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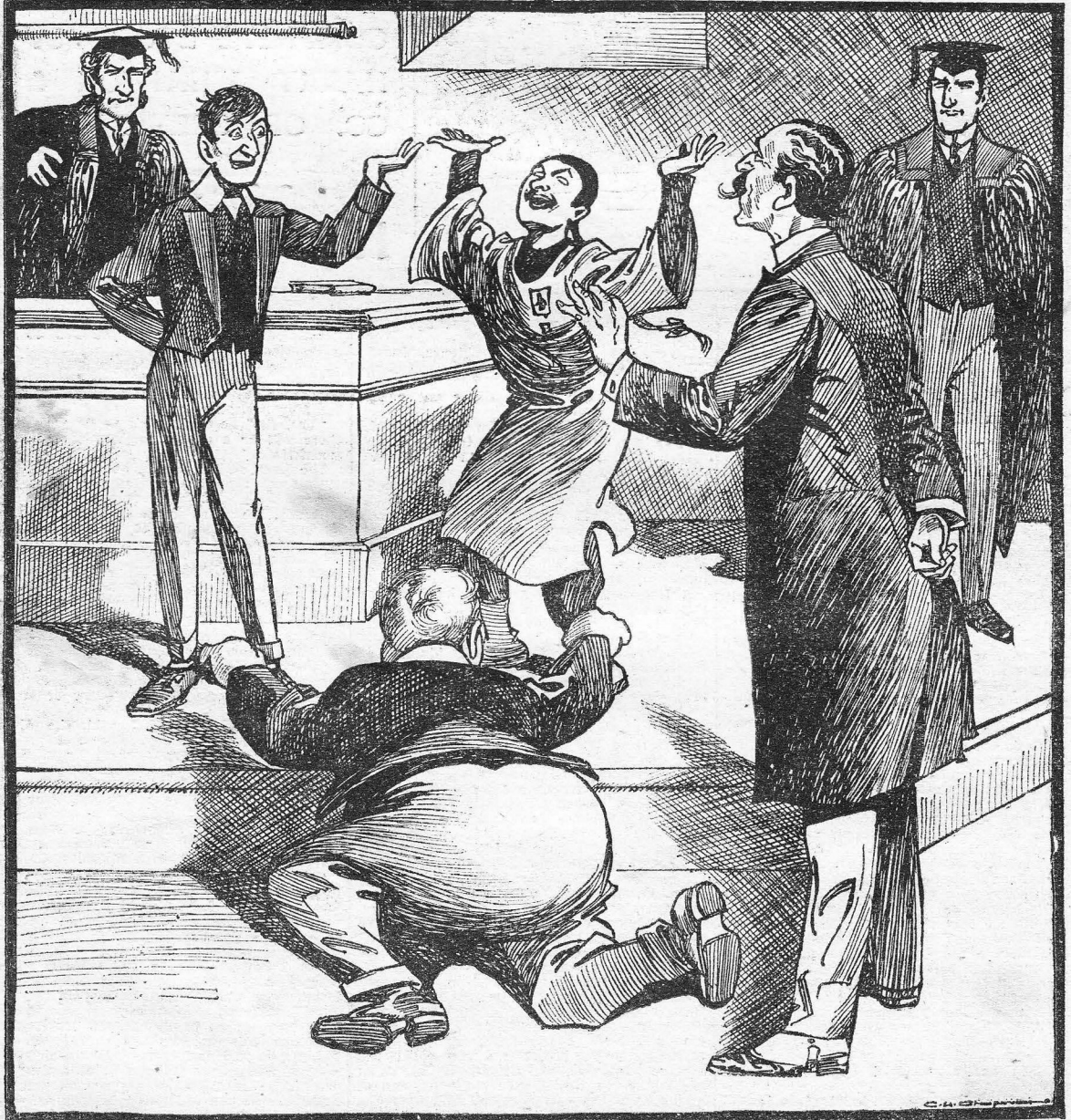
The
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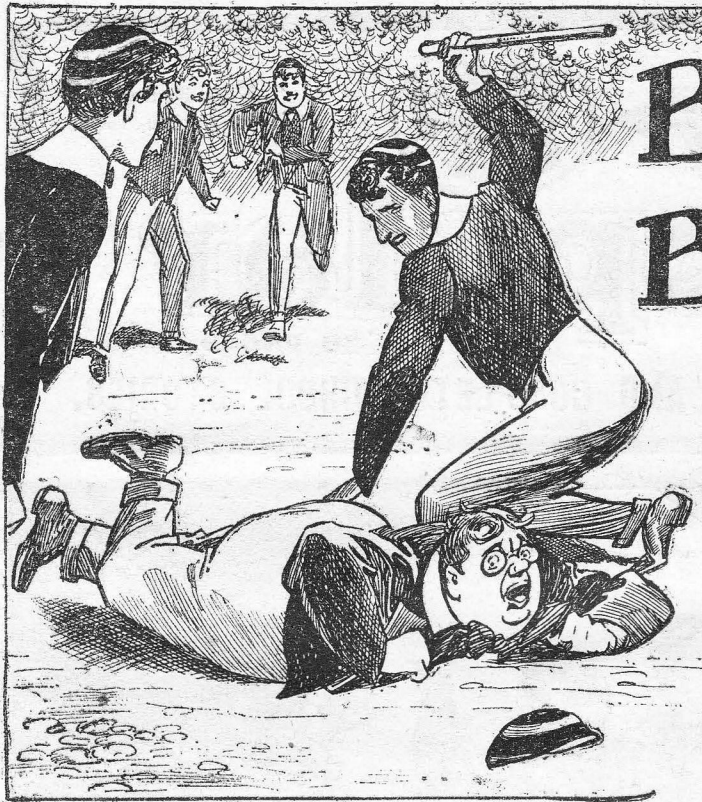
20 PAGES.

GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



CURIOUS ANTICS OF THE MESMERISED JUNIORS!

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



Bunter and the Bonesetter!

A MAGNIFICENT LONG
COMPLETE STORY OF
HARRY WHARTON &
CO. OF GREYFRIARS.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Head Makes an Arrangement.

BULL!" Mr. Quelch's voice rapped out like a pistol-shot.

"Sir?"

"Will you kindly cease wriggling like a worm?"

"Yes, sir."

Johnny Bull took out his handkerchief, and mopped his brow. Seldom had the Remove at Greyfriars School known their Form-master to be in such a curiously contrary mood.

"Old Quelch's got a liver this morning!" whispered Bob Cherry to Hurree Singh, his near neighbour and fellow member of the Famous Five.

"The curryfulness of the sahib's liver is terrific!" agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"It isn't curry, Inky; it comes from drinking so much of that rotten coffee we get at breakfast!"

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Was it you I heard making that mumblyng noise?"

"I hope not, sir!"

"Well, don't do it again!"

The surprise of the Removites at the extraordinary leniency of their Form-master was revealed in a general lifting of heads. Bob Cherry sank into his seat with the same feeling of relief as was evidenced by Johnny Bull. The time was five minutes to noon on Monday morning, and he did not want to start with a heavy imposition, especially as he had navigated the most trying hours of the week with a quite extraordinary success.

The buzzing noise which often accompanied the juniors' efforts to work increased slightly until the sound of the clock-tower chimes created a satisfied shuffling as papers were put away and pens laid down.

To their surprise Mr. Quelch made no move towards dismissing them. Instead, he looked up from his desk with evident annoyance.

"Why are you ceasing work?" he demanded.

"No permission to do so has been given yet, as far as I am aware!"

"Old bear!" muttered Skinner, with a scowl.

"Say, how long are we to vegetate here?"

said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, carefully resting his face in his hand. "I guess I sha'n't have much time to hike down

to the post-office to get that package I got word about."

"Were you speaking to Skinner, Fish?" asked Mr. Quelch, glaring over the top of his desk.

"I guess I was only handing out a few remarks about—"

"In this room I'll do all the 'handing out,' as you say in your curious tongue, Fish!" rasped the Form-master. "Two hundred lines!"

"Gee, the spiteful galoot!" hissed Fisher T. Fish, under his breath, with an expression on his face that almost matched the scowl that Skinner habitually wore.

"You don't seem satisfied, Fish," remarked Mr. Quelch, "so I'll add another hundred lines to your imposition."

A few smothered sniggers broke from the rest of the Remove, but they died away suddenly as the door opened.

"The Head!"

Mr. Quelch hurriedly rose from his desk as the headmaster strode toward him.

"I am a little behind time; I'm afraid I've kept your Form waiting!"

"Hallo! What's the rumpus?" asked Frank Nugent of Harry Wharton. "Has somebody been getting the school into trouble?"

"I don't think so," replied Wharton. "Dr. Locke isn't exhibiting any of the symptoms which usually precede a full-sized strafe."

The Head opened a letter he held, leaned his hand upon the Form-master's desk, and faced the Remove.

"I am sorry I have had to keep you beyond your routine time, boys," he said, "but I have been busy this morning, and I asked your Form-master to detain you a few moments. The reason is that I have an announcement to make which I am happy to think will afford you all great satisfaction."

Dr. Locke paused, cleared his throat, and readjusted his spectacles.

"A short time ago," he went on, "I learned that no less a personage than Professor Bartolomew Bomba, the well-known Portuguese bonesetter, is visiting Courtfield to give a lecture. I seized the opportunity of extending to the professor a very cordial invitation to visit Greyfriars, if he could possibly spare the time, for the purpose of giving us a demonstration and talk upon the subject of hypnotism—a science which he uses largely in his work. I have in my hand Professor Bomba's reply, in which he very

kindly states that he can arrange to come next Saturday evening. Do you wish to ask a question, Bunter?"

The Owl of the Remove, who was squirming with suppressed excitement, raised his ponderous bulk into something approaching a standing position.

"Yes, sir," he said. "Please do you think there will be a chance for any of us to be mesmerised?"

The Head smiled tolerantly.

"I trust that the professor will bring a subject with him," he replied; "but if he does not, I have no doubt that there will be an opportunity granted to some member of the audience."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Bunter sank into his seat.

"Ow-yow! Yaroo!"

Dr. Locke and the Form-master swung swiftly round towards the fat junior.

"What is the matter, Bunter?" cried Mr. Quelch. "How dare you call out like that?"

"I—er—I think something stung me, sir!" groaned Bunter, tenderly feeling behind him.

"It—it must have been a wasp, or something."

"I think, Mr. Quelch," said the Head severely, "you will find the solution of Bunter's extraordinary conduct by allowing your gaze to rest upon Skinner!"

As by magic, the gloating smile of the end of the Remove, as he gently withdrew the drawing-pin from behind Bunter, was erased.

"I will interview you after the class has been dismissed, Skinner," remarked Mr. Quelch, his face pale with anger.

"It has come to my knowledge," said Dr. Locke, continuing his interrupted discourse, "that several boys in the school have acquired text-books on hypnotism, and have been studying the subject. It is my duty, in loco parentis, to warn you, as I have the other Forms this morning, that it is a dangerous practice to thus dabble unlearnedly in such a subject. Hypnotism, you must know, can be prolific of much evil, and it is only in the hands of such surgeons as Professor Bartolomew Bomba that we can glimpse its real usefulness. Although attendance at the lecture will not be compulsory, I confidently anticipate seeing you all present, and feel sure you will give this great scientist a very hearty reception for his kindness in coming. Thank you, Mr. Quelch!"

The Head gave a pleasant nod to the Re-

move, and rustled majestically from the Form-room.

Five minutes later the Removites were mingling among the crowd in the quadrangle. Arm-in-arm, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent passed on towards the playing-fields, where some energetic Third-Formers were aimlessly punting a football.

"What on earth did that fat chump, Bunter, want to chime in with his silly questions for?" asked Nugent.

"Why, didn't you catch on after what Dr. Locke said about silly asses dabbling in hypnotism?" replied Harry Wharton. "Bunter's one of 'em!"

Frank Nugent gave a low whistle. "Oh, that's it, is it?" said he. "Funny how the Head came to spot it!"

"He doesn't miss much. It's only recently that Bunter's taken to it again. Alonzo Todd lent him a book called the 'Power of the Eye.'"

"I suppose the fat chump imagines that if he learns how to put chaps to sleep, he'll be able to induce them to lend him advances on the strength of that postal-order that never arrives, or else stand him tuck while under the 'fluence.'"

"Ha, ha, ha! Who knows he might make quite a decent mesmerist? The mere sight of him makes me feel tired!"

A cheery shout from behind them caused the two chums of Study No. 1 to swing round. Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh were strolling along a short distance in the rear.

"You two must have found a jolly interesting topic," remarked Bob Cherry; "we yelled enough times!"

"We thought it was those Third Form kids over by the goal making such a row," said Wharton. "We were only discussing Bunter."

"I, for one, would have been gladly pleased to have seen the head-teacher sahib descend hurriedly upon the questionable Bunter for his interruptiveness!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Bunter's getting worse!" said Bob Cherry. "Look at him over there now, joking with that rotter, Skinner."

At that moment Skinner made off, and Billy Bunter descended gleefully upon Harry Wharton & Co.

"I say, you fellows!" he cried.

"Buzz off, Billy!"

"Fade away!"

"Vamoose!"

"Oh, really, you chaps—"

The Famous Five strolled on all unheedingly.

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly through his big round spectacles and ambled after the juniors.

"I say!" he cried. "You heard what old Locke said about Bomba's kindness in coming to lecture here? Well, it's all rot! It isn't kindness that's bringing the chap here at all!"

"Then what's the answer?" said Frank Nugent, turning. "The train?"

"No; there's no catch really, you chaps!" expostulated Bunter. "I've discovered something!"

"Oh, walk round the fat idiot and assist him with your boot, Johnny!" growled Wharton.

"Now, porpoise, out with it!" ordered Bob Cherry.

"Ow—groogh! Take your hand off my neck, you beast!" yelled Bunter. "If my spectacles fall down and break they'll cost you twelve-and-a-tanner!"

"Did I hear you say 'Beast'?"

"No. Yow-wow! Really, Cherry, I didn't! Lemme go, and I'll tell you something!"

"All right; now, fire away!"

"Well, in that letter from the professor to old Locke," began Billy Bunter, straightening his collar, "the hypnotist chap said he'd come down here if he was paid three quids. So you can bet old Locke stumped up out of his own pocket."

"How did you learn this, Billy?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"I guessed part of it," replied Bunter. "but I know for certain about the three quids because I saw it in the letter."

"How did you see it?"

"Why, you see, old Locke dropped the letter outside the door of the Remove and I picked it up and—"

"Read it?"

Bunter quite failed to note the dangerous glint in the eyes of Bob Cherry who asked the question.

"Of course!" he said. "You see—"

But the hands of the Famous Five were

upon the ponderous person of Billy Bunter, and he was borne to the ground.

"Now give me that letter, Billy!"

As he made the request Harry Wharton took a seat on the fat junior's head.

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r!" was Bunter's unintelligible remark.

Bob Cherry found a place on the fat Owl's chest and tapped his heels against the sides of the victim.

"What have you done with the letter, Billy?"

"I—oo—gave it—oo—to Skinner! He's—oo—going to give it back! Oo—groo! Now gerroff me chest, you rotters!"

"William George Bunter," said Wharton solemnly, "I've come to the conclusion that you are becoming tarred with the same brush as Skinner. What shall we do to him, you fellows?"

"If the esteemed head-teacher sahib knew of the extreme dishonourableness of accused," murmured Hurree Singh, "the chastisement with the worthy cane would be terrific. Could we not painfully wield the esteemed stick on accused with much strokefulness?"

"It would serve the fat little rotter right, Inky!" said Harry Wharton. "But we're no stick!"

The loud ringing of a bicycle bell caused the juniors to glance up: Passing by on the road that bordered the playing-fields was Fisher T. Fish, peddling furiously. Suddenly a small pump clattered from the quickly-moving machine.

"Hi, Fishy, you've dropped something!" called Frank Nugent.

As the American junior took no notice Johnny Bull ran across and retrieved the pump.

"An idea, my worthy chums!" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur. "If we cannot hurtfully chastise the accused owing to the absence of an esteemed cane, why not stickfully make use of the honourable pump?"

"Oh, please, Hurree—" began Bunter.

"We will," said Harry Wharton grimly. "A good idea of yours, Inky! William George Bunter, you have been found guilty of the caddish trick of reading someone else's correspondence, and you are sentenced to two strokes with the honourable pump from each member of the Court here present!"

"I say, Wharton, old chap—"

"Turn him over, you fellows!"

"Wow-ow! You'll break my spectacles, and then—"

"Hold him while I have first whack!"

Harry Wharton drew up his coat sleeves and grasped the pump.

"Lemme alone, you cads! I—Ow!"

Again Wharton raised the bicycle pump, and once more it descended on the unfortunate Bunter with a sharp thud.

"Yow-ow! Groogh! You beasts!"

"Your turn, Inky!"

As the Nabob of Bhanipur stepped forward with a smile on his dusky face a number of Third-Formers deserted their football and came running across to enjoy the spectacle of the squirming Bunter.

Whack!

"Ow! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha! What's the matter, Bunter?"

"Oh, the beasts, the—"

Whack!

"Ooooh!"

When each of the juniors had had his fair share in the ceremony, Billy Bunter was released.

"Now then, buzz off, Billy, and behave like a little gent in future!"

Bunter needed no second bidding. He recovered his spectacles from the ground, and affectionately caressing his wounded anatomy with one hand, hastening away in the direction of the school as fast as his fat legs would carry him.

Only once at a safe distance did he halt, and that was for the purpose of delivering but one word:

"Beasts!"

"Sleep! Sleep! Sweet, sweet sleep!" he

murmured, waving one fat hand before him. "You are going to sleep—to sleep deeply. Sleep, perfect sleep!"

Peter Todd looked up from his work peevishly.

"Oh, dry up, you fat ass!" he cried. "How the dickens do you think we can work with you making that mumbling row?"

"Do the swatting later, Toddy," enjoined Bunter. "Turn your chair round, and I'll put you to sleep."

Peter Todd rose threateningly.

"I'll put you to sleep if you don't stow the cackle! The last time you tried hypnotism you only made a mess of it. So shut up. I want to study!"

With that Todd flopped down in his seat, jabbed his pen in the inkwell, and resumed his prep.

"Oh, I say, Dutton," said Bunter, in a louder tone, "stop working now. You've done quite enough."

Tom Dutton looked up in surprise.

"Will I have a jam-puff?" he murmured. "I should say so! Thank you, Billy!"

"I said you've worked long enough!" said Bunter loudly.

"What stuff?"

"Oh, rats!"

The Owl of the Remove raised himself ponderously from his seat. He went across to the deaf junior, and laid his hand on the other's shoulder.

"Come and be hypnotised, Tommy!" he shouted. "You sit in that chair, and I'll put you to sleep."

