hope had so far proved a forlorn one.

After attending the funeral of his father, Dennis had tramped round in search of lodgings. Finally, he had rented a small room-attic would have been a more correct term—in the neighbourhood of Westminster.

The landlady, Mrs. Grubb, was hard of face and hard of heart. She insisted upon a fortnight's rent in advance, and she got it. She also undertook to "do" for Dennis, who replied that he had no wish to shuffle off this mortal coil just yet.

Instead of risking Mrs. Grubb's cooking, Dennis preferred to get his meals at a restaurant.

Next day he set out to search for employment. He adopted the very sensible plan of visiting one of the big newspaper offices and scanning the advertisement columns.

But, alas! he found that others were at the same game—scores and scores of them. And many were in a worse plight than he. They had wives and families to support. Wrecks of men they were, many of them, with wan cheeks and drooping shoulders. Their country had called for them in the time of need, and nobly had they answered to the call; but their country did not want them now.

The spectacle of these men, hunting high and low for employment, moved Dennis Carr strongly.

But he could not afford to spend much time in brooding over the misfortunes of others. He himself had to find work, by hook or crook, and he pushed his way towards one of the advertisement pages which was pasted to a board.

Ah! Here was a job that would suit him. "JUNIOR CLERK (male) wanted, with knowledge of shorthand and typewriting. Knowledge of French desirable, but not compulsory. Boy fresh from public school preferred. Commencing salary, 45s. per week. Apply personally, or by letter, to Messrs. Barry, Jones & Barry, Queen's Circus, E.C."

Dennis made a note of the address, and hurried out of the newspaper office.

He had high hopes of obtaining the situation in question. He was an expert shorthand writer, he could manipulate a typewriter at a fair speed, and his knowledge of French was at least passable. Moreover, he was fresh from a public school. The advertisement and the intending applicant seemed to fit in.

But when Dennis reached the offices of Messrs. Barry, Jones & Barry he received a rude shock.

Although the advertisement had only appeared for the first time that morning, no less than thirty applicants had already been interviewed, and a selection had been made.

A pompous-looking individual explained all this to Dennis by means of a lengthy oration, whereas two words—"Nothing doing"—would have sufficed.

This rebuff rather took the wind out of Dennis Carr's sails. But he realised that faint heart n'er won a situation—or anything else worth winning—and he retraced his steps to the newspaper office.

Having made a note of all the situations for which he was suited, Dennis set out on an extensive tour of the City.

The luck was dead against him. It was the same old story everywhere—"We're already suited, thank you!"

One or two employers rather liked the look of Dennis, and regretted that he had not turned up before; whilst the jobs were going begging.

Not until five o'clock in the afternoon did Dennis exhaust the list of addresses. And then he realised that he had had nothing to eat all day.

"Thank goodness I've still got a little cash left!" he murmured. "That was a happy inspiration of mine to sell most of my belongings before leaving Greyfriars."

A few moments later Dennis was seated in a restaurant, reviewing the events of the day.

It had been the most wretched day he could remember.

Everything had gone against him. In the case of every job he had applied for there had already been a man in possession. Nobody seemed to want him, save one or two who had been struck by his gentlemanly appearance.

"This sort of thing mustn't go on much longer," muttered Dennis, "or I shall be broke!"

He determined to get up early next morning, in order to be on the spot when the advertisements appeared. Experience had already taught him that this was his only chance of obtaining work.

But the next day, like its predecessor, proved a "wash-out," and so did the day after.

Dennis began to grow desperate. His money was now reduced to a few shillings, and the extortionate Mrs. Grubb would soon be clamouring for a further payment of rent.

Tired out with his exertions on the third day, Dennis went to bed early. But he found sleep impossible.

His thoughts constantly turned to Greyfriars—to the old school where he had known such genuine happiness.

What were the fellows doing now? Were they thinking of him, or was it a case of "Out of sight, out of mind"?

How he wished he was back!

If only he could resume his place in the Form-room and on the football-field!

Yes, even the drudgery of the Form-room was preferable to this grim striving after employment.

Physically tired, but mentally active, Dennis Carr remained awake until Big Ben sounded the midnight chimes; then he fell into a troubled slumber.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. The Last Straw!

NEXT morning two letters arrived for Dennis.

He was later than usual in getting up, and his landlady pushed the letters underneath the door of his bed-room. Dennis pounced upon them eagerly.

He had been looking forward to these letters, having notified his Greyfriars friends of his address.

The first note he opened was from Mark Linley. Dennis recognised the familiar, scholarly hand.

"Good old Marky!" he murmured.

And then he plunged into the letter, which ran as follows:

"My dear Dennis.—Do let us have a line from you, old man, to say how you are faring. We are all very anxious about you, and are wondering if you have been successful in getting a decent job at a decent wage, or if you stand in need of help.

"Should the latter be the case, let me know at once. It will be an easy enough matter to have a whip-round on your behalf, and if your pride won't allow you to take the money as a gift, you could have it on loan, and pay me back at your convenience.

"After you had gone there was another election, and Wharton has resumed his old position as captain of the Remove.

"Please write at the first opportunity, giving all the news. The fellows send their united good wishes.—Yours ever,

"MARK."

Dennis smiled as he read that letter.

"Just like Marky to offer me a helping hand!" he murmured. "Still, I can't take the money. And I can't borrow it, for how should I be able to pay it back?"

Dennis tucked Mark Linley's letter into his pocket, and opened the other one.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What's the Head got to say, I wonder?"

Dr. Locke had written a very kind and sympathetic letter. He was afraid that Dennis was finding it difficult to keep his head above water; and he repeated the suggestion he had made before, namely, that he should approach the governors on Dennis Carr's behalf, so that Dennis could return to Greyfriars.

"He's a brick!" muttered Dennis. "A first-class, gold-edged brick! But I can't possibly accept charity, no matter how down-and-out I become!"

Having quite made up his mind on that point, Dennis pocketed the Head's letter, and set out once again in search of a situation.

"Let's hope I have some luck to-day!" he mused. "It's about time!"

But once again the hope was shattered. The newspaper office was thronged with ex-officers and men, vainly seeking employment.

There was also a number of men who had employment, but could not find houses to live in. Wearily—with the air of men who were used to this sort of thing—they scanned the advertisements which appeared under the enticing heading, "Houses to Let." But, alas! the rentals were far, far beyond the means of the majority of house-hunters.

Dennis Carr squeezed himself between a house-hunter and a man who was wearing the ribbon of the D.S.O., and ran his eye down the "Situations Vacant" column.

There were not so many advertisements this morning, and there were only a couple of posts which Dennis could fill. He jotted down the addresses, and hurried round to the respective firms, only to find that the jobs had been filled already.

This job-hunting campaign was proving a much grimmer business than Dennis expected. He was feeling very desperate indeed now.

Save for a shilling or two, his funds were exhausted; and soon there would be the problem of rent.

Dennis Carr walked moodily along the Thames Embankment, his hands thrust deeply into his pockets.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 52.

"Everything's against me!" he muttered. "Everything!"

And then he remembered the two letters in his pocket.

The Greyfriars fellows were not against him, at any rate, and neither was the Head. On the one hand, Dennis had an offer of financial help; and, on the other, a chance to return to the school.

For a moment the boy wavered, but only for a moment.

"I can't do it!" he exclaimed. "I can't trespass on their kindness to that extent!"

When Dennis reached the Middle Temple he halted abruptly.

His heart beat quickly with a new hope.

The sight of the famous Temple caused him to recollect his father's solicitors.

Surely they would help him in his crisis? Surely they would be able to give him employment? They had been not only the lawyers, but the personal friends of the late Mr. Carr.

Dennis remembered that their office was at Lincoln's Inn. Accordingly, he made his way thither.

He halted at length outside a door bearing a brass plate with the inscription:

"MESSRS. CHAMBERS & TEMPLE,  
Solicitors—Commissioners for Oaths.  
Office Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m."

Dennis could scarcely repress a smile.

"Anybody would think this was Whitehall!" he murmured. "I suppose old Chambers is funky of a nervous breakdown, and, therefore, he knocks off at four!"

Dennis opened the door, and passed up a flight of narrow, rickety stairs.

From a room at the top came the harsh clatter of a typewriter.

The typist—a pale-faced youth of seventeen or so—suspended operations on catching sight of Dennis.

"What d'you want?" he growled.

"In the first place, civility," said Dennis. "And secondly, Mr. Chambers."

The youth glared.

"Mr. Chambers isn't in."

"Mr. Temple will do, then."

"He isn't in, either."

Dennis clenched his hands with annoyance.

"Office hours, ten to four, with an interval of three hours for lunch!" he said. "I suppose that's the usual routine, isn't it?"

"Don't you be cheeky, young shaver, or I'll—"

At that moment Dennis heard the familiar voice of Mr. Chambers, the senior partner. He was speaking on the telephone in the next room.

Dennis turned to the clerk.

"Thought you said Mr. Chambers wasn't in?" he exclaimed.

"He wasn't in to you, I meant."

"By Jove!" reflected Dennis. "If I'm lucky enough to get a job in this office, I can see myself at war with that fellow!"

Then he moved towards the connecting-door.

The youth moved towards it, too. He reached the door first, and stood with his back to it.

"Let me pass!" muttered Dennis. "I want to see Mr. Chambers!"

The clerk glanced at the speaker's muddy boots and at his stained and rumpled clothes, and laughed harshly.

"Mr. Chambers doesn't interview tramps!" he said.

That was more than Dennis could stand.

Rushing in, he grasped the youth round the waist, and swung him to one side.

Before the victim could recover, Dennis was through the connecting-door.

A tall, baldheaded man was seated at his desk, speaking into the telephone. He failed to notice Dennis Carr's presence until he hung up the receiver. Then he rose to his feet and extended his hand.

"Ah! How d'you do, Master Carr? Still feeling bowled over by your father's death? Yes, yes, of course! That's only natural! Your father was a genuine sort—one of the best and least selfish men I ever knew. But I will not dwell upon a subject which is painful to both of us. What can I do for you, my boy?"

Dennis did not beat about the bush.

"I want a job!" he said frankly.

"A job—eh? What sort of a job?"

"Anything, so long as it's honest."

Mr. Chambers looked thoughtful.

"I suppose a clerical job would be in your line?" he said.

"That would be just the thing!" said Dennis.

"H'm! Can you write shorthand?"

"Rather!"

"Typewriting?"

Dennis nodded.

"Bookkeeping?"

Dennis nodded again. He was beginning to feel decidedly hopeful.

Surely all these questions were leading up to one thing—namely, his engagement as a junior clerk to Messrs. Chambers & Temple?

Mr. Chambers pursued his cross-examination.

"Speak French?"

"Yes."

"Know Latin?"

"Yes."

"Fond of things appertaining to the law?"

"Yes."

"That's a pity," said Mr. Chambers, "a great pity! If you had come to me yesterday I could have fixed you up with a job in this office. You seem to possess all the necessary qualifications. As it is, I've engaged somebody else."

Poor Dennis! His hopes came crashing down like a house of cards.

Mr. Chambers was very sympathetic. But Dennis could see that the sympathy was not genuine, but assumed.

"Cheer up!" said the lawyer. "A smart youngster like you won't be out of a job for long. You'll soon find something to suit you if you hunt round."

"That's what I've been doing ever since I came to London," said Dennis wearily.

"Never mind! Persevere, my boy, and you'll prove successful in the end."

Dennis was about to retort that it was impossible to persevere when he was penniless. But he checked himself and turned to the door.

"I wish you luck!" said Mr. Chambers. "I may have a vacancy for a junior clerk about six months hence; so if you are not suited by that time you might let me know."

Dennis passed out, feeling too sick at heart to reply to that generous statement.

The solicitor's final words had been overheard by the weedy youth in the outer office. He sneered at Dennis as the latter came out.

"Nothing doing," he said. "And I should think not, either! This is a respectable office, and we don't want your sort here! You can jolly well—"

Biff!

Exasperated beyond measure, Dennis Carr shot out his left in the approved Greyfriars fashion.

The weedy youth took the blow on the point of the jaw, and he went to the floor with a crash that shook every bone in his body.

Dennis passed on, and disappeared down the rickety staircase, leaving the clerk to sort himself out.

"No luck!" muttered Dennis, as he emerged into the January drizzle. "This was my last resource, and it's failed! There's a cheerful outlook in front of me, and no mistake!"

He became aware of the fact that he was ravenously hungry. He had eaten nothing since the previous evening.

Dennis fished in his pocket and brought to light the princely sum of one-and-fourpence. It was enough for one meal, and that was all.

"Shall I, or sha'n't I?" murmured Dennis.

On the one hand, it seemed madness to spend every penny he possessed; on the other hand, his hunger must be appeased.

Dennis Carr's hesitation was short-lived.

With a grim expression on his face, now white and wan, he made his way to the nearest restaurant.

Once again he was tempted to take advantage of Dr. Locke's offer, and of Mark Linley's.

His past record at Greyfriars had been so good that the governors would cheerfully have paid his term fees if he cared to stay on.

But to go back at this juncture would be a confession of failure. It would show that he was incapable of earning his own living.

No, he could not go back. Moreover, he could not accept money from his old chums.

He must paddle his own canoe. He must make his own way in the world, independent of help from his old friends.

He had taken the plunge, and now he must sink or swim.



THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Dennis Finds a Friend.

“WHICH I begs to inform you, sir, as 'ow another week's rent's due.”

Such was the cheery greeting of Mrs. Grubb, Dennis Carr's amiable landlady.

“But I've already paid you a fortnight's rent in advance, Mrs. Grubb!” protested Dennis.

“That's right,” she said. “An' when you leave, one week's payment will be refunded to you.”

“Oh!”  
Dennis did not quite understand this queer method of business, which had evidently been invented and patented by Mrs. Grubb. But Dennis was tired, and he was not equal to arguing the point.

“Very well, Mrs. Grubb,” he said. “You shall have another week's rent as soon as I can raise it.”

Mrs. Grubb frowned.  
“You mean to say as 'ow you 'aven't got it?”

“Not at the moment.”  
“Well, if you don't get it by Saturday, hout you go!”

With this threat ringing in his ears, Dennis went up to his room to rest. He was tired out with much tramping.

Sleep, however was denied him.  
How could he sleep, with the knowledge that he had come to the end of his resources?

All his money was gone, and on Saturday he would probably be evicted from his lodgings. Mrs. Grubb was not the sort of woman to display the quality of mercy.

For the space of a couple of hours Dennis lay on his bed fully dressed, brooding on his unfortunate plight.

At last, unable to endure his cheerless surroundings any longer, he put on his cap and coat—both of which were becoming weather-stained—and set out into the winter dusk.

The steady drizzle which was falling harmonised with Dennis Carr's thoughts.

