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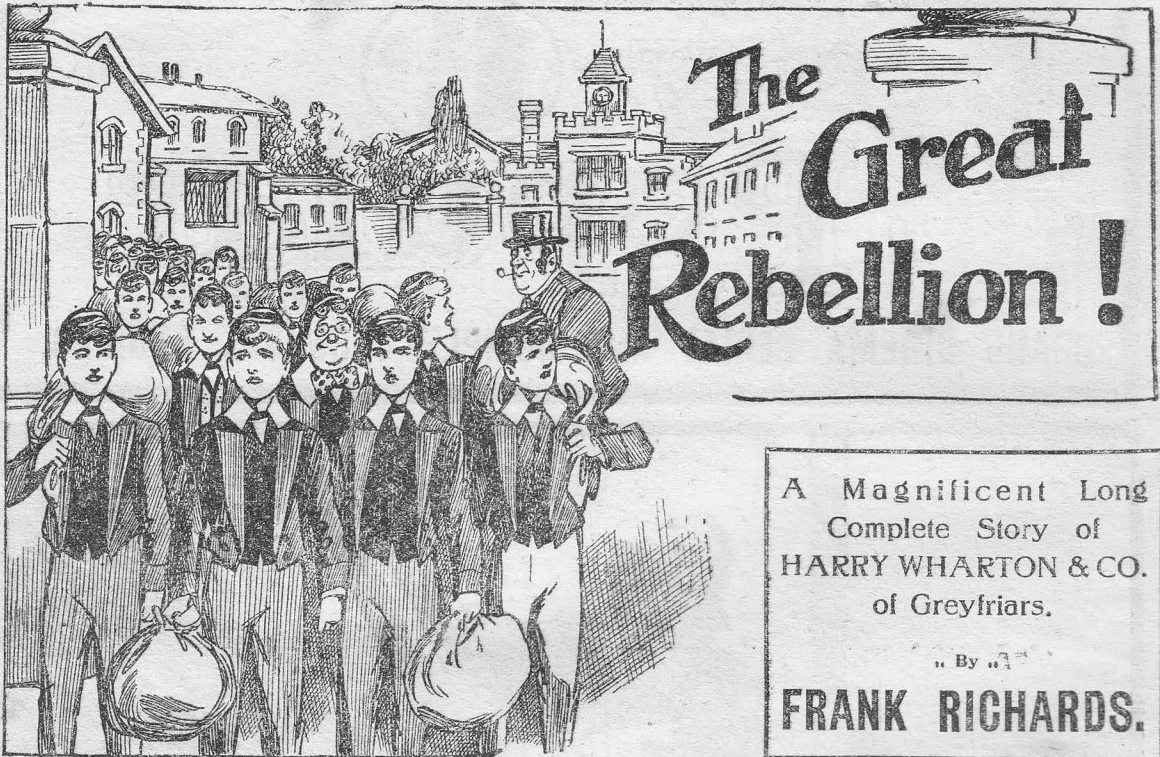
20 PAGES

GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



P.-C. TOZER MAKES A HASTY DESCENT FROM THE LADDER!

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



A Magnificent Long
Complete Story of
HARRY WHARTON & CO.
of Greyfriars.

.. By ..

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Momentous Meeting!

PASS this along to Carr!" Harry Wharton made the remark very cautiously as he handed a slip of paper to Frank Nugent, who was seated next to him in the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars.

It was necessary to exercise caution, for Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, possessed eyes which his pupils likened to gimlets on account of their penetrative powers.

The slip of paper was passed quickly along, underneath the desk, until it reached Dennis Carr, who was seated at the end.

Carefully screening the missive from view with the aid of his Latin grammar, Dennis perused it.

This is what he read:

"To Dennis Carr.—Please note that you have been selected to serve on the Remove Emergency Committee.

"A secret meeting of all the members will be held in the woodshed immediately after morning lessons, for the purpose of discussing ways and means of conducting a great rebellion, in which the whole Form will participate.

"Strict secrecy must be observed in connection with this affair.

(Signed) HARRY WHARTON,

"President, Remove Emergency Committee."

Dennis Carr was not altogether surprised to receive such an epistle. He knew, of course, that the Remove was on the verge of rebellion—firstly, because of the new food regulations, which had thrown the school into a state of disorder; and, secondly, because Loder of the Sixth had been appointed to succeed Wingate as captain of Greyfriars.

The juniors had been long-suffering. They had endured the new hygienic food and the tyranny of Loder as long as they were able. But there was a limit to their endurance, and that limit had now been reached.

An Emergency Committee had been formed for the purpose of organising the rebellion on sound lines, and Dennis Carr, as was only fitting, had been elected to serve on the Committee.

"It was rather risky for Wharton to send this note along during lessons," reflected Dennis. And he hastily transferred the document to his pocket.

The action, quick though it was, did not escape the notice of Mr. Quelch.

"Carr!"

"Yes, sir?" said Dennis guilelessly. "What have you just placed in your pocket?"

"My pocket, sir?"

"Yes. It appeared to me to be a paper of some sort."

"A paper, sir?"

Mr Quelch frowned.

"Do not mimic my words like a parrot, Carr! I distinctly saw you slip a document into your pocket. And I want to know—I insist upon knowing—the nature of that document.

"Oh, crumbs!"

The eyes of Harry Wharton & Co. were anxiously fixed upon Dennis Carr.

"He'll give the whole show away!" muttered Frank Nugent in an agony of apprehension.

"Not he!" replied Wharton, in a whisper. "He'll throw Quelch off the track somehow."

Mr. Quelch glared at Dennis.

"I am waiting, Carr, for you to enlighten me concerning the nature of that document."

"It was a letter, sir."

"From whom?"

"I'd rather not say, sir."

"But I insist upon knowing!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"It was a letter from a chum of mine, sir."

"Then I must ask you to produce it, and hand it to me."

There was an ominous pause. Then, fearlessly and distinctly, Dennis Carr said:

"I refuse, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's frown grew blacker.

"Carr! How dare you address your Form-master in such disrespectful terms!"

"I'm sorry, sir. I didn't mean to be disrespectful. But I can't show you that letter."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"Then I can only conclude, Carr, that you wish to conceal from me certain statements which would get the writer of the letter into trouble. Is my assumption correct?"

"It may or may not be, sir."

"Your insolence, Carr, is unpardonable. Bring that letter to me at once!"

Dennis did not budge from his place.

"Do you hear me, Carr?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then obey me immediately!"

"I've already said that I decline to hand over the letter, sir."

"In that case," said Mr. Quelch angrily,

advancing towards Dennis, "I have no alternative but to take it from you by force!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on breathlessly.

Would Dennis Carr yield, or would he openly resist Mr. Quelch's efforts to gain possession of the letter?

The question was soon answered.

As the Remove-master strode towards him, Dennis Carr jumped up, and crossed over to the fireplace.

Although it was early in May the morning was chilly, and there was a fire burning in the grate.

Taking the letter from his pocket, Dennis screwed it up into a ball and hurled it into the fire. It was instantly shrivelled up by the flames.

Mr. Quelch gave a gasp, and so did the class. The fellows had not expected Dennis Carr to resort to such flagrant defiance.

"I can scarcely find words to adequately express my opinion of your conduct, Carr!" said the Remove-master. "This disobedience and defiance shall be brought to the notice of Dr. Locke. You will accompany me at once to his study."

Some of the juniors thought that Dennis Carr would refuse. But he didn't. He quitted the Form-room in the company of Mr. Quelch.

After an interval of ten minutes master and pupil returned.

Dennis Carr's face was white, and it was easy to see that he had been flogged. But he had been loyal to Harry Wharton and to the Form at large. He had not betrayed the contents of the letter, and his school-fellows admired his pluck.

Morning lessons were concluded without any further excitement.

As soon as the word of dismissal came, Dennis Carr made his way to the woodshed. He was joined en route by the Famous Five, Mark Lialley, and Vernon-Smith.

"In the words of the poet," said Bob Cherry, "we are eight."

"I say, Carr, it was awfully decent of you not to give the show away in class," said Wharton.

"Oh, rats!"

"Did the Head lay it on thick?" asked Nugent sympathetically.

"Well, he did, rather."

"Never mind," said Johnny Bull. "We'll soon put an end to all this beastly tyranny."

The juniors entered the woodshed, and Hurree Singh barricaded the door against

possible intruders. Then Harry Wharton addressed the meeting.

"Gentlemen," he began, "we represent the Remove Emergency Committee, and our responsibility is a big one. It rests with us to make all the plans in connection with the proposed rebellion. You are all agreed, I take it, that the rebellion shall take place?"

There was a general nodding of heads. "The new grub is quite impossible," said Vernon-Smith, "and so is Loder! They've both got to go."

"Hear, hear!" "Mind you," said Wharton, "a rebellion is a big step to take, and we, as the organising committee, will be regarded as ringleaders. We are about to take big risks. Are you all agreed that they are worth while?"

"Yes, rather!" "That's good," said Wharton. "I wanted to make sure that we were all of one mind at the outset. Now, what form shall the rebellion take?"

"I vote we hunger-strike," said Nugent. Wharton shook his head. "Couldn't be done," he said. "We should never be able to persuade a fellow like Bunter to go without his grub."

"And it would be a jolly uncomfortable process, anyway," said Dennis Carr. "Dash it all, we can't starve!"

"They wouldn't let us," said Nugent. "The Head would give in when he saw that we were in earnest."

"I rather think that we should be the first to give in," said Mark Linley. "Hunger-striking sounds all right in theory, but in practice it's another matter."

"I agree with Marky," said Bob Cherry. "There are better ways of carrying out a rebellion than by refusing to eat."

"Name one of them, then!" said Nugent. "I propose," said Bob, "that we kidnap Loder."

"My hat!" "That's rather a startling suggestion, Bob," said Wharton.

"But it's quite practicable. It would be a fairly simple matter to imprison Loder in the vaults, or in the tower, and keep him in captivity until the Head agrees to our terms."

"I can't say I'm altogether in favour of the kidnapping stunt," said Wharton. "It seems a bit too thick, somehow."

"And there would be big difficulties in the way," said Vernon-Smith. "We should have to keep Loder supplied with grub for one thing."

"And we should never be able to keep his whereabouts a secret," said Dennis Carr. "My own suggestion is that the rebellion takes the form of a barring-out. I don't claim that the idea's original—"

"It isn't," said Johnny Bull. "Why, they had a barring-out in the time of Noah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "If it's properly organised, I think a barring-out would be far more successful than any other form of rebellion," said Dennis Carr.

"I think so, too," said Wharton. "Same here," said Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith together.

"Those in favour of a barring-out, show their hands!" said the president.

Six hands went up, including Wharton's. The only two who dissented were Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh.

"Carried by six votes to two," said Wharton. "Why aren't you keen on a barring-out, Johnny?"

"It's no easy matter for one Form to hold out against the rest of the school," said Johnny Bull.

"But the rest of the school will be in strong sympathy with us," said Wharton. "Nobody likes the new grub, and nobody likes Loder—except Loder himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "We shall be able to hold out all right," said Dennis Carr confidently, "provided we take up our position outside the school."

"Outside the school?" echoed Nugent. "Where can we accommodate forty fellows?"

"In the old beacon tower on St. Giles' Hill, just outside Courtfield. That's the most impregnable position for miles around."

"By Jove, you're right!" said Bob Cherry. "We shall be able to see everybody who approaches, and, what's more, we can barricade the place beautifully. That was quite a brain-wave of yours, Dennis!"

"I'm simply bursting with brain-waves!" replied Dennis modestly.

"There are two decent-sized rooms at the top of the tower," said Mark Linley, "and there's plenty of space on the ground floor. The door is of solid oak, if I remember, and

all the windows are barred. If we hunted for miles round we should never hit upon a better spot."

The old beacon tower having been decided upon as the headquarters of the rebels, Harry Wharton raised the question of the food supply.

"We must pool our resources," said Vernon-Smith. "Every fellow in the Form must contribute according to his means."

"Or his meanness!" chuckled Nugent. "How much do you think we shall be able to raise?" asked Wharton.

"Fifty quid," said Vernon-Smith. "What! I'm afraid your estimate's a bit groggy, Smithy. We shall be lucky if we raise twenty."

Vernon-Smith smiled. "I'm prepared to start the ball rolling with a tanner."

"And you may countfully rely on me for an esteemed five," said Hurree Singh.

"There you are," said Vernon-Smith triumphantly, "that's fifteen quid already! And I'm sure the remainder of the fellows could raise a further thirty-five between them. Fifty quids' worth of tuck will last us quite a long time even in these days of high prices. And if we ran short I could wangle help from my pater."

"Same here," said Bob Cherry. "If my pater gets to hear of the rebellion—and he's pretty certain to, as he's staying in Courtfield for a couple of days—he'll give us tons of support. He's sampled the new grub himself, and he's not in love with it."

"Things look very promising indeed," said Wharton. "I vote we have a whip-round at once, and collect the necessary funds. Then we'll go and purchase the grub from the store at Pegg, and take it along to the tower."

"One other point," said Dennis Carr. "The rebellion may last a long time, in which case we shall need plenty of blankets and things. The rooms in the tower are bare at present. There's no furniture whatever. And we want to be as comfortable as possible."

"Hear, hear!" "When the rebellion actually begins," said Wharton, "we'll instruct every fellow in the Form to bring his kit with him."

"Ripping!" "The faces of the juniors were glowing with excitement."

"Is the rebellion to start to-night, Harry?" asked Nugent.

Wharton shook his head. "We want to get everything shipshape to-night," he said. "The real thing will commence in the morning. I shall give a signal, either in the Hall at breakfast-time or in the Form-room, and the whole of the Remove will march out."

"The beaks will be after us like a shot," said Johnny Bull.

"The beaks will be no match for forty determined fellows," said Mark Linley.

"That's true enough," said Nugent. "If it comes to a scrap, we shall more than hold our own."

"I can picture myself giving the Head a black eye, or dotting Quelchy on the boko!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It won't come to that," said Wharton, laughing. "But we may be called upon to handle Gosling the porter, or our old friend P.-c. Tozer!"

"We'll knock their heads together and sling them into the nearest duck-pond," said Dennis Carr.

"Just hark at the fellow!" said Vernon-Smith. "Proper bloodthirsty sort, isn't he?"

"Look here," said Wharton, "let's cut the cackle and get a move on! The first item on the programme is to have a whip-round for funds; the second, to saunter down to Pegg."

The whip-round was duly made, and the total amount collected realised forty-eight pounds—just two pounds short of Vernon-Smith's estimate.

It was a large sum of money, and over fifty per cent. of it had been contributed by Vernon-Smith, Lord Mauleverer, and Hurree Singh.

The members of the Emergency Committee, their pockets bulging with notes and coin, then made their way to the little store at Pegg.

The tradespeople in Friar-dale and Courtfield had been instructed not to serve anybody from Greyfriars, but when these instructions were issued the little fishing village of Pegg had been overlooked.

The Greyfriars juniors bought up practically the whole of the storekeeper's stock. The purchases were not confined solely to

food. A small spirit-stove was included, as well as a kettle and a set of crockery.

"We shall have to have our meals in re-lays," said Dennis Carr. "There will be a good deal of washing-up to do, but many hands make light work."

"That brings us to a serious difficulty," said Mark Linley. "What about the water supply?"

"There's a big tank at the foot of the tower," said Harry Wharton, "and it's full of water."

"Our enemies will jolly soon empty the tank," said Johnny Bull.

"True; but we can carry on until they do." "And what then?"

Wharton turned rather irritably upon his chum. "For goodness' sake don't keep putting obstacles in the way," he said. "There are bound to be a few drawbacks, but we shall overcome them if we tackle them in the right spirit."

"Hear, hear!" said Vernon-Smith. "The next job on hand," said Dennis Carr, "is to get all these things to the tower. For that purpose I propose we hire a car."

"There isn't a garage in this one-horse place," said Nugent.

"No, but there's one at Courtfield. It won't take us long to pop over and hire a car."

"What about dinner?" said Johnny Bull.

"We'll give it a miss. It won't be a hardship to go without that beastly hygienic stuff."

The juniors were busily engaged during the next hour or so. They hired the car from the garage in Courtfield, and they managed to convey their purchases to the lonely beacon tower without exciting observation.

The driver of the car was astonished, which was only natural in the circumstances. But he was quite a sportsman, and when the juniors explained what was afoot he wished them every success.

The supplies were carried up the long spiral staircase and deposited in one of the rooms at the top of the tower.

This done, the juniors bustled about to make the place fit for human habitation. Then they returned to Greyfriars, arriving just as the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

During the afternoon the Removeites were in a state of suppressed excitement.

The arrangements for the great rebellion were complete, and it now only remained for Harry Wharton to give the fateful signal.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Die is Cast.

HARRY WHARTON made a rousing speech in the Remove dormitory that evening.

"The fuse has been laid," he announced, "and to-morrow morning it will be fired."

"Hurrah!" "Some of you fellows have taken part in a barring-out before," continued Wharton, "and some of you haven't. To those who haven't let me say that it's not a mere prank, but a serious business. We must all stand together, shoulder to shoulder, and resolve to see the thing through. Unity is strength, and without unity we find ourselves—"

"Nowhere," said Bob Cherry.

"Exactly! It is more than possible that we shall have to face hardship and privation. If the rebellion lasts a week or longer we can't expect to live on the fat of the land the whole time. I don't want to throw a lamper on any fellow's enthusiasm, but it's only fair to point out that we may find ourselves up against it. If there is anybody in this room who, from funk or other reasons, feels that he'd rather not take part in this enterprise, let him speak now, before it's too late."

Nobody spoke.

"If any fellow wants to back out, he may do so without fear of being punished," said Wharton. "Better to back out right away than to desert our cause later on."

Still no one spoke.

"What about you, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove. "Are you prepared to take part in the barring-out, and to face the consequences, if any?"

"Of course!" said the fat junior. "In fact, I'll be your commander-in-chief, if you like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You'll promise faithfully not to scoff at the provisions?" said Dennis Carr.

"Oh, really, Carr, I'm not a pig!"

"My mistake!" said Dennis. "I thought you were!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How about you, Skinner?" said Wharton. "Are you with us heart and soul in this movement?"

"I am, mighty chief!"

"And you, Snoop?"

"Yes!"

"And Stott?"

"I'm a red-hot rebel!" said Stott.

"Good!" said Wharton. "But I can't help forgetting that a short time ago you supported Loder for the captaincy."

"We were a set of silly asses!" said Skinner. "We thought Loder would make a decent skipper, but we realise now what a rotten tyrant he is!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bolsover major.

Loder himself came into the dormitory at that moment to see lights out.

"What have you kids been jawing about?" demanded the new captain suspiciously.

"The weather," said Bob Cherry, "and other things!"

"What other things?"

"Well, you're one of them!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder did not look best pleased at being referred to as a thing.

"What have you been saying about me?" he asked.

"We were remarking what a nice, gentlemanly, amiable sort of fellow you were!" said Dennis Carr.

"You cheeky young cub!"

"And we were on the verge of singing 'For he's a jolly good fellow' when you came in, Loder!" said Nugent.

The captain of Greyfriars scowled.

"I've a strong suspicion that you kids are up to mischief," he said. "If there's any skylarking in this dormitory to-night, I shall come down heavily!"

So saying, Loder extinguished the lights and withdrew.

Not for many hours did sleep visit the eyes of the Removites that night. They were in a state of seething excitement.

In the morning the great rebellion was to commence!

At a word from Wharton the whole of the Remove would rise in revolt.

It was a stimulating prospect, and the hearts of the prospective rebels beat faster than usual.

The juniors were tired and heavy-eyed when the rising-bell clanged out its shrill summons. But their drowsiness soon passed, and they became alert, and ready for all developments.