"Rock me to sleep? What for, you ass?" asked Dutton.

"I'll hypnotise you!" yelled Bunter.

Dutton glanced at the book in the fat junior's hand.

"Well, why didn't you say so?" he said. "But we had enough of your rotten hypnotising stunts one before."

And Tom Dutton recommenced writing steadily.

"Selish beasts!" muttered Bunter.

He ambled across the study and threw himself into the armchair again. As he did so a step sounded in the passage outside, and next moment the door opened to admit Alonzo Todd, Peter's cousin.

"Ah, Alonzo, my dear chap!" greeted Billy Bunter. "What about practising a little hypnotism this evening?"

"My dear Bunter," replied Alonzo, "in spite of an alternative desire to peruse an ancient treatise upon the reign of Montezuma, which I have borrowed from our esteemed headmaster, Dr. Locke, I shall be very pleased to place myself at your disposal in a few moments."

Billy Bunter rubbed his fat hands together and beamed through his round spectacles.

"I know all about it now," he said. "All I want is someone to put to sleep. These other two asses won't give me a chance."

Alonzo Todd put a heavy volume on the table, and drew his slippers from the cupboard.

"Don't start any of that hypnotism business to-night, Alonzo," said Dutton. "Wait till we've finished prep, anyway."

"Yes, give it a rest!" growled Peter Todd.

"My dear Peter and Dutton," said Alonzo, "our practice of the science of hypnotism does not call necessarily for a cessation of work on your part. No pandemonium will be created, and a closer application to your own tasks will solve the problem automatically."

"Just what I was going to say," said Bunter. "You get on with your own washing, you two."

"Well, go ahead," snapped Peter Todd. "Put each other to sleep, and stay asleep. I'll be jolly glad. Won't you, Tom?"

"I quite agree with you, Peter," said Dutton. "I certainly think they are both mad."

Alonzo Todd finished putting on his slippers, and rose to his feet.

"The interest that Bunter has displayed recently in the realms metaphysical seems to me to call for every encouragement," he said. "Therefore I shall be pleased to assist him in any way I can. I am ready."

"I was thinking, Alonzo," said Billy Bunter, "that if I were successful in mesmerising some of your fellows, old Locke might let me help that bonesetter chap on Saturday; or else give an exhibition off my own bat."

"No doubt," said Alonzo Todd, "were you to attain a marked degree of proficiency you might have opportunities of directing your talent into many useful channels."

"Do you think I might make chaps less selfish?" asked Bunter.

"I believe that hypnotic power in the hands

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of one of lofty ideals would be conducive to the removal of unbecoming traits in the characters of others."

Bunter's eyes sparkled greedily, and with evident satisfaction.

"Well, you sit in that chair, Alonzo," he said, "and I'll put you in a trance."

Tom Dutton leaped up from the table, upsetting the ink in his excitement.

"Dance?" he yelled. "We don't want any of your dancing here, you great porpoise!"

Alonzo Todd turned a deaf ear to the remarks of Dutton and his brother as they mopped up the ink.

"I am ready, my dear Bunter, if you are."

He took a seat in the armchair, and Billy Bunter rapidly ran through some pages of "The Power of the Eye." Then he glared at Alonzo Todd through his round spectacles.

"Sleep! Sleep!" he hissed.

Tom Dutton advanced wrathfully.

"Sleep? Who are you calling a sheep?"

"It's all right, my dear Dutton," called out Alonzo. "He's calling to me!"

"Well, why don't you dot him one with something. Don't you submit to being called names by that overfed ass."

"Look here, Dutton," began Bunter.

"I—"

"Oh, shut up!" roared Peter Todd.

"Don't take any notice, my dear Bunter," said Alonzo. "Commence again."

Billy Bunter again glared at his victim, and suddenly extended five plump fingers.

"Sleep! Sleep!" he commanded.

"Sleep!"

"Excuse me, my dear Bunter," put in Alonzo, "but I fear you will be totally unable to exercise any soporific influence on me unless you modulate your voice and follow more closely the printed directions in the textbook I lent you."

"Why, what's up?"

Alonzo Todd picked the book from Bunter's hand and skimmed the leaves until he came to page sixty-three.

"Listen to this!" he enjoined. "Having placed the subject in as comfortable a position as possible, it is important not to disturb his mental equilibrium by any sudden movement of the hands or harshness of the vocal tones. With gentle, caressing movements encircle his forehead, and in a calm, well-modulated key lull him into a sense of physical and mental tiredness. Moreover, it is—"

"I know all that," interrupted Bunter impatiently. "You didn't give me a chance."

Again the fat junior poised over his victim, and sounds resembling a kettle about to come to a boil proceeded from his lips.

"Sleep! Sleep!" he breathed. "You are going to sleep—fast, fast asleep. You are asleep—sound asleep."

"Oh, but I'm not, my dear Bunter!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd; "in fact, I am suffering from acute insomnia."

With a set look on his fat face, Billy Bunter made another attempt.

"Sleep! Sleep! Peaceful, peaceful—Yow!"

Bunter's last sudden remark was caused by a well-aimed book, which caught him fairly on the back of the head.

Next moment Peter Todd had the poker in his grasp, and was advancing on the Owl.

"Scat!"

Bunter "scatted."

In the passage outside the study Bunter rubbed his head and muttered execrations.

"The beast! The selfish cad!"

Then an idea struck him. For several days he had been trying to borrow money, but his only success was a loan of half-a-crown from Alonzo Todd. The beating he had sustained at the hands of the Famous Five still rankled, but he determined to worm himself into their good graces again for his own ends. Accordingly he made his way to Study No. 1, and knocked on the door.

"Entrez, scout!"

Billy Bunter cautiously opened the door and beamed through his glasses into the room.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were sitting near the fire, with a chess-board between them.

"Hallo, Billy!"

Encouraged by his reception, Bunter entered the study and closed the door.

"Take a seat, old top!"

Beaming benevolently, Bunter crossed to the fire and dropped into an armchair.

"Hi, go easy with the springs!" cried Frank Nugent. "We can't afford any more sticks this term."

Bunter changed his expression to one of sadness.

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"I've had a disappointment to-day," he remarked.

"Not in connection with a postal-order by any chance, was it?" asked Wharton.

Bunter's eyebrows lifted.

"How do you know?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Cut out the old wheeze, Billy! How goes the hypnotism?"

"Really, you know, you fellows, I can mesmerise properly now. I'll show you, if you like."

"Right-ho! Try it on Frank!"

"No; you be hypnotised, Harry!"

"Couldn't you hypnotise us both, Billy?" asked Wharton. "Or is that beyond your powers?"

Bunter turned away, and drew out two chairs to conceal his gloating smile of satisfaction.

"Oh, I think I could do it, Harry, old chap!" he murmured. "At least, you might let me try. Both of you sit together here, and I'll put you to sleep."

The chums of Study No. 1 did as they were bidden, and Billy Bunter leered at them with great satisfaction. If only he could hypnotise them he could make them do anything he wanted. He rolled up his sleeves and swept his hand before the faces of his victims.

"You are about to sleep," he told them.

"Sleep, sleep—sink to sleep!"

After about two minutes of endeavour Bunter noted with a sharp thrill of joy that the two chums were nodding wearily. He redoubled his efforts, and a snore from Frank Nugent testified to the potency of his mesmeric influence. Only when the two were lying like logs in their chairs did he cease.

Billy Bunter rubbed his fat hands gleefully.

"I've done it! Now to get to business. Wharton," he said distinctly, "rise and go to the cupboard."

With a fixed look in his eye, Harry Wharton arose and crossed the study.

"Now set out all the grub you've got."

As Wharton fumbled in the cupboard, Bunter turned his attention to his other victim.

"Lend me any money you have in your pockets, Nugent!" he commanded.

A flickering of one of Frank's eyelids caused the hypnotist to stoop down.

"You're asleep," he murmured; "you are off."

A pair of lithe, sinewy arms shot out and encircled Bunter's neck.

"You're off—off your rocker, you fat fraud!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Ouch!"

Harry Wharton sprang from the cupboard, bearing an old cricket-bat.

"Hang on to the rotter, Frank!" he cried.

The next few moments were both exciting and painful ones for Billy Bunter.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"You-ow! Help! Ooooh! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When finally Nugent released his grip, Billy Bunter sprang up with surprising agility, and dashed wildly out of the study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bonsetter Arrives.

THE train's due to arrive in five minutes' time. You nip out, Inky, and meet the professor; I'll look look after the gee."

Thus Harry Wharton, who had been sent by Dr. Locke with the pony and trap on Saturday evening to meet the lecturer.

Friarale Station seemed more deserted than usual as he reined in the pony at the entrance, and Hurree Singh, who had volunteered to accompany him, alighted.

"What is the name of the honourable Portuguese gentleman?" asked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Bomba—Professor Bartolomew Bomba."

"Thanks, my worthy chum! I will speedfully depart to bring the esteemed bonsetter sahib."

A few minutes later the train drew into the sleepy station. Three villagers alighted; and just as the Indian junior began to think that the professor must have missed the train a middle-aged man clambered out. His swarthy skin, lank, black hair and moustache, and kid gloves proclaimed him to be the expected visitor even before Hurree saw the initials "B. B." on his handbag.

"Have I the pleasure of addressing the honourable Bomba, bonsetting professor?" asked Hurree Singh. "If so, the head teacher sahib's trap and horse wait in the chillfulness without."

Professor Bomba stared hard at the Indian junior.

"I have come to give a lecture at Greyfriars School," he said. "Perhaps you have been sent to meet me?"

"The correctness of that esteemed supposition is terrific," murmured Hurree Singh. "Permit me to have the pleasure of conveying your esteemed bag."

The Nabob of Bhanipur relieved the professor of his gladstone, and led the way to the trap.

"Here is the esteemed Professor Bonsetter, my worthy chum!"

"Bomba—Professor Bomba!" corrected the lecturer testily. "Are you one of the little boys from Greyfriars School?"

Harry Wharton winced.

"I'm a scholar at Greyfriars," he replied.

The professor ignored the emphasis in the word "scholar."

"And this little nigger boy is the boot-boy at the school, I presume?"

A dangerous glint sprang into the eyes of Hurree Singh; and Harry Wharton flushed hotly.

"My friend is a scholar, too," he said shortly. "If you will kindly get into the trap, sir, I will drive you to the school."

"First I will pay a visit to the refreshment buffet," said the professor. "The parched condition of the thorax is indicative of the necessity for liquid refreshment—yes!"

Harry Wharton settled himself comfortably in the trap and pulled the rug about his knees.

"There's no refreshment-room at this station, sir."

"No refreshment buffet?" snapped the professor. "This is what is called a 'one-horse' town—yes!"

With the aid of the juniors, Professor Bomba mounted the trap, and then Hurree Singh fitted himself into the footman's seat behind. The pony was in high fettle and set off briskly.

"I hope it is that you know how to drive," said the lecturer nervously. "It seems strange to me that the headmaster should send little boys out alone with his property."

Harry Wharton made no reply, but imperceptibly flicked the pony with his whip. Like a racehorse springing into action with the upward swing of the starting-tapes, the pony leaped forward. The trap swung over slightly, and the professor threw his arms round Wharton's neck in an affectionate embrace. Soon the shops in the High Street were passing in swift procession.

"Stop, stop!" cried Bomba. "I have got to get out here! The mad horse, won't he stop? No—yes!"

The terror of the professor was so manifest that Harry Wharton drew rein. Immediately the pony came to a standstill the professor jumped out of the trap and stood looking in dazed fashion about him. By chance the place they had stopped at was right opposite Uncle Clegg's shop.

"Ah, that is right!" panted the professor. "I have alighted for the purpose of quenching my thirst. I can obtain lubricant for my parched throat here—yes!"

"You can get lemonade and ginger-pop, if that's what you mean, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Take the professor in and introduce him to some of Uncle Clegg's knock-outs, Inky!"

Hurree Singh climbed down and led the way into the shop, followed by the lecturer. Ranged along the counter inside were Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, Billy Bunter, and Harold Skinner.

Skinner and Uncle Clegg were engaged in a heated discussion. Apparently the subject of it was two small black beetles which the former held in his hand.

"It's no good talking," Skinner was saying. "I found these in those buns I bought here yesterday. I thought they were currants at first, but, knowing you never by any chance put currants in your buns, I had 'em carefully examined. Our tame naturalist, Mr. Alonzo Todd, said plainly they weren't the dried products of the vine. So stump up two currants in exchange for the beastly things, and be more careful in future, or I'll report you to the nearest anti-profiteering committee."

At that moment Uncle Clegg noticed the newcomers.

"What can I get you, sir?"

The Portuguese scientist ordered some cider, and while he was being served Billy Bunter edged across to Hurree Singh.

"Is that chap the hypnotist, Inky?" he muttered.



Alonzo took a seat in the armchair, and Billy Bunter rapidly ran through some pages of "The Power of the Eye." Then he glared at Alonzo through his round spectacles. "Sleep! Sleep!" he hissed. (See page 4.)

Feeling it the polite thing to do, the Indian junior introduced his learned companion.

"This is the esteemed Professor Bonesetter Bomba sahib, my worthy chums!" he said.

The three juniors bowed.

"Ah, these are some of your little school-fellows, are they not, my dusky friend?" smiled the professor. "I would buy you all some bullseyes if I could be convinced you would not suck them during my lecture this evening."

The faces of Skinner, Fish, and Bunter flushed at the insult.

"Guess we're not in the habit of sucking bullseyes, sir!" said the American junior.

"Ah, judging by your accent you masticate chewing-gum, little boy!" murmured the professor. "A pernicious and disgusting habit—yes!"

He drank off his cider and prepared to go. "I won't say good night, young urchins!" he said jocularly. "We shall meet in the lecture-hall of your school later."

And, having paid for his drink, he stalked out of the shop, followed by Hurree Singh.

"The cad!" hissed Skinner.

"The ill-bred galoot!" snorted Fish. "Say, did you get that bit about the gum?"

"Yes, the beast!" piped Billy Bunter. "And fancy calling us 'urchins'!"

"Serve him jolly well right to be hissed off the platform to-night!" said Skinner.

The three juniors paid Uncle Clegg for their purchases, and walked out into the High Street. And as they trudged back to the school they discussed earnestly a plan to get even with the ill-mannered professor.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton and Hurree Singh brought the professor without further incident to Greyfriars, where Dr. Locke was waiting to greet his guest.

It was a quarter of eight o'clock when the Famous Five left Study No. 1 for Big Hall, where the lecture was to be held. In the

passage they saw Billy Bunter surrounded by half a dozen juniors, who were interested in something he held in his hand.

"Hallo! What have you got there, Billy?" asked Harry Wharton.

Bunter held up a large silver "turnip" watch.

"I had this sent to me to-day," he explained. "It's a present from my wealthy aunt. Worth no end, you know!"

Wharton took the huge timepiece in his hand.

"Looks to me like a cheap American watch," he remarked. "Why, the works make a noise like a blessed machine!"

"Really, you know, Harry," said Bunter, "it's a very valuable one!"

Harry Wharton gave a snort of derision and hastened after the rest of the Co., who were walking on. Little did he dream of the conspicuous part Bunter's watch was to play in the trouble that was brewing.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bomba's Busy Evening!

"PHEW! I'm bored to tears!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"It's dry as dust!" agreed Johnny Bull.

"The dry-as-dustfulness is terrific!"

It was plain by their appearance that none of the Famous Five was enjoying the lecture of the Portuguese professor.

Big Hall, specially prepared for the occasion, was packed with the masters and scholars of Greyfriars School. The headmaster himself had introduced the lecturer with a few well-chosen words, and now the famous bonesetter and hypnotist occupied the raised dais. For half an hour he dilated upon the theory of hypnotism in relation to modern surgery, and spoke learnedly upon its utility

as an anæsthetic agent. No wonder, therefore, that not only Harry Wharton & Co. and the other juniors, but also some of the masters and prefects were bored and restless.

"To further stimulate your interest," said the professor, "I will explain yet another instance to show how modern science is diverting metaphysical phenomena for the use of therapeutical materia medica."

"Oh, help!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"My only aunt!" said Harry Wharton, in an awed whisper.

Fortunately, Dr. Locke caught the eye of the lecturer. His glance, polite though it was, spoke volumes. Even Professor Bomba could not refuse to take the hint.

"Er—I think that a demonstration in hypnotism would help to explain my few remarks," he said.

Immediately a thrill of interest passed through the assembled school.

"It is my custom, to avoid any suspicion of collaboration, to ask a few members of my audiences to submit themselves to hypnotic tests. Will a few little boys consent to come forward? Yes!"

Instead of a riot of juniors falling over each other in violent contest for the privilege, only four arose from their seats. They were Billy Bunter, Tom Dutton, Wun Lung, and Fisher T. Fish, and of these Dutton and the Chinese junior had little idea of what was required, having been persuaded by a series of nudges by the Owl of the Remove. Fisher T. Fish, who was as thick-skinned as a rhinoceros, pushed himself into the limelight as a mere matter of habit.

Professor Bomba eyed the four juniors quizzically, and drew a long lead pencil with a silver mounting at the end from his pocket. Having arranged his subjects in file he approached Fish, who was ahead of the others.

"Gaze at this silver mount steadily, boy!" he commanded.

Fish did as he was bidden, and the professor slowly drew the pencil forward. As though attached by an invisible wire, the American junior followed the movement until he nearly fell.

"You'll do! Sit down!"

Fish took his seat on one of the chairs provided, and the hypnotist proceeded to test Dutton.

"Look hard at the silver mount!" he said. "Come, open your eyes, boy! Open them wider! Wider still—wider!"

Tom Dutton gazed round him apprehensively.

"Where, sir?" he asked.

"Where's what, boy?" demanded the professor testily.

"The spider."

"Spider?"

"Yes, sir, the spider you told me to beware of."

A few titters broke from the audience, but they were quickly smothered.

Professor Bomba looked at Dutton doubtfully as though suspecting ill-timed humour.

"I fear you will not make a good subject, little boy," he said. "Return to your seat in the audience!"

Fortunately, as he spoke in a high-pitched, irritable voice, Tom Dutton understood, and left the dais.

"Now, my little heathen Chinese," said Bomba jocularly, "let me try you!"

"Yesse, sir," murmured Wun Lung, "you tly me. Me makee velly good sleepy waiker, me tinkee."

Grinning all over his yellow face, Wun Lung was then tested, and proved acceptable. The professor turned to his audience.

"Although I have sent one boy back to his seat," he said, "I do not admit failure. Had I the time to spare I could hypnotise a hippopotamus—yes, I cannot prove that statement, I know, as I have no hippopotamus. However, I will try our young friend here."

