

THE GREAT HOLIDAY STORY-PAPER!

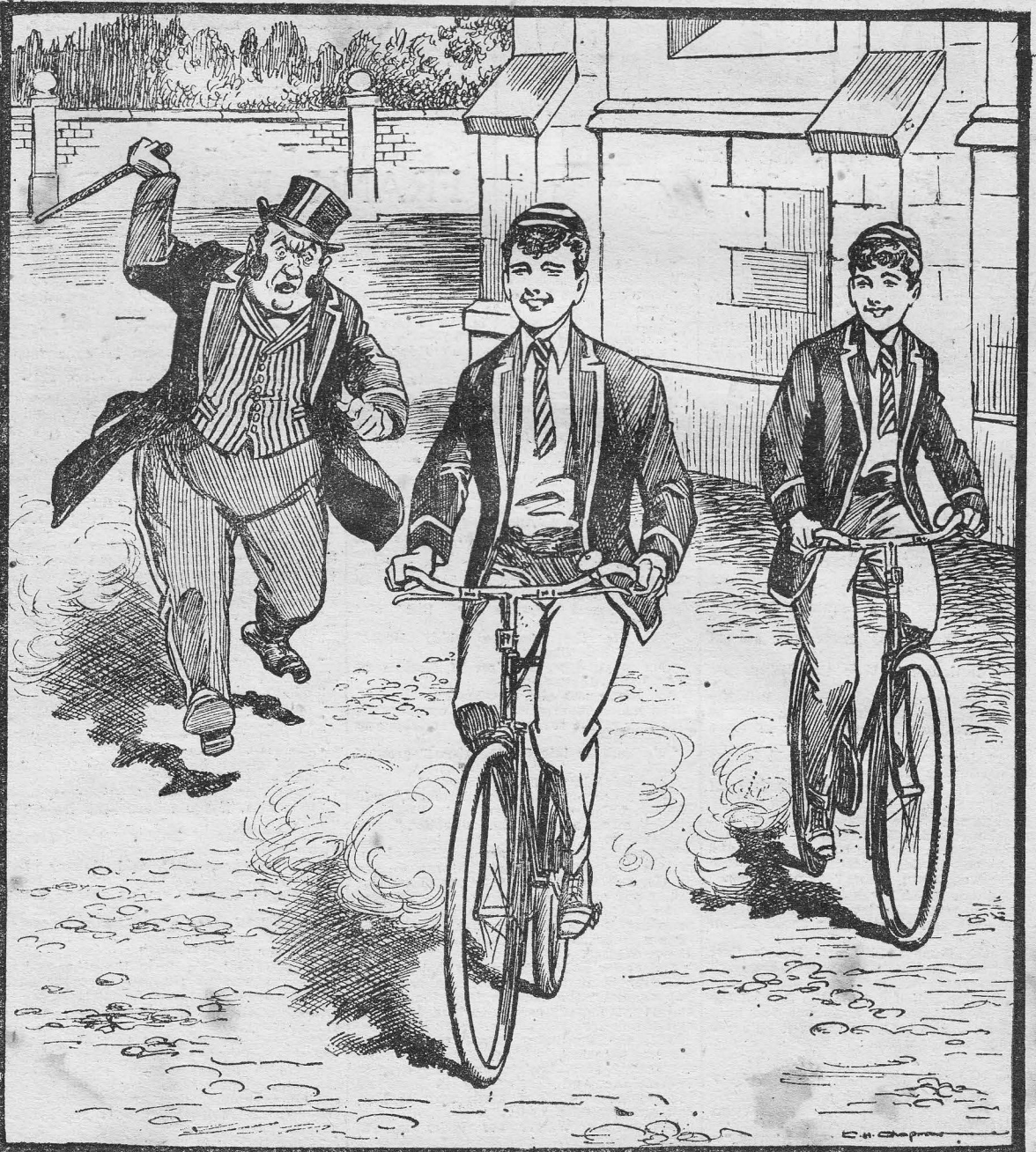
The
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Popular

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COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES OF THE BEST.



THE RETURN OF THE MISSING CRICKETERS!
(A Surprising Incident in this week's Splendid School Story.)



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

.. By ..

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
French Leave!

“WHAT’S the programme for this evening, kids?”

Dennis Carr asked that question from the doorway of Study No. 1. Until recently Dennis had been at daggers drawn with Harry Wharton & Co., on account of the fact that Wharton had rejected one of his contributions to “The Greyfriars Herald.” But the cheery smile on Carr’s face as he addressed the Famous Five of the Remove showed clearly enough that he was willing, for his part, to resume the old friendly footing.

“The programme for this evening?” said Wharton. “Well, to tell the truth, we hadn’t thought about it.”

“We shall probably play the esteemed game of chessfulness as soon as prep is completely finished,” said Hurree Singh, in his quaint English.

“Blow chess!” said Dennis Carr.

“Can you suggest a counter-attraction?” inquired Bob Cherry.

“Yes, rather! The Burlesques are at Courtfield.”

“The Burlesques! Who the dickens are they?”

“The famous comedians from the Frivolity Theatre, London. They’re giving a show at the Theatre Royal, in Courtfield, at seven o’clock.”

“Why, it’s nearly that now!” said Johnny Bull, consulting his watch.

“Yes. If you fellows are thinking of coming, you’ll have to put a jerk in it!”

The Famous Five jumped to their feet with one accord. It was some time since they had seen a real live entertainment, and they welcomed this opportunity of witnessing the well known “stars” from London.

“Lead on, Macduff!” said Frank Nugent. “We’ll go and make love to old Wingate, and squeeze half a dozen late passes out of him.”

And the Famous Five and Dennis Carr hurried away to Wingate’s study in the Sixth Form passage.

The juniors halted outside the door of the study. A half-sheet of notepaper had been pinned to one of the panels, and it bore the following announcement:

“NOTICE!

“The captain of Greyfriars will be engaged in the senior Common-room until 9 p.m. He is not to be disturbed, except in the event of anything urgent transpiring.

“BY ORDER.”

“My hat!” ejaculated Bob Cherry.

“Wingate’s not at home.”

“Let’s go along to the senior Common-room and see him,” suggested Johnny Bull.

“Ass! He’d boot us out in record time.”

“But this is an urgent matter—”

“I’m afraid Wingate wouldn’t think so,” said Dennis Carr. “We shall have to get our passes from one of the prefects, that’s all. Let’s come and see Gwynne.”

The juniors went along to Gwynne’s study, but they drew blank. A grubby-looking fag informed them that Gwynne was out for the evening.

“Let’s try Faulkner,” said Harry Wharton. But Faulkner’s study was untenanted.

“Great Scott!” said Nugent. “All the prefects seem to have vanished off the map! Wingate isn’t to be disturbed, and Gwynne and Faulkner are not on view. Who else is there?”

“There’s Hammersley,” said Dennis Carr. “He’s a jolly decent sort, and he’s bound to turn up trumps!”

But Vincent Hammersley had also vanished.

“This is the absolute giddy limit!” exclaimed Bob Cherry.

“Try next door, and see if North’s at home,” said Johnny Bull.

But North was also an absentee.

The juniors were annoyed and exasperated. This tour of the senior studies was taking up valuable time.

“We shall be late for the show!” growled Wharton.

“The lateness will be terrific!”

“There are only two more prefects,” said Nugent, “Walker and Loder.”

“Not much hope in that direction,” said Bob Cherry.

Walker of the Sixth was a fellow of uncertain temper. Sometimes he was as nice as pie, and would issue late passes without asking any awkward questions.

But that was only sometimes. On most occasions it was about as easy to get blood from a stone as to extract a late pass from James Walker.

And as for Loder, the juniors had no hope whatever in that quarter. Loder had been “up against” the Remove from the outset, and he was morally certain to turn down any application for late passes.

Still, the Removites meant to leave no stone unturned. They were keen—desperately keen, in fact—on going over to Courtfield. And they meant to bring all their eloquence to bear, firstly upon Walker, and secondly upon Loder.

But neither Walker nor Loder was at home!

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged dismayed glances.

“Here’s a pretty go!” growled Johnny Bull. “What’s to be done now?”

“We must tackle Quelch,” said Dennis Carr.

“Personally, I’d as soon tackle a raging lion!” said Bob Cherry.

“Same here. But it’s our only chance.”

The juniors went along to the Remove-master’s study. They expected the sound of his typewriter to greet their ears. But the study was still and silent.

Mr. Quelch had followed the example of the prefects, and performed the vanishing trick!

“Nothing doing!” said Nugent.

“Half a jolly!” said Wharton. “Here’s a note on Quelch’s desk.”

The note conveyed the information that Mr. Quelch was dining with the Head, and would not return to his study that evening.

“Oh, help!” groaned the captain of the Remove. “We’re fairly floored, you fellows.”

“We can’t very well barge into the Head’s dining-room,” said Bob Cherry.

“Hardly!”

“There’s only one thing to be done, in the cires,” said Dennis Carr.

“What’s that?”

“We must take French leave!”

“Phew!”

The Famous Five were rather taken aback at this startling suggestion.

“That would be a bit too thick, I’m afraid,” said Wharton.

Dennis Carr shrugged his shoulders.

“Of course, if you fellows funk it—” he began.

The suggestion of funking got the Famous Five’s backs up at once.

“We’re not funks!” said Johnny Bull heatedly.

“Prove it, then, by coming over to Courtfield.”

Johnny Bull threw a questioning glance at Wharton.

“Are you game, Harry?”

“Yes, rather! I’d go to the other end of the earth without permission, sooner than let Carr imagine I was a funk!”

“That settles it,” said Bob Cherry. “Come along, kidlets!”

The juniors went round to the cycle-shed and obtained their machines. They would be too late to see the start of the show, but that couldn’t be helped.

Gosling, the school porter, was standing in the doorway of his lodge when the cyclists whizzed past.

“Come back, you young rips!” he shouted.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—you're a-goin' hout of gates without permission!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Which I'll report yer—"

"Rats!"

Gosling started in pursuit of the cyclists, but he might just as well have attempted to catch an elusive will-o'-the-wisp.

Harry Wharton & Co. soon vanished from view, and Gosling pulled up, panting and perspiring, in the roadway.

"Wot I says is this 'ere!" he growled. "Boys is a drafted noosance! They orter be drowned at birth!"

Meanwhile, the Famous Five and Dennis Carr sped on their way. They reached Courtfield in record time, and left their machines in a neighbouring garage. Then they entered the theatre.

There were only gallery seats left, and with these the juniors had to be content.

The performance was in full swing, and roars of laughter echoed through the theatre.

The Burlesques were certainly a big attraction. They displayed real humour in their songs and jokes, which happened to be quite up-to-date and original.

The Removites were so absorbed in the proceedings that it was not until the curtain fell at the interval that they discovered that they were not the only Greyfriars fellows present.

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, glancing down into the stalls. "No wonder we couldn't find the prefects. They're all here!"

The Greyfriars prefects had the front row of the stalls to themselves. And they seemed to be a very merry party. Evidently they intended to make a joyous evening of it. Even Walker and Loder were in high spirits, and were chatting genially with the others.

"We shall have to disguise ourselves as cobwebs, or something!" said Nugent. "If those fellows spot us, there will be ructions!"

"Rats!" said Dennis Carr. "They're in the same boat as we are! They've taken French leave, and they won't be able to say much!"

As a matter of fact, not one of the prefects happened to glance up towards the gallery. And it was not until the performance was over that they were aware that the juniors had attended it.

Dusk had descended when Harry Wharton & Co. recovered their bicycles, and prepared to start back to the school.

In the light of the street-lamp, however, they were instantly recognised by the party of prefects.

"What are you kids doing here?" demanded Gwynne.

"Ripping show, wasn't it?" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here—"

"That ventriloquist fairly brought down the house!"

"I insist upon knowing—"

"And the conjuring was simply perfect!"

Gwynne's strong grasp descended upon Bob Cherry's collar.

"Listen to me!" he said sternly. "Have you kids taken French leave to come here?"

"Yes," answered Dennis Carr defiantly.

"I thought so."

"There wasn't a single prefect to be found, and Quelch happened to be dining with the Head, so we thought we were justified in coming along on our own account."

"Very well," said Gwynne. "As you've owned up, and not attempted to prevaricate, I'll say nothing more about it."

"Hold on!" said Loder. "Surely you're not going to let these cheeky young cubs go scot-free, Gwynne?"

"They were unable to obtain late passes—"

"That's all rot! Where was Wingate?"

"He was in the senior Common-room, and he left a notice on his study-door saying he wasn't to be disturbed," said Harry Wharton.

"Good enough," said Gwynne. "Cut along, you kids!"

But, although it was good enough for the easy-going Gwynne, it was far from good enough for Loder.

"I insist upon those young rascals being reported to their Form-master!" snarled the unpopular prefect. "And if you won't report them, Gwynne, I'll do so myself."

"Oh, will you?" said Gwynne. "Just you try it on, and see what happens!"

"You've got no right—"

"Excuse me, but I have. And I've got a left as well," said Gwynne. "What's more, you'll feel it, if you make a report to Quelch over my head!"

That threat was quite sufficient to subdue Gerald Loder, and to banish from his mind any intention of reporting the Removites.

Gwynne was a renowned fighting-man; and he could have made mincemeat, so to speak, of the weedy Loder. Wherefore, the latter discreetly held his peace; and Harry Wharton & Co. were allowed to return to the school unpunished.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Left in the Lurch!

"CONFOUND those fellows! Where on earth have they got to?"

Wingate's tone was impatient and irritable. He was in a royal rage, for which there was every excuse, in the circumstances.

The captain of Greyfriars had convened a special meeting of the senior cricket club for six-thirty that evening. And he had waited, with what patience he could muster, for the members of the First Eleven to turn up.

Half-an-hour had elapsed, and Wingate was still alone in the senior Common-room.

"This is the limit!" he exclaimed. "The match with the Old Boys comes off to-morrow, and we haven't arranged a plan of campaign. It seems as if those bounders don't care a rap whether we win or lose! They've absolutely ignored my notice calling the meeting."

Wingate strode to the door. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man. Silence reigned in the long corridor.

"Fag!" shouted the captain of Greyfriars, at length.

There was no response.

"F-a-a-g!"

This time Wingate fairly bellowed the word.

There was a scuffle of feet from the distance, and Nugent minor raced up.

"Did you call, Wingate?" he panted.

"Oh, no! I was merely whispering to myself!" said the Sixth-Former, with crushing sarcasm. "Go round to all the members of the First Eleven—you know who they are—and tell them that I'm waiting for them in the senior Common-room. You might add that I'm not prepared to hang about all night!"

"Right you are, Wingate!"

And Dicky Nugent sped away on his errand. Within five minutes he was back again.

"Well?" snapped Wingate.

"I can't find any of the fellows in the First Eleven, Wingate," said Dicky Nugent.

"Eh?"

"None of 'em are at home."

"They're not in their studies?"

"No."

"Then, dash it all, where are they?"

"At the Burlesques, I expect," said the fag.

"The Burlesques! Who the thump are they?"

"A concert-party from London, Wingate. They're giving a show this evening at Courtfield."

Wingate frowned. It was unheard-of cheek, he reflected, that the members of the First Eleven should ignore the summons to attend the cricket meeting, and go over to Courtfield instead.

"Do you want me any more, Wingate?" inquired Dicky Nugent.

"No. You can buzz off."

When the fag had retired, Wingate settled down to wait for the return of the Sixth-Formers. He had to wait a very long time.

Hour after hour passed, and the members of the Eleven failed to put in an appearance. Wingate saw lights out in the various dormitories; then he paced up and down in the Close.

"I'll make those bounders sit up, when they do arrive!" he muttered to himself.

Presently there was a jingling of bicycle-bells, and six juniors rode up to the school gates. They were the Famous Five and Dennis Carr.

Gosling shuffled out from his lodge to unlock the gates.

"Young rips!" he growled. "Comin' in at this time o' night! I'll report yer!"

"It's all right, Gosling," interposed Wingate, striding on the scene. "I'm here."

"Then I 'opes as 'ow you'll give these young raskils their doo deserts!" said Gosling.

He unlocked the gates and threw them open, and the juniors pushed their machines into the Close.

The tall form of George Wingate loomed up and confronted them.

"What do you kids mean by staying out till this hour?" demanded the captain of Greyfriars. "I don't remember having given you late passes."

"We didn't bother you, Wingate," said Bob Cherry. "The notice on your study door said that you weren't to be disturbed; so we tried to get passes from one of the prefects. But they were all out."

"Then you took French leave?" said Wingate ominously.

"Yes, Wingate," said Dennis Carr. "Gwynne's already spoken to us about it, and he decided not to punish us, under the circumstances."

"Oh!"

Wingate had always been on very good terms with Pat Gwynne, and he realised that it would not be good form to punish the juniors after Gwynne had already exonerated them.

"Very well," said the captain of Greyfriars. "But you're jolly lucky to be let down so lightly. If you take the law into your own hands again, I shall march you in to Mr. Quelch!"

Feeling greatly relieved, the Removites went on their way. And Wingate waited in the gateway for the prefects to arrive.

After a time a peal of laughter echoed along the dusky road.

The merry-makers were returning. Wingate compressed his lips.

"Here we are again!" said Gwynne boisterously. And he pushed open the gate, which Gosling had left unlocked.

"About time, too!" grunted Wingate.

"Hallo, here's George!" said Hammersley, in surprise. "Top of the evening, George!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The comedians seem to have put you fellows in a good humour," remarked Wingate. "But it's rather a pity, don't you think, that you couldn't have attended the cricket meeting this evening, and gone to the show some other time?"

"My hat!" ejaculated Gwynne. "I'd clean forgotten all about the cricket meeting!"

"Same here," said Faulkner.

"I suppose you'd all forgotten?" said Wingate sarcastically.

"No; I hadn't," said Loder.

"Neither had I," added Walker. "Fact is, Wingate, you don't mind a bit of plain speaking, do you? We're rather fed-up with your mouldy meetings."

"Cricket's all very well," said North.

"Hear, hear!"

"But we must have a little diversion now and then, you know."

"Yes, rather!"

"These cricket meetings bore me stiff!" said Walker.

Wingate frowned.

