

# GRAND NEW SERIAL & EDDIE POLO'S LIFE STORY

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**A MIGHTY CRY AROSE FROM THE SURGING CROWD—"GOD SAVE OUR KING!"**

(See Our Grand New Serial, "THE SWORD OF THE TEMPLES!")

## THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF A ROMANTIC ADVENTURE SERIAL!



## A TALE OF THE GREAT REBELLION

BY EDMUND BURTON

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

THOSE of my readers who dwell in the Midlands may possibly know the crumbling ruins which mark all that is left of Temple Chase, though antiquarians will certainly be familiar with the ancient pile, linking as it does the historic past with our more go-ahead present century. Nowadays, the surrounding district forms a strange contrast to those grey, ivy-covered walls—a contrast which seems only to enhance their impressiveness, and conjure up more vividly in the imagination those events which took place hundreds of years before either you or I saw the light.

At the time of which I write—in the early part of the year of grace, 1642—Temple Chase was one of the finest habitations in all Britain. Situated in the centre of its extensive parkland, its many turrets and twisted chimneys, rising above a green sea of waving tree-tops, formed a landmark which could be seen for miles around on every side.

And its master—Sir John Temple? Would that I were able to guide you back through Time, so that you yourselves might ask the peasantry what they thought of him—ay, and of young Master Harry, his son; and of big Will Howard, who had been in the Temples' service as long as most could remember, yet who seemed as tough and strong as ever, though his hair was fast rivaling that of his master in its wealth of silver! Oh, you would find it good listening, I warrant, for none would have aught but the best to say of them!

Towards sunset on this particular March evening, one of the great bed-rooms at the Chase made a cosy picture. A big log-fire hissed and crackled on the wide hearth, sending myriads of sparks shooting into the dark chimney; tall candles—as yet unlit—in silver sconces, were placed on the table in the centre, at which a boy of some seventeen summers sat, apparently immersed in some task or other, yet ever and anon glancing anxiously towards the bed, whereon an elderly man lay, breathing heavily and irregularly.

A cosy picture, did I say? Ay, pleasant enough, save this latter part; for, some two or three weeks before, Sir John Temple had been thrown from his horse whilst hunting, and had sustained serious injuries which had caused Mr. Thomas, the family physician, to shake his head gloomily. Yet he was not quite devoid of hope, he said, for Sir John's active life had made his constitution one to be envied, and 'twas to this that Mr. Thomas had pinned his faith.

But the days passed slowly by without any visible sign of improvement, and finally even the sanguine physician was reluctantly obliged to own that the chance of recovery was infinitesimal indeed.

"Harry, lad!"

The boy raised his head quickly again, and crossed to the bedside, where, taking the injured man's hand in his own, he held it tightly for a space, waiting for the next words. Sir John looked old, indeed, as he lay there—rather too old to be this young lad's father—but, after all, that was not so very surprising,

for the owner of Temple Chase had married somewhat late in life, and was already beginning to feel the burden of advancing years, even if ever so slightly, when his only son was born. Of his mother, Harry had no clear recollection, she having died before he was old enough to understand many things; yet sometimes he seemed to have faint memories of a sweet face bending lovingly over him, as though in some wonderful dream—an angel face, so like that of the portrait in the Long Gallery, which appeared to smile upon him whenever he passed it, and which the servants always referred to reverently as "the good mistress."

"Harry, you'll feel lonely, I warrant!"

The boy started and looked down at his father's face, a strange expression creeping into his own. Sir John, quite awake now, returned his half-questioning gaze with a curious look in those clear grey eyes of his which the passing of years had failed to dim, and gripped his hand still tighter.

"Father, you—you speak oddly—"

But Temple shook his head slowly.

"Nay, lad! 'Tis of no avail to hide the truth from you. Troubles seem lighter when one is prepared for them—I have hunted my last stag, Harry!"

The young fellow's eyes grew suspiciously moist, and he choked back a sob with an effort; but his voice was strangely husky when he replied, though he tried to speak cheerfully.

"Nay, father mine, 'twould take more than a fall from a horse to hurt a tough Temple over much. Why, Mr. Thomas says—"

"Mr. Thomas says one thing, lad—but he thinks another!" responded Sir John, with a wan smile. "He knows—and I know!"

Harry was silent—forced to admit the truth of the words. The animal had rolled over on its rider in its frantic efforts to regain its feet, and had inflicted internal as well as external injuries. 'Twas the former which had caused the physician to take such a serious view.

"Harry!" Sir John was pointing towards the wall above the hearth, where a long rapier hung horizontally—the only ornament that part of the bedchamber contained. "The sword! Pray, bring it to me!"

The lad did as requested, and laid the weapon on the coverlet. His father struggled into a sitting position, and drew the blade from its scabbard, silently regarding it for a brief moment whilst the ruddy firelight flickered on the glistening steel and jewelled hilt. Then he said abruptly:

"You know the legend, boy—the story of the Temples' Sword?"

Harry did know it. Could there, indeed, be anyone connected with that household who did not? Many a time had he listened spell-bound whilst his father had related the strange narrative—how the rapier had been found by a Temple after the defeat of "Crookback" Richard on Bosworth Field, nearly two hundred years before; how its coming had so mysteriously changed the fortunes of the family from comparative penury to affluence; and how it had been carried by a Temple in every battle from then till now, guarding him

from hurt in the fight, and seeming to make him invincible over his enemies.

Then came the day when the huge treasure stored at the Chase had suddenly disappeared from its usual place, and with it the sword had vanished also. That was in Sir William Temple's—Harry's grandfather's—time, and the weapon had not been unearthed till some three years back. In the meantime, troubles had followed close upon each other; but, strangely enough, with the finding of the sword affairs took a brighter turn, though the treasure itself was never located. Indeed, 'twas thought that Sir William, who was ever reputed to be something of an eccentric, had removed it to a place of greater security; but he had died very suddenly, leaving no statement.

Of course, all these things may have been pure coincidence; but those were curious times—strange, superstitious times, truly.

Sir John again held up the rapier, looking steadfastly at its hilt for a moment, and then turned to Harry.

"You know the story, boy?"

"Ay, father! 'Tis an odd tale, indeed!"

"But a true one, lad, as any Temple could tell you. Harry, I want you to guard this sword as you would your life, for 'tis my firm belief that only through its agency will the treasure be found—if ever. You will need it, boy, for other purposes also!" the elder man added significantly.

The lad nodded gravely.

"These are bad times, Harry," continued Sir John, "but worse are yet to come, I fear. The Temples have ever been loyal to their King—even though that King may have shown himself to be a misguided one. Is there any fresh news to-day, my son?"

"Ay, father; though why trouble about it now—"

"Nay, nay, lad! I would know it, even though I cannot be of much use to the cause. Speak, Harry!"

"His Majesty has ordered the arrest of Hampden and his colleagues," the boy answered slowly; "but this was refused, and the King has fled. The Queen has also left suddenly—for Holland, they say—and the Parliament have seized Hull and other fortresses—Why, father mine, what—"

Sir John had suddenly dragged himself upright, his face distorted by the fresh pain which his effort produced and filled with anxiety.

"Charles gone, you say?" he cried hoarsely. "Marry! Then, 'tis the finish! You will need this sword, boy, to defend his cause!"

He dropped back exhausted, and lay for a while with closed eyes. Young Temple's gaze rested on the weapon still lightly held in his father's hands, and wondered vaguely how this fresh intelligence affected the crisis. Harry up to this had been more concerned with his home than with affairs of State, and had but a very faint idea of the great things which were going on in the outside world, though he knew, of course, that there had been many serious, ever-widening rifts between King and Parliament for a long time past.

Charles Stuart had once stayed for a short while at Temple Chase, whilst on his way to Nottingham, and Harry had liked him well. The monarch may have been weak and unfit to hold the reins of government, but of this the boy knew nothing—he was far too young at the time, indeed, to see anything beneath the pleasant exterior of the beautifully-dressed personage who had allowed him to kiss his hand and had patted him kindly on the head. Moreover, he was the King, to whom every Temple had vowed unswerving loyalty. Yes, right or wrong, he would fight for Charles if ever the necessity arose.

Sir John opened his eyes again, breaking in on Harry's train of thought with a sudden question:

"You remember your Uncle Stephen, lad?"  
 "Ay," answered the boy, somewhat mystified at the quick departure from the subject.  
 "Uncle Stephen, who crossed to Ireland and died there? I recollect him well, father—he and his son Walter."

"Hast had any tidings of your cousin lately?"

"None since we were told he had arrived in London. He was to visit us, you remember, but never did so."

"Nay. 'Twas strange, for he was ever fond of the Chase. Mayhap he had been detained. We were fast friends, Stephen and I, and I should have liked to have seen my nephew before—before—Hark you! 'Tis Will Howard's voice, and—surely someone else comes with him?"

Soft footsteps in the corridor without fell on Harry's ear, and a deferential knock sounded at the door. Big Will Howard entered quietly, and approached the bedside.

"Master Walter is here, Sir John. Shall I—"

Sir John, assisted by Harry, struggled once more into an upright position.

"Marry! 'Tis a strange world!" he said, a smile momentarily banishing his expression of pain. "I was even speaking of him, good Will, when you entered. Bring him to me at once!"

The newcomer was a young man some six or seven years Harry's senior, dark as a gipsy, and powerfully built. He stooped low over his uncle's hand, hardly noticing his cousin, and murmured his regrets at hearing of the accident.

"I learned of it but an hour back," Walter said, "at an inn yonder; but they say 'tis not quite so serious as was at first feared."

Temple gave another of his wan smiles.

"Then rumour lies, I fear, nephew mine. 'Tis much worse than was expected. White Robin was a heavy steed."

"Uncle! You—you surely do not mean—"

"I fear so, Walter. Nay, I know it. Temple Chase will soon have another master."

The newcomer almost unconsciously let his gaze travel in Harry's direction, and then out through the windows across the great park where the last shafts of the dying sun were tinting the foliage with crimson and gold.

"Temple Chase—another master!" Walter heard the words again—within him, as it were—and in his imagination conjured up a vision of himself as lord and master of the great house and all its broad acres. But Fate had apparently willed otherwise—one life stood between.

Then his eyes suddenly rested for the first time on the rapier, which still lay across the coverlet, and he started slightly. 'Twas nearly four years since he had last been at Temple Chase, and at that time the sword was still being diligently sought for, high and low—and now it had been found.

Walter, of course, knew the legend, and knew what a prominent part it had played in the fortunes of the family. Doubtless the "new master" would hold it, as was the custom; and that there was fighting ahead for everyone Walter was well aware. The rapier was a mascot to the Temple who wore it—a safeguard against death. And he, too, was a Temple—

"You will tarry a while, nephew?"

With a great effort Walter pulled himself together, tearing his eyes away from the sword, and turned to his uncle again.

"Ay; but only for two or three days, sir, at most. I should stay longer, but I fear me that duty—"

He stopped suddenly, looking a trifle confused; and 'twas that confusion more than anything else which caused Sir John to gaze curiously at him for a moment, letting his eyes travel slowly over his attire.

"Ah, nephew, I see now! You are a soldier, but—but—Marry! The light here

is none too good, or else my sight is failing. Come closer, good Walter!"

As his cousin moved forward Harry lit the candles in the silver sconces on the table; then he swung round quickly, startled by a puzzled exclamation which his father suddenly gave utterance to.

"'Tis faith—a strange garb! I know not which of his Majesty's regiments wears it. Enlighten me, nephew. I pray you!"

Walter was silent, and Harry, still holding the burning taper, stood looking questioningly from one to the other. Sir John bent forward, and then gave a startled gasp.

"Kind Heaven! That I should have lived to see it! You are not for the King, but for the Parliament! A Temple fighting against his Sovereign! A Temple siding with—"

The end came with startling suddenness. As became one of his grand old fighting stock, Sir John had kept the great enemy at bay until Nature herself could hold out no longer. He sank back on the pillows just as Harry reached him and reverently drew

"Walter gone!" gasped the lad. "You are sure? Have you made inquiries?"

"Ay, Master Harry. None heard or saw him go, but his bed is empty—has not been slept in, indeed—and his horse has disappeared, also."

Young Temple drew his hand across his brow.

"I cannot understand it," he muttered. "I care not overmuch for Walter, but surely he has better feeling than to leave us now when my father is—Come, Will! There must be some mistake!"

Whilst speaking he had hurriedly donned a few clothes, and together they passed quickly down the long passage. Drawing level with his father's bedchamber, Harry hesitated; then, with a choking sob, he pushed the door open and looked inside. Sir John was lying white and still, just as they had left him; everything seemed the same, yet the boy realised instinctively that something was different.

Finally his eyes rested on the wall above



Sir John bent forward, and then gave a startled cry. "You're not for the King, but for the Parliament! A Temple fighting against his sovereign! A Temple siding with Cromwell—!" (See this page.)

the sword from between the now nerveless fingers.

Silently the cousins withdrew from the chamber—Harry replacing the rapier in its accustomed position—and softly closed the door behind them.

Neither spoke a word—the one too grief-stricken, the other too taken aback to utter a syllable. Walter, who had not the deep-rooted sense of fidelity to their King that was characteristic of the other members of his race, could not quite understand how great was their aversion to anything savouring of disloyalty, and therefore had not foreseen how chilling his reception was likely to be, until it dawned upon him that Sir John might be a trifle upset at learning the real nature of his duty—which, indeed, had caused him to waver in his reply to his uncle's question. Truly, had Walter been given the power to look ahead a little, he would certainly have been more careful of his attire on this particular occasion.

Harry mutely indicated a spare bedchamber, and then passed on towards his own in the western wing. Half the night he lay awake, too upset to sleep; but finally he dozed off, and knew nothing until big Will Howard entered with the startling announcement that his cousin had left the Chase

the now cold hearth, and a muttered exclamation burst from his lips. The space was vacant!

The sword of the Temples had vanished.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Casting of the Die.

ONE blazing day, some five months later—in August, 1642, to be exact—Nottingham Town presented a busy appearance, especially Castle Hill, to which point everyone, citizens, soldiers, women and children—ay, even the dogs—seemed to have flocked, until there was scarce standing-room to be had so great was the crush.

Yet, big though the concourse was, a strange stillness seemed to hang in the air—the deep, breathless silence of a mighty waiting throng.

And for what had they come, this varied crowd of individuals, whose faces showed such signs of subdued excitement? Why, for a simple purpose enough, at first sight—merely to witness the hoisting of a standard. Yet, that seemingly unimportant event was

to mean the plunging of Merrie England into the worst possible kind of conflict—a civil war.

For the fatal die had at last been cast. June had seen the final attempt at a peaceful settlement between King and Parliament, when Charles had rejected no fewer than nineteen propositions which had been laid before him. After that, 'twas a matter of but a very short time, indeed, ere the cloud burst; and now they were waiting, breathless, for His Majesty's official signal.

A sudden stir in the crowd, a sudden pointing of a myriad fingers, and then a mighty cry arose to the blue heavens as a ball of brightly-coloured bunting ascended to the peak of the staff and broke on the light breeze.

"God save the King! God save Your Majesty!"

They surged nearer towards where Charles Stuart, surrounded by his retainers, was standing just beneath the castle walls, and once more lapsed into silence whilst he delivered his brief address; then the wild cheering broke out afresh, as they commenced to separate.

Conspicuous amongst the departing throng were two figures—a big, strongly-built man, whose great plumed hat only accentuated his tall stature, and a young lad, somewhat similarly attired, who walked by his side.

Much had happened since Sir John Temple had been laid to rest five months ago. The Chase had been closed and deserted by all save an elderly servant, who acted as caretaker. Big Will Howard and Harry had cast in their lot with the King's cause, and had followed in the wake of Charles until His Majesty arrived in Nottingham to give the die its decisive throw.

"Faith, Will," said Harry, looking up at his sturdy companion, "there is no going back now for any of us."

"Didst wish it, young master?" asked Howard swiftly, and the boy's face flushed slightly as he answered.

"Nay, 'twas not that. I am a Temple. But, the end of it all—where and when will that be?"

Big Will shook his head gloomily, and shrugged his great shoulders.

"I know not, lad, neither care I to try guessing," he said gravely. "His Majesty is obstinate, but so are the people. Methinks our sword-arms will be weary ere we see—"

Harry started slightly, hearing nothing of his friend's further remarks. He was thinking of one early morning in the previous spring, when he had entered that quiet death-chamber at Temple Chase to find the mysterious rapier missing from its accustomed place on the wall above the hearth; and neither had a most careful search thrown any light on the whereabouts of either it or of his cousin, Walter, who had so suddenly disappeared at the same time.

Both he and the sword had, apparently, vanished into thin air, but whether the two incidents had any connection with each other, was, up to now, a matter of pure conjecture.

Yet, though he had felt somewhat strange at the rapid departure of his cousin, Harry, it must be confessed, was much more concerned about the safety of the rapier. He had never particularly cared for Walter. It could hardly have been called an actual dislike, but rather a lack of fellow-feeling. It may have been that their tastes lay in opposite grooves, or, perhaps, the difference in their ages might have had something to do with it. However, it matters not; suffice it to say that the feeling existed and seemed to be mutual.

And now it seemed as though the strained relations were likely to blossom out into open hostility, for Walter, if he still lived, and was still in England, would be on the side of the people, whilst Harry, true to the breed of the Temples, had enrolled himself under the banner of his Sovereign.

Ay, sword-arms would be busy shortly, as Will Howard said, and Harry would have given much to know the whereabouts of one particular weapon—more, to have it swinging at his side. For—coincidence, chance, spiritual agency, or whatever it might be—'twas an indisputable fact that no Temple had ever yet sustained hurt in battle so long as he wore it. Ay, and members of the family had taken part in many a tough encounter since the Roses finished with the victory of Earl Richmond.

Yet it must not be understood from this that Harry pinned all his faith to the powers of the mystic rapier. Far from it, for his

healthy, outdoor life had made him as tough as a young oak, whilst his ample skill as a swordsman had been cultivated by Big Will, under whose wing the boy had been reared ever since he was old enough to scamper across the park at Temple Chase. And Will was no novice, I warrant, where fighting was concerned, as you would have known could you have guessed the history of that long white scar upon his left cheek, or the deep furrow in his forehead, which was plainly visible whenever the sleeve of his doublet happened to slip up.

"Your thoughts wander, Master Harry?" The big fellow's voice broke in upon the lad's reflections, as they reached the foot of Castle Hill. "Art already scenting battle, like the war-horse, or—"

"Ay, Will!" laughed the boy. "I was just picturing to myself the stirring times ahead for you and me. Now—marry! Who is this? He seeks us, surely?"

A mounted officer was approaching them at a canter, pulling up as he drew level, and looking them over with an approving eye.

"Ay, good stuff!" he said, as though to himself, and glancing at Will. "You may be somewhat heavy, but wiry withal, whilst the young stripling—canst ride?"

Howard smiled reminiscently and exchanged a knowing look with his youthful companion, as they both remembered many an exciting pursuit through the glades and glens round Temple Chase when the stag had shown more staying-power than was usually the case. Of a surety, those gallops had required more than ordinary horsemanship.

