

THE STORY-PAPER THAT IS BEATING ALL RECORDS!

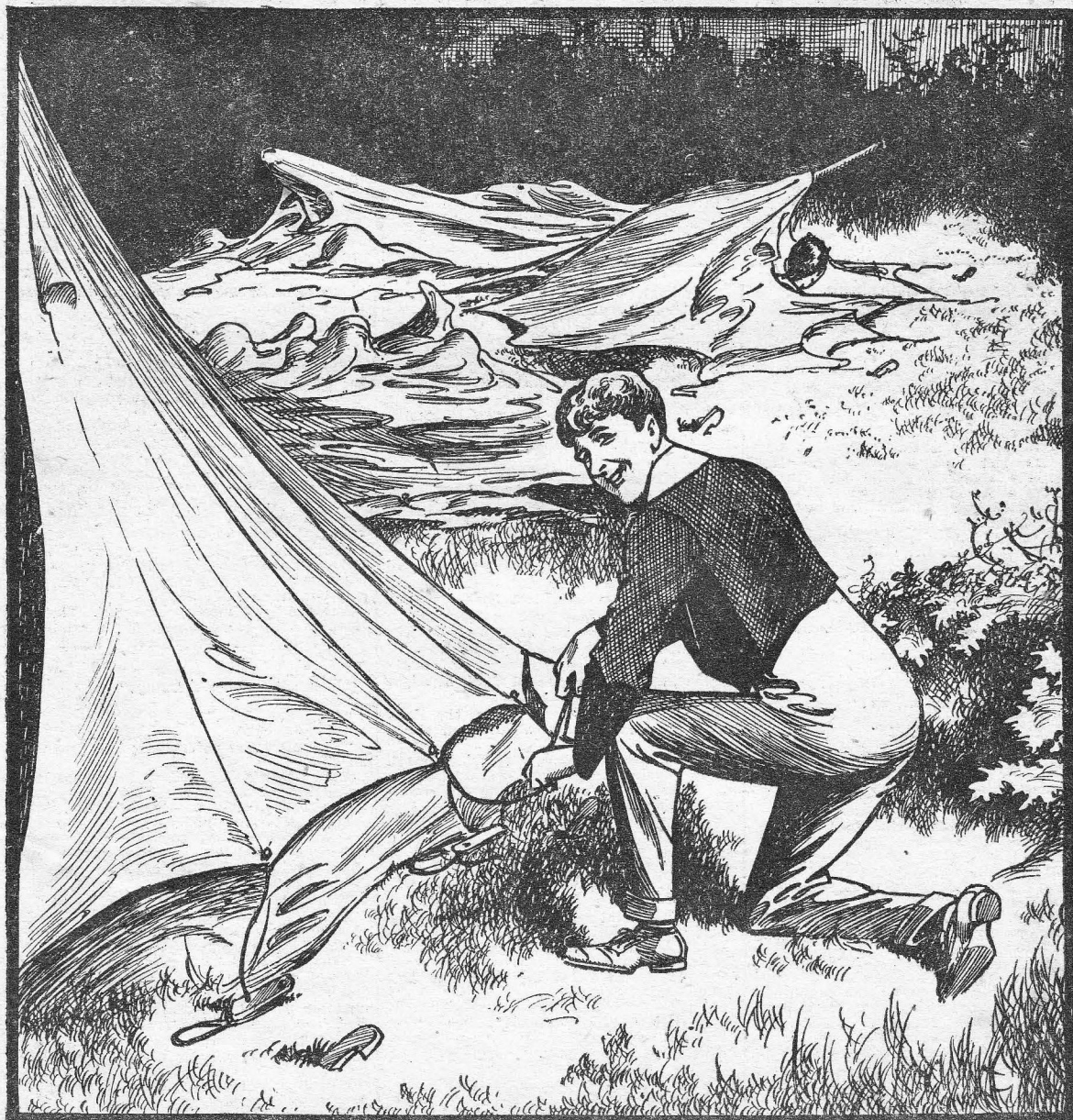
The Penny **1½^d**
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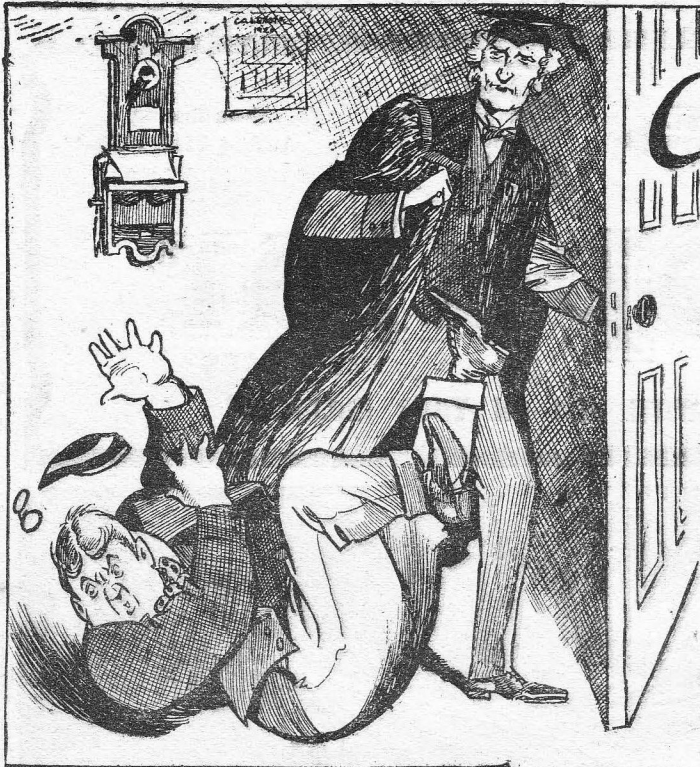
20 PAGES

TAKE THIS PAPER WITH YOU ON YOUR HOLIDAYS!



AN ENEMY IN THE GREYFRIARS CAMP!

(An Incident in the Grand School Story in this Issue.)



Getting Quits with Greyfriars!

A Splendid Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars School : : in Camp. : :

.. BY ..
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. What Bunter Overheard.

“WHERE is the nearest telephone, Quelch?”
Billy Bunter of the Remove pricked up his ears as the headmaster of Greyfriars asked that question.

It was a glorious afternoon in August, and the sun shone pleasantly down upon the Greyfriars encampment at Woody Bay.

Billy Bunter was in the refreshment marquee. He had been pleading with Mrs. Mumble for nearly half an hour to let him have a strawberry-ice “on tick.” But the good dame was adamant. And now, just as he was about to quit the marquee in despair, Billy Bunter overheard the Head in conversation with Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

“The nearest telephone, sir,” said Mr. Quelch, “is at the boathouse down on the beach.”

“Dear me! Is there no instrument near the camp?”

“None, sir.”

“That is most annoying!”

“Shall I go down to the boathouse and telephone on your behalf, sir?” volunteered Mr. Quelch.

“No, no; I will go myself!”

The conversation ceased at this juncture, and there was a sound of retreating footsteps.

Billy Bunter, rolled cautiously out of the marquee.

The dialogue between the Head and Mr. Quelch, brief though it had been, had not been without interest to the fat junior.

What was going on?

Whom did the Head propose to ring up on the telephone?

Why had he not allowed Mr. Quelch to telephone on his behalf? Had he some secret message to deliver?

These questions, together with several others, occupied Billy Bunter's mind.

The Owl of the Remove was nothing if not inquisitive, and he set off in the wake of the Head, whose begowned figure was retreating in the distance.

The Famous Five were playing cricket close to the camp exit.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” ejaculated Bob Cherry. “Whither bound, porpoise?”

“Ahem! I—I’m going for a walk,” explained Bunter.

“Where to?” demanded Harry Wharton.

“I’m going to follow the Head.”

“My hat! What on earth for?”

“I believe there's something wrong. I heard the Head tell Quelch that he was going down to the boathouse to use the phone. Quelch offered to go instead, but the Head wouldn't hear of it. So it must be something jolly private and important!”

“If you take my advice,” growled Johnny Bull, “you'll chuck the idea of stalking the Head. If he happens to look round, and finds that you're following him, there'll be ructions!”

“Yes, rather!”

“Stay where you are, fathead!”

But Billy Bunter paid no heed to this good advice. He hurried out of the camp, and scuttled along the lane which led to the shore.

Dr. Locke walked ahead with a firm step and an upright carriage, and, fortunately for Bunter, he did not once look back.

The fat junior was hard on his heels by the time he reached the boathouse; but the Head was blissfully unaware of the fact.

There was a boatman hovering in the vicinity, and Dr. Locke asked him if he might use the telephone.

Permission being readily given, the Head disappeared into the boathouse and closed the door.

Billy Bunter followed up, and flattened his ear against the keyhole of the door. It was a little habit of Bunter's to accumulate information in this way.

The Head took the receiver off its hook, and requested the operator to give him a number at Friarade.

“My hat!” murmured Billy Bunter, quivering with excitement. “He's going to ring up Greyfriars!”

A long interval followed, during which the Head snorted with impatience.

At last a voice sounded over the wires.

“Hallo!”

“At last!” murmured the Head. “Is that Greyfriars?”

“Eh?”

“Is that Greyfriars School?”

“Great Scott, no!”

The Head gave a gasp.

“Then who—what—?”

“This is the Kent County Asylum!”

“Bless my soul!”

“Are you seeking admission to this institution?” inquired a voice at the other end.

“No, I am not!” roared the Head. “I am a victim of the incompetence of the tele-

phone operator who has given me the wrong number!”

“Oh!”

“Will you ring off?”

“Certainly, old fruit!”

The Head nearly choked. And when he succeeded in attracting the attention of the operator again, he gave that young lady a piece of his mind.

“You gave me the wrong number, madam!” he shouted. “I expressly asked for Greyfriars School, and you put me on to the County Asylum! Really, your incompetence is appalling! I suppose,” added Dr. Locke, with a touch of irony, “that had I asked for the asylum in the first instance, you would have put me on to Greyfriars!”

“Sorry, sir!” said the operator blandly. Evidently she was accustomed to these outbursts from indignant subscribers. “I'll give you Greyfriars right away.”

Another long interval followed. Then a familiar voice sounded over the wires.

“Ah! Is that Greyfriars?” asked the Head.

“Yes.”

“Is it the matron speaking?”

“Yes.”

“I am Dr. Locke.”

“Oh, yes, sir!”

“How are those unfortunate lads progressing?”

The “unfortunate lads” to whom the Head referred were Nugent minor, Bolsover minor, Tubb, Paget, Gatty, and Myers.

These six fags had contracted German measles, and had been confined to the school sanatorium, whilst the rest of the fellows went away to camp, in order to be safeguarded against infection.

“The doctor has just been, sir,” said the matron, “and he has pronounced the whole of the patients to be perfectly fit again.”

“Splendid!”

“There is no longer any need to isolate them, and I am allowing them to go out this afternoon.”

“I am pleased and relieved to learn that they are quite all right again,” said the Head. “I will make arrangements for the camp to be evacuated, and the boys to return to Greyfriars in three days' time!”

Billy Bunter, listening at the keyhole, gave a gasp of dismay.

Like the majority of his schoolfellows, Bunter had been very happy under canvas, and it was sad news that the camp was shortly to be broken up.

The Head was about to ring off, when the matron spoke again.

"One moment, Dr. Locke! A new boy has just arrived at the school—a boy called Percy Pilkington. Evidently his father was not aware of the fact that the school had removed to camp. What shall I do with Pilkington? Is he to remain here until the boys return?"

The Head reflected for a moment. "No," he said at length. "It would be rather uncomfortable for a new boy to spend three days practically alone. Would you be good enough to send Pilkington straight to the camp?"

"Certainly, sir!" said the matron. "Thank you! I take it he will arrive some time during the afternoon?"

"I will send him at once, sir." "Thank you!" said the Head again. "Good-bye!"

And he replaced the receiver and crossed to the door.

No sooner had he opened it than a fat junior came sprawling into the boathouse, to alight in a confused heap at the Head's feet. "Bless my soul!" ejaculated Dr. Locke, in amazement. "Bunter!"

"Ow!" "What are you doing here, boy?" "Yow!"

The Head frowned. "Cease making those ridiculous articulations, Bunter, and answer my question! I strongly suspect that you have been listening outside the door!"

"Nunno, sir!" said the fat junior, scrambling to his feet. "Not at all, sir! I hope you don't think I'm that sort of fellow, sir!"

"If you were not listening at the door, Bunter, what were you doing?"

"Ahem! I came to—to hire a boat, sir." The Head's frown deepened. He knew that Billy Bunter was no sailor, and that the fat junior would not have dared to take a boat out by himself, especially as the sea happened to be far from smooth.

"You are prevaricating, Bunter! I am convinced that you followed me all the way from the camp in order to overhear my conversation on the telephone!"

"Oh, really, sir, I—I didn't hear a word!" faltered the fat junior. "I didn't hear you tell the matron that the camp would break up in three days' time, sir! And as for the new boy who's being sent down here from the school, why, I don't even know that his name's Pilkington."

The head made an impatient gesture. "That is quite enough!" he said sternly. "You will take five hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs!" "And I shall expect them to be handed in to me before the camp is disbanded. You must learn to curb your inquisitiveness. Go!"

And Billy Bunter, to use one of Shakespeare's expressions, stood not upon the order of going, but went at once!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Waiting for the New Boy.

"I SAY, you fellows—"
"Hallo, Bunter's back!" remarked Frank Nugent, as the fat junior rolled in at the camp entrance.

"He looks pretty down in the mouth, too," said Bob Cherry. "Did the Head spot you, porpoise?"

"Yes," grunted Billy Bunter. "When he had finished phoning he opened the door suddenly, and I pitched headfirst into the boathouse!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the Famous Five through his big spectacles.

"It's nothing to cackle at, you fellows! I got five hundred lines!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" was Johnny Bull's unsympathetic comment.

"Who did the Head ring up?" inquired Bob Cherry. "Was it a pawnbroker or a money-lender?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, really, Cherry! He rang up the matron at Greyfriars."

"My hat!" "The fags who were down with German measles are now all right again, and the camp breaks up in three days' time, and we go back to the school."

The Famous Five exchanged dismal glances. Billy Bunter's news was not altogether unexpected. But it was none the less unwelcome. Harry Wharton & Co. had thoroughly enjoyed their camping-out experiences,

and the prospect of packing up and returning to Greyfriars was anything but pleasant. "Rotten luck!" said Bob Cherry.

"Beastly!" "I knew we should get marching orders in a day or two," said Harry Wharton. "Why couldn't those fags have let their German measles hang on for another month?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Never mind, my worthy chums!" said Hurree Singh. "Let us look on the brightful side of things. As your poet Shakespeare observes:

"Pack all your troubles in your kitful bag,
And smilefully smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The juniors could scarcely refrain from "smilefully smiling" at Hurree Singh's weird and wonderful English.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "there's a new kid coming this afternoon!"

"Eh?" "A fellow called Pilkington. He turned up at Greyfriars this morning, and the Head gave instructions to the matron that he was to be sent on to the camp."

"My hat! Rather a novelty for a new kid to arrive while we're in camp," said Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather!" "Wonder if he's coming into the Remove?" said Johnny Bull.

"Shouldn't be surprised," said Wharton. "Most new kids seem to find their way into the Remove."

"I think it's up to us to stand Pilkington a feed when he turns up," said Billy Bunter. "If you fellows will hand over the cash, I'll see about laying in supplies of tuck."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter blinked in astonishment at the Famous Five.

"What's the joke?" he demanded. "You are!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"If you think we're going to hand over our spare funds to you, so that you can have a free orgy, you're jolly well mistaken!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really!" "Come along, you fellows!" said Frank Nugent. "We'll stroll around and see if we can find this new kid. He'll be on his way by now, and he's only got twelve miles to come."

The Famous Five abandoned their game of cricket, and sauntered away.

Dennis Carr hailed them as they were in the act of quitting the camp.

"Whither bound, you fellows?" "There's a new kid coming," explained Bob Cherry. "He's being sent on to the camp from Greyfriars, and we're going to meet him, and do the welcoming-him-in stunt. Coming along?"

"Yes, rather!" said Dennis Carr. The six juniors set out together along the shady lane.

They proceeded in the direction of the railway-station, for it was more than probable that Master Pilkington would make the journey from Greyfriars by train.

The little station at Woody Bay, however, was deserted, save for an aged and bearded railway-servant known as Old Bill.

It has been observed that each man in his time plays many parts. This was certainly true of Old Bill, who was station-master, ticket-collector, booking-clerk, porter, and general factotum rolled into one.

At the present moment Old Bill was juggling with a couple of milk-cans.

"What time does the next train from Friardale arrive, William?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"Seying o'clock, sir!" said Old Bill stolidly.

"Not until seven! My hat!" "Pilkington won't come by train," said Harry Wharton. "He'll walk, most likely."

"If he crawled on his hands and knees, balancing a hod of bricks on the top of his noddle, he'd get here quicker than the train!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "No use waiting here!" growled Johnny Bull. "Come on!"

The juniors left Old Bill to continue his juggling feats, and they turned back into the lane.

And as they strolled along between the shady hedgerows a rousing refrain came to their ears.

It was a scouting song, and the singers were undoubtedly Jimmy Brown & Co., of the rival camp:

"Look out! Look out! The song of the scout,
The cry of the marching host;
Under command to lend a hand
Wherever it's wanted most.
Body and brain resolved to train
By all that we hear and see;
Each in his place, his job to face,
Whatever that job may be!"

The song was familiar to Harry Wharton & Co. They had chanted it themselves during their scouting exploits around Greyfriars.

"Brown's brigade!" muttered Dennis Carr. Harry Wharton nodded.

The singers came into view round a bend in the lane. There were four of them—Jimmy Brown, the patrol-leader, and his three staunch chums—Jack Hardy, Kid Lennox, and Tommy Towers.

"Hallo, my merry warblers!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"What cheer, aged grape-fruit!" said Jimmy Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "What are you kids from the kindergarten doing?" inquired Tommy Towers. "Looking for trouble?"

"No—for a new kid," said Harry Wharton. "You haven't seen a spare part called Pilkington lying about, I suppose?"

The scouts shook their heads. "When are you expecting this new addition to the menagerie?" asked Jimmy Brown.

"Don't be a funny ass! He's expected to arrive at any moment."

"He might be coming by train," said Kid Lennox. "In that case, he won't turn up until the winter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "If you see this fellow Pilkington drifting about, you might tell him we're looking for him!" said Wharton.

"Certainly!" said Jimmy Brown. And the scouts passed on, singing boisterously as they went:

"Never get slack when things look black,
But carry the maxim through;
Open your eyes and shut your mouth
Whenever there's work to do!"

Then the singing broke off abruptly, and Jimmy Brown turned to his comrades. His eyes had that mischievous twinkle in them which portended a jape.

"What's the wheeze, Jimmy?" inquired Jack Hardy hopefully.

"I was thinking," said Jimmy Brown, "that we might collar this kid Pilkington, and make good use of him."

"How?" The scout leader then outlined his scheme. It was a particularly daring scheme, and if it worked it would undoubtedly prove the jape of the season.