It so happened that on this particular morning the Head and all the masters had decided to have breakfast in Hall instead of in their own quarters. There had been so many disturbances of late in connection with the new food that Dr. Locke deemed it advisable to keep an eye on the school.

The Removites sat down noisily at their table, ignoring Mr. Quelch's frequent exhortations to silence.

"What's this vile-looking concoction?" asked Bob Cherry, surveying the contents of his plate with extreme disfavour.

"It's Parker's Patent Porridge," said Dennis Carr by way of enlightenment.

"Groo!"

"Cherry," thundered Mr. Quelch, "take a hundred lines for making that ridiculous ejaculation at the breakfast-table!"

"It wasn't at the breakfast-table, sir," said Bob; "it was at the porridge!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" stormed the Remove-master. "Your imposition is doubled, Cherry!"

Bob grinned. He knew that the imposition would never be written.

The Removites made no attempt to eat their porridge. Some glared at it; others poked and prodded it with their spoons, and others, again, pushed their plates away from them in disgust.

More than once the Head glanced towards the Remove table and frowned. He had reason to frown, for the juniors were completely out of hand, and even Mr. Quelch could not maintain order.

Everybody in the Remove seemed to be chattering at once.

"This stuff is simply awful!"

"They're trying to poison us!"

"Shame!"

"We won't stand it!"

"Not at any price!"

Mr. Quelch rose up in wrath from his seat at the head of the table.

"How many more times have I to enjoin silence?" he exclaimed. "Wharton, Nugent,

Carr, Todd, Desmond, you will each take a hundred lines!"

Still the chatter went on.

"Your conduct would lead one to suppose," said Mr. Quelch, "that there was something wrong with the porridge!"

"There's nothing wrong with it at all, sir," said Vernon-Smith, "except that it's poisoned, and unfit for human consumption!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed so heartily that the Head was roused to action.

"Mr. Quelch," he exclaimed reprovingly, "might I request you to preserve order at your table?"

The master of the Remove almost wrung his hands.

"The members of my Form are incorrigible this morning, Dr. Locke!" he replied. "I am generally regarded as a capable disciplinarian, but on this occasion I am powerless! I appeal to you, sir, to take strong action——"

Mr. Quelch was interrupted by Bolsover major.

The bully of the Remove had seen the kitchen cat stalking through the Hall in quest of food; whereupon he set his plate of porridge upon the floor, and called loudly:

"Puss, puss, puss!"

"Bolsover!" thundered the Head.

"Puss, puss, puss!" repeated Bolsover.

"Come along, old dear! Lap it up!"

Even Harry Wharton & Co. had to gasp at Bolsover's effrontery.

"Bolsover!"—the Head's voice, booming from the other end of the Hall, resembled the rumble of thunder—"come here at once!"

Bolsover continued to address the cat.

"Come along, puss! Don't turn up your nose at this fattening porridge! It'll do you a world of good—if it doesn't kill you outright!"

The Head turned to the captain of Greyfriars.

"Loder, bring that recalcitrant boy to me at once!"

Loder left his seat, and advanced towards the Remove table.

Bolsover major looked up, and darted a hurried glance at Harry Wharton.

Then, before Loder could reach the bully of the Remove, Wharton sprang to his feet.

"Now, you fellows!" he exclaimed, in ringing tones.

What followed was so sudden and so altogether unexpected, so far as the rest of the school was concerned, that masters and prefects were too stupefied to act. Probably the prefects would not have acted in any case.

The dining-hall contained two exits. Half the Remove marched out through one, under the leadership of Harry Wharton; the remaining half, headed by Dennis Carr, marched out through the other.

Not a movement was made to check the wholesale exodus.

The masters sat paralysed with astonishment, and the prefects pinched themselves to make sure they were awake.

As soon as the rebels were outside, the two doors through which they had emerged were promptly locked. This was part of Harry Wharton's programme.

A moment later Wharton's party and Dennis Carr's party joined forces in the Close.

The faces of the juniors were glowing with excitement.

The fuse had been fired, and the great rebellion had begun!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The March to the Tower.

"NOW," said Harry Wharton, surveying the tense, excited faces of his schoolfellows, "there's not a moment to waste! Each fellow will pack up his blankets and other necessities in a bundle and parade out here! Off you go!"

The juniors raced away to the Remove dormitory and to their studies, and for the next ten minutes they had their hands full.

Meanwhile, the Head had made the startling discovery that the two doors of the dining-hall were locked on the outside.

"This—is this monstrous!" he gasped. "Your pupils, Mr. Quelch, must have taken leave of their senses!"

The Remove-master nodded.

"That is the only possible conclusion one can come to, sir," he said. "I cannot understand their action in the least."

"They have locked us in!" said Mr. Prout, aghast. "Such a state of affairs is almost without parallel in the school's history! What do you propose to do in the matter, sir?"

"The doors must be forced open," said the

Head, "and the young rascals must be brought back at once!"

To force open the doors, however, was a matter of time; and, meanwhile, the rebels, each carrying a big bundle, had paraded in the Close. They formed fours in an orderly manner, and Harry Wharton's voice rang out clearly in the morning air.

"Members of the Remove! Right turn! Quick march!"

Scenes of unprecedented enthusiasm followed.

Keeping in step, and shouting uproariously, the rebels marched through the Close, and streamed out of the school gateway.

Gosling, the porter, nearly fell down when he sighted that strange procession.

"My heye!" he ejaculated. "What does this mean, Master Wharton?"

"It means, Gossy," said the captain of the Remove, "that we're fed-up with tyranny, and that we're going away until the authorities come to their senses!"

"Hurrah!"

"Young rips!" snorted Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—all boys oughter be drowned at birth! Which they're always a-givin' of perpetual trouble!"

"Rats!"

"The 'Ead will 'ave you sacked from the school for this 'ere!"

"Who cares?"

The procession tramped away along the hard, white road.

The rebels would like to have carried banners, bearing inscriptions, such as "School-boys Never Shall Be Slaves!" and "Down With Tyranny!" But it was as much as they could do to manage their kit, which in many cases was very heavy.

Many and various were the songs that were sung by the processionists.

Bolsover major rendered a hymn of hate of his own composition. Ogilvy sang "The Land of the Leal," and David Morgan obliged with "The Men of Harlech."

Micky Desmond was chanting "The Minstrel Boy," with variations. The first verse went something like this:

"The Greyfriars fellows on strike have gone,
In the beacon tower you'll find them;
Their overcoats they have girded on,
And their kit is slung behind them.
Down with the hygienic cakes and buns!
No Greyfriars fellows need 'em!
And we mean to show that the school's
proud sons
Can manfully fight for freedom!"

Squiff, who was marching alongside Micky Desmond, was bellowing at the top of his voice something to the effect that "Australia Would be There." And Bob Cherry was declaiming Shelly's rousing address to the men of England:

"Rise, like lions after slumber,
In unvanquishable number!"

Doors and windows were being thrown open, and the sober and respectable people of the neighbourhood stared in astonishment at the noisy procession.

When the village was reached the excitement grew to fever-pitch. A horde of small boys linked themselves on to the tail-end of the procession; and all the errand-boys dumped their wares on to the pavement, twirled their caps in the air, and cheered wildly.

But there were others who took a less flippant view of the proceedings.

P.-c. Tozer's portly form loomed up to intercept the rebels.

"Nice goings hon!" ejaculated the constable. "Wot are you young raskils a-doin' off?"

"Sorry to see your grammar's still a bit shaky, Tozey!" said Dennis Carr. "You should say, 'Of what are you a-doin'?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Tozer extended a plump hand, as if he were directing the traffic.

"At!" he said impressively.

"Rats!"

"Stand clear, Fatty Arbuckle!"

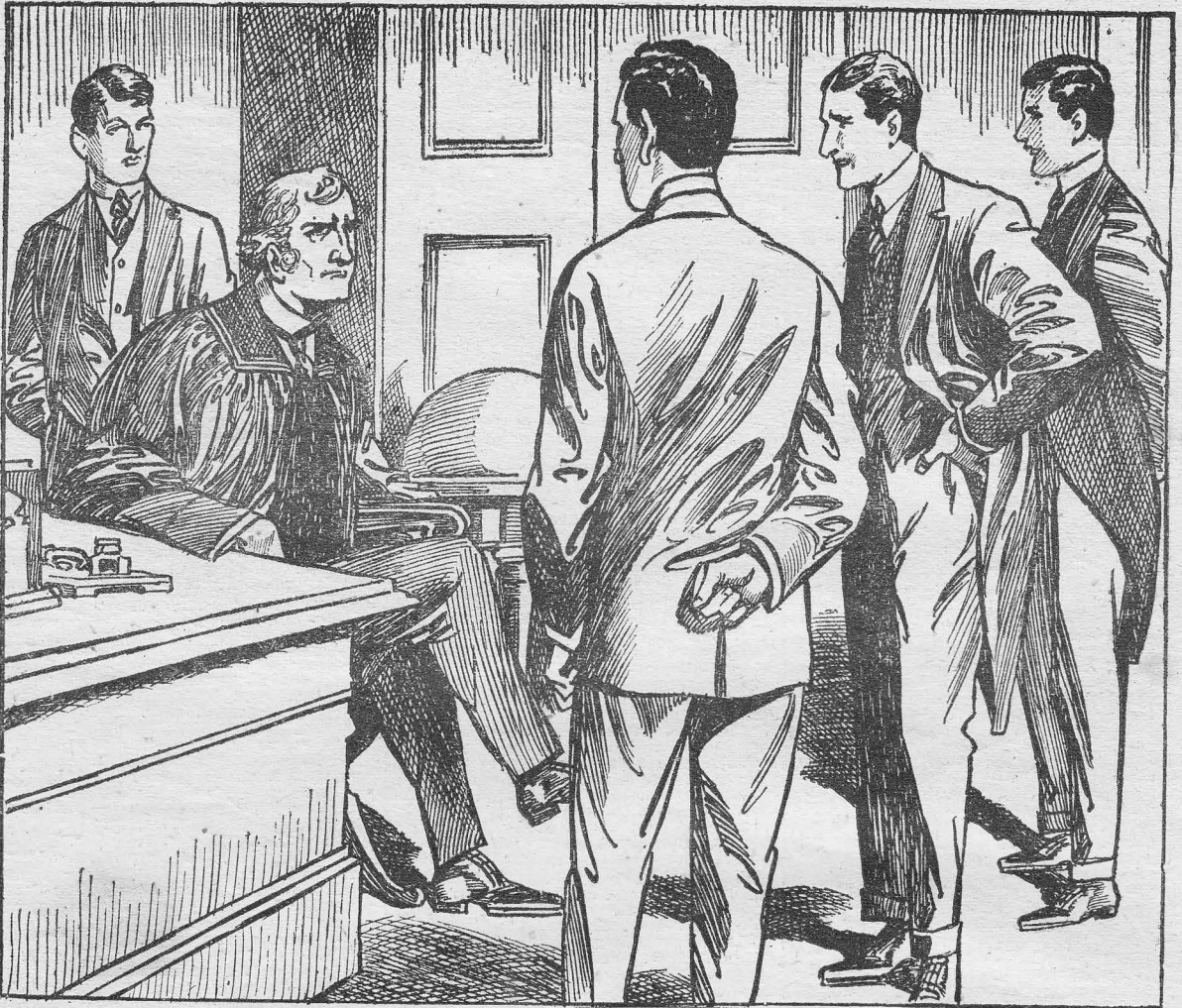
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The village constable began to dance to and fro like a cat on hot bricks.

"Do you 'ear me?" he roared. "I demand to know wot you young rips is a-doin' off!"

"Oh, bowl him over!" sang out Wharton impatiently.

The next moment was a very painful one for P.-c. Tozer. He was sent sprawling by the Remove vanguard, and he collapsed in an ungainly heap in the roadway. The men-



"Do you mean to say," rumbled Dr. Locks, "that you decline to carry out my wishes?" "We do not feel called upon to interfere in the matter of the rebellion, sir," said Wingate. (See page 6.)

bers of the procession wiped their boots on him as they passed.

"Ow! Young raskils! Which I'll 'ave the lor on yer for this 'ere!" panted the constable.

But the "young raskils" marched on unheeding. They left the village behind them, but the villagers still stood gaping and blinking on the pavements, wondering vaguely what had happened up at the school to cause this amazing demonstration.

At the foot of St. Giles' Hill Harry Wharton called a halt.

Glad enough were the rebels to dump their kit on the greensward and rest. Most of them had bellows to mend; but there was no gainsaying their high spirits.

"It's a wonder we haven't been pursued by the prefects," said Johnny Bull, mopping his heated brow.

"My dear chap," said Wharton, "you can bet your Sunday topper that the prefects are on our side. They hate the new grub and the appointment of Loder just as much as we do; and if they are ordered to go after us, it's more than likely they'll refuse." "Or deliberately go off in the wrong direction!" said Nugent.

"But what about the masters?" said Tom Redwing.

"I don't suppose they've succeeded in getting out of the dining-hall yet," said Dennis Carr.

"They'll be along soon, no doubt," said Mark Linley. "It won't take them long to discover where we are. All the village will be babbling about it."

"Yes, rather!"

For five minutes the juniors rested. And then began the most strenuous part of their journey. They had to climb St. Giles' Hill, the summit of which stood nine hundred feet above the sea-level.

Some of the weaker spirits began to grumble at the exertion, and Harry Wharton sharply reproved them.

"Wait till you get something to whine about before you start making a fuss!" he said.

"Ow! My kit's jolly heavy!" groaned Skinner.

"Well, you can take it back to Greyfriars if you like!"

Evidently Skinner didn't like, for he took a fresh grip on his bundle and staggered along with the rest.

The old beacon tower was reached at last, and the juniors were surprised and delighted to find that the Emergency Committee had paved the way by making the place habitable, and laying in ample stores of food.

The water-tank at the base of the tower was full. It would not remain full long. The school authorities would see to that. But, as Bob Cherry remarked, "Sufficient unto the day was the water thereof!"

Harry Wharton allotted the juniors to their respective rooms.

Twelve good men and trus were detailed to remain on the ground-floor. They were placed in charge of Tom Redwing, and it was their duty to see that the stout door was effectively barricaded night and day.

The remainder of the rebels were split into two parties. Harry Wharton commanded one lot, and Dennis Carr the other; and they were to occupy the two rooms at the top of the tower.

It was clearly laid down at the outset that any questions or disputes which arose should be referred to the Emergency Committee.

Having arranged their belongings on the floor in such a manner that they took up as little space as possible, the juniors set about preparing breakfast.

"We couldn't touch Parker's Patent Porridge," said Bob Cherry. "But what's wrong with eggs-and-bacon?"

"I say, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, "would you like me to warm up one of those rabbit-pies?"

"No, I wouldn't!" said Wharton curtly. "They're for dinner."

"I should like my dinner now," said Bunter. "It would be a good idea to have brekker and dinner combined into one meal."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It would be a still better idea," said Peter Todd, "if you kept that rat-trap of yours closed, Bunter."

A few moments later breakfast was in full swing.

It was a merry meal.

The rebels had been successful, so far, beyond their wildest expectations. They had expected to meet with a certain amount of resistance on their way to the tower. But no hand had been raised against them save that of P.-c. Tozer. And Tozer didn't count.

Breakfast was served on the floor. It had been prepared in one of the upper rooms, and a couple of specially-appointed waiters carried supplies to the hungry fellows downstairs.

Every now and again the juniors rose to their feet and glanced out of the small windows, which commanded a magnificent and extensive view of the surrounding countryside.

"Nobody in sight yet," said Bob Cherry.

"It won't be long before somebody turns up, though," said Dick Russell. "I shall expect to see a tank crawling up the hill soon, and a fleet of armoured cars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Half an hour passed.

The breakfast things were cleared away.

and the duly-appointed bottle-washers commenced their task.

The Emergency Committee had thoughtfully provided a long coil of rope and a couple of buckets. The latter were lowered from time to time, and hauled up, full of water from the tank below.

It was more than probable that the tank would be drained as soon as the enemy appeared on the scene. And what the rebels would do then they hardly cared to think. But there were several dozens of mineral-waters in the fortress—sufficient to allay the thirst of the garrison for a couple of days, if not more.

Just as the fellows were beginning to pine for something exciting to happen, Bob Cherry gave a sudden shout.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Loder!" Trotting up the hill, with his eyes fixed on the beacon tower, came the captain of Greyfriars. He was alone.

"Now we shall have some fun!" said Vernon-Smith. "Forward, the stout bowmen and the trusty spearmen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Onward and upward came Gerald Loder; and the rebels waited breathlessly for him to arrive. They wondered what action, if any, he intended to take.

Whatever his intentions were, Loder was likely to get no change out of the rebels of Greyfriars!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Prefects Decline!

"COME down at once, you cheeky young sweeps!" snarled Loder, halting at the foot of the old beacon tower.

Bob Cherry unscrewed one of the bars which guarded the window, and poked his curly head through the aperture. He gazed down at the infuriated sculor.

"Speak up, my little man!" he said encouragingly. "We can't hear you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come out of that!" roared Loder.

"Not this evening," replied the imperturbable Bob. "Some other evening!"

"You'll be expelled for this outrageous conduct!" hooted Loder.

"Bow-wow!"

"How long are you going to keep up this tomfoolery?"

"Until Wingate is restored to the captaincy and the new bug is withdrawn!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"You fools—you mad fools! Don't you realise what this means? You'll be brought back to the school in disgrace, and the ring-leaders will be flogged and expelled!"

"We've got to be brought back to the school first," said Nugent.

"And that that will be no easy matter," said Mark Linley, with a smile.

"Is every fellow in the Remove taking part in this?" demanded Loder.

"Every man-jack of us!" answered Vernon-Smith.

Loder advanced towards the heavy oaken door, and gave it a savage kick. This had no effect whatever upon the door, but it hurt Loder's foot considerably.

"Nothing short of dynamite will shift that door," said Dennis Carr, who was peering through one of the windows of the room in which he held control.

"You mad young idiots! How long do you suppose you can hang out here, without food and drink?"

"We've an ample supply of both, thanks!" said Bob Cherry.

Loder scowled.

"Then this was all out and dried beforehand?" he ejaculated.

"Exactly!"

"Look here!" said the captain of Greyfriars. "The Head has sent me to fetch you all back!"

"Then he's sent you on a fool's errand!" said Dick Penfold.

"Absolutely!"

"I should advise you to come quietly——"

"Good old special constable!" sang out Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't it time we put in a bit of work with our peashooters?" murmured Bolsover major.

Harry Wharton nodded, and a number of enthusiastic marksmen produced their peashooters, and waited for the command to open fire. It soon came, and a shower of hard peas rained down upon the unfortunate Loder.

The captain of Greyfriars executed a new variation of the jazz as he was peppered by the rebels' ammunition.

THE PENNY POPULAR—No. 63.

"You—you cheeky young cubs!" he spluttered. "How dare you!"

"How dare we!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bombardment had been in progress about five minutes, when Harry Wharton gave the order to cease fire.

"We must economise our ammunition," he said. "We shall require a good deal of it later on, I'm thinking!"

"There are some prehistoric eggs in this packing-case," said Monty Newland. "We might as well get 'em out of the way."

Accordingly, a number of juniors armed themselves with the unwanted eggs, and Loder was pelted with the unavoury missiles. The pea-shooting bombardment had been bad enough, but it was tame in comparison with the egg-throwing.

Loder yelled and spluttered and danced as the avalanche of eggs descended, and crashed and smashed on various parts of his anatomy.

"Oh! Ow! Yarooooo! You'll be made to suffer for this, you young villains!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bombardment grew so terrific that Loder had no alternative but to turn and flee.

