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Rookwood St. Jims



THE SPY! MORNINGTON WATCHES KIT ERROLL'S MEETING WITH "GENTLEMAN JIM" IN THE WOODMAN'S HUT!
(A dramatic incident from the long complete tale of Rookwood School inside.)

The End of His Tether!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Famous Chums of Rookwood. — By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Strange News!

JIMMY SILVER—the rotter!" Mornington of the Fourth muttered the words savagely, as he stood looking out of the window of Study No. 4.

It was a bright afternoon but the shadows were lengthening in the old quadrangle of Rookwood.

On Little Side a cricket match was in progress. Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, was at the wicket, facing a Bagshot bowler. Erroll, the new junior at Rookwood, was at the other end.

Jimmy Silver's name, in a roar from the juniors round the cricket-field, had reached Mornington's ears, as he stood with a moody brow at his study window.

Jimmy was putting up a great innings for his side, and a hit to the boundary had been the cause of the roar.

"Good old Jimmy! Well hit!"

"Good man, Jimmy Silver!"

Mornington stared over the beeches in the direction of the cricket-ground. Rookwood were beating Bagshot, though Pankley and Co., of Bagshot, were putting up a good game. And Mornington, who was as good a cricketer as any junior at Rookwood, when he liked, was scowling in his study—out of it!

The batsmen were running again now, the fieldsmen leather-hunting. It was a single, and it brought Kit Erroll, the new boy, to the batting end.

Erroll, the new boy, whom he had made his special enemy—Erroll was reaping glory in the Bagshot match, as well as Jimmy Silver. Everything seemed to Mornington to be going wrong. His persecution of the new boy, popular in the Fourth, had brought him into general odium among his Form-fellows. Even Peele and Townsend and Topham, his pals, were tired of it.

As he looked at the handsome young cricketer a doubt forced itself into Mornington's mind. Was the accusation he had made against Erroll true, after all? He had believed it. But had he been led too far by the bitter dislike of the fellow—led into making himself unpopular, disliked—into even a bore, as Townsend pathetically complained?

He wondered.

There was a timid tap at the door, and it opened. Mornington swung round impatiently. His dark brow grew darker at the sight of the fag who entered.

It was Murphy of the Second Form. "Erbert," as he was called, the little waif whom Mornington had rescued from want, and brought to Rookwood.

Erbert paused as he caught Mornington's scowl.

Deeply grateful as he was, Erbert had learned that his patron had a very uncertain temper, and he never knew how to take him.

"So it's you!" snapped Mornington.

"Yes, sir!" faltered Erbert.

"You young ass!" said Mornington. "A pretty pickle you've got me into with your silly yarns about Erroll!"

Erbert started. "They wasn't yarns, sir," he said steadily. "I told you the truth."

"Was it the truth?" said Mornington savagely.

"You don't think as I'd tell you a lie, sir?" stammered Erbert, his troubled little face growing crimson.

"Well, I don't see why you should. But you made a bloomer—at least, I think so now!" snapped Mornington. "You told me you recognised Erroll's father—Captain Erroll—as a criminal you had known in some low den you used to live in before I found you."

"So I did," said Erbert stubbornly. "It's true. I knowed 'im as Gentleman Jim, the cracksmán, and he ain't no more a Captain Erroll than I am!"

"You stick to that?"

"I does!" said Erbert. "It's true, I ain't got nothin' agin Erroll—he seems to be a right good sort; but it's true that the man wot brought him 'ere was Gentleman Jim, the forger and cracksmán, what I knowed once at Dirty Dick's tenement behind the Easton Road."

"He called himself Captain Erroll, of the Loamshire Regiment."

"It was a lie, then!"

"Look here!" said Mornington savagely. "I believed your yarn, an' accused Erroll to his face. I got an old paper with a picture of Captain Erroll, from a photograph taken after he got his distinction at the Front. Well, that was a genuine picture of the genuine Captain Erroll, and it's as like Erroll of the Fourth as one pea is like another."

"I don't understand it, sir," said Erbert. "If Erroll is really Captain Erroll's son, I don't see why Gentleman Jim should bring 'im to Rookwood."

Could there be a personal resemblance between Gentleman Jim the swell mobsmán, and Captain Erroll, the Honduras planter who had become an officer in the King's Army? It was absurd to suppose it.

"Sides, that there photograph don't prove nothing for Erroll," said Erbert, after a pause.

"It proves that he's the son of the real Captain Erroll, I suppose!" snapped Mornington.

"It proves that he ain't the son of the man what brought him 'ere. That man ain't anything like Erroll to look at!"

Mornington started.

"By gad!" he exclaimed, "I didn't specially notice the man who was with Erroll when he came—not specially. Do you mean to say that he's not like Erroll?"

"Nothin' like 'im!" said Erbert. "Then he can't be the Captain Erroll whose photograph was in the paper!" exclaimed Mornington.

"I've said all along he ain't!" "But—but— Oh, it beats me!" exclaimed Mornington restlessly. "If Erroll is the son of Gentleman Jim, how comes he to resemble Captain Erroll so closely? I tell you they're as like as two peas."

Erbert shook his head. That problem was too much for him. "When you knew the cracksmán in that den you spoke of, did he have a son?" asked Mornington.

"I 'eard so," said Erbert. "I never saw 'im. He never came to Dirty Dick's. But I remember now I 'eard 'im spoken of."

Mornington knitted his brows. His case against Erroll had been completely knocked on the head by the production of the photograph of Captain Erroll. The resemblance between the two had been striking.

And yet— "I come 'ere to tell you somethin', sir," said Erbert diffidently.

"Well, what is it?" said Mornington impatiently.

"He's come 'ere!" "Eh? Who's come here?" "Gentleman Jim!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Mornington's Chance.

MORNINGTON ceased his restless pacing, and stared at the fag, his eyes gleaming.

"By gad!" exclaimed Mornington. "By gad! We've got Captain Erroll's photograph! If this man's nothing like it, as you say, we can show him up! I'll face him before the Head, if necessary. Is he at the school?"

"No, he ain't come to the school. But I've seed him."

"Where? How?"

"I was down in Coombe with Jones minimus and Snooks, bein' a 'arf-holiday," explained the fag. "I seed him come out of the station."

"Then he must have come down to see Erroll!" exclaimed Mornington.

"He will come to Rookwood!" "He ain't coming," said Erbert. "I watched him go down the street, and I thought he was comin' to Rookwood, but he turned off the lane."

"Where did he go?"

"Into the wood," said Erbert. "Cause I kept a heye on him. I left Jones and Snooks in Coombe. I says to myself, that Gentleman Jim's up to no good. And I reckoned I'd see wot he was up to. 'Course, I knew if he comes down 'ere, he's lookin' for a crib to crack. P'raps this very school, for all I know. When I saw he didn't come on to Rookwood, of course I was sure he was up to some of 'is games."

Mornington smiled.

"Good old Erbert! And you saw him—"

"He went into the wood, sir, and I

folled," said 'Erbert sturdily. "'Course, I kep' outer sight. Gentleman Jim would ha' thought precious little of knockin' me on the 'ead, if he seed me and knowed I was watching him."

"What did he do?"
 "He sat down there on a log, and started smokin' cigars," said 'Erbert. "'Course, he's waiting for somebody."

"By gad!"
 "So I come on to tell you, sir," said 'Erbert, with a troubled look.

"My hat!" said Mornington. "I think I've got it! Erroll's written to him about the real Captain Erroll's photograph being produced here, and warned him not to come to the school. You can bet every eye would be on him, to see whether he was like the picture. And you say he isn't?"

"Not a bit, sir."
 "Then he can't come to Rookwood again. I've settled that for them!" grinned Mornington. "If he wants to see his precious son, he's got to meet him outside the school."

"Oh!" said 'Erbert. "He's at the woodman's 'ut."

"I'm jolly glad you told me," said Mornington. "Don't tell anybody else, 'Erbert. Mum's the word, you know!"

"Orl right, sir."
 And the fag left the study, much relieved in his mind.

Mornington looked from the window again. The Rookwood innings was over, and Jimmy Silver and Co. had gone into the field. It was the second Bagshot innings, and Erroll was bowling. He was bowling in great style, too, as a yell from Little Side revealed.

"Bravo!"
 "The hat trick! Hurray!"

"Bravo, Erroll!"
 "Wait a bit, my fine fellow," muttered Mornington. "Wait a bit! You won't be cheered again on a Rookwood ground, I fancy."

The dandy of the Fourth left his study, and walked down to Little Side.

Mornington stood looking on at the game for some minutes. Kit Erroll was in great form, and his bowling was first-class. And in the field he was dangerous, too. As Morny watched there was a shout, as Erroll held up the ball, hot from Pankley's bat. The great Pankley, of Bagshot, himself had been caught out.

"Bravo!" shouted Jimmy Silver. And he rushed up and smacked Erroll on the back. "Well caught! Oh, well caught!"

"Good man!" chortled Lovell.

The match was drawing to an end. Bowling and fielding of that class would soon bring the finish. Mornington had not too much time on his hands. He left Little Side and hurried down, to the gates.

Mornington walked quickly down the lane, and turned into Coombe Wood.

He knew the old woodman's hut very well—an untenanted ruin overgrown with weeds and creepers. How did Gentleman Jim know it? Evidently Erroll had written to his father and fixed that rendezvous with him.

Mornington did not approach the spot openly. He followed a footpath for some distance, and then made his way through the thickets, with infinite caution.

He came close to the old hut at last, where the trees were close, and the creeping plants grew thickly.

There was no door to the hut, and Morny, if he had chosen to put his head through the screen of foliage, could have looked into it. But he did not.

Close to the old hut, hidden from sight, he remained still as a mouse. He did not need telling that "Captain Erroll"

was there. For, from the old woodman's hut there came to his nostrils a strong, unmistakable scent—the scent of a cigar! Gentleman Jim was waiting for the junior who was known at Rookwood as Kit Erroll. But Erroll was not first at the rendezvous. Mornington was there, and he, too, was waiting—within earshot of every word that should be uttered in the old hut.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Win for Rookwood!

PANKLEY, of Bagshot, made a grimace as another wicket went down.

"Man in!" he grunted.
 And Poole went in, not with any joyful anticipations. Rookwood's new bowler was rather getting on the Bagshot nerves.

The Rookwood crowd were smiling sweetly. The Bagshot matches were always keenly contested, but this time it resembled a walk-over for Rookwood. Pankley & Co. had almost given up the hope of pulling the game out of the fire.

Jimmy Silver was smiling with a smile that would not come off.

Jimmy had a keen eye for a fellow's form, and he had chosen Erroll as a new recruit for the Eleven, though he had been only a few weeks at Rookwood; and the junior skipper could not help feeling a little proud of his perspicacity. Erroll had been a rod in pickle for Bagshot, and he was making Bagshot sit up now. There was no mistake about that.

Erroll was enjoying the game. He was pleased with his success, pleased with the cheers it brought, but he never seemed to think of putting on 'side.'

"Blessed if they haven't got a prize- packet in that chap!" Pankley grumbled to Putter. "Best of the bunch, I think!"

"Looks rotten for us!" said Putter dolorously. "Only thirty-six so far, and only one more wicket to go down! And we're licked on the first innings, and that bounder is gobbling up wickets like a Hun gobbling up sausages!"

"There he goes again!"
 "How's that?"
 "Out!"

"Last man in!" growled Putter.
 Tommy Dodd was bowling now for Rookwood. The innings survived the over. Then Jimmy Silver looked at Erroll.

"Can you manage another over, Erroll?"

Erroll laughed.
 "A dozen if you like!" he said, swinging his arm.

"A dozen won't be wanted!" chuckled Jimmy. "Better go on and put 'em out of their misery!"
 "I'll try."

Erroll caught the ball deftly, and went on. The batsman was not pleased to see him, and his misgivings were well-founded. A roar round the field announced the fall of a wicket.

"Well bowled, Erroll!"
 "Rookwood wins!" grinned Lovell.
 "Better luck next time, Panky, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver when the Rookwood field came off.

"My hat! You've got a cough-drop in that new chap!" said Pankley.

"We have—we has!" smiled Jimmy.
 "Who the dickens is he?" asked Pankley. "New chap here?"

"Yes. His father is Captain Erroll, who got no end of kudos at the Front!" said Jimmy. "His chivvy was in all the papers at one time."

"By Jerusalem, is he?" said Pankley.
 "Why, we've got Captain Erroll's chivvy stuck up on the wall of our study at Bagshot. Poole cut it out. I can see now that the chap's like him. Erroll,

my pippin, you're welcome to your wickets. Your pater bowled over Huns like that, eh?"

Erroll smiled, somewhat constrainedly. The Rookwood fellows had noticed that Erroll did not like talking about his father's exploits against the Huns. They put it down to modesty.

"Time we were getting back!" said Poole. "The game's hung out a bit!"

Erroll was looking up at the clock-tower. He went into the pavilion, and came out with a coat over his flannels.

"Hallo! Where are you off to?" exclaimed Lovell.

"I'm going out a bit——"
 "My-hat! I should think you'd been on your legs enough this afternoon!" said Raby.

"I'm not going far."
 "Hold on!" said Jimmy Silver. "If you want a trot, we'll trot part of the way home to Bagshot if you like."

"I—I'm going another way!"
 Jimmy gave him rather a curious look. "Oh, if you're going somewhere special, all serene!" he said. "Ta-ta!"

Erroll nodded, and walked very quickly down to the gates. Jimmy Silver and Co. went down the road with the Bagshot fellows, who were walking home.

"Rows" with Bagshot were "off" on match days, and the rival juniors were very friendly. Half-way to Bagshot went the Fistical Four, and then they took their leave of Pankley & Co., and turned back towards Rookwood.

"My hat! There's Erroll!" exclaimed Lovell in surprise.

Jimmy Silver started.
 At some distance from the road, crossing the fields at a great rate, was a figure the Fistical Four recognised at a glance. It was Erroll of the Fourth!

As they looked at him he left the fields, and disappeared into Coombe Wood, where it adjoined the meadows.

Jimmy Silver and Co. looked at one another rather oddly.

"He said he was going in the other direction," said Newcome. "If he was going to the wood, why couldn't he come with us? I suppose he knows we pass the wood going to Bagshot?"

Jimmy Silver did not reply.
 But he could not help thinking it odd. It looked as if Erroll had deliberately gone in the other direction to avoid company, and had doubled and made for the wood afterwards.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

"Gentleman Jim!"

"KIT, you're late!"
 The man in the woodman's hut rose from the fallen log, and threw away the stump of a cigar he had been smoking.

A handsome, athletic figure had appeared in the shattered doorway of the hut—Erroll, of the Rookwood Fourth, with a blazer coat over his flannels. His face looked flushed under the cricketer's cap. He had plainly been hurrying.

"Yes, I'm late," he said breathlessly.
 "I couldn't help it, father!"
 "I've waited a long time."
 "It couldn't be helped. I've been playing cricket!"

"Cricket!"
 There was a world of contempt and disgust in the man's voice.

"Cricket!" he repeated.
 Erroll smiled slightly.

"Yes, cricket!"
 "And you kept me waiting while you were playing a fool's game!" exclaimed the man savagely.

"It couldn't be helped. I am in the Form eleven, and if I'd left the game before the finish it would have made every fellow stare and talk. It would

have meant a row, too. I couldn't do it. I suppose you didn't want all Rookwood to wonder where I had to go to?"

"No, of course not. If that's how it stood—"

"As it was, it wasn't easy," said Erroll. "Some of the fellows came in this direction—past the wood, I mean—going home with the Bagshot team. I had to go round a good way to make out that I wasn't coming towards this place. They would have wondered."

"You're right, Kit. You don't want the fellows wondering and talking about you, certainly."

"There's enough of that already!" said Kit bitterly.

"You said in your letter that I was not to come to Rookwood again," said the man abruptly. "Something has happened. Quite right not to put it in black and white, in case of accidents. Letters get opened sometimes. But what has happened, Kit? Tell me!"

"If you came to Rookwood the game would be up!" said Erroll quietly.

"There's a kid here who knows you—"

"What!"

"A kid called Herbert Murphy—or, rather, 'Erbert,'" said the junior. "He knew you at Dirty Dick's."

"By gad, how could a kid from Dirty Dick's be at Rookwood School?" the man exclaimed in utter amazement.

"A fellow named Mornington found him staving on the road, and took him in," said Erroll. "Somehow the Head was persuaded to let him stay at Rookwood. Mornington's guardian pays his fees. He's a good little chap. But—but he saw you the day you came to the school, and recognised you at once, and told Mornington."

"What awful luck! Nobody could have foreseen a thing like that."

Erroll nodded.

"And the kid's talked?"

"Yes, to Mornington. Mornington has set himself up as my enemy. He accused me before the whole Form."

"Oh, gad!"