When Jimmy Brown's chums heard it, they simply yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Jolly good, Jimmy!"

"Think it'll pan out all right?" "It's bound to!" said Jimmy Brown, with a chuckle. "But the first thing to be done is to find Comrade Pilkington, and see what sort of a merchant he is. If he's a sport, he'll enter into the jape like a shot!"

"And if he isn't?" said Kid Lennox. "Then we shall have to force his hand!"

And the scouts, congratulating themselves that they had hit upon a scheme for making Harry Wharton & Co. sit up, went on their way, keeping a sharp look-out for the Greyfriars new boy.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Pilkington is Willing!

TING-A-LING-LING!
A bicycle-bell clanged out in the lane.

Jimmy Brown & Co. stepped to one side, and the cyclist came into view, pedalling furiously. He was a young, cheery-faced fellow in Etons.

"That's your man!" exclaimed Jack Hardy. The cyclist applied his brakes when he drew level with the scouts, and he jumped off his machine.

"Am I going right for the Greyfriars camp?" he inquired.

Instead of replying to that question, Jimmy Brown asked another.

"Your name Pilkington?" The cyclist nodded. "You're the new kid who's going to Greyfriars—what?"

"That's me!"
 "Then I've got a proposition to put before you."
 Pilkington eyed the scouts rather suspiciously.
 "Half a minute!" he said. "Who are you?"
 "I'm Jimmie Brown, the patrol-leader at the scouts' camp, and these are my valiant henchmen—Jack Hardy, Kid Lennox, and Tommy Towers."

"Oh! You're not Greyfriars fellows, then?"
 "My dear fellow," said Tommy Towers, "we should never allow our people to send us to such a home for incurables!"
 Pilkington grinned.
 "Do I understand," he said, "that you are up against the Greyfriars crowd?"
 "Right on the wicket!" said Jimmy Brown. "Ever since they've been in camp we've been at war with them. Quite a friendly sort of war, of course!"

"Oh, of course!"
 "We've played a number of japes on them," continued Jimmy Brown, "and they've japed us in return. Honours are about even. And we want to get the upper hand before their camp breaks up—twig?"
 Pilkington nodded.
 "This is jolly interesting!" he said. "And I should like to hear all about your feud with Greyfriars. But the fact is, I'm hungry—simply ravenous! I had nothing to eat at Greyfriars, and I hired this bike and came straight here, expecting to find some sort of refreshment-place on the way. But I drew blank."

"We'll soon dispel the pangs of hunger," said Jimmy Brown. "Follow your uncles!"
 Pilkington hesitated.
 "Our camp's only a few hundred yards from here," said Kid Lennox persuasively.
 "All serene!"
 The new boy accompanied the scouts to their quarters.

Jimmy Brown & Co. were on tenterhooks lest Harry Wharton and his chums should see them. But the Greyfriars fellows were not in sight, and the scouts camp was reached without mishap.
 Pilkington took stock of his surroundings with an interested air. He surveyed the neatly-arranged tents and the bronzed-faced scouts who bustled briskly to and fro, and he remarked rather wistfully:
 "By Jove! Wish I was coming here, instead of to the Greyfriars camp! I'd give anything to be a scout!"

Jimmy Brown & Co. exchanged triumphant glances.
 "That will be all right, Pilkington," said Jack Hardy. "You can stay here—for a few days, at any rate."
 Pilkington looked astonished.
 "Eh? What on earth are you babbling about?" he exclaimed.
 "Step this way," said Jimmy Brown, "and we'll put our proposition before you!"
 Pilkington was escorted to the scout leader's tent, where an excellent repast was set before him.

After he had devoured a couple of buttered scones and some jam-tarts, and laved his parched throat with ginger-beer, Pilkington turned to his hosts.
 "Now, what's this proposition?" he asked.
 "Are you fond of a jape?" inquired Jimmy Brown.

"Yes, rather!"
 "And you'd rather like to stop here for two or three days?"
 "Of course! But—but it can't be done—"
 "Oh, yes it can!"
 "How?"
 "You can change places with one of our fellows," said Jimmy Brown calmly. "He can go to the Greyfriars camp and pass himself off as you, and you can stay here."

Pilkington's eyes opened wide.
 "Impossible!" he said breathlessly.
 "My dear chap, there's no such word as 'impossible' in the dictionary—not in the scouts' dictionary, anyway."
 "But the Greyfriars fellows would smell a rat—"
 "They wouldn't. They've never seen you. And if a strange fellow turns up at their camp this afternoon, and says he's Pilkington, the new boy, they'll swallow it all right."
 Pilkington drew a deep breath.
 "Well, I'm game!" he said, at length.
 "But I'm dashed if I can see the object of this queer stunt!"
 Jimmy Brown chuckled.

"The fellow we shall send in your place—a chap called Terry O'Rooney—will lead the Greyfriars bounders the very dickens of a THE LENNY POPULAR.—No. 88.

dance!" he said. "He'll jape them over and over again."
 "And they'll never dream that he's one of our fellows!" said Tommy Towers. "You see, they've never seen Terry O'Rooney."
 "My hat!"
 "He'll simply run amok, and cause no end of a disturbance in their camp!" chuckled Kid Lennox. "It will be the jape of the season!"

"But what's going to happen to me when the hoax is discovered?" asked Pilkington.
 Nobody seemed to hear that question.
 The flap of the tent was pulled open, and a pleasant-faced scout looked in.
 "Any tea left?" he inquired.
 "Yes, rather!" said Jimmy Brown. "Step right in, Terry! You're just the fellow we want to see!"
 "Who's this merchant?" asked Terry O'Rooney, pointing to Pilkington.
 "He's a new kid—Pilkington—bound for the Greyfriars camp," explained Jimmy Brown. "But he's staying here for a few days, and you're going to the other camp in his place."
 "What?"

"It's a glorious opportunity of scoring off the Greyfriars bounders!" said the scout leader. "The sort of opportunity that only crops up once in a giddy lifetime! You and Pilkington will change togs, and you'll go along to the Greyfriars camp, and represent yourself as the new kid. Then you can fairly make things hum—see?"

Terry O'Rooney was Irish, and fond of a jape. It took him some time to see what Jimmy Brown was driving at. But when he did see he laughed uproariously.
 "Are you game, Terry?" asked Kid Lennox.
 "Of course! I'll give those Greyfriars beggars the shock of their lives! But supposing they recognise me?"

"No fear of that," said Jimmy Brown. "They've never seen you, except at a distance. And you'll look altogether different in Etons."
 "Is Pilkington willing to swap places with me?" inquired Terry O'Rooney.
 "Quite!" said Pilkington. "But I'm rather doubtful as to how it's all going to end."
 "Set your mind at rest," said Jimmy Brown. "If there's any trouble afterwards, we'll come forward and face the music."
 "Yes, rather!"

After some further discussion Percy Pilkington and Terry O'Rooney changed clothes.
 The former was not at all averse to getting into scout's garb, and the latter rather fancied himself in Etons.
 "You'd better be getting along!" said Jimmy Brown. "Don't forget that your name's Pilkington, and that you're a new kid—just arrived!"
 "And don't forget to give Wharton & Co. beans!" said Jack Hardy.
 Terry O'Rooney chuckled.
 "They'll have several sorts of a fit by the time I've finished with them!" he declared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "One minute!" chimed in Pilkington. "What will your scoutmaster say when he finds this out?"

"We'll put him wise about the jape," said Jimmy Brown. "Scoutmaster Walters is a real good sort, and he wouldn't dream of giving the show away!"
 All the details having been arranged, Terry O'Rooney bade an revoir to his chums, and set out in the direction of the Greyfriars camp.

Not many fellows would have cared to play so difficult and dangerous a part as he was about to play.
 But Terry had heaps of nerve, and he was keenly looking forward to causing an unprecedented commotion in the rival camp!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
 "Here comes the new kid!"
 The Famous Five and Dennis Carr halted in the lane as a youth in Etons came towards them.
 "Your name Pilkington?" inquired Harry Wharton.
 The newcomer nodded.
 "How on earth did you get here?" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "You surely didn't walk?"

The new boy made no response to that question. He realised that it would be necessary for him to tell a few "whoppers," but he intended to restrict the number as much as possible.
 "Are you Greyfriars fellows?" he asked.

"Yes; and we've been looking for you for the last hour or more," said Dennis Carr. "You didn't come by train, of course?"
 "No; by road," said the impostor.
 And he felt devoutly thankful that the Greyfriars juniors did not press for further information on the subject.

"Well, you're here, and that's all that matters," said Bob Cherry, who was favourably impressed by the new boy's appearance.
 "What sort of a merchant are you?"
 "Oh, an excellent fellow in every way," said Terry O'Rooney gravely.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Are you a cricketer?"
 "I'm a budding Jessop."
 "Useful fighting man?"
 "Well, I could put your nose out of joint before you could say 'Pax'!"

"You—you cheeky cub!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully. "If it wasn't for the fact that you're a new kid, I'd wipe up the ground with you!"
 "If Pilkington's good at nothing else, he's an expert at blowing his own trumpet!" said Dennis Carr dryly.
 "He doesn't believe in being backflogged behind in coming frontally forward," observed Hurree Singh.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Which Form are you coming into, Pilkington?" inquired Harry Wharton.
 "Don't know yet. The Sixth, most likely."
 "Ass! Only the very brainy fellows belong to the Sixth."
 "Oh! That accounts for the fact that you fellows don't belong to it, I suppose!" said Terry O'Rooney.
 "Why, you—you—"
 "He's more likely to go into the Third!" growled Johnny Bull.

The juniors had liked the new boy at first sight. But they were exasperated to find that he had none of the meekness and respect which characterised the average new boy. He did not seem to realise that he was in the company of six of the leading lights in the Remove Form.
 "By the way," said Terry O'Rooney, as the party set off towards the camp, "I don't know your names yet."

"I'm Wharton, skipper of the Remove," said Harry, "and these are my pals."
 And he introduced the rest of the juniors in turn.

"What sort of a time are you having down here?" asked Terry.
 "Top-hole!" said Dennis Carr. "But the camp breaks up in a day or two. Then you'll have to come back with us to Greyfriars."
 "I don't think!" murmured Terry under his breath.
 "Eh? What did you say?" demanded Dennis sharply.

"Ahem! I said I could do with a drink. It was jolly stuffy in the railway-carriage, you know."
 "But you said you came by road!" exclaimed Nugent.
 "Oh crumbs!"

Terry O'Rooney flushed to the roots of his hair. The juniors regarded him curiously.
 "You say you're a budding Jessop, and a budding Joe Beckett, and all the rest of it," said Bob Cherry. "Strikes me you're a budding Ananias as well!"
 "First you say you came by road, and now you say you came by rail," said Harry Wharton. "Which was it?"

Inspiration came to Terry, and helped him out of a tight corner.
 "I came part of the way by train, and walked the rest," he said.
 "But there wasn't a train—" protested Johnny Bull.

"Of course there was!"
 The juniors glanced grimly at the new boy. They knew that he was prevaricating, though why he should do so was a complete mystery to them.

Terry O'Rooney felt very uncomfortable. He had realised at the outset that he had a difficult part to play. But it was proving even more difficult than he had anticipated.
 The Famous Five and Dennis Carr were not simpletons, and it was far from easy to deceive them.

Moreover, Terry hated telling fibs—even harmless ones. But he knew that it would be humanly impossible to carry the jape through successfully without making a few misstatements.
 Fortunately the camp was reached at this stage, and no further awkward questions were asked.
 "Here we are!" said Bob Cherry. "You'd



The amazed exclamations of the juniors awakened the Form-master. "Why, bless my soul, what does this mean?" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "Somebody has had the effrontery to convert my tent into a storage for boots and shoes!"

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better go and report to the Head, Pilkington."

Terry's jaw dropped. He didn't relish the idea of interviewing the headmaster of Greyfriars, who would probably subject him to a searching cross-examination.

"You needn't look so startled, kid," said Harry Wharton kindly. "The Head's quite a decent sort. We'll take you along to his marquee."

Terry nerved himself for the ordeal. He reflected that he had to be loyal to Jimmy Brown & Co., and that it was up to him to play the part of Percy Pilkington without restraint.

As it happened, however, the Head was out. He was playing golf with Mr. Prout on the neighbouring links.

"Better come and see Quelch," said Dennis Carr.

At that moment the master of the Remove bore down upon the group of juniors.

"Ah! Are you the new boy—Pilkington?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," said Terry.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch; "follow me to my marquee. I wish to ask you a few questions."

Terry felt very uneasy on the subject of those "few questions." But he found that they merely referred to scholastic matters. Mr. Quelch interrogated him concerning history and geography, and Latin and French. And finally he said:

"Your abilities appear to be moderate, Pilkington. You are a little above the standard of the Third Form, but not quite up to the standard of the Upper Fourth. You will therefore be placed in the Remove."

"Very good, sir."

"We shall not be here in camp much longer, my boy," said Mr. Quelch. "For the remaining day or two you will occupy No. 1 tent, with Wharton and Nugent."

Terry chuckled inwardly. Nothing could have suited his purpose better. Situated in the Remove headquarters, so to speak, he would be able to carry out his designs far more effectively than if he had been allotted to one of the other Forms.

The Famous Five and Dennis Carr were waiting for the new boy when he emerged from the Form-master's marquee.

"What luck?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I'm coming into the Remove," said Terry.

"Good! Which tent?"

"No. 1—with you and Nugent."

"All serene. By the way, where's your baggage?"

For a moment Terry was taken aback. Then he said:

"I didn't bring it down to the camp with me. You see, we shall only be here a day or two."

"Had your tea, Pilkington?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, thanks."

"Then p'raps you wouldn't mind looking on while we have ours?"

"Not at all. It will remind me of the lions feeding at the Zoo!"

"Look here, Pilkington," said Harry Wharton, "you've got a colossal amount of cheek for a new kid. And if you don't moderate your transports, you'll finish up with a thick ear!"

"He's almost as cheeky as those confounded Scouts in the other camp!" said Frank Nugent.

Terry chuckled. He wondered what Harry Wharton & Co. would have said had they known that he was a member of Jimmy Brown's patrol.

Tea was prepared in the tent; and the juniors, squatting in Oriental fashion on the tent-benches, attacked the meal with hearty appetites.

Terry watched them with an amused smile.

"Before many hours are over," he reflected, "I'll make these beggars feel sorry for themselves!"

The flap of the tent parted, and a fat face, adorned by a pair of spectacles, peered in.

"I say, you fellows—Hallo! The new kid's arrived, then?"

Terry O'Rooney regarded Billy Bunter with interest.

"Pon my soul, this reminds me more than ever of the Zoo!" he said. "I've never seen such a perfect specimen of a porpoise!"

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the speaker.

"Look here, you cheeky new kid—I—I mean, look here, Pilkington, old chap, I'm expecting a postal-order in the morning."

"Go hon!"

"It's being sent by one of my titled relations," continued Bunter, "and it's bound to be for a good sum. But at the present moment I happen to be on the rocks. I know you're rolling in cash, and if you could advance me a pound—"

"Certainly," said Terry.

Billy Bunter's eyes fairly glistened behind his spectacles. He had not expected such a ready response to his request.

The new boy rose to his feet, and Harry Wharton & Co. were about to warn him that it would be an act of lunacy to lend money to Bunter, when he suddenly shot out his fist.

Billy Bunter took the blow on his snub nose, and started back with a yell of anguish. "Yarooooh! What did you want to do that for, you beast?"

"I've advanced you a pound," said Terry blandly. "In other words, a punch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The only person who did not join in the laughter was Billy Bunter. He flourished a fat fist at his assailant, and promptly scuttled away out of the danger-zone.

"Good, Pilkington!" said Bob Cherry. "That's the stuff to presentfully give them!" said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The flap of the tent parted again, and this time it was the far from beautiful face of Bolsover major which appeared through the aperture.

"Are you the new kid?" demanded the bully of the Remove, glaring at Terry.

"Yes. You, I presume, are the boot-boy?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Bolsover scowled.

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Bolsover.

"Why don't you take that hideous mask off?" inquired Terry.

"Eh?"
"It absolutely disfigures you! It— Why, my hat! It's not a mask at all! It's your face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton & Co. The new boy's taunting remark was altogether too much for Bolsover major. He scrambled through into the tent, and made a rush at Terry.

That youth had heard all about Bolsover in advance, and he felt quite confident of holding his own against him. He waited until Bolsover sprang at him, and then he clasped the bully of the Remove round the middle, and bore him to the ground.

Although a useful fighting-man, Bolsover major had a lot to learn regarding the science of wrestling. He was no match whatever for this tenacious new boy, who bore him face-downwards on to the tent-boards, and pinned him there by kneeling on his back.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on in amazement. And their amazement grew when Terry reached out his hand for a cricket-stump, and proceeded to belabour his victim.

"Whack, whack, whack!"
"Yaroooh!"

The dust rose in a cloud from Bolsover's tight-fitting trousers.

The prostrate bully writhed and struggled as the stump descended, but there was no escape for him.

"Whack, whack, whack!"
"Yow-ow-ow! Chuckit! Stoppit! Dragim-off!"

When he had administered half a dozen strokes, Terry paused.

"If I allow you to get up now, will you promise to go away quietly?" he asked.

"Yow! Yes!"
"And be a good little boy?"

"Yes, hang you!"

Terry allowed the bully of the Remove to rise, and Bolsover, hurt and humbled and humiliated, slunk out of the tent. The laughter of Harry Wharton & Co. followed him as he went.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You know how to look after yourself, Pilkington, and no mistake!"

"Where did you learn that wrestling dodge?" asked Nugent.

"In the scouts—" began Terry.

And then he could have kicked himself for letting his tongue run away with him.

Harry Wharton glanced curiously at the new boy.

"Have you belonged to a scout patrol?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Excuse me," said Terry, who felt unequal to facing a fire of awkward questions, "I'm going to have a look round the camp."

And he hurriedly quitted the tent.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Johnny Bull. "That fellow Pilkington's about the queerest card I've ever struck!"

And the other members of the Famous Five agreed!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Deeds of Darkness.

TERRY O'ROONEY—alias Pilkington of the Remove—made good use of his time that evening.

He carefully explored the camp, and the Remove tents in particular, and a plan of campaign was already forming in his active brain.

When bed-time came, and he rejoined Wharton and Nugent in No. 1 tent, he explained that he was feeling fagged out, and wanted to get to sleep. In this way he managed to stave off further cross-examination.

As a matter of fact, Terry was really tired, and he did go to sleep. But only for a few hours. He awoke at midnight, and, after making sure that Wharton and Nugent were

fast asleep, he slipped on his clothes, and stole out of the tent.

The first jape which Terry intended to carry out was rather a drastic one. And it was decidedly risky into the bargain. But he didn't mind the risk.

The night was intensely dark, and the camp was hushed and still. Even the Head, who usually sat up studying until a late hour, had retired for the night.

Sentries had been posted on the outskirts of the camp, but it was unlikely that they would observe Terry.

"Now for it!" muttered that youth. And he stepped towards No. 2 tent in the Remove lines, and deftly loosened the ropes.

