

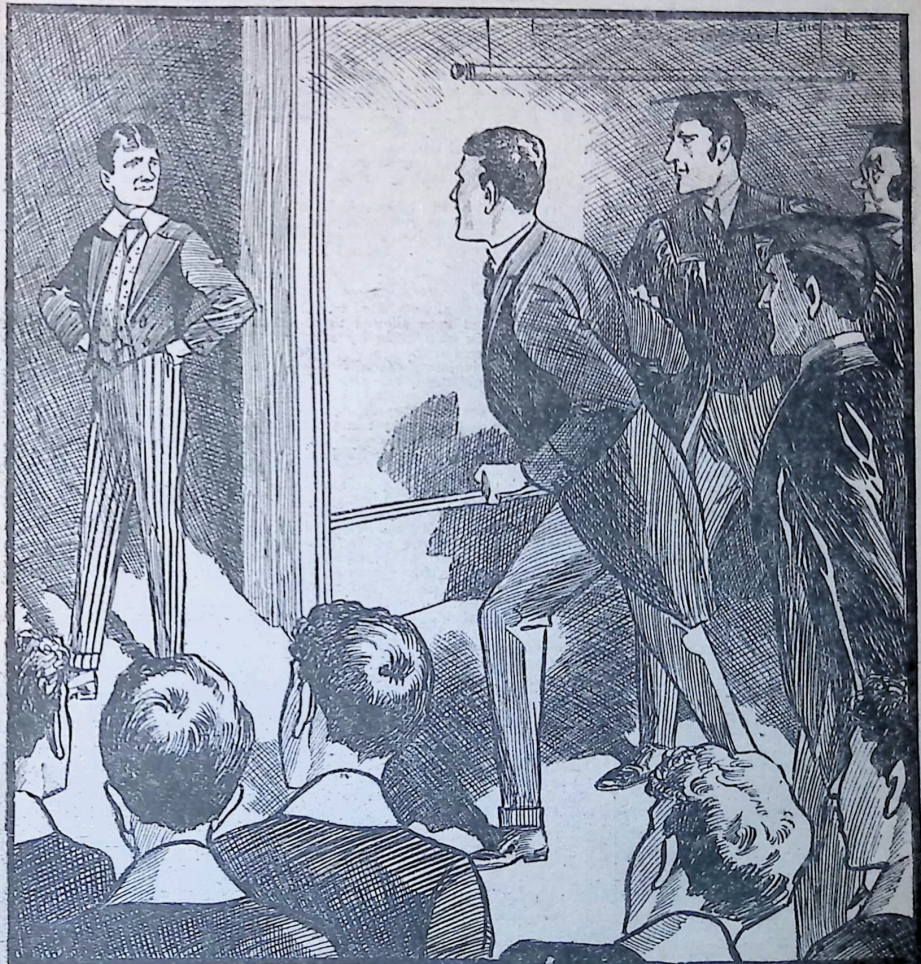
A NOVEL COMPETITION WITH MANY MONEY PRIZES!

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The Popular

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THE SECOND NUMBER OF—
"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!"
— IS IN THIS ISSUE. —



"I GO NOW, BUT I SHALL RETURN—SOME DAY!" Vernon-Smith
Defies the School.
(A Dramatic Moment in One of the Long Complete School Stories Inside.)



Vernon-Smith's Dilemma!

A Magnificent Long Complete School Tale
of the Chums of Greyfriars and Vernon-
Smith's Early Schooldays.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Once Too Often!

"HE'S done it this time!"
That was the general verdict
in the Greyfriars Remove.

There seemed to be no doubt about it.

The school was talking of nothing else. The Remove especially buzzed from end to end with it.

Fellows in the Sixth, who did not, as a rule, take much interest in Lower Fourth affairs, talked of the matter in their studies and in the passages. Even Wingate, the head prefect of Greyfriars, and captain of the school, had been heard speaking on the subject to Courtney, of the Sixth.

All the masters discussed it, from Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove—in whose Form Vernon-Smith was—to the Head himself.

There seemed to be but one opinion in all Greyfriars, and that was that Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, had "done it" this time.

Those who saw the Bounder brought in, with the Remove master walking on one side of him and a prefect on the other, read in Vernon-Smith's face the opinion, too, that he had done it at last. The Bounder himself shared the general opinion.

Remove fellows crowded round the door of the Head's study when they knew that the Bounder was there.

Interest was deep, excitement ran high.

"He's done it," said Bob Cherry, of the Remove—"he's really done it at last! It's been a long time coming, but it's come!"

"It's come!" said Harry Wharton.
"And I'm not sorry, for one," said Frank Nugent. "The Bounder's been a disgrace to Greyfriars ever since he came here. I'm sorry to see any chap get it in the neck; but if ever a chap deserved to get it in the neck, Vernon-Smith's that chap."

And all the others said:
"Win't-ho!"

The Bounder's look as he was marched into the Head's study, with Mr. Quelch's hand on his arm, had been sullen and half defiant.

Truly, the Bounder had done enough since he had been in the Remove Form at Greyfriars to merit expulsion half a dozen times over. How the Head stood him so long had been a mystery to all the Form.

But he could not possibly stand him any longer! It was impossible!

The Bounder had "done it" this time!

Many of the fellows had surmised that there was some secret influence at work; indeed, the Bounder himself had been dared not expel him; that Dr. Locke could not get rid of him if he would.

And, really, there had seemed to be some truth in it. Else, why had the Bounder, with a bad reputation from the day he arrived at Greyfriars, been suffered to remain so long in the old school?

It seemed that he had taken delight in breaking the rules, in making himself generally obnoxious, and in outraging all the traditions of the place. Yet so far he had not been "sacked."

But he had "done it" now!
The Head could not look over what had happened, even if he wanted to. If Vernon-Smith had been allowed to remain, the Head's own authority must have fallen into contempt.

While excited juniors clustered in the passage outside, Herbert Vernon-Smith stood in the Head's study—stood before the Head, his eyes on the carpet, his cheeks flushing and paling by turns, his hands tightly clenched.

Dr. Locke looked at him with hard eyes.

Mr. Quelch stood near the culprit, and his looks, too, were as hard as iron.

For a long time Mr. Quelch had suffered the Bounder in his Form—suffered him there impatiently, because the Head would not, or could not, rid the school of him. But Mr. Quelch felt a grim satisfaction in knowing that the end must come now. The Bounder must go!

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon the junior.

"Vernon-Smith!"
The Head's voice rapped out hard and metallic, quite different from the kindly tones the juniors were accustomed to hear from their headmaster.

Vernon-Smith did not raise his eyes. But his lips set tighter, and a steely look came into the downcast eyes. Defiance hardened in the pale face.

"Vernon-Smith, look at me, sir!"

The Bounder raised his eyes to the doctor's face.

"Smith, you know what you have done?"

The Bounder was silent.

"You have brought nothing but disgrace to this school!" said the Head, and his voice trembled a little. "This school has never been disgraced as you have disgraced it! From the day you entered you have never troubled to take care of your conduct; you have hardly shown the slightest regard to appearances even. There had to be an end of this."

Still the Bounder did not speak.
"The Friardale policeman," resumed Dr. Locke, "found this evening—at an hour, too, when you were supposed to be within gates! You were semi-intoxicated, sir!"

Still no reply.
"Police-constable Tozer brought you here," said the Head. "You slept like a brute for hours after you were brought in."

Silence.
"What do you expect after such conduct?"

Silence.
"You cannot expect, at all events, to remain at Greyfriars," said the Head. "You know that you must leave the school. To-morrow morning, Vernon-Smith, you will be expelled—publicly—from the school you have shamed."

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"I am to go?" he said, breaking the silence at last.

"Yes."
"I am to be expelled!"

"To-morrow morning."

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"You cannot expel me!" he said thickly. "You know you cannot! My father—"

"You need not speak of your father. I shall explain the circumstances fully to Mr. Vernon-Smith. He will see how impossible it is for you to remain at Greyfriars after what has happened."

The Bounder's lip curled in a sneer.

"He will not see anything of the sort!" he retorted.

"That makes no difference. You must go."

"I cannot go! I will not!"

"Smith!"

"You know you cannot expel me!" said the Bounder between his teeth.

"My father will not allow it!"

"Do you think your father has authority here?"

"I know he has!" cried the Bounder fiercely. "You cannot blind me, Dr. Locke. You have wanted to expel me before this. If you dared not then, you dare not now. I will not leave Greyfriars!"

For a moment the Head's face was deadly white.

There came into his eyes a look which showed how hard the Bounder's words struck home.

But the Head's answer was clear and cold:

"To-morrow morning, Vernon-Smith, you leave Greyfriars, whatever may be the consequences to myself or anyone else! I would rather resign my position

Here as headmaster than allow you to remain!"

"I—I—"
"Go to your study now, and remain there."

The Bounder clenched his hands.
"You dare not—you dare not!" he muttered.

"Leave my study!"
"I tell you you dare not! I—"
Dr. Locke glanced at Mr. Quelch.

"Will you kindly take that boy from my study, Mr. Quelch?" he said quietly.
"Certainly, sir."

The Remove-master's grasp fell like a grasp of iron upon the shoulder of the blackguard of the Remove.

"Come!" he said, quietly and coldly.
The Bounder made no effort to wrench himself loose. He turned a face white with anger and terror upon the Head.

"You dare not—you dare not!" he cried hoarsely.

The Head looked steadily at the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Kindly take that boy away, Mr. Quelch," he said.

And, with a grasp of iron, the Remove-master led Vernon-Smith from the Head's study.

"He's not gone yet, though," said Ogily.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Blue Funk!

VERNON-SMITH went into his study.

The Bounder of Greyfriars began pacing the room like a wild animal in a cage.

His state of mind was not enviable.
From the first day of his coming to Greyfriars the new boy had earned the title of "The Bounder," and certainly there was never a more perfect and complete specimen of the bounder than Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Even the black sheep of the school—and there were some—were not quite so black as the Bounder. His recklessness startled even reckless fellows in the Sixth, and he had made even Loder stare sometimes.

The Bounder had known what he was about, or he thought so.

The nature of his father's hold over the Head of Greyfriars he did not know; but he knew that that hold existed. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the Cotton King and millionaire, had told him so, and the boy had never doubted it.

And his career at Greyfriars had been enough to prove to him, and to others, that there was some secret influence at work.

The Head could not expel him!

Vernon-Smith had known that, and had always taken the fullest advantage of it. He had never had a thought of treating generously the man who was under his father's thumb. He had used his liberty to the utmost. The Head had had to close his eyes to many things; the masters had come to understand that in many respects Vernon-Smith was to be considered as a privileged person.

The Bounder had swanked to his heart's content, and his recklessness had grown more pronounced all the time.

He had not reflected that the time might come when the Head could not, if he would, allow his career to continue unchecked.

And he had passed the limit at last! Yet it was hard for him to realise that it was over—that he could no longer do as he liked—that he was to leave Greyfriars—leave it in disgrace, with a stain on his name, and the shame of an expulsion hanging over him.

Surely it was only a threat—surely the Head would not dare!
Surely not!

The Bounder repeated that to himself a score of times as he paced the study feverishly; but he felt in his heart a chilling doubt. He remembered the cold, hard look upon Dr. Locke's face in the study—the look of a man who had been driven to resolve, and who was determined to buy everything now.

It was the look of a man who would not retreat. The Bounder knew it, and he felt a chill of apprehension.

For if he were expelled, any vengeance his father might take upon the Head would not benefit him. With the fact known that he had been expelled from Greyfriars for being intoxicated, he would find it very difficult to gain admission to any decent public school.

It was a heavy blow for him; and now, too late, the Bounder repented that he had gone so far. But his repentance was only for the consequences of his misdeeds.

But surely the Head would not dare!
Tap!

Vernon-Smith started as he heard the knock at his study door. His face brightened up and his eyes gleamed. It was a message from the Head, of course, to tell him that, after all, Dr. Locke had reconsidered his decision; he was to have one more chance. At the mere thought of it the cowed look left the bounder, and the old swank returned to his manner.

He crossed to the door.
"Hallo!" he called out. "Who's that?"

"It's I—Loder!"
The Bounder grimaced. The Head, of course, had chosen a prefect to bring him the message; or perhaps Loder was merely to convey him to the Head's study, to hear it from Dr. Locke's own lips.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the Bounder airily.

"Only a word with you."
"The key's on the outside," said Vernon-Smith. "Old Quelch locked me in. Of course, I know that it wouldn't last long."

"The key's not in the lock."
"Then how are you going to get in?"

"I can't get in. I can speak to you through the keyhole, though," said Loder hurriedly. "Bend down so that I shan't have to shout."

The Bounder felt a chill of doubt. Wasn't it a message from the Head, after all? He bent down, his ear to the keyhole.

"What is it?" he asked sharply.
"Haven't you come from Dr. Locke?"

"From the doctor? No!"
"Then what do you want?" demanded Vernon-Smith savagely.

"Just a word. Carne's here, too. Look here," said Loder hurriedly, through the keyhole, "I hear you're going to be sacked from the school tomorrow morning, Smithy."

The Bounder gritted his teeth.
"Yes, if the Head dares!" he said.

"He's under my father's thumb, and he dare not!" said the Bounder, though in his heart there was a sinking that belied his words.

"I've heard that before," said Loder roughly. "It doesn't look to me as if there's anything in it. How could the Head be under your father's thumb, anyway?"

"I don't know, but he is!"
"Well, it seems pretty certain that he's got his ears up, in spite of it—all the school's saying that you're going to get the order of the boot in the morning," said Loder. "I hope you will be able to make terms; but if you can't—"

"Well, what then?"
"Mum's the word!"

"What are you driving at?" asked the

Bounder irritably. "Tell me what you mean, or buzz off and don't bother."

"I mean that—that there are some little things there's no need to mention—things that have happened, you know," said Loder hurriedly through the keyhole. "I introduced you at the Cross Keys. I did it in a friendly way; but it would make trouble for me here if you were to blab. It won't help you to hurt me, so—"

The Bounder laughed savagely.
"Oh, that's what you want, is it? You're afraid that I'm going to give you away when I'm sacked!"

"It wouldn't do you any good—"
"I know it won't! If it would, I'd give you away in two seconds," said the Bounder. "But you can set your mind at rest. I'm not going to say a word."

Loder's deep breath of relief could be heard in the study. A weight seemed to have been taken off the rascally prefect's mind.

"Thank you, Smithy! I felt that you would be decent—I knew you'd play the game—only—"

"Only you don't know anything of the sort!" said the Bounder presently. "You were in a blue funk!"

"Well, it's all right now."
"Yes. Leave me alone to do that. He walked away with Carne, both of them looking very much relieved and comforted. The Bounder resumed his angry pacing of the study. His brief hope had been destroyed, and he was in a savage humour.

Knock!

It was a timid knock at the door again. The Bounder paused. This time he hardly hoped it was a message from the Head.

"Who's there?" he rapped out acidly.
"It's I!"

It was Hazeldene's voice—Hazeldene of the Remove.

Hazel had been very "thick" with the Bounder in many of his escapades; though of late, under Harry Wharton's influence, he had been trying to give the black sheep of the Remove a wide berth.

The Bounder burst into a scoffing laugh. He could guess why Hazeldene had come to his study. He was on the same errand as the two Sixth-Formers.

"Well, what is it you want, Hazel?" he asked. "Are you in a blue funk, too—afraid I shall give you away to the Head because I'm going to be sacked?"

"You won't, will you, Smithy?"
Hazeldene's voice was husky as it came in low tones through the keyhole. He was evidently in a state of nerves.

"Why shouldn't I?" asked the Bounder coolly. To his peculiar temperament there was a certain kind of enjoyment in torturing the timid junior—such an enjoyment as a cat finds in playing with a mouse.

"Smithy, don't be a cad! I—I'm not thinking only of myself, but—my people, and my sister," groaned Hazeldene. "It would be an awful blow for Marjorie if I were sacked—and I should be if the Head knew everything! You won't tell, Smithy?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said the Bounder roughly. "Of course I won't tell! What sort of a cad do you think I am?"