"You've had your little bout of plain speaking," he said, "and now I'll have mine! I consider it's downright caddish of you fellows to leave me in the lurch. The Old Boys are bringing down a very powerful side to-morrow, and it was absolutely necessary that we should discuss our plan of campaign. A fat lot you seem to care for the school's cricketing traditions! I don't believe you care the toss of a button whether we win or lose."

This sort of plain speaking was a little too plain for the members of the First Eleven.

Loder gave a snort.

"I'm not going to be spoken to like that!" he exclaimed. "You can find somebody else to play in my place, Wingate!"

"With pleasure!" said the captain of Greyfriars. "I can well afford to dispense with fellows of your stamp!"

But Wingate was not prepared for what was to follow.

"You can find a deputy for me, too," said North.

"Same here!" echoed several voices.

Wingate was quite taken aback. This wholesale desertion of players was alarming. There was no other word for it.

"Look here, this is rank nonsense—" began Wingate.

"It's nothing of the sort," said Walker. "We're fed-up with your domineering ways! You're too fond of riding the high horse. And we'll jolly soon show you that we mean business!"

"Hear, hear!"

Wingate turned to Gwynne.

"Are you taking part in this caddish movement?" he inquired.

"No, I'm not," answered Gwynne. "You were quite justified in slating us as you did. I should like to apologise for not turning up at the meeting."

"Thanks!" said Wingate quietly. "What about you, Faulkner?"

"I feel the same as Gwynne does about it," replied Faulkner.

"Then, you'll play to-morrow?"

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"Of course!"

Wingate bucked up considerably. The situation was still very grave—no less than eight of the players having resigned from the team—but matters might have been worse.

With Gwynne and Faulkner to back him up, Wingate felt that the prospect was not entirely without hope.

The captain of Greyfriars turned to the malcontents.

"I sincerely hope that you fellows will have changed your minds by the morning," he said, "with the exception of Loder, that is. I wouldn't play him at any price!"

"You won't get the chance!" sneered Loder. The conversation ended at this point, and the seniors dispersed.

Gwynne and Faulkner were looking very grave as they entered the building with Wingate.

"Looks as if the Old Boys will have a walk-over," said Gwynne.

"Absolutely!" agreed Faulkner.

"I'm hoping that North and Hammersley and the others will think twice before they decide to desert the eleven," said Wingate.

"I rather think," said Gwynne, "that they've made up their minds, and that nothing will induce them to turn out against the Old Boys."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Honours for the Remove!

GWYNNE was right. Next morning Wingate questioned the traitors, and they informed him that they were sticking to their guns.

"We haven't the slightest intention of playing," said Hammersley, "so please don't ask us again!"

"I won't!" said Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars felt convinced that it was Loder who was at the bottom of this business. And his convictions were correct.

With great craft and cunning, Loder had succeeded in poisoning the minds of the majority of the players against Wingate. He had repeated to them some scathing remarks which Wingate was alleged to have made, but which in reality he had not made at all. And North, Hammersley & Co. had taken a firm stand, and decided that Wingate must dispense with their services.

On the school-notice-board after breakfast appeared the following extraordinary announcement—extraordinary because of its inconsequence:

GREYFRIARS FIRST ELEVEN versus GREYFRIARS OLD BOYS.

This match will be played on Big Side this afternoon, commencing at 2 p.m. The following eleven will represent Greyfriars:

G. WINGATE (Capt).
P. GWYNNE.
L. FAULKNER."

The Famous Five of the Remove were among the first to read this notice, and they fairly gasped when they did so.

"Wingate must be potty!" declared Bob Cherry. "He says 'the following eleven,' and then he quotes only three names!"

"Looks as if he's got bats in his belfry!" growled Johnny Bull.

"As if three players could possibly hold their own against a full team of Old Boys!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"There's no doubt about it," said Nugent, "old Wingate's off his dot!"

Dennis Carr strolled up to the notice-board at this juncture.

"Seen the latest?" asked Harry Wharton. "Our First Eleven has dwindled down to three!"

Dennis nodded.

"There's been an unholy row in the Sixth!" he said. "It appears that Wingate got ratty with the seniors for going over to Courtfield last night instead of attending the cricket meeting. He told them what he thought of them, and the result is that eight members of the team have resigned."

"What?"

The Famous Five blinked at Dennis Carr in astonishment.

"Who gave you this information?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Bunter."

"In that case, it's all tommy-rot!"

"It's true enough," said Dennis. "I heard Wingate ask Hammersley just now if he had quite made up his mind not to play. And

Hammersley said he had. Everybody's standing down from the team, with the exception of Wingate, Faulkner, and Gwynne."

"But what on earth is Wingate going to do about it?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "He can't field a team of three!"

"Hardly!"

"And there are no decent players in the Sixth, apart from the usual eleven."

"I expect Wingate will fill up the gaps with Fifth-Formers," said Wharton.

And he was right—up to a point. For when the juniors again looked at the notice-board after morning school, the following names had been added to the list:

"G. BLUNDELL.
B. BLAND.
C. HILTON."

"That makes six," said Dennis Carr.

"There are still five places to be filled," said Harry Wharton. "Dashed if I know how Wingate's going to fill them!"

"He'll ask Gosling to turn out, I expect!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or p'raps he'll approach Prout and Quelch," suggested Nugent.

The juniors chuckled at the idea of Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch standing up to the bowling of the Old Boys.

"Joking apart," said Dennis Carr, "there's Larry Lascelles. Larry's a top-hole cricketer!"

"I expect Wingate's forgotten his existence," said Wharton. "I'll go along and remind him."

"Mind your eye, Harry!" said Johnny Bull. "Wingate isn't in a very amiable mood just now."

The captain of the Remove went along to Wingate's study. He found the captain of Greyfriars in consultation with Gwynne and Faulkner. All three of the seniors were looking decidedly worried.

The problem of obtaining deputy players had been partially solved; but there were still five gaps to be filled. And Wingate was at his wits' end to know how he could get a complete team together.

"I say, Wingate," said Harry Wharton. "It seems that you're short of players for the match this afternoon."

"I am!" grunted Wingate. "And you've come along to suggest that I give you a place in the team, I suppose?"

"Not at all. But I can give you the name of a jolly good player whom you seem to have overlooked."

Wingate looked hard at the junior.

"Is this a leg-pulling stunt, Wharton?"

"Nunno!"

"Then let's have the name of this crack player!"

"Larry Lascelles."

Wingate brought his clenched fist down with a thud on to the table.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "I'd clean forgotten Larry!"

"And he's one of the best cricketers at Greyfriars!" said Gwynne. "Thanks awfully, kid, for jogging our skipper's memory!"

"That's all right!" said Wharton laughing. "Any more suggestions?" asked Wingate.

"Not at the moment," said the captain of the Remove. "If I think of any more star players, I'll let you know."

"That kid," said Wingate, when Wharton had retired, "has simplified our problem no end."

Gwynne and Faulkner nodded.

"Queer that we should have forgotten Larry!" said Faulkner. "He'll agree to play, I take it?"

"Like a shot!" said Wingate. "I'll go along and see him now."

The young mathematics master readily consented to turn out for Greyfriars against the Old Boys. And his name was duly added to the list on the notice-board, thus bringing the total up to seven.

When the dinner-bell sounded, however, there were still four vacancies in the First Eleven.

North, Hammersley, Walker, and the others who had left the team in the lurch sat sullenly silent during the meal. In their hearts they were regretting the step they had taken. But they had no intention of retracting now. They had listened to the voice of the charmer—the charmer being Gerald Loder; and although their attitude was strongly condemned by nearly all Greyfriars, they were resolved not to swerve from their decision.

The mutinous members of the First Eleven ate very little dinner. Their appetites

deserted them just as completely as they themselves had deserted the team.

There was a marked falling-off in Wingate's appetite, too; and small wonder, for the captain of the eleven was finding his job anything but a bed of roses.

"The Old Boys will be here in an hour," he remarked to Gwynne, "and we've only got seven men."

"Can't you recruit any more fellows from the Fifth?" suggested Gwynne.

Wingate shook his head.

"I've got their three best men," he said, "and the others aren't of much use. I'd rather play four men short than include an imbecile like Coker in the side!"

"My hat, yes!"

After dinner Wingate, Gwynne, and Faulkner strolled to and fro on the cricket-ground, giving instructions to the gardener who was engaged in rolling the pitch.

Occasionally Wingate's glance wandered towards the nets, where several of the Removites were at practice.

Dennis Carr was batting, and he was giving a very fine exhibition. On one occasion he ran out to meet a short-pitched ball from Hurree Singh, and drove it with such power that the sphere alighted at Wingate's feet.

The captain of Greyfriars gathered up the ball and returned it, shouting as he did so:

"Well hit, young Carr!"

"It's about time 'young Carr' was clean bowled!" observed Bob Cherry. "Here goes!"

And Bob sent down a deadly leg-break, which had the batsman beaten all ends up.

Bob Cherry's deadly delivery had not escaped the attention of Wingate, who by this time had ceased giving instructions to the man who was rolling the pitch, and was intent upon the game at the nets.

Harry Wharton took Dennis Carr's place at the wicket, and the captain of the Remove was in fine fettle. For ten minutes he gave a hurricane display of hitting, and then Vernon-Smith brought off a catch which bordered on the miraculous.

All this time Wingate had been thinking furiously. And presently he exclaimed aloud:

"I'll do it, dashed if I won't!"

"Eh? Do what?" asked Faulkner.

"Make the eleven complete by including four of those kids."

Faulkner could only gasp.

As for Gwynne, he clutched Wingate by the arm, and gazed into his eyes with some concern.

"Is—is the sun affecting you, old man?" he inquired.

"Of course not! Why?"

"Then I can only conclude that you've gone off your dot. Has there ever been any insanity in the family?"

"Don't be an ass!" said Wingate, laughing. "You—you're surely not going to let four of those fags play in the First Eleven?"

stuttered Faulkner.

"Why not?" challenged Wingate. "Their stature's against them, but that's all. As far as cricket is concerned, they're hot stuff. In my opinion, Wharton's the best bat in the Lower School."

"No one disputes that," said Gwynne.

"But it isn't a Lower School match that we're about to play. It's the stiffest fixture of the term."

"I'm convinced that I can't do better than give a trial to four of those youngsters," said Wingate. "Wharton, Cherry, Carr, and Vernon-Smith will fill the bill nicely."

Gwynne tapped his forehead significantly.

"Mad!" he ejaculated.

"Stark, staring mad!" agreed Faulkner.

"I'm perfectly sane," said Wingate, "and I'm perfectly serious. I mean to include those kids in the eleven."

Gwynne and Faulkner protested vigorously and vehemently, but their protestations went unheeded.

Wingate's mind was made up, and he crossed over to where the juniors were playing.

"Wharton! Cherry! Carr! Vernon-Smith!" he rapped out. "I want you to turn out for the First Eleven against the Old Boys this afternoon."

The four juniors thus addressed were too breathless to make any immediate reply. But presently Harry Wharton managed to stammer out:

"Is this a j-i-joke, Wingate?"

"I'm not in the habit of joking at a crisis of this sort," said the captain of Greyfriars.

"I mean what I say. You four will play for the school this afternoon—if you'd like to,



Wharton and Carr were hoisted to their feet, and dragged through the gap in the hedge, and into Friardale wood. "Let us go, you cads!" gasped the captain of the Remove. (See page 6.)

that is. I'm not going to do the press-gang stunt."

Harry Wharton turned with sparkling eyes to the other three.

"Would we like to play, you fellows?" he said.

"Would we not?" said Dennis Carr heartily. And so it was arranged. And the four Removites, who had been honoured thus unexpectedly, were transported to the seventh heaven of delight.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trapped!

"THIS is great!" said Harry Wharton.

"Simply stunning!" said Dennis Carr. "I shall have to pop over to Courtfield on my bike!"

"Why?"

"To get the new bat I ordered a few days ago."

"All serene," said Wharton. "I'll come with you."

Loder of the Sixth was both annoyed and alarmed at Wingate's action in playing four juniors.

Loder knew that the selected fellows—particularly Harry Wharton and Dennis Carr—were sterling cricketers. And they were certain to play the game of their lives. They would probably render valuable assistance in defeating the Old Boys, and Loder didn't want the school to win, for very good reasons. He had contracted a wager with a sporting gentleman in the village, and under the terms of that wager he would receive a fiver if the school lost.

The sporting person who had accepted the bet did not know that the school eleven would not be at full strength. But Loder knew, and he had promptly taken advantage of the fact.

The cad of the Sixth had imagined that

Greyfriars would be represented by only seven men, and Wingate's sudden selection of four Removites rather took the wind out of his sails.

Harry Wharton and Dennis Carr started off on their mission, and Loder, with a thoughtful expression on his face, went along to the prefects'-room.

The room was deserted, the majority of the seniors being out of doors.

Loder stepped to the telephone, and called up Highcliffe School. After a good deal of delay he succeeded in getting on to Cecil Ponsonby, the fellow who was always at war with the Greyfriars Remove.

"That you, Ponsonby?" asked Loder.

"Yes. Who is that?"

"I'm Loder, of Greyfriars."

"Oh, yes?"

"I want you to do me a favour."

"With pleasure," said Ponsonby. "Anything you like."

Loder cast a cautious glance over his shoulder, to make certain that no one was within earshot. Then he spoke again into the transmitter.

"Wharton and Carr have just started out on their bikes to Courtfield," he said. "I want you and your pals to intercept them on their way back and imprison them in some secure place for the afternoon."

"My hat!" ejaculated Pon, in surprise.

"Am I asking too much of you?" said Loder. "Am I setting you too stiff a task?"

A chuckle sounded over the wires.

"Not at all, dear boy. We shall be only too pleased to carry out your wishes. We can't stand Wharton at any price, and we've precious little love for Carr."

"Good!" said Loder. "You won't bungle the business, will you? It's absolutely imperative that those two kids shall be got out of the way for the afternoon. You can

stow them in a barn somewhere, and release them when it gets dark."

"All serene," said Ponsonby.

"And you won't breathe a word about this to anybody outside your own circle?"

"Of course not!"

"I'm much obliged to you, Pon," said Loder.

"Don't mench! I must ring off now, and get to business. Cheerio!"

"Good-bye!" said Loder.

And he laughed grimly as he replaced the receiver on its hooks. He had not counted on Ponsonby in vain. And he confidently anticipated that when Greyfriars took the field they would be two men short. Moreover, he—Loder—would be the richer by a fiver.

"I think I can rely on Ponsonby not to make a mess of things," he muttered. And then he strolled away in the direction of the cricket-ground.

The Old Boys had arrived by this time. Big, bronzed fellows they were—cricketers every inch of them. And Loder surveyed their tall forms with glistening eyes. Greyfriars First would never be able to account for these stalwarts.

Meanwhile, Ponsonby of Highcliffe lost no time in getting to work. He summoned his cronies and outlined his plan of campaign.

"We've got to collar Wharton and Carr, and keep 'em in a safe place for the afternoon," he explained.

"That's simple enough, dear boy," said Gadsby.

"Especially as there are six of us," added Monson.

"Where are we going to stow the beauties, Pon?" inquired Merton.

"The barn in Friardale Wood seems to be the best place," said Ponsonby. "I happen

to have the key of the door, an' as there are no windows to the barn, the bouncers can't possibly get clear. The whole thing's beautifully simple. We'll lie in ambush for Wharton an' Carr, an' when we spring out at 'em from the hedge, an' bowl 'em off their bikes, they'll have the shock of their little lives!"

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"We shall need some rope, I'm thinkin'," said Gadsby. "The beggars are bound to struggle."

A stout coil of rope was procured from the wood-shed, and Ponsonby & Co. set out on their dastardly errand.

Everything went without a hitch. The Highcliffians had scarcely been encountered five minutes in their ambush behind the hedge, when a couple of cyclists came speeding at a good pace along the road.

"Here they come!" muttered Ponsonby. "Lie low until I give the order!"

Little dreaming of the danger which threatened, Harry Wharton and Dennis Carr came on. They were chatting excitedly on the subject of the forthcoming match; and across Dennis Carr's handlebars rested a cricket-bat.

The Highcliffe cads crouched silently in their ambush.

There was a breathless interval; and then Ponsonby rapped out the command:

"Now!"

Instantly the roadway became alive with rushing figures.

Harry Wharton, recognising Ponsonby & Co., immediately quickened his pace, but he was grabbed from behind and savagely jerked off the saddle of his machine.

"Got him!" chuckled Gadsby triumphantly.

"Where's the other beauty?" panted Merton.

The other "beauty" was engaged in putting up a big fight for freedom.

Ponsonby, Monson, Vavasour, and Drury were finding Dennis Carr a very hot handful. He, too, had been thrown from his machine, but he had contrived to land on his feet, and he was keeping the Highcliffe cads at bay with his cricket-bat.

After a time, however, the opposition became too great.

Gadsby and Merton succeeded in making Harry Wharton secure with the rope. Then they went to the aid of Ponsonby and the others.

"Pile in!" gasped Pon.

"Stand clear, you cads!" panted Dennis Carr, wielding the cricket-bat in a dangerous fashion. "We'll scrap with you some other time. We've got to get to an important match!"

"Pardon me, but you're comin' with us!" said Gadsby.

And, tackling Dennis from the rear, he managed to wrench the cricket-bat from the junior's grasp.

After this, Dennis was promptly taken prisoner. He was sent sprawling in the roadway, and before he could regain his feet, his arms were pinned to his sides by a length of rope.

Harry Wharton, writhing helplessly in his bonds, cast an anxious glance up and down the road.

But no help was in sight. He and Dennis were at the mercy of the Highcliffians.

"What's the little game, you rotters?" demanded the captain of the Remove angrily.

Ponsonby & Co. did not deign to reply—not just then, anyway. They were in a hurry to get their captives out of sight.

Wharton and Carr were hoisted to their feet, and were dragged through the gap in the hedge, and into Friardale Wood.

They protested vigorously as they went, but for all the satisfaction they gained they might just as well have remained silent.

Ponsonby and Gadsby had charge of Harry Wharton, and Monson and Vavasour were the wardens of Dennis Carr. Merton and Drury brought up the rear with the bicycles and the cricket-bat.

When the party reached the old barn, which was situated in a clearing in the heart of the wood, Ponsonby called a halt.

"Here we are!" he said genially.

"Let us go!" shouted Wharton.