"Good sir," replied Will at length, doffing his plumed hat, "if we cannot ride, we cannot walk, and you have seen us walking—"

The man gave an impatient gesture.

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"Enough!" he said. "That will suffice! Ye are for the King, I take it, or ye would scarcely be here?"

"Ay! God save His Majesty!"

"Then, haste ye to Leicester, where his Royal Highness, Prince Rupert, is now encamped. He wants useful horsemen, and plenty of them."

The man cantered off in search of fresh recruits, leaving Harry and Will to bestow a handshake of congratulation upon each other. They had determined to fight for their Sovereign, but to be asked almost at the outset to join Prince Rupert's brilliant cavalry, was a piece of good fortune which neither had ever dared to dream of.

#### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

##### The Camp at Leicester.

THOUGH no actual declaration of war had been made until Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, the Royalist forces had been quietly mobilised—as was doubtless the case with the enemy also—for everyone well knew that nothing short of a miracle could avert the worst happening; but the age of miracles was supposed to be past.

Thus it was when Harry and Will, after a hot and dusty ride across country, drew rein atop of a rise within a short distance of Leicester Town, they saw spread out beneath them a large expanse of snowy canvas, which even now was beginning to turn a ruddy tint in the rays of the setting sun.

"Faith, a good and welcome sight, lad!" quoth Howard enthusiastically, as he passed his hand over his perspiring brow. "My throat is like a lime-kiln, and as for my back—Od's life! This saddle of mine was never made by Christian hands—"

"It but weakens the strong will—eh, friend?" Harry cut in; and the big fellow uttered a hearty laugh.

"A pretty quip, young master!" he

chuckled. "Ah, me! I well remember you ever were quick with the tongue! But 'tis even so—I feel as though I had been thrashed with a score of quarterstaves!"

He dismounted stiffly and led his horse down the hill, an action which was followed by his young companion. As they drew nearer the camp they perceived that they were not the only newcomers by any means, for several horsemen, as dusty as they were, arriving from different directions—for the most part regular troopers; but here and there a poorly-mounted, unkempt fellow, greatly lacking in the general smartness of the others, betrayed the raw recruit.

Presently a score of splendidly-appointed cavalry cantered swiftly by, and disappeared somewhere amongst the tents. Howard clutched Harry by the arm, in a grip that trembled slightly with excitement.

"Didst see who that was, young master—the leader, I mean?" he whispered.

"Nay, I did not notice—"

"'Twas Prince Rupert himself," continued Will—"as fine a soldier as ever man wished to serve under, they say, though inclined to be somewhat rash and impetuous."

"The latter part of your description does not seem to fit the former over well, friend!" objected Harry. "For rashness in a leader must surely tend to prove fatal!"

"Od's fish! You are likely right, lad; yet he is well spoken of everywhere. However, we shall probably have ample opportunity of testing his prowess later— Ah, we are called! See!"

A few yards away a trooper was waving to them, and pointing down a narrow lane formed by a double row of tents. They approached, and were at once conducted to another part of the camp, where their horses were led away to join a group of weary-looking steeds whose hanging heads and heaving flanks spoke of having had a long and tiring journey also.

"Ye won't need these again," their guide told them. "His Highness requires better horseflesh than this to follow him—"

"But—"

"Pray do not grieve!" replied the trooper, showing his white teeth in a smile. "Your mounts will come to no hurt, and meanwhile ye will be supplied with others. 'Twill be but an exchange, which they say is never robbery."

They were reluctant enough to part with the two animals, for they had been special favourites at the Chase; but the wisdom of the man's words was easily apparent—a totally different class of horse was absolutely necessary for the work which lay ahead.

The odour of a savoury stew, wafted from the open flap of a large tent close by, quickly drove away all remaining traces of resentment; and soon they were busily discussing the appetising mess, which served to make them realise tenfold how hungry they were.

Tough though Harry was, the work of the next six weeks or so made him doubly strong and wiry. Prince Rupert was a firm believer in physical fitness, and to that must be attributed a good deal of the undoubted prowess of his cavalry. Drill and sundry manoeuvres occupied a goodly portion of each day's sojourn at Leicester, and after a short time even his newest recruits were almost to be as much relied upon as his veterans.

"You walk strangely, friend Will," said Harry one evening, as they strolled towards the tent which they shared with two others. "Like a lame mule, or a—"

"Marry, lad!" laughed Howard. "I fear me I shall never get my legs straight again; they seem to have taken the shape of the saddle for all time. I was ever fond of a canter, but— Ah, me! 'Tis somewhat overdone, I'll vow!"

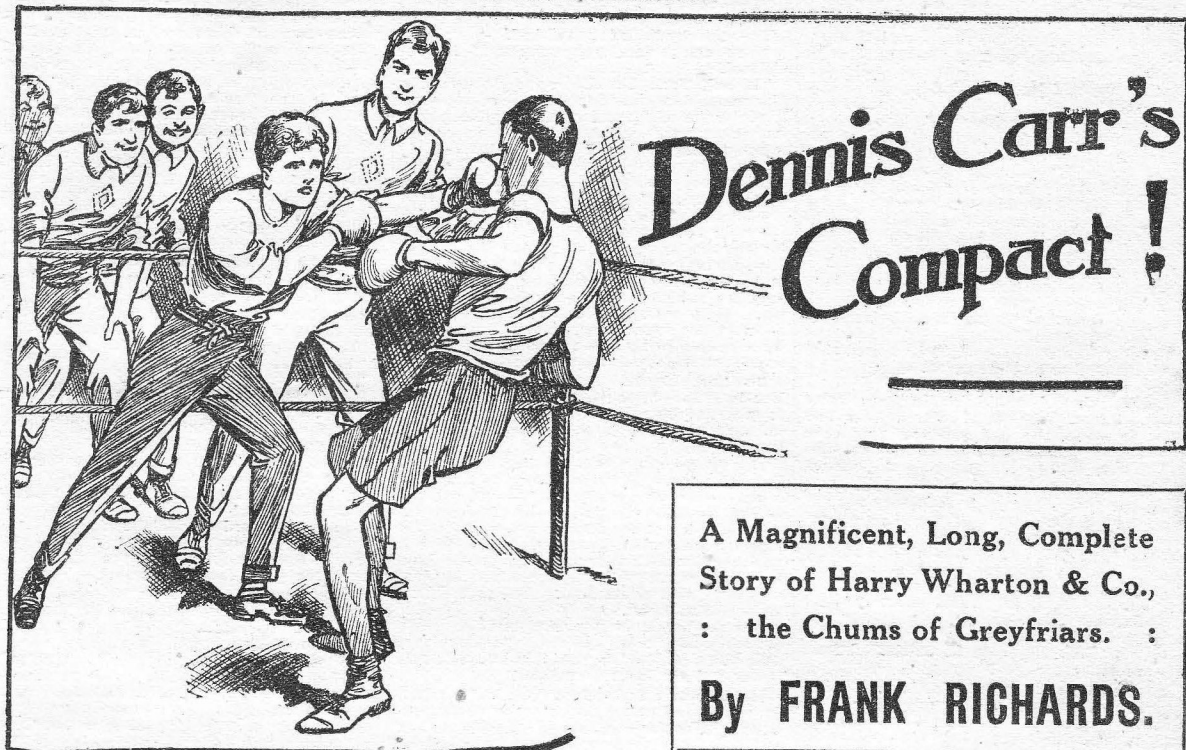
"You think so?"

"Nay, nay, I meant it not! 'Twas said but in jest! His Highness knows what he is doing of a surety— Zounds! Who comes now?"

Temple followed the direction of his companion's pointing finger, and saw what seemed to be a thick cloud of dust approaching from the south—a cloud which soon resolved itself into a flying horseman, who pulled up within a few yards of where they stood and slid from the saddle. His face ashen, his head swathed in a bloodstained bandage, he reeled towards them, holding out a crumpled paper.

(There will be another grand instalment of this romantic adventure serial in next week's issue of THE POPULAR. Tell all your friends about this splendid new serial.)

**A SPLENDID COMPLETE GREYFRIARS STORY.**



**A Magnificent, Long, Complete  
Story of Harry Wharton & Co.,  
: the Chums of Greyfriars. :  
By FRANK RICHARDS.**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.  
Troubled Waters!**

**B**ED-TIME, you kids!" The tall form of Wingate of the Sixth loomed up in the doorway of the gym at Greyfriars, and four of the Remove's best boxers took off their gloves and donned their coats.

Three of the four—Bob Cherry, Dick Russell, and Dennis Carr—were going to take part in the lightweight contests at the forthcoming Public Schools Boxing Tournament at Aldershot.

The fourth junior was Harry Wharton, who had been having a friendly bout with Bob Cherry.

"How's the training going?" inquired Wingate, with interest.

"First-rate!" said Bob Cherry.

"With three of you taking part in the lightweight competition," said Wingate, "there ought to be some honours coming to Greyfriars. Who has shown the best form, so far?"

"Dennis Carr," said Bob Cherry.

"Dick Russell," said Dennis Carr.

"Bob Cherry," said Dick Russell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There seems to be a slight conflict of opinions," said Wingate, laughing. "Well, I wish you luck, all of you!"

"Thanks, Wingate," said Dennis Carr. "And we all hope you'll pull off the heavy-weights."

"Yes, rather!"

"I've several stiff hurdles to overcome," said the captain of Greyfriars. "There will be representatives from Eton and Harrow and all the big schools."

"But you'll trounce the lot of them, Wingate," said Bob Cherry. "You're a top-hole boxer."

"Simply great!" said Frank Nugent.

"I believe you kids are laying on flattery in large chunks, in the hope that I shall let you stay up a bit longer," said Wingate. "Well, there's nothing doing. Clear off to bed all of you!"

The Removites obeyed. And, both before and after lights out, they excitedly discussed the chances of Greyfriars in the forthcoming boxing tournament.

Bob Cherry, Dick Russell, and Dennis Carr were all eager to do themselves justice on the great day. But of the three Dennis Carr was by far the most ambitious.

Dennis had already made his mark in the

world of school and sport, but he was hungry for fresh honours.

He had not been much in the limelight of late. And Marjorie Hazeldene, his girl chum at Cliff House, had intimated that he was getting slack in his old age, so to speak—that he seemed to be content with resting on his laurels. And this remark—which was not altogether justified—had roused Dennis, and filled him with a strong determination to acquit himself well at Aldershot. He would prove to Miss Marjorie that he was by no manner of means a dead letter. He would win the lightweight championship, or know the reason why!

Dennis Carr fell asleep at length. And whilst he slept he dreamt that he was in the ring at Aldershot. He fought his way through one heat after another until he reached the final; and as he hit and parried, and fainted and side-stepped, he could see Marjorie Hazeldene smiling at him from the audience.

And then Dennis woke up.

The clock in the old tower was striking midnight.

And there was another sound that fell upon Dennis Carr's ear—a sound as of someone sobbing.

Dennis sat up in bed, listening intently.

Yes, the sobbing was real enough. And it came from the bed next to Dennis—the bed that was occupied by Peter Hazeldene.

Dennis surmised at once that Hazel was in trouble of some sort. He usually was. He was a weak-willed, foolish fellow, and he was always being led into scrapes. For some time past he had played with a straight bat, and had not listened to the voices of his tempters. Dennis Carr knew this, and he wondered why Hazel should be in trouble now.

Slipping out of bed in his pyjamas, Dennis crossed over to the sobbing junior.

"Hazel!" he exclaimed.

Hazeldene gave a start.

"Carr! I—I didn't know you were awake!" he faltered.

"Why are you blubbing?" demanded Dennis, seating himself on his schoolfellow's bed. "Anything wrong?"

"Yes."

"Thought so. Trouble at home?"

The rays of the moonlight glimmered upon Hazel's white face as he replied:

"No."

"Then what's the worry?" asked Dennis.

"I—I can't tell you!"

"Oh, rot! You can trust me to keep my own counsel. Besides, if you're in a fix, I may be able to help you out."

Hazel shook his head.

"You can't help me, Carr," he said wearily.

"Nobody can."

"Oh, surely it's not as bad as all that? I've helped you before, you know, when you've imagined yourself to be past help."

"Yes, I know. And I'm grateful. You've been a real brick to me," said Hazeldene. "But you can't help me now."

"Look here," said Dennis persuasively, "tell me exactly what's wrong, Hazel. I sha'n't let on to a soul, if you don't wish it."

There was a long pause. Hazeldene seemed to be debating in his mind whether it would be worth while to tell his troubles to another. He felt sure that Dennis Carr would be quite unable to help him. Finally, however, he decided to make a clean breast of the affair.

"I'm threatened with the sack, Carr," he muttered.

"The sack from the school, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"My hat! How has this come about? Have you been going on the razzle lately?"

"No. I haven't broken once this term. But last term I played the fool, and—and—"

"What's the last term got to do with it? The past is dead and buried now."

"I wish to goodness it was!" said Hazeldene fervently. "But it's been resurrected. This evening, when I was out for a stroll before locking-up, I met Jerry Martin."

"Who's he? I've never heard of the merchant."

"He's a bookmaker and a cardsharp, and several things besides. And last term I was in the habit of playing cards with him at the Cross Keys—for money. I was a mad idiot—"

"You were!" said Dennis frankly.

"And I got into debt—head over ears in debt—to the tune of ten quid."

"Oh!"

Dennis Carr was looking very grave now.

"Why didn't you tell me this before, Hazel?" he asked.

"I was hoping the affair would blow over. I didn't think that Jerry Martin would press for payment. He's let it rip for such a long time that I thought I should hear nothing more about it. And I had the shock of my life when Jerry Martin met me this evening and told me he must have the money by Wednesday."

"The scoundrel! He cheated you, of course?"

"Yes," said Hazeldene wretchedly; "but I should never be able to prove that he did. He says that he'll go to the Head if I don't pay him the fifteen quid by Wednesday evening."

"But you said just now that you owed him ten quid!"

"He's charging me interest."

"The awful rotter! And you've no means of raising the wind, I suppose?"

"If I had," replied Hazeldene, "you wouldn't have woke up and found me blubbing. I sha'n't be able to scrape together fifteen bob, let alone fifteen quid! I shall be sacked from the school. There's no way out—that I can see. And what will my people say—that will Marjorie say?"

Dennis Carr was silent. He realised only too well what a cruel blow it would be to Marjorie Hazeldene if her brother were expelled from Greyfriars.

In order that Marjorie might be spared that blow, Hazeldene must be saved.

But how?

Dennis himself would gladly have come to the rescue with hard cash, but he had none to spare. He had received more than the average amount of pocket-money that term, but, being of a generous disposition, he had bludged it all.

Fifteen pounds was a colossal sum of money in a schoolboy's eyes. Lord Mauleverer possessed that amount several times over, and so did Vernon-Smith. But neither Mauly nor the Bouncer was sufficiently interested in Hazeldene to advance him fifteen pounds. And Hazel would scarcely have dared to ask them.

What was to be done?

How was Hazeldene to be extricated from his unfortunate plight?

Dennis Carr racked his brains for a solution, but he could think of only one thing. He would go and see this man Jerry Martin, and remonstrate with him; and endeavour to get Hazeldene clear of his clutches.

"Keep your pecker up, Hazel!" he said at length. "You can rely on me to do all I can to help you out of this scrape. I can't get hold of the cash, but I can get hold of that scoundrel Martin, and I'll give him a piece of my mind!"

"I'm afraid that won't be much use," said Hazel.

"We shall see. Of course, if Jerry Martin's determined to come and see the Head, and nothing that I say will shake his determination, then we must think of some other way out. The cash will have to be raised, somehow. And you needn't worry about what's going to happen when you're sacked from the school—because you'll never be sacked!"

Dennis Carr spoke brightly and hopefully, and his words had a cheering effect upon Hazeldene, who a few moments before had been utterly down and out.

"Do you honestly think you'll be able to get me out of this scrape, Carr?" he asked.

"I do. I'll see Jerry Martin to-morrow, and I hope to succeed in making him climb down. Now, you get off to sleep, and for goodness' sake don't worry any more, or you'll be knocking yourself up. Good-night!"

Hazeldene took the hand of his would-be benefactor in a tight grip.

"Good-night, Carr!" he said. "And thanks ever so much—"

"Reserve your thanks till later," said Dennis. "You're not out of the wood yet."

And then, as Hazel's face fell, Dennis added:

"But you jolly soon will be!"

And then he went back to his own bed. But it was not until the dawn crept in at the high windows of the Remove dormitory that he fell asleep.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Golden Opportunity!

"W HITHER bound?"

Bob Cherry, of the Remove, hailed Dennis Carr as the latter was in the act of pushing his bicycle down to the school gates.

Afternoon lessons were over at Greyfriars, and Dennis was setting forth to interview that very unpleasant character, Mr. Jerry Martin.

"I'm going down to Friarclade," he replied. "Good!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll come along, too. I feel just in the mood for a spin."

Dennis gave a start. He had very good

reasons for not wishing Bob Cherry to accompany him.

"I—I'd rather go alone, if you don't mind," he stammered.

Bob Cherry looked astonished.

"You don't want my company?" he exclaimed.

"It isn't that. But I'm going down to the village on business—important business—and if you came with me I should only keep you hanging about."

Bob Cherry shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, all right!" he said gruffly. "I've got enough savvy to keep out of the way when I'm not wanted."

And Bob strolled away.

Out in the roadway, Dennis Carr mounted his machine and sped off towards the village. His face was grim-set, and there was a gleam in his eyes. He knew that he was taking a very big risk in going to interview Mr. Martin. That disreputable person occupied a room at the Cross Keys, and if Dennis Carr were seen visiting the village inn, the consequences would be very serious.

But for Hazel's sake—for the sake of Hazel's sister—he must see the thing through. It was no use retracting now that he had solemnly promised to help Hazel out of his scrape.

The village street was practically deserted. Darting a keen glance up and down, Dennis could see nobody connected with Greyfriars. So he dismounted, pushed his machine up the side alley of the Cross Keys, and stepped into the stuffy little parlour. There he had an interview with Jerry Martin, in the hope that the rascal would be prepared to deal leniently with Hazeldene. But the interview proved futile.

Dennis, hands in pockets, strolled along the leafy lane in the gathering autumn dusk. And as he walked he tried hard to think of a way out for Peter Hazeldene.

The sum of fifteen pounds had to be raised by Wednesday evening. It was a tall order—a very tall order—and not for the life of him could Dennis see how it was going to be managed.

He could possibly have borrowed the money from Lord Mauleverer, his study-mate, who possessed more pocket-money than the rest of the Removites put together.

But if Dennis borrowed from this source—if he borrowed from any source, for that matter—how was he going to pay the money back?

The more Dennis thought about it the more perplexing the problem became.

A bicycle-bell clanged out in the dusky lane, and a girl cyclist swept past.

"Good-night, Dennis!" she called out, over her shoulder.

"Good-night, Miss Marjorie!" responded Dennis.

The cyclist was Hazeldene's sister.