"Oh, thanks, thanks! Of course, I knew—"
"Of course you didn't! Get off, do!"

"I—I say, Smithy—"
"Buzz off, I tell you! You've nothing more to ask, have you?"

"No," said Hazeldene. "Only—only if I could do anything for you, Smithy. I'm sorry it's come to this. Can I do anything?"

The Bounder paused. He had not expected that.

"Well, that's decent of you," he said at last. "You're not such an utter rotter as Loder, anyway. He was only thinking of his own skin. No, there's nothing you can do. Hazel, old man. And you can rely on me to keep mum. About the tin you owe me, that's all right. I never expected it back, as a matter of fact; and I make you a present of it."

"You're awfully good, Smithy—"

"Ch, rats!"

Hazelene left the study door, and Vernon-Smith threw himself into a chair. With his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a gloomy frown upon his brow, the Bounder of Greyfriars remained thinking—thinking, and cursing the stupidity which had led him into this scrape, from which there seemed to be, after all, no escape.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

VERNON-SMITH had a certain amount of sympathy in his downfall, but the Remove were fed up with the blackguard of the Form. It seemed as if there would be no end of his cadishness, and they were glad that he was to go.

But there were no taunts. Bunter and a few others would have jeered him, but Harry Wharton soon put a stop to that.

The Remove simply wanted him to go; that was all. The Bounder understood it, and his heart was full of malice and chagrin.

He still hoped that the doctor would change his mind, but the fear of Vernon-Smith senior would overrule his decision.

But as the time fixed for the expulsion drew nearer, that hope faded more and more in the Bounder's breast.

He realised that the Head was in earnest.

After prayers, the boys had orders to assemble in Big Hall for the expulsion. Before the time came, however, the Bounder came to the door of the Head's study. Dr. Locke was alone there, and the Bounder came in without knocking.

"The Head's dead and looked at him."

"Vernon-Smith, how dare you!"

The Bounder set his teeth.

"I want to speak to you, Dr. Locke," he said insolently.

"Leave my study at once!"

"Not till I've said what I came to say. You are going to expel me from Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"You've fully decided on that, sir?"

"Fully."

"You know that my father will take my side."

"It is a matter of indifference to me."

The Bounder sneered.

"If it is a matter of indifference, sir, I can't understand why I haven't been sacked before!" he exclaimed. "I know that Mr. Quelch has complained about me, and it's common knowledge that you would have been glad to get rid of me."

The Head changed colour.

"That is no matter for boast, Vernon-Smith!" he exclaimed.

"I'm not boasting, sir—I'm mentioning the fact. You'd have been glad to get rid of me before I'd been here a week."

"It is perfectly true. You are not the kind of boy any headmaster would wish to keep in his school, Smith."

"Then why didn't you do it, sir?"

The Head was silent.

"I take it that my father wouldn't have it," said Vernon-Smith coolly.

"The pater has told me so himself. You couldn't do it."

"And believing that I could not expel you, Smith, you took the meanest and most ungenerous advantage of my position."

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The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "It's every one for himself in this world, sir," he said; "but I'm willing to admit that I've gone too far, and to promise that it sha'n't occur again."

Dr. Locke shook his head.

"It's too late, Smith. I cannot pardon you this last wicked freak. The reputation of the school would suffer too much, and I have to consider my duty as headmaster. I would rather send in my resignation to the governors of Greyfriars than allow you to remain in my school."

"You will have to deal with my pater, then, sir."

"I am prepared to do that. I trust your father will receive my explanation in a reasonable spirit. If not, I cannot help it. In any case, you shall not remain at Greyfriars."

"But—"

"Leave my study now, Smith!"

"Very well, sir; but if I go—"

"Go, I tell you!"

The Bounder quitted the study, biting his lips. He had gone too far; as the juniors had been saying the day before, he had "done it" this time.

If the Head was prepared to lose his position at Greyfriars rather than allow him to remain in the school all was over. His father, possibly, could do no worse than deprive the Head of the position he had held for so many years with respect and honour.

"Oh!" muttered the Bounder. "Oh, I've been a fool—and it's too late now! But—but what a mad old duffer to risk so much to sack me! The old duffer—the old duffer! He doesn't even seem to think of his wife and children!"

At that thought a new idea came into Vernon-Smith's mind. He hurried out into the old Close, and crossed to the gate of the Head's private garden. He knew that the Head's elder daughter, Miss Rose, was generally in the garden early in the morning, and Vernon-Smith wanted to see her.

As he looked over the gate he caught sight of the graceful form of the young girl. He could not open the gate as it was locked, but he climbed over it, and the noise he made caused Miss Rosie to turn her head.

She looked at the Bounder of Greyfriars in surprise. The expression upon her face showed that she had heard of the sentence passed upon him. The Bounder raised his cap as he came up the garden path.

"Excuse me, Miss Locke," he exclaimed, "I wanted to speak to you particularly."

"I am not allowed in this garden," said Miss Rosie rather severely.

Vernon-Smith smiled sulkily.

"Well, I sha'n't be a junior here in an hour's time if the programme is carried out," he exclaimed. "I'm going to be sacked."

"I had heard of it," said Miss Rosie quietly. "I am sorry."

"Sorry I'm going?" exclaimed the Bounder in astonishment.

"Sorry you have deserved it, I mean."

The Bounder laughed mockingly.

"I'm not the only chap here who's deserved it, if I've deserved it at all!"

he exclaimed. "I've been found out, that's all. There are plenty of other fellows in the same boat, and I could give them away if I liked."

"You sorry for that, too?"

"You sorry to see me to be sorry for someone else," said the Bounder. "That's why I've come here to speak to you."

Miss Rosie looked at him with wide eyes.

"I don't understand you," she said.

"Then I'll explain. I dare say you've heard about me—a good many people keep their tongues quite busy on my

account," said the Bounder unpleasantly. "They call me the Bounder of Greyfriars. I'm the black sheep—the blackguard—the fellow who's held up as a bad example to all the nice, goody boys. Haven't you ever wondered why the Head hasn't sacked me before?"

"My father is too kind-hearted, I suppose."

Another unpleasant laugh from the Bounder.

"His kind heart isn't going to be given any show to-day, anyway," he said. "No, Miss Locke, it wasn't his kind heart. He dared not do it."

"You are speaking nonsense!"

"Not at all, and I'll prove it," said the Bounder. "The Head couldn't sack me, because my father had a hold over him—exactly what it is I don't know; but he has it, and the Head has to knuckle under."

Miss Rosie's lip curled.

"You don't believe me?" asked the Bounder.

"No; certainly not!"

"The Head has as good as admitted it to me, and my father told me it was the case in plain English."

"Nonsense!"

"That's why the Head hasn't sacked me before," said Vernon-Smith doggedly. "If you won't believe it, you won't; but it's true."

"If it were the case, my father could not expel you to-day, any more than previously, I suppose?"

"He's made up his mind to risk everything. He told me he'd rather lose his post here than allow me to remain. I'm speaking to you, Miss Rosie, because I know you've got a great deal of influence over him. I believe you could make him do almost anything. Look here; if I go, he goes!"

"Nonsense!"

"It's true. You can save him."

"I'll try."

"By persuading him to do the sensible thing," said the Bounder eagerly. "You could easily talk him over if you liked. Persuade him to give me one more chance. I'll be more careful in the future after this."

"More careful of your conduct, or more careful not to be discovered?" asked the girl, with a scornful curl of the lip.

"That doesn't matter. I'll be more careful. But if I go your father is ruined—give you my word about that."

"The word of the Bounder of Greyfriars?" asked Miss Rosie scornfully.

Vernon-Smith flushed.

"It's true," he said.

"I do not believe it. I do not believe for a single moment that your father has any hold over mine, or that my father would yield to him to the extent of neglecting his duty if he had. I believe you are telling untruths," said Miss Rosie, in exceedingly plain English.

"Now kindly go away."

The Bounder drew a deep, hissing breath.

"Then you won't interfere?"

"No."

"You can save your father—"

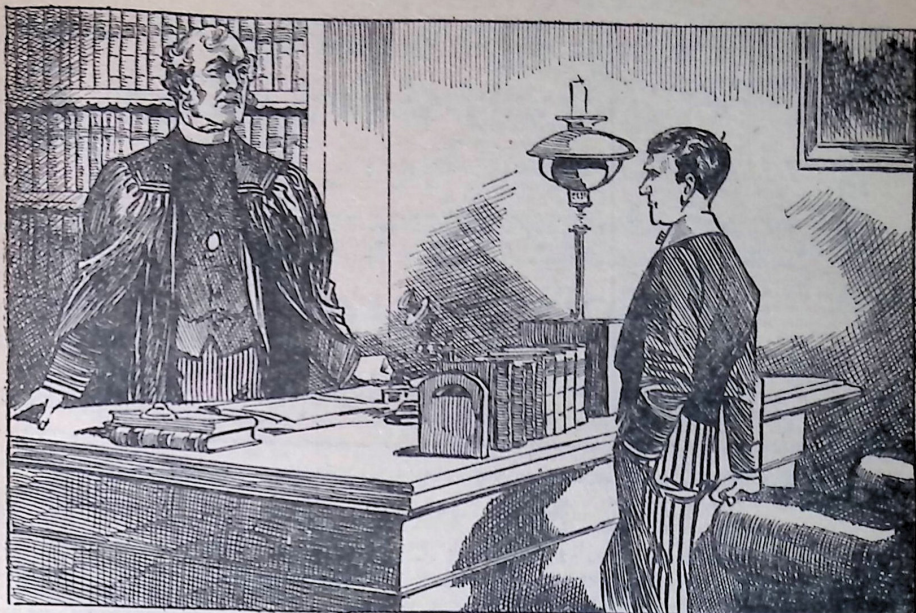
"Please go."

"Oh, you are a fool—women are all fools!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "You will be sorry when the time comes to leave Greyfriars. You can ride the high horse now, but you will change your tune then."

The girl coloured with anger. She raised her hand, and pointed to the gate into the Close.

"If you do not go I shall call someone to remove you," she said.

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands till the nails dug into the palms. He felt helpless and baffled under the young girl's scornful, clear eyes. He had no reply ready, and with a muttered word,



"Are you going to expel me from Greyfriars?" asked Vernon-Smith, staring insolently into the frank face of the Head. "Yes!" "Then I can't understand why you have not done it before. Mr. Queloh has complained to you about me, and it's common knowledge that you would have been glad to get rid of me!" replied the Bounder. (See Chapter 1.)

which it was just as well that Miss Rosie did not hear, he turned and tramped back to the gate.

His last chance had failed him!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sacked I

THERE was a hush in Big Hall. The whole school was assembled there—assembled for a scene that was, fortunately, rare at Greyfriars.

Vernon-Smith was to be expelled in public—publicly "sacked" from the school—he had brought disgrace upon.

It was an impressive scene.

The Forms were ranked in order, and the prefects walked up and down to keep them so, but it was not really needed. The boys were too excited and impressed to think of anything but the business that was coming.

Vernon-Smith was to be expelled!

It had come at last!

He had deserved it a score of times. He had risked it half as often. He had boasted that he could not be expelled—that the Head dared not send him away.

And this was the end of it!

He was to go!

The boys all looked at him curiously as he stood alone, prominent in the scene.

The Bounder stood erect, his head thrown back in defiance. Bad as he was to the very core, the Bounder was game to the last.

There were whispers in the ranks of the Remove, the Form that had the doubtful honour of claiming the Bounder as a member.

"He's got pluck, anyway," Frank Nugent murmured.

"Heaps of it," said Harry Wharton. "You can't help admiring the beggar in

a way. But he is such an unspeakable rotter!"

"I guess he's got sand," said Fisher T. Fish, the American youth. "He can stand up to the rack and take his fodder like a little man—some!"

"Can't help feeling sorry for the poor beast," said Bob Cherry. "I've been through this, and I know what it's like."

Some of the Renovites chuckled. Bob Cherry had been expelled on a false charge, and in the anger of righteous indignation he had refused to go, and had had to be carried out by force. It was very like Bob Cherry. But the Bounder did not cut the same figure. The Bounder had the consciousness that he fully deserved all that was meted out to him, and more. What troubled him was not that he could not get justice, but that he did get it.

The Head entered by the door at the upper end of the hall. His face was very quiet, pale, and composed. It was easy for the juniors to see, in spite of his composure, that this was an ordeal to him as well as to the boy who was to be expelled.

Vernon-Smith's eyes glittered as they fell upon the Head.

Perhaps he still entertained an elusive hope that his sentence was to be rescinded; that at the last moment the Head would allow him to stay. If so, it was soon destroyed.

The Head's deep voice rolled through the hall.

He did not say much, but what he said was impressive. The boys listened in deep and silent respect, with the exception of Vernon-Smith. There was a sneer upon the lips of the Bounder.

"Boys, you all know why you have been called here! A boy—a junior belonging to the Lower Fourth Form, has disgraced himself, his Form, and his

school, in such a way that cannot be pardoned. He cannot remain at Greyfriars to be allowed to taint other boys with his own wickedness. He must go, and I hope that the lesson will impress itself upon his mind, and teach him to take greater care in his new surroundings, wherever they may be. Vernon-Smith, stand forward!"

The Bounder lounged forward. There was an exaggerated and insolent carelessness in his manner that brought a gleam of anger to many eyes.

The Head did not appear to notice it.

His steady gaze was fastened upon the Bounder, a steady look that had the effect of quieting the insolent junior, in spite of himself.

Vernon-Smith shifted very uneasily under the Head's gaze, and finally allowed his own glance to fall.

"Vernon-Smith, you have been discovered in a state of semi-intoxication, in the public street, and brought back to the school by a policeman! This is the culminating disgrace of a disgraceful career. You have never done right since you came here. You have taken, apparently, a perverse pleasure in doing wrong. Vernon-Smith, you are expelled from this school!"

There was a murmur.

The Bounder raised his head, but he did not speak.

"For your conduct you deserve that a flogging should precede the expulsion," went on the Head. "But I omit that. It is sufficient that you do not disgrace Greyfriars with your presence any longer. You will leave Friardale by the ten o'clock train this morning. You may go."

The Bounder did not move.

Wingate of the Sixth touched him on the shoulder.

"Get out!" he murmured.
 "One moment," said the Bounder. He turned to the Head. "So I am to go, sir?"

"You have heard me say so."
 "Very well. I shall return."

A loud murmur came from the boys. They were trembling with excitement now. What was the Bounder about to say? Were they to hear the secret at last? The colour wavered in the Head's face—what little colour there was.

"I shall come back, sir," said Vernon-Smith, in calm, deliberate tones. "I am going now, but I shall come back, with my father. That's all, sir."

"Quite enough, too, you young sweep!" said Wingate, roughly, grasping the junior by the shoulder. "Get out before I shing you out!"

"You can take your paws off me!" said the Bounder insolently. "I'm going!"

"Go at once!"
 The Head had turned away. The Bounder hesitated. A torrent of words came to his lips, but he had no chance to utter them.

The captain of Greyfriars crossed him hard, and swung him away towards the door. With a swing of his arm, he sent the Bounder spinning.

"Get out!" he said angrily.
 Vernon-Smith reeled away, and righted himself with an effort. He looked back at Wingate savagely.

"I'll make you sorry for that!" he muttered.

The Greyfriars captain made a movement towards him, and the Bounder hurried towards the door.

The crowd watched him go in silence. In the doorway the Bounder paused, and turned back, and looked into the crowded hall with a sneer upon his face.

"I shall come back!" he said.
 Then he was gone!

The school broke up, the boys dispersing to their different Form-rooms. But for some time it is to be feared that very little attention was given to lessons.

The fellows were all discussing the expulsion of Vernon-Smith, and his threat that he would come back. Would he come back? The Bounder was so false

that one could believe nothing that he said, but many of the fellows recalled that he never made a threat that he did not fulfil.