"The fellows don't believe it. But the cad got an old newspaper with a portrait of Captain Erroll in it," Erroll's voice faltered. "I thought the game was up then. He was going to prove that I wasn't Captain Erroll's son by that photograph. But—but— It was like a miracle, I can't understand it."

Gentleman Jim gave the schoolboy a peculiar look.

"What can't you understand, Kit?"

"Instead of showing me up, Mornington only proved my case, because—because I am exactly like Captain Erroll in appearance."

Gentleman Jim laughed.

"Lucky for you," he said. "It was lucky; but—but it nearly knocked me over," said Erroll. "How came I to be like a man I've never seen? It isn't a chance resemblance, it's exact. If he were my father he could not be more like me. Father, is Captain Erroll any relation of ours?"

Behind the screen of foliage near the woodman's hut the hidden listener drew a deep, deep breath.

Mornington's eyes were blazing now. If he wanted proof of his suspicions he had it now. He wondered what Jimmy Silver would have thought if he could have heard Erroll of the Fourth ask that question.

Mornington made no sound, no movement. Neither of the two in the hut dreamed that a listener was at hand.

Gentleman Jim did not reply to the schoolboy's question. He lighted another cigar.

"Father, I asked you—"

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"A foolish question," said the man. "How is it, then, that I am so like him?"

"Chance!"

"A very strange chance," said Erroll. "It saved me."

"Then the accusation against you is knocked on the head?" said Gentleman Jim. "It will die away?"

"I suppose so. Mornington keeps it up, but he has every fellow down on him. Even his own friends are fed up with it."

"That's all serene, then. It was a narrow escape, by Jove!" Gentleman Jim blew out a cloud of smoke. "By gad, it's lucky you warned me not to come to the school. With Captain Erroll's photograph in their hands they would have seen that I was not the man."

"At once," said Erroll.

"I shall have to give Rookwood a wide berth now," Gentleman Jim tugged at his moustache for a moment. "Captain Erroll's supposed to be back in British Honduras, so that relieves me from any necessity of visiting Rookwood. I must keep clear. You say this Mornington is your enemy?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He is a fellow with a rotten temper. He can't stand being crossed by anybody. Everybody's on bad terms with him, except a few rotters like himself! Some of the fellows make up to him because he's rich."

"You'd better get on friendly terms with him, too."

"I couldn't do that without flattering him and toadying to him."

"Well, do so."

"Father!"

"Don't be a fool, Kit! Your future is at stake. You've got to make your position secure at Rookwood, and you can't afford to have enemies."

The schoolboy was silent.

"I had some business to talk to you," said Gentleman Jim. "Under the circumstances, it can stand over. Nothing had better be done till this is blown over. It's doocid unlucky!"

Erroll looked startled.

"Business!" he repeated.

"Yes, business."

"You don't mean—"

The boy's face had become white.

"Never mind that now," said Gentleman Jim brusquely. "I can't stop longer. The last train back will be gone. You've kept me waiting so long. If anything turns up, you can let me know, and I'll meet you in the same place again. Good-bye, Kit!"

"Good-bye, father!" said the boy dully.

They shook hands, and Gentleman Jim disappeared through the trees. Erroll remained standing in the doorway of the woodman's hut. All the brightness had gone out of the handsome, boyish face.

"Business!" he repeated in a low voice. "That—that at Rookwood! Oh, never—never!"

The sun was sinking lower. Dusk was deepening over the woods. Gentleman Jim's footsteps had died away. The boy stood silent, plunged in miserable thought, his face white and set.

A footstep startled him from his black thoughts. He glanced up.

Mornington, of the Fourth, with a mocking smile on his face, stood before him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Face to Face!

Kit Erroll looked blankly at the dandy of the Fourth. A ghost rising before his eyes could not have startled him more at that moment.

His pale face became paler as he realised the truth. The mocking smile on Mornington's face told him all.

Mornington knew!

He did not speak. His hands clenched hard, almost convulsively, but he did not move.

It was Mornington who broke the silence. The dandy of the Fourth was enjoying his triumph now.

"Surprised to see me—what?" he drawled.

"Yes," muttered Erroll.

"What a happy meetin'!" smiled Mornington. "Sorry I couldn't make the acquaintance of your estimable father. I thought it better not, under the circumstances. Gentleman Jim might have cut up rusty—what?"

"You have been listening," said Erroll.

Mornington nodded.

"I've been here all the time," he said. "I was here before you. I've heard every word. I heard you ask that man whether Captain Erroll was any relation of yours. I wish Jimmy Silver could have heard it. Ha, ha!"

Mornington's laugh rang under the dusky trees. He expected to see the junior he hated shrink and tremble under his gaze.

Erroll did not shrink. The son of Gentleman Jim had courage, and his nerve seemed to be of iron. All was known, and known to his enemy. Yet he was cool, calm, unmoved, save for the deadly paleness of his face.

"You spied on me!" he said.

"I heard that a professional crackman was coming here to meet you," smiled Mornington. "As a law-abiding citizen, my duty was to chip in. By the way, I suppose the police would like to know where to meet your pater? He's wanted by the police, I suppose?"

Erroll winced.

"Ah, that touches you, does it?" said Mornington. "Well, you're bowled out, my dear chap!"

Mornington laughed again. He had hoped, but he had never expected, that his enemy would be placed in his power, so completely as this. There was a keen relish of the situation in Mornington's breast, and he had no mercy.

"What are you doing at Rookwood at all?" he continued. "Are you there to help Gentleman Jim crack a crib? I think that's the expression, isn't it? You'd know better than I do."

"No," said Erroll quietly.

"Oh, you're not plannin' to disappear one night with the Rookwood silver and the Head's war bonds?"

"No."

"Then what's the game?"

"You have spied on me, but I am not bound to answer your questions," said Erroll coolly. "May I ask what use you are going to put your spying to?"

Mornington bit his lip. His enemy was at his mercy, but his spirit, at least, was not conquered.

"You needn't ask that," he sneered. "You can't suppose I'm going to allow a crackman's son to stay at Rookwood. I've found out the truth, and all Rookwood will know soon. A cheery prospect for you!"

"You have accused me before, but you have not been believed," said Erroll.

"You mean you'll deny it again?"

"I did not deny it before," said Erroll.

"I simply left you to prove your case, if you could. You couldn't."

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"No, you were lucky," agreed Mornington. "But this time your luck can't hold out. It's not a matter for the Fourth. Now that I know you are the son of a criminal, beyond the shadow of a doubt, it's my duty to inform the Head. I suppose you know that?"

He laughed again.

"It will be a bit of a surprise for the old boy, and he won't believe it at first. But he will have to inquire into it. He will have to send for Captain Erroll—ha, ha!—and when Captain Erroll shows up, and his chivvy is compared with the photograph I can produce—ha, ha!"

Erroll was silent.

"In fact, as soon as I take the photograph to the Head, that ought to settle it, now I'm sure!" pursued Mornington. "The fellows didn't notice your pater's face specially, but the Head must have. He was jawing with him in his study for a long time. When he sees the real Captain Erroll's picture he will know that it isn't the face of the man who came to Rookwood as Captain Erroll. Don't you think so?"

"Probably."

"And the game will be up then, won't it?"

"I might ask you to—to hear what I have to say," said Erroll in a low voice. "I could tell you that I'm not at Rookwood with any rotten intentions. That I came here intending to play the game. That I've been unlucky, and that coming to Rookwood seemed a chance of getting out of a life that was horrible to me; that it seemed like getting into the daylight out of the dark—"

"In another fellow's name?" sneered Mornington.

"No. There is no Kit Erroll in existence. I have borrowed a name that belongs to nobody—at least, my father selected it for me. I do not know why. I could not come in my own name."

"Ha, ha! I fancy not!"

"It was a fresh start, the beginning of an honourable life," said Erroll. "There did not seem much harm in changing my name. It was not as if the name belonged to anybody else. My father is—you know what, now. Is that my fault? At least, it was a kind thought in him to try to place me in a position where I could live a decent life, and avoid the pitfalls he has fallen into himself."

Mornington gave a sardonic laugh.

"You want me to believe that you came honest to Rookwood, and that you are honest now?" he sneered.

"I do not expect you to believe it," said Erroll dully.

"You are right. I shouldn't believe a word of it."

A strange spile came over Erroll's pale face.

"You believe that I am a criminal too—"

"Like your father, yes."

"That I have plans to carry out at Rookwood, and that your betrayal of me will ruin them?"

"Exactly!"

"And yet," said Erroll, "you tell me this in a lonely wood, where you are at my mercy?"

Mornington started back.

"By gad! If you dare—hands off!" shrieked Mornington, as Erroll leaped upon him.

He struck out fiercely, savagely, madly. Erroll received the blows without heeding them. Mornington went down into the grass with a crash, and Erroll's knee was planted on his chest, and Erroll's eyes blazed down at him. And Mornington's face grew whiter than Erroll's own as he looked up into those blazing eyes.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Under the Shadows!

MORNINGTON did not move—he could not in the muscular grasp.

He was at the mercy of his enemy, over whose head he held disgrace and ruin. He did not call for help. He knew there was no one within hearing. He could only gaze up, with a frozen look, at the face above him.

For some seconds it lasted.

Then Erroll, with a light laugh, released him and sprang to his feet. Mornington lay sprawling, breathless, in the grass.

Slowly he picked himself up.

The contemptuous amusement in Erroll's face stung him to the soul.

"You need not fear," said Erroll.

"Fear!" Mornington ground his

teeth. He followed him slowly in the direction of Rookwood. It was past locking-up when he reached the school, and old Mack gruffly told him he was to report himself to Mr. Bootles.

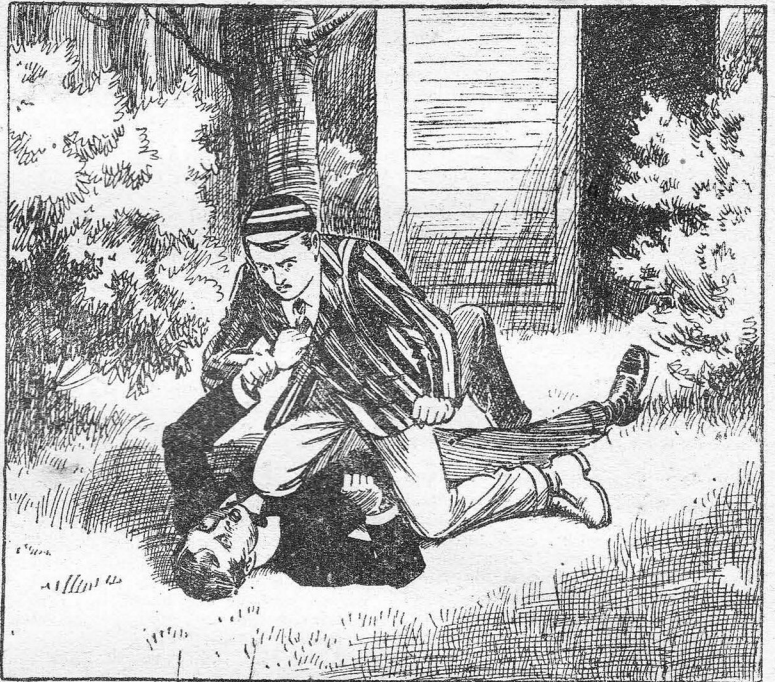
Jimmy Silver and Co. met him as he entered the schoolhouse. The Fistical Four looked curiously at his pale, tired face.

"You've missed call-over," said Jimmy.

Erroll nodded. He went on to Mr. Bootles' study to report, and was rewarded with fifty lines. Then he went to his own quarters. Erroll shared No. 2 Study with Higgs and Jones minor, and he found his study-mates busy on their preparation.

"You're jolly late!" said Jones minor.

"Yes."



Mornington was at the mercy of his enemy, over whose head he held disgrace and ruin. He did not call for help, he knew that there was no one within hearing. He could only gaze up at the face above him, with a frozen look! (See chapter 6.)

teeth. "Do you think I'm afraid of you, you bound?"

"I think that you were," said Erroll coolly. "I should not have hurt you. I was only proving to you that you were mistaken—that if I were the fellow you believe you would not be allowed to go back to Rookwood and say so."

Mornington set his collar straight. He had been afraid, terribly afraid for a moment, though he did not lack courage. But he knew now that Erroll had only been fooling him, that he had never been in any danger. But he realised—he could not help that—that he was at the stronger fellow's mercy, whatever Erroll chose to do; that he owed his safety to the fact that Erroll was not what he had accused him of being.

"By gad!", said Mornington at last. Erroll looked at him mockingly.

"Are you satisfied?" he asked.

"I've nothing to say to you," said Mornington. "I'll give you twenty-four hours to clear out of Rookwood.—Then I shall speak!"

He strode away.

Erroll, in silence, watched him go.

"Got lines?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'd better get on with your prep. Make room, Higgs, you Hun!"

Higgs grunted and made room, and Erroll sat down to his prep. His work was carefully done, as usual. To-morrow, perhaps, was to be his last day at Rookwood. Twenty-four hours, and he was to be driven in disgrace from the school he had learned to love—from the cheery friends he had made. It was a blow that shattered everything for him, yet he was calm.

Why had Mornington given him that respite?

Perhaps, blackguard as he was in most things, the dandy of the Fourth had had some regard for the good name of Rookwood. Perhaps it was part of his revenge, to play with his defeated enemy like a cat with a mouse.

Perhaps the cool, quiet courage with which Erroll had faced this shattering blow had evoked an unwilling admiration in Mornny's breast. His motives, probably, were mixed. Be that as it might, the son of Gentleman Jim had

• You Must Not Miss Reading "Wun Lung's Feud!" A Grand School Tale—

twenty-four hours in which to consider his course of action.

Mornington would keep his word, he knew that. Morny was a very unreliable fellow in most things, but his word was his bond. What he had said he would do.

After prep was over Erroll went down to the Common-room.

Mornington and Co. were there, and Morny was in great spirits. He gave Erroll a mocking smile as he came in. Erroll did not appear to notice him.

He joined Jimmy Silver and Co., who were talking cricket. Jimmy greeted him with a cheery smile and nod.

The captain of the Fourth had not forgotten the curious incident of the afternoon, and he wondered whether Erroll would make any reference to his somewhat ~~visit~~ visit to the wood. But Erroll did not mention it.

He talked cricket with a cheery smile on his face. The juniors had been discussing the forthcoming match with Greyfriars. After the splendid game he had put up against Bagshot, it was a foregone conclusion that Erroll would play in the Greyfriars match.

The Fifeal Four little dreamed as they chatted away cheerily till bedtime, of the thoughts that were working in Erroll's mind.

The morrow—the morrow! That was the besetting thought. What was to happen on the morrow?

Mornington strolled over to the group. "Settlin' the great question of the eleven for Greyfriars?" he asked.

"It's settled," said Jimmy Silver.

"Erroll goin' to play?"

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, where does the cackle come in?" demanded Jimmy Silver gruffly.

"I don't see anything to chortle at myself."

"Perhaps you will later," said Mornington, laughing. "What do you think, Erroll?"

Erroll turned away, and took up a book and did not seem to hear the question. Mornington rejoined his friends, still grinning. Townsend and Topham and Peele were puzzled by his mood.

"You seem to be thumpin' merry this evenin'!" said Peele.

"I've been havin' good luck," smiled Mornington.

"Gee-gees?" asked Towny.

"Oh, no. Better than gee-gees."

"Well, I wish some of your luck had come my way," grunted Townsend.

"I've been cleaned out—clean as a whistle. No more sportin' for me for a week or two."

"Same here," said Topham.

"Does that mean that you're not comin' out to-night?" asked Mornington.

"What's the good?"

"Well, I'm goin'."

"More duffer you," said Townsend.

"You were out on Monday. Once a week is quite enough for me. You'll get spotted by a prefect sooner or later if you keep this up."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

His luck had always held good, and he did not care for risks. Erroll glanced up over his book at the nuts of the Fourth, and dropped his gaze again. But there was a strange gleam in his eyes.

He was not reading now; he was thinking. It was as if an avenue of escape from his terrible dilemma had opened before him.

The dandy of the Fourth would not have laid his plans for that "night out" so carelessly if he had known what was in the new junior's mind.

THE POPULAR.—No. 124.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

JIMMY SILVER stirred and moved drowsily in the dormitory of the classical Fourth.

He blinked round in the darkness for a moment or two, and dropped off to sleep again. Some sound had awakened him; but it was not repeated.

The sound had been that of a softly-closing door.

Five minutes later a dim figure moved silently from a bed, dressing almost without a sound in the darkness.

Then the door opened and closed more cautiously than before.

Jimmy Silver slept on, dreaming of a cricket match in which he was scoring a century for Rookwood amid thunderous cheers. He did not dream that two beds in the Fourth Form dormitory were vacant.

Mornington of the Fourth was gone. His nutty friends had been left fast asleep. But there was one other who had been awake, and that other had followed.