Blissfully unconscious of the cloud which hung over her brother—of the prospect of ruin which confronted him—Marjorie was speeding cheerfully back to Cliff House after an evening spent at the Courtfield cinema.

The sight of his girl chum stimulated Dennis Carr to fresh mental efforts. He walked on, thinking furiously as he went.

And presently, as he rounded a sharp bend in the road, he came upon a scene which rudely disturbed his train of thought.

A fierce fight was in progress, and three men were involved. Two of them were of the hooligan type, and they were making a joint attack upon a sturdy, athletic-looking young man, who was hitting out right and left.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Dennis in astonishment.

And he quickened his pace.

When he was at close quarters, he realised what was happening.

The sturdy-looking man was well-dressed, and the two roughts who were attacking him were doing so with the motive of robbery.

It was a very unequal contest. And, although the man who had been waylaid in the lane was fighting like a tiger, he would not have been able to get the upper hand of both his powerfully-built assailants.

Realising this, Dennis Carr promptly went to the man's assistance. He was feeling in the humour for a scrap, and he hit out vigorously at the bigger of the two hooligans, who, taken completely by surprise, reeled backwards with a savage imprecation.

Dennis followed this up quickly. The man aimed a savage blow at his head, but he ducked in the nick of time, and then he proceeded to beat a merry tattoo on the fellow's ribs.

Meanwhile, Dennis Carr's partner, en-

couraged by the fact that he was no longer playing a lone hand, was making short work of the other lout.

"Stick to him!" panted Dennis cheerfully. "I can manage this merchant all right!"

The two hooligans saw that the tide of battle was turning against them, and, instead of waiting to be floored, they promptly took to their heels. They bolted through a gap in the hedge, and Dennis was about to follow in pursuit. But his companion called him back.

"Let 'em go, kid!" he said. "They're not likely to worry me again."

Dennis turned back, breathing hard from his exertions.

"Those bouncers were doing the Dick Turpin stunt—what?" he said.

The sturdy-looking man nodded.

"That's so," he said. "And I should have had a pretty rough handling if you hadn't chipped in. I'm much obliged to you, kid, and I should like to know your name."

"Carr—Dennis Carr."

"You're at Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"And the champion fighting-man of your Form, I s'pose?"

"I don't know about that," said Dennis, with a smile.

"Well, if there's anybody who can keep his end up better than you, he's a giddy marvel!" said the stranger. "You don't know me, I take it?"

Dennis confessed he didn't.

"I'm Jack Harper," said the man.

The Greyfriars junior gave a start. The name was quite familiar to him.

"Are you the founder and the boss of Harper's gymnasium, the other side of Courtfield?" he asked.

"That's me!"

"Jolly pleased to meet you, Mr. Harper!" said Dennis, shaking hands. "I've never met you before, but I've heard all about you. Billy Bunter, one of the fellows in my Form, spent a day or two in your gym not very long ago."

Jack Harper grinned at the recollection. "Yes," he said, "I tried to make an athlete of Bunter, but one might just as well attempt to turn a rhinoceros into a fox-terrier!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I must be getting along," said Jack Harper. "Are you walking my way?"

Dennis Carr nodded, and set off along the dusky road with his companion. He had some little difficulty in keeping pace with Jack Harper's giant strides.

"By the way, Mr. Harper, you used to be a first-rate boxer, didn't you?" inquired Dennis.

"Well, I was middle-weight champion of Loamshire for a number of years. Afraid I've gone off a lot since then, though. If you hadn't chipped in just now, that precious pair of hooligans would have wiped up the road with me! I saw how you dealt with the bigger of the two ruffians, and, believe me, Carr, you've got the makings of a really fine boxer. You're a light-weight, of course?"

Dennis nodded.

"In that case," said Jack Harper, "I wonder you don't take on Ned the Nipper." "Who on earth is Ned the Nipper?" exclaimed Dennis, laughing.

"A youthful boxing marvel—a prodigy, a phenomenon—an insignificant-looking kid with a terrific punch!"

"I've never heard of him," confessed Dennis.

"Never heard of Ned the Nipper? My dear kid, you're sadly behind the times! Didn't you know that Ned was coming to Courtfield?"

"Dashed if I did!"

"And that there's twenty-five quid waiting for the youngster who can knock him out?"

Dennis opened his eyes wide.

"This is news to me, Mr. Harper," he said.

"Well, it's a fact. Ned the Nipper comes to Courtfield on Wednesday afternoon. And local light-weights are invited to have a go at him. One of my own pupils—a kid called Derrick—is going to accept his challenge. But I very much doubt if he'll hold his own against Ned, who boasts an unbeaten record in the ring."

Jack Harper and Dennis Carr walked on in silence for some moments.

The Greyfriars junior's brain was very active.

Here was his opportunity. Here was his chance to raise the wind.

Twenty-five pounds was the reward for the fellow who could administer the knock-out to

Ned the Nipper. Why shouldn't he—Dennis—take up the challenge?

It seemed a queer way of raising money to help another out of a scrape. But, for the life of him, Dennis could think of no other way. He had as good a chance as anybody of defeating this youthful boxing marvel, and he resolved, there and then, to accept the challenge which had been thrown out by Ned the Nipper.

"Penny for 'em," said Jack Harper suddenly.

Dennis Carr turned to his companion. "I want your candid opinion, Mr. Harper," he said.

"Well?"  
"I've just decided to tackle this kid you told me about. Honestly, do you think I shall stand a chance of licking him?"

"I do!" was the emphatic reply. "On your showing just now, you're just the sort of fellow to take the wind out of Ned the Nipper's sails. My advice to you, Carr, is to go in and win!"

"Thanks!" said Dennis.  
"You've made up your mind to take this on?"

"Yes."  
"That's the spirit!"  
"But what about this chap Derrick you mentioned just now?"

Jack Harper reflected for a moment. Then he said:

"I'd rather like you and Derrick to try conclusions with each other. You could have a friendly bout, and the winner could take on Ned the Nipper."

"Splendid!"  
"We're only a quarter of a mile from my gymnasium," continued Jack Harper. "Would you like to meet Derrick this evening?"

Dennis glanced at his watch, and gave a start.

"My hat! It's past locking-up time!" he ejaculated.

"Then you'd better be getting back to the school."

"I might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb," said Dennis. "I'm bound to be late, anyway, so I'll come along with you and have this bout."

"Good!" said Jack Harper.  
And he and his youthful companion walked on through the deepening darkness.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
Called Over the Coals!**

**W**HEN Dennis Carr was introduced to Derrick, of Harper's gymnasium, his heart sank. For Derrick, although a light-weight, was physically superior to the Greyfriars fellow in height and reach.

The gym was crowded with Jack Harper's youthful pupils, who were very keen on witnessing the bout.

Dennis Carr felt like a stranger in a strange land. But Jack Harper soon put him at his ease.

"Off with your coat and on with the gloves, kid!" he said. "And we'll soon see who's the better man. I should advise you to mind your eye, Derrick. This youngster's hot stuff!"

Derrick grinned, and signified that he was ready for the contest to begin.

"Time!" said Jack Harper.

The boxers shook hands, and then Dennis Carr was sent reeling by a powerful blow in the chest.

But that proved to be the only blow which Derrick struck. For Dennis rallied swiftly, and attacked with all the vigour at his command. Left and right, right and left, his fists shot out; and a murmur arose from the spectators—a murmur of admiration for the prowess of the Greyfriars junior.

Few fellows would have withstood that hurricane attack of Dennis Carr's. Derrick did his best, and he succeeded in warding off some of the blows. But presently Dennis shot out his left, straight from the shoulder, and Derrick went to the floor with a crash.

Jack Harper began to count.

"One—two—three—"

"Up, Derrick!"

"Get on your feet, man!"

But Derrick was "whacked." He made a movement to rise, but his head fell back listlessly. And the relentless count went on:

"Four—five—six—seven—"

Dennis Carr hovered anxiously over his opponent, expecting the latter to rise.

But Derrick lay motionless.

"Eight—nine—ten! Carr wins!"  
Dennis immediately helped the defeated

boxer to his feet, and he did so to the accompaniment of cheers and handclapping.

"Bravo, Carr!"

"That was short and sweet, by gad!"

"They teach 'em how to box at Greyfriars!"

Jack Harper turned to Dennis with a smile.

"You're the real goods!" he said. "You'll have all your work out to beat Ned the Nipper, but I'll guarantee you'll give him a good run for his money!"

"Hear, hear!" said Derrick. "You're great, Carr! I wonder you're not going up to Aldershot on Wednesday!"

Dennis gave a violent start.

In the excitement of the past hour he had clean forgotten Aldershot, and the fact that he had been selected to represent Greyfriars in the Public Schools' Boxing Tournament.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

"Anything wrong, kid?" asked Jack Harper.

"I'm due to go up to Aldershot on Wednesday—the same day that Ned the Nipper comes to Courtfield!"

"Oh! Then you'll have to let one of the events slide. You can't be in two places at once!"

would give the youthful-looking marvel a warm time on Wednesday afternoon.

When Dennis reached Greyfriars the Removites had gone to bed. Even the seniors had retired. But, judging by the lights which gleamed from various study windows, the masters were still up and doing.

"I s'pose I'd better go and report to Quelch," muttered Dennis, as he clambered over the school wall. "He's pretty certain to be waiting up for me."

But the belated junior was spared the necessity of going to the Form-master's study. For as he was crossing the Close, the familiar voice of Mr. Quelch hailed him.

"Is that you, Carr?"

"Yes, sir," answered Dennis.

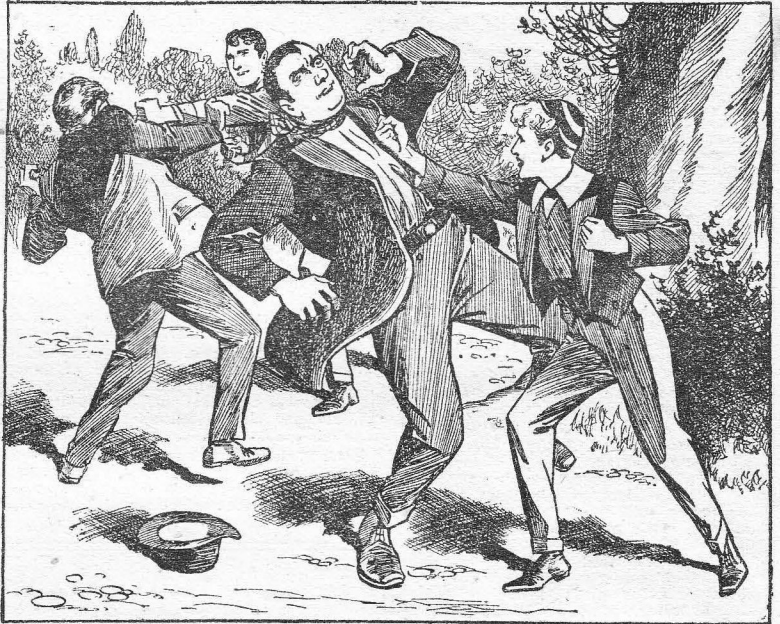
"You are excessively late."

"Yes, sir," said Dennis again. He didn't feel very talkative, somehow, in the Remove-master's presence.

"You will follow me to my study, Carr!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

And Dennis set off in the Form-master's wake.

Mr. Quelch was looking very grim as he



As he turned the corner Dennis Carr came face to face with a lively fight in progress. Without stopping to think, he dashed in, hitting out vigorously at the bigger of the two hooligans, who, taken by surprise, reeled backwards with a savage imprecation. (See page 6.)

Dennis put on his coat with a thoughtful expression.

"I shall have to chuck Aldershot," he said slowly.

It was an extremely awkward situation. Dennis was very keen indeed on going to Aldershot. But if he went his chance of meeting and defeating Ned the Nipper would be gone. And only by defeating Ned could he hope to raise the money for getting Hazeldene out of his scrape.

Dennis knew that Harry Wharton & Co. would be furious when they learned that he was not going to Aldershot. He knew that he would be putting himself in a very unpopular position. But his determination to see Hazeldene through never wavered.

"It's bad luck that you've got to sacrifice your chance of going to Aldershot," said Jack Harper. "Still, if you lower the colours of Ned the Nipper, you won't regret giving the Public Schools' Tournament a miss."

Dennis nodded.

"I must be getting along now," he said.

And, after shaking hands with Jack Harper and Derrick, Dennis Carr took his departure, and made his way back to Greyfriars under the evening stars.

Dennis felt wonderfully fit as he strode along. The easy manner in which he had accounted for Derrick gave him confidence. He had never even seen Ned the Nipper; he had never even heard of him till that evening. But he told himself grimly that he

stood with his back to the mantelpiece and confronted the erring junior.

"Where have you been, Carr?" he demanded.

"To Courtfield, sir!"

"I will trouble you to be more explicit," said Mr. Quelch.

Dennis decided to make a clean breast of the facts.

"I've been to Mr. Harper's gymnasium, sir," he said. "I had the gloves on with one of his pupils."

"Indeed! And you had no late pass?"

"No, sir."  
Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I am relieved to find that you have not visited a place of doubtful repute, Carr," he said. "At the same time, you have violated one of the rules of the school, and you must be punished. Hold out your hand!"

Dennis obeyed. And Mr. Quelch administered half a dozen stinging cuts with the cane.

The junior took his punishment without wincing, and the Remove-master ordered him to his dormitory.

"If you transgress in this way again, Carr," he said, "I shall have no alternative but to take you before Dr. Locke!"

With tingling palms, Dennis quitted Mr. Quelch's study. He felt relieved at having got off so lightly. For Mr. Quelch would have been within his rights in detaining  
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Dennis on Wednesday afternoon—and that would have been a tragedy.

The majority of his Form-fellows were asleep when Dennis Carr entered the Remove dormitory. There was a movement, however, from Hazeldene's bed. And Hazel's voice said softly:

"That you, Carr?"

"Yes."

"Where on earth have you been? There's been quite a hue-and-cry for you. Have you seen Quelch?"

"Yes—to my sorrow!" grunted Dennis. "He lays on the beastly cane like a black-smith swinging his sledge!"

"How many did you get?" asked Hazel.

"Six!"

"My hat!"

"But it was worth it," said Dennis. "I've hit upon a way out at last—a way of raising the wind."

Hazeldene sat up in bed. His eyes sparkled with an eager light.

"Tell me all about it!" he urged.

And then Dennis unfolded his plans. He explained that he was going to meet Ned the Nipper on Wednesday afternoon in the hope of securing the twenty-five pounds.

"But—but you can't do it!" protested Hazeldene. "It will mean cutting Aldershot and—"

"That's precisely what I'm going to do."

"But what will all the fellows say? They'll simply rave!"

"Let them!" said Dennis, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Look here, Carr," said Hazeldene, "I can't have you getting into hot-water on my account."

"Rats! I've made a compact with you that I'll get you out of this mess, and I mean to do it!"

"At the expense of your own reputation?"

"Blow my reputation! I'm not going to stand by and see you kicked out of Greyfriars. That money's got to be raised, and the only method of raising it that I can see is to knock out Ned the Nipper."

"Think you can do it?" said Hazeldene anxiously.

"Well, it's a tall order. But you can rely on me to put up the best fight I know."

"And if you're licked—"

"I'm not going to think of failure," said Dennis Carr. "I'm going all out to win. Keep your pecker up, Hazel! There's every prospect of your being out of Jerry Martin's clutches by Wednesday evening."

"You're a real good sort, Carr," said Hazeldene, with some emotion. "I don't know how to thank you—"

"Don't try," said Dennis cheerfully. "Good-night!"

"Good-night!" replied Hazel.

And Dennis Carr, wearied out with the exertions of the past few hours, was soon in bed and fast asleep.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Dennis Carr's Resolve!

"WHO were you with last night?" It was Bob Cherry who asked that familiar question. And he asked it of Dennis Carr as soon as the rising-bell had clanged out its shrill summons.

Dennis smiled.

"I went over to Courtfield," he said.

"To the cinema?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"No."

"To the Theatre Royal?" asked Nugent.

"No."

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "I expect Carr went to the Courtfield Arms!"

And there was a laugh.

"Joking apart, Dennis," said Mark Linley, "where did you go?"

"To Harper's gymnasium."

"What on earth for?"

"To have a boxing bout with a fellow called Derrick, to decide which of us should accept Ned the Nipper's challenge."

"Ned the Nipper!" echoed Harry Wharton. "That's the merchant who is coming to Courtfield on Wednesday, isn't it?"

"Yes. And twenty-five quid is being offered to anyone of his own weight who can knock him out."

"Great pip!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You don't mean to say—"

"I licked Derrick," said Dennis Carr, "and I shall therefore accept the challenge of Ned the Nipper."

A buzz of amazement ran through the Remove dormitory.

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"You burbling chump!" said Dick Russell. "You won't be able to meet Ned the Nipper!"

"Why not?"

"Because you're going to Aldershot on Wednesday, of course!"

Dennis Carr shook his head.

"Aldershot's off, so far as I'm concerned," he said.

"What?"

There was a shout of astonishment from Harry Wharton & Co.

"Aldershot off!" repeated Johnny Bull.

"What the thump do you mean?"

"What I say," said Dennis.

"You're going to fight Ned the Nipper at Courtfield in preference to going to Aldershot?" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"But, dash it all, man, you must be loyal to Greyfriars! We're counting on you to put up a great show in the Public Schools light-weights."

"Hear, hear!"

"Sorry I can't oblige," said Dennis. "I can't be in two places at once. I'm jolly anxious to lick Ned the Nipper, and therefore I shall have to let Aldershot slide."

"Shame!"

"The school's interests ought to come first, and your own afterwards," said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather!"

Strong disapproval was expressed concerning Dennis Carr's decision. However anxious he might be to defeat Ned the Nipper, the fellows considered that Dennis ought to study the school first.

"There's no cash to be won in the Aldershot camps," said Bolsover major, with a sneer. "But there's twenty-five quid going begging at Courtfield. Trust Carr to know which side his bread's buttered!"

"Only a rotten outsider would fight for money!" said Skinner, who was a pretty hopeless outsider himself.

"Is it really for the sake of winning the money, Carr, that you're going to fight Ned the Nipper?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes," said Dennis. But he did not explain that it was for the sake of another that he wanted to win the twenty-five pounds. And Hazeldene said nothing either. He didn't want all the fellows to know what a terrible predicament he was in.

Feeling ran very strongly against Dennis Carr. In the eyes of the Removites he seemed utterly selfish—a fellow who put his own considerations before those of the school.

Dennis saw that he was becoming very unpopular, but he did not budge from the position he had taken up. By hook or by crook, he had to save Hazeldene from ruin and disgrace, and the only way he could do so was to defeat Ned the Nipper.

"You've made up your mind not to go to Aldershot, Carr?" said Harry Wharton.

"Quite."

"You're going to leave us in the lurch?" growled Bob Cherry.

"Put it that way, if you like."

"Then I think you're a howling cad!"

"Thanks!" said Dennis imperturbably. And he went on dressing.