The sudden loosening of all the ropes which surrounded the tent could have only one effect—that of bringing the tent down upon the heads of the occupants.

This was Terry's scheme.
Within a few seconds No. 2 tent came crashing down upon the devoted heads of Tom Brown, Bulstrode, and Hazeldene, who were within.

All three of the juniors awoke with a start, wondering if an earthquake had happened. They struggled frantically to extricate themselves from the wreckage. And the more they struggled, the more hopelessly they became mixed up with the canvas.

"What the thump—" gasped Tom Brown. "It's a raid!" spluttered Bulstrode.

"Those bounders from the rival camp have caught us napping!" panted Hazeldene.

And whilst the three juniors were vainly endeavouring to sort themselves out, Terry O'Rooney had passed on to the next tent, which was inhabited by Russell and Ogilvy.

Dick Russell was disagreeably surprised when the tent-pole descended upon his head with a terrific concussion. And Ogilvy gave a yell as a mass of falling canvas enveloped him like a shroud.

Terry O'Rooney chuckled as he surveyed the results of his handiwork. But he realised that there was no time to be lost, and he hurriedly proceeded from tent to tent, loosening the ropes with nimble fingers.

There was great commotion in the Remove lines.

Nobody seemed to know what was happening.

Tent after tent came crashing down, and the slumbering juniors had a rude awakening. Wild yells rang out in the darkness.

Fellows struggled and grappled with each other on the ground, under the delusion that they were at grips with the unknown raiders.

The scene was one which the poet Milton would have described as "confusion worse confounded."

And at last the bewildered juniors contrived to sort themselves out, and an immediate search was made for the author of the outrage.

But Terry O'Rooney, having completed his task, sprinted back to No. 1 tent. It was the only tent in the Remove lines that was left standing.

Wharton and Nugent were awake. They were sitting up in their beds, listening to the wild sounds of commotion, when Terry came in.

"What's going on?" asked Wharton, in amazement.

"It's a raid!" said Terry excitedly. "Somebody's wrecked all the tents! You never saw such an upheaval in your life!"

"My hat!"

"Buck up!" said Terry. "Let's see if we can collar the giddy raiders!"

Wharton and Nugent were up in a twinkling. They slipped on a few garments, and followed the new boy out of the tent.

"It's Jimmy Brown and his gang who are responsible for this!" exclaimed Nugent. "If only we can get the bounders into our clutches—"

"There they are!" shouted Wharton, in great excitement.

And he pointed towards the camp exit, where a number of moving figures could be seen.

"After them!" panted Terry O'Rooney.

And the three juniors raced across the grass.

It so happened that Temple, Dabney, and Fry were on sentry duty that night. And the three Fourth-Formers were rudely surprised to find themselves seized and borne to the ground.

"Got them, by Jove!" gasped Nugent triumphantly.

"Yaroooh! You—you cheeky young rotters!"

It was not the voice of Jimmy Brown, or of one of Jimmy Brown's confederates. It was

the voice of Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Upper Fourth!

Harry Wharton, who had been in the act of grinding his knee into Temple's chest, released him as if he had been red-hot.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "We—we've made a mistake!"

"I should jolly well think you had!" growled Temple, rising to his feet. "What the dickens do you mean by springing on us like this?"

"We thought you were Jimmy Brown's gang!" explained Nugent. "Have you seen anything of those bounders?"

"No."
"Well, they've broken into the camp and japed us!"

"My hat!"

"They must have dodged out of the camp by another exit," said Terry O'Rooney.

"Let's collect the other fellows, and go along to their camp and slaughter them!" said Nugent.

But Harry Wharton shook his head.

"We shouldn't stand an earthly," he said. "There are over two hundred fellows in their camp. They'd simply make hay of the Remove! There's nothing for it but to go back to bed, and pay those bounders out some other time."

So the three juniors, after apologising for the inconvenience they had caused to the unfortunate sentries, went back to their own quarters.

On arriving at the Remove lines they found that the victims of the midnight jape were busily engaged in reconstructing their tents.

"Where have you fellows been?" asked Tom Brown.

"On the track of the japers," replied Wharton. "But they've given us the slip."

"That fellow Brown was responsible for this, of course?" said Bulstrode.

"Of course! We'll settle his hash tomorrow!"

Wharton and Nugent went back to their tent, and Terry O'Rooney, chuckling softly to himself, followed.

It was some time before all the tents were re-erected, but at last silence brooded once more over the Remove section of the camp. And the juniors, as they got into their freshly-made beds, mentally vowed vengeance on Jimmy Brown & Co.

Little did they dream that there would be a further jape that night. But there was. And Terry O'Rooney was again responsible.

Terry allowed an hour to elapse, and then, feeling satisfied that the Remove had settled down to sleep again, he visited each of the tents in turn, and took therefrom all the boots and shoes and slippers he could find.

He needed to go very warily, for fear of rousing the sleepers. But at the end of half an hour he had achieved his object, and every article of footwear in the Remove—with the exception of Terry's own shoes—was dumped outside on the grass.

The practical joker then conveyed all the boots and shoes and slippers to the marquee in which Mr. Quelch slept.

The master of the Remove would have been considerably astonished had he awoke, to find that his sleeping quarters were being used as a dumping-ground for all sorts and conditions of footwear.

Mr. Quelch did not wake.

Terry exercised great caution as he piled up all the boots and shoes and slippers into a pyramid in the Form-master's marquee.

Having completed the pyramid the japer withdrew.

"That completes my night's work!" he murmured, with a chuckle. "By my halidom, there will be ructions in the morning!"

And he was right!

From the Remove tents, at seven o'clock next morning, came a babel of voices.

"Where's my shoes?"

"Who's bagged my boots?"

"My slippers are missing!"

"Likewise my cricket boots!"

"And my running pumps!"

A scene of indescribable confusion followed. Fellows rushed from tent to tent, inquiring after their property, and other fellows collided with them, loudly protesting that their footwear had disappeared.

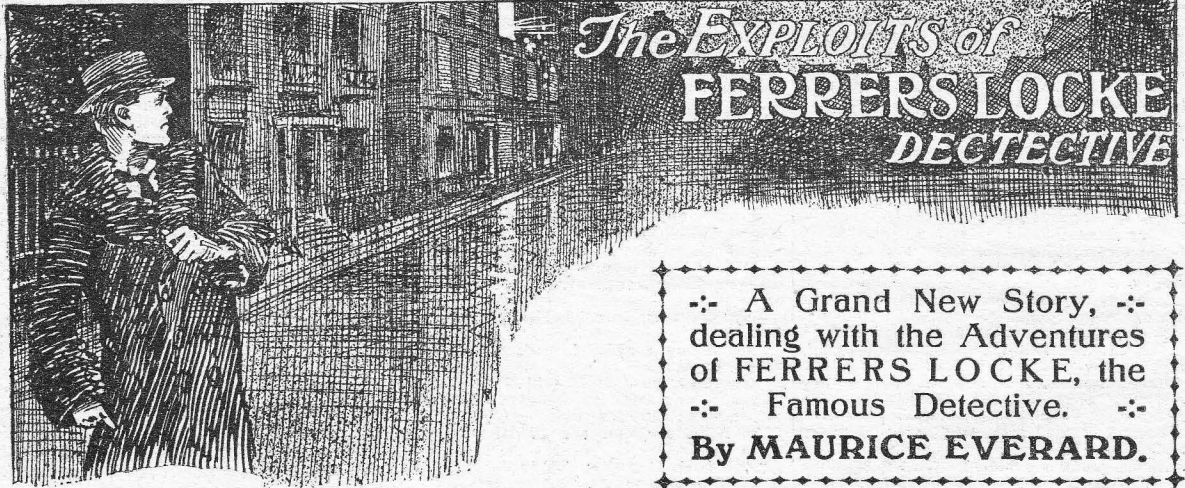
"This is the absolute limit!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Have your shoes vanished, Franky?"

"Yes!" growled Nugent.

"And yours, Pilkington?"

Terry nodded. His shoes had vanished all right—beneath the blankets. He had hidden them there for the time being in order to avoid suspicion. If he had been the only fellow in the Remove wearing shoes, the

THE SECOND INSTALMENT OF A THRILLING NEW DETECTIVE STORY.



The EXPLOITS of
FERRERS LOCKE
DETECTIVE

:- A Grand New Story, :-
dealing with the Adventures
of FERRERS LOCKE, the
:- Famous Detective. :-
By MAURICE EVERARD.

INTRODUCTION.

Ferrers Locke receives an urgent message from Marcus Hannaford, of Regent's Park, requesting his assistance. Hannaford, who, it appears, was the means of the death of Boris Stephanoff, is being hounded down by Stephanoff's brother Ivan, who is determined to have revenge.

On arriving at Hannaford's flat, Locke finds Hannaford dead, with a man, John Hay, who pleads innocent of the murder, bending over him.

The detective determines to prove Hay's innocence, and when the officials from Scotland Yard arrive Hay is introduced as his secretary.

"I am puzzled to know how and just when Ivan Stephanoff got away," said Locke, to the Yard officials.

(Now read on.)

Ferrers Locke's Predicament.

SIR KENNETH MOSELEY nodded acquiescence.

"You examined this room?" he said, walking into the inner apartment, and switching on the light.

An undisturbed bed-room with shut windows and a locked door met their inquiring gaze.

"The landing door of this room, which was in darkness when I passed, I locked. The key was on the outside. Here it is. Every cupboard and recess has been examined."

"But not the chimney, I suppose?" cried Fox, darting forward.

"The chimney, Mr. Fox, has an iron grille through which a rat might squeeze, but not a human-being."

Locke's coolness nettled the inspector. "Then the escape must have been by way of one of the windows."

"Which are all fastened. Even such an astute criminal as the one who committed this crime could hardly have got through a window, closed it, and have fastened the sash-lock from the outside."

Fox and his chief looked at each other in blank amazement. In all their wide experience no such baffling mystery as this had ever confronted them.

"A painful silence was brought to an end by a cry of triumph from Locke's rival.

"Of course, the broken window! He must have made his exit through that."

He thrust his head out and looked down. Forty feet of space yawned dizzily between him and the pavement.

Locke took up John Hay's notes, and placed them carefully in his pocket-book.

"I wish I could have found some such explanation myself, Mr. Fox," he said, with a quizzical smile. "Unfortunately, I couldn't entertain the idea for a moment. I tell you this so that we all start level in this case."

"Why don't you entertain Fox's theory?" interjected Sir Kenneth irritably.

"Because, Sir Kenneth, I was in the street below when the glass was shattered, and looked at every lighted window. Certainly no one escaped from any in the block of buildings."

"But, my dear fellow, the affair is absurd. THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 33.

Here is a man shot by an assailant in this very room. You are within a stone's throw. You are certain the murderer didn't escape by the window, or come out of either of these two rooms and pass you on the landing or on the stairs. The place is systematically searched, and no one is discovered in hiding. 'There is no exit by way of the upper floors or by the roof,' reading the brief report which his assistant, who just then returned, handed to him. 'Every room above has been turned inside out, and no trace of the wanted man found. What are we to think, Mr. Locke,' his manner suddenly becoming frigid, for it was an open secret that between the Scotland Yard officials and the famous private detective no love was lost, 'but that you have allowed yourself to be tricked by a very clever fellow, and now the task of bringing him to book lies with us?'

"With regard to my own position in this matter, Sir Kenneth, I am quite capable of looking after myself." Not once during the whole interview had he glanced at Hay or allowed his coolness to desert him. "We are all faced with the same problem. Who killed this man? I do not know, but, all the same, I mean to solve the mystery surrounding Marcus Hannaford's death."

He leaned forward, and laid a white handkerchief reverently over the dead man's face, while Sir Kenneth Moseley, with a few hurried words to half a dozen plain-clothes men, sent them in hot haste to make a close search of the neighbourhood. Next a doctor was summoned, and, pending an autopsy, pronounced cerebral hemorrhage, caused by a bullet wound in the brain, as accounting for death.

For the time being little more could be done on the scene of the tragedy. Locke had gathered all the information there was to be obtained during his lightning-like examination of the room prior to the arrival of the police. He wanted to get away, to be alone, and in the quiet seclusion of his own room reconstruct the crime, which filled him with deeper interest, and puzzled him more than any case he had ever undertaken before.

Before bidding Sir Kenneth and his colleagues good-night, he waited for a flash-light photograph to be taken. Then, with a shake of Sir Kenneth's hand, and the returning of a challenging glance from Inspector Fox, he opened the door for Hay to pass out.

Not until the open road lay silent before them, and the house of dread was several hundred yards behind did Hay speak.

"Safe at last, Mr. Locke, thanks to your splendid effort," he murmured. "We shall never meet again, but before I go let me assure you that you have earned my life-long gratitude, and a debt I can never hope to repay."

"You are indebted to me for nothing, Mr. Hay," he answered. "If I have staked my reputation on you, it is because—well, because something made me believe in you, and because to unravel a mystery like this is the breath of life to me. But enough of myself. You must still be thought of."

"I—Surely now I am safe?" he asked.

"Not for an hour—till the hand that slew Marcus Hannaford is brought to justice. To-morrow London, the whole of Britain, will

ring with news of the murder. At any moment something to connect you with the crime might come to light, and of what use would my subterfuge of to-night be then? We shall not say our good-bye yet awhile—not, in fact, until this crime has been brought home to its perpetrator."

Hay started back. "Come, play your part to the end, Mr. Hay," Locke said quietly. "Other eyes may be watching you."

"Whose, Mr. Locke?" "Those of the man who more than once has looked suspiciously at you to-night—Inspector Fox."

"Do you think he suspects?" "He is thinking the same thought as I had nearly two hours ago, but without my belief in you—that it is strange your being so near the scene of the tragedy—the nearest, in fact—without having seen anything that would give a clue to the assassin. In other words, had I not been there to shield you by a trick, I fear you couldn't possibly have escaped arrest."

"But surely I am free to go my own way now?" Hay suggested.

"Certainly, if you are willing to hazard the almost certain risk of arrest. Look behind on the other side of the road, and tell me what you see."

Tremblingly the young fellow obeyed. "A short, thin man, dressed in a dark suit. Ah, he has vanished now!"

"Detective-Inspector Fox, Mr. Hay. We must give him no further cause to suspect I have made the slightest misrepresentation concerning you. Now you will go straight back home to your parents—"

"I have no parents, Mr. Locke—no friend in the world, except one, and he—"

The young man stopped suddenly, and his lips closed tight.

Locke gave no sign that he had noticed the embarrassment.

"To your lodgings, then, Mr. Hay; and to-morrow, may I hope, you will be at my rooms to take up—for a time, at any rate—the duties I have had to impose upon you? Here is the address."

"You mean me to come and pretend to be your secretary?"

"Certainly! I am afraid your presence in the role forced upon you will be an absolute necessity."

Hay's eyes shone. "Of course, I shall be only too glad to do all I can, especially after what you have done for me."

"It is a business arrangement necessitated by unavoidable circumstances on both sides," he said shortly. "Should the police interrogate you, say you have orders from me to say nothing, and resolutely refuse to speak. Perhaps to-morrow we can arrive at a better understanding of this amazing affair."

A taxi whirled Locke back to his flat. His valet awaited him in the hall. The hands of the bracket-clock pointed to eleven.

"You'd better get to bed, Peters; you look tired out. I shan't want you any more to-night," he said.

Peters smiled.

"You may, sir. A gentleman is waiting to see you."

"What! At this time of night? When did he come?"

"Only a few minutes ago, sir."

"What name?"

"He wouldn't give any. Said he must see you—most important it was; and it weren't no use me trying to tick him off by saying you didn't see people as late as this! He knocked me flat with a look—put the lid on me like, and I gave him a chair inside."

Curiously puzzled, the detective opened the door silently, but a reflex mirror revealed a tall, dark, foreign-looking man.

"Have you quite finished your inspection of me?" he asked suddenly, turning towards the detective.

Locke felt momentarily taken aback.

"I have to ask your pardon!" he said apologetically.

"You are Mr. Locke, the detective, I presume?"

Locke inclined his head.

"To whom have I the honour of speaking?" he asked.

Before his visitor could answer Locke's

"Perhaps it is." He smiled with perfect composure. "I may be different from your other clients only in the manner of my seeking your aid. You are aware at this particular moment the shadows of suspicions are deepening rapidly around me—that I shall certainly be suspected of having murdered Mr. Hannaford?"

His coolness certainly was amazing.

"Why should I think anything of the sort? Has a murder been committed, Mr. Stephanoff?"

For a second his dark eyes flashed angrily, and he moved in his chair as though to rise; but he repressed the inclination.

"Mr. Locke, we are wasting each other's time unless we are mutually frank," he said, speaking very slowly. "For the time being the instinct of the detective is dominating you. A moment ago you saw my gloves fall to the floor, noticed there was blood on them. You neatly rolled the gloves out of sight under the bookcase for closer inspection later on. Let me save you the trouble of a labourious analysis. The blood is human

"What makes you think I am conversant with this affair?" he asked suddenly.

"Were you not there? I myself saw you coming down Baysdown Road. You were looking for a certain house—I conjecture No. 20. Mr. Hannaford had a fear of losing his life—"

"At your hands."

"Possibly. He was given to seeking protection from private detectives. I imagine in his usual condition of highly-strung nervous tension he sent for you."

"I see no reason for denial. He wrote me a certain letter, which is now in the hands of the police."

"Implicating me?"

"That I am not at liberty to say. You can draw your own conclusions."

"Well, taking that for granted, I am in a most dangerous position."

Locke smiled.

"That depends entirely on yourself, Mr. Stephanoff." His thoughts went back to John Hay. "I do not see how I can help you. Your best plan—if you are innocent, as you say—will be to go to the police. I do not feel you ought further to make a confidant of me."

"Then you refuse to help me?"

"There is nothing I can do."

"There is everything you can do—find the real murderer, and lift the guilt from an innocent man."

"That is exactly my intention."

Stephanoff began to show signs of impatience.

"You are convinced in your own mind that I am the murderer. Were you only that a trifle more certain, you would detain me here, and inform the police."

"I have no power to detain you."

He drew a short, quick breath of relief.

"If you fail me I am lost!" he cried, in sudden desperation. "Do, please, help me! Tell me what to do. I know I have been a fool, but I did not kill that man."

"Then who did?"

"I do not know."

"But you threatened his life—made more than one unsuccessful attempt."

"Ah, he told you that! Yes, I admit I did. I would have killed him. He slew my brother. Boris was dearer than life to me. Marcus killed him."

"And in revenge, Mr. Stephanoff, you made at least four determined endeavours to put an end to him. Now, when you see your wish accomplished, you profess repentance."

"Not that he is dead. Don't think that. He deserves his fate. But seeing I did not kill him, why should I suffer?"

"You will have a difficulty in convincing anyone of your innocence."

"I know." He became suddenly silent, and folded his hands. "When the truth becomes known—and in a case like this every little fact leaks out—there is so much that will tell against me. I had an appointment with him for nine o'clock, the time he was murdered."

Locke shot his visitor a searching glance.

"Remember, I am not forcing or welcoming your confidence."

"Perhaps not, but if my supposition is correct you have set yourself to fathom this mystery, and at the bottom, unless I can convince you, you will come back to me."