Smiling at his own joke, the professor approached Billy Bunter, and held up the silver-mounted pencil. As he drew the pencil away Bunter began to fall forward. The hypnotist threw out his arms to save him, but next moment the fat junior crashed to the floor.

Two or three masters and some of the juniors jumped to their feet, but their assistance was not needed. Billy Bunter, with his fat face wreathed in a placid smile, slowly rose, and brushed himself.

The professor darted forward eagerly, and ran his hands over his victim.

"Any bones broken?" he asked.

"I'm all right, sir," said Billy Bunter. "I'm afraid your piercing eye quite overcame me, sir!"

Bomba rubbed his hands together.

"What a splendid subject!" he muttered.

When Bunter had taken his seat with the other two juniors on the chairs, the professor approached and fixed his piercing black eyes on each in turn, making at the same time a few passes with his hands. Soon each was lying back motionless, and Bomba turned again to the audience.

"Before I undertake to show you any of the serious tests in hypnotism," he said, "I will, for your amusement, prove how I have these little boys under control. This boy"—he indicated Fish—"will try to sell his clothes to you. Also he will believe his pockets are full of red-hot roasted chestnuts. The great big plump boy will be a sea-lion, and this little Chinese will sing songs to the moon, which he will see shining above a pagoda in his own heathen land."

He made a few more passes in the direction of his subjects, and stood aside.

Wun Lung arose slowly, and gazed upwards, with arms outstretched. Then a wild fairsheet note, which set the teeth of the school on edge, escaped his throat.

"Woo-ai ah lee!" he trilled. "Chow ling foo chee!"

Billy Bunter flopped on the floor, and, using his arms like flappers, raised himself partially on to the dais.

"Gr-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-r!" he remarked.

Fisher T. Fish sprang up, and occupied the centre of the raised dais.

"Say, you guys!" he cried. "Does anyone wanter get possessed of a brand-new coat and bags—the real goods, jewelled in every button-hole, and going dirty cheap for forty-five dollars? What's that? You'll hand me thirty? No, sirree!"

Fish looked so reprovingly at Mr. Quelch, who had not said a word, that the school

broke into peals of laughter. Then he thrust his hand into his coat-pocket.

"Wow!" he yelled. "Hot chestnuts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the school.

Bunter raised his head and gave a blood-curdling grunt. Then, as though startled, he dived from the raised dais into the sea, or, rather, what he presumably took to be the sea. The fluid as he hit the floor shook Big Hall.

Dr. Locke rose from his seat. He could enjoy a joke as well as anyone, but he did not approve of the present exhibition, which might prove detrimental to discipline.

"It is getting late, professor," he whispered. "We have greatly enjoyed your lecture, and I must now reluctantly request you to bring the demonstration to a conclusion."

"Certainly, sir, if you wish it!" said the professor shortly.

Still grunting, warbling, and shouting, Bunter, Wun Lung, and Fish returned to their seats at his command. He then tapped each smartly on the cheek. Wun Lung blinked and opened his eyes, and Fisher T. Fish awoke with a start, to find himself clutching his jacket, which he had discarded in his efforts to dispose of it. Billy Bunter alone remained motionless.

"Awake!" cried the professor. "Awake!"

But Bunter reclined very still in his chair.

"Wake him up!" piped a voice.

"Silence!" called Dr. Locke.

Professor Bomba again tried to rouse the Owl, but there was nothing doing. The school grew restive. The professor redoubled his efforts. He slapped the fat junior's face unmercifully. He shouted loudly, but all in vain.

"Buckle his ear!"

"Silence!" roared the Head again. "If I discover the boy so ill-mannered as to shout remarks, I shall visit on him my severest displeasure!" He turned to the unfortunate professor, who looked at a total loss. "I will have Bunter removed to my study," he said.

It took six juniors to carry the unwillingly form of Billy Bunter from Big Hall, but, staggering and gasping, they did it. Behind them followed the headmaster and Professor Bomba.

No sooner had they disappeared than the school was electrified by a sudden commotion. Billy Bunter, scattering the headmaster and the bonesetter to either side of him, burst through the door into Big Hall.

"My watch! My watch!" he cried, tapping his pockets. "Where's my watch?"

With livid face, Dr. Locke strode after the fat junior.

"Explain this conduct, Bunter! What are you saying?"

Billy Bunter felt in all his pockets.

"It's my watch, sir," he said. "A present from a wealthy aunt. Brand-new, jewelled in every movement, stamped on every link, worth—"

"Be explicit, boy!" cried the Head testily.

"Well, it's gone, sir! I had it in my pocket before I was mesmerised!"

Dr. Locke frowned.

"Do you suggest that Professor Bomba has stolen your watch, boy?" he demanded.

"N-no; sir, no-not at all," stammered Bunter. "I had it in my pocket before I was mesmerised, and now—"

"Yah! Give him back his watch!"

This and other remarks came from a group of juniors, led by Skinner and Fish.

"Now my watch is gone!" finished Bunter pathetically.

"I did not steal the watch!" shouted the professor. "How dare you!"

"It's gone!" said Bunter simply.

"I tell you I did not—"

"Yah! Search him!"

"Turn him upside-down!"

"Silence!" roared the Head. "The whole school shall suffer for this disgraceful exhibition! I must ask you, professor, to accompany me to my study, where we will endeavour to find an explanation to this—ahem!—unfortunate affair. Bunter, follow us."

And, followed by Professor Bomba and Billy Bunter, the Head swept from Big Hall.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Painful Interviews.

"B" E seated, professor!"

Dr. Locke indicated the armchair in his study, and seated himself at his desk.

"Now, Bunter, let us have your statement," Billy Bunter interlaced his fingers nervously.

"My wealthy aunt sent me a valuable watch to-day, sir," he said, "and now it has gone!"

"Perhaps you didn't take it into Big Hall?" suggested Dr. Locke.

"Oh, yes, I did, sir," said the Owl. "I remember showing Wharton and some of 'em it before I went in to the lecture."

The Head pressed the button of a bell. Trotter, the pageboy, appeared.

"Tell Wharton I wish to see him," he said.

"Now, Bunter, you're absolutely positive you took the watch into Big Hall?"

"Y-y-yes, sir."

"I did not steal the watch!" chimed in the professor.

"My dear Professor Bomba," said the head soothingly, "no one has accused you of doing so. The watch may have been dropped somewhere."

The door opened, and Harry Wharton was ushered in.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Wharton," said the headmaster. "I understand that Bunter showed you a valuable watch just before the lecture to-night?"

"I don't know about a 'valuable' watch, sir," said Harry Wharton. "He certainly showed me a watch."

"And now it's gone," murmured Billy Bunter feelingly.

"I tell you I did not steal the watch!" shrieked the professor. "I will have this young scamp, and you too, Dr. Locke, in the libel courts yet—yes!"

"Calm yourself, my dear professor, I—"

"I will not calm myself, sir—no! It is scandalous! I have come here as a favour, and now—"

"The new watch is gone," murmured Bunter plaintively.

The professor jumped to his feet and stamped on the floor.

"You are a falsehood-teller, boy! You are a scoundrel—yes! And as for you, Dr. Locke, sir, you are as bad for listening for one moment to such a tissue of fabrications!"

The headmaster calmly turned to Wharton.

"Drive Professor Bomba back to the station, please!" he said.

"I will not be driven by any young rip of yours, sir!" shrieked Bomba. "I will find my own way."

He secured his hat and bag, and stamped wildly from the study, followed by Wharton.

"You may go, Bunter," said Dr. Locke. "I will have the matter investigated, and if I find reason for believing that the watch has actually been stolen, I myself will compensate you suitably."

With a broad grin on his fat face, Billy Bunter then left the study.

It was shortly before morning school when Billy Bunter again paid a visit, not without a certain amount of fear, to the Head's room. Dr. Locke, in his cap and gown, stood by the desk, and the sight of his majestic figure seemed to deprive Bunter of all power of speech. Like a startled owl he stood motionless, blinking through his big spectacles.

"Well, what is it, Bunter?"

"I—I thought, sir, I'd e-come and tell you I've found the watch, sir!"

"Indeed, Bunter!" said the Head ominously.

"And where did you find it?"

"On the mantelpiece in m-my study, sir."

Dr. Locke gazed at the Owl piercingly.

"Do you know, Bunter," he said, "I almost incline to the belief that you have perpetrated a practical joke and told me a series of lies of colossal impertinence."

"Oh, really, sir, I—"

"As I have not the requisite proof," interrupted Dr. Locke, "I shall regard you as merely having been guilty of an unpardonable lapse of memory which has been the means of casting a slur on a gentleman of irreproachable reputation. You have, too, placed me in the humiliating position of having to write a letter of apology to Professor Bomba for the unfortunate situation in which your forgetfulness placed him last night."

A lurking gain at the corners of Bunter's mouth showed that he thought he was getting well out of it, but his hue changed to a sickly green as the headmaster picked up a long yellow cane.

"Now, Bunter, I feel it my duty to impress on you the necessity for cultivating a better memory in future."

Five minutes later the painful interview terminated, and Billy Bunter, yelling lustily, left the Head's study feeling as though he had been stung by a swarm of giant bees.

He was writing a quarter of an hour later, when he met Fisher T. Fish and Skinner in the passage outside the Remove studies.

(Continued on page 11, col. 3.)

OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN!



PERCY MELLISH.

HOLD on, kid! What have you got there?"

Mellish, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, fastened a firm grip upon the arm of a fag, who had just entered the School House. It was Mulvaney minor, and in his hand he was carrying a sealed envelope.

"Mellish's eyes fastened upon the envelope at once, and the startled fag gripped it more tightly.

"What have you got there, eh?"
"A note to Mr. Raitton," said Mulvaney minor. "Leggo my arm, please, Mellish."

"Who's it from?" was Mellish's next question, while the fag wriggled as the grip on his arm tightened.

"Ow! Old Ratcliff! He gave it to me to take to Mr. Raitton at once. Leggo my arm!"

Mellish grinned.
"I'll take it for you, kid! Give it to me!"

Mulvaney looked alarmed.
"Oh, I say—"
"Give it to me!"

"But—Ow! Here you are!"
Mellish took the note, which was addressed "Mr. Raitton" in the neat, precise handwriting of Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House.

"Good!" he exclaimed, grinning. "Don't be alarmed, kid; I'll take it straight away."

And he walked on, whistling, with the note in his hand, in the direction of the School House master's study.

Mulvaney minor was left in a state of astonishment—as well he might be. Mellish was not given to doing "good turns" of this description without some good reason. Gradually, however, the fag's amused expression gave way to a grin.

"My aunt!" he murmured. "What a joke! Ha, ha, ha!"

Something seemed to be amusing Mulvaney minor.

Meanwhile Mellish went on up the stairs, whistling.

At the corner of the Sixth Form passage a senior suddenly pounced out upon him.

"Good! I've been waiting here for a fag. Didn't you hear me calling, Mellish? Just you come along to my study and get my tea—and sharp!"

Mellish halted.
"Sorry, Knox—" he began.

"Don't jaw!" snapped Knox, the most unpopular prefect at St. Jim's. "Come along, sharp, or I'll make you sorrier!"

Mellish forced an expression of concern into his face, though he was inwardly chuckling. As a matter of fact, he had heard Knox's call, and had guessed that he

would be lying in wait for a junior to fag for him. And as Mellish had to pass the end of the Sixth Form passage to get to his study, he had laid his plans accordingly.

"Sorry, Knox! I—I should love to fag for you, but—"

"Rats! Come on!"
"But I've got to take this note to Raitton from Ratty, and wait for an answer!" finished Mellish blandly.

Knox scowled.

"What rot! Let's look at it!"

"Here you are!"

Knox muttered something as he looked at the envelope addressed in Mr. Ratcliff's hand. He dared not order Mellish to postpone an errand of that nature. He would have to look elsewhere for a fag.

"Cut off, then, and look sharp!" he growled.
"Is there anyone else down there to fag for me?"

"I saw young Mulvaney hanging about just now," said Mellish over his shoulder. And he chuckled as he cut along the passage, while Knox gave a furious howl of "Fa-ag!"

A moment later he heard young Mulvaney's voice saying, "Coming, Knox!" in meek tones, and he knew that Knox had secured a victim for the afternoon.

It was a mean trick, but as long as Mellish had escaped fagging for the bullying prefect himself, he was quite indifferent to the fate of the unfortunate Mulvaney minor.

Arrived at Mr. Raitton's door, he knocked discreetly, and was bidden to enter.

Mr. Raitton, who was as popular in the school as Mr. Ratcliff was unpopular, was working at his desk. He laid down his pen as the junior entered.

"Ah, Mellish!" he said pleasantly. "And what can I do for you?"

"If you please, sir, here's a note from Mr. Ratcliff," said Mellish meekly.

"Give it me. Did Mr. Ratcliff tell you to wait for an answer?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"Very well."

Mr. Raitton scanned the note, while a puzzled frown came over his face.

Mellish looked up carelessly, to find the Housemaster's gaze fixed upon him with a peculiar expression. Mellish began to feel a little uneasy.

Mr. Raitton was a kindly and just master, but it was by no means safe to take liberties with him, as Mellish well knew.

He wondered what was in the note to make the Housemaster look like that.

"I suppose there is no mistake, Mellish?" said Mr. Raitton at last. "I understand that Mr. Ratcliff gave you this note to give to me?"

"Yes, sir," said Mellish promptly.

He felt an inward tremor, but Mellish of the Fourth was never very particular about a lie or two. After all, he thought, he must carry it through now.

"Have you any idea of the contents of this note, Mellish?" said the Housemaster curiously.

Mellish hesitated a moment. He did not wish to commit himself unnecessarily.

"N-no, sir," he replied cautiously. "At least, I don't think so."

"I see. Well, it is a complaint from Mr. Ratcliff," said Mr. Raitton drily. "I suppose it does not surprise you very much to hear that?"

"Not very much, sir," said Mellish, venturing on a faint smile. This was quite true. Mr. Ratcliff was always complaining about something.

"So I should imagine," said Mr. Raitton shortly, rising abruptly from his seat and taking up a stout but limber-looking cane.

"Hold out your hand, Mellish!"

Mellish gasped, utterly taken aback by this sudden and unpleasant development.

"H-hold out m-my hand, sir?" he babbled, gazing stupidly at the master. Had Mr. Raitton suddenly taken leave of his senses? he wondered wildly.

Mr. Raitton raised his eyebrows.

"Certainly, Mellish! Did you not hear what I said? Hold out your hand at once!"

"B-but, sir—"

Mr. Raitton frowned.

"Are you going to disobey me, Mellish?" he asked coldly. "Will you hold out your hand at once?"

Mellish almost staggered.



MULVANEY Minor.

"Are—are you going to cane me, sir?"

Mr. Raitton took a hasty step forward, and Mellish jumped back in alarm. But the master checked himself with an effort.

"Certainly I am going to cane you, Mellish!"

"W-what for?" howled the unfortunate junior.

But Mr. Raitton's patience was at an end. "Hold out your hand!" he thundered, looking as black as a thunder-cloud.

Mellish, fairly frightened now, jumped—and held out his hand. He was almost blubbering, and his face wore an expression of dazed amazement that was almost idiotic.

Swish, swish!
Mellish gave a terrific yell.

"Ow! How-yow!"

"The other hand, Mellish!"

"Wow-wow! I won't! I—"

His voice tailed off into a wail, as he glanced at Mr. Raitton's face, and noted the truly terrific expression thereon. Mellish decided then and there to hold out his other hand.

Swish, swish!
"Yow! Yaroo! Boo-hoo!"

"Now you may go, Mellish!" said Mr. Raitton grimly.

And Mellish went—with his hands tucked under his armpits, groaning and wow-wowing away at a great rate.

He arrived at his own study in the Fourth Form passage a sadder if not a wiser youth. He had succeeded in escaping the ordeal of fagging for Knox, but it was a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire!

But Mellish's brain was in a whirl, and how it had all happened he was quite incapable of fathoming.

If he had had the advantage of seeing Mr. Ratcliff's note, matters would doubtless have been clearer to him.

"Dear Raitton," it ran,— "I have to complain of a gross piece of impertinence, and not for the first time, from one of your boys. I need not go into details concerning the highly disrespectful epithet which I heard him, with my own ears, apply to me behind my back. As on previous occasions you have raised objection to my punishing your boys, however richly they deserve it, I send the culprit to you with this note. I look to you to give the bearer of it a sharp lesson—which I may say he appears to be badly in need of.

"Yours sincerely

"HORACE RATCLIFFE."

THE END.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 58.



Our Grand New Serial, dealing with the Adventures of a Young Acrobat who Rose to Fame and Fortune as a Cinema Star.

By STANTON HOPE.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Micky Denver, an orphan lad, is an acrobat in Beauman's Gigantic Circus. One night, in Liverpool, he is accused unjustly by 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. In New York Harbour Micky escapes through an open port and swims ashore. Ashore he meets a slim, red-headed American, Alec P. Figg, who is also anxious to get out West. With him Micky "jumps" the "Chicago Flyer" and by stages they beat their way to Kansas City. Figg, known as Smart Alec, is one of the most expert cracksmen on the continent, and he attempts to crack the hotel safe. Micky frustrates him, and makes the rest of his way to Los

Angeles alone. Once in the city he loses no time in trying to get taken on at the cinema studios, but without success. One day he visits Santa Monica, on the coast, and there he rescues Mary Maidstone from the surf. In consequence, Micky is given a job as assistant to Buddy Gaylord, the property-man, in the great K. N. Broadworth's Cinema Company. One day, whilst moving an antique vase between the filming of two scenes, he sees a hideous being, more nearly resembling a gorilla than a man, peering through a door. It is like some vision from the past to Micky, and the vase slips from his fingers and crashes into a thousand pieces on the floor!

(Now read on.)

On the Carpet.

"**S**AY, that's done it! You'll get fired for sure now, you clumsy galoot! And serve you right!"

It was Floyd Unwin, the star of the Broadworth company, who, with a gloating smile on his face, was the first to break the silence.

Micky went hot all over with shame. He had set about his work as assistant to Props so thoroughly and with such good intentions that it seemed as though some cruel fate over which he had no control had intervened. In his confusion he started to collect the fragments of the vase, that antique, Indian ornament which Unwin had told him was worth eight thousand dollars if a cent. From the corner of his eye he saw the great K. N. Broadworth and Jeff Romery, the director, talking earnestly together. Then the producer strode away.

"Denver!" Micky looked sharply up at the sound of Romery's voice.

"Leave that mess and report at Mr. Broadworth's office."

Micky's heart turned to lead within him. So this was to be the end of the studio work he had started with so high a heart! As he rose to his feet he remembered for the first time the vision which had been the immediate cause of the accident. He glanced towards the door in the background of the set where he had seen the gorilla-like man, but it was closed, and the creature had disappeared.