He was indeed in a sorry plight. Not only was he faced with the prospect of going to bed supperless, but he did not know when or how he would get his next meal.

Unconsciously, Dennis directed his steps towards that crowded and brilliantly-lighted part of the metropolis known as Theatreland.

Long queues were lined up outside the principal theatres, and there was an incessant buzz and whirl of traffic.

Dennis paused on the edge of the pavement, and took stock of his surroundings.

At that moment a taxi drew up beside the kerb. It drew up suddenly and without warning, with the result that the drivers of a couple of taxis following up behind uttered wrathful shouts.

“Clumsy fool!”

“Get a move on, can't yer?”  
These shouts caused the driver of the first taxi to set his vehicle in motion again.

The driver failed to notice that his fare, an elderly, well-dressed gentleman, had been in the act of alighting. Yet such was the case.

The sudden movement of the taxi literally hurled the old gentleman on to the pavement, where he would have come a very nasty cropper indeed but for the presence of mind exhibited by Dennis Carr.

Dennis rushed forward to save him, and the couple collided violently.

The collision had a double effect. It caused the old gentleman to steady himself and remain on his feet, but it swept Dennis Carr off his.

Dennis fell heavily, but he had achieved his object and saved the old gentleman from a fall which in his case might have resulted in serious injury.

“My—my dear boy!” panted the elderly individual. “I trust you are not hurt?”

“Only a bit dazed, sir,” said Dennis.  
And he scrambled to his feet.

The old gentleman noted the pallor of the boy's face in the glare of the street-lamp.

“One moment!” he said.

Then he advanced towards the taxi, which had halted half a dozen yards ahead, and abused the driver in measured terms.

“You clumsy dolt! You confounded imbecile! You had no right to move on again after I had ordered you to halt!”

The taxi-driver mumbled a few words of apology.

“Here is your fare, plus the usual gratuity,” continued the old gentleman.

“And I may tell you you are lucky to get it!”

He then returned to Dennis Carr.

“I am indeed grateful to you, my boy, for coming to my aid in such a prompt and plucky manner! But for you I should have had a very nasty tumble. I feel that I should like to reward you for services rendered.”

So saying, the old gentleman produced a wallet, from which he extracted a couple of Treasury notes. These he handed to Dennis.

The latter shook his head.

“No, thank you, sir,” he said. “I hope I sha'n't offend you by declining to take the money, but—but I'd rather not!”

“Nonsense! You have fully earned it. Now, be a sensible young fellow, and—Why, bless my soul!”

The speaker broke off in some alarm as Dennis Carr staggered forward with his hands pressed to his forehead.

But for his companion's timely aid Dennis would have fallen.

“Why, you are ill!” exclaimed the old gentleman.

“Only a trifle giddy, sir!”

“You are ill, I say! And I must insist upon seeing you to your home at once. Where do you live?”

“Nowhere,” said Dennis.

“What! You mean to say you are homeless?”

“I shall be on Saturday, anyway.”

The old gentleman asked no more questions. He summoned another taxi, and gave an address in South Kensington.

Dennis was assisted into the vehicle, which moved off at a crawl on its journey.

The taxi stopped eventually outside a large house—a mansion, almost.

Dennis knew that he was about to receive hospitality, and he tried to raise a protest, to which his benefactor refused to listen.

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this week's issue.*

A few moments later the couple were seated together in a spacious and sumptuous dining-room.

Dennis soon learned whom the old gentleman was. He was Sir Howard Prescott, a celebrated West End auctioneer, who had recently been knighted.

“I can see what's the matter with you, my boy,” said Sir Howard, leaning across the table. “You're pretty nearly famished with hunger. That accounts for your dizziness. Am I not right?”

“I'm afraid you are, sir,” admitted Dennis. He had certainly had a meal that day, but it had been neither a substantial nor a sustaining one.

“I'll see that you have a good square meal right away!” said Sir Howard.

And he did.

Never in all his life had Dennis Carr enjoyed a meal so much as the one he had that evening. He consumed it in silence, the old gentleman watching him with curiosity and interest.

“That's better!” said Sir Howard, noting with approval that the colour had returned to the boy's cheeks. “Now, tell me all about yourself!”

“There isn't much to tell, sir. A week ago I was at one of the big schools in Kent—Greyfriars, to be precise—”

“And you were fired out, hey?”

“Not exactly. My pater died, and it so happened that he left no money. So I had to quit schooling, and earn my own living.”

“Oh! And how are you faring?”  
Dennis smiled ruefully.

“I haven't even got a job yet, sir. I've tramped everywhere in search of one, but without result. And, what's more, I've come

to the end of my resources. On Saturday, unless by some miracle I am able to stump up a week's rent, I shall be turned out of my digs.”

“Good gracious! You appear to be having a rough time of it, my boy—a dashed rough time! What sort of a job are you after?”

“Any job which will enable me to pay my way, sir.”

“Can you do clerical work?”  
“On my head, sir!”

“Good! Then there's a job waiting for you in my office. A vacancy occurred yesterday, and if you would like to fill it, it will save me advertising.”

Dennis brightened up.  
After all his rebuffs, all his reversals of fortune, he was on the track of something good at last.

“Mind you,” said Sir Howard, “there will be plenty of hard work—”

“All the better, sir!”

“And I cannot offer you a very princely salary to start with. Let me see. The youngest clerk I have at present—a boy named Craven—gets forty-five shillings a week. He has been with me six months, and in justice to him I cannot give you more than he is getting, or even a similar amount.”

“I quite understand that, sir.”

“Would two pounds a week be satisfactory to you?”

“I should say so, sir.”

“Of course, if you care to put in overtime you will be able to bring your salary up to three pounds a week. And that ought to be sufficient for you to live on.”

“I'm awfully grateful to you, sir!” said Dennis.

“Tut-tut! It is I who have cause to be grateful. I hardly dare to conjecture what might have happened this evening had you not come to my assistance. A fall at my age is a serious matter. You broke my fall, and nearly broke your own neck in doing so. You are a plucky youngster, and I shall be interested to see how you shape in the office.”  
The conversation continued for half an hour or more, and then Dennis prepared to depart.

“Don't you think you had better accept a week's salary in advance?” said Sir Howard.

“Then you will be able to make peace with your landlady.”  
Dennis smiled.

“That's jolly good of you, sir!”  
“I shall expect to see you in my office at nine o'clock in the morning,” continued Sir Howard, as he handed over the money. “By the way, I have not yet asked you your name.”

“Carr, sir—Dennis Carr.”

“Then I hope you'll run smoothly. Rotten pun, that—eh? Well, good-night, my boy!”

“Good-night, sir!”

Dennis was shown out, and he walked home—if his lodgings could be called home—with a couple of Treasury-notes rustling in his pocket, and with a heart which was considerably lighter than when he had set out that evening.

“What luck!” he muttered joyfully.

The drizzle was still falling; but Dennis did not even notice it.

Fortune had smiled on him at last, and the grim quest for employment was at an end. He no longer belonged to that vast army of individuals “of no occupation.”

To-morrow he would set out, with renewed hope and vigour, for Sir Howard Prescott's office in the West End. He would become a wage-earner—a fellow who filled a definite niche in the world.

Memories of Greyfriars still rose in a crowd to haunt him. He would have given the world to be back in the old familiar surroundings. If only he could take his place in the Remove once more!

But it was no use sighing for what could never be.

Dennis realised that it was of the future he had to think, and not of the past. The past was gone beyond recall, and he had no power to bring it back; but the future was his own, to make or mar as he chose.

And before his eyes closed in slumber that night, Dennis asked himself—not for the first time—an absorbing question.

How would he fare on the morrow?

THE END.

Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled “The Downfall of Dennis.” Order your copy in advance. THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 52.



# MICKY OF THE MOVIES

A MAGNIFICENT NEW SERIAL STORY  
OF A YOUNG CIRCUS ACROBAT WHO  
ROSE TO FAME AND FORTUNE AS  
A CINEMA STAR.

By STANTON HOPE.

## A Circus Sensation!

"H OUP LA! Here we are again!" A burst of delighted applause broke from a thousand throats as Clancy, the clown, dashed into view, tripped over a tarpaulin, turned three somersaults, and landed in a sitting posture in the centre of the circus ring.

To the accompaniment of a peal of laughter, Clancy lifted himself up with a firm grip on the back of his decorated trousers and gazed round at the sea of faces lit by the roaring naphthaline flares. The expression on his face was so full of comic bewilderment and trouble, that again the audience responded with loud guffaws.

But, little though the crowd knew it, old Clancy, who for many years had been one of the principal draws of Beaman's Gigantic Circus, was genuinely troubled.

"No ringmaster again!" he muttered to himself. "If old Beaman can't leave the drink alone long enough to come into the ring, why don't he appoint someone else?"

It was not the first time that Clancy had trotted from his caravan and entered the circus, to find the ringmaster and proprietor, Boris Beaman, not in his place. The best of the old clown's jests and japes were at the expense of the ringmaster, and he was thoroughly approved at having to "gag" the time away until the entry of the next turn, Micky and Mike, the Daredevil Acrobats.

But next moment Clancy, with the agility of a man half his age, hopped through a paper hoop, and, selecting two attendants for victims, worked off quips and pranks with whole-souled enthusiasm. The minutes flew by, but no one entered the ring.

"Here's them acrobats late, now!" he moaned under his breath. "What with old Beaman having an alcoholidday in his caravan, and no acrobats, it seems to me that I've got to be the whole Gigantic Circus!"

But Clancy was wrong in one particular, for at that moment the proprietor was staggering towards his caravan with a large bottle concealed beneath his overcoat, on his way back from the Green Horse, a place of public refreshment situated conveniently close to the circus lot. Boris Beaman was always glad to reach his pitch in Liverpool for this very reason. He was never so happy as when in bar-room company, and not every place to which his circus travelled could boast of such a convenient resort as the Green Horse.

Although somewhat fuddled as the result of his evening's entertainment, he realised he was late for the show, and was hurrying as fast as a lamentable shortness of breath would permit. In addition to the bottle, his overcoat concealed his evening-dress, and he had only to leave his purchase in his caravan to be ready for his duties in the ring.

With stifled curses at the cold mist and semi-darkness, he passed between the cages of the menagerie until he came to that portion of the lot on which the group of caravans were buddled. He had almost reached his

own, when a slim figure rose in front of him.

Boris Beaman gave vent to a low exclamation, and almost dropped the bottle in his surprise.

"Who—who's that?" he gasped.  
A lad's voice immediately answered him.  
"It's only me—Micky Denver."

The circus proprietor breathed his relief, but his tone changed to violent rage.  
"You, is it, you scum!" he hissed. "And what the blazes are you doing skulking round my caravan?"

"I followed Chappie," began the lad.

"He—"  
"Chappie! That mongrel cur!" roared Beaman. "Didn't I tell you before I'd shoot the beast if I caught it hanging around my place?"

"He spotted a rat," said Micky quietly, "and ran under your van after it. Why, he's caught it, too! Good old Chappie!"

In the ray of light that streamed through the half-open door of the caravan appeared a small, wire-haired dog, bearing in his mouth a full-grown rat. His stubby tail wagged to and fro with astonishing rapidity as he laid his catch at his young master's feet, and looked up as much as to say, "Now, wasn't that clever of me?"

Boris Beaman gave a snarl of rage.

"I'll smash every bone in its body!" he shouted.

He staggered forward and swung his foot in a vicious kick. Like lightning, Micky stooped down and whipped the terrier from the ground. The result was that Beaman, meeting nothing of greater resistance than air, overbalanced, and crashed headlong on to the wooden steps of his van, smashing the precious bottle into a hundred pieces. As though fully appreciating the discomfiture of his enemy, the little dog gave vent to a series of sharp, joyous barks. Micky Denver drew the folds of the blue dressing-gown he was wearing tightly round the terrier, and watched with white face the circus proprietor slowly rise from the steps.

From a long experience of blows, kicks, and curses from Beaman, the lad fully expected to have to meet a violent onslaught. But the combined effects of the drink he had taken, and the loss of the drink he had intended to take when the show was over that night, had reduced the circus proprietor to the verge of tears. He drew a big handkerchief from his pocket and mopped the liquor from his clothes, and turned to Micky with quivering lips.

"You ungrateful cub!" he whined. "Didn't I save you from the gutter when your father died, and give you a chance in life? Wasn't it my charity that kept you from beggary, eh?"

Micky Denver flushed scarlet, as he always did when Boris Beaman referred to his past history. It was true that the circus proprietor had taken charge of him, and the lad had been duly grateful, and put up with the harsh treatment accorded him on that account. But the lad had begun to realise that Beaman's motive was not quite so un-

selfish as he himself always made out. Under the tutelage of Mike Megan, a crony of Beaman's, Micky had developed into a proficient acrobat; but, apart from giving him food and shelter, the circus proprietor had never paid a penny-piece for his services. But for the sympathy and friendship of old Clancy, the clown, the lad would have shaken the sawdust of the circus from his feet long before.

"I fully appreciate the fact that you have provided for me, Mr. Beaman," said Micky, "but, on the other hand, I have worked hard for you, and have done my best to repay you for my keep. With the exception of Clancy, Chappie is my only pal, and I won't allow you to lay a finger on him!"

The lad's face was pale, but his chin was set, and his eyes flashed with the light of determination. Beaman drew a sharp breath, and his bullying nature rose to the surface again.

"You impudent guttersnipe!" he thundered. "I'll horsewhip you for this, and smash that mongrel cur you picked up into pulp! What are you sneaking about here for? You ought to have been in the ring long ago! Get to your job, or I'll—I'll—"

Words failed the drunken bully, and, with a final roar, he staggered up the steps into his van, and slammed the door behind him.

Micky waited no longer. He knew he was behind time, and that his partner, Mike Megan, would be cursing his absence, so he put Chappie on the ground and darted at top speed to the great circus tent. In the passage-way that led to the entrance of the ring itself, a tall man in a brown dressing-gown was standing. As Micky dashed in he swung round with a scowl.