"He will come back," Ogilvy said.
 And many others thought the same. There was a general movement of interest in the Remove class-room that morning, when a sound of wheels was heard in the Close.

Mr. Quelch's back being turned, one or two venturesome youths stood up, and looked out of the window.

They saw a trap driving away, with Vernon-Smith and his box in it. Vernon-Smith turned at the gates, and took a last look back at the school, and scowled, then he disappeared.

The Bounder was gone!
 But in many hearts there was a feeling, almost a conviction, that they would see him again; that Greyfriars had not yet done with the Bounder.

THE END.

(Another grand complete story of Vernon-Smith and Greyfriars next Friday.)

∴ THE MAN-HUNT! ∴

Specialy Contributed to the "Popular" by ROBERT ARTHUR DICBY, of St. Jim's.

CRASH!
 The clock in the old tower had struck one, and the Fourth-Formers at St. Jim's were asleep, as was fit and proper and in accordance to regulations.

But at that tremendous crash like one man they awoke.

Sleepy voice were heard on every side.

"Burglars!" said Cleve.

"Wats, deah boy!" snorted D'Arcy.

"Shut up, Gussy!"

"Who's coming down to the burglar?"

asked Blake, jumping out of bed.

Of course, we all decided to go.

Every fellow had a weapon of some sort, and Arthur Augustus, with many scornful sniffs, said he would come with us just to prove that it wasn't a burglar.

We let him come, of course. There were only a few fellows who didn't come.

Trimble and Mellish, of course, refused.

Trimble got under the bed. He said he wouldn't come down because he agreed with Gussy that it was another Armistice day. Apparently that's why he got under the bed.

We weren't keen on Trimble or Mellish, so it didn't matter.

The whole crowd of us crept out of the dormitory, Blake leading. Gussy, convinced at last that this was a burglar, came last.

Of course, he wanted to come first, and lead, but we weren't having any.

"Shush!"

"What's up with you, Blake?"

"Shush!"

Blake held up his hand, and we all stopped. Apparently he had heard something.

Everyone took a tighter grip on their weapons. That burglar had gone through it had he been at hand then.

Ahead we heard a sound of someone creeping.

"When I say 'Now!'" whispered Blake, "all make a rush at him! Now!"

No sooner was the word out of his mouth than we all rushed forward. At the same moment, from the opposite direction, came another horde.

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"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Shell-fish!"

"Fourth kids!"

Our burglar—the chap we thought we had so nicely ambushed—was merely another party on the man-hunt. Tom Merry and the rest of the Shell-fish must also have heard the burglar.

"You silly asses!" we hooted.

"You blithering chumps!" hooted the Shell-fish.

"Why did you rush at us like that?"

hooted Tom Merry, rubbing his arm ruefully. He and Blake had cannoned in the corridor.

"Yow! You silly Shell-fish, why didn't you look where you were going?"

"Ass!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Blake. "If we're going to nail that blessed burglar we'd better get on. Now, you fellows, come on!"

And the whole mob of us crept downstairs. We were over forty strong, and should have put up a fair fight with any burglar.

"What on earth are all you kids doing?"

Kildare of the Sixth and half a dozen more prefects stared at us. Evidently they were after the burglar.

Jack Blake dramatically held up a forefinger.

"Shush!"

"Eh?"

Kildare stared.

"You silly chumps, go back to bed! There's a burglar in the place!"

"That's what we're after," growled Blake. "What on earth did you think we were doing?"

"I was just wondering," grinned Kildare.

"Still, you kids might be useful. You can come on!"

And you can bet we came on! But as we stood there we heard a sound from inside the room on our right. That was the kitchen. Perhaps he was after grub.

"That's the burglar!" said Kildare.

"Stand to, you kids!"

"Yaas, wathah! Stand to, deah boys! I told you it was a burglar, if you wemembah."

Kildare strode to the door. At that moment Railton came along. In a second he was at Kildare's side.

We stood by ready to mob the burglar when he came out.

Somehow the door seemed to have got stuck. Neither Kildare nor Railton could open it, and it was not until we rushed it in a mob that it opened.

Inside all was dark. There was no sign of a burglar. From one corner glowed two small balls of fire.

Mr. Railton had a flash-light in his hand, and he switched it on.

Never had we seen such a sight. There was no burglar, but on the floor was a mass of crockery. Tea, jam, and other foodstuffs were mixed together in a mass of broken china.

An up-turned tray lay on the floor, and Tibbles, Mr. Mimbles' cat, was sitting in a corner scared out of his life.

It was easy to see what had happened. The Head had had something to eat late at night, and the parlourmaid had carried the tray down, taken it into the kitchen in the dark, and had, as she thought, put it on the kitchen table. But she had put it only half on. Tibbles, poor little beggar, had jumped on to the protruding half, with the result that we were contemplating.

We looked at the wreckage. Then, with hardly a word, we slunk off to bed.

Poor old Mary got into hot water over it, and so did Tibbles. He is still suffering from acute shell-shock, and now makes tracks at the sight of a laden tray.

"Bai Jove, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, when we returned. "What did I tell you? I knew it wasn't a burglar. You wemembah—Yow! Who thweh that pillow?"

But no one answered him, and he went to sleep vowing vengeance in the morning.

THE END.

THE COMING OF THE CORNSTALK!

A Splendid Long Complete Story, dealing with the
Adventures of JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Adolphus Has a Great Idea!
CONROY!

“C Adolphus Smythe, the ornament of the Shell Form at Rookwood, repeated the name in a thoughtful sort of way.

Adolphus had just come into his study, and he accepted a cigarette from Tracy, and lighted it, first making sure that the door was closed.

It was very nutty to smoke cigarettes in the study, and Adolphus was a very nutty Nut; but he did not want to be seen from the passage. For his dignity—a very important matter with Adolphus—would have suffered severely if his noble ear had been pulled by a prefect.

“Conroy!” he repeated, through a little cloud of smoke.

The fellows in the study looked at him. There were five of them—Howard and Tracy of the Shell, and Mornington, Topham, and Townsend of the Fourth.

They were the most select circle in the Lower School at Rookwood—at all events, they flattered themselves that they were. And undoubtedly their neckties were unequalled in or out of Rookwood School, and their trousers were the last word in elegance.

“What are you burblin’ about?” said Mornington. Morny was shuffling a pack of cards. “Look that door, before some-body comes nosin’ in.”

“Conroy!” said Adolphus. “Any of you fellows know that name?”

“I’ve heard it,” said Townsend. “There’s a new kid comin’ in the Fourth, named Conroy. I heard Jimmy Silver say so. He got it from Bootles, I suppose.”

“Exactly!” said Smythe.

“He comes from Australia, I believe,” said Townsend. “Jimmy Silver said so. I remember, he was askin’ Van Ryn and Pons if they’d like him in their study, as he’s another Colonial.”

“There’s somethin’ about him in the paper,” pursued Smythe. “I happened to see it yesterday. That’s why the name struck me when I just heard Van Ryn mentionin’ the kid. Anybody seen the ‘Mornin’ Post’?”

Howard produced the paper, and Smythe opened it, and scanned the columns, regardless of Mornington’s growing impatience.

“Here it is!” said Smythe. “Listen, you chaps!”

And Adolphus read out the paragraph:

“Mr. Gerard Conroy, the celebrated Australian financier and millionaire, has taken up his residence permanently in England. We understand that his son is being sent to a well-known public school in a southern county.”

“By gad!” said Topham.

“I always read the Society news, you

know,” said Smythe. “Comes in useful sometimes—what!”

“You would!” sneered Mornington.

“Then this new kid is a millionaire’s son,” said Tracy thoughtfully.

“Yaas; and a regular corkin’ millionaire, too!” said Smythe impressively.

“Old Conroy is simply reekin’ with wealth—owns mines, an’ railways, an’ things, an’ he’s got more oof than he could count in a month of Sundays. The kid will be simply gilt-edged.”

“I wonder if he plays nap?” remarked Topham. And there was a laugh in the study.

“If he doesn’t, he’ll soon learn, I dare say,” grinned Townsend.

“So you’re thinkin’ of rookin’ the new kid already?” jeered Mornington.

“That’s your brutal way of puttin’ it,” said Smythe calmly. “I’ve no doubt—no doubt whatever—that this Conroy is a splendid chap—one of the very best! Look at the way the Colonies have backed us up in the war. Never mind how we muddle things, they stick to us through thick and thin, an’ back us up.”

Smythe’s friends stared at him. It was the first time they had ever heard him give utterance to patriotic sentiments.

Mornington rose.

“If you’re goin’ to talk that balderdash from the newspapers, I’ll clear!” he snapped.

“Oh, don’t be a rotter, Morny!” said Townsend, who quite agreed with Adolphus. “It’s up to us to be civil to a Colonial chap.”

“I haven’t noticed you bein’ particularly civil to Van Ryn or Pons.”

“Well, you see, they—”

“They’re not the sons of millionaires!” sneered Mornington.

“Oh, rot!”

“Morny can blow off all the gas he likes,” said Smythe, unmoved. “But we’re goin’ to take this Colonial chap under our wing; an’ see him through, an’ help him on his way a bit at first, an’ all that. It’s up to us.”

“Hear, hear!” said the Nuts, in chorus.

Mornington’s lip curled scornfully.

“Well, leave me out,” he said. “I’m not goin’ to join you in suckin’ up to a millionaire cad for his money.”

“All millionaires ain’t cads,” said Smythe. “Some are, certainly.”

There was another chuckle at this neat hit by Adolphus. Mornington scowled, and left the study, slamming the door.

“Morny’s got his back up!” smiled Adolphus. “One of dear Morny’s ways. It doesn’t worry me.”

“Morny likes to be the only pobble on the beach!” grinned Tracy. “But he isn’t, not by long chalks. I suppose, really, this new chap will be a bit of an out-and-outer—what?”

“If he is, we’ll polish him,” said Smythe. “I suppose his father’s send-

in’ him to Rookwood to be polished. We’ll do the polishin’!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“And, mind,” said Smythe impressively, “I fancy there’ll be some competition for this new kid when it comes out that he’s a millionaire. We’ve got to be first in the field, an’ chum-up with him, and we’ll start the minute he comes.”

“Hear, hear!” said the Nuts heartily.

Evidently there was to be a very handsome reception for the new fellow from Australia when he arrived at Rookwood. But whether the Cornstalk would fully appreciate the kindness of Smythe & Co. was still a question.

It was barely possible that a fresh and breezy youth from a great colony might not be so satisfied with the elegant Smythe the Sm. He was with himself. But that did not occur to Adolphus.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver is Surprised.

“T HAT must be the new kid!”

The Fistical Four of the Fourth were airing themselves on the School House steps the day after the meeting in Smythe’s study.

The station cab had driven in at the gates, and two passengers alighted from it. One was a little, dry-looking gentleman dressed in black; the other a sturdy youth about Jimmy Silver’s age, upon whom Jimmy Silver’s eyes turned curiously.

The captain of the Fourth was somewhat interested in the new junior. He knew nothing about the millions, never having heard of Mr. Conroy, the celebrated financier. Jimmy Silver’s taste in literature did not lie in the direction of “Society news.” All he knew of Conroy was that he was coming into the Classical Fourth, and that he came from Australia.

Jimmy rather liked his looks.

Conroy—was evidently Conroy—was sturdy and well-built, with a face that was not exactly handsome, but very frank and cheery in expression, and quite prepossessing to look at. He looked in perfect health from top to toe.

“Rather a decent-looking kid,” remarked Lovell. “I suppose the old johnnie’s his father.”

“Not much like him,” said Raby.

“By gad, here he is!”

Smythe of the Shell came out, with Townsend and Tracy. The old gentleman and the new junior were mounting the steps, and the Fistical Four raised their caps civilly. But Adolphus was not satisfied with merely a polite salute. He was determined to strike the iron while it was hot.

Having raised his shining topper in an elegant manner that was all his own,

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Adolphus addressed the old gentleman in his politest manner.

"Good-afternoon, sir!"

The old gentleman paused. He had little choice about that, as the dandy of the Shell was standing directly in his path.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" he said in a squeaky voice.

"Pray excuse my addressin' you, sir," said Smythe in his best manner. "But we—all the Rookwood fellows, in fact—wanted personally to welcome your son to the school, sir."

"Eh?"

"We are very glad to welcome Master Conroy amongst us, sir," pursued Smythe, a little disconcerted by the old gentleman's stare, but sticking to his guns. "Any fellow from the great Austral Colonies, sir, is sure of a hearty welcome at Rookwood, and your son will find himself among friends from the start."

The old gentleman looked perplexed, and the new junior grinned slightly. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on. They were utterly astounded by Smythe's hearty action, never having expected anything of the kind from Adolphus.

"I have no son," said the old gentleman at last. "You appear to have made some mistake, young man."

Smythe started.

"I—I—I—aren't you Mr. Conroy?" he ejaculated.

"I am Mr. Conroy's solicitor."

"Oh!" gasped Smythe.

"By gad!" murmured Townsend.

"However, I understand that you wish to welcome Mr. Conroy's son to this school," said the legal gentleman graciously. "I thank you for your very kind remarks, Master—"

"Smythe, sir," said Adolphus, recovering himself.

"Master Smythe; and I am sure Master Conroy appreciates them. Master Conroy, these are your future school-fellows."

Adolphus Smythe held out an elegant hand to Conroy.

The Australian shook it heartily, giving Smythe a grip that made him wince a little.

Conroy looked very pleased and friendly.

Smythe's welcome was a little high-flown, but so far as the new boy could see it was dictated by cordiality and kindness of heart, and it was agreeable enough to a fellow arriving in a strange school.

"I hope we shall be friends, Conroy," said Smythe graciously.

"I hope so, I'm sure," said Conroy. "It's very kind of you to welcome me like this."

"Not at all!" said Adolphus. "Let me introduce my friends—Townsend and Tracy, two of the best."

Townsend and Tracy shook hands solemnly with the new junior.

Then Mr. Bruff and the new junior passed on into the House, leaving the three nuts looking quite pleased with themselves.

The Fistical Four walked off. Jimmy Silver had intended to show the new junior some kind little attentions at the start, but evidently his services were not required now. His chums had intended to back him up, but they were glad enough to get away to the football-ground, after all.

"Blessed if I understand Smythe," said Lovell. "He can't say such a bad sort, with all his funny ways. He's playing up quite decently to the new kid."

"Good luck to him!" said Jimmy Silver heartily. "It's a bit of a surprise from Smythe. He isn't so black as he

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paints himself. But I'm blessed if I understand it, all the same."

"Is the new chap rich?" grinned Raby.

"I don't think so. Haven't heard so, anyway."

"Then it beats me."

However, on the football-ground the Fistical Four dismissed the matter from their minds. It was no especial business of theirs.

But Smythe & Co. did not dismiss it from their minds. Mr. Bruff had gone into the Head's study with the new junior, and the nuts collected in Smythe's quarters to discuss the plan of campaign. The news that the millionaire's son had arrived at Rookwood drew all the Nuts together, excepting Mornington. Mornington, like Achilles of old, was sulking in his tent.

"Looks quite a decent chap," Smythe told his comrades. "I wish he were comin' into the Shell, by gad! I'd have him in my study."

"Van Ryn wants him, I believe," said Townsend. "I understand that those two Colonial chaps are goin' to ask him."

Smythe smiled.

"Exactly; but they're not goin' to have him. We've got to keep him under our wing, and under our eye. You're goin' to have him in your study, Topsy."

"Well, I shouldn't mind, and Topsy wouldn't—"

"Not at all," said Topham.

"But there's that cad Rawson in our study, that scholarship bouncer—"

"You can give Conroy the tip about Rawson—that he's a poverty-stricken beggar, and a fellow a chap can't know."

"But what about Van Ryn?" asked Peele. "Conroy's pretty certain to accept his offer."

