

"MICK O' THE MOVIES"

GRAND NEW STORY OF A  
YOUNG CINEMA ACTOR.

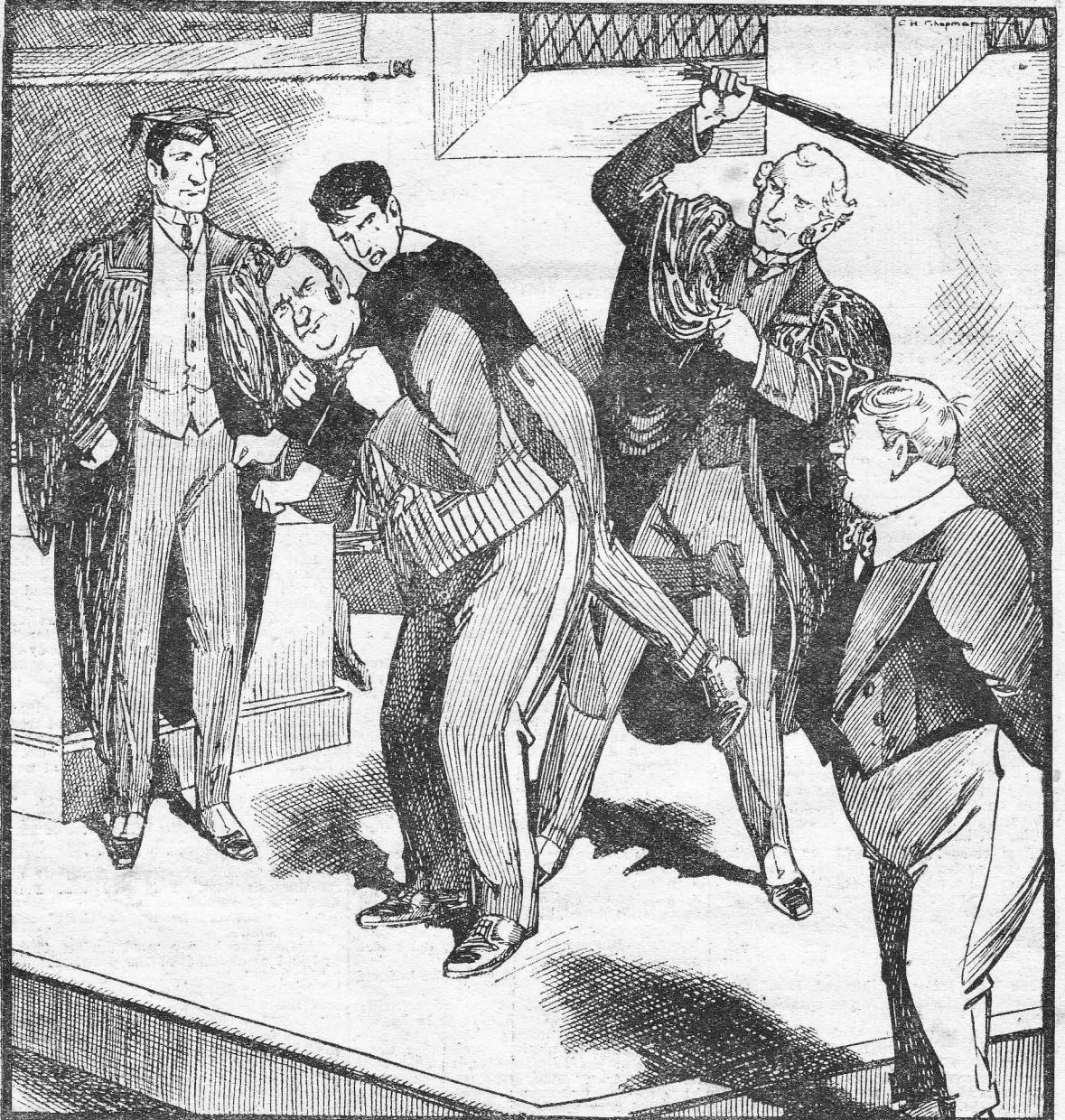
The Penny  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Popular

Week Ending  
February 7th, 1920.

No. 55.  
New Series.

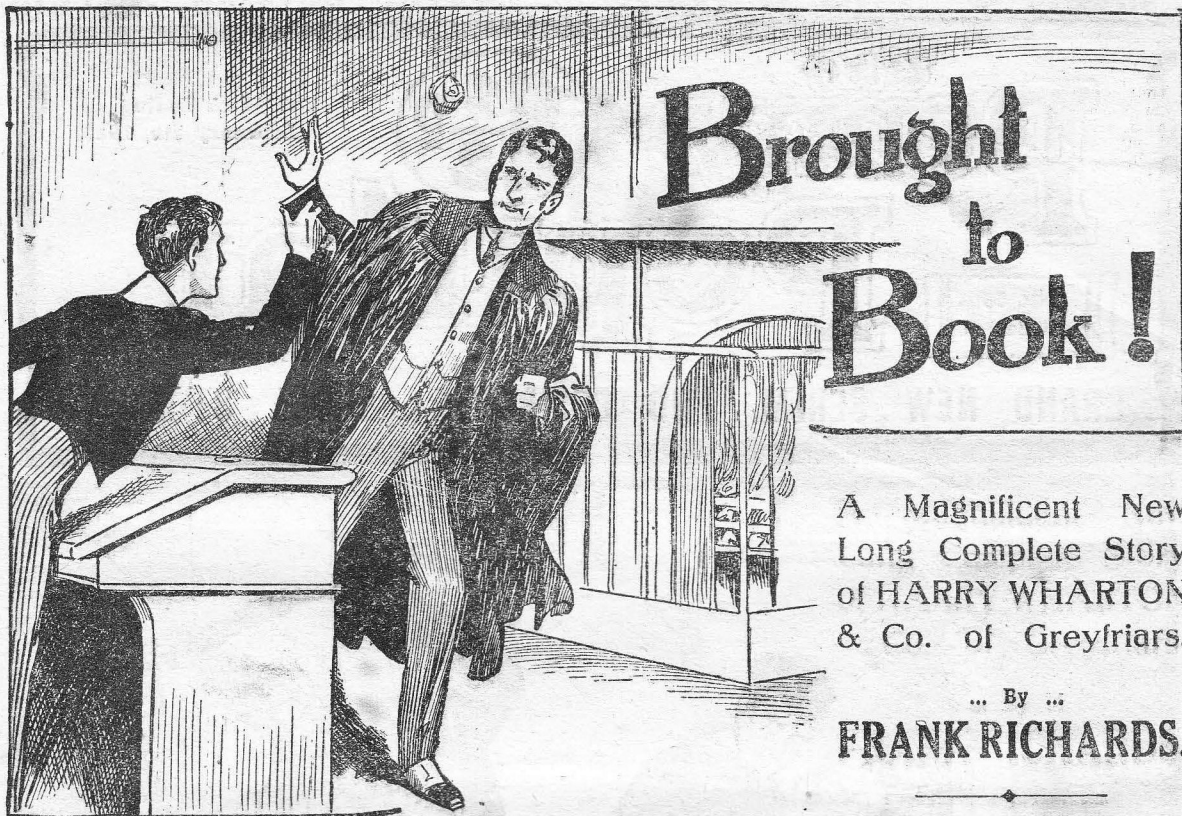
20 PAGES.

GRAND NEW SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



**SKINNER PAYS THE PIPER!**

(A Dramatic Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



### THE FIRST CHAPTER. News of Dennis Carr.

"**C**HERRY, you're wanted!" Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, hailed Bob Cherry as he was in the act of quitting the Remove dormitory with the other members of the Famous Five.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob. "Quech's starting early! Fancy sending for a fellow before brekker—before he's properly awake, in fact!"

"It isn't Mr. Quech who wants you, Cherry," explained Wingate. "It's somebody on the telephone in the prefects' room. I didn't inquire his name or his business, though I think I ought to have done. You kids make use of that telephone far too frequently. I should advise you to buck up, Cherry, or the fellow, whoever he is, will be out of it!"

Bob Cherry nodded, and hurried away to the prefects' room.

His chums followed, greatly wondering.

Who could be wanting Bob Cherry at that early hour?

"Praps it's a mistake," suggested Wharton.

"That's more than likely," said Johnny Bull. "The telephone operators are always making mistakes lately. Only the other day Bessie Bunter rang up her brother, and was put through to the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here we are!" said Bob Cherry, advancing into the prefects' room. "We'll soon see whether it's a mistake or not!"

Bob took up the receiver, and spoke into the transmitter:

"Hallo! Yes, it's Bob Cherry speaking. Who's that?"

A familiar voice greeted Bob over the wires.

"It's Mark Linley at this end, Bob."

"Good old Marky! Are you speaking from London?"

"No. I'm on my way back to Greyfriars. I'm speaking from Courtfield Station."

"Hurrah! We were beginning to think you were never coming back! What luck did you have in London? Did you succeed in clearing poor old Dennis Carr?"

"I'll tell you all the news when I see you, Bob. I thought you and the others might

like to come over to Courtfield and meet me. That's why I rang you up."

"Ripping," said Bob. "We'll come over right away. If we bring a spare bike with us, we shall all be able to ride back together, and, with any luck, we shall be back in time for brekker."

"Good!" said Mark Linley. "I've existed ever since six o'clock this morning on a stale railway-sandwich. Au revoir, Bob! You'll find me at the station!"

And the Lancashire lad rang off.

Bob Cherry replaced the receiver, with a smile.

"Marky's at Courtfield," he said, turning to his chums, "and I've promised that we'll go over and meet him at once."

This arrangement met with universal approval; and the Famous Five obtained their bicycles—and an extra one belonging to Squiff—and sped away in the direction of Courtfield.

Mark Linley had been absent from Greyfriars for some days, with the Head's permission. He had gone to London to fight for the honour of his chum Dennis Carr.

Owing to the death of his father, Dennis had been thrown upon his own resources, and had been compelled to find a situation in London.

Hardship and hunger and want—he had experienced all these during his quest for employment. And at last he had secured a job in Sir Howard Prescott's office in the West End.

In this same office worked Craven, a cousin of Skinner of the Remove, and Craven had been "up against" Dennis Carr from the outset. He had vowed he would bring about the new clerk's downfall, and he had succeeded!

Thanks to Craven's cunning and rascality, Dennis had been accused of theft, and turned out of his job in disgrace.

Very few of the Greyfriars fellows believed Dennis guilty; and Mark Linley was so concerned for his chum that he had prevailed upon the Head to allow him to go to London and attempt to clear Dennis Carr's name.

Mark Linley was now returning to Greyfriars; and the Famous Five, as they sped along the frosty road, were very anxious to know all that had happened—whether Dennis Carr had been vindicated or whether he was stranded in his lodgings without a job.

The juniors were soon to learn the facts.

At the entrance to Courtfield Station, they were greeted by Mark Linley.

Mark was looking worn and tired, but not altogether dismayed.

"Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry, as he shook hands. "Heave yourself on to Squiff's jigger, Marky, and we'll whizz back to Greyfriars! You can tell us all the news as we go."

After shaking hands with the rest of the juniors, Mark Linley mounted Squiff's bicycle, and the party rode away.

"There isn't a great deal to tell," said Mark Linley. "As soon as I got to town, I called at Dennis Carr's digs; but he was out. I went for a stroll, intending to call back later, and I happened to come across Dennis. He was on the Embankment, staring down at the water, and if ever a fellow looked fairly down and out, Dennis did at that moment. He had been through a terrible time. Kicked out of his job, and nobody else would take him, because he couldn't produce a reference."

"Shame!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"I did my best to buck him up," continued Mark Linley. "Gave him a jolly good feed—he needed it, too, by Jove—and then we went along to Sir Howard Prescott's office. Craven was there, working, and he sneered at us as we went in."

"Craven's a worm!" said Bob Cherry. "If he were here now, I should be inclined to strew the roadway with little pieces of him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I told Sir Howard," Mark Linley went on, "that the whole thing was a rascally plot on Craven's part. I insisted that Dennis Carr was innocent."

"And what did he say to that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Refused to hear a word against Craven, and had us chucked off the premises!"

"My hat!"

"So Dennis hasn't been cleared, after all?" said Harry Wharton.

"No. But the position's brighter than it was at one time. Dennis has got another job."

"Oh, good!"

"It's nothing great," said Mark Linley. "Merely a job behind the counter in a grocery store. But it will keep the wolf from the door."

"Yes, rather!"



Mark Linley made no mention of the fact that it was he who had obtained the job for Dennis Carr. Neither did he mention that, but for him, Dennis might have gone under.

The cyclists rode on for some moments without speaking.

The silence was not broken until they reached Greyfriars. Then Wharton said:

"I suppose we must give up all hope of clearing Dennis and bringing that cad Craven to book?"

"I suppose so," said Mark Linley ruefully. "It's horrible that poor old Dennis should be branded as a thief. But he's got another job, and that's a blessing! No more tramping the streets in search of employment!"

Skinner of the Remove encountered the juniors as they pushed their bicycles towards the shed.

The cad of the Remove was looking unusually pale and haggard.

"Hallo, Linley!" he said. "What luck? Have you succeeded in clearing your precious pal?"

Skinner tried to speak jauntily, but he could not conceal his anxiety.

Mark Linley looked hard at his questioner. "No, I haven't," he answered. "Carr's still under a cloud."

And Skinner drew a deep sigh of relief. "You were a clump to go up to London!" he said. "You might have known that it's impossible to make black white!"

"What do you mean, you cad?" demanded Mark Linley, his eyes flashing.

"What I say! You can't get away from the fact that Carr's a rotten thief! All the whitewashing in the world won't alter the fact. I—"

Skinner got no further.

"Hold this bike, Bob!" muttered Mark Linley.

And the next instant his fist shot out, straight from the shoulder.

Skinner sat down suddenly on the flagstones in the Close. He dabbed at his nose with a handkerchief, which came away red.

"Yow-ow-ow!" he groaned.

"Another word from you against Dennis Carr," said Mark Linley, "and we'll duck you in the fountain!"

"Hear, hear!"

Skinner shivered as he picked himself up.

It was a cold morning, and a ducking in the fountain would not have added to his personal comfort.

At that moment the breakfast-bell rang.

"Just in time!" said Nugent.

"We ought to feel quite proud of our performance, riding to Courtfield and back before brekker," said Johnny Bull. "I don't believe Hercules himself could have done it!"

"I'm jolly certain he couldn't!" said Bob Cherry. "Bikes hadn't been invented in his time!"

The Famous Five, accompanied by Mark Linley, went in to breakfast, Skinner following at a discreet distance.

There was quite a demonstration as Mark Linley took his place at the Remove table.

"Good old Linley!"

"Back again, by Jove!"

"What's happened?"

"Tell uncles all about it!"

Mr. Quelch, seated at the head of the table, frowned portentously.

"Silence!" he rapped out. "I am glad to see you are back, Linley. I will question you later concerning the result of your mission to London—Skinner, what is the matter with your nose?"

"It's bleeding, sir!"

"That fact is already apparent to me, Skinner. You appear to have been the victim of an act of violence. Am I correct in my supposition?"

"Yes, sir," said Skinner sullenly. "I was punched on the nose because I had the courage to tell the truth!"

"Bless my soul! Kindly explain what you mean, Skinner!"

"I declared that Carr was a thief, sir, and Linley didn't like it. He punched my nose, and—"

"Sneak!"

An angry hiss arose, and the Removites glared at Skinner, who seemed to have scant regard for the schoolboy code of honour.

The Form-master's frown deepened. He, too, was angry—but not with Mark Linley.

"Your conduct is mean and contemptible—Skinner!" he exclaimed. "You have made a statement which you cannot substantiate—namely, that Carr is a thief, and I consider that Linley was quite justified in acting as he did. You will take five hundred lines, Skinner!"

"What for, sir?"

"For making cowardly insinuations against a boy who is not here to defend himself!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"If you utter another word Skinner, I shall

canoe you!"

The cad of the Remove relapsed into silence. He had expected Mr. Quelch to side with him in the matter of Dennis Carr; but his expectations had not been realised.

Skinner was feeling so upset, what with the punch on the nose, the heavy imposition, and another matter that weighed upon his mind, that he ate no breakfast. But Billy Bunter, being of a generous disposition, was kind enough to eat it for him.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Startling Disclosures.

MR. QUELCH was not in a good temper that morning.

The Remove-master was finding his pupils very trying.

The juniors were extremely attentive during morning lessons, but not to the lessons themselves. They were engaged, for the most part, in doing things which had no bearing on English History.

Bob Cherry was the first victim of Mr. Quelch's displeasure.

"Cherry!" rapped out the Form-master. "Who was Hardicanute?"

Bob Cherry was a little uncertain as to the identity of the gentleman in question, but he thought he would essay a chance shot.

"Hardicanute, sir?" he said, with an air of wisdom. "Why, he was the fellow who discovered America!"

After which, Bob Cherry himself made a discovery—to wit, that Mr. Quelch knew how to wield a pointer to the fullest advantage.

The second offender was Bolsover major.

The bully of the Remove had not been paying attention, and he was in a blue funk lest Mr. Quelch should suddenly call upon him to answer a question. He turned to Tom Dutton, who sat next to him, and whispered:

"I say, Dutton! Whom did William the Conqueror conquer?"

Tom Dutton failed to hear the question. It took something more than a whisper to make Dutton hear.

Bolsover repeated his question—a little louder this time.

Still no answer from Dutton, and no sign that he had heard.

Bolsover sat at the end of the form; and he had no one on the other side of him to whom he could appeal.

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes were darting from one junior to another; and Bolsover, in his acute anxiety, fairly bellowed the question into Tom Dutton's ear.

"Whom did William the Conqueror conquer?"

Bolsover's deep voice boomed through the Form-room, and there was a gasp from the class.

"Oh crumbs!" muttered the bully of the Remove, realising the enormity of his offence.

"Bolsover!"

Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the booming of breakers on the beach.

Bolsover rose in his place.

"How dare you raise your voice in the Form-room, sir?" demanded Mr. Quelch, raising his own voice very considerably as he asked the question.

"I—I— Dutton's rather hard of hearing, sir!" faltered Bolsover. "So I simply had to shout!"

Mr. Quelch looked grim.

"You asked Dutton a question concerning William the Conqueror, Bolsover! Apparently you are unable to answer the question yourself?"

"I can answer it all right, sir!" said Bolsover, with a sudden burst of confidence.

"Very well, Bolsover. Whom did William the Conqueror conquer?"

"The Spanish Armada, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a burst of merriment from the class, but it died away suddenly as Mr. Quelch flourished his pointer.

"Your density is fast driving me to distraction, Bolsover!" exclaimed the Form-master. "Come out before the class!"

Bolsover reluctantly obeyed, and when, a moment later, he went back to his place, he was squeezing his hands and contorting his countenance.

After the fate which had befallen Bob Cherry and Bolsover major, the majority of the juniors were on their best behaviour.

Harry Wharton deemed it advisable to postpone the writing of his editorial for the "Greyfriars' Herald" till some other time, and to turn his attention to English History.

Johnny Bull abandoned his pirate serial, and Frank Nugent his cartoon. Peter Todd had been writing an article on famous modern criminals, now he devoted himself to the exploits of the Ancient Britons.

But there was still one person who was doing those things which he ought not to have done.

Billy Bunter had a sheet of paper on the desk in front of him, and the fat junior was scribbling away as if for a wager.

Fortunately, Mr. Quelch was not looking in Bunter's direction at the time.

Having finished his scribbling, the Owl of the Remove folded up the paper, and pushed it across to Alonzo Todd, who sat next to him.

"Pass it along to Skinner!" he muttered.

Alonzo was in the act of obeying, when Mr. Quelch spun round upon Billy Bunter.

"Bunter! You were talking!"

"Me, sir!" said the fat junior, with an injured air. "Oh really, sir, I never opened my mouth!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I distinctly heard you make an articulation, Bunter! You said something to Todd. It sounded suspiciously like 'Pass it along to Skinner!'"

"Oh, no, sir! You're quite mistaken, sir. I assure you! What I actually said was, 'It won't be long till dinner!'"

"Then you admit speaking to Todd?"

Billy Bunter shook his head vigorously.

"No, sir! You're quite wrong, as usual—I mean—"

"You are a perverse and untruthful boy, Bunter, and I shall deal with you as you deserve! Stand out in front of the class!"

The fat junior blinked at Mr. Quelch through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really, sir, there's no harm in my sending a note to Skinner, is there?"

"Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "fabricators should have long memories, and your own appears to be remarkably short. Scarcely a moment ago you gave me your assurance that you did not pass a note to Skinner. You now admit that you did. I shall cane you most severely!"

"Ow!"

"Meanwhile," said Mr. Quelch, "you will come out before the class, Skinner, bringing with you the note you have in your hand!"

All eyes were turned towards the cad of the Remove.

Skinner's face was deadly pale, and it bore a hunted look.

The wretched junior clutched Bunter's note in his hand, and glanced wildly around, as if seeking for some place where he might conceal the missive.