"Certainly!" chuckled Pon. "You're goin' right now—into the barn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who bribed you to do this, you cads?" exclaimed Dennis Carr.

"Nobody," said Gadsby. "We're doin' it of our own sweet will."

"Absolutely!" said the parrot-like Vavasour.

Harry Wharton was bundled into the barn THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 71.

without ceremony. And Dennis Carr followed.

"Make yourselves at home!" said Ponsonby cheerfully.

"How long do you intend to keep us here?" growled Wharton.

"Till the golden sun sinks in the hills, dear boy!"

"We shall miss the match——"

"All the better for Greyfriars!" said Monson. "They'd have no earthly chance of winnin' if you two were playin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——"

But Ponsonby & Co. were not in the mood for further conversation. They evacuated the barn, and slammed the door in the faces of the captives.

Ponsonby turned the key in the lock, and was about to leave it there, but Gadsby protested.

"Better slip the key into your pocket, Pon," he said. "If you leave it in the door, somebody will come along an' let the beggars out."

Ponsonby nodded, and pocketed the key. And then the kidnapers, their task accomplished, strolled away, with the intention of coming back later in the day to liberate the unfortunate captives.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Race Against Time.

"THIS is awful!" said Dennis Carr.

"Beastly!" groaned Harry Wharton.

The prisoners in the barn were feeling far from happy.

A short time since, they had rejoiced in the knowledge that they were to play for the First Eleven; but it now looked as if they would be unable to be spectators at the Old Boys' match, let alone players.

"Those cads couldn't have collared us at a more awkward time!" growled Wharton.

"Wingate counting on us, and——"

"And we shall let him down!" muttered Dennis.

"Exactly!"

"I feel like slaughtering Pon as soon as I get out of this place!"

"Same here!"

"It won't take us long to get rid of these bonds," said Dennis. "I've half-severed the beastly rope already. But getting out of the barn will be another matter. There's no window—only a tiny peep-hole."

"And it won't be possible to bash down the door," said Wharton. "It could be done from the outside, though."

"But if nobody comes along——"

"Then we shall be fairly done!"

Very bitter indeed were the feelings which the two Greyfriars juniors entertained towards their captors. But there was just one thing which stood to the credit of Ponsonby & Co. They had done no damage either to the bicycles or to the cricket-bat, which were inside the barn with the prisoners.

After ten minutes of desperate exertion, the juniors succeeded in breaking their bonds. Then they stretched their cramped limbs, and exchanged dismal glances.

"Afraid we must resign ourselves to a spell of six hours in this beastly hole!" said Wharton morosely.

But Dennis Carr was not quite so pessimistic.

"We'll keep watch through the peep-hole," he said, "and see if anybody comes along. This is a pretty lonely spot, I know, but fellows sometimes come here for a picnic."

"What hopes?" grunted Wharton.

But he stationed himself at the peep-hole, whilst Dennis Carr launched a futile attack upon the door with his boot.

Several minutes passed; and then the sound of footsteps in the bracken came to Harry Wharton's ear.

"Help!" shouted the captain of the Remove.

The footsteps drew nearer, and presently a plump, feminine figure came into view.

"Bessie Bunter!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Good!" said Dennis Carr. "Ask her to do the needful."

"I say, who's in that barn?" demanded the shrill voice of Billy Bunter's sister.

"Carr and myself," said Wharton.

"What on earth are you doing in there?"

"We're not here from choice, Miss Bunter!" growled Dennis Carr. "We were collared by a set of cads, and shoved in here. And it's a jolly lucky thing for us that you happened to come along."

"Why is it?"

"Because you can let us out, of course!"

"Oh, can I?" said Bessie Bunter. "I'm not so sure about that. Got any jam-tarts in there?"

"No."

"Or doughnuts?"

"Afraid not."

"You've nothing in the eating line at all?"

"We're awfully sorry——"

"Not even a slab of toffee?"

"We've got nothing," said Wharton.

"Then I'm afraid I can't help you," said the amiable Bessie.

And she turned away.

Harry Wharton called desperately after the Cliff House girl.

"Miss Bunter!"

"Yes?" said Bessie, glancing back over her shoulder.

"Do let us out of this place! We've got to get to an important cricket-match——"

Bessie Bunter hesitated.

"If you'll give me half-a-crown for my trouble," she said, at length, "I'll go and get somebody to come and break the door in!"

Wharton hurriedly ran through the pockets of his cricket flannels. To his dismay he found that he hadn't a penny. All his pocket-money was in his other clothing, at Greyfriars.

"Got any cash, Dennis?" he asked.

"Not a stiver!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Wharton turned back to the peep-hole.

"We haven't any cash here, Miss Bunter," he said. "But we'll give you the half-crown later."

Bessie tossed her head disdainfully.

"That's no use," she said. "If I can't have the money now, I'm off!"

And she suited the action to the word.

Wharton clenched his hands in rage and impotence.

"The—the cheeky minx!" he growled.

"Has she gone?" asked Dennis Carr.

"Yes."

"As soon as I get out of this," said Dennis, "I shall form the S.E.B.F.!"

"What on earth's that?"

"The Society for the Extermination of the Bunter Family."

Wharton did not laugh at his chum's remark. He felt more like weeping now that his hopes of freedom had been shattered.

"The Old Boys' match must be well under way by this time," said Dennis.

Wharton glanced at his watch, and nodded.

"Wingate's given us up long ago," he said.

"But if we could only get clear of this place we might still be in time to take part in the match. I——"

Wharton broke off with a glad cry.

Coming towards the barn were Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, and Phyllis Howell, of Cliff House.

The captain of the Remove repeated his call for help, and the girls halted in astonishment when they caught sight of Wharton's face at the peep-hole.

"Why, Harry," ejaculated Phyllis Howell, "what is wrong?"

Wharton briefly explained what had happened, and the Cliff House girls waxed highly indignant when they learned of Ponsonby's callousness.

"We must get you out of this!" said Marjorie Hazeldene briskly.

"The door's locked," said Dennis Carr.

"Then we must force it open."

"It's an awfully stout door!" said Clara Trevlyn. "But we'll see what can be done."

The three girls pitted their united weight against the door, which did not even quiver under the pressure.

"It won't budge!" panted Phyllis Howell.

"Never mind! There are some men felling timber in another part of the wood. We'll get them to force it open."

"Thanks awfully!" said Harry Wharton.

The girls hurried away, returning in a few moments with a couple of men, one of whom carried a crowbar.

"Now we sha'n't be long," said Dennis Carr.

The door was forced open in record time, and Harry Wharton and his companion stepped out into the sunshine, pushing their bicycles.

"Hope you'll be in time for the match," said Marjorie Hazeldene.

"I doubt it," said Wharton. "Our places in the team are probably filled by now. Still, there's just a chance that we may come in at the death."

"Don't let us detain you," said Clara Trevlyn.

The juniors lifted their caps to their fair

liberators, and, mounting their machines, sped along the footpath.

The path had never been intended for cyclists, and on more than one occasion the juniors were nearly thrown off their machines by tree-stumps and other obstructions.

But they kept pegging away, and, riding neck and neck, they reached Greyfriars in a remarkably short space of time.

Through the open gateway they sped, and Gosling shouted after them to slacken their pace. But the cyclists did not heed. They went ahead with rare dash in the direction of the cricket-ground.

A tremendous shout greeted their arrival at the scene of the match.

Loder of the Sixth did not join in that shout. He clenched his hands with annoyance when he caught sight of Wharton and Carr.

"Ponsonby made a hash of it!" he muttered savagely.

Heedless of the cheering throng, Harry Wharton glanced at the playing-pitch and then at the telegraph-board.

"We're just in time!" he exclaimed. "The school's batting, and eight wickets have fallen."

Wingate of the Sixth came down the pavilion steps to meet the belated players. In a few hurried sentences they explained what had happened.

"You seem to have had a rough handling," said the captain of Greyfriars. "Are you sure you're fit to play?"

"Personally, I never felt more like cricket in my life!" said Dennis Carr.

"Same here!" said Wharton.

Wingate thrust a bat into the hand of the captain of the Remove.

"We're doing very badly," he said. "We're only 28, so far, and eight wickets are down. The worst of it is, it's only a single-innings match. If the score isn't improved upon pretty considerably, we shall be badly licked! Do your best, kid!"

Harry Wharton nodded, and stepped out to the wicket. He noticed with a thrill of pleasure, that Bob Cherry was still batting.

The Old Boys could scarcely repress their grins when Harry Wharton took his stand at the wicket.

"Looks as if we're playing the Lilliputians!" remarked the wicket-keeper.

And the others chuckled.

Their chuckles soon died away, however, when Harry Wharton commenced his innings.

The bowling was swift and deadly, and it was not to be wondered at that wickets had fallen so cheaply. But Harry Wharton batted with energy and purpose. The first ball was too good to hit, and the batsman stopped it dead. The second and third balls he pulled to leg, and a couple of runs were scored on each occasion.

The Old Boys began to look grim. And when Harry Wharton despatched his next ball to the railings they looked positively alarmed.

"This won't do!" said their skipper—a bronzed-faced major. "I think I'll take a turn with the ball."

He did so, and the rate of scoring slackened considerably.

All the same, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were not to be disposed of. They offered a resolute resistance to the wiles of the major. And as for the other bowler, they both had the measure of him, and treated his deliveries with scant ceremony.

The score had risen to 65 before the partnership was dissolved.

A wonderful one-handed catch in the slips finished Bob Cherry's career; and cheer upon cheer greeted him as he walked back to the pavilion. He had scored 18—a remarkable achievement for a junior playing in such high-class cricket.

"These Lilliputians," remarked the perspiring wicket-keeper, "are a jolly sight too tenacious for my liking! Thank goodness we've only got one more to deal with! Settle his hash, major!"

The major nodded grimly.

"Leave him to me," he said.

And as he walked out to the wicket Dennis Carr's feelings were akin to those of the fly who walked into the spider's lair.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Great Finish!

DENNIS started badly. The major's bowling was deadly in the extreme, and the batsman was all at sea.

Harry Wharton looked on anxiously from the other end of the pitch.

"Pull yourself together, old man!" he said.

After several narrow escapes, Dennis Carr settled down. His confidence and courage came back to him. He tried to persuade himself that the bowling was quite ordinary stuff, and only needed to be tackled with resolution.

The major's great failing was this. He could bowl only one type of ball, and Dennis Carr soon became quite familiar with this type. He began to take liberties with it, and the figures on the telegraph-board mounted higher and higher.

Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, who were perched on the roller, watching the game, cheered enthusiastically.

"Well hit, sir!"

"Oh, well hit!"

"Run it out!"

The fieldsmen were being given plenty to do and plenty to think about. They had not imagined that the school's "tail" would wag to such advantage.

"Eighty up!" said Frank Nugent at length. "This is great!"

"Glorious!" said Johnny Bull. "If only they can get the hundred!"

The faces of the spectators were radiant, with one exception.

Loder of the Sixth surveyed the proceedings with a scowl. Things were not panning out in accordance with his wishes. He had expected the school to be all out for less than 50; instead of which, they were nearing the 100!

Dennis Carr was batting brilliantly. But he took more risks than Wharton, who was playing much the better game.

The captain of the Remove had never felt in better trim. He was not troubled by the fact that the major and several other Old Boys had played on occasions for the M.C.C. Nor did he quail at the knowledge that the wicket-keeper—a famous Army man—had once assisted Hampshire.

In front of the pavilion, Wingate, Gwynne, and Faulkner, their dignity forgotten, were crowing like a trio of fags.

"This is great!" chortled Gwynne. "Whoever would have thought that those Remove kids would keep their end up like this?"

"I told you they'd come up to the scratch," said Wingate, "but you wouldn't believe me. A prophet never gets any honour in his own country."

"Why," said Faulkner, with a whoop of delight, "the hundred's up!"

"By Jove, so it is!"

"Hurrah!"

But close upon the heels of this triumph came disaster.

Dennis Carr ran out at a tempting-looking ball, with the fixed intention of despatching it to the farthest limits of the horizon.

The ball swerved, however, and Dennis missed it completely. And before he could jump back into his crease the wicket-keeper had stumped him.

There was a great demonstration as Harry Wharton and Dennis Carr walked back to the pavilion. The former had scored 25 not out, and the latter had contributed 15.

Wingate shook hands cordially with both batsmen.

"Splendid, you kids!" he said. "We shall pull it off yet!"

Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Singh quitted their perch on the roller, and sprinted up to Wharton and Carr.

"Jolly well played, you two!" said Nugent. "You put up a better show than the regular members of the First Eleven would have done," said Johnny Bull.

And even Wingate had to admit the truth of this statement. Vernon-Smith, Bob Cherry, Wharton and Dennis Carr had more than justified their selection.

An interval for tea followed. And then the Old Boys started on their task. They did not regard it as a very formidable one. They were very strong in the batting department, and it was quite on the cards that one of them would succeed in making a century.

The major went in first, accompanied by a sporting parson.

Wingate and Gwynne shared the bowling, and the four Removites who were playing were detailed to field in the slips.

"We're going to have a strenuous time of it, you fellows," remarked Vernon-Smith.

And the others nodded.

"The major looks good for a century," said Dennis Carr. "He'll probably win the match off his own bat."

The Old Boys opened in fine style, and runs came thick and fast.

Wingate bowled well, mixing his deliveries in cunning fashion. But the major and the sporting parson were quite at home. The ball

was despatched to all parts of the field; and the figures on the telegraph-board grew and grew.

The spirits of Loder of the Sixth revived considerably. He no longer had any doubts about the result. The Old Boys were shaping splendidly, and nothing short of a miracle—or a series of miracles—could prevent them from winning.

"I shall win that fiver all right!" muttered Loder.

And his eyes wandered to the telegraph-board.

"Forty—and not a single wicket down!" he exclaimed. "The school's hopelessly licked."

But before the words were out of Loder's mouth, Vernon-Smith brought off a sensational catch in the slips. The ball kept very low, but by flinging himself forward with outstretched arm the Bounder just managed to get to it.

"Caught, sir!"

"Well held!"

The major was the victim, and he threw an approving glance at Vernon-Smith as he retraced his steps to the pavilion.

"Very smart, by gad!" he exclaimed.

Wingate & Co. were hoping that the tide would now turn. But a strapping giant of well over six feet came in to join the sporting parson, and between them they made the fur fly.

The score rose from 40 to 50, from 50 to 60, and from 60 to 70. And by the time it had got to 80, Wingate had tried every bowler in the team with the exception of the Removites.

In desperation, the captain of Greyfriars tossed the ball to Harry Wharton.

"See what you can make of it, kid," he said.

For a time Wharton was not effective. Once he had succeeded in getting his length, however, it was another story.

The sporting parson was greatly surprised to find his middle stump performing revolutions. He stood blinking at it like a man witnessing some strange phenomenon.

"Really, that is most remarkable!" he kept repeating.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But there were still more remarkable things to follow.

Harry Wharton continued to bowl so well and so effectively that Wingate conceived the notion of putting Dennis Carr on at the other end.

Wharton had taken some time to get going; but Dennis Carr found his length at once, and with his first ball he secured a victim.

Then followed a complete collapse on the part of the Old Boys.

A brilliant catch by Wingate; a smart throw-in by Faulkner; a masterly manoeuvre by Blundell of the Fifth, who was keeping wicket—and three more batsmen were disposed of.

But it seemed that the revival had come too late, so far as the school was concerned. For the strapping giant was still at the wicket; and the score stood at 98 when the last of the Old Boys went in to bat.

"They want 2 to tie—and 3 to win!" remarked Bob Cherry, crouching low in the slips.

"It will be a jolly near thing," said Vernon-Smith.

The crowd in front of the pavilion looked on with fascinated eyes. They were very excited, and Loder of the Sixth was most excited of all.

The rascally prefect was on tenterhooks. If the Old Boys scored three more runs, he would be richer by five pounds. But if the Old Boys failed to get those runs, he would have to pay up, and he could ill-afford to do so.

Harry Wharton was bowling, and he sent down the best ball he knew.

More by accident than design, the batsman managed to drive it over the head of mid-wicket.

"Come on!" he shouted.

Hilton of the Fifth was racing for the ball as the batsmen crossed. They ran 1, and then, after a second's hesitation, they decided to make it 2.

"Quick!" shouted Blundell, bending over the wicket.

Hilton snatched up the leather and sent it whizzing in. And Blundell had the balls off in a twinkling.

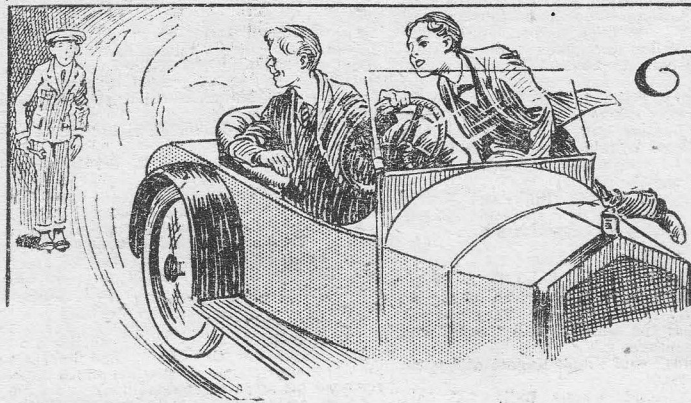
"How's that?"

The fieldsmen hung breathlessly on the umpire's reply. When it came, it dealt a death-blow at the hopes of Greyfriars.

"Not out!"

(Continued on page 12, column 5.)

START READING THIS GRAND, NEW SERIAL TO-DAY!



The MYSTERY MAKERS.

A Thrilling New Story of a Boy's Amazing Adventures with a Cinema Company.

By NAT FAIRBANKS.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

The story opens with Mr. Tulliver and his wife being abruptly awakened one night by the extraordinary actions of their nephew, Dick Tulliver, who, though very young, has remarkable acting abilities.

It appears that he had been rehearsing a thrilling cinema stunt scene in his bed-room with Mike O'Flatherty, a friend of his, prior to going to the studios in Dorminster, where he hopes to obtain a start in the career he is mad to follow.

But his uncle has other ideas for the boy's future.