The captain of Greyfriars was in such a shocking state by this time. He was plastered from head to foot with the yolks of eggs, and a disagreeable odour clung to him. Those eggs had been laid by prehistoric hens in prehistoric times.

Loder lost no time in getting back to the school. He went across the fields, not wishing to expose himself to the public gaze.

He reached Greyfriars without meeting a soul; but as he crossed the Close the Head's study window was thrown open, and Dr. Locke exclaimed:

"Good gracious! Loder! How came you to get into that disgusting state?"

Loder stopped short.

"I'll come in and explain, sir——" he began.

"No, no!" said the Head hastily. He did not wish to get to close quarters with the captain of Greyfriars for obvious reasons.

"I will converse with you through the window. What has happened?"

"I have been assaulted by the young rascals in the Remove, sir!" said Loder.

"You have discovered their whereabouts?"

"Yes, sir. They are occupying the old beacon-tower on the crest of St. Giles' Hill."

"Bless my soul! What could be their object in visiting such a place?"

"They are holding what is known as a barring-out, sir. Wharton's at the bottom of the whole business. He incited the others, and they rallied round him!"

"Did you remonstrate with the young rascals, Loder?"

"I did, sir. I urged them to cease their tomfoolery at once, and return to the school!"

"And what did they say?"

"They said that they would stay where they were until the new food has been withdrawn and the captaincy restored to Wingate."

The Head compressed his lips.

"This is rank rebellion!" he said. "The foolish boys appear to have acted like this without realising the enormity of their conduct! They shall soon learn, however, that they may not defy those in authority with impunity!"

"They treated me with the utmost violence, sir!" said Loder. "They attacked me first with their peashooters, and then with eggs which were—well, not quite fresh, sir!"

"And they absolutely refused to return to the school?"

"They were most emphatic on that point, sir!"

"Very well!" said the Head. "Go and cleanse yourself, Loder. And meanwhile I will take the necessary measures to quash this rebellion at once!"

As soon as Loder had disappeared in the direction of the nearest bath-room, the Head rang for Trotter, the page.

"Go to the Sixth Form-room, Trotter, and announce that I wish to see all the prefects in my study."

"Werry good, sir!"

Trotter retired on his errand; and five minutes later the prefects came in, headed by Wingate.

"You sent for us, sir?" said the ex-captain. "Yes, Wingate. It has been brought to my knowledge that the reckless and misguided young rascals in the Remove Form are occupying the old beacon tower on St. Giles' Hill, which, as you know, is on the outskirts of Courtfield."

"Do they give any reason for their action, sir?" asked Gwynne.

"They appear to object to the new food, and to the appointment of Loder as captain of the school."

"Then they've got a genuine grievance, sir."

"Gwynne!"

"The new food was never popular from the beginning, sir," continued Gwynne. "And the nomination of Loder to the captaincy got the fellows' backs up. It's not altogether surprising that the Remove has revolted."

The Head frowned.

"Am I to understand, Gwynne, that you are in sympathy with the young rebels?"

"Yes, sir. I consider they have acted very rashly, but under great provocation."

Dr. Locke turned to Gwynne's colleagues.

"Are you all of the same opinion?" he asked.

There was a general nodding of heads.

"We can't say that we're keen on the new food, sir," said Faulkner.

"And we're still less keen on Loder, sir," added Hammersley.

The Head's frown grew deeper.

"I am at a loss to understand your attitude," he said. "As prefects, it is your duty to support the new food regulations which Sir Hilton Popper has seen fit to introduce. Further, you have no right to criticise my action in appointing Loder to the captaincy!"

"Might I venture to suggest, sir, that you don't know Loder so well as we do?" said North.

"Be silent, North! I can only assume that you have all conspired together to make Loder's position as uncomfortable as possible!"

"That is not so, sir!" said Wingate indignantly. "I give you my word——"

"Very well, Wingate! I accept your assurance on the matter. And now I must request you all to go and bring back those recalcitrant boys—by force, if necessary."

A grim expression came over Wingate's face.

"I'm sorry, sir, but——"

The Head looked thunderstruck.

"Do you mean to say," he rumbled, "that you decline to carry out my wishes?"

"I do not feel called upon to interfere in the matter of the rebellion, sir."

"Neither do I, sir," said Gwynne.

And the remainder of the prefects endorsed that sentiment.

"This is open defiance!" said the Head angrily. "You are encouraging those young rascals in their act of lawlessness!"

The prefects were silent.

"Once more," said Dr. Locke. "I command you to go and do my bidding!"

"We are sorry, sir," said Wingate quietly.

"but we cannot alter our decision. We consider that the Remove have good grounds for acting as they have done; and it would be going against our principles to interfere."

"Things are coming to a nice pass," observed the Head, "when I am defied by my own prefects! Leave my study at once, all of you! I will consider what is the most fitting form of punishment for this insubordination!"

Without another word the prefects filed out in an orderly procession, leaving the Head in a state bordering on distraction.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Holding the Fort!

WHEN morning lessons were over—for lessons had proceeded as usual, so far as the other Forms were concerned—the Head summoned all the masters to attend in his study.

Mr. Quelch was the first arrival, and he was looking very grave. He had had the Remove Form-room to himself all the morning.

Mr. Hacker and Mr. Prout arrived together shortly afterwards, and then came Messrs. Twigg and Capper. Mr. Larry Lascelles, the young mathematics master, completed the assembly.

"I have summoned you together," said the Head, "to discuss the extraordinary situation which has arisen. As you are all aware, the boys in the Remove Form have defied my authority, and have broken out in revolt."

"What is their motive, sir, in going to such an extreme?" said Mr. Hacker.

"They appear to resent the new hygienic fare, and also the appointment of Loder to the captaincy. They have established themselves in the old beacon tower on St. Giles' Hill, and they refuse to come back to the school."

"Dear me! This is very serious!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

"The matter is even more serious than you

suppose, Quelch. I have instructed the prefects to bring the wayward young rascals back to the school, and they have declined to do so."

"Then they are in sympathy with the rebels?" said Mr. Capper.

The Head nodded. "It is an altogether unprecedented state of affairs," he said. "This absurd rebellion must be instantly checked or the affair will be getting into the newspapers. Since the rebels refuse to come back to the school in a proper manner, they must be forced to evacuate the tower!"

"A very simple matter, sir!" said Mr. Prout.

"I do not agree with you, Prout. Without the aid of the prefects we are severely handicapped!"

Mr. Prout smiled in that superior manner which his colleagues often found so exasperating.

"My dear Dr. Locke," he said, "I will undertake to put a stop to this childish nonsense in an hour! If you will invest me with the necessary authority, I will see that the young rascals are brought back to the school in time for afternoon lessons."

The Head gaped. "Do you realise the magnitude of your task, Prout?"

"Bah! I have handled hundreds of men in my time, sir—desperate men of the Wild West—and it is hardly likely that I should be balked by a mere handful of schoolboys."

"How do you propose to work?"

"Why, sir, I shall enlist the services of Gosling, Mimble, the gardener, and possibly Constable Tozer. A ladder will be conveyed to the tower, and the rebels will be forced to make an immediate surrender. Will you allow me to handle this situation, sir?"

"Certainly!" said the Head. But he looked very doubtful. He knew that Mr. Prout was a gentleman who frequently promised more than he could perform.

"Very well," said Mr. Prout. "I will set out on my mission at once. The other masters may accompany me, if they so desire."

With the exception of Larry Lascelles, who had a sneaking sympathy for the Removites, the masters decided to accompany Mr. Prout.

Mr. Joseph Mimble, the school gardener, was summoned; and he picked up P.-e. Tozer en route.

"Which I see the young rips marchin' through the village this mornin', gentlemen," said Mr. Tozer. "An wot I says is this 'ere—they're werry desprit!"

"Nonsense, Tozer!" said Mr. Prout. "I can quite understand that they had nothing to fear from you, but they will quail at the sight of the masters!"

"You do not think, sir," said Mr. Twigg uneasily, "that they will venture to attack us?"

Mr. Prout looked horrified at the bare suggestion.

"My dear Twigg," he said, "they would not dare to even contemplate such a proceeding!"

"I am afraid, Prout," said Mr. Quelch drily, "you do not make sufficient allowance for the mettle of my pupils. They are anything but weaklings!"

"We shall see, sir!" said Mr. Prout. Nothing more was spoken until the party reached the foot of the old tower.

The alarm had been given, of course. The rebels were at dinner, but a sentry had been posted at one of the upper windows, and he at once gave notice of the master's approach.

"Here they come, bless their hearts!" said Bob Cherry, crossing to the window to reconnoitre. "Prout's leading the procession, and he looks quite fierce! Then there's Hacker, Quelch, Capper, and Twigg."

"Anybody else?" asked Wharton.

"Gosling and Mimble, grunting beneath the weight of a stout ladder. And our old pal Tozer's bringing up the rear! Poor old Tozey! He'll get more than he bargained for! Have we any of 'Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome' left?"

"Meaning the eggs?" asked Dick Russell.

"Yes."

"There are about two dozen here, and if we don't get rid of 'em we shall be obliged to wear gas-masks! The effluvia is simply appalling!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With one accord, the rebels crowded to the windows. They revelled in the prospect of a fresh piece of excitement.

Mr. Prout tried the handle of the heavy oak door, but it refused to budge.

"No admittance that way, sir!" sang out Dennis Carr cheerfully. "You'll have to go round to the tradesmen's entrance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout gazed upwards. His florid face was working convulsively.

"You impertinent young rascal!" he spluttered.

"Wot d'you want us to do with this 'ere ladder, sir?" inquired Mr. Mimble, mopping his heated brow.

"Rear it up against the wall!" commanded Mr. Prout. "One moment! I will call upon the young rascals to surrender!"

And Mr. Prout did so.

"Come down at once, all of you!" he thundered. "Let this preposterous rebellion terminate immediately!"

"Sorry, sir," said Harry Wharton, firmly but respectfully, "but we haven't the slightest intention of giving in! We have a just grievance, and we mean to hang on here until it's remedied!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I will not bandy words with you, Wharton!" said Mr. Prout imperiously. "You will submit at once, or I shall employ force!"

"Go ahead, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Prout renewed his instructions for the ladder to be reared against the wall of the tower.

After a good deal of manoeuvring, Gosling and the gardener accomplished the task, and awaited further orders.

"Which is the younger of you two men?" inquired Mr. Prout.

"I am, of course, sir!" said Mr. Mimble. "I could give that old fogey ten years!"

Gosling snorted with rage.

"Which I'm a younger man than you, Joseph Mimble, an' you knows it!"

"Bah! Didn't I see you totterin' down to the village the other day, to draw your old-age pension?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter rang out from the rebels. "Cease this unseemly brawling!" said Mr. Prout sternly. "You, Mimble, appear to be the more agile of the two. Kindly ascend the ladder—"

"An' what then, sir?"

"Why, bring the young miscreants down, of course!"

Mr. Mimble looked quite bewildered. How he was going to haul thirty or forty juniors down from the top of the tower quite passed his comprehension.

"Which it ain't possible, sir!" he protested. "Don't argue!" snapped Mr. Prout. "It will be quite sufficient if you force an entry through one of the windows, and come down and remove the barricade from the door. The young rascals will then be driven out like rabbits from their burrows!"

"That seems to be quite a favourite expression of yours, Prout," said Mr. Hacker drily. "I fear, however, that the chances of its realisation are extremely remote."

"My pupils possess greater powers of resistance than rabbits," said Mr. Quelch.

"Do you mean to say," roared Mr. Prout, "that you are proud of them?"

"Not in the least. I consider that they have behaved abominably, and I shall be happy to see them ejected. Their ejection, however, is not the simple matter you appear to imagine."

Meanwhile, Mr. Mimble had set foot on the ladder, which he ascended with ponderous steps.

Harry Wharton uttered a word of warning from above.

"If you can a step higher, Mr. Mimble, we shall be reluctantly compelled to open fire!"

"Eh? Wot with?" gasped the gardener, pausing midway up the ladder. In his alarm he conjured up visions of machine-guns and Lee-Metford rifles.

"We've got several brands of ammunition up here," said Bob Cherry. "None of them are very pleasant to the recipient. If you value your skin, Mr. Mimble, you'll slide down that ladder like greased lightning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Mimble did value his skin, and he descended the ladder for more quickly than he had mounted it.

"Coward!" said Gosling contemptuously. "Coward yourself!" growled the gardener. "That is quite enough!" said Mr. Prout sternly. "Gosling, pray climb that ladder."

"I don't mean no disrespect, sir," said Gosling. "But wot I says is this 'ere—go an' bring the young rascals down yourself, sir!"

"Ear, ear!" said Mr. Mimble, in hearty agreement for once with his enemy.

"You are a pair of chicken-hearted buffoons!" snorted the master of the Fifth.

Then, turning to Mr. Tozer, he added: "Tozer, you are a representative of the law. I call upon you to eject those unprincipled rascals from the tower!"

"I'll do my best, sir," said the constable. And he started to climb the ladder.

"Forward the peashooting brigade!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Are you ready?"

The crack shots of the Remove nodded assent.

"Fire!"

Fortunately for Mr. Tozer, he was only a short distance up the ladder when the bombardment began; otherwise he would have shared the fate of Humpty-Dumpty, and had a bad fall.

A hail of peas spattered on the constable's tunic, and a goodly number smote his upturned face. With a yelp of anguish he slid rapidly down to the ground.

The Remove marksmen were not so skilful as usual in their aim, for some of the peas found a billet on Mr. Prout and Mr. Hacker.

"Tozer," gasped Mr. Prout, caressing his tingling jaw, "I am surprised that you should shrink from the performance of your duty! I must insist upon your remounting that ladder!"

"Ow! I've 'ad enough, I 'ave!" said the constable. "I ain't a'goin' up that there ladder agen! Them young warmints is dangerous!"

Mr. Prout looked baffled and furious. He hardly knew what to do next. He had boasted to the Head and to his colleagues that he would swiftly quell the rebels. But it was proving a much harder task than he had anticipated.

"Wharton!" thundered the master of the Fifth.

"Yes, sir?"

"For the last time, I call upon you to put an end to this tomfoolery!"

"I'm sorry, sir—"

"If you submit quietly I will persuade the headmaster to be lenient with you and to visit your offence with a flogging instead of expulsion."

"It's very good of you, sir," said the captain of the Remove, "but, as I said before, we haven't the slightest intention of giving in."

"You will hardly dare to spend the night here!"

"We're prepared to spend a good many nights here if necessary, sir!"

"You are an unmitigated young rascal!"

"The air seems to be thick with compliments just now," observed Bob Cherry.

Mr. Prout appealed to Mr. Quelch. It was humiliating for him to have to do so after his vain boasting, but he addressed the Remove-master with an effort.

"Would you care to ascend that ladder, Quelch?"

"No, I would not!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Might I request you, Hacker?"

Mr. Hacker shrugged his shoulders.

"You undertook to quell this rebellion, Prout," he said; "it therefore rests with you to take action."

"Twigg, you are a comparatively young man—"

"I have not forfeited all sense of dignity," replied Mr. Twigg, "and I should not dream of ascending that ladder!"

Very reluctantly Mr. Prout was compelled to admit defeat. He had no desire to ascend the ladder himself, for obvious reasons.

"I am afraid," he said, "that we can do nothing further at the moment. We must have a further consultation with Dr. Locke."

"And I trust that on this occasion you will not make promises which you are incapable of carrying out!" said Mr. Quelch.

The masters, the gate porter, the gardener, and the constable retired discomfited, and from the upper regions of the tower came a ringing cheer of triumph.

No further attacks were made that day on the rebels' stronghold.

The rebels were going strong. They had pitted themselves against the powers that were, and they were prepared for all eventualities.

What did the future hold in store for them—defeat or victory?

Of the further developments in the great rebellion, and of its dramatic climax, another story must tell.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "THE TRIUMPH OF JUSTICE." Order your copy EARLY.)



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. Micky is arrested, but escapes to the river-front and stows away on a tramp-steamer. In New York Harbour Micky gets through an open port and swims ashore. There 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. The film company goes on location, where Floyd Unwin, the Broadworth star, is to perform a death-defying feat. But the opium habit, to which the star is addicted, has undermined his nerve, and he is unable to do the stunt. He insults Mr. Broadworth, and is ignominiously fired out of the company. Seizing his opportunity, Micky leaps on the motorcycle and performs the stunt himself by dashing over the edge of the cliff into the sea. Afterwards he is given a contract by Mr. Broadworth to appear as star in one production. His first important work is a stunt among the skyscrapers of Los Angeles. Floyd Unwin joins forces with Alec P. Figg, and the rascally pair concoct a plot for Micky's downfall. Micky arranges with Jeff Romery, the chief director, to view the skyscrapers among which he is to risk his life for the cinema.

(Now read on.)

Preparing for the Big Stunt.

WHEN Micky called round at the flat of Jeffrey J. Romery, chief director of the Broadworth Film Company, he found Jeff's powerful automobile already waiting.

In less than a couple of minutes he was joined by the genial Southerner himself, and the two took their seats in the car, and were whirled rapidly down into Los Angeles.

As the chauffeur drew up by the side-walk outside the main entrance to the Liberty building, Micky looked out at the towering skyscraper with peculiar interest. Often had he seen this particular block of offices, but he had noticed the Liberty building no more than he had the other magnificent structures in the city.

Followed by the English lad, Jeff Romery alighted from the car and led the way into the building.

"I guess we'll take the express elevator up to the twenty-fifth storey," he remarked, "and from there we can make our way out on to the roof."

Going up in the lift the director gave Micky a piece more information about the stunt which confirmed an opinion expressed by Floyd Unwin to Alec P. Figg during their secret confab in the cheap eating-house.

"I'm going to have half a dozen steel wires strung across from this building to the block opposite, Micky," he said, "and after I've had a good look round, I'll come down here again with the chief carpenter, who will be responsible for having the work done."

"Any definite time fixed for the stunt yet, Jeff?" asked Micky.

"We'll try and pull it off on the day after to-morrow," replied the director. "This morning K. N. obtained the necessary permission and completed the final business arrangements, and as long as the weather holds good for photography, there shouldn't be a hitch."

From the twenty-fifth storey the two made their way up a narrow stairway, and came out on to the flat roof of the great Liberty building.

For a few seconds Micky stood lost in wonderment at the view of the lovely city of Southern California and the surrounding country as seen from that great height. But his enjoyment was speedily marred by Jeff's voice, reminding him that business, and not pleasure, had brought them up there.

Hastily he darted across to the film-director, who was leaning against the parapet that bordered the front of the building.

"Now you'll be able to grasp the whole idea clearly, Micky," remarked Jeff, lighting up one of his notorious black cigars. "We shall run the wires from under this parapet to a point above that window on the building opposite." With a gesture the director indicated the place in question, and continued: "By climbing out of the window and reaching up you'll be able to yank yourself on to the

wires. Then you work your way across the width of the street, and climb over this parapet. But, gee, I'm glad it's your stunt, and not mine!"

Micky laughed confidently. "That's the disadvantage of your not having had a circus training, Jeff," he said. "A course of the flying trapeze would do your nerves all the good in the world!"

"But not my neck, I guess!" murmured Jeff, peering over the parapet. "Gosh, it's sure some drop to the street!"

Micky boldly leaned over the roof and gazed down. Jeff grasped his arm in alarm.

"Jumping snakes!" he cried. "Don't go committing suicide until we've 'shot' the rest o' the scenes for 'The Mysterious Pearl!'"

The young film star laughed at the director's apprehension, and adopted a slightly safer position.

As Jeff had said, it was "sure some drop." From the roof of the mighty skyscraper to the busy street below was well over three hundred feet. The motor-car by which they had journeyed down from Cinema City was but a small, dark patch outside the building. The pedestrians reminded Micky of nothing so much as so many insects crawling indiscriminately upon the ground.