But the Form-master's eyes never once left him, and Skinner had no chance to dispose of the note.

Then, very reluctantly—like a condemned man approaching the gallows—Skinner stepped to the fore.

His brain was working swiftly.

Whatever happened, Mr. Quelch must not see that note. If he saw it, Skinner's game would be up.

The Remove-master looked sternly at the cad of the Remove.

"Have you just received that note from Bunter, Skinner?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir. It—it's nothing of importance. Just an invitation to a study feed, sir."

Skinner fervently hoped that Mr. Quelch would be satisfied with this rather lame explanation, and would not express a desire to see the letter.

But the hope did not materialise.

"Hand me that letter immediately, Skinner!" rapped out the Form-master.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on, expecting to see the cad of the Remove obey.

To the breathless amazement of the class, however, Skinner crumpled the letter into a ball, and was about to hurl it into the fire, when Mr. Quelch jerked back the junior's arm, and retrieved the missive.

"Skinner," he panted, "how dare you defy me in this manner!"

The cad of the Remove made no reply. He was trembling in every limb, as if with the ague.

Mr. Quelch stepped back to his desk, and unfolded the missive.

The Form-master's expression was one of blank astonishment at first, then it became thunderous.

The letter which Bunter had written to Skinner ran as follows:

"Dear Skinny—I'll trouble you for another five bob, and if it isn't paid by to-nite, I'll tell all the feloes how you and yore cuzzen plotted to ruin Dennis Carr."

"It was you who suggested to yore cuzzen that he should get Carr kicked out of the offfis, and I herd him tell you exactly how he did it. He pinched some munny from the safe, and slipt it into Carr's pocket when he wasn't looking. Then a search was made, the cash was fownd on Carr, and he was sacked."

"You and Craven wangled the whole thing betwene you; and if old Quelch or the Head got to no all about it you would be fired out of Greyfriars."

"So long as you keep me well supplide with pocket-money, I sha'n't split. But unless I reseave another five bob by to-nite, it will be my pafeul duty to open my mouth on the subjick."

"Don't let old Quelch katch you reeding this letter, whatever you do."

"Yores,"

"W. G. BUNTER."

For some moments a silence, as of some brooding fate, hung over the Remove Form-room.

It was Mr. Quelch who broke that ominous silence.

"Skinner!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" muttered the cad of the Remove, moistening his dry lips.

"If the statements contained in this letter are true, you have been guilty of the most base and despicable conduct!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Bunter states that he overheard you and your cousin Craven plotting together to ruin Dennis Carr."

"That's a lie!"

Skinner's voice rose almost to a scream. Billy Bunter spun round upon the cad of the Remove with a furious glare.

"Why, you rotter, you know jolly well that you plotted to ruin Carr! I was passing the door of your study at the time, and I couldn't help hearing what you said. You told Craven that you hated Dennis Carr, and that nothing would give you greater pleasure than to see him kicked out of his job!"

A murmur of indignation rose from the class.

Mark Linley's eyes were gleaming—and so were the eyes of a good many more fellows.

The juniors had suspected, all along, that Dennis Carr's downfall was due to trickery on the part of Skinner and his rascally cousin. And this suspicion was now confirmed.

"I am strongly of the opinion," said Mr. Quelch, "that Bunter is—on this occasion, at any rate—telling the truth. He is not sufficiently ingenious to concoct such a story. I also remember, Skinner, that your attitude towards Carr when he was a member of this Form was distinctly hostile."

"That's not so, sir," said Skinner. "I like Carr very much—"

"Then you had a peculiar way of showing it. I do not doubt for one moment that you conspired with your cousin to bring disgrace upon Carr—a boy whose boots you are not fit to clean. And I am quite prepared to believe that your rascally cousin committed a theft, and arranged that the evidence should point to Carr as being the thief."

"My cousin Craven's one of the best, sir," said Skinner.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch drily. "From the little I have seen of him, I have formed the impression that he is one of the worst."

"Hear, hear!" chorused a dozen fellows.

"Silence, boys!" said Mr. Quelch. "What have you to say for yourself, Skinner?"

"Nothing, sir—except that I'm innocent, and Bunter's telling lies as usual!"

"I think you will find it difficult to convince Dr. Locke of your innocence, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch. "You will accompany me to his study immediately. You, too, Bunter."

"Me, sir!" said Bunter, in alarm. "Why what have I done?"

"You have behaved abominably! It was your duty, the moment you heard of this vile plot against Carr, to report the matter to me, or to some other authority. Instead of doing this, you appear to have thought that it would be far more profitable to blackmail Skinner. You seem to have extorted money from him on several occasions, and in this letter—Mr. Quelch picked up the fateful missive—"You ask for

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

a further payment of five shillings. Some allowance will probably be made for your natural stupidity; at the same time, Dr. Locke would be perfectly justified in expelling you with ignominy from the school."

This speech had a terrifying effect upon Billy Bunter.

The fat junior had anticipated being punished for writing letters in the Form-room; but he now realised that he had to answer a far graver charge than that.

The prospect of being dealt with by the Head was anything but pleasant.

"Come, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! I—I don't feel very grand, sir—"

"I am not surprised to hear that."

"In fact, I—I think I'm going to faint, sir—"

"Come!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

And the Form-master's tone was so imperative that Billy Bunter hesitated no longer.

Mr. Quelch swept out of the Form-room, and the two delinquents followed.

As soon as they had gone the room was in a buzz.

"We were quite right," said Bob Cherry. "We said all along that Skinner and Craven had engineered this business between them. Marky, old man, Dennis Carr is practically cleared."

"Yes, rather!" said Mark, with a happy smile.

"Dashed if I thought the truth would come to light so soon!" said Johnny Bull. "Wonder what Skinner will get?"

"He deserves the sack," said Wharton.

"Yes; but a fellow doesn't always get what he deserves."

"Bunter ought to be fired out of Greyfriars, too," said Squiff. "We've been suffering from too much Bunter lately, and this latest stunt of his is the absolute limit!"

"Thank goodness, Skinner didn't succeed in chucking that letter on the fire!" said Frank Nugent fervently.

"Oh, rather!"

The juniors rejoiced in the knowledge that Dennis Carr's innocence would soon be established.

Although Dennis was no longer at Greyfriars, the fellows took an extraordinary interest in his welfare. And many of them hoped to see him return again.

In a fever of excitement, the Remove waited for Mr. Quelch to return to the Form-room.

But the time passed, and the Form-master failed to appear.

What was happening in the Head's study? Had Skinner been "sacked"—or Bunter—or both?

And would Dennis Carr regain the position of which he had been deprived through the joint rascality of Skinner and Craven?

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Before the Head.

"BLESS my soul!"

Dr. Locke rose to his feet in surprise as Mr. Quelch entered his study, followed by two quaking and scared-looking juniors.

"I trust nothing is amiss, Mr. Quelch?" "Something is very much amiss, sir. Would you be good enough to peruse this document?"

And Mr. Quelch handed to the Head the letter which Bunter had written to Skinner. Amazement and indignation were depicted on Dr. Locke's face as he read Billy Bunter's ill-spelt scrawl.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "Can it be possible, Mr. Quelch, that this boy Skinner, in conjunction with his cousin, is responsible for the crisis which has arisen in the affairs of Dennis Carr?"

"It is not only possible, sir," replied Mr. Quelch. "It is extremely probable. Skinner has never been favourably disposed towards Carr, and as for Craven, he was undoubtedly jealous of Carr's position in the office. The two young rascals put their heads together, and connived to bring about Carr's downfall."

"That's not correct, sir!" said Skinner wildly.

But he found himself totally unable to meet the Head's searching glance.

"Do you suggest, Skinner, that Mr. Quelch is making a misstatement?"

"N-n-not exactly; but he—he's guessing at things, sir. Carr was a pal of mine when he was here, and I should not dream of doing him an injury."

The Head turned to Billy Bunter.

"Bunter, what have you to say in connection with this disgraceful affair?"

Billy Bunter's complexion was a sickly yellow.

"I—I—I—" he stammered.

"Incoherent stuttering does not constitute a reply to my question, Bunter!" said the Head sharply.

"It was like this, sir," said Bunter, gathering courage as he went on. "I happened to be passing Skinner's study the other day, and my bootlace—"

"I have no desire to enter into a controversy on the subject of your bootlace, Bunter!" said the Head, frowning. "You will kindly keep to the point!"

"Yessir! Certainly, sir! I happened to be passing Skinner's study the other day—"

"You have already told me that!"

"Ahem! The other day I happened to be passing Skinner's study—"

The expression on the Head's face was so formidable that Billy Bunter broke off in alarm.

"If you continue to exasperate me in this way, Bunter, I shall flog you forthwith!" said Dr. Locke.

"Oh, crumbs! I was passing—that is to say, I overheard a conversation between Skinner and his cousin. They were plotting and planning to ruin Dennis Carr, sir. Skinner suggested to Craven that it would be a jolly good idea if he pinched some money from the safe in the London office, and fastened the guilt on to Carr. They hatched a fine old plot between them, sir, and—"

"Why did you not inform me, or one of the masters, of what you heard?" demanded the Head.

"I—I—it slipped my memory, sir!"

"Nonsense! Had you forgotten the incident, you would not have attempted to blackmail Skinner."

"Blackmail, sir! Why, I don't even know what that means!"

"You have been prevaricating, Bunter, and I intend to flog you severely for your base conduct. This offence is by no means the first of its kind, and I should not be punishing you to excess if I expelled you from this school."

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I—I assure you, sir—"

"Your assurance carries not the slightest weight with me, Bunter. Not another word! I will deal with you directly."

The Head turned to Skinner.

"Your conduct, Skinner, is infinitely worse than that of Bunter, because you cannot plead ignorance and stupidity. I am quite satisfied that you collaborated with your cousin in a cowardly plot to ruin Carr, and I shall send you to the punishment-room whilst your punishment is being decided upon."

Skinner threw out his hands in a desperate appeal. Visions of expulsion were already looming before him.

"I'm innocent, sir!" he declared. "I swear I had no grudge against Carr. I've always voted him one of the best. Surely you won't condemn me on Bunter's evidence, sir? It's nothing but a pack of lies! I—"

At that moment there was a tap on the door, and Trotter, the page, entered.

"Which there's a gentleman to see you, sir—" began Trotter.

Before he could proceed he was brushed aside by a stout, grey-haired man, who advanced into the study and confronted Dr. Locke.

The Head did not welcome the interruption.

"Really, sir, your intrusion is somewhat abrupt—"

"I am Sir Howard Prescott," said the Head's visitor. "I regret that I have arrived at an inopportune moment, but I have only a short time at my disposal. I have to hurry back to London."

The Head relented at once, and Mr. Quelch promptly placed a chair for Sir Howard.

"I won't sit down," said the latter. "I have called in connection with Dennis Carr, one of your former pupils, who until recently was in my employ."

"Yes, yes!" said the Head. "It appears that Carr was dismissed from your service for alleged dishonesty?"

Sir Howard nodded.

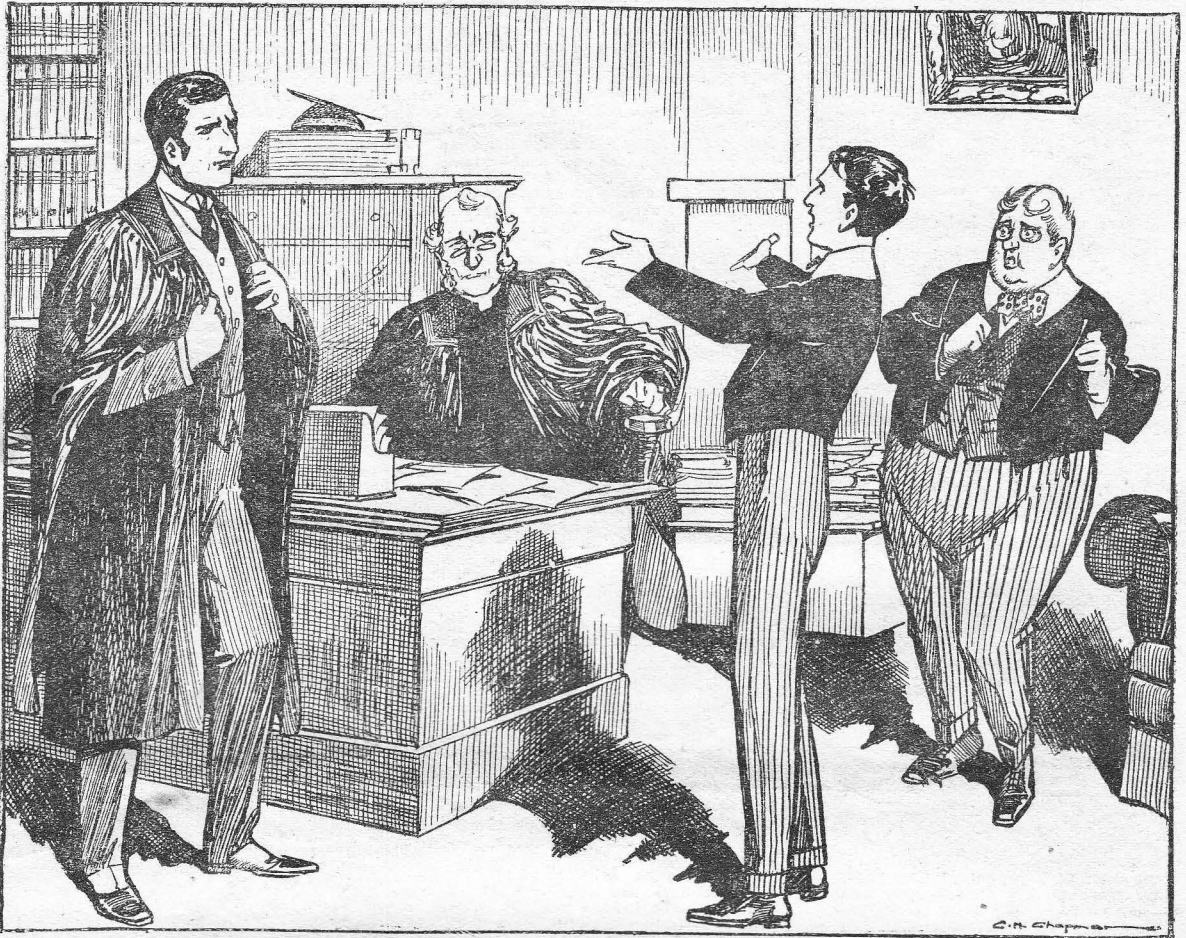
"That is so," he said. "I now find, however, that I made a big blunder. Carr's innocence has been fully established."

"Bless my soul!"

Both the Head and Mr. Quelch looked surprised. They were wondering what developments had taken place at Sir Howard's office in London.

As for Skinner, there was not a trace





Skinner threw out his hands in a desperate appeal. Visions of expulsion were already coming before him. "I'm innocent, sir!" he declared. "I swear I had no grudge against Carr!" (See page 4.)

of colour in his cheeks. He swayed, and was obliged to cling to the Head's desk for support. The wretched junior had a dreadful premonition of what was to follow.

"I was originally under the impression," continued Sir Howard, "that Carr stole a sum of money from the safe, and the evidence was such that I considered I was fully justified in dismissing him. I regarded the whole incident as closed; but this morning dramatic developments occurred. One of my clerks—a youth named Craven—was caught in the act of rifling the safe. I myself caught him red-handed, having arrived at the office at an unexpectedly early hour."

The Head and Mr. Quelch were following Sir Howard's narrative with keen interest.

Skinner still clung to the desk; and as for Billy Bunter, he scarcely heard what Sir Howard was saying. He was absorbed in the contemplation of his own unhappy plight.

"Of course," Sir Howard went on, "I dismissed Craven instantly from my employ. But before he went he confessed to me that it was he who had committed the previous theft. He declared that he did so at the instigation of his cousin at Greyfriars."

A shiver ran through Skinner's frame.

"It appears that Craven slipped some of the money into Carr's pocket, with the result that when a search was made I adjudged Carr to be guilty, and punished him accordingly."

"Quite so, Sir Howard," said the Head. "I am happy to think that Carr's honour is vindicated. It is very good of you to make a special journey from London in order to acquaint me with the facts."

"My chief object in coming," explained Sir Howard, "is to apologise to Linley, one of your boys. Linley came to me a few days ago and made a spirited defence of Carr, but I refused to listen to him—had him ejected from my office, in fact. It now

transpires that he was right, after all, and I was wrong."

Sir Howard glanced at his watch. "Jove, I must be going!" he exclaimed. "Perhaps you would be good enough, sir, to tender an apology to Linley on my behalf?"

"With pleasure!" said the Head. "And Carr?"

"I shall, of course, take Carr back into my employ—that is, if he cares to come after the manner in which he has been treated," said Sir Howard, as he turned to go.

Then, with a hurried word of farewell to the Head and Mr. Quelch, he quitted the study.

A grim silence followed Sir Howard's departure.

Skinner was looking the very picture of dejection.

His emphatic denial had availed him nothing. His cousin had given him away, and he was now at the mercy of the Head.

What would be his fate?

In his mind's eye Skinner saw himself arraigned before a general assembly in Big Hall. He saw himself being expelled—hounded out of Greyfriars in disgrace.

Well, it would serve him right. He had only himself to blame. He had taken a hand in the dastardly plot against Dennis Carr, and he had lied about it to Mr. Quelch and the Head. There could only be one sequel to such caddish conduct—expulsion.

Presently the Head turned to Mr. Quelch.

"I wish the whole school to be assembled in Hall at once," he said.

"Very good, sir."

Mr. Quelch left the study to do the Head's bidding, and Skinner and Bunter would have followed, but Dr. Locke called them back.

"You will remain here," he said, "until you are ordered to accompany me to the hall."

And Skinner and Bunter, looking very crestfallen, and feeling that life was not worth living, remained.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. At the Eleventh Hour!

**R**ANK by rank, and file by file, all Greyfriars trooped into Big Hall. They had been summoned from their respective Form-rooms, and a good deal of eager discussion was taking place, particularly in the Remove.

"Wonder what's going to happen?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Skinner and Bunter will both be sacked, methinks," said Nugent.

"And flogged into the bargain!" said Johnny Bull.

"Serve 'em jolly well right!" growled Bolsover major.

Hitherto, Bolsover had been on Skinner's side, and his attitude towards Dennis Carr had been the reverse of friendly. But that was because he had genuinely imagined Carr to be guilty of dishonesty. Now that he knew the facts, he was quick to condemn Skinner.

"Skinner will be sacked, for a cert," said Harry Wharton. "I'm not so sure about Bunter. The Head always regards him as more fool than rogue, and he may give him another chance."

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Blackmailing's bad enough," he said, "but it's not so bad as deliberately plotting to ruin a fellow."

"I, for one, sha'n't be sorry to see the last of Skinner," said Squiff. "He's never been able to play the game, and he's been asking for this for a long time."

"Yes, rather!"

"Shush!" murmured Hurree Singh. "The Head is approachfully coming in!"

Dr. Locke swept into Big Hall with rustling gown. And behind him, like sheep being led to the slaughter, came Skinner and Bunter. Both were looking scared out of their wits. But there was no sympathy for them. Greyfriars had no use for rank outsiders.

The murmur of voices died away as the Head took his stand on the raised dais.

Dr. Locke scanned the crowded hall. Every boy and every master was in his place. There were no absentees. Even Gosling, the school porter, was present, grinning in anticipation of being called upon to hoist the culprits on to his broad back.

"My boys," said the Head, in tones which were not loud, but stern, "I have called you together at an unusual hour, in order that I may make a public example of the two young rascals who have just accompanied me into the hall."

Skinner and Bunter instantly became the cynosure of all eyes.

"Of the two, Skinner is the principal offender," continued the Head. "He and his cousin—the latter has already been dealt with by his employer—formed a dastardly and cowardly conspiracy to ruin Dennis Carr, a boy whom you all know intimately, since it was only a short time that he was here with us."

The Remove, who knew the facts already, were silent. But a murmur of amazement arose from the fellows in the other Forms.

"Skinner suggested to his cousin," he went on, "that a theft should be committed, and laid to the door of Dennis Carr. The plot proved successful, but I am glad—very glad—to be able to say that the full facts have come to light, and that Carr's honour has been vindicated!"

No sooner had the Head uttered these words than a ringing cheer arose—a loud and prolonged cheer, given by Dennis Carr's old chums in the Remove.

Dr. Locke allowed the cheering to continue unchecked for some moments; then he again raised his hand for silence.

"Skinner flatly denied his rascally conduct, thereby making his offence the more serious. I must say that I take a very grave view of the matter—so grave, in fact, that I have decided to administer a severe flogging to Skinner, and subsequently to expel him from this school!"

Skinner almost curled up as he heard the Head's sentence.

He had half expected a flogging; he had half expected expulsion. But he had not expected both.

Seidom, indeed, had the twofold punishment been administered at Greyfriars. But there was no doubt that Skinner would be getting no more than his deserts.