"Colonials have a way of stickin' together, I believe," remarked Gover. "Van Ryn will be too late," smiled Smythe. "You trust your uncle. Topsy's goin' to the Head to ask."

"What!"

"Why not?" said Smythe. "You go into the Head's study, an' ask for the new kid to be put along with you and Topsy. Dr. Chisholm's bound to consent, an' the new kid will be pleased, and he'll agree at once. It's a dashed polite thing to do towards a stranger, and it will nip Van Ryn's game in the bud."

The nuts looked upon their great leader with admiration. Certainly, Adolphus was showing great acumen.

"Blessed if I don't try it on!" said Townsend. "Van Ryn can take Rawson off our hands, if he likes—if he wants a new study-mate."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Topsy!"

And Townsend of the Fourth, encouraged by his comrades, started for the Head's study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Townsend Gets There First.

"SEEN the new kid?"

Van Ryn asked the question as Townsend came along the passage. Van Ryn, the South African, and Pons, the Canadian, were chatting there when the Nut of the Fourth came along.

"Yes, chap," said Townsend vaguely.

"Ye, Chap named Conroy—"

"Oh, Conroy!"

"Yes. We're going to ask him into our study," explained Van Ryn. "Is he with the Head, do you know?"

"I fancy he's with Bootles," said Townsend calmly.

"Thanks!" said Van Ryn.

And the two Colonials moved off in

the direction of Mr. Bootles' study, nothing doubting that Conroy was with his future Form-master.

Townsend grinned, and went on his way. Van Ryn and Pons were put off the scent. Their motive in wanting to ask Conroy into their study was quite disinterested, for they had never heard of the Conroy millions. But their intention had to be nipped in the bud, as Smythe had put it. The millionaire's son was to be kept very carefully under the wing of Smythe & Co.

The door of the Head's study opened as Townsend came up. Conroy's interview with the headmaster had come to a close. Townsend entered hurriedly.

Dr. Chisholm looked at him.

"What is it, Townsend?"

"If you please, sir, I was only goin' to ask for Conroy to be put in my study," said Townsend meekly. "We're only three in No. 5, sir, an' we should be very glad to have Conroy."

"That is a matter to be decided by Mr. Bootles," said the Head kindly. "But I have no doubt he will accept your request, Townsend. If Conroy wishes to share your study—"

He glanced at the new junior.

"I should be very glad, sir," said Conroy.

"Then I will speak to Mr. Bootles, and you may take the matter as decided," said the Head graciously. "I am glad to see you so kindly disposed towards a new boy from a distant Colony, Townsend. As it is a half-holiday, you may perhaps care to show Conroy about the school, and give him any information and assistance he may require."

"I shall be delighted, sir!" said Townsend.

"Very well, you may go."

"Come on, Conroy!" said Townsend in a very friendly manner.

The two juniors left the study together, the legal gentleman remaining some minutes longer in conversation with the Head.

"Jolly glad you're coming into my study, Conroy!" remarked Townsend, as they went down the passage together.

"I'm glad, too!" said Conroy simply.

"It's very kind of you. I never expected to be welcomed like this in the Old Colony."

Townsend's heart smote him for a moment. The simple good faith of the new junior made him feel mean. But he nodded and smiled.

"We shall get on together," he said.

"You'll like Topham, too—my study-mate, you know. There's rather a rotter in my study—chap named Rawson—but you needn't have anything to do with him. Come up and see the study now!"

Conroy's face was very bright as he accompanied Townsend. So hearty and unexpected a welcome from entire strangers naturally raised his spirits, though he was cheerful enough in any case.

"Hallo, here he is! This must be the chap!" exclaimed Van Ryn, as the two juniors came round the corner of the passage.

"Conroy?" asked Pons.

"The new boy nodded."

"That's my name!"

"Come on!" said Townsend.

"Hold on a minute!" said Van Ryn.

"I suppose your study isn't settled yet, Conroy? If you care to come into ours, we'd be pleased to have you. We're both Colonials like yourself, though from rather different parts of the world. I'm from South Africa, and Pons is from Canada. I'm Van Ryn."

"Conroy's study is settled already," said Townsend, before the new junior

(Continued on page 9.)



BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY



EDITED BY
WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER,
Assisted by **FATTY WYNN** and **BAGGY TRIMBLE**
of St. Jim's, **SAMMY BUNTER** of Greyfriars, and
TUBBY MUFFIN of Rookwood.

HOW I CHOSE MY STAFF!

By The **EDDITER.**

"Let me have men about me that are fat," Thus spoke that wonderful man, William Shakespeare; and thus, four hundred years later, spoke that other wonderful fellow, William Bunter!

I realized at the outset, dear readers, that it was no use engaging a set of skinny scarecrows to help me run my "Weekly." Skinny people are a nuisance. I avoid them as I would a plague. They are more of a hindrance than a help. Take that bony idiot, Alonzo Todd. He's always harping in with his long-winded poems and articles; and if I were to give him a place on the staff of this journal—why, he'd fill it with his own stuff, in spite of the notice I've put up on the door of my sanctum:

"NO RUBBISH TO BE SHOTT HEAR!"

Thin people are bad-tempered and treacherous. Fat people are jolly and genial, and they'll stick to you thru thick and thin—especially if you are in receipt of a liberal supply of pocket-munny! Thin people are greedy and gluttonous. Fat people never eat unless they are in the throws of starvation—and then they only take just enuff to keep boddy and sole together!

Realizing these things, I decided that no fello should become a subb-edditer on my staff unless he measured at least sixty inches round the waste. Well, their were only four felloes who foollified this kendishun.

IN YORE EDDITER'S DEN!

By **BILLY BUNTER.**

My Deer Readers,—Larst weak the 1st issew of my famus weekly was given to the wurld.

I've been working it out—I'm very hot on mathematticks—and I find that, larst weak's issew being No. 1, this weak's is No. 2!

I'll tell you how I fieggered this out. I thort of a number, added one, took away the number I firt thort of, and the anser was one, of course!

Not many felloes would be able to work out a problem like this; but then, arrithmetick has always been one of my strong points.

Well, deer readers, I trusted that No. 1 came up to yore eggspectashuns. I have not herd from any of you yet, bekwase we go to press sun weeks in advance; but before long I hope to get sholes and sholes of letters praising up my wonderful weeklies. They will be no letters of krittissim. I feel sure, for the simple reazon that their is nutting to krittissim!

I have aloud Bob Cherry to write a story for this issew. It's piffle, of course, but I've got to play up to my pal Bob, bekwase ho's giving a bumper sellybration shortly, and I don't want to be left out in the cold!

Their was my miner, Sammy; their were Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble, of St. Jim's; and their was Tubby Muffin, of Rookwood.

The 1st person I sent for was my miner. "Konsider yoreself hubly onered, Sammy!" I said. "I intend to make you my rite-hand man on the staff of the 'Weekly'!" "Rippin'!" said Sammy, with dassing eyes. "What are my dewties?"

"You will clean out my sanktum every morning—"

"Yes!"

"You will make a bonfire of all the rejeckted manuscripps—"

"Go on!"

"And you will make yoreself jenerally usefult by running errands."

"And my sallery?"

"Fopense a year, payable in kwarterly instalments of one penny, and free of Income Tax!"

"You are very jenerus!" said Sammy.

"Jennyrossity," I replide, "is a sort of 2nd nature with me. Do you axcept this prinsely offer?"

"Like a shott!" said Sammy.

I then went over to St. Jim's. I found Baggy Trimble only too willing to join my staff.

Fatty Wynn was rather diffukult to persuade. But I bribed him with a bag of doewntts, and at last he konsented.

"I shall be the only member of the staff who can spell korrekctly," he said. "And I shall save the paper from being a komplet wash-out!"

"Katts!" I growled.

And then I wrote a letter to Tubby Muffin, of Rookwood, rekwesting him to enlist under my banner. He replide by return, saying he would be dilited.

My staff is now komplet!

I egspesk a good many of you are wonderung how I came to choose my staff. I am therefore deskribing in anuther kolumn how it was done.

Up to the prezent my four fat subbs have given me no trouble. But I should be surprized if they went on strike before long. As I egzplained to my pater, you can't trusted these people fater than than you can see them!

And now, deer readers, I have nutting more to say. In the wurds of a famus historrikle karakter: "What I have writ I have wrote."

Orry vor—as the French say—till neekt weak!

Yore stout pal,

Yore Edditer

ROOKWOOD RIPPLES.

By **JIMMY SILVER.**

The Moderns have an extremely "modern" way of playing footer. The Classical side trotted them on Saturday by seven goals to one. Time the three Tommies and their supporters woke up!

By a curious coincidence, the ugliest fellow at Rookwood is called Hanson!

Why did Sergeant Kettle boil over? Because we had a free fight in the tuckshop, and smashed all his glasses!

What is the difference between Tommy Dodd of the Moderns and a raving lunatic? No difference whatever!

Heard the latest limerick?

There's a Modern outsider called Dogle. At the sight of whose face we recoyle.

All the Classics agree
What a blessing 'twill be
When they boyle Tommy Dogle in oyle!

Tommy Dodd & Co. have referred to the members of the Classical side as cannibals. I can assure them that we're not, or wo would have devoured a Muffin long ago!

Talking about Tubby, he contemplates taking his annual bath this week. "Tubby or not Tubby"—that is the question!

Arthur Newcome had a licking the other day for cheek. He tells us that he can't stand Manders' handers!

Cartew of the Sixth is advertising for a fag. We advise him to go slow. He smokes far too many as it is!

Adolphus Smythe's latest book, "Fashions for Fatheaded Pops," will shortly be published by Messrs. Smart & Nutty.

Bulkeley of the Sixth says it has come to his knowledge that a number of Fourth-Formers have been playing marbles in the sacred precincts of the Sixth Form passage. Marble-ous how he gets his information!

Warders were scouring the country a few days ago for an escaped lunatic. We promptly put them on the track of Tommy Dodd!



MY TERRIBLE TIME!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE, Subb-Edditer.

My Deer Readers.—The 1st issew of "Billy Bunter's Weekly" was not a success. I couldn't possibly have been, because my Kollum wasn't in it!

As I egsplained in a brief note larst week, I was unable to kintrowbete a Kollum, for two reasons. In the 1st place, that greedy bounder Wynns crowded me out; and in the sekcond place, I was in the saunny, dubbleed up with agernity.

I'll tell you how it came about. I herd a fello say that the French people were very fond of froggiepie, so I wrote to Nappoleon Dupong, at Grefyriars, and asked him how froggiepies were maid. He sent me a resposy by return; and I borroed a butterfly-nett and went in serch of some nice fat froggies. I managed to catch a plump toad in Rylcombe Lane, and then I fished out some tadpoles from the pond, thinking they would improve the flavor. After wich I went back

to St. Jim's and cooked the beeatly things. Groot! The memmery of it haunts me still!

My study-mate, Mellish, found me lying—a littel habit of mine!—on the sofer. "What's up, Baggy?" he asked. "Yow! I—I'm dy'ing!" I gasped. "Well, fer goodness's sake dy' kwetly!" growled the unsinpercthetick Mellish. "Yore groans can be herd all over the bilding!"

"Gimme a serapp of paper!" I panted. "What for?" asked Mellish. "I'm going to make out my las' will and Testement," I replide. "I'm poisoned—I'm dy'ing by inches!"

"Ratts!" said Mellish. "No, not ratts," I groned. "It was a toad."

"What!" yelled Mellish. "You meen to say you've been eating toad?"

"Yes—with a sprinkling of tadpoles." "My only nat! How big was the toad?"

"It was about the sighs of a gluv," I said.

Mellish gave a low wisse. "Fansy eating a fat toad, you fat toad!"

he said. "You mite have known it would give you severe internal pances! Come along! I'll help you up to the saunny."

Pickecher my plite, deer readers! For hours I lay skwirmin in angwish, and I thort that every breth would be my last.

For three days I lived on groot and water. Tigh! I'm all rite agane now, but I'll never tuch toad-pie agane—never! I think I would prefer hashed heegeheg! I've written to Nappoleon Dupong and told him that the resposy he sent me neerly cost me my life!

Well, deer readers, what do you think of my being appointed subb-edditer of "Billy Bunter's Weekly"? It ought recly to be "Baggy Trimble's Weekly," with me as head cook and bottle-washer. But ther is so much personel jellusy about that it's hopeless to egspect fare treatment. However, if Billy Bunter kills this paper, as he's bound to do in the long run, I shall come to the scen with a jernal of my own.

That fello Wynns seems to be taking a lot on his own soulders; but I advise you to ignore him, and to mitebete I. Bagdick, Trimble, a desendant of that famus knight, Sir Loyne de Beefe, am the speshal representattif for St. Jim's.

With best wisshes for Krisemuss and the New Year—in case I forget when neckst December arives.

I remane,
Yores et setterer,
BAGGY TRIMBLE.



THE MISSING "E"!

By FATTY WYNN, Subb-Edditer.

SXMS mox lix a Missing Word compxtion than anything xlx, doesn't it?

I havv bxnx having somy graxt tixms larstly St. Jim's. Tom Mxyry celabrated his bithday last wxwk, and invatd mx to a top-look study fxnd. Thaxr wxvz plantful supplix of tuck, and I am afraid I madx rather a bxasx of mxxsxl. Thaxr was a lovely rabbl-dix on the tablx, and havng startd on it, I found I couldn't lxavv off. Figgus and Kxrr had to carry mx back to thx Nxw Housx. I wasn't ablx to walk!

I wish Tom Mxyry had a bithday xvxy day! Thaxr thaxr would always bx plaxy to xat and drink, and I should bxgn to put on waight, with a vxngxanx!

We playd footx against Rookwood last Wxdnaxday. It was a toppng gaux! Jimmy Silvxr & Co. wxrv lickyd by thaxr goals to onx, and thaxr had to admit that wx wxrv thx bxttr Txm. I playxd in goal, and managed to stop xvxy shot that camx my way, xxcept onx—and I had no chaunc with

that, because I was rolling in thx mud at thx time.

What do you think of thx St. Jim's Page thx wxwk, dxar rxdxrs? I think Monty Lowthx's riddlx is vxry funny, don't you? But I'll bx Billy Bunter didn't think so! You will notix that Baggy Trimble has got somthing to say thx wxwk. Goodness knows why Baggy was chosxn as a sub-xditer! As our poxt onx obsrvd:

"Thxrx is a podgy yonth namxd Trimblly, Whox brains would go insidx a thimblly!"

Still, I dxxx say you will find Baggy rather amusing, in spix of the fact that lx's a fat, gluttonous sort of follow—totally unlixk mx!

Confound thx bxxxy typwxrxt! It makx my lattxr look lix a blaxsxd Chinxux puzzlx!

Figgus and Kxrr arx rxxaring with laughtx about it—lxh hartxlss boaxs! Thax say that a chap whos' ass woxugh to writx for a rag lix "Billy Bunter's Wxkly" dxsrxvz all lx gxts.

Nxxt wxwk, I hopx you will understand what I havv thxrd. Don't bx angry with mx, dxar rxdxrs, for making such a hash of thx thx wxwk. (I'll makx a hash of that typwxrxt man's chxrv, x'x x'm!)

Chxrxio! Your plump pal,
FATTY WYNN.

(NOTE.—Fatty Wynn tells me that he hired a typewriter from the Wayland Typewriter Company, in order to do his Kollum neatly and egspectationally. When the machine arrived at St. Jim's, Fatty found that the letter "e" was missing, so he had to put an "x" in place of it. The printer ought to have filled in all the "e's" but he neglected his duty, and I must apologise to my readers for the komical appearance of Fatty's letter.—E.D.)

My Dear Rxdxrs,—I havv bxnx to thx troubl and expens of hiring a typewriter from Wayland, only to find that thx lattxr "x" is bxtsd, so I am having to usx thx lattxr "x" instxad.



WHY I WAS LICKED!

By TUBBY MUFFIN, Subb-Edditer.

My Deer Readers.—I've just had a fearful licking from the Head, and I feel kwite cut up about it!