And in a couple of days' time Micky was to wend his way between the giant skyscrapers with only a few wires between himself and destruction!

Having made a few notes in a small book he carried, the cinema director announced his intention of returning home. The two made their way down the staircase and rang for the lift. As they did so the door of a room bearing the number 713 opened, and a man stepped out.

For one fleeting second his eyes met those of Micky before he swiftly withdrew into the room and closed the door.

The sudden action roused Micky's curiosity for a brief space, but he said nothing to Jeff about an affair which in itself was so trivial.

The man was lean, with bushy, black eyebrows and thick moustache, and, as far as the young film star was aware, he had never seen him in his life before.

But no sooner had Jeff Romery and Micky descended in the lift than the man again stepped out of the office. He looked cautiously about him, and then carefully locked the door of the room from which he had emerged.

For a couple of seconds he stood admiringly regarding a freshly-painted sign on the door. It read: "Mexican Silver Mines and Land Development Company," and the pretentious title seemed to afford the man considerable gratification.

"Quick work!" he muttered to himself. "Now, I guess, the vice-president o' the 'company' might try and raise a few greenbacks on account."

He stepped across and rang the bell for the elevator, and half a minute later he

boarded a trolley-car for one of the fashionable suburbs of the city.

Dismounting from the street-car at the end of the journey, he consulted a slip of paper which he drew from his breast-pocket.

"Puebla Court-Mansions," he murmured, "at the corner of Madison Avenue and Cedar Street."

It was dusk by this time; but the man apparently had the eyes of a hawk, for he speedily picked out one of the names high up on a block of buildings close at hand.

Turning the corner, he soon found the building of which he was in search.

"Great pineapples!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "That guy sure lives in some style! This is as nice a block o' bachelor apartments as I've ever clapped eyes on!"

In the light streaming from the porchway of the place he again consulted the scrap of paper, and then he stepped into one of the self-working lifts, and went up to the second floor.

He made his way to the front door of one suite of apartments, and rang the electric bell.

In response a Japanese butler appeared, and, raising his hat politely, the man made his inquiry.

"Is Mister Floyd Unwin in?"

The butler looked the dark individual up and down.

"Yes, sir! What name shall I take in?" he asked in almost perfect English.

"Oh, tell him a pal! Y'savvy? Just a pal."

"Very good, sir! Step inside!"

For a few seconds the visitor was left regarding the luxurious appointments until the butler returned and ushered him into the smoking-room.

Standing on a large bearskin rug under the soft crimson glow of a shaded electric lamp was the ex-star of the Broadworth Film Company.

His eyes were hollow and restless-looking and his cheeks pale and sunken, for he had again been "hitting the pipe" in another foul opium-den kept by a friend of the notorious Li Chang Foo.

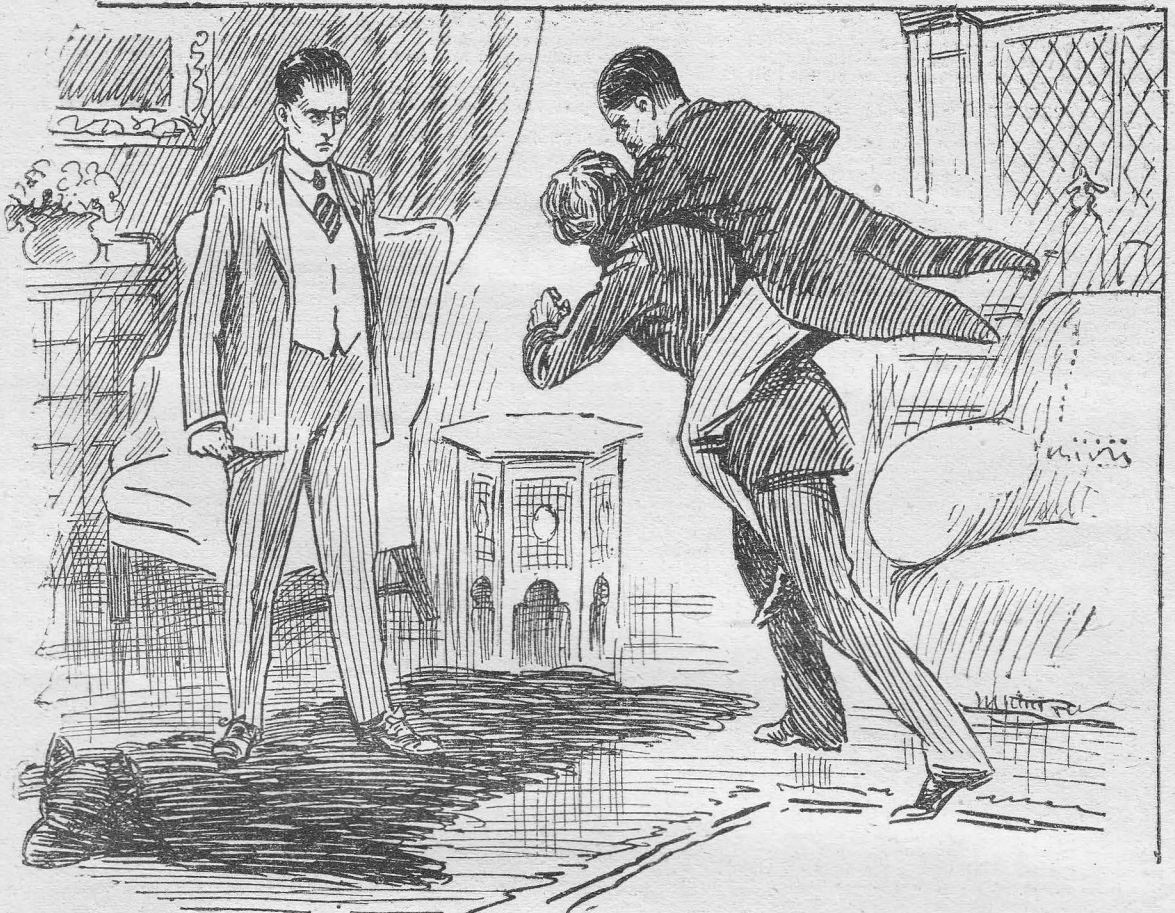
The visitor stepped into the room and made an exaggerated bow.

"Good-evening, Mister Unwin!"

The puzzled look which had been on Unwin's face was erased as though by some magic in the other's voice, and he started violently and clutched the table.

"Figg!" he gasped. "What the blazes d'you want here? Didn't I tell you never to come to my flat?"

"Maybe, Mister Unwin," said the crook suavely, as he calmly took a seat—the most comfortable armchair; "but I haven't come merely to enjoy the pleasure of your illustrious company, but to have a quiet lip vav about a business proposition. I guess your nerves ain't as good as when you were doing those daredevil stunts for the Broadworth outfit.



Figg half-turned, but he was a second too late. With a spring like a panther the Japanese butler landed high on the man's back. (See page 10.)

Otherwise you wouldn't get so skeered jest because a pard chooses to drop in for a visit." "Oh, cut it out!" growled Unwin, who was not in the best of moods. "You know mighty well that the sheriff's officers have got your number, and—"

"Pshaw!" sneered Smart Alec. "I'm no amateur at the game. I haven't been shadowed a yard the whole afternoon. If I hadn't opened my mouth, would you have been wise to me in this disguise?"

"Perhaps not," admitted Unwin; "but your coming down here is dangerous, anyway."

Mingled with the annoyance the ex-star felt at the unexpected visit of the cracksmen was more than a little nervousness at the thought of being marked as an associate of a man of such disrepute as Alec P. Figg.

The crook, however, was feeling very much at his ease, for he had quite got over the scare the ex-star had given him at their last meeting, when Unwin had claimed inside knowledge of the shooting of Monkey White.

That chance shot of Unwin's had proved to be a bulls-eye; but now Figg was possessed of certain information of which the ex-film star knew nothing—namely, that Monkey White had left Los Angeles in a northbound train, probably for San Francisco.

The fact that Floyd Unwin was not proving the most genial of hosts worried him not in the very least. He drew a packet of rice-papers and a bag of "Bull Durham" tobacco from his pocket and proceeded to roll a cigarette.

When he spoke he ignored entirely Unwin's last churlish remark, and proceeded to broach the business which had brought him to the flat.

"I've jest been taking a hike down to the Liberty building, Unwin," he said. "You've sure been mighty successful in hiring and fixing up those offices, you haven't let the grass grow under your feet."

Unwin preened himself under this flattery,

and regarded Figg with a trifle more tolerance.

"Yep," he said; "I pride myself on the fact of getting a hustle on once I've made up my mind to do a thing. And now you're here I guess we might as well make the final arrangements for dealing with our mutual friend, Mr. Micky Denver."

"Ah, that's the stuff!" cried Figg, blowing out a cloud of smoke. "I had a hunch you were anxious to have a pow-wow about our li'l business proposition."

Unwin made a little impatient gesture and launched into an account of the arrangements he had been making since the discussion in the eating-house, when he had first secured the notorious crook as his ally against the young English lad whom he considered his enemy.

"See here, Figg," he said; "this afternoon I found out more about the stunt young Johnny Bull is due to perform for the films. As I expected, some steel wires are going to be rigged from under the parapet at the top of the Liberty building to the block opposite. Now, as your visit to the building to-day will have shown you, the whole length of that parapet under which wires can possibly be fixed is within easy reach of one or another of the windows of that suite of offices I hired."

"Yep; I savvy that," said Figg. "It was a stroke o' luck that the Broadworth outfit selected a new skyscraper like the Liberty in which offices were to let—mighty thoughtful o' them, in fact. But, say, if this business comes off, won't the sleuths cotton on to the fact that the Mexican Silver Mines and Land Development Company is a phoney one, and that you're the real tenant o' the offices?"

Floyd Unwin smiled inscrutably.

"They'll soon cotton on to the fact that the company's phoney," he said, "but they'll be a whole lot cuter than I give 'em credit for being if they can implicate me in the

affair. My money has paid for the option on the offices, but the business has been done through an agent I can trust. He's being well paid, and if trouble comes he'll have to bear the brunt of it. But I guess he'll be a good many miles out of California before that little accident happens to our young Britisher friend. Now, have you arranged for the means for bringing the thing off?"

Smart Alec leaned forward and lowered his voice.

"I hev," he said, "and I've found the very identical thing I want for the purpose. In this li'l burgh are two or three members o' one o' the cutest gangs of yeggmen in the Yew-nited States. The leader o' it is Red Herman, whom I hev met a good many times in the East, and I am hiring what I want from him. Gee! I wish I had my own kit o' tools, though!"

When Thieves Fail Out!

ALEC P. FIGG heaved a heavy sigh as he thought of the wonderful collection of instruments which were reposing in a secret depository in the Bowery district of New York. In that kit, which he had not been able for safety's sake to bring to the West with him, were some of the most up-to-date and ingenious appliances known to the profession. Figg was still able to make the boast that there was not a steel safe in existence that he could not cut, granted a night in which to complete the job.

There is always a warfare going on between the leading makers of steel safes and the cleverest cracksmen. As surely as a more highly tempered steel is brought out, so surely is some new scientific method discovered for cutting through it.

Except for one or two simple little jobs in his early days, Figg had never used such crude means as the jemmy or dynamite.

"There's not likely to be any hitch with this thing you're borrowing from—er—Red Herman, I suppose?" murmured Unwin. "You'll have only a few seconds to do the job, y'know."

The cracksmen smiled contemptuously. "Never fear, Mister Unwin," he said. "Provided you've made no mistake in your calculations and I kin get within a couple o' yards o' those wires upon which our young Johnny Bull is going to do his cinema stunt, I'll cut 'em like so many bits o' string!"

The thought of the dastardly plot which was to send the young film star hurtling from the mighty skyscrapers to the street three hundred feet below caused the two precious soundreels to give grim chuckles of satisfaction.

The amount of careful thought and ingenious preparation they were making for their revenge on the English lad who had fallen foul of them was worthy of a better object.

Figg drew his chair a trifle closer to that of Unwin.

"Yep," he went on; "I guessed that Red Herman would hev about what I should want for the job, but I didn't know that it would prove as good as the one I've got way back in New York. This oxy-acetylene generator will give a flame o' a temperature o' three thousand seven hundred degrees Centigrade. It'll cut through an ordinary steel safe door like a knife going through paper, and will burst any steel wires the Broadworth outfit put up for Mister Micky Denver like so many threads."

"Fine and dandy!" cried Unwin. "And directly I have discovered the exact situation of the wires below the parapet of the Liberty building I'll let you know, so's you can get to work and arrange for your get-away directly you've done the trick."

He rose and unlocked a drawer in the writing bureau and drew out a rolled-up plan. This he straightened out and showed to Figg.

For some seconds the two had their heads together discussing a simple but clever way of making an escape from the Liberty building after Figg had performed his allotted task. They anticipated that a hue and cry would be raised immediately the deed was perpetrated, and they were determined to leave no stone unturned in providing that the get-away should be as swift and safe as money and brains could make it.

On the floor beneath the suite of offices obtained for the purpose of the plot was one other vacant room which Unwin's agent had also hired. It was by way of this that Figg contemplated making his escape, and so by a workmen's lift down to the back exit of the building. There a swift motor-cycle would be at Figg's disposal with which to reach a safe retreat at a distance from the scene of the crime.

It was all very carefully planned, and Figg felt absolutely confident that even if he were suspected of having a hand in the affair, that the cleverest sleuth in the city would find no evidence against him.

Knowing well the danger of finger-prints, he had worn gloves during the whole time of his visit to the offices that afternoon, and on the day of action he intended using a pair of rubber gloves and gauntlets borrowed, together with the oxy-acetylene, from Red Herman.

The shoes he had worn that afternoon had been fitted with false soles two sizes bigger than the shoes themselves, and these he intended to gear again whilst at the work which would rid him of the hated English lad who had crossed his path and inflicted such indignities upon him.

When the two had discussed the plan of the building for some minutes, Unwin again replaced it in the bureau drawer, and glanced meaningly at the clock. But Alec P. Figg did not take the gentle hint. He settled himself back in the armchair and lighted a fresh cigarette before introducing the real object of his visit.

"By the way, Mister Unwin," he said, "before I kin get the loan o' the apparatus I want from Red Herman, I've gotter come across with a tidy wad o' greenbacks. He wants three hundred 'bucks' for the hire o' them, and another five hundred deposit. So I guess if you'll hand me twenty per cent. o' the sum you agreed to pay me right now, it'll sorter make matters nice and smooth."

"What the blazes d'you mean?" growled Unwin. "A contract's a contract. When the

job's done you'll get your five thousand dollars! You won't touch a cent before!"

Figg shrugged his shoulders and rose from his seat.

"Waal," he said, "if that's how you feel about it, I guess it puts the kibosh on the whole business!"

"You idiot," hissed Unwin, "you made a contract, and carry it out you shall!"

The crook smiled contemptuously. "And if I don't?"

"I'll get the sheriff to put Monkey White in the witness-box, Mr. Jed Tomson!"

Floyd Unwin peered defiantly into the face of the cracksmen, and the glint of triumph in his deep-set eyes showed plainly he believed that he had played a trump card.

For perhaps a couple of seconds Figg met his gaze unflinchingly, and then he raised his hand and snapped his fingers under the nose of the ex-star.

"No, you won't, Mister Unwin," he said. Unwin started back suddenly, but he quickly recovered his composure.

"Indeed! And why not?" he asked suavely. "For two reasons."

"And they are?"

"Firstly, that they won't be able to find him, and secondly—"

Figg paused, and, thrusting his hands in his pockets, seated himself comfortably on the edge of a small table.

The ex-film star watched him like a fascinated rabbit before a snake.

"Well, Mr. Figg," he said, in a constrained voice, "and what's the second reason?"

"This!"

Like lightning the astute cracksmen whipped his right hand out of his pocket, and the ex-film star found himself looking into the sinister barrel of a thirteen-shot automatic pistol.

"Gosh!" shrieked Unwin, leaping back a foot and covering his face with his hands. "D-don't shoot!"

"Shurrup!" growled Figg. "And get your hands over your head before I count three, or I'll let daylight into your thirteen places! One—two—Ah, that's better!"

He surveyed the trembling form of his accomplice with a contemptuous sneer curling his thin lips.

To Unwin at that moment the crook looked a veritable fiend incarnate, and quite capable of carrying out the threat he had made.

Perhaps to a spectator, had one been present, he would have presented a spectacle more conducive to laughter, for his nose, still red and swollen from contact with Micky's fist, did not fit well with the rest of his fearsome appearance.

For a few seconds he paused, and then burst forth into a torrent of tumbling words.

"So you thought you could skeer me—eh, Mister Unwin?" he hissed. "You thought you could make a tool o' Smart Alec, eh—Smart Alec, the most expert cracksmen on the Amurrican Continent? Now get this—I want a thousand 'bucks' badly, and you've jest gotter find 'em for me! The 'tec guys hev been markin' me so well lately it ain't been healthy to crack a crib in this li'l burgh; now jest you pay up and don't start gettin' fresh, or you're up against a mighty tough proposition! You're nerves ain't good enough to start any monkey business—you know you've got a yellow streak about as broad as my hand in you, Mister Unwin! Take my advice and quit 'hittin' the pipe,' you skeered piker!"

So intense was Figg in taunting his victim that he failed to see the slow opening of the smoking-room door behind him.

Inch by inch the door moved on its hinges and a yellow face peered into the room. Its owner was the Japanese butler, who had heard the shriek of his master when the crook had so deftly levelled the automatic.

It was the glance from Unwin's eyes which gave Figg the first intimation that danger threatened.

He half-turned, but he was a second too late. With a spring like a panther the Oriental landed high on the crook's back.

Figg twisted his arm back, and without hesitation pressed the trigger of his pistol. The bullet parted the black hair of the Jap, and crashed into a mirror, splintering it into a score of long uneven cracks, which ran out like so many spider legs in all directions.

But before he had time to fire again, the wily Oriental caught the forearm of the crook in a grip that caused Figg to drop the automatic with a yell of pain. It was as though a live electric wire had touched his flesh and sent an agonising current through his whole body.

The Japanese butler had resorted to a little

ju-jitsu, and the effect of his sudden grip was to render the crook as helpless as a child.

Unwin, with trembling fingers, stooped and picked up the automatic-pistol. He slipped the magazine from it, ejected the cartridges from the breech, and dropped the firearm into his pocket.

No sooner had he done so than a loud knocking sounded at the door, and the voice of a man was heard inquiring for Unwin. The ex-film star darted across to the door, and, half-opening it, looked out.

The sound of the shot had attracted two or three residents of the block of flats; but Unwin was quite equal to the occasion.

He explained with a laugh that his butler had accidentally knocked against his large electric reading-lamp, and the bulb had exploded with a crack like a pistol-shot. It had made him—Unwin—jump, he could assure them, but, fortunately, the rest of the lights had not fused.

The easy assurance of the ex-film star quite satisfied the inquirers, and then Unwin came back into the room, and closed the door.

By this time Figg was as white as a sheet from the pain of the ju-jitsu grip which the Japanese had maintained on his arm; and the little yellow man had no intention of relaxing it until his master made some indication of his wishes regarding his visitor.

Floyd Unwin gave a satisfied smile as he noted the helpless condition of the man who had tried to get the better of him. Figg had no fight left in him now, it was evident, and so the ex-star gave his butler the signal to release him.

"All right; that will do, Kato," he murmured. "You can safely leave him to me now!"

The little Jap gave Figg's arm one more squeeze out of sheer delight in seeing his victim squirm, and then he released him and glided out of the room.