The cad of the Remove tried to pull himself together, but the effort proved a dismal failure.

It was not of expulsion that Skinner was thinking at the moment. It was of the physical pain. The sight of the Head's birch sent a shudder through him.

"Gosling," said the Head, beckoning to the school-porter. "Would you be good enough to perform your usual office?"

"Certainly, sir!"

And Gosling came forward at once.

Skinner was hoisted on to the shoulders of the porter. He was whining and whimpering, and the majority of the fellows could not conceal their disgust.

"The fellow hasn't a ha'porth of backbone in him!" muttered Johnny Bull.

Swish, swish, swish!

The great birch rose and fell, and Skinner's screams of anguish rang through the packed hall.

It was neither an inspiring nor a dignified spectacle; and most of the onlookers were glad when it was all over.

Skinner was set down at last, still whimpering.

The Head pointed to the door.

"Go!" he said. "You will proceed to the punishment-room, and remain there until you receive further instructions!"

The cad of the Remove tottered, rather than walked, out of Big Hall.

One or two of the fellows hissed him as he went; but the majority were silent. They refrained from hitting a fellow when he was down.

All this time, Billy had been quaking, both inwardly and outwardly. The fat junior knew that he was booked for a bad time of it; and the knowledge was far from comforting.

"As for this boy," said Dr. Locke, fixing his stern gaze on the Owl of the Remove, "he, too, has behaved abominably, though in a lesser degree, perhaps, than Skinner. He knew of this plot to ruin Carr, but instead of reporting it to the authorities, as he should have done, he chose to make capital out of the affair by blackmailing Skinner!"

"Ow! I didn't—I wasn't—I never—" stammered Bunter wildly.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

"Silence, wretched boy! You seem ever to have a falsehood on your tongue! Denial of your offence is absolutely useless. You have extorted various sums of money from Skinner, the amounts being the price of your silence. And you now stand unmasked as a despicable young rascal!"

"Yow!"

"The only excuse that can possibly be found for you," continued the Head, "is that you are stupid, and, to some extent, irresponsible. Your stupidity and ignorance have saved you from a public expulsion, but they will not save you from a severe castigation. Gosling, do your duty!"

Once again the school-porter stooped to carry out his task, and he gasped and grunted under Billy Bunter's tremendous weight.

The birch was again brought into play, and Billy Bunter's yells fairly awakened the echoes.

"Ow! Yaroooooh! Help! Stoppit! Mercy! I won't do it again, sir! In fact, I haven't done anything! Yow!"

"Reminds you of pig-killing, doesn't it?" murmured Peter Todd.

And there was a chuckle from the Removites, who were not at all averse to seeing Bunter get his deserts.

The ordeal was over at last, and the victim lay squirming and groaning on the floor.

"Get to your feet, sir, at once!" commanded the Head. "Or I shall consider the advisability of giving you an additional number of strokes!"

Billy Bunter leapt up like a fat Jack-in-the-box. He had no desire to renew his acquaintance with the Head's birch.

"I trust," said Dr. Locke, "that the flogging I have just administered will be a lesson to you!"

But the Head's trust was being misplaced. Just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, so Billy Bunter could not change his detestable habits. He was, as Bob Cherry justly remarked, a fat worm; and a fat worm he would remain until the end of the chapter.

The Head dismissed the assembly, and the fellows returned to their Form-rooms.

The routine of the school proceeded as usual, save that one junior was absent from his place.

That junior was Skinner.

In the dark and dingy punishment-room, the cad of the Remove awaited his fate.

He was feeling decidedly sore, both mentally and physically.

His scheme to wreck the happiness of Dennis Carr had come tumbling about his ears.

At any moment he would be called upon to shake the dust of Greyfriars from his feet.

How long was he to remain here, in this dismal apartment?

When would he receive a summons from the Head to go and pack his belongings?

Skinner shivered.

It was a bitterly cold day, and there was no fire burning in the grate.

But it was not the absence of a fire that caused the condemned junior to shiver. It was the haunting thought that he would shortly have to go home and face his father.

What could he say? What excuse could he make?

It would be futile to tell his father that he had been expelled from Greyfriars without just cause.

Mr. Skinner would soon learn the real facts of the case. Perhaps he had learnt them already. No doubt the Head had sent him a wire, or called him up on the telephone.

Skinner realised only too well what the future held in store for him.

He would be set to work in his father's office; and his father was a hard taskmaster.

There would be no slacking—no eight-hour day. Mr. Skinner's clerks commenced work at nine o'clock in the morning, and they considered themselves lucky to be able to leave the office before nine o'clock at night.

The prospect was gloomy in the extreme. Presently the sound of shouting came to Skinner's ears.

The fellows had been dismissed from morning school.

Happy and care-free, they were punting a football about in the Close. But he—Skinner—remained in the punishment-room, the door of which had been locked on the outside.

An hour passed. Then footsteps sounded in the corridor without.

Skinner rose from the rickety chair on which he had been seated.

The key grated in the lock; the door of the punishment-room was opened a few inches

and a plate, containing the condemned junior's dinner, was pushed into the room.

Then the door was slammed to, the key was turned, and there was a sound of retreating footsteps.

Skinner did not even know the identity of his visitor.

The fare which had been brought to him was not of the bread-and-water variety. It consisted of steak-pie and vegetables. But Skinner ignored it, and sat down again on the rickety chair. He had no appetite whatever.

The hours dragged slowly by, and Skinner still sat there, silent and wretched.

Presently the winter dusk set in.

How much longer? thought the unhappy junior.

Had the Head forgotten all about him? At length, cramped and stiff—Skinner rose to his feet, and paced up and down in the gloaming.

Then, once again, footsteps sounded in the corridor without, and the door was unlocked and opened.

"Come, Skinner!"

It was the voice of Wingate of the Sixth. Skinner staggered off into the corridor.

"The Head has sent me along to tell you to pack your belongings and clear out!" said Wingate.

His tone was curt and contemptuous. Without a word to the captain of Greyfriars, Skinner went along to his study.

Vernon-Smith was seated in the armchair by the fire, but he rose and went out as Skinner entered. Evidently the Bounder had no desire for Skinner's society.

Slowly and mechanically, the expelled junior proceeded to pack his box.

The task was completed at length, and Skinner wondered how he was going to convey the heavy box into the Close.

He stepped to the door, and glanced out into the passage.

Hurree Singh was passing. He carried a chessboard under his arm.

"I say, Inky," said Skinner, "you might give me a hand—"

The Nabob of Banipur did not even turn his head. He walked straight on, as if deaf to Skinner's remark.

Skinner stood still, wondering what to do, when Bolslover major loomed up.

"Bolslover, old chap—"

"Don't talk to me!" said the bully of the Remove. "You're a low-down cad, and I don't want anything to do with you!"

"My box—"

"Bust your box!"

And Bolslover major passed on. Skinner might have remained in the doorway of his study indefinitely had not Mark Linley come along.

Of all the fellows in the Remove, Mark Linley had most cause to detest Skinner; for Dennis Carr was the Lancashire lad's particular chum, and Skinner had wronged him.

But Linley could feel for the wretched junior in his extremity; and when Skinner appealed to him for assistance he did not appeal in vain.

"I'll give you a hand," said Mark.

"Thanks!" said Skinner. And there was genuine gratitude in his tone.

Between them the two juniors carried Skinner's box along the passage, and into the Close.

There was a rumbling of wheels in the darkness, and the station hack rolled up.

"This is for me!" said Skinner.

Mark Linley nodded, and the box was heaved up on to the vehicle.

Skinner gave a wild glance round. It was, he supposed, the last time he could gaze upon the historic building of Greyfriars.

From the window of the Head's study a light was gleaming.

Lights were gleaming from other windows, too, and the rattle of tea-cups could be heard.

Skinner gave a gulp.

"By Jove, Linley!" he muttered. "If only the Head would give me another chance!"

"You've been a fool!" said Mark Linley quietly.

"Yes, I know—I know! Goodness knows why I helped to play that trick on Carr! He had never done me any harm. I must have been potty!"

"It's not too late to make amends," said Linley.

"Of course it is! I'm sacked from the school—"

"But that doesn't prevent you from going straight in future. You've been a failure at Greyfriars; but you needn't be a failure in the outside world. Make up your mind to



play the game, and you'll live down this sorry business. Good-bye, Skinner!"

Mark Linley put out his hand, and Skinner clasped it tightly, as if unwilling to let it go.

"You're the only fellow who's been decent to me at the finish!" he said. "Heaven bless you for it, Linley!"

Mark said nothing. Skinner released his hand, and clambered into the waiting vehicle. The driver flicked his whip, and the hack rumbled down to the gates.

Mark Linley stood watching it, with a thoughtful expression on his face.

As he stood thus, the Head's window was suddenly thrown open, and Dr. Locke's voice exclaimed:

"Is anybody there?"

"Yes, sir," answered Mark.

"Who is that?"

"Linley of the Remove, sir."

"Do you know if Skinner has taken his departure yet, Linley?" asked the Head.

"He has just gone, sir."

"Bless my soul! Is it possible, do you think, to overtake him, and instruct him to report to me in my study?"

"Certainly, sir! Shall I go after him?"

"I shall be obliged if you will, Linley."

The Lancashire lad sped off on his errand at once.

The station hack had disappeared by this time, but Mark Linley was fleet of foot, and he caught up with the vehicle a few hundred yards from the school gates.

Skinner heard the patter of running feet, and he poked his head out of the window.

"Who—who's that?" he exclaimed.

Mark Linley halted.

"It's I—Linley!" he panted. "The Head wants you, Skinner!"

"My hat!"

Mark instructed the driver to turn back, and he clambered into the hack beside Skinner.

There was a gleam in the latter's eyes as he turned to his companion—a gleam of hope.

"What do you think this means, Linley? Do you think there's a chance that the Head has decided to let me off?"

"Couldn't say," answered Mark.

And then silence fell between them.

Five minutes later Harold Skinner tapped on the door of the Head's study.

He could only think of one reason why the Head should have recalled him. He was going to be given another chance!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### All's Well!

"COME in!" Skinner promptly obeyed the Head's summons.

He had the shock of his life on entering Dr. Locke's study. For the Head was not alone.

Standing beside the desk, in ordinary civilian attire, was the fellow whom Skinner had wronged—Dennis Carr!

Skinner darted one swift glance of amazement at Dennis; then he lowered his eyes. He felt he was unable to meet the honest, steady gaze of the Head's visitor.

"Skinner," said the Head, "I have recalled you in order to tell you that I have reversed my decision. You will not be expelled from Greyfriars."

Skinner drew a quick, sobbing breath of relief.

He was saved!

At the eleventh hour the miracle had happened, and he was to have an opportunity of redeeming the past.

"Thank you, sir!" he said fervently.

"It is Carr whom you have to thank—not I," said the Head. "Carr has just arrived here from London, and on hearing that you were about to be expelled he interceded on your behalf. He has assured me that your cousin Craven was far more to blame in the matter than you, and that you did not actually suggest, in the first place, the plot to ruin Carr. That suggestion emanated from Craven, and you were merely an accessory before the fact. I have already given you a flogging, and, all things considered, I regard that as a sufficiently adequate punishment. But understand me, Skinner! If you transgress in this way again, neither Carr nor anyone else will be able to successfully intercede for you. You will leave Greyfriars at once!"

"Yes, sir," said Skinner, in a low voice.

"I have nothing more to say," said the Head. "You may go."

Like a fellow in a dream, Skinner quitted the study.

He was repleved!

And it was not the Head's clemency that had brought about this climax. It was the intercession of Dennis Carr.

Dennis had repaid evil with good, and had saved the cad of the Remove from a sorry fate.

As he turned into the Remove passage Skinner encountered the Famous Five.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Not gone yet?"

"No," said Skinner. "And I'm not going."

"Eh?"

"The Head's decided to give me another chance."

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"You can consider yourself jolly lucky!" said Harry Wharton.

"I do!"

"Dashed if I can understand the Head relenting like this!" said Johnny Bull. "When he makes a decision, it has to stand, as a rule."

"It was Carr who got me off," said Skinner.

"What?"

"What!"

"Carr's in the Head's study now. He told the Head that Craven was more to blame than I was, and Dr. Locke recalled me when I was on my way to the station."

"My hat!"

"Carr's a brick!" said Skinner, with real feeling. "I've been a beastly cad to him, and I shall take the very first opportunity of making him a public apology!"

"You can't very well do less!" said Wharton curtly.

Bob Cherry brushed past the cad of the Remove.

"Come along, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

"Let's go and see old Dennis!"

And the Famous Five hurried along the passage.

The news that Dennis Carr was at Greyfriars spread through the Remove like fire through gorse.

In a very short space of time the corridor leading to the Head's study was crowded with juniors.

Mark Linley was there, of course, eager to greet his old chum.

Soon the entire Remove had assembled, with the exception of Skinner and Billy Bunter. The latter was indisposed.

A murmur of voices could be heard within the Head's study.

The murmur ceased at length, the door opened, and Dennis Carr, suspecting nothing of the reception which awaited him, stepped out into the corridor.

The appearance of Dennis was the signal for a storm of cheering.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Carr!"

"Jolly glad you're cleared, old man!"

Dennis Carr found himself surrounded by a surging mob.

Everybody seemed to be trying to shake his hand at once, and the babel of voices in his ear was deafening.

Presently the Famous Five succeeded in hustling Dennis away from the spot. They escorted him to Study No. 1, where, opportunely enough, a ripping spread had been prepared.

"It's jolly good to clap eyes on you once again!" said Bob Cherry, placing a chair for the newly-arrived guest.

"And it's better still to know that your innocence has been proved," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

"We didn't know you were going to arrive fully turn up, my esteemed Carr!" said Hurree Singh. "But, as the luckfulness would have it, we have killed the esteemed fatted calf!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dennis Carr smiled happily as he took his place at the table.

"It's good to be back, even for a short time," he remarked.

"You'll be staying for a few days, I hope?" said Nugent.

"No such luck! I'm going back to town by the last train to-night."

"Oh, help!"

"You see, I've got to start work to-morrow morning in my old job."

"You're going back to Sir Howard Prescott's office?" inquired Wharton.

"Yes. And I'm going to receive my salary for all the weeks I've been away."

"Good!"

There was a tap on the door, and Mark Linley came into the study.

"Can I invite myself to tea, you fellows?" he asked, with a smile.

"By all means, Marky!" said Bob Cherry.

"We'll give you a high tea, consisting of an equally high kipper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark Linley clapped Dennis Carr on the shoulder.

"I told you everything would come right," he said. "But a prophet is without honour in his own country. You wouldn't believe me."

"Well, it seemed too much to hope for, Marky, at the time," said Dennis. "I couldn't foresee that Craven would confess, and that Sir Howard would ask me to return to my old job. However, everything's panned out all right, and I've only got one regret."

"What's that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"That I can't come back to Greyfriars for good."

"Look here," said Mark Linley, "I'm going to venture on another prophecy. I've a rooted premonition—"

"That's a good word!" said Bob Cherry.

"I've a rooted premonition," repeated Mark, glaring at the humorous Bob, "that you'll return to Greyfriars before long, Dennis, in your old position as captain of the Remove."

"Rot!" said Dennis. "You're right off the wicket there, old man! I don't see how I can possibly come back. The Head suggested just now that I should stay at Greyfriars, and let the governors pay my term fees. But I'm not going to be kept here on charity."

"All the same, you're coming back," persisted Mark Linley. "That premonition of mine—"

"Take it away and bury it!" growled Johnny Bull. "Stop discussing your mouldy premonitions, Marky, and discuss tea instead!"

It was a merry meal which took place in Study No. 1. But there were so many interruptions—caused by fellows who wanted to speak to Dennis Carr—that eventually Harry Wharton was compelled to lock the door.

Dennis recounted to his eager listeners all the experiences and adventures which had befallen him in London, and the Famous Five in turn described all the recent football matches and the skirmishes with rival schools and rival forms.

"The Remove is keeping its end up jolly well," remarked Wharton.

"In spite of the fact that Harry's Form-captain!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up, Bob, you ass! You can't deny that we're jogging along well."

"But you ought not to be content with merely jogging along," said Dennis Carr. "You ought to gallop! My hat, if only I could skipper the Remove once again!"

"Cheer up!" said Mark Linley. "Before many moons are over—"

"There he goes again!" said Johnny Bull. "He makes me tired with all his rotten premonitions!"

Mark Linley smiled, and said no more; but he fully believed in his heart that his premonition concerning Dennis Carr would come true.

After the feed the juniors, together with their guest, adjourned to the Common-room.

The room happened to be crowded, and Skinner, who was present, seized the opportunity of making his apology.

"Carr," he exclaimed, mounting a form, "I wish to apologise, in the presence of all the fellows, for the caddish way I've treated you! It would serve me right if you gave me a jolly good licking here and now!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bolsover major frankly. Skinner was about to continue his speech, but Dennis Carr cut him short.

"That's all right," he said. "I bear no malice. And I'm glad the Head's given you another chance."

"There's a sportsman for you!" said Bob Cherry, his eyes shining. "Three cheers for Dennis Carr! Hip, hip, hip!"

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

This was not the first cheer Dennis had received that day, but it was by far the most enthusiastic. Everybody joined in right lustily, and the sound rang pleasantly in the ears of the fellow whose honour had been vindicated.

Dennis Carr's bitter ordeal was over, and that same evening he was to return to London.

For good?

Dennis himself thought so, but Mark Linley thought otherwise. Which of the two would prove to be right?

THE END.

(Another grand, long, complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "The Return of the Wanderer!" Order your copy EARLY.)

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.



## By STANTON HOPE.

### The Train "Jumpers"!

**M**ICKY spent the day partly in sleep and partly in wandering about the Bowery district of New York. Once or twice he almost regretted his decision to meet Alec P. Figg at the Carolina that night, for there was something in the make-up of the man that he did not trust. However, his few dollars were not likely to be of much assistance in helping him far on the road to Los Angeles, and as Figg was a native of the country his aid might prove invaluable.

In the evening Micky settled his account with Mrs. Stocker, the keeper of the ill-favoured lodging-house, and, with Chappie at his heels, wandered forth to meet Figg. He entered the Carolina, and ordered a stack of hot buckwheat cakes and some coffee, and, after supplying Chappie with a liberal helping of food, proceeded to make a meal as a good beginning to his night's adventure.

Suddenly he heard a low whistle, and, looking round, he saw the ginger-haired American youth peering in at the doorway of the restaurant. Figg was evidently in a hurry, for he beckoned with his hand impatiently. Micky hastily summoned the waiter, squared up for his meal, and joined Figg outside.

"See here, bo," said the American, "we've gotter to get a hustle on! I want to be three miles from here by nine o'clock to pick up the New York Central express—the Chicago Flyer."

Micky started to ask how Figg proposed to take a long railway journey without ample funds, but the other immediately silenced him.

"You quit blazing off so many tongue fireworks!" said Figg, in the picturesque language of his native land. "I guess you'll need all your breath to make the train in time!"

For some time the two strode swiftly along in silence, Micky noticing that his companion kept his face well down in his overcoat. The lad was glad to see that Figg avoided the frequented thoroughfares, for he dreaded the possibility of running into Puncher Hogarth, the giant bo'sun of the Plunger, or some other members of the tramp steamer's crew.

It was evident that Figg knew the devious route he was taking like a book, for never once did he hesitate as to which turning to take. Only once on the way did he deign to speak, and that was when he noticed Chappie, who ran ahead upon seeing a cat stalking across the road.

"Say kid," he said, "you don't mean to say you're bringing the tyke along?"

"I am," answered Micky. "Wherever I go, you can bet that Chappie goes with me!"

Figg saw the determination in the face of his younger companion, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, it's none o' my funeral," he said; "but how you're going to take a dog across the States in the way we're going to travel beats me!"

After three-quarters of an hour's brisk walking the two came out by a number of high stone warehouses; and the sound of locomotive whistles and other familiar noises told Micky they were near to a railway.

The American did not hesitate. He turned into a narrow pathway, and shinned up a high wall.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

# MICKY o' THE MOVIES!

### SYNOPSIS.

Micky Denver, an orphan lad, is an acrobat in Beauman's Gigantic Circus. One night, in Liverpool, he is accused unjustly by Boris Beauman, the bullying proprietor, of having stolen a gold watch. The evidence is black against him, and Micky is arrested, but escapes to the river-front, and stows away on a tramp-steamer called the Plunger. On the voyage across the Atlantic the lad is ill-treated by Puncher Hogarth, the giant bo'sun, so when the ship brings up in New York Harbour Micky escapes through an open port and swims ashore.

In New York Micky meets a slim, red-haired American, who introduces him to a cheap lodging-house, and proposes, as they both want to get out West, that they should be pals.

"I'll make you a proposition, kid," he says. "Meet me at the Carolina Eating-house at eight o'clock to-night, and I'll show you how to get on the way to Los Angeles."

And Micky shakes hands on it—with Smart Alec, one of the most expert cracksmen on the American Continent!