The night grew older. Midnight sounded in muffled strokes, and the last light in Rookwood School had been extinguished. The great building lay dark and silent. In the old quadrangle only the branches of the beech-trees stirred in the night wind.

Midnight!

From the direction of Coombe a soft footstep was audible on the shadowy road, had there been ears to hear.

Mornington was returning.

The dandy of the Fourth was humming a tune faintly as he came. He stopped under the shadow of the school wall, where branches of the trees within overhung the road.

He knew well the spot where the wall was facile to climb, where the old, worn stone gave foothold. It was not the first time by many a one that Mornington had returned to Rookwood at that hour of the night.

The junior stepped close to the wall, felt over the inequalities of the old stone, and climbed. His hand caught the coping, and he was about to draw himself up to the top, when he paused with a sudden, gasping ejaculation.

Above him, dim in the darkness under the overhanging tree, a head appeared. A dimly seen face looked down on him.

"Who—who is that?" panted Mornington, holding on.

There was a low laugh above him in the gloom.

"Erroll!" muttered Mornington.

"Yes."

"Let me pass!"

Erroll laughed again softly.

Mornington's face grew a little pale as he hung on to the wall, his boots scraping on the stone as he strove to keep his foothold.

"Will you let me pass?" he hissed.

"No!"

Mornington's eyes burned.

"What's your game? Have I interrupted you, you hound? Are you out of bed to let your crackman father into the school?"

He saw the junior above him wince.

But Erroll's voice was quiet and steady as he answered:

"No."

"Then what's your game, confound you? Let me get in. I can't hang on here long."

"You are not coming in!" said Erroll coolly.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Have you forgotten," asked Erroll, with a bitter accent in his voice, "I have to leave Rookwood to-morrow. You are sending me back to what I've left. You're spoiling my only chance of

leading a decent life. Well, you're going to leave Rookwood with me, Mornington."

"I?" hissed Mornington.

"You! We're birds of a feather, you know," said Erroll bitterly. "I am the son of—you know what. You are a gambling, rascally blackguard, a disgrace to the school. Sooner or later, you'll be found out and expelled, if you're not run in by the police some night. Rookwood will be better off without either of us."

"You—you hound!" said Mornington between his teeth. "You've played this trick on me because I've found you out."

"Haven't I found you out, too?" smiled Erroll. "Which is the bigger disgrace to Rookwood, you or I, Mornington? Perhaps my past won't bear the light, but will your present? If a decent fellow had found me out, I couldn't have looked him in the face. Jimmy Silver, for instance, I should have gone away from Rookwood rather than met his eyes. But you're different. Whatever I am, Mornington, whatever I've been, I'm a better fellow than you are!"

Mornington panted.

"I told you I was playing a straight game here, and you scoffed at it. Jimmy Silver would have believed me in your place. He is honourable himself, and he can see honesty in others. You could not. Because you are not honourable. Morny—because you're a bigger rascal than I've ever been. You're driving me from Rookwood—for the honour of the school, you've said. You will leave Rookwood at the same time, Mornington, for the honour of the school. Do you think I don't care as much for Rookwood's good name as you do?"

Mornington was silent. He understood clearly enough.

When he had held the upper hand he had shown no mercy. In his heart of hearts he had believed Erroll, he had believed that the crackman's son was seeking to throw his old life behind him in coming to Rookwood. Erroll's words had carried the stamp of truth with them. Yet he had scoffed, and he had had no mercy.

Erroll had the upper hand now.

Mornington knew what it meant if he was found out of school bounds at night. More than once suspicion had fallen upon him already. It would be the finish—expulsion from the school in undying disgrace. His career at Rookwood would finish on the same day as Erroll's.

There was a long silence. Mornington's aching arms gave way, and he dropped back into the road. Erroll looked down at him.

"I'm going in now," he said. "I shall fasten the window. You can ring the bell, Mornington, if you want to get in before morning. I shall have your company in the train to-morrow. A pleasant journey for both of us!"

"Erroll!" Mornington's voice was husky. "Don't go! Listen to me!"

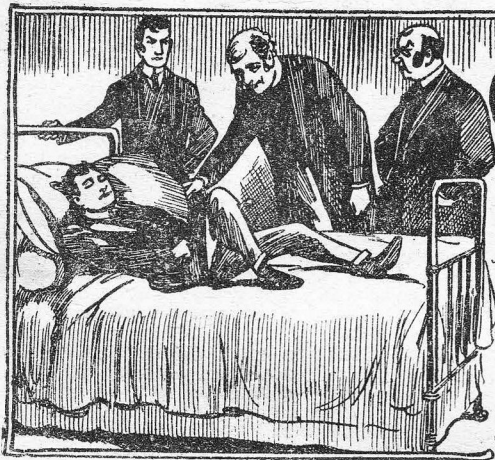
"Well?"

"You've got me!" said Mornington between his teeth. "I'll make a bargain with you. That's what you want, of course. I can see that. You've got me down, and you want to make terms with me to save your skin. It's what I might have looked for from you. I forgot I was dealing with a criminal!"

"You lie!" said Erroll. "You know I am nothing of the sort!"

"You are the son of your father, I suppose?" sneered Mornington. "You rotter, you plotting scoundrel, you're proving now that you're a criminal! Would any decent fellow have thought of a trick like this? Nobody but the son of Gentleman Jim!"

(Continued on page 15.)



One Staunch Chum!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale
of HARRY WHARTON & Co.'s
Early Schooldays at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

FRANK NUGENT, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, was right when he said trouble would follow Harry Wharton's attempt to get revenge against Loder, the unpopular prefect of the Sixth.

Harry Wharton, bullied unmercifully by Loder, made up his mind that he would risk the trouble. Against the advice of his chum he left the dormitory with a horsewhip in his hand, intent upon giving Loder the thrashing of his life.

Loder was not in his study. But Harry Wharton, knowing that Loder often broke bounds at night, waited for him in the shadow of the elms in the quadrangle. There the midnight drama was enacted.

Loder saw Wharton and made a savage rush at him.

"I'll smash you!" he muttered fiercely. "You prying little rotter. IH—"

Loder broke off. The lash of the whip whistled through the air, and cut the prefect across the face. Blindly Loder dashed in pursuit as Harry Wharton flung the whip down and bolted.

A moment later a thousand stars flashed before the prefect's eyes—he gave a cry of pain, fell to the ground and lay still.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, heard the sound of Loder's cry.

Two minutes later the Remove master and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, had found the unconscious prefect.

Mr. Quelch handed the lantern to the other master, and dropped upon his knees beside the prefect. There was blood upon Loder's white face—there was blood clotting his hair. A big black bruise was on his forehead, and under his hair, telling where a fearful blow had fallen.

"Is it—was—was it an accident?" gasped Mr. Prout.

The Remove-master shook his head. "No; he has been struck down."

"But—but how comes it that Loder is out in the quadrangle at this hour of the night—fully dressed, too?" Mr. Prout exclaimed, in amazement. "I cannot guess."

Mr. Prout cast a quick glance round.

"He may have heard some sound, and come out to see what it was, and fallen by the hand of some ruffian!" he exclaimed.

"It is possible. Let us get him into the house, and then you can wake Gosling, and get the mastiff out and search the place."

"Very good!"

Mr. Prout helped the Remove-master raise the insensible prefect from the

ground. Loder was quite inert in their grasp. He groaned as he was moved, but he did not open his eyes. The two masters bore him into the house and up to his room, and Mr. Quelch tried to open the door. But it was locked on the inside.

"That proves that he must have gone out by the window," he remarked.

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Prout. "It is very curious. We had better take him into the next room and wake Wingate."

Mr. Quelch nodded, and knocked at Wingate's door and opened it. The captain of Greyfriars was already awake. He had heard the noise in the passage as the two masters carried the insensible prefect up to his room.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" he asked, jumping out of bed.

"Yes, Wingate. Loder has been injured. Will you let us place him in your bed? His own door is locked on the inside."

"Certainly, sir!"

Wingate lighted the gas at once, and Loder was carried into the room and laid upon the bed. Wingate gazed in horror at the pale face of the prefect, stained with streaks of blood.

"Good heavens, sir!" he exclaimed.

"What has happened?"

"We do not know yet, Wingate—only that we found Loder in the Close, under the trees, in this state. He has been struck down by someone, that is clear; we know nothing more than that. We must get a doctor here as quickly as possible. Will you go on your bicycle to Friardale and call Dr. Short?"

"I'll be ready in five minutes, sir."

"Thank you, Wingate!"

Loder lay inert upon Wingate's bed, while the captain of Greyfriars hastily dressed himself. Mr. Prout called two or three other prefects, and with them searched the Close, while Mr. Quelch remained with Loder. But there was no trace in the Close, or round the buildings, of any intruder—and Gosling, the porter, had seen and heard nothing. Mr. Prout returned to tell the Remove-master of his ill-success. Mr. Quelch nodded. He had fully expected it.

"I do not think that it was anybody from outside the school who struck this blow, Mr. Prout," the Remove-master said quietly.

"But—not another Greyfriars boy surely!" Mr. Prout ejaculated.

"I fear so."

"But—that is terrible! Who could have done so dreadful a thing?" exclaimed the Fifth-Form master, utterly horrified.

"That is what we must find out," said Mr. Quelch. "Loder was, I believe, very unpopular with the juniors, and there

were many seniors who did not like him. I have no doubt we shall get at the truth when Loder can speak."

"He may not have seen his assailant in the dark."

"We shall see."

Mr. Quelch had bathed the prefect's injury, and done all he could for him, but Loder had not yet recovered consciousness. Occasionally he uttered a low groan, and that was all.

"It would be better to call the Head, I suppose," Mr. Prout suggested.

"Yes, I think so. Pray do."

Dr. Locke was aroused, and he came a little later to Wingate's room, his face very pale and startled. It grew paler as he looked upon the ghastly face of the injured prefect.

"This is terrible!" he muttered. "And Mr. Prout tells me that you have no idea how it happened, Mr. Quelch."

"None, sir."

Dr. Locke bent over the prefect.

"He has been struck very hard, with some heavy weapon—a club of some sort, perhaps a cricket-stump, or a bat," he said. "He must have been stunned instantly. I cannot understand who could have made this ferocious attack. It must surely have been someone from outside the walls of Greyfriars."

Mr. Quelch was silent.

They waited, watching over the unconscious prefect, waiting anxiously for the return of Wingate with the medical man from Friardale.

Loder stirred and groaned.

His eyes opened, with a wild look in them.

"Oh!" he muttered. "Oh, you murderous young scoundrel!"

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch exchanged glances. The semi-conscious prefect was evidently thinking of his assailant. And they had not failed to note the adjective. Loder's assailant was "young," and it was pretty clear that he was a Greyfriars fellow.

They listened breathlessly. Loder did not seem to see them. His senses were wandering a little.

"I'll smash you, you young hound! Do you hear? How dare you be out of your dormitory at this time of night? I'll report this to the Head!"

The Head was very grave and silent.

"You—you murderous young villain—Wharton—stand back—"

The prefect groaned, and relapsed into unconsciousness.

Mr. Quelch caught his breath. The Head gave him a startled look.

"Did you hear the name?" he muttered breathlessly.

"Yes."

"It was Wharton?"

"Yes."
 "There is only one Wharton at Greyfriars," said Dr. Locke. "Wharton of the Remove."

"Yes. But—"
 "But do you not think it was he?"
 "I am sure it was not," said Mr. Quelch with emphasis. "Wharton of the Remove has his faults, but he is utterly incapable of an outrage like this. Of that I am convinced."

Dr. Locke nodded.
 "From what I have seen of the boy, Mr. Quelch, I am quite inclined to agree with you," he said. "Yet it is strange that his name should be upon Loder's lips now."

"His mind is wandering."
 "Doubtless. Has there been any trouble between Wharton and Loder lately, do you know?"
 "I do not know."

"There was a sound below. Dr. Locke rose to his feet.

"The doctor has come!" he said.
 And Wingate came in with little Dr. Short of Friardale.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Under Suspicion!

TIME to get up!" Gwynne, of the Sixth, looked into the Remove dormitory that morning with the announcement. The juniors blinked at him in surprise from their beds. Tom Brown looked at his watch; it was ten minutes past the usual hour for rising, and the rising-bell had certainly not changed out yet.

"Up you get!" said the prefect.
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Tain't rising-bell yet, Gwynne!"

"The rising-bell will not ring this morning!"

"Wh-what!"
 "No rising-bell!" exclaimed Bulstrode, the captain of the Remove.
 "What on earth's the matter, Gwynne?"
 "Gosling tipsy?" asked Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Rope broken?" asked Skinner.
 "What's the row, Gwynne?"
 "What's wrong?"
 "Someone is ill!"
 "Oh!"
 "Who is it?"
 "Not the Head?"
 "Or Quelch?"

"No," said Gwynne quietly. "It's Loder. Don't ask any more questions. Get up quietly and dress yourselves, and come down quietly. There must be no noise. Loder is in a bad way, and he has to be kept quiet."

And Gwynne went out and shut the door.

The juniors turned out of bed in amazement. Loder ill—so ill that quietness had to be kept all over the house, and the rising-bell was not to ring. Nobody had ever known Loder to be ill before—he seemed far too strong and robust to be ill, and even his reckless ways did not seem to tell upon his stout constitution, as they would have told upon a weaker one. Loder ill! He had been well enough the previous day to make himself unpleasant, at all events. He had bullied Wharton, and he had been even rougher with Skinner, and he had interfered with the juniors in the Common-room in the evening. He had certainly not been ill then. What was the matter with him now.

The juniors wondered, and discussed the matter with great interest while they were dressing. Loder ill! Loder laid up! It is to be feared that there was more satisfaction than sympathy felt in the Remove dormitory. While Loder was ill, at all events, he could not be bullying the juniors, and that was a relief. Many of the Removites were very much inclined to wish him a long illness.

"I say, you fellows, this is luck!" said Billy Bunter, rubbing a bruise on his shoulder which had been caused by a cricket-stump belonging to Loder. "I hope it's something jolly painful, don't you?"

"Oh, shut up!" said Johnny Bull.
 "Oh, really, Bull—"

"Blest if I can imagine what the matter is!" said Bolsover. "He must be gammoning. He was well enough last night, I know that."

"It may be an accident," said Mark Linley.

Hazeldene burst into a chuckle.
 "Yes, rather! He may have fallen climbing into his window, or something like that, especially if he had been getting squiffy at the Cross Keys."

And there was a laugh.
 The juniors were not by any means unfeeling. If Wingate or Gwynne had been ill, they would have been concerned enough. Loder had only himself to thank if nobody cared whether he was ill or not.

Harry Wharton did not join in the general discussion, neither did Bob Cherry, nor Nugent. At the first news, Bob had cast a quick, curious glance at Wharton, and since then he had avoided looking at his chum. Nugent said no word. He went about his washing and his dressing with an expressionless face. Wharton was very pale.

The expedition of the previous night was in his mind now, and he sincerely wished that he had never made it. Nugent had been right, after all. Wharton had let the sun go down upon his wrath—against the warning which was given in olden times. A night's sleep had brought the junior to a calmer frame of mind. Loder was not worth his hatred, and revengeful feelings were foolish and low. Harry Wharton would have given a great deal to recall the happenings of the night. But it was too late to think of that now.

He started as he heard Skinner's voice addressing him. Skinner had spoken before, but Wharton, buried in painful thoughts, had not heard him.

"Wharton! I say, Wharton!"
 Harry looked round.
 "Did you speak to me?"
 "Getting deaf?" said Skinner sarcastically.

"No! What did you say?"
 "I was asking you if you know anything about Loder's illness."

Wharton started.
 "What should I know about it?" he exclaimed.

"Well, the whole Form knows that you had some scheme for revenging yourself on Loder," said Skinner. "I thought that perhaps this might be the result of it."

Every fellow in the dormitory looked quickly towards Harry Wharton. Skinner's words were sufficient to start suspicion in every mind.

Harry Wharton flushed crimson.
 "What do you mean, Skinner?" he exclaimed hotly.

"Well, Loder seems to have had an accident, or something," said Skinner carelessly. "If you have been japing him—"

"I have not been japing him."
 "Then you didn't carry out your scheme whatever it was?"

Wharton was silent.
 "There may be a row about this," said Bulstrode. "Wharton had better hold his tongue. If there's going to be an inquiry, the less he says the better."
 Wharton flushed again.

"I'm not afraid of an inquiry!" he exclaimed angrily. "I'm not afraid to own up to Dr. Locke himself what I did last night."

"Oh! Then you did something!" exclaimed Skinner.
 "I don't deny it."

"What did you do, Wharton?"
 A dozen voices asked the question.
 "I took a horsewhip to lick Loder in his room," said Harry. "Only he hap-

(Continued from page 9.)