Figg remained swaying backwards and forwards in a dazed sort of way for a few seconds from the intense pain he experienced, and then, with a hollow groan, he sank into the armchair he had occupied during his discussion with Unwin.

Unwin, who by this time had quite recovered his nerve, drew the automatic pistol from his pocket and tossed it on to Figg's knees.

"Come, put that away," he said, "and let's quit this foolish squabbling! Our quarrel's with that young Britisher pup—not between ourselves! Shake hands and be pardns!"

Smart Alec picked up the empty pistol, and carefully stowed it away. Inwardly he was furious at the treatment he had received, but the remembrance of the formidable Jap and his vice-like grip, and the hope that Unwin might accede to his demand for an advance of money, made him see that a pretence of friendliness was his best policy, for the time being, at any rate.

He gave his hand to Unwin, but it was done in a surly manner, and there was no heartiness in his grip, as may well be imagined.

"Waal, Mister Unwin," he said, "I guess I wasn't out to make a rough house in this hyer flat; but when a pard refuses a paltry li'l advance, and starts handin' out insinuations such as you said, I guess it was jest about to make a saint riled!"

"Anyway, it's all over now!" murmured Unwin, "and no harm's done, save to the mirror."

He turned and regarded the expensive mirror which was smashed beyond redemption rather ruefully.

Figg, too, looked at it with a start. He was of a superstitious nature, and he regarded the long spider-like cracks as though they were an omen of coming evil.

"Gee!" he exclaimed. "I hope that ain't a sign o' bad luck!"

The ex-film star gave a laugh, and offered the cracksmen a cigar from a carved silver box.

"Say, Figg," he said jocularly, "I guess your nerves are in a worse state of wear than you say mine are! The whole arrangements are safe as houses, and I'll see you get a wad of money on account to-morrow morning."

"Ah, now you're talking!" exclaimed Figg. "But I opine if you write me a cheque for a thousand 'bucks' right now, it'll meet the requirements o' the moment."

"Nothing doing!" retorted Unwin, with a smile. "You shall have a roll of notes to-morrow."

The ex-film star was far too astute to give into Figg's hand such incriminating evidence as a signed cheque; and, seeing that Unwin

could not be moved from this resolution, Figg agreed to the other arrangement.

He rose from his chair and prepared to go. "All right, Mister Unwin!" he said. "Jest mall the wad along to the address I gave you, so's I kin square up with Red Herman for the hire of the oxy-acetylene generator, the rubber gloves, mask, and the rest of the paraphernalia. And when our mutual friend, Mister Micky Denver, has had his three-hundred-foot tumble, you kin come across with the other four thousand 'bucks.' Good-night!"

He paused, and his eyes again rested upon the splintered mirror.

"Gee!" he muttered, as he turned to leave the apartment. "But I'm sorry about that mirror!"

The Stunt Among the Skyscrapers!

It was the second day following Micky's exciting ride on Bertram, the Mule, in the ring of the travelling circus and of the visit of Smart Alec to the flat of Floyd Unwin, the ex-star of the Broadworth outfit.

Ah Mee, the old Chinese servant of the Gaylords, tiptoed into Micky's room, and awakened him by snapping his fingers close to the lad's ear.

Micky immediately came to consciousness with the sense that something big and important was pending in his life, and, as his mind cleared of the effects of sleep, he remembered that this was the day on which he was to be filmed in the death-defying feat among the Los Angeles skyscrapers.

The sun was streaming into his room, and the song of birds and the scent of lovely semi-tropical flowers were being wafted in through the open window.

The genial Buddy and his buxom spouse greeted him heartily on his arrival at the breakfast-table, and all felt more than a little excited at the prospect of the forthcoming big film stunt.

When, less than an hour later, Micky and Buddy arrived on the Broadworth lot they found numbers of the studio people there already. Among the number was the great K. N. Broadworth himself, who was strolling side by side with his chief director, Jeff Romery.

Micky and Buddy greeted the two film men, and then the little props hurried across to the store-sheds to collect the few articles listed for use in the big skyscraper scene.

"Well, sonny," said the great producer, "how are you feeling—fit to do a dozen stunts—eh?"

"Trust me, sir!" cried Micky, with glowing eyes. "What time do we start?"

"Ah, the impatience of youth!" laughed Mr. Broadworth. "You won't have to wait long, Micky. The automobiles are coming up now."

For some moments the young film star strode up and down, chatting away with Jeff and "The Big Noise." Then, as the company's automobiles drew up he caught a glimpse of Mary Maidstone and Reggie Eton coming towards him. They had arrived in the dude's two-seater, and announced their intention of going into Los Angeles to see the big stunt, in spite of the fact that neither of them were taking a part in the picture.

That these famous stars of filmland should thus honour him pleased the youngster immensely, and he determined that his work before the cameras should repay them for their kindly interest in him.

But hardly had Micky greeted them than he had to hurry across to his dressing-room to change into the Norfolk tweeds, in which he was to appear in the scene. Meanwhile, the other preparations went on apace.

In less than a quarter of an hour Jeff Romery was able to announce that all was ready for the run into Los Angeles.

Two of the automobiles were occupied entirely by camera men and four cinema cameras, for it was intended to "shoot" the big scene from four different view-points. Afterwards, when the photo-play was edited, the best of these separate lengths of film could be inserted as seemed best suited to the sequence of the story.

When Micky returned in his tweed suit he saw the two cars containing the cameras and a third, in which were Buddy Gaylord and two mechanics, already rolling out of the wide gateway. Then the lad took his seat in the fourth automobile between Mr. Broadworth and Jeff Romery, and the car darted off in pursuit of the others. Bringing up the rear of the little procession came Reggie Eton, together with Mary Maidstone, in the smart little two-seater.

To Micky it seemed too wonderful to be true that he should be the central figure in what seemed like a triumphal progress into the famous city of Southern California. But a few short months ago he was glad to sit in the cheap seats of some cinema theatre watching, with tingling pulse, the daring stunts of Douglas Fairbanks and other stars. Now he numbered Fairbanks among his friends, and was on his way to do as thrilling a feat as he had ever seen on any cinema screen.

Arriving in Court Street, the cars swung round and drew up outside the building opposite the Liberty block, and the cinema folk dismounted on to the side-walk.

Their arrival in a London or New York street would have quickly attracted a crowd, but the inhabitants of Los Angeles were too blasé to notice a few cinema cameras. For years they had had opportunities of witnessing the filming of all kinds of scenes in the streets of their city, and it had to be something very exceptional to cause them to pause in their everyday business.

"Look up there, Micky!" said Jeff, pointing aloft with his favourite megaphone. "Those are the wires we have rigged for the stunt. You will notice they run sheer under the parapet of the Liberty building, and you should have no difficulty, once you are across, in clambering on to the roof and making your way down that staircase we used the other day."

"Those stagings you can see halfway at different points on each of the buildings are for the cameras. One machine, however, will be stationed down here in the street to record the correct idea of the height of the wires. In that bit of film you'll look like a fly crawling on bits of cotton! The camera men have got their orders, and so we may as well be taking the elevator to the top of the building to be in readiness for the stunt as soon as they are."

Before accompanying Jeff, however, Micky ran across to the two-seater car for a few words with his two fellow-film artistes.

Reggie Eton held out his hand. "Well, so-long, dear boy!" he murmured. "Be careful not to drop into the street, as you'll come an awful cwoppah if you do, weally you will! Good luck!"

"How horrible you are, Reggie!" cried the young film actress, with a slight shudder. "I'm sure you will be all right, Micky, and the picture will turn out to be a dandy. We are going to remain in the car and watch you from here, and you will have all our best thoughts with you during your climb along the wires!"

Mary Maidstone extended a daintily-gloved

hand, and Micky grasped it with both of his, with a feeling of deep gratitude for the good will which the famous young film star bore towards him.

There was moisture in the girl's eyes as the lad turned and followed Jeff Romery into the main entrance of the skyscraper, but Reggie Eton jabbed his monocle into his eye, and occupied himself by running the car to a point of vantage a little farther down the street. When Reggie felt moved he did not show his feelings in his placid, aristocratic face, but they sought an outlet in a nervous desire for action.

With the producer, the director, and an actor who had a small part to enact at a window during Micky's perilous escape across the "telephone wires," the lad entered the express elevator and shot up the great skyscraper to the top storey. Then, leaving the lift, Jeff Romery led the way to a large window at the end of a long corridor.

"This is the front of the building," he told Mr. Broadworth, "and young Denver can easily reach the wires by stepping out from here."

He threw open the bottom sash and peered out, and Mr. Broadworth, removing his hat, did likewise.

"Gosh!" muttered the producer to himself. "The kid is sure going to earn his money!"

As the two dived in again Micky leaned out to see how close the wires actually were. He saw that they ran in half a dozen dark strands from a point a few feet above his head, and, to test whether he could reach them easily, he started to climb out on to the ledge.

With a sharp exclamation, Jeff dragged him back again.

"Jumping mackinaws!" he cried. "This ain't the kinder stunt you can practise, kid! You stay right byer until you get the order for action! When those camera men on the stagings give me the signal that they are all ready, you can get a move on—not before!"

For some minutes the four remained chatting together, and then Jeff peered out of the window again.

Four fluttering white cloths greeted his eyes. They were the "all ready" signals of the camera men.

From an open window of the great Liberty building opposite, unnoticed by Jeff, a masked man hastily withdrew himself.

The director turned round and addressed Micky.

"Everything's O.K.," he said. "They're ready to start filming as soon as you climb out of the window."

Micky clasped the hand of each of the cinema men in turn, and then quickly stepped out on to the window-sill three hundred feet above the level of the busy street!

Behind the locked door of an office in the Liberty building opposite a lean man, wearing a mask, a black apron, and rubber gloves, was waiting.

As Micky stepped out the man gave a low chuckle. Then he stooped down, and removed a cap from the nozzle of a sinister-looking appliance at his feet.

The appliance was an oxy-acetylene generator, hired from Red Herman, and it was able to project a flame of 3,700 degrees centigrade—a flame capable of bursting steel wires like so many cotton threads!

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

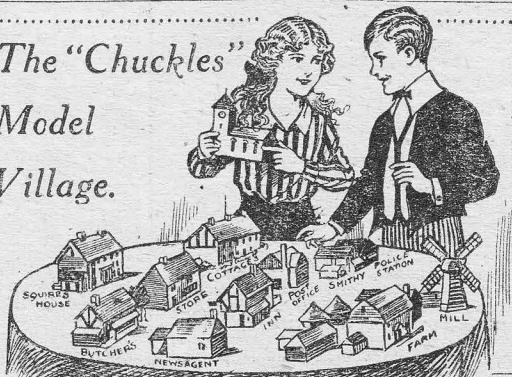
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The "Chuckles" Model Village.



THE FIGHTING THREE!

A SHORT STORY OF ST. JIM'S.

"JUST listen to this!"

Fatty Wynn of the New House made the exclamation to his chums, George Figgins and George Kerr. The three were gathered in the study, and Fatty Wynn had been very busy with a pen and paper for some time past.

"What's happened to you, fathead?" cried Figgins impatiently. "I should never have thought you would fall low enough to write poetry."

"It isn't poetry really," explained Fatty Wynn. "It's what those old jossers years ago used to call an epic. I've called my stunt 'The Song of the Fighting Three,' and I've cracked you two up to the skies."

"As well as yourself, I suppose," remarked Kerr drily. "Anyway, if we've got to have it, cough it up and be done with it!" said Figgins, resigning himself to what seemed the inevitable.

"That's the idea," agreed Kerr. "Get in front of the fireplace and roll it off to your heart's content, and when you've got to the end of it, shut your rat-trap and let's have a little peace."

"You needn't be so blessed uppish about it," grumbled Fatty Wynn. "You always put the damper on anything a fellow wants to do."

"Cut the cackle, and get on with the washing!"

Fatty Wynn was a good-natured fellow as a rule, and he stifled his feeling of annoyance and prepared to recite his "Song of the Fighting Three."

"Let us now proclaim the story
Of the boys who fight and win;
Three giants grim and hoary,
Midst the battle and the din."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you laughing at, you chumps?" demanded Fatty Wynn, the colour leaping to his face.

"Grim and hoary," repeated George Figgins. "We're not hoary, you idiot! That means white-headed old boys!"

"That doesn't matter, fathead!" exclaimed Fatty testily. "It isn't necessary to stick to the truth when you're writing poetry."

"Right-ho! Fire away!"

"George Figgins is our leader,
A man of mighty deeds,
As long and tall as cedar,
However much he feeds!"

"I don't think much of that verse," growled Kerr.

"Neither do I!" declared George Figgins strenuously. "In fact, it's a blessed insult."

"No, it isn't," replied Fatty Wynn. "I was afraid you might think so; but, you see, I had to get that bit in about the feeds, because I couldn't think of anything to rhyme with 'deeds.'"

"Humph! All right!" growled Figgins. "I thought you said it was an epic you'd written," said Kerr.

"So it is," responded Fatty Wynn. "Of course it isn't!" snapped the Scotch junior. "An epic isn't written in rotten doggerel verse like that."

"Rats!"

"Never mind!" said Figgins, winking at Kerr. "The great thing's to get it over."

"Quite so."

"Who cares for School House rotter
As his puny strength he tries?
'Fight and win' is aye our motto,
And our answer—two black eyes!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Jolly good, that!" roared Figgins. "Wouldn't those School House bouncers be wild if they heard it?"

"I reckon it's rotten," said Kerr. "It's a beastly rhyme, anyway. You have to say 'rotter' to make it go with 'rotter.'"

"That doesn't matter when it's poetry!" snapped Fatty Wynn. "You're a jolly sight too particular, George Kerr. If you got hold of one of those poetry books you'd often find a bit that doesn't seem to rhyme with anything else."

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"Yes, that's right," agreed Figgins, supporting the fat junior. "You're all right with that last verse. Let's have that one again."

"Have it all again, if you like," suggested Fatty Wynn eagerly. He was highly pleased with his handiwork, especially as Figgins was veering round to his support.

"No fear!" exclaimed Kerr. "We don't want it all again!"

"All right; that third verse, then," said Fatty Wynn.

"Who cares for School House rotter
As his puny strength he tries?
'Fight and win' is aye our motto,
And our answer—two black eyes!"

"Here, what's that?"

There was a sudden thud and a bump at the study door, and Tom Merry & Co. burst into the room.

"My hat!" exclaimed Figgins, jumping up from his chair. "At 'em, you fellows!"

"What was that about School House rotters?" demanded Tom Merry, striding up to Fatty Wynn in warlike attitude.

"About you!" retorted Figgins.

There was stern rivalry between the two houses at St. Jim's, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the School House had heard every word of the verse Fatty had just proclaimed at the top of his voice.

"Get that blessed paper away from the bouncer!" cried Tom Merry. "I'll teach him to write poetry about us—rotten poetry like that, too!"

In a moment a wild and whirling battle was taking place in the study of Figgins & Co., and the centre of the conflict was Fatty Wynn.

That junior was making desperate endeavours to keep his "Song of the Fighting Three" from the clutches of the enemy, and his chums were aiding him to their utmost. This fact prevented them from concentrating their attention upon the question of inflicting punishment upon the intruders, and proved their undoing.

Tom Merry suddenly grasped the paper containing Fatty's great work, and wrenched it away.

At the same moment Manners and Lowther fell upon Figgins and Kerr, and all went down with a crash.

The fight was soon over after that, for Figgins & Co. had little heart for the battle after the loss of the poem, and Fatty Wynn was quite done.

"Come on, chaps!" cried Tom Merry. "We'll recite this to the other fellows. It'll amuse 'em no end!"

The Terrible Three took their departure, leaving Figgins & Co. to sort themselves out.

"This is a pretty fine go, and no mistake!" growled George Kerr, as his hand wandered round the back of his neck for the broken side of his collar.

"Yes; and they've got my poem, too!" wailed Fatty Wynn.

"Bust your poem!" snorted Kerr. "Wish you'd never written the beastly thing!"

"It's no good grouching now," remarked Figgins quietly. "We've been done in the eye, and we've got to square with those bouncers as soon as possible!"

"Get together a crowd of New House chaps, and then go for Tom Merry & Co. hammer and tongs!" replied Figgins promptly, striding to the door.

His supporters followed him, and in less than ten minutes a goodly army of New House fellows had been gathered together, and were marching down to the quad.

They were too late, however. When they reached the quad Tom Merry was declaiming Fatty Wynn's poem to a vast multitude of St. Jim's fellows from all Forms. He was supported on the shoulders of Manners and Lowther, at which elevated position he could be seen by all.

A roar of amusement and derision broke out when Figgins & Co. were seen, and there were loud ironical cheers for Fatty Wynn.

"Oh crumbs! This is awful!" growled Kerr. "Let's get back to our kennels quick, like little beaten dogs!"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Figgins, who was only too ready to fall in with any suggestion

so long as they got out of the present awful position.

Fatty Wynn was less willing to retreat, but Figgins and Kerr grasped him firmly by the arms and marched him into the New House.

It was at that moment that Baggy Trimble, who was on the outskirts of the crowd, was struck with a brilliant idea. The fat junior was always on the look-out for information which could be sold at a good price or exchanged for tuck. Accordingly, he made his way up to the study of Figgins & Co. in the New House. He did not enter, however; he bent his ear to the keyhole and listened.

"When they've gone into the village after tea," Figgins was saying, "you can just nip into Merry's study, and get the poem back again."

"Yes," replied Fatty Wynn; "I'll do it. I don't care about poking about in another fellow's study, but this is an exception."

"That's settled, then," finished Figgins. "We'll talk over again about some wheeze for getting our own back."

After tea that evening Tom Merry & Co. sauntered out of the gates and down the road towards the village. Figgins & Co. saw them go, and so did Baggy Trimble.

It was some time later, when it was getting dark, that Fatty Wynn cautiously made his way up to Tom Merry's study. Baggy was some distance behind, well in the shadow.

Wynn was some time in the study, and when at last he came out he did not look at all satisfied.

"Expect he can't find that blessed paper!" muttered Baggy to himself as Fatty disappeared round a corner of the corridor.

And, as it happened, Baggy was right.

He had no time to waste on sympathy for Fatty Wynn, however, and a minute or two later he was entering Tom Merry's study. In his case there was no searching to be done; he went straight to the cupboard, and shone his electric torch on to the dark shelves. As he had expected, there was a goodly supply of tuck in the cupboard, to which he helped himself liberally.

As it happened he only just escaped being caught redhanded, for Tom Merry & Co. returned just after he had taken his departure from their quarters.

The loss of the tuck was discovered immediately, for the first thing they did was to go to the cupboard for a snack, their walk having given them an appetite.

"My hat! All the grub's gone!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"By Jove! It's that beast Trimble!"

The three juniors hurried from the study and straight along to Baggy's room.

"What about that grub?" demanded Tom Merry, fiercely.

"It wasn't me!" retorted Baggy quickly, quailing before the Shell leader's piercing gaze. "B-but I saw Fatty Wynn coming out of your study a little while ago!"

"It couldn't be Fatty!" declared Lowther. "It might be those New House chaps," said Manners. "This is their revenge!"

"My hat! Let's go and see 'em about it now!" cried Tom Merry.

Without further word to Baggy Trimble the Terrible Three took their departure, and hurried over to the New House.

"D'you think I'd stoop so low as to pinch your blessed grub?" was Fatty Wynn's indignant reply to their question. "My name's not Trimble."

The Terrible Three knew well enough that Fatty was quite incapable of telling a lie.

"How was it you were seen leaving our study, then?" asked Tom Merry quickly.

Fatty Wynn blushed up to the roots of his hair.

"If you want to know all the facts about it, I went after my poem," he snapped, "which you have no right to! I didn't find it, but I'm going to have it back!"