All eyes were upon Micky as he made his way from the scene, most showing looks of sympathy, but a few, like those of Floyd Unwin's, revealing nothing but satisfaction at the prospect of seeing the last of the English lad who had so suddenly become a personality among them in the cinema studio.

"Beat it quick, young Johnny Bull," sneered Unwin. "They're waiting to hand you your time in the office."

"Hard luck, kid!" murmured Jeff Romery, as the lad passed. "It was bad loss that the breakage occurred to that particular vase, and just as the Big Noise was standing by, too!"

Micky gave a rueful glance at the kindly director, and passed down the long studio. He looked round to see if any of his other friends were present, but Mary Maidstone, Reggie Eton, and Buddy Gaylord were nowhere to be seen.

From the studio he crossed the lot and made his way to the office building. A clerk in one of the general offices immediately took him in tow and led him to the door marked "Private," and which bore the name of the great film producer. The clerk knocked open the door, and ushered him in. Then the door closed, and Micky found himself alone with the famous Kennedy N. Broadworth.

The film producer finished signing a few

papers on his desk, and leaned back in his chair. His eyes, gazing through his bizarre, tortoiseshell spectacles, seemed to pierce the lad through and through. Micky, quailing beneath that look, realised as never before the magnetism and the personality of the man which so dwarfed those of others with whom he came in contact.

At last, after what seemed an age to Micky, K. N. broke the silence.

"By chance I was the witness, sonny," he said evenly, "of an accident of colossal carelessness in the studio just now. You had the simple task of moving a vase from a table to a pedestal a few feet distant, and despite the warning by Mr. Unwin of the value of the article, you let it slip from your fingers. There was only one vase like that in the world, and that was hired by Mr. Gaylord from a Los Angeles dealer especially for this one film production. Apart from the fabulous sum this breakage will cost my company, I am as much displeased at finding I cannot trust you to perform the simplest task of a property man's assistant with thoroughness."

Micky hung his head beneath the reproof, and Mr. Broadworth rose from his chair.

"If you have any reason to give, sonny," he said, not unkindly, "let me hear it."

Micky raised his head, and his hands clenched and unclenched nervously.

"I—I saw something, Mr. Broadworth," he stammered. "Er—that is, someone— I—I—"

He stopped short, lost in confusion. For the life of him he could not think where or when he had seen the man who had appeared through the door of the set, and whose appearance had caused him to start back and drop the vase.

"Who or what did you see, sonny?" demanded Mr. Broadworth.

It was on the tip of Micky's tongue to tell the producer that he had seen a creature, half-man, half-gorilla, as it seemed to him, peering at him. But he was sick and annoyed with himself for having given way to such a paltry attack of nerves, and the excuse seemed foolish to a degree. The few words which might have saved him were left unsaid.

The film producer waited patiently, and then disappointment overshadowed the calm of his face. It was evident he believed the lad had been attempting to concoct some good excuse and failed. He put his hand into a pigeon-hole of his roll-top desk and drew out a wad of notes.

"We owe you a debt of gratitude, sonny, for saving the life of our star, Miss Maidstone." He tendered Micky the wad. "Here are five hundred dollars to help you while you are securing another billet."

Like one in a dream, Micky extended his hand and mechanically took the money. Then, a deep flush suffusing his cheeks, he straightened himself up proudly and tossed the fat wad of notes on to the desk.

"You—you don't understand, Mr. Broadworth," he panted. "I—"

A lump seemed to rise in his throat, and with a low groan he turned on his heel and staggered from the office.

"Micky! Micky! What's happened, lad?"

It was Buddy Gaylord, the genial property man, who had come striding through the general office and grasped the lad's arm. Buddy's plump, red face was agog with concern, and his heavy breathing denoted he had been hurrying.

"I—I've been fired, Buddy!" "Fired? I heard you'd broken the vase and been called on the carpet, so I jest ran across to see how you'd got on. So K. N.'s handed you the frozen mitt, has he. Was he very mad about it, kid?"

"He was quite calm, and jolly decent," replied Micky. "But I was tongue-tied, and couldn't explain things as, I suppose, I should have done. In spite of the money he's lost, though, through my having smashed the Indian vase to smithereens, he offered me a wad of notes as thick as your arm, Buddy, when he told me to go."

"See here, Micky," said Buddy, "jest you come across with the explanation of your keerness right here and now. What made you do such a goldrned ridiculous thing like droppin' that there vase?"

Micky had no hesitation about telling Buddy, and he informed the property man of his experience between the filming of the two scenes in which Unwin had been participating.

"Great rattlesnakes!" cried Buddy. "Skeered by a man what looks like a monkey, were you? Well, by gum, unless you get the edge rubbed off them nerves o' yours, you'll have as much chance o' ever becomin' a cinema artist as my late departed grandna has o' being Mrs. President o' the United States!"

"Anyway, Buddy," said Micky ruefully, "I've been sacked, pushed, or fired, and there's an end to it. I'll see you to-night down home, and then perhaps you can give me a few tips about landing another job somewhere."

"Oh, forget it!" cried Buddy. "Such verbosity makes me tired. You ain't agoin' to hit the trail. You're comin' back with me to the lair o' the Big Noise right now."

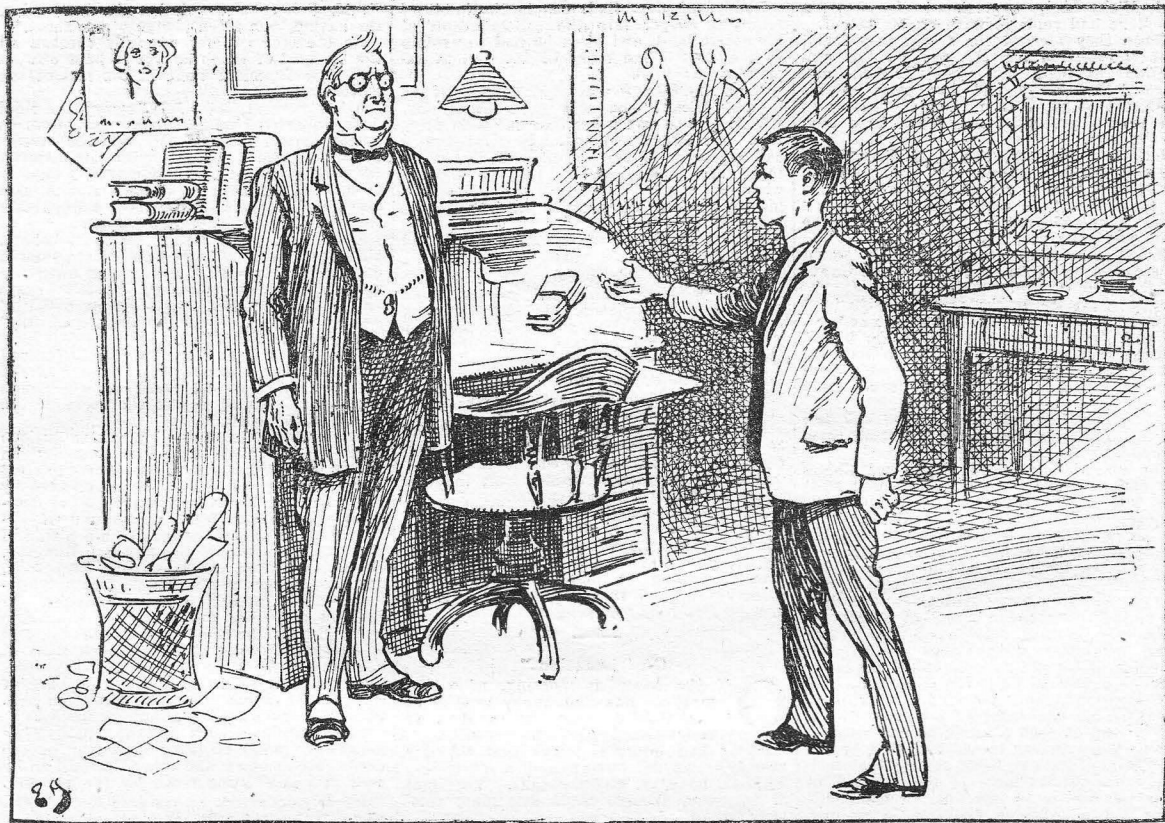
Too astonished to protest, Micky found himself grasped by the plump little Props, and propelled back to the sanctum of the great K. N.

Buddy tapped on the door, then opened it, and pushed Micky unceremoniously in front of him into the producer's office.

Mr. Broadworth looked up from his desk, and gazed sternly at the intruders through his tortoiseshell spectacles.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion, Gaylord?" he demanded in his most official tones.

Buddy, bold as a lion as he had entered, suddenly became meek as a lamb in the



Like one in a dream, Micky extended his hand and mechanically took the money. Then, a deep flush suffusing his cheeks, he straightened himself up proudly and tossed the fat wad of notes on to the desk. (See page 8.)

overwhelming presence of the Big Noise. But he remembered that he had come on Micky's behalf, and pulled himself together. "I—I understand, Mr. Broadworth," he began, "that young Micky Denver, here, has been fired out o' the company."

"I have released him from his engagement, Gaylord," replied the producer evenly, "and I did it personally to save you the embarrassment, as you have become a sort of father to the lad. The matter's closed."

"No, sir!" cried Buddy. "I think, as his immediate boss, I've a kinder right to know why the kid was fired!"

"That I intended informing you," said Mr. Broadworth. "I discharged him for gross carelessness in the handling of that antique Indian vase you kired in Los Angeles. Now, I'm busy, and—"

"See here, Mr. Broadworth," said Buddy, warming up, "the kid ain't had a proper show. You've a reputation for treating folk square, and you ain't heard all sifes o' the case."

"I gave the lad an opportunity to explain any mitigating circumstances," said the producer, "but he was unable to—"

"Hear me, sir," broke in Buddy. "The kid was all shaken and overwhelmed at what he'd done. But I've heard from his own lips what made him drop that vase. D'you remember that guy who looks more like a monkey than a man whom you hired as one o' the toughs in 'The Vase o' Gunda Lal'? Well, that same guy suddenly poked his ape-like chivvy in the door o' the set just after the filming o' Scene Eight. Why, I'd have dropped the vase myself, and so would you have done, sir, if you'd never seen the ugly phiz o' Monkey White before!"

Monkey White! It was as though some obstruction in Micky's brain had burst to release a flood of memories. Now he understood why he seemed to have some knowledge of the ape-like man when he had seen him. The description which Smart Alec, the cracksman, had given him of his accomplice in the New York crime, whom he had called "Ginger" White, had left its impression on his mind.

Both the film-producer and the property-man noticed the startled look in Micky's eyes.

"What's phasing you, kid?" asked Buddy Gaylord. "Have you met this guy, Monkey White, before?"

"No," said Micky. "I haven't."

Then he relapsed into silence again.

For a few moments the great K. N. sat back at his desk, the tips of his fingers together, narrowly regarding Micky through those bizarre tortoiseshell spectacles of his. Then he turned to the property-man.

"I remember the man you mean, Gaylord," he said. "He was engaged specially by Romery for 'The Vase of Gunda Lal,' owing to his weird, villainous looks. However, I cannot consider that his sudden appearance before this lad constitutes a valid excuse for dropping a vase worth—"

"Four dollars-fifty!"

Buddy Gaylord's face was blazing excitedly as he shouted the remark.

Micky looked at him in astonishment, while Mr. Broadworth sprang to his feet and regarded his subordinate as though under the impression that Buddy had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"What the blazes do you mean, Gaylord?" he demanded. "I ordered you to obtain that antique Indian vase from old Shriner's junkstore in Los Angeles if it cost the company a thousand bucks a day for its hire. Why, I even signed a guarantee of insurance for sixty thousand before our notary public for you to give the curio-dealer!"

"I'm wise to all that, sir," said Buddy, quailing a trifle; "but I didn't carry out your instructions."

"You didn't! Phew!"

The great film-producer drew a large bandana handkerchief from his hip-pocket and mopped his brow.

He was in the habit of having his commands carried out implicitly, and the idea that his chief property-man could have deliberately disobeyed him on such a matter staggered even his relentless calm for a moment.

Buddy took his courage in both hands, determined to get his say in before the expected storm burst.

"It happened this way, Mr. Broadworth," he said. "You told me I was to get the real, genuine article for the production, and

so I went to see old Shriner. Unfortunately, he had just sold the vase, so I got the name o' the purchaser and called on him.

"I offered this collector guy as much as fifteen hundred bucks for the use o' that vase for two days, but he wouldn't let it go ten yards out o' his possession. Well, I talked to that collector till my throat was so dry his Japanese butler had to give me three gallons of grape-juice and water before I could say good-bye to him!"

Buddy wetted his lips reminiscently.

"Waal," he continued, "I just couldn't come back here and report failure, so that very day I went back and had another long pow-wow with that obstinate mutt. It was like trying to get a wrinkle out o' its shell with a walking-stick, inducing that collector to change his mind with persuasive perorations and making a noise like a wad o' greenbacks."

"Finally, knowing you were set on using that partic'lar-shaped ornament for 'The Vase o' Gunda Lal,' I got his permission to hike down there again with an assistant, and I reproduced it in painted plaster, so's I guess old Shriner himself wouldn't have told the genuine from the phoney one!"

Buddy threw out his chest in conscious pride at his impromptu achievement; but Mr. Broadworth frowned sternly.

"You didn't make it out of papier-mache so as not to give yourself away, I suppose—eh, Gaylord?" he said.

"Yep; that was the idea."

"I've a good mind to fire you for your confounded impertinence!" thundered the great producer. Then the crow'sfeet at the corners of his eyes rippled into a smile in spite of himself. "Well, the company's been saved a whole heap of money, so I mustn't be too hard. Get back to your work, Buddy, and take that young scamp with you!"

It was with joyful steps that the two left the producer's office and crossed the lot to the studio.

Buddy had saved Micky, though at some loss to his own reputation in one respect. However, the kindly little Props had been prepared to sacrifice something for the lad for whom he had taken so firm a liking,

and Micky duly appreciated the way in which he had come forward on his behalf.

When they reached the studio they found that the filming for the day on the production in hand had just finished, and Gaylord set Micky and two more of his assistants to work to replace in the stores the various properties which had been used in the sets.

Jeffrey J. Romery, the chief director, in the act of putting on his coat, noticed Micky and gave him a cheerful word.

"Hallo, kid!" he said. "Glad to see you back. I opined that K. N. was going to hand you your walking-ticket."

But if looks could have killed, Micky would have curled up on the spot when Floyd Unwin caught sight of him.

"Say, what the smoke are you doing back here, you young Britisher boob?" he started. "Didn't the boss tell you to hit the trail?"

Micky took no notice of the irate film-star, but went quietly on with his work, which was by far the best thing he could have done.

But Buddy Gaylord had seen the look and overheard the churlish words, and bore them in mind.

The sun, sinking in the West, was gilding the highest points of the San Gabriel foothills with a rich orange fire, and the scent of lovely semi-tropical flowers was heavy in the air as Micky walked homewards with his friend, the property-man, that evening.

In spite of the unpleasant memories which had been raised in his mind by the apparition of Monkey White, Micky was feeling too relieved at retaining his job at the studios to be other than in joyful mood. He had at times previously been rather worried by thoughts of his short and eventful acquaintance with Alec P. Figg, the crackman, and had more than once been on the point of reporting his knowledge of the man to the police. But on each occasion he had been deterred—firstly, owing to the fact that he had no definite charges to bring against the crook except his own evidence of the attempt to crack the safe in Kansas City; secondly, because it had not been desirable on his own account to expose his method of entry into the United States. He had kept his own counsel, and now, unless anything else occurred to induce him to change his mind, he intended remaining silent.

Buddy Gaylord strode along chatting merrily for a while, and then he broached the subject which had been worrying him since the afternoon.

"I say, Micky," he said, breaking a slight pause, "how is it you have been getting up against Floyd Unwin?"

Micky looked at Buddy's round, earnest face quizzically.

"Up against Floyd Unwin?" he echoed. "I've done nothing as far as I'm aware to annoy him."

"That be as it may, kid," said Buddy. "My own eyes and ears told me this afternoon he's got his knife in you. Now let me put you wise to that guy. He's a darned fine actor and a daredevil to boot, or he'd never have got to be a star in the Broadway outfit, as you kin guess. But there's something in his nature I never did cotton on to—something deep and underhand—and I reckon you'll be safer if you keep often his trail as much as possible. I never did like nor trust him—nor anyone else round the studio, for that matter—and the chin goods I heard him handing you out to-day didn't go no ways to improving my opinion of him."

"Some chaps can't help having rotten tempers," said Micky charitably, "so I don't take any notice."

"Words don't hurt people any, as a rule," said Buddy; "but Unwin's a man o' some considerable importance with our outfit, and so my advice to you is, 'Be keenerful!'"

Suddenly he slapped his knee.

"I'm next to it!" he cried. "Unwin's jealous o' you, Micky."

"Jealous? What the dickens do you mean?"

"He's jealous o' your having saved the life o' Mary Maidstone—jealous o' the fuss that's been made over you."

"Rot!"

"It's a lead-pipe cinch! Unwin's always tried to be the little candy kid where that gel's been concerned; but Mary's too almighty sensible. She's like the rest o' us—wise to his leisure stunts, such as 'hitting the pipe.'"

"I say, Buddy!" laughed Micky. "I think I'd better take a correspondence course in the American language. You've got me beaten this time!"

Buddy, when excited, was in the habit of relapsing deeper into the colloquialisms of his native land, and often he had to explain to the English lad many of the curious expressions he used.

"You don't know what 'hitting the pipe' is, eh, Micky?" he said good-humouredly. "Well, I hope you never will know—in practice. It's smoking opium. In most towns, and especially in the big cities o' the West, there are joints illegally run by Chinese where a man can hire a pipe, and smoke his senses into the dreams which the drug induces."

"So—so Unwin is an opium-smoker?" said Micky, in a strained voice.

"Yep. Since I've known the man I've seen his face get leaner and his eyes more deeply set and lifeless. He still performs his film stunts as well as ever he did, but if he doesn't cut out the opium, one day his nerves will give out, and then—"

Buddy shook his head meaningly, and walked the rest of the short distance home in thoughtful silence.

Without further discussion the two arrived at the property-man's cosy little home, and Chappie, who had to spend his time there during the day, came rushing out, followed slowly by Buddy's buxom spouse.

This was the happiest time of the day for the cinema workers, and also the supreme moment for little Chappie, who, yapping lustily, sprang again and again at his young master, pawing at him and wagging his stumpy tail, and running round and round in a perfect frenzy of delight.

On "Location."

ON the following morning, when the property-man and Micky arrived at the studios, they saw a fleet of motor-cars outside the premises.