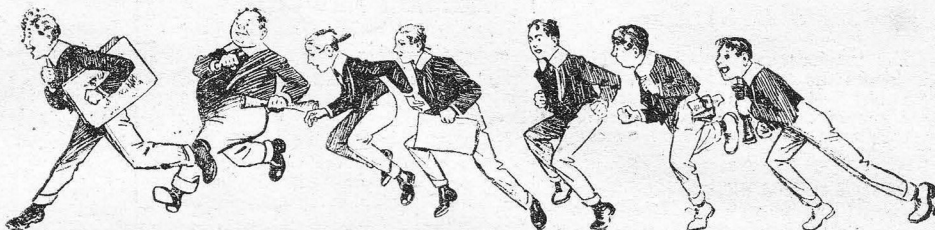
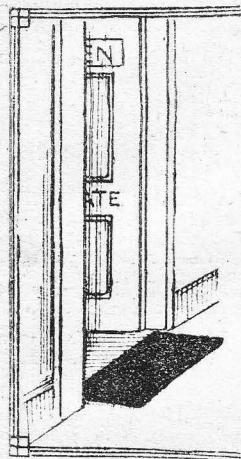
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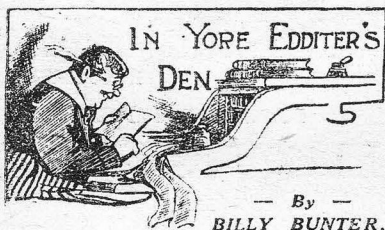
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BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!

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.



— By —
BILLY BUNTER.

My Deer Readers,—On this suspicious occasion—the occasion of my fifteenth birthday—I konder that it's up to me to produce a Speshul Birthday Number of my deliteful "Weekly."

That beest Bob Cherry deklares that I've already had a duzen berthdays this term, but, of corse, he duzzent no what he's torking about! Berthdays, like Krissmuss, come but wunce a year.

Fifteen long years have elapsed sinse I was borne into this veil of woe. I often wonder what the world woud be without me. Can you konsensee it, deer readers—a world without Billy Bunter? Bob Cherry says it woud be a happier plaice for evverybody, but that's all tommy-rot. If their was no Billy Bunter, their woud be no "Billy Bunter's Weekly"—and what woud my readers do then, poor things?

To sellybrate this momentus occasion of my berthday, I washed my neck this mourning and put on a cleen collar. I also asked to be eggused from lessens, as it was the Annie Versary of my natal day; but that beest Quelchy woudn't here of it. "I don't believe it's yore berthday at all, Bunter!" he eggslamed. "It was only larst week that you had a berthday."

"Oh, no, sir!" I replide. "That was the Annie Versary of my chrissening!"

"Well, I certainly shall not egguse you from lessens," said Quelchy. "You are the most backward boy in the class!"

"Oh, reelly, sir! By the way, what are you going to give me for my berthday?"

"A hundred lines, if you do not behave yoreself!" said the sarky beest. "And if you menshuu yore berthday agane, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

I was hoping that all the feloes woud rally round and give me presents; but a lass! The presents are conspicuus by there absents!

Before konklooding my little chat this week, I will wish myself many happy returns of the day, as nobddy else has got the desensy to do it.

"Many happy returns, Billy! Long may you rain! Long may you be a poplar favorite with the boys and girls of Brittan!"

That is my sinseer berthday wish, and I feel sure you will all support the sentiments of yore fifteen-years-old-to-day pal,

Your Edditer

P.S.—Checks, postle-orders, tuck-hampers, and other berthday presents should be sent to the head keeper at the Zoo, and marked "FOR THE PRIZE PORPUSS!"

BIRTHDAY BREVITIES!

By Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter is fifteen years old to-day. He was fifteen years old last week, and he said it was his berthday about a month ago. This means that Billy is at least forty-five years of age! If he goes on at this rate, he'll be in the running for an Old Age Pension!

"Billy Bunter's Weekly" is eighteen weeks' old to-day. It is a most amusing youngster, and takes after its editor. Will the priceless "Weekly" last eighteen months? Doubtful. Will it last eighteen years? Doubtful.

There has been a fearful epidemic of berthdays at Greyfriars just lately. Mr. Quelch is fifty; Larry Lascelles, our popular maths master, is thirty; and Gosling, the porter, is a hundred and eight, not out!

The Famous Five are the only ones who don't seem to be having berthdays. We're holding ours in reserve! No doubt we shall arrange to have 'em all at the same time. But we sha'n't make Billy Bunter's mistake of selecting the 13th of the month!

By the way, how did Billy like the berthday hamper I sent him? After he had dragged it all the way up to the school from the station, he found it was full of stones. And I'll wager Billy was full of moans!

Just a word of warning to people who pretend it's their berthday when it isn't. They're liable to get badly biffed! When Robinson Crusoe told his companion on the desert island that his berthday fell on a Friday, Friday promptly fell on him! Bunter, beware!

A BIRTHDAY DREAM!



"ME."

MY BERTHDAY BANQUITT!

By SAMMY BUNTER.

"It's my berthday to-day, you feloes," I said. "What are you going to do about it?"

"What do you eggspeekt us to do, porpuss?" asked Dicky Nugent.

"Well, as I'm the most poplar, hansom, and extinguished fello in the Form, the leest you can do is to stand me a big berthday banquitt!" I replide.

"All serene," said Dicky.

To tell the trooth, I hadn't eggspeekted this anser. Dicky Nugent isn't very konderate, as a rool, so far as I am kondered, bekwase he's jellus of me, and he's always afrade that I shall be eckted leader of the Sekkond in his plaice.

"You shall have it served up hear, in this Kommon-room, at five o'clock," said Dicky. "How will that soot you?"

"Down to the ground!" I said. "It's ortully desent of you to put yoreself out for my bemynit. You're a brik, in short."

"Not a tall!" was the reply. "Dash it all, we karn't overlook the berthday of such a hansom and extinguished fello!"

Well, deer readers, I looked forward eagerly to five o'clock. And when the hour struck I was waiting eggspectantly in the faggs' Kommon-room.

Prezently the door opened, and in walked Dicky Nugent, carrying a big plum-cake. Behind him came Gatty and Myers, armed to the teeth, so to speak, with bags of delishus pastries.

My mouth wartered at the site.

"Hear you are, Sammy!" said Dicky Nugent. "Pile in!"

"Aren't you going to stopp and divvide a cream-bun betwene you?" I asked.

"No. Thanks for yore jenneerous offer, but we must be off."

And my three Form-feloes scuttled away.

I started on the feed at wunce. Their was no nife to cut the cake with, so I did it with a ruler. The ruler was a triffe inky, but I always think that ink gives a sort of plezzant flavor to cake.

Before I could get into my stride, the door suddenly opened, and Loder of the 6th rushed in. Their was a fierce scowl in his hand, and an ashplant on his face.

"So it was you, you yung eubb!" he rored. "You have been to my study and raided my grub!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Yes, that's all their woud have been if I'd come in a bit later," said Loder. "I'll teech you to loot my grub, you yung rascal! Take that—and that—and that!"

I showted and protested, but all in vane. Loder lade on the ashplant with terribul forse, and he woudn't lissen to my eggsplication. And when he went away the beest took my berthday banquitt with him!

I shall never forgive Dicky Nugent and the others for playing me such a low-down trick—never!



Tubby Muffin's Birthday Honours.

By ARTHUR NEWCOME.

His gracious and corpulent Majesty, Reginald the First—otherwise known as "Tubby"—having arrived at the ripe old age of fifteen, desires to distribute the following birthday honours amongst his schoolfellows:

JAMES SILVER, ESQ.—To be knighted by his corpulent Majesty aforementioned, and to be known hereafter as Sir James Geld.

MASTER ALGY SILVER.—To receive the Order of the Bath—in other words, to be ducked in the school fountain every morning before brekker!

GEORGE BULKELEY (Captain of Rookwood).—To receive general honours, in the form of the O.B.E., which, being interpreted, means, "Onnered by Everybody!"

CYRIL PEELE, ESQ.—To be made a knight, thereby sharing the distinction of his well-known namesake, Sir Orange Peele!

TEDDY GRACE, ESQ.—To be appointed Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber. His duties will include arousing King Reginald every morning with a wet sponge!

CUTHBERT GOWER, ESQ.—To be made Lord of the Manners (because he hasn't got any at present!).

LOVELL MINOR.—To be Fag-in-Chief to his Most Regal and Rotund Majesty.

VALENTINE MORNINGTON, ESQ.—To be Lord Lef-tenant of Study No. 4, so that his Majesty can take possession of same.

PAUL WAUGH, ESQ. (Shell Form).—To be Secretary of State for Waugh!

TOMMY DODD, ESQ.—To be Master of the Rolls (both jam and sausage).

MR. MAURICE BOOTLES, M.A.—To be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to let his Majesty have a good "whack" whenever he needs it!

SERGEANT BENJAMIN KETTLE.—To be Minister of Food, and to allow his Majesty to enter the tuckshop whenever it happens to be his Royal pleasure.

MR. HAROLD BULL, B.A.—To be turned out to graze on the cricket-field.

MONSIEUR MORCEAU.—To be as highly honoured as Mr. Bull, only Morceau!

These Birthday Honours will take effect from the 13th day of May, in this Year of Grace One Thousand Nine Hundred Odd.

Given under our hand and seal, at our Court, Study No. 2 (which isn't quite so well-furnished as Buckingham Palace!).

REGINALD.

LONG LIVE MUFFIN!

to be perfectly genuine; don't you, deer readers?—ED.)

FROM THE EDDITER OF THE COMPANION PAPERS.

My Dear Billy,—Allow me to congratulate you upon attaining the ripe old age of fifteen.

I must also congratulate you upon the splendid way in which you have conducted your WEEKLY. The POPULAR, without your supplement, would be like a kennel without a dog.

When I get tired of editing the companion papers, I have resolved to hand over the job to you, as a tribute to your journalistic abilities.

Yours sincerely,

THE EDITOR.

(Bob Cherry says the edditer didn't write this letter at all, and that somebody's trying to be funny. But I can assure my readers that this letter is perfectly bony fidee, as they say in Latin.—ED.)

(Sevveral thowsand berthday greetings from other sauces have been unavoydably held over.)

EXTRAX FROM MY BERTHDAY POST-BAGG!

By Billy Bunter.

A USEFUL PREZZENT FROM THE COUNTESS DE BUNTAIRE!

(My only aunt—I meen, my third aunt.)

Dear Nephew William,—Very many happy returns of the day, my dear boy!

I am at present staying at the Hotel Splendo, in Paris; but amid all the gaiety and excitement of this city, I have not forgotten your berthday.

I enclose a fifty-pound banknote herewith, with my warmest regards.

Ever your affectionate aunt,
MARIE YVONNE DE BUNTAIRE.

(Sum of the feloes say that this letter is a fake; but the oriijinal may be seen by any Doating Pomasses in Study No. 7.—ED.)

AN INVITASHUN FROM THE HEAD!

My Dear Bunter,—It has been brought to my notice that you celebrate your fifteenth berthday to-day, so I am sending you this note by Trotter, requesting you to come and have tea with Mrs. Locke, myself, and all the little padlocks, this afternoon at five.

You are such a charming and entertaining boy that we shall be delighted with your society.

Believe me, yours sincerely,
HERBERT H. LOCKE,
Headmaster.

P.S.—Wash your own mug and bring it with you.

(A lot of chapps say that Skinner wrote this letter for a joke; but I believe it



My Berthday Pressents!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.

Billy Bunter's berthday falls on the 13th of May.

Same hear!

The 13th falls on a Friday this year, so, as you may guess, it was my unlucky day!

I had told all the feloes in the Fourth Form dormitory overnite that it was my berthday on the morro.

I eggspocketed, on waking up in the morning, to find all the feloes ringing my hand, and saying: "Many happy returns of the day, Baggy!" But no congratulations were 4th-coming. The fact that it was my berthday seemed to have escaped everybody's notiss.

THE POPULAR.—No. 124.

When I went down to my study, however, I found that my berthday had not been forgotten after all.

With trembling fingers I wipped out my pen-nife, and slashed the string on every parcel. Then I eggsplored the kontents; and I neerly had a pink fit!

What do you think the rotters had sent me, deer readers?

Lissen, and you shall shall here!

From TOM MERRY.—A stout coil of rope, with the rekwest that I should go and hang myself from one of the elms in the quad.

From JACK BLAKE.—A plum-cake which had been baked six months ago,

and which had lain neglected in Blake's study cubberd. The beestly thing was as hard as a brickbatt!

From RALPH CARDEW.—An ear-trumpett, to enable me to lissen better at study keyholes.

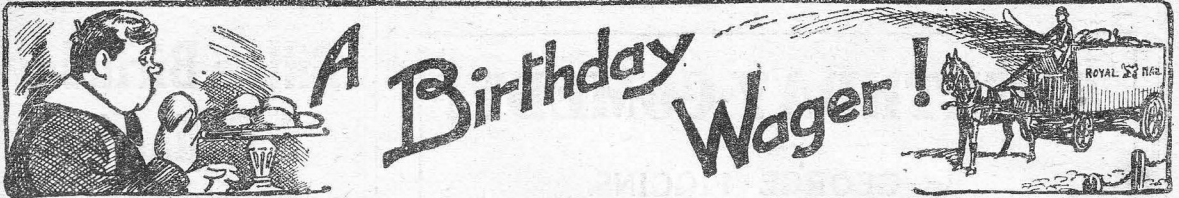
From MONTY LOWTHER.—A dilapidated pear of trousers, formerly the property of Taggles, the porter. Lowther tells me that they have been speshfully cut down for my bennyfit.

From D'ARCY MINOR.—One of Gussy's "toppers," painted purple. I am rekwested to wear this on speshul occasions. Did you ever hear such cheek?

From GEORGE FIGGINS.—A dog-coller and chain, together with a note, saying: "Should you develop rabies, you are requested to notify the nearest veterinary surgeon!"

There were sevveral more "berthday-pressents," but I will not dwell on this painful toppick.

If this is the sort of rekknernition a fello gets on his berthday, it will be a long time before I have another!



Showing how TUBBY MUFFIN outwitted his schoolfellows, but paid dearly for it at the finish.

By ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL (of Rookwood.)

"TOMORROW," said Tubby Muffin impressively, "I shall be fifteen!"
 "What! Fifteen times as big a fathead as you are to-day?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

And there was a laugh.
 "Oh, really, Silver! I shall be fifteen years of age."

"Suddenly silver up your mind to have a birthday?" asked Newcome.
 "No, you ass! It's my official birthday!"
 "In that case, the birthday you had last week was an unofficial one," said Raby. "You attempted to obtain congratulations and presents by false pretences!"
 "Nunne!" said Tubby Muffin hastily. "I—I made a mistake last week when I said it was my birthday. I got mixed up with the dates. I couldn't quite remember whether my birthday fell on the sixth or the thirteenth."

"So you're celebrating it twice, to be on the safe side?" I said. "Well, go ahead, my fat tulip. You won't get any presents from this quarter."

"No jolly fear!" said Newcome. Tubby Muffin gave a scornful sniff.

"I don't want your mouldy presents!" he said. "I shall get quite enough from my relations and people outside the school. And I shall get such a crowd of letters by the morning post that the postman will require a pantechnicon!"

"Eh? What awful rot!" growled Jimmy Silver. "You're not likely to get a single letter!"

"Bet you I get at least a hundred!"

"W-w-what!"
 "At least a hundred," repeated Tubby, with emphasis.

Jimmy Silver snorted.
 "If you make any more wild statements of that sort, you'll be soundly bumped!" he said grimly.

"Oh, really, you know, it isn't a wild statement at all. It's a fact. I shall get over a hundred letters by the morning post. I shall be simply bombarded with 'em! Matter of fact, I shouldn't be surprised if the number of letters I got ran into thousands!"

"You—you—" gasped Jimmy Silver, amazed at Tubby Muffin's flight of fancy. "I'll wager you twenty to one—in doughnuts—that you don't get a hundred letters."

"Done!" said Tubby promptly.

"That means you'll have to hand over one doughnut to your Uncle James," said Raby.

"On the contrary," said Tubby, smiling, "it means that Uncle James will have to hand over twenty doughnuts to me!"

"Ass!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I'll jolly well see that you stomp up that doughnut. You fellows will bear witness to the wager?"

"Yes, rather!" we all exclaimed.

The gathering then dispersed, as a newspaper reporter would say.

We all agreed that Tubby Muffin had been "talking out of his hat."

Even if his birthday did fall on the thirteenth, it was hardly likely that he would receive more than half a dozen letters. As for a hundred—why, the thing was absurd, grotesque!

Early next morning quite a crowd of fellows assembled in the quad, to wait for the postman.

It was universally believed that Tubby Muffin would lose the wager, in which case Jimmy Silver would lose no time in claiming his doughnut.

"It's still half an hour to brekker," said Jimmy, "and a nice, sugary doughnut will be very acceptable!"

"Twenty nice, sugary doughnuts will be even more acceptable!" murmured Tubby Muffin.