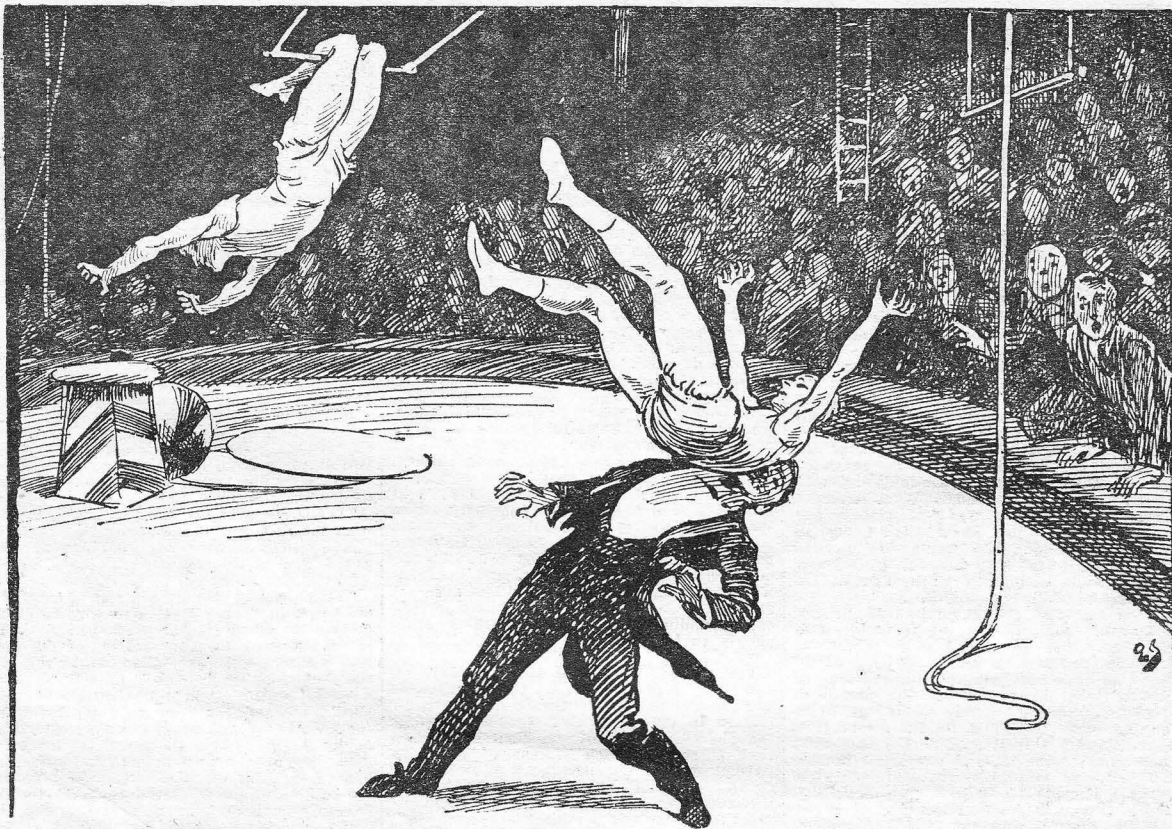
"Where have you been all this time?" he demanded. "I've been waiting here for ten minutes, and the bareback riders have gone in, and nearly finished their turn. I'll take it out of your hide after the show!"

The exit of a man and woman on two white horses stopped further conversation, and the two acrobats threw off their dressing-gowns preparatory to entering the ring. In his white tights Micky looked a splendid specimen of an athlete. He was rather slim, but his pliant muscles rippled beneath the skin in his every movement, and his eyes shone with excitement, as they always did before his work on the trapezes. He raised a warning finger, and Chappie crawled under a bench and sat down, as Micky had taught him to do while the acrobatic turn was on.

With a great bound, Micky and Mike burst through the entrance into the glare of the flaming naphthaline lights. A round of applause greeted their appearance, and the two acrobats opened their turn with flying handstands over each other's shoulders. Then, springing on to the trapezes, they swung high into the air, and performed flying somersaults to the blare of the band and the acclaim of the audience.

Suddenly Micky swung on to a tiny platform near the extreme top of the tent. The music of the band ceased. A breathless hush





Micky strove hard to recover his balance, but it was too late! He landed full on the top of Boris Beauman, and the two rolled in the sawdust together (See this page.)

fell on the crowd. The young acrobat was about to dive from that great height and clasp the hands of his partner, who was swinging head-downwards from a flying trapeze. The slightest miscalculation, and he would crash down to the floor of the ring, for no net was spread beneath him.

As Micky stood balancing himself daintily on the tiny platform, awaiting the sign that Mike was ready, he felt no fear. A little natural excitement tingled in his veins; but he had never failed yet, and no thought of failure entered his head now.

Mike clapped his hands twice. It was the signal for the "big stunt."

A pin might have been heard to fall in the silence that possessed that crowded tent. Micky let go the brass rails that bordered the sides of his little platform, and stood on his toes, gauging with his eyes the swing of the trapeze.

Then a loud roar broke the silence of the circus:

"Come down, you thief!"

It was Boris Beauman, who had entered the ring, and was shaking his fist at the young acrobat in drunken fury.

Micky heard the voice, and strove to recover his balance. But it was too late! With terrible velocity, he hurtled downwards, and, instead of catching the wrists of Mike firmly as the trapeze was at the end of its swing, he was a fraction of a second too late. His hands caught the hands of his partner, but his hold was not good, and the sudden strain on his arms caused him to let go his grip. Sharp gasps of alarm broke from the audience, but, fortunately, their fears were groundless. Boris Beauman was underneath, and Micky landed full on the top of him, and the two rolled into the sawdust together.

Had the lad not broken his fall by grasping the hands of Mike, it is probable that finis would have been written to the careers of both Micky and the circus proprietor. As it was, Micky leaped to his feet and waved his arms to relieve the anxiety of the audience, and Beauman, bruised and sore, staggered to

his feet, with a thunderous look on his face that boded no good for the young acrobat.

"Tried to add murder to your other crime, eh, you young rip?" he snarled. Then clutching Micky by the throat, he hissed: "Now then, where's that gold watch you boned from my van?"

A medley of cries arose from the spectators:

"Let the kid alone!"

"Yah, you great bully!"

"Didn't like acting the part o' mattress, eh, old sport?"

This last remark, shouted in a stentorian voice, brought forth a shout of laughter, and several men jumped over the barrier into the ring.

"Now then, guv'nor, what's up?" asked one burly individual.

Boris Beauman released his hold on Micky, and turned to face his interlocutor.

"This young scoundrel has robbed me!" he roared. "I caught him skulking about my caravan, and when I got inside I found a valuable gold watch gone from the drawer where I put it."

Mike Megan slipped from his trapeze, and artistes, attendants, and audience crowded swiftly around. It was evident that the sympathy of the majority was for the young acrobat, who had so nearly lost his life through the ill-timed interruption of the bullying ringmaster.

"What have you to say, lad?" asked one.

"I say it is false—false!" cried Micky vehemently. "I never went into his van, and if you like you can search my clothes and boxes for the watch."

"Likely, ain't it?" sneered Beauman. "Of course, he's hidden the watch somewhere where nobody's likely to look, and when—"

"Now then, what's the trouble here?"

The crowd parted hastily, and the burly form of a police-inspector came into view.

"Officer, arrest this thieving young scamp!" shouted Beauman, pointing dramatically at Micky. "He's robbed me and—"

"Come this way!" ordered the inspector, interrupting the circus proprietor's outburst. "Now then, make way there!"

By careful usbering, the limb of the law

extricated Micky and Beauman from the crowd, and got them through the exit. Immediately, Chappie, who had been waiting patiently under the bench, leaped out, and, with every manifestation of delight, rubbed his cold nose in Micky's hand.

Just outside the great circus tent the inspector halted, and another policeman, attracted by the commotion, arrived on the scene. Some of the circus artistes, who had followed them out, flocked round, too; but they were dispersed by Beauman himself.

"Get back to your work!" he shouted. "D'you think I pay you to hang about doing nothing?"

Old Clancy, the clown, alone refused to budge. He wrapped Micky in the blue dressing-gown, and remained by his side whispering encouragement.

"Don't be afraid, youngster!" he wheezed. "Everything will turn out all right, and you can rely on old Clancy to stand by ye!"

Micky saw the kindly look that shone through even the crude white chalk and red paint that smothered the clown's face, and he murmured his thanks, and took fresh heart. The change from the comparative warmth of the interior of the circus to the chill air outside caused him to shiver, but the kindly inspector was quick to notice the fact.

"Where are your clothes, lad?" he asked. "That dressing-gown is too thin for this weather."

"In there," replied Micky, pointing to a small adjoining tent.

"Get inside and slip 'em on, then," said the police-officer.

Holding Micky's arm he entered the tent, where a small oil lamp was shedding a feeble light. Trooping in after them came, in order, Chappie, the little mongrel, the other policeman, Beauman, and Clancy, the clown. "Mind the young rip don't escape!" said Beauman; "he's as slippery as an eel!"

"That's my business, sir!" said the inspector frostily. "I'll hear what you've got to say in a minute."

Micky hastily drew on his clothes over his

acrobat's tights, and pulled his boots and overcoat on.

"Now, sir, let's have your version of this matter!" said the inspector to Beauman, in business-like tones.

"Well, it was like this," said the circus proprietor, "just as the show was starting this evening I caught this lad coming out of my caravan. It struck me then it was suspicious; but—"

"It's a lie—a deliberate lie!"

Micky's eyes flashed, and he took a quick step forward. Immediately there was the snap of something over his wrists, and he found himself manacled with a pair of handcuffs.

"Now, lad, behave yourself!" said the inspector. "I didn't want to put the bracelets on you, but we can't allow any little games, d'you understand?"

"That's right, officer!" said Beauman, in thick tones. "I'm glad to see you doing your duty."

"I want no commendation from you, sir!" said the inspector stiffly. "I understand you charge this lad with stealing a gold watch?"

"I do," said Beauman. "He broke into my van and stole it while I was on a business visit down town. But before you take the scoundrel to the lock-up I want the watch back." Then, stepping towards Micky with uplifted hands, he shouted: "What have you done with it—eh, you thief?"

Chappie, who had been sitting on his haunches watching the scene with puzzled eyes, sprang to life at the threat to his young master, and, baring his teeth, flew at the legs of the circus proprietor.

"Get out of it, you mongrel cur!" shrieked Beauman. And, raising his foot, he dealt the little dog a violent kick in the ribs.

It was too much for Micky. With a cry of anger he hurled himself forward, and crashed his manacled hands full on the mouth of the bully. None too steady on his legs, Beauman measured his length for the second time that evening, this time into the soft mud churned up by the hoofs of horses just outside the tent.

The police-officers made a grab at Micky, but they were a fraction too late.

With sudden inspiration the lad remembered an old trick taught him by a "hand-cuff king," who had once been with the show. He ducked his head, and, bringing his wrists sharply on the toe of his boot in the exact manner in which he had been shown, released the spring lock of the handcuffs. Then, with a splendid take-off from the prostrate form of the circus bully, he darted clear of the tent, and, with a sharp bark of delight, Chappie darted after him.

"Houp la!"

Old Clancy, the clown clapped his gnarled hands in great glee, but the two policemen shouted a warning, and started in hot pursuit. Unfortunately, Beauman raised himself slightly at that moment, but he sank back with a yell as the hefty boots of the Police Force descended upon him. Certainly he hindered two zealous officers in the execution of their duty, for by the time they had recovered their balance and got into their stride Micky had gained a good ten yards' start.

"Stop thief!"

Several men who were working near the entrance to the circus joined the policemen in their chase; but Micky was soon lost to sight in the deep shadows among the caravans.

"Phew!" panted the inspector, to his subordinate. "We've lost him all right! And I expect we shall hear something about the matter." Then he gave a chuckle. "But I'm not sorry the young scamp got away!" he added.

### The Stowaway.

ONCE clear of the tent, Micky Denver lost no time in dropping the loosened handcuffs and making for the darkest and most deserted part of the circus lot. One or two men called out to him as he passed, but he took no heed of them. With Chappie at his heels, he ran like a hare until he got clear of the circus area altogether and reached the narrow, deserted streets that abounded in that vicinity.

When all sounds of pursuit had receded from his hearing he dropped into a quick walk until he came to a railway embankment. Turning sharply from the road, he descended the slope and stopped under the shelter of a bridge to consider his best course of action.

"I think we've made a mess of things this time, Chappie, old fellow," he murmured.

fondling the muzzle of the terrier. "But what chance would I have had in a police-court in the face of Beauman's evidence? Anyway, I should have been convicted for assault, and then what would have become of you, eh, Chappie? But the point is: What are we going to do next?"

Chappie pawed sympathetically at Micky's overcoat, and his expression was so full of comical wonderment that the young acrobat burst out laughing.

"You're sorry you can't think of anything helpful at the moment, eh, old fellow?" he said, patting the little mongrel's head. "However, let's put some more distance between ourselves and the circus, and perhaps we'll hit on some scheme later."

With Chappie following closely at his heels, Micky started to walk down the railway track. Although he had no definite scheme in his head, he wanted to make in the direction of the river. Perhaps at the back of his mind he had the hope that he might manage to work a passage on some small coasting steamer, and thus get clear of Liverpool altogether.

For hours the young acrobat and his dog wandered by devious unfrequented ways, until at last they came to a waterside district well down the river, where, passing through a dilapidated gateway, they found themselves on a long wooden wharf. The tide was at the slack, and Micky gazed longingly across the muddy waters of the Mersey to an old tramp steamer which was swinging slowly to the first gentle reflux of the tide. He sat down on the edge of the wharf and wondered whether the ship was bound, for hoarse shouts and the rattle of the anchor chains as they came winding in over the windlass came clearly to his ears.

"Hallo, there!"

The sudden hail caused Micky to leap up and swing round in alarm. Coming towards him was an old night-watchman with a lantern in his hand. For a moment Micky thought only of flight, but then he realised that there was little chance of the man having heard of the occurrence at the circus, or of recognising himself and Chappie as the runaways. But what excuse could he give for being on a dark wharf at four o'clock in the morning?

Chappie gave a low growl, and the old man stopped.

"Call that dawg off!" he wheezed. "Ah, that's right! Now, where 'ave you been, me lad? Your poor father's been in a terrible state about you, 'e 'as!"

The old man raised his lantern, and Micky kept his face as low in his overcoat as he could. What did the old fellow mean? It was obvious that he, Micky, was being mistaken for someone else. But for whom?

"It's lucky for you, me lad," went on the night-watchman, "that your father is a good friend o' mine, and that he give me the price of a bottle to take you off, otherwise you'd 'a' been properly in the soup."

Micky's brain worked light lightning.

"I suppose I should," he agreed. "I'm a bit late, aren't I?"

The old man chuckled.

"Late!" he echoed. "That's good! Another five minutes and you wouldn't 'a' caught the old Plunger at all. She's weighing now!"

So that was it—he had been mistaken for somebody who ought to have been on board a ship called the Plunger, which was just weighing for sea. Micky's heart gave a great bound of hope. What a chance to get away from Liverpool, perhaps to some land across the ocean!

"Well, come on," he said gruffly. "Let's get a move on, or I shall miss the old packet after all."

"An' sarve you right!" snapped the night-watchman. "Don't you start supposin' I want to take you off, 'cause I don't. If it wasn't for the good turns your father 'as done for me, you wouldn't catch me pulling out to the middle o' the river at this time o' the mornin'!"