"But why trouble about convincing me? The police are the proper people to convince."

"The police are fools! They have hanged innocent men on less evidence than they could pile up against me. Once they get me I am done for. What will they say when everything leaks out? You have admitted there is a letter in his handwriting incriminating me. Doubtless he has left written, substantial records of the efforts I have made to be revenged on him. And there are other things nearer to the case. I received a strange letter from him—this letter. He may have kept a copy among his papers. If so, the police will find it and search for me."

He threw an open note on the desk.

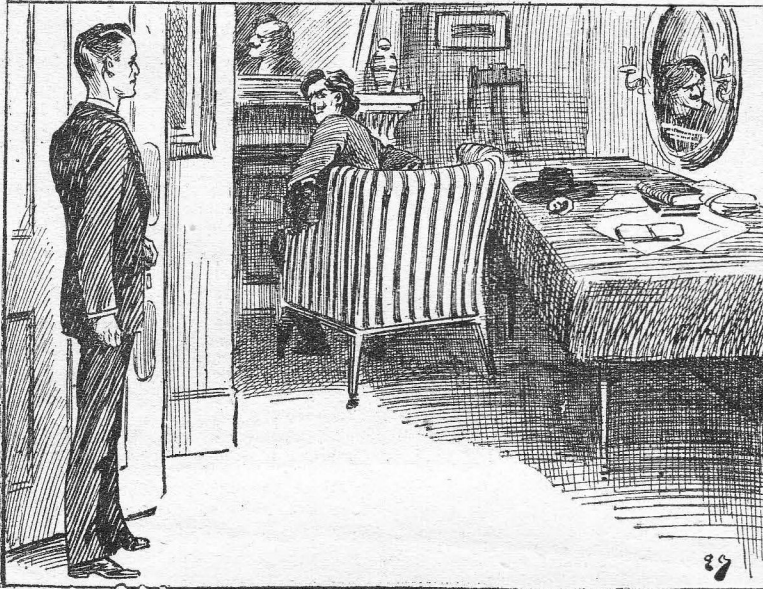
"They will search for you anyhow. His letter to me was enough."

Locke's eyes ran over Marcus Hannaford's note. To his surprise, it was a request that Ivan Stephanoff, the man of whom he went in mortal terror, would call on him at his flat that night at nine o'clock. The letter was dated only that morning.

"Did you answer this?" he inquired.

"I did."

"How?"



Curiously puzzled, the detective opened the door silently. His visitor's back was towards him, but a reflex mirror revealed a tall, dark, foreign-looking man. "Have you quite finished your inspection of me?" the stranger asked suddenly, turning towards the detective. (See this page.)

eyes, never at rest, caught a splash of red brilliantly clear against a background of something light.

"I am sorry if I have called at an inconvenient hour," the stranger said. "Let the gravity and urgency of my business be my excuse. My name is Stephanoff—Ivan Stephanoff."

As he moved, his hand touched something on the edge of the table. It slid sideways, and fell to the floor. Something red-and-lemon coloured rolled towards the detective—a pair of chamois-leather gloves rolled into a ball, and here and there wet—still wet with blood.

The Amazing Man.

WITH a quick movement Locke bent down.

"My gloves, Mr. Locke—did I put them on your table?" Stephanoff asked, half-rising.

The detective moved, shifting a few books and loose sheets of paper.

"You might have left them in your taxi. Would you like me to see?"

"I don't think so. It doesn't matter"—seating himself. "How did you know a taxi was waiting for me?"

"Merely a suggestion, that is all. I saw one a little way up the road. Your boots do not look as though you have walked along wet pavements for the last few minutes. You wished to see me, I presume, on business?"

"I want to ask you a few questions."

"Isn't that rather unusual?"

blood, and here is the cause." He extended his left hand. "I tore my finger on a nail inside the taxi door in trying to lower the window. Believe me or not, as you like. I did not kill Marcus Hannaford."

"You are anticipating the result of my investigations."

"Then you admit you know all about the murder?"

"Did you not yourself suggest we should be frank with each other?" he asked. "I am trying to bring you to the point of your visit."

"Then it is this: At nine o'clock to-night Mr. Hannaford was shot in his flat, in Baysdown Road. You, for one—possibly in common with the police authorities—suspect me of the crime."

"Well?"

"I am as innocent as you are, but I don't know how to prove it."

"By an alibi. Surely that is the only conclusive way."

"More difficult than you imagine. I was near the spot at the time the murder was committed, but if anyone saw me I came to make sure of finding them or bringing them forward."

Locke rolled a pencil between his long fingers.

"Mr. Stephanoff, do you realise that, as an innocent person you are making most damaging admissions, which I may have to use against you?"

"Only by satisfying you can I save myself."

Locke silently acknowledged the tribute to his skill.

"By telephone. I telephoned from Borrard's Universal Stores in Oxford Street, where of late I have been a very frequent customer."

"To what effect?"

"I said I would be with him on the stroke of nine."

"And you meant to keep the appointment?"

"Yes; out of curiosity. I was so surprised at his sending for me after he had fled from me across three continents."

"You fear someone at Borrard's recalling this appointment?"

"They are sure to. I telephoned from one of the counter telephones, and several people there know me quite well now."

"As you say, if you are innocent, this scrap of evidence would appear particularly damning."

"No one will believe in face of that I didn't shoot him; but, on my oath, Mr. Locke, I never entered the flat at all."

"Have you got this letter, the one you received from him this morning?"

"No; I burnt it."

"Then tell me just what you did by way of keeping the appointment?"

"I went to Baysdown Road. A church clock was striking nine as I got near the house. Then I caught sight of you looking for a number near No. 20. At that moment I heard a pistol fired, and saw you run into the flat and up the stairs. I suspected something dreadful had happened in Marcus' room. I drew back and waited."

"Is that the truth?"

"Before God, the truth!"

"You saw no one else near No. 20?"

"Yes. A few seconds before you—a young man. I could not see his face, but something in his walk struck me as familiar."

Locke swung round suddenly in his chair, his grim face strong with determination.

"Mr. Stephanoff, do you know anyone of the name of Hay?"

The man went white.

"Yes; John Hay. Do not tell me it was he."

"The young man who entered the flat before me was John Hay."

"Good God! This is terrible! Poor Hay!"

"He was your friend?"

"One of the best pals I ever had."

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Not since I returned to England."

"How long have you and he been friends?"

"About three years. I met him in South Africa. He became my secretary, and travelled everywhere with me."

"Did he know Mr. Hannaford?"

"Quite well. He was with me when Marcus killed my brother."

"Why did he leave you?"

"I left him—left him a sum of money with a note of regret the day I set out to hound the life out of that man."

"And John Hay knew of the hatred you had conceived for Mr. Hannaford?"

"Oh, yes. I have said he was with me at the time Marcus killed Boris. Besides, accounts of my attempts to be revenged have appeared in various papers. Let me be quite honest. I would have poisoned him in India. The story of that certainly was published in the 'Times of India,' a paper obtainable here. Then I put the fear of God in him in Vienna. Doubtless some English journalist got hold of the account. John Hay most likely would see it."

"H'm! Can you suggest any reason why he should have called on Mr. Hannaford?"

"He might have been in need of a situation. Certainly he would have done all in his power to help him. I give him credit for that."

"You realise that he, too, stands in peril."

"Tell me what happened."

"You saw him enter the flat a short time before the fatal shot was fired. The conclusion is obvious."

"You mean, if I came forward and swore to that fact the guilt would be fastened on him. Mr. Locke, for Heaven's sake, then, do not mention his name. None but you and I know he was there. We must keep the knowledge to ourselves."

"The police knew he was there."

"Do they suspect?"

"Not at present. I threw them off the scent."

"Why?"

Locke stared straight at him.

"I'm sure I can't say, except that I believed his story."

"You could not imagine him otherwise than innocent."

"I am glad to hear you say so. Now, can

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you suggest any other reason why Mr. Hay should have visited Mr. Hannaford at his flat?"

"Yes; one only, in view of what you have just told me. He may have gone to warn him against me."

"What would have made him do that?"

"He knew I was in England. He saw me accidentally in Regent Street on Tuesday. I am certain he recognised me. A moment later the crowd hid us from each other's sight. Certainly, he would know Marcus Hannaford was in London. However much he might try to cover his identity by the use of a false name, his face was so well known and the notoriety he created as a multi-millionaire so great that it was always difficult for him to remain incognito for long."

"Then you think Hay's purpose might have been to warn Hannaford against you?"

"Yes. He heard me say in Jeffersburg nearly two years ago, that if I had to track Hannaford to the ends of the earth I would make him pay for the wrong he had done me. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth—yes, blood for blood!"

Locke became gravely silent. This strange man's supposition explained John Hay's words: "There are some things a man can't tell even to save his own life. I am not thinking of myself." Had he spoken, given the reason for his presence on the scene of the crime, he would have implicated one who had been a very good friend to him. For the sake of Ivan Stephanoff, his friend, Hay had kept silence.

"You have told me, Mr. Stephanoff, that Hay was much attached to you. Can you explain his attachment?"

"I think so. It began in gratitude. When I first gave him work he was almost starving in Johannesburg. His father and mother had just died, and he was thrown on the world penniless and alone, and Johannesburg isn't a kind place for a young fellow without much experience."

At last Locke began to see the light. "Well, what is it you wish me to do for you?" he said.

"Advise me as to the best course to take, not considering the ethics of the case, but considering my own safety. Also help to find the murderer, if what the rumour says is true—that he was murdered."

"Can there be any shadow of doubt about that? The possibility of suicide is inadmissible, to quote Sir Kenneth Moseley's own words. Hannaford was shot twenty feet from the spot where the pistol that slew him was found. I am certain death was instantaneous. It is inconceivable he could have shot himself with one pistol, have dropped it, have walked twenty feet across the room, and then have fired a second weapon for no purpose whatever. The absence of bloodstains anywhere but about the place where he lay renders such a theory untenable."

He was speaking more to himself than to the man, mentally reviewing the case as it presented itself to him in the present known circumstances.

"Then what am I to do until the murderer is found and the shadow of guilt lifted from me?"

Locke came to a full realisation of his great responsibility.

"You can do nothing except take my advice and lay all the facts of the case as you have presented them to me before the police. I have no wish to deceive you. In view of the strong circumstantial evidence against you, suspicion must inevitably point to you as the author of the crime. There is something else which I have not told you. The weapon which shot Mr. Hannaford bore your initials."

"That proves nothing," the other replied impatiently. "He became possessed of a pistol of mine when we last met in Vienna. Still, I should be a fool to go and give myself up to the police." He rose suddenly. "If that is all the help you can give me, I will wish you good-night!"

The detective hardly heard him. He was scribbling something on a slip of paper, which he slipped into a drawer and closed it. The message went down a slot-like tube to his valet, Peters, waiting in the room downstairs.

"I am sorry I cannot do anything else."

"Then you refuse to help me?"

"I have done all I can."

"I suppose now you will telephone through to the police and tell them all about me?"

"On the contrary, you came to me as a

client. What passes between myself and my clients is no concern of Scotland Yard, and never goes beyond these walls. I have set myself the task of solving the mystery surrounding the strange fate of Marcus Hannaford. So have the police. We start on level grounds. Good-night, Mr. Stephanoff!"

He rang the electric bell, and Peters appeared.

"Show this gentleman to his cab, please. And, Peters, would you mind picking up the gentleman's gloves? They have rolled under the bookcase," he said.

Peters bowed, and nodded his head in a way that told the detective that his written commands likewise should be obeyed.

Slender Clues.

LOCKE had just finished his breakfast and was scanning the somewhat garbled account of the murder in a morning newspaper when Peters announced that Mr. Hay was waiting in the reception-room. The detective went in and held out his hand, which Hay took rather nervously. His pale cheeks and the heavy lines under his eyes told of a sleepless night, and Locke was quick to admonish him.

"You have been worrying unduly," he said, in that brisk manner of his which always made people feel at ease with him. "I told you overnight to get at least a few hours' rest, and that to-day perhaps we should be able to arrive at a better understanding of this strange affair. You have no reason to mistrust me. Put your hat and coat here. I shall want you soon to get busy. It is possible before the day is out we may see something of our friend, Inspector Fox."

"Oh!"—a startled look dawning in his face. "I don't believe your story about my being your secretary satisfied him."

Locke laughed.

"Perhaps not. I'm not an over-good liar, but it was the best thing I could do on the spur of the moment. For the time being you are safe."

"Then you think they will arrest me later on?"

"Not if I can prevent it. But there is always the chance of my subterfuge breaking down and of suspicion drifting towards you until the mystery is cleared right up, when, of course, you will be quite safe."

He met his keen eyes with a grateful glance.

"Then you believe in me still?"

"Absolutely. At some point—I can't say just when—in last night's strange happening I made up my mind about you. That decision will remain unshaken."

His hands busied themselves tidying up the litter on his table.

"Will the murderer be caught?" Hay asked.

"We shall get to the truth before very long."

He saw a sudden warmth of colour creep up in Hay's cheeks. His fears were obviously for his friend.

"I wish to goodness it had never happened!" he murmured.

"It was inevitable. Marcus Hannaford had to die."

"What makes you so positive about that?" he asked, looking up quickly.

"Because I know perhaps about as much of the strange fate hanging over him as will ever be known. Mr. Hay, you are wasting your sympathies."

"On whom?"

His voice sounded lifeless and cold.

"On Ivan Stephanoff." A book fell from John Hay's fingers with a crash to the floor. "I won't keep you in suspense," he hastened to add. "Last night Stephanoff took a bold course, and came here. He is the most daring man I ever met. I learned all about your friendship. It is unfortunate for you."

"Then you think he committed the crime?"

"There can be little question."

"What makes you so sure?"

"He has made so many attempts, why not this last successful one? When he called on me last night, he told me only half the truth."

"Yes?"

"He admitted much—acknowledged the correctness of all the dead man had said in a certain letter to me; he admitted being almost on the scene of the tragedy at the very moment it was committed; but did not tell me that between his accidental meeting

with you in Regent Street a few days ago and last night, he had made a peculiarly atrocious attempt on Hannaford's life."

"How?"
"By sending him a deadly poisonous snake in a cigar-box. He hoped when Hannaford opened it the reptile would sting him and produce fatal results."

"If he did not tell you, how do you know all this?" Hay asked.

Locke paced the room.
"You remember last night before the police came I raked about among the dead ashes in the grate of Hannaford's room. I found there several pieces of charred scaly skin, curiously mottled. I recognised them as fragments of the skin of a snake, a most deadly kind. How had they got there? Hannaford had no stuffed birds or reptiles of any kind in his room. An old broken cigar-box in the wastepaper basket brought the first clue. In all probability the snake had been sent by post in the cigar-box. On it I made out an address. Early this morning I went to that address, and found it to be that of a dealer in curious birds, reptiles, and strange animals of all kinds. He admitted having sold a poisonous snake to a man answering Ivan Stephanoff's description. Clue number one was followed by clue number two, picked up at the tobacconist's where the cigar-box was bought. Over his shop your friend has his flat."

"Are you sure?"
"Quite. Last night before he left I gave my man instructions to follow him home. He did so, to the flat over the tobacconist's shop. I am afraid things begin to look very bad for Mr. Stephanoff."

"Have you informed the police?"
"No."

"Why?"
"Because when they want to, they will lay hands on him. Their exhaustive inquiries will elicit the fact that Mr. Hannaford had an appointment with him on the night of the murder. He is not unknown to several shopkeepers in the West End. They will produce his address readily enough."

"Then your connection with the case ends?"
"On the contrary, it has only just begun. I have two things to accomplish—to protect you until the assassin is safely cornered, and to solve the mystery of how he escaped from the room."

"I am sure there was no one there when I entered. The dead man was quite alone."

"Mr. Hay, tell me, what was your reason for calling on Mr. Hannaford?"

The young fellow looked gravely troubled.
"Since you have learned so much about Ivan, there is no reason to remain silent any longer. I went to warn Hannaford against his vengeance."

"Then you knew Stephanoff was a dangerous man?"

"Y-Yes."
"And you were willing to imperil your own safety to shield him?"

"He was my friend. I owed him so much. As soon as I saw Mr. Hannaford's dead body I suspected Ivan had killed him."

"Exactly. But you should never have taken so grave a responsibility on yourself."

"I quite realised by keeping silence I might be making matters difficult for myself, but I acted on the impulse of gratitude."

"You have yourself to think of, Mr. Hay. Don't you realise how damning would be the evidence against you? You and he alone in that room on your own admission; he lying dead with a pistol in his hand, a second pistol twenty feet away which only you could have fired. No scrap of proof that a third party was there; nothing to show how that third party escaped. There is the difficulty—a room forty feet above the ground with no visible means of reaching the pavement, the windows all fastened on the inside, no exit by means of the upper floor or of the roof, I blocking the stairway. How did Mr. Stephanoff escape? I confess I am puzzled."

"Then Mr. Donaldson—"

"Oh, he is all right! I satisfied myself on that point. He had been ill, and was in bed when the shots were fired. His rooms were turned inside out. Stephanoff did not escape that way."

"Is there no other possible explanation?"
"We must find one, the right one, for your sake," Locke said. "Don't worry more than you can help. Do the work I give you as calmly and as well as you can, and whatever happens, refuse to answer questions Inspector Fox may put to you."

"Then he might call here?"

"It is quite possible, ostensibly to see me."

With that he picked up his hat and stick, and, giving him certain notes of his own to transcribe, he went out. By ten o'clock he was on the scene of the tragedy. Police, uniformed and in plain clothes, swarmed everywhere, intent on one of the most startling murder mysteries of modern times.

As Locke expected, they had already picked up several clues. Among the dead man's papers were found additional references to Ivan Stephanoff. Curiously enough, too, there was a draft of the note he had sent to his flat asking him to call that night at nine o'clock. Within an hour of the publication of the newspaper reports, one of Borrard's shop-walkers came forward and testified to the appointment made over the telephone. Within an hour the warrant for Stephanoff's arrest was out.

Locke smiled to himself, and wondered who would prove the smarter, the police or the foreigner. He backed the foreigner. In his own mind, as he again entered the darkened room, he had no doubt but that overnight Stephanoff had wilfully and cleverly lied to him. A glance from one of the closed windows into the street convinced him that his story of having seen him and Hay approach and enter the house might just as well be a lie as the truth, for the range of vision commanded a fair distance of the pavement, and he might easily have looked out and have seen both Hay and him as they passed under the glare of the street lamp.

The room differed little from the appearance it had presented overnight. Only the body, the two pistols, and the bloodstains on the carpet had been removed. The wastepaper basket and the ashes in the grate still remained as he had left them—untouched.

Locke continued his investigations in silence. He made a careful drawing of the room, a plan showing the exact position of the body, the various articles of furniture, the distance between each, the possible flights of the two bullets fired, and the exact disposition of the adjoining apartments.

Towards noon Detective-Inspector Fox strolled leisurely in.

"Well, Fox, what do you make of it?" Locke asked, slipping his notebook in his pocket and buttoning his coat.