"I say, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, "I think you ought to send me to Aldershot in Carr's place. I'm a top-hole boxer. You may have noticed my form—"

"His fragile form!" murmured Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can put up a better show than Carr, anyway!" said Bunter warmly. "Won't you send me to Aldershot, Wharton?"

"You'll be sent to Colney Hatch, if you don't stop talking silly rot!" growled the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton was feeling far from sunnypempered. Dennis Carr's refusal to go to Aldershot had upset him.

But other things occurred that morning which ruffled his feelings still more, and which plunged the Remove Form into despair.

During the interval between breakfast and morning school, Bob Cherry sprained his wrist. Exactly how he did it he didn't know. There had been a scuffle between a party of Removites and Temple & Co. of the Upper Fourth. And in the course of the scuffle Bob Cherry had fallen heavily. When he rose to his feet he found that his left wrist was practically useless.

"What awful luck, Bob!" said Johnny Bull.

"That'll put you on the shelf for days," said Nugent.

Bob Cherry nodded gloomily.

"I sha'n't be able to go to Aldershot," he said.

"And Carr's backed out," said Harry Wharton. "So Russell's our only hope."

But Fate had decreed that Dick Russell, the last hope of the Remove, should not go to Aldershot.

Later in the day Russell had a telegram stating that his mother was seriously ill, and he was given the Head's permission to go home until the crisis was over.

Harry Wharton & Co. were baffled and helpless.

Three candidates had been chosen to represent Greyfriars in the lightweights, and not one of the three was available.

"You'll have to go yourself, Harry," said Bob Cherry, "and take Smithy with you."

But Wharton shook his head.

"I'm fairly useful with my fists, and so is Smithy," he said, "but neither of us is up to the standard of Aldershot. If we went, we should be knocked out in the first heat. I'm afraid we must say good-bye to the light-weight championship, unless we can persuade Carr to change his mind and go."

"Come along," said Nugent; "we'll put it to him like Dutch uncles!"

And they did. But Dennis Carr remained firm in his resolve to go over to Courtfield on Wednesday afternoon, and accept the challenge of Ned the Nipper.

"There's only one place for you on Wednesday afternoon, and that's Aldershot," said Bob Cherry. "Why don't you play the game? You can see how we're fixed. I'm crooked, and Russell's been called home. And it's up to you to go to Aldershot and bag the light-weight championship—or have a good shot at it, anyway."

"Hear, hear!"

To the wrath and consternation of the Famous Five, Dennis Carr stuck to his guns.

Come what may, he must win that twenty-five pounds, and save Hazeldene from expulsion. By taking this step he was putting himself right outside the pale. He was courting unpopularity and enmity.

But Dennis did not falter. He had made his compact with Hazeldene, and whether he would succeed or fail in his efforts to save that unhappy junior remained to be seen.

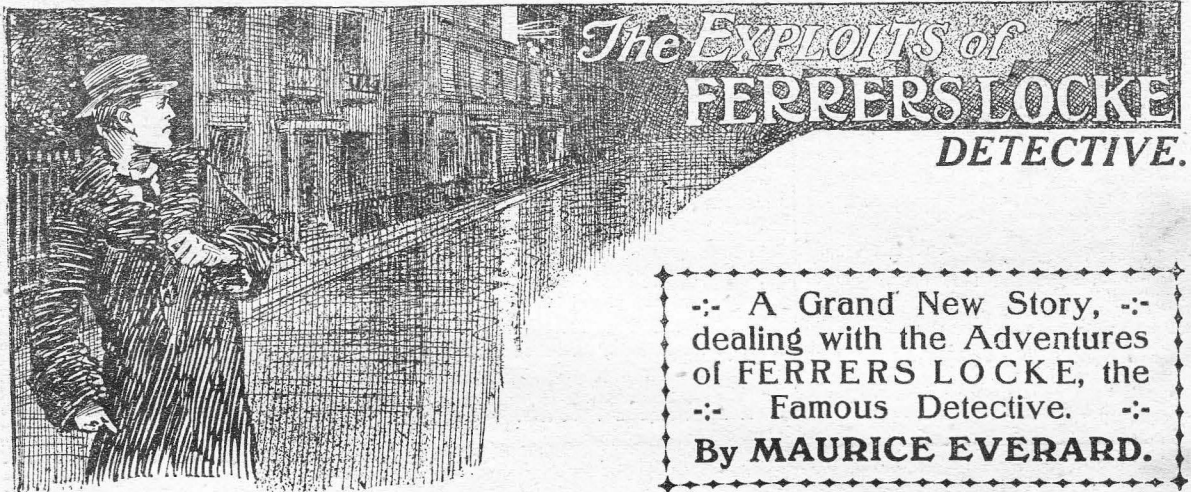
THE END.

(Another grand story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "THE SCHOOLBOY CHAMPION!" By Frank Richards. Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY!)

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A THRILLING NEW STORY OF THE FAMOUS 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 Stephánoff, is being hounded down by Stephánoff'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.

Returning to his flat, Locke finds Ivan Stephánoff awaiting him. Stephánoff pleads his innocence of the crime, but the detective refuses him personal assistance.

Locke learns that Ivan Stephánoff once did Hay a kindness, and that Hay, thinking him guilty, kept his name back to shield him.

Next day, Ferrers Locke returns to Hannaford's flat to investigate further.

(Now read on.)

A Bit of Steel!

FERRERS LOCKE drew back, and, occupying the position where he judged Marcus Hannaford had stood at the moment of firing, and being about the same height, he extended his right arm and pointed towards the paneless window with the stem of his pipe, which he gripped as he would have done a revolver. Then he went out, and returned a quarter of an hour later with a pocket air-pistol and a number of coloured darts. He found the line of vision and range of fire broken by three large elms in a garden forty yards or so distant. One after another he loosed the darts, altering his position only slightly with each shot.

"Where the darts are it is a thousand-to-one chance Hannaford's bullet will be," he told himself. And within a very short time, by means of a rope-sling and a pair of friendly hands, he was making a critical inspection of the tree-trunk. All the six darts he found embedded in the centre tree, but of a jagged hole such as a heavy revolver would make there was no sign. There was, however, a compensating discovery—a number of small and shallow, newly-inflicted pits, all within an area of a square foot or so; and from one of these Locke dug out something which he wrapped carefully up and put safely in his pocket-book.

The murder had now taken on a fresh interest for him, the interest of throwing light on what at first seemed an insoluble crime. Back in Marcus Hannaford's library, he had the place to himself, except for a meek-eyed constable, smoking stolidly in the dead man's revolving armchair.

"Things don't seem to be moving very briskly, Dykes," he said, removing his hat and gloves, and closing the door.

The policeman looked up.

"Don't they, sir? I thought they was beginning to hum a bit. They've got the assassin. You know that?"

"No." Locke's strong face greyed suddenly.

"Name of Stephánoff, ain't he?"

"Who told you?"

"Mr. Fox, sir. He rang up five minutes ago. Told me to tell you if you looked in again."

Locke went on with his inspection as though the news left him utterly cold. He had stopped on the library side of the bedroom—stopped to look at something swaying gently in the sun-kissed wind that blew through the shattered window. It was a length of the finest silk thread of a dark blue colour depending from the portiere-rod that ran along the top of the door.

"Dykes, how long have you been here—in this room, I mean?" he asked suddenly.

The policeman yawned tiredly. "Ever since midnight. My relief ain't come yet. Mr. Fox, he left me here, and said I could knock off at two, and he'd send me someone else. I suppose—"

"Do you remember, Dykes, was there a curtain hanging on that door?" Locke asked.

"There was, sir; a heavy plush curtain—darkish blue or black."

"Where is it?"

"Someone took it down, sir. Sir Kenneth Moseley, he went off with the key of the bedroom door in his pocket. They took the curtain down to wrap the body in."

"H'm! And who cleared up the bloodstains on the carpet?"

"The caretaker, sir, a fellow name of Garley. Mr. Fox fetched him up, sir, to do a bit o' tidying up. People's boots, sir, was beginning to tread all over the place."

"Thank you. I'm going along to the station, Dykes; I'll see about a relief." He went slowly down the stairs. The length of thread reposed also in his pocket-book, and the spot where it had hung upon the rod was marked.

In the hall a man in shirt-sleeves was taking the number down from the fanlight. No. 20 had a sinister attraction for morbidly curious lookers-on to-day.

Locke touched the man on the sleeve as he descended from his task.

"Is your name Garley?"

"Yes, sir. I'm the caretaker of this block."

"My name is Locke—Ferrers Locke. I'm a private detective. I was the first on the scene of the murder last night. I want to ask you a few questions."

"Sorry, sir; but Mr. Barkleigh Fox—he's a Scotland Yard official—he warned me not to answer any questions about the crime or to speak of it to anybody."

Locke smiled encouragingly.

"I don't want to ask you anything about the murder. Perhaps I could tell you and Mr. Fox more than you will ever know. Now, Garley, see if you can remember what I am going to ask you." He pressed a coin into the man's willing palm. "Did you sweep the carpet in Mr. Hannaford's room this morning—I mean the room he used as a library?"

"I did, sir; the room where the crime—"

"Never mind about the crime; we're not talking of that. Did you find anything on the floor?"

"Nothing of any consequence, sir—no, nothing at all."

"I don't mean anything connected with the

murder. Were there any odds and ends lying about?"

"No, sir— Ah, I remember! There was one little thing, a bit of steel."

"A bit of steel?"

"Yes, sir. It looked like a clip or spring of some sort."

"Where is it?"

"I threw it away with the rest of the rubbish into the dustbox. It wasn't no good."

"Where's the dustbox?"

"Outside, sir. Would you like to see it?"

"I should."

Garley led the way to the back, where a row of refuse-bins stood against the wall.

"Half-a-sovereign for you if you find me the clip or spring."

Garley earned the half-sovereign, and handed to the detective a fairly large metal clip, which formed, as the caretaker said, a moderately strong spring.

Locke's interest was deepening. He ran his gloved hands through the dust, and added something more to his pocket-book. At the station he got on the track of the plush curtain in which the body had been carried to the mortuary. This he examined with special care.

A little after five he returned to his flat. Peters met him in the vestibule.

"Inspector Fox, sir, is waiting upstairs to see you."

Locke went up to his room three steps at a time. From the inner office a scornful voice arrested him. He stopped, his hand on the door.

"You are a coward as well as a bully to make such suggestions against an innocent fellow!" John Hay was saying. "Only wait till Mr. Locke returns. I shall tell him everything you have said."

Fox laughed harshly.

"You haven't answered my question yet. How long has Locke employed you?"

"Long enough to make himself responsible that Mr. Hay receives respectful treatment at your hands!" thundered Locke, striding in.

"Now, Detective-Inspector Fox, if you have any questions to ask, direct them to me. Hay, would you mind going into my private room and filing the rest of my letters? I will ring when I want you."

He went out very white-faced, leaving the rival detectives to the threatening storm.

Who Killed Marcus Hannaford?

"YOU may sit down," Locke said, fixing Fox with a frigid glance.

The Scotland Yard man scowlingly took a seat.

"Thank you!" he said, in aggressive tones. "I've seen fit to question your typist."

"A course I should not for an instant have allowed you to take had I been here. Like most officious officials, you take too much upon yourself. The exigencies produced by your own futility call for the starting of a hare. Anything for a chase, false scent or no."

Fox fidgeted under the scathing tones.

"I'm not satisfied, Locke, I tell you straight!"

"Satisfied about what, pray?" the younger man asked, an amused smile playing about his thin lips.

"That Mr. Hay is as innocent of this matter as he pretends to be."

"Oh!"

"I've found out he isn't your secretary."

"That is news. I thought he was. Anyway, he is doing secretarial work for me now. Would you like to look into the next room?" Fox was getting annoyed.

"I mean, he hasn't been long."

"I don't ask your permission as to whom or how often I engage a secretary."

"Perhaps not, Locke; but you are throwing dust in our eyes over this young man."

"Young gentleman, please!"

"Well, young gentleman. What is the difference?" he snarled. "You didn't know him before last night!"

"Wouldn't you find that rather difficult to prove?"

"Anyway, he wasn't working for you before then. I've looked up his landlady—"

Locke straightened himself in his chair, his amused nonchalance falling away.

"Look here, Mr. Fox, unless you can satisfy me you have some proper reason for interfering with Mr. Hay, I shall ask you to leave."

"What makes you so cocksure?"

"Not cocksure—merely sure, that is all. A moment ago, you accused me of throwing dust in your eyes. Perhaps I can get a little of the dust out for you. I've discovered who killed Marcus Hannaford!"

"You have discovered that?"

Fox sprang up, but Locke waved him back to his chair with a hand gesture of calm.

"I have!"

"Who?"

"Marcus Hannaford himself!"

"Impossible!"

"Nevertheless true!"

"On your own showing he couldn't possibly have done it. How could he have shot himself through the brain close by the bed-room door, have walked almost across a wide room, and then have fired the second pistol? Besides, only one bullet was found in his head. You are mad!"

Locke rose, and placed his pocket-book on the desk.

"I am going to reconstruct and re-enact the crime so far as space and circumstances will allow."

He touched a bell, and his man appeared.

"Peters, ask Mr. Hay to step in. Hay, will you stand here, please?" he said. "Now, Fox,

pellets strikes the trigger of the air-pistol; but, to prove my case, I take up my position by the side of the easel. Watch what happens. Everything is in readiness. I am driven nearly mad by the constant fear of losing my life at the hands of a revengeful and remorseless man. I know that sooner or later he will kill me. I may just as well die by my own hand as by his. I conceive a fiendish idea. I will kill myself in such a way that suspicion will fall on him. I have Stephanoff's own pistol, picked up when he attempted to shoot me in Vienna a month before. It is there, fixed in the curtain, waiting to end my life. Nine o'clock strikes. Will he keep his promise to come? I go to the window and look out."

Locke strode across the room.

"Yes, there he is. By the light of the street lamps I see him coming down the road. I wait a minute, and go back. Then I hear a step on the stairs. A hand is on the door. It opens. I aim my weapon at the other pistol—so!"

He pulled the trigger of the rook-rifle. The report drowned the tinkle of the falling glass as most of the pellets passed through the window-pane, shattering it to fragments, and the click of the trigger of the air-pistol as one of the tiny shots struck it. Every eye was turned to the card on the easel. A red dart quivered in the forehead of the likeness of the man.

Fox sprang forward, a cry of amazed surprise breaking from him.

In miniature he looked again on the tragic scene of the previous night. The air-pistol, knocked from its hold, lay upon the carpet close to the door leading to the inner room; the spring had fallen down, and reposed out of sight amid the curtain folds; the broken thread trailed in the draught from the window; and the rook-rifle still sent its spiral of blue smoke coiling lazily towards the ceiling.

"That was the way in which Hannaford died," Locke said quietly. "But the man who rushed in as the weapons exploded—the man on whom he planned to throw the suspicion of his death—was not Stephanoff at all, but my friend Mr. Hay."

For several moments Fox was too surprised to speak.

"How did you discover all this?" he asked at length. "I agree it can be the only possible solution."

Locke picked up the folds of the hanging curtains and showed a few tiny holes.

"In my search for the bullet fired by Hannaford, I discovered the key to the whole mystery. He never fired a cartridge loaded with a leaden ball at all. To make quite sure of hitting the trigger of the pistol pointed at his own head he loaded one chamber of his revolver with a cartridge similar to the one I used in the rook-rifle. The majority of the bullets passed through the window. One—perhaps more than one—hit the trigger, and several passed through the curtain and dropped into the pile of the carpet. A tree in line with the window, and where Hannaford stood, was riddled with them. I found the rest among the litter which the caretaker took downstairs after he swept the room. Now, Mr. Fox, you are at liberty to put the case before the Yard. I have finished with it to my entire satisfaction." And he bowed the Scotland Yard man out.

#### What the Vault Held!

ONE early morning in spring Peters came into his master's room bearing a card on a tray. Ferrers Locke picked up the pasteboard and read:

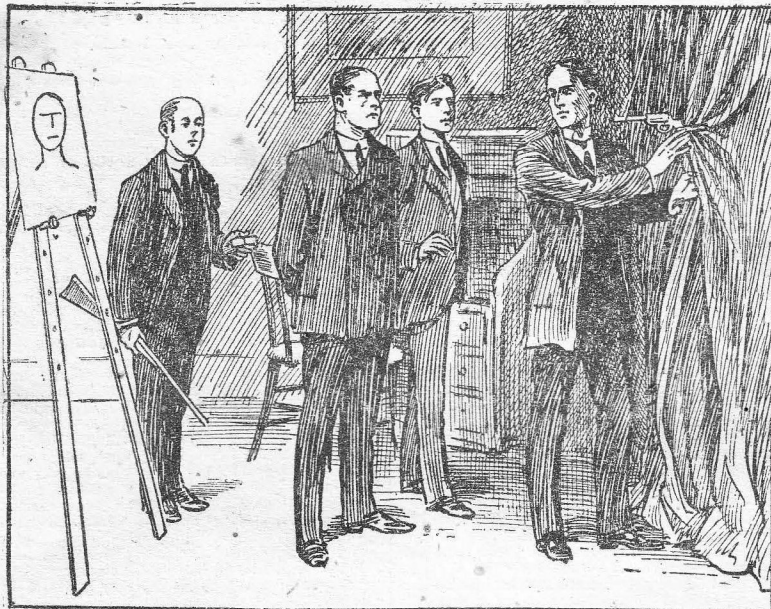
"Mr. Charles Fox Quenaby,  
Brampton Hall, Northants.  
Philanthropists' Club."

"Quenaby!" Locke turned him up swiftly in "Who's Who." "Ah, I have him—millionaire, philanthropist, great supporter of the present Government, possessor of honorary degrees from leading universities, a man much in the public eye. I wonder what he wants? Peters, show Mr. Quenaby in!"

Locke set a chair where the shaded sunlight of the clear, spring morning would fall on his visitor's face.

"Mr. Quenaby. Good-morning! Yes, I am Ferrers Locke, at your service. Please sit down!"

It was a fine big man who slid inertly, rather than sat down, in the chair Locke indicated, a man ordinarily of commanding presence, but now physically shrunken and mentally crumpled up by something that had



"In the loop of the thread I poise an air-pistol charged with a red-topped dart," said Ferrers Locke, "Now I point the muzzle of the air pistol so that it is aimed directly at the head on the easel." (See this page.)

"As a representative of the law, I naturally want to get at the bottom of the case."

"Well, can't you? I always thought you Scotland Yard men were such a smart lot. I heard several hours ago you had caught the murderer."

"We've got Stephanoff."

"Did you catch him?"

"No; he voluntarily came forward."

"To confess?"

"No; to establish an alibi."

"Did he succeed?"