I'll tell you egsactly what happened. A fortnite ago, I was in the state known as stency (my usual kondishun), and I hitt upxon a recly brillunt weeze for raising the wind. I went round to all the tradesmen in Lucham, and I said to them:

"Look here, ther's a new paper coming on the markitt, called 'Billy Bunter's Weekly,' and I'm the subb-edditer, speshal korrespondent, and advertisement manniger for Rookwood. Would you like to advertize yore goods? Our charges are fivv bobba a page."

"And what will the sekulshun of the paper be, Master Muffin?" asked Mr. Trimmitt, the barber.

"Oh, milyons!" replide. "Billy Bunter's Weekly" will be on sail throught the Yewntid Kingdom. Evvrybody who is anybody will buy it."

THE POPULAR.—No. 108.

"Rite you are," said Mr. Trimmitt. "I'll have a fool-page advertishment in the 1st issew."

"Fivv bobba, please," I said.

And then, having roped in the shekkels, I went along to interview the groser, the bootcher, the kobbler, and the rest of the tradespeople.

Well, deer readers, to cut a long story short, I kolleked thirty bobba, and trotted back to Rookwood feeling awfully bucked with life. I blewed the munny at the tuk-shopp, and then forgott all about the matter.

But the tradespeople didn't forgett! Larst week, when No. 1 of "Billy Bunter's Weekly" was published, they looked for thare advertishments. And they looked in vane!

Of course, they were awfully rattfy about it. They came in a deputatshun to the Head, and demanded thare munny back.

The Head sent for me, and he was perpie wd'ed.

"What does this meen, Muffin? he egsclaimed. "You apper to have axcepted munny from these gentlemen, on the understanding that you published thare advertishments in a paper called 'Bunter's Weekly.' The 1st issew of that jernal has

appeared, but ther is no sine of the advertishments. Why, were their not used?"

"I—I—I, sir!" I stammered.

"Ratts!" said the Head—or words to that effect. "You had no intenshun of publishing them, you wickid, descaatful boy!"

"I subject, sir," said Mr. Trimmitt, the barber. "You give the yung raskal a good thrashin'!"

Nodding his head, the Head heunged towards the bookcase, where he keeps his canes.

I had a fearful grooling, and it's a wonder I'm alive to tell the tale!

I hope to have happier news neckst week—to the effect that Mr. Bootles is down with booping-koff, or sumthing like that!

Meanwhile, deer readers, I remane,
Yore affekshunat pal,
TUBBY MUFFIN.

P.S.—The tradespeop got thare munny back. The Head wrote to my paper, who had to pay and look piezzant. But I'll bet he won't look piezzant neckst time I see him!

—T. M.

When I saw Billy Bunter the neckst time I told him of that little skeme of mine, and asked him whether I should ask the tradespeople in Friaridle if they would like to advertize in the "Weekly." But Bunter, the mean rotter, said that he would see me hanged first before he let me cadge on his ground. I expect he wants to do the same thing, and if that is the case I shall deem it my duty to inform the tradespeople of it. It's a verry mean act to get munny out of poor people who have to ern thare own living. I wouldn't do such a thing to save mi life, not if I wer starv'ing.



By BOB CHERRY.

(NOTE.—I am using this story of Bob Cherry's, not because it's a good one, but because Bob is holding a big bangkwaet in his study and I want an invitashun! —ED.)

WHATEVER you say to Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of the Remove, he takes it literally. I'll show you what I mean.

Alonzo brought a manuscript into Harry Wharton's study the other day, and urged him—on bended eyes and with tears in his eyes, as Billy Bunter would say—to publish it.

Wharton told Lonzy to go and chop chips. Whereupon, the guileless youth went round to the woodshed, and proceeded to chop up a packing case! When he came staggering into Study No. 1 with a big bundle of wood Wharton was fairly flabbergasted.

"What's that?" he gasped.

"Please, Wharton," said Alonzo meekly. "I've chopped the chips!"

"And we were all in hysterics for the rest of the evening."

That incident, however, was crowned by the one I am about to relate.

We—the Famous Five of the Remove—were seated in front of the Common-room fire, discussing the feud which has always existed between Dick Trumper & Co., of Courtfield, and ourselves.

"We've had a good many scraps just lately, with the Courtfield fellows," said Harry Wharton. "They're meant to be friendly affairs, of course, but Trumper took it the wrong way when we ducked him in the horse-pond the other day!"

"He was quite waxy about it," said Nugent.

"And since then the feud's grown more bitter than ever," said Johnny Bull.

"I think," said Wharton slowly, "that we ought to bury the hatchet."

Alonzo Todd, who was sitting quiet near, spring over a ponderous tome, pricked up his ears.

"The sooner we bury the hatchet," added Wharton, who was looking rather worried, "the better."

"That's so," said Nugent.

"There won't be any peace until the hatchet is buried," I chimed in.

Alonzo Todd rose to his feet, and went thoughtfully out of the Common-room.

"Poor old Lonzy!" said Johnny Bull, gazing after Lonzy's retreating figure. "Our jaw's getting on his nerves!"

"Well, if he wants peace and quietness, he should stay in his study—no come into the Common-room."

And we resumed our conversation on the subject of the feud with Dick Trumper & Co. until Wingate came into the room, and said:

"Bed-time, kids!"

We trooped up to the dormitory. It was one of those very cold nights, and the chilly north wind moaned round the clock-tower, and I shivered.

"Shut the windows!" said Wharton. "I say, Wingate, we can't sleep with that wind howling in!"

Wingate laughed and nodded. Whereupon there was a rush to close the windows and a general sighing of relief.

I happened to be one of the first to arrive at the end window. For a few minutes we stood looking out upon the dark Close. Suddenly a curious thudding sound reached my ears—a sound I couldn't for the moment put my finger on.

"Shut that window, young Cherry," shouted Wingate. "and get into bed!"

"Half a mo'!" I replied. "Come here a minute, Harry!"

Wharton stopped his undressing, and came over to the window. He looked out. The sound was still going on—the weird thud, thud! Suddenly it stopped.

"Where's your Todd?" said Wingate, slanging round.

The fellows looked at one another. Nobody spoke, for nobody could say where the duffer was.

"Dunno, Wingate," said Harry.

There was a buzz of talk when Wingate left the dormitory in search of Alonzo. A minute later, however, he returned with the mild Alonzo in tow. Todd was looking very

sheepishly at the captain, and I noticed—although I did not draw attention to the fact—that there was mud and dust on his trousers, and his hands were none too clean.

"Get into bed, you young cub," growled Wingate, "and take a hundred lines for being late and keeping me waiting!"

Todd gave us all a plaintive glance, and commenced to undress. Why was he late?

"Gosling!" The Head shivered as he spoke. "Why have you not lighted my fire?"

It was a bitterly cold morning. Snow was falling in sheets, and icicles sparkled and scintillated on the window-panes.

"Which here ain't no fuel available, sir," answered Gosling the porter.

"Nonsense! The coal-cellar is full—"

"Yess! But—"

"And there are numerous blocks of wood in the woodshed."

"That's true enough, sir. But—"

At that moment the door of the Head's



"Gosling! Why are there no fires?" asked the Head. "Which I can't find the 'hatchet, sir, what's been missing since last night!" said Gosling.

study was thrown open, and Mr. Prout flounced in.

"I have a complaint to make, sir," he said, addressing the Head. "The thermometer is at a freezing-point, and yet there is no fire in my Form-room! I cannot conduct a class under such Arctic conditions, sir!"

"Calm yourself, my dear Prout—"

"It is impossible to be calm, sir, when one is freezing by inches!"

"Gosling," said the Head, with a frown. "it is your duty to see that all the fires are laid and lighted. I shall punish you severely for this flagrant neglect of duty! It is monstrous that the school should be deprived of warmth—"

There was a tramping of feet in the passage, and again the door of the Head's study was thrown open.

First came Mr. Quelch, whose nose and ears were blue with cold, and behind him, wrathful and indignant, came Mr. Hacker, Mr. Twigg, and Mr. Capper, Larry Lascelles, the mathematics master, lurked in the rear.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head. "Is— is anything amiss, gentlemen?"

"We have no fires in the Form-rooms, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"The boys are sneezing and coughing, and the conditions are intolerable!" chimed in Mr. Capper.

"We ourselves are chilled to the marrow!" added Mr. Hacker.

"It is scandalous!" exploded Mr. Twigg.

"After those chilling statements," added

Larry Lascelles, with a smile, "there is no need for me to add anything."

The Head turned again to Gosling, who was being glared at on all sides.

"What have you to say, Gosling, in explanation of your conduct?"

"Which it's a question of fuel, sir—"

Dr. Locke made a gesture of impatience. "Do not trifle with me, Gosling! I have already said that there is an ample supply of fuel, and you agreed with me."

"I can't light a dozen fires with coal and paper!" grunted Gosling.

"But you have wood!"

"Yes," said Gosling, scratching his head, "an action which brought another smile to the lips of Larry Lascelles. "There's wood all right, but it's in great solid blocks."

"This is sheer laziness on your part, Gosling!" said the Head. "Surely you could have chopped up the blocks!"

"No, sir."

"Why not, pray?"

"Which there ain't no 'hatchet, sir."

"What?"

"It's been missin' since last night," explained Gosling. "I've 'unted 'igh an' low, but I can't find the dratted thing. It's my belief that one of the young warmists 'ad 'idden it for a joke."

The Head looked grim.

"You are probably right, Gosling," he said. Then, turning to the masters, he added:

"You had better question your respective classes on the subject. No doubt, the hatchet has been removed for a practical joke."

"In that case, it will go hard with the practical joke!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"And the half-dozen members of the deputation trooped out of the study."

"I wish to ask you a question, my boys," said Mr. Quelch, when he returned to the Remove Form-room.

"Go ahead, sir," said Bolsover major encouragingly.

"silence, Bolsover! Has any boy removed a hatchet from the woodshed?"

There was a gasp from the class. The question struck the majority of us as being extraordinary.

And then, to our astonishment, Alonzo Todd rose in his place.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes were focused upon the junior.

"Well, Todd? Do you know anything of this?"

"Yes, sir. It was I who removed the hatchet."

"What?"

"I took it from the woodshed, and buried it," said Alonzo innocently.

"Good gracious! Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"It was like this, sir," said Alonzo. "I heard Mr. Wharton say last night that there would be no peace until the hatchet was buried, and so I—I went and buried it, sir."

"In, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter from the class. Even Mr. Quelch found it difficult to keep his face straight.

"You are an utterly ridiculous boy, Todd!" he exclaimed. "When Wharton used the phrase, 'burying the hatchet,' he was evidently referring to patching up a quarrel. Is that not so, Wharton?"

The captain of the Remove nodded.

"Where did you bury the hatchet, Todd?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Behind the chapel, sir. I dug a deep hole, dropped the hatchet inside, and then replaced the loose turf."

Again the class yelled; and again a smile flickered on Mr. Quelch's lips.

"I can see that you acted quite innocently, Todd," he said, "and therefore you will not be punished. But your action has caused great inconvenience. I will trouble you to go and recover the hatchet, and take it to Gosling."

Alonzo was looking quite bewildered.

"I—I thought I was doing the right thing, sir," he stammered.

"No doubt," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "But in future you will be well advised not to take phrases too literally. Go!"

And Alonzo went.

Half an hour later cheerful fires were blazing in the Form-rooms, and in the Head's study.

And when morning lessons were over Greyfriars laughed loud and long over the affair of the buried hatchet!

THE SONG OF THE SUB!

By **SAMMY BUNTER**,
Junior Subb-Editor.

I say, you fellows, I've got a grievance! I have been shamefully and skurvily treated by my major.

It isn't all beer and honey being a subb-editor of Billy's "Weekly." And I've had an awful time this week—gastly! I've had to do all the donky-work, such as scrubbing the floor of the editorial sanatorium, making bouffes of rejekted manuscripts, and eggsplaining to kontributors why there stuff has not been published. These eggsplanashuns have cost me a pear of black eyes, a swollen nose, and a thick ear! Bit thick, isn't it? I thort I was in for a good thing when Billy selected me as his ritc-hand man—but I thort rong!

And I've got another grievance, deer reeders—in fact, I'm simply bubbling over with grievances!

I didn't get paid for the kollum I wrote last week. Not a soot! Not a scent! And my kollum was the only thing in the paper worth reading!

When I ticked Billy off on the subjick, he bumped me—and I feel kwite sore about it! It's all the fault of the editor of the Kompanion Papers. He ought not to have given my major the job of running a "Weekly." It should have been given to ME! I spoke to yung Tubb about it, and he said, "Kwite rite, Sammy! If you were editor of the "Weekly," it would be even funnier than it is at prezant!" Do you think he was flatterng me, deer reeders, or meerly being rong?

And now I should advise you to get out your hangkerchills, Lekawse I'm going to give you a soles-stirring ditty:

"It ain't all milk and kittels when you're working on the staff,
For you get no cash nor vittels, and yore stuff's cut down by };
And you're boozed by yore major, and you have to stand his chair,
No, it ain't no joke, I wager, when you're working on the staff!"

"Oh, it's Sammy this, and Sammy that, and it's 'Sammy, skrub the floors'!
But it's 'Sammy, you're a marvel!' when the serkulashun soars—
When the serkulashun soars, my boys, when the serkulashun soars!"

"From erly morn till late at nite, you're kept upon the go;
You're always rong, you're never rite, in Billy's eyes, you know!
When you're gay, and when you're sollum, he is fussy and he's funny;
You can write a ripping kollum, but you'll never get no munny!"

"Oh, it's Sammy this and Sammy that, and it's 'Sammy, you make me tired'!
But it's 'Sammy, you're a koff-dropp'—when their's skill and branes rekired!
When their's skill and branes rekired, my boys, when their's skill and branes rekired!"

I'm fed up to the neck, deer reeders, and if things don't alter by neckst weak—why, they'll remain as they are!

I paid Fatty Wynn a visit to St. Jim's, at the request of mi major, to get some more copy from him. (The Editor of the Kompanion Papers had wired to say that some of last week's kopy had been lost.) I found Wynn in the mood of a king, enjoying himself with a bag of tarts in front of him. If he had been at all a gentleman he wood have invited me to join him, but, as he did not, I had to help myself, much to Fatty's anger. But, dear reeders, what wood you have done in mi place? A rather unpleasant scene follof, but I left St. Jim's in kwite a normal kondishun. I don't think, tho, after all, I shall say Fatty Wynn another friendly visit.

THE POPULAR.—No. 103.

SHOULD PREFECTS BE ABOLISHED?

Some Conflicting Opinions from
Rookwood Readers of
"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY."

JIMMY SILVER: By all means abolish prefects! They are like so many puppets on a wire—neither use nor ornament!

TOMMY COOK: I am of the firm opinion that all prefects should be demolished.

TOMMY DODD: Abolish prefects? By all means! They're always causing trouble. Who ever heard of a prefect prefect?

LOVELL MINOR: it wouldn't be very tackful of me to say that prefect should be abolished bekwase you see I happen to be fagging for bulkeley of the sixth at the moment and I dont think he would like it!

MARK CARTHEW: The young jackanapes who first made this impudent suggestion is ordered to come to my study immediately! I might tell him in advance that he won't be able to sit down for some days!

ADOLPHUS SMYTHE: Yaas, begad! Kick 'em out neek an' crop! They've no idea how to dress attractively!

VALENTINE MORNINGTON: Prefects are necessary evils, and I'm afraid we must put up with them, in the same way that we put up with a cold in the head, or the apricot-jam that's served in Hall. These things—I hope the prefects will forgive me for calling them things—are sent to try us!

ALGY SILVER: Prefects are kweer fish, and, with all respect to our worthy (s)kipper, they want putting in their place!

SERGEANT KETTLE: Which I won't vencher to express no opinion, yung gents, on this here toppick!