Much to his disgust, he arranges for him to be apprenticed to Wibbleswick & Co., a local drapery firm. On the last day of his freedom Dick goes to Dorminster. Passing by a lake in an old park, he sees a girl fall out of her canoe. Without a moment's hesitation Dick rushes to the bank and dives into the water to the rescue.

(Now read on.)

The Wailing in the Pines.

AT the moment of entering the water Dick Tulliver thought he heard a voice crying out to him. He dived deep. Twining things passed about his legs, but he shook himself free, and a few seconds later he came to the surface. Something brushed by him. It was the overturned canoe. He flashed a glance round and spotted the girl a few yards away. With a couple of strong strokes he was by her side.

Dick knew exactly what he ought to do. He judged by the girl's actions that she was unable to swim, therefore it was likely she would endeavour to clutch at him. To avoid this he got behind her, and seized her with a firm grip. Such an action often has the effect of inspiring confidence in the person who is being rescued from drowning, and will, consequently, prevent futile struggling.

In the present instance, however, the girl seemed to have lost consciousness. It made Dick's task all the easier. He held up her head, so as to permit free breathing, and gradually worked her body towards the bank.

"Don't bring her here!" shouted a voice from the side. "It's by the willows you've got to land. Splash a bit, Maisie! Put a bit of life into it, both of you! It's too tame—much too tame!"

These words naturally mystified Dick. He shot a brief glance over his shoulder, and saw the man with the lasso pulling feverishly at the rope, doubtless with the intention of again casting it.

It was not he who had shouted, however. The voice proceeded from a stout, well-dressed, middle-aged gentleman, holding a megaphone in one hand, and brandishing a roll of paper in the other. He was dancing about on the bank that Dick was approaching, and generally had the appearance of having worked himself into a pitch of tremendous excitement.

"Have I run into a lunatic asylum?" thought Dick.

A voice a few inches from him softly echoed in his ears.

"I'm going to sink now. I think the water here is fairly clear of weeds. Ready? Right! Let go!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 71.

Dick let go from sheer astonishment. It was the girl he was rescuing who had spoken.

She sank like a stone.

"Good!" bellowed the gentleman with the megaphone. "After her, lad! Put plenty of punch into it. Go on! Dive, man—dive!"

Dick dived. He could hardly do anything else under the circumstances. But as he dived beneath the surface his bewildered brain grasped at least one point, and that was the girl was in no danger of drowning. He saw now she was an expert swimmer—as good, if not better, than he was.

He caught a fleeting vision of her swimming under the water; then, as she shot up, he followed swiftly after her, determined to adopt drastic measures. Dick felt he was being made game of, for what reason, and by whom, he had no idea; but, as far as he was concerned, he decided he had quite enough of the business.

He got the girl in a sure grip this time. He may have been a bit rough, for Dick was angry at the thought of being made the victim of such a practical joke. He propelled her forward, and landed her, breathless, among the thick bulrushes.

Dick stood up, drenched and wrathful, and faced the stout gentleman. This person was gazing down on him with every sign of approval beaming out of his rubicund countenance.

"That's the picture I want, sonny!" he smiled. "Fling her ashore, and then drop exhausted. Afterwards—but never mind about afterwards for the minute. We'll get the rescue right first."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Dick shortly.

"Eh?" ejaculated the stout gentleman. "Don't know what I'm—"

The girl suddenly interrupted with a loud "Oh!"

Dick turned. He felt some regret when he discovered how pretty she was. It prevented him from saying exactly what he would like to have said concerning her part in the affair.

"Mr. Halibut," she cried, amazement echoing from every tone of her voice, "this isn't Archie Deen. It's a stranger!"

"Not Archie Deen!" cried the stout gentleman, whipping out a pair of glasses, and glaring at Dick. "Why, I'm bothered! You're right, Maisie; it's not. May I ask what you mean, young man, coming down here and— But why isn't Deen here? Where is he? Did he get you to take his place? I must say it was a great liberty on his part. It's a distinct breach of contract—"

"I say," broke in Dick excitedly, "are you a cinema company?"

"Are we a cinema company!" echoed the stout gentleman scornfully. "Did you think we were a school-treat? Look here, I've no time for a game of cross-questions and crooked answers. There's evidently some big mistake, somewhere or other. I'm the manager of the Western Super-Film Company. Who and what are you?"

Dick understood everything now. By an extraordinary chance he had got mixed up in a rehearsal for a picture-play. These people—the Western Super-Film Company—had evidently rented the Wildfell estate for the purpose of film productions. They must have come here very recently. To Dick's certain knowledge, the place was empty three weeks ago. However, the most won-

derful thing about the whole business was the fact that he should have arrived and enacted another man's part, and done it apparently correctly in almost every detail. It was uncanny.

All this darted through Dick's mind whilst Mr. Halibut was speaking. He hastened to give the manager a brief account of how he came to be in the grounds.

"You see," he concluded, "it was quite an accident. I had no idea the Grange was inhabited."

Mr. Halibut looked at the girl, the girl looked at Mr. Halibut—then they both looked at Dick.

"It's the oddest thing I ever came across," mumbled Mr. Halibut. "But then, it doesn't explain Archie Deen's absence. Now, look here, laddie. You're quite sure Deen didn't suggest that you should come here and take his place?"

"Positive," said Dick. "I know no one of that name. I don't know any cinema actors— Oh, well, I do know one," Dick hastily corrected himself. "He's a fellow named Harry Trent. He's the chap I was going to visit at Porchester."

Mr. Halibut glanced suspiciously at Dick. "Harry Trent is a member of this company," he said. "He's over at the Grange now. If you want to see him, you'd better go over there. I'll get you a change of some sort." He turned to the girl. "Run to the dressing-room, Maisie, and get out of your wet things. I ought not to have kept you talking all this while, but incidents like our young friend has provided don't happen every day."

As Maisie went off, the man with the lasso came round from the opposite bank and joined them.

"What's all the talk about, boss?" he drawled. "I don't want to shove in my ear, but I reckon those two put up a rattling fine show. Archie's come on since last week—come on hand over fist."

"But that's just the trouble!" cried Mr. Halibut impatiently. "Archie hasn't come on. This isn't Archie Deen. Look at him, Quarry, and you'll see he isn't."

The man Quarry looked at Dick. "My word!" he mumbled. "You're right. What's it all mean?"

"You'd better come back to the house with us, and I'll tell you the whole story on the way," said Mr. Halibut.

Which he did.

Quarry was naturally greatly amazed. "I bet you wondered what was up when you saw me throw that lasso at Maisie Hope," he said to Dick.

"Yes, it was rather a staggerer," owned Dick. "I thought for the moment you were the ghosts that are supposed to haunt these parts."

"Here, stop all that talk about ghosts!" interrupted Mr. Halibut angrily. "Ever since we've been here I've heard about nothing else but ghosts and spectres and noises from every blessed member of the company. It's sickening!"

"Still," observed Quarry, "you must own, Mr. Halibut, some rather queer things have happened since we've been here."

"I'll own nothing of the sort," retorted Mr. Halibut. "It's all imagination."

Faintly in the distance a slight wailing noise arose, as if to give the lie to Mr. Halibut's assertion.

Quarry came to an abrupt halt. "Hear that?" he whispered.

"Pooh! It's some animal!" said Mr. Halibut, his face a shade less pink than usual.
 "Maybe! There it goes again!"
 "It sounds like a dog," said Dick.
 They listened intently. Again and again the weird noise echoed through the trees.
 "It's over there," said Quarry, pointing a trembling finger in the direction of some tall pines. "Do you think we ought to go and investigate?"
 Mr. Halibut did not seem very keen, but after his scoffing comments of his company's behaviour he felt he couldn't very well refuse.
 "You get on to the house and change your clothes," he said to Dick. "You'll find your pal Trent there, I expect. Don't

to notice that someone had come out into the hall and was regarding him with a good deal of interest.
 "Surely I know that back view!" said a voice.
 Dick wheeled round like a shot.
 "Harry," he cried in delight, "I've run you to earth at last!"
 Harry Trent, who was a tall, good-looking young fellow, shook him warmly by the hand. They were great chums. They had been to the same school, and though Harry Trent was some three years Dick's senior, the difference in their ages didn't prevent their friendship.
 The fact was there was a link between them—the lure of the cinema.

ton, the wardrobe-mistress. "I can't have you fellows here!"
 This was Mrs. Scotton's pet phrase. It meant something or nothing, according to whom it was addressed. In Harry Trent's case it meant nothing.
 "Of course you can't, Mrs. Scotton!" said Trent, in a coaxing voice. "I thought you'd like a some chocolates, that's all."
 If there was one thing Mrs. Scotton liked more than another it was chocolate.
 "Oh, well, if it's you, Mr. Trent, you can come in for a few minutes," she said, in a considerably mollified tone.
 "Right you are!" said Trent. "Allow me to introduce you to my friend, Dick Tulliver. He's met with a slight accident—as a matter



As the two came ashore, dripping with wet, they were met by a stout gentleman with a megaphone in his hand. "That's the picture we want, Deen!" he said approvingly. "Deen!" repeated the girl, "This is not Deen. It's a stranger!"

go until I come back—I want to have a few words with you."
 The wailing noise broke out afresh.
 "Snakes!" muttered Mr. Halibut. "I hope it is a dog!"

Missing!

WHEN Dick entered Wildfell Grange he discovered few outward signs of anything being done to make the building more habitable. The big door opening on to the hall, it is true, possessed a new lock, and certain of the windows on the ground-floor had been repaired to the extent of pasting brown paper over the broken glass, together with old curtains, hung in such a manner as to act as draught-excluders. Odd bits of furniture lay scattered over the floors—all of a theatrical make—and propped against the wall were various parts of scenic sets that were used as backgrounds for the thrilling episodes depicted on the pictures produced by the Western Super-Film Company.
 Dick paused for a second to gaze upon all this. These were the surroundings he longed to work amongst. He thought of Wibbleswick & Co., and shuddered. He thought of his uncle at home waiting for him—and tried to picture the exact sort of reception he would have when he got back.
 "Ah!" thought Dick. "But I haven't gone back—yet! Suppose Mr. Halibut gives me an engagement!"
 Lost in this conjecture, Dick quite failed

But there was a difference also. Harry Trent's relations were all in the theatrical line; Dick's relatives, as we know, were not.
 "Why, Dick," said Trent, "as the Irishman said, 'I'm glad to see your face again, and shake it by the hand!' What good wind blows you here? Crumbs, lad, you're sopping wet! Have you swum over from Harrowsfield?"
 "Oh, that's nothing," returned Dick. "Things have been happening—"
 "So I should jolly well think!" said Trent. "I must try and get you a change!"
 "Yes, that's why I came over here, Harry. Mr. Halibut said you'd find me some clothes."
 "Did he, by Jove! If that's the case, I'll see what I can do. Old Halibut's a marvel at getting other people to find things. Didn't know you were acquainted with the great Halibut, though!"
 "Well, I'm not exactly acquainted with him," said Dick.
 Trent opened his eyes.
 "I can see you've got heaps to explain," he observed. "However, I dare say it'll keep for a minute. Come along with me to the wardrobe-mistress. She'll be able to fix you up with some togs while your own are drying."
 Together they proceeded downstairs to the basement, and after treading cautiously along some dark passages, Trent stopped at a door, knocked, and then went in.
 "Good-afternoon, Mrs. Scotton!" he said.
 "Now, what do you want?" said Mrs. Scot-

of fact, he's wet through. I was wondering if you had an old pair of trousers and a coat he could put on while he hangs his wet things out to dry."
 Mrs. Scotton, despite her grumpy manner, was one of the best-natured women in the world. She would do anything for people she liked, and Harry Trent was one of them.
 She at once got down a pile of clothing from one of the shelves, and selected a faded military tunic, a pair of trousers, a vest, and a sweater.
 "They ain't a good match," she remarked. "And I won't guarantee they'll fit, but I expect your friend won't mind that."
 "Not at all," said Dick.
 She also produced a pair of jack-boots.
 "That's the best I can do," she announced. "You go in the next room and change, laddie. Pass me out your wet things. I'll hang 'em up in front of the fire."
 Harry Trent stood by, whilst Dick changed his costume. He listened with considerable interest to an account of the latter's adventures.
 "By Jove, you're a rum fellow, Dick!" exclaimed Harry, with a laugh. "There's no doubt about it—you're cut out to be a cinema star!"
 "Do you really think so?" exclaimed Dick.
 "I do, indeed; but I don't want to persuade you to do anything rash. You say old Halibut wants to see you again? That looks rather promising. If he thinks well

of you, you may tumble into the profession. But what about your uncle?"

"I'll take any job Mr. Halibut likes to give me, and ask my uncle afterwards!" said Dick resolutely.

"Well, the fates certainly seem to be fighting on your side," said Harry. "It was a rare bit of luck turning up at the lake as you did. I wonder where Archie Deen's got to. I saw him early this morning, and he knew he was down for the rescue stunt this afternoon. As a matter of fact, he told me so. Rather mysterious, I must say. But, then, this tumble-down show is full of mysteries. We've been here only a couple of days, Dick, and already most of us are fed up with it!"

"Why's that?" asked Dick.

"It's difficult to explain," returned Harry evasively. "The place ought to have been pulled down years ago. Are you ready? Let's have a squint at you. Jove, you look like a cross between Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks! Come on, we'll go and see if Mr. Halibut has returned."

They proceeded upstairs, and entered a large, lofty room, which had once been a banqueting-hall. A gallery ran along one end, and the walls were hung with tattered remains of old tapestries. There was a musty smell about the place, quite in keeping with its look.

Here they discovered the full strength of the company assembled. They were gathered into small groups, talking in hushed voices, and there was a general air of subdued excitement about.

"What's on, Biglow?" whispered Harry to a tall, lantern-jawed individual, who looked as if he had lost a shilling and found a sixpence.

Dick subsequently discovered that Mr. Biglow cultivated this expression. His speciality was the elderly character who gets into the hands of blackmailers and generally lives in a perpetual atmosphere of either being kidnapped, or else having to pay fabulous sums to satisfy the rapacity of the villain.

"The old man's going to make a speech," returned Biglow gloomily. "He routed us out five minutes ago, and told us to assemble here. There's some row on, I suppose. Not that I care after last night's shock. I've been thinking about my sinful past all day. I should like to do a bit of good in the world before I peg out. Some of you chaps have been fearful rotters—"

"My dear old boy, do buck up!" cried Harry encouragingly.

"I'm doing my best," said Biglow, with a sigh. "But you know what it means when anyone sees a ghost, don't you?"

"Haven't the slightest idea," returned Harry. "What does it mean?"

"It means," said Biglow, in tragic accents, "that the person who sees it dies within a year. I saw the ghost of Sir George Gaston last night, and as he was the last of his race, it means I'm done for."

"Go on!" said Harry, with a wink at Dick.

"My dear chap," answered Biglow, with a sort of gloomy satisfaction. "It's always the rule. The last of a race appears, and someone has to die. Of course, there's just a chance I may escape, if someone saw him before me, but I don't think they have."

Biglow's inglorious remarks were cut short by Mr. Halibut suddenly bustling in. The manager was breathing heavily, and his silk hat was pressed down on his forehead at an angle which the company invariably associated with "ructions."

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "never in my life before have I encountered such an extraordinary affair as has happened this afternoon."

He paused to recover breath.

The company murmured sympathetically, but so far remained fairly calm. Mr. Halibut usually prefaced his public utterances like this. Indeed, if he was to be believed, he lived in a constant state of being surprised.

"One of our company has disappeared," continued Mr. Halibut. "To keep you no longer in suspense, I will mention that I refer to Mr. Archibald Deen. He was last seen early this morning. This afternoon he should have rehearsed his great rescue-scene with Miss Maisie Hope. He did not turn up. On our way back, Mr. Quarry and myself were startled—*that is, we heard a strange wailing sound. We proceeded to investigate this, and discovered Archibald Deen's small terrier labouring under a great state of excitement. The faithful animal was tearing up the ground, and then running round in*

a circle. Although both Quarry and myself addressed him in the most endearing terms, he quite mistook our intentions. As a matter of fact, he attempted to bite us. I have no wish to make a mountain out of a mole-hill, but I greatly fear some misfortune has befallen our comrade. We must leave no stone unturned to discover his whereabouts. I propose, therefore, that the whole company shall proceed at once and search the grounds."

The company voiced their approval in no uncertain tones. Dividing themselves into small parties, they set out to find the missing actor.

Dick Gets His Chance.

BUT although they searched until it was dusk, no traces did they discover of Archie Deen.

The various search-parties accordingly returned to the Grange, and reported their non-success to Mr. Halibut.

"The police will have to be informed," said Mr. Halibut gloomily. "In the meanwhile the whole production is held up. I must wire to London to get someone to take Deen's part."

"Now's our time!" whispered Harry to Dick.

Intercepting Mr. Halibut as he was about to retire, Harry Trent hailed him with a "One moment, Mr. Halibut!"

The manager grumbled and growled, but consented to hear what Harry had to say. There ensued a little whispered dialogue, in the course of which Harry strongly urged the claims of Dick to be taken on the strength of the company.

"Pon my word, I'd forgotten all about our sudden young friend!" said Mr. Halibut.

"I own, Trent, he's quite a good swimmer; but we require something more than that. He's a raw hand. The Western Super-Film Company carries no passengers. We are all people of experience. I hardly see how—"

"Dick Tulliver has a decided turn for the game," persisted Harry. "It would be quite worth while giving him a trial. He'd only want a small screw."

"And he'd only get a small screw!" retorted Mr. Halibut.

Still, he felt he was in a hole, and Dick would certainly be better than no one for the present.

"Come here, Dick!" called out Harry, seeing the manager was wavering.

Dick approached with a wildly-beating heart.

"What else can you do besides swim?" asked Mr. Halibut.

"I can ride, box, do gymnastics—" began Dick, trying to think of all his accomplishments.

WHAT'S THE BIKE WORTH?

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"Let's look at you," said Mr. Halibut. "You look as if you might manage a bit of comedy."

"Rather!" cut in Harry. "That's Dick's line. Just pull a couple of your extra special funny faces for Mr. Halibut, Dick."

Dick never felt less funny in his life. Still, he did his best.

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Halibut. "It's all right as far as it goes, but it doesn't go quite far enough for my purpose. However, you show some promise. You can stop a week with us, and see how you turn out."