"Easily. He brought forward three people who proved conclusively that they had seen him in Baysdown Road and Modbury Street continuously from ten minutes to nine to nearly a quarter-past. It appears he was going towards the house, but was clever enough, when he heard the shot fired, and guessed what had happened, to engage a stranger in conversation. His only danger would have been if he could not have found the stranger again to testify to the truth of his statement. That was why he had vanished when we went to arrest him, in order to find this man. He was successful, luckily for him, and our case against him collapses. We are no nearer now to getting the murderer than we were last night, unless—"

"Unless you can work up a fantastic case against an innocent young man. I'm afraid that won't do, Fox. But, I'll give you credit for this—you are right when you say Stephanoff did not commit the crime."

THE POPULAR.—NO. 84.

you see that door leading from Hannaford's library into his bed-room? Fortunately, over the door, as in Hannaford's room, hangs a curtain from a portiere rod. Peters, in the lumber-room upstairs, you will find a rook-rifle, and on the mantelshelf some small six-shot cartridges. Bring them down with the gun."

He stepped out a few paces from the window near the door to a spot almost in the centre of the room, where he placed an easel, and on a large sheet of cardboard, at a height of between five and six feet, he drew a rough representation of a man's head.

"You will notice, Fox, that for the purpose of demonstrating my case, I am using in several important particulars the actual materials found by myself in the dead man's room. For instance, this loop of blue silk thread; I tie it to the rod, and allow it to hang down before the curtain, which, were it also dark blue, would make the thread invisible. In the loop of the thread I poise, in place of the small revolver initialled 'I. S.', which we know was loaded with .32 ball-cartridges, an air-pistol charged with a red-topped dart. Now I so point the muzzle of the air-pistol that it is aimed directly at the head on the easel—the corresponding spot to where Hannaford stood—and I hold the pistol firmly in position by clipping it with this metal spring, which was picked up off the library carpet, to the thick curtain. All of you please stand near my desk. It doesn't matter where I stand to fire the gun, so long as one of the

set a tragic seal of despair on his usually florid face. There were dark shadows, too, about the penetrating, restless eyes, and a nervous, unhealthy twitching at the corners of his mouth that told of ill-suppressed agitation.

"Mr. Quenaby, you are in trouble!" Locke's grave voice was encouraging. "Believe me, you can talk quite freely here"—for the other's glance was roving jerkily round the room, as though he expected the hangings and the pictures to have ears. "The walls are steel-lined, the glass everywhere of plate and treble thickness, and those who move about my person above suspicion." The philanthropist's head drooped to his chest.

"I suppose it's no use hiding anything from a man like you, Mr. Locke, when one wants help," he said reflectively.

Locke forced an inscrutable smile. "That depends. I never force confidences." "The position, you see, is more than delicate for me. I want you—I must have you come in on this case. Money, you will understand, is no object. But to understand what is required of you I must begin with a half-veiled confession. Mr. Locke, you know me as Charles Fox Quenaby, of Prince's Gate and Brampton Hall, the man who thinks and speaks and deals in millions."

"I have your public career here." Locke's slim hand tapped the red-covered book of reference.

"You have only the purposely revealed side there, Mr. Locke, the shining facets shown to a receptive and admiring world. There is another side, a darker side, which neither you nor any living soul must know till after I and those dependent on me have mouldered to dust in the grave. It will be an astounding revelation when it is made public; but if all goes well that will not be until years after my wife's and my own death. I want you as I go along most carefully to weigh every word I speak."

"I notice you make no mention of possessing children."

"I have none, nor am I ever likely to have. I married late in life. We shall come to that later." He wiped the moisture from his troubled forehead. "You have heard of me as a proud, ambitious man, who, between ourselves, has hopes one day to see his name figuring in there." He pointed to a gilt-frosted copy of "Debrett."

"You mean you look for a peerage?" "At no remote date; possibly in the next honours list. But everything depends on you."

"On me!" "On your ability to keep up the screen which for years has sheltered my past from discovery. I have told you there is a dreadful chapter in my life story. What that secret is, while I live, concerns neither you nor any living soul. At my death things will be different. It will be right then that the whole truth about Charles Fox Quenaby shall become known. I realised that long ago, and prepared for it accordingly."

"In what way?" "I put on record the truth about myself—the most amazing document ever penned by human hands. When you have got the full significance of that securely fixed in the back of your brain, and realise how vitally important to me and all my dearest hopes inviolable secrecy concerning that strange document is, dismiss it temporarily, and fix your attention on the mystery which now baffles me."

"Go on, please." "Three years ago I married a wonderfully beautiful and accomplished lady. I was then fifty-seven, she was forty-one. Here is her portrait."

"Your wife is English, of course?" "A Suffolk lady, Mr. Locke. She was a widow when I married her. We have been ideally happy."

"Does she know of this secret in your past?"

"No. It would kill her if she did." "I should like the facts leading up to your visit here this morning—sequentially, of course."

Quenaby toyed with his gloves. "They are these. I have, as you may be aware, business offices in London. It isn't often I come to town to attend them for any considerable time. When I do, of necessity I return home late. Such was the case on Tuesday evening last."

"The eleventh of this month?" "Precisely. I reached the Hall soon after midnight. I looked into my wife's room, Mr. Locke, and found it vacant, her bed un slept in, and my wife nowhere to be seen." "The detective betrayed no sign of surprise. "You had told her not to expect you back early?"

"By telegram." "Which she received?" "Oh, quite safely! I have since discovered the wire in the dining-room."

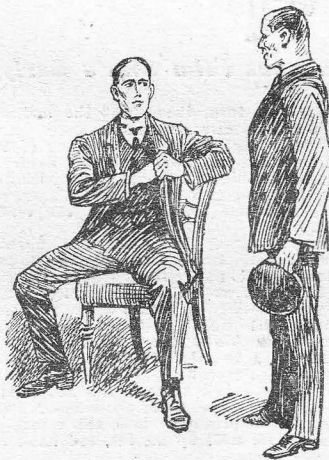
"She would usually, then, regard such a telegram as an intimation not to wait up?"

"That was the understanding between us."

"What happened afterwards?" "For the next few hours I spent the most unhappy time of my life. I was frantic. My wife had gone without a word of farewell, without a last good-bye. Mr. Locke, the shock almost turned my brain."

"I quite understand," was all Locke said. The philanthropist leaned forward and placed the ball of the forefinger of his right on the tip of the first finger of the left.

"Now, mark all that followed in careful order. I roused the servants. My wife had apparently gone; but as if to disprove this were the facts that her store of clothes was untouched. No bag, portmanteau, or dressing-case was missing, nor had anyone seen her leave the Hall."



"It is merely an ordinary case of murder," said the Scotland Yard Detective.

"Who saw her last?" "James, the butler, at a quarter to eleven on the night of the eleventh. She told him not to wait up for me, as I should go straight to bed, took a silver candlestick from the stand in the hall—a fad of hers always to retire by candlelight—and mounted the stairs to her own room. Over what followed impenetrable mystery hung, until I myself discovered Mrs. Quenaby three hours later locked in the steel vault beneath the mansion."

Locke drew a surprised breath. "I suppose she could not have locked herself in?" "That is out of the question, except for a lunatic. Another hour in that vault would have suffocated her."

"Has your wife given any explanation how she came to be in such an extraordinary and dangerous position?"

"None at all. She can throw no light on the happening. Mr. Locke, as I now believe in truth and justice, in woman's love and honour, I pin my faith on every word she says. She tells me that a few minutes after James had gone to his room she came downstairs to fetch something she had forgotten. She remembers reaching the hall, but nothing more."

"What was in the vault before you discovered in it your wife's senseless body?"

"Money—a considerable sum in notes and gold—and the document which I have previously spoken of, the document which, if ever its contents become known, will bring

irretrievable ruin and lasting shame on what is now an honoured name."

"And the document has been stolen?" "Yes."

"Anything besides? Any money?" "Yes, all the gold, but not the notes. They were left untouched."

"That is strange."

"I cannot understand it at all."

"Was your wife aware of the existence of this document—I mean, without knowing its contents or import?"

"I am certain she wasn't."

"And she knows nothing about it now?"

"There is my only ray of consolation—up to the present she doesn't. Mr. Locke, can you understand my feelings—the hopeless fear that consumes me night and day—the dread of losing my wife's love, my good name, and of dragging hers down in shame? For mercy's sake, help me unravel this mystery! Get back that paper before whoever has it makes use of its secret!"

"You realise, Mr. Quenaby, there are two ways in which the person who has stolen the document may choose to exert his power—either to expose your past, or to blackmail you as the price of his silence?"

"Either means living torture for me. Mr. Locke, you must put an end to this intolerable strain!"

"Right!" replied Locke, with sudden briskness. "I will come down to Brampton and see what can be done."

The Circle Widens.

WHEN John Hay, Locke's temporary secretary, returned from a visit to Scotland Yard, he found a note in Locke's handwriting awaiting. It ran as follows:

"Pack sufficient clothes for a week or two in the country, and join me main-line departure platform Euston midday."

The detective strolled up, dressed in serviceable tweeds, a few minutes before the train was due to start.

"I've reserved a first at the front end," he said to Hay. "I almost wish this wasn't a business trip after all."

Before many minutes had gone, however, he had run over the main points of the philanthropist's story.

"Poor Mr. Quenaby! I feel quite sorry for him," Hay said. "As you say, he will lose the love and esteem of his wife unless the paper is recovered."

"I am glad your view of the case coincides with mine," the detective agreed. "I don't see why, because the man once made a dreadful mistake—a mistake I honestly believe he has long since repented of—he should be allowed to lose what he holds most dear—the affection and esteem of his beautiful wife—if we can possibly prevent it."

"Do you regard Mrs. Quenaby as above suspicion?"

"Mere consideration for a woman makes me, for the moment, give her the benefit of the doubt. No one is above suspicion in a case like this. We have to reckon the worst part is yet to come. When systematic blackmail begins, real tragedy occupies the stage."

"But nothing in that direction has happened so far?"

"Nothing. The person who stole the document is taking time to perfect his or her plans."

"Then what do you want me to do, Mr. Locke?"

"Keep an eye on Mrs. Quenaby. Find out everything you can about her. Stay in the village, put up at one of the cottages, frequent the church, get to know Mrs. Quenaby's maid, find out where she shops, who supplied her clothes. At the end of a week we will meet, you and I, and compare notes."

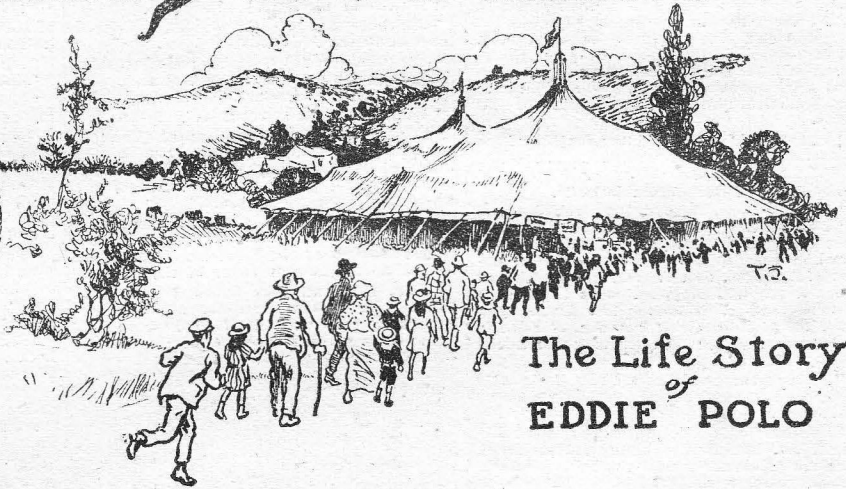
"And you?"

"I shall be staying at the Hall as Quenaby's guest. Of course, if the whole case should collapse suddenly I will let you know; but I don't think it will. This is no ordinary mystery. The problem is going to tax both of us to the uttermost."

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

THE LIFE STORY OF FAMOUS EDDIE POLO STARTS TO-DAY!

# Fighting for Fame!



## The Life Story of EDDIE POLO

A Thrilling Story of the Famous Film Star's Early Struggles and Triumphs.

### THE FIRST CHAPTER. Eddie Polo Wins His Spurs.

**T**HE glare of the lights and the blare of the brass band from the travelling circus situated outside the town made a strong appeal to each and every individual of the mixed population of San Francisco.

Crowds could be seen wending their way towards the large tent.

Young and old, women and men, were equally attracted. Family parties, with the son and heir talking loudly and excitedly of the wonderful things he hopes to see; young men with their chosen lady friends carelessly explaining how simple the most difficult tricks really are—all strolled towards their Mecca of the evening.

The circus—a travelling affair, known as Busto's World-Famous Menagerie and Circus—visited San Francisco twice a year, and stayed, on each occasion, but two nights.

This was the last performance of the present visit; and, with memories of former years, the population knew there would be a prize offered to any local man who could retain his seat on the untamed pony for more than five minutes.

The vast tent was fully occupied, and the atmosphere was blue with smoke from hundreds of pipes and cigarettes. Every available seat had been taken, and even the limited standing room had been taxed to its utmost capacity.

"Ginger," the clown, whose hair was as white as the powder on his face, and who was the oldest member of the troupe, was busy keeping his audience amused until such time as the "boss" decided to commence the show. That moment soon arrived. It was impossible to pack any more people into the tent.

One turn followed another in quick succession. They were all very well known. Dolly and Dot, the two musical elephants, made their appearance and played the same old tunes upon the same old musical bellows.

Esta, the queen of equestriennes, repeated her marvellous performance upon the white thoroughbred.

The glaring posters in the town depicted the lady riding round the ring standing on her head on the prancing white horse.

The horse did not prance a great deal, and not even the oldest patron could remember seeing the daring lady do the ride on her head.

However, it did not matter to any great extent. The show was sufficiently exciting without that; and the only part which had any great interest for the audience was the attempt by talent to win the large money prize.

So far this had not been accomplished. It

was for this turn, then, that the audience waited as patiently as possible.

In anticipation of the event many of the local horsemen had been practising hard.

Turning double-somersaults and shouting as loudly as his lungs would permit, Ginger, the clown, made his appearance in the centre of the ring.

Del Rogeriguo, the remarkable Spanish trapeze artiste, had just completed his performance, and was sitting calmly upon a bar suspended at a dizzy height above the safety net, smiling his thanks to the audience.

"Hallo-oah! Hallo-oah!" roared Ginger. "Silence for his Mighty Mightiness, who cometh forth to offer pourbairs unto those who can take them!"

The moment had arrived, and Mr. Busto, the fat and florid owner of the circus, walked slowly and impressively into the centre of the ring. He held up his fat, red hand for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he roared. "In accordance with my usual custom, I ham about to hoffer five hundred dollars to any member of the audience who can hear it!"

The delighted audience shouted their approval in no uncertain manner.

"In hother times," continued Mr. Busto, "I 'ave hofferred this money to the man who could stay on the back of my pony, Fire-Eater, which 'orse, ladies and gentlemen, has never yet been ridden."

"To-night I 'ave decided to give this large sum of money to hany individual who will go up on to the trapeze and do the tricks which our world-famous artiste, Del Rogeriguo, will show 'im!"

There was a murmur of disappointment as Mr. Busto paused to notice the effect of his words.

Mr. Busto noticed the discontent his words had occasioned, and held up his fat hand again for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he shouted, "I regret to cause you this disappointment, but"—here he drew his right hand across his eyes—"this morning I suffered a horful loss. Fire-Eater smashed a bone in his leg and 'ad to be shot!"

He paused again, and gazed round the faces of his audience. The murmurs of disappointment changed into those of sympathy.

Ginger now took a hand in the conversation, as was his custom.

"Hallo-oah!" he roared. "Where are all the fellows who wish to find a short and easy way out of this world of trouble? I will promise all who attempt to win this prize a decent funeral. Now, then, walk up!"

In place of the usual crowds who answered this sporting offer only one person came forward.

He was a short youth with an amazing crop of thick, jet-black hair, and sparkling eyes of

the same colour, which gazed fearlessly out upon the surprised audience.

In stature he was short, but stolidly built. His compact body and springy walk spoke of great strength and agility, capable of withstanding almost any strain, and the clear eye expressed a wonderful nerve and unflinching judgment.

A rousing cheer of encouragement went up as this youth vaulted lightly over the baricade from a front seat.

"Go it, young 'un!"

Mr. Busto was evidently surprised that any person should take his offer. He gazed at the sprightly youth who presented himself. This young man could hardly have been a trapeze artiste, and certainly could not have had any practice.

Mr. Busto demurred slightly at accepting the responsibility, but the young fellow appeared quite decided.

"What is your name, young fellow?" demanded Ginger.

"Polo!" was the reply. "Eddie Polo!"

Ginger turned to the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he roared, "Mr. Eddie Polo has decided to make the attempt. I am sure we all wish him good luck."

There was a suppressed air of excitement throughout the tent as the black-haired youth made his way to the dressing-room. In a few moments he was back, clad in the tights supplied him by the management.

He walked slowly towards the rope, and then, with the agility of a monkey, which surprised the audience and Mr. Busto, he quickly climbed to the topmost rung. Here he seated himself, and smiled cheerfully at Del Rogeriguo on the opposite side.

"I am ready!" he called out.

Del Rogeriguo smiled back. It would not be difficult, he thought to himself, to dispose of this young man.

The Spaniard grasped the pole, upon which he was sitting, with both hands, and, gently swinging to and fro, suddenly released his hold, and, turning a double somersault in mid-air, fell down into the safety net thirty feet below.

Not a sound could be heard in the vast tent. The audience knew quite well that the trick, however simple it appeared, was a difficult one to perform, and that to fall into the net without hurt was even more difficult.

Eddie Polo smiled as he saw the tense expression on the hundreds of faces surrounding him, and, grasping the pole as the Spaniard had done, performed the trick with as much grace as the star artiste.

He landed in front of Del Rogeriguo, still smiling.

"And the next?" he said.

Del Rogeriguo did not seem at all pleased at the easy manner in which the stranger

had performed his hardest trick. He climbed up to the bars again.

No matter what he did after that, the smiling youth on the opposite bar followed as easily and as gracefully. And, after each stunt, the Spaniard became visibly more and more annoyed.

The audience screamed their delight and encouragement, while Mr. Busto below gazed in amazement, and ceaselessly fidgeted at the roll of notes in his hand.

The Spaniard could think of nothing else to do, and signalled down to his "boss."

Mr. Busto glanced round at the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen," he roared, "for the first time in my life I've to pay out this prize. After such an exhibition, we must all agree that the little man deserves it."

Eddie Polo swarmed down the rope to the ground, and approached Mr. Busto to collect his prize.

He bowed his acknowledgments to the excited audience, and made his way back to the dressing-room.

It was here that Mr. Busto found him a few moments later.

"Look 'ere," he said, "I've never seen anything like that show of yours. Will you join us?"

He fired the question at Eddie Polo. Polo's black eyes twinkled with excitement and delight.

"There's nothing I'd like better," he replied.

And from that day Eddie Polo became a member of Busto's Word-Famous Menagerie and Circus.

### THE SECOND CHAPTER.

#### A Fight With Del Rogeriguo.

**E**DDIE POLO left the circus that night with his head in a whirl.

The stroke of luck which had so suddenly come his way caused him the greatest astonishment.