Grumbling under his breath, the night-watchman led the way down some weed-coated steps to where a rickety old skiff was moored. Suddenly an idea seemed to strike him.

"Ere, you ain't going to take that little dawg with you, are you?" he asked.

"Well, I'm not going to leave him behind," said Micky.

And he picked up Chappie and deposited him in the bow of the boat.

"Your father will say sumthin' to you all right when he see it!" said the old man wisely. "I shouldn't be surprised but what you get a taste of the rope's-end from him as well as bo's'n. Still, it's none o' my

business. 'Ere, get for'ard and give a pull on the bow oar."

Glad of the opportunity of getting behind the night-watchman, Micky hastily obeyed the order, and shipped the oar in its rowlock. It was possible that the man did not know the youth he had been told to take off to the Plunger, but Micky did not intend to take chances. He had not let the night-watchman see his face properly yet, and he was not going to do so if he could help it.

Soon the little skiff was clear of the wharf and decreasing its distance from the old tramp steamer in mid-river. The old night-watchman rowed a long, steady stroke, and Micky put every ounce of his strength into seconding his efforts. It was a risky venture the lad was undertaking, and there was a very big chance of it failing, but he was desperately anxious to get as far removed from the hated circus life as he could. Meanwhile, he determined to pump his fellow-rower for as much information as he could before reaching the ship.

"I say, what time did you see my father?" he asked, thinking this a safe question with which to open a conversation.

The old man took no notice; he needed all his breath for his exertions. Micky made two or three tries, but it was not until they were nearly out to the steamer that his companion deigned to speak.

"Is there a gangway down on the starboard side, me lad?" he demanded.

Micky looked over his shoulder at the gaunt form of the weather-beaten steamer.

"Yes," he answered.

"That's good," said the old man; "for we're only just in time. We'll give way together for half a dozen strokes, and then you can stand by ready to jump out and make fast the painter. I'll have a minute's rest in the skiff afore I pull back."

No hail came from the steamer. As a matter of fact, the crew were far too busy for a watch to be kept at the gangway. But Micky did not know that, and it was with much trepidation that he stood up in the bow of the boat ready to board the Plunger. He had no desire to fasten the skiff to the gangway as the night-watchman wanted, in case somebody tumbled him into it again. His chances of being allowed to remain on board the tramp when he was discovered would be all the better if there were no boat available for taking him ashore.

The night-watchman gave a couple of hard pulls with his oar, and the nose of the skiff swung in towards the steamer. In a flash Micky grabbed the little mongrel from the bottom of the boat, and leaped out on to the gangway of the Plunger.

"Hi, young 'Opracft, make fast that painter!"

With astounding agility the old night-watchman shipped his oar, and clutched the gangway with both hands to prevent his skiff from being carried away by the tide, which was now beginning to run strongly.

Micky swung round, keeping his body close against the rusty side of the ship.

"Can't you see I've got the dog in my arms?" he said. "Besides, you ought to be getting back to your job on the wharf."

"You're right there," said the old man. "If I was caught doin' favours for people like what I've done for you, I'd get the sack, I would! Rowing is 'ard work at my time o' life, and I gets that thirsty and—Ah, thank you, young sir!"

It was Micky's only coin—a half-crown old Clancy had given him on his birthday—but he tossed it into the skiff. The night-watchman let go his hold on the gangway and made a grab for it, and as he did so Micky gave the boat a sharp thrust with his foot, and sent it spinning from the ship.

"Hi! What's your game, you young up-start?"

The night-watchman got out his oars, but the tide had caught the boat, and, to Micky's joy, the old man adopted the easier course of rowing back towards the shore. As he departed he fired one parting shot.

"Give Master 'Opracft my compliments!" he shouted. "An' tell 'im I 'opes 'e'll give you a jolly good lickin' with the rope's-end!"

Micky shivered with apprehension, not so much from the prospect of the old man's cheerful hope being fulfilled, as from fear that the noise might lead to his premature discovery by one of the Plunger's crew.

Micky waited until the row-boat was lost to view, and then, as there was no sign that the cry had been heard by anyone on the ship, he cautiously began to creep up the gangway. With Chappie clasped tightly in



his arms, he had almost reached the top, when he felt the ladder tremble and heard the dull thud of slowly-revolving propellers. The Plunger was starting her voyage down the river!

Apprehensively, Micky peered round the bulwark, and to his relief found that the after well-deck was deserted. He quickly stepped on board, and as he did so one of the ship's cooks emerged from a galley in the starboard alleyway and came towards him. Without a moment's hesitation Micky sprang up the iron ladder leading to the deck above, and made himself as inconspicuous as possible in the shadow of a large ventilator, where he stood, hardly daring to breathe. But he need not have been alarmed, for the cook had no thoughts of stowaways in his mind, and most of the rest of the crew were working with the first mate on the fore's'le head.

Chappie, with great good sense, had remained quiet so far; but he began to get tired of his cramped position in Micky's arms, and struggled to get his feet to the ground again. Micky raised a warning finger to him, and looked round for a better hiding-place. A few feet away, hanging from a pair of davits, was a large-sized cutter, and with one hasty glance round to make sure that nobody was in sight, he ran across the intervening space of deck.

He mounted the iron rails that ran fore and aft inboard, raised the tarpaulin that covered the lifeboat, and, having deposited Chappie inside, crawled into the boat himself. The floor of the cutter was hard and lumpy, but Micky was too tired to be particular. He rested his head on a small water-cask, and, with Chappie curled up by his side, he soon fell into a sound sleep.

How long he remained asleep Micky had no idea, but he was awakened suddenly by a low growl from Chappie. The lad patted the little dog on the head as a sign for him to keep quiet, but Chappie's ears were thrust forward and his wiry frame was trembling with suppressed excitement. The

cause was not far to seek. A number of men were approaching along the deck outside, and then a gruff voice gave an order.

"Ere, one o' you, make fast that boat-cover! It's going to blow like blazes when we get a bit farther out!"

A couple of seconds later a huge pair of hands grasped the tarpaulin under which Micky was crouching and began to drag it tauter over the boat. With a deft twist the little mongrel freed himself from his master's grasp, and, pushing his head over the side of the cutter, gave vent to his feelings by a series of loud barks. The seaman who was responsible for Chappie's excitement let go the tarpaulin and dropped back to the deck in his surprise.

"A dawg!" he gasped. "Or the ghost o' one!"

Immediately there came the sounds of other voices and the heavy tread along the deck. It was useless to remain in hiding longer, and Micky poked his head out. The broad daylight made him blink, but he made out a small group of seamen facing the boat, who raised loud exclamations at the sight of him.

Then the bo's'n of the Plunger, a burly giant in a blue jumper, stepped forward.

"Hallo! What 'ave we 'ere?" he said. "A stowaway, eh! Come on out o' there, ye young swab, an' let's 'ave a good look at ye!"

*There will be another splendid instalment of this grand serial next week.*

**TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT "MICK O' THE MOVIES"**

**READERS' NOTICES.**

**BACK NUMBERS.**

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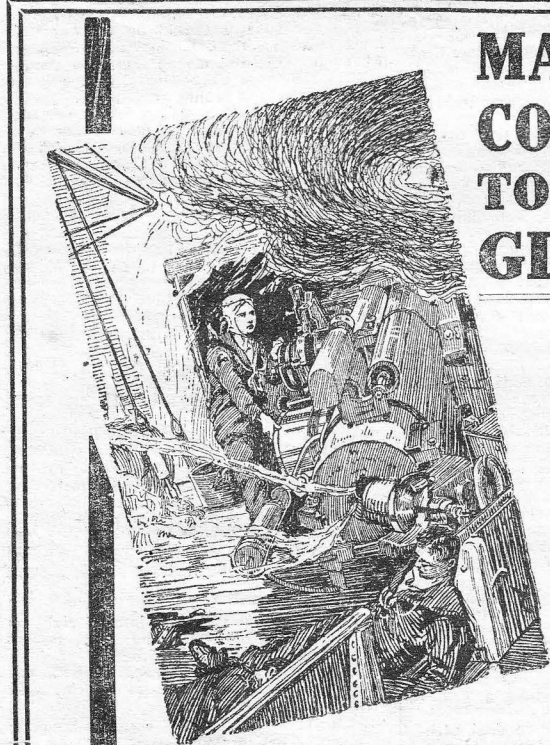
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F. Macpherson, Balintore, Glenferness, Nairn, will exchange Companion Papers.



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*Only one plate will be sent to any one reader.*

## HOW I SEE MYSELF!



By BAGLEY TRIMBLE.

(Edited by Monty Lowther.)

**T**HE other day I was walking through the quad, thinking about my people at home at Bagley Towers, when a silly chump—I forget now who it was; Tom Merry or one of that lot—came up to me, and said, "How do you see yourself, Baggy?"

Of course, I replied: "Through the looking-glass, fathead!" And he laughed.

Then he explained that he didn't really mean how I see myself at all, but what I thought of myself. I said I hadn't got time to tell him all that, so he asked me to write it down; and here we are.

Well, to start with, I consider that I'm the most thoroughly ill-treated fellow at St. Jim's. (I knew that was coming.—M. L.)

It doesn't matter what I do, or what I don't do, somebody's bound to come along and start kicking up a row; if it isn't one, it's another. I seem to act like a red rag to a bull. Directly anyone catches sight of me he seems to go mad.

There's something all wrong somewhere. If I see a pin on the ground outside a study, and stoop to pick it up, somebody dashes out and says that I was listening at the keyhole. As though I'd do a thing like that!

F'rinstance, the other day I was leaning against the wall just inside the gates, resting. There was nothing in that, was there? Suddenly I heard voices outside. It was Tom Merry and his lot talking. The Terrible Three they call themselves—though I can't see anything very terrible about 'em.

Well, as I say, they were talking. (So are you—through your hat!—M. L.)

Now, I happened to hear Tom Merry say that a "Greyfriars Herald" Tuck Hamper had just arrived for him, and that it was waiting at the lodge. Then that silly ass Lowther (I'll give you "silly ass Lowther" when I get hold of you—M. L.) said they'd better take it up to the study before they went to footer, and open it at tea-time.

You can see that it wasn't my fault I heard all that, can't you?

Anyway, they took it upstairs between them, and then came down to footer. They think they're very hot at footer; but, of course, that's just a little weakness on their part.

Later on that afternoon I happened to be walking along the corridor, and I remembered about the tuck hamper, and thought I'd just pop into their study and see what it was like. I just wanted to see whether it was worth while going in for that "Greyfriars Herald" competition and getting a hamper myself.

Well, the hamper was there all right; and a jolly big one, too! I was surprised, really; I didn't think the "Greyfriars Herald" would give away such whacking prizes.

As the fatheads hadn't opened the thing, I thought I'd better do it for 'em; it'd got to be opened, so I was saving them the trouble. There was nothing in that, was there?

There was simply tons of stuff in it; I hadn't seen such a heap of grub since before the war. There was cake and chocolate and jelly and condensed milk, and—oh, loads of things! Those three lunatics couldn't possibly have eaten it all themselves if they'd tried.

I suddenly thought of that old tag, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," and, of course, I wanted to know what the stuff was like because of going in for the competition myself. There was nothing extraordinary about that, was there?

At any rate, I tried a bar of chocolate. I couldn't see anything wrong in that, because we live in a free country, and we're all human beings.

Well, the chocolate was really very good indeed, and I wondered whether the cake was as good. That was only natural, wasn't it? But how was I to find out if I didn't try it? Of course, I did the only thing a sensible chap could do; I tried it.

That cake was about the best thing I've ever tasted in the way of cake; I didn't think the stuff was in the country to make cakes like it.

I began to think that perhaps it was worth while going in for the competition; but, mind you, I was not sure. It depended on what the other things were like. I tried a bit of jelly, though I had to bite it off, because that stuff's so blessed tough until it's properly made.

Anyway, it wasn't at all bad; the only thing was that it was raspberry flavour, and I prefer-lemon myself. I just had a taste of the figs afterwards, and broke my fingernails getting the box open.

They were just as good as the other things—the figs, I mean—and I came to the conclusion that it would be quite worth my while to try my hand at winning a hamper myself. I didn't trouble about the condensed milk, because I knew what that would be like; besides, I hadn't got a tin-opener.

I was turning the straw and stuff over to have a look at the next layer of things, when I heard Merry and the other two coming along the corridor. So I buzzed out of the study to run along and tell them what a splendid hamper they'd won, but directly I got outside Merry shouted:

"Collar him!"

Then those two chumps Manners and Lowther dashed at me like a couple of hooligans, and before I hardly knew where I was they'd got me down on the floor, and were sitting on my chest.

"Let me get up!" I exclaimed. "I just wanted to tell you—"

But before I could explain matters, Merry came running out of the study.

"He's wolfed half the grub out of the hamper!" he bawled. "The beastly glutton!" There's a thing to say about a fellow like me!

I tried to get a word in to explain that I was only just doing it to see whether it was worth my while going in for the competition. But it was no good; they wouldn't listen to what I had to say. And that's just like 'em. They'll never let a fellow speak for himself.

Then, what'd you think? They started bumping me! Yes, me—Bagley Trimble, of Bagley Towers! Just think of it! It's enough to make all the Trimbles for centuries back rise in their graves!

They would insist that I'd been stealing their grub. I reckon that was a blessed insult; it was as good as calling a Trimble a thief!

If I'd only had one lunatic to deal with—say, Tom Merry himself—of course, I should have landed out, because I'm a pretty hot fighter; but what can a chap do against three?

By the time they'd done ill-treating me I was pretty well half-dead. (Pity to only half do the job!—M. L.)

And that's just how it is all the time. I'm always being misunderstood. But I'll pay 'em out! I was thinking of asking those fatheads Merry and Manners and Lowther to come down to Bagley Towers—

(Cut it out! We've had quite enough! You've wasted too much space already.—M. L.)

## Between Ourselves!



By TOWSER.

(Interpreted by Robert Arthur Digby.)

**I**T is not often I get a chance to say a few words—dogs don't get much of a look-in at the best of times; but I've got a column all to myself now, and, though I could say enough to fill the paper, I'll make the best of it.

Of course, I'm not grumbling when I say that dogs don't get much of a look-in, because, as a matter of fact, my master is very good to me. He's a real good sort, though one or two of his chums, just between you and I, are rather funny chaps.

The one they call Digby is a jolly decent fellow; he seems to like me, and I like him. Then there is another one called Blake. He's not so bad, in a way, though he seems to think that I get too much attention. If it wasn't for that, I should be very keen on him; but, of course, he shows his ignorance when he thinks I'm looked after too well.

Now, the other chap—Gussy, they call him—he really is a funny old stick. Why? Because he doesn't seem to like me at all; and he must be funny if he doesn't like me!