"Oh, that's jolly good of you!" cried Dick. "I suppose you'll pay the usual rates?"

said Harry.

"My dear boy! Really!" protested Mr. Halibut. "An absolute beginner. I couldn't think of it."

"All right," said Harry firmly. "Then the whole thing's off."

As he spoke he gently nudged Dick.

"But it's most unusual," said Mr. Halibut.

"Just as you like," replied Harry carelessly. "I can easily get Dick Tulliver an introduction to Parkes' Master Films. They're advertising for young talent."

At the mention of his hated rivals Mr. Halibut at once began to reconsider matters.

"I'll give you my decision in the morning," he announced. "In the meanwhile, if he likes to stop here for to-night, I've no objection."

And with this Mr. Halibut withdrew to his quarters.

"You're all right, Dick," chuckled Harry. "I can see he's really as keen as a mustard on having you. He's a mean old bunks. You just leave the business part to me. I'll see you get treated fairly."

"It's awfully good of you, Harry," said Dick gratefully.

"Not a bit of it. Come on; we'll get upstairs to my quarters. I share a room with that chap Biglow, who thinks he saw the ghost of Sir George Gaston. You ought to have heard him last night. His yells roused the whole company."

"Did he really see it, do you think?" asked Dick.

"More likely dreamt it," said Harry. "He's heard the stories people tell about this place, and they've got on his nerves. I must say I wish Mr. Halibut had taken some other place, but as he hasn't we must make the best of a bad job."

By this time they had reached the landing at the top of the broad stairs—a landing as big as an ordinary drawing-room—and were proceeding down a wide and lofty corridor, on the dark panels of which had once hung the family portraits of the house of Gaston.

"My room is on the next floor," Harry informed Dick. "We're all scattered about the place. Goodness knows how some of the girls get on. The rooms have had a dry scrub, and that's about all. Dust and dirt—it's everywhere."

Harry's room had "10" chalked on the door. On going in they found it was empty. Biglow, apparently, had been there recently, for there were a couple of candles, an oil-stove was burning in the fireplace, and on a packing-case, which served as a table, reposed a frying-pan and a pound of sausages.

"Wonder where Biglow can have got to?" said Harry. "Very likely he's gone off for some more provender. He's taken on the cooking, and, between ourselves, Dick, a precious rotten cook he is. You used to be rather a dab at that yourself at school, if I remember rightly. You might give old Biglow a few hints. Hark! I hear him coming upstairs."

It was Biglow right enough. He appeared at the door staggering under the weight of several pieces of crockery, a chair, and one or two odds and ends in the shape of an old carving-knife and a battered dish-cover.

He deposited these things on the floor with a great clatter.

"Hallo!" said Harry. "You've been on the 'scrounce,' I see."

Biglow did not answer for a minute. He went to the door, looked out, and then closed it.

"Harry," he said, in tones fraught with a hidden meaning, "have you heard the latest? Quarry's just come in, and he says Deen's little dog is dead. It's been poisoned!"

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

The Last of the "Yellow Frigates."

THE AMAZING HISTORY OF THE OLD CONVICT SHIP "SUCCESS."

FOR many years before the War, in the tranquil waters of the harbour of Douglas, Isle of Man, one of the most interesting vessels in the world lay peacefully at anchor. She was the old convict-ship *Success*, the last of the "yellow frigates," as the ominous hulks, moored in Hobson's Bay, off the port of Williamstown, Australia, were called. Owing to the great shortage of shipping caused by the War, the old ship was put into commission again to "do her bit" for the country. In January, 1919, a West Virginian newspaper reported that she was wrecked in the Ohio River, and had sunk. If that is indeed the last we shall hear of the stout old ship, it is of interest to recall her amazing and tragic history.

The *Success* was the commodore of a felon fleet of five ships, of which she was the last survivor, to remind us of a dark page of Imperial history. Her story is a romantic one, full of incident, and of sufficient vicissitudes to have made an end long ago of a less sturdy barque. Once she was attacked by a French privateer in the Bay of Bengal, but, merchantman as she was, she made such a stout resistance that the Frenchman was glad to draw off, leaving shot-marks on the hull of the *Success*, which were visible ever after. Again, when her lascar crew mutinied in Calcutta Bay, her captain signalled to the authorities at Fort William for assistance, but by some extraordinary mistake was rewarded by a well-aimed shot from one of the guns of the fort, which left a permanent mark on the great teak mainmast. Later in her career the old ship was maliciously scuttled in Port Jackson Harbour, only to be raised again five and a half months later.

In spite of these misadventures, the condition of the wonderful old vessel remained as sound as the proverbial bell, as was proved during her five-and-a-half-months' voyage from Adelaide to London in 1895, when not a single stick was lost nor was the least weakness discovered.

The *Success* was built at Moulmein, British India, in 1790, of solid Burmah teak, two and a half feet thick, and was a curiosity as a specimen of old-time British ship-building, apart from her historical interest. Her unusual solidity baffled the efforts of more than one of her miserable convict crew to bore his way out of his floating prison; in fact, it is on record that no prisoner ever succeeded in escaping from the *Success* during the whole of her career as a convict-hulk. This is the more remarkable when it is considered that attempts to escape were of almost daily occurrence. And no wonder!

As one trod the worn planks of the gruesome old vessel the relics of man's inhumanity to man in the past met the eye at every turn, and the mind reeled at the mere conception of the horrors which must have been suffered by the wretched tenants of the rows of tiny dark cells in the depths of her black hole. Somewhere and somehow in the confined spaces below deck one hundred and twenty prisoners were "accommodated"—save the mark!—besides twenty-seven warders. In all there were seventy-two cells, of various sizes and degrees of torture. Those which lined the sides of the first corridor, tween-decks, were for the use of the better behaved prisoners, and were as large as seven feet by seven. Those on the lower-deck only four feet by seven, and every prisoner brought on board the hulk, whatever his offence, by rule was incarcerated for two years in a lower-deck cell!

All the cells were provided with a grating of iron bars above the massive iron-bound doors, through which filtered all the light and air to which the prisoner was considered entitled. To be shut up in one of these cells even for a few minutes caused one such a feeling of oppression that it is hard to imagine any mortal being confined in there for any length of time without his reason giving way. Yet far more terrible than these ordinary cells were the "Black Holes" which occupied

the corners of each side of the lower-deck. In these infernal fractious prisoners were punished by solitary confinement lasting from one day to twenty-eight, according to the gravity of their offence or to the temper of the Inspector-General.

The "Black Holes" were tapering in shape, and measured only two feet eight inches across. Over the grating a perforated iron plate was fixed, to increase the intensity of the blackness, and scarcely enough air to maintain life could filter through the perforations. The doors fitted tight, and excluded all other air and ventilation. The furniture of each of these noisome holes consisted of a stout iron ring fixed about as high as a man's knee in the shelving back of the cell. Through this ring the right wrist of the malefactor was passed and handcuffed to the left hand.

The resulting position of the poor wretch was such that he could neither stand upright nor lie down, but was forced to stoop or lean against the sloping side of the vessel as she rolled and pitched at her moorings. From this fearful torture the prisoner was only allowed one hour's respite a day for exercise. One had only to have the door closed upon one in the "Black Hole" for a moment to experience the sort of darkness which can be felt and a feeling of suffocation which became absolutely unendurable.

It is almost impossible to credit that even the callous, hardened ruffians, who for the most part inhabited the hulk, were able to endure such punishment and live. More than one malefactor's reason gave way under the fearful torture, and yet we are told that some seemed almost unmoved by it, though their eyesight often suffered.

At the stern of the vessel was the fearsome looking structure known as the "Tiger's Den," and built of huge two-inch iron bars, embedded in solid timber above and below. Here the worst characters on the hulk were huddled together indiscriminately to the number of twenty-two. The tigerish ferocity of these maddened wretches, who were treated, and behaved, more like beasts than men, gave the den its name, unless it came from the special yellow jackets, barred with black, which gave the prisoners a tigerish appearance.

The conditions of life in this miniature hell cannot be described, or even imagined. Packed tightly in the confined space, the crouching, close-cropped men-beasts snarled and fought among themselves till the weakest went battling to the wall. The method adopted by the warders to check the rioting was the simple one of placing their muskets between the bars of the den and firing blank cartridges above the heads of the teeming, struggling crowd.

The howls and bestial roars from the fetid den floated across the bay to the shore-folk, making night and day alike hideous. Landsmen shuddered as they heard those awful cries, and dubbed the old *Success*, once a proud merchantman, the "Ocean Hell," and never was name more fitting. Surely the Union Jack has never floated above scenes which have disgraced it more than those which were enacted in the name of Britain and of law and order on board the convict-hulks. The mockery of the "justice" which sentenced Englishmen to such infernal tortures!

Six of the prisoners on board the *Success* went by the nickname of the "Six Men of Dorset." Their crime was agitating for a payment of eight shillings a week for farm-labourers instead of seven, which was then the standard in England; in other words, they were pioneer Trades Unionists, and bitterly did they pay for their advanced opinions.

Another prisoner received a sentence of seven years for "drunkenness and resisting the police," for which offence he would now be fined seven-and-sixpence! Numerous other such sentences were passed for the pettiest of thefts; and one prisoner, whose health was so undermined by the vile treatment he suffered on board the hulk that he died three weeks after his release, was afterwards discovered to have been absolutely innocent of any offence whatever!

Such was the mockery of justice in the bad old days of transportation, when there were one hundred and forty-five offences punishable by death under the English Penal Code.

There were other lesser mockeries also on board the convict-hulk. Every Sunday the good-conduct men were mustered in a dark, barred enclosure for Divine Service. The door was bolted, warders with loaded rifles stood round vigilantly, and the chaplain then proceeded to read the Service—from the outside—including the prayer for mercy "on all prisoners and captives"! In addition, every cell was carefully provided with a copy of the Holy Bible, although, of course, in the outer darkness that surrounded him like a pall, it was utterly impossible for the inmate even to see the Book as it lay on the shelf provided for it.

Once a week a surgeon visited the ship, invariably finding plenty of work for him to do in the way of setting or amputating limbs maimed in the frequent collisions between the desperate convicts and their gaolers. All injuries, however severe, had to await attention until the surgeon's visiting day came round before they received any attention. Who can say how often the surgeon's ministrations came too late to save a limb or even a life?

On the lowest deck, in the very bowels of the sinister old hulk, the solitary-confinement cells and the condemned cell were to be seen. In the massive planks which formed the floor of the "solitaries" deep ruts and grooves worn in the solid wood tell a pitiable tale of prisoners, loaded with irons and driven almost mad by solitary confinement in outer darkness, standing long weary hours in their fetters just inside the cell door, to catch a ray of light from the barred aperture above or to await eagerly the coming of the warden with their scanty meal of bread and water.

The condemned cell—a tiny, gruesome den, in which the doomed ones awaited their unwelcome fate—is to-day furnished with the original ring and bolt which held the fated wretches secure during their last fleeting moments. Not even during the hours before death was the barbarity exercised on this floating hell relaxed. How great that barbarity was, what unspeakable cruelties were in truth practised on board the *Success*—the irony of the name!—can only be dimly guessed at. But instruments of torture, awful contrivances of truly diabolical ingenuity, met the eye at every turn on board. The flogging-frames and the cruel cat-o'-nine-tails, wire-bound and shot-weighted, from which some hardened ruffians received as many as one thousand five hundred strokes during their time on board; the irons, spiked collars, strait-jackets, and punishment-ball, all these grim objects helped one to realise the kind of hell on earth this majestic-looking vessel with the high-sounding name must have been.

No wonder many a broken-spirited desperado, shambling in his fetters during exercise hour, along the well-worn path, which is still easily traceable in the planks of the deck; no wonder many a one summoned up his enfeebled energy to make a bold dash to gain the bulwark, and hurl himself over to a watery grave, a welcome release from his treatment at the hands of his fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians! Well might the ominous words of Dante have been inscribed above the handsome old ship's bell, which used to hang from the forecaste, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

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LEND THIS COPY TO A FRIEND!

GOOD FOR EVIL!

A Short Story of St. Jim's.

"JUST a moment, deah boys!"

The voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy reached the ears of Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, who were sauntering down to the nets after tea for a little practice.

"What's wrong, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, pausing.

"Nothing wong, deah boy. I have an invitation for you," replied the swell of St. Jim's as he came alongside.

"Get it off your chest, old scout," said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "If it's a feed, I'm on!"

"Weally, Lowthah," murmured Arthur Augustus, "it's not a feed! I've just had a lettah from my patah, and he states that he is winning his horse in the Wepley Stakes to-morrow."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy paused for breath. "Go on," said Tom Merry encouragingly.

"He's asked permission of the Head for me and five friends to visit the wacecourse, and the doctah gave his consent like a bwick."

"Good egg!" exclaimed Lowther.

"I was wondering whether you and Monty would care to be amongst the party," went on D'Arcy, addressing Tom Merry.

"What-ho!"

"Rather!"

"When does this stunt come off?" inquired Tom Merry eagerly.

"To-morrow, deah boy!"

"Good!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Thanks very much, Gussy, for including us in the party."

"Yes, rather!" conceded Lowther.

"Don't mench, deah boys," said Gussy, with a wave of the hand. "It's settled, then. We shall have to catch the two-thirty twain from Wayland to be in time for the first event. The patah's gee-gee wuns in the three-fifteen wace—Fiery Queen is the name of the beast."

"Then we'll shout ourselves hoarse when Fiery Queen flashes first past the post!" said Tom Merry enthusiastically.

And the juniors walked down to the nets for some practice before prep.

The next morning dawned a typical summer's day, and the lucky six found it hard to concentrate their attention on English History, important as that subject was. But everything comes to an end at last, and morning lessons drew to a close eventually.

After lunch, Arthur Augustus summoned his party, which consisted of Blake, Herries, Digby, Lowther, and Tom Merry, and set off for Wayland Junction. The train came in punctual to the minute, and the juniors were fortunate enough to secure a first-class compartment to themselves.

"Hallo, there's Knox!" exclaimed Blake, who was leaning out of the window.

Sure enough, the tall figure of the unpopular Sixth Form prefect entered the platform, and selected a first-class smoking compartment.

"I wonder what he's doing on this train?" queried Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I know!" grunted Blake. "Or care!" he added.

"Might be going to the races," suggested Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

Monty Lowther's conjecture proved to be correct. When the juniors alighted at Repley Station the Sixth-Former could be seen emerging with the crowd for the racecourse. He no longer wore the school colours; instead, he was wearing a soft tweed cap. He was soon lost to view in the crowd, and the St. Jim's juniors forgot of his existence in the excitement that attended the start of the first event on the programme.

Lord Eastwood had made the party comfortable in the stand, from which position they commanded a full view of the course. After the second race Knox caught sight of the St. Jim's colours, and his eyes nearly bulged from his head when he saw that the owners of the caps were his youthful adversaries at the school. A gleam of

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malignant triumph crossed his face as he walked over to them. He rubbed his hands gleefully. Now was the chance to exercise his authority and to lower the colours of the juniors whom he hated. Caught on a racecourse! It seemed too good to be true!

"What are you fellows doing here?" he demanded magisterially.

"Oh, just looking on, you know," replied Tom Merry, with a grin.

"Then I'm afraid it will be my unpleasant duty to report you to the Head for breaking bounds. It's forbidden for any member of St. Jim's to frequent a racecourse," growled Knox.

"Then what are you doing here?" inquired Monty Lowther sweetly.

"I want none of your cheek, Lowther!" bellowed Knox. "I followed you here out of a sense of duty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared with laughter. They knew too well Knox's little habits, among which was numbered an obsession for horse-racing and gambling.

"Stop! D'you hear?" roared the prefect, thoroughly enraged. "I command all of you to take the next train back to St. Jim's. You'll be sacked for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That threat only had the effect of doubling the merriment of the party. They knew that Knox was labouring under a delusion, and one and all decided to let the prefect have his head, as it were.

"Leave the course at once," roared Knox, "or I'll make it hotter still for you when I get back to St. Jim's!"

"Go and chop chips!" replied the juniors in unison.

"Take my tip, and back Fiery Queen!" grinned Monty Lowther.

The prefect, fuming inwardly, saw that it was useless to argue any longer with the juniors. From all sides smiling glances were thrown at him by members of the crowd. They evidently sympathised with Tom Merry & Co. Not only that, the next race was due to be run, and Knox realised that he would lose the chance of placing his bet if he remained any longer. Muttering under his breath that he would make it warm for the juniors when they were back at the school, he moved off and was lost to view in the crowd.

"Thank goodness that rotter's gone!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "He'll sing small when he knows that we've permission to be here."

"They're off!"

The cry went up from a thousand throats as the horses engaged in the Repley Stakes got off the mark. It was a most exciting race, and the juniors watched it with glowing excitement. Lord Eastwood's horse, Fiery Queen, kept well to the front, and the last furlong from home was seen to hug the rails. Suddenly from nowhere, it seemed, another horse shot up abreast of the gallant animal, and Tom Merry & Co. witnessed an exciting finish. A touch of the whip and Fiery Queen flashed past the post a winner by half a length. What a roar went up from the spectators, and the juniors' voices were as loud as any.

"Jolly good finish!" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove, it was wipping!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Hallo! What's the twouble?" he added.

A few yards away the crowd swayed round a bookmaker who was gesticulating wildly at a figure whom the juniors recognised as Knox. Tom Merry & Co. from the distance saw a tough-looking gentleman suddenly swipe the prefect a terrific blow behind the ear. It was a signal for a gang of roughs who were in the pay of the bookmaker to close in on the unfortunate St. Jim's senior, who had claimed his winnings. Before the astonished prefect could determine his adversary he was knocked down again from behind.

"This is where we chip in," said Blake. "We can't allow a gang of roughs to handle a St. Jim's fellow, even if it is Knox. Come on!"

The juniors needed no second bidding. With a whoop they descended on the gang of toughs, who were so surprised at this unexpected attack that they were bowled over like ninepins. A regular fight was soon in progress, and the juniors fought back tooth and nail. But for the timely intervention of the police, serious injuries would have been dealt out. The gang were not particular as to their methods of scrapping. Each of the juniors had some scratch to show—most of them, unfortunately, had rapidly-swelling noses, and not a few, black

eyes; but they were cheerful. They had held their own. When the police interfered the gang scattered like rabbits, and the juniors turned their attention to Knox, who was sitting up dazedly rubbing his ear and his nose alternately.