CYRIL PEELE: I always did say that prefects were no good whatever. We can't even have a lit smoke in the study and a merry game of nap without them nosing us out, and giving us a licking or reporting us to the Head. No; if they made the Fourth prefects that would be very different. I shouldn't want them abolished then.

TUBBY MUFFIN: It is a very difcult questhun to give an answer to. In a way, prefects are corn in Egypt to a fello like me. That is, they all ways have tons of grub knocking about there cupboards, and if you happen to fag for them (I always make it a point of fagging for a prefect when he is going to give a party) you can help yourself to as much grub as you can eat. But there is still the other side of the questhun to consider. They are all ways chucking impositions about for the smallest thing, and the lickings they give are jolly painful. I've experienced many, and it has all ways been a sore point with me. However, to come back to the questhun in hand, I think, on the hole, that they had better remain where they are, and I'll have to chance the painful part of them and look forward to the feeds.

BAITING BILLY BUNTER!

By **MONTY LOWTHER**,
Official Humorist of St. Jim's.

I ran Billy Bunter to earth in Study No. 7. He was waist-deep in manuscripts, and in a moment of absent-mindedness he had perched his founts-in-pen on his nose, and poked his spectacles behind his ear.

"Hallo, Billy!" I said cheerfully. "I'm glad you're in! I've biked all the way over from St. Jim's to see you."

The editor of "Billy Bunter's Weekly" waited me to a seat on the coal-scuttle.

"You're Lowther, aren't you?" he said.

I bowed.

"Well, what do you want to see me about?"

"I've brought you a contribution," I said, taking a slip of paper from my pocket. "It's a sort of riddle."

"Don't want riddles!" said Billy Bunter curtly. "This is a real, live, go-ahead paper. We don't print stale chestnuts, like 'Why does a chicken cross the road?'"

"But this is an extra-special, eighteen-carat, gilt-edged riddle!" I urged. "It'll give your Greifriars readers a chance to use their brains—if any!"

"Billy Bunter gave a grunt.

"I hand it over," he said.

I handed him the slip of paper, and Billy Bunter, mopping the ink from his nose, proceeded to read what I had written. It ran as follows:

"My first is a day-boy at St. Jim's,
My second's contained in an athlete's limbs,
My third is the season of skating glories,
My fourth is always rejecting stories,
My fifth is a place where you dig and hoe,
My sixth is a fellow who writes, you know!
My whole is the biggest and silliest fool
Of all the mad duffers at Greifriars School!"

Billy Bunter scanned the written lines intently.

"It won't take me long to decipher this!" he said. "To begin with, the day-boy at St. Jim's is Brooke."

"Quite right."

"And an athlete's limbs contain strength."

"Try again," I said.

"Muscle?" queried Bunter.

I nodded.

"The season of skating glories is winter. The merchant who's always rejecting stories is an editor. The place where you dig and hoe is a garden. And the fellow who writes is an author. There! Have I got 'em all right?"

"Marvellous!" I said. "Now, arrange all the words in order, and see what the solution is!"

So saying, I hurried out of the study, leaving the editor of "Billy Bunter's Weekly" choking with wrath.

For the solution was as follows:

B R O O K E
M U S C L E
W I N T E R
E D I T O R
G A R D E N
A U T H O R

But I had not counted on the Four Fat Subs. When I dashed into the corridor I found that my passage was blocked completely. They were just coming in. If I had been a fly there might have been a possible chance of escape, but I wasn't. However, I measured the distance between us; then, taking the bull by the horns, so to speak, I made a gallant dash for it.

The Fat Three saw me coming straight at them, but I was in among them before they had time to realise what had happened. Fat to the right of me, fat to the left of me, fat all round me! The odds were certainly against me, for I could not even move where I was, sandwiched between the fat. Yes, it was a painful experience while it lasted, and I left more like a chewed piece of rag.

The Coming of the Cornstalk!

(Continued from page 8.)

could speak. "He's comin' into No. 5 with Toppo an' me."

"Oh!"

"Thank you very much, all the same!" said Conroy.

"Oh, all serene!" said Van Ryn. "We thought we'd ask you. You'll find a very decent chap in No. 5—chap named Rawson. Ta-ta!"

Van Ryn and Pops, thus defeated in their kind object, departed to join the junior footballers, and Townsend was left in undisputed possession of his prize. Conroy followed him to Study No. 5 in a somewhat perplexed mood. He had already heard twice of the "chap named Rawson"—once that the said Rawson was rather a rotter, and once that he was a very decent chap. He was rather curious to see Rawson.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Taking the Stranger In!

HERE was a sound of loud voices in No. 5 Study as Townsend and his companion came up the Fourth Form passage. Topham was there, and he seemed to be arguing with Rawson.

"Dash your rotten swottin'!" Topham was saying, in heated tones.

"What do you want to swot for on a half-holiday, you measly prize-hunter? I tell you that we're goin' to have a little party in the study this afternoon!"

"And I tell you you can go and eat coke!" came the deeper voice of Tom Rawson. "Studies are made to work in!"

"Look here, you outsider——"

"That's enough! Shut up while a chap's working!"

"I tell you——"

"Oh, rats! Dry up!"

Townsend frowned with vexation. The scholarship junior was a thorn in the side of his aristocratic study-mates. It was not only that the presence of a "poverty-stricken bouncer" annoyed Topsy and Poppy, but Rawson refused to allow smoking or card-playing in the study, which the "Giddy Goats" of Rockwood regarded as a very high-handed attitude on his part.

And Topsy and Poppy wouldn't have stood it for a moment but for the unfortunate fact that the burly Rawson could have knocked their heads together, and "handled" them both at once to any extent, if he had chosen.

"That's the cad I told you of, Conroy," whispered Townsend. "A regular swottin' beast, an' likes to make himself a nuisance!"

Conroy nodded without speaking.

They came into the study. Tom Rawson was seated at the table, with a pen in his hand and his books open before him. Rawson was a hard worker—a "swot," as the nuts contemptuously termed it. But Rawson was not quite in the same position as the nuts; he was poor, and had no resources beyond his scholarship allowance, and he had come to the school to work.

He glanced at the new boy as he came in.

"Hallo! New chap?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Conroy, I suppose?"

"That's right!"

"Conroy's comin' into this study," said Townsend.

"He's very welcome, as far as I'm concerned!" said Rawson.

"An' look here, you can't swot here

this afternoon, Rawson," said Townsend. "We're goin' to have a little party in honour of the new chap."

"I don't want to disturb anybody, you know," said Conroy, rather at a loss between the two.

Rawson reflected a moment, and rose to his feet.

"All serene!" he said. "I don't want to be in the way. I'll get along to the end study—Jimmy Silver won't mind."

And Rawson gathered up his books and papers and left No. 5.

"That's the cad I mentioned to you," said Townsend, not making that remark, however, till Rawson was out of hearing.

"He isn't one of us, you know—he's here on a scholarship."

"Ought to be abolished, those rotten scholarships!" said Topham. "We don't want that sort at Rockwood!"

"He seems rather an obliging chap," remarked Conroy.

"Oh, he's a rotter!" said Townsend. "I tell you he's too poor to wear decent clothes—you see how he dresses."

"I suppose a chap can't help being poor."

"Well, no, I suppose he can't. But Rockwood isn't a place for the deservin' poor!" said Townsend, with a curl of the lip. "The cad's always workin' while other chaps are havin' a good time!"

"If he's poor, I suppose that's the reason."

Townsend gave the new junior a sharp look. Conroy did not seem wholly inclined to accept his estimate of Rawson.

"Never mind that rotter!" said Topham hastily. "You're not bound to know him, though he's in the same study. We don't know him. He gets on with Jimmy Silver an' that lot, but the best set don't speak to him."

"Who's Jimmy Silver?"

"He's captain of the Fourth—a foot-baller, uproarious sort of a hooligan!" said Townsend. "Not our sort. He was on the steps when you came, with the rest of his gang—the Fistical Four, they call themselves. A rotten set!"

Conroy was silent. He had noticed the four juniors on the steps, and had rather liked their looks. He was grateful to Townsend for the kindness received at his hands; but it was already coming to his mind that he would not "pull" with Townsend. Every fellow who looked thoroughly decent seemed to be a rotter, according to Topsy.

"Well, this is the study," went on Townsend. "This chap's Topham, my study-mate. We're thinkin' of havin' a bit of a party here this afternoon, to give you a chance of makin' the acquaintance of some of the best fellows. Like the idea?"

"Ripping!" said Conroy. "It's very kind of you!"

"We'll help you unpack your things presently," went on Townsend. "I suppose you're getting ready for tea after your journey down? Toppo will look after that, an' get the fellows here, while I show you round the school a bit—what?"

And Townsend led his new friend forth.

Conroy met Smythe and Howard and Tracy of the Shell in the passage—by chance, of course—and they chatted a few minutes in a very friendly way.

He met Gower and Peale of the Fourth as he came out into the quadrangle, and was introduced to them. They joined him as Townsend piloted him about Rockwood, showing him the sights.

Conroy's glances turned several times in the direction of the football-ground, where a scratch game was going on, to the accompaniment of loud and cheery voices.

"Like to see the footer-ground?" asked Townsend at last.

"Yes, rather!"

It was only footer practice, but it was very keen. Half a dozen Modern juniors, led by Tommy Dodd, were disputing with half a dozen Classics under Jimmy Silver's lead. Conroy looked on with keen interest.

"Play footer?" asked Peale.

"Yes," Conroy nodded. "I suppose everybody joins in the games here!"

"Everybody who cares for it!" said Townsend, with a curling lip. "Our set don't go in much for games; it's hardly the thing!"

"Isn't it?" said Conroy, in astonishment.

"Besides, the footer eleven's in the hands of Silver and his friends, and we don't pull with them. In fact, we ignore that crowd."

"What's Silver?"

Townsend pointed out the captain of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver had just kicked the ball into the Modern goal.

"He can play footer," remarked Conroy.

"I suppose you'll join the junior club?" said Townsend. "There's compulsory practice twice a week, but a fellow can often dodge it, if he likes."

"I shouldn't want to dodge it, though," said Conroy. "I want to get all the footer I can, and cricket, too, when that comes along."

Topsy exchanged a rather hopeless glance with his friends. It looked as if the new junior would not be so easy to handle as they had anticipated.

The ball was in play again, and a kick lifted it out of the ground, and it came whizzing along to where the group of juniors were standing.

"Send that ball in!" shouted Jimmy Silver from the field.

Townsend & Co. shrugged their shoulders. They did not intend to touch a muddy footer—not if they knew it.

But Conroy was "on the ball" at once. He lifted it back into the field with a neat kick that landed it among the players.

Jimmy Silver's glance fell upon him, and he came over to the ropes.

"Conroy?" he asked. "I saw you come in, you know. I'm Silver of the Fourth. You play footer?"

"Yes; I've played a good bit."

"I thought so, from that kick. Would you like to join in?" asked Jimmy.

"This isn't a regular match—only practice."

Conroy glanced at his companions. His expression showed plainly that he would have liked to accept Jimmy Silver's invitation, but he felt bound to stick to the fellows who had shown him friendliness.

"Thanks!" he said. "You fellows care for it?"

Townsend shook his head promptly.

"Rotten fag, footer!" he said. "Besides, there's the party in the study."

"Yes; come on!" said Peale.

"Another time, Silver, if you don't mind," said Conroy. "I hope I shall have a chance in the footer here."

"Certainly you will, if you can play!" said Jimmy. "All serene! I'll give you the tip next time we come down. What study are you in?"

"Number Five."

"Oh, come on!" said Gower impatiently.

Conroy walked away with his friends.

"Come here, Jimmy!" shouted Lovell. Jimmy Silver rejoined the footballers, in a puzzled frame of mind. He was more and more surprised at the kindness the Nuts were showing the new boy. He would have expected Townsend to growl at a new boy being placed in his study. Yet Topsy was evidently chumming with the junior from Australia.

Conroy glanced back once or twice as he left the football-ground. But he

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made no remark, and continued his walk round with the Nuts, till they went in to tea.

Smythe & Co., including Mornington, were in the study when they arrived.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Looking for Trouble.

MORNINGTON gave the junior from Australia a far from pleasant glance as he came in with Townsend and his companions.

The arrogant Morny had already taken a dislike to the new fellow, without having even seen him.

He was quite keen enough to see that the Nuts intended to set the millionaire's son up in opposition to his noble self, and that was more than enough to irritate Mornington.

As much for the sake of irritating Morny as for any other reason, Smythe & Co. greeted Conroy in the most cordial manner.

Rawson and his obnoxious "Swotting" having been got rid of, Towny's friends had prepared a "spread" which did credit to the study.

Mornington was sulky and silent. But Conroy hardly noticed him. As a matter of fact, the dandy of the Fourth was not particularly welcome in the study just then—his dear pals could have dispensed with his company quite cheerfully. But Morny was a fellow with a dangerous temper, and the Nuts did not care actually to quarrel with him. Moreover, there was a certain amount of amusement to be found in "putting his nose out of joint."

Conroy had brought a good appetite with him from Queensland, and he sat down to tea very cheerfully. There was little of the shyness of a new boy about him—he seemed to have dropped into his place at Rookwood quite easily, and at once.

Perhaps the cordiality of his reception at the school had something to do with that. He chatted quite cheerily, though he did not talk much about himself—the Nuts, however, being quite prepared to let the millionaire's son run on as long as he liked.

Mornington found many of his own remarks deliberately unheeded, which added fuel to the fire of his sulky resentment.

His remarks, when he made them, were generally disagreeable, and Conroy glanced at him once or twice curiously. He wondered who was the handsome, sulky junior, and why the other fellows stood his ill manners.

After tea Smythe produced his cigarette-case, and smokes were passed round—a proceeding that caused Conroy to open his eyes wide.

"You'll have a fag, Conroy?" said Smythe jovially.

Conroy shook his head.

"Thanks, no!" he said.

"Oh, you'd better—they're good!" urged Smythe.

"Depend on Smythe for choosin' a good smoke," said Tracy. "You'll find 'em rippin', Conroy!"

"Is smoking allowed here?" asked Conroy, in astonishment.

There was a general chuckle from the nuts, and a sneer from Mornington.

"Not exactly allowed!" smiled Adolphus. "We smoke, all the same, though. It's rather the thing!"

"Fellow doesn't want to be a prig, you know!" remarked Peele.

Conroy flushed a little.

"I shouldn't like to be thought a prig," he said. "But that kind of thing is bad for the health in a chap who hasn't

finished growing. I don't want to spoil my form for footer."

"We rather go the pace here," explained Smythe. "Under the rose, of course. We're rather a sportin' set. As for footer, the best set in Rookwood don't have much to do with that. It's mostly the outsiders—cads like Rawson and Silver."

"I rather like that chap Silver's looks," said Conroy uncomfortably. "I must say I hope to get a whack in the footer here. No, I won't smoke, thanks. Don't let me interfere with you, of course, if it is your custom."

"Is this a Pleasant Saturday Afternoon meetin'?" asked Mornington, with a bitter sneer. "By gad, I didn't know I was comin' hers for a sermon." "Oh, dry up, Morny! Let the new chap do as he likes. He hasn't learned our ways yet."

"I don't like prigs," said Mornington. Conroy's eyes gleamed a little.

"I don't call it priggish to keep oneself fit," he said.

"What the dickens do you know about customs among decent people?" said Mornington contemptuously. "Where is it you come from—Borneo or New Guinea?"

"Where I come from doesn't matter, but there we don't insult strangers who've given no offence," said Conroy quietly. "If my ways aren't agreeable here, I'm quite ready to get out."

"You won't do anythin' of the sort!" exclaimed Smythe. "Shut up, Mornington! If you can't be civil to Conroy, you can clear off!"

"Yes, do dry up, Morny!" urged Townsend.

Mornington's lip curled. He was in a sulky and savage temper, and he intended to quarrel with the new junior. And Conroy's quiet manner gave him an impression that the Australian was timid.