You see, he's always talking about his "twousahs"—not that I can see very much to talk about, because they're all stripes!

Anyway, he seems to think that I'm always wanting to take a bit out of them, which is just where he makes a big mistake. Every time I go anywhere near him, he says: "Take that howbid brute away; he has no respect for a fellah's twousahs!"

He's just about right there; I haven't got any respect for his trousers—and not very much for him, either, calling me a horrid brute!

But I get a rare lot of fun out of him, all the same. He's afraid of me, really, and I do pull his leg; not with my teeth, of course—oh, no!

The other day the four of them went skating, and I was taken with them. Well, I noticed this fellow Gussy kneeling on one knee by the side of the ice, and fastening on one of his skates. The other skate was just close behind him, so I crept up quietly and put my nose over it.

The next moment Gussy put his hand round to grasp the skate, but instead he put it right on my nose.

"Yow-oooooh!"

He gave such a yell, and jumped right on to the ice with one skate on. Then, just to frighten him, I jumped towards him.

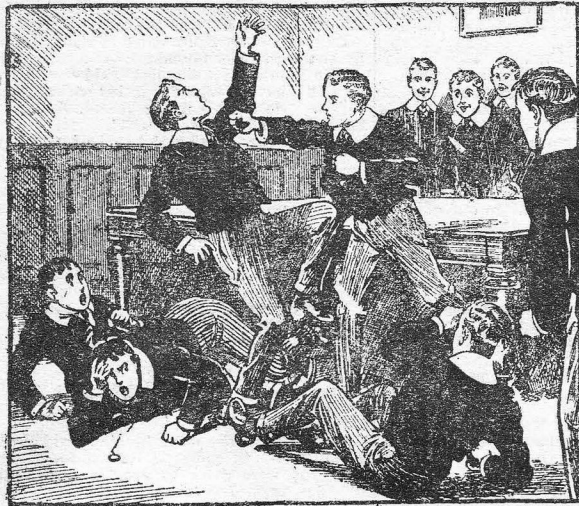
He gave another big yell, and tried to run; but, of course, he couldn't, and down he went with a bang!

Oh dear! I nearly died through laughing so much. Then my master came along and tied me up—shame!—and that was the end of my little bit of fun.

What a life! A real dog's life!

LEND THIS COPY  
TO A FRIEND!





## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Hard Up!

**K**EEP smiling!" Jimmy Silver of the Fourth clapped Rawson on the back with a sounding clap that made Rawson stagger as he gave him that useful admonition.

Rawson gasped.

"Ow!"

Jimmy grinned at him cheerfully.

"What are you looking like a boiled owl about?" he asked.

"Was I?"

"You were! Come up to the study to tea," said Jimmy. He held up a parcel, which he had just brought from the tuckshop, temptingly. "Look here! We're in funds—at least, I'm in funds, and the study is flowing with milk and honey—anyway, with ham and eggs! Come on!"

Rawson grinned faintly.

"Thanks! But—"

"No buts," said Jimmy Silver; "you're coming!"

And he grasped Rawson's sleeve with his free hand, and marched him along the passage.

Rawson went unresistingly.

It was difficult to resist Jimmy Silver's high spirits. Jimmy's spirits were always high, his face always sunny. He swung his parcel of tuck cheerily by the string as the two juniors went up the passage to the end study.

Rawson's face was dark and clouded, and Jimmy wondered why.

Rawson, the scholarship boy, had had a good many little persecutions to suffer at the hands of Townsend & Co., the snobs of the Fourth; but they had not affected his spirits much. The burly Rawson was a little too muscular for the Nuts to handle personally; and he repaid their absurd contempt with a contempt much more profound and well-founded, despising them as snobs and slackers and duffers, as they were. He was generally in cheerful spirits. But Jimmy Silver had spotted him looking as if most of the troubles in the universe had settled on him in a cloud.

So it was just like Jimmy to march him off to a merry feast in the end study, with the intention of cheering him out of the "blues."

Townsend and Topham and Peele, the Nuts of the Fourth, were in the passage, and they made it a point to curl their lips as Jimmy Silver came by with Rawson. Rawson did not even look at them. But Jimmy Silver did. And he swung his parcel a little more widely, and caught Townsend under the chin with it, as he passed. Towny gave a yell and sat down.

"Clumsy!" said Jimmy Silver chidingly.

And he walked on to the end study, leaving Townsend sitting in the passage, rubbing his chin and glaring.

"Cheeky rotter!" gasped Townsend. "If—if I thought he did that on purpose, I'd go after him and lick him!"

"He did it on purpose, right enough," said Topham

"No doubt about that," chimed in Peele.

Townsend considered it judicious to turn a deaf ear to those remarks. Certainly he would have fared very badly if he had gone after Jimmy Silver to lick him.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were in the end study getting tea. They greeted Rawson with friendly nods. The Fistical Four of the Fourth rather liked old Rawson. He was so burly and good-natured, slow to take offence, but a dreadfully hard hitter when he did take offence, as some of the Nuts had discovered, and a decent fellow could hardly help liking him. And then, there was no "rot" about him. He made no attempt to conceal the fact that his father was a working carpenter, and his brother a private in the Army. Amazing as it seemed to Towny & Co., he was distinctly proud of both these facts.

Townsend, in a moment of deep sarcasm, had asked Rawson if he would have been proud if his sisters had been washerwomen; to which Rawson had replied, in his serious, thoughtful way, that it depended upon whether they did the washing well. Rawson's amazing opinion was that a good carpenter was superior to a bad emperor; an opinion which proved to Towny & Co. that he was simply "outside"—in fact, the very extreme outside edge.

Rawson's plain common-sense, which outraged all the ideas and beliefs of the elegant Nuts of Rookwood, rather amused Jimmy Silver & Co. It was really surprising the number of things Rawson was proud of. He was proud of having come to Rookwood on a scholarship, instead of being paid for by money he hadn't earned. So he wasn't likely to agree in any way with Towny, who regarded earning money as the very last degradation a fellow could fall into.

Jimmy Silver slammed his parcel on the table—the study table that stood as firm as a rock now, since Rawson, with his wonderful knowledge of carpentry, had mended the "gammy" leg.

"Here you are!" said Jimmy. "A feast of the gods, dear boys! Have you got the kettle boiling?"

"Just on," said Lovell.

"Make the tea, Rawson, old chap—make yourself useful!" said Jimmy Silver briskly, as he unfastened the parcel.

Rawson nodded without speaking, and made the tea in his careful way. Everything that Rawson did was careful and methodical, and he made tea as carefully as he did Greek exercises.

It was indeed a feast of the gods in the end study. There were eggs and ham galore, there were sardines, there was a whole cake, there were two kinds of jam, and there was an entire pineapple. No wonder the Fistical Four sat down very smilingly to tea. It was, in fact, more than a feast of the gods; for, as Jimmy Silver truly remarked, the gods on old Olympus never had ham and eggs.

But even under the influence of that cheery feed, Rawson's gloomy face did not light up.

Jimmy tried him on footer, in which he intended Rawson to take a hand, let the Nuts rage as they would. Rawson was generally

keen on games, but just now he seemed to have lost his interest in footer. Jimmy came to the point at last, taking a pal's privilege of speaking plainly.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Matter!" said Rawson.

"Yes. You're in the blues."

Rawson coloured.

"I—I'm sorry!" he stammered. "I—I shouldn't have come."

"Bless your little heart, we don't mind!" said Lovell. "Pass the jam!"

"Anything wrong?" asked Raby. "You can tell us. Has Smythe of the Shell been licking you again?"

Rawson grinned. The way Adolphus Smythe had tackled him, to mop up Rookwood with him, and the way the great Adolphus had fled headlong from the ring after a few rounds, was still chuckled over in the school.

"No," said Rawson.

"Have the noble Nuts been worrying?" asked Jimmy.

"They don't worry me," said Rawson. "I don't mind them."

"Then cheer up!" said Newcome. "Try the pineapple, and grin!"

Rawson tried the pineapple, but he did not grin.

"The—the fact is—" he said at last, his face flushing crimson.

"Go it!" said Jimmy Silver encouragingly.

"I—I'm short of tin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rawson looked puzzled.

"Nothing funny in that, is there?" he asked.

"Well, no; but it's rather funny to wear a face like a blue moon about it!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "My dear chap, that isn't so bad as the end of the world, or a railway strike, or any catastrophe like that. Cheer up, and borrow some tin from your Uncle James. How much do you want?"

"That ain't all," said Rawson. "You—you see, I don't have a lot of pocket-money like you chaps. I only have the scholarship allowance, and out of that I have to pay for my books and clothes, and—and there's other things."

"Old folks at home—I understand," said Jimmy. "It's ripping of you, old chap! Nothing to blush about."

"What I mean is," said Rawson, still blushing. "I—I mean, if you lend me some tin, it will be a bit of a time before I can shell out again, and—and so—"

"Make it next term, if you like," said Jimmy. "Will half-a-quad see you through?"

"It would for this week," said Rawson, "but—but I mayn't be able to pay it back for weeks, or I'd have asked you before."

"Don't worry about that," said Jimmy. He fumbled in his pockets, and produced three half-crowns, two shillings, and a sixpence. "There you are, my son! If you keep it till next term, it will be a little windfall for me some time when I'm stony."

Rawson hesitated to pick up the money, though his eyes dwelt on it longingly. It was evident to the Fistical Four that the scholarship junior was bitterly in need of it, though

why they could not guess. Rawson certainly never had much money, but he had no expensive tastes; and, as a rule, though he had little, he generally had some in his pockets, and never fell into the utterly "stony" state that Jimmy Silver & Co. experienced so often.

"Shove it into your pocket, old son," said Jimmy, in wonder. "What's the matter with you?"

"It—it's rather like sponging on you!" faltered Rawson.

"What rot!"

"But—but you fellows know I'm not that sort, don't you?" said Rawson. "It's so pressing that—that I'm risking making you think badly of me—"

"Don't be so jolly serious about nothing!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "You are such a serious old hunk, Rawson!"

Rawson slipped the money into his pocket. "I can't say how much I'm obliged to you, Silver," he said. "Do you mind if I buzz off now? I—I want to get down to Coombe before the shops close."

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy.

Rawson quitted the study. The Fistical Four had not finished their tea, and they went on with it cheerfully enough. In discussing the prospects of footer they soon forgot about Rawson. But they were to be reminded soon of the scholarship junior—and of the loan.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Disgusted With Rawson.

"A REGULAR blow-out!" said Muffin of the Fourth.

"Oh, bow-wow!" drawled Townsend. "Draw it mild, Muffin!"

"I tell you I saw him."

"Well, where did the bouncer get the tin?"

"Blessed if I know, unless he's been borrowing it from Leggett," said Muffin. "But there he was, in Mrs. Wicks' shop in Coombe, laying in tuck ad lib. And when a fellow asked for a whack, he said 'Rats! Rats—to me, you know!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve you right for wanting to feed with such a rank outsider, by gad!" said Townsend.

"Well, I haven't been down on Rawson," said Muffin. "I've treated him very decently. I think—spoken to him, and borrowed his dictionary, and all that."

"You'd be civil to anybody with a smell of doughnut about him," said Topham.

And there was a laugh. Muffin was a fat youth with a first-class appetite, and it was popularly believed that he would have accepted an invitation to feed with the Kaiser himself. Muffin was in a state of indignation now, and Jimmy Silver & Co., who were coming in from the dusky quadrangle, paused to listen to his tale of woe and grievance.

"Somebody done you out of a doughnut, Muffy?" asked Jimmy sympathetically. "Or did you dream you were a jam-puff—and woke up?"

"It's that rotter Rawson," said Muffin. "Mean, I call it. Rolling in tuck, and wouldn't hand out a single biscuit to a chap."

"Tosh!" said Jimmy at once. "Rawson always whacks out when he's got anything."

"Which isn't often!" sneered Townsend.

"Well, I tell you he's a mean beast!" said the aggrieved Muffin. "Rolling in cash, too!"

"He isn't—he's stony!"

"I tell you he was simply perspiring bobs!" said Muffin. "I saw him. I called in at Mrs. Wicks' to ask her to trust me for a stone ginger, and—and she wouldn't. And there was the bouncer buying tuck. Cakes, and biscuits, and chocolate, and things, and whole jars of jam, I tell you. And he wouldn't whack out a single crumb with a chap he knew!"

"What rot!" said Jimmy.

"And that wasn't all, either," said Muffin. "He was buying smokes, too!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you I saw 'em!" howled Muffin. "He asked Mrs. Wicks to give him an old cardboard box to pack 'em in—all kinds of tuck, and a packet of tobacco, and half a dozen packets of cigarettes. I saw the lot!"

Jimmy Silver's brow darkened.

If Townsend or Topham had made that statement, Jimmy Silver would have regarded it as a libel, and perhaps taken drastic measures. But Muffin, who never thought about but feeding, was not one of Rawson's persecutors. And he was evidently in aggrieved earnest.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 52.

Townsend burst into a mocking chuckle.

"Well, that puts the lid on!" he ejaculated.

"Why, Rawson's rowed Toppo and me for smoking in the study!"

"He has!" said Topham. "The cheeky worm!"

"And now it comes out that he smokes himself," said Townsend. "Like all these chaps who keep up awfully good appearances, what! I suppose he's going to smoke 'em in the end study with Jimmy Silver."

"You don't suppose anything of the kind," said Jimmy curly. "Anybody who starts smoking in the end study will go out of that study on his neck. And I don't believe Rawson smokes. He's told me he doesn't."

"Of course, he would tell the truth!" jeered Peele.

"Of course he would!" agreed Jimmy. "Only cads tell lies, and Rawson is a decent chap. You've made a mistake, Muffin!"

"Didn't I see with my own eyes?" howled Muffin indignantly.

"Oh, you were dazzled by the pot: of jam, and saw double!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps he's going to stand a study feed, and there may be a chance for you yet, Muffin," suggested Dick Oswald.

Muffin brightened up.

"Yes, that's possible. I'll keep an eye open for him when he comes in. After all, it's time he stood a spread; he hasn't stood one since he's been here."

"Too jolly poor!" said Peele.

"Well, he's in funds now," said Muffin. "He was spending shillings like ha'pennies, I tell you!"

"Anybody missed any cash?" chortled Smythe of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's not going to stand a feed in my study," said Townsend. "If he does, I shall retire from the scene!"

"Do!" said Muffin. "That will leave all the more for me. I sha'n't refuse Rawson's invitation. I rather like old Rawson, come to think of it, though he was rather a beast at Mrs. Wicks'."

"Sure, and he's a broth of a boy!" said Flynn. "And if Towny don't like the feed in his study, Rawson can have it in mine, and I'll help him."

"Same here," said Hooker.

"More likely the chap's having a feed on his own, and don't mean to ask anybody!" sneered Townsend.