"Grough!" he gasped. "The rotters! The bookie wouldn't pay out. I had over five pounds to draw from him. Ow-yow-grough!"

In a short space of time he was able to scramble to his feet, and he had the graciousness to thank his rescuers. Tom Merry & Co. received his thanks with smiles. Then they quietly informed him that the Head had given them permission to be present at the meeting, at which Knox's graciousness disappeared.

It was a very happy party that sat down to tea in Arthur Augustus' study that evening, and bruises and scratches were soon forgotten under the influence of steaming hot tea and cream-puffs. Needless to say, Knox did not report the juniors for breaking bounds, neither did he molest them in any way for some considerable time. Perhaps that was due to certain twinges of conscience—or, rather, twinges of pain where the weight of the ruffians' fists had found their mark. No doubt he realised that but for Tom Merry & Co.'s timely assistance he would have been severely handled. Decidedly it was a case of returning good for evil!

THE END.

THE REMOVE TO THE RESCUE.

(Continued from page 7.)

The scores were exactly level, each side having made a hundred.

Loder of the Sixth could scarcely contain his delight.

Harry Wharton had not entirely lost heart. He realised that it was now impossible for him to win the game. But he could at least save it. And he sent down a splendid ball, which had the batsman beaten all ends up.

Crash!

The wicket was wrecked, and the match was over.

Greyfriars First and Greyfriars Old Boys had tied!

The spectators cheered as lustily as if a victory had fallen to the school, instead of a division of spoils. And the four Removites who had taken part in the match were carried shoulder-high to the pavilion.

And the most surprising thing in connection with this demonstration was this. The fellows on whose shoulders Harry Wharton & Co. rested were North, Hammersley, & Co., who but a short time since had been disloyal to their school.

The fellows who had stood down from the team were—with the exception of Loder—true sportsmen at heart. And as soon as they had set the juniors on their feet, they went up to Wingate, and apologised to a man for their conduct.

"We've been a set of rank outsiders," said Hammersley. "But we sha'n't desert the team again, in a hurry."

"I doubt if Wingate will take us back, after what's happened," said North.

But Wingate received the renegades with open arms. And he accepted their assurance that they would not leave him in the lurch again.

The breach was duly healed. And the only disgruntled person at Greyfriars that evening was Gerald Loder. He had backed the Old Boys to win outright, and they had narrowly failed to do so. As a result, Loder was in the painful predicament of having to hand over five pounds to the sporting gentleman in the village.

But nobody was thinking of Loder of the Sixth just then. He was left to solve his little problem alone.

In the ranks of the Remove there was great rejoicing. A great spread took place that evening in the junior Common-room, and the place of honour was shared by no less than four fellows—the four whose brilliant debut in the First Eleven had been the means of quelling the storm in the Sixth!

(Another grand long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "BILLY BUNTER'S CAMPAIGN!" Make a point of ordering your copy of the PENNY POPULAR early.)

:: THE ::

Missing Captain!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

... A SPLENDID, LONG, ...
COMPLETE STORY, DEALING
WITH THE ADVENTURES OF
JIMMY SILVER & CO.,
THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver's Eleven.

JIMMY SILVER stopped before the notice-board at Rookwood and pinned up the paper he carried in his hand in a prominent position.

It was an important paper.

For it contained the list of the Junior Cricket Eleven, who, on the morrow, were to visit Bagshot School, and inflict dire defeat and confusion upon the ancient rivals of Rookwood.

There was a rush of juniors to read the list.

Most of the names contained in it could be guessed in advance; but there was a chance that any fellow might find his name there.

"Jolly good team!" remarked Tommy Dodd, of the Modern side, finding written there his own name, and the names of his two special chums, Cook and Doyle. "A few more Moderns would improve it. But it's jolly good."

"Wants a few more Classical names," remarked Dick Oswald. "But it's jolly good, all the same. My name's there."

"And mine, intirely," remarked Flynn. "Jimmy Silver's the best captain we've ever had in the Fourth. Smythe used to lave me out."

"Glad you're all satisfied," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"I'm not satisfied," said Dickinson minor. "What have you left me out for, Jimmy Silver?"

"Sorry, old chap; but we want to beat Bagshot," said Jimmy affably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a jolly good list!" remarked Lovell. "I think we shall give Bagshot the kybosh this time. I suppose Bootles isn't likely to chip in again, and ask us to play that slacker Mornington."

Jimmy shook his head.

"No fear. That's all over, for one thing. I've spoken to Bulkeley about that, and he's chipped in."

"Good old Bulkeley!"

"Mornington expects to play," remarked Newcome.

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him expect! He won't play."

"He's been telling chaps that he's in the Bagshot match."

"No law against that," said Jimmy. "He can tell chaps that he's going to be Head of Rookwood, if he likes."

"Here he comes!" said Lovell, with a grin.

Mornington of the Fourth came up to the notice-board. Townsend and Topham and Peele were with him. The Nuts of the Fourth glanced at the cricket list, and Mornington frowned darkly and turned to Jimmy Silver.

"You've left my name out!" he said sharply.

Jimmy nodded.

"Why is that?" demanded Mornington.

"Because you're left out yourself, my dear chap."

"I've told you that I expect to be played!"

"Go hon!"

"The best thing you can do is to put my name in at once," said Mornington. "I decline to be left out, and it will save you trouble in the long run."

Jimmy Silver looked grimly at the dandy of Rookwood.

Nobody but Mornington would have dreamed of taking such a tone with the captain of the Fourth.

But Mornington was not quite like the other fellows.

His wealth loomed largely in his own eyes and in the eyes of fellows like Townsend & Co. His uncle and guardian, Sir Rupert Staepoole, was chairman of the governing board of Rookwood.

Mornington was ambitious to shine among the cricketers, but his ambition did not

cause him to stick to practice or exert himself in any way; and Jimmy Silver was the last fellow in the world to play a slacker if he could help it.

On one occasion he had not been able to help it. Mornington's complaints to his guardian had caused that gentleman to approach the Head on the subject. And Dr. Chisholm, who knew little of junior cricket matters, had interferred.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, had conveyed the Head's request to Jimmy Silver to play Mornington in the St. Jim's match.

Jimmy, sorely against the grain, had concurred.

But for the fact that a couple of juniors locked Mornington in a study, and kept him out of the match, the result would have been disastrous for the Junior Eleven.

Jimmy Silver did not mean to run that risk a second time.

He explained the matter to Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of the school, and Bulkeley had "taken a hand" promptly enough.

Bulkeley had interviewed the Head on the subject, and there was no danger of a repetition of the Head's request to Jimmy Silver.

Mornington was evidently unaware of the new state of affairs.

Evidently he considered that he had only to state his wishes in order to have them assented to.

"You hear me?" he said. "You'll put my name down in that list at once, Jimmy Silver!"

"Cheeky ass!" growled Lovell. "Shall I mop up the passage with him, Jimmy?"

"Bump him intirely!" said Flynn.

"Do you hear me, Silver?" snapped Mornington.

Jimmy nodded.

"Yes, dear boy!"

"Well, what do you say?"

"Rats!"

"Wha-at!"

"R-A-T-S—rats!" said Jimmy. "Isn't that plain enough?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington set his teeth.

"Well, you'll get an order from the Head," he said. "You'll find that you can't do as you please."

Jimmy Silver smiled, and turned away. Mornington turned away also, to make his way to the Head's study. But before he had taken two steps, several pairs of hands were laid upon him. He swung round savagely, and glared at the grinning faces of Lovell and Raby and Newcome and Tommy Dodd.

"Let me go!" he shouted.

"You're going to be bumped for your cheek," said Lovell coolly. "Up with him!"

"Let go! Help!"

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

"Cave!" ejaculated Rawson of the Fourth, and the juniors scudded away as Mr. Bootles came out of his study.

Mornington was left sitting on the floor, gasping.

Mr. Bootles stared at him.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, peering at Mornington over his glasses. "Who is that? Mornington—ha! What ever are you doing on the floor, Mornington?"

Mornington staggered to his feet, crimson with anger.

"I've been ragged!" he gasped. "Lovell and—"

"That will do, Mornington! I am sorry to see that you cannot live on better terms with your Form-fellows," said Mr. Bootles severely. "You are concerned in incessant disturbances; Mornington. I fear that it is the insolence of your manners that is the cause of it. I advise you, Mornington, to amend your ways, and to cease to exasperate your schoolfellows by ill-

founded arrogances. You will do well to bear this in mind, Mornington."

Mr. Bootles rustled on, leaving Mornington almost stuttering with rage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Mornington!

Dr. Chisholm laid down his pen. "Come in!"

Mornington of the Fourth entered the Head's study.

He was still looking somewhat red and flustered, and was evidently in a savage temper. Only Mornington, of all the fellows at Rookwood, would have ventured to show signs of temper in the august presence of the Head.

Dr. Chisholm noted the knitted brows and gleaming eyes of the dandy of the Fourth, and he frowned.

"Well?" he said sharply. "What is it, Mornington?"

"I wish to speak to you, sir!"

"Kindly be brief!"

The cold, severe glance of the Head somewhat abashed Mornington. His gaze dropped a little, and his voice was quieter as he went on.

"I have been left out of the cricket team again, sir!"

The Head made a gesture.

"That is a matter that concerns only the junior cricket club. You may go."

"My guardian asked you—"

"Listen to me, Mornington," said the Head quietly. "Sir Rupert Staepoole wrote to me on the matter, and I did not care to disoblige a governor of Rookwood, and for that reason I uttered a word on your behalf. Since then I have received further information on the subject. I have learned the particulars from Bulkeley. It is a matter that entirely concerns the cricket club, and I understand that you are omitted from the playing eleven because your play is not up to the standard required, and because you refuse to attend the necessary practice. I cannot interfere in the matter again."

"But—"

"I recommend you to attend more constantly on the playing-fields, and make yourself useful as a cricketer, and in that case I have no doubt you will have as much chance as the others of playing for the school," said the Head. "The matter, however, does not concern me. You may go!"

Mornington did not stir.

"Am I to be left out, then?" he exclaimed. "That depends on the captain of your club, I presume."

"He dislikes me."

"Probably you have given him reason, if that is the case," said the Head drily. "I have received very unfavourable reports of you from your Form-master, Mornington. It appears that you treat the other boys with insolence and an assumption of superiority. You cannot expect that to make you popular. I advise you to mend your manners."

"I—I—"

"And now you have wasted enough of my time. Leave my study!"

The Head took up his pen again. But Mornington did not go.

"Do you hear me, boy?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm, in surprise and anger.

"Yes, sir."

"Leave my study at once!"

"I'm going to play in the Bagshot match," said Mornington doggedly. "I want you to tell Jimmy Silver so, sir."

"Boy!"

Mornington stood his ground, unabashed now by the glare the Head of Rookwood bestowed upon him.

There was an ominous pause.

"It is due, I suppose, to your extraordinary training that you dare to speak to your

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headmaster with such unexampled insolence!" said the Head at last. "If you think that such insolence can be tolerated, Mornington, you are mistaken!" Dr. Chisholm took up his cane. "Hold out your hand!"

Mornington's eyes gleamed. "I won't be caned, sir! I shall write to my guardian. He is chairman of the governors, and he will not allow—"

The Head rose. "Hold out your hand immediately, Mornington, or I shall administer a public flogging!" he exclaimed.

Mornington hesitated a moment, and then his hand came slowly out.

"Swish!" "Now the other hand!" thundered the Head.

"Swish!" Mornington squeezed his hands together, his face pale with pain and rage.

The Head pointed to the door with the cane.

"Go!" he said. Mornington went, almost choking.

Townsend & Co. were waiting for him in the passage with rather anxious looks. Although it suited the Nuts of the Fourth to chum with Mornington, they could have little liking for him, and they were never without a certain amount of uneasiness lest his insolence should land him, and themselves, in some serious scrape.

Nobody but Mornington would have dared to "beard the lion in his den" as he had done.

The Nuts were not surprised to see him come forth squeezing his hands and mumbling.

"Well?" said Townsend.

Mornington gritted his teeth.

"I've been licked!"

"Well, what the dickens did you expect?" said Peele. "You can't cheek the Head, you know, and I'll be bound you checked him!"

"What about the cricket?"

"The Head won't interfere again."

"Couldn't expect him to," said Townsend. "Nothin' doin', of course."

"He doesn't seem to understand that I can give him trouble about it," said Mornington. "My guardian will back me up."

The three Nuts grinned at one another. They did not have so much faith as Mornington in the influence of his guardian.

"You can cackle!" growled Mornington. "I know what I'm talkin' about. Sir Rupert doesn't like the Head. As a matter of fact, he would be glad to get him into the bad books of the governors. He has a friend he would like to see Head of Rookwood, if Dr. Chisholm were gone. I know he's thought of workin' it already."

"Phew!" said Topham.

"Anyway, you're out of the Bagshot match," said Townsend. "Let's have a jolly afternoon to-morrow instead. There are races at High Coombe."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Never mind the races. I suppose I'm out of the cricket—owin' to Jimmy Silver. He's been one too many for me. But I'll get even. Jimmy Silver is goin' to be out of it, too!"

"How the dickens—"

"You know what they did with me when the St. Jim's match was on?"

"Locked you in Rawson's study," grinned Townsend. "Us, too, the rotters! But you can't work that on Jimmy Silver. A study wouldn't hold him."

"I'm not thinking of a study." Mornington lowered his voice. "What about the old tower? There's Sergeant Kettle's tuckshop on the ground-floor, but the rooms above are never used and never entered. A fellow shoved in there would never be found—till we chose."

"My hat! But how would you get Jimmy Silver there?"

"Four of us could handle him, I suppose."

"But—but we should be seen getting him there—"

"Not after dark."

"But after dark the match will be over."

"I'm thinking of to-night."

"Great Scott!"

"You—you're dotty!" said Peele, aghast. "You couldn't keep the chap there all night. He'd be missed."

"Well, what about it?"

"There'd be a row—a search—no end of a fuss."

"I don't care."

"You may not," said Townsend. "But I do. I'm not going to get myself sacked from Rookwood to please you, Mornington!"

"So you are a funki!" sneered Mornington.

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"I haven't an uncle on the Board of Governors to see me through," said Peele, with a sneer. "If I had, I might risk it."

"There's no risk. Silver wouldn't give our names."

"He might have to."

"Then I'll do it alone," said Mornington. The three Nuts looked at one another. But they shook their heads.

"Too jolly risky," said Peele. "It would be a flogging at least."

"Then I'll do it alone," said Mornington, and he turned his back on his companions and walked away.

Townsend & Co. looked at one another uneasily.

"What the dickens has he got in his head?" muttered Towny.

"Blessed if I know," said Topham. "But I know one thing, and that is—I'm going to keep clear of it!"

To which Towny and Peele heartily agreed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Caught Napping!

THE Fistical Four sat down to tea in the end study in great spirits.

They were looking forward to the cricket-match of the morrow, and Jimmy, who was very pleased with the form his team had shown of late, fully expected to "mop up" the Bagshot ground with the Bagshot team.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were equally confident.

They had dreaded a repetition of the trick Mornington had played on them on the occasion of the St. Jim's match. But Mornington had come to the end of his tether; there was a limit, evidently, to the influence of his guardian at Rookwood.

The careless and swanking slacker would have been sufficient, if he had been played, to reduce the chances of the Rookwood team to zero.

The danger was over, however, and the Fistical Four rejoiced accordingly.

"Of course, we wouldn't have stood it," Lovell remarked. "If the Head had chipped in a second time, there would have been trouble."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Jolly sure of that!" he replied. "The whole club would have gone on strike, I think. But the Head didn't savvy. Mornington's guardian gave him the impression that a set was made against the silly ass, and that he wasn't given a fair chance. Now Bulkeley's spoken to the Head it's all right. The Head means well," added Jimmy tolerantly. The captain of the Fourth felt that he could make allowances for a head-master.

"Mornington is ratty about it," grinned Raby. "He was looking like a Hun when I saw him last."

"Let him!" said Jimmy serenely.

"The silly duffer!" remarked Newcome. "He can't play cricket for toffee. Blessed if I think he cares twopence whether Rookwood wins or loses, so long as he can swank at the wicket."

"Well, he won't swank at the wicket this time," said Jimmy Silver sententiously. "No room for slacking asses in the Rookwood Junior Eleven."

"Hear, hear!"

After tea, as there was plenty of light, the Fistical Four walked down to Little Side for some batting. Mornington & Co. stood looking on, decidedly sour in appearance.

In the dusk the chums of the Fourth walked back to the School House. They were chatting on the steps after calling-over, when Mornington came up.

The Fistical Four looked at him rather grimly.

They were prepared for some more insolence from the dandy of the Fourth, and quite ready to roll him in the quad at the first word.

But, as it happened, Mornington was quite civil for once.

"Tommy Dodd wants to speak to you, Silver," he said carelessly.

"Where is he?"

"In the tuckshop."

"Well, I suppose he can come here?" said Jimmy.

"Time we got on to our prep," remarked Lovell, as eight rang out from the clock-tower. "Don't waste time on that Modern bouncer, Jimmy!"

"Well, it won't take me long to run across," said Jimmy, a little puzzled, but always obliging.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome went up to

the end study, while Jimmy Silver ran across the dusky quadrangle.

The school shop, which was kept by Sergeant Kettle on the ground-floor of the old disused clock-tower, was closing. The sergeant was about to lock the door when Jimmy came up.

"Hallo! Is Tommy Dodd here, sergeant?" asked Jimmy.

"No, Master Silver."

"The ass! He sent for me."

"Well, he ain't here, Master Silver," said Sergeant Kettle, and he retired into the shop and closed the door and locked it.

Jimmy Silver looked round wrathfully at Mornington, who had followed him from the house.

"Have you been pulling my leg?" he demanded. "Dodd isn't here."

The next moment Jimmy uttered a gasp of amazement.

"What the dickens— Hands off! My hat!"

Crash!

Mornington had sprung at him like a tiger. Jimmy Silver was not often taken by surprise, but the attack was utterly unexpected, and he went down in a heap, with Mornington on him.