The one type of life he had always longed for, without warning, had opened its arms to him, and, with the impetuosity of youth, he grasped the opportunity.

He knew he would never regret his change of life. He had the certain feeling within him that he could make a great success of his newly-chosen career.

So he strode along, as happy as it was possible to be.

Life held nothing for him unless he could obtain that excitement for which his whole being craved.

There is nothing finer than to know that one's whole life depends upon one's own quickness of thought, and the power of self-control.

Eddie, therefore, the following morning, was eager to commence his new duties.

When he reported his arrival the next day he was surrounded by the other members of the company, who showered their congratulations upon him.

They had heard nothing else since the boy's performance of the previous night than Mr. Busto's opinion of the wonderful possibilities of the nimble athlete who had carried off his five hundred dollars.

"Mark my words," Mr. Busto had stated to the assembled company at breakfast that morning, "that boy'll be a famous athlete some day mighty soon, and I"—and all present remembered the way he had puffed out his chest—"I will start him on that road to fame!"

And so Eddie, unbeknown to himself, was looked upon as a man with a great future before him. The professional who has only just failed to reach the top of the ladder—and most of the members of the circus company came under that category—is always generous with his wishes for the future of any newcomer.

All the company assembled to greet Eddie as he made his way through the piles of wooden cases, and all expressed their sincere pleasure—with the one exception of Del Rogeriguo.

The Spaniard, previously the only acrobat of any importance in the circus company, felt that his position was becoming weaker, and that probably very soon he would lose his job.

There was no part in his nature which would allow of that generous expression of goodwill so noticeable in the rest of the company. It was entirely farsighted to him to say, or even think, "Well, if he is a better athlete, let him win."

And, as he stood with the rest of the company, he scowled fiercely.

Ginger, the clown, noticed the nasty look

which came over the man's face; but Ginger was a wise person—much wiser than his make-up and general behaviour at public performances would lead people to believe.

Also, he had had a vast experience of the petty jealousy which prompts men to wreak vengeance upon an innocent rival.

He said nothing, until, while showing Eddie round the circus, pointing out the work which would be expected of him, he could whisper a word of warning in the young acrobat's ear.

"Look out for storms from Del Rogeriguo," he said. "I think the boss wants you to take his place, and, if that is the case, the Spaniard will not like it, and may try some funny tricks."

"But, why?" remarked Eddie. "Surely there is room for two of us in a circus of this size?"

"Yes, but there is only room for one of you at the top."

And Ginger stopped the conversation in order to show Polo the work he had to do in preparation for the move.

This consisted, chiefly, of dismantling the

your show last night, I am going to offer you the position of leading acrobat in this circus. Apart from the fact that I do not much like the present fellow, Del Rogeriguo, I think your performance is heaps better than his. Will you take the job?"

Eddie Polo gasped in amazement.

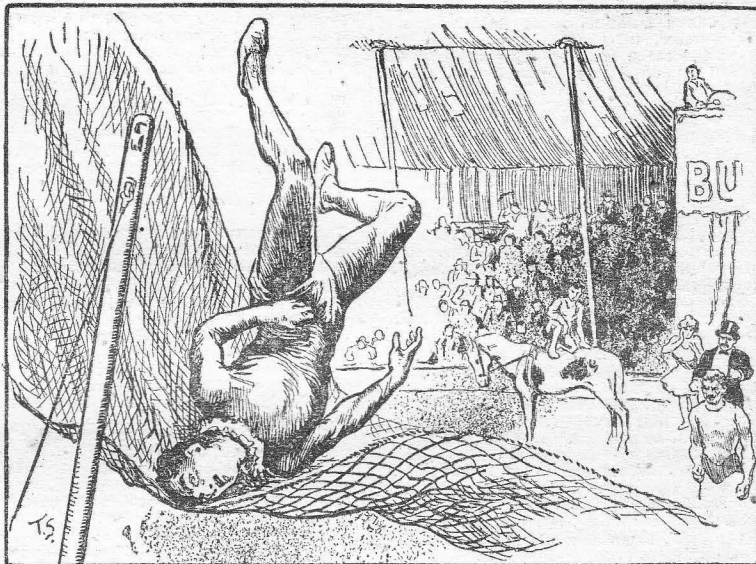
"Sure," he stammered, as soon as he had regained his breath.

"Good!" continued Mr. Busto. "Then we'll see you 'starred' at our next stopping-place. I have already told the Spaniard of my decision. By the way, if there is any trouble with him, let me know."

For the second time within twenty-four hours, Eddie was overcome at his tremendous good luck. However, he determined to work hard, and to prove to the boss that his faith in him was not misplaced. He would show them some really thrilling acrobatic stunts, and so justify his appointment.

He felt sorry for Del Rogeriguo; but, after all, it was the fortune of life.

As he made his way back to his position in the column he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned round, and found himself look-



An ominous sound, like the cracking of a large whip was heard, and to the horror of the spectators, the net collapsed and Eddie Polo continued his mad dash downwards. [See this page.]

trapeze ropes and packing them in their boxes.

Eddie set about the work with a good will, and soon all the boxes were ready for loading on to one of the great vans which waited outside.

The boxes were soon packed on to the trailers, horses were hitched up, and the men were standing by to commence the move.

Mr. Busto walked along the road towards his caravan.

"Good-morning, Polo!" he shouted, as he passed by Eddie, standing in conversation with one of the men in charge of the elephants. "Come along to see me at the top of the column when we are on the move."

And the genial owner walked along the line of waggons, looking critically at each as he passed.

"Fine fellow that," said the elephant-man, nodding his head in the direction of the departing boss. "One of the best!"

Further conversation was prevented by the man's effort to get his charges on the move. The column made its way slowly along the dusty road. When they had proceeded a mile or so, Eddie walked along to the boss's caravan.

"Ah, come in!" said Mr. Busto cheerfully. "You must know my wife and daughter, as we in the circus are just like one big family."

Eddie Polo climbed into the caravan, and was surprised to see that Mr. Busto's daughter was none other than Esta, the dainty queen of the equestriennes, whose performance had so pleased him the night before.

"Now, Eddie," continued Mr. Busto, "after

ing into the face of Del Rogeriguo. The Spaniard was livid with rage and disappointment, and it was with great difficulty that he controlled himself sufficiently to speak.

"You have twisted me out of my job!" he cursed. "I will kill you, sir!"

And he made a violent thrust at Eddie with a long, dangerous-looking stiletto.

Eddie Polo, for the first time, then found the value of his training as an acrobat.

Flinging himself backward, he avoided the murderous thrust, and the Spaniard over-balanced himself with the power he had put behind the blow.

Del Rogeriguo had not time for a second onslaught, for, as quick as lightning, Eddie sprang upon him, and delivered a smashing blow to the point of the chin. The half-caste collapsed as if he had been poleaxed.

Eddie glanced down at the writhing villain. "I shouldn't try that again," he said grimly—"at least, not when I happen to be looking at you."

And he turned on his heel, leaving the Spaniard to collect his wits and to pick himself up.

Nobody had witnessed the affair, and the rest of the journey passed without incident.

Late in the afternoon the circus reached its next stopping-place, and all hands were demanded to prepare the tent for the first performance. It was then that Eddie learned how hard the life of the circus man was to be. But he did not flinch at heavy work.

The news that he was to take the place of Del Rogeriguo had quickly spread through the company. Posters had been written by the scenic artist, announcing the first show

(Continued on page 18.)

# TOMMY DODD'S MISTAKE!

A Magnificent Long  
Complete Tale of  
JIMMY SILVER & Co.  
of Rookwood.

By  
OWEN CONQUEST.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Three in a Fix.

**L**OOK out!"  
"What's the row?"  
"Classical cads!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"Oh, what rotten luck!"  
The three Tommies of the Modern side at Rookwood looked exasperated, as they felt. It was a half-holiday at Rookwood, and the weather, for once in a way, had condescended to be fine. Nearly everybody was out of doors. Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Classical side, were on the cricket-ground. The Classical studies were deserted. So were the Modern studies, for that matter. And the opportunity had seemed excellent to Tommy Dodd for paying a visit to the quarters of his old rivals, and preparing a little surprise for them when they came in. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle were in the junior passage on the Classical side, outside the door of the end study. They had been about to enter that celebrated study, when Tommy Dodd gave the alarm.

There were footsteps on the stairs, and the voice of Lovell of the Fourth could be heard in the distance:

"Rot! We can rehearse after dark, Jimmy, you ass! Much better stick to cricket while the rain's off."

"Oh, my hat! They're coming in to rehearse!" said Tommy Cook.

"Caught, be jabbers!" growled Doyle. The Modern raiders were fairly caught. They hadn't raided the end study yet. They had only just arrived on the scene, and the Fistical Four were coming upstairs, and retreat was cut off.

The three Tommies would not have shrunk from a fistical encounter with the four Classicals, but it would need only one yell to bring a crowd of Classicals on the scene, and then the venturesome Moderns would certainly have been booked for a ragging, to impress upon them the risk of raiding Classical quarters.

"We've got to bunk!" muttered Cook. "They're in the way. We can't."

"Rush them before the other bastes can come on," suggested Doyle.

Tommy Dodd shook his head quickly.

"Better dodge. Get into the box-room. We can clear off after they're gone into the study."

"But—"

"Buck up, ass! They'll be along in two ticks!"

Tommy Dodd opened the door of the box-room as he spoke. The box-room was at the end of the passage. The three Moderns hurried into it, and Tommy Dodd closed the door, only a second or two before the Classicals came into view at the other end of the long passage.

"Look here—" began Doyle.

"Mum's the word, ass! I suppose they won't come in here?" said Tommy Dodd. "You wild Irish duffer, do you want to be sooted and gummed? They'll make an example of us if they catch us raiding their quarters." Tommy looked through the key-hole. "There's Oswald and Rawson with them, too! Too many for us."

"Look here!" muttered Cook.

He pointed to several queer-looking costumes that lay on the empty boxes in the room. There was a box of grease-paint also, and several wigs, beards, and moustaches, and a wooden leg. Tommy Dodd snorted. The presence of the theatrical props showed that the box-room was to be the scene of the Classical rehearsal.

"They're coming in here, bedad!"

"And we shall be spotted all the same!" grunted Cook. "We should have been safer in the study. You're an ass, Tommy!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 84.

"Get out of sight!"

"Where?"  
"Oh, use your head, fathead!" said Tommy Dodd crossly.

There was no time to be lost. The footsteps and voices of the Classical juniors were approaching the box-room.

Fortunately, there was plenty of cover. Most of the boxes and trunks in the room had been piled in one corner, to keep them out of the way of the rehearsers. The three Tommies squeezed themselves behind the stack, which quite concealed them from view. "Now keep quiet!" murmured Dodd.

"Faith, but I think—"  
"Shurrup!"

"Look here, Tommy Dodd—"

"Do you want me to bash your silly napper on the wall, Tommy Doyle?" demanded the Modern leader, in sulphurous tones.

"Why, you cheeky spalpeen—"  
"Shurrup!"

The box-room door opened, and Tommy Doyle grunted and relapsed into silence. The three Tommies scarcely breathed.

Jimmy Silver came into the box-room with his companions. The Fistical Four—Jimmy, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome—were all there, with Rawson, Oswald, Flynn, and Jones minor. The odds were far too great for even the redoubtable Tommies to think of tackling, if they could help it. There was nothing for it but to understudy Brer Fox, and lie low.

"Silly rot!" Lovell was saying. "We can rehearse any old time—"

"Fathead!" said Jimmy Silver. "We've had an hour at the cricket, haven't we?"

"Well, another hour would do us good."

"And what about the play?"  
"Oh, bother the play!"

"Oh, let's get on with it!" said Newcome. "We've had it about for a long time now. Those Modern worms will be nosing out all about it soon, too."

The three Moderns grinned behind the stack of trunks. Newcome was quite unaware how near his remark was to the facts.

"Yes, shut up, Lovell!" said Raby.

"We're going to knock the Modern cads with this play. They've never thought of introducing a wooden-legged admiral into any of their rotten plays!"

"And if they knew what a splendid character we've got in Admiral Corker, it would be just like them to collar it," said Jimmy Silver. "This play is going to beat all records. The Moderns aren't going to know anything about it till it comes off."

"That's all very well—" began Lovell, evidently still unsatisfied.

"Of course it is," said Jimmy Silver.

"Keep smiling. We've got to have a dress-rehearsal before the play comes off, and we've got to have it this afternoon."

"We've had one dress-rehearsal."

"Well, now we're going to have another."

"Oh, I suppose you're bound to have your way, Jimmy Silver."

"Naturally," said Jimmy calmly. "You follow your Uncle James, and don't jaw!"

"Br-r-r!"

"The Modern cads haven't heard a whisper of it so far," remarked Rawson. "They don't even know we've booked the Form-room for this evening."

"Don't we!" murmured Tommy Dodd behind the trunks.

"We'll let them know when it's going to start, so that they can come if they like," remarked Jimmy Silver generously. "They can pick up a lot about amateur acting by watching us."

Tommy Dodd shook his fist at the trunks. The amateur actors on the Modern side did not think that they had anything to learn from Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Besides," continued Jimmy Silver, "we've got to have everything pat, as we shall have

a very distinguished audience. Bootles has promised to come!"

"Good!"  
"And old Bulkeley is going to give us a look in. And I'm going to ask Admiral Topcastle."

"Who the thunder's Admiral Topcastle?" demanded Lovell.

"The Head's guest."

"I didn't know the Head had a guest."  
"He hasn't, fathead! The guest is coming. Old Mack is taking the trap down to the station for him, and he's coming to dinner. I heard the Head telling Mack. The play will take place after dinner, and it would be only civil to send an invitation to the admiral."

"Well, you cheeky ass!" said Lovell. "You're going to have the nerve to ask the Head's guest to come to a junior play!"

"Isn't it a jolly good play?" demanded Jimmy warmly.

"Well, you ought to know as you wrote it," said Lovell sarcastically.

"Exactly. I do know. The part of Admiral Corker will bring the house down—I'm convinced of that."

Jimmy Silver was cast for the part of Admiral Corker in the play, so he knew what he was talking about.

"Admiral Corker has jolly nearly all the play!" grunted Lovell. "He comes on in every scene, and does nearly all the jaw!"

Jimmy Silver was sitting on a box, strapping on the wooden leg. He had to twist his own leg up at the knee to fasten on the wooden limb.

"Of course, the best actor has to have the fattest part," said Jimmy modestly. "Besides, it needs an active chap to hop about on a wooden leg. You would come a cropper every other step, Lovell. You're clumsy."

"Why, you ass—"

"Besides, you couldn't tuck your hoof out of sight. It's too big."

"You cheeky ass, your feet are bigger than mine!" roared Lovell.

"Well, my brain's bigger, anyway. Brains are wanted for a really telling part like Admiral Corker."

"Well, I don't suppose the Head's guest will come," grunted Lovell; "and if he does, he won't be pleased to see a funny admiral in the play. I can tell you that. If he's an admiral himself, he'll think a funny admiral off-side."

"Oh, that's rot! I suppose the old johnnie will have a sense of humour; sailormen always have a sense of humour," said Jimmy, still busy with the artificial limb. "And Admiral Corker is a fine character, too; rather touchy and peppery, but with a heart of gold. There must be a comic character in a play. But there are some good patriotic speeches for him—"

"Yes, jolly nearly all the speeches in the play," said Lovell. "I know I only have a dozen lines to speak as an able seaman."

"Well, that's all you could remember."

"And I don't get much as a German spy," said Raby. "I only have to say 'Mein Gott!' half a dozen times. And look here, Jimmy, you mind how you go for me with that wooden leg."

"We've got to have the thing realistic, Raby. Admiral Corker goes for the German spy with his wooden leg, and makes him hop. If you get a bit hurt, and yell, that will add to the realism."

"If you hurt me, Admiral Corker will jolly well get a dot in the eye."

"Look here, Raby—"

"Suppose we get on with the bizney, and jaw afterwards?" suggested Oswald.

"Yes; that's a good idea; these chaps would jaw the hind leg off a mule!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Why, you've been doing all the jawing!" bellowed Lovell.

"There you go again! For goodness' sake, let's get on with the washing!"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

And then the amateur actors got on with the washing.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
Unrehearsed.**

**T**OMMY DODD & Co. were as quiet as mice behind the stack of trunks in the corner. The Classics had not the faintest suspicion of their presence there. The three Tommies were grinning hugely. The secret of the Classical play had been well kept, and this was the first Tommy Dodd had heard of it—and it was coming off that evening! But the Moderns knew all about it now. And already Tommy Dodd was turning over in his mind schemes for making the Classical performance a "frost." There was keen rivalry between the Classical Players and the Modern Stage Society; as keen as the rivalry in cricket and footer.

Tommy Dodd peered cautiously through a small space between two trunks, which gave him a view of the rehearsal.

The Classical juniors had donned their costumes.

Jimmy Silver, as the comic admiral, was quite a striking personage. He was padded out to a considerable stoutness. His face was grease-painted to the hue of mahogany, and adorned with a fringe of white whiskers and a white moustache. A white wig covered his curly head. His nose was tinted a deep red, which hinted that Admiral Corker was supposed to be fond of his grog.

Unfortunately, an admiral's uniform was not included among the "props" of the Classical Players, and Admiral Corker was compelled to appear in mutli. But that was all right, as Jimmy Silver explained, because real admirals, retired, don't wear their uniforms at home. Jimmy Silver had donned a somewhat striking suit of grey check and a bowler hat. He looked about sixty years old now. His right leg had disappeared from view as far as the knee, being strapped up inside the trouser-leg. The wooden leg was fixed on at the knee, and looked very natural.

Tommy Dodd had to admit that "Admiral Corker" was good. Jimmy had a natural turn for acting and for making up, and the gift of throwing himself into a character he adopted. There was little doubt that Admiral Corker would be a success—unless the Moderns intervened.

Raby, as a German spy, wore blonde whiskers and a spiked moustache. Probably he did not look much like a spy, but he looked German. And he had practised very assiduously, saying "Mein Gott!" in a grumpy, guttural voice.

Rawson was a comic policeman—a caricature of P.-c. Boggs, of Coombe—whose chief business was to chase the German spy in and out of rooms and windows, and to fall over the admiral's wooden leg, and to be chased by the admiral. The fun in Jimmy Silver's ripping play was of a knockabout sort, which Jimmy sagely opined was the sort to "go down" among an audience of juniors.

Newcome and Oswald were two old sailormen who had retired from the sea along with the admiral, and they had to wear sailor clothes, smoke black pipes—without tobacco—walk with a rolling gait, and ejaculate "Shiver my timbers!" and "Blow my topsails!"

Lovell was an able seaman; at least, he was a seaman, though Jimmy averred that he was not very able.

The rehearsal proceeded quite briskly. Having rehearsed a good many times before, the juniors remembered their lines, or nearly all of them. Newcome and Oswald shivered their timbers and blowed their topsails at a great rate. Jimmy Silver played a great part with the wooden leg. In moments of excitement the peppery old admiral was supposed to belabour all and sundry with that wooden leg, and the German spy had the chief benefit of it. Jimmy had become quite an adept at standing on one leg, and prodding, poking, and jabbing the other fellows with the wooden limb.