"Rats to you!" sneered Flynn. "Let's go down to the gates and wait for him, and give him a hand with the tuck."

"Jolly good idea!" said Muffin heartily.

Half a dozen of the Classical Fourth adopted Flynn's suggestion. The Nuts contented themselves with sneering. They didn't want a "whack" in Rawson's spread; especially as it was doubtful whether they would be asked.

The Fistical Four went on into the Common-room; Jimmy Silver's brows knitted a little.

Jimmy, with his usual generosity, had lent Rawson nearly all that remained of his remittance, and he was himself in a "stony" state till the funds should rise again.

It was decidedly startling to hear that Rawson had been expending that loan in "tuck." Jimmy had naturally imagined that he needed it for some important purpose. If Rawson had borrowed money for a feed, when, according to his own statement, the date of repayment was very uncertain, Rawson was not exactly the fellow Jimmy Silver had taken him for.

"That's jolly queer!" Lovell remarked.

"Simple enough," said Raby, in a thoughtful way. "The poor chap has been chipped about not having any money, and so on, and perhaps he thinks he'd like to stand Sam for once."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"It's not quite like Rawson," he said. "But I dare say that's it. He never seemed to care for Towny & Co.'s silly rot; but you never know. And it's all both about the smokes. Muffin was mistaken."

"I—I suppose so."

"Dash it all! We're not going to believe that Rawson has been telling downright lies!" said Jimmy.

"N-no! But Muffin says he saw—"

"Muffin's a fat idiot!"

"True, O King!"

Meanwhile, eight or nine juniors had gathered at the gate to wait for Tom Rawson to come in. The Classical Fourth agreed that it was really a ripping idea of Rawson's to stand a "spread," as an answer to the charges

of meanness hinted by Towny & Co. And they were generously willing to help old Rawson in disposing of the good things.

Rawson's burly figure came in sight, striding up the road from Coombe.

"He hasn't got a bundle!" said Oswald.

"Can't have much tuck in his pockets," said Flynn. "Sure it's a duffer ye are, Muffin! It isn't a spread at all, at all!"

"But he was buying the tuck—tons of it!"

"Then sure he's scoffed it intirely! Besides, why should he go down to Coombe to buy tuck for a spread? He could have got it from Sergeant Kettle here."

"But I saw him."

Rawson arrived at the gates. He glanced in some surprise at the group of juniors, all of whom greeted him with cordial nods and sweet smiles.

"Top of the afternoon to yez!" said Flynn.

"Where have you got it?"

"Eh? Got what?"

"Faith, the tuck!"

"What tuck?"

"Isn't it a spread?" demanded Hooker warmly.

"A spread! No!"

"Well, of all the mean beasts!" said Muffin, in disgust. "Of course, I took it for granted that you were going to stand a spread with all that tuck, Rawson!"

Rawson grinned.

"You shouldn't take things for granted, Tubby!"

And Rawson went on into the quadrangle with long strides.

The Classical juniors looked after him with deep feelings.

"Scoffed it all himself!" gasped Muffin. "I tell you there was a heap—whole jars of jam, cakes, and biscuits, and chocolate!"

"Greedy rotter!" growled Hooker. "Blessed if I don't think Towny's been right about that chap all the time!"

"And cheese," said Muffin. "A really beautiful cut of cheese. And a glass-jar of ham and tongue."

"Well, he must have had a blow-out!" grinned Flynn. "Sure, I hope he enjoyed it; but it's a mean baste he is!"

And the juniors returned to the School House in a state of great disgust. Towny & Co. chuckled gleefully when they heard the result. A fellow who, the first time he was in funds, went out of the school and stood himself a "whacking" feed, all on his own, was not likely to be popular. And the story of the smokes was not likely to be allowed to die. Rawson had stopped smoking in his study by Towny and Toppo, who shared the study with him—a high-handed proceeding that had earned him the deadliest animosity of the "Giddy Goats." The discovery that he was a smoker himself was too good to be lost, and Townsend & Co. made the very most of it.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Shown In.

JIMMY SILVER looked rather oddly at Rawson when he saw him again in the Fourth-Form dormitory that night.

The feed that hadn't come off had been much discussed among the juniors, and it was generally agreed that Rawson was what Muffin elegantly termed a "greedy beast."

Raby's charitable surmise that Rawson had borrowed the money in order to rebut charges of meanness by "standing Sam" in the Fourth was evidently wide of the mark.

The Fourth, of course, did not know that Rawson had borrowed the money Muffin had seen him expending at the village shop. Jimmy Silver & Co. were not likely to mention that circumstance.

Rawson caught Jimmy's eye on him in the dormitory, and coloured, and turned away his head. He had heard a good deal of the tattle among the juniors, and understood how he was regarded.

The next morning he joined Jimmy as the captain of the Fourth went out into the quad before breakfast.

Rawson's manner was very awkward, and there was a flush in his cheeks. It was evidently painful to him to say what he had to say.

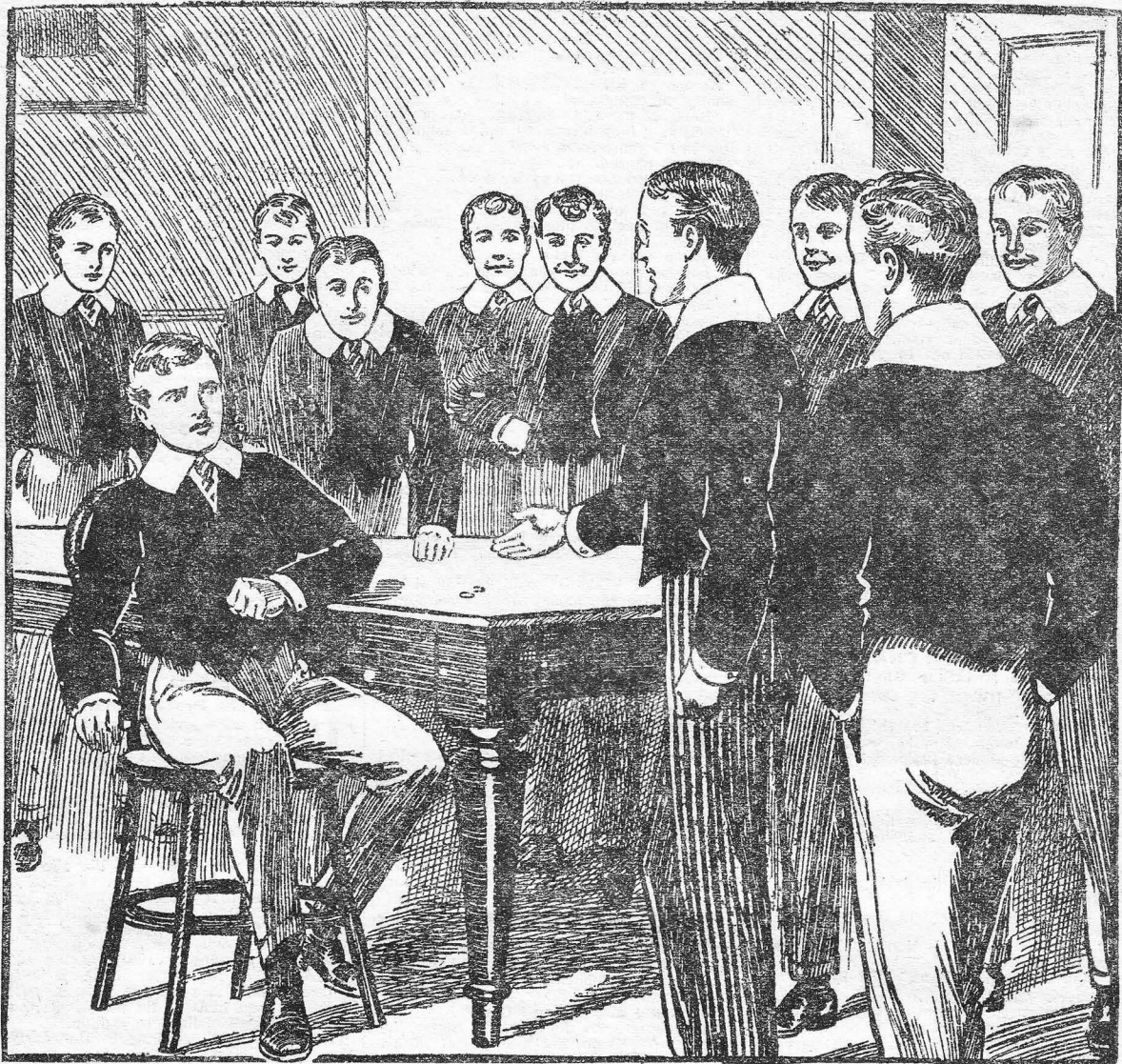
"I—I say, Silver—" he began.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy cordially. "More trouble?"

"No. You—you've heard what the fellows are babbling—"

"Bless you, I never mind what fellows babble!" said Jimmy. "I advise you not to,





"Gentlemen," said Smythe, as he drew the two coins from his waistcoat-pocket and laid them on the table at Rawson's elbow. "In the name of Rawson's friends, I hereby make the presentation." Rawson's flushed face became pale, for the coins were none other than farthings covered with gold paint! (See page 17.)

either. That's sound advice from your Uncle James."

Rawson grinned.

"I shouldn't like you to think I'd borrowed your money to go out and guzzle," he said awkwardly. "I want you to know that it wasn't so."

"That's all right," said Jimmy. "Muffin had eaten too many pork-pies, and he dreamed it all."

"Not that, either, exactly," said Rawson. "I don't deny anything that Muffin said and all I say is, it wasn't his business!"

"Quite so!" Jimmy became grave. "Look here, Rawson, I hope Muffin was mistaken about the smokes!"

"You don't think I smoke in secret, like that fathead Townsend, do you?" said Rawson, laughing.

"No; and I'll take your word about it."

"Well, I give you my word I don't!" said Rawson. "I hope I'm not silly idiot enough. Whatever I may be, I don't think you'll ever see me setting up as a Nut."

"All serene!"

"Look here! If you like, Silver, I'll explain the whole thing to you," said Rawson slowly and reluctantly.

"But you'd rather not?"

"Yes, I'd rather not. But as you lent me the money—"

"Bow-wow! Don't say another word! Come and help me punt this footer about!"

And the subject was dismissed.

Townsend and Topham kept an eye on

Rawson that day, with the idea of catching him smoking, to show him up as a humbug—a whited sepulchre, as Towner put it. But Rawson was not to be caught. If he smoked, it was a dead secret, for he was never seen with a cigarette, neither was there a telltale stain on his fingers, or a "niff" of tobacco about him. For two or three days it was the same.

"He smokes out of doors, same as he has his spreads," said Townsend to his chums. "Did you ever hear of such a cad? Going out of the school to guzzle, as if he was afraid a chap would ask for a whack! Br-r-r-r!"

Peele chuckled.

"Rather a good idea to follow him next time he goes on a gorging expedition," he remarked. "Catch him in the act—what!"

"Good egg!" agreed Townsend. "But where does he get the tin from? I believe he only has about a bob a week allowance."

"Nobody's missed anything," grinned Topham.

"Might be borrowing from that Modern cad, Leggett," said Peele. "Pity him if he gets into Leggett's clutches."

Rawson came into the study at that moment, and the discussion ceased. Rawson was looking very thoughtful and decidedly glum. He glanced at the three Nuts. They had cigarettes between their lips, and there was a haze of smoke in the study.

Towner & Co. watched him uneasily, won-

dering whether he would cut up rusty, as usual, at the smoke.

But Rawson had other matters in his mind.

He opened the table-drawer and took out a book. It was a somewhat gaudy volume, and evidently a "prize" which Rawson had won at school before he came to Rookwood. He put the book under his arm, and left the study without a word to the Nuts. Townsend, glancing from the window, saw the scholarship junior crossing over to the Modern side.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were lounging outside Mr. Mander's house, and they lined up to meet Rawson. Rawson was a Classical, and the three Tommies were Moderns, which was a quite sufficient reason for ragging Rawson. The fact that they rather liked him personally made no difference.

"Stand and deliver!" said Tommy Dodd.

Rawson stopped.

"Pax!" he said. "I've come to see Leg-

gett."

"No Classical bounders allowed on this side!" said Tommy Cook. "Not unless they go on their knees—"

"And sit up and beg!" said Tommy Doyle.

Rawson grinned.

"Don't play the goat now!" he said. "I've got business with Leggett!"

Tommy Dodd glanced round, to make sure that Mr. Manders was not within sight or hearing.

"Going to see Leggett?" he asked.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 52.

"Yes."

"All right; we'll take you to him."

The three Tommies separated, to allow Rawson to pass in. As he put his foot on the stairs they closed on him suddenly, and he was whirled off the floor. The surprised Classical struggled in their grasp.

"Let go, you silly asses!" he gasped.

"Let go, I tell you! Ow—oh! I'll—"

"Come on!" said Tommy Dodd cheerily.

The three Moderns rushed Rawson up the staircase, with his arms and legs wildly flying. He was rushed headlong into the juniors' passage, and they arrived at Leggett's door.

"You silly duffers!" gasped Rawson.

"Knock at the door!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Crack!"

"Yaroooh!" yelled Rawson.

The merry Moderns had used Rawson's head to knock at the door with.

"Come in," called out Leggett.

"Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leggett opened the door from within. He jumped at the sight of Rawson struggling and wriggling helplessly in the grasp of the three Tommies.

"Visitor for you," gasped Tommy Dodd.

"Sure, we're showing him in, Leggett!"

"Come on, Rawson!"

Leggett jumped back as Rawson was rushed into the study. But he did not jump quickly enough. Rawson's head crashed on his chest, and Leggett roared and fell on the carpet. Rawson was deposited on his chest, and the three Tommies retired from the study howling with laughter.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Amateur Shylock.

"WOW-OH-OH! Gerroff!" gasped Leggett.

Rawson, breathless after his rough handling, rolled off Leggett, and the Modern junior sat up, gasping. "You silly Classical ass!"

"It wasn't my fault," said Rawson. "Those duffers—"

"You silly fathead, what did you come here for?" hooted Leggett, staggering to his feet. "I'm hurt!"

"Sorry, but—"

"Oh, get out, you Classical rotter!" Rawson put his collar straight. He picked up the book, which had rolled into the fender.

"What the dickens is that?" said Leggett, looking at it.

"I've come on business," said Rawson.

Leggett calmed down, a gleam coming into his narrow, shifty eyes. Leggett of the Fourth was always open to do business. He would buy anything for a tenth part its value, and sell it again for double its value when he found a purchaser, and he was always ready to lend money at fifty per cent. per week. There was no doubt that Leggett would be a great financier when he grew up, unless he found his financial operations cut short by a cold and unsympathetic judge and jury some day.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Leggett. "Short of tin?"