He lay on his back on the ground in the deep dusk, with the dandy of the Fourth kneeling on his chest.

He glared up at Mornington.

"Get up, you silly chump! By gum, I'll smash you! Lemme gerrup!"

Mornington did not move. He had grasped Jimmy's hands, and he held him by the wrists, in spite of his struggles.

From round the corner of the tuckshop a junior ran quickly and silently, and a sack was thrown over Jimmy Silver's head as he lay prostrate.

So quickly was it done that Jimmy did not catch a glimpse of his new assailant, and, indeed, did not know what was coming until the sack was over his head.

He struggled furiously.

But he was at a disadvantage, and two strong pairs of hands were grasping him. He struggled in vain.

"Quick!" panted Mornington.

The young rascal had chosen his moment well.

The quadrangle was dark, and there was no one near the tuckshop, and Sergeant Kettle had retired into the back-room.

Jimmy Silver, more amazed than angry, struggled in the hands of the two assailants.

But the second assailant ran a loose cord round his wrists as Mornington held them, and it was drawn tight and knotted.

Then Jimmy was helpless.

Another cord was knotted round his ankles, and then the sack was pulled close over his face, stifling the shout he tried to utter.

Then he was lifted and rushed away in the darkness.

He felt himself being carried into a building, and up stone steps, upon which he bumped several times.

He was set down at last.

"Good!" It was Mornington's voice. "You can cut. He hasn't seen you."

Jimmy heard departing footsteps.

A match scratched, and the sack was pulled from over his face. He blinked in the light of a candle.

In utter amazement, he stared at Mornington.

He opened his lips to speak, and as he did so a folded handkerchief was thrust into his mouth, and Mornington proceeded to tie it there safely, winding a string round and round his head.

Then he rose to his feet, and looked down on Jimmy Silver with a mocking grin.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Kidnapped!

JIMMY SILVER stared up blankly at Mornington.

He was lost in amazement.

He lay upon the stone floor of a small room, with a tiny window open to the starry sky.

He knew where he was.

Part of the ground-floor of the ancient clock-tower of Rookwood was occupied by the school shop, but the greater part of the dilapidated old building was untenanted. Sometimes the fellows climbed the crazy old stairs to investigate the deserted place, and to view the country from the high window; but it was seldom. The climb up the stairs was hard work, for the spiral stair contained over a hundred steps. Sometimes the place was not visited for weeks together, or even for a



There was a shout from the fellows, as the burly sergeant was seen to cross the quadrangle to the School House, bearing the missing junior in his arms. "Silver!" they cried. "It's Jimmy!" (See page 17.)

whole term. The door at the foot of the spiral stair was generally kept locked, and old Mack, the porter, had the key; but he would part with it for a moderate tip.

Mornington had evidently obtained the key from the porter, and chosen this out-of-the-way spot as a hiding-place for his prisoner.

But Jimmy could not understand.

It was not uncommon for Moderns and Classics at Rookwood to raid one another in this way.

But why Mornington should take the trouble to kidnap Jimmy Silver was a mystery. Jimmy could not be kept there long, at all events, as he would have to turn up on the Classical side at bed-time. And it was quite certain that he would hammer Mornington without mercy if he were kept a prisoner in the old clock-tower for a couple of hours.

He was far from divining, as yet, the thoughts that were in the mind of the reckless young rascal.

Mornington was breathing hard after his exertions. Smoking and slacking did not make it easy for him to carry Jimmy Silver's weight up a hundred steps, even with the assistance of his unknown companion.

He was gasping, in fact, and for some minutes he could not speak. Neither could Jimmy, for the excellent reason that the gag choked back any sound but the faintest mumble.

Mornington found his voice at last, however.

"Well, here you are!" he remarked.

Jimmy could not speak, but his look was eloquent. But the dandy of the Fourth only grinned at his expression.

"You wonder why I've taken all this trouble?" grinned Mornington.

Jimmy nodded.

"I'm goin' to make terms with you. Play me in the team to-morrow, and I'll let you go. Nod your head if you mean 'Yes.'"

Jimmy Silver did not nod his head. Evidently he did not mean "Yes."

"Don't be an obstinate ass!" urged Mornington. "You'll find it pretty cold to stay here, though it's a summer's night. I've brought this old sack for you to lie on, but it won't be comfy."

Jimmy Silver's eyes opened wide.

For the first time it occurred to him that Mornington intended to leave him there a prisoner for the night.

It was scarcely credible that the dandy of the Fourth could be so brutal and so reckless; but Jimmy's heart sank.

He knew Mornington's fixed belief that, whatever he did, his uncle, the governor, would be able to see him through.

Jimmy knew that, in that, he miscalculated; but Mornington did not know it.

"You're going to play me, or you won't play yourself!" said Mornington. "You can take your choice. Both or neither. If you nod your head, I'll take it as your word of honour that you'll put me in the team."

Jimmy's head remained motionless.

"Still obstinate!" grinned Mornington. "I'll come and see you before brekker, and I think you may have changed your mind by then!"

Jimmy strove to speak, but only a mumble came forth.

"I've borrowed the key from Mack," went on Mornington. "I shall lock the door below, and tell Mack I've mislaid the key. He won't be able to make a fuss, as he's not supposed to lend it to us. Nobody can come here—if anybody wanted to, which isn't likely.

You can't get out of this room—the door opens outwards, and I'm going to wedge it with a chunk of wood. You can't call for help—you're gagged. You'll have a bad night if you stay here."

Jimmy Silver's look was expressive.

He no longer doubted that the dandy of the Fourth intended to carry out his threat, and the prospect of a night, bound and gagged, at the top of the old tower, was dismaying enough.

But Jimmy Silver did not intend to surrender.

"You think I shall get licked for this," continued Mornington, grinning. "Well, you can lick me, though I shall put up a fight, I think. As for the Head, he dare not flog me. He would have the governors' down on him."

Jimmy shook his head.

Mornington laughed.

"Well, I'm risking it," he said. "You'll see. But if you still want to get off, you've only to agree to play me in the Bagshot match. You see, I'm determined. Now, do the sensible thing."

Jimmy's eyes burned, but he made no sign of assent.

Mornington waited a minute; then he shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and went to the door.

Thud!

The heavy oaken door closed. Mornington had taken the candle with him, and Jimmy Silver was in darkness, save for the faint glimmer of starlight at the little window. He could hear a scraping sound as Mornington drove a wedge of wood under the door.

Even if he could have released himself from

the knotted cords, he was a prisoner in the tower now.

Painfully, Mornington's retreating footsteps died away on the long spiral stair.

Silence at last.

He was gone!

Jimmy Silver, stretched on the sack on the stone floor, writhed in his bonds, struggling to free himself, till his wrists ached, and the skin was abraded and torn. But he could not get free.

Outside the old tower, Mornington closed the big, heavy door, and locked it, and slipped the key into his pocket.

Then, with perfect calmness, the rascal of Rookwood strolled away to the School House. Townsend & Co. were chatting in the hall, and they looked curiously at Mornington as he came in.

"Hallo! Been for a stroll with Leggett?" asked Peele.

"Leggett! That modern bouncer! No! I saw you talking to him a while ago," said Peele.

"Just a word or two," said Mornington carelessly. "He was tryin' to lend me money, as a matter of fact."

"Seen anythin' of Jimmy Silver?"

Mornington smiled.

"By gad! I shouldn't notice Jimmy Silver if I saw him," he said. "Nearly half-past eight—time I got on with my prep. Ta-ta!" He went to his study.

Townsend and Topham and Peele exchanged curious glances. But they did not speak on the subject that was uppermost in their minds. They went to their preparation, content to mind their own business with great strictness.

Rawson of the Fourth noticed that they were grinning, however, as they came into the study they shared with him. But Rawson was not on speaking terms with the Nuts of the Fourth, and he did not inquire what amused them.

It was close on bed-time when Mornington looked into the study.

"Finished, you chaps?" he drawled.

"Yaas," said Townsend.

"Come along to my study and have a smoke. By the way, Silver's out."

"Out—at this time!" exclaimed Rawson, looking up.

"Yaas. Queer, ain't it? Seen anything of him?"

"Not since cricket practice."

"Jolly queer," said Townsend.

The Nuts of the Fourth followed Mornington to his study. Rawson, with a somewhat worried look, went to the end study to speak to Jimmy Silver's chums.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

"SEEN Jimmy?"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome asked that question together as Tom Rawson came into the end study.

The Fistical Three had finished their preparation, and they were surprised by the absence of their study leader.

Rawson shook his head.

"I've just heard that he hasn't come in," he said. "It's bedtime in half an hour. Hasn't he done his prep?"

"No; he hasn't been in. Better look for him, I think," said Raby.

"Can't have gone out of bounds, anyway."

"Oh, no! He went to speak to Tommy Dodd. Those Modern bounders have been tarking with him, most likely."

"They wouldn't make him miss his prep," said Rawson.

"Well, he's missed it."

The four juniors left the study and the House, and crossed to the Modern side. They found the three Tommies chatting on the staircase. The Moderns looked at them in surprise.

"Hallo! Time you Classical kids were in bed?" said Tommy Dodd severely. "What are you doing over here at this time of night?"

"Where's Jimmy Silver?" asked Lovell.

"Blessed if I know."

"Lost, stolen, or strayed?" grinned Tommy Cook.

"Look here, he came to speak to you in the tuckshop about eight, and we haven't seen him since," said Lovell warmly. "He's missed his prep, and that means a row with Bootles in the morning. What have you done with him?"

"My dear chap, we haven't eaten him for supper," said Tommy Dodd. "And he didn't come to see me in the tuckshop. I haven't been there since tea."

The PENNY POPULAR.—No. 71.

"You sent him a message—"

"Blessed if I did!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Raby. "Mornington brought him a message from you!"

Tommy Dodd shook his head.

"Mornington was rotting, then. I never sent any message. Perhaps the Nuts have been larking with the august Jimmy."

Lovell gave a snort.

"We'll jolly soon teach 'em manners if they have," he said. "Come on, you chaps! Jimmy's not here!"

The four Classics crossed the quadrangle again, and repaired to Mornington's study on the Classic side. They found Mornington, Townsend, Topham, and Peele, smoking cigarettes. Mornington regarded them with an insolent smile as they came in.

"I don't remember askin' you into my study," he drawled.

"Where's Jimmy Silver?" demanded Lovell.

Mornington raised his eyebrows.

"How the dickens should I know?" he asked.

"You gave him a spoof message from Tommy Dodd."

Mornington laughed.

"Yaas! I was pullin' his leg."

"Haven't you seen him since?"

"Of course not!"

"Then you don't know where he is?"

"Haven't the slightest idea."

Mornington yawned as he made that reply.

Lovell & Co. looked puzzled. They did not see any reason why Mornington should be lying. Evidently Jimmy was not in the study. They left it, leaving the Nuts grinning as soon as the door was closed.

"Well, this beats the band!" said Lovell.

"Where on earth can Jimmy be? He can't have gone out."

"Let's ask the sergeant."

Sergeant Kettle was in his back room, smoking his evening pipe, when the juniors knocked at his door. He stared at them as he opened it.

"Shop's closed long ago!" he grunted. "Be hoff!"

"We're not after jam-tarts!" growled Lovell. "Have you seen anything of Jimmy Silver?"

The sergeant nodded.

"He came just as I was closing the shop, and asked for Master Dodd," he said.

"Master Dodd wasn't here."

"Where did Jimmy go then?"

"I don't know."

"Anybody with him?" asked Rawson.

"Not that I see. I was locking up."

The juniors left the sergeant, greatly puzzled. They returned to the house, and inquired right and left for Jimmy Silver. But no one had seen him. It was close on bed-time now.

"Well, what the dickens!" exclaimed Lovell. "Jimmy must be somewhere. What the dickens is he playing hide-and-seek for like this?"

"Bed-time, you kids!" said Bulkeley, coming along the passage.

The Classical Fourth went to their dormitory.

Lovell & Co. had a hope that Jimmy might turn up there for bed. But the captain of the Fourth was not in the dormitory.

Bulkeley came in to see lights out, and he noticed Jimmy's absence at once.

"Isn't Silver here?" he exclaimed.

"We don't know where he is," said Lovell, with a worried look. "We haven't seen him all the evening."

"He seems to have disappeared intirely," remarked Flynn.

Bulkeley looked astonished.

"What nonsense!" he exclaimed. "Has he gone out?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, turn in! I'll look for Jimmy Silver!" said the captain of Rookwood grimly.

The Classical Fourth turned in, and Bulkeley left the dormitory. He repaired to Mr. Bootles' study, to inform him that Jimmy Silver had not turned up for bed, and that his Form-fellows did not know where he was.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

"This is extraordinary!"

"I can't understand it, sir," said Bulkeley. "I find that nobody's seen him since eight o'clock."

"Please ask the prefects to look for him, Bulkeley."

"Yes, sir."

Bulkeley left the study. He returned in a quarter of an hour.

"Silver can't be found, sir!"

Mr. Bootles jumped up.

"You have looked for him?"

"Yes, sir. He isn't in the school—unless he is hiding away somewhere."

"Surely he would not do such a foolish thing, Bulkeley?"

"Well, I suppose not, sir. Unless he's doing that, he must have gone out without permission, and has not returned."

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

"What is to be done, sir?"

"Send him to me immediately he returns Bulkeley."

"Very well, sir."

The captain of Rookwood returned to his study. But Jimmy Silver did not return, and at half-past ten Bulkeley visited Mr. Bootles again.

"Has not Silver returned?" asked the Fourth Form master, as the captain of Rookwood came in.

"No, sir!"

"Very well, Bulkeley. You may go to bed. I will speak to the Head on the subject."

Mr. Bootles, very much surprised and somewhat alarmed, went at once to the Head's study. Dr. Chisholm's brow contracted as he heard the Form-master's report.

"The boy has broken bounds undoubtedly," he said. "Something has occurred to prevent his return."

"Some accident, sir?" said Mr. Bootles.

"Probably. I will telephone to the police-station immediately."

The Head went to the telephone at once. He rang up the police-station, but there was no news from that quarter. No accident had happened to a schooboy in the neighbourhood of Coombe, so far as the police were aware.

The Head laid down the receiver, his look grimmer than ever.

"What is to be done, sir?" asked Mr. Bootles helplessly.

"There is nothing to be done until morning, unless the boy returns," said the Head. "I can hardly believe that he has run away from the school. I fear that some accident has happened. The police have promised to do all they can."

"I shall remain up," said Mr. Bootles.

"If you do not mind—"

"Certainly not! I am very anxious."

Mr. Bootles remained up, in his study. He was anxious and flurried. By midnight, however, he was fast asleep in his armchair, and he did not waken till the rising-bell was pealing out over Rookwood.

Mr. Bootles started up, and rubbed his eyes.

"Bless my soul!" he murmured. "I—I think I must have fallen asleep. Yes, undoubtedly I must have fallen asleep. It is—bless my soul!—morning. Dear me!"

He rubbed his eyes again, and yawned, and left his study. Three anxious-looking juniors came downstairs—Lovell and Raby and Newcome. They had been awake before rising-bell.

"Has Silver come back, sir?" asked Lovell.

"I—I fear not!" yawned Mr. Bootles, suppressing a heavy yawn. "I have waited up for him, but he has not come back, apparently. It is extraordinary!"

"There's been an accident," said Raby. "Jimmy must have gone out."

"I shall inquire of the police," said Mr. Bootles.

The Form-master telephoned to the police, but there was no news of Jimmy Silver.

At breakfast there was only one thought in the minds of the Rookwood fellows. The whole school, Classical and Modern, was buzzing with the news.

What had become of Jimmy Silver?

The Head was seen to be looking very anxious. Angry as he was at Jimmy Silver's supposed absence without leave, his anger was not so great as his anxiety.

The only possible supposition was that an accident had happened to the junior outside the walls of Rookwood, and prevented his return.

The Rookwood fellows went into the Form-rooms as usual that morning; but there was much more thought given to the missing junior than to the lessons.

During the morning the police-inspector from Coombe called upon the Head. He had no news; but he took a description of Jimmy Silver, and promised that every effort should be made to find the missing lad.

After morning lessons the juniors came eagerly out of the Form-rooms, hoping to hear news of Jimmy.

But there was no news.

The captain of the Fourth was still missing.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were looking lugubrious. At dinner they ate hardly anything. Their anxiety for their missing chum was intense.

After dinner Tommy Dodd came up, as the

three were discussing the matter dismally in the quadrangle. Tommy was looking concerned. In spite of his many rows and rags with Jimmy, he had a real liking for the captain of the Fourth.

"Not heard anything of Jimmy?" he asked. Lovell shook his head.

"What about the Bagshot match?" Lovell snorted.

"Blow the Bagshot match! I'm not thinking of cricket!"

"Well, they're expecting us," said Tommy Dodd awkwardly.

"We're going out to look for Jimmy this afternoon," said Raby. "You'd better take a team over, Tommy."

"Well, I'll do it, if you like. We're bound to play the match, or else send an excuse, and it's rather late for that," said Tommy Dodd.

And so it was settled. Lovell & Co., keen cricketers as they were, had no mind for cricket that afternoon. They had resolved to spend the afternoon in a search for their missing chum. Little did they dream how near at hand he was.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Sergeant Kettle Makes a Discovery.

"YOU'LL want some players, I suppose?"

Tommy Dodd glared at Mornington as the dandy of the Fourth asked that question.

"Not your sort," he said, with a sniff. "There's a lot of fellows standin' out—Rawson and Oswald, as well as Lovell and Raby and Newcome," said Mornington.

"They're goin' out huntin' for Silver."

"I know that."

"Well, I'm willin' to play, if you like."

"But I'm not willing," said Tommy Dodd tersely. "Go and eat coke!"

And he turned his back on Mornington.

The team that departed for Bagshot School was mostly composed of Modern fellows. Quite a crowd of the Classical juniors had resolved to spend the afternoon searching for Jimmy Silver.

Mornington strolled away idly after speaking to Tommy Dodd, and sauntered round the tuckshop to the door of the staircase of the old tower.

He inserted the key and unlocked the door, and disappeared within.

Townsend had observed him from a distance, and he turned a somewhat scared look on his chums.

"Morny's got him shut up right enough," he whispered.

"The silly ass!" said Peele. "He'll be fogged for this. Mind, we don't know anything about it—not a word."