(Now read on.)

"Hand me up that dog," he cried impatiently; "that is, if you're still determined to take him with you!"

For reply Micky handed Chappie up to his companion, and then swarmed up the wall himself. Before him stretched a huge railway system, the steel lines glistening in the light of arc lamps and the yellow rays from signal-boxes and stationary carriages. Dotted here and there were the red and green lamps of the signals, and some distance away, towards the heart of New York, was a veritable blaze of light.

Figg followed the eyes of his young companion.

"Thet's New York Central station you kin see back there," he said. "The Chicago Flyer is due to leave at three minutes after nine, and I'll show you a place near here where we kin 'jump' her as she passes."

"Look here!" said Micky. "What's the game?"

"You know what 'jumping' a train is, don't you?" asked Figg. "If you don't, you must be a proper rube! I'm speaking good, plain Yew-nited States, ain't I?"

"I suppose you are," said Micky; "but let's hear all about it in English."

A shade of anger passed over the American's face, but he quickly regained his composure.

"We've no time to sit here spilling the talk!" said Figg. "Now get this—we've gotter get in a certain place I know of near here within five minutes, taking care not to run foul of any railroadmen. When the Flyer comes by, we must nip aboard, and get between two o' the Pullmans. She won't be picking up speed for another half-mile, so we shall have no difficulty in getting on, and we must trust to luck that no brakeman on the train spots us."

With that Alec P. Figg dropped from the wall, and began to make his way along the railway-lines, keeping in the shadows as much as possible. A second later Micky, still clasping Chappie in his arms, dropped down, too, and hastened after the ginger-headed youth.

"I say, Figg," he said, "stealing a ride on a train seems a rotten game to me, and—"

"Jumping mackinaws!" exclaimed Figg.

"Every hobo and a good many others take free rides when they kin get them in this country!" Then he added insinuatingly: "But, of course, if you don't feel up to the scratch—"

"Oh, I'm not afraid!" said Micky hastily.

"It's not that!"

"I guessed you weren't no piker!" said Alec P. Figg. "Come on, we've only jest got time!"

Micky said no more, but bounded after his companion over half a dozen permanent ways, and dodged behind a small shed of corrugated iron.

Anyway, he reasoned to himself, he had not much choice in the matter if he wanted to get clear of New York, where he was likely to be apprehended at any moment for smuggling himself and Chappie into the United States.

Suddenly the sound of a clanging bell was born to his ears, and Figg gripped his arm. "The Chicago Flyer!" said the American, in a hoarse whisper. "She's leaving the station now."

Soon the form of the express could be seen approaching, and Micky stood quivering with

excitement, awaiting the psychological moment.

At last the huge locomotive, with outspread cowcatcher in front, passed the two watchers, and the long Pullman coaches began to roll slowly by. Above the chugging of the engine and the clanging of the bell just abaft the stumpy funnel, Micky heard the sound of his companion's voice.

"Be ready to follow me, kid," said Figg; "and don't get falling under the train, or you'll never go to Los Angeles!"

A few seconds more of breathless suspense elapsed, and then Figg darted forward.

"Climb aboard!" he cried.

Figg scrambled up between the coaches, and, clasping Chappie tightly in his arms, Micky clambered up after him.

"Stoop down and make yourself as inconspicuous as possible!" ordered the American.

"Train 'jumpers' ain't popular with the railroad men!"

But the luck of Micky and Figg was in, and they remained undetected. Soon the Flyer began to bowl along at a speed far from comfortable to the young Englishman and his American companion. New York was left behind, and the express thundered along at a speed of sixty-five miles an hour through the darkness, while occasionally the lights of small stations flashed by like strings of yellow jewels.

In spite of the discomfort, Micky began to experience an exhilarated feeling as he realised that each mile traversed took him so much farther from the perils of New York and brought him nearer to sunny California.

After a clear run of several hours the Chicago Flyer slowed down, and Figg announced his intention of climbing down. Micky was numbed with cold and almost exhausted with standing between the coaches and the anxiety of keeping Chappie from falling off. Both, indeed, were glad to stretch their legs; and as for Chappie, his delight knew no bounds at finding himself on the firm ground of the railway embankment.

"I guess it must be nearly daybreak," said Figg. "I don't know what town this is down the line, but it doesn't matter much. We'll walk along and get some breakfast there, rest during the day, and beat it out again at night on a west-bound freight-train, if nothing better happens along."

The town proved to be Pittsville, a large railway junction, and Micky and Figg began to look round for a place in which to breakfast. After a search they found a little restaurant bearing the notice, "Open All Night!" And entered, and took their seats at a white-clothed table.

Both partook of a hearty breakfast, and by the time they had finished it was fully daylight.

"I'll square up," said Figg, as the attendant presented the two bills, "and then we'll go and find a lodging-house, and have a doss."

"All right," agreed Micky. "But I'll pay my share as I go along."

He put his hand into his breast-pocket for the roll of notes, but withdrew it hastily, and began to feel in his other pockets.

"What's the trouble, kid?" asked Figg, assiduously using a toothpick.

"It's gone!" cried Micky. "My wad of money!"



"Oh, I guess you've got it stowed away somewheres, all right," said Figg, hardly moving a muscle of his face. "Have another dekkko."

Micky made a thorough search, but without success.

"Maybe you've dropped the wad somewheres," suggested Figg calmly. "I dessay the jolting o' the train had something to do with it. Still, never mind that now. I'll settle up, and you kin pay me back some other time."

Alec P. Figg paid the bills, and then the two left the restaurant.

A lurking suspicion entered Micky's mind that his companion knew more concerning the roll of notes than he cared to say; but as he had no proof to justify such an idea, he dismissed the subject as far as possible from his mind.

"See here, kid," said Figg, "we're pard, and I'm jest going to grub-stake you till you kin make a few greenbacks o' your

That night Micky and Figg crawled into a box-car on a West-bound freight-train, and thus secured another big lift on their way.

By stages they came at last to the great city of Chicago, but Figg showed no disposition to stop anywhere for long. He never spoke about his intentions, but that he had some business in the West that was spurring him on was evident.

Before they reached the big city of Illinois Figg announced that his own funds had run out, and he began to rely on the earnings from Micky's street acrobatic performances for his lodging and keep.

This the English lad did not mind, for he realised that without the American's aid he would never have been able to have made so much progress towards his Western goal.

Their luck on trains held remarkably good, and by using the Southern-Pacific rolling-stock without buying tickets or asking anyone's permission, the two adventurers brought up in Kansas City.

In spite of their low funds, Figg, to

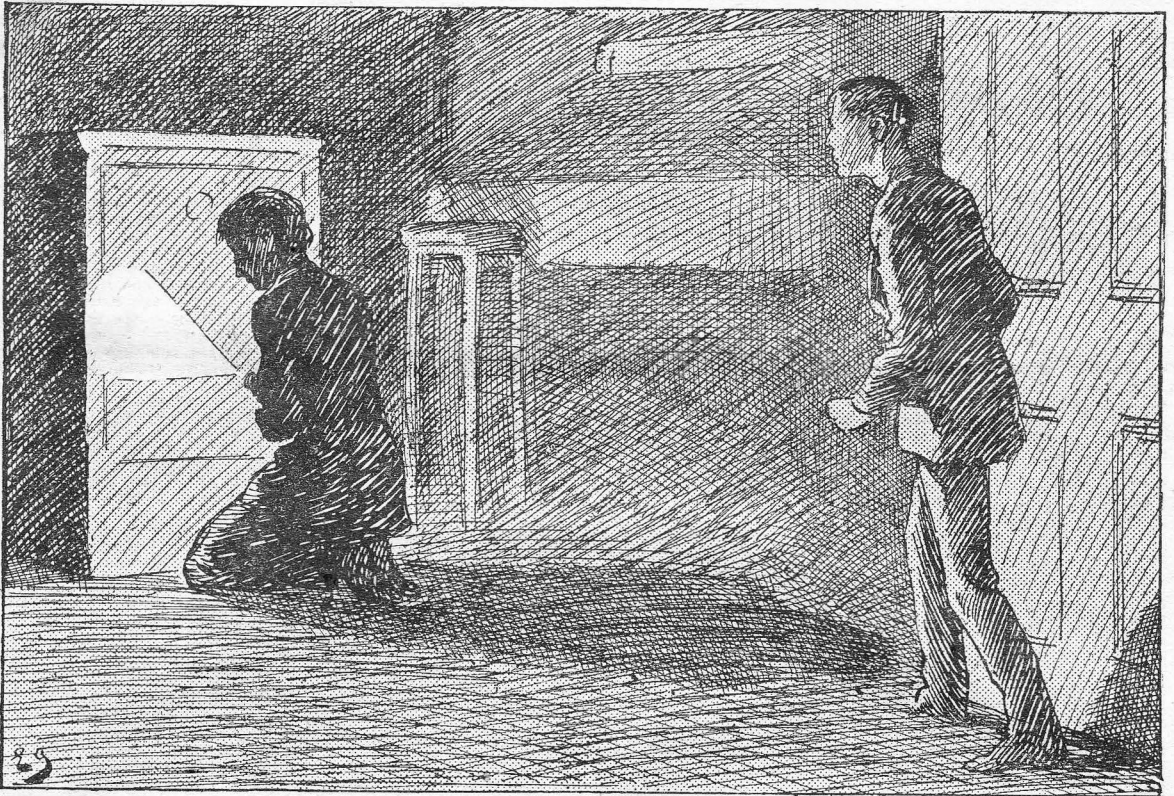
know all the big men in the Yew-nited States, but I guess you'll prick up your ears when I teñ you the name o' my enemy. He is Detective Murray Neale, chief o' the New York Criminal Investigation Department!"

Up Against the Cracksman!

MICKY was nearly startled from his chair. Apart from the impressiveness of Figg's tone, the name of America's greatest detective was familiar in every civilised country of the globe. His suspicions regarding his companion fast began to evolve into certainties.

Figg was quick to note the impression he had made, and, with his hawk eyes glued on Micky, launched into an explanation.

"Don't think I'm a Wild-West bad man, or anything like that, kid," he laughed; "but I once, unfortunately, got mixed up with a guy called Cliff White—'Monkey' White,



Micky pushed the door open quietly, and stared in. On his knees before a small safe was Smart Alec, a little circle of light from an electric torch in his hand illuminating the combination lock. (See page 10.)

own. Then, if you like, you kin come through with something."

Micky thanked him, and, having no choice in the matter, accepted the offer.

The two secured beds in a cheap lodging-house, and slept until long after noon.

In the early evening Micky told Figg he was going out for a while, and went to select a suitable locality for giving a street performance.

He opened his show with a few dexterous hand-turns and somersaults, and soon had a goodly gathering of Pittsville citizens around him. Then he put Chappie through his tricks.

The little mongrel's lifelike imitation of the Charlie Chaplin walk brought forth bursts of laughter and applause from the crowd, and money was showered into the cap which Micky passed round.

Fortunately, the collection had been taken when a policeman hove into sight, and Micky and Chappie bounded off and made their way back to the lodging-house.

There Micky counted his money, and found he had earned no less than nine dollars and fifty cents; but, strangely enough, Alec P. Figg did not seem over-pleased when the lad repaid his debt.

Micky's surprise, insisted on securing rooms at the Pioneer Hotel, one of the best in the place.

It was in this hotel, shortly after their arrival, that Figg for the first time showed a very intensive interest in Micky's past life and a disposition to be communicative about himself.

"You may have wondered, kid," said Figg, lounging in an easy-chair in his own apartment, "why I was in such a desperate hurry to get out of li' old New York, and whrit business is taking me to the West. You've been a good pard, and it would sorter do me good to put you wise. In the first place, I want to tell you that I have a deadly enemy in New York, a man who will never rest content until he has hounded me to my ruin!"

Figg paused dramatically, and narrowly watched Micky's face to read the effect of his words.

Mixed curiosity and sympathy shone in the eyes of the lad; and, apparently satisfied, Figg proceeded in a low, sad tone:

"For the last two or three years I have been hounded from place to place, and all through the machinations of this one man. You're a Britisher, Micky, and may not

they called him, for he had a face like a gorilla, long arms, and he was almost as good an acrobat as you, Micky. Well, apparently some 'sparklers' got mislaid in some millionaire's residence in Fifth Avenue one night, and Monkey White was suspected o' knowing something about them.

"To cut a long story short, those jewels were never discovered—neither the man, Monkey White. But I guess you'll hardly credit what that pinhead, Neale, did next. For no reason whatever, except that I happened to know White slightly, that 'tec guy had me nobbled. Yep, the boob had me put in the clink, but, o' course, I was acquitted."

Micky hardly knew what to say or what to believe, but that Figg had some underlying purpose in thus confiding in him he was assured.

As a matter of fact, Smart Alec gave these few unreliable details as a preliminary to pumping the English lad.

"You kin jest bet, kid," said Figg, making himself a cigarette, "that, after my experiences, I've gotte no use for the Yew-nited States Police Force, jest as, I guess, you've

got no very pleasant memories of the British cops."

In spite of himself, Micky flushed hotly. That Figg suspected him of clearing out of the Old Country as a law-breaker he had guessed from the time he had first met the American, and now he decided his best plan was to make an honest statement of his motive.

"It's quite true I was suspected of a crime in England," said Micky, "but I was innocent."

Figg gave a smile, half-cynical, half-amused.

"What I say is true," averred the lad. "Boris Beauman, who was the proprietor of the circus in which I worked, lost a gold watch one night, and accused me because he saw me near his caravan. I had gone there after Chappie, who had spotted a rat, but Beauman wouldn't believe that, and had me arrested. I did a guy from the police, and stowed away on a steamer, and thus reached this country."

"You escaped from the police, and smuggled yourself into the great Yew-nited States, did you, kid?" murmured Figg. "Well, I call that right sharp, now. You're a gink after my own heart, and I guess we shall get on well together."

"What do you mean?" demanded Micky, startled by the tone of the other's voice rather than the actual words.

"See here, kid," said Figg suddenly, "let's cut out his phoney talk. I guess we kin trust each other, eh? You're a lad who's likely to be of great use to me; and, let me say, there's a good many cute guys in this country who'd feel honoured to be pards with Smart Alec."

Micky, naturally, had never heard of Figg's title in the criminal profession, but he sat fascinated by the personality of this slight, red-headed man, who was one of the cleverest of all American crooks, a man whose astuteness had baffled the police force of a continent.

"Right-ho, Figg," said Micky. "You want open dealing, so you shall have it. But, before we go any farther, I want to settle up one point. You know my line—I'm an acrobat. Now, what's yours?"

Figg paused a moment, and then he spoke very deliberately.

"I am a cracksmen," he said slowly, "and I think I kin modestly claim to be one of the most expert in the profession. There ain't a safe in the country I can't see the inside of by means of an outfit of tools, the 'soup,' or by fingering the combination. At present I've got no tools, nor 'soup' for blowing open steel doors, for I was double-crossed by that four-flusher, Ginger White, who hit out West with all my belongings when I was arrested. He's got my outfit now, but he's going to get something more before I've done with him!"

The tigerish expression that convulsed the face of the crook told more plainly than words the hate that Figg bore towards his late partner in crime, and of the revenge that he contemplated taking should he come across Ginger White again.

Micky rose to his feet.

"I'm sorry you've told me all this, in a way, Figg," he said. "I'm grateful enough for your help in getting out to the Middle West, but in future I'm going to beat my way alone."

The crook also rose and faced the English lad.

"D'you mean you're through with me?" he demanded. "You're a crook yourself—a fugitive from the police of two countries, for they don't allow penniless thieves to land in this land of liberty. But quit your fooling, and listen to me. I intended undertaking my next big job in Frisco, where there's a bank of which I've got the plans and full information, but I see a way of doing a bit in this lil' burgh first. I'll do the job myself, but I'll share the swag with you. We'll rake in more in one haul than you'd make in a year doing them street acrobatic stunts of yours."

"You can jolly well think what you like about me," said Micky, "but we part company here and now. Let me pass!"

Micky gave a low whistle for Chappie, who was curled up under a chair, and strode past Figg out of the room.

"You skeered piker!" hissed Figg, clenching his hands. "Get out, then, and go and turn somersaults in the streets! But, remember, keep that mouth of yours tight closed about me, or I'll close it for you for ever!"

And Smart Alec drew an automatic pistol

from his pocket and tapped the barrel lightly in the palm of his left hand.

Micky took no notice of Figg's threats, but left the Pioneer Hotel and walked through the streets of Kansas City. He determined to find a suitable location and give an acrobatic performance, so that he might be enabled with the proceeds to pay for his room and board at the hotel, and go elsewhere. The discovery that his travelling companion was a dangerous criminal was disturbing enough in itself, and he was greatly worried as to what he should do in the matter, and how he should proceed in future. Apart from the fact that he did not want to implicate himself, he could not go and make a statement to the police, for he had no proof that Figg was "wanted" for any crime. Before he reached a spot suitable for his little show, the sum total of his deliberations was to keep out of Figg's way and to clear out of Kansas City on the following day.

After two interruptions by over-zealous policemen, Micky, with the help of Chappie, managed to give a performance, and with pockets jingling pleasantly, made off to spend an hour or two at a cinema, his favourite recreation. Afterwards he had a meal in a small cafeteria, and avoided returning to the hotel until late in the evening. He noticed that Figg's room, which was next to his own, was in darkness, and heavy breathing told him that the occupant was fast asleep. Quietly, he entered his own room, and in ten minutes he was in bed and at peace with all the world.

It must have been in the small hours of the morning when the low growling of Chappie caused Micky to awake suddenly and sit bolt upright in bed. With every nerve of his being tensely drawn, he strained his ears to catch some sound which might explain Chappie's excitement and his own subconscious feeling that someone was near to him.

Gently he heard the handle of his door turned and the door slowly opened. Micky gave a whispered order to Chappie, who was preparing to spring on the intruder, and lay perfectly still himself, ready, however, for action at a moment's notice. But the door only opened a few inches, and then it closed again as noiselessly.

Micky slipped out of bed, quickly pulled on some clothes, determined to investigate the matter further. When he cautiously opened the door Chappie made as though to follow him, but, to the little terrier's great disappointment, the lad ordered him to lie down.

The corridor was deserted, and Micky stole along to the door of Figg's room and listened. Figg, he knew, was a heavy breather, but he heard no sound. A suspicion that something was afoot led him to the head of the wide staircase that led down to the entrance-hall of the hotel. He peered over the banisters, but drew back slightly as he discerned, leaning over the first landing below him, the figure of a man. It was his late companion, the cracksmen!

For perhaps half a minute Micky watched in silence, and then Figg began to descend the stairs. Some lights were burning in the entrance-hall and in the office, which was situated there, but apparently the night clerk had left his post, for Figg did not hesitate. Immediately it occurred to Micky that Smart Alec's objective was the large safe in the hotel office, but the crook did not make in that direction. Instead, he turned at the bottom of the stairway and slipped into a room leading off the entrance-hall on the right.

Micky darted after him, with a strong determination to prevent Figg from performing his nefarious work. No one was about, and the lad reached the room without mishap. He pushed the door open quietly and peered in. On his knees before a small safe was Smart Alec, a little circle of light from an electric-torch in his hand illuminating the combination lock.

The light was extinguished suddenly, and the expert cracksmen began to work on the combination with his slim fingers, his highly-developed sense of touch being his only guide to obtaining the necessary knowledge of the secret movements of the circular lock by which the steel safe could be opened.

Micky stood motionless for a few seconds, and then he spoke quietly.

"Hi, Figg!"

Like a flash, at the sound of his name Smart Alec swung round; at the same time Micky found himself illuminated by the white ray of the electric-torch, and looking

into the sinister barrel of an automatic pistol.

"Get your hands over your head, quick!" hissed Figg. "That's the idea! Now move two steps forward."

Without a word Micky obeyed, and Figg, whose face was partly concealed by a strip of black muslin, moved with feline step and closed the door softly, keeping his quarry covered all the time.

"So it's you, you galdurned Britisher, is it?" snarled the cracksmen. "There ain't many such fools outside of the Police Force who would care to interfere with Smart Alec. Now, jest you stand there until I've finished the job, and if you so much as move a finger I'll drill a hole clean through you!"

Keeping the automatic pointed at Micky's chest, the crook edged backwards towards the safe, the door of which was partly open, and gently laid the torch down so that the ray should still be upon his human target. With his free hand he then commenced to rifle the safe, and drew out a bulky wad of high denomination notes. Micky said nothing, but his brain was working at express speed.

That Figg was desperate enough of a character to fire if he shouted a warning he was convinced, and he watched lynx-eyed for an opportunity of turning the tables on the crook. Not, however, for one moment did the barrel of the deadly automatic waver in Figg's hand as he proceeded with his work.

But suddenly the god of Chance took a sportive hand in the game. Either from faulty mechanism or the need of another refill, the electric-torchlight went out! With a muttered oath Figg half turned, and as he did so Micky dropped to his knees. The lad fully expected a bullet to crash in his direction, but Figg was not such a fool as to rouse the hotel on the mere chance of winging the lad in the darkness.