"Some hopes!" chuckled Newcome.

The minutes passed, and there was no sign of the postman. Eager eyes scanned the horizon for a glimpse of him. But there was nothing doing.

"Postman's jolly late this morning,"

grumbled Kit Erroll. "Where's the beggar got to?"

Presently there was a rumbling of wheels, and a large mail-van came into view. It turned in at the school gates.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"What's all this?"

We swarmed round the driver of the mail-van, and demanded an explanation.

"It's like this, young gents," said the man. "There was so many letters for Rookwood this mornin' that the postman would have broke his back if he'd tried to carry 'em."

"My hat!"

"Who are they all for?" gasped Kit Erroll.

"The whole school isn't having birthdays, I suppose?"

The driver's reply was staggering.

"Which there's about fifteen hundred letters for Master Muffin!" he announced.

"Great pip!"

Tubby Muffin turned to Jimmy Silver with a triumphant smile.

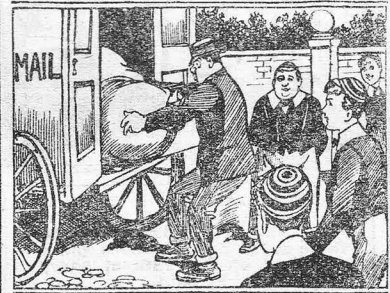
"I'll trouble you to come along to the fuckshop and treat me to twenty doughnuts!" he said.

"Not so fast, my son!" said Jimmy Silver.

"I—I can't believe that you've got all those letters! Seeing's believing, but I haven't seen them yet."

The driver of the van dragged an enormous mail-bag into view. Jimmy Silver opened it, and examined the contents.

"It—it's a fact, you chaps," he said, in dazed tones. "They're all for Tubby!"



The driver of the van dragged an enormous mail-bag into view. "Which there's about fifteen hundred letters for Master Muffin," he said.

"My only Aunt Jane!" gasped Mornington.

"How the merry dickens did he come to get fifteen hundred letters?"

"He must have addressed them all to himself!" said Raby.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"The handwriting on all the envelopes is different," he said. "And the postmarks are all different, too. There's no trickery in it. Whether those letters contain birthday greetings or not, they're all for Muffin. And as there are over a hundred of them—considerably over—our prize porpoise has won his wager."

To say that we were flabbergasted was to put it mildly. We could scarcely believe the evidence of our eyes.

Tubby Muffin handed the driver of the mail-van sixpence, and instructed him to take the letters along to his study. After which Tubby accompanied Jimmy Silver to the school shop, and received his twenty doughnuts. He devoured half a dozen before brekker, and the remainder at intervals during the morning.

We were all very curious to know the contents of those fifteen hundred envelopes. Tubby Muffin seemed in no hurry to open them—in fact, they remained unopened all day. And nobody ventured to open any of them, for tampering with another fellow's correspondence is one of the things that are not done.

The afternoon post brought a further flood of letters for Tubby Muffin. These were added to the pile in Tubby's study, and left there.

"There's a mystery about those letters," declared Jimmy Silver. "Wish I could fathom it!"

"Same here," said Newcome. "I don't suppose that in the whole history of Rookwood any single fellow has had so many letters."

"Tubby's correspondence is simply overwhelming, by Jove!" said Mornington. "How's he goin' to answer it all?"

"Replying to it would mean nearly two thousand twopenny stamps," I said. "Afraid Tubby's exchequer wouldn't run to that."

"Not likely!"

That evening the mystery of that amazing invasion of letters was solved.

We were in the Junior Common-room, discussing the strange affair, when in walked Bootles, our respected Form-master.

There was a most terrific frown on Bootles' usually mild countenance, and it was easy to see that there was trouble brewing for somebody.

"Is Muffin here?" asked Bootles, in a terrible voice.

The fat junior rose to his feet. He eyed the Form-master very nervously.

"Wretched boy!" thundered Bootles. "You doubtless know why I have summoned you! Your shameful conduct has just come to light."

"Oh crumbs!"

"For some reason best known to yourself you caused an advertisement to be inserted in a leading London newspaper to the effect that there was a furnished house to let in Letcham, a few miles away."

A murmur of amazement ran through the Common-room.

"You stated that the rent of the aforesaid house—which does not exist, except in your imagination—was only ten shillings a week!" went on Mr. Bootles. "Further particulars may be obtained by applying, in writing, to R. Muffin, Rookwood School," you wrote. The result is you have been inundated with letters from eager house-hunters, all of whom will be bitterly disappointed—and very angry—on finding that the affair was merely a hoax!"

"I—I—I—" faltered Tubby Muffin.

"How dare you perpetrate such an outrageous practical joke, Muffin?" roared Mr. Bootles. "Are you aware that your conduct places you within the reach of the law?"

Tubby Muffin shuddered. He had evidently left that consideration out of his calculations.

"I have arranged for a full explanation to appear in to-morrow's papers," said Bootles. "Let us hope, for your sake, that none of the disappointed house-hunters will institute legal proceedings against you. Whatever possessed you to publish such an advertisement?"

"It—it was like this, sir," stammered Tubby Muffin. "It's my birthday to-day, and I—I wanted to impress all the fellows by getting a crowd of letters. So I hit upon the wheeze of advertising a furnished house. I—I didn't see any harm in it, sir!"

Bootles frowned.

"I shall be greatly surprised if Dr. Chishelm fails to see any harm in it, Muffin!" he said. "I will take you before him now."

"So saying, Bootles swept out of the room, and Tubby Muffin tottered after him.

It seemed quite on the cards that the fat junior would be "sacked" for having perpetrated such an amazing hoax. But the Head realised that Tubby Muffin had acted thoughtlessly, and he decided that a public flogging would meet the case.

"I have a painful duty to perform," were the Head's words, before he laid on the birch.

But he didn't find it nearly so painful as Tubby Muffin!

A BIRTHDAY COMEDY!

By GEORGE FIGGINS.

Billy's Birthday Ballad!

By DICK PENFOLD.

"Coming down to cricket, Fatty?"
"Bless cricket!" growled Fatty Wynn.
My plump study-mate was reclining on the sofa. He had eaten a substantial dinner, and he didn't seem inclined to budge.

"Don't be such a lazy slacker!" I said sternly. "The House-match comes off next week, and we've got to get some practice."

"Oh, run away and pick flowers!" said Fatty drowsily. "I'm not coming."

"You jolly well are!" I said warmly. "Unless you can give me a jolly good reason why you shouldn't turn out, I'll get a crowd of fellows to march you down to the field by force!"

"Oh crumbs! Don't be a beast, Figgy! Let me take forty winks in comfort."

"You've got to give me a good excuse for not turning out," I repeated.

"Too hot!" growled Fatty.

"I can't accept that as an excuse. Try again."

"I've eaten too much."

"That's no excuse, either. You shouldn't be such a blessed pig!"

"Gr-r-r!" growled Fatty.

"You can't give me a satisfactory reason why you shouldn't join us at cricket," I said, "so I'm going to fetch the other fellows—"

"Half a jilly!" cried Fatty, sitting bolt upright on the sofa. "I've got a jolly good reason."

"Name it!"

"It—it's my birthday!"

"First I knew of it!" I said. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Ahem! It—it slipped my memory!"

"Well, you're a queer card, and no mistake! Fellows don't usually forget their birthdays. By the way, there seems to be a perfect epidemic of birthdays just now. Baggy Trimble says it's his birthday to-day; and I've heard that Billy and Sammy Bunter, of Greyfriars, and Tubby Muffin, of Rookwood, are also claiming birthdays."

"Good luck to them!" said Fatty.

"Funny you should all have been born on the 13th of May," I said. "Still, to come back to our subject, I don't see that a birthday's any excuse for not playing cricket."

"Rats! A fellow ought to be allowed to do as he likes on his birthday. If he wants to slack, let him! If he wants to chase a cricket-ball all the afternoon, and get sunstroke, let him! He should be free to follow his own devices. Dash it all, birthdays come but once a year!"

After this chunk of oratory had been delivered, Fatty lay back again on the sofa, and closed his eyes.

"All serene," I said. "As it's your birthday, I won't be hard on you. Come in, fat-head!" I added, as a knock sounded on the door of the study.

The "fathead" proved to be Dick Redfern. He was in flannels, and he had in his hand a copy of a weekly paper called "Scraps."

"What have you got there?" I asked.

"Anything interesting?"

Reddy nodded.

"There's an article in this paper," he said, "about people whose birthdays fall on the 13th of May."

Fatty Wynn, who had been on the point of nodding off to sleep, sat up again.

"Eh? What's that?" he inquired.

"I'll read it out to you fellows," said Reddy.

"Here goes: 'People whose birthdays fall on the 13th of May are to be deeply pitied. Bad luck will dog them all their days—'

"Oh, my hat!"

"They will meet with many misfortunes; their friends will turn to foes; they will be the victims of fearful diseases and terrible accidents—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"They will meet with many misfortunes; their friends will turn to foes; they will be the victims of fearful diseases and terrible accidents—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"They will meet with many misfortunes; their friends will turn to foes; they will be the victims of fearful diseases and terrible accidents—"

Fatty Wynn grew quite pale.
"And it is quite probable that they will die young—that they will be cut off in the springtime of their youth—"

That was altogether too much for Fatty Wynn. He uttered a shriek which rang through the study.

Redfern stared in surprise at the fat junior.

"What's the matter, Fatty?" he asked.

Fatty did not answer. He was wiping huge beads of perspiration from his brow.

"You couldn't have upset him more if you'd dropped a bombshell in the study. Reddy," I said. "You see, it's Fatty's birthday to-day—and to-day's the 13th of May!"

"My hat!"

Fatty Wynn was on his feet now. He was in a state bordering on panic.

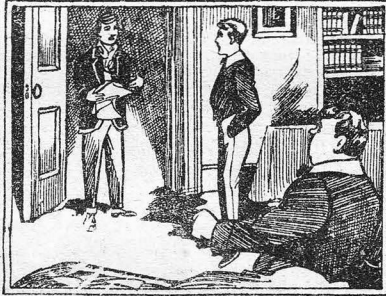
"It—it isn't my birthday at all!" he exclaimed.

"What!" I roared.

"My birthday falls in September."

"But you told me it was to-day—"

"I know. You see, I had to find an excuse,



Dick Redfern came into the study. He had a copy of "Scraps" in his hand. "There's something about people whose birthdays fall on the 13th of May," he said.

somehow, for not turning out to cricket practice!" said Fatty desperately.

I surveyed my fat study-mate grimly.

"You shall pay dearly for that fib!" I said.

"We'll give you a jolly good bumping, and then frog-march you to the cricket-ground!"

So saying, I went out into the passage and raised a shout, which was answered almost immediately by the arrival of half a dozen fellows.

"What's the trouble, Figgy?" asked Kerr.

"I want you fellows to lend me a hand," I explained. "This fat bouncer has tried to wriggle out of cricket practice by pretending it was his birthday. So I've sentenced him to be bumped and frog-marched on to the ground."

"Say when!" chuckled Pratt.

I rapped out the word of command, and Fatty Wynn's huge bulk was raised in the air and deposited none too gently on to the floor.

"Bump!"

"Ow!"

"Bump!"

"Yow!"

"Bump!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Fatty's yells of anguish awakened the echoes. And when Dick Redfern consulted the article on birthdays, and turned up the 11th of September—Fatty's real birthday—he discovered that fellows born on that day were excellent vocalists!

And if you could have heard Fatty's yells, you would have agreed.

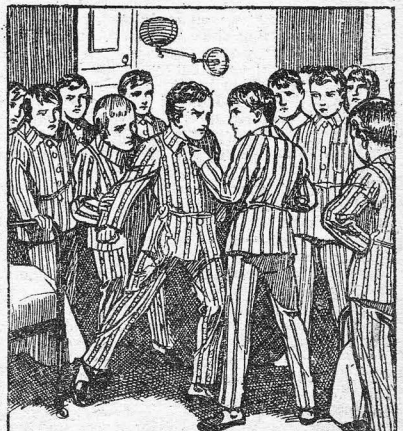
"I'll have a dozen sausage-rolls.
Look lively, Mrs. Mumble!
You're not so young as me, I know,
But please be smart and nimble.
You don't know who's to foot the bill?
That's aggravating—very!
But as it is my birthday, why,
You'll treat me, won't you, Cherry?"

"I'll have that rabbit-pie as well.
And twenty "maids of honour."
You want spot-cash? Oh, don't be rash!
John Bull will be the donor.
I'll have a pound of chocolate roll
(Don't think that I'm a glutton).
Your terms are cash? Upon my soul!
You'll settle, won't you, Dutton?"

"A strawberry ice would be quite nice,
A ginger-pop delicious.
(I wish you would stop scowling, ma'am,
And looking fierce and vicious!)
A score or so of currant buns
My joys would increase tenfold;
And please be sure they're tuppenny ones.
Collect the cash from Penfold."

"I say, you fellows, please don't go!
This is my birthday, Toddy!
Come back, you beast! I want to feast,
In turn, with everybody!"
The laughing juniors stroll away,
And Billy in despair drops.
His birthday feast he buys himself—
A pennyworth of pear-drops!

SCENES AT ST. JIM'S.



No. 3.—RUCTIONS IN THE FAGS' DORMITORY.

ONE STAUNCH CHUM!*(Continued from page 8.)*

pened to be out of doors—Cross Keys, I suppose—and he met me under the window as he came back. I gave him a lash or two, and then he got the whip away. He came for me with the butt of it, and I had to cut. I dodged him under the elms—it was very dark there—and that's all. I came back here."

"And Loder didn't follow?" asked Snoop.

"No!"

"That's very curious!" Russell remarked. "You'd have thought that he'd be raging, and that he'd come tearing up to the dorm."

"Well he didn't."

"Perhaps he couldn't," suggested Skinner. "You may have hit him harder than you thought, Wharton. He might have been laid out."

"Nonsense! I hit him with the lash, and he was after me after that."

"It's curious that it should make him ill."

"It hasn't made him ill," said Harry sharply.

"You think something else happened after that to make him ill?" asked Skinner.

"I don't know what may have happened. I know that a lash or two across the face with a whip wouldn't make him ill."

"Sure you didn't use the butt?" asked Stott.

"Yes, of course I am."

"My hat!" exclaimed Skinner suddenly. "What's this?"

He was standing by Wharton's bed. Upon the pillow, which lay just as it had lain under Harry Wharton's head, was a stain of red. The stain showed up with startling distinctness upon the whiteness of the pillow.

The juniors stared at the bloodstain in horror. There was no doubt what caused that stain—it was blood!

"Blood!" muttered Bulstrode. "I say, Wharton—I—I say!"

Wharton burst into an angry laugh.

"That's from my nose," he said. "My nose was bleeding last night. I biffed it against a tree in the dark."

"Oh!"

The juniors were very silent after that. Harry Wharton finished dressing himself, and, with a darkly-frowning brow, made his way to the door. It opened just as he reached it, and Wingate, of the Sixth, looked in.

"Wharton!"

"Here I am," said Wharton firmly.

"You are wanted in the Head's study."

"Very well."

Wharton followed the captain of Greyfriars from the dormitory. He left a dead silence behind him. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent looked at one another—mute! The same thought was in both their minds: What had Harry Wharton done in the darkness of the night?

THE THIRD CHAPTER.**Before the Head!**

WINGATE did not speak as he led the way. Harry Wharton glanced at him on the stairs, and saw that his face was cold and set—very different from its usual lively expression.

"What does the Head want to see me for, Wingate?" he asked quietly.

Wingate gave him a look.

"You'll see soon," he said gruffly.

"What about Loder—what's the matter with him?"

"If you don't know already, you soon will."

And Wingate said no more. Wharton followed him in silence to the Head's study. Dr. Locke was there, looking very pale and stern, and Mr. Quelch was also there. The Remove-master looked distressed.

He fixed his eyes upon Wharton as he came in. Wharton met his glance respectfully, but firmly. He was not afraid.

"Wharton!" said the Head slowly.

"Yes, sir."

"You have to answer a terrible charge. In the first place, if you have anything to say to me, and choose to say it of your own accord, I will listen."

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"You do not know, then, what this charge is?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, I hope you will be able to prove your innocence, Wharton. You have always had a good reputation in the school, and it would be a terrible thing if this was proved against you. Not only would you be expelled from Greyfriars, but if Loder becomes worse the matter will become public, and then you would undoubtedly be arrested and sent to a reformatory."

Wharton shivered.

"What has happened, sir?" he asked, in a low voice.

"I will tell you. In the first place, I will ask you some questions, and I am sure you will answer truthfully. I may tell you that this matter will be sifted to the very bottom, and the truth will, and must, be brought to light. I warn you in the first place against any temptation to prevaricate."

Wharton flushed.

"I hope I am not likely to prevaricate, sir!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Quelch will tell you whether I am truthful or not."