The Scotland Yard man smiled serenely.
"Nothing very special; merely an ordinary case of murder. That fellow Stephanoff meant to have him, and, by Jove, he got him, too!"

"But have you got Stephanoff?"

"Not yet—not yet! We'll have him soon, though. He can't have got very far. But, I say, Locke, you were a bit woolly with your statements last night."

"Oh!"
"I mean, about the time that passed between the firing of the shots and your getting here."

"I told you it was almost fractional, and I heard only one shot fired," said Locke.

"Nonsense! Your usual deep thinking must have hypnotised you. We know Stephanoff had an appointment with him at nine o'clock. He kept it. As soon as the description of him was given out this morning, Thwaitte came forward, and swore to having seen him turn into Baysdown Road from Modbury Street at five minutes to nine. You say the shots were fired at nine-five. It wouldn't take eight minutes to walk from the corner to this house—more likely two. He was here before nine, and well away before three minutes past."

"Then you think I am wrong?"

"Most assuredly! What happened is as plain as a pikestaff. For some reason best known to himself the poor devil wrote to the Russian, asking him to call, and that after sending you such a ridiculous letter. Well, Stephanoff came, and, before they had been together a minute, they quarrelled. Anyway, perhaps Hannaford drew a pistol. Stephanoff whipped out one as well, and got his shot in first. The mere shock of the bullet striking him may have caused his finger to pull on the trigger, and his own weapon exploded. I don't say much time elapsed between the two shots, but they can't have been simultaneous, as you suppose."

Locke heaved a sigh of relief. Certainly Barkleigh Fox's reasoning was carrying him farther and farther away from John Hay, and he had no desire to undecieve him.

"You may be right," he admitted quietly.

"Of course I'm right. The affair admits of no other explanation. As soon as Stephanoff saw what he had done, like a wise man he made a bolt for it through the library to the bed-room close to which he was

standing when he fired the fatal shot. Then he crossed the bed-room, where he may have hidden in a cupboard or a wardrobe if he heard footsteps on the stairs, and made his escape when you were examining this room."

Locke squared his shoulders.
"That won't do, Fox. As I ran up the stairs behind Mr. Hay, the bed-room door leading to the landing—and, consequently, to the stairs—was still open. I locked it, and put the key in my pocket."

"Which only proves my original surmise correct, then, that you were a minute or two late arriving here. Stephanoff had time to cross the bedroom, run down the stairs, leaving the door open behind him."

"I see. You have a pretty conclusive case against Stephanoff—when you get him."

Fox caught the scarcely-veiled note of sarcasm in the other's voice.

"We have that. My men are pretty hot on it. They've traced him to his flat, but he's done a move on. Of course, he'll streak for the Continent, but all the ports are being watched. We shall rope him in well inside of twenty-four hours!"

"I hope so. What does the doctor say about poor Hannaford?"

"Instantaneous death. I'll give you credit for being right in one particular—the bullet went straight into the brain."

"It has been extracted?"

"Yes; and it fits the man's pistol. Miles too small, of course, for the revolver found in Hannaford's hand. Which reminds me you must have been dreaming about seeing the spirals of smoke still rising from the barrel of each."

"Maybe I was. Mistakes will happen."

Fox laughed harshly.

"Private detectives can't afford to make mistakes, especially in a case like this."

Locke pretended not to notice.

"What's going to be done here?"—running his glance round the sumptuously-furnished room.

"The police will remain in possession till after the inquest. You can come in and have a look round when you like, if you've notions of building up a fantastic theoretical case."

"Thanks! I haven't done yet."

"Nothing will be disturbed. We have all the information we want. You can go ahead."

"That's good! I hope you are satisfied."

"We shall be when we get the man," Fox said, as he walked towards the door. "Never fear, he'll be in our hands before to-morrow!"

Locke smiled.
"Don't be too sure. There's many a slip, you know!"

But Barkleigh Fox went out, closing the door with an impatient slam.

Locke stared out of the window, obviously perplexed. There were several aspects of this astounding case which left him puzzled. There was always the danger that Stephanoff might prove one too many for the astute Fox, in which case sooner or later his investigations, starting again on the scene of the crime, and perhaps taking Locke's own first statement for his basis, would be sure to come back to the young fellow who was with the detective in the dead man's room. Once let Barkleigh Fox get so far, what could save him?

There was but one safe way out of the whole predicament—for Ferrers Locke to satisfy himself absolutely just how and by whom the murder was committed. Eliminating Hay as a potential factor, there remained only the Russian adventurer Stephanoff, who was not above such a crime, but he denied being in the flat. Yet, had neither he nor anyone else been present besides Hannaford, what could have made him fire the heavy-calibre weapon found grasped in his hand? He had levelled it at someone standing by the window, near to whom, and by whom probably, the smaller weapon was dropped. His aim had obviously been bad, for, instead of hitting his assailant, his bullet struck the window, and shattered the glass.

At this point in his reflections Locke drew himself up sharp. His glance was still fixed on the framework containing only very small fragments of the broken pane.

"Point No. 3 to be elucidated," he said, examining the woodwork closely under a powerful glass. "How comes it that a large pane of glass is knocked almost clean out by a single revolver-bullet? At most, one would expect it to make merely a fair-sized hole. This is something worth investigating!"

(There will be another magnificent instalment of this grand detective serial next week. Look out for it!)



THE TALISMAN!



A Splendid Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's. -:- -:- By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Ray of Hope for Frank.

"WHEREFORE that worried look, Frankie?"

Ernest Levison, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, asked that question of his young brother Frank, who ornamented the Third Form at that famous seat of learning. Morning school was over, and the brothers had run across one another in the quad.

Frank Levison turned a somewhat woe-begone countenance towards his major.

"It's—its work, Ernest! Old Selby's on the warpath again!"

Mr. Selby, the Form-master of the Third Form, was not a popular gentleman with his pupils. Admittedly, he had a hard task in trying to instil learning into the heads of the young rascals of the Third. But he was bad-tempered and severe, and often, it is to be feared, unjust. When Mr. Selby was "on the warpath," the fags had to go very cautiously if they were to avoid trouble.

Ernest Levison clapped his minor on the shoulder, and looked sympathetic.

"Hard lines, kid! Let's hear about it."

"Well, it's like this," said Frank. "Old Selby's told us to-day that he is going to have a Form exam to-morrow morning on the work we have been doing the last month."

"Well?"

"I—I've been playing cricket rather a lot the last month, you know," confessed Frank ruefully. "I was keen on getting in the Form team, and—and I only did just about enough work to scrape through. I—I don't think I shall do very well in the exam."

"H'm!"

"And the Selby-bird said he would drop heavily on anyone who did not get over half-marks," went on Levison minor dolefully. "And you know what that means. To-morrow's a half-holiday, and we are playing a Boy Scout eleven from Rylcombe. But old Selby's sure to detain any boy who doesn't get through the exam for the whole afternoon!"

"I see. And you think—"

"I think—in fact, I'm jolly sure—that I shan't get through. If I get detained, I shall miss the match, and D'Arcy minor's promised me a place in the team."

"H'm! That's rather rotten, certainly!" said Levison major, knitting his brows in thought. "Can't you mug up the work between now and to-morrow morning?"

"I'm going to, of course. But I shan't get through. I know I shan't, unless I have tremendous luck. Old Selby's down on me at present, and he'll stump me if he possibly can!"

And Frank Levison looked very distressed indeed.

"Cheer up, kid!" said his brother. "Don't meet trouble half-way, you know. It probably won't be so very dreadful after all. If you go hard at the work beforehand, you'll probably scrape through all right, with luck."

"With luck, yes!" said Frank bitterly. "But I'm such an unlucky beggar, you know. Selby always gives me the worst questions to answer. And I simply must play in that match to-morrow. It would be a grand chance for me to show what I can do on the cricket-field in a real match. It's the chance I've been waiting for!"

The brothers walked on in silence for a moment, Ernest deep in thought, and Frank in utter dejection. Suddenly a ray of hope came into the younger boy's downcast face.

"Oh, Ernest!" he exclaimed excitedly. "What about the talisman—your ring, you know! Do you think it would be any good in this?"

Ernest Levison stopped short.

"By Jove! The ring! But—"

"If it would bring me luck in the exam, the same as it did for you in the cricket-match against the New House, it would do the trick!" exclaimed the Third-Former, his

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face glowing. "I only want a bit of luck to get through!"

Levison major looked at his brother, considering hard.

His father had recently sent him a ring, a quaint old family heirloom which had just come to light after lying for many years in obscurity. The family legend attached to it was to the effect that it would bring good luck to the eldest son of the house. Ernest, who was the eldest son, had slipped it on just before going in to bat against the New House the week before. The match looked like something of a forlorn hope for the School House team, but Levison's wonderful batting had won the game for his side.

He played the innings of his life, when better batsmen than he had failed hopelessly. Marvelling at his prowess, the school had given him a great ovation, but Ernest had put it down to the "Luck of the Levisons," the old ring, whose powers he had tested for the first time.

"You know what the legend says, Frankie," he said slowly. "The ring brings wonderful luck to the eldest son of the house. You're not the eldest son."

"No, but it would be worth trying, surely," said Ernest eagerly. "It might bring me luck just as it did you when you most wanted it. Will you lend it to me?"

"Of course, kid! But I shouldn't bank on it too much," said Ernest. "Here it is! Take it and try it by all means."

He slipped the ring, with its curiously carved stone, from his waistcoat pocket, and handed it to his brother, after a look round to see that nobody was observing them.

The story of the ring and its wonderful luck-bringing powers was a secret the brothers had not mentioned to their school-fellows as yet. Apart from the fact that juniors at St. Jim's were not supposed to wear rings, the brothers knew how much chaff they would have to hear from their chums if the story of the so-called "luck of the Levisons" became public property. So they kept it to themselves, as a family secret.

They only felt half-convinced about the matter themselves, to tell the truth. True, on the only occasion that Ernest Levison had put the talisman to the test it had turned out trumps in the most wonderful way. Still, it was possible that it might have been just a coincidence that Ernest Levison had played such a wonderful innings on the day that he wore it.

Levison took the talisman, and looked at it almost with reverence. He welcomed anything that would be likely to increase his somewhat slender chances of getting through the dreaded examination.

"I shall try it, anyway," he announced, much more cheerful now. "It can't do any harm, anyway. And if it brings me through, I shall believe in it ever after!" Ernest laughed.

"Right-ho, kid! I hope it brings you luck! But I should recommend you to mug up the work as much as you can before to-morrow, and not to leave too much to the ring."

"You bet! I'll give it every chance," said Levison minor. "It's bucked me up already, just having it in my pocket." He slipped it into his waistcoat pocket as he spoke. "If it acts it'll be a giddy marvel! And I believe it will act, too!"

"Anyway, it'll be an interesting experiment," said Ernest, laughing. "So go ahead!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Wash-Out.

M R. SELBY'S expression was grim when he came into the Third Form room the following morning, with a sheaf of examination-papers under his arm.

"Every boy will have one hour to write out the answers to these questions!" he rapped out. "Levison, what are you fumbling about in your waistcoat-pocket for?"

"N-nothing, sir!"

"Very well. Stop it at once!"

"Y-yes, sir!" gasped Frank Levison.

The question-papers were handed out, and Frank Levison almost groaned aloud when he saw his. Eight "corking" questions were on the paper. At first glance Frank felt that at most he would be able to answer one or two of them. However, when Mr. Selby was not looking, he slipped the ring out of his pocket and on to the middle finger of his left hand, the stone turned inward. In the fervent hope that it would not be noticed, and that it would soon begin to put forth the mysterious "fluence" that would enable him to answer those fearsome questions, the fag began to tackle one of the questions he was able to answer.

Alas! All too soon he was in difficulties! He gnawed his pen-holder and wooed inspiration in vain. It was worse even than he had anticipated. Everything he had ever learnt seemed to have flown out of his head.

Mr. Selby glanced at him severely once or twice.

"You do not appear to be making much progress with your paper, Levison minor!" he said at last.

"Nunno, sir!"

"I trust that you will endeavour, at least, to obtain more than half-marks, Levison minor! I have warned you what to expect should you fail to do so."

"Ye-e-es, sir!" groaned the unfortunate fag.

Levison minor was not the only Third-Former, by any means, who was in difficulties. More than half the Form, in fact, were gnawing away at their pen-holders, and shuffling their feet, and showing every sign of distress. As D'Arcy minor had freely prophesied that it would be, the exam-paper was a "regular snorter."

The hour came to an end at last, and the fags' valuable efforts were collected, ready for Mr. Selby's attention later on.

"We will now indulge in a short viva voce examination on the interesting subject of English history," said Mr. Selby in his acid voice. "Levison minor, stand up and tell me what you know of the Battle of Bannockburn!"

Unfortunately, what Frank Levison knew of the Battle of Bannockburn was not very much. He knew that it was fought between the English and the Scots, but further details he could not supply.

Mr. Selby's brow grew black.

"Apparently you do not recall, Levison minor, that only last week I devoted a quarter of an hour to a description of this battle," he said grimly.

Levison minor did recall it. But for the life of him he could not remember any of the things that Mr. Selby had said about the battle during that quarter of an hour. All he could recall was the enjoyable game of noughts and crosses he had had with Joe Frayne during Mr. Selby's discourse. This, however, was a fact he discreetly did not mention.

Mr. Selby now fired a number of other questions at the scared fag, not one of which he could answer correctly. With his mind running on the coming cricket-match, Levison minor even informed his scandalised Form-master that King Robert Bruce's resolution to persist in his struggle against England was aided by a Boy Scout! This version of the ancient story of King Bruce and the spider did not commend itself at all to Mr. Selby.

In a voice of thunder, he requested Frank Levison to approach his desk, what time he grasped a limber-looking cane with a businesslike grip.

"Hold out your hand, Levison minor!"

Frank gingerly held out his right hand.

Swish!

"Yow-wow!"

"The other one!"

Levison extended his left paw, and there was another energetic swish, followed by a yell.

"Yaroorh!"

Mr. Selby uttered an exclamation, and

gazed at his best cane with a startled expression.

It was split right down to the curved handle!

"That is curious," he muttered. Then his eye fell upon Levison minor's left hand.

"Levison, hold out your left hand again for me to see!"

Frank extended the grubby paw again, decorated as it was now with a red mark right across it. Then he gave a gasp. He had forgotten the ring! There it was, on the middle finger of his left hand, plainly visible.

But Mr. Selby's gimlet eyes had already spotted it.

"Ha! The reason why my cane split is very obvious!" he exclaimed, in his grating voice. "You have actually got a ring upon your finger, Levison minor!"

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Frank, in utter dismay.

"You, a junior boy in the Third Form, actually have the temerity to come into your Form-room wearing a ring!" exclaimed Mr. Selby, in an awful voice. "What do you mean by it?"

"I—I—" stuttered the unfortunate Frank.

"Remove it instantly!" thundered Mr. Selby.

Frank Levison slipped it off his finger with alacrity. So far the family talisman had entirely failed to bring him any luck whatever—rather the contrary, in fact.

"Now place the ring upon my desk!" went on Mr. Selby. "I shall take possession of it until the end of the term."

With the ring still in his fingers, Frank Levison stepped back a pace, with alarm in his face. He had never dreamed of this!

"Oh, sir, you—you can't—"

"Do you intend to disobey me, Levison minor?" grated Mr. Selby.

"I can't give it to you, sir. It isn't mine!" said Frank desperately.

"You should have thought of that before you flaunted it in the Form-room, under my very eyes!" barked Mr. Selby. "Give it to me directly!"

"I—I can't, sir!"

"What!"

Mr. Selby was out of his chair with a bound, a new cane grasped in his right hand. In another bound he was upon the unlucky lag. Levison minor was seized and whirled round, and the cane rose and fell on his back in a series of resounding lashes.

"Lash, lash, lash!"

"Yow! Yarowh!"

Lash, lash, lash!

The lag wriggled and squirmed, but Mr. Selby laid on as if he were beating a carpet. In the scuffle there was a clink on the floor, and the ring slipped from the lag's grasp.

Curly Gibson, one of the Third-Formers, jumped forward and secured it in an instant, but Mr. Selby's gimlet eyes were upon him. He ceased thrashing Levison, panting. He pointed at Gibson with the cane.

"Hand me that ring at once, Gibson!"

Curly Gibson hastily did so. He had hoped to be able to return it to Levison, but he quite wisely decided that to argue with the Form-master in his present mood would be madness.

Mr. Selby slipped the ring into his pocket. "You may ask me for this at the end of the term, Levison!" he grated. "Go and sit down. You will be detained the whole of the afternoon!"

Sore in body and mind, Frank Levison limped to his place and sat down—rather gingerly. His worst fears were realised. Not only was he detained, but he had had a sound thrashing into the bargain. The talisman, of which he had had such high hopes, was evidently no talisman in his hands. The "Luck of the Levisons" itself had actually fallen into Mr. Selby's clutches. For himself Frank Levison was not ill-pleased that it should be so—as far as he was concerned the talisman was a "wash-out." But his brother Ernest—the eldest son of the house of Levison—would think differently, that was quite certain.

Frank groaned.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Return of the Talisman.

WELL, how did it go, Frankie?" That dreadful morning had dragged itself to a close at last, and the suffering Third-Formers made their escape, for the time being, from their tyrannical preceptor.

As Frank, with slow footsteps, came out

into the sunny quad, he was met by his brother's cheery greeting.

"Rotten!" groaned Frank. "That mouldy old talisman was a dud—an absolute wash-out, Ernie!"

"Well, let's hear about it, kid!" said Ernest sympathetically.

Frank told his doleful story. His brother could not help grinning a little in places. But on the whole he was grave.

"The only bright spot in the whole show is that D'Arcy minor is going to postpone the cricket match, if he can, to another day," said Frank, finishing his tale of woe. "You see, the whole of the cricket team, including even the scorer, is detained for the afternoon. So we couldn't very well have the match, could we?"

"Ahem! Hardly!" said Ernest.

"I hope to goodness the scouts can play us another day!"

"I hope so, too," said Ernest. "And now the thing is to get that ring back from old Selby at once."

"I don't think he'll give it up," said Frank doubtfully. "Besides, it's such a rotten talisman that I don't see that it matters. That innings of yours the other day must have been a fluke after all, old man!"

"I don't think so, kid," said Levison major quite seriously. "I—I feel it wasn't, somehow. I'm sure that ring had something to do with it. You see, I'm the eldest son."

"H'm! It doesn't seem to be much good to anyone else!"

"No; and that's all in accordance with the old family legend. Well, I'm off now to interview Selby."

"I'm not coming with you!" said Frank emphatically. "I'd as soon interview a raging lion!"

Ernest Levison grinned, and made his way to the Third Form master's study. He knocked.

"Come in!" said Mr. Selby's irritable voice.

Levison entered, and shut the door carefully behind him.

"Well?" snapped Mr. Selby. "What do you want, Levison?"

"My ring, please, sir," said Levison quietly.

Mr. Selby glared.

"What! Do you refer to the ring I took from your brother in the Form-room this morning, Levison?"

"Yes, sir. May I have it back, please?"

"No, you may not!" snapped Mr. Selby.