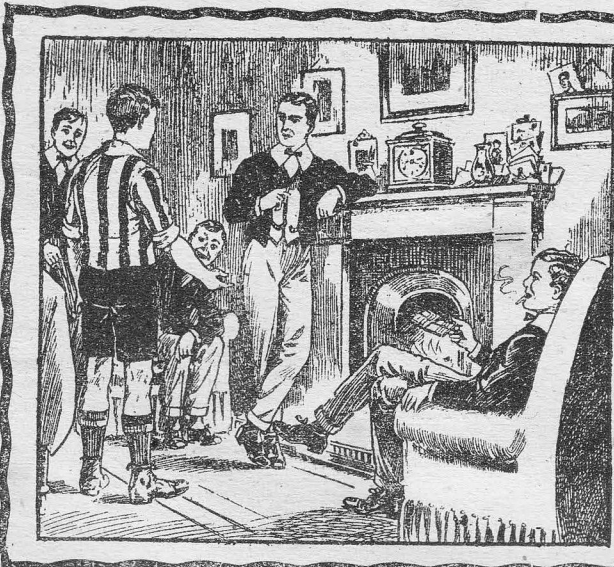
"If Baggy Trimble saw Fatty come out of the study," remarked Kerr quietly, "he couldn't have been very far away himself; therefore—well, it's as plain as a pikestaff to a fellow with any sense!"

"My hat, yes; Kerr's right!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, ignoring the slight.

The next moment the Terrible Three were on their way back to the School House.

The next ten minutes were very painful ones for the fat junior, and when he was finally settled with the three chums of the Shell again paid a visit to the New House. This time they apologised to Fatty Wynn for having suspected him of taking their grub, and to back up the apology they returned the poem.

THE END.



MORNY'S MINOR!

By OWEN CONQUEST

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Chance for Mornnington.

JIMMY SILVER, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, paused outside Study No. 4.

Jimmy hesitated there. As a rule, there wasn't much hesitation about Jimmy Silver. He generally knew exactly what he wanted, and went straight to the point. But he was hesitating now, and, having raised his hand to tap at the door of No. 4, he let it drop to his side again.

A buzz of voices came from the study. It was Mornnington's study, and Peele and Gower, Townsend and Topham, the Nuts of the Fourth, were there with Mornny.

They seemed to be in high spirits that afternoon, to judge by the cheery buzz of voices.

"Rippin'!" Townsend was saying. "Just like one of your toppin' ideas, Mornny!"

"When's the car comin'?" asked Peele. "It will be ready for us at half-past two."

It was Mornnington's voice. "We're goin' to walk down the road to it; it won't do to have it come up to the school."

"Why not?" asked Topham. Mornnington laughed.

"Old Bootles was jawin' me last time about havin' a car out for pleasure so often."

"What rot!" "Absolute rot, old fellow! But a chap can't argue with his Form-master."

Jimmy Silver's face set a little. He made a movement away from the door, apparently giving up his intention of entering the study.

Then he changed his mind again, and came back, and, without any more hesitation, knocked at the door.

"Come in!" called out Mornnington's voice. Jimmy Silver entered.

There was a haze of cigarette-smoke in the study. Mornnington & Co. were smoking while they chatted.

The Nuts of Rookwood stared at Jimmy Silver. The captain of the Fourth was a very infrequent visitor to that study.

"Hallo!" said Mornnington, in surprise. The dandy of the Fourth was still looking somewhat pale from his recent illness. But the cigarette between his well-cut lips showed that he was quite the old Mornny again.

Jimmy frowned, and coughed a little. The smoky atmosphere of the study was not pleasant to his healthy lungs.

"Squat down!" said Mornnington, with unaccustomed cordiality in his manner. "I came in to speak to you, Mornnington," said Jimmy.

"Well, go ahead!" Jimmy paused. The Nuts regarded him curiously. Jimmy Silver had always been on the worst of terms with Mornnington.

"Well," said Jimmy at last, "I don't want to preach to you, Mornnington. But you showed when you pulled Miss Dolly out of the fire that you've got something jolly decent in you, and I think it's a pity you should waste your time playing the giddy goat with these silly asses."

"Thanks!" yawned Peele. "Much obliged!" grinned Townsend.

Jimmy Silver went on, unheeding.

"I'm speaking seriously, Mornnington," he said. "You're fit for something better than smoking and slacking, and you've proved it. Everybody's willing to give you a chance. Why not take it?"

Mornnington laughed. "I believe you're in earnest," he said, "and I think you mean well. But it's no good, old scout—I'm a bad egg. I'll take up cricket like a shot, if you like. But no sermons."

"I don't think I'm the chap to sermonise," said Jimmy.

"I mean, if I'm in the Form team, I shall go on as usual, without bein' preached at."

Jimmy shook his head. "You wouldn't be preached at," he said. "But, of course, you'd have to chuck smoking, and all that."

"Nothin' goin'!" "Well, I thought I ought to speak to you," said Jimmy. "You're too good a chap to go to the dogs, in some ways. But I suppose I'm a fool for my pains."

"Has that only just dawned on you?" grinned Topham.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I'll tell you what, Silver," said Mornnington, "I'm willin' to bury the hatchet if you are. Come along with us this afternoon. Give Good Little Georgie a rest, and come an' have a merry time."

"What do you call a merry time?" asked Jimmy.

"A rippin' run in a car, an' a feed at the Ship Inn—first-class feed, ordered all ready in advance—a hundred up in the billiard-room, and a little game with some sportin' fellows we're goin' to meet there. What do you say?"

Jimmy's brows knitted. "The Ship's out of bounds," he said.

"All the more fun, you know."

"That kind of fun isn't my kind," said Jimmy drily. "Thanks all the same, but you can leave me out. Ta ta!"

Jimmy left the study. He left the Nuts grinning.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for their chum in the end study. They grinned as Jimmy came in with knitted brows.

"Well, did Mornny foid you to his manly bosom and weep?" asked Lovell.

"Oh, rats!" said Jimmy crossly. "Let's get down to the cricket, and don't jaw!"

And the Fistical Four went down to the cricket—three of them grinning, and Jimmy Silver was frowning. It was evident that Jimmy Silver's kindly impulse had been useless, and that the dandy of Rookwood was not to be plucked like a brand from the burning.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Change in the Programme.

THE Nuts of Rookwood sauntered down the lane towards Coombe, and turned off at the cross-roads. There a big, handsome motor-car was waiting, with a chauffeur standing by it, who touched his cap very respectfully to Mornnington.

The Nuts surveyed the car with admiration.

It was a very big and expensive car. Mornnington did everything in style.

"All ready, sir!" said the chauffeur. Mornnington nodded, and stepped into the car.

There was ample room for the whole party. The chauffeur took his seat, and the car moved away up the lane.

Mornnington passed his cigarette-case round, and the Nuts of Rookwood lighted up, with great enjoyment.

"Let her rip!" he called out to the chauffeur.

The big car buzzed along the road at a great speed.

In those quiet lanes there were no watchful eyes to note the excess of speed, and the chauffeur obeyed Mornny's instructions, and let her "rip."

"We'll have a run for an hour, and get into the Ship about half-past four," remarked Mornnington.

"Good idea!" The car turned out of the lane into the road that lay across the wide expanse of heath between Coombe and the sea.

It was a sunny afternoon, and from the high road over the heath the juniors could catch glimpses of the distant Channel.

It was a very enjoyable ride, and Mornny's chums were exceedingly glad that Mornny had recovered, and was out of the sanatorium at last.

"By gad, this is like old times!" said Mornny.

"The rippin' old times!" said Peele. "The merry old times!" grinned Townsend.

"Hallo! What the merry thunder is he slackin' up for?" There was a jamming of brakes, and the car slowed down.

"Buck up!" rapped out Mornnington. The chauffeur looked round.

"Somebody in the road, sir."

"Hang him! Run him down if he won't clear!"

The juniors looked ahead at the figure in the road. It was that of a boy, about thirteen years of age, in shabby, almost ragged clothes. He was coming along towards the car slowly, and limping as he walked, looking as if he were in the last stages of exhaustion.

His eyes were on the ground as he plodded wearily along, and he did not seem to see the big car bearing down on him or to hear the hooter.

"Toot, toot, toot!" "Confounded cheek!" growled Topham. "Some rotten beggar takin' up the road and stoppin' a gentleman's car, by gad!"

"Run the cad down!" growled Peele. The chauffeur, however, was not inclined to run the lad down. The road was narrow, and the boy was plodding down the middle of it. He heard the hoot of the motor at last, and looked up.

Then he stepped aside. The car glided on, and the juniors stared at the ragged chap angrily as they passed.

Mornnington's eyes dwelt on him curiously. The boyish face was white and pinched, the eyes deep-set and hollow. There was

suffering in the pale face. Even the careless eyes of the Nuts of Rookwood could read there the signs of bitter want.

"You ragged cad, why can't you get out of the way?" hooted Peele as they passed.

The lad made no reply, staring dully as the car swept by.

Mornington glanced back.

The boy remained standing where he was for a few moments, and then sank down on the grass by the roadside.

A curiously thoughtful expression came over Mornington's face as he sat down again, and blew out a cloud of smoke from his cigarette.

"It's a queer world," said Mornington meditatively. "Why the merry dickens should we be hummin' along in a big car, and that kid trampin' along on his uppers, without a meal inside him?"

"Get out and give him a fiver!" sneered Peele.

"What a rippin' idea!" chuckled Townsend.

"Hallo! What are you up to now, Morny?"

Mornington had called to the chauffeur to stop.

The car slowed down.

"Yes, sir?" said the driver, looking round.

"Turn back," said Mornington.

"Yes, sir!"

"Go back to where that kid is. I want to speak to him."

"Yes, sir."

The car backed and turned in the road. Mornington's companions stared at him in utter astonishment.

"What on earth's the little game?" exclaimed Gower.

"I'm goin' to speak to that kid."

"What for?"

"To ask him if he's hungry."

"What the dickens does it matter to you?"

"Nothin'."

"Look here, we're wastin' time," growled Townsend angrily.

"Well, what did we come out for?" asked Mornington. "We're not specially bent on improvin' the shinin' hour, I suppose. May as well waste time one way as another."

The Nuts exchanged angry glances, but it was evidently useless to remonstrate with Mornington. The dandy of the Fourth intended to have his way—as he usually did. There was a sulky silence in the car as it swept back along the road over the heath.

"There's the beastly little bounder!" snapped Townsend.

Mornington nodded.

The boy was still by the roadside, lying very still in the grass. He had not moved since the car passed before.

The car halted. Mornington jumped out and ran to the boy, and bent over him.

"He's fainted," he said.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritan.

THE little fellow's eyes opened as Mornington raised him in his arms. He blinked strangely and dazedly at the handsome, well-dressed Rookwood fellow standing there.

Townsend & Co. looked on surlily from the car.

They felt that they were wasting time. The merry meeting at the Ship was being put off on account of Mornington's amazing interest in this ragged, starving vagrant. The Nuts felt that they were being treated very inconsiderately, and they were indignant.

"By gad, he's touchin' him—actually touchin' the dirty little beast!" said Peele, in utter disgust and contempt.

"Wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole!" growled Topham.

Mornington was a dandy and a nut of the first water. He was the most elegantly dressed fellow at Rookwood, and probably spent more on his clothes than any three fellows even in the upper Forms. But he did not seem to mind touching the dusty, way-worn vagrant, from the mere idea of which his nutty comrades shrank in disgust. One elegant arm was passed round the little fellow's shoulders, supporting him as he sat on the grass.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Mornington, and his tone was quite kindly.

The lad stared at him dazedly.

"I come over bad," he murmured. "It's all right, sir."

"You're not ill?"

"No, sir."

"What the thunder does it matter if he's ill?" muttered Peele.

"Where are you goin'?" asked Mornington.

"I—I don't know."

"Where do you live?"

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"Nowhere, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you haven't a home?" asked Mornington, staring at the white, drawn face.

"I ain't got nothin', sir," muttered the vagrant. "But I ain't a beggar," he added quickly, his pale cheeks flushing. "I ain't asking for nothin'."

"You're on tramp?" asked Mornington.

"Yes, sir?"

"But where do you live?"

"I used to live with Bill Murphy till he went to the war," muttered the lad. "He's been killed."

"Was he your father?"

"Oh, no! I ain't got a father. He give me a 'ome."

"What's your name?"

"'Erbert."

"And any other name?"

"Ain't got one."

"Come, you've got a surname!" said Mornington.

'Erbert shook his head.

"I ain't. I been called 'Erbert Murphy, 'cause that was ole Bill's name. But I ain't got a name."

"My hat!"

"Precious little beast!" said Townsend.

"Do get into the car, Morny."

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here, how long are we goin' to waste time while you're talking to that little toad?" demanded Townsend angrily.

Mornington did not reply.

"So you're name's Herbert, and you've got no other name," he remarked, "and you've got no home. Where did you live before you were with Bill Murphy?"

"I dunno. I was left on the common at Rookham arter some gipsies 'ad been there," said 'Erbert. "I ain't a gipsy, though. Old Bill thought p'raps I'd been stolen. I dunno. He give me a 'ome; he was a good sort. Then he went for a soldier, and they killed 'im."

"And where were you left?"

"Old Bill got me a job afore he left, at Biggs' farm," said the lad wearily. "I worked there till two weeks ago. Then I up an' checked Master Alf 'cause he laid the cart-whip round me, and old Biggs gave me the sack."

"Poor little beggar!"

The lad grinned faintly.

"How long since you've had your last meal?" asked Mornington.

'Erbert hesitated.

"Now, then, answer me!"

"Yesterday mornin', sir."

"My hat!"

"Are you coming, Mornington?"

"Yes, I'm comin'," said Mornington coolly.

"Come on, kid. Can you walk?"

"I'm all right, sir."

The lad staggered. But weakness overcame him, and he would have pitched over in the grass but for Mornington's sustaining arm. The poor little fellow had evidently been at the end of his strength when he fell by the roadside.

"Lean on me," said Mornington.

"I—I say, where you takin' me, sir?"

"Get into the car."

"Wot!"

'Erbert's eyes opened wide in amazement. There was a howl of indignant wrath from the Nuts in the car.

"Morny!"

"You silly ass!"

"You're bringin' that filthy little beast in here?"

"Are you off your rocker?"

"Lemme go, sir," stammered 'Erbert. "The gentlemen don't want the likes of me in that there car, sir—"

"Get in!" rapped out Mornington.

'Erbert had no choice about the matter. Mornington fairly lifted him into the car. Towny & Co., with horror and disgust in their faces shrank the furthest possible away from him.

The Nuts were crimson with indignation. That this wretched, dirty, famished outcast should be brought between the wind and their nobility, so to speak, was a shocking outrage. But Mornington did not seem to mind their feelings on the subject. Indeed, it was probable that his peculiar humour was tickled by the horrid disgust of Towny & Co., and that he enjoyed it.

"What are you goin' to do with the little beast?" hissed Townsend. "Are you bringin' that horrid bounder along with us?"

"Why not?"

"Why not!" yelled Townsend. "Are you dotty? Do you think I'm goin' to be seen with him?"

"Just as you like," said Mornington coolly. "Sorry to lose your charmin' company, Towny, but you can step out if you like."

"Mc—step out!" stammered Townsend.

"Where are you goin' to take him, Morny?"

stammered Peele.

"Rookwood!"

"What!" yelled the Nuts in amazed chorus.

"He's hungry, and he's goin' to be fed. I'm goin' to take him to the school," said Mornington coolly.

"You silly idiot!"

"Thanks!"

"What about our afternoon out?" demanded Gower warmly.

"That's off."

"Off!" stammered Gower.

"Somethin' more important on hand, dear boy. Chauffeur, get to Rookwood School as quick as you can, please!"

"Suttinly, sir!" gasped the chauffeur. The driver had looked on at Morny's proceedings with wide, staring eyes. But there was a new respect in his manner as he replied to the dandy of Rookwood.

Apparently the chauffeur did not disapprove of Morny's remarkable proceedings.

The car buzzed away down the road. 'Erbert sat in a corner, the Nuts shrinking away from all contact with him. And they eyed Mornington as if they would eat him. This was the end of their joy-ride—this was their afternoon out! They snarled with indignation and fury.

But Mornington was quite unmoved. There was a grin on his handsome face as the car started for Rookwood.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mornington Astonishes the Natives.

'ERBERT sat in the corner, leaning back exhaustedly on the soft cushions. He looked like a fellow in a dream.

What the young "toff" was doing this for him was to 'Erbert a deep and strange mystery. But he was conscious of feeling very comfortable, and the prospect of a meal was extremely attractive.

Townsend & Co. sat savage and sullen. Mornington regarded them with a smile.

"Sorry to bust up your little outin'," he remarked. "It's a pity. But feedin' the hungry an' takin' care of the homeless is more important than playin' billiards, isn't it?"

"You silly fool!" said Townsend, in concentrated tones. "What are you playin' the fool like this for? You don't dare to take that ragged scarecrow to Rookwood, an' you know it!"

"I'm takin' him there!"

"You don't dare!" howled Townsend.

"What'll the Head say to your bringin' him in?"

Mornington chuckled.

"The Head can't say anythin'," he replied.

"He jolly well will!"

"He can't. Don't you remember the sermon he preached us on Sunday?"

"I never listen to his sermons!" growled Townsend. "Rotten enough to have to attend chapel without listenin' to the sermon!"

"Well, I remember it," said Mornington calmly.

"Long jaw about feedin' the hungry, an' carin' for the sick and unhappy, an' the rest of it. If the Head says anythin' about my bringin' this kid in, I'll quote his own sermon to him. It will be a lark to watch his face!"

"Oh," said Townsend, "if you're doin' it to rag the Head—"

"Not exactly," said Mornington. "Still, it will be a lark to rag the Head. When I sling his own gas at him he can't say anythin'!"

"He'll jolly well do somethin'—flog you most likely!"

"Flog me for actin' on his own sermon?" grinned Mornington. "My dear man, he can't do it!"

"You wouldn't have the cheek, anyway!"