"I'm not going to shut up!" said Mornington. "If Conroy can't drop into our ways, we don't want a skeleton at the feast. The fellow's a rank outsider, and I want nothin' to do with him."

"You needn't have anything to do with me," suggested Conroy mildly. "I feel quite the same on my side."

Mornington sneered. It looked as if the Colonial could not be drawn into a quarrel, and Morny was determined upon it.

"Well, that isn't how I should answer if a fellow called me an outsider!" he said scornfully.

"Indeed! How would you answer?" said Conroy, unmoved.

"I should call him a liar!"

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind making a row in another fellow's quarters?" suggested Conroy. "I'd rather not!"

"Any excuse is better than none for a funk, I suppose."

"As a matter of fact," said Conroy calmly, "you are a liar!"

"What?"

And a rotten, ill-tempered, ill-bred cad into the bargain, since you seem to want plain English!"

Smythe & Co. were looking worried, but they chuckled at that. The expression on Mornington's face was quite entertaining.

The dandy of the Fourth jumped up.

"Will you have it here, or will you come into the gym?" he asked.

"Am I going to fight you?" said Conroy, not looking at all alarmed.

"Yes, you cad!"

"Look here, Morny—" protested Townsend.

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Mornington.

"I don't like the new cad, and I'm going to lick him, if he's got the pluck to stand up to me!"

Conroy rose also.

"I'm sorry this has happened, you fellows," he said. "I didn't want a row."

"It's only Morny's rotten temper," growled Smythe. "Morny thinks he's the only pebble on the beach, and he isn't. I hope you'll lick him."

"I'll try," said Conroy grimly.

"But, look here, you've had a journey to-day, an' you're tired," said Topham. The Australian smiled.

"I'm not tired," he said. "Fresh as a daisy. If the fellow wants trouble, he's really come to the right party for it."

"I'm waitin' for you," sneered Mornington.

He had thrown open the door.

"Come on, Conroy," said Smythe, throwing his cigarette into the fire, and slipping his arm through the new junior's. "We'll see you through. Come on, you fellows!"

And the Nuts, reluctantly disposing of their cigarettes, followed Mornington and the Australian from the study. At the doorway they met Jimmy Silver & Co. coming in to tea after football. Mornington's black frown and Conroy's flush caught Jimmy's eye at once.

"Trouble!" he asked Townsend, as the latter passed him.

"Morny's picked a row with the new kid!" growled Towny. "They're going to fight it out in the gym. I hope Morny'll be licked!"

"We'll come along and see him licked," grinned Lovell.

And the Fistical Four, and several other fellows, joined the procession to the gym. Dick Van Ryn tapped Conroy on the elbow.

"Want a second?" he asked.

"I'm Conroy's second!" said Townsend loudly. "We're seein' him through, Dutchy."

"All serene. We'll look on," said the South African cheerily.

Quite a little army poured into the gym. Far from pleasant looks were cast on Mornington. It was considered on all sides that it was the worst of taste to fasten a fight upon the new junior on his first day in the school. But Mornington was quite impervious to public opinion.

"Gloves?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, of course," said Smythe.

"Hand them over. Here you are, Conroy!"

And Mornington and the Australian, in their shirt-sleeves, donned the gloves, and faced one another, and Adolphus Smythe took out his handsome gold watch to keep time.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Morny Meets His Match.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. looked on with considerable interest.

Mornington was strong and active, and he was a good boxer, and, in spite of his surly temper and arrogant ways, he had plenty of pluck. But the Australian looked as if he could take care of himself. The tussle seemed likely to be of more than usual interest to the spectators.

"Time!" said Smythe.

The fight began. Mornington attacked at once, hotly. The general condemnation of his action, which he could read in all faces, only made him determined to give his opponent as sound a thrashing as he could bestow upon him.

But he soon discovered that he had not set himself an easy task.

In less than a minute it was quite apparent that Conroy knew something about boxing—quite as much as the dandy of the Fourth, if not a little more. And there was no hesitation about him—

no sign of "funk" in his set face and clear, steady eyes.

He gave ground a little at first, and as Mornington came on, hard and fast, he suddenly found his guard swept away, and a hard glove rapped upon his nose, and as Morry staggered a little, the left followed the right, and Mornington went over backwards with a crash.

"Well hit!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Right on the wicket!" said Lovell. "Bravo, young 'un!"

Mornington lay on the floor, surprised and dazed; and Smythe, with a grin, began to count.

Nobody had offered to act as a second for Mornington. Nobody was displeased to see him on the floor.

But he was not to be counted out. He was up again before Adolphus had reached six.

He came on to the attack with a savage rush.

"Look out!" murmured Van Ryn.

But the Con-stalk was looking out.

The fighting was furious for the next minute. Both parties received punishment that would have been very severe but for the gloves, and was quite severe enough with them.

"Time!" rapped out Smythe.

Conroy dropped his hand and stepped back at the call. But Mornington was too furious to heed. He came on, hitting out savagely, and the new junior, taken by surprise, went headlong to the floor.

There was a howl from the Rookwood juniors at once.

"Foul!"

"You cad, Morry!"

"Foul!"

Townsend rushed forward to pick up his principal. Mornington stepped back, his face flushing hotly. He had forgotten himself for the moment.

"You rotten worm!" roared Lovell. "Can't you fight fair?"

"I—I didn't mean

—"

"This fight isn't going on!" said Jimmy Silver angrily.

"Collar that cad, and give him a frog's-march round the gym!"

Conroy staggered up.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "Let's get on! Let him alone!"

"He ain't fit to touch, dear boy," said Townsend.

"I'd rather fight it out! Let him come on," said Conroy. "We won't have many more rounds!"

"Well, let him have his way!" granted Jimmy Silver.

The combatants faced one another again, Conroy's eyes gleaming. The foul blow had hurt him; but it angered him more than it hurt him. As Morry did not heed the call of time, there were to be no more rounds, and Smythe put his gold watch away. It was a contest of endurance now, in which the slim

Mornington did not seem to stand so much chance as the sturdy new junior.

Mornington, only rendered more silky and savage by the scorn of the Rookwood juniors, came on with bitter fury. His blows, where they fell, were hard and heavy. But Conroy's blows came like lightning, and the dandy of the Fourth was driven right round the ring, compelled to yield ground, in spite of his savage determination.

In a few minutes he was hard put to it to defend, without attacking his sturdy adversary.

But he fought on with bitter determination, till a heavy drive from the right laid him gasping on his back.

Conroy stood panting, waiting for him to rise.

ten, felled by a terrific right-hander, lay gasping on the floor, unable to rise.

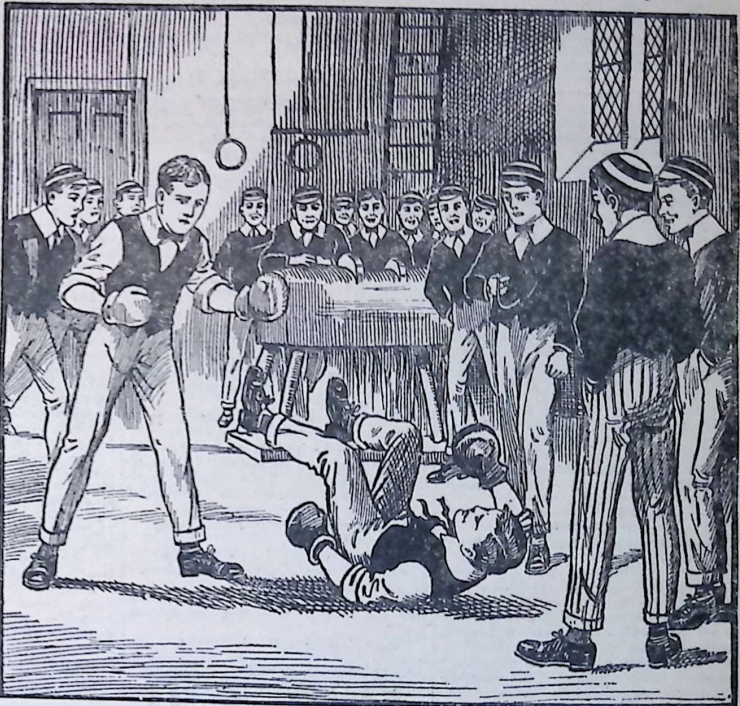
Adolphus Smythe jacked out his watch, and counted ten with a grinning face. But he might have counted a hundred. Mornington could not get up without assistance.

"Conroy wins!" said Smythe, putting away his watch. "Congratulations, old chap. Let me help you on with your jacket."

It was Jimmy Silver who helped Mornington to his feet. The dandy of the Fourth stood unsteadily, looking dazed.

"Here's your jacket!" said Jimmy Silver gruffly.

Mornington, without a word, slipped on his jacket, hurling the gloves to the floor. He walked unsteadily out of the



Mornington fought on with bitter determination till a heavy drive from the right laid him, gasping, on his back. Conroy stood panting over his opponent, waiting for him to rise. Smythe pulled out his watch and commenced to count. By the time he reached ten, Mornington was still on his back, staring at the ceiling. (See chapter 6.)

"Finished, Morry?" sneered Smythe.

Mornington gasped.

"No, by gad! I'll lick the cad yet!"

"You don't look much like doing it,"

grinned Townsend.

Mornington staggered to his feet. The fall had shaken him, and the bitter consciousness of defeat was already creeping upon him. But he came on again with undiminished fury.

The next few minutes were, as Lovell said, quite a circus.

It was quite clear by this time that Mornington was no match for the Australian; but he would not admit it, and he fought on till his strength was expended to the last ounce.

He was knocked right and left, and went down several times. But each time he came on again with redoubled fury. But the end came at last, and Morning-

gym. He had had as thorough a licking as any fellow could have, and nobody had any sympathy to waste upon him.

The Nuts surrounded the victor in a congratulatory crowd.

Conroy looked very red and a little bruised, but otherwise he seemed fresh enough, even after that gruelling encounter.

He was walked off in triumph by Smythe & Co.

"That kid's got something in him," remarked Jimmy Silver, as the Fistical Four made their way to the end study.

"I'm blessed if I know why Smythe has chummed with him! I fancy they won't pull together for long. I suppose Morry's nose was put out of joint, and he cut up rusty."

"Never been so pleased to see a cad

“Well, a chap doesn't want to chip in,” he said. “Conroy looks rather mean. He can see things for himself. He won't join in their bet unless he's that sort.”

“Well, a new kid doesn't know the ropes, and, of course, they'll tell him it's the thing at Rockwood. Still, a fellow can't very well shove in.”

And Van Ryn went into his own study, still looking very thoughtful. Jimmy Silver & Co. went on their way, somewhat thoughtful, too. They knew very well what would be going on behind the locked door of Townsend's study, and they wondered how the new fellow would take it.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
A Slight Mistake.

SMYTHE & Co. were in great spirits in Study No. 5. They had been very pleased by the defeat of Mornington, who had gone to sulk in his own study, not in the least missed by his friends.

Smythe's opinion was that it was high time Morny was taken down a peg or two, and certainly he had been taken down this time with a vengeance. Moreover, the Nuts were well aware that a sturdy fighting-man would be a very valuable addition to their select circle, none of the Giddy Goats of Rockwood being very conspicuous in that line. It was open to Conroy to become quite a shining light in that noble society.

“Feelin' pretty fit—what?” asked Smythe.

Conroy smiled.

“Yes; I'm all right,” he said.

“Done a lot of scrapperin', perhaps?” said Peele.

“Yes. We lived in the bush at one time, and I sometimes had scraps with fellows twice as big as Mornington,” said Conroy cheerily. “We roughed it a bit in those days, and roughing it hardens a chap.”

“Before your pater made his pile, I suppose,” said Smythe. “We've heard about your pater, you know.”

Conroy looked astonished.

“Have you?” he asked.

“Yes, rather! The name's quite well known in this country,” said Smythe, with a smile. “A very prominent man out there, I understand.”

“I don't know about very prominent,” said Conroy. “My father's in a good position, but I hardly expected to hear that his name was known in England.”

“What about a little game to pass the time?” asked Townsend. “We must do something to amuse Conroy.”

Towny spoke as if a “little game” was quite a new thing to the select circle of Giddy Goats.

“Well, that's rather a good idea,” assented Smythe. “Anybody got any cards?”

“I believe there's some in the study,” said Topham gravely. “I'll look, anyway.”

“Yaas, do. What games do you play, Conroy?”

“I've played card games—round games—at Christmas,” said Conroy, with a somewhat puzzled look. “I shouldn't

have thought cards were allowed here, though.”

Smythe smiled indulgently.

“We allow ourselves some things that the books don't know about,” he explained. “Not that we're a gambler's set, or anything of that sort, of course, but a little flutter once in a way does a chap good.”

Conroy looked very grave.

“I'm sorry,” he said. “I can't join you!”

Smythe's eyes began to gleam. Peele grinned. Adolphus' great capture was not turning out a very valuable prize, after all.

“I'm sure you don't mean that, Conroy,” said Adolphus, still smoothly. “You don't want to be a prig. Be a sport, an' join in. You can't be afraid of losing a little money.”

“I can't afford to lose money, so far as that goes,” said Conroy. “But that isn't my reason.”

“You can't afford!” repeated Townsend, with a stare.

“No, I suppose a chap can't do much gambling on an allowance of five shillings a week,” said Conroy. “But I shouldn't gamble, in any case.”

Smythe simply blinked.

“You—you mean to say that your pater only allows you five shillings a week, and he a millionaire?” he gasped.

Conway stared.

“A millionaire?” he repeated. “My father's not a millionaire!”

“Wha-a-a-at!”

“N-n-not a millionaire!” stuttered Townsend.

Conroy looked round at the startled and exasperated faces, and understanding dawned upon his mind. He realised now the reason why Smythe & Co. had swamped him with kind attentions that day. His face hardened a little, and a gleam came into his eyes.

“Did you think my father was a millionaire?” he asked very quietly.

“But—but he is!” stammered Smythe, too surprised and chagrined to think of concealment now. “I saw it in the paper—Mr. Gerard Conroy, the celebrated financier and millionaire—”

“My father's name is John Conroy.”

“Oh, gad!”

Smythe & Co. sat limply, blinking at Conroy. Townsend gave his great leader a savage look.

“Oh, you silly chump!” he said. “Just like you to get the wrong pig by the ear!”

Towny was naturally indignant. He

had wasted an afternoon on the new fellow—had asked him to be put into his study, and he wasn't a millionaire, after all, and had an allowance much smaller than Towny's own. It was really very hard.

Conroy smiled rather grimly.

“You seem to have made a mistake,” he remarked. “There is a well-known Australian millionaire named Conroy, but he is no relation of mine.”

Adolphus recovered himself a little. All his friendly feelings towards the new junior had vanished. Adolphus' feeling was that he had been taken in and imposed upon, and Adolphus was exasperated and enraged.

“You don't see why it should, you confounded outsider!” he snapped. “Do you think we want to chum up with a fellow who may be a dashed bushranger, for all we know? Prechin' at us, by gad! Never smokes—never plays cards for money. Can't afford to, I fancy. You, confounded cheeky, priggish cad!”

“You've shoved yourself into this study under false pretences,” growled Townsend, “and the sooner you get out the better!”

Conroy's lip curled scornfully.

“Well, of all the rotters!” he exclaimed.

Smythe jumped up.

“None of your cheek, you confounded nobody!” he roared. “You swindler! outsider, get out!”

“Kick him out!” said Topham savagely.

The disappointment was too much for the good manners of the Giddy Goats, such as they were. They were in a state of intense exasperation, and they closed round Conroy with hostile looks.

Conroy did not speak. He stretched out his hand, and took hold of Adolphus' Smythe's somewhat prominent nose and tweaked it.

“Yurrregg!” gurgled Smythe helplessly. “Die on the cad!”

The disappointed and enraged Nuts piled on Conroy. With a sweep of a sturdy arm he sent Townsend and Peele staggering, and knocked Topham into the fender. Then he opened the door. He paused in the doorway and looked back.