"Since Levison minor had the audacity to wear it in school hours, I shall retain possession of it until the end of the term. You may go, Levison!"

"Very well, sir," said Levison calmly.

"But it is my duty to warn you, sir!"

Mr. Selby jumped.

"Warn me! What do you mean, boy?"

"Warn you against the consequences of keeping that ring, sir," said Levison steadily.

"Do you dare to threaten me, Levison?" rasped Mr. Selby.

"Threaten you! Certainly not, sir!" said Levison. "Only to warn you that that ring

has a history which proves it to be very unlucky for anyone who possesses it, except the right person!"

"Nonsense!"

"It's true, sir. The ring has been in our family for generations, except for short periods. The people who have taken it from us have all—well, been unlucky, sir!" said Levison, with peculiar emphasis.

Mr. Selby gazed at the junior, evidently startled.

"Is this true, Levison?"

"Quite true, sir. If you will write to my father, he will confirm what I say, and give you further details, no doubt."

"G-good gracious!"

"There are a number of very funny stories about that ring, sir," said Levison, who, having stuck to the strict facts so far, was now prepared to give play to his imagination. "The rumour is that the last stranger who took it had only had it a week when he was found—"

"E-found!" stuttered Mr. Selby.

"Yes, sir. They took the ring off the corpse—"

Mr. Selby jumped.

"The—the what?," he gasped.

"The corpse, sir! He died, of course!"

"Dud-did he? Dear me!" Mr. Selby breathed hard. "And—and what did he die of, Levison?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't know, sir," he said stolidly. "They say his hair began to fall out first—"

Mr. Selby passed his hand through his own scanty locks with a nervous motion. He was known to have a horror of being bald, as Levison was quite aware.

"Then he lost his whole fortune, sir?"

Mr. Selby passed his hand across his damp brow. He was notoriously a careful gentleman in money matters. His Form, in fact, openly declared that he was a miser.

"That—that is dreadful, Levison!" he gasped. "I really think—"

"I can tell you about the man before him—another stranger who got hold of the ring for a few days—if you like, sir," said Levison cheerfully.

"No, no!" said Mr. Selby hurriedly. "I think, under the—ahem!—circumstances, Levison, I had better return the ring to you. If it is harmless to you, as a member of the family—"

"Oh, yes, sir; it is quite harmless to me!"

"Then you had better take great care to keep it always in your possession, Levison. Here it is. Pray take it away at once!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Levison seriously, pocketing the ring. "I thought I had better give you a word of warning, sir—"

"Quite so, Levison!"

"Before it was too late, sir!" continued Levison cheerfully.

Mr. Selby turned quite pale.

"That—that will do, Levison!" he gasped. "You may go!"

And Levison went. He strolled away from Mr. Selby's study, grinning, and with the "Luck of the Levisons" safe in his pocket. Levison minor met him on the stairs.

"Got it?" he asked.

"Yes."

"How on earth did you get the Selby bird to part with it?" asked Frank Levison, in considerable astonishment.

"Told him some hair-raising yarns about it—but shush! Not a word! We don't want the story of the talisman to get about at St. Jim's!"

"Oh, right-ho! But you can keep your old talisman yourself in future, Ernie!" said Frank. "For my part, I wish I hadn't taken the old thing into the Form-room this morning at all. I wish I'd taken Curly Gibson's advice instead!"

Levison major grinned.

"And what was that, old man?"

"To shove some old exercise-books down my bags!" said Levison minor.

THE END.

(Next Friday's Bumper Number will contain Two Grand New Serials, specially written for the PENNY POPULAR. Your Editor strongly urges you to make sure of ordering next week's issue of the PENNY POPULAR early, as there is sure to be a great demand for this bumper number.)

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 83.



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JIMMY SILVER & CO.'S VISITOR!

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By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Much Too Thick!

JIMMY SILVER!" "Jimmy!" "Jimmy, you fathead!" Jimmy Silver heard his name called, but, like the dying gladiator of old, he heard it, but he heeded not.

Jimmy was at the wicket, on Little Side at Rookwood, facing Tommy Dodd's bowling. It was only practice, certainly; but cricket was cricket. And Jimmy Silver kept his eye on Tommy Dodd, heedless of the fact that Lovell and Raby and Newcome were shouting to him from the pavilion.

"Telegrams, fathead!" yelled Lovell. "Two of them!"

Smack! The bat met the ball, and sent it whizzing away. Then Jimmy Silver condescended to glance round.

"Telegrams, ass!" called out Raby. "The kid's just brought two for you!" "Well, it never rains but it pours," said Jimmy Silver.

The lad from the post-office handed him the two buff envelopes. Telegrams did not often come to junior fellows, and it was rather remarkable for a fellow to receive two of them at one fell swoop, as it were.

Jimmy hastily opened the first that came to hand. He read it quickly, and gave an expressive grunt.

"Rotten!" "Your uncle—" began Lovell. "Tain't from him. It's from that fat beast Bunter!"

"Bunter! Who's Bunter?" "That fat idiot who came over from Greyfriars once to see us! The bouncer is coming again—this afternoon!"

"Like his cheek!" growled Lovell. "Who's asked him?"

"Nobody. Bunter doesn't wait for trifles like that!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I'm blessed if I'm going to stand it a second time! We used up all our nice manners the first time, and it was a strain."

"It was," said Raby. "I'm fed-up, for one." "What does he say?" asked Newcome. Jimmy Silver read out the telegram:

"Arriving by two-thirty train. Meet me at station.—Bunter."

The Fistical Four of the Fourth looked at one another grimly. It was really a little too much for Billy Bunter of Greyfriars to bag their half-holiday in this way.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were on the best of terms with Harry Wharton and his friends of Greyfriars School. They played regular matches with them, and sometimes gave one another a look-in. But Billy Bunter was a horse of quite another colour. The fat junior of Greyfriars had invited himself to Rookwood once before, and had plagued Jimmy Silver & Co. for a whole afternoon.

He had "stuck" them for his railway fare both ways, he had borrowed money right and left, he had been a worry and a bother all

the time, and he had made all the Rookwood fellows feel that it would be supreme delight to kick him round the quadrangle.

Because he was a Greyfriars fellow, the Fistical Four had endured Bunter with heroic politeness on that occasion. Their politeness had come near breaking under the strain. But they had stood it out manfully to the end. Now it really looked as if they had overdone it—Bunter was coming again.

Any of the fellows they knew at Greyfriars would have been welcomed with open arms. But they didn't know Bunter, and didn't want to.

The fat bouncer was coolly planting himself on them, on the strength of their friendship for Harry Wharton & Co.

And William George Bunter of Greyfriars wasn't an ordinary guest. He was a very exacting one.

Jimmy Silver had no desire whatever to meet him at the station, and hear that he had forgotten his purse, and to hand him his week's pocket-money to pay his fare. He wasn't at all keen to expend the whole financial resources of the end study in feeding Bunter. Above all, he didn't feel inclined to spend that sunny afternoon in being bored by the fat and fatuous fellow. Jimmy's plans were laid for that afternoon, and they did not include being bothered by Bunter.

"There's the other telegram," said Raby at last. "You haven't opened that."

"By Jove, no!" Jimmy Silver opened the second telegram. He grinned as he read it.

"Somebody else coming?" asked Lovell. "Ha, ha! No. Read it. It's from Wharton."

The second telegram ran:

"Dear Silver.—Bunter is coming to plant himself on you this afternoon. Don't lend him anything. Kick him out.—WHARTON."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Good!" said Lovell. "We'll do as Wharton asks. I should enjoy booting that fat bouncer."

Jimmy shook his head. "Can't exactly boot him out!" he remarked. "But—but we're not going to have him on our necks as we did before. Once is enough!"

"I've jolly well got no politeness to waste on him!" growled Raby.

"We overdid the polite bizney last time," said Jimmy ruefully. "I felt rather a lumbag at the time. I thought it was up to us to stand it civilly. We won't overdo it this time!"

"That we jolly well won't!" said Lovell, with emphasis.

"But—but a chap must be civil!" "Oh, rats!"

"We've got the reputation of Rookwood hospitality to consider," said Jimmy. "My idea is to be polite, but firm!"

"Look here, we're not having it!" exclaimed Lovell. "I tell you I can't stand the fellow, with his gorging and lying and swanking and bragging!"

"He isn't exactly the pal you'd pick out of a thousand," agreed Jimmy Silver; "but a

chap must be civil. But—but I think that it we're firm as well as civil Bunter will get tired of paying visits to Rookwood."

"Well, if you've got a wheeze—" "Of course I have, fathead! Rely on your Uncle James!"

"We're not going to the station, anyway!" "No fear! Let's get on with the cricket!"

"Besides it's too late to meet the two-thirty now," said Jimmy Silver. "Bunter can come along by himself. Let's get on. Sufficient for the day is the giddy evil thereof; we can deal with Bunter when he gets here."

And the Fistical Four devoted themselves to cricket practice, and dismissed Billy Bunter of Greyfriars from their minds.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Pay Up!

I SAY, you fellows!" "Hallo! Bunter, by gum!"

The Fistical Four had come off the cricket-field about half an hour later, and were sauntering to the school shop for the refreshing ginger-beer, when a fat voice hailed them.

Billy Bunter had arrived. He did not come alone. Old William, the ancient porter at Coombe Station, was with him, with a grim expression on his face.

Billy Bunter was not looking happy. He blinked at Jimmy Silver & Co. through his big glasses with quite a pathetic look.

"I say, you fellows, didn't you get my telegram?"

"Yes, we got it," said Jimmy. "I asked you to meet me at the station!"

"Did you?" "Yes, I did. You might have done it, too, after pressing a chap to visit you here!" said Bunter warmly.

"I must have a bad memory," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "I don't remember issuing any pressing invitations."

Billy Bunter gave him a quick, comprehending blink. He could see that the politeness he had put to such a severe strain was giving way.

"Ahem! Well, I rather expected to see you at the station," he said. "I've got into rather a fix. You see, I forgot to put any money in my pocket. I'm an absent-minded chap sometimes—"

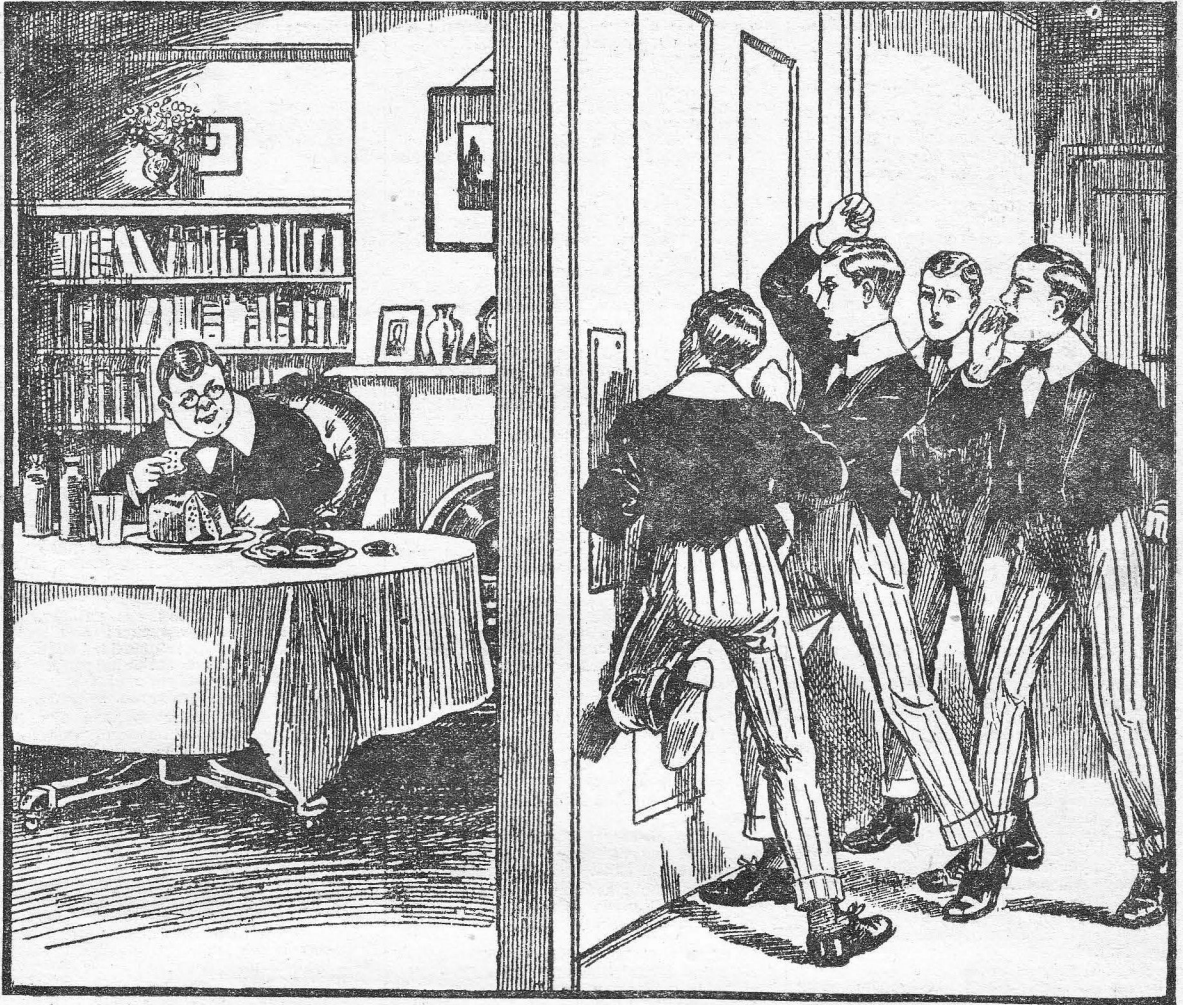
"Yes, I've noticed that."

"And I only just caught the train, too, and didn't have time to take my ticket," explained Bunter. "I intended to pay at this end, of course."

"After you'd met us!" said Lovell grimly. "Ahem! You—you see, when I got out I thought you'd be there, as I telegraphed—I borrowed the tin specially of Mauly to send the wire—I—I mean, I sent the wire specially. Well, as I'd left my cash at home, I couldn't pay up, and the rotters at the station actually accused me of wanting to swindle the company."

"You don't say so!" remarked Newcome sarcastically.

"Yes, they did, and they were going to send for a policeman!" said Bunter indig-



Mornington rapped savagely on the door of the study. "Hallo!" came Billy Bunter's voice from within. "Who's there?" "You fat rotter!" yelled Mornington. "You have been raiding my grub!" (See page 17).

nantly. "If I hadn't explained that I'd got friends here who'd be anxious and eager to lend me the money, I might have been locked up."

"Oh, you've got friends here?" asked Lovell. "Eh? Yes, of course!"

"Good! You'd better look for 'em, and ask 'em to lend you the tin," said Lovell. "Good-bye!"

"He, he, he! I say, Silver, I suppose you can lend me six bob? This beast has come along with me to take it!"

Old William touched his hat.

"Begging your pardon, Master Silver! The young person said he was a friend of yours, so the stationmaster said he'd give him a chance."

Jimmy Silver looked grim.

He knew that Bunter had deliberately travelled without paying his fare, with the intention of "sticking" the Rookwood juniors for it when he arrived. And as they had not met him he was in a serious difficulty.

The porter had come with him for the money. If it was not paid there was trouble ahead for William George Bunter.

If anything could have made Jimmy Silver more exasperated by Bunter's visit than he was already, this incident would have done it. He could not let Bunter be marched away to answer for his sins.

He fumbled in his pocket and produced half-a-crown.

"Lend us some tin," he said. "It's all right, William, we'll pay as the fellow was coming to visit us. Lock him up next time." William grinned.

"Look here—" began Lovell warmly.

"Oh, pay up and keep smiling!" said Jimmy. With far from a good grace the juniors rummaged in their pockets for the money.

The sum was raised, with a shilling over for William, who touched his hat and retired from the scene satisfied.

Billy Bunter's fat face cleared. He was out of his scrape, and the effect of a scrape never lasted long with Bunter. He was quite cheerful now.

"Thanks, awfully, you fellows!" he said. "Of course, I'll settle up that little sum as soon as I get back to Greyfriars. How much do I owe each of you?"

"Oh, never mind!" said Jimmy gruffly.

"But I do mind," said Bunter firmly. "I'm very particular in matters of this sort."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Some fellows aren't particular," said Bunter, "but I'm one of the sort that are. Short reckonings make long friends, you know. Still, I suppose it will be all right if I send you a postal-order for the amount, Jimmy, and you can settle with the others?"

"Oh, yes; that will be quite all right," said Jimmy sarcastically.

"Good!"

"And when the postal-order comes I sha'n't cash it. I shall have it framed and hang it up in the study," said Jimmy Silver.

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter decided to treat that remark as a joke. "Well, here we are again! Jolly glad to see you fellows! You were just going into the tuckshop, I think? Don't let me stop you."

"Oh, that's all right!"

"The fact is, I'm rather peckish after my journey," said Bunter. "Come along with me! It's my treat!"

Jimmy Silver did not move. He had been caught like that before. Billy Bunter intended to give orders recklessly, on the understanding that it was "his treat," and leave the Rookwood fellows to settle the bill, to

be reimbursed at some future date with a postal-order.

"Your treat?" said Jimmy.

"Yes, certainly!"

"How are you going to stand treat if you haven't any money?"

"Ahem! I suppose you could lend me a few bob, Silver, as I've left my banknotes locked up in my desk at Greyfriars?"

"Sorry! Can't be did!"

"Ahem! I say, Lovell—"

"Money's tight," said Lovell calmly.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Rookwoods.

Times had changed, evidently.

"Like to come and look at the cricket?" asked Jimmy Silver blandly.

Billy Bunter grunted. He wasn't in the slightest degree interested in the cricket.

"Oh, all right," he said ungraciously.

And the Fistical Four piloted the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove to Little Side with an expression upon his fat face that spoke volumes.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Bunter on the War-path.

"**F**AT JACK of the bone-house, by gad!"

Adolphus Smythe of the Shell made that pleasant remark as he turned his eyeglass upon Billy Bunter.

Smythe & Co. were lounging upon Little Side, looking upon the cricket with a patronising eye, but taking no part in the practice. The Nuts of Rookwood dodged cricket practice whenever they could, with the exception of Mornington. Slacker as he was in other respects, Mornington was keen on cricket. He was at the wickets now, and Dick Oswald was bowling to him.

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at Smythe. "Where did you pick it up?" pursued Adolphus.

"Is that Rookwood good manners?" inquired Billy Bunter.

"Shut up, Smythe!" said Jimmy Silver uneasily.

He did not like his visitor, and he did not like Bunter's planting himself on Rookwood as he had done. But there was a limit.

Billy Bunter's little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"If a chap insulted a visitor of mine at Greyfriars I should lick him!" he remarked.

"Great Scott! Could you lick anybody?" grinned Smythe.

"I'd jolly well lick you if I wasn't a visitor here!" said Bunter.

"Don't mind that," chipped in Lovell at once. "We'll excuse you, Bunter."

"Yes, rather!" grinned Raby.

"Pile in, Bunter!"

"I'll hold your jacket," said Newcome.