Buddy had informed Micky that the day would be an interesting and a busy one, without, however, giving details. The sight of the cars, though, made him more communicative.

"Part o' the company's going out to 'location' in those automobiles," he said, with a wave of the hand. "We're going to film another scene in our great production, 'The Vase o' Gunda Lal,' and the 'location' is a rough piece o' ground about twelve miles to the south-east o' here. I'm going to send you out in charge o' the 'props,' and you kin check 'em as they come out o' the stores. Be mighty keenerful, or you'll have Jeff Romery on your trail. He goes off like a giant cracker on the fourth o' July if everything ain't jest so. I'll never forget the things he said to me once. For five solid minutes Jeff told me things about myself, and I guess he never once repeated himself. It was Mary Maidstone, bless her, who put me to rights with him again."

"What was it all about, Buddy?" asked Micky, as they walked towards the store sheds.

Buddy delicately took the paper from a slab of pepsin chewing-gum and inserted the gum into his mouth before replying.

"Waal, it was like this," he said. "I guess you know that all scenes for a production aren't filmed in their proper order. They do number four to-day, and maybe number nine to-morrow. On this partic'lar occasion No. 2 Scene, which was supposed to be the interior of a mountain shanty, was filmed in the studio, with Mary Maidstone figuring prominently. Three weeks afterwards No. 3 Scene was filmed in the mountains, forty miles from here, and depicted Mary running out o' what was supposed to be the same shanty as in No. 2. Got me?"

"Yes, I think I follow."

"Anyway, both o' those scenes were filmed," went on Buddy; "and after the pictures were developed and projected, what d'you think was shown in the reels?"

"Give it up, Buddy!"

"Waal, jest this! Mary Maidstone, wearing a house-frock and a pair o' low shoes with buckles, rushing out o' the door o' the shanty in Scene 2, and appearing a moment later outside the shanty in Scene 3 wearing the same frock, but a pair o' high boots. The whole o' the second reel had to be destroyed, and that little bloomer cost the company a couple o' thousand bucks for re-filming the scene at the same 'location' again, and I guess it would have cost me my job if Mary hadn't come forward and told

K. N. it was as much her fault as mine, she having been given charge o' the shoes."

At the stores Micky carefully checked all the 'props' of which he was to have charge, and then deposited them in the last of the motor-cars.

A few moments later Jeff Romery, the chief director, arrived on the scene, and began to bustle the rest of the cinema folk who were to go on "location" into the other cars. Among the people present Micky discerned a number of men in the garb of sheriff's officers, and also about a score of the most disreputable ruffians he had ever set eyes upon.

"They're a tough lookin' bunch o' hoboes, ain't they, kid?" remarked one of the camera men in the car with Micky. "Jeff hired the most o' them this mornin'. There's always two or three hundred guys o' all types waitin' around on the lot on the chance o' bein' taken on as supers."

From the camera man, too, Micky learned more about the production, "The Vase of Gunda Lal," the last scene of which was about to be filmed amidst the rocks of the San Gabriel foothills.

The story of the photo-play was an antique vase brought from the Far East by an Indian, Gunda Lal, and of the efforts to steal it by a daring collector, the part enacted by Floyd Unwin. The collector, after many daredevil attempts to become possessed of the vase, hires a gang of toughs to aid him, and succeeds in attaining his object. However, the Oriental vase has mysterious properties, and soon brings retribution to the unscrupulous collector and his bunch of thieves. In the last scene the gang are chased into the mountains by the sheriff and his officers, and a fierce fight takes place, in which some of the ruffians are killed and the rest captured.

It was this final scene of "The Vase of Gunda Lal" which was to be filmed on that lovely day among the Californian foothills.

Micky lounged back in the comfortable motor-car, proud of being in charge of the knives, six-shooters, and other "props," to be used in this exciting scene for the pictures.

Jeff Romery strode up the long line of cars, seeing that everyone and everything was ready for the start. When he approached them, the camera men and Micky reported "All correct," and the director was about to move away when an idea struck him.

"Say, Micky," he said, "I'd kinder like to have a dog in this big fight scene. D'you think Chappie would be tractable enough?"

"He'd do anything if I were near him all the time, sir," replied Micky.

"Good!" said Romery. "We'll call round at Buddy's place on our way, and pick him up. Now nip across to that dressing-room, and get into the most disreputable clothes you kin find. You'll have to get a move on for we start in five minutes. I'll give you your instructions for the scene when we get en 'location.'"

Bubbling over with delight at the prospect of actually appearing in a film scene with his little four-footed friend, Micky lost no time in jumping from the car and making for the dressing-room which Romery had indicated.

In less than the five minutes allotted he was back in the automobile with the camera men, looking as disreputable a rascal as any of those in the cars in front of him.

Micky was sorry to notice that Reggie Eton, the dude of filmland, was not of the party; but Mary Maidstone was in the first car with Floyd Unwin and two other actors. Then Jeff Romery, carrying his large megaphone, climbed into the car, and the whole fleet of automobiles started to move off.

As they drove from the lot a man in a car two ahead of Micky's half turned his head, and the lad recognised the gorilla-like features of Monkey White. The sight of the man sent a cold shiver through Micky, for it brought back memories of the crook, Alec P. Figg, and associations that the lad was only too anxious to forget.

But in a few moments the cars drew up near the residence of Buddy Gaylord, and Jeff Romery roared an order to Micky through his megaphone to "get a move on and get the dog."

But before even the car had stopped Micky had leaped out, and was darting through the garden round to the back of the house. There he found old Ah Mee, the Gaylord's Chinese servant, and of him Micky demanded the whereabouts of Chappie. Before, however, the Chinaman had time to reply, the little dog came dashing out of the house, having heard the sound of his master's voice.

Micky lost no time, but rushed back to the waiting car, with Chappie bounding along delightedly at his side.

Some of the leading cars were already moving as he arrived, and he hastily caught up the terrier in his arms and climbed into his seat. Then off the car darted after the others towards the San Gabriel foothills.

Southern California is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and during that grand twelve-mile ride Micky understood as never before the reason why that land had developed into the home of the world's greatest cinema activities.

The climate of Southern California is genial all the year round, and the atmosphere is so clear and dry as to be almost ideal for photography. At one period the land was inhabited by the Spaniards, and many beautiful old cloistered monasteries and dwelling-places remain to this day, and have been greatly used for filming purposes. Moreover, within easy reach of Los Angeles almost every type of scenery can be obtained for the camera, from rolling desert land to mighty snow-clad mountain peaks.

Only a few years ago private owners of suitable land, beautiful mansions, or picturesque shanties near Los Angeles were pleased to be honoured with the presence of the cinema folk, and were only too glad to have their possessions filmed.

But the days of free filming on private estates are over, and now exorbitant prices are usually demanded of cinema companies.

The place chosen for the last scene of the Broadworth production was a rugged piece of ground dotted with rocks and large cactus-bushes, and no sooner did the cars arrive at the selected spot than Jeff Romery set about his preparations for filming the picture.

The cameras were set up under Jeff's personal direction, while two assistant-directors marshalled the supers. Micky then handed out his "props" to the supers, working under the supervision of one of the assistant directors, and getting a receipt from each man for the articles supplied. He had quite forgotten Monkey White until that weird, ape-

like individual appeared in his turn, to obtain the six-shooter and couple of dozen rounds of blank which he had to use during the filming of the scene.

Each of the supers had been selected for his villainous-looking appearance, and Micky could hardly credit the assertion of the assistant-director that some of them had been working for the films in "two-dollar-a-day stuff" for two or three years.

Micky paid particular attention to the last man in the file, for he looked the greatest cut-throat of the lot. He was a slim individual with a bent back, a limp, and a growth of rough hair over his lips and chin, and he wore a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes.

He signed his name to a receipt, took the revolver and blank cartridges which Micky handed him, and turned away. As he did so he made a muttered remark about the property six-shooter he had received to the man in front of him.

"Say, bo, this is sure some shootin'-iron! I guess I shouldn't care to be heeled with this if a real posse o' sheriff's men were after me!"

At the sound of the voice Micky swung round with a start of surprise. Then with trembling fingers he raised the receipt in his hand. The name on the paper was the name of Jed Tomson, but the voice he had heard was the voice of Smart Alec, the cracksmán!

ANOTHER LONG INSTALMENT OF THIS MAGNIFICENT SERIAL STORY OF THE CINEMA WILL APPEAR IN NEXT FRIDAY'S "PENNY POPULAR."

BUNTER AND THE BONESETTER!

(Continued from page 6.)

"Hallo, porpoise!" said Skinner. "Hugging yourself with delight?"

"You rotters!" groaned Bunter. "Next time you think of a weeze you can jolly well play it yourselves!"

"Why, you have played your part fine, Billy!" said Skinner. "You even deceived the hypnotist chap himself!"

"Groogh! I wish I'd let him put me to sleep like Fish and Wun Lung!"

"Say, Billy," said Fish, "just you hand over my new Pittsburg watch I lent you to show the fellows before the lecture."

"Sha'n't!" growled Bunter.

Fish made a great spring, and bore the fat junior to the floor. Sore at his recent treatment at the hands of the Head, Billy Bunter used his hands and feet with great effect.

"Oooch!" gasped Skinner.

His ear had come into contact with Bunter's boot.

"You thieving galoot!" yelled Fish. "Yow!"

The last sudden remark was caused by Billy Bunter's fat fist meeting his waistcoat with the force of a small steam-hammer.

At last the two held the Owl securely. Fish ran his fingers into Bunter's pockets and drew out the watch.

"Now, seat!"

Not until he had reached the door of Study No. 7 did Billy Bunter dare to reply again.

"Yah, you beastly cads!" he yelled. "You can do your own rotten tricks in future!"

THE END.

(Another grand long story next week, entitled: "The Greyfriars Musicians!" Order your copy EARLY.)

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 7 1/2 inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy, 1st Class, JOHN TRAVERS 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.

Caught Redhanded!

A COMPLETE SHORT STORY OF ST. JIM'S.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Birthday Present.

"I've got it!"
Thus Tom Merry of the Shell at St. Jim's to his chums Manners and Lowther, who were scribbling away at an impot on the corners of the table in Study No. 19. The table was strewn with sheets of paper, and the busy whir of pens was the only sound that answered Tom Merry's remark.

"I've got it!" repeated the junior captain. Scratch, scratch!
Manners and Lowther paid no attention to their leader's remark; they were far too busy.

Tom Merry glared.
"I tell you I've got it!" he exclaimed warmly; and he emphasised his statement by bringing his fist down upon the study table.

Crash!
The inkpot danced uncertainly, and scattered a choice selection of blots over the sheets of paper Manners and Lowther had just completed.

"You burbling ass!"
"Look at my impot!"
Tom Merry did not seem to notice the damage he had caused, and the savage glares Manners and Lowther bestowed upon him were entirely lost in effect.

"Look at my blessed impot!" howled Monty Lowther.

"You dangerous lunatic!" roared Manners. "I shall have to do mine all over again!"

"I tell you I've got it!" murmured Tom Merry, whose thoughts were evidently far away.

"You'll jolly well get it in a minute, you ass!" said Lowther darkly. "My impot's ruined!"

"Blow your impot!"
"Eh?"
"What!"

"This isn't a time to be thinking of impots," said Tom Merry. "It's old Ralton's birthday!"

"Well, what about it?" demanded Manners warmly.

"I've been thinking!"
"Go hon!"
"Marvellous how he does it!" muttered Monty Lowther.

"And I think it's up to us," went on the junior captain, "to give him something—a present of—"

"My impot!" chimed in Monty Lowther. "He's welcome to it!"

"Never mind your blessed impot; old Knox can wait!" said Tom Merry.
"Humph!"

Manners was responsible for that grunt; he had his doubts about the advisability of keeping Knox waiting.

"What about giving old Ralton a box of cigars and some cigarettes?" resumed Tom Merry.

"Not a bad notion," conceded Lowther. "He's been a jolly good sport to us."

"Hear, hear!"
"What about funds?" ventured Manners. "Oh, that's all right! I had a remittance from home to-day!" replied the junior captain cheerfully.

"Good!" grunted Manners. "I'm absolutely stony!"

"Same here!" said Lowther.
"You can square up with me when you're in funds," said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!"
"I'll cut down to Rylcombe while you chaps are doing your lines. I shall be back in time for tea!"

And Tom Merry donned his cap and left the study.

"Next time you think of a brilliant idea, don't be so jolly emphatic about it!" exclaimed Lowther, after his retreating figure.

But Tom Merry did not hear that parting shot of his chum's; he was speeding away down the passage, and five minutes later was well on the road to Rylcombe.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and in the ordinary course of events Tom Merry & THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 58.

Co. would have been playing footer; but Knox had come down heavily on Manners and Lowther for making too much noise in the Shell passage, and those two cheerful juniors were given a task of Virgil apiece for that afternoon.

The unpopular prefect of the Sixth had been very much in evidence of late amongst the juniors, and as Tom Merry strode along the road to the village he racked his brains for a wheeze that would make Knox look small. It was in a very thoughtful frame of mind that the junior captain entered the tobacconist's at Rylcombe, and he came out of his reverie, so to speak, with a start as the shopkeeper inquired his business. Schoolboys were not often seen in the tobacconist's, and Tom Merry was not known to the proprietor.

"I—I want some cigars—" he began.
"Very good, sir!"
"And some cigarettes!"

"Yes, sir!"
And the shopkeeper drew out several boxes of cigars and cigarettes, over which Tom Merry bent his head to select Mr. Ralton's favourite brand.

A shadow fell across the open doorway, and Knox, the Sixth-Former, peered in. His eyes nearly started from their sockets when he saw the figure of a St. Jim's junior leaning over the counter, and Tom Merry at that.

Knox hastily withdrew, and a gleam of malicious triumph came over his face. He had caught Tom Merry purchasing cigarettes—caught him in the act. It seemed too good to be true!

"The little beast!" muttered the prefect. "I've bowled him out at last!"

And with that comforting reflection he settled himself down to wait for the junior's appearance.

Tom Merry was quite unaware that Knox of the Sixth had practically entered the tobacconist's and had stealthily withdrawn at sight of him, and after having settled his bill, the junior gathered up his parcels and left the shop.

As his foot touched the pavement outside a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder and swung him round, and Tom Merry came face to face with the bullying prefect.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Hasty Conclusions.

"I've caught you!" hissed Knox between his teeth. "Caught you in the act!"
Tom Merry flung the prefect's detaining arm aside.

"What are you burbling about?" he inquired calmly.

"I know what you've got there!" exclaimed the Sixth-Former.
"Go hon!"

The junior captain did not seem at all abashed, and the prefect marvelled at his coolness.

"I heard you ordering those smokes!" he growled. "I've suspected you of smoking for a long time now, and I knew I'd catch you one day!"

"Really?"
Tom Merry's tone was sarcastic, and the prefect's frown deepened as he watched his grinning face. Tom Merry did not look like a guilty fellow at that moment. Knox put it down to bluff; he had seen the junior in the tobacconist's, and that was good enough for him.

Quite a crowd of urcleins had collected round the two St. Jim's scholars, and they looked on with grinning faces.

"You're coming with me to the Head," muttered Knox, "and I'll trouble you for those parcels—you're not going to pitch them away over a hedge!"

"I'm certainly not going to pitch them over a hedge!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I've bought these smokes for—"

"Silence! Follow me to the school, Merry!" broke in the prefect.

"But I tell you I got them for—"

"Enough! You can explain your behaviour to the Head. Follow me!" bellowed Knox.

And he strode away in the direction of St. Jim's, with Tom Merry following in his wake.

If Knox wouldn't listen to reason he must take the consequences, thought the junior captain. His errand to the tobacconist's had been of an innocent nature; evidently the prefect thought otherwise, and Tom Merry decided to let him have his head.

Kildare, the captain of the school, passed Knox and Tom Merry at the gates, and he noticed the frown on the face of the prefect.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked.
"I'm taking Merry to the Head?" snapped Knox.

"What for?"
"Smoking!"

And Knox and Merry entered the gates, leaving Kildare staring after them in bewilderment.

"Come in!" came in Dr. Holmes's kindly tones as Knox tapped on his study door.

Tom Merry and the prefect marched in, and the Head looked up in surprise.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "Dear me! What have you brought Merry to me for, Knox?"

"It is my duty to report him, sir!"
"Indeed! For what?"

"Smoking, sir," snapped the prefect.
"Dear me! I can hardly believe it of you, Merry!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes.

"I wasn't smoking, sir!" said Tom Merry quietly.

"Where did you find Merry smoking, Knox?" demanded the Head.

"I—I caught him purchasing cigarettes at the tobacconist's in Rylcombe, sir!" he replied.

"But you said smoking!" rapped out Dr. Holmes severely. "There's a vast difference between smoking and purchasing cigarettes!"

"Y-yes, sir; but he was going to smoke them!" stuttered Knox. "I've had my suspicions about him for some time past."

"Indeed!" remarked the Head dryly.
"What have you to say, Merry?"

"It's quite true that I was in the tobacconist's, sir—" began the junior captain.

"There, sir; he admits it!" exclaimed Knox triumphantly.

"Silence, Knox!"
"But," went on the junior captain, "I went with the intention of buying smokes for Ralton—ahem!—I mean, Mr. Ralton, sir!"

"Did Mr. Ralton send you, my boy?" asked Dr. Holmes.

"No, sir. It's his birthday to-day, and we thought we would like to give him a present of some smokes," said Tom Merry colouring.

"He's telling lies!" exclaimed Knox heatedly.

"I'm not!" replied Tom Merry, with equal heat. "Manners and Lowther can prove that that was my intention."

The Head's glance rested on both of them, and then he spoke.

"I will take your word, Merry; and I consider it very thoughtful of you to give Mr. Ralton a present!"

"I can prove they are for Mr. Ralton," said Tom Merry, eagerly unfastening one of the packages. "You know his favourite brand is a Havana, sir?"

Dr. Holmes smiled.
"That is so."

Then Tom Merry held over the box of cigars for his inspection.

"Your proof is quite conclusive, my boy," said the Head. "As you say, they are Mr. Ralton's favourite brand."

"Thank you, sir!"
"You may go!"

Knox realised very clearly that he had made a complete fool of himself, and he would have been glad to have followed the retreating form of Tom Merry, but he was not to escape so soon.