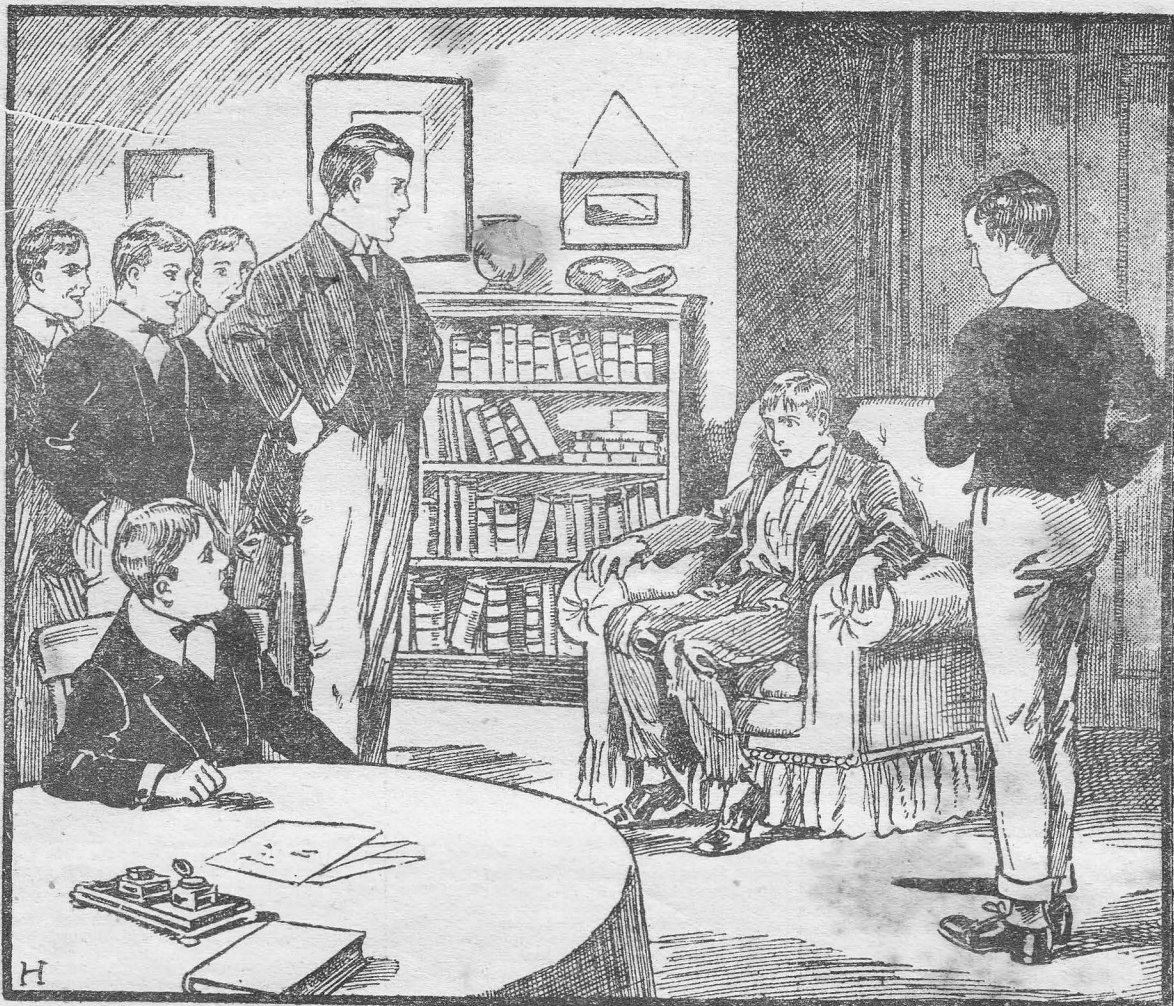
"You'll see!"

Mornington chuckled gleefully, evidently delighted at the prospect of retorting upon the reverend Head of Rookwood his own sermon. Logically, the Head would not have a leg to stand upon. But the juniors did not believe that the Head would bother about logic when he saw that dusty and ragged ragamuffin brought into the select precincts of Rookwood School.

Mornington's cheek simply astounded them. It was the sheer audacity of the thing, probably, that appealed to Mornington's reckless nature more than anything else. But certainly the black sheep of Rookwood must have felt a kindly and charitable impulse in the first place.

The car stopped at the gates, and Mornington, helping 'Erbert out of the car, dismissed the chauffeur.

"Wait till he's spotted, that's all," said Topham, as Mornington led his queer protege in at the gates.



Bulkeley stared frowningly into the study. His eyes almost bulged out at the sight of 'Erbert. "What— Who's that?" he ejaculated. "Morny's friend," said Jimmy Silver. (See page 16.)

"Gather round, an' screen him," said Mornington.

"I'll see you blowed first!" "Where are you goin' to take him to feed him?" demanded Topham.

"My study, of course!" "My study!" howled Peele. "It's my study, too, you rotter!"

"Well, your study, then!" "You're goin' to take that dirty ragamuffin into my study! You cheeky cad—"

"Oh, dry up!" "Ere, wot's this?" exclaimed old Mack, the porter, coming out of his lodge as 'Erbert was piloted in at the gates. "Get hout of this, young 'un! You ain't allowed in 'ere!"

"I'll trouble you to be civil to my friend, Mack!" said Mornington.

"Hey!" "His friend!" stammered Townsend. "His friend! Oh, by gad!"

"Beggars ain't allowed in 'ere, Master Mornington!"

"I ain't a beggar!" flashed out 'Erbert. "The young gent 'ave asked me to come 'ere!"

"Well, you can get hout!" "Shut up, Mack!" said Mornington coolly. "Come on, Herbert—I mean, 'Erbert! My mistake!"

"Look 'ere, Master Mornington—" protested the scandalised porter.

"Bow-wow!"

Headless of old Mack, Mornington led 'Erbert into the quadrangle. The nuts did not gather round to screen him, as Morny had requested. They did not intend to be seen in company with Morny's "friend."

Mornington did not seem ashamed of his friend, however.

He took his arm and walked him across

the quad as calmly as if 'Erbert had been a viscount at least.

There was a regular howl of amazement from the fellows who saw them.

So ragged and forlorn a figure as 'Erbert's had seldom or ever been seen within the select precincts of the quadrangle of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were on the steps of the School House when Morny and his new friend came up. The Fistical Four had finished cricket practice, and were chatting before tea.

At the sight of 'Erbert walking arm-in-arm with the aristocratic Mornington the Fistical Four wondered whether they were dreaming.

"What—what—what is it?" stammered Lovell.

"Great Scott!"

"Who's your friend, Mornington?" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"My brother 'Erbert," said Mornington coolly.

"Your brother!" yelled Raby.

"Yaas!"

"Gammon, you ass!"

"I'm surprised at you, Raby," said Mornington calmly. "Didn't you hear the Head tell us last Sunday that we were all brothers? I hope you weren't asleep during the sermon!"

"You funny ass!" gasped Raby.

"My brother's hard up, and I'm takin' him in hand," said Mornington, evidently enjoying the astonishment he was causing. "I hope Bootles won't spot him before I've given him some tea. Still, I shall insist upon keepin' him here for a bit."

"You—you'll insist?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Mornington minor, bedad!" grinned Flynn. "Oh, what larks! But it's a broth av a boy ye are, Morny, and I take back some of the things I've thought about ye!"

"Get round and screen him a bit," said Jimmy. "Better get him to the study without being seen if possible."

"Thanks!" said Mornington. "My pals are too aristocratic to come near him!"

"We're not!" grinned Jimmy. "Come on!"

The Fistical Four, entering into the spirit of the thing, crowded round 'Erbert, to keep him out of sight as much as possible as he was taken into the house. Flynn and Oswald and Rawson joined in. In the midst of a crowd of juniors the little ragamuffin was rushed into the house at a good speed, up the stairs to the Fourth Form passage.

Fortunately, Mr. Bootles was in his study, and there were no prefects on the scene. 'Erbert was safely conveyed to Study No. 4.

The news of Morny's "latest" spread like wildfire through the school, and excited keen interest among both Moderns and Classics.

It caused great surprise that the black sheep of the Fourth should ever have troubled his head about a hungry vagrant. But it raised him in the estimation of most of the fellows. And his cool audacity in bringing a tramp to tea in a Rookwood study made the juniors gasp.

The Head of Rookwood was a kind-hearted gentleman, but he could hardly be expected to approve of visitors of that kind in a junior study. The fellows wondered what he would say if he knew—or, rather, when he knew—for 'Erbert's presence was not likely to remain undiscovered long. And the general impression was that Mornington would be in hot water.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

'Erbert in Clover.

"SQUAT down!" said Mornington. 'Erberb hesitated as the dandy of Rookwood pointed to a comfortable armchair.

"Sit down, kid!" said Jimmy Silver. "You look tired."

"I-I ain't clean enough to sit in that there chair, sir!" stammered 'Erbert.

"Rot!" said Mornington. "Do as you're told!"

"Yes, sir."

'Erbert sat down.

"Well, this is a go!" murmured Lovell. "Can we help you in any way, Morny?"

Lovell had quite melted towards the black sheep of the Fourth. He began to agree with Jimmy Silver's opinion that the dandy of Rookwood could not be a bad fellow in the main.

"You can help me entertain my guest, if you like," said Mornington. "I hardly think my study-mates will come and help."

"Ha, ha! I think not!"

"Hungry, kid?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, sir."

"He hasn't eaten since yesterday," remarked Mornington. "Look after him while I cut down to the truckshop, will you?"

"Any old thing?"

Mornington hurried out of the study. The Fistical Four looked at 'Erbert, and looked at one another.

"Well, this beats the band!" said Raby.

"Fancy Morny!" gasped Newcome.

Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"It's jolly decent of Morny," he said. "He went out on the spree like a shady rotter, and seems to have chucked it up to play the good Samaritan. I must say it's an improvement."

"But what'll the Head say?" ejaculated Lovell. "I hope Morny won't get into a row for this."

"I'm afraid he will. Hallo, kid! What are you shifting for?"

'Erbert had risen to his feet.

"I think I'd better go, young gents!" he stammered.

"Wait for Morny. You haven't had your tea yet."

"I-I don't want that young gent to git inter trouble over me, sir!" stammered 'Erbert. "I-I oughtn't to 'ave come 'ere!"

"Sit down!" said Jimmy kindly, pushing him into the chair again. "That's all right. We'll stand by Morny."

'Erbert submitted, but there was a look of concern upon his dusty face. And his concern for his benefactor made the juniors feel very kindly towards him. 'Erbert was badly in need of a wash, but evidently his heart was in the right place.

While Mornington was gone for tuck the juniors busied themselves setting the table for tea. 'Erbert sat in the comfortable armchair, and watched them—dazedly. Juniors came along the passage grinning, to peep in at Mornington's astonishing guest. Most of them had a kindly nod and smile for the unfortunate little fellow; there were few, after all, of Townsend's sort at Rookwood.

There was a sudden call from the passage, from Tubby Muffin of the Fourth.

"Look out! Here comes Bulkeley!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came striding along the passage. The captain of Rookwood had evidently heard of 'Erbert already. Peele and Gower followed him, their faces red with anger. 'Erbert was in their study—their sacred quarters—and they intended to have him turned out forthwith.

The prefect stared frowningly into the study. His eyes almost bulged out at the sight of 'Erbert.

"What—Who's that?" he ejaculated.

"Morny's friend," said Jimmy Silver.

"What?"

"He—he—he's come in to tea!"

"That's the beast!" howled Peele. "That's the filthy brute Morny's brought into my study, Bulkeley! How can I have my tea in the study with that horrid little beast there?"

"You can have your tea in Hall!" suggested Lovell.

"You cheeky rotter—"

"I ain't doin' no 'arm 'ere, sir!" said 'Erbert, blinking at the big Sixth-Former. "The young gent asked me to come in fur something to eat, and werry kind of 'im it was, too!"

"Oh!" said Bulkeley.

The prefect seemed puzzled.

"Turn him out, Bulkeley!" urged Gower.

Mornington came into the study, with a big parcel under his arm. He set it down on

the table, and nodded coolly to the captain of Rookwood.

"You brought that young shaver in here, Mornington?" exclaimed the prefect.

"Yaas!"

"Blessed if I know what to do about it!" said Bulkeley. "If the kid's hungry he ought to be fed! But—but—"

"Not in our study!" howled Peele.

"You could have taken him to the kitchen, Mornington."

"Take my brother to the kitchen!" exclaimed Mornington.

"What do you mean? That kid's not your brother!"

"Yaas, he is—the Head said so last Sunday!"

"Cheese it, you ass!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley frowned.

"If you dare to make fun of the Head, Mornington—"

"I'm not makin' fun of him, unless takin' his sermon seriously is makin' fun of him," said Mornington, with perfect coolness. "I suppose the Head wasn't roffin', was he?"

Bulkeley seemed nonplussed. So far as argument went Mornington had the best of the matter.

"I'll speak to Mr. Bootles," said the prefect at last.

And he went out of the study.

"Look here—" exclaimed Peele and Gower together.

But Bulkeley went down the passage without heeding them.

Mornington grinned.

"Fairly put the lid on him!" he remarked.

"I'll sling the Head's sermon at all of 'em—and the Head himself, too! Now, then, 'Erbert, are you ready?"

"Wotso, sir!" said 'Erbert emphatically.

Peele and Gower shook their fists into the study, and retired. Nothing would have induced them to come in to tea while 'Erbert was there. But Jimmy Silver & Co. preferred their room to their company, as a matter of fact.

The chums of the Fourth busied themselves attending to 'Erbert's wants.

There was no doubt that the little ragamuffin was hungry.

He travelled through cold beef and ham and tongue and pickles at a great rate. Then he started on a big cake, and there was not much of the cake left when he had finished.

Even in his more prosperous days 'Erbert had probably never had such good fare. And a day's fasting had given him an appetite that Tubby Muffin might have envied.

He did full justice to the good things the juniors pressed upon him, and seemed not to observe that a crowd had gathered in the passage to watch him eat.

'Erbert's table manners had left something to be desired. He used his knife to convey food to his mouth, and helped with his fingers.

But his kind hosts did not mind.

The chief thing was to fill the hungry ragamuffin with good food, and that purpose was thoroughly effected.

'Erbert leaned back in his chair at last, completely satisfied, with an expression of almost beatific happiness upon his grubby face.

"Prime!" he ejaculated.

"Another tart, 'Erbert?" asked Mornington.

'Erbert shook his head slowly and regretfully.

"No, thanks, sir! I couldn't 'old any more!"

"Better shore some things in his pockets," suggested Lovell. "He'll get hungry again. And we'll have a whip round to raise some tin for him—what!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Jimmy Silver heartily.

"That's all right!" said Mornington coolly. "I've got lots of tin, and I'm lookin' after him. He's got to have some new clothes before he goes on his travels again."

"Good man!"

"Mine would be a bit too big for him," said Mornington thoughtfully. "Some kid in the Third would be about the size. There's young Wegg. Call him in."

Wegg of the Third was grinning into the study, watching 'Erbert.

"Come in, Wegg?" called out Jimmy Silver.

The fag came grinning in.

"We want some clobber for my minor," explained Mornington. "Do you feel inclined to do a good and charitable deed by handing him a suit of your clothes, Wegg?"

"No fear!" said Wegg promptly.

"Well, sell your oldest suit," said Mornington. "I'll pay you anything you like."

Wegg promptly closed with that generous offer.

"Done!" he said.

"Take 'em to the Fourth Form dormitory, and I'll bring the kid there."

"Right you are!"

Wegg of the Third hurried away.

"Oh, I say, sir," murmured 'Erbert.

"You're awfully good to me!"

"I'm a good chap," said Mornington calmly.

"My goodness has often astonished my friends!"

'Erbert blinked at him. He was deeply grateful to the dandy of Rookwood; but certainly he did not know what to make of him.

"Here comes Bootles," murmured Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four looked a little alarmed as the Form-master stepped in, rustling. Mornington faced him with perfect calmness.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Morny's Resolve.

MR. BOOTLES blinked at 'Erbert over his spectacles, and blinked at the Fourth-Formers. Evidently Mr. Bootles was what the juniors

would have called "flabbergasted."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "I—I—I—"

Bless my soul, this is the boy, I presume. Mornington, you have—er—done a very extraordinary thing in introducing such an excessively dirty boy into the school!"

"The Head told me to, sir."

Mr. Bootles started.

"Dr. Chisholm told you to, Mornington?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bless my soul! I was not aware of that! I trust you are speaking the truth, Mornington?"

"Honest Injun, sir!"

"When did the Head tell you, Mornington?"

"Last Sunday, sir."

The Fistical Four exchanged glances. Whether Mornington was speaking seriously or whether he was being guilty of astounding impudence they could hardly tell. The Head certainly meant his boys to take his Sunday morning sermons seriously. But—

"The Head told you last Sunday to—bring this ragged urchin into the school to-day?" said Mr. Bootles dazedly.

"He wasn't referin' to Herbert especially, sir. He told us it was our duty to care for others less fortunate than ourselves—his very words, sir—and to feed the hungry, an' clothe the poor, an' all that, sir. So I'm doin' it."

"But—but the Head scarcely meant—ahem!"

—he was, in fact, speaking generally—he did not intend you to introduce ragged vagrants into the school, Mornington. However, I should be sorry to check a kind and charitable impulse," added Mr. Bootles kindly.

"As you have brought the boy here, you may provide him with what he needs, and kindly see him safe off the premises when you have finished! I hardly suspected you, Mornington, of so much kindness of heart. It is an agreeable surprise to me, though—though you have certainly chosen a very peculiar method of exercising your—ahem!—philanthropy. It would be advisable, perhaps, to let the boy wash before he takes his departure."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Bootles rustled away, still flabbergasted. Mornington grinned cheerfully. "I knew I should floor him with the Head's sermon," he remarked. "It fairly takes the wind out of their sails, you see."

"Look here, I don't like you making fun of the Head's sermon!" said Jimmy Silver bluntly. "It's rotten bad taste, it not worse!"

"But I'm not making fun of it—wouldn't dream of such a thing. I'm takin' the old joinee seriously," said Mornington coolly. "Now, 'Erbert."

"Yesir?"

"Feel better?"

"Ever so much, sir!" said 'Erbert, with a sigh of contentment. "I won't never forget this, sir! You're a brick, sir, like Bill Murphy!"

"Thanks!" said Mornington. "I'm awfully flattered, though I never had the pleasure of knowin' Mr. William Murphy. As a matter of fact, I fancy Bill Murphy was worth about a hundred of me, as he went out and died for his country, and I should think twice before I did anythin' of the sort! What are you goin' to do when you leave here, 'Erbert?"

"Look for a haystack, sir."
 "What the merry dickens do you want with a haystack?"
 "Erbert grinned.
 "Sleep under it, sir."
 "Dash it all," said Jimmy Silver uneasily, "it's going to rain to-night. It's coming on already."

"I'm used to it, sir," said Erbert simply. "Laying up rheumatism for your old age," remarked Mornington. "I suppose lots of the poor do that."

"Course they does, sir."
 The dandy of the Fourth was silent, his brows knitted, plunged in thought.

Jimmy Silver & Co. watched him in silent amazement. This strange development in Mornington's character simply astounded them. His rescue of Miss Dolly from the fire had been a surprise. But this was amazing. Who would have thought that the hardy, reckless blackguard of the Fourth would have cared twopence whether a ragged little urchin starved or not? Jimmy Silver was really concerned about the little vagrant. But Mornington!

The dandy of the Fourth broke the silence at last.

"He's not goin' out into the rain," he said deliberately, "and he's not goin' to the workhouse. The chap who looked after him has been killed, and in common decency the kid ought to be looked after."

"That's right enough," said Jimmy heartily. "But—"

"There's only one thing to be done."
 "And what's that?"

"He's goin' to stay here."
 The Fistical Four stared.

"Stay here!" murmured Lovell. "At Rookwood!"

Mornington nodded emphatically.

"Yaas. After all, we owe Bill Murphy somethin' for fightin' the Huns for us. We should look pretty queer if they had let the Germans through. That kid's goin' to stay here."

"Oh, my hat!"
 "I'm goin' to take him to the Head," said Mornington, rising.

"Great pip! Let him have a wash first!"
 "And get him into Weggy's old clobber!" exclaimed Raby.

"I'm goin' to. Come on, kid! You chaps can come and lend me a hand; he may want scrubbin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Erbert, with a dazed look in his face, was marched off to the Fourth Form dormitory. And for the next half-hour or so Mornington and the Fistical Four were very busy, but the result of their labour was quite sufficient to compensate them for the trouble they had taken.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Home for 'Erbert.

"**C**OME in!"
 Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, glanced up as Mornington of the Fourth entered his study, followed by a lad a couple of years younger. The Head glanced at the second comer curiously.

He was puzzled. So far as he was aware, there was no new boy due at Rookwood.

Mornington's companion did not bear the remotest resemblance to the ragged, dusty outcast who had been picked up on Coombe Heath.

A bath and a thorough scrubbing had worked wonders. Clean from head to foot, with his hair nicely brushed, 'Erbert looked very different. Wegg's Etons did not fit him exactly, but they were a remarkable change from his rags.

In his new guise 'Erbert would have passed muster quite well among the fags of Rookwood. Indeed, he was at the present moment a good deal neater and tidier than Wegg of the Third ever was.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Who is this?"
 "Herbert, sir."