"Oh! I say, you fellows, I—I mean—"

"By gad, I'd forgotten I was to meet Howard in the village," said Smythe hastily. "Come on, you chaps!"

Adolphus was not looking for a fight, even with the fat and unwieldy Owl of Greyfriars. But his evident haste to avoid one encouraged Billy Bunter. Bunter was obtuse in most things, but he was keen in others, and it did not need much keenness to see that the lofty Adolphus was a funk of the first water.

"Blest if I don't jolly well lick him, too!" exclaimed Bunter.

"Hold on, Smythe! Where are you going?"

"I've got an appointment—"

"You've got a previous one with Bunter," grinned Lovell, giving Adolphus a shove that sent him staggering towards the fat junior.

"By gad! You insulting rotter—"

"Go it, Smythe!" said Townsend of the Fourth. "You can lick that fat rotter!"

"I'm not going to enter into blackguardly scuffling," said Smythe. "A chap's got his dignity to consider."

Billy Bunter needed no more encouragement than that. As a matter of fact, he was very nearly as bad a funk as Adolphus himself. But he was brave as a lion when there was no danger to be encountered.

He tore off his jacket and pitched it to Jimmy Silver.

"Come on!" he roared. "I'll give you Fat Jack of the bone-house! Come on, you glass-eyed funk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold my spectacles, Jimmy Silver! Mind you don't drop them! If they get broken somebody'll have to pay for them! Come on, you skinny rotter!"

"Look here—" stammered Smythe.

He had never dreamed that the fat fellow would turn out ferocious like this.

The fat junior, blinking without his spectacles, pranced up to Smythe, and landed out forcibly, hitting Townsend of the Fourth under the chin. Townsend staggered back with a yell.

"Come on!" roared Bunter. "That's one for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly idiot!" roared Townsend.

"Eh? Did I hit you? Sorry! I'm rather short-sighted, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's that rotter? Bring him here!" roared Bunter. "I'm not going chasing him! Is this Rookwood pluck? Yah!"

Lovell and Raby grasped Smythe, and fairly hurled him at Bunter.

"There he is!" chuckled Lovell.

Smythe crashed into Bunter, and the fat junior hit out wildly and blindly. As it happened, his fat fist caught Smythe on the point of the chin.

A drive with Bunter's tremendous weight behind it was no joke.

Adolphus fairly crumpled up.

He crashed backwards to the ground, and lay there, gasping, wondering whether an earthquake had happened.

"Come on!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, porpoise!"

"Get up, Adolphus!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" mumbled Smythe, caressing his chin as he lay in the grass.

"My jaw's broken! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Yah! Gurrup!" roared the fat junior from Greyfriars, dancing round the fallen Nut of the Shell. "Yah! Funk!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Funk!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 33.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Did you ever see a porpoise on the warpath before? Get up, Smythe!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Townsend and Topham ran forward to pick up the dandy of the Shell. Adolphus' head was swimming, and his jaw was aching. He had had enough.

"Go it!" said Townsend.

"Yow-ow! I'm not goin' to fight the beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Funk!"

"You can't funk a fat rotter like that," whispered Topham. "Go in and win!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, pile in! You can lick him!"

Smythe of the Shell reluctantly piled in. Billy Bunter's warlike dance ceased as the Shell fellow advanced on him. He backed away.

"I'll let you off now," he said magnanimously. "I don't want this to go any further."

"Oh, don't you?" snarled Adolphus, realising that Bunter was as afraid as he was. "Well, I'm goin' to lick you, you fat rotter! Come on!"

"I—I say, you fellows— Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as Adolphus attacked him, hitting out furiously.

Crash!

Billy Bunter went to grass.

It was Adolphus' turn to dance a waltz. He pranced victoriously round Billy Bunter as he lay blinking.

"Get up, you fat rascal—get up! I'll give you a thrashing while I'm about it!" he exclaimed. "Drag him up, somebody!"

"Oh dear! I—I can't get up!" gasped Bunter. "I've sprained my back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My leg's dislocated, and my backbone's sprained in two places! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Silver, if this is the way you treat a visitor, you won't see me at Rookwood again in a hurry!"

"Get up!" shouted Adolphus. "I'm goin' to lick you!"

"You can lick me, if you're hungry for licking somebody!" remarked Jimmy Silver, pushing back his cuffs. "Come on, Smythe!"

Adolphus would as soon have attacked a tiger in his lair as Jimmy Silver of the Fourth. His warlike ardour vanished at once.

"Well, if that fat bounder's had enough, I don't mind lettin' him off!" he said loftily. And he walked away hastily.

Jimmy Silver grinned, and helped Bunter to rise.

"Is that rotter gone?" gasped Bunter, blinking round him nervously.

"Yes, he's gone."

"Oh, you shouldn't have let him go! I was just going to get up and lick him!"

"I'll call him back," said Lovell.

"Oh, never mind, I don't want to hurt him!" said Bunter hastily. "I've heked him, and that will do. You Rookwood fellows ain't much in the fighting line. Not like us at Greyfriars. We simply live on it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yes, rather! If a chap cheeks me, I knock him down," said Bunter calmly. "I'm a regular terror in the Remove at Greyfriars. Fifth-Formers are jolly careful how they talk to me, I can tell you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blest if I can see anything to cackle at! What time do you fellows have tea here?" asked Bunter, changing the subject.

"We're going to have some cricket before tea," said Jimmy Silver. "You'd like some cricket, wouldn't you?"

"I'm a demon at it!" said Bunter. "I wouldn't mind showing you some things, at either batting or bowling. I suppose you call that cricket?" He nodded towards the fellows at practice.

"Of course, you'd put us quite in the shade," said Lovell sarcastically. "If you can play cricket as well as you can fight you must be a corker!"

"That's right, I am a corker!" said Bunter. "I don't play for the Remove; the cricket committee's jealous of me. That's how the matter stands. If you like, I'll show you some bowling that will open your eyes a little!"

"Chuck over the ball, Oswald!" called out Jimmy Silver.

Oswald grinned, and tossed the ball to Billy Bunter. The fat junior caught it—with his chest—and sat down in the grass.

"Ow, ow! Wharrer you up to?" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry!" ejaculated Oswald. "I thought you'd catch it."

"You silly ass!"

"Ahem!"

Jimmy Silver jerked the fat junior to his feet.

"There's the ball! Go and bowl to Mornington," he said.

And Bunter grunted, and toddled on the pitch.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Demon Bowler.

BY gad! Who's that funny merchant?" asked Mornington, staring along the pitch at the Greyfriars junior.

Billy Bunter blinked along him.

"Look out!" he called out.

"That fat idiot can't bowl!" said Mornington. "What's the game? I'm not goin' to bat to that fathead!"

"He's the demon bowler from Greyfriars," said Jimmy Silver. "He's the chap who can't get into the eleven because they're all afraid of being put in the shade. Bunter is going to surprise you with his bowling. Give him a trial."

"Oh, all right!"

Mornington stood up at the wicket again, and Bunter prepared to bowl. All eyes were fixed on the fat junior. Billy Bunter enjoyed the limelight, and he was by no means averse to showing off his wonderful powers to the Rookwooders. Nothing would have convinced Bunter that he was not a first-class cricketer.

His method of bowling was striking. He retreated about a dozen paces and took a run forward at the pace of a lazy snail, and turned himself into a catherine-wheel. The ball came whizzing down, and there was a fendish yell from Mornington.

The Rookwood junior dropped the bat, clasped both hands to his head, and fairly danced on the crease.

There was a yell of laughter.

"How's that?" chirruped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Out—what!" grinned Bunter.

Jimmy Silver threw himself in the grass, and kicked up his heels in helpless mirth. Mornington was yelling with pain and wrath. Bunter had not bowled at all; he had thrown the ball, and it had caught the batsman on the side of the head.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!" shrieked Mornington.

"Oh, my head! Yah! Oh, the fat villain! He's brained me! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, field that ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, there's nothing to run for," said Bunter, in surprise, as Mornington came tearing along the pitch. "You're out, you know."

But Mornington was not taking a run. He was coming for Bunter. There was a big bruise on Mornington's head, and he wanted vengeance. The demon bowler uttered a yell of surprise and wrath as the infuriated batsman hurled himself upon him.

"Yaroo! He's gone mad! Help! Yah! Yooop!"

"Punch, punch, punch!"

"Help! Murder! Fire! Draggimoff!" shrieked Bunter.

Mornington had the fat junior's head in chancery, and he was pounding away with Hunnill fury.

Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed to the rescue.

They seized the enraged Mornington and dragged him off, and Billy Bunter collapsed into the grass, and yelled.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Yoop! Grooogh! Oh crumbs!"

"Lemme get at him!" yelled Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on, Morny! It was an accident, you know."

"I'm goin' to smash him!"

But half a dozen juniors hustled the infuriated Mornington away. Billy Bunter was set on his feet again, blinking dazedly.

"Grooh! Where's my glasses? Don't tread on my glasses, you silly idiots! If they get broken—grooogh!—somebody'll have to pay for them! Oh dear! Wharrer that silly idiot go for me for? Grooh!"

"Here's your barnacles, old chap!" said Lovell, sticking them on Billy Bunter's fat little nose.

"Grooogh! I've had enough of this!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "You Rookwood chaps don't play the game!"

"What!"

"When a fellow's out at Greyfriars to first-

class bowling, he takes it like a sport! He doesn't go for the bowler!" spluttered Bunter. "Oh, my hat! Morny wasn't out!" shrieked Jimmy Silver. "You chucked the ball at him, and biffed him on the napper!"

"Rot!"
"Eh--what?"
"Rot!" repeated Bunter. "I suppose I know when I've got my man out? There never was a neater ball than that. He was out, and he lost his temper and went for me. We don't do that at Greyfriars!"

"You--you fat idiot--"
"Shush!"
"I'm not bowling to that chap again," said Bunter. "I never did think much of Rookwood cricket; but I really did expect you fellows to know when a batsman was out. I've had enough of this, I must say. I'm ready for tea!"

"But it isn't tea-time yet," said Raby. "I'm hungry."

There was no gainsaying that. "Oh, come along!" said Jimmy Silver. The Fistical Four and their remarkable visitor left the cricket-pitch, and as they walked to the School House Billy Bunter enlarged upon his views of batsmen who didn't know when they were out.

What William George Bunter didn't know about cricket wasn't worth knowing--at least, so it appeared from Bunter's remarks. And it was an undoubted fact that nobody at Rookwood was inclined to stand up to his bowling.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Short Commons.

BILLY BUNTER sank into the armchair in the end study with a grunt. It was far from being tea-time, but Bunter was ready for tea; he was always ready for a meal.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not like being dragged indoors on that sunny afternoon, but there was no help for it. Their visitor was on their hands, and had to be looked after, to a certain extent.

But it occurred to Lovell that there was no need for four fellows to look after him, and he strolled out of the study.

It occurred to Raby immediately afterwards that there was no need for three, and he followed Lovell. Then it was borne in upon Newcome's mind that there was no need for two, and he sauntered out of the end study and disappeared.

Unfortunately, there was need for one, and Jimmy Silver had to remain with the uninvited guest.

The captain of the Fourth turned out the contents of the study cupboard. As it happened, the Fistical Four were not in funds that day, and the sum they had been compelled to raise for Bunter's railway fare had cleared them out of cash. The guest had to take his chance.

"You wouldn't rather wait for tea in Hall, Bunter?" Jimmy Silver asked, rather hesitatingly.

"I'll have tea in Hall as well," said Bunter.

"Oh!"
Jimmy Silver made the best show he could with the scanty supplies of the study. He could do no more. He would have cut down to the tuckshop for fresh supplies, if he had possessed the necessary cash resources; but his cash had been expended for Bunter already.

The fat junior dragged his chair to the table, and blinked over the festive board.

"Ahem! Pile in!" said Jimmy Silver hospitably.

The hospitality was unbounded, though the supplies were limited.

The Fistical Four would have had an exceedingly frugal tea with those supplies. As it was, they would have to have tea in Hall. The total amount of the study supplies was at Bunter's disposal, but the amount was not large.

Bunter's blink was very expressive. There were two sardines, half a loaf, a fragment of butter, a suspicion of jam, and tea, the latter very weak.

That was all.
Bunter had retained a loving memory of his last feed at Rookwood. The chums of the Fourth had "done" him very well on that occasion, having been in funds, and having also borrowed money for the occasion. Billy Bunter wasn't an easy guest to provide for.

Bunter looked at the tea-table, and looked at Jimmy Silver.

"Like sardines?" said Jimmy cheerily.

"Oh, yes!" said Bunter sarcastically. "Wire in, then! Take the lot!"
Bunter took the lot; there were only two. The meagre supplies vanished in record time, and Bunter blinked discontentedly over the table. It was enough for any ordinary eater, but Billy Bunter wasn't an ordinary eater.

"Rather short commons to-day," remarked Jimmy apologetically.

"So I see."
"You took us rather by surprise, you know."

"So it seems!"
"Ahem! Would you like some more--more tea?"

"Is that tea?"
"Oh, yes!"

"You're sure you didn't forget to put the tea in?"

"I put the lot in."
"Must have been a lot!" said Bunter.

"Have some more bread-and-butter?"
"Where's the butter?"

"I--I mean, bread."
"Thanks! I don't care for bread!"

"The chaps are playing cricket," said Jimmy Silver. "Let's go and see old Bulkeley batting--what!"

"I'd rather take a rest," said Bunter, rolling back in the armchair. "Don't you stay in. The fact is, I'll take a little nap!"

"Sure you'd like to?" said Jimmy eagerly. Unwelcome as his guest was, Jimmy did not wish to be wanting in politeness. But certainly it was a pleasant prospect for Bunter to take a nap, and leave him free to follow his own devices.

"Oh, yes! You cut off; I'll join you presently!" said Bunter.

Jimmy eyed him doubtfully. He had never heard of a junior schoolboy taking a nap after meals before.

But Bunter leaned back and closed his eyes, and began to snore.

That settled it.

Jimmy left the study with a lighter heart. The Fistical Four had planned a little excursion for that afternoon. The excursion had to be given up now. But at least Jimmy could get some cricket, so long as Bunter was content to sleep in the study armchair.

But as his footsteps died away down the passage, Billy Bunter's eyes reopened. He sat upright in the chair.

"Beast!" he murmured. "Rotter! Call that hospitality! I could have had a better tea than that with Todd. But I'm jolly well not going to be famished to please him! I'm going to have tea!"

Billy Bunter tiptoed to the door. He blinked out cautiously into the passage. There was no one in sight; there was no sound from the studies. All the juniors were out of doors that sunny afternoon.

With a grin on his fat face, Billy Bunter quitted the end study. The Owl of Greyfriars was on the warpath!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Pig in Clover.

CRUMBS! This is a bit of all right!" Billy Bunter chuckled joyously. He had scouted along the Fourth Form passage, looking into the studies--and into the study cupboards.

He had taken a snack here and there, when he had found one. Cheese and biscuits from Townsend's study, cold rashers from Jones minor's, jam and pickles from one, marmalade and ham and cake from another; all was grist that came to William George Bunter's mill. But it was when he reached Mornington's study that the fat junior found himself in clover.

He did not know it was Mornington's study. But he knew that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, to speak figuratively. Mornington was rolling in money, and he "did" himself remarkably well. After cricket practice he was having a few friends to tea, and the study cupboard held the supplies. Billy Bunter's eyes danced behind his big glasses as he blinked into the cupboard. Jam and cake, biscuits and ham, cheese and cold beef and pickles, and lobster, all sorts and conditions of good things were there.

Billy Bunter gazed at them ecstatically. But he did not waste time in contemplating the plunder.

He commenced operations at once. Guzzle, guzzle, guzzle!

There was a steady sound in the study of champing jaws. Seldom had Billy Bunter

found such an opportunity. And he was making the best of it.

Ham and tongue and cold beef disappeared as if by magic. A hungry Hun could not have made a more rapid clearance.

For about half an hour Billy Bunter hardly moved.

By that time the keen edge of his appetite had worn off, and he proceeded more slowly, picking out delicacies.

He reflected, too, that if the owner of the study returned, he would be surprised--and probably exasperated--to find the visitor from Greyfriars scoffing his supplies.

He resolved to finish the feed in safer quarters.

He gathered up a large cake, several bottles of ginger-beer and currant wine, a bag of biscuits, a packet of chocolate creams, and several other articles. His pockets were stuffed, and he had a cargo under each arm, as he trod cautiously out of the study.

There was a sound of voices below, and Bunter hurried along the passage. If it was the owner of the study returning, he had escaped only just in time.

A bottle of ginger-beer slipped from under his arm, and crashed on the floor, and rolled along; but Bunter did not stop it.

He bolted into the end study, closed the door, and turned the key in the lock.

Then he spread out his plunder on the table, sat in the armchair, and proceeded to dispose of it.

His fat face beamed over it.

If there was trouble to follow his raid, that could not be helped, and the astute Owl reflected that Jimmy Silver & Co. could not very well stand by and see their guest ragged.

Meanwhile, Mornington and his friends had come in. Townsend and Topham and Peck and Gower were with Mornington. They came into the study in cheerful humour. Mornington had recovered from his painful experiences with Bunter the bowler, though there was still a bruise under his dark hair. But a change came over his face as he saw the cupboard door wide open, and noted the deprivations that had taken place.

"Who the dickens has been here?" he exclaimed.

"Hallo, a giddy raid!" exclaimed Townsend. "Some of the Modern rotters."

"Oh, rotten!" exclaimed Peck. "There goes our tea! Look here, we're not goin' to stand this! I'd go to Bootles about it."

"Some cheeky rotter has collared the stuff!" he growled. "We'll jolly well find him and get it back. Come along!"

He hurried along out of the study, looking about him savagely. The ginger-beer bottle on the floor caught his eye.

"He went this way!" he exclaimed.

Mornington ran along the passage, looking into the studies, in search of the raider. All the studies were empty, however, until he came to the last, which was locked.

Mornington rapped savagely on the door.

"Hallo!" came a fat voice from within. "Is that you, Jimmy?"

"It is I! Open the door!"

"Who's I?" asked BUNTER, without moving. "Mornington."

"How do you do, Morny? Remember seeing me at Greyfriars?"

"Have you been to my study?" shouted Mornington, rattling the door.

"Smithy sent you his kind regards."

"You fat rotter! Have you been raiding my study?"

"And Smithy told me to tell you not to overdo the smokes, Morny."

"Open this door!"

"Eh?"

"Open the door, you fat rotter!"

Billy Bunter made no reply. But Mornington could hear his champing, as he disposed of the cake. The dandy of the Fourth kicked furiously at the door.

"What's the row?" asked Townsend, coming along the passage. "Tain't one of those chaps who's raided us. They're on the cricket-ground!"

"It's that fat beast from Greyfriars!"

"Phew! Sure?"

"He won't let me into the study, anyway!"

"Bunter!" shouted Townsend.

"Hallo!"

"Let us in!"

"Some other time, old chap!"

"Have you got our grub there?"

No reply.

"He's scoffing it!" exclaimed Mornington. "Bunter, if you don't open this door, we'll break it in!"