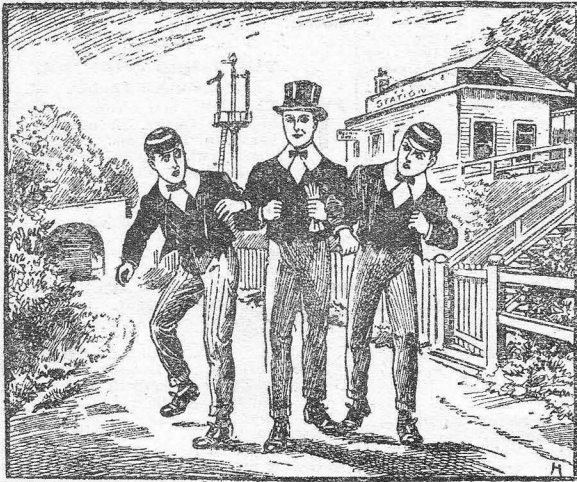
"Knox!" rapped out the Head.
"Y-yes, sir!"

"You should not be so hasty in your conclusions. On the flimsiest evidence possible you have accused Merry of breaking a rule of the school. This points to a strong prejudice on your part, Knox, and it won't do. You understand?"

"Ye-es, sir!"
"Then don't let it occur again! You may go!"

And Knox went without a word, but with an inward determination to "take it out of the little beast" at some distant date.

Mr. Ralton received his present with a little note appropriate to the occasion, and Tom Merry & Co. chuckled amongst themselves over the trouble Knox had let himself in for through his usual hasty method of jumping to conclusions.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Too Much Self-denial.

WHAT do you Modern bounders want?"

"What do you Classical bounders want?"

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd asked one another those questions simultaneously.

They had just arrived outside Mr. Bootles' study.

It was close on time for afternoon lessons at Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Classical Fourth, came down the passage from one direction; Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, came from the other. And they met just outside Mr. Bootles' study.

Classicals and Moderns eyed one another suspiciously.

"You cut off," said Jimmy Silver authoritatively. And his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, chimed in emphatically:

"Cut off!"

To which Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle answered in chorus:

"Rats!"

There were four of the Classicals. But the three Tommies stood their ground. They were quite ready for a "scrap," even just outside their Form-master's door.

"None of your butting in here!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver wrathfully. "I can jolly well guess what you're after!"

"I think I can guess what you're after, too!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"We're going to ask Bootles—"

"Exactly! And we're going to ask Bootles!"

"About the new chap?"

"Exactly! About the new chap."

"We're going to get off lessons, and go to meet him!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha! So are we!"

"You're jolly well not! Bootles won't give leave to seven chaps!"

"You cut off, then!"

"Rats! You cut off!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Now, look here," said Jimmy Silver darkly. "We don't want any of your Modern rot. You'll cut off, or we shall shift you!"

And the three Tommies replied cheerily:

"Go ahead!"

"I give you one minute!"

"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver took out his silver watch with a determined air to time them. The Fistical Four of the Classical Form meant business.

But so did the three Tommies.

There was a great deal at stake.

A new fellow was coming to Rookwood that afternoon—a new boy for the Fourth Form. Whether he was going to be on the Classical or the Modern side the juniors did not know. But they knew he was coming.

Not that new boys, as a rule, mattered much. New boys could come and go in flocks and herds, as a rule, without attracting much notice from Jimmy Silver & Co.

But this particular new boy was something special.

His name was Van Ryn, and he came from South Africa. As Jimmy Silver said, it was

a long, long way from South Africa to Rookwood. The new fellow, it was understood, had met friends in London, and they had put him in the train for Coombe. But, according to Jimmy Silver, the new kid, though only a new kid, had a right to expect somebody at the station to look after him after such a tremendous journey. Jimmy Silver, with great self-denial, was prepared to "cut" lessons that afternoon, and go down to the station for that kind purpose.

His chums, equally self-denying, were prepared to let geography and English history and the French lesson "slide," all for the sake of looking after a perfect stranger.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, could not fail to be touched by such self-denial on the part of his pupils, Jimmy Silver considered. He was really bound to give them leave to carry out their generous purpose.

An afternoon out of doors, in the fine weather, would be quite a sufficient reward for the self-denying juniors. Indeed, it was barely possible that the Fistical Four were thinking more of the afternoon out than of the comfort of the new boy, of whose existence they had only heard that morning.

Unfortunately, the same thought of self-denial had come into Tommy Dodd's active mind, and the three Moderns had arrived at Mr. Bootles' study with exactly the same purpose in view.

It was really a contest of self-denial, and neither party had any intention of giving way.

Jimmy Silver watched the big hand on his watch grimly.

The three Tommies occupied the interval of waiting by pushing back their cuffs, ready for combat.

"Time's up!" announced Jimmy.

"Go hon!"

"Are you going?"

"I don't think!"

"Then go for the Modern bounders!" shouted Jimmy.

There was a rush of the Classicals.

"Back up!" roared Tommy Dodd.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Punch! Pommel! Punch! Yell!

The expected new boy was quite forgotten now. Classicals and Moderns closed in deadly strife.

"Yah! Oh!"

"Yaroooh! Take that!"

"Yoop! Classical rotter! Yow-ow!"

"Grooh! Modern cad! Yow!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The study door opened. The juniors had forgotten Mr. Bootles. The Fourth Form-master was generally a good-tempered little gentleman. But there was wrath in his face as he threw open his study door.

"Boys!" he thundered.

"Yaroooh!"

Bump, bump!

"Boys!" shrieked Mr. Bootles.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Chuck it!"

The combat ceased suddenly.

Tommy Dodd and Raby were sprawling on

HOW VAN RYN .. CAME TO .. ROOKWOOD!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

A MAGNIFICENT LONG
COMPLETE STORY OF
JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE
CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

the floor. They sat up and blinked at the Form-master.

"Silver! Dodd! Lovell! How dare you fight in the passage!"

"Ahem!"

"Grooh!"

"I am ashamed of you! You will take two hundred lines each!"

"Oh!"

"And stay in an hour after lessons to write them out!"

"Oh!"

"And now go into the Form-room at once!"

"Oh, dear!"

"If you please, sir—" began Jimmy Silver, remembering his self-denying intentions.

"Not a word!" rapped Mr. Bootles.

"If you please—" began Tommy Dodd.

"Go!"

"The—the new kid, sir," stammered Jimmy Silver. "We were going to ask leave to meet him at the station—"

"What—what!"

"He's bound to feel a bit lonely, coming all the way from South America—I mean South Africa!"

"And we wanted—" began Tommy Dodd.

"Sure, we were thinking—" stuttered

Doyle.

"If you please, sir—"

"You see, sir—"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Bootles. "Do not deafen me with clamour!"

"Ahem! Certainly not! But—"

"But, you see, sir—"

"It's like this, sir—"

"The new chap—"

"Silence! I had intended," rumbled Mr. Bootles, "to send some members of my Form to meet the new junior and bring him to Rookwood. But I shall certainly not send such noisy, rowdy, and disorderly members of the Fourth Form as yourselves. Go into the Form-room at once, or I shall cane you!"

And the rivals of Rookwood, dabbling their noses and setting their collars straight, went—dolorously. There was no self-denial for the heroes of Rookwood that afternoon.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Schoolboy from South Africa.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were looking quite "down" when Mr. Bootles came majestically into the Form-room a little later.

Tommy Dodd & Co. looked glum.

It had been a good idea for getting an afternoon off—a ripping idea; but, unfortunately, the old saying, that great minds run in grooves, had proved true again. That ripping idea had occurred to both Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, and the result had been disastrous.

Instead of an afternoon off, the heroes of Rookwood had an hour's detention. It was exceedingly hard-chaese.

Most of the Fourth, however, when they learned of the disaster, seemed to see something comic in it, for they were grinning at a great rate when the Form-master came in.

Townsend & Co., the Nuts of the Fourth, seemed especially amused.

Mr. Bootles glanced at the seven damaged juniors, who showed very plain traces of the scrap outside his study. But he did not speak to them. There was no hope for the delinquents.

"Townsend! Topham!" said Mr. Bootles. The two Nuts of the Fourth rose in their places.

"I am about to ask you to render me a service," said Mr. Bootles.

Towny and Topy exchanged cheery glances. They could guess what was coming, and they rejoiced. They were not particularly "gone" on lessons, and they welcomed the prospect of a free run for the afternoon.

"A new boy arrives at Rookwood this afternoon," said Mr. Bootles. "I should like two boys to meet him at Coombe Station and bring him to the school. I have selected you, Townsend and Topham, because you are quiet and well-behaved."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Towny.
 "Thank you, sir!" said Topham.
 "Oh, what luck!" growled Jimmy Silver.
 And Tommy Dodd snorted.

"The new boy," pursued Mr. Bootles, "is named Van Ryn. He comes from a great Colony—South Africa. I wish you to meet him, Townsend and Topham, and conduct him to Rookwood, and treat him with great civility. He will be quite a stranger to our ways, and I am sure I can depend upon you to refrain from any absurd jokes, such as are sometimes, I believe, practised on new boys, and to give him a very good impression of Rookwood manners."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Topham.
 "You can rely on us, sir!" said Townsend.
 "We shall be delighted!"

"Very good! You will be excused from lessons for the purpose," said Mr. Bootles.

"Thank you, sir!"
 "Van Ryn arrives, I understand, by the three o'clock train at Coombe. If he should be later, however, you will wait for him."
 "Certainly, sir!"

"You will take him to my study when you return. You may go!"

And Towny and Topy left the Form-room in great delight. Then the afternoon lessons began for the rest of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd gave one another quite a dispirited look. It was really hard luck.

And, as a matter of fact, Mr. Bootles would have done better to choose Tommy Dodd or Jimmy for that mission.

It was quite possible that those cheery youths would have "pulled" the new fellow's leg in a humorous way, but they could have been depended on to treat him well. That was not quite the case with Townsend and Topham. But Mr. Bootles did not know Towny and Topy quite so well as their Form-fellows did.

Townsend and Topham grinned at one another as they took their caps and went out into the quadrangle.

"What a little bit of luck!" grinned Townsend. "No blessed lessons this afternoon! Mornington would have liked to come, too. He tried to catch Bootles' eye."

"Never mind, Morny," said Topham. "We're off! Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd dished one another. Ha, ha! And we've bagged the holiday!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The two Nuts of the Fourth started down Coombe Lane in great spirits.

"We can't have a bit of a run this afternoon," remarked Townsend. "I suppose we'd better drop in at the station, and just speak to the new cad."

"Oh, yes! Bootles will want to know."
 "I wonder what he's like," remarked Townsend. "He's got a Dutch name, and he comes from South Africa. Must be a Boer."

"Some rough-and-ready rotter, I expect," said Topham, with a sniff. "If Bootles thinks we're goin' to pal with him, Bootles is jolly well mistaken! But he comes in useful to get us off lessons. Might rag him a bit to pass the time."

"H'm! Some big, brawny chap, I expect, with a fist like a leg of mutton," said Townsend doubtfully.

"Well, we're two to one."
 "Yaas, that's so. We'll rag him!" agreed Townsend.

If Mr. Bootles could have heard that agreeable conversation he might have regretted that he had not sent Jimmy Silver or Tommy Dodd, in spite of the fustical proclivities of those young gentlemen.

Towny or Topy were not at all fustical in THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 58.

their tastes, it was true. But they were quite ready to rag a newcomer who did not know the ropes when it was quite safe for them to do so.

They arrived at the station in very good time, and improved the shining hour by extracting packets of cigarettes from an automatic machine. That was one of Towny's and Topy's pleasant little ways.

Then the train came in.
 "Look out for some beefy boulder in a slouch hat!" grinned Townsend.

"And number eleven boots!" chortled Topham.

But there was no one in a slouch hat and number eleven boots among the passengers who alighted from the train.

There was only one boy among the passengers, and he was in Etons and a silk hat. Evidently this was the new boy.

Townsend and Topham glanced at him in surprise.

He was a lad of their own age, and somewhat, slimly built, though his limbs were solid and strong. His face was darkly sunburnt, and he had thick, dark curly hair. His eyes were a deep blue, and very keen and strong in their glance. The expression on his face was sunny and good-tempered.

Towny and Topy had had a vague idea that all Boers were big-boned, heavy, and lumbering. But the newcomer, as he stepped from the train, looked as lithe and as active as an antelope.

He glanced about the platform, and his eyes fell on the two Rookwood juniors.

Mr. Bootles had told the Nuts of the Fourth to treat the newcomer with great civility, in order to give a good impression of Rookwood manners. But Towny and Topy had their own ideas about carrying out those instructions.

"That's the cad!" said Townsend, loud enough for the new boy to hear.

"Yaas, that's the rotter!" said Topham. The newcomer flushed under the tan on his cheeks, and looked at them harder.

"A dashed Boer!" said Townsend. "Nearly as black as a nigger, too! I dare say he is a bit of a nigger!"

"Looks like it, by gad!" agreed Topham. "I wonder whether he speaks English," pursued Townsend calmly. "I suppose he talks some kind of broken lingo."

"Like a Hum," agreed Topham.
 "Yaas, that is so."

Every word of those cheery remarks was perfectly audible to the new boy. The Nuts grinned as they saw his handsome face flush with anger.

Having made themselves agreeable to this extent, Townsend and Topham walked towards the new boy.

"New kid for Rookwood—what?" yawned Townsend.

"Van Tromp, or Van Bomp, or somethin'—what?" asked Topham.

Van Ryn looked at them without replying. He seemed puzzled what to make of them.

"We've come here to meet you," explained Topham. "Our Form-master sent us. As you probably don't speak English, you want lookin' after."

The new boy grinned.
 His keen, clear eyes had taken the measure of Townsend and Topham. There was a peculiar glimmer in his eyes as he nodded.

"Me speak some little English," he said. Townsend and Topham chuckled.

They had not really supposed that the new boy could not speak English; that was only their exquisite Nutty humour. But the supposition seemed to be well founded, after all.
 "Excuse me!" gasped Townsend. "What did you say?"

"Me speak some English."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Vat for you laff?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Me soon learn speak him at Rookwood, ain't it?" pursued the new boy. "Me speak Dutch first-chop."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Topham. "That new merchant will make 'em yell at Rookwood! Ha, ha!"

"No see why Mynheer laff," said the new boy, looking puzzled.

"Mynheer!" shrieked Townsend. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mynheer! Oh crumbs!"
 "Mynheer! That's the Dutch way of saying 'Mein Herr!' What language do you talk when you're at home, kid? Dutch or Hottentot?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Your box, sir?" said the porter.

"Send it to Rookwood," said Townsend.
 "This chap is goin' to walk with us!"

Van Ryn slipped a shilling into the old porter's hand, picked up a small bag, and followed the Nuts of the Fourth from the station.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Catching a Tartar.

TOWNSEND and Topham were in hilarious spirits. A new fellow who came to Rookwood talking broken English was a new experience. Van Ryn was, as Townsend remarked, a real cough-drop.

"You show me way to Rookwood, ain't it?" asked the new boy, as the Nuts paused outside the station.

"Not just yet," said Townsend. "You see, we've been let off lessons to fetch you. If we go straight back we shall have to go into the Form-room again. We're goin' to let Bootles think you came by a later train!"

"Who Pootles?"

"Pootles!" yelled Topham. "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Mr. Bootles is our Form-master," chuckled Townsend. "Now we're goin' round the town a bit. You wait here!"

"Y' me wait?"

"Because we don't want to be bothered all the afternoon by an African savage," said Townsend politely. "We're goin' round the town. We'll come back for you and take you to the school in a couple of hours. See?"

"No want to wait."

"It isn't a question of what you want, but of what we want. And if Bootles asks you what train you came by, tell him the half-past four!"

"Me come by tree o'clock train."

"Yaas, I know you did, you fathead! But if Bootles knows that he'll expect us to get back before lessons are over. You'll tell him you came by the half-past four, and then if we get back to Rookwood by five it will be all serene!"

The new boy's eyes gleamed for a moment.
 "No tell lies," he said.

"You cheery cannibal!" growled Townsend.
 "You'll do as you're told!"

"No tell lies to Pootles!"

"I'll Pootles you if I have any of your cheek!" said Townsend angrily. "Now you stay here, and we'll come back for you at half-past four. If you don't do as you're told, you'll get a hidin', you silly Hottentot! Savvy?"

Townsend and Topham turned away. It was a glorious opportunity for sneaking into the Bird-in-Hand by the back way, and enjoying the society of their sporting friends there. The Nuts of the Fourth did not mean to miss that opportunity.

But as they started off in one direction the new boy started off in another. He did not apparently want to spend an hour and a half waiting outside the village station.

Townsend swung round.
 "Come back, you Kaffir!" he shouted.

Van Ryn looked round.
 "Me go to Rookwood," he said.

"Haven't I told you you're to stay here?"
 "You goes and eats coke, isn't it?"

"Well, my hat! You cheery rat—"
 "Look here," said Topham, "we're goin' to leave you here, and if you don't wait for us you'll get a hidin'!"

"Hats!"
 "Do you want the hidin' first!" growled Townsend.

The new boy grinned.
 "No wait," he said.

"Then we'll jolly well give you a lesson to start with! Collar him, Topy, and bump the cheery cad!"

Townsend and Topham were exasperated. The afternoon off would be quite spoiled if they had to carry out Mr. Bootles' instructions. They did not see why the new boy could not wait at the station till they condescended to return for him. Apparently the new boy did.

Townsend and his chum grasped Van Ryn, with threatening looks.

"Now, are you goin' to do as you're told, or are you goin' to have a jolly good bumpin'?" demanded Townsend.