"Not a syllable," said Topham. "It's a rotten trick, too; the poor beggar must be hungry by this time."

Townsend shivered a little as he thought of the night the imprisoned junior had passed in the lonely room at the summit of the tower.

"It's rotten!" he muttered. "But we can't say anything! It's rather thick, even for Morny. He's a regular hooligan. Serve him right if he's sacked. I wonder who helped him? He couldn't have handled Silver alone."

"Leggett, of course," said Peele. "Leggett would play any mean trick for half-a-quad. It was Leggett."

"Sorry for him, then, when Silver gets out," said Topham.

Mornington mounted the spiral staircase, unfastened the door at the top, and entered the little room.

Jimmy Silver lay on the sacking on the floor.

His face was deadly pale.

He had slept little in the night. His limbs were cramped by his bonds, and he was faint with hunger and want of sleep. His eyes burned as they turned on the rascal of Rookwood.

Mornington regarded him with a mocking smile.

"It's time to start for the match," he remarked. "They're sending over a team with Tommy Dodd as skipper."

A faint mumble came from Jimmy Silver. He had gnawed away part of the gag, but still he could not speak.

"Would you like to be let loose?" smiled Mornington. "There's still time, you know!"

Jimmy nodded.

"Will you play me if I let you loose?" Jimmy shook his head.

"Still obstinate!" grinned Mornington. "You are a stickler, and no mistake! But I'm rather a stickler, too."

Jimmy mumbled.

"For the last time, you know. I'm willin' to let you loose, and go over with the team to Bagshot."

Jimmy did not trouble to shake his head. But his look was enough.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and left the room, carefully fastening the door after him.

He descended the staircase, and left the tower, turning the key in the lock. Then he strolled away and joined Townsend & Co. "Comin' out for the afternoon?" he said lazily.

"Not with you," said Townsend tersely. Mornington raised his eyebrows.

"Why not?"

"Look here, we'd rather not be seen speaking to you at present," said Townsend. "We don't want to get into a row when it all comes out."

"Gettin' funky?" grinned Mornington.

"We've had nothin' to do with it, mind," said Topham.

Mornington laughed.

"I'm not goin' to drag you into it," he said contemptuously. "If it comes out, I can face the music on my own."

"The chap who helped you—"

"Silver didn't see him—that's all right."

"And you won't mention his name?"

"I've promised not to."

"Look here, when are you goin' to let the poor beggar out?" demanded Townsend abruptly. "We can't let this go on."

"Not till it's too late for him to play in the Bagshot match."

"Well, that won't be long!" said Peele. "The team's startin' now. And if you don't mind, Morny, we'd rather not have your company this afternoon."

"Just as you like," said Mornington indifferently.

He sauntered away.

Townsend & Co. joined the crowd of fellows who were going to hunt for Jimmy Silver. That seemed to Townsend the best way of keeping up appearances. In spite of Mornington's assurances, the nuts could not help feeling uneasy.

It was not till five o'clock was striking from the clock-tower on the Modern side that Mornington entered the old tower again. He nodded coolly to Jimmy Silver as he entered the room at the top of the staircase.

"Time's up!" he remarked, as he took the gnawed gag from the junior's mouth. "You can get out now."

Jimmy could not speak, his lips were numb. Mornington cut through the cords that bound him.

Jimmy made an effort to rise, but sank back on the sacking with a cry of pain. His limbs were cramped and icy cold.

"By gad, you look bad!" said Mornington, with a touch of remorse. "Of course, I didn't intend to hurt you, Silver. By gad, you look as if you're goin' to be ill. Let me help you down."

"Let me alone, you rotter!" gasped Silver. "Don't you want my help?"

"No!"

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and left him. Jimmy made another effort to rise, but sank back helplessly. He realised that he was going to be ill. His limbs felt like lead, and his head was burning.

Mornington had not reflected on the probable results of his dastardly action. The results were to be more serious than he had dreamed.

Jimmy lay helpless on the sacking, unable to rise now that he was free. Mornington was gone, but even had he been there Jimmy would have refused his help.

"My hat!" murmured Jimmy. "I feel awfully queer! I suppose this means the sanatorium for me. The silly ass!"

Again and again he strove to rise, but he could not. He felt as weak as a baby. But he could use his voice now, and he called for help.

His voice was faint at first, and did not reach beyond the walls of the little room. But it became stronger.

It seemed an age to Jimmy Silver before he heard steps on the staircase, and the bronzed old face of Sergeant Kettle locked in.

"Now, then, wot's this 'ere little game?" said the sergeant gruffly.

Then, as he caught sight of Jimmy Silver, he uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Master Silver! You here!"

"Help me out!" said Jimmy faintly.

The sergeant did not ask any more questions. He picked up the junior in his strong arms, and carried him downstairs.

There was a shout from the fellows in the quadrangle, as the burly sergeant was seen crossing to the School House, with the missing junior in his arms.

Mr. Bootles met them at the doorway, blinking with astonishment.

"Silver!" he exclaimed.

The Head came hastily out of his study. He had seen the sergeant with his burden from the study window.

"Silver! Where did you find the boy, sergeant?"

"At the top of the old tower, sir," said Sergeant Kettle. "He'd been tied up, sir. There was the cords lyin' round him, and he's been tied up, and cut loose again."

The Head's brow was like a thundercloud. "Have you been all night, and all the morning, in that place, Silver?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir!"

"A prisoner—bound?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is monstrous! Who did this? Tell me!"

Jimmy was silent. Much as he had suffered at Mornington's hands, he was not inclined to betray the rascal of Rookwood.

"You hear me, Silver? Tell me at once who was guilty of this outrage?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm.

"I—I'd rather not, sir!" faltered Jimmy. "What!"



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From
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LITTLE SPARKS

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"One word, sir," interposed Mr. Bootles. "Whoever placed Silver there must have obtained the key from the porter."
 "Ah! Kindly call Mack here, Mr. Bootles. Sergeant, take Silver up to the dormitory. Go to bed at once, Silver, and I will telephone for the doctor."

The sergeant carried Jimmy upstairs. In a few minutes he was in bed, with blankets piled on him, and a hot-water bottle at his feet. And in a few minutes more he was fast asleep.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Flogged!

ROOKWOOD was in an uproar. The news of the sergeant's discovery spread like wildfire. "Who did it?" exclaimed Lovell, with blazing eyes, as the chums of the Fourth went downstairs again. "The Moderns, what!" "Impossible!" said Rawson. "They wouldn't play such a dirty trick!" "But it was somebody—"
 "It's bound to come out. Mack will know who had the key of the tower."

Mack, the porter, was at that moment in the Head's study, being questioned by Dr. Chisholm. He had little to say, but that little was very much to the point. Mornington had asked for the key of the tower, and had not returned it. Mack had supposed that he wished to explore the place. The Head dismissed him and sent for Mornington.

Mornington entered the study calmly enough.

The storm had burst, and he had expected it. He was ready to face the music now, with plenty of nerve. He faced the Head calmly.

"You sent for me, sir?" he asked.
 "I sent for you, Mornington. You have been guilty of an astounding outrage!"

"Indeed, sir!"
 "Do you deny that you placed Silver of the Fourth, bound hand and foot, in the old tower, and left him there, without food, for a whole night?" thundered the Head.

"You—you admit it?" ejaculated the Head.

"Yes, sir!"

"Why did you do this wicked and brutal thing, Mornington?"

"I did not mean to hurt Silver, sir. I am sorry if he is ill. I only meant to keep him out of the Bagshot match, as he refused to play me."

"Good heavens! For so trifling a motive you have been guilty of this dastardly outrage?"

"That was my motive, sir."

"You understand, of course, that your punishment will be severe? Only in consideration of your training, or want of training, I refrain from expelling you in disgrace from the school. You will be flogged!" thundered the Head. "To-morrow morning, in the presence of the whole school, I shall administer the severest flogging that has ever been administered at Rookwood! Now go!"

Mornington gritted his teeth.

"I will not be flogged! I—"
 "Go!" thundered the Head.

And Mornington went.

The next morning, after prayers, all Rookwood was assembled to witness the punishment of the culprit.

Grim faces looked at Mornington as he entered the Hall, with Bulkeley's hand on his shoulder.

The thrashing that Mornington received was, without doubt, the severest the Head had ever dealt out to a junior at Rookwood. When at length he was set down he staggered from Big Hall without a word.

The Rookwood fellows crowded out.

They looked grimly at Mornington, who was gasping on the settee in the passage and groaning with pain. He gave them a fierce look.

"This isn't the end! I'll have him sacked! I'll have him turned out of Rookwood! There'll be a new Head here soon!" hissed Mornington.

"Silly ass!" said Jimmy Silver.

And the juniors, grinning at Mornington's wild threat, passed on.

But they were destined to be reminded of that threat.

THE END.

(Next week's grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled: "RULED BY A TYRANT!" by Owen Conquest. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy EARLY.)

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 71.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "PENNY POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

NEXT WEEK'S STORIES.

Our Grand New Cinema Serial, "THE MYSTERY MAKERS!"

By Nat Fairbanks,

is creating quite a stir, and I think my chums will agree, after reading the first two instalments, that the story promises to develop into an exceptionally interesting and exciting one. Nat Fairbanks assures me that he has something quite out of the ordinary in the way of "copy" concealed up his sleeve, and I am now anxiously awaiting the delivery of another batch of it.

The two complete school stories, which are on our programme for next week, deal, of course, with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co at Greyfriars, and of Jimmy Silver & Co at Rookwood. Both are exceptionally good stories, and the Rookwood story, especially, which is entitled:

"RULED BY A TYRANT!"

By Owen Conquest,

chronicles one of the most amazing episodes in the history of the old school. You will all enjoy next Friday's "Penny Popular."

A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY-VILLAGE.

Some friends of mine who are putting in some enjoyable weeks in Italy seem to find matters rather easy-going. In their remote quarter of the boot-heeled kingdom, life does not hurry. When you want to go ten miles by train, you find there are several changes. "We were turned out at a junction where the station house looked like a hut, and told to hurry for the second train. We found this train at last. It was standing in the long grass—just a toy sort of train, but it was in no hurry, at all, and did not move for half an hour." There was a visit to a certain post office at mid-day. Everybody was fast asleep. Someone woke up, and told the callers to come back later, when the staff would be awake, and able to transact business.

But the best touch of all had to do with the house-bell. A new bell was required. Three engineers came and spent a day over the work. They threaded some wire from the gate, through the shrubs, to an oleander bush, on which a humble little sheep-bell was hung. You tug at the wire. It often breaks, and has to be tied up. Occasionally the bell gives the faintest tinkle, but the best plan is to keep your eye on the oleander. When the oleander wags, you know there is a visitor.

It is all a pleasant, take-things-quietly sort of existence. No need to worry. If life gets irritating, just take a nap!

CARDEW.

"A Faithful Reader" writes from Sunderland: "Just a few lines to let you know that I like the stories very much, but please let us hear more about Cardew." I have made a note of the suggestion. Cardew is immensely popular, even if he does not hit it off with the Australian supporter to whom I have referred. When there is real merit, you can put up with affectations.

BASEBALL.

R. T. Ellis, of the Waterloo Hotel, Alexandra Road, Newport, Mon., is much interested in baseball. There are many teams in South Wales. Newport, Cardiff, Ebbw Vale, and Swansea are keen on the game. Did the sport originate in this country? Well, the general impression is that the States originated baseball as it is now, though, to be sure, in the back ages, before the time of the Mayflower, there was a game of the sort in this country. An American baseball team came over to London in September, 1889, and played an exhibition match at Kennington Oval, but though there was a lot of interest shown, it did not look then as if the fine game would get a firm hold this side as it has done.

EXCELLENT!

"Gert," writing from Pretoria, says a lot of cheery things about the yarns, but the writer takes grave exception to Fingo. Fingo was the Kaffir boy who figured in one of the tales not long since. My correspondent points out that she has never heard of a decent native. A Kaffir her family trusted because he had saved her brother's life took French leave when he chose, stole all he could lay his hands on, got drunk, and ended up by attacking the family with a knife. "He got away, thanks to my brother, who still had the idea that he was indebted to the savage. . . . In future when reading about Fingo, I shall imagine I am out in England, where I've never seen a savage. Now, I want to ask you where Trimble is? We have hardly heard of him lately. All the new boys seem to be fading away. We don't want them to figure in every story, but still, they might be mentioned occasionally. It is very difficult to get back numbers here. Who is Doris Levison? I am out of many details to which you refer in Chat. I was a reader of the good old 'Penny Popular' before the war.

"Out here in Pretoria there are many admirers of the Companion Papers, but there are few who ever write to give you their opinions of the stories. The distance is apt to dishearten them a bit. Then most of them think you can only read British English, not African slang English. If, however, you were to receive the verdicts of everyone here, I am sure you would be of the opinion that you have a loyal band of followers of the Companion Papers out here in South Africa."

I am extremely obliged to this correspondent. Doubtless, ere this, she has had a chance to see some of the stories in which Ernest Levison's sister figures. Many of her points are real winners. The letter deals with facts, and would carry weight anywhere. I was proud to get it.

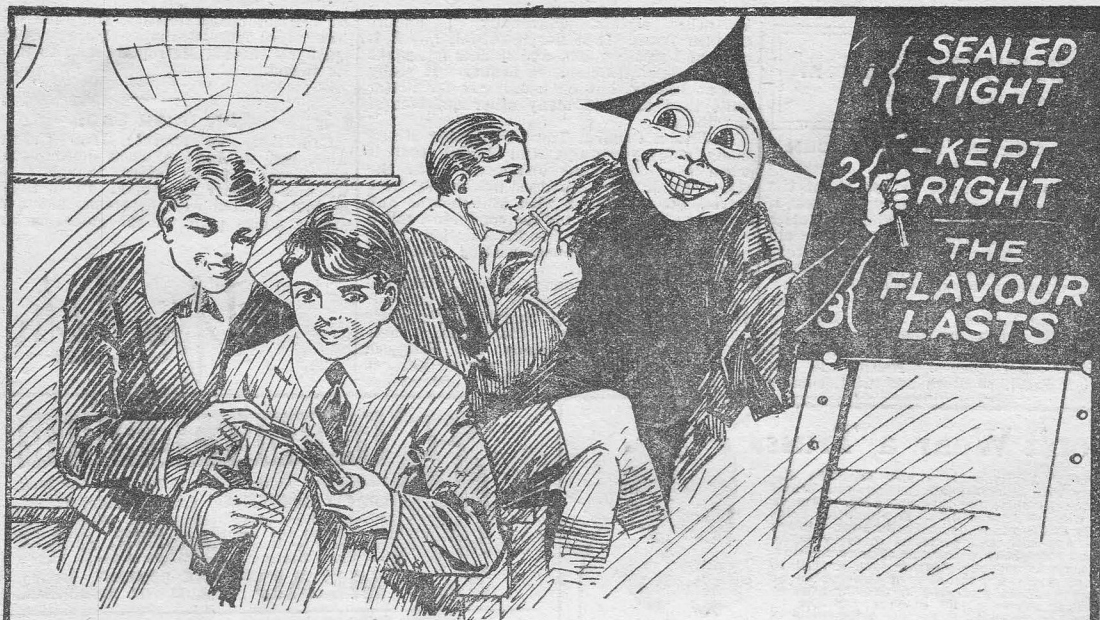
SO MUCH FOR BUCKINGHAM.

A staunch reader tells me that I often refer to various counties in Chat, while there is never any mention of leafy Bucks. So here goes! All the same, I think there is a mistake here, but no matter, as the man said, when he picked up a five-pound note in the street. To my mind, Buckinghamshire is a most interesting county. Burnham, where my correspondent lives, is a regular football village. The scenery all round is hard to beat. The walks about the Cliveden district are wonderful. They are that! Then, again, Bucks is one of those counties which are unspoiled by big towns. Buckingham, up in the north, used to be the county town. Aylesbury has the honour now. Buckingham is cheery enough, not much more than a village. At the station all the notices used to be put up in French as well as English, because the French Royal Family used to live at Stowe House, the old seat of the Dukes of Buckingham. This title is now extinct. Aylesbury is a town which should be visited. The old George Inn has a minstrel's gallery, and pictures of the period when this country was fighting Napoleon.

Not far away is Hartwell House, where another exiled French King lived for years. But Bucks need not rely merely on picturesque memories. It is a beautiful county all the way from Slough or Denham—the latter the daintiest village anywhere—in the south, right away into the Verney region.

I can congratulate my chum on his interesting reminder. I remember, during a stroll round Burnham, coming upon a smart little picture house right away from the houses. The owner told me he was doing excellent business. I wonder if he is still there!

(Continued on page 20.)



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A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR.

(Continued from page 18.)

THREE CHEERS FOR CAMDEN TOWN!

"It grieves me to write to you about the way you insult Camden Town," writes J. Field, of the Old Kent Road. You will notice that he does not even live in dear old Camden Town. The reference is to a story in one of the Companion Papers, in which the much-respected suburb was joked about.

But you can joke about a thing, and yet appreciate its merits. So there. Let this correspondent grieve no more. No harm was intended. True, Camden Town is not much like other places. Neither is the Caledonian Road, so stern and wild, similar

to other streets. Personally, I admire Camden Town. It is not beautiful, but it is calm and steady-going, and it does not make a song about its claim to beauty. It really has no beauty, but its houses are far better built than those in many other quarters of the town.

And then Camden Town was going strong many, many years ago. Old stagers recall it when the old yellow omnibuses, with the straw inside to keep the passengers' feet warm, the omnibuses with knife-boards and straps to hang on to for the conductor, rolled up from St. Martin's Church, Charing Cross, or the gay green 'buses rattled north up Great College Street.

Camden Town represents history. Like the rest of North London, it is full of interest. It is rather curious, too, that in all the many quarters of London there are these differences. North London has little in common with the South. If you go East, it is the same—as elsewhere. Each district has

its distinct characteristics, and each quarter has helped more, perhaps, than it realises to make up the big Metropolis, and to increase its charm.

AN IRISH LAD.

Can there be another Irish character? Also, can we have a chess department? I am afraid not the latter, though I would welcome another Hibernian. Chess takes up no end of room with diagrams, and a chess article minus plans of the games is apt to be thin.

Your Editor

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