The crook fumbled for the torch in the darkness, and his touch set the light on again. From the floor Micky gave a spring that would have been a credit to any acrobat in the circus ring, and bore the cracksmen to the floor. Figg's automatic was jerked from his hand, and, like lightning, the lad possessed himself of the firearm.

"If you move so much as a finger," hissed Micky, repeating Figg's own words of a few minutes before, "I'll drill a hole clean through you!"

"You interfering yap!" snarled Figg, with an oath. "I'll make you pay for this!"

"Get up," commanded Micky calmly, "and keep your hands above your head, or this little toy of yours may go off."

Mumbling execrations on the head of the English lad, Smart Alec obeyed, for he knew only too well that the magazine of the pistol was fully loaded, and that the trigger required but a light pressure to send him where all his astuteness and skill at safe cracking would be of no further avail.

Micky quickly ran his disengaged hand over the crook, and having made sure he had no other weapon in his possession, took from Figg's pocket the bundle of notes. Then, still facing the baffled cracksmen, he reached back and replaced the money in the safe and closed the steel door.

"Now," he said, "walk straight from here, go up the staircase, and get back into your own room!"

As he turned round Micky put the barrel of the pistol against the small of Figg's back, as a hint that alacrity in obeying orders would be the crook's best policy. Fortunately, the night clerk had not returned to his office, and the two reached the top landing without polestation.

"Good-night, Figg!" murmured Micky politely. "Pleasant dreams!"

Figg gave a snarl in reply, and, hastily sinking into his room, shut the door behind him.

In a few minutes Micky was in bed again, with the automatic pistol safely stowed away under his pillow, unpleasantly conscious that he had made a deadly enemy of one of the most dangerous criminals in the United States.

#### The Cinema City of the Golden West.

**E**ARLY on the following morning Micky dressed hastily, and went down to settle his bill with the Pioneer Hotel. Having done so, he walked out to a railway-siding on the outskirts of Kansas City with the idea of trying to "jump" a west-bound freight. This decision he made in spite of a previous resolve not to steal any



more rides on trains. But he was anxious to get out of town as quickly as possible, and he assuaged his conscience with the reflection that "necessity knows no law." He also mentally determined that in future he would try and earn sufficient money to pay his way even if he took longer to reach Los Angeles by that method.

By this time Micky had had experience of the discomfort of travelling on top of cars and between them, where the dust almost choked one, so he looked for a box car to climb into, and, after one or two encounters with brakemen, succeeded in his efforts. As he was lying concealed behind some boxes, he heard a voice exclaim angrily, and next moment the sliding doors of the car were shut with a bang.

A few minutes later the train began to jolt over the points, and Micky hugged Chappie delightedly. Once more he was on his way to his Land of Promise, for never once had the lad wavered in his resolve to secure for himself a position in the cinema world.

The weather was quite genial, but as the train journeyed on, Micky became increasingly cold, until at last he and Chappie were reduced to jumping about in the darkness of the car to keep the circulation going in their freezing bodies. Two or three times the train stopped, and was shunted to allow mail trains to pass. The first time Micky tried to get out, but the doors were locked on the outside, and he knew he was a prisoner until someone opened them. Once he heard voices outside, and raised a shout; but the Westbound Limited came dashing past with a long shriek of her siren that rendered his efforts abortive.

Not until hours afterwards, when the train stopped at Butte Springs, Colorado, did someone hear the feeble kicks of his boots against the solid wooden doors. By this time Micky was nearly exhausted with the cold, and Chappie, with frosted nose, was shivering violently in spite of having been under his master's jacket for a considerable time. The brakeman who opened the door started back in surprise at the apparition of the lad and his dog.

"Curly snakes!" he cried. "Jest look what's hyer! Come out o' thet, ye young hobo!"

Only too glad to obey, Micky slid down from the car and dropped to the ground, thoroughly chilled and exhausted. Another brakeman in blue overalls and black peaked cap, came running up.

"Hallo, dat guy looks bad!" he said to his train-mate. "Where did he spring from?"

"From there," said the first brakeman, indicating the box car.

"What! Out o' the refrigerator van? Say! How long hev' ye been in there, kid?"

"I—I g-got in at K-Kansas City!" quavered Micky. "And I'm n-nearly frozen!"

"I should guess so!" said the man. "It's a wonder ye ain't frozen mutton, kid! You'd better come back an' hev' a warm up in the brake-van."

In spite of all he had heard from Figg about the ruthlessness of American brakemen in dealing with train "jumpers," Micky and his little terrier received nothing but kindness at the hands of these two. Both, as it happened, were family men, and when they heard that the lad was practically penniless, and that he wanted to reach Los Angeles, they promised to do all they could to help him on.

While Micky and Chappie were partaking of a meal before a glowing stove in the brake-van, he told the two men of his reason for wanting to get out to California, and both laughed heartily at the idea of his obtaining a job with a cinema company and one day becoming a film star.

And so, slowly and with many stops, the freight train wended its way through the mountains of Colorado, along the wide cattle-ranges of Arizona, and into California, the land of sunshine.

Then, one eventful day, Micky gazed with fast-beating heart from the brake-van across the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains to catch a glimpse of Los Angeles, the hub of the cinema world. At last the beautiful city of Southern California came into view, and soon the train was jolting past pretty white dwellings with gardens, in which flourished palms, orange-trees, and other kinds of semi-tropical vegetation.

When the train finally came to a standstill in the freight terminus, Micky's impatience knew no bounds. After many expressions of gratitude and goodwill for the help of the kindly brakemen, he set off with Chappie to find a hotel or lodging-house in which to stay. He had only two dollars and a few cents left, but they would suffice for a day.

It did not take him long to find a hostelry, called the Pacific Lodging House, and he booked a cubicle and had the thorough wash and brush up he so sorely needed. The brakemen had given him some breakfast in the train, so, with Chappie at his heels, he wandered forth again into the sweet, spring air which was being wafted to the city from the mountains. It must be said for Micky that he did not let the grass grow under his feet, for the first policeman he saw he approached with the question that was nearest his heart.

"Excuse me, sir," he said politely, "but can you tell me where they make the cinema films about here?"

"Uh-huh, an' which one?" asked the policeman suspiciously.

Micky did not quite know what to say, so he fired off the first name that entered his head.

"The Chaplin studio."

The policeman obviously did not know quite what to make of his questioner, but he directed the lad to a building, and the name "Chaplin" stood out in letters of gold. A beautiful upholstered automobile was throbbing outside.

Without hesitation, Micky entered the polished swing-doors and approached an open wicket marked "Enquiries," by which a smartly-dressed American youth was sitting.

"Good-morning!" said Micky. "Is Mr. Charlie Chaplin in?"

"I guess he is!"

"Good!" said Micky. "Please tell him I want to see him—on business!"

(Another grand, long instalment of the magnificent Cinema Serial next week.)

# MAGNIFICENT COLOURED PICTURE TO BE GIVEN FREE

## WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO SECURE A BEAUTIFUL ART PLATE :: :: ::

We reproduce here a small line drawing of a magnificent coloured plate which every reader of THE PENNY POPULAR has an equal chance of securing. All you have to do is to secure the names and addresses of SIX of your friends who are non-readers of THE PENNY POPULAR. When you have done this, write them down on a postcard and post them to the Editor of THE PENNY POPULAR, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4. All postcards should be marked "Free Plate" in the top left-hand corner. Names and addresses of regular or occasional readers must on no account be sent, otherwise your application for a Plate may be rejected. Before sending in your list, make sure that the names are of non-readers.

Only one plate will be sent to any one reader.



This is a small line drawing of the Plate to be Given Free. Actual size of Plate with engraving is 7½ inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy, 1st Class, JOHN TRAYERS CORNWELL, V.C. The Battle of Jutland, May 31st—June 1st, 1916. From the Picture by F. O. Salisbury, painted for the Admiralty on board H.M.S. Chester." The closing date of this offer will be published in this paper in a week or so. No application will be accepted after that date.

## CHECKMATING KNOX!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

**K**NOX, the most unpopular prefect at St. Jim's, threw the end of his cigarette in the fire and rose from his chair. The study was in a haze of tobacco-smoke—no uncommon thing in Knox's study—and the prefect threw up the window to allow it to disperse. Then he opened the door and looked out into the Sixth-Form passage. "Fa-a-ag!" he bawled, in his unpleasant voice.

There was no response, but a junior turned into the Sixth-Form passage just at that moment.

Knox uttered an exclamation of satisfaction, and his eyes glistened unpleasantly.

"Good! You're just in time, Merry! I want a fag!"

Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, looked at Knox with a sweet smile.

"Sorry, Knox! Nothing doing! I'm busy!" Knox turned red with wrath.

"You young cub! Come here and fag for me directly, or it'll be the worse for you!"

"Can't, Knox. I've got to report to Kildare!"

Knox scowled. There was no love lost between him and Kildare, the popular captain of St. Jim's.

"That won't wash with me!" he said roughly. "Kildare's out, as I happen to know, so it's no use you going to his study now. Just you come in here and clean up my study, and sharp, or I'll touch you up with my ashplant!"

The smile faded from Tom Merry's sunny face, and gave place to a look of dismay.

As a prefect, Knox had the right to fag juniors, which right he exercised to the full. As it was Knox's firm conviction that the way to get the best service out of his fags was to "touch them up" with his ashplant at frequent intervals, fagging for Knox was not exactly a popular pastime amongst the St. Jim's juniors.

Tom Merry, on an errand to Kildare's study, had felt quite secure in his refusal to fag for Knox. But if Kildare were out, it made a difference, of course.

"Well, are you coming, you young rascal?" growled Knox.

"If Kildare is really out—"

"I tell you I saw him crossing the quad towards the New House just now! Another word, and I'll run you in to the Head for refusing to fag for a prefect!"

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders. Luck was evidently against him.

He moved towards the open door of Knox's study.

"What do you want me to do?" he grunted. "I won't stand any bullying, Knox, I tell you straight!"

"You cheeky young cub!" grated Knox, between his teeth. "Tidy up my study at once! If it isn't as clean as a new pin in half an hour, I'll give you the licking of your life!"

Tom Merry snorted, and entered the study. He did not dare to trust himself to speak. Knox was only too ready to use his ashplant if he got the slightest excuse—or even without one. He had had many little rubs with the sturdy captain of the Shell, in which the prefect had not infrequently come off second best, so that he had a wholesome respect for Tom Merry, who was not an easy fellow to bully. But if he got a legitimate excuse, Knox would be merciless, as Tom Merry well knew.

Knox closed the study door, and sat down in his armchair, with his ashplant over his knee.

"I'm going to stay here to see that you do the job properly," he remarked grimly. "If there's any slacking—well, look out for squalls!"

Tom Merry breathed hard. There was no help for it. He was in for a spell of unpleasant duty in Knox's study, and he would have to be very careful indeed to escape the ashplant.

He set about his task quietly and methodically, while Knox eyed him grimly, watching for an opportunity to find fault, as Tom knew very well.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

"Put all those crocks away in the cupboard neatly, you young sweep!"

"Yes, Knox!"

"If you break any, I'll warm you!"

"Thank you, Knox!"

"And don't give me any of your confounded cheek!" roared Knox.

"No, Knox!" said Tom Merry meekly.

Knox snorted. A soft answer is said to turn away wrath. But Tom Merry's soft answers only appeared to have an irritating effect on the prefect's temper. It is just possible that Tom Merry was aware of the fact.

The junior was down on his knees now, brushing the floor. Suddenly Knox leaned from his chair and gave him a smart tap behind with the ashplant.

Tom Merry gave a yell and a jump.

"Yow! Wharrer you at, Knox?" he demanded indignantly.

"What's that you've got buiging out of your pocket?" asked Knox suspiciously. "None of your little games, now! Let's look at it!"

Knox had a certain amount of reason to be suspicious of the meek way in which Tom Merry was doing his work. Tom and his chums had more than once, while ostensibly fagging for Knox, played havoc with his study in various ways.

The prefect had frequently found pepper in his tea, and mustard in the marmalade, after one of their enforced visits to his study.

So the sight of a very large bulge in the pocket of Tom Merry's Eton trousers put him on the qui vive as soon as he noticed it.

"What is it?" he repeated. "Out with it, you young sweep!"

Tom Merry faced him with an indignant flush.

"It's nothing to do with you, Knox!" he said defiantly. "It's just a box—a tin box. I suppose I can have a box in my pocket if I like, can't I?"

"We'll soon see about that!" said Knox,

There is a splendid, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's in

## "THE GEM" LIBRARY

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Ask your newsagent for it to-day.

Price 1½d.

getting up and taking a firmer grip on his ashplant. "I can see it's a tin box, and now I come to look at it, I'll tell you what it looks like to me!"

"What's that?" said Tom Merry scornfully. "It looks like a box of cigarettes!" said Knox spitefully. "That being so, it's my duty to have a look at it. Hand it over!"

Tom Merry turned very red, and then gave a little scornful laugh.

"You ought to know what a box of cigarettes looks like, anyway, Knox!"

Knox gritted his teeth.

"Hand it over, you young sweep, or—" He made a threatening motion with the ashplant, but Tom faced him undauntedly.

"Don't touch me with that, Knox!" he said quietly. "Here you are!"

He dived his hand into his pocket, and produced a box of a hundred cigarettes of a well-known brand.

Knox gave a gasp, and a gleam of malicious triumph came into his eyes.

"Well, I'm dashed!" exclaimed Knox, hardly able to believe his eyes. "Fags! And some of them have been smoked, too! I've bowled you out at last, Tom Merry, you hypocritical young sweep!"

"As a matter of fact, they don't belong to me at all," said Tom Merry calmly. "I can explain—"

"You can tell a lot of lies, of course!" said Knox, with a savage sneer. "But you can tell 'em to the Head! You'll come straight to his study with me!"

"But I tell you, Knox—"

"This'll mean a flogging for you, Merry, at least," said Knox, with malicious satisfaction. "Come on!"

"But—"

Knox grasped the junior by the collar, and gave him a push out of the door.

There was an exclamation as Tom Merry bumped into someone who was passing along the Sixth Form passage.

"What the dickens—"

It was the voice of Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry uttered an exclamation of relief.

"Oh, good! It's you, Kildare!"

"What's the trouble here?" demanded Kildare.

"I've just caught this young sweep with a half-used box of smokes on him, that's all!" said Knox, with a sneer. "Fairly bowled the young hypocrite out!"

Kildare looked at Knox with a curling lip. Then he looked hard at Tom Merry.

"It's all right, Kildare," said Tom, with a cheery smile. "It's the box I was bringing along to you, you know."

"What's this?" said Knox harshly, his hand falling away from Tom Merry's collar.

"Have you explained the matter to Knox, Merry?" asked Kildare quietly, ignoring the prefect.

"I tried to, but Knox assumed that I was telling lies, Kildare," said Tom meekly.

"Of course, the young rotter's bound to have some lying excuse ready!" said Knox. "I warned him it wouldn't do for me, though."

"It's perhaps a pity you wouldn't listen to him in this case, Knox," said Kildare drily.

"I suppose you aren't going to back up a junior against a prefect, Kildare?" said Knox hotly.

"Don't be a fool, Knox—"

"If you interfere in this, I shall complain to the Head!" barked Knox. "I've caught this young scoundrel, and I'm going to see that he gets his deserts!"

Eric Kildare breathed hard, but by a great effort he kept his temper.

"Kindly come into my study for a minute, and bring Merry with you, Knox!" he said, with an air of quiet authority that left no room for argument. "If, after hearing what I have to say, you still wish to take Merry to the Head, you may do so."

Without waiting for an answer, he led the way to his study. Tom Merry followed, and Knox brought up the rear.

"Now, Knox," said Kildare, closing the door, "just listen to me a moment."

Knox grunted.

"It came to my knowledge this morning that one of the juniors in the Shell—Crooke, to be exact—had been making a fool of himself by smoking cigarettes in his study," pursued the captain of St. Jim's. "A very foolish and caddish trick for a schoolboy, as you will agree, Knox!"

Another grunt from Knox.

"I decided it would be best to deal with the case through the captain of the offender's Form," went on Kildare, "so I sent for Tom Merry, and told him to deal with Crooke, confiscate his cigarettes, and bring them to me."

Knox's face was a study.

"Perhaps you begin to see how matters stand at last, Knox!" said Kildare coldly.

"I—I—"

"Did you deal with Crooke, Merry?"

"Ragged him bald-headed!" said Tom Merry promptly.

"And these are his cigarettes?"

"They are. Manners and Lowther can prove that I took them from Crooke."

"Your word is quite enough for me," said Kildare quietly. "I think that explains the matter, doesn't it, Knox?"

"I—I suppose so," muttered Knox, biting his lip in his chagrin. "Of course, I didn't know—"

"If you had given the kid a chance to explain, you would have known!" said Kildare sharply. "You've made a fool of yourself, Knox, and would have looked a bigger one if you'd gone to the Head! That's plain speaking!"

Choking with rage, Knox stalked to the door, and left the study, slamming the door behind him.

Tom Merry gave the stalwart captain of St. Jim's a grateful grin.

"Thanks, Kildare, old bean! You're a brick! I've checkmated Knox this time, I think!"

Kildare smiled, and pointed to the door. "Buzz off, kid!" he said briefly.

And Tom Merry buzzed off.





### THE FIRST CHAPTER. Swotting Under Difficulties!

**C**LINK!

A pebble rattled on the window of the end study, and Jimmy Silver looked up from his work, and snorted. Jimmy was alone in the study.

The door was locked. Jimmy Silver was working hard, and it was a half-holiday, and so it was strictly necessary to "sport his oak," for his study-mates, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, looked with a disavouring eye upon "swotting."

Persuasive voices had addressed Jimmy Silver through the keyhole, urging him to come down to the football-ground. Only the scratch of Jimmy's pen had replied.

The persuasive voices grew very threatening, and kicks and bangs were bestowed on the door; but still Jimmy worked on, unheeding.

Then his friends had retired, baffled, and Jimmy hoped that he would get a few hours in peace and quiet to grind at the Anabasis.

But the hope was delusive.

The clink of the pebble on the window proved that Lovell & Co. had simply changed the locality of the attack.

Clink, clink!

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Jimmy. "The silly asses! Why can't they let a chap work? Bad enough to have to work, anyway!"

Clink, clink!

Crack!

One of the panes went.

Jimmy Silver jumped up and strode to the window. Under the window Lovell and Raby and Newcome stood in the quad, grinning. Jimmy shook his fist at them, and they smiled back sweetly.

"Come out!" shouted Lovell.

"Come out, you swot!" said Raby.

"Come out, you slacker!" yelled Newcome.

"You silly asses!" roared the exasperated Jimmy. "I'm swotting!"

"Rats!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Advice to an industrious young man—When about to swot, don't!" grinned Lovell. "Chuck it, and come down to the football!"

"Look here, the exam comes off next week!" said the unhappy Jimmy. "You want me to win the Greek prize, don't you?"

"Both the Greek prize! We want to beat St. Jim's when they come over!"

"We shall beat St. Jim's, anyway!"

"Not if you swot on half-holidays and cut the practice! Come out!"

"Come out!" chorused the three.

"Now, do be reasonable!" urged Jimmy Silver from the window. "I don't like swotting, you know that. I don't like Xenophon. I wish the ten thousand had retreated to some place where they'd never be heard of again. But if I'm going to get the twenty guineas I've got to work for it. Think of the feed we'll have when I bag the prize!"

"Think of the licking we shall get if we ain't in form for St. Jim's!"

"Blow St. Jim's!"

"Well, how the Greek prize, then! Come out!"

Jimmy Silver snorted. His chums were unreasonable. It had been agreed by all the Fistical Four that the end study ought to bag that prize.

The Co. agreed that Jimmy Silver was the chap to do it. It was understood, too, that the handsomest prize of the term couldn't be bagged without some hard work being put in.

Jimmy wasn't specially fond of hard work, and that bright afternoon he would have given almost anything to be out of doors. But he had to grind for the exam. The honour of the study was at stake.

That study more than kept up its reputation as a fighting study. It shone at footer and cricket. In rags and rows with the Moderns it was in all its glory. But in scholarship it had not been brilliant, as the Fourth Form-master had said on more than one occasion. The Fistical Four had not cared much for prizes.

It had seemed a good idea to prove that the end study could bag prizes if it liked, and twenty guineas was a stupendous sum, and meant high funds for the whole study for a long time—when safely bagged.

Jimmy Silver was anything but a swot, as a rule; but of late he had been swotting in season and out of season. He thought, dreamed, and almost spoke Greek. In dreams he marched ever so many parasangs with the famous ten thousand.

His chums had grown fed up with it. On this special afternoon the Co. considered it really too bad, and they were determined that Jimmy Silver should come out.

So, in answer to Jimmy's expostulations from the window, they replied in chorus:

"Come out! You slacker, come out! Come down to the football!"