"I have always found Wharton a perfectly truthful boy," said the Remove-master.

Dr. Locke nodded.

"Very well! Were you out of the Remove dormitory last night, Wharton?"

The junior was silent.

"Speak up, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch. "This matter is so serious that there is no possibility of keeping anything back—nor will any small fault be punished. Dr. Locke is only anxious to find out the truth of the attack upon Loder, and anything else that may come to light will be passed over. Is it not so, sir?"

"Quite so," said the Head. "For the sake of clearing up the one matter, I will pass over anything else that was done, and so you may speak to me with perfect freedom, Wharton."

"I was out of the dorm. last night, sir," said Harry quietly.

The Head drew a deep breath.

"Yes? Did you leave it by the door or the window—I mean, was it some boyish prank upon the other Forms, or did you actually leave the house?"

"I left the house, sir."

"You confess that?"

"Certainly, sir."

"And what was the reason for going to Loder's room in the middle of the night?" demanded the Head, his voice growing very stern.

"To horsewhip Loder, sir," said Wharton firmly.

"What?"

"Are you serious, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Quite serious, sir."

"You intended to horsewhip a prefect?" the Head exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"And the reason for this piece of astounding impertinence?"

"Loder had bullied me, and licked me before the fellows—for nothing," said Wharton, between his teeth. "I said that I would be even with him. That was my reason. If I were big enough I would fight him. As I'm not, I meant to catch him in bed and horsewhip him. That's all, sir."

"And did you do so?" said the Head coldly.

"No, sir. He was not in his room." "Ah! Where did you see him? You did see him, I presume?"

"Yes. I was under his study window, when he came through the trees and recognised me."

Mr. Quelch suppressed a groan. He could see how Wharton was incriminating himself, and his belief in the junior's innocence wavered.

"And then?" exclaimed the Head.

"Then you struck him down?"

Wharton almost smiled.

"I don't think I could have struck down a fellow so big as Loder, sir," he said. "I hit him across the face with the whip, once or twice or three times; I hardly remember, I was very excited." "With the butt of the whip?"

"No, sir, the lash. I meant to punish him, not to injure him. I hope you don't think I would act like a ruffian, sir."

"It remains for you to prove that you have not acted like a ruffian, Wharton. But what did Loder do after you had lashed him, as you state?"

"He got the whip away from me, sir, and tried to hit me with the butt."

"Be careful what you say, Wharton."

"I am telling you exactly what occurred, sir."

"What did you do?"

"I cut—I—I mean, I ran, sir," said Wharton. "Loder was in a fury, and didn't know what he was doing, and he might have brained me. I dodged away under the trees."

"And Loder?"

"He missed me in the dark."

"You did not turn upon him?"

"No, sir."

"Nor strike him again with any heavy weapon?"

"I had no weapon, sir."

"He was quite well, then, and had received from you only the lashes on the face when you left the spot?"

"Yes, sir."

"And then you returned to your dormitory?"

"Yes, sir."

"Unpursued?"

"Yes."

"Did it not strike you as singular that Loder did not follow you?"

"Well, I was rather excited and confused, and didn't think much about it, sir," said Harry. "I thought, I believe, that Loder didn't care for the matter to go any further. I intended to tell the exact facts if he complained to you, sir, as he has done. But I rather thought that he would let the matter drop, and take his revenge afterwards in some underhand way; that would have been more like him. I can't understand his having allowed the matter to come to your knowledge at all, because he knows that I'm bound to give my reasons for acting as I did."

"If Loder was so brutal as you say, Wharton, why did you not complain to me or to your Form-master, instead of taking the law into your own hands?"

"Because that would be sneaking, sir."

"But you have told me now."

"Because Loder has reported me, and

10 You Must Not Miss Reading "Wun Lung's Feud!" A Grand School Tale—

forced me to. I'm bound to defend myself, sir."

The Head looked at him searchingly. "Then you think that Loder has reported your conduct to me, and that that is why I have sent for you?" he asked slowly.

Wharton looked surprised.

"I suppose so, sir. You couldn't know anything about it unless Loder had reported it, could you? I suppose he has reported it, and he is shamming illness to make it out more serious; that would be like him."

The Head's brow grew very stern.

"Then you do not know, Wharton, what has happened to Loder?" he exclaimed.

"I don't know that anything has happened to him, sir."

"You do not know that last night he was struck down by an unknown hand, in the Close, under his window—"

"What?"

"And left insensible?" said the Head harshly.

Wharton staggered.

"It—it's impossible!" he exclaimed.

"Your Form-master, Mr. Quelch, found him there, bleeding and unconscious," said the Head sternly. "For a long time he could not speak. This morning he is able to speak, and that is all. And he has named you as his assailant."

"I, sir?"

"Yes, you, Wharton!"

Wharton held on to the back of a chair for support. His brain seemed to reel, and for a moment the room swam round him.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Guilty!

"WHARTON!"

Mr. Quelch's clear, incisive voice seemed to pierce the mist that was closing upon Harry Wharton's brain. The Form-master's strong hand closed upon his shoulder, and held him. Harry made an effort, and collected himself. The Head's eyes were like steel now as they were fixed upon him.

"Wharton, collect yourself!"

"Ye-es, sir," muttered Harry.

"Have you anything to say, Wharton?" said the Head coldly.

"Yes, sir. I—I didn't do it. If Loder has really been injured, I didn't do it. I know nothing at all about it."

"Do you seriously expect that statement to be believed, Wharton?" the Head demanded sharply. "You admit striking Loder; you admit that you went there purposely to take revenge upon him for some wrong, real or fancied; and you deny that you inflicted the injury from which he is now suffering."

"I deny it!"

"You aver, then, that someone else must have found Loder there immediately after you left him, and struck him down."

Wharton was silent.

It certainly did seem a wild supposition put in that way. That the Head believed him guilty was clear. He looked at Mr. Quelch, but the Remove-master avoided his glance. Harry's heart was as heavy as lead. Mr. Quelch believed him guilty, too!

The boy broke out passionately.

"Oh, sir, you—you can't believe that I'd do a thing like that! I never meant to hurt Loder—only to punish him for bullying me. I hit him with the lash of the whip, and that was all; I swear it."

"I cannot believe you, Wharton. The whip has been found there, but you had another weapon, too, probably a cricket-bat. Dr. Short states that Loder's in-

jury was caused by some heavy, blunt weapon, probably a cricket-bat. Do you deny that you had such a weapon with you?"

"I had nothing but the whip, sir, and Loder took that away."

The Head sighed.

"Then you persist in denial?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly, sir, as I am only telling the truth!" said Wharton. "I have not hurt Loder. If he was struck down and stunned, it certainly was not by me. He might have run into a tree, perhaps. I ran into one, and made my nose bleed."

"Loder's injury could not have been caused by running into a tree. He was struck down."

"Does he say I did it, sir?"

"Yes."

Wharton gasped.

"He says I struck him down?"

"Yes."

"But—but it's impossible, sir. If he says so, it's a lie. And if—if he was struck down under the tree, sir, he couldn't see who struck him; it was too dark."

Loder's statement is that you assaulted him, Wharton, and he followed you under the trees, and there you turned upon him and struck him down."

"I did nothing of the kind, sir."

"You suggest, then, that there was someone else under the elms, lying in wait for a chance to injure Loder?"

Harry Wharton gave a start.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Now I think of it, I remember hearing a foot-step under the trees a long time before Loder came up. There was somebody else there."

The doctor shook his head.

"I am afraid that will not do, Wharton. You did not see this other?"

"It was too dark, sir."

"You do not know who it was?"

"I have no idea, sir."

"Hm! And you did not mention the fact at all until now—"

"I had forgotten about it, sir."

The Head was silent for a few moments, his eyes fixed upon Wharton. The boy stood erect before him. He was dismayed, but he was not afraid.

"You will not confess, then, Wharton?"

"I have confessed everything now, sir."

"You deny your guilt?"

"Most decidedly, sir."

"It is only too clear, Wharton. What is your opinion, Mr. Quelch?"

The Remove-master was pale and grave.

"I agree with you, sir," he said, in a low voice.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Wharton.

"You—you believe me guilty?"

"I cannot believe otherwise, Wharton. I am afraid that it is only too clear," said Mr. Quelch sadly.

"That you were in a state of great excitement, and hardly knew what you were doing, I believe also, but I cannot doubt that you did this. The first name upon Loder's lips when he came to himself was yours."

"He lied, sir."

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"He spoke your name, Wharton, before he was fully conscious. He was not lying. He might have been mistaken; but I do not see how he could have been mistaken."

Wharton's brain seemed to whirl.

He was beginning to understand what this meant to him. Ruin—ruin—disgrace and condemnation! He gasped for breath.

"Loder is now in a precarious state," said Dr. Locke, in a hard voice. "His strong constitution may pull him round without a severe illness. As yet Dr.

Short cannot tell. It is quite possible that he may become worse, and have brain fever. If it comes to that, Wharton, the matter must become public. In that case, you will be dealt with according to law. But if Loder improves, and we are able to keep this unhappy matter to ourselves, you will simply be expelled from Greyfriars. In the meantime, it is my duty to keep custody of you. You will be locked up in a room until we know more."

"Locked up, sir?"

"Yes, Wharton; and if it were not for the disgrace to Greyfriars," said Dr. Locke, his voice rising, "I should have you locked up in the police-station at Friardale, instead of a room in the school."

Wharton shuddered.

"I shall write to your uncle to-day, acquainting him with what has happened," went on Dr. Locke. "I understand that he is now in Paris, and it will be some time before he can get here. In the meantime, you will be kept in custody—"

"I am innocent."

"Do not add falsehoods to your other wickedness, Wharton. You have been guilty of a cruel and barbarous act. That you received provocation I am willing to believe, but nothing can excuse or condone the utter barbarity of this attack upon Loder. I shall keep you in confinement till Loder's state is ascertained more accurately. If he grows better, I shall hand you over to your uncle to take away from the school. If he grows worse, I fear that I shall have no alternative but to give you up to the police. Wingate, will you take Wharton away, and lock him in the empty room in the second passage, and bring me the key?"

"Yes, sir."

Wharton gave a wild look round at the condemnatory faces.

"I—I am innocent," he muttered huskily. "Dr. Locke, ask Mr. Quelch, ask Wingate, ask any of the fellows, if I've ever done a rotten, cowardly thing like that before!"

"Talk is useless, Wharton. Take him away!"

"But—but, sir, I—I can't be locked up!" Wharton exclaimed. "I—I ought to be allowed a chance of looking into the matter to—to find out who really did that to Loder."

Dr. Locke's colour deepened. He was very angry.

"That is sheer impertinence, Wharton!" he exclaimed. "You would do much better to own up to the truth and say that you are sorry."

"I am not likely to own up to what I never did, sir!" retorted Wharton with spirit.

"Enough! Take him away, Wingate."

The Greyfriars captain dropped his hand upon Wharton's shoulder. His face was hard and dark.

"Come!" he said.

"You needn't put your hands on me!" said Harry. "I'll come without that!"

Wingate gave him one look, and released him. Harry Wharton followed him from the study. The junior held his head high. He was angry now—quite as angry as the doctor. Wingate opened a door in the lower passage.

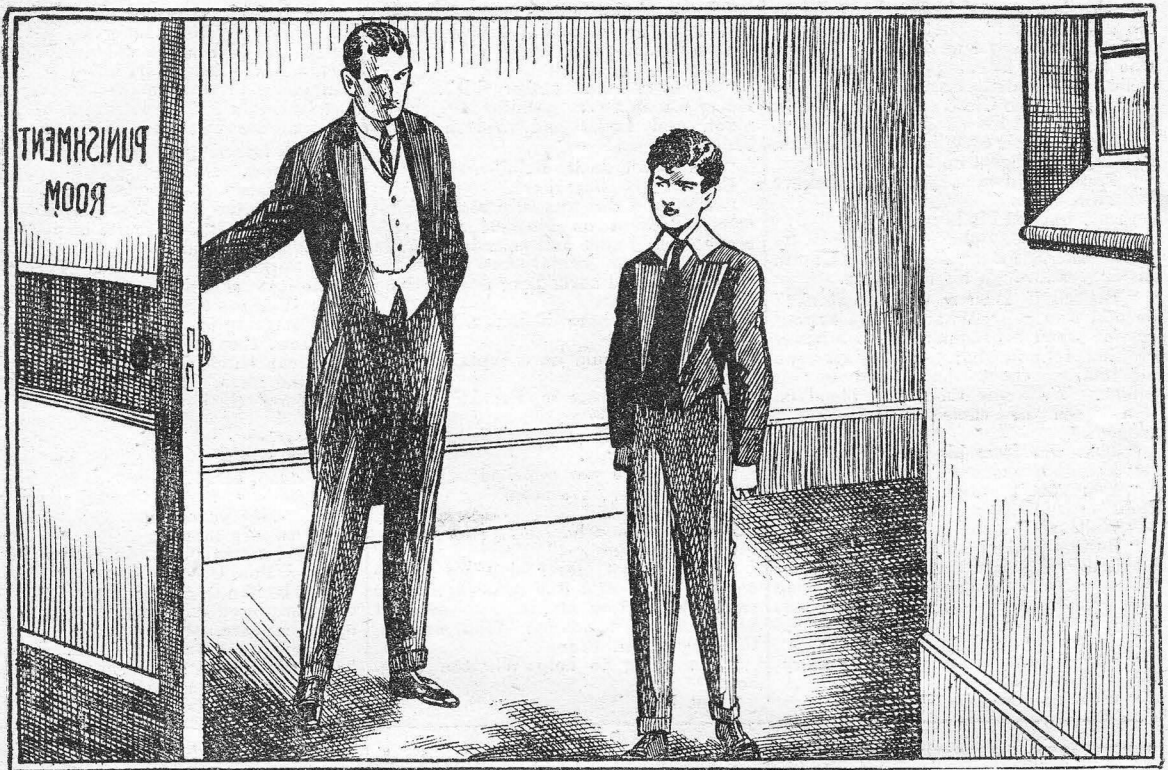
"Get in!" he said roughly.

Wharton stepped into the room.

Wingate drew the door shut, and turned the key on the outside. There was a click, and the captain of Greyfriars put the key into his pocket and turned away.

Harry Wharton was alone.

A prisoner—under a terrible charge. It seemed to him that it was some fearful dream, but he looked round the



Harry Wharton followed Wingate along the passage, with his head high in the air. He was very angry now, but he knew that he could not escape from the punishment-room. Wingate opened the door of the detention-room at the end of the passage. "Get in there!" he said roughly. He stood aside. For a moment Wharton hesitated, then he stepped into the room. (See Chapter 4.)

room, at the locked door, and knew that it was no dream.

He was a prisoner, his honour stained, perhaps for ever, and the terrible sentence hanging over him—expulsion from the school, perhaps prison. Prison! The mere thought of the horrible word sent a chill to his very heart. If only he had taken Frank Nugent's advice the day before!

But it was too late!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. One Staunch Chum!

THAT work was very much neglected in the Remove Form-room that morning we need hardly say.

The Remove were amazed and dismayed.

The news of Loder's injury and of Wharton's incarceration had, of course, spread over the whole school at once.

It caused utter amazement in all quarters.

That any Greyfriars fellow should be guilty of such a ruffianly revenge, even upon a bully like Loder, was shocking enough. But that the guilty person should be Harry Wharton of the Remove made the matter as surprising as it was shocking.

Wharton guilty!

The facts that were known hardly seemed to leave room for any other supposition. Loder, when he recovered in the morning, had told his tale clearly enough—so clearly, that it was pretty evident to some of the fellows that he had thought it over carefully before he spoke a word.

He had heard a noise in the Close, so he said, and had risen to see what it was, suspecting that perhaps some of the juniors were breaking bounds. In order not to alarm the house, he had

dropped from his window to look round the Close. He had looked under the elms, fancying that he saw someone there, and as he came back towards the house he met Harry Wharton of the Remove face to face. Wharton, instead of replying to his questions as to why he was out of the dormitory, had attacked him savagely with a whip, and then run under the trees. Loder had followed him, and Wharton had turned upon him and struck him down with some heavy weapon. Then he was insensible, and knew no more. He had an impression, however, that he had been struck twice. He had not seen any weapon in Wharton's hand excepting the whip, which he had snatched away from him in the struggle. But the junior must have had it with him, or else leaning against a tree in readiness to be snatched up. Loder thought it was a cricket-bat that he had used.

That was all that Loder could tell.

Most of the fellows discounted the first part of the story. They guessed pretty clearly that Loder had been returning from some midnight excursion when he had encountered Wharton in the Close, and had not risen because he had heard a noise in the Close. But that was only a minor point of the story. The essential part of it seemed to be well substantiated.

For Wharton admitted having left the Remove dormitory to make an attack upon Loder, and there was only his bare word to the effect that he had intended only a punishment, not a brutal assault.