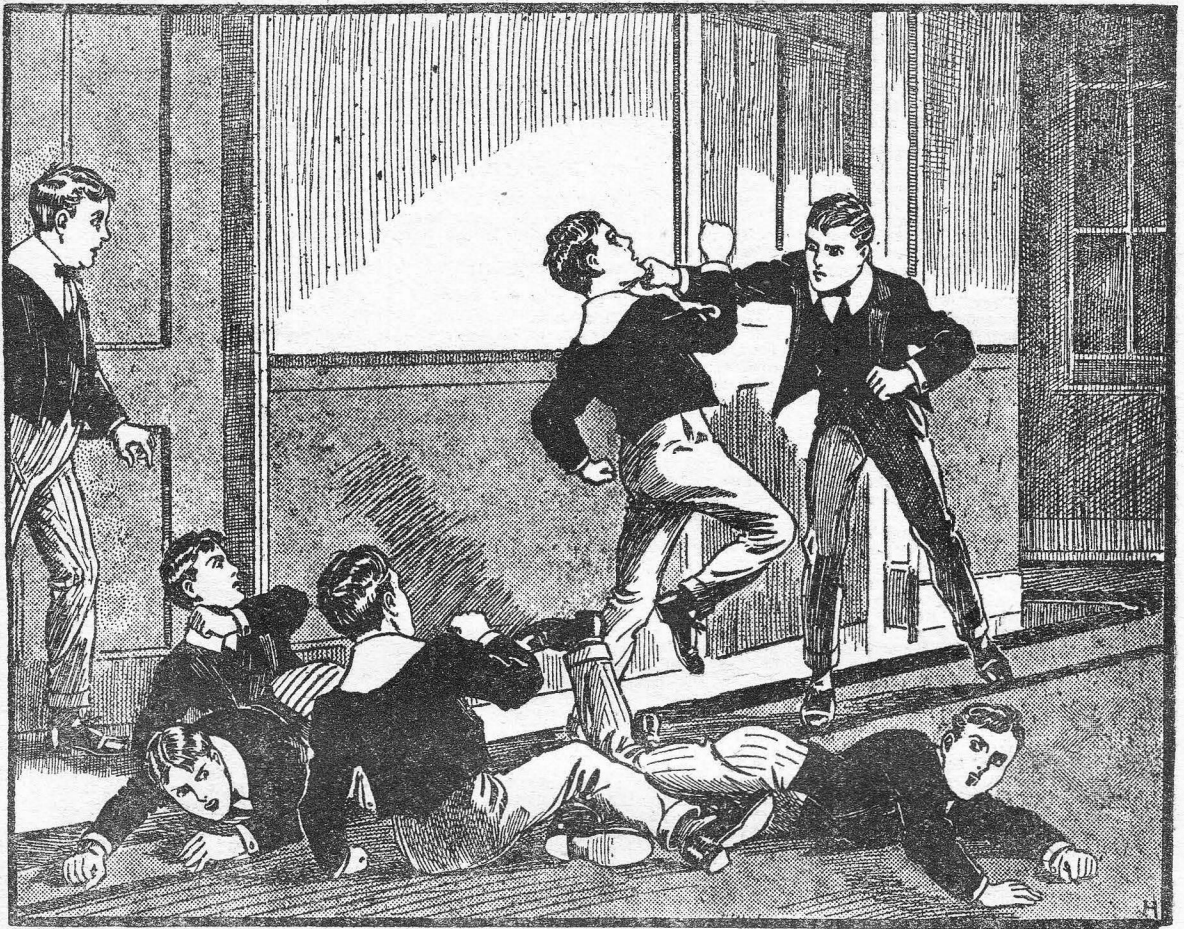
"You take dem hands off me!"
 "Yes or no, you Hottentot?"

"No!"
 "Bump him!" growled Townsend.

They dragged at the new boy. Van Ryn promptly returned grasp for grasp, and, to their surprise, Towny and Topy were dragged together, and their heads came in contact with a resounding crack.

Crack!

"Oh, by gad!"
 "Yow-ho!"



Higgs hit out like a steam-hammer. The yelling ragers rolled right and left from his terrific drives, amid a chorus of howls and groans. In about a minute the Nuts were strewn about the passage. (See page 18.)

Then Towny and Topsy sat down suddenly on the pavement.

The new boy grinned down at them good-humouredly.

"I tinks tat you not pump me," he remarked.

"Yow-ow-ow! You beastly Boer!"

"Yooop! You rotten Dutchman! Oh dear!"

"You gets up and have some more, isn't it?" grinned Van Ryn.

Townsend and Topham got up, but they did not want any more. They regarded the new boy with mingled rage and alarm, but they showed no desire to come to close quarters again.

"What a rotten strong beast!" growled Topham.

"You puts up der hands, isn't it?" said Van Ryn, advancing on them.

"Keep off, you savage!" yelled Townsend, in alarm.

"Hands off, you Dutch rotter!"

The Nuts of the Fourth backed away in alarm.

"No want to scrap, Mynheer?"

"No, you beast!"

"Keep your-distance, you rotter! I want nothin' to do with you!" roared Topham, rubbing his head.

"Den you takes me to Rookwood, I tink."

"You rotter! We're not goin' back to Rookwood yet. Look here, you can come with us if you like," said Townsend. "You—you needn't wait at the station if you don't want to. We let you off that."

"Tank you for nothin', Mynheer!"

"Well, come on!" growled Townsend ungraciously. "We're goin' to have rather a good time, and you can come."

"But Bootles expects us."

"Blow Bootles! You can tell him you came by the four-thirty."

"No tell lies!"

"Jolly particular for an African savage,

ain't we?" sneered Townsend. "Well, you can jolly well tell Bootles what you like, but we're not goin' back yet. You can come with us if you like. Do you smoke?"

"Nein, nein!"

"Oh, what a washy waster!" snorted Townsend. "Do you know how to play nap?"

"Nein."

"Then we'll teach you. You'll have to keep it dark, of course. Come on!"

"No come!"

"Then go and eat eoke! Come on, Towny; we'll chance it."

Van Ryn stepped forward and grasped Townsend's arm with one hand and Topham's with the other. They glared at him.

"Let go, you cad! What do you want?" howled Topham.

"No know vay to school. You come and show."

"Catch us!"

"Me caught you," said Van Ryn cheerfully.

"Leggo!"

"You gum wiz me, ain't it?"

"Will you let go?" said Townsend sulphurously. "We'll point out the way!"

"No good enough. You tell lies."

"Why, you checky Hottentot—"

"Gum on!" said Van Ryn cheerfully.

He had linked his arms with those of the two Nuts, and wriggle as they would, Townsend and Topham could not unlink them.

They exchanged furious looks across the Boer.

They were two to one, and Van Ryn was no bigger than either of them. But they were aware that he was a decidedly tough customer—their heads were still ringing from the late concussion. Towny and Topsy sincerely repented by this time that they had started ragging the junior from South Africa. They had caught a Tartar, as they realised too late.

"Look here, we're not comin'!" said Topham-
feelably.

"I tink you gum."

"Will you let us go?" shrieked Townsend.

"I tink not."

"You rotten Dutchman! Yow-ow-ow! Don't twist my arm like that, you ruffian!" yelled Townsend.

"You gum?"

There was no help for it. Towny and Topsy had to "gum," as the new junior expressed it.

With feelings that were too deep for mere words, the Nuts of the Fourth started for Rookwood, their arms linked in those of the new boy.

Van Ryn walked along cheerfully between them, heedless of their black looks and mutterings of vengeance.

And he did not let go their arms till they arrived at the school and walked in at the gates of Rookwood.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Not a Hun!

TOWNSEND and Topham came back into the Fourth Form room in time for last lesson. They had left Van Ryn in Mr. Bootles' study, and were glad to get rid of him there. Their arms were still aching from his grip, and each of them had a bump on his head.

The afternoon off had not been very enjoyable for the Nuts of the Fourth, after all, and they were feeling a deep and bitter animosity towards the new boy. Mr. Bootles glanced at them as they came sullenly in. They had no choice but to turn up in the Form-room as they had come back to Rookwood.

"You have met the new junior?" asked Mr. Bootles.

"Yes, sir. Left him in your study."

"Very good!"

Townsend and Topham went to their places. Some of the juniors looked at them anxiously. It was trouble.

"What's the giddy Colonial like?" whispered Higgs to Townsend as the latter sat down. "A rotten beast!" growled Townsend. "I believe he's a rotten German. He talks like one!"

"If he's a Hun, we'll jolly soon make Rookwood too hot to hold him," said Higgs. "I'll see that merchant after lessons and talk to him."

Townsend knew very well that the South African junior was not a German, but it was his idea to put the bully of the Fourth on Van Ryn's track. There was only one fellow in the Fourth who could stand up to Higgs and that was Jimmy Silver. If Higgs started on Van Ryn, the new boy was likely to suffer severely for handling Towy and Topy in Coombe.

"It's up to you, Higgy," whispered Topham encouragingly. "You show the cad what we think of Germans here."

"What ho!" said Higgs. Mr. Bootles glanced round, frowning. "Someone is talking in class!" he said. That fact had just dawned upon Mr. Bootles. The discussion ceased, but Towy and Topy exchanged glances of satisfaction. They felt assured of vengeance now.

When the Fourth Form was dismissed seven unfortunate juniors had to remain behind. The Fistical Four and the three Tommies were detained until half-past five.

The rest of the Fourth streamed out. Mr. Bootles went at once to his study, where the new boy was waiting for him to be at leisure.

Several fellows gathered round Townsend and Topham to ask them how they had got on with the South African. Nobody at Rookwood had seen the new boy yet. The Nuts of the Fourth did not lose the opportunity of instilling prejudice into the juniors' minds against the new fellow. From their description of him, Van Ryn might have been a hooligan of the deepest dye. And Townsend was convinced—or professed to be—that he was in reality a Hun.

"An ugly, prizefightin' beast!" said Towy. "Talks broken-English, German through and through—spy, very likely!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Dick Oswald. "Bootles said he was a Colonial."

"Wait till you hear him talk, then!"

"Wait till he comes out of Bootles' study," said Higgs. "I'll put him through it. I'll make him answer up!"

"Better let him alone," said Oswald. "Oh, you go and eat coke!"

Quite a number of juniors gathered in the passage for Van Ryn to appear. Higgs declared that he was to be taken into the Common-room, and there put through his paces. And no one present cared to gainsay the heavy-handed bully of the Fourth.

Mr. Bootles' door opened at last, and the new boy appeared. Mr. Bootles signed to Tubby Muffin.

"Muffin, Van Ryn will share your study—No. 3. Kindly take him there. And show Van Ryn any little attentions you can, Muffin."

"Yes, sir," said Tubby Muffin. Mr. Bootles retired into his study and closed the door. Tubby Muffin looked the new junior over critically, and as he looked pretty prosperous, Tubby decided to be friendly. A study-mate with ready money was just what Tubby wanted, and Tubby would have taken the Kaiser himself as a study-mate, with plenty of cash attached.

"Come in, kid!" said Tubby politely. But before Tubby could proceed any farther with his friendly attentions, Higgs, shouldered him out of the way, and Tubby Muffin collapsed on the floor with a yelp.

Higgs strode up to the new boy with his most bullying expression on his face.

"So you're the Hun!" he exclaimed. Van Ryn stepped back a pace.

"Listen to his English!" jeered Topham. "You'll soon see whether he's a Hun or not!"

Van Ryn grinned. "Me not Hun!" he grinned. "Me Dutch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. "Oh, my hat!" gasped Higgs. "What English! Haven't you ever been to school?"

"Ja, ja!"

"Ja, ja!" mimicked Higgs. "A Hun, right enough. Bring him into the Common-room!"

The juniors gathered round Van Ryn, and he was hustled down the passage into the junior Common-room—a quarter generally safe from the masters and prefects.

The new boy seemed inclined to resist at first, but he decided to go quietly. The juniors, Classical and Modern, streamed into the Common-room after him.

"Shut the door!" commanded Higgs.

Townsend closed the door, grinning. The new boy was going to pay the piper now. Towy and Topy rejoiced.

"Now you're going to answer up," said Higgs.

Van Ryn looked at him quietly. "My idea," pursued Higgs, "is that you're a rotten Hun, sneaking in here as a Dutchman!"

"Nein, nein!" roared Higgs. "Ha, ha, ha! That's German!"

"May be Dutch, too," said Oswald. "Oh, rats! He's a German!" said Higgs positively. "Anyway a Boer is the next thing to a German!"

"You lie!" said the new boy directly. "What!"

"You are a liar!" said Van Ryn calmly. The juniors stared at him. There was no trace of his weird accent in his voice now. Townsend and Topham could scarcely believe their ears.

"Hallo! You can talk English when you loike, you gossoon!" exclaimed Flynn. Van Ryn laughed.

"Of course I can talk English!" he exclaimed. "I was brought up to speak both Dutch and English at home. Those two fellows met me at the station, and before even speaking to me said that I should speak broken English. So I spoke broken English to pull their silly legs."

"Oh, by gad!" ejaculated Townsend. "You spoofin' cad!" exclaimed Topham savagely.

There was a loud laugh. Townsend and Topham, in their description of the new boy, had laid particular stress on the German accent and the broken English. It was one of the chief counts in their indictment against the new fellow. And it was not agreeable to discover that the South African had been "pulling their leg" all the time.

"Well, you silly gossoons, to be taken in by a new kid!" exclaimed Flynn. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you were pulling my leg, too, just now in the passage?" exclaimed Higgs.

Van Ryn nodded. "Yes. As you seemed the same kind of silly ass, I pulled your silly leg in the same way," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's one for you, Higgy!" chuckled Jones minor.

Higgs flushed with rage. He was far too important a person to have his leg pulled—in his own estimation, at least.

Van Ryn was showing no sign of uneasiness, though the burly bully of the Fourth fairly towered over him.

Higgs' hands were clenched and his eyes were gleaming.

"You cheeky cad—" he began. "Well, you have cheeked me," said Van Ryn. "One good turn deserves another, you know. I do not want to quarrel with you."

"You won't have much choice about that, if you don't mind your p's and q's," said Higgs darkly. "I'm going to ask you some questions, and if you don't satisfy me, you'll be put through it!"

"I do not mind answering questions. But about being put through it, I should have something to say about that."

"And so should I," said a cheery voice at the door. And Jimmy Silver came into the Common-room, followed by his chums.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Fight to a Finish.

HIGGS scowled at Jimmy Silver. Jimmy's detention had given him a chance of bullying without being called to account; but Mr. Bootles had been occupied so long with the new boy that Jimmy's detention was over before the bully of the Fourth could carry out his amiable intentions.

"Don't shove your oar in here, Silver," growled Higgs. "This cheeky young bounder is going to give an account of himself."

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy. "We'll see fair play."

"You'll mind your own business," roared Higgs.

"This is my business," said Jimmy calmly. "Trust your Uncle James to keep an eye on you, Alfred, my boy!"

Higgs snorted. Jimmy Silver seated himself on the corner of the big table, and looked on. Jimmy rather liked Van Ryn's looks; but even if

(Continued on next page.)

Dishing the Fourth!

A Short Story of St. Jim's

"WHAT about raiding those Shell bouncers to-night?"

Jack Blake asked the question of his chums Digby, Herries, and D'Arcy as they were seated in Study No. 6.

"Wathah, deah boy!" exclaimed Gussy. "They've been cowering wathah too much lately."

"I'm on!" said Digby. "And me!" exclaimed Herries, ungrammatically.

"Half an hour after lights out, then," said Jack Blake.

"By Jove! We'll make those bouncers sit up and take notice!" exclaimed Herries.

"Wather, deah boy!"

Had the chums of Study No. 6 seen Baggy Trimble at that moment, however, they might have been of a different opinion.

Baggy had been listening to the arrangement through the keyhole, and he was now sauntering along the passage, rubbing his fat hands with glee.

He made his way to the Shell passage and knocked on the door of Study No. 10.

"Come in, fathead!"

Baggy opened the door and stepped in. "Oh, it's you, is it?" snapped Monty Lowther. "What are you after?"

Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, and Manners shot inquiring glances at the fat junior.

"I suppose you fellows would be prepared to give me five shillings for some valuable information?" said Baggy pleasantly.

"Something wrong with your supposer, then?" snapped Tom Merry.

"Oh, really—"

"Sent!"

"All right, then," exclaimed Baggy angrily. "I sha'n't tell you that Blake & Co. are going to raid your dormitory to-night!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! D'you think there's anything in it?" asked Manners quickly.

"Come in farther!" invited Tom Merry, more amiably, as Baggy moved towards the door.

The fat junior turned at once in response, and accepted with alacrity Lowther's invitation to help himself from the bag of jam puffs upon the table.

"So that's it!" remarked Tom Merry, when Baggy had reported his valuable information. Baggy was dissatisfied with his reward, but he could not claim anything further, as he had given the whole business away.

"We shall have to make preparations for our dear friends of the Fourth," remarked Monty Lowther, when Baggy had taken his departure.

"Yes. What about this?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

And he proceeded to unfold a simple plan. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The very stunt! We'll pepper 'em!"

The idea was received with approval. According to arrangement, half an hour after lights out that night, a large company of Fourth-Formers, led by Jack Blake & Co., crept noiselessly from the Fourth dormitory and made their way to the Shell dormitory.

"All ready?" whispered Blake, with his hand upon the knob of the door when they reached their destination.

"All serene!"

Blake turned the handle quietly, and pushed open the door.

"Grrrr! A-a-atishoo!"

"A-a-a-tishoooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Roars of laughter rang out in the Shell dormitory, while in the doorway one after another of the Fourth-Formers commenced sneezing violently. The tin of pepper had fallen upon the leaders of the expedition.

"A-a-a-tishoo! A-a-a-tishoo!"

Tom Merry led an attack against them when the sneezing was at its height, and they retreated in stumbling disorder, gasping and sneezing as they ran.

Long after they reached their own dormitory once more, Tom Merry & Co. heard sounds of sneezing from the vanquished Fourth-Formers.

"Dished!" he exclaimed, with a laugh.

And at the same moment Jack Blake made the same exclamation, but with a groan:

"Dished!"

THE END.

How Van Ryn Came to Rookwood.

(Continued from previous page.)

he had been as bad as Towny's description of him, Jimmy would have seen fair play. Jimmy looked on that as his duty as captain of the Fourth.

"Now, young shaver," growled Higgs, "what's your name?"

"Richard Van Ryn."

"Oh, you're a beastly Boer; but you've got an English front name!" sneered Higgs.

"I am a Boer," said the new junior quietly.

"Not beastly, that I know of. I have an English name, because I am partly English."

"Where do you come from?"

"Cape Colony."

"And which side were your people on?" demanded Higgs. "Backing up the Huns, I've no doubt."

Van Ryn flushed.

"You are a cad to suggest that," he said. "My people fought against England in the other war. But we are one people now."

"Oh, they did, did they?" said Higgs.

"Certainly. My father was a Transvaaler, and he was with De Wet to the very last. Naturally, he fought for his own country."

"Of course he did," agreed Jimmy Silver.

"We shouldn't think much of him if he hadn't."

"Hear, hear!" said Lovell.

"But now we are united, all true Boers are standing by England," said Van Ryn.

"We have nothing to thank the Germans for. They promised us help in the South African War, and they were too cowardly to keep their word. We should not be likely to trust them again, even if we wanted to break off from the British Empire. But we do not want to. We are free under the British flag, and all we ever asked for was freedom."

"Sure, it's a Daniel come to judgment," said Flynn. "It's a broth av a bhoy ye are!"

"Well, we've only got your word for all that," sneered Higgs. "I shouldn't wonder if your precious father was a rebel really."

Smack!

Higgs staggered back with a roar of pain and amazement. Van Ryn's open hand smote him fairly across the face.

"That is my answer to that," said the Africander coolly. "You can have some more if you want it!"

"Oh, by gad!" ejaculated Townsend. The astute Towny had planned to "set" the bully of the Fourth on Van Ryn. But the South African seemed quite willing to meet the truculent Alfred half way, or more than half way.

Higgs was too astonished to do anything but gasp for a moment or two. Then he rushed at Van Ryn like a bull.

Jimmy Silver jumped between, and Higgs staggered back from a powerful shove.

"Not so fast!" said Jimmy.

"Do you think I'm going to let him punch my face?" roared Higgs.