“Anything more to say beside goodbye?” asked Conroy cheerfully.

There was no reply, and Conroy walked away down the passage. Townsend kicked the door savagely shut, and the next ten minutes were occupied by the Nuts of Rockwood in telling the egregious Adolphus what they thought of him.

Van Ryn and Pons were at prep in their study when a tap came at the door. Conroy looked in.

“You fellows asked me to share this study,” said Conroy. “Does that offer still hold good?”

“Yes, rather, if you like,” said Van Ryn at once, and Pons nodded. “Trot in!”

“But what about Towny?”

“I don't seem to pull with the fellows in No. 5,” said Conroy. “I'd rather dig here, if you'll have me.”

“Welcome as the flowers in May,” said Van Ryn, laughing. “This study isn't quite as nutty as No. 5, but we'll try to make you comfy.”

Jimmy Silver smiled the next day when he heard that the new junior had already chummed out of Townsend's study. The Giddy Goats of Rockwood had lost a recruit, and the Colonial Co. had gained one, and for a long time there were recriminations among Adolphus & Co. on account of Smythe's little mistake.

THE END.

(Now turn to my Chat for the title of next week's story.—Ed.)

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A MARKED MAN.

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THREADS OF THE STORY.

Adrian Vaughan, after having served five years, leaves Dartmoor Prison, bent on retaining his old position in the world, but he finds that all of his old acquaintances had joined the great army against him, including a very old chum, Harry Leigh, and he vows to get his revenge on those who were once his friends.

He falls in with an old acquaintance of the prison, by name of Demottson, and secures a suite of splendidly furnished rooms, where they intend to plan a great scheme. Later Vaughan appears before the public as a singer and musician, and makes a great name for himself as Paul Rutherford.

Demottson informs his partner that he has discovered that Leishman is really Mr. Leigh, the criminals' moneylender.

They employ the services of John Firth, who is the double of the ex-convict, and it is arranged that the latter helps Firth to discover the whereabouts of Judas Leishman, a man who had wronged him in the past.

Vaughan pays Leigh a visit, and threatens to reveal to the world his secret if Leigh does not hand over to his care Harry, who is really Harry Firth. Leigh has to agree, and Harry is taken to Vaughan's house in Flatney, and kept a prisoner there.

(Now read on.)

THE LAST WILL!

A MOMENT later the two detectives, following on the excited Jevons, themselves stood in the presence of death. Instinctively their hurried whispers were hushed to an awed and reverent silence as they stared in horror at what but a few moments before had breathed and lived as vitally as they.

Save for a solitary green-shaded electric standard perched on the table, the great room was heavy with dim, mysterious shadows. Justin Leigh lay half in, half out of the small circle of light, his legs and arms drawn up convulsively as though his last moments had been of intensest agony. His shrunken face patched in purple and grey, while the gaping lips were flecked with dead-white foam.

Locke leant over the body and examined the contents of the white paper clutched and crumpled in the nerveless right hand. "Cyanide of potassium!" he muttered, tracing the collar and stained shirtfront, and bending his ear in the vain hope that a spark of life might yet remain.

"He's gone, I suppose?"

Barton Dawe moved the lamp so that the green rays fell full on the ghostly, contorted face.

"Yes, I'm afraid we've come too late. Jevons, 'phone for Dr. Mallett. Ask him to come at once. Then return to me."

As the door closed behind the man Locke raised a warning hand.

"Let his past die with him, Dawe. No good is gained by a public scandal."

The Scotland Yard man nodded.

"No one knows except you and I. He must have felt the net tightening round him."

"I say, but not so many hours ago. Relations were getting very strained between us. Apparently he feared my interest for his son, and the steps I might take to discover Harry Leigh would mean the lifting of the curtain on a dark and terrible past. Besides, there are more players in this human

drama than you and I and he. We can't tell yet what prompted him so swiftly to such a mad act. Apparently he was busy writing when we came."

He glanced towards the table, where a sheet of paper lay, with the ink still glistened upon it.

"The man will tell us. He was the last to see him alive."

Jevons came quietly in.

"I've 'phoned for the doctor, sir; he will be here in a minute or two."

"Thank you, Jevons."

Locke rose and stood beside the table.

"Tell us, Jevons, how did this happen?"

The man steeled himself by gripping the back of a chair.

"I was busy writing when I came in and announced you. As soon as I said, 'Inspector Barton Dawe and Mr. Ferrers Locke,' he sprang up, pale and trembling."

"Wait—wait a moment, Jevons! I can't see the point of your narrative. I saw his left hand, sir, so to his heart. He swayed, and I thought an attack was coming on. I went to the sideboard to pour out some brandy, then I heard a choking, gurgling noise, and before I could reach him he had fallen on the floor. I saw the paper and the white powder, and knew the poor master had taken poison."

"Why didn't you shout—call aloud for help? Waiting in the vestibule, we should have heard you."

The fellow passed a hot tongue over his dry lips.

"I tried to shout, sir. My mouth went dry; I couldn't make myself heard. When I tried to lift him he was crooning badly; then his head fell back, I knew he was dead."

"Thank you, Jevons; that will do. Be ready to admit Dr. Mallett when he rings."

The man went out, glad enough to be out of the presence of the lifeless thing whose glazed eyes stared up at him from the floor.

Ferrers Locke covered the face with a handkerchief; then, as he stood up, his glance fell mechanically on the last words written by Justin Leigh.

"In addition to the provisions already made in my will, I bequeath a further sum of one hundred and fifteen thousand pounds to my adopted son, Harry Firth, the child of John and Rosamund Firth, and I wi—"

Here the pencil draft of the indented codicil came to an abrupt end. A gasp of surprise came involuntarily from Ferrers Locke.

Harry Firth, not Harry Leigh at all. What mystery, indeed, inexplicable, had gone down to the grave of silence with the unwritten words of the self-dain man?

He handed the document to Barton Dawe.

"With no one to give me permission, I take upon myself, as the friend of Justin Leigh's son, the responsibility of looking through these papers, lest later on they might fall into unscrupulous hands," he remarked decisively, and tapped the open deed-book that stood beside the desk on which Justin Leigh had been writing.

Save one thing, there was little in it material to the issue—the guarding of Harry's welfare. This, an unsealed envelope, contained two slips of blue paper, the marriage certificate of John Firth and Rosamund Ponds, and the birth certificate of the child, "Harry Robert."

Barely had Locke finished making copies of the contents of Dr. Mallett appeared. His swift examination merely confirmed the detective's suspicion—that death—almost instantaneous death—was due to poisoning by cyanide of potassium.

In the excitement and rush that followed,

Locke, as the family's greatest friend, had to see to everything. There were the police to be informed, the inquest to be arranged for, lawyers to be communicated with, and a hundred and one other duties incidental to such an occurrence.

The morning that followed found the young detective pretty well worn out. Dawe had gone back to London, to say just as little as he possibly could, so that the memory of the dead might be shielded and the interests of the living watched.

Into the Trap!

LOCKE was standing by the library window, staring over the front drive, and hammering his brain for some clue to Harry's whereabouts.

A thorough and systematic search of the house had failed to bring to light anything to help him. From the moment of his leaving in the big Daimler car, with his father, he had been seen by no one; for the present, at any rate, it looked as if Leigh's hiding-place for the young fellow must remain an impenetrable mystery.

Outside, from a leaden sky, the rain poured down in torrents. Locke's nose few happy thoughts were broken by the sight of a tall man who came hurriedly along the drive and halted suddenly as his eyes rested on the many closely-drawn blinds.

The detective drew back and watched him curiously. There was something familiar about the tall, well-set-up form, the massive head wreathed with a wealth of lustrous, dark, curly hair, and the strong, good looking face.

Then he placed the newcomer.

"Paul Rutherford, the very fellow I want to see!" he muttered. "Now, whatever link in this strange chain of circumstances brings him into touch with Justin Leigh for I can't doubt that he expects to see the owner of the house, seeing that the news of Leigh's death, so far, has not been made public."

Again Rutherford had stopped; this time not a score of yards from the hall door. Locke watched him draw back, half-turn, as though to retrace his steps, then once more he glanced searchingly along the whole front of the house, the dreary, blind-drawn appearance of which evidently puzzled him.

It was then, as he passed his hand perplexedly across his high forehead and inadvertently pushed back the soft felt hat, shadowing his face, that the detective had a plain view of his visitor. His eyes, cold, brilliantly piercing, and suspicious, alone held his attention.

"Rutherford, yet not Rutherford at all!" he mused jubilantly. "This Rutherford is Adrian Vaughan. I am on the right track at last!"

As the man's steps sounded in the porch, Locke rang for Jevons, and his fingers worked quickly through the pockets of his clothing.

"Jevons, there is a certain gentleman waiting at the front door," he said, in a low voice. "I get out of your clothes, in my self. I particularly want to let him in myself. Get out of your clothes, cease, and put on mine. I shall show the gentleman into the morning-room, and shall be with him, perhaps, some little time. Take that."

He passed over one of the brace of small pocket-pistols which he always carried. "If I ring once, hurry round to the front window, break the glass, and level the weapon at the man's head; if I ring twice, merely telephone for the police."

While he was speaking Locke was busy, with the aid of a little grease-paint and a couple of liners, transforming his own face into a semblance of Jevons'. Now, in the other's clothes, he hastened to answer the insistent ringing of the front-door bell.

(To be continued.)

WRITE TO YOUR EDITOR ABOUT IT!



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. ADDRESS: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

FOR NEXT FRIDAY:

The first long complete story is of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, and is entitled:

"SAVING THE HEAD!" By Frank Richards.

This is a splendid yarn, and deals with the further adventures of the Famous Five of the Remove. Vernon-Smith, expelled from the school, keeps his word, and returns. With him comes his father, a hard, almost merciless business man, who has a hold over the Head of Greyfriars. It is Vernon-Smith, senior, who sets the ball rolling, and the Head finds himself in a very awkward position. Bob Cherry solves the problem, and in the end succeeds in

"SAVING THE HEAD!"

The surprising thing which follows will interest you all.

The second grand complete school story is of the chums of Rookwood, and is entitled:

"THE COLONIAL CO. IN TROUBLE!" By Owen Conquest.

In this story we find the newly formed Colonial Co. in danger of being "wiped out" as soon as it is formed. But "Uncle James" and his chums take a hand in the business, and in doing so we have the makings of a very fine story. You will like this, too.

"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY."

The third issue of this wonderful supplement will be in next week's "Popular," and I can again say it is going to be grand. His Four Fat Subs are working hard at their respective jobs, and there is splendid "copy" from all the schools. The juniors of St. Jim's and Rookwood have a show, although Billy Bunter belongs to Greyfriars, and he is editor of the "Weekly."

POPLETS.

Again, too, there will be a fresh lot of examples for the Ten Prizes of Five Shillings offered in connection with "Poplets." We shall soon be having the result of the First Competition, and then some of you are going to be lucky!

Rules.

1. All "Poplets" must be written on one side of a POSTCARD, and not more than two "Poplets" can be sent in by one reader each week.
2. The postcards must be addressed: "Poplets," No. 1, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.
3. No correspondence can be entered into in connection with "Poplets."
4. The Editor's opinion on any matter which may arise is to be accepted as final and legally binding. This condition will be strictly enforced, and readers can only enter the competition on this understanding.
5. I guarantee that every effort will be thoroughly examined by a competent staff of judges. PROVIDED that the effort is sent in on a POSTCARD and that it is received on or before the date of closing.

Now that you fully understand the rules we will talk about the prizes and competition. Select two of the following examples, and make up two sentences of TWO, THREE or FOUR words having some bearing on the example. ONE word must commence with ONE letter contained in the example. Thus: THE POPULAR.—No. 108.

Example: Billy Bunter's appetite.

Poplet: Leads him To steal, or, Accounts for food shortage.

My chums will agree that that is quite simple to understand!.. Now here are the examples for "Poplets" Competition No. 2, and all efforts must reach me not later than February 17th, 1921.

"POPLETS" COMPETITION No. 2.

Examples:

Why Bolsover Grinned,	Jimmy Silver's	
Bunter's Little Ways.	Chuckle.	
A Late Pass.	Smythe the Dude.	
When Wingate	Monty Lowther's Puns.	
	Tow-rows When.	
All Skinner's Fault.	Mr. Ralton's Cane.	
Bunter On Horseback.	Billy's Fat Subs.	

Ten prizes of five shillings each will be awarded to readers who send in the best efforts. Why shouldn't it be YOU? Try your luck, boys and girls.

FOURPENNE A WEEK.

If you said you had fourpence a week to spend, people would tell you that you can't buy much for fourpence nowadays. They're wrong, for you can buy quite a lot with fourpence.

And this is what you will buy—fourpennyworth of pleasure. For instance, three-halfpence of the fourpence buys the "Popular." That is worth three-halfpence, isn't it? You've grand complete school stories, a four-page supplement, and a fine detective serial.

In the "Popular" there is a little competition which offers you a chance of winning five shillings. To enter that competition you have to spend one penny—on a stamp to send in your postcard.

That leaves three-halfpence. Well, what could be better than the "Magnet Library"? There you have twenty pages of all-school stories and articles. Harry Wharton & Co. the famous chums of Greyfriars, and the inimitable Billy Bunter, will keep you amused for hours. Then there is the supplement edited by the boys themselves—the "Greyfriars Herald"—four pages of fun and fiction, which can only be equally by "Billy Bunter's Weekly."

That is how fourpence a week can be spent in securing good value. Fourpence spent in that manner, too, is not by any means wasted.

If you have fourpence to spend this week, try as I suggest. I'll guarantee you won't be sorry. Remember, three-halfpence for the "Popular," one penny for "Poplets" Competition, and three-halfpence for the "Magnet Library."

THE BOYS' FRIEND 4d. LIBRARY.

I cannot close my Chat this week without a word concerning the magnificent numbers of the above-named Library, which are now on sale at all newsagents. You have something to choose from: There is a grand school story, a ripping yarn of Indians and Buffalo Bill, a tale of the footer field by famous Arthur S. Hardy, and a magnificent romance of Robin Hood, the outlaw.

Readers who want something really fine to read during the coming week-end cannot do better than buy one, or better still, all these "BOYS' FRIEND 4d. LIBRARIES."

POPULAR FAVOURITES!

No. 2.—TOM MERRY.



JUNIOR CAPTAIN OF ST. JIM'S SCHOOL.

Tom Merry came to St. Jim's in company with Harry Manners, Monty Lowther, and several "lesser lights" when Clavering School was shut down. The manner of Tom's arrival even now brings a smile to the juniors, for he was dressed in a neat velvet suit. His aunt, Miss Priscilla Primrose, accompanied him to the school, and by alluding to him as "dearest Tommy" gave the juniors the impression that he was a milkop.

When his aunt had departed from the school, however, Tom Merry quickly disillusioned the juniors—especially Jack Blake & Co. Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, and Harry Manners soon became known as the "Terrible Three," a name which has stuck to them ever since.

In this capacity the three juniors formed a rival Co. to Blake & Co. of Study No. 6, and many have been the harmless escapades in which the Co.'s have entered.

Tom Merry soon came to the conclusion that he was the one to lead the junior school, and after a time he was elected captain. His idea of what was right and wrong did not coincide with such as Ernest Levison, but they had to climb down and more or less do as they were told. In stamping out the bad habits of some of the juniors, Tom was ably backed up by Study No. 6 and his own chums.

To-day Tom Merry is the most popular junior in the Lower School, captain of both cricket and football elevens, and a great favourite of Eric Kidare.

This is his signature:

Your Editor
Tom Merry

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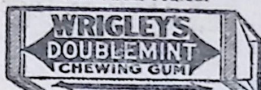
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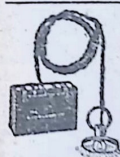
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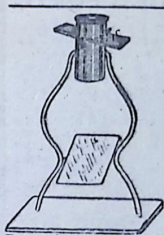
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