"Yes."

"You shouldn't waste your tin in spreads," grinned Leggett. "I've heard all about it, you see!"

"You buy things of the fellows," said Rawson, without heeding that remark.

"Yes, if they're any good."

"What will you give me for this book?" Leggett sniffed.

"Nixes!" he replied.

"It's a pretty good book," said Rawson. "Morocco binding, gilt edges, and a jolly good story—Treasure Island."

"Books are a drug on the market," said Leggett, with another sniff. "What is it—some blessed school prize?"

"Yes," said Rawson.

"Let's look at it."

Leggett took the book and examined it. He burst into a scoffing laugh as he read an inscription on the flyleaf:

"Presented to T. Rawson, Denham Road School. My hat! Is that the County Council School where you used to go?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'd have to tear out that flyleaf, and that takes away a lot from the value of the book," said Leggett. "Still, I'll give you twopence for it."

"Twopence!" ejaculated Rawson.

"I don't suppose I should get a shilling

for it," said Leggett. "Anyway, there's my offer—take it or leave it."

"I'll leave it, thanks!" said Rawson, taking the book back.

He moved towards the door, his face gloomy in expression.

"Hold on!" said Leggett, eying him curiously. "If you're hard up, I might be able to let you have a loan."

Leggett paused.

"How much are you in want of?"

"I'd like ten shillings."

"That's a lot of money for a chap like you," said Leggett inquisitively. "What do you want it for?"

Rawson did not reply.

"Another spread for your little self—what?"

"Never mind that. Will you lend me the money?"

"On terms—yes," said Leggett. "Always open to do business. A penny on the bob every week—that's tenpence a week till you're square."

Rawson hesitated.

"I mayn't be able to square for weeks," he said.

"I don't care, so long as you keep the interest up."

There was a long pause. Leggett's interest was at the rate of about eight per cent. per week—something like four hundred per cent. per annum.

Leggett could have given the venerable Shylock himself points in the usury business. But Leggett did not lend money for amusement.

"Well, I—I'll take it!" said Rawson at last. "I must have the money from somewhere."

"A poor kid like you shouldn't come to a school like this," said Leggett.

"That's not your business! Where's the money?"

"Hold on!" said Leggett coolly. "I don't hand over hard cash for nothing! How do I know you'll pay up?"

"I promise," said Rawson simply.

But Leggett chuckled.

"Promises are like pie-crusts!" he remarked.

"Yours may be," said Rawson contemptuously. "Mine are not. I will pay you the interest every week till I can return the money."

"Promises ain't business," said Leggett coolly. "You may mean to, and you mayn't have the money. You don't have much, I know that. You'll have to hand over some security, of course."

"I—I don't think I've got anything of value, except this book."

"That's of no value. Look here, if you think I'm trusting money into the hands of a poverty-stricken boulder who mayn't be able to pay up, you're mistaken," said Leggett.

"Suppose I give you an I O U?"

"You'll have to do that, of course, but your signature's not worth anything. You've got no resources. If you get a fellow to sign it whom I can trust, it's a go!"

"I couldn't ask—"

"What rot! You're friendly with Jimmy Silver. Ask him."

Rawson flushed.

"I—I couldn't ask him!"

"Then you won't have the tin!" said Leggett coolly. "Good-bye!"

Rawson still hesitated.

"Look here, Leggett," he said awkwardly,

"I—I can pay this money at the end of the term. I get a whack from my scholarship—the rest that's due to me. I wouldn't borrow if I couldn't pay."

"Good-bye!" said Leggett. "I don't know what's due to you and what isn't. Bring me the I O U with Jimmy's name on it, and it's a go. Otherwise, don't trouble to call again. I'm rather busy!"

Leggett sat down to the table and began to work. Rawson eyed him for some moments, and then left the study with a downcast face.

The three Tommies were in the doorway, waiting for him. They intended to carry him back to the Classical side, as they had carried him to Leggett's study, but the grim trouble in the junior's face disarmed them. Tommy Dodd clapped him on the back.

"Cheero!" he said.

Rawson started.

"Anything up?" asked Tommy Dodd, in a very friendly tone.

Rawson stared at him.

"Yes, if you want to know!" he said.

"Wouldn't Leggett advance a tanner on the book?" grinned Topham.

The Nuts had guessed the purport of Rawson's visit to the Modern side.

"No!" said Rawson calmly.

"Well, look here," said Townsend. "As you're in our study, we feel that we ought to stand by you, Rawson. If you want to raise the wind, we can give you a tip."

Rawson eyed him very dubiously.

"If you mean that, I'll be glad," he said.

"Well, write home to your mater—"

"Yes?"

"And advise her to take in washing. You see—Yaroooh!"

Townsend staggered back against the wall as Rawson gave him a rough shove, and the scholarship junior walked on. Townsend, his face red with rage, made a furious stride after him, but paused.

"The cheeky cad!" said Topham. "It was jolly good advice you were giving him, too, Topham!"

"I'll be even with him!" growled Townsend.

"By gad, I'll make the poverty-stricken cad sit up! Laying his paws on me—the cheeky scoundrel! Pretty sort of ruffian to come to a gentleman's school!"

"Regular hooligan!" said Topham. "I say, Topham, I've got an idea. What about raising a subscription, as he's hard-up?"

"Dotty?" grunted Townsend.

"A spoof subscription, I mean—I've got two farthings—"

"Farthings!"

"Yes—and some gold paint—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and tell Smythe, and we'll work it on him this evening!" chuckled Topham.

And a little later there was an important consultation, amid much cigarette smoking, in Adolphus Smythe's study, and the loud laughter that proceeded from the study seemed to hint that Adolphus & Co. were enjoying a very good joke indeed.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

##### The Presentation.

HERE were several curious glances at Rawson when he came into the junior Common-room that evening.

The depression in Rawson's face was visible to every eye.

That Rawson was unusually "hard-up" was now known to every fellow in the Fourth; but it was not so clear what he wanted money for.

His wants were few, and his allowance, small as it was, covered them. He had told Jimmy Silver that there was nothing wrong at home. Tubby Muffin certainly had no doubt what he wanted cash for—it was to stand himself feeds, with smokes galore.

But such a want as that was not likely to have such an effect upon a steady character like Rawson. It was a puzzle, which Rawson himself did not seem in the slightest degree inclined to explain.

Townsend & Co., sticking to the story of the surreptitious smokes, had suggested that Rawson had gone a little further in playing the "giddy ox," and had lost money on gee-gees. All the Giddy Goats knew how money went when it went in that direction.

Jimmy Silver had heard the suggestion, but he did not believe it. Rawson had too much sturdy common-sense to waste money in that way, and he had very strong views on the subject of racing generally, too. More than once the Nuts, with undisguised contempt, had heard him express his indignation that betting on horses was allowed at all. But if Rawson had not been betting, it was hard to guess why he was in such extreme need of money.

In the case of any other fellow the matter would not have attracted much attention; but in poor Rawson's case the Nuts of Rookwood were keen to draw attention to it, and make it the joke of the Form. Rawson's personal affairs were his own business; but Townsend & Co. made them theirs.

Jimmy Silver, who was playing chess with Lovell, gave Rawson a nod as he came in, which Rawson did not even see.

He dropped into a chair by the fire, and stared moodily at the embers, unconscious of the looks that were cast towards him. Signs passed between several of the Nuts who were in the room. The merry rag planned by Townsend & Co. was in progress.

Adolphus Smythe came in, with Howard and Tracy of the Shell. He was joined by Townsend and Topham and Peele. The six elegant Nuts came towards Rawson, and there was a general movement of interest. All the juniors in the room could see that something was "on."

"Aw! Excuse me, Rawson," said Smythe, with a little cough.

Rawson looked up moodily.



"Hope I'm not interruptin'," said Smythe politely.

"I'm doing nothing," said Rawson. "What is it, Smythe? I warn you I don't feel in a humour for any of your little jokes."

Adolphus looked pained.

"Dear man, I'm not jokin'," he said seriously. "I'm goin' to speak to you as a friend."

"Yaas, that's it!" said Townsend. "We're all friends here."

"Don't be ratty about nothin', Rawson," urged Howard; "we're really feelin' very friendly, you know."

Rawson looked puzzled.

"Well, what's the game?" he asked.

"Go it, Smythe!"

"It's a presentation," said Smythe.

"A what!"

Jimmy Silver was looking up suspiciously from the chessboard. Although all the Nuts made it a point to look serious and solemn as owls, Jimmy could guess that a joke was intended.

Smythe of the Shell gave another little cough.

"Gentlemen," said Smythe, turning his eyeglass round upon the interested juniors. "I should like you all to see this presentation made to Rawson by his friends."

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

"Sure, phawt's the little game intoirly?" asked Flynn.

"There is no little game, Flynn. It is a presentation. I hope Rawson will take it in the spirit in which it is meant."

"You can rely on that," said Rawson.

"Good! Gentlemen, hitherto Rookwood has been a somewhat exclusive school. True, we have Modern bounders here—and even on the Classical side there are such bounders as Muffin—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Muffin indignantly.

"But until quite lately we were never able to boast here a member of that truly useful and admirable class, the workin'-class," said Adolphus gravely. "This has been altered. We have now a representative of the class which have been called the backbone of England. Don't smile, gentlemen. The Rawsons of this world have a very important function to fulfil. Without Rawsons, how should we get our boots cleaned or our hats made?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Our attitude, therefore, should be one of grateful recognition towards the lower classes, to whom we owe so much."

"Hear, hear!"

"Off the wicket!" said Rawson calmly. "My idea is that people who work are the upper classes, and people who don't work are the lower classes. They're called by their wrong names at present."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I stand corrected," said Adolphus gracefully. "Our friend Rawson, therefore, comes here as the representative of what should justly be called the upper classes. Unfortunately, in the upper class to which he belongs there is a dearth of hard cash, which causes our friend Rawson to be under the painful necessity of wearing old clothes."

"Shut up, you cad!" came from Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, let him run on!" said Rawson. "This is as amusing as watching the monkey at the Zoo."

There was a chirrup of laughter, and Adolphus turned red with wrath. But he calmed himself with an effort, and proceeded in the same strain of gentle irony.

"The upper, or Rawson classes, are somewhat short of filthy lucre. Our friend Rawson is in that unhappy state known as stony. This is an intolerable state of affairs. Our superior friend, Rawson, has been driven to selling the valuable prizes he won in the palatial halls of the County Council—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But his friends have rallied round. Deeply conscious of the honour done to Rookwood by the arrival of this superior person in our midst, we have raised a small fund to relieve him of pecuniary embarrassment. We have whacked out—especially our generous friend Topham has whacked out—"

"Oh, don't mensh!" said Topham modestly.

"By our combined efforts we have raised a fund for presentation to our friend Rawson, in acknowledgment of the honour he has done us by comin' to reside in our midst," said Adolphus. "In the name of Rawson's friends, I hereby make the presentation."

And Adolphus, with a flourish, drew two coins from his waistcoat-pocket, and laid them on the table at Rawson's elbow.

There was a buzz as the glimmer of gold was seen.

"Half-quids!" gasped Hooker. "Oh, my hat!"

The juniors stared at Smythe in amazement. They had expected his ironical oration to wind up with some joke at Rawson. The sight of the gold coins seemed to show that he was in earnest.

Rawson blinked at the two coins.

Only himself knew how much the money would have meant to him. But he shook his head.

"I suppose you're serious, as you've handed out the money," he said. "But I can't take it."

"Oh, do!" said Adolphus.

"Do!" chorused the Nuts.

"It's all yours," said Howard, "with our kindest regards."

"As a special favour to us," said Adolphus, "we beg you to accept our little presentation. Don't be proud. The one fault of the lower—I mean, the upper—classes is that they are proud. As a special favour—"

There was a yell from Flynn, who was peering at the two gold coins on the table.

"Sure, they're not half-quids."

"What!"

"They're farthings!" yelled Flynn. "Farthings painted with gold paint."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a burst of laughter in the Common-room. All the fellows could see Smythe's little joke at last.

Rawson's flushed face became pale. He had been puzzled, but patient. He had a simple nature, and it had really seemed to him for the moment that Adolphus & Co. had meant kindly, though in a tactless way.

He understood now.

The whole room was howling with laughter. The Nuts were howling, too, and Adolphus' eyeglass had dropped off in his great merriment.

But his merriment had a sudden check.

Rawson stepped forward and hit out straight from the shoulder. There was a loud yell—not of laughter—from the great Adolphus, and he went tumbling heels over head among the Nuts.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The I O U.

CRASH!

Adolphus Smythe went to the floor, dragging down Townsend and Howard, whom he had caught wildly hold of to save himself. Then there was a yell from Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha! Well hit!"

Rawson had not finished yet. He was rushing forward. His face was pale with anger, and he was hitting out hard and quick. Topham rolled over Townsend, and Tracy was sent reeling by a blow on the chin. Peele backed away, but not in time. A drive on the chest laid him on his back.

The whole party of merry Nuts were on the floor, but they did not look very merry now.

The Fistical Four roared with laughter, and it was echoed all over the room. The sudden downfall of Adolphus & Co. seemed to the Fourth-Formers the climax of the joke, and they shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Rawson!"

"Get up and have some more, Towny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Adolphus scrambled furiously to his feet. The laugh had turned against him, after all. And he was hurt.

"Rush him!" yelled Smythe. "Collar the cad! Scrag him!"

"Me, too!" grinned Jimmy Silver, joining Rawson. "Back up, the end stud!"

And Lovell and Raby and Newcome joined him at once.

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver invitingly, as the great Adolphus paused. "Fair play's a jewel, you know. Come and scrag the lot of us."

"Yes, go it, Adolphus!" grinned Flynn.

"Mop 'em up, Adolphus."

"I—I decline to enter into a vulgar row with fags," gasped Adolphus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if you won't come on, we will!" said Jimmy Silver. "Come on, you chaps, and kick the cads out!"

The Fistical Four made a rush, and Rawson followed them up, and Adolphus & Co. were promptly bundled neck and crop out of the Common-room. They were distributed in the passage, gasping and yelling, and left to sort themselves out.

Adolphus & Co. did not return. They were crawling away with mutual recriminations, feeling anything but victorious.

In the dormitory that night Townsend was seen bathing his nose, and Topham his eye, while Peele rubbed ointment on his chin; and they maintained a very dignified reserve towards Rawson.

"Any more presentations coming along?" asked Jimmy Silver.

But the Nuts of the Fourth did not reply to that question.

The screaming joke had fallen flat. Smythe & Co. had had little doubt that Rawson would accept the money, and when the half-sovereigns turned out to be gilded farthings they were prepared to enjoy Rawson's looks. But the little joke had fallen flat—and so had Adolphus & Co. It was not likely that there would be any more presentations to Rawson.