Only a fat chuckle replied. The door was of stout oak, and Bunter did not think it was likely to be broken easily.

But he did not know Mornington. The Rookwood junior had flown into one of his savage, passionate tempers; and when he was in that mood he did not care how much damage he did.

"Get a form!" he exclaimed. "Get that form from the box-room. We'll batter the door in!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Townsend uneasily. "There'll be the dickens to pay!"

"I don't care!"

"Well, I do."

"Pah!"

Mornington rushed into the box-room at the end of the passage. An old, damaged form had been left there with other lumber, and Mornington remembered it. He seized it and dragged it out into the passage.

"Lend me a hand with it!" he exclaimed.

"Look here, Morny—"

"Stand aside!"

Mornington lifted the heavy form with the exertion of all his strength, and crashed it against the lock. The door shook and groaned.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

"Will you open the door?" yelled Mornington.

"Will you make it pax if I do?"

"No!"

"Then you can go and eat coke!"

Crash! Crash!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Mornington.

"HALLO!" What the merry dickens is—

Jimmy Silver & Co. came along the passage. They quickened their pace as they saw how Mornington was engaged. He was about to crash the old form on the door again, when Jimmy Silver's grasp fell upon his shoulder.

"Hold on!" said Jimmy.

"Let me alone, haug you!"

"That's my study door," said Jimmy quietly. "You won't bust in my door, Mornington!"

Mornington wrenched himself away from the captain of the Fourth. The form crashed on the floor, and there was a howl of anguish from Townsend. The end had clumped on his toe.

Townsend hopped on one foot, yelling.

"Yow-ow-ow! Yah! You silly idiot!"

Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my toe! Ow—yow!"

"Now, what's the little game?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Mornington panted with rage.

"That fat beast has raided my study. He's got my grub in there, and the door's locked."

Jimmy Silver whistled.

"Oh, my hat! Let me in, Bunter."

"Is that you, Jimmy, old pal?"

"It's Jimmy, anyway."

Billy Bunter unlocked the door. Jimmy Silver strode in, followed by his chums and Mornington. Townsend was still hopping in anguish in the passage.

Mornington shook a furious fist at the Owl of Greyfriars.

"Now where is it?" he shouted.

"Where's what?"

"That you've taken from my study."

"I don't understand you, Mornington!" said Bunter, with dignity. "If you mean to imply that I have taken anything from your study, I can only say that I regard the insinuation with scorn."

Jimmy Silver looked sharply at the fat junior. Bunter looked rather greasy and shiny, and seemed to be breathing with some difficulty. Certainly he looked like a fellow who had over-eaten himself. But there were no signs of a feed in the study; the fat junior had taken care of that. All the eatables and drinkables were safely disposed of—inside Bunter; and the ginger-beer bottles were hidden under the table. The Owl of Greyfriars was prepared to brazen it out. Billy Bunter was quite a Prussian in some things, and "whoppers" cost him little.

"I know he's had the stuff," said Mornington, between his teeth. "Why shouldn't he open the door?"

"Why didn't you let Mornington in, Bunter?" asked Lovell.

"Well, he seemed so waxy, I wouldn't risk

it," said Bunter calmly. "I don't want to have to lick him. I've licked one Rookwood chap this afternoon. I didn't come over here to wallop all Rookwood!"

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy.

"I tell you he raided my study!" shouted Mornington, advancing on Bunter with his fists clenched. "And if he doesn't hand it over, I'll take it out of his hide!"

Bunter promptly dodged behind Jimmy Silver.

"I say, you fellows—"

Jimmy pushed the enraged Mornington back.

"Did you collar Mornington's grub, or not, Bunter?" he demanded.

"Certainly not!"

"Have you been in this study all the time?"

"Yes, fast asleep. Mornington woke me up thundering at the door."

"What did you lock the door for?" asked Raby.

"I don't like being disturbed when I'm having a nap."

"He's lyin'!" yelled Mornington.

Jimmy shook his head.

"You can see the grub isn't here, Mornington. I dare say it was some of the Moderns raided you."

"Nothin' of the sort. It was that fat rotter, and I know it."

"Well, you can't know it."

"He's goin' to hand the stuff over, or I'm goin' to lick him!" shouted Mornington.

"And if you interfere, I'll lick you, too, Jimmy Silver!"

Jimmy's eyes gleamed.

"Well, you're not going to touch Bunter," he said. "You've got no proof. You'd better clear out of the study."

"Yes, kick him out!" said Bunter, keeping behind the stalwart captain of the Fourth. "I don't like a hooligan like that in the place. I must say I don't think much of Rookwood manners—I don't really."

Mornington made a rush at Bunter. As Jimmy was in the way, he came into collision with Jimmy. His fist crashed on Jimmy Silver's nose, and there was a roar from Jimmy.

The next moment Mornington was being driven out of the study, with Jimmy's left and right driving him.

The infuriated Mornington resisted savagely, but he was driven out, and a straight drive from Jimmy's left hurled him fairly into the passage.

Mornington collapsed upon the floor, gasping.

"Now, if you want any more, you can come in again," said Jimmy Silver, breathing hard. "Come away, Morny!" muttered Topham.

"The grub isn't there, you know."

Mornington's friends picked him up and led him away down the passage. The dandy of the Fourth had had enough.

Billy Bunter chuckled gleefully.

"You ain't bad as a boxer, Jimmy," he remarked critically. "I could give you some tips, perhaps; but you ain't bad for a Rookwood chap."

Jimmy glared at him.

"You could give me some tips?" he asked.

"Oh, yes! I'm rather a dab at boxing!"

"Well, I've got some gloves here. You can give me the tips."

"Ahem! Another time. I—I don't feel quite up to boxing after a feed like that," said Bunter hastily.

"A feed like what?" demanded Lovell suspiciously.

"I—I mean, on a warm afternoon like this," said Bunter. "That's what I really meant to say."

Townsend looked into the study.

"Somebody's been robbin' my study cupboard," he said, with a savage look at Bunter. "Tain't only Morny's."

"Who's got my pickles, bedad?" came Flynn's voice along the passage. "Tare an' ou'n's, and my pot of jam!"

"Where's my cheese?"

"Where's my cake?"

"Where's my ham and tongue?"

The Classical juniors had come in to tea, and the long list of deprivations had been discovered. There was wrath from one end of the passage to the other.

"Must have been a Modern raid," said Jimmy Silver.

"Rot!" growled Townsend.

And he stamped away in a temper.

The Fistical Four eyed Bunter suspiciously. It was possible that some of the Modern fellows had raided the passage while the

Classicals were on the cricket-ground. But they could not help feeling suspicious of Bunter.

"Well, we're going to have tea in Hall," said Jimmy Silver. "Are you ready, Bunter?"

"Ahem! I—I've had tea, you know."

"You said you'd like tea in Hall as well. You didn't have much of a spread here."

"I'm not a great eater," said Bunter calmly. "You fellows go and have tea. I'll wait for you here."

"Well, I want my tea," said Lovell.

"Better lock the door," said Jimmy, with a grin.

"You bet!" said Bunter emphatically.

The Fistical Four went down to tea, and Bunter locked the door after them. Then he sat in the armchair and grinned. From his pockets he drew several chunks of cake and biscuits and chocolate creams, and proceeded to dispose of them—slowly. Even Billy Bunter had a limit, and after his tremendous feed, he had to be careful how he crammed anything more in, lest there should be a catastrophe.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Very Serious Problem.

BILLY BUNTER was asleep in the armchair when the Fistical Four returned to the study. A hammering at the door awakened him, and he let the juniors in. Jimmy Silver & Co. regarded him curiously as he yawned and rubbed his eyes.

"Napping again?" asked Newcome.

"Yes, just a doze, you know," said Bunter. "I can do with a good deal of sleep. I suppose I shall have to think about my train pretty soon."

"Will you?" said Jimmy politely.

"Yes. I suppose you're not going to walk to the station?"

"No," said Jimmy, misunderstanding—perhaps purposely. "We've got a meeting of the cricket committee, and we sha'n't be able to get away."

"So awfully sorry!" said Lovell.

"I don't mean that!" grunted Bunter. "I mean, you're going to have a lift of some sort."

"No lifts here," said Jimmy; "we all use the stairs."

"I don't mean that sort of lift. Have you got a trap to take me to the station, or haven't you?"

"Nothing but a mouse-trap!"

"Br-r-r-r! When I have a visitor I generally look after him a bit better than this. I shouldn't urge a fellow to come and see me if I wasn't prepared to look after him," said Bunter irritably.

As a matter of fact, the ham and jam and pickles and cheese and the rest were engaged in internequine warfare inside Bunter, and his temper was suffering.

"Well, we're prepared to look after you," said Lovell; "we'll look after you from the gate when you go, with pleasure."

"Well, if I've got to walk, we may as well start now," said Bunter sulkily. "I suppose you're going to see me to the station?"

"Sorry! Can't cut the cricket committee."

"Then there's something that will have to be settled before I start," said Bunter, in alarm. "I told you I'd left my money at Greyfriars. I've got to get a ticket back somehow."

"My hat! That looks like a difficulty. Sorry, I'm stony!"

"Same here," said Lovell.

And Raby and Newcome shook their heads sadly.

Billy Bunter blinked at them. Following his usual system, he had intended to "stick" Jimmy Silver & Co. for his railway fare. But he had overdone it for once. The Fistical Four were stony, and they had neither the desire nor the intention to go up and down Rookwood borrowing money for Bunter.

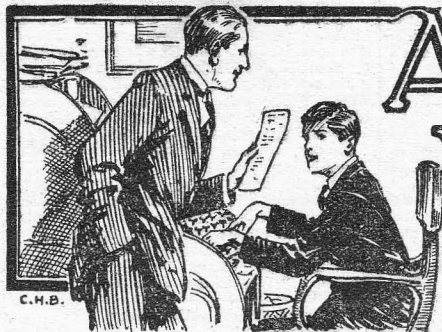
"We'll see you as far as the gate," said Jimmy Silver. "Sorry we can't come farther, but a cricket committee is a cricket committee, you know."

"I say, you fellows. I—I've got to have a ticket, you know," said Bunter, in alarm. "I—I can't dodge the railway company all the way."

"It's a good idea to take a return ticket," remarked Lovell. "Well, I must be off. Rawson's expecting me."

Lovell strolled away, whistling. How William George Bunter was to get home to

(Continued on page 20.)



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

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NEXT WEEK'S BUMPER NUMBER!

Look out for a

GRAND SPECIAL NUMBER

of the POPULAR, which will make its appearance next week—the greatest issue of the POPULAR ever published—containing

TWO WONDERFUL NEW SERIALS

which have been written by two of the famous authors of the day. This grand treat must not be missed, so I want you to circulate the news among your friends who are non-readers and get them to order their copies well in advance.

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"THE SWORD OF THE TEMPLES!"

By Edmund Burton.

This grand story commences in next Friday's POPULAR, so don't miss next week's issue, whatever you do.

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EDDIE POLO'S LIFE STORY

will be another "Star" feature on the programme, under the title of:

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"THE EXPLOITS OF FERRERS

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By Maurice Everard

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The next grand, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School is entitled:

"TOMMY DODD'S MISTAKE!"

By Owen Conquest.

It is a story of the famous Rookwood Players, as the amateur actors amongst the juniors call themselves. Jimmy Silver's impersonation of one of the characters is so striking that it gives rise to an amazing error on the part of the Modern juniors.

Altogether, next Friday's number will be packed full of splendid features, which cannot fail to enhance the increasing popularity of the good old "Popular."

CORRESPONDENCE.

F. A. King, 17, Lochaline Street, Hammersmith, W. 6, asks for a correspondent in New York, or any part of the U.S.A., also with a boy in London who is interested in America.—Miss Cissie Austin, 69, Langton Road, North Brixton, S.W. 9, wants to correspond with readers.

DOWN IN THE COUNTRY.

Nowadays the roomy and comfortable public motor conveyances which trundle merrily along the country lanes enable the public to reach the most out-of-the-way beauty spots at a cheap rate. Just now Surrey is looking its best. In many respects Surrey is the garden of Londoners—the wilderness sort of garden, where tired workers can get the cobwebs blown out of their eyes, and enjoy the scent of the heather. The whole district in the Haslemere region is crammed full of

wonder at the present time, though this fact is nothing remarkable, for Surrey has a big appeal, winter and summer. This part of the world is easy to reach, as has been said. You can go to Chilworth, and take to the hills near by Albury, and take to be seen, however at Albury, and it should not be missed. I mean the Silent Pool, a beautiful lake hidden by trees. The place will hardly bear describing, with its mystery and charm. It just wants seeing. Then you want to walk to the village of Shere. This village looks as if it had been a model for all the most picturesque postcards. The church is ancient, like everything else, but it has been restored of late years, though the heavy oak, iron-clamped doors are just as they were in the past centuries. There is a lych-gate here which bears inspection, with its old French lettering.

The hill route to Dorking some miles away takes finding. You climb up a rough track, which has been rendered pretty well impassable by the work done in wood-cutting, for trunks of oaks bar the route. Once at the top you are on a grassy plateau. There are magnificent views, and there is a path, but you are sure to lose it over and over again as you make your way through the woods, where the jays are shouting and there comes the soft music of the pigeons.

When you lose your way you just have to find it again, that's all. There is no one of whom to make inquiries—except a gipsy chap who rises up out of the bush, as if he had just had a nap (which he probably had), and demands cigarettes. The track winds on, and is grass all the time. It forms part of the old Pilgrims' Way from Winchester to Canterbury.

The views are magnificent right and left, wherever the density of the trees permit a glimpse of the land lying far below. Up in the hills you find a different climate—plenty of rain which the valley misses altogether. Of course, nearly everybody knows Dorking, where there never was a battle, despite what Sir George Chesnay said on the subject. But the best feature of the town is not the ornate High Street, but the old part where the little red houses lie in tumbled-up style round about the river, with gardens just now brilliant with hollyhocks.

You have to tramp down into the place from the heights some summer evening when the sunshine floods the world after rain, and hear the grand music of Dorking Church filling the valley, to see what the beauty of Dorking really is. And then, after many miles of footing it, you can devote your very best attention to a Dorking tea. There is nothing to beat a Dorking tea in an old inn, with the window open to a Surrey garden of flowers.

Therefore, if circumstances make it out of the question to travel far afield—and circumstances have a way of being rough on the individual—just now—the best counsel is: Take a day off, and see Surrey. There is no madding crowd. If you feel botanical you find positive rarities all the way. There is really grand scenery if you want it, and peaceful ditto if your mind is that way. And mind you remember to cross Rammore Common, where the gorse and heather brighten the scene.

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Your Editor

JIMMY SILVER & CO'S. VISITOR!

(Continued from page 18.)

Greyfriars was no concern of his. It was up to William George to consider those details before he issued invitations to himself.

Billy Bunter was utterly dismayed.

"Oh, really, you know, I—I can't stay here all night, you know!" he said.

"I might make you up a bed in the study," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "Would you mind sleeping on the floor?"

"You ass!" roared Bunter. "I've got to get home before locking-up, or I shall get a licking!"

"Then you'd better not lose the train," remarked Raby.

"I—I can't travel without a ticket."

"No; awkward, ain't it?"

"If I had a visitor, and he'd left his money at home, I'd lend him a few bob!" snorted Bunter.

"How would you, if you were stony?" asked Jimmy Silver calmly.

"Well, I can tell you that I shall think twice before I visit you again, that's all!"

"You're welcome to think three times," said Newcome. "See you later, Jimmy. Good-bye, Bunter! So sorry you're in a fix!"

Newcome went out.

"I say, you fellows, don't buzz off like that!" howled Bunter. "Where am I to get the money for my ticket?"

"Borrow it from Mornington," grinned Raby. "Morny's got lots of oof."

And Raby sauntered out.

"Don't forget the cricket committee, Jimmy!" he called back. "The fellows will be waiting for you."

Billy Bunter caught hold of Jimmy Silver's sleeve.

"Look here, what are you going to do?" he demanded.

Jimmy shook his head.

"Blest if I know. You should really have thought of that before you started, you know. You'll excuse me now, won't you? I can't keep the committee waiting."

"But I—I say—"

"Perhaps you could borrow it of Bootles," said Jimmy, relenting.

"Bootles! Who's Bootles?"

"Our Form-master. If you tell him you're stranded here without your return fare, I dare say he would stand it. Only you'd have to send him the money afterwards, or he'd write to your headmaster."

"Look here! You go and ask Bootles, and I'll send you a postal-order to-morrow—I say, don't cut off while I am talking to you! All right, you beast, show me where his study is, then!"

Jimmy Silver, with a solemn face, conducted Bunter to Mr. Bootles's study, and the fat junior knocked and entered. Doubtless the Owl of Greyfriars succeeded in explaining satisfactorily to Mr. Bootles, for his fat face wore a look of relief when he came out of the study.

He blinked round for Jimmy Silver, but Jimmy had disappeared. The cricket committee was in session, and Jimmy was there.

Billy Bunter gave an expressive snort, and rolled out of the School House. He rolled down to the gates and departed.

His visit to Rookwood had come to an end. And, excepting for the stolen spread, it had not fulfilled Bunter's expectations in the least. He rolled away down the lane in a decidedly discontented frame of mind, and as he plumped into the train that bore him away, he registered a vow that he wouldn't honour Jimmy Silver & Co. with another visit, not even if they went down on their bended knees and begged him with tears in their eyes to do so. But Bunter's determination was not likely to be put to such a test.

"Tubby's gone, then!"

Lovell made that disrespectful remark when he came into the end study to do his preparation.

"Did he raise the fare?" yawned Raby.

"Bootles lent it to him," said Jimmy Silver. "That was easy enough; the only difficulty is, that Bunter will have to square, or Bootles will let somebody hear of it."

Jimmy Silver sat down at the table to work. There was a clink under the table as his feet knocked against something there.

"What the dickens—"

Jimmy stopped, and pulled up the cover. Then he ejaculated:

"Oh, my hat!"

He kicked out into view a collection of empty ginger-beer and currant-wine bottles, and several empty cardboard boxes that had contained chocolates and toffee.

"What the merry thunder!" exclaimed Lovell. "Where did that collection come from?"

"Morny's grub!" yelled Raby.

"Oh crumbs!"

The Fistical Four looked at one another. It was evidently the debris of the missing feed that had been discovered under the study table. Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"And the fat villain swore that he hadn't touched Mornington's stuff!" he said. "And I believed him, like an ass—and punched Morny's silly nose!"

"Well, Morny asked for it," said Lovell. "Never mind Morny's nose! Look here, Jimmy Silver, if that fat villain comes here again, he's going to have my boot! I shan't argue with him, I shall just give him my boot, and that's that!"

Jimmy grinned.

"I don't think he'll pay us another visit," he said. "He will feel too jolly uncertain about getting his fare home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Jimmy Silver was right. The chums of Rookwood had seen the last of the uninvited guest.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "TOMMY DODD'S MISTAKE!" Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY!)



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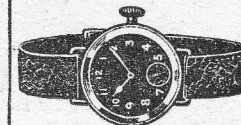
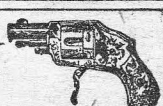
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