"The chap lost his head when Loder was after him, and biffed him too hard," said Bulstrode. "It was a bit rotten, but Loder can blame himself. I'm sorry for Wharton."

"So am I," said Tom Brown. "There's not much doubt about it, I

suppose, but it's rotten hard on Wharton. He never meant to hurt Loder so much, I'm certain of that."

"But he denies the whole business," Mark Linley remarked.

"Oh, he would!" sneered Skinner.

Mark fixed a steady look upon the cad of the Remove.

"You seem to have been much against Wharton all along," he said, as Skinner shrank a little from his glance. "I, for one, believe every word Wharton has said. I don't believe he would tell a lie to escape any punishment."

"Oh, rats!" said Snoop. "Anybody would."

"That may be your opinion; it isn't mine."

"Oh, Wharton denies it, of course," said Skinner. "He doesn't want to be expelled. But we know jolly well that he biffed Loder."

"We know nothing of the sort," said Nugent.

Skinner stared at him.

"You ought to know it better than us," he said. "We all know that Wharton had some scheme on last night to revenge himself on Loder, and you were on bad terms with him about it."

Nugent flushed.

"That was simply his scheme for horsewhipping Loder," he replied. "I thought it was rather too thick at the time, and I think so now."

"I suppose he didn't tell you all this?" "He did tell me all, and he never meant to hurt Loder seriously. Some cowardly brute did this to Loder," said Nugent. "It wasn't Wharton."

"Oh, rats!"

"Yes, that's too thick, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish. "It's pretty clear about Wharton, you know, though I'm sorry for the galoot, I guess. Yep!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Frank. "Wharton didn't do it!"

He swung away angrily. Bob Cherry, who had been listening in silence to the somewhat heated discussion, followed Nugent into the Close. Morning lessons were over, and the whole school was discussing the affair of Wharton and Loder. Bob tapped Nugent on the arm.

"Franky, old man, you don't believe Wharton did it?"

Frank knitted his brow.

"No; do you, Bob?"

Bob Cherry looked distressed. He ran his fingers through his thick hair.

"Blessed if I know what to think!" he said slowly. "Wharton is a curious beggar when his temper gets the better of him, I know that. The fellows are all talking about that blood on his pillow. We know there was blood on him when he came in last night, Nugent."

"That was from his nose."

"Yes, if it was true."

"You don't think Wharton lied, Bob?"

"Well, no."

"Besides he had nothing with him to hit Loder with like that," said Nugent. "He took the riding-whip, and nothing else. And Loder admits having got that away from him."

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Do you think Wharton told us everything, Franky?"

"What do you mean?"

"Some of the fellows suggest that he had a bat or something hidden on the spot ready."

"Rot!"

"Well, it seems rather thick. Only Harry was in a very peculiar temper last night, and Loder had used him very badly, and—and—"

"He didn't do it, Bob."

Bob Cherry was silent.

"What he did was silly and reckless enough," went on Nugent, "but the rest—hitting Loder and stunning him in that way—was brutal and cowardly. Wharton would never have done a thing like that."

"He might have if Loder had been wetting him—"

"Then he would have explained how it was."

"Well, I suppose so, Frank."

"He says he dodged Loder under the trees, and I believe every word of it," Frank said firmly.

"Then there was somebody else?"

"There must have been."

"But whom?"

Nugent made a hopeless gesture.

"Goodness knows!"

"They've got Harry shut up in the empty room," said Bob restlessly. "No chance of getting at him and seeing if he can tell us anything. What are you thinking about, Frank?"

"I'm going to help Wharton somehow."

"But how?"

"I don't know—yet," Frank knitted his brows. "He's innocent, Bob. I don't care if I'm the only chap in the Remove who knows it, but I know it! I'm going to manage to see him somehow and talk it over with him, and then we shall see what can be done."

"He's locked up, Frank."

"I know. But—"

"Wingate's got the key, or else he's given it to the Head," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "No chance of getting in at the door. And the room is just over the Form-room windows, Frank—no chance of climbing up without being seen. You can't get at Wharton."

"I'm going to get at him!"

"How, then?"

"I can climb down from the window over the room," said Frank. "There's ivy there thick enough to bear my weight."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"It's risky."

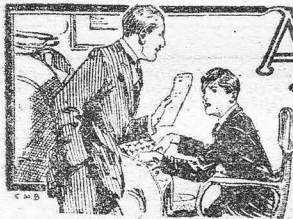
"I don't care!"

"I believe in him through thick and thin," said Nugent quietly; "and I'm going to help him."

And Nugent went into the house, leaving Bob Cherry staring after him with his hands in his pockets, and a very perplexed and distressed expression upon his face.

Harry Wharton was down. But he had at least one staunch chum, and much could result from that.

THE END.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. ADDRESS: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

Once again I have pleasure in announcing a splendid programme for next Friday's issue of the "Popular." We shall start off with a long, complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, entitled:

"RALLYING ROUND WHARTON!"

By Frank Richards.

If you have read this week's story you will understand that Wharton is really in need of friends, and Frank Nugent persuades the chums of the Remove to rally round Wharton in no mean manner. Indeed, by their efforts, the slur that is cast upon Wharton's good name is removed once and for all. More than that I will not say.

"GENTLEMAN JIM'S STRATAGEM!"

By Owen Conquest.

That is the title of the second long, complete school story, which deals with the further adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., known as the Fistical Four throughout the famous school, and dealing with the feud between Mornington and Kit Erroll. This story is certain to meet with the approval of all my chums.

"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY."

I have only space for a brief announcement that next week's issue of this popular feature will be as funny as ever, and full of interest from start to finish.

"POPLETS" COMPETITION No. 18.

Examples for the above competition:

A New Excuse.	Stick Together
Lucky Let Off.	When—
Masters on Strike.	Coker's Opinion.
Full of Troubles.	Japing Kildare
The Winning Team.	Means—
Sports and Sportsmen.	Marjorie's Tea Party.
Rift in Lute.	Get Out When—

THE POPULAR.—No. 124.

Read the following rules carefully, and then send in your postcard. Readers should particularly note that TWO efforts can be sent in on one card, but no effort may contain more than FOUR words.

Select two of the examples, and make up a sentence of TWO, THREE, or FOUR words having some bearing on the example. ONE of the words in your sentence must commence with one of the letters in the example.

You must study these rules carefully before you send in your effort:

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. 18, the "Popular," 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.

All efforts must be received on or before June 9th.

TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH to senders of the TEN BEST "POPLETS."

RESULT OF

"POPLETS" COMPETITION NO. 12.

The prizes of five shillings each have been awarded to the following readers:

Tom Fox, 35, Atkinson Street, Stockton-on-Tees.

Example: When Bunter Bored.
"Poplet": Guests Naturally Snore.

F. Brown, 45, Menbury Street, Saltley. Laying in Grub. Bunter Then "Takes Stock."

Arthur Molyneux, 5, Deme Street Gardens, Dorking. When Prout Shoots. "Good Job," Says Glazier.

Albert W. Cann, 46, Lyndhurst Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants. Accepting Loder's Advice. "Ails" and "Whines" Follow.

Arthur E. Ambrose, 26, Trinity Street, Rhoslyllan, near Wrexham. Accepting Loder's Advice. "Tenner" Soon Becomes "Tanner."

Jessie Shroll, 94, Grafton Road, N.W. 5. Getting Too Frisky. Billy Bunter's Imagination.

Nellie Shroll, 94, Grafton Road, N.W. 5. Very Welcome Tips. Soften "Stoney" Porter.

L. Benlow, 93, St. Matthew Street, Wolverhampton. When Prout Shoots. Target Quite Safe.

Lilly Bachelor, 19, Kettering Road, Levenshulme, Manchester. Waiting for Billy. Queue, for "Bills Due."

Hilda Head, Victoria Road, Coleford, Glos. When Prout Shoots. Hospital Gets His Bag.

CORRESPONDENCE.

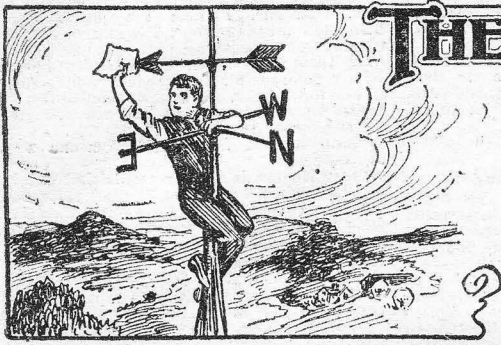
M. Dismek, 52, Caledon Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers overseas.

S. G. Lawson, 15, High Street, Penarth, South Wales, asks all correspondents who have not received replies to their letters to forward their names and addresses.

S. Peter, 19, Fairfield Crescent, Newham Park, Liverpool, asks readers interested in the work of an amateur magazine to write to him.

T. Marshall, 12, Green's Place, South Shields, Durham, would like to hear from readers re his Stamp Club. No fees. Stamp for copy of rules.

AN ABSORBING NEW TALE OF THE GREAT CINEMA WORLD!



THE DAREDEVIL SCHOOLBOY

Exploits of a High Spirited and Fearless Boy,
Whose Wild Pranks Cause Him to be Expelled
from the School and Join a Cinema Company.

By PAUL PROCTOR.

Dick Trafford is just a boy like yourself.

You will enjoy reading his thrilling adventures with the famous film company.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Dick Trafford, a high-spirited, fearless boy of St. Peter's School, brings about the downfall of Jasper Steele, the unscrupulous headmaster, and is expelled by the latter out of revenge.

Dick is turned away from home by his father. He comes in touch with a cinema company on "location," and acts as deputy "stunt" actor for them. Whilst doing this he saves an express from disaster. Among the passengers whom he has saved is the manager of the World-famed Cinema Company, who comes forward to congratulate Dick on his bravery, and offers him a job in the company. Dick accepts the splendid offer and travels down to the Cinema King's home to sign the contract.

There he meets Dr. Steele, who is a guest at the house, but he decides to say nothing to Mr. Henderson concerning their previous acquaintance.

A theft occurs at the Towers, and the stolen pearls are discovered in one of Dick's suit-cases. He is accused of the theft, and locked in his bed-room. That night he leaves his room by the window and saves Mrs. Henderson, who has been sleep-walking, from a terrible death. Her husband afterwards refuses to believe that Dick is a common thief, and in his gratitude tells Dick that he will do all in his power to help sift the affair of the pearl necklace to the bottom and find the real thief. That night he phones to Hesketh Moir, the great detective.

(Now read on.)

The Arrival of Hesketh Moir!

BREAKFAST had been finished an hour when a motor-car drew up before the imposing entrance to Shoreton Towers, and two men alighted. Dick Trafford, seated in the library, could see them both quite clearly through the window.

The larger of the two men he immediately recognised as the famous detective, Hesketh Moir, by his lean, cadaverous features and his dark, piercing eyes.

The other Dick noticed to be Mr. Henderson's clerk, Hopson—the poor fellow who had been discharged by Mr. Henderson upon the morning of Dick's first call at the Cinema King's offices in Wardour Street, London.

At that moment Mr. Henderson came into the room.

"Who's that arriving?" he asked. "It's the detective, Mr. Hesketh Moir," replied Dick.

As Mr. Henderson looked out through the window an angry expression crossed his face, and he let fall a hasty imprecation.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick. "Matter!" echoed Mr. Henderson. "Matter enough! There's that incapable fool, Hopson! I told him a couple of days ago to go down to the cashier, draw a month's salary, and to get. Don't you remember how he failed to remind me of that important appointment I had with Sir Oscar Buddelley?"

Dick nodded slowly. "And there's the fellow still there!" went

on Mr. Henderson angrily. "I won't have it! He'll have to clear. Why hasn't he gone as I told him, I wonder?"

"I'm afraid that's partly my fault!" interjected Dick.

Mr. Henderson swung round and regarded Dick Trafford with surprise.

"Yours?" he exclaimed, in amazement. "How can you have anything to do with it?"

Dick hesitated.

It was going to be a difficult matter to explain.

"Well, you see," he said, "after you had hurried off to keep your appointment with Sir Oscar Buddelley, this poor clerk of yours, Hopson by name, seemed absolutely heart-broken at the prospect of losing his job. You see, Mr. Henderson, you may not know it, but he has a wife and an invalid child. I felt sorry for him, and so I told him to stay on, and that I would see you and intercede upon his behalf. You will give him another chance, won't you, Mr. Henderson?"

The Cinema King regarded Dick with an expression of half surprise and half anger.

"Really, Mr. Trafford," he said coolly, "I think you took rather a great deal upon yourself to cancel my orders. I really cannot allow Hopson to remain in my employ another moment. There must be discipline in my office!"

Dick held up his hand, but Mr. Henderson brushed it aside.

"I won't hear another word!" he said shortly, and, turning upon his heel, strode out of the room into the hall to greet the famous detective, Dick following in the rear, slightly crestfallen.

He had promised this poor clerk that he should be given another chance, but now it looked as if he would be unable to keep that promise.

Already Mr. Henderson was greeting the famous detective.

"I must thank you for coming down so promptly, Mr. Moir," Dick heard him say.

"I should not have been able to get here so quickly but for the help of your clerk, Mr. Hopson here," answered the great man. "He has been of the greatest assistance to me."

"Hmph!" grunted Mr. Henderson. "That may be so! But he was discharged from my service two days ago."

Then Mr. Henderson turned upon the pale-faced, frightened clerk.

"Would you kindly explain," he demanded angrily, "why you are still here? Why did you disobey my instructions and not get the month's money from the cashier, as I ordered you to do, and clear?"

Hopson fidgeted with his bowler hat, and shifted his weight from one foot to the other, as he gazed helplessly from Mr. Henderson to Dick Trafford.

Then it was that Dick took a hand in affairs again.

"It's not his fault, Mr. Henderson," he said. "It isn't, really. I told him it would be all right. I'm to blame, if anyone. Please give him another chance, Mr. Henderson. I have asked nothing from you in return for what you were pleased to regard as the great service I did you last night. Will you now please grant me this one favour? Let Hopson have another chance. Surely your wife's life is worth it! If you insist upon discharging this poor fellow, the life of his one and only little daughter may pay forfeit. I saved your wife for you last night, won't you in return save the life of this poor fellow's sick child?"

Dick had chosen a strong argument, and already he could see Mr. Henderson wavering in his determination.

He regarded Dick with almost an amused expression upon his face.

"You're a clever young scamp!" he said at length. "You know how to frame an argument. All right!" he added, with a laugh. "I'll give way. He can stay!"

"Oh, thank you, sir—thank you!" cried Hopson gratefully. "I promise to give you my very best service in future!"

"All right; mind you do!" retorted Mr. Henderson.

Then the poor clerk turned to Dick.

"I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Trafford!" he said. "Perhaps—who knows?—one day I may be able to repay your kindness. I only hope the chance will come my way!"

"That's all right!" laughed Dick. "Don't say another word about it!"

Little did Dick realise at that moment how soon the opportunity was to come when Hopson would be able to carry out his promise and help Dick more than even he had hoped.

Hesketh Moir Gets to Work!

WITHOUT further waste of time, Mr. Henderson now turned to the famous detective—Hesketh Moir.

"You'd better come into the library, Mr. Moir," he said, "and I will tell you the details of the case I want you to undertake. I shall be glad if you, Mr. Trafford, would come as well; and you," he added, turning to Hopson, "had better wait here. I might want you to take down some letters later on. You can have a stroll round the grounds, if you like."

"Thank you, sir!" answered the clerk, as he turned away and passed out into the spacious grounds of Shoreton Towers.

Meanwhile, Mr. Henderson led the way into the library, followed by Hesketh Moir and Dick.

Once inside, Mr. Henderson told the famous detective the details—so far as he knew them—of the strange disappearance of his wife's pearl necklace.

"And," he concluded, "although the necklace was certainly found in the toe of a boot in the suitcase of Mr. Richard Trafford here. I am now convinced that he knew nothing whatever about it. It is, in fact, in order to completely prove his innocence, and, if possible, find the real culprit, that I have requested you to come down from town. Do you think you will be able to do it?"

The detective nodded his head.

"I quite understand what you want done," he said, "and you may rely upon my doing my utmost to bring the case to a successful termination. I can, of course, promise nothing; but I rarely fail. And now, first of all," went on the detective, "I shall want to interview each one of the servants and guests in your house separately. Has Mrs. Henderson a personal maid?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Henderson. "She has a little French girl, whom she brought back from Paris with her—Annette Foret is her name."

"I should like to see her immediately," announced the great detective.

Mr. Henderson nodded, and, rising to his feet, crossed to the electric bell-push.

A couple of minutes later a footman arrived in response to the summons.

"Tell Mrs. Henderson's maid, Annette, that

14 You Must Not Miss Reading "Wun Lung's Feud!" A Grand School Tale—

I want her here immediately!" ordered Mr. Henderson.