"Go and eat coke!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Come out!"

"I've got to work!"

"Come out!"

"It's twenty guineas!"

"Come out!"

"Think what a time we'll have when we bag the cash!"

"Come out!"

"You silly, frabjous asses!"

"Come out!"

Evidently it was useless to explain, useless to argue, and useless to expostulate.

Jimmy Silver slammed the window shut, and returned to the study table.

Clink, clink! Crash!

The cracked pane fairly went now. Fragments of glass were strewn over the study carpet. There was a roar of laughter from below.

Jimmy Silver jumped up again, in a mood of desperation. He made one jump to the study cupboard for a bottle of ink. He made another jump to the window, and threw it open.

Three grinning faces were turned up to him.

"Come out! Ha, ha! Come out—Gooooooogh!"

Swooooosh went the ink in a black shower. It swamped over the three grinning faces, and Lovell and Raby and Newcome were

transformed into Christy Minstrels in the twinkling of an eye. Wild and suffocated ejaculations rose in chorus.

"Gerrrooop!"

"Yurrrrrh!"

"Woosh!"

Jimmy Silver slammed the window shut again. With a contented smile, he sat down once more to Anabasis, and revelled in parasangs. Below, in the quad, Lovell and Raby and Newcome mopped ink from their faces, and gasped out blood-curdling threats in a perfectly Hunnish manner.

### THE SECOND CHAPTER. Not Jimmy Silver.

**T**AP!

The tap at the door elicited a wild howl from Jimmy Silver.

"Go away!" he shrieked.

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Oh, is that you Rawson?"

"Yes. The door's locked."

It was Rawson of the Classical Fourth at the door. Rawson, the scholarship junior, whom the Nuts of Rookwood disdainfully described as a church mouse, was also a competitor for the Greek prize. Jimmy was his only serious rival. The examination was confined to juniors.

Several Shell fellows had entered, but there was nobody in the Shell of whom either of the Fourth-Formers had need to be afraid. They had rivals in the Fourth, but they were well ahead of them. It was generally admitted that it was between Jimmy Silver and Rawson.

They were keen rivals for the exam, but on the best of terms. Jimmy was one of Rawson's firmest backers against Townsend & Co., the magnificent Nuts who affected to look down on the scholarship boy.

"I don't want to interrupt you if you're working," said Rawson, through the keyhole. "But if you're not using your Liddell and Scott, you might lend it to me."

"But I am," said Jimmy.

"Oh, all right, then! Never mind!"

"What's become of your own?" asked Jimmy.

"Somebody's hidden it," said Rawson. "A rotten joke on me, I suppose! I can't find it anywhere!"

"What a rotten trick!" said Jimmy Silver. "Well, I'll whack out my lexicon with you, Rawson. We'll work together, if you like."

"If it won't bother you—"

"Oh, that's all right!"

Jimmy Silver jumped up and unlocked the door. Jimmy was good nature itself, and it never occurred to him that a disadvantage to his rival was an advantage to himself.

He unlocked the door, and Rawson came in. The burly Rawson was looking a little pale and tired, though he was generally in the most robust state of health. He had been swotting hard, and, as the Classical juniors remarked, he slept with Greek verbs under his pillows. It was not uncommon for Rawson to be seen sitting up in bed in the early morning, studying hard, while he waited for the

rising-bell. Jimmy Silver did not carry swotting quite so far as that.

"Hallo! What are those chaps up to?" exclaimed Rawson, glancing from the window as he came in.

Jimmy followed his glance.

Three juniors with inky faces were carrying a ladder towards the window. It was old Mack's ladder, evidently commandeered from the woodshed. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were looking as furious as they were inky. It was an attack by escalade upon the end study that was coming.

"The silly bouncers!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, exasperated.

"Swotting under difficulties!" grinned Rawson.

"Yes, bless them!" Jimmy burst into a sudden chuckle. "I'll bring my books into your study, Rawson, and we'll whack out Liddell and Scott there—you can Liddell while I Scott."

Rawson chuckled.

"You take the books," said Jimmy quickly. "These blessed exercises, too, and the paper, and my pen. I'm going to get something ready for those blessed duffers!"

"Right you are!"

Rawson carried off the paraphernalia of the swot. Jimmy Silver opened a box in the corner of the study, and dragged out some of the articles belonging to the Rookwood players. They were an old Eton jacket and trousers. With deft and rapid hands, he stuffed other articles into them, and arranged them on the chair, with the back to the window, sticking a wig on the top.

It was only a few minutes' work, and when Jimmy Silver had finished the figure in the chair looked like a fellow bending over his work, until seen at close quarters.

Having completed that playful arrangement, Jimmy then followed Rawson from the study, changing the key to the outside of the door, and turning it in the lock.

There was a bump outside the window as he went. The ladder had jammed against the sill.

A minute later an inky and wrathful face looked through the window. It was that of Edward Arthur Lovell. Raby and Newcome were behind him on the ladder, breathing vengeance.

"There he is, the cheeky rotter!" muttered Lovell, peering through the shattered pane. "Now, Jimmy Silver, you rotter, you're going to have it!"

There was no reply from the figure at the table.

"Come and open this window, Jimmy Silver."

No reply.

"Well, I'll jolly soon get it open, and you'll be slaughtered," said Lovell. "We'll make you eat your Greek exercises."

Silence.

Lovell snorted, and fumbled with the window. In a minute more it was open, and Lovell put his head in.

"Now, look out, you rotter!" he said.

Lovell was a little surprised that the junior did not even look round. He had expected that Jimmy Silver would resist the invasion.

But the figure at the table never moved.

"Blest if he hasn't gone to sleep over his work!" said Lovell. "We'll soon wake him up!"

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

Lovell wedged himself in, and dropped lightly into the study. He waited for Raby and Newcome to squeeze in after him.

Then the three of them advanced together. Lovell bent over the leaning form and roared.

"Wake up, you slacker!"

No answer.

Lovell, with a grunt, seized the Eton jacket by the shoulder and dragged at it, to drag Jimmy Silver over the back of the chair.

He had expected plenty of weight to pull, so he put all his strength into that terrific tug.

Unfortunately for Lovell, there was no weight, or hardly any.

The stuffed jacket flew up in his hands, and Lovell, his tug meeting with no resistance, flew backwards.

He crashed into Raby and hurled him flying.

Raby rolled on the carpet, and Lovell sat down.

Crash! Bump!

"Oh! Oh, my hat! What—what the thunder—" stuttered Lovell.

"Yow-wow-wow!" came from Raby in tones of anguish.

Newcome burst into a yell of laughter.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

"Ha, ha, ha! That ain't Jimmy Silver! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a—a— a jacket!" stammered Lovell, blinking at his prize. "A—a—an old jacket stuffed, by gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-wow!"

"The spoofing rotter!" bellowed Lovell.

"He's gone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Newcome.

"You cackling idiot, there's nothing to cackle at! He's gone!" roared Lovell, scrambling to his feet. "I'll scalp him!"

Lovell rushed to the door and dragged at it furiously. But the door did not open.

"What's the matter with this rotten door? It's jammed or something!"

"Ha, ha! It's locked!"

"Well, if it's locked, that's nothing to cackle at, you silly jabberwock!" hooted Lovell. "Oh, I'll scalp Jimmy Silver! Come on!"

"Yow-ow-wow!"

"What are you yowing and yowing for, Raby, you ass?"

"Yow-ow! I'm hurt! You've bunged my head on the fender!" moaned Raby.

"Blow your head! Come on, I tell you!"

Lovell scrambled out of the window again, and slithered down the ladder. He rushed round to the door of the School House, followed more slowly by his chums. They ran into the House, and almost ran into Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth.

Mr. Bootles halted them with a gesture. "Lovell! Raby! Newcome! How dare you appear in public with such shockingly dirty faces?" he exclaimed.

Lovell gasped. "Tain't dirty, sir! It—it's some ink that—that got spilt—"

"Go and wash your faces at once, you dirty boys!" said Mr. Bootles chidingly.

The dirty boys went to wash their faces obediently, but with feelings that could hardly be expressed in the British language.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Nuts are Indignant.

JIMMY SILVER and Tom Rawson worked contentedly in the latter's study. It was an hour before the Co. discovered where Jimmy Silver was, and when they found he was in Rawson's study they wreaked their wrath by kicks and thumps on the door, till Bulkeley's voice from downstairs warned them to desist and scuttle off. Then they gave it up, and went to the football-ground.

Jimmy Silver chuckled when they had departed.

"Now for some quiet, and swotting," he remarked. "How are you getting on, Rawson?"

"Pretty fair, I think," said Rawson.

"You're overdoing it," said Jimmy, with a critical glance at Rawson's pale face.

"No good doing that, you know. You ought to put in some football and keep yourself fit, or you'll crack up on exam day."

Rawson shook his head.

"I'm fit enough," he said. "Anyway, I'm going to grind every minute until the exam."

"Dead set on the giddy guineas, what!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, if I can bag them."

"Same here," said Jimmy. "Those duffers agreed that the end study was to bag the prize, only they won't give a fellow a chance of swotting for it. You can't bag a prize without swotting; especially a Greek prize." Rawson nodded.

"All the same, it's a mug's game to overdo it and get stale," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm giving you good advice like a kind uncle, you know; for if you crack up the prize belongs to me. You're the only chap who could beat me. Howard and Tracy of the Shell haven't an earthly. Old Flynn hasn't much chance, and Oswald is weak—jolly weak—and Topham won't have a bare look-in. And that's the lot."

"Yes, it's between you and me."

"Here's at you, then," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Pass the giddy lexicon, and blow the whole giddy Greek alphabet from Alpha to Omega. I'd rather be playing football!"

And the rivals wired in again, helping one another occasionally in a manner that certainly did not smack of rivalry.

At five o'clock Jimmy Silver rose, stretched his limbs, and yawned portentously. Rawson was grinding on.

"Coming out for a run?" asked Jimmy.

"No; I'm keeping on."

"You've had a good grind."

"I shall go it till Towny and Topham come

in to tea. I should have to chuck it then, anyway. They won't let a fellow work."

Jimmy regarded Rawson rather anxiously. He had a real regard for the scholarship junior, who was making his way at Rookwood under so many difficulties. He did not quite understand Rawson's extreme keenness after the prize, either; for Rawson, though poor, was not generally keen after money.

"You'd do better to get some fresh air, old chap," said Jimmy. "You don't want me to beat you next Thursday because you've cracked up."

"I sha'n't crack up. Thanks, all the same!"

"Well, pile in, then!" said Jimmy. "I'm off!"

The captain of the Fourth left the study, leaving Rawson poring over his books. There was no doubt in Jimmy's mind that Tom was overdoing it, and that a little less swotting might have meant a greater advance for him. Unless he kept himself fit he had little chance of winning through a difficult examination. But that was for Rawson himself to decide.

Jimmy Silver sauntered down the passage, with Greek verbs and Persian parasangs buzzing in his ears, and yawning widely. As he came downstairs he found Townsend and Topham and Peele, the Nuts of the Fourth, talking on the middle landing.

Topham, Nut and slacker as he was, was a competitor for the twenty guineas, though, as he neglected his Greek, and was generally in hot water with his Form-master about it, it was a mystery how he expected to bag the exam.

Topham and his friends were wildly indignant at Rawson's cheek in entering for the exam at all. As Topham said, almost pathetically, it was rather hard that a gentleman should have to grind at filthy Greek because a rank outsider and rotter had the awful nerve to enter into competition with him. As for Jimmy Silver, Topy did not think much of his chances. Jimmy was so great at outdoor games that Topham was inclined to despise his efforts at scholarship. But in Rawson he knew that he had a very dangerous adversary.

The three Nuts were talking and chuckling on the landing, and they did not observe the captain of the Fourth coming down the stairs. Jimmy's own name was on Topham's lips at that moment.

"That rotter Silver's with him now!" he said. "The cad's borrowed Silver's books, too, I find. But—"

"Hallo, Topy! Taking my name in vain?" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Who gave you leave to call your Uncle James a rotter?"

Topham spun round in alarm.

"Oh! I—I didn't see you, Silver! I—"

Jimmy Silver interrupted the dandy of the Fourth by taking him by the back of the neck. Topham wriggled in his grasp.

"Let go, you silly ass!" he howled.

"Did you call your Uncle James a rotter?" smiled Jimmy Silver, compressing his grip.

"Yow! Ow! Help me, you fools!" howled Topham.

"Yes, come and help him!" said Jimmy Silver, smiling at Townsend and Peele. "Come to the rescue, like the giddy Paladins you are!"

"Look here, let Topy go, you silly chump!" said Townsend threateningly.

"Make him!" yelled Topham, struggling.

"Yes, make me, dear boys!" said Jimmy.

Townsend and Peele set their lips, and made a rush simultaneously. Jimmy Silver swung Topham round by the shoulders, the unfortunate dandy of the Fourth being as helpless in his grasp as a sack of coke.

There was a roar from Peele and Townsend as Topy came into violent contact with them, and they were rolled over on the landing.

Jimmy Silver chuckled as the two Nuts sprawled over, and rolled Topham over them, and then went on his way downstairs, smiling serenely.

The three juniors sat up, gasping and furious.

"Ow! The rotter!" mumbled Topham, rubbing his neck ruefully. "Yow! Ow! The beast guessed we were getting up something against Rawson, I think!"

"Well, he's gone now," said Peele. "Rawson's alone. Let's go in and see him."

"Good egg!" said Townsend.

The Nuts had no desire to pursue Jimmy Silver and take vengeance. Jimmy was too hard a nut to crack. They had been waiting for him to leave Rawson's study, and now he had gone, and the coast was clear.

"The rotter's swottin' in the study!" went





Lovell seized the Eton jacket by the shoulder and dragged at it, to drag Jimmy Silver over the back of the chair. The stuffed jacket flew up in his hands, and Lovell, his tug meeting with no resistance, flew backwards. (See page 18.)

on Topham. "He's been swottin' all the afternoon. He means to bag that twenty guineas, the poverty-stricken cad! A gentleman's got no chance against a cad like that! I'm not goin' to swot!"

"Of course you're not!" said Townsend. "It's not to be thought of. But that worm's not goin' to bag the prize if we can stop him! That prize is yours, Toppo, and you're goin' to stand an afternoon at the races in a car if you bag it."

"That's agreed," said Topham. "Like the filthy outsider's cheek to think of baggin' Toppo's prize!" said Peele. "Cheek to be at Rookwood at all, for that matter! Now those beasts have all gone down to the football, we've got a free hand!"

"Better call a chap or two more," said Townsend cautiously. "Rawson's a savage beast when he's roused, and it's beneath our dignity to fight with such a rank outsider. We'll call Mornington and Smythe."

"Good!"

The Nuts lost no time. Mornington of the Fourth and Adolphus Smythe of the Shell were keen enough to join in the ragging of the outsider, having once ascertained that the Fistical Four were safe on the football-ground. The five "Giddy Goats" proceeded to Rawson's study with far from friendly intentions.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.**  
**Ragging Rawson.**

**R**AWSON had laid down his pen. He was tired, and he was feeling the need of fresh air and exercise. but he did not think of leaving his work just then.

Jimmy Silver had wondered why Rawson was so keen on the Greek prize; but he did not know all the scholarship junior's motives.

He knew that Rawson was poor, and that he had a soldier brother a prisoner in Russia, to whom he had to send supplies.

But Rawson had recently received his scholarship allowance, which had enabled him to clear off several small debts to Leggett and some other fellows, and left him some little cash in hand. Of his home, and his home affairs, Jimmy Silver naturally knew nothing. Rawson spoke little about his people, and Jimmy was not a fellow to ask questions.

Rawson passed his hand across his forehead, which was burning. He drew an envelope from his pocket, and took out a letter. He unfolded the letter, which was well thumbed, and had evidently been read many times.

The letter was in his mother's handwriting:

"Dear Tom,—I can't say how glad I was to get the news you gave me in your letter last week about your having a chance of winning a big prize. Your father is better now, but he hasn't been able to work since his accident. If Dick were at home now we could manage, but goodness knows when we shall see poor Dick again. If something turns up to pay the rent we can pull through, but don't think for a moment, dear Tom, of leaving school for our sakes. You could not earn enough for that if you were in work, and you might not even be able to get a job. If you could win that prize you told me of, that would save our home from the landlord. It would be a blow to poor Dick when he comes home from being a prisoner in Russia to find his home sold up to pay the rent. Do your best, my dear boy, but don't overwork yourself. Take care of your health. Don't worry about us at home.—Your loving mother,

"ELIZA RAWSON."

Rawson's tired eyes were dim as he read that letter for the tenth or twelfth time. He could read between the lines the wistful anxiety of the poor woman. His father sick and unable to work, his elder brother a prisoner in Russia, young children that required to be fed, but could not contribute to the small income of the family—that was Rawson's home. Unless he won the Greek prize the clutch of a rapacious landlord would close upon it.

Poor Rawson had offered to leave Rookwood, to throw up his scholarship so hardly won, to go home and work for his parents—a desperate resource which would have ruined his own prospects without affording much help. But if he could only win the Greek prize, he could help his people, he could save them, and without throwing up his Rookwood prospects.

If Jimmy Silver could have seen that letter he would not have wondered that Rawson was working himself to the verge of illness for the sake of the twenty guineas.

That handsome prize was Rawson's lodestar now, or a mirage in the desert, as it might prove. An Old Boy of Rookwood, of the Classical side, had founded that annual prize when the school was first divided into Classical and Modern. It was open only to Classical, as the Modern side did not take Greek, having German instead.

The Classical Old Boy had been desirous of encouraging the old classical studies of his own time, and there was no more effectual way of doing it than by founding a handsome prize for a Greek examination. Rawson blessed the Old Boy, a hundred times when he thought of it.

He hoped to beat Jimmy Silver, though he had his doubts about it.

The door opened, but Rawson did not hear it. It had been left unlocked when Jimmy Silver went out. Townsend's grinning face looked into the study.

"By gad! Here's the beast swottin'!" said Smythe of the Shell, looking in over Townsend's shoulder.

Rawson started and looked up.

The five juniors came into the study. Peele closed the door. They surveyed Rawson with mocking grins. The pallor of his face, the tired look in his eyes, did not touch them in the least. To the foolish, unthinking Nuts, he was simply an outsider who had "wedged" into Rookwood, and, not satisfied with that, had squeezed into the race for the Greek prize which Topham needed so badly.

"Have you come to tea?" asked Rawson quietly. "You're early. But if you want the study, I'll take my work somewhere else!"

"We haven't come to tea yet," smiled Townsend. "We've come to see you. How are you gettin' on with the Greek?"

"Pretty well, I think."

"Think you've got a chance of swindlin' Tophy out of his prize—what!"

"I don't quite see that it's Topham's prize," said Rawson. "Topham has as much chance as anybody, if he works for it!"

"No chance against a swottin' cad who lives and 'breathes in swottin'!" said Topham disdainfully. "I don't mind competin' with Howard and Tracy. They're decent. But a cad who swots mornin' and night to take away a fellow's prize—pah!"

"The fact is, we're not goin' to allow you to do it," said Smythe of the Shell. "The exam's gettin' close now, and it's time you were warned off."

Rawson's lip curled.

"You can't be thinking of interfering with me, I suppose," he said. "You can't prevent me from entering for the exam, as my name's down!"

"That's just what we're goin' to do."

"Then you're a silly fool!" said Rawson coolly.

The great Adolphus turned pink.

"I didn't come here for any of your low cheek," he said. "We've come here to give you a friendly warnin'. This swottin' is goin' too far. You're not goin' to be allowed to bag Tophy's prize!"

"No, by gad!" said Mornington.

"That's the plain English of it," said Townsend. "We're warnin' you off!"

"Let those papers alone!" shouted Rawson, as Mornington began to gather up his exercises. "What are you doing?"

"We're goin' to burn the whole lot," smiled Mornington. "If you're so fond of Greek exercises, you can write the lot out again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rawson came striding round the table, his fists clenched and his eyes blazing.

"Put those paper down, Mornington!"

"Pah!"

"Do you want me to handle you, you fool?" "You'll handle the lot of us!" grinned Smythe. "Dash it all, we're wastin' time! Collar the cad, and make an end of his rubbish!"

The grinning Nuts closed in on Rawson from all sides.

Rawson put up his hands at once. He was as hard as nails, and had made his mark in the Fourth as a fighting-man. He was hopelessly outnumbered, and he was not in his usual form, but his courage was undaunted.

The Nuts did not handle him very easily.

The great Adolphus was sent flying from a drive full on the chin, and he gasped painfully and collapsed on the floor. Peele joined him there, nursing his nose and yelling.

But Mornington and Townsend and Topham had hold of him then, and he went to the floor, with the three clinging to him.

"Gag the hound!" hissed Mornington. "Pummel him!"

Rawson struggled furiously.

Smythe and Peele scrambled up, savage and furious, and hurled themselves into the fray.