The next day after lessons Rawson joined Jimmy Silver when the Classical Fourth came out. The expression on his face gave Jimmy a hint of what was the matter.

"Well?" said Jimmy.



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"Tubby Wiggins"—the St. Ives fat boy who appears every week in one of Jack Lewis's famous school stories.

"I'm not going to borrow of you," said Rawson, with a faint smile.

"You'd be welcome," said Jimmy, "only I'm stony, old son. But if there's anything I can do—"

"I don't like asking you," said Rawson miserably. "But—but I don't get any more tin for some time, you know. And—and I want some badly. I feel like a sponging cad speaking to you about it. But—"

"I'll help if I can," said Jimmy wondering. "What do you want me to do?"

"I've been trying to borrow of Leggett. He won't lend me any tin unless—unless a chap he knows has got money signs the paper along with me."

Jimmy looked very grave.

"The less you have to do with that money-lending cad the better, Rawson," he said.

"I know that. But I must have the money. You know I wouldn't bilk you, Jimmy. I get some more from my scholarship at the end of the term. I can settle out of that. I'll give you all the particulars."

"You needn't," said Jimmy. "I can take your word."

"Leggett won't!"

"Leggett's cad. What are you going to borrow of him?"

"Ten shillings," said Rawson. "Tenpence a week interest. I can manage that. And I shall settle the principal at the end of the term. But unless I get somebody to put their name on the paper—somebody he knows is all right—"

"I understand. I'll sign it," said Jimmy. There was a moisture in Rawson's eyes.

"I—I ought to tell you what it's for," he muttered, "only—only—"

"Never mind that. I know you're fair and square," said Jimmy at once. "Trot out your I O U. Ten bob, wouldn't bust me, even if I had to pay it."

"You won't have to, Jimmy."

"I know that, fathead! Give me the paper."

Ten minutes later Rawson ran down Leggett of the Fourth in the quadrangle. Leggett held out his hand for the paper the scholarship boy handed to him.

"All serene," said Leggett. "Jimmy Silver's fist is good enough for me. And there's your tin."

He counted out nine shilling and twopence.

"Ten bob!" said Rawson.

"First week's interest deducted," said Leggett coolly.

"You rotten Shylock!" growled Rawson. "I want the money!"

"Take it or leave it!" said Leggett, with a shrug of the shoulders.

Rawson walked away without replying. Leggett sauntered on, smiling. It was a good stroke of business—on Leggett's side—and the young rascal was not very deeply troubled with a conscience.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Secret Out.

**R**AWSON hurried out of the School House immediately after lessons that day with his coat and cap on. And Muffin of the Fourth gave a howl to his friends.

"Come on, you fellows!"

"Phwat's the game?"

"The beast is going out feeding again!" said Muffin. "He's in funds. Come on!"

"That's right!" said Hooker. "He's been borrowing of Leggett—I saw him!"

Flynn chuckled.

"Faith, we'll catch him in the act, intoirly! Come on, ye gossoons!"

Quite a little crowd of the Fourth followed Rawson to the gates. Townsend and Topham joined the party, and Flynn, Hooker, Jones minor, and several other fellows. They marched down the lane towards Coombe on the track of the unconscious Rawson.

Rawson did not look back once.

He hurried on to the village with his long strides, and the juniors had to step out to keep pace with him.

They were grinning over their little joke. Rawson's solitary spreads had caused great disgust, and the idea of catching him in the act, as it were, appealed to their sense of humour. Muffin was of opinion that the tuck ought to be raided as a punishment, while Townsend proposed "lathering" him with it. Flynn's idea was to make the greedy fellow ashamed of himself.

They reached the village, and there was a general gasp as Rawson was seen to enter the tobacconist's.

"I told you so!" chortled Muffin.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 52.

"What would Jimmy Silver say now?" grinned Townsend.

"Howly Moses!" said Flynn, in disgust. "Well, the spalpeen is bowled out now, and I'll have somethin' to say to him intoirly."

"Here he comes!"

Rawson came out of the shop with a little packet in his hands. He stepped along to Mrs. Wicks' little shop and went in.

"Tuck this time," said Jones minor.

"We'll keep him in sight, and drop on him when he starts on it," said Muffin eagerly.

"He don't gorge it in the shop; he didn't last time. Takes it away in a box to some quiet corner, the mean beast!"

Townsend peeped into the shop.

Rawson was standing there with his back to the door, giving orders to old Mrs. Wicks.

"What's he getting?" asked Muffin breathlessly.

"Tuck!" said Townsend. "Cheese and a glass jar of ham and a loaf. Now he's asking for grease-proof paper to wrap the loaf in."

"What the dickens does he want that for?"

"Blessed if I know."

"And a pound jar of marmalade, and a pound of biscuits," went on Townsend. "We'll jolly well lather him with the marmalade!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now he's asked for a box—"

"He did last time," said Muffin. "What does he want a box for?"

"To carry the tuck in, I suppose."

Townsend, somewhat puzzled, peered round the corner of the door again. Rawson, quite unconscious of the espial, was busy at the counter. Mrs. Wicks had handed him an empty cardboard box, such as sweets are packed in. Rawson rolled the loaf up carefully in the grease-proof paper, and packed it in the box, and carefully packed in his other purchases round it. The packet of smokes went in along with the rest.

Then he purchased three sheets of brown paper at a penny each, and carefully wrapped up the box, cording it with thick string he produced from his pocket.

"What's he doing now?" gasped Muffin breathlessly.

"Wrapping it all up," said Townsend, mystified. "Blessed if I understand what he's up to at all. Hallo! He's coming out!"

Rawson came striding out of the village shop. He glanced carelessly at the group of juniors, and crossed the street.

"After him!" said Muffin.

"My hat! He's gone into the post-office."

"Sure, it's quare! What's the little game intoirly?"

Townsend burst into a chuckle.

"I've got it! Bet you he's going to send himself a parcel to Rookwood, to make out that he gets parcels like other chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's it," said Topham. "Let's watch him."

The curious crowd crossed over to the village post-office. They looked in at the door. Rawson was standing at the counter, and his box was on the scales.

"Under eleven pounds?" they heard him ask.

"Yes—only eight," said the postmaster.

"Thank you. I'll address it now."

Rawson moved over to the portion of the counter reserved for telegrams, and dipped a pen in the ink, and began to address the parcel.

Hooker, with a grin, stole in on tiptoe, behind Rawson, to read the address over his shoulder. Rawson was writing it in large block letters. It ran:

"PRIVATE R. RAWSON,  
00116, 2nd Middlesex Regiment,  
Prisoner of War,  
Moscow, Russia."

Hooker's jaw dropped as he read the unexpected address. Rawson drew a label from his pocket, to address also, and as he moved the back of his hand came into violent contact with the inquisitive Hooker's chin.

Crack!

"Oh!" gasped Rawson.

"Yow-ow-ooop!" yelled Hooker.

Rawson turned round, his eyes blazing.

"You rotter! You were—"

"Yow-ow!" gasped Hooker, nursing his chin. "I—I'm sorry, Rawson. I am really. I—I didn't know your brother was a prisoner in Russia! I—I beg your pardon!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Rawson.

He addressed the label, fastened it on securely, and handed the parcel over to the postmaster. Then he strode out of the post-office. Hooker followed him, still rubbing his chin.

"Well?" said Townsend breathlessly. "Was the cad addressing it to himself?"

"Who are you calling a cad?" growled Hooker. "He's worth fifty of you, and chance it, Towsny!"

Townsend stared.

"Why, you ass—"

"Pretty lot of worms you are, to be following the chap about, and watching him, and suspecting him!" jeered Hooker. "Jolly decent chap, I think. 'Tain't every fellow who'd spend his last bob sending grub to a prisoner in Russia!"

"A—a prisoner in Russia!" howled the astounded juniors.

"Yes," said Hooker crushingly. "His brother's a prisoner with the Bolsheviks, and Rawson's sending him grub, and if you fellows can't be decent enough to know a decent chap when you see one—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Townsend, for once almost ashamed of himself. "You were with us, anyway, Hooker. I—I didn't know his brother was a prisoner; he's never said anything about it—"

"He wouldn't, to you," said Hooker. "Well, I've begged his pardon, and if you're decent, you'll do the same."

"Oh, rats!" said Townsend.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Staunch as Steel.

**J**IMMY SILVER & Co. burst wrathfully into Rawson's study about an hour later. They had heard of the expedition, and the curious discovery that had resulted. And they were naturally wrathful.

"You bounder!" shouted Jimmy.

"You mysterious beast!" hooted Lovell.

Rawson jumped up in alarm.

"What's the row? What the dickens—"

"We've heard all about it!" growled Jimmy. "Why couldn't you tell your old pals that your brother was a prisoner with the Bolshies, what?"

"I suppose these silly asses have been gassing!" growled Rawson, frowning. "Why can't they mind their own business?"

"Why didn't you tell us?" howled Raby.

"Well, I—I couldn't!" said Rawson. "You—you see, Dick was taken prisoner by those Bolshevik beasts, and there was a letter home, and we knew he was on awfully hard tack, though he couldn't say much. I—I wanted to send him what I could—you know how our men are starved in the Russian prisons. But—but I couldn't tell you fellows. I—it would have looked as if I—I wanted you to stand something for him, and—and it wasn't your business—I mean, you weren't called upon to do anything of the sort, and I didn't want to look like sponging. I wish those silly duffers had minded their own business!"

"I see," said Jimmy Silver. "Perhaps there's a little sense in what you say, but not much—not very much. Upon the whole, we won't bump you as we were going to. We'll punish you another way—through your brother Dick."

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Jimmy Silver sternly, "that as soon as we get out allowances, we're going to make up a stunning parcel, crammed with grub and smokes, and send it to Brother Dick, without so much as saying, 'By your leave!'"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co. heartily.

Rawson grinned.

"I see; you're beginning already," he said. "And we're going to keep on," said Jimmy Silver. "The end study herewith and hereby adopts your Brother Dick, and regards him as our Brother Dick. And if you raise the slightest objection to our sending tuck to our Brother Dick, you will get a whole set of thick ears, Tom Rawson!"

But Rawson did not raise objections.

Somewhat to Rawson's surprise, he found himself wonderfully popular in the Fourth Form that day. And for the next week or two it was quite the fashion in the Fourth Form to send off parcels to Brother Dick; and however much the other prisoners in Bolshevik hands went on short commons, it was certain that Brother Dick, at least, was remarkably well supplied.

THE END.

(Another grand, long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood School, next week. Order your copy of the PENNY POPULAR early.)



# A Word With My Chums.

## SPLENDID NEW FEATURES.

There is great news this week. In addition to our usual story of Greyfriars and a tale of Rookwood, I am giving special articles about a few of the celebrated characters of St. Jim's. I do this because I know how eager my friends are for mere biography, so please drop a word about the feature to your chums.

### Our New Serial.

But I want to refer specially to the fine new serial, "Mick o' the Movies," which will take rank among the best and most stirring stories we have had in the Companion Papers. If you take any interest in the cinema, you will appreciate to the full this narrative of a young and enterprising circus acrobat who rises to fame and fortune in the mighty world of the film. And as everybody nowadays is keen on the cinema and all it implies, I am quite confident regarding the success of the serial which is just starting.

### "Mick o' the Movies."

He is a real and appealing character is Mick, the hero; the sort of fellow you cannot help taking to, for he is human. He has to face a myriad difficulties, and then he loves his dog. About that dog—called Chappie, after the famous Charlie Chaplin—there is much to be said. Chappie is a grand fellow. He has no special breed, gives himself no airs; but he is just the real, proper sort of dog who finds his way to anybody's heart.

A mongrel—yes, he is only a mongrel. But what of it? A mongrel is generally the best companion and the dog with the keenest sense of humour and the quickest sympathy. Just watch this first opportunity. A mongrel is not worrying about his aristocratic ancestors and whether they jumped out of the boat with William of Normandy.

### Chappie of the Films.

Of course, Mick and his mongrel pass through amazing adventures. Later on we shall find the inimitable pair winning through at Los Angeles, the great city where the best films are made.

Chappie can do things; he can accomplish that fascinating waddle-walk of the leading cinema actor of the world—Chaplin, to wit. You will be spellbound by this yarn. It is written by a brilliant author, who, besides being a dog lover, like the rest of us, has been to and fro and up and down in the big world, and seen much worth the seeing. So tell everybody about Mick and Chappie, please!

### VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

Perhaps you think that there is not much to chat about this week, and that all the really good topics have been exhausted, poor things, and are leaning up against a convenient fence trying to get their wind back. But you would be mistaken. And Towser, whom you see scenting after something in the right-hand corner of one of the pages, Towser has a bit of an awesome way with him when he gets to business—may soon be just sniffing round to see if there is anything good to chat about.

But that is not Towser's motive at all. Towser is just attending to his own business—in this case a bone—which is sound in every walk of life, whether you walk on four legs or have to put up with a mere couple. But what I wanted to say is just this—there is always plenty to chat about, and chat does folks good, so long as it is amiable chat, of course; for, unfortunately, there are individuals who tramp round seeing how many crabby things they can say. But we don't want to talk to them.

### HINTS FROM AUSTRALIA

My two friends, A. Carney and Jack Gill-

gan, write from Blackfriars, Sydney, and enclose a gum-leaf and a sprig of wattle along with their good wishes from Blackfriars to Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

How the old names turn up! Londoners think of Blackfriars in connection with the bridge which used to be the last but one across the Thames, until the Tower had a bridge of its own. Then there are letters from girl readers, all as keen as possible, and with heaps of imagination as well. Not that I am going to suggest boys do not possess imagination, but often girl readers see things that others miss and vice versa.

Not that a friend in Liverpool who sends me a few questions and a cargo of compliments is a girl. He says he has been a reader of the Companion Papers for the last four years. "I would," he says, "like to know these few items: What is Bagley Trimble's age? What are his parents? Where does he live? Why don't his people send him money?"

There you are! Now, Baggy is very reticent on the subject of his folks and his home, for we do not count his magnificent stories of Trimble Hall and its splendour. Obviously, in that respect Baggy is romancing. As a matter of fact, we can but assume that the Trimble family has a struggle for it, or at least that there is not enough spare cash floating round to supply Baggy with cash for all his needs. Perhaps this is quite as well. Baggy is bad enough as things are at present. He would be simply insufferable if he were rich.

It takes a lot of real good feeling and decent thought to be rich and true to self. In a comic play the millionaire was heard to exclaim angrily: "Rude! I am not rude! You never saw me rude! I am rich!" Baggy would be on those lines, most likely, if fortune came his way. He would not have to bother about raising cash in the same way that he does now, but he would show his natural meanness in other directions. As to his age, Baggy is fifteen.

Your Editor

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