Raby had some natural objections. It was all very well for Jimmy to explain that if he howled with real pain it would be more realistic. Raby admitted that it would; but he had decided objections to real pain, all the same.

"This will make a ripping scene!" declared

Jimmy. "I've just thought of an improvement. That box is a table—see? I chase you right round the table, Raby, prodding you from behind—"

"Do you?" growled Raby.

"Yes, ass, I do! Right round the table, you yelling all the time. Then you—"

"Then I turn on you and down you, and bash your silly head against the table?"

"No, ass! A German spy is a funk, and never turns on anybody. You clamber on the table to get out of the way, and smash the tea-things. A real smash goes down splendidly in a comedy. People like to hear the smash."

"But what about the tea-things?" asked Lovell.

"We shall have to borrow them up and down the passage."

"The fellows will get pretty waxy if we smash them."

"Rats! It's worth a few old crocks to make a really effective scene like that," said Jimmy. "The fellows can go and eat

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fathead! Now, then, Raby, let's get on rehearsing that scene. It's a splendid scene. You start round the table, with me after you."

Raby started round the table, with a somewhat grim look on his face. The programme, as mapped out by Jimmy Silver, did not quite agree with Raby's ideas. The admiral followed him, hopping on one leg and prodding with the other, and Raby yelled. He whipped round suddenly, and caught hold of the wooden leg with both hands, and held it in the air.

"Hold on!" roared Jimmy Silver. "I mean, let go! You don't do that! Mind what you're at; you'll have me over!"

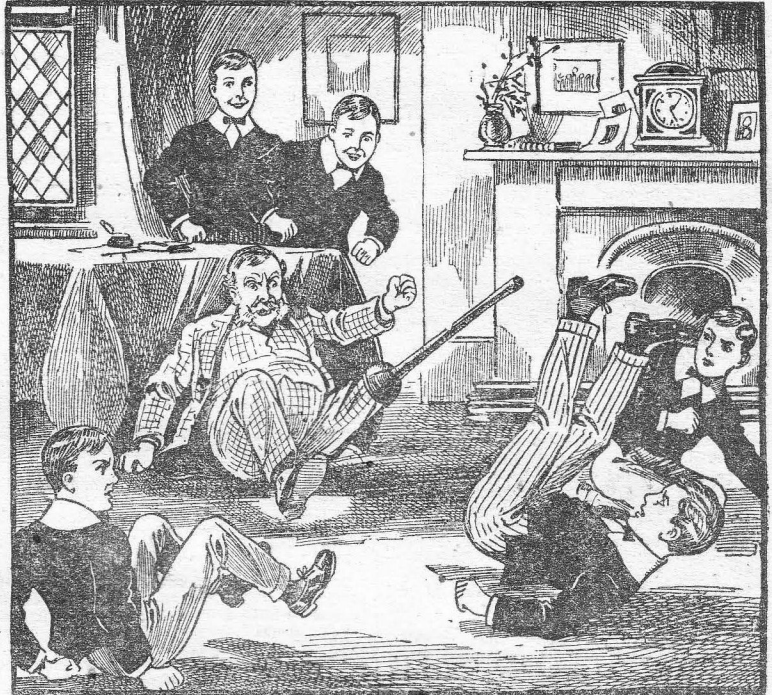
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think this is an improvement," grinned Raby. "You see, it's making all the fellows yell already."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver hopped rancantly.

"You silly ass! Leggo!"



The admiral's wooden leg caught Tommy Dodd on the chest and hurled him backwards, and then swept round and knocked Cook and Doyle off their legs. "Collar the mad baste!" shouted Doyle. (See page 16.)

coke. Raby sprawls among the crocks, and rolls off the table—"

"Do I?" roared Raby. "Not unless you have a mattress for me to roll on!"

"Fathead, that's where the cream of the joke comes in! You roll off, and I catch you on my wooden leg—"

"You—you dangerous ass!"

"I pin you down with the wooden leg on your chest, and you howl with agony—"

"Real agony!" grinned Oswald.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Rawson comes in at the window and falls over you. In the confusion, you jump up and escape, and I chase Rawson and jab him—"

"And I knock you down with my truncheon?" suggested Rawson.

"No, you don't! You mustn't knock an admiral down. You escape through the window again, me prodding you all the time."

"You'll get some of the prodding, Jimmy Silver, as well as giving it. I'm not going to be prodded!"

"Ass! The audience will simply yell."

"So will you, if you start prodding me."

"Look here, I suppose this play isn't going to be mucked up because you're a shirker, Rawson."

"I think the scene would be much more comic if I felled you with my truncheon," said Rawson obstinately. "I fetch you an awful whack on the napper, you know, and you fall down, groaning with real agony—"

"Isn't this an improvement?" demanded Raby, still holding on.

"Yow! No! Leggo!"

"But you admit it's comic?"

"Will you leggo?"

"No fear! I hold on to your wooden leg," said Raby calmly. "I shove you backwards—like that!"

"Yaroooh!"

Jimmy Silver sat down on the floor, and the wooden leg was jerked out of Raby's grasp. Jimmy roared.

"Splendid!" exclaimed Lovell. "You did that rippingly, Jimmy, considering that you hadn't rehearsed it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow! I'm hurt!" yelled Jimmy.

"All the better!"

"What!"

"That adds to the realism, you know. I suppose that this play isn't going to be mucked up because you're a shirker, Jimmy Silver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver did not reply. He scrambled to his feet, and started for Raby. Rawson rushed on the scene, flourishing his truncheon.

"Yow-ow!" roared Jimmy, as Rawson's truncheon commenced operations. "Stoppit! You don't hit me, you fathead!"

"I jolly well do!" said Rawson. "There's going to be as much hitting as prodding in this play!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver stumped away frantically, the policeman following him up with the truncheon, while the whole caste—with the exception of Jimmy Silver—roared with laughter.

There was a chuckle from behind the trunks in the corner. The sight of Jimmy, with the tables thus turned upon him, was too much for the three Moderns.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jones minor. "Who's that? There's somebody—"

"There's somebody here!" exclaimed Lovell.

He ran towards the trunks.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Ragging for Three.

**T**OMMY DODD & CO. exchanged a quick glance.

"Game's up!" murmured Tommy.  
"Rush for it! Follow your leader!"

Tommy Dodd rushed out of the place of concealment.

He collided with Lovell, and Arthur Edward Lovell went spinning. Tommy Dodd rushed for the door.

Doyle and Cook were after him in a twinkling.

"Collar 'em!" roared Lovell. "Modern cads!"

The rehearsal had ceased suddenly. The three Moderns had hoped to escape by a sudden rush; but they were not so fortunate.

Admiral Corker hurred himself upon Tommy Dodd, and tackled him and brought him down, and Flynn and Jones minor and Newcome fastened upon the other two, and they were brought struggling to the floor.

"Modern cads!" exclaimed Raby.  
"Moderns here! Sit on 'em!"

"Squash 'em!"  
"Bump them!"

The three Moderns put up a terrific struggle; but the odds were too great.

Some damage was done to the Classical costumes, but in a few minutes Tommy Dodd & Co. were reduced to helplessness, with the victorious Classics sitting upon them.

"Now, you cheeky rotters, what are you doing here?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Groogh!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Get off my neck, fathead! We've been watching a set of silly owls, if you want to know!"

"They know all about the play now!" grunted Lovell. "This is what comes of rehearsing when we ought to be at cricket, Jimmy Silver!"

"Oh, rats!"  
"Blessed set of asses, bedad!" gasped Tommy Doyle. "Do ye call that a play intirely?"

"Of course, you Modern asses wouldn't understand a good play!" said Jimmy Silver loftily. "It's a bit above a Modern intellect. What did you come over here for? You didn't know anything about the play?"

"We came over to jolly well rag you!" hooted Tommy Dodd.

"You're splitting your infinitive, Dodd. I suppose you're allowed to split infinitives on the Modern side?" said Jimmy Silver sarcastically.

"Fathead!"  
"Well, as they're here, we'll give 'em a lesson about sneaking into our quarters!" said Lovell. "Lucky we've got lots of grease-paint!"

"Good!"  
"We've got some to spare for them, and we'll give 'em a new set of complexions to take back to the Modern side!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you rotters—" began Tommy Dodd apprehensively.

"Sit on his chest while I doctor him," said Jimmy.

"What about the rehearsal?" asked Jones minor.

"The rehearsal can wait while we attend to these Modern cads!"

"Don't put that muck near me!" howled Tommy Dodd. "Groogh! Grrroogggg!"

"What's the matter, Duddy?"

"Gurrgg! You've shoved it in my—gurrgg!—mouth! Groogh!"

"Better keep your mouth shut, then. You always did open your mouth a little too wide, Duddy!"

"Oh, you Classical villain! Groogh!"

Tommy Dodd struggled wildly, but it was no use. Lovell and Newcome were sitting on him, and Jimmy Silver painted his face cheerfully.

Tommy's complexion was soon extraordinary.

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With crimson cheeks, and blue chin, and a yellow forehead, and green circles round his eyes, he looked like anything but a junior of Rookwood. Even Doyle and Cook could not help grinning as they looked at him.

But they ceased to grin when Jimmy Silver started upon them.

Jimmy did his work well.

When he was finished the three Moderns were unrecognisable, and their appearance was startling.

"There!" said Jimmy Silver, surveying his handiwork with much satisfaction. "I think they will make a sensation in the quad now!"

"Ha, ha! I think so!"

"You rotters!" roared Tommy Dodd. "You're not sending us out of doors like this?"

"We are—we is! Kick 'em out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Oswald opened the door, and the three Moderns were bundled into the passage; and the Classics followed them down the passage, helping them along, Admiral Corker's wooden leg coming in very useful for the purpose.

Classical fellows were coming in to tea now, and Tommy Dodd & Co. had to pass a crowd of yelling juniors on their way out.

They breathed wrath and fury as they fled down the staircase.

As luck would have it, Mr. Bootles was in the Lower Hall when the breathless Moderns arrived there. The master of the Fourth caught sight of them as they tried to dodge out unseen, and uttered a startled exclamation.

"Bless my soul! What—what—"

The three Tommies fled.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.

"What a very—what a very extraordinary thing! I think it must be some juniors playing an absurd practical joke—I do really!"

The three Tommies were glad to get into the quadrangle to escape the Form-master; but as they appeared there a yell of laughter greeted them.

"Here come the wild men of Borneo!" yelled Muffin.

"Hook it!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

The three juniors fled through the archway into Little Quad.

"Oh, what an afternoon!" gasped Cook.

"Tommy Dodd, if you ever propose raiding those Classical beasts again—"

"Faith, we'll scrag you!" groaned Doyle.

"Oh, dear!" moaned Tommy Dodd. "Oh, dear! There'll be a row if old Manders sees us like this!"

"Yes, you ass!"

"Yes, you duffer!"

"We can get the worst of it off in the fountain," said Tommy Dodd. "Buck up, before we have a blessed army watching us!"

"Oh, dear!"

The three Moderns hurried to the fountain and dipped their handkerchiefs in the water, and rubbed and splashed at their faces.

A crowd of juniors gathered round to watch them, apparently in a state of great amusement.

The worst of the paint, certainly, came off, but there was a good deal left. The three Tommies had queerly mottled complexions when they gave it up.

"We can sneak into the house now," growled Tommy Dodd. "Ow! I feel as filthy as a Hun! I'll scrag Jimmy Silver for this!"

Dripping and doleful, the unhappy Moderns limped away to their own house, still followed by a cackling crowd.

There they rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, and consoled themselves by vowing vengeance upon Jimmy Silver & Co. and every Classical within the walls of Rookwood.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### The Admiral.

**T**HE Fistical Four came into the end study to tea in great spirits.

The rehearsal had gone off with great success. The improvements

thought of by both Jimmy Silver and Raby had been dropped by mutual consent. But

there was no doubt—in the minds of the Classical players, at least—that the play

would be a howling success, and that it would go with a bang. As for rivalry from the

Moderns, now that they knew all about it, there was nothing to fear. The play was due

in a few hours, and it was too late for the Tommies to take measures. At least, the

Fistical Four were satisfied that it was.

"It's going to be a regular corker!" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll get the Form-room into

order at once after tea. We shall have to dress in the study. I've asked Bootles to

speak to Admiral Topcastle, too."

"Like your cheek!" said Raby.

"Well, you can't get on in this world without cheek," said Jimmy philosophically. "Bootles is a little brick. He's coming to the performance himself, and he's promised to ask the admiral to come. 'Tain't often you get a real live admiral to come and see you play. He's a ripping old johnnie, I heard. He fought in some war or other a thousand years ago—more or less. Blessed if I remember whom we were at war with in his young days!"

"The Russians," said Newcome.

"Must be a jolly old johnnie, then!" said Raby.

"Well, he is an old johnnie," said Jimmy Silver. "Smythe's father knows him, and I've heard Smythe the jaw about him. He lives about twenty miles from Rookwood, in a bungalow or something. Mind you treat him with lots of respect. He's one of the old bulldog-breed, you know. I hope he'll come to the play. I might work in an extra speech about splendid old sailormen who fought for England in the past."

And Jimmy Silver, with the aid of a stump of pencil and an old envelope, set about composing the extra speech which was to please old Admiral Topcastle—if he came to the play in the Fourth Form room.

After tea the Fistical Four and the rest of the amateur actors were busy. Great preparations had to be made in the Form-room.

There was, unfortunately, no stage available, but a portion of the Form-room was marked off for a stage, and the curtains were strung up, and with a certain amount of persuasion they went up and down as desired.

A wall, with a window, was erected on the stage, such as it was. This was very important, as a considerable portion of the play consisted in dodging in and out of the window.

Most of the Fourth Form fellows lent a hand, and many hands made light work. The preparations were all completed a considerable time before the hour booked for the performance.

Then the amateur actors retired to the studies to make-up.

As the Fistical Four came to the stairs, to go up to the end study, they stopped suddenly, and stared at a gentleman who had entered the house in company with Mr. Bootles.

They could not help staring.

The gentleman was a little, stout, old man, with a wooden leg, and a very red face fringed by white whiskers.

He bore a startling resemblance to Admiral Corker in the play. Indeed, Lovell & Co. had to glance at Jimmy Silver to make sure that he was with them.

"My hat!" murmured Lovell, under his breath. "Is that the admiral?"

"Must be," said Jimmy.

"You'll have to make some changes in the make-up, Jimmy," said Raby hurriedly.

"Why, the old chap is the living image of you when you're made-up!"

Jimmy frowned.

"I'm jolly well not going to alter my make-up! I've had a good bit of trouble with it already."

"But he'll think you're caricaturing him, if he sees us."

"Oh, rot!"

"Especially the wooden leg," said Lovell.

"He's got a wooden leg—look at him. I dare say he left his leg in the Crimea. He'll think you're taking him off, Jimmy."

Jimmy snorted.

"I'm jolly well not going to drop the wooden leg! Why, the whole play depends on Admiral Corker's wooden leg! I'll make some changes, in my chivvy, and wear a different colour in whiskers."

The admiral was coming up the passage with Mr. Bootles. Evidently he was the admiral—the Head's expected guest.

He was glancing about the old, oak-panelled hall with satisfaction and interest.

"Yes, it's forty years since I've seen Rookwood," the juniors heard him say to Mr. Bootles. "I should really have looked in before. By gad, the place hasn't changed since I was in the Fourth Form here!"

"By Jove, an old Rookwooder!" said Lovell.

The admiral passed on with Mr. Bootles towards the Head's study. The Fistical Four mounted the stairs.

"You'll have to drop the wooden leg, Jimmy," said Lovell. "Ten to one he would think it was his wooden leg you were making game of if he saw us play. Hallo, Bootles & making faces at you, Jimmy!"



Jimmy Silver turned back. Mr. Bootles was not exactly making faces at him—he was beckoning. Jimmy approached very respectfully, and the old admiral's keen eyes blinked at him from under shaggy brows.

"This is Silver, admiral," said Mr. Bootles.

"James Silver, bedad?" said the admiral.

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

"I knew your grandfather," said the admiral, shaking hands with Jimmy. "He was in the Crimea with me. Fighting the Russians in those days, begad! Kids, both of us, not much older than you are now—midshipmen, by gad! And, by thunder, you're very like him! Give me your fist!"

Jimmy Silver was highly honoured by a handshake from the admiral. But it nearly doubled him up. There was tremendous strength in the battered frame of the old sea-dog, and in his pleasure at meeting the grandson of his former shipmate, he put his ancient beef into that handshake.

"Jolly glad to see you, sir!" gasped Jimmy. "I don't remember my grandfather."

"And you're getting up a play, is it?" said Admiral Topcastle. "Mr. Bootles tells me you've been kind enough to request my company, hey? Rely on me, my boy. Old Topcastle will roll in and give you a cheer!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Jimmy. "It's awfully kind of you!"

"Not at all—not at all. I'm glad to see old Jimmy Silver's grandson! Just like you, only better looking," remarked the admiral, who had apparently learned to be very candid in the Navy.

Jimmy grinned.

The admiral rolled on with Mr. Bootles, and Jimmy rejoined his chums on the stairs.

"He's coming to the performance," said Jimmy, as they went to the study. "It seems we knew my grandfather a thousand years ago. Jolly old boy!"

"Then you'll have to drop the wooden leg," said Lovell decidedly. "Dash it all, Jimmy, you can't risk him thinking that you're making game of him!"

Jimmy Silver gave a dismal groan.

"I suppose I shall have to. But it's rotten. It'll muck up the play."

"Well, as a matter of fact," remarked Newcome thoughtfully, "it may improve it. I've thought several times there was a bit too much of you and your wooden leg in the play, Jimmy."

"Fathead!"

"You can give me some extra bits," said Lovell. "We can pull the thing through by good acting, you know."

"Ass!"

However, reluctant as Jimmy was to part with the wooden leg—upon which he felt that the success of the play depended—it was agreed on all hands that it wouldn't do. So Jimmy proceeded to make up in a somewhat different style, and the wooden limb was discarded.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**  
**A Very Successful Raid.**

"I'VE got it!" announced Tommy Dodd. The three Tommies were finishing a very late tea. Their faces showed signs of the rubbing and scrubbing they had been through.

The Modern chums felt a little sore, both about their skins and about their tempers. Their intended raid upon the Classics had ended most ingloriously. And the Classics were about to produce a play, and it was too late for the Moderns to think of chipping in. Tommy Dodd had set his brain to work on the subject, and finally he announced that he had "got it."

Cook and Doyle did not look enthusiastic.

"Is it a wheeze?" asked Cook disparagingly.

"Then I hope it's a bit better than the last one."

"Or you can go and boil it, bedad!" said Doyle.

"Oh, don't grouse! We got the worst of it for once, but one swallow don't make a summer. We're going to muck up that play."