Jimmy nodded.

"Yes, if you insult his father," he said. "If you say anything of the kind again, I'll punch your face myself, and hard."

"Get aside!"

"Bow-wow!"

Van Ryn dropped his hand on Jimmy's shoulder.

"Thank you very much," he said quietly,

"but you need not protect me. I can stand up for myself."

Jimmy Silver stepped aside.

"Well, you can have your own way, of course," he said. "You can go ahead, Higgs. Sing out when you've had enough, Van Ryn."

"No good his singing out," said Higgs savagely. "I'm going to hammer him black and blue, and make him beg pardon on his knees."

"Better have some gloves on," said Lovell uneasily.

"I won't have any gloves!" roared Higgs. "Let the cad stand up to me, and I'll smash him!"

"Gloves or not, as you choose," said Van Ryn, shrugging his broad shoulders. "It is all one to me."

"Take your jacket off, at any rate," said Lovell. And he helped the new junior off with his jacket.

Van Ryn rolled back his sleeves. It could be seen that his arms were strong and well developed. It occurred to Jimmy that he was not so bad a match for Higgs after all.

But Higgs had no doubts.

He came on like a bull, with his big fists thrashing out.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on anxiously. They could not interfere in a fair fight; but they had a natural repugnance to seeing the Colonial knocked about on his first day at Rookwood.

But their fears were soon relieved.

Higgs' rush did not move the young Boer. He stood like a column of stone, immovable.

His hands were up, and Higgs came to a stop against them. His weight was almost twice that of the South African, yet it had no effect upon the boy from Cape Colony.

Van Ryn's fist flashed out like lightning.

Crash!

The bully went over backwards.

"Right on the wicket!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "Bravo, young 'un!"

Higgs sat up dazedly.

His nose was streaming with crimson, and he was feeling dizzy from the shock. He blinked stupidly at Van Ryn.

"Oh, crumbs!" he ejaculated.

Townsend helped him to his feet.

"You're not done yet," he said. "Go for him! You can lick him, Higgs!"

"Of course I can!" gasped Higgs. "And I'm going to! Don't be a silly idiot, or I'll lick you, too!"

Higgs stood panting for breath for some moments. The whole crowd of juniors were grinning. It struck them as comical to see the bully of the Fourth catch a Tartar in this unexpected manner.

But Higgs was not finished yet. He had plenty of bulldog pluck, and the mere thought of being knocked out by a new boy made him furious. He came on again with a savage rush.

"Go it, Dutchy!"

"Give him another on the boko!"

"Bravo!"

Van Ryn was holding his own steadily, without giving an inch of ground. But, he did not get a chance of another knock-down blow.

The handsome, sun-tanned face was getting marked now.

But the South-African took his punishment quietly; and all the time his fists were hammering upon Higgs of the Fourth.

The juniors looked on almost breathless.

It was evident that there was more in Dick Van Ryn than met the eye, and that

the bully of the Fourth had once more met his match.

There were no rounds in the fight, and it was a contest of endurance; and Higgs, tough as he was, was the first to weaken.

His savage attack slackened off, and he gave ground, the South African following him up grimly, hitting hard.

Higgs went down at last, with a heavy bump.

"Somebody had better count," said Lovell. Jimmy Silver took out his watch.

He counted.

Higgs sat up. But he could not get on his feet. He sat and panted, blinking with half-closed eyes. Van Ryn waited quietly.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—out!"

Higgs was still sitting on the floor.

He had been counted out, and there was a ringing cheer in the Common-room for the victor.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Tubby Muffin is Hospitable.

VAN RYN leaned on the edge of the table, breathing deeply.

The fight had told on him.

And the juniors remembered that he had had a long journey that day. Yet he had stood up to the bully of the Fourth, and licked him in a fair fight. Jimmy Silver clapped him on the shoulder.

"Good for you, kid!" he said. "You know how to put up your hands."

Van Ryn smiled faintly.

"Is he finished?" he asked.

"He looks like it. Are you finished, Higgs?"

Higgs groaned.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"Well, that sounds finished," remarked Flynn, and there was a laugh.

"Oh! Wow!" said Higgs. "What are you grinning at, you rotters? I can't go on at present! Yow! Yow! Oh, my eye! Oh, my hat! Groogh!"

Van Ryn came over to the bully a little uncertainly. Higgs was struggling to his feet, almost blindly, and the South African reached out to him.

"Give us your fist," he said. "It was a jolly good fight. You've damaged me as much as I have you. Let's forget all about it."

"Bravo!" said Jimmy Silver.

Higgs blinked oddly at the Colonial, and then slowly his big fist came out, and he shook hands with him.

"Well, I don't mind," he said. "Of course, I could lick you. I wasn't quite ready this time, you see. Another time—"

"Oh, don't let's have another time!" said Van Ryn cheerily. "We're both feeling rocky at present, and it isn't enjoyable, is it?"

"Nunno!" grinned Higgs. "I feel as if I'd been through a threshing machine."

"So do I," said Van Ryn frankly.

"Well, you ain't a bad sort," said Higgs. "But you're jolly well not going to crow over me if you have got the best of it this time."

"If I should try to crow over you, I hope you'll hit out hard," said Van Ryn quietly.

"You won't find me that kind of a cad, I hope."

"Well, that's all right. I—I—I—" Higgs made an effort. "I—I'm sorry I spoke as I did. It was only rot, you know. I know your pater must be all right, or you wouldn't be here. I'm sorry, and I take it back. Not because you've got the best of me, though."



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he added hastily. "Just because I choose, that's all."

"All serene," said Van Ryn, smiling. "Will anybody tell me where I can bathe my eye?"

"What-ho!" said Jimmy Silver. "This way!"

The Fistical Four marched Van Ryn out of the Common-room in their midst. Higgs followed them slowly. Townsend and Topham did not offer to lend a hand. The bully of the Fourth had been licked, and he was no further use to the Nuts of the Fourth. Town and Topsy were disgusted, in fact.

"Silly ass, to get licked by that blessed Boer!" growled Townsend. "I suppose the beast will be ridin' rough-shod over us now."

Topham rubbed the bump on his head. "He jolly well won't!" he muttered. "Higgs can tackle him. But there's more ways than one of killing a cat. The beastly savage isn't goin' to handle us as he likes. If the rotter can't be licked, he can be ragged."

Townsend's eyes gleamed. "Good egg! Half a dozen of us—"

"That's the idea! We'll put him through it. And after that scrap he won't be able to put up much of a fight, either."

"Let's go and talk to the chaps," said Townsend.

And the Nuts of the Fourth gathered in war council in No. 4 Study, and Towny and Topsy, and Peele and Mornington and Gower put their heads together, with the idea of making matters exceedingly warm for the junior from South Africa.

Meanwhile, Dick Van Ryn was bathing his damaged face in a bath-room. Jimmy Silver & Co. lent him what aid they could. Van Ryn looked the better for it; but there was a dark shade about one of his eyes, and his nose looked red and bulbous, and there were bruises on his face. His good looks had been sadly marred for the present. He had a good many aches and pains, too; but he bore them quietly.

Tubby Muffin joined him when he had finished.

in my study. As you're friendly with him, I thought you'd like to come."

"We'll come," said Jimmy. "We'll come, if it's only to celebrate the fact that you're standing a spread, Tubby."

"Come on," said Tubby.

The Fistical Four followed him. It was rather a surprise for Tubby to be standing anything, as he was generally hard up, and what cash he ever had generally went at once to the tuckshop. In the passage Tubby tugged at Silver's sleeve, and stopped him as the Co. went into No. 5.

"Hold on a minute, Silver," whispered Tubby mysteriously.

"Well, what's the row?"

"C-c-can you lend me half-a-quad?"

Jimmy stared.

"The fact is, I'm run right out of tin," said Tubby confidentially. "Merely temporary, of course; but it comes rather awkward just at this moment."

"Why, you spoofing villain!" growled Jimmy Silver. "You've asked five chaps to tea, and you've nothing to give them. Why couldn't you let Van Ryn come with us?"

"Ahem! You see—"

"I see that you're a spoofing porker!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Here's five bob, you fat bouncer! I suppose we may as well pay for our tea in your study as in ours. It comes to the same thing."

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, if you put it like that—"

"Well, I do put it like that," growled Jimmy.

"All serene! I'll cut off to the tuckshop," said Tubby cheerfully. "I don't care how you put it—anything to oblige."

And Tubby cut off, and Jimmy, grinning in spite of himself, followed his chums into the study.

Tubby Muffin returned laden with good things, and in great spirits. He was standing a hospitable spread, and he was booked for the lion's share of it, and it did not cost him anything, so he had reason to be pleased.

But it was a very pleasant tea in Study No. 5, and by the time the Fistical Four left

"Hallo!" he ejaculated. "What the thunder—"

"Lend a hand, Higgs!" panted Townsend. "We're putting the cad through it!"

"Pile in, Higgs!" shouted Mornington. "Come and give him one while you've got the chance!"

Higgs piled in.

But his "piling in" came in quite an unexpected manner to the merry ragers.

He rushed at them, hitting out right and left. Townsend & Co. had naturally expected that the bully of the Fourth would be glad to lend a hand, in revenge for his defeat at the hands of the South African junior.

But that was not in Higgs' mind. It was upon Townsend & Co. that his punches fell.

"Let him alone!" roared Higgs. "I'll mop up the lot of you! Take that! That's for you, Morny, you cad! Five to one, by gum! That's for you, Peele! You can take that, Gower! And that—and that—"

Higgs was hitting out like a steam-hammer. The yelling ragers rolled right and left from his terrific drives, amid a chorus of howls and groans.

Townsend and Topham were floored, Mornington rolled across them, Peele was hurled headlong along the passage, and Gower fairly fled, barely dodging Higgs' heavy fist.

In about a minute the Nuts were strewn about the passage, and Higgs was glaring at them, ready to knock them down again as soon as they rose. But they did not rise; they sprawled and blinked at Higgs in anguish and fury.

Higgs gave a snort of contempt, and stooped down to help Van Ryn to his feet.

The South African junior staggered up, considerably dazed, and more surprised than hurt. The rescue astonished him more than it did the Nuts of the Fourth.

"Have they hurt you?" asked Higgs.

"Ye-es—a bit!" gasped Van Ryn.

"Help me kick 'em along the passage."

There were furious yells from Townsend & Co. as two pairs of boots started on them. The unhappy Nuts—no longer dreaming of

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"You haven't seen the study yet," he said. "We're going to have tea there. I suppose you're hungry—what?"

Van Ryn looked at the podgy junior with a good-humoured smile. Tubby was not exactly the study-mate he would have chosen, but he was prepared to be friendly.

"We shall have the study to ourselves," went on Tubby. "There were two chaps with me, but they've changed out. They said the grub went too fast with me there. I hope you're not that kind of mean beast, Van Ryn?"

"I hope not," said Van Ryn, laughing.

"Then we shall get on," said Tubby, with much satisfaction. "Come along to the study. We're going to have a topping spread."

"I say, Van Ryn's coming to tea in the end study," said Jimmy Silver.

Muffin shook his head. "Look here, Jimmy Silver, you're not going to collar my study-mate. I'm standing him a spread on his first day here."

"Oh, all serene!" said Jimmy. "You'll give us a look in another time, Van Ryn."

"Thank you," said the new junior. And he followed Tubby Muffin.

"Come on, Dutchy," said Tubby Muffin. "Here's the study. Ripping, ain't it? You sit down in the armchair while I get the things in for tea. We're going to have rather a spread."

"You're awfully good!" said Van Ryn. "Not at all! Backing up the giddy Empire, you know," said Tubby affably. "I'm jolly glad to have a Colonial in my study! You sit down and take a rest, and leave it to me."

Van Ryn was glad to rest. Tubby bustled out of the room, and scudded along to the end study, where the Fistical Four were getting tea.

"Ain't you fellows coming?" asked Tubby.

"Eh? Where?"

"I'm standing a spread to the new chap

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 53.

they were on excellent terms with the new boy. Jimmy Silver & Co. were of opinion that Van Ryn was one of the best—an opinion in which most of the Classical Fourth soon came to concur.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

PALS!

THERE he comes! It was a whisper in the darkness, as Dick Van Ryn came out of his study late in the evening.

The gas had been turned out in the passage, and all was dark.

Van Ryn heard the whisper, and stopped, peering about him.

It was close on bed-time, and most of the fellows had finished their prep, and gone down to the Common-room. A rush of feet followed the whisper.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Van Ryn. "What—"

He had no time for more.

Hands seized him on all sides in the darkness, and he was brought to the floor with a heavy bump.

He realised that it was a ragging, and he struggled fiercely.

But he was down, and fellows he could not see were swarming over him. There were at least four or five, and he had no chance.

"You rotters!" panted Van Ryn. "Let me up—oh!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Tubby Muffin blinked out of the study.

"Help!" gasped Van Ryn.

But the fat Classical was not a fighting-man. He only blinked. The light from the study glimmered on the struggling mass on the passage floor. Van Ryn was in the hands of Townsend & Co., and they were ragging him mercilessly.

There was a heavy tread further down the passage, and Higgs of the Fourth came along.

The Fourth Form bully stopped, to stare at the peculiar scene.

ragging anybody—squirmed out of the way and dodged and fled. They did not stop till they were at the bottom of the stairs.

"There!" panted Higgs. "That's a lesson for the cads! They won't rag you again in a hurry, young 'un."

"I think not," said Van Ryn, laughing. He looked curiously at Higgs. "It's jolly good of you to come and help me like that, after—"

"After our scrap?" said Higgs. "What rot! I like a chap who can stand up for himself. You can."

"I'm much obliged."

"Oh, rot! Of course, you didn't exactly lick me in that scrap, if I'd been—well, more ready for you, it would have gone a bit differently."

"Any old thing," said Van Ryn, smiling.

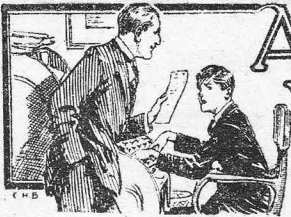
"Still, you put up a good fight, and I had my hands full," conceded Higgs good-temperedly. "The fact is, I rather like you, young 'un, and if you want a pal in the Fourth, you needn't look any further for one. I can't say fairer than that."

"Done!" said Van Ryn at once.

The Classical Fourth hardly knew what to make of it. The next day Higgs changed into Study No. 5—No. 4 being quite pleased to get rid of him, as a matter of fact. But he was very welcome in No. 5. Jimmy Silver & Co. could not help thinking that Dick Van Ryn had a queer taste in pals. But they agreed that a fellow who could take a licking as Higgs had taken his, could not be a bad fellow in the main, and the bully of the Fourth rose in their estimation. It was probable that difficulties would arise in Study No. 5; but for the present all was peace and harmony in the quarters of the Colonial schoolboy.

THE END.

(Another grand, long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "The Joker of Rookwood!" Order your copy of THE PENNY POPULAR early!)



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

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THE SPRING.

Plenty of active reminders of this season are obtained these days. On a mild rainy morning the thrushes and blackbirds start singing, and a very cheery concert they put up on occasion; while the crocuses are popping up merrily in the grass. Now is the time when the tramp becomes an object of interest. Nothing to do with the picturesque party met in the lanes—i.e., the gentleman of the road who basks in the sun and never toils.

I was thinking of those pleasant country tramps which crowds of my chums take. I know this because they write to me about their experiences about the birds they see, the ancient ruins passed, and so on. I only wish I had space to give all their comments on life; but this is impossible.

SHORTHAND AND LONGHAND.

There is the same old interest in journalism as ever. Lots of correspondents write to me concerning the calling. One friend told me that he wanted to be a journalist, but he had no inclination to start as an office-boy. But that is just how to begin. An office-boy picks it all up. What he thinks to-day the rest of us know to-morrow.

Anyway, it is something like that. No reflections, please, on this useful and super-intelligent member of society.

There is pretty nearly always room for journalists. Those who are following the craft write their bit and go on, and their places have to be filled, for the world will ever require journalists, and the brighter the better.

By the way, some of the young aspirants ought to write better. Because they are writing shorthand that is no earthly reason why they should break up the alphabet, smother the individual letters, and sign the heap of curious signs with a name that cannot be read.

In the old days picture-writing started the alphabet going. A man wanted bread, and he drew a loaf, same with a mutton-chop or a coalscuttle. Gradually the pictures settled down into letters, and so forth. But treat a letter well, and it will not deceive you. Don't add baggy, shapeless ornamentations to your words. It only puzzles the chap who has to read your letters. It may even make him fractious.

A downright old newspaper proprietor said once: "The time has gone by for bad writing."

He hit the mark. But the fact is the time never came. Bad writing is a crime. Better printing letters written with a stick.

Promptitude is a big asset in journalism, as in most things. The fellow who can sit down and reel straight off the report of a fire—leaving out anything about the "devastating element"—generally gets the job. I must go back to this subject sometime.

LONDON NEW AND OLD.

I am always being asked to add something more about London. It is principally for readers overseas, who read about the little obscure village on the Thames, and can't

for the life of them form any bright conclusions as to what the place is like. The subject is too big to tackle. The town amazes anybody who has time to look at it or think of it. Very few folks have time.

Take Whitehall—no don't take it, because London could not possibly do without it, but try and picture a fairly wide thoroughfare which touches Trafalgar Square at one end and Westminster at the other. The whole street is crammed full of history. Some of the buildings are the same as when the Stuarts reigned in Britain—oh, and some go farther back.

Nelson, at the top of his draughty statue, surveys the picturesque scene—the towers of Westminster, the gleaming river with its wharves, the silver point of the cathedrals, and the Lambeth pile. There are glimpses of the Parks, and down in the streets the traffic never ceases to rumble by.

London hums and hustles. You cannot get hold of the spirit of the city, try as you may. Everybody comes to London. You meet visitors from Paris arm-in-arm, talking each other's heads off, and saying, "Dites donc, mon ami," and so on; to say nothing of strangers from the Yellow East, and the Far North, for Russians find sanctuary in the old metropolis, and one cannot wonder at that.

But no pen can manage London. The West End has changed more than the East. There are new theatres. Open spaces where ancient houses have been pulled down get covered with huge blocks of houses, flats, and shops. Yes, the spacious West End, with its gigantic marts, is attractive enough, but I own to taking more interest in the other quarters where old Time has gone easy, weird little courts, where strolling musicians tune up; unexpected footways where markets are held; little bits of the past seen in forgotten gardens, and so on.

More another time. Oh, but just one word! Don't think the East uninteresting because it has not had a fresh coat of paint. The East End is humming with activity. It does more work than any other parts. Where London would be without the splendid toilers in this quarter nobody knows—leastways, I do not!

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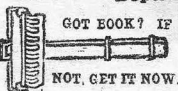
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