With five fellows scrambling over him, punching and pummeling, Rawson had no chance. Breathless and exhausted, he lay panting on the carpet, with Townsend kneeling on his chest, Smythe standing on his legs, and Mornington holding his head. Topham had caught his wrists, and gripped them together.

"Got the cad!" gasped Smythe.

"Pin him down," said Mornington. "I'll jam his head on the floor if he wriggles any more!"

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Rawson.

Crack!

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

Rawson's head came in hard contact with the floor, and he yelled.

"Have some more?" grinned Mornington. "Ow! Ow!"

"Shove those papers into the grate, and set light to 'em, Peele," said Smythe. "Shove in the books, too. May as well make a clean sweep. If he sneaks to Bootles about it, we'll stand together and deny the whole yarn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rawson struggled ineffectually under the weight of the four juniors, while Peele, grinning, gathered up his papers on the table.

"Hallo! What the dickens is this?" exclaimed Peele, picking up Rawson's letter, which lay on the study table, where the scholarship junior had put it down.

"Put that letter down!" shouted Rawson furiously.

"My hat! It's a letter from the cad's slum," said Peele. "I'll read it out to you fellows!"

"Ha, ha! Go it!"

"Put that letter down, you cad!" shrieked Rawson, struggling frantically. "Don't you dare to read it!"

"Go it, Peele! We've got the cad safe!"

Peele, grinning, read out the letter, which was greeted by howls of laughter by the Nuts of Rookwood.

"Well, my hat!" said Smythe, in deep disgust. "A Rookwood chap's people goin' to have the bailiffs in! Rookwood prizes goin' to pay out the broker's-man! By gad, this school is comin' to somethin'! I wonder the cad ain't ashamed to show his face here!"

Rawson groaned. His cup of bitterness was full. He knew that that letter's contents would soon be all over the school. The miserable poverty of his home would become a standing joke among all the fellows, who were too thoughtless or ill-natured to understand the tragedy of it.

The shame and humiliation of it caused the tears to start to his eyes.

"Blubb'n', by gum!" said Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll tell you what we'll do with this letter," said Peele, chucking. "We'll stick it up in the Common-room for all the fellows to read!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The proposition was greeted with a howl of laughter.

"Oh, you cad!" panted Rawson.

"I'll go down and do it now," grinned Peele. "You fellows muck up his rubbish here, and then come down."

"Right-ho, dear boy!"

Peele quitted the study, letter in hand. Rawson made a fierce attempt to throw off his captors; but they held him fast, and pinned him down.

"Not just yet," smiled Smythe. "All Rookwood's goin' to know what a beggarly worm you are, my fine fellow. I should think this would be the finish for you at Rookwood. Bailiffs in, by gad! A Rookwood fellow's people with the bailiffs in for the rent! Oh, gad!"

Townsend, leaving his three precious comrades to hold Rawson, gathered up the exercises which had cost Rawson so many hours of work, and jammed them into the grate.

He set a match to the sheets, and they were soon flaring away. Rawson's Greek grammar and Jimmy Silver's big lexicon followed, and all the other books that were on the table.

There was soon a roaring fire. Rawson, incapable of resistance, watched the scene with dumb misery.

"Now you can let the cad go," said Townsend. "He can have the study to himself. I'm not goin' to feed here with that outsider. We'll lock him in and leave him!"

"Good egg!"

"Let those papers alone!" shouted Rawson, would begin to hit out as soon as he was released, Smythe jerked off his victim's necktie, and coolly tied his hands together with it.

Then the Nuts retreated from the study, laughing loudly—leaving Rawson to struggle to free his hands. Smythe changed the key to the outside of the lock.

"Ta-ta, dear boy!" he said. "You'd really better think twice about fryin' to bag Tophy's prize. I really think it would be better for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Adolphus locked the door on the outside, and the Nuts departed in great glee.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Jimmy Silver Takes a Hand.

JIMMY SILVER & Co. came in from the footer-ground as the dusk was falling. Peace was restored among the Fistical Four. The Co. had magnanimously forgiven the incident of the ink, especially as Jimmy had shown himself at the top of his form on the football-field.

A sound of loud laughter in the junior Common-room drew the chums of the Fourth in that direction.

"Hallo! What's the little joke?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bailiffs, by gad!"

"Nice for Rookwood! The cad ought to be kicked out!"

"What on earth's up?" asked Lovell, puzzled.

"Somethin' rather interestin'," drawled Adolphus Smythe. "There's a document on the wall here concernin' a friend of yours. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, dear boys."

The Fistical Four, much perplexed, made their way through the crowd. There were a dozen fellows present. Some of them looked disapproving, but the majority were members of Adolphus Smythe's select set, and they were laughing and jeering.

Jimmy Silver read the letter that was pinned on the wall. He did not understand at first, taking it for some joke of the Nuts.

It was not till he came to the signature, "Eliza Rawson," at the end that he realised that it was a genuine letter from Rawson's mother.

A blaze came into the eyes of the captain of the Fourth as that understanding dawned upon him at last. He turned round to the grinning Nuts.

"Is that a genuine letter of Rawson's, or one of your rotten jokes?" he asked.

"Genuine enough," grinned Smythe. "The real article, dear boy!"

"If it's a genuine letter, how did it come to be stuck up on the wall here, then? I suppose Rawson didn't put it there?"

"Rawson! Ha, ha! No."

"Then who did?" asked Jimmy, with a dangerous look.

"Oh, somebody must have found it and put it there!" said Peele, and there was a fresh roar of laughter from the Nuts.

"Do you mean to say that you've taken a private letter of Rawson's, and made it public in this way?"

"We don't mean to say anythin'," yawned Adolphus. "What a fellow you are for askin' questions, by gad!"

Jimmy Silver reached up, and unpinned the letter.

"Let that letter alone," shouted Howard, of the Shell, starting forward.

Jimmy shoved him savagely back.

He strode out of the Common-room with the letter in his hand, and none of the Nuts ventured to make an attempt to take it from him. Lovell & Co. followed him.

Jimmy Silver went straight to Rawson's study. He found the key on the outside of the door, and unlocked it.

Rawson was seated there, his whole looks and attitude indicating the deepest dejection. He had freed his hands, but he had been unable to leave the study. He looked up in gloomy silence as Jimmy came in. It looked as if Rawson's spirit had sunk at last under the persecution.

"That letter's yours?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes."

"Did those cads take it from you?"

"Yes."

"I—I'm sorry I read it," said Jimmy. "It was pinned up in the Common-room, and I didn't understand what it was till I'd read it. I'm sorry."

"It doesn't matter," said Rawson heavily. "It'll be all over the school, anyway, now. I was a fool ever to come to Rookwood."

"Buck up!" said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"I'm sorry I've got to know about your private affairs, Rawson!"

"It doesn't matter now."

"Excuse me, things are pretty bad at home, it seems, according to that letter," said Jimmy, hesitatingly. "That's why you've been grinding so hard for the exam?"

Rawson nodded.

"And those cads have been ragging here," said Jimmy. "What's all that muck in the grate?"

"All my work," said Rawson bitterly.

"And my books, and some of yours, too."



You left them here, you know. I couldn't stop them. They were holding me, five of them."

Jimmy Silver's eyes glittered. "They'll make all that good," he said. "They won't. They seem to think I've no right to enter for the prize at all, as Topham's entered," said Rawson wearily. "I'm about fed up. I wish I'd never come to Rookwood."

"Oh, buck up, you know," said Lovell. "Cheer-o!" said Jimmy Silver. "Keep smiling. You're feeling run down from too much swotting, or you wouldn't feel like that. This is going to be set right. They're going to replace the books, and they're going to learn not to repeat it. There were five of them, you say. Give me their names."

Jimmy Silver made a note of the names. "Smythe, Mornington, Townsend, Topham, Peele," he said. "Good! We're going to interview them. You can leave it to us, Rawson. Now, give me a list of the books destroyed."

Rawson smiled faintly, and made out the list. Jimmy Silver put it in his pocket.

"Come on, you chaps!" he said. "Whither bound, O king?" asked Newcome.

"On the war-path, of course. If you feel inclined for a scrap, Rawson, you can come, too. If you don't, you can leave it to us."

"I'll come," said Rawson. "Then follow your Uncle James!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. returned to the Common-room.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Nuts and the Nut-crackers.

TOWNSEND & Co. were in the Common-room, still chuckling over that extremely good joke of pinning up Rawson's letter for the general amusement.

Townsend & Co. were in high feather. They felt that, after the ragging the scholarship fellow had received, he would think twice before going on with his swotting for Topp's prize. If he didn't, the dose could be repeated ad lib. Anyway, the destruction of his papers was a set-back to him. So everything in the garden, so to speak, was lovely, from the point of view of the Nuts, till Jimmy Silver & Co. came in. The looks of the five juniors boded trouble, especially when Jimmy Silver closed the door and locked it.

"We've got a bone to pick with you," said Jimmy, coming to the point directly. "You've been ragging Rawson five to one—"

"No business of yours," said Mornington. "I'm making it my business," said Jimmy calmly. "As captain of the Fourth, and as your kind Uncle James, I cannot allow such proceedings."

"Oh, cease it!" said Smythe. "You've ragged Rawson five to one. Now we're going to rag you one to one," said Jimmy Silver. "The rest of the fellows will see fair-play."

"Faith, and we will!" grinned Flynn. "Pile in, ye cripples, and depend on us!" "I'm going out," said Smythe angrily, and he swung away towards the door.

Jimmy Silver took him by the shoulder. Adolphus rolled over on the hearthrug, and rested his head in the fender.

"You're not going out till this matter's settled, Smythey."

"Yow-ow-oh!"

Adolphus sat up and rubbed his head.

His comrades cast longing glances towards the door. But they did not venture in that direction."

"Here's a list of damage done," said Jimmy, laying the list on the table. "These books have got to be replaced. My Liddell and Scott went with the rest."

"I—I didn't know it was yours," stammered Peele.

"And you didn't care much, I expect. Anyway, it's got to be replaced."

"You shouldn't lend your books to that outsider," growled Topham.

"There's the list," said Jimmy, unheeding. "First you get the ragging—tit for tat, you know—then you replace the books. You understand?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Rats!"

"Gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, looking round, "these cads ragged a fellow five to one. We're going to give them fair-play. I call on all the chaps present to see fair."

"Arrah, and we'll do it intirely!"

"Rely on us!" said Oswald cheerfully.

"I'm your man!" said Jones minor.

"Same here," said Tommy Dodd, the Modern, heartily. "Always ready to help you Classical kids settle your little differences. Go it, Smythey! I can see you're yearning for battle, murder, and sudden death!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As a matter of fact, all Smythe's yearnings were in the direction of the door. But there was no escape for the restive Nut. The hour of reckoning had come!

"Pick your men!" said Jimmy Silver. "Will you choose me as your partner, Smythey?"

"Look here—"

"Do you choose me?"

"No, confound you!" roared Smythe.

"Then I choose you," said Jimmy Silver.

"Wade in, kids, and mop them up! Remember, you're doing strict justice, and don't spare the rod and spoil the Nut!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the avengers piled in without further delay. Jimmy Silver opened the ball by rushing upon Adolphus Smythe, who dodged wildly round the table, amid yells of laughter. Hooker obligingly put out his toe for Adolphus, and the dandy of the Shell stumbled over it and sprawled. The next moment he was in the grasp of Jimmy Silver, and his head was in chancery.

Lovell collared Topham, much to Topham's dismay, and they rocked about in a tight embrace, Topham getting most of the punishment. Raby dealt with Townsend, declining to listen to his frantic statements that he had had enough. Newcome cornered Mornington, who put up a savage fight, but was soon knocked into a cocked hat by the warlike Newcome. Rawson advanced upon Peele, who backed away till the wall prevented him from backing farther, and then put up his hands.

The junior Common-room at Rookwood had often witnessed wild and whirling scenes. But five fights in progress at once was rather a novelty.

A crowd of fellows looked on, laughing, and cheering the combatants. Patrick O'Donovan Flynn, in his enthusiasm, urged Howard and Tracy to go to the rescue of their nutty comrades, promising to deal with both of them himself if they did. But they didn't. Selwyn and Chesney likewise refused pressing invitations from Dick Oswald. Smythe & Co. had no help to expect from their select friends of the Giddy Goats Society.

It was a wild rough-and-tumble fight, distinguished mainly by wild yells from the Nuts and their frantic endeavours to get away.

Adolphus Smythe flung himself at last on the floor, and refused to rise for any consideration whatever. His comrades speedily followed his example, with the exception of Mornington. But Mornington was down, with Newcome sitting on his chest. Mornington scratched and kicked, proceedings which Newcome promptly punished by banging his head on the floor, to an accompaniment of terrific yells from Mornington.

"I give you best!" shrieked Adolphus. "Lemme alone! Yaroooh!"

"Well, they look rather licked," said Jimmy Silver, surveying the field of battle.

"But this isn't only a licking. It's a ragging! They've got to have a lesson about going for a chap five to one, and burning his books and papers."

"Yow! Ow! Help!" howled Peele.

"Oh, by gad! Wow!"

"Raby, scrape some soot out of the chimney, will you?"

"What-bo!"

"Lovell, get all the ink there is in the room!"

"You bet!"

"Newcome, I want all the ashes you can find in the grate."

"To hear is to obey!" grinned Newcome. Up jumped the five Nuts, making a frantic rush for the door. But Jimmy Silver and Rawson were in the way, with their fists up. They hit out right and left, and the unfortunate Nuts retreated, yelling.

"You've got to have your medicine," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "You're not going to try your dodge of mucking up Rawson's chance for the prize again. You're going to have something you'll remember."

"Oh, by gad! Ow!"

"Floor the rotters, and shove their heads over the fender!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Promptly Smythe & Co. were collared and yanked to the fender, resisting furiously. But their resistance did not avail them. They were held down forcibly, with their heads in the fender, and over their heads was duly swamped the soot, the ink, and the ashes. Jimmy Silver stirred that dreadful mixture well in with the shovel, raising a few bumps on the unfortunate heads in the process. But that could not be helped. The wriggling, howling Nuts were released at last, looking decidedly the worse for wear.

Yells of laughter greeted them on all sides as they scrambled up, as black as Christy Minstrels, and gasping for breath.

"Oh, you rotters!" groaned Adolphus. "You've spoiled my clothes! Ow, ow! Yow!"

"I'll go to the Head about this!" yelled Mornington.

"Do. And tell him how you ragged Rawson's study," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "You can't afford to sneak, dear boy!"

"Hang you!"

"There's a list of the books, Smythey."

"Hang you!" hissed Smythe.

"Will you take it, or do you want another licking?"

Adolphus decided to take the list. He shoved it savagely into his pocket.

"Every book on that list has got to be replaced," said Jimmy Silver. "We give you until nine o'clock to bring them to the end study. If they're not brought by that time we'll come round and visit you, and what you've had now will be a joke to what

Out on Tuesday, Feb. 10th.

*The Master Key to the World's Knowledge*

IS YOURS for 1d. per day

Harmsworth's UNIVERSAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, Part 1 of which will be on sale everywhere on Tuesday next, will be the most wonderful work of reference ever published. It will deal simply and clearly with EVERY SUBJECT under the sun. ABSOLUTELY NEW and RIGHT UP TO DATE.

When completed, the "UNIVERSAL" will embody six million words, written by over 400 world famous experts, and will contain no fewer than 14,000 pictures, coloured plates, coloured maps, etc.

Superbly printed and issued in fortnightly parts at 1/3 each, this great STANDARD work will be within easy reach of ALL. No one who wishes to gain the knowledge that brings success in life can afford to be without it.

HARMSWORTH'S  
UNIVERSAL  
ENCYCLOPEDIA

ORDER PART 1 TO-DAY!

you'll get then. Now you can clear off, you dirty animals! Kick 'em out!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The five unhappy Nuts were kicked out of the Common-room, and they fled.

"I fancy," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully, "that you won't be ragged any more after this, Rawson."

Rawson laughed.

"I fancy not," he agreed.

Promptly at nine o'clock Adolphus Smythe, with suppressed fury in his sullen face, appeared in the end study with a bundle of books. The Nuts had made up the list to the last item, lest worse should befall them.

"Thanks awfully, Smythey!" said Jimmy Silver amiably. "That's really nice of you. You're really a most obliging chap, Smythey."

Adolphus did not reply; his feelings were too deep. He stalked away down the passage without a word, leaving the Fistical Four smiling.

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### Jimmy's Sacrifice.

"YOU chaps have got a lot of sense." Thus Jimmy Silver the next day after lessons.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome ought to have looked flattered and pleased at this unexpected tribute from their leader, instead of which they looked surprised. And Lovell remarked:

"What are you driving at, fathead?"

"You've got a lot of sense," repeated Jimmy Silver, with conviction. "I admit that a fellow wouldn't think so to look at you."

"Why, you cheeky ass!"

"But there it is, all the same. You've got a lot of sense, and your Uncle Jimmy gives in. I'm not going to swot to-day. Let's get down to football."

"Well, that's sensible," said Lovell. "You might have said that yesterday afternoon, instead of swamping your old pals with ink."

"Yesterday afternoon isn't this afternoon," said Jimmy Silver oracularly. "Tempora mutantur—"

"Oh, don't! We get enough of that in class!"

"Times change," said Jimmy Silver. "My idea is that I ought to go in for some really hard training for the next few days, and get into ripping form, ready for the St. Jim's match. What do you think?"

"Hurrah!"

And the Fistical Four went down to the football.

Rawson went to his study to swot, without fear now of interruption from the Nuts of Rookwood. Smythe and Townsend & Co. had learned their lesson. Adolphus Smythe had declared that he wouldn't touch the outsider with a barge-pole, and, as a matter of fact his terror of Jimmy Silver made it quite certain that he wouldn't touch poor Rawson, with or without a barge-pole.

Jimmy Silver was in great spirits on Little Side and in great form, and his chums were delighted. There was no doubt that Jimmy's dribbling was a rod in pickle for Tom Merry & Co. when they came over from St. Jim's.

The next day, out of lessons hours, again Jimmy Silver seemed to think of nothing but footer.

On Saturday it was the same.

Jimmy had conceded so much to his chums, and put in so much time at football, that the Co. would have allowed him that Saturday afternoon to swot. They told him so, with the air of fellows making a generous concession.

But Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"No, dear boys," he said. "I've told you that you chaps have got a lot of sense, and I'm going to take your advice. It's more important to beat St. Jim's than bag the Greek prize."

"Well, that's so," said Lovell. "But we want the Greek prize for this study all the same, Jimmy. We've bragged about it already."

"We've agreed that we're going to show Rookwood what this study can do in that line," remarked Raby. "Don't run any risks with the prize, Jimmy. We really want that for this study."

"Well, I like that!" said Jimmy warmly. "Only last Wednesday you were ragging me for swotting, and I had to waste a lot of valuable ink on you to make you sheer off. I'm jolly well not going to swot!"

"Oh, all serene!" said Lovell. "Let's get up a match with the Moderns for practice, THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 55.

and stick to the football. You can swot next week. The match isn't till Thursday."

That afternoon passed very cheerily on the football-ground. Jimmy met Rawson as he came in. Rawson was looking tired but cheery.

"Getting on all right with the giddy Greek?" asked Jimmy.

"I think so. How are you getting on?"

"First rate! I've been dribbling past Tommy Dodd, and knocking him into a cocked hat!"

"I mean with the Greek," said Rawson, with a smile.

"Oh, the Greek!" said Jimmy vaguely. "The fact is, my pals don't like me to swot too much, and I'm rather giving it a miss lately."

"Better not give it too big a miss. It's not easy to make up for lost time in a matter like that, you know."

"All serene, so long as we beat St. Jim's."

On Monday Lovell & Co. expected to see Jimmy Silver really wiring into the Greek. After tea, they decided to go for a walk and leave him the study to himself.

Jimmy Silver rose at once.

"You're not coming, are you?" asked Lovell.

"Why not?"

"Ain't you going to swot?"

"No fear!"

"Look here, you slacker—"

"Don't be unreasonable!" urged Jimmy Silver. "Last Wednesday you called me a slacker for sticking indoors with the Greek."

"Well, there's a limit," said Lovell. "We've arranged to stand a big dormitory feed out of that prize."

"I'm waiting for you," said Jimmy Silver. "Br-r-r-r!" said Lovell.

On Tuesday football reigned supreme in Jimmy Silver's thoughts. He declined to swot for any consideration whatever.

The Co. had been decidedly pleased at first with Jimmy Silver's amiable falling in with their views. But they were getting uneasy now. At this rate Jimmy Silver certainly would never bag the twenty guineas. It was close on the exam, and he never touched a Greek book if he could help it. There was, as Lovell said, a limit—the end study had counted on those guineas.

But Jimmy Silver was obstinate.

Football was the order of the day. And on Wednesday there was a match to be played with Bagshot, and Jimmy could not be spared from the eleven. It was the last chance of swotting, and it was gone.

Jimmy was at the top of his form as a footballer, and he helped to beat Bagshot by a handsome margin. But the Co. couldn't help thinking about the morrow's examination.