"Can't be did. Bootles will be there. You heard what those rotters said. And the Head's guest, very likely. Silver said something about asking him. Can't kick up a row there."

"I'm not thinking of kicking up a row. According to Jimmy Silver, the whole blessed play depends on his little bit as Admiral Corker. I dare say he's right there, too—it is really comic. Well, suppose the play had to come off without Admiral Corker in it."

"Why should it?"

"That's the wheeze, duffer!" snorted

Tommy Dodd. "You know those Classical asses have to make up in their studies, and sneak down to the Form-room with their warts-paint on."

"Well?"

"Well, suppose Jimmy Silver was collared as he went down?"

"My hat!"

"Suppose a lot of us were over there, and we collared him on the stairs, and simply rushed him off?" grinned Tommy Dodd. "He won't be expecting anything of the kind, of course. We'll collar him, and bag him, and bring him over here—"

"Over here, bedad?"

"Certainly, and keep him in this study," said Tommy Dodd coolly. "And the play can go on without the giddy admiral!"

"We'll try, anyway," said Tommy Doyle. "I'm wid ye, Tommy!"

"Let's go and scout, anyway."

The three Tommies, having decided upon the plan of campaign, left the study.

They received a good many grinning glances from the Modern fellows they passed. Tommy Dodd's adventure was not likely to be forgotten—at least, until he had "downed" the Classics and restored his prestige.

"Well, you look better for your wash," remarked Towle of the Fourth.

"Shut up, and come and lend us a hand," said Tommy Dodd. "You, too, Lacy!"

"Looking for some more paint?" asked Lacy.

"Oh, cheese it, you ass! Come on!"

Towle and Lacy grinned, and followed the Co. The five Moderns strolled over to the Classical side with a careless air. Jimmy Silver's friends were all busy in the Form-room, and the caste were in their studies making-up, so the coast was clear. Tommy Dodd & Co. marched into the House as bold as brass.

"My hat! There he is!" muttered Cook excitedly.

Tommy Dodd's eyes glistened.

His idea had been to lie in wait, and collar Jimmy Silver as he came down after making up as Admiral Corker for the performance. There was no mistaking him, as he had seen Jimmy in his character as admiral at the rehearsal in the box-room.

Fate seemed to be playing into Tommy's hands.

For as the five Moderns mounted the stairs they caught sight of a wooden-legged, mahogany-faced, white-whiskered gentleman on the landing.

"Is that Jimmy Silver?" ejaculated Towle.

"Yes; he's made up."

"He's Admiral Corker, you know," said Cook. "That's how he was made-up in the box-room. It's a fatheaded play about a wooden leg."

There was no one else in the corridor, and they were near the end of the passage which led to the Modern building.

The admiral was looking about him, just like a stranger revisiting early scenes almost forgotten. That struck the Moderns afterwards. At the present moment they thought of nothing but collaring Jimmy Silver, and of their great luck in happening on him like this.

The admiral heard their footsteps, and glanced at them.

At the same moment the Moderns made a rush.

"Nail him!" gasped Cook.

"Yank him along! Sharp's the word!"

The admiral went over in the grasp of the Moderns, and was whirled off his feet in the grasp of five pairs of hands.

He seemed too astounded to speak.

Grasping him firmly, somewhat surprised by his heavy weight, the five Moderns whirled him along into the long corridor that led to the dormitories on the Modern side.

The kidnapped sea-dog was rushed into the dormitory, and bumped on the floor. Tommy slammed the door.

"Fancy catching him like that!" he chortled. "Who says we can't do the Classical duffers brown—what!"

And the five Moderns, in their delight, executed a war-dance of triumph round the hapless victim, who sat on the floor staring and gasping.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.**

**In the Hands of the Amalekites.**

"MAD!" gasped the admiral, passing his hand over his perspiring brow. "Either I'm dreaming, by gad, or I've got into a lunatic asylum somehow!"

"This is where we gloat!" chortled Tommy Dodd. "Done you this time, Jimmy Silver!"

"Hurrah!"

"Mad—mad!" repeated the admiral. "Quite mad! Dangerous, by the holy poker!"

"Fank his whiskers off," said Cook. "He won't want his whiskers now."

Cook reached at the prisoner's whiskers. But a wooden leg whipped up and caught him on the chest, and Tommy Cook went over backwards, with a roar.

"Yaroo! Jump on the beast! Ow! I'm punctured!"

"Look here, Jimmy Silver!" said Tommy Dodd warmly. "Not so handy with that wooden leg, please! This isn't the play, you know, and you're not prodding us."

"Jimmy Silver!" repeated the admiral. "Mad as a hatter! What do you mean by calling me Jimmy Silver? Jimmy Silver's been dead thirty years!"

"Wha-at!"

"Is he dotty?" exclaimed Towle, in wonder.

"Well, he was alive when I saw him in the box-room," grinned Tommy Dodd. "What are you getting at, Jimmy, you ass?"

"Mad!" said the admiral, still sitting dazedly on the floor. "You mad young villains, my old shipmate Jimmy was dead before you were born!"

"He can't be off his rocker," said Doyle. "He's puttin' this on intiorely."

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"Oh! You're speaking of Jimmy's grandson, perhaps!" exclaimed the admiral.

"Are you potty, you ass?"

"But—but if you're not lunatics, what do you mean?" roared the admiral. "Do I look anything like young Silver, a kid of fifteen?"

"You do, without the whiskers and the paint and the wooden leg," chuckled Tommy Dodd. "What are you driving at? We know you're Jimmy Silver. Didn't we see you making-up in the box-room this afternoon?"

"You young swab—"

"Blest if he isn't denying that he's Jimmy Silver!" said Tommy Dodd, in wonder. "He's forgotten that we've seen him made up!"

"By thunder! I'll—I'll—"

"We'll jolly soon bring him round! Bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Moderns were very naturally exasperated by Jimmy Silver's extraordinary obstinacy. His denial of his identity took them by surprise, and naturally they weren't inclined to believe him. As for the possibility that a mistake had been made, it did not even occur to them. They had never seen Admiral Topcastle.

The five juniors closed in on the admiral to bump him. The sea-dog was still gasping on the floor. But he had plenty of energy left. His wooden leg caught Tommy Dodd on the chest and hurled him backwards, and then swept round and knocked Cook and Doyle off their legs.

There were yells of pain and wrath in the dormitory.

"Collar the baste!" shouted Doyle.

"Hands off!" roared the admiral.

"Bump him!"

"Yank his silly whiskers off!"

"Have that wig off him!"

Many hands were laid on the unfortunate admiral. Cook tugged at his beard, and Lacy at his hair.

The admiral roared with anguish.

"My hat! This beard is jolly well fixed on!" exclaimed Cook, in amazement. "How is it fixed, Silver, you dummy?"

"Yow! Ow, ow! Help!"

"The blessed wig won't come off, either!"

"By gum, he must have glued them on! Take another pull!"

"Yaroo! Help! Murder!"

The dormitory door opened, and Leggett of the Fourth looked in. He stared at the amazing scene.

"Aren't you fellows coming to the play?" he asked. "It's just beginning."

Tommy Dodd looked round.

"Beginning without Jimmy Silver?" he chuckled.

"No; Jimmy Silver's there."

"Eh?"

"He's there," said Leggett, in surprise. "I saw him go in, made up as an admiral. That's his part, isn't it?"

Tommy Dodd stared at him.

"What do you mean, you ass? How can Jimmy Silver be there?"

"Why shouldn't he be there?" said Leggett. "Because he's here, you silly ass!"

"Here!"

"Yes, fathead! We've collared him to keep him out of the play."

Leggett jumped.

"But I saw him only three minutes ago!" he shouted. "Where is he, if he's here?"

"Here he is, you ass!"

"Great pip!"

"You burbling chump—"

"That isn't Jimmy Silver!" yelled Leggett. "I tell you Jimmy Silver's in the Form-room at this blessed minute beginning the play."

The Moderns glared at Leggett. But there was no doubting his earnestness. They led go the unfortunate admiral as if he had become suddenly red-hot.

"Then—then who's this?" stammered Tommy Dodd.

"Another chap made up as Silver, I suppose," said Cook—"Lovell, or Raby, or Newcome. Bless if a chap can recognise him!"

Leggett shrieked.

"Oh, you asses! Mr. Bootles asked me a few minutes ago if I'd seen Admiral Topcastle. Oh, you idiots! You've collared the wrong man!"

"Eh—what! Who's Admiral Topcastle?"

"You've got him there!" shrieked Leggett. "Oh, you asses! I tell you Jimmy Silver's in the Form-room, and you've collared the Head's guest!"

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. All's Well That Ends Well.

THE Head's guest!"

Tommy Dodd babbled out the words.

There was a hush of horror in the dormitory.

The awfulness of the mistake flashed upon all the juniors at once.

"Oh, howly mother av Moses!" groaned Tommy Doyle at last. "Ye've put yer fut in it this time, Tommy darling, bedad and ye have!"

Tommy Dodd sank limply against a bed. He was overcome.

The breathless admiral was striving to get on his feet. Towle hurried to him.

"Can I help you, sir?" he asked anxiously, with great politeness. "I—we—yaroo!"

The formidable wooden leg was planted on Towle's waistcoat, and he staggered away, yelling. Apparently the admiral was impervious to politeness. That was not really surprising, after what he had undergone at the hands of the Modern juniors.

"Ruffianly young swabs!" gasped the admiral. "I'll have you flogged! Handling me—me—me—Admiral Topcastle—by gad! Thunder! I'll have you flogged all round! I'll have you keelhauled!"

"We're awfully sorry, sir—"

"Quite a mistake—"

"Oh dear!"

Stump, stump, stump! The old admiral was on his feet now, stumping to the door. Tommy Dodd & Co. did not attempt to stop him. Not for untold gold would they have laid hands on the admiral now.

"Oh, crumbs, what a ghastly fix!" groaned Tommy Dodd.

The admiral gave them a withering glare, and opened the door. There was an exclamation in the passage outside.

"Ah, here you are, my dear sir!" It was Mr. Bootles. "I had quite lost sight of you. You have been inspecting the Modern side—what, what! My dear sir, what ever is the matter?"

"I have been kidnapped, sir, and treated with violence, by a gang of young scoundrels, sir, by gad!" roared the admiral.

"Good heavens! Is it possible?"

"Collared, sir—bumped on the floor, sir—at my age, sir—I, sir—by gad!"

"Bless my soul! Dodd! Cook! Is it possible that you have—"

"It was a mistake, sir!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "We—we're awfully sorry. Oh, dear! We—we took the gentleman for somebody else, sir. We hope he will pardon us."

Admiral Topcastle snorted. He did not look much like pardoning anybody at that moment.

"Dodd, you have dared to lay hands on this gentleman—your headmaster's guest! Can I believe my ears?" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"We—we—we—it was a mistake, sir," groaned Tommy. "We—we—we took him for Jimmy Silver."

Another snort from the admiral.

"Are you insane, boy?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "How can you pretend for one

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moment that you mistook Admiral Topcastle for a junior schoolboy?"

"Jimmy was made up as an admiral for the play, sir!" gasped Tommy. "We—we thought it was Jimmy got up as an admiral, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"They're as alike as two peas, wooden leg and all," moaned Cook. "We—we really weren't to blame, sir."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "I accept your explanation, but you cannot expect Admiral Topcastle to pardon such an outrage. I have no resource but to report you for a flogging, and I must warn you that it will be very severe."

"Oh, dear!"

"Young swabs!" growled the admiral. "They ought to be flogged round the fleet, and keelhauled into the bargain, by gad! Laying hands on an admiral of his Majesty's Navy, by gad! But—but they say they're sorry—"

"Awfully sorry, sir!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Fearfully sorry, sir!" chorused the hapless Moderns hopefully.

The old admiral burst into a laugh, much to the relief of Tommy Dodd & Co.

"Mr. Bootles, may I beg you to let the young rascals off? There's no harm done, and it seems to have been a mistake."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tommy Dodd. Mr. Bootles smiled.

"If you really forgive them, sir—"

"Ay, ay! Let the young swabs off!"

"It shall be as you wish, most certainly, sir," said Mr. Bootles. "I trust you will thank the admiral suitably, my boys, for his great clemency."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

"You're a brick, sir!"

"A real, gilt-edged brick, sir!"

"Three cheers for the Navy!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

The cheers rang out with a will, and the dormitory resounded, and the admiral grinned and walked away with Mr. Bootles.

Admiral Topcastle was an honoured visitor in the Form-room to see the play, and Tommy Dodd & Co. came in later—Tommy limping a little.

The play was a great success. Jimmy Silver's part—modified as it was—proved a great success, and the old admiral clapped his horny hands and cheered in his deep, gruff voice with great heartiness.

Jimmy Silver's comedy evoked much laughter; but not so much as Tommy Dodd's adventure, when it became known afterwards. The Fistical Four shrieked when they heard of it; and it was a long time before the Rookwood fellows ceased to chuckle over Tommy Dodd's mistake.

THE END.

(Another grand story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week.)



## The Hidden House

By the Author of "DRIVEN FROM HOME."

This dramatic and enthralling mystery story will thrill you as no story has ever thrilled you before. Startling surprises and exciting incidents by the score. Do not miss the superb, long opening instalment in TO-DAY'S issue of

# The Butterfly

The Celebrated Weekly Comic.

## FIGHTING FOR FAME.

(Continued from page 13.)

of the cleverest young acrobat living. These were distributed through the village.

Under the experienced guidance of Mr. Busto the circus ring and tent were soon erected, and the whole company was ready for the first performance.

They gathered round, sitting on boxes, and partaking of tea, and chatting.

Eddie told Ginger of the happenings with Del Rogerigo during the journey. Ginger expressed no surprise, but only warned the young acrobat to keep an eye on the man in future. The next attempt would not be made in full daylight.

Eddie discovered that there was no time for lingering, and hastened to prepare himself for his first appearance. He had erected the safety-net and the ropes, with the assistance of the Spaniard, and had left that worthy to go over them again. Del Rogerigo seemed quite content now to be second string, and Eddie told himself that the half-caste had had enough with the one affair, and would not cause any further trouble.

Could he have known the inner workings of the half-caste's mind he would not have dressed with such a light heart, and so full of confidence.

It was not without a certain feeling of nervousness that he made his bow to the crowded house that night.

Everything had seemed so entirely different the previous evening. Then he had performed the tricks from a sporting point of view; now he realised that perhaps one slip would mean death. It would certainly spell the end of his career.

So Eddie swore that slip should never occur.

Mr. Busto made a short speech, introducing Eddie, in which he remarked that the young acrobat was the winner of the previous night's prize, and that if anyone else wished to try for a similar amount, the circus would be only too pleased to provide the money.

He smiled to himself as he issued the challenge. He was convinced he would not find another Polo for many years to come.

Eddie mounted the rope with the same speed and lithe movement which had characterised his performance of the previous evening.

Apart from the ordinary trapeze acts with which he would open his show, Eddie had decided during that afternoon to wind up his performance with a really daring exhibition.

He would climb to the highest possible point and show his audience how to fall the forty feet, and, while falling, how to turn the greatest number of somersaults possible in mid-air.

After his first tricks he swarmed to the top, and, resting there for a moment, gazed at the audience far below him.

He could see Mr. Busto looking upwards in surprise, while even Ginger had stopped his fooling, and was watching the performance with interest.

Over at the door he could distinguish Esta, the queen of equestriennes, clasping her hands tightly, with a look of wonder on her face.

He could also see the Spaniard near the net, with a nasty grin on his face.

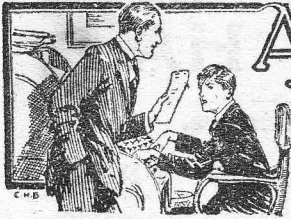
There was not a sound to be heard in the whole of the large tent. The men forgot to smoke their pipes and cigarettes, the women became silent, and tried to imagine what would happen to the intrepid youngster if the net—

Their thoughts were interrupted by a loud shout from the man above, and Eddie Polo started on his somersault rush into the net. There was a gasp of amazement as he sped through the air, twisting like a catherine-wheel all the way down.

There was a sigh of relief as Eddie's body fell into the safety-net.

But it was changed immediately into one of dismay as an ominous sound, like the cracking of a large whip, was heard, and to the startled gaze of the horrified spectators the net collapsed, and Eddie Polo continued his mad dash down towards the centre of the circus ring.

(There will be a further narrative of Eddie Polo's Life Story next week. Do not miss it!)



# A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

## THE GRAND PROGRAMME FOR NEXT WEEK.

By the time you glance through this chat I take it that you will have read the opening chapters of our three grand serials, and have all voted that this number is the best that has yet been published. I should like to hear your opinions, whatever they are, so drop me a line on a postcard.

Next week there will be a further instalment of the splendid story of the Great Rebellion, entitled:

### "THE SWORD OF THE TEMPLES!" By Edmund Burton.

This tale ranks as the finest in the long list this famous author has to his credit, and loses none of its attraction as he cleverly unfolds his plot; in fact, it is so remarkable that it bids fair to take first place, also, amongst the fine yarns that have appeared in the POPULAR since the paper first came into existence.

Following this will be a splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, entitled:

### "THE SCHOOLBOY CHAMPION!" By Frank Richards.

Who deals in a masterly way with the remarkable fight which takes place between Dennis

Carr and a professional pugilist. How Carr contrives to regain a lost friendship and at the same time save his schoolfellow from disgrace provides great reading for all my reader chums.

### "THE SCHOOLBOY CHAMPION!"

Also, another long instalment of  
"THE EXPLOITS OF FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE!"  
By Maurice Everard.

Who recounts amazing adventures of the famous criminal investigator in another astounding case of robbery and mystery which quickly claims his attention. No doubt by now you have all recognised the genius of Maurice Everard in these stories. The postbag alone shows the great appreciation of my loyal friends. You must not miss

### "THE EXPLOITS OF FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE!"

And a long complete story dealing with the adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., The Famous Chums of Rockwood School, under the title of:

### "UNINVITED GUESTS!" By Owen Conquest.

With plenty of humorous incidents.

Last, but far from least, is the next instalment of the thrilling life of

### EDDIE POLO.

This magnificent story, abounding in the daring "stunts" of the world's greatest Film Star, has already made a great sensation, and I can assure my friends that there is a treat in store for them in subsequent instalments as the author unfolds his breathless narrative of the circus king's hard struggle in his early boyhood. Don't forget that the title is:

### "FIGHTING FOR FAME!"

and to spread the news around to all non-readers. They will miss a rare treat if they do not order the POPULAR at once!

### THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

There is great news this week. The new volume of the famous "Holiday Annual" comes out on September 1st, price six shillings, and it is better than the first volume, which received such a welcome last season. The new book is a magnificent affair which will fascinate all readers of the Companion Papers—and they are legion, and scattered all over the world, from Camberwell to Canada, and Blackburn to Bechuana-land—besides attracting those folks who are not as yet supporters of the "Magnet," the "Gem," and the "P. P.," as well as the other papers.

Your Editor

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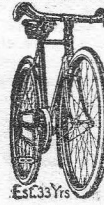
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