"I do not quite understand, Mornington. Herbert whom?"

Mornington proceeded to explain.

"Ah, this is the lad!" said the Head, surveying 'Erbert's burning face. "Mr. Bootles mentioned your burning—very extraordinary proceeding to me, Mornington. I am glad to see," added the Head sternly, "that my sermon had so very much effect upon you, Mornington."

The junior coloured.
 Under the Head's stern gaze he did not

venture to speak in the flippant manner he had adopted towards Mr. Bootles. It was not safe to jest with the Head.

And Mornington, indeed, was not in his usual flippant mood. Something deep and earnest had been stirred in his strange, wayward nature.

"This boy does not quite bear out Mr. Bootles' description," said the Head, as Mornington did not reply.

"We've looked after him a bit, sir."

"I understand. I congratulate you, Mornington; you have risen very considerably in my estimation by this kindly action," said the Head.

Evidently Townsend had been mistaken as to the Head's view of the matter. Astonishing as it would have seemed to the worthy Towny, the Head was quite in earnest in his Sunday morning sermon.

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Mornington. "I—I know it was a bit unusual, sir—"

"I am sorry that such kind actions are unusual," said the Head quietly. "But why have you brought this lad to me, Mornington?"

"I—I—I want to ask you somethin', sir. The kid's an orphan; he hasn't any people, and he was looked after by a chap who's been killed at the Front. Under the circumstances, sir, I—I—I—"

"You may speak quite freely, Mornington," said the Head kindly.

"Well, sir, can he stay here?"

The Head started.
 "Here!" he said.

"He's got no home, sir. His guardian was killed fightin' for us. He can't be sent out in the rain. I'd pay anythin'—"

The Head made a gesture.

"It is a very strange request, Mornington. But I am glad to hear you make it. I certainly think that something should be done for the lad. I will think over the matter. Meanwhile, I will ask the housekeeper to provide a room, and, for the present, until something can be done, he will have shelter and food at Rookwood."

"Thank you, sir!" said Mornington. "I know it's a cheek—"

"Not at all, Mornington. I have not forgotten that you saved my little daughter's life, and I should not refuse any reasonable request you might make. In the present case, Mornington, your kindness of heart towards this unfortunate boy pleases me very much, and I trust I shall not be found wanting in taking my share in the charitable action. You may take the boy to the housekeeper's room, and tell Mrs. Wade I wish to speak to her."

"Thank you, sir! Come on, 'Erbert!"
 "Oh, my eye!" murmured 'Erbert.

He followed Mornington through the study like a fellow in a dream. All the happenings of that afternoon seemed like a dream to 'Erbert. But he was in clover at last; and if it was a dream, it was a very pleasant one.

Jimmy Silver & Co. heard with much satisfaction that the little ragamuffin was to have the shelter of the roof of Rookwood until something could be done for him.

Towny and his Nutty friends snorted when they heard it. They found it hard to forgive Mornington for that afternoon's doings. But as Mornington did not care a solitary rap whether they forgave him or not they came round.

When Jimmy Silver passed Study No. 4 after prep there was a whiff of cigarette-smoke from the keyhole, and Morny's voice was heard within:

"Your deal, Towny."

Jimmy Silver passed on. Mornington was the same old Morny, that was evident—the same shady black sheep that he had always been. But Jimmy felt, somehow, that there was at bottom more of good than of evil in his strange character, and he felt kindly enough towards the fellow who had rescued from misery and want the little ragamuffin whom the juniors called "Mornington minor."

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "TUBBY'S TRIAL!" Order your copy EARLY.)

GOOD STORIES!

YOU CAN NEVER TELL!

It showed that Mr. Harry Hawkins possessed a spirit of pushfulness when he added to his business as vendor of vegetables the making and selling of pork-sausages.

Into the ingredients or merits of the sausages let us not enter, nor did Hawkins commit himself regarding the quality of his wares in the notice he painted outside his shop:

"Pork Sausages. Our Own Make!"
 But former purchasers in the locality had emphatic opinions on the subject. One morning, very early, the maker of breakfast delicacies found, to his astonishment, the sign altered to:

"Pork Sausages. Our Own Moke!"

NOT ALWAYS!

Agent (to crowd): "Ladies and gentlemen, this liquid will remove stains from anything!"

Interested Onlooker: "I know something it won't shift."

Agent: "All right! Out with it, my friend!"
 Onlooker: "Why, remove Staines out of Middlesex!"

A TALE OF LETTERS!

Which letters are the hardest workers?—The bees (B's).

Which are the most extensive letters?—The seas (C's).

Which letters are the most fond of comfort?—The ease (E's).

Which are the noisiest letters?—The jays (J's).

Which are the longest letters?—The eels (L's).

Which are the poorest letters?—The owes (O's).

Which are the most sensible letters?—The wise (Y's).

TWO TONGUE TWISTERS!

A tutor who tutored the flute,
 Tried to teach two young tooters to toot.
 Said the two to the tutor:
 "Is it harder to toot,
 Or to tutor two tooters to toot?"

There was a young fellow named Tate,
 Who went out to dine at 8.8.
 But I will not relate
 What this fellow named Tate
 And his tete-a-tete ate at 8.8.

DO YOU KNOW THESE?

Question: What is better than presence of mind in a railway accident?

Answer: Absence of body.

Question: Why is an egg like a colt?

Answer: Because it is not fit for use until it is broken.

Question: Why is it dangerous to take a nap in the train?

Answer: Because the train invariably runs over sleepers.

Question: Why is a balloon similar to a policeman?

Answer: Because they both take people up.

Question: Why is a newspaper like an army?

Answer: Because it has leaders, columns, and reviews.

REFLECTION ON AUNTIE'S MANNERS!

She was a very pretty little girl, with eyes of blue and hair of gold, but she didn't like soap and water very much, because it was so wet, she said.

One day she went to tea with her auntie, and her hands were just a shade grubbier than usual. You see she had been trying to make marbles from some soft asphalt that the road-makers had left over.

"Effie," said her aunt, "how dirty your hands are! What would you say if auntie came to table with hands like that?"

"Oh," said the little lady of the golden locks, "I'd be too polite to say anything about it!"

Then auntie changed the subject.
 THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 66.

DISHED!

My hat!" Baggy Trimble, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, said that as he sat in his study, No. 2, on the Fourth Form passage. He shared the study with Mellish, but that junior was out for the afternoon.

Baggy Trimble was feeling lonely. It was a beautiful afternoon, and the majority of the juniors were either out of school or partaking of tea in their studies.

Tea in Hall on a "half" never agreed with Baggy Trimble. There was never sufficient to satisfy him.

Then Tubby conceived an idea, which was the cause of his sudden exclamation.

He lost no time, but proceeded straight to Jack Blake & Co.'s study. As Trimble well knew, Digby was celebrating a birthday that day, and a banquet on a miniature scale was being held.

Baggy Trimble knocked upon the door, and Jack Blake's cheery voice bade him enter.

"Hallo, Baggy!" said Digby. "Sorry, old son, but we're full up!"

"That's more than I am!" chuckled Baggy Trimble. "I'm all on my lonesome."

"We have only enough to go round," said Blake.

"However, I didn't come in here to cadge a feed," said Trimble. "I really came to ask you chaps if you can do a little trick."

"Come in after tea!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I might be out—as a matter of fact, I thought Gussy might be able to help me out!" said Trimble solemnly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth, could not let that pass.

"Pway wait a minute, deah boys!" he said. "I will do my best for Baggy!"

"Then what I want to know is, if any of you can stand on one hand?" said Baggy.

"Eh?"

"The juniors began to take an interest. 'Stand on one hand!' said Blake. 'I jolly well think so!'"

And the leader of the Fourth left the table, and, as the only part of his study in which there was room to move was by the door, Blake did his best to stand on one hand. He failed dismally.

"M-m-my hat!" he said, as he stood up. "That's harder than it seems!"

"I can do it," said Baggy Trimble quietly. "There's a special way—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Monty Lowther. "Why, it's as much as you can do to stand on two legs, never mind one hand!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries and Digby tried to perform the feat, but they met with as much success as had Blake.

"If you can do it," said Blake, "I'll jolly well stand you a bun!"

"Make it an invitation to join your party," said Baggy Trimble. "And I'll tell you the trick. Then I'll wager every chap here will be able to do it!"

The juniors looked at one another in surprise. Baggy Trimble seemed not only to be in an extra genial mood, but he was also apparently challenging the athletic members of the study to perform a gymnastic feat.

"My hat!" said Herries. "I'm on there, you chaps! Hallo, what's up with Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus was spreading a handkerchief on the floor. He looked very serious.

"I am goin' to do this trick!" he said.

The handkerchief, it was then obvious, was to keep any dust there might be on the floor from getting on his hands. He placed his hands on the ground, and kicked his feet up. But Baggy would not have that.

"Not that way!" he said quickly. "You mustn't touch the floor at any time with your other hand!"

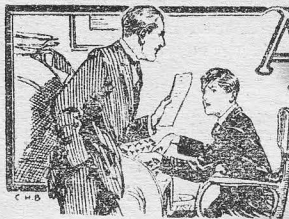
"Then pway show me the knack, deah boy!" said Gussy, fighting himself.

With a grin of amusement on his fat face Baggy Trimble stooped down, placed one fat hand on the floor, and calmly put his foot on it!

"There you are!" he said triumphantly. "I'm standing on one hand!"

For a moment the juniors were too surprised to speak, but when they at last found their voices, Tubby listened to things other than invitations!

THE END.
THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 34.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASSED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "PENNY POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

STANDING UP FOR GRUNDY.

A well-wisher in Western Australia says he had to intervene in a fight the other day between his brother George and another boy. George said that Grundy was the finest fighter, and the other fellow was sticking up for Tom Merry, and much damage might have been done.

But Tom Merry can look after himself. This is not invariably the case with George Alfred, despite his loud voice and heavy style of fighting. Grundy is one of the most misjudged fellows. I am glad to know he has staunch supporters in Australia as well as elsewhere. Grundy is a splendid chap, really, and the number of decent things he has done could not be counted. He is on the side of the oppressed, and he goes like a bull for the oppressor. You cannot say much more in favour of anybody than that. But, of course, Grundy is not noted for brain-power. He acts before he thinks, leaps before he looks, and he has ere now got himself into a world of trouble for this reason.

Grundy is interesting, however. He talks like a true Briton. Hasty in some of his conclusions, he does know what is right. Some people do not—or, anyway, their actions suggest ignorance on the point. Grundy bellows loud enough when he wants his way. You can hear him talking a mile off. He dashes into meetings to which he has not been asked, and insists upon taking the chair. He likes to play first fiddle; but what a lot of folks feel the same way! To my mind there is any amount to be said in favour of Grundy. He fails most times, but they are splendid failures. They are the insuccesses of the honest chap who meant well all the time. Good luck to Grundy—and to his Western Australian champions!

BEING A POLICEMAN.

A chum writes from the North to tell me that he has his eye on the Metropolitan Police. As a rule, it is the police who have their eyes on others, but my correspondent intends to join the finest Force in the world, and I wish him luck. I know the old rhyme put it that the policeman's lot was not a happy one, but that is all relative. A policeman has tremendous responsibilities, and his work takes him into situations which peaceful individuals would not like.

While the rest of us are going about our business in the same old way the policeman on duty—and as a matter of fact the constable is really never off duty—has to face dangers and take his stand in a score of awkward disputes, to say nothing of being wanted when there is a fire, or an upset of any kind.

To my thinking the work performed by the guardians of law and order during the long years of war would take whole months of thought to recognise adequately. There were days when bombs were dropping casual-like out of hostile aeroplanes and, creating trouble everywhere as bombs do, but the policeman went on just the same, keeping order, not worrying about himself at all, but merely seeing to it that others got all the security that was going.

It pays to have a chat with an officer of the police. He knows more about many important things than a crowd of us do. He is a good fellow and an amiable one. I only hope my supporter will succeed in his quest for a place in the ranks of the men in blue.

THAT EXTRA PAGE.

Here is another reader who asks me to have an extra page of chat. I am afraid there is nothing doing in this particular, much as I like to satisfy my friends. My correspondent thinks the advertising section could go by the board, but then the adver-

tisers would simply hate such a notion. Chat is just one of those little insignificant features which has to squeeze in where it can, like the late comer into the theatre-row or the omnibus. I am glad to have opinions of readers on such a matter, all the same. My friends never say that they don't want it. Since we have had larger papers it has been possible to give a little space regularly to this weekly extra, and I hope as we go on to devote a little more room to it, but extra pages are out of the question.

THE RAILWAY.

It was cheery to get a note from a reader who wants to find work on the railway. He lives at Preston, and the railway people have put his name down for work when the chance offers, but so far there has been no opportunity. Of course, it is like this in pretty well everything. My correspondent is as keen as anything, but he has no scope to show his real ability in the job which occupies his attention now. At least, that is the thought which is in his mind. Personally, I think that a fellow "can show his talent in almost any sort of work. A shop offers plenty of openings. It is no good growling because you do not find a post ready-made for you in the kind of occupation you have set your heart on. Things never are like that. Just look at the amount of waiting most men have had to do even in cases where they were simply itching for work! Then one fine day the chance comes along, and the individual who bided his time like a stoic, preparing himself for the call, gets ahead in his new avocation like a house afire. But by waiting is not meant lounging round until something you fancy turns up. That means getting rusty and losing grit and vim. My chum has a job which he thinks he does not like, but he is a brainy chap and may think different ere long. If the railway idea has to be given up I can see him developing his shop work. More than likely he will be having a shop of his own—or a row of them!

THE METRIC SYSTEM.

Earnest-minded people in the United States are urging the world to adopt the metric system universally. Do you care twopenny about the metric system—that is, counting by fives and tens and so forth? So long as the money is there perhaps it does not seem to matter much, but such a system would be more convenient. It applies to weights and measures as well as money. At present the whole world does things haphazard. The inhabitant of one country has to accustom himself to a different form of counting directly he has business in another land. And then our shilling with its twelve pennies adds to the confusion. It seems a most reasonable notion to make the shilling represent ten just as the pound represents twenty. America is taking up the business in fine style and means to have the reform somehow. I should not be a bit surprised if it gets its way.

BEAUTIFUL DEVON.

A correspondent in the Royal County sends me a poem which is not half bad, and some pictures of his own drawing which are also good, and he tells me that he is thinking of moving on from his Devon retreat to somewhere where he can get promotion. "If you could give me a little help," he continues, "I should be very pleased. I hope I am not straining my privilege by writing to you in this strain." No, he is not. But as he does not tell me anything special about his work, or append his address, I am afraid there is nothing to be done but to wish him well. In its way, the notion of moving on is all right if there is something fairly definite to move on to, but it is not a bit of good starting

a progress into the great world without seeking for something which he fancies may be profitable. That is merely placing himself "in the air," as the French say. A clerk, or anybody else, must feel his way. It is the fellow who specialises in some given department of work who usually gets there. The extra smart man at shorthand is pretty sure of a job. He has a talent which is always wanted.

FROM HUNGERFORD.

A valued correspondent at Hungerford who has journalistic leanings offers me a suggestion for a new paper, and the idea shall have careful attention. I am much obliged to my chum for all the cheery things he says. By the way, he refers to the notion of a weekly devoted entirely to Bunter. Shall we see it? he inquires. Well, we might—and we might not. My time is fairly full, and I do not know how far one could trust William George to run "Bunter's Weekly." He is a most interesting chap; I know all about that, and, what is more, you cannot have too much of a good thing, so it is quite all right that the porpoise should be putting on weight. But when it comes to running a paper with a master printer ringing him up for copy and proofs, I half fancy Bunter might fall short. You never can tell. Bunter may develop a powerful habit of punctuality. Under the stress of heavy responsibility he might show latent sources of character which we have not dreamed of. Then, again, W. G. B. might be out to supper just when the office wanted him most—and there is no arguing with printers. They are the masters and the martinet of this sad old world.

It had suddenly struck my correspondent that the famous author in question had done enough. "He has been writing for years; let's have a change." But, as it happens, the writer of so many stories remains just as popular now as ever he was, and that being the case I'm afraid it's impossible to act on the suggestion. So, there's nothing doing. Sorry!

ENCOURAGEMENT.

Is it good or bad? Some authorities say it is bad. It annoys them. I can understand this way of looking at things in certain cases, as, for instance, where some fellow has a mighty difficult business to get through and his chum comes in and says: "Oh, you'll worry through all right! Just pull up your socks and put your beef into it!" That form of encouragement is apt to be irritating. The fact is, the victim of the advice has been putting his best into the work. He has been sweating for an exam till his brain is tired. He wants something else in the way of an enlivener. Sympathy or would-be cheery encouragement handed round in reckless style is no much use. You don't want a lecture, however well intended. But, fortunately, there is a brand of encouragement which does help, and it is just that kind which the whole world is grateful for in the hour of stress and trouble.

Your Editor

WHAT A POPULAR WRITER GETS ?

Well, it is not always praise. I admit I was staggered by a note that came to me last week from a whole-hearted supporter of the Companion Papers. But the trouble was that the writer had fallen away from his former admiration of one of the authors who contribute regularly. I shall not mention names. It would not be cricket. No, it was not the man you were thinking about!

READERS' NOTICES.

BACK NUMBERS.

D. Coffee, E. Chalet, Spofforth Street, Cremorne, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants

No. 1 of the "Penny Popular" (new series), 3d. each offered. Write first.

Miss D. Dunkinson, 4, Western Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex, has for sale "Magnets," 563-633, at 2d. each; "Greyfriars Heralds" (new series), Nos. 1 and 2, at 2d. each; and "Penny Populars" (new series), Nos. 1, 2, 5, 8, and 27, at 1d. each. Also wants "The Scout's Victory" and "A Lancashire Lad's Luck," 2d. each offered.

G. I. Jones, 4, Church Street, Carmarthen, has for sale a complete set of "Magnets" and "Gems," from No. 460-630. All are in good condition.

J. E. Tame, 21, Victoria Road, Kilburn, N.W., wants "Gems," Nos 621 and 622, 3d. each offered. Also has a number of Companion Papers for sale.

A. Cracknell, 46, Treherne Road, Brixton, S.W. 9, has for sale "Cousin Ethel's School-days," "Frank Richard's School-days," "The Flying Armada," "After Lights Out," "Football Champions," "The Feud at Rookwood," and "The Fourth Form at Frankingham"—at 5d. each.

P. Lockey, 169a, Tottenham Road, London, N.W. 1, has for sale 40 "Magnets," before No. 629, 1s. 6d. And 45 "Gems," 1s. 9d.

F. Whitworth, 1 Russell Street, Lanes., wants "Sexton Blake Libraries," Nos. 25, 38, 39, 51, and 52—1s. 6d. each offered.

S. Malyon, 114, Bravington Road, Maida Hill, W., has for sale a number of the Companion Papers.

I. Eagles, 85, Church Road, Moseley, Birmingham, wants "Magnets," Nos. 618 and 621. 1/6d. each offered.

Miss K. McGlynn, 5, Princes Street, Abbotsford, Victoria, Australia, wants early stories of Cardew.

W. McGinty, Castlepollard, Westmeath, Ireland, has for sale "Gems," from Nos. 500-630.

Miss E. Hancock, 11, Welton Place, Leeds, has for sale "Magnets," Nos. 583-681; and "Gems," from Nos. 581-681.

I. Horner, Sunnybank Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds, has a large number of the Companion Papers for sale.

N. Carter, the Royal, Southwold, Suffolk, has for sale "Gems," Nos. 586, 598, 610, 612, 621-624, 626, 627, 629, 676; and "Magnets," Nos. 615, 622, 623, 628, 630, and 631. Will sell for 1d. each, or 1s. 6d. the lot.

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