"Blest if it doesn't look as if you want to lose the blessed thing, Jimmy!" Lovell said peevishly in the study that evening.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"After all, it would be rather a good thing for poor old Rawson to get it," said Lovell thoughtfully. "According to that letter that was stuck up in the Common-room his people are badly wanting the cash."

"Yes, that's so," said Jimmy. "I shall take that as a consolation if I get licked in the exam."

"Looks to me as if you will get licked, anyway," said Raby. "You're the only chap who could beat Rawson, and you're simply chucking it up the way you're going on!"

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a sudden start as a new idea came into his mind. He fixed his eyes on Jimmy Silver.

"You frabjous ass!" he said deliberately.

"Hallo! What's biting you now?" demanded Jimmy.

"You silly duffer!"

"What the dickens—"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Lovell.

And the subject dropped.

The next day came the famous exam. The candidates went into the library in the morning, while the rest of the school was at lessons. The papers were set for them there. Jimmy Silver, Tom Rawson, Topham, Howard, Tracy, Flynn, Oswald, and one or two more competing.

Morning lessons were over before the exam finished. Lovell & Co. waited for their leader to come out. Jimmy Silver was released at last, and he joined his chums, smiling.

"Well, how has it gone?" asked Raby.

"Better ask Bootles," smiled Jimmy Silver.

"He's got the papers. Result announced on Friday."

"Do you think you had any luck, fathead?" "You never can tell, you know. Let's get out."

"DONE!"

"MY hat! That's done it!" Figgins & Co. of the New House at St. Jim's, stood gazing anxiously towards the school porter's lodge. They had been kicking a football about the quad, and a particularly hefty kick by Figgins had sent it hurtling into Taggles' garden, breaking off one of his prized rose-trees.

They stood, with bated breath, waiting for Taggles to come bounding from his lodge roaring with anger. They had not more than five seconds to wait.

"Wot I sez is this 'ere!" shouted the irate school porter, dashing out into the quad. "Which I reckons all boys should be drowned at birth! One o' my best rose-trees gorn to glory, and—"

"Very sorry, Taggles, old son!" exclaimed Figgins, stepping forward. "It was quite an accident!"

"Haccident!" snorted Taggles. "I'll give you haccident if I gets 'old on yer! I'll look after the football for yer now, and yer needn't come and ask me for it, 'cos yer won't get it!"

With that parting shot, Taggles re-entered his lodge and slammed the door.

"The old rotter!" exclaimed Kerr. "That's finished the game, anyway!"

"Hard luck!" cried Tom Merry, who, with Monty Lowther and Manners, had been a witness of what had occurred.

"We'll get it back when he goes out!" declared Figgins.

Tom Merry & Co. strolled away, chuckling, towards the School House.

"I've got a lovely weeze for dishing those New House bouncers!" exclaimed Monty Lowther suddenly, when he and his chums had reached Tom Merry's study.

Tom Merry and Manners looked inquiringly at Lowther, but, without further explanation, he hastened from the room and quickly disappeared down the corridor.

Five minutes later Monty Lowther returned, carrying under his arm an old tunic of the school porter's.

"What the merry dickens—" began Manners, when Lowther held up a warning finger.

"Steady on!" he said. "Gather round, my boys, and I'll tell you the weeze!"

Tom Merry and Manners drew nearer, and for two or three minutes Lowther talked to them in an excited undertone. Several times they grinned widely, and when he had finished they burst into a roar of laughter.

After afternoon classes Figgins & Co. hurried down to the quad to keep an eye on Taggles' lodge. They had not been watching many minutes, when the portly figure of the school porter was seen emerging from round the corner of the house.

Taggles disappeared through the school gates to the road.

"Now for it!" exclaimed Figgins.

And he commenced to run towards the lodge, closely followed by Kerr and Fatty Wynn.

Figgins turned the knob of the door, and the three darted into the little sitting-room, where, they felt sure, they would see the football.

Sure enough, it was on the sideboard, and Figgins was about to seize it, when there broke out a terrific roar from Fatty Wynn.

"Yaroooogh!"

"You young rips! Burgle my 'ouse, eh?"

Taggles was swinging his leather belt from right to left, and every time it swung round it caught one or other of the three chums.

"We—we thought you were out!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Did yer? Well, I hain't!"

When Figgins & Co. had recovered from their surprise, they made a dart for the door and made their escape.

Tom Merry and Manners were just outside, and they roared with laughter as the New House juniors emerged. Then at that moment Monty Lowther entered the gates with a bundle under his arm, which looked suspiciously like one of Taggles' old coats rolled up.

Then it dawned upon Kerr. Lowther was an absolute artist at impersonation, and it was he that they had seen pass out of the gates.

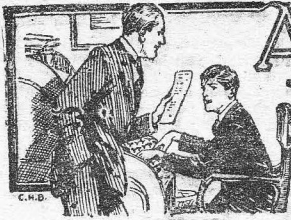
"You spoofing rotters!" shouted Kerr.

Tom Merry & Co. hurried into the School House, leaving Figgins & Co. gasping with rage and astonishment.

"Done!" was Figgins' only remark.

(Continued on page 20.)





# A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

## "BART'S"

I have been asked to call the attention of my friends to the need of funds of the great London hospital, the full name of which is St. Bartholomew's. No institution is better worth supporting than a hospital. Bart's has a history which is so filled with good deeds and the alleviation of suffering that it is not necessary to urge the matter. If the chance of being any use in the matter is presented to my chums I know they will be there.

## WHAT IS LONDON LIKE?

That was the question recently addressed to the Editor of the Companion Papers. It is some query! Still, as the correspondent lived in Australia it was quite reasonable. I did my best to give her a lightning sketch of just a few of the outstanding features of the mighty metropolis, but that was all I could do. London is so big that the majority of Londoners know scarcely anything about it. They have no time to go round with a guide-book and look at the sights. Perhaps the best view of London is from the river below the Tower Bridge. You see a shining wilderness of spires and monuments, and get a sort of grasp of the little place. Or there is another fine vista if you come in from the west and go through Kensington with the parks on the left, and the effect of a town which is out to amuse itself and to look its best.

## FOR DANCERS ONLY.

I suppose this winter has seen more variety in the costumes sported at fancy-dress "hops" than ever before. I was reminded the other day of one venturesome chap who thought he would be original. Here is his experience:

There was a young man of Bengal,  
Who went to a fancy-dress ball.  
He said "I will risk it,  
And go as a biscuit."  
But he was eaten by dogs in the hall.

## THE TOFF.

A chum writes from Orange, South Africa, asking me to go ahead at once with reprints of all the old favourite stories, especially dealing with Tabot, and the old yarns about the Toff and the Bounder before Vernon-Smith changed so much. I would like to oblige, but reprints are difficult matters. Most of my supporters want new tales; and, though I will cede place to no one in my admiration for the earlier narratives, I feel that the majority are right in this instance.

## "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

It is as suitable to speak of Tom Merry and his ever famous Weekly—not Weakly, as referred to in the "Holiday Annual"—in the PENNY POPULAR as anywhere else. A correspondent at Irvine writes:

"I ask a favour; will you please start 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' the same as the 'Greyfriars Herald'? All my chums have asked me to write about it."

I am afraid the answer will have to be in the negative for the present, at any rate. Personally, I should like to see the paper in question brought forward again, but there are still some few difficulties in the road. Tom Merry's paper was simply a cheery little leaflet supplement to the "Gem," and it never appeared as a fully-fledged periodical in the same style as the "Greyfriars Herald."

That it deserves so to appear I know well. The deep impression it left is proof enough of its excellence and is a feather in the cap of Tom Merry. I am really much obliged to my Irvine chum who sent me such a good

reminder of the old days. I thank him for his loyalty to the Companion Papers, and I must congratulate him on his memory.

## THAT PIT LAD.

Some time since there was a request sent in from a worker in the mines for correspondence. He seemed to fancy that he had been overlooked. That was not so at all. The tone of the following letter shows how ready others are to respond to the appeal:

"40, Carlton Vale, Maida Vale,  
London, N.W. 6.

"Dear Sir.—Will you please say that, to disprove the illusion that 'Pit Lad' and his friends are not good enough—and also to show that I should enjoy corresponding with anybody so interesting—I should be jolly pleased if he would write to me? Thanking you, yours sincerely,  
DICK ISAACS."

I hope the reader up North will see this cheery invitation. He was hopelessly out of it in his surmise.

## RAPS OVER THE KNUCKLES FOR ARTISTS.

With reference to a recent story, a friend writes to point out that the artist was at fault. The heroine was described as having long golden hair.

"On looking at the illustrations I find," says my correspondent, "that her appearance is nothing to rave about, while her hair is bobbed."

There you are! But, after all, one never knows. It may not have been the artist at all. Fashions change so rapidly. Perhaps we should not blame either the girl or the artist, for both do their best.

At one moment long golden tresses are quite the thing, while half an hour afterwards trim bobbing, the trouble-saving fashion, may have come in. If the artist gets confused I, for one, am not going to blame him. For aught we know to the contrary, he may have received later intelligence than the author himself on the point, and, naturally, he does what he can to keep level with events.

## SCOTLAND FOR EVER!

"You might pay a little more attention to your Scottish readers," writes a chum from Glasgow. "You very seldom publish a letter received from a Scottish reader. The letters published are, in nine cases out of ten, from English readers. You might remember that you receive a lot of support from us Scots, considering the paper is an English one."

I am not in complete agreement with this note, though not as regards the friendly support I get north of the Tweed. Far from it. I am proud of the popularity of the Companion Papers in Caledonia stern and wild. But I do not think it is quite fair to say that I have disregarded letters from Scottish friends. If such has been the case, it is simply one of those purely accidental affairs which cannot be deemed important.

And, besides all that, there is the British view. There is nothing separate about Scotland except as concerns some of those sterling qualities which provide object lessons for us all. I hope I shall hear again from this Glasgow chum.

## HAPPY JAPAN.

Miss Ruby Benson, who sends me the nicest possible letter, would like to see a new Jap at Greyfriars. You see what I mean. She seems to think the land of the Rising Sun has been neglected. Of course, we may have many fellows from "furrin parts" in

the yarns, but I certainly do not recall a Jap. I am sure if he could be persuaded to come and take up his quarters at one of the schools, the representative from the Mikado country would be a first-rate Jap.

You have only to look at the Japanese students to be seen in London and other great cities to realise that much. Real keen fellows they are, and generally studying deeply. In one of the libraries there is a "charming Japanese boy," as my correspondent dubs Yakama. I shall think the matter over. Naturally, it is a different business altogether to introducing a Chinese. Popular superstitions about the Flowery Empire or Republic still cling; but we all know what modern Japan has done, is doing, and will do, and of the part its gallant soldiers and sailors played in the war against oppression.

## SCHOOL STORIES.

I am glad to say I am getting the cheeriest sort of messages from my chums about the yarns in the PENNY POPULAR. The "P. P." remains just what it has always been—something special; one of the Companion Papers, and yet giving tales week by week of a different colour, as it were, to those published in the "Magnet" and "Gem."

You see the various characters often enough from a distinctly novel point of view, and this is what I want. I expect myriads of readers of the "Popular" also keep up their close association with the other papers, but they are wise to stand by this paper. It started out as something out of the way, and at the same time as an ally of its contemporaries, and its position remains unassailed.

## THE BEST STORY.

No, this is not a competition. I was merely thinking of what the school story means, how big it looms in the world, and of the lessons it teaches. How many millions of men who are out in the great world fighting the good fight here at home and overseas look back in the odd old moments of life to the familiar school they have known—the shadows in the quad; the white mice kept in the desk (it was so quaint to feel the little beggars running over your hand!); the happy half-holidays; the shouts from the cricket-field, those summer days when the very scent of the turf was good, and the sun came up so fine and early in the long days before the vac!

All life is there, is it not? You can always feel that school is irksome at times, that masters do not, perhaps, take enough individual interest in you—though they do! But even the schoolboy grouser knows right well that the days are grand ones, whether they are being passed at a school in town or at one of the big establishments far away in the heart of the country where there is a shining river to fish in, and with friendships sometimes among the masters who are keen on science and natural history.

It is always the thought of school days that lives. You make your chums in the class-room and on the playground. And what would life be without friends? It is for just this reason, as for many another, that the PENNY POPULAR and its Companion Papers stand so high. It brings the school atmosphere back again with a rush to the oldest, and it amuses the youngster, while also helping to show him a crowd of things he did not know before.

## A FAMOUS PICTURE.

It will be well worth while for all my friends to take advantage of the offer to be found in another page. Here is a chance of obtaining a fine work of art which will be a splendid reminder of the heroism of Jack Cornwell, the brave fellow whose name is known wherever our language is spoken. I should like you to have this picture. The competition is an easy one, and the prize awarded is certainly not a thing to be missed.

Your Editor

**A HELPING HAND.**

(Continued from page 18.)

After lessons on Friday quite an army gathered to see Mr. Bootles pin up the list on the board.

The Form-master came out of his study, apparently oblivious to the eagerness round him. The paper went up, and all eyes were glued on it.

Then there was a shout:

"Rawson!"

"Rawson's top!"

Poor Rawson, his heart beating hard between hope and fear, was hanging back behind the crowd, his face pale and worn. But the shouts which announced his success brightened him up wonderfully. Jimmy Silver dragged him forward.

"Feast your eyes on it, Rawson!"

"I congratulate you, Rawson!" said Mr. Bootles. "Your paper was—er—excellent—excellent!"

"Thank you, sir!" faltered Rawson.

That day Rawson of the Fourth wrote cheering news to his home. In the end study the Co. took Jimmy Silver severely to task. "You're a fathead, you know, Jimmy!" said Lovell. "And I know now why you hardly looked at Greek for a week, you dummy! You're a silly ass, and a duffer, and a frabjous dummy, and a burbling jabberwock, and—and a brick!"

Jimmy Silver grinned. The Co. understood at last; but Rawson never had the least suspicion of how Jimmy Silver, in his own way, gave him A Helping Hand!

THE END.

**Boys, be Your Own Printers and make extra pocket-money by using THE PETIT "PLEX" DUPLICATOR.**



Makes pleasing numerous copies of NOTE-PAPER HEADINGS, BUSINESS CARDS, SPORTS FIXTURE CARDS, SCORING CARDS, PLANS, SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS, DRAWINGS, MAPS, MUSIC, SHORT-HAND, PROGRAMMES, NOTICES, etc., in a variety of pretty colours. Send for one TO-DAY. Price 6/6 complete with all supplies. Foreign orders, 1/6 extra.—

**B. PODMORE & Co., Desk P.P., Southport.**  
And at 67-69, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.

**DO YOU LACK SELF-CONFIDENCE?** Do you suffer from nervous indigestion, constipation, lack of energy, or will power? You can acquire strong nerves, which will give you absolute self-confidence, if you use the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment. Used by Vice-Admiral to Seaman, Colonel to Private, D.O.C.'s, M.C.'s, M.M.'s, and D.C.M.'s. Merely send 3 penny stamps for particulars.—**GOLDFRY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 527, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4.**

**BOXING GLOVES 7/6**

per set of four (with lace-up palm, 12/6), Tan Caps, Best, 15/6. Footballs, match size, 12/6 and 14/6. Money returned if not satisfied. Postage 6d. on all.—**TOM CARPENTER, 69, Morecambe Street, Walworth, S.E. 17.**

**80 MAGIC TRICKS**, Illusions, etc., with Illustrations and Instructions. The lot post free, 1/-.—**T. W. HARRISON, 239, Pentonville Road, London, N.1.**

**PHOTO POSTCARDS**, 1/8 doz., 12 by 10 ENLARGEMENTS, 8d. Also CHEAP PHOTO MATERIAL, CATALOGUE AND SAMPLES FREE. **HACKETT'S, JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**

**"SMOKE-PAINTING!"** Latest Novelty. Provides endless enjoyment. Instructions, unique, fascinating, simple. Something New, Something Different! Instruction Book only ONE SHILLING.—**HAROLD W. FISHER, Publisher, 24, Crossley Terrace, Halifax.**

**5/- 10/- or 20/- monthly.**

Overcoats, Boots, Shoes, Suits, Raincoats, Trench Coats, Costumes, and Winter Coats. Veracity Pocket and Wrist Watches. Rings, Jewellery, &c., on easy terms. 30/- worth 5/- monthly; 60/- worth 10/- monthly; &c. **CATALOGUE FREE.** Foreign applications invited.

**MASTERS, Ltd., 6, Hope Stores, RYE. Estd. 1869.**



**SHORT MEN AND WOMEN**

are often ignored and looked down upon. Tall people receive favourable consideration and attention in every walk of life. By my easy, scientific, and safe method you can grow several inches taller. Many people have added 1in. to 4in. to their height by My System. Write at once for FREE particulars, mentioning Penny Popular.

Address: Inquiry "N" Dept., 51, Church Street, South Shore, Blackpool.

**CUT THIS OUT**

"Penny Popular." **PEN COUPON** Value 2d.

Send this coupon with P.O. for only 5/- direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet St., London, E.C.4. In return you will receive (post free) a splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6. If you save 12 further coupons, each will count as 2d. off the price, so you may send 13 coupons and only 3/-. Say whether you want a fine, medium, or broad nib. This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the PENNY POPULAR readers. (Foreign postage extra.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. **Special Safety Model, 2/- extra.**

Printed and published every Friday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Limited, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Subscription rates: Inland, 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Abroad (except South Africa and Australasia), 8s. 10d. per annum; 4s. 5d. for six months. Sole agents for South Africa: The Central News Agency, Ltd. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for Canada, The Imperial News Co., Ltd. Saturday, February 7th, 1936.

**DUTTON'S 24 HOUR**

DUTTON'S SHORTHAND has only 8 rules and 28 characters. Complete theory learned in 24 hours. Practice quickly gives high speeds. Send 2 stamps for illustrated booklet containing specimen lessons to **DUTTON'S COLLEGE** (Desk 203), **SKEGNESS**, London Branch: 62 and 63, Great Russell Street, W.C.1. Manchester Branch: 5, 8, 9, Victoria Buildings, St. Mary's Gate.

**SHORTHAND**

**"ARE YOU SHORT?"**

If so, let the Girvan System help you to increase your height. Mr. Briggs reports an increase of 3 inches; Driver E. P. 3 inches; Mr. Lindolf 4 inches; Miss Davies 3 inches; Mr. Hatton 3 inches; Mr. Ketley 4 inches; Miss Leedell 4 inches. This system requires only ten minutes morning and evening, and greatly improves the health, physique, and carriage. No appliance or drugs. Send 3 penny stamps for further particulars and £100 Guarantee to Enquiry Dept. A.M.P., 17, Strand Green Road, London, N.4.



**FREE BOOK OF BARGAINS POST FREE**

GET BOOK. Free Catalogue Post Free. Big Bargains from 6d. All Post Free. Watches (Big Reductions), Jewellery, Useful Goods, Novelties, Toys, etc. etc. Big Bargains in all Depts. Write To-Day! Don't Miss This!

**PAIN'S PRESENTS HOUSE, Dept 21, HASTINGS.**

**GOLD SHELL** **GOT BOOK? II** **POCKET BOOK**

**CIT LOOK NOW.** **NOT GET IT NOW.**

**"RECO" MODEL AEROPLANES ARE THE BEST.**

Send 3/6 for Sample Model. Flies 200 yards. Fully Illustrated Catalogue of Aeroplanes and Parts, 1/-. Post Free. "RECO," 110, Old Street, London, E.C.1.

**NERVOUSNESS CURED COMPLETELY.**

If you are nervous in company, if you redden up when spoken to by strangers or superiors, if your bashfulness is causing you to miss golden opportunities in social or business life, here is a message of hope, a guarantee of cure complete and permanent. By My System of Treatment you can quite certainly be cured in one week and in your own home. My System gives you perfect nerve control and self-confidence. If you suffer from Nervousness, Timidity, or Heart Weakness, write now for full particulars of My System of Private Home Treatment. Sent FREE privately if you mention PENNY POPULAR.

Address, Specialist, 12, All Saints Road, St. Anne's-on-Sea.

**50 FOREIGN STAMPS, 6d.**  
Rhodesia, Alexandria, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Gold Coast, etc. 200 Assorted Stamps 6d. 20 Unused Stamps, 8d. 1,000 best mounts, 6d.—Turner, 129, Vile St., Walworth.

**VENTRILLOQUISM.** Learn this laughable and wonderful art. Failure impossible with our book of easy instructions and amusing dialogues; also 50 Magic Card Tricks (with instructions). Lot 1/- P.O. (post free)—**IDEAL PUBLISHING CO., Clevedon.**

**BLUSHING.** This miserable complaint permanently cured, either sex. Simple Home Treatment. Particulars free. Enclose stamp postage.—**MR. J. AMBROSE HILL (Specialist), 50, Royal Arcade, Weston-super-Mare.** (Testimonials daily.)

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS BE SURE AND MENTION THIS PAPER.