"Very good, sir!" The footman bowed and withdrew, and a few moments later the dainty little figure of the French maid hurried into the room, all flustered with excitement.

"You sent for me, sir?" she said, looking towards Mr. Henderson.

"Yes. This gentleman here is a detective," replied Mr. Henderson, as he waved his hand in the direction of Hesketh Moir. "I want you to tell him all you know about the disappearance of madam's pearls."

The girl nodded nervously. "But eet ees so leetle that I know!" she protested.

"Never mind!" retorted Mr. Henderson. "Tell us what little you do know!"

"Vell," commenced Annette, "before dinaire last night I take out from zee safe madame's diamonds and her pearls for 'er to choose from. Madame she choose zee diamonds, and zee pearls zay vaire left on zee dressing-table. Zen later I go to madame's room to prepare zee bed for zee night, and Voila! zee pearls 'ad gone.

"Zat is all I know, monsieur!" cried Annette. "I 'ear zat zay 'ave since been found, n'est pas?"

"Why did you leave the pearls on the dressing-table?" asked Hesketh Moir. "Why did you not return them to madame's jewel-safé, since she was not going to wear them?"

The French maid hesitated.

"Answer me!" demanded the detective.

Annette shrugged her shoulders, with a pretty gesture.

"I would 'ave done so," she said, "but madame she send me off with a message, and I leave 'er there in 'er room, with the pearls upon zee dressing-table before 'er; and zen, by zee time I come back madame 'ad gone downstairs to dinaire, and I notice zat the pearls were not zaire! I ran downstairs immediately to madame to tell 'er, and see if perhaps she 'ad 'erself put zem away."

Hesketh Moir held up his hand.

"Just a minute," he said, as he saw the girl was about to proceed with her story. "To whom did you have to take a message for Mrs. Henderson?"

The girl hesitated, and then suddenly blurted out:

"To Madame Spencer, who live down in zee town!"

"Do you know a Mrs. Spencer?" asked the detective, turning to Mr. Henderson.

The cinema king nodded.

"Yes," he said; "she is one of my wife's most intimate friends."

"I see," murmured the detective. "All right," he added, glancing up at the French maid; "that will do. You may go now."

The girl gave a little curtsy and then withdrew.

Hesketh Moir turned to Mr. Henderson.

"Is Mrs. Henderson in the house?" he asked. "I should like to see her, if possible."

"Certainly!" answered Mr. Henderson. "I will go and fetch her myself."

And so saying the cinema magnate rose to his feet and left the room, to return a few moments later accompanied by Mrs. Henderson.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Henderson!" remarked the detective, as he rose to his feet to greet his client's wife. "I want to ask you a few questions about this strange disappearance of your pearls."

Mrs. Henderson nodded, and seated herself in one of the comfortable armchairs.

"Yes?" she said.

"In the first place," commenced the detective. "I want to know if your maid's version of what she alleges took place is correct. She tells me that you had both your diamonds and pearls fetched out of your jewel-safé for you to choose from."

"Yes, that is so," agreed Mrs. Henderson; "and I chose the pearls."

"Quite so," went on the detective. "And now, Mrs. Henderson, I don't want you to think me impertinent, but don't you think you acted rather unwisely in leaving the pearl necklace lying loose there on your dressing-table when you descended to dinner after sending your maid off with a message to your friend Mrs. Spencer?"

An expression of surprise crossed Mrs. Henderson's face.

"But I don't understand!" she exclaimed. "I did not send Annette with a message to Mrs. Spencer!"

"As I expected!" exclaimed the detective triumphantly. "I guessed the girl was lying just now. She was too prompt in her answer for it to be the truth. And now, Mrs. Hen-

derson, will you tell me exactly what did happen?"

"Why, I left Annette in my room when I came down to dinner, and my last words to her were to be sure and lock the pearls away safely," answered Mrs. Henderson.

"Thank you, Mrs. Henderson!" remarked Hesketh Moir. "You have given me some very useful information, and furnished me with a clue which, I hope, will lead to the successful solving of the mystery!"

Peter Hopson Takes a Hand!

AND whilst the detective proceeded with his interviewing of the servants was one by one, Peter Hopson was strolling aimlessly round the extensive grounds of Shoreton Towers.

He was in a greatly relieved frame of mind now that, thanks to Dick's intervention on his behalf, his job had been saved.

"Thank Heaven!" murmured Hopson to himself. "I tremble to think what might have happened to little Elsie and her mother if I had lost my job! That Mr. Trafford's a fine fellow, and I only wish I could do something to help him in return. But he seems to have everything a lad could wish for—health, strength, and fearless courage, and a contract of five thousand a year to work for the pictures. Gee! I'm not jealous of him, nor do I envy him his good fortune, but some people seem to get all the luck!"

Peter Hopson stopped in his stroll, and stood near an artistic little summer-house which looked out of the sea.

It was a perfect picture—the blue waves breaking over the red rocks, with the early-morning sun glinting upon the sails of the returning fishing-smacks.

The picture caught the fancy of the poor little drudge of a London clerk, and he sank down upon one of the seats in the summer-house.

The seat was set well back, and Peter Hopson was completely hidden from the sight of anyone approaching from the house.

Hopson sat there ruminating upon life in general, when suddenly the plaintive voice of a woman came to his ears.

It sounded as if she were crying, even as she spoke.

Peter Hopson had no desire to act the part of eavesdropper, but the first words which came to his ears held him spellbound—rooted to the spot.

Had he wished to move, he would have been unable to do so.

"But, monsieur, you promised to marry me if I gave you zee pearls!"

These were the words spoken with a half-sob in the voice of a woman which came to the ears of Peter Hopson.

Already the poor clerk knew that the detective whom he had brought down to Shoreton had come there for the purpose of discovering who had taken the pearls and to clear Dick of the stigma which had been cast upon him.

"Yes, yes, monsieur!" Hopson heard the girl's voice go on. "You zay to me, 'Annette, you get me zose pearls, and I will either

marry you and take you back to La Belle France or I will give you enough money to go back by yourself and wait for me there! But, monsieur, I take zee pearls from madame's dressing-table; I give zem to you because you promise me that madame should have them back agin within a few hours. I only get zem for you because you tell me it ees for a joke. And now, monsieur, you refuse to marry me, and you will not give me any money to go away!"

"Stop it, you little fool! Someone may overhear you!"

Peter Hopson heard the words shot out in a savage whisper by a man's gruff voice.

The poor clerk bent his head in the direction from which came the voices.

His eyes were bright with excitement, and his heart beat quicker.

Here was his chance to help Dick Trafford. Here was his opportunity to repay him for the kindness he had done!

"But, monsieur," went on the girl's plaintive voice, "zee police are 'ere! Already I 'ave been before zee detective, and 'e ask me all sort of questions?"

"What did you tell him?" snapped out the man's voice.

"What could I tell him?" protested the girl. "I 'ad to make somesing up tout suite, and so I say I was sent by madame with a message to one of madame's friends, and zat when I come back zee pearls were gone."

"But, oh, monsieur, when zat detective man 'e ask madame about it all, she will tell him zat she did not send me on a message, and zen zay will come and take me to prison! Oh, sir, you must take me away, or give me money to escape and wait for you! You will do this for me?"

"Don't be a fool!" snarled the man's voice.

"I told you that I'd help you if my plans went right. But they haven't! They've all gone wrong! Here's this young jackanapes, Trafford, with Henderson on his side. Henderson sent for this detective himself, and, what's more, I believe they're beginning to suspect me!"

"This is what comes of falling in love with your infernally pretty face. If I hadn't met you in Paris, and learned you had come back here to England with Mrs. Henderson, I should never have gone out of my way to pick up an acquaintance with Eustace Henderson, and get an invitation down to his house in order to see you."

"If I'd never come here, this could never have happened. And now, like a fool, you've given the whole show away by telling this detective fellow a cock-and-bull story about going off on a message."

"You've put both me and yourself in the cart now, you little idiot, and then you come to me and beg me to marry you or give you enough money to get away before they arrest you! Huh! You'll get nothing out of me! Get out of my way!"

And then Peter Hopson, sitting hidden in that little summer-house, heard something which made his blood run cold with anger.

It was the sound of a man's clenched fist striking a woman upon the cheek.

The girl gave a heartbreaking little sob as she felt the sting of the blow.

But that cowardly blow which Dr. Jasper Steele—for, of course, it was he—had dealt the little French maid in his blinding rage was to have a far-reaching effect upon his plans.

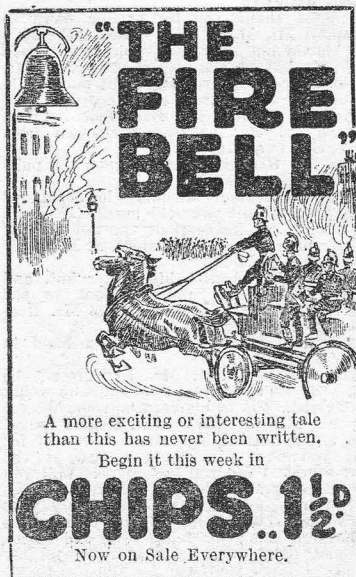
The unexpected and cowardly attack stung the little French maid into the fury of despair.

"Very well!" she cried. "You refuse to help me! You won't keep your promise to me! C'est bien, monsieur! We will see who gets zee bettars of this! I am going now at once to Mr. Henderson, and I tell him everything! I will confess that I did take zee pearls, but zat I took zem for you, and zat I gave zem to you—zat it must 'ave been you who put zem in Monsieur Trafford's baggage! We will see! You strike me! Bien! Then I will strike also! But not with zee fist, but with zee tongue!"

"Come here, you little vixen!" roared the doctor angrily, as he grabbed at the girl's slender arm and held it in a vice-like grip, which caused her to cry out with pain. "What good do you think that will do you—eh? Do you think for one moment that they will believe your word against mine, when I tell them that 'Annette Forêt' is none other than 'Madeline Montrose,' the notorious hotel thief?"

"Mon Dieu!" gasped the French maid. "Ow did you know zat?"

(To be continued next Friday.)



"THE FIRE BELL"

A more exciting or interesting tale than this has never been written.

Begin it this week in

CHIPS..1½^D

Now on Sale Everywhere.

THE END OF HIS TETHER.

(Continued from page 6.)

"All's fair in war!"
 "To a criminal—yes!" sneered Mornington. You've got me! I'll make terms. Let me in, and I'll keep your rotten secret. Stay here till your father burgles the school, you scoundrel! I suppose that's the game. I can't afford to be sacked. Let me in, and you're safe from me."

Erroll was silent.
 The game was in his hands. That Mornington would keep a promise he had little doubt. He had observed the character—a strange mixture of good and evil—of the dandy of the Fourth.

And in the hour of his success came doubt and hesitation.

Mornington's taunt had struck home. It was the son of Gentleman Jim who had planned this defeat for Mornington; not the frank, honourable, schoolboy that Jimmy Silver believed him to be.

Erroll knew it. He knew that in driving Mornington into this bargain he was giving up all that he had come to Rookwood for; he was abandoning the path he had marked out for himself—the path of honour. He would save himself by becoming what Mornington had accused him of being.

There was a long silence. Mornington looked up anxiously at the dim face above him.

Erroll spoke at last.
 "You can come. I don't want your promise. I want nothing at your hands, Mornington. Do your worst!"

He disappeared from the wall.
 Mornington stared up blankly into the gloom. He was slow to understand. But he saw that the wall was clear, his passage was free. He climbed the wall and dropped into the quadrangle. Erroll had disappeared.

"By gad!" muttered Mornington.
 He crossed cautiously to the school-house. The window by which he had left was still unfastened. He climbed in.

The Fourth Form dormitory was silent as the black sheep of Rookwood crept into it. A glimmer of starlight from the high windows fell upon the beds, and he saw Erroll. The junior's eyes were closed, and he seemed to be sleeping.

Mornington turned in. But it was long before he slept.

Jimmy Silver and Co. turned out cheerily as the rising-bell clanged in the early summer morning.

Erroll joined the Fistical Four as they went down.

When the breakfast-bell rang, and the juniors trooped in, Mornington joined Erroll, and stopped him.

"You had me down," said Mornington. "Why didn't you strike a bargain?"
 "You wouldn't understand."

"I should have kept my promise if you had taken it. You know that?"

"I know."

"And now—"

"And now," said Erroll quickly, "I know what to expect. Have you anything more to say to me?"

"Only this," said Mornington. "Clear off to-day, and nobody shall know who and what you are. I'll do that much. Get out of Rookwood, and I'll keep my mouth shut. You know you can't keep up this game after I've spoken."

"I know it."

"You had your chance last night, and you didn't take it. Well, take the chance that's left. The fellows will wonder, but they won't know the truth. Will you go to-day?"

Erroll drew a deep breath.
 "It's more than I expected from you," he said. "After lessons to-day I shall leave Rookwood. I shall not return. Are you satisfied?"

Mornington nodded, and Erroll went quietly into the house.

Mornington followed him slowly.
 His brow was moody. He had triumphed, but his triumph had left a bitter taste in his mouth.

THE END.

(Another grand story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week in the POPULAR. By the way, do you read the long story of Rookwood which appears in the "Boys' Friend" every Monday?)

POPULAR FAVOURITES.

No. 16.—S. Q. I. FIELD.



Sampson Quincy Illey Field is his real name, but Bob Cherry said that, seeing life was so short, they couldn't call him all that, so he altered it to "Squiff," and that name has stuck to him through thick and thin. It was when the Famous Five went to meet him at the station, and the humorous Bob saw the initials on his case, "S. Q. I. F.," that the name occurred to him, and Field good-naturedly agreed with him.

In some small points the average Australian schoolboy may differ from our boys here. But he is like them in things that matter most. He has their love for japes and fair play, and their high ideals of honour.

Squiff has more than ordinary skill in the devising of japes and he never lacks the audacity to carry them through. Anyone can think of a jape, or a sort, but it takes a person with a clear and cool head to carry it through. You doubtless remember the story which appeared in the "Magnet," entitled "A Cool Card." That was the story in which Squiff came to Greyfriars. Nothing better explains him than that title.

People have often wondered where he gets all the ideas from for the numerous japes he has been responsible. All through his

career at the school there is never a week that passes that he has not "japed" someone. Of course, they are quite harmless, inasmuch as the victim seldom suffers from the ruling rod of the "powers that be." That would go against the grain absolutely. Squiff would see that such a thing would not happen if he could stop it—which shows the type of boy we are dealing with.

The Famous Five took to the Australian from the very first, and, indeed, so did the rest of the Remove. They saw, or thought they did, a likely "recruit" for the cricket eleven. They had heard so much about these Australian schoolboys who were such Trojans at cricket that they were completely off their guard when the new boy "japed" them. Perhaps they deserved to be taken in.

Squiff meekly informed them that he could play a little, but would improve himself if they would like to wait a little while. He meekly studied that very useful handbook, "Hints to Young Cricketers," much to their amazement and amusement. He meekly took hints and advice from the other fellows at the nets, and when he played they had to admit that he was certainly very elementary. Then he meekly fell in with Harry Wharton's offer to give him to Dick Trumper's eleven, who were a man short.

Then the mask fell off, and all Greyfriars had the surprise of their young lives, for he licked the Remove off his own bat, and licked them unmercifully. Nevertheless, they had to laugh at the joke against them. And from that day Squiff has been one of the most popular fellows in the Lower School.

Another sport in which he has helped the Remove is in boxing. Early in his career he knocked out Boisover in a great fight, and he has always been a very useful man with the "mitts"—in fact, he is one of the four or five best in the Remove.

If you wanted me to tell you in a few words my opinion of Squiff, I should say: "You couldn't have a better chum if you searched the whole world over."

This is his signature:

S. Q. I. Field

ROYAL AIR FORCE

BOYS WANTED between 15 and 16½ years of age. Must be medically fit and of good education. Boys receive thorough instructions in selected trade, and are paid, fed, housed, and clothed during training. Write or call for descriptive booklet, etc., to—R.A.F., Recruiting Depôts: 4, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C. 2; 293, Bath Street, Glasgow; 11, St. Anne Street, Liverpool; Crown Buildings, James Watt Street, Birmingham; or 15, Old Town Street, Plymouth.

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EVERY woman looks into the mirror, and there is every reason why she should, for Nature has given to woman the gift of beauty, and there are none who have received more of Nature's bounty than the "English Rose."

Healthy, radiant, abundant hair makes all the difference to a woman's appearance (and man's, too, for that matter), and now you have the opportunity to try the "Harlene Hair-Drill" method of securing and maintaining hair-health and beauty free.

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Two minutes - a day "Harlene Hair-Drill" will quickly restore your hair to its best. If you are troubled with

SCURF OR DRYNESS, OVER-GREASINESS OF THE SCALP, THIN OR BRITTLE HAIR, SPLITTING OR FALLING HAIR,

you should obtain at once a Free Trial Outfit. All you have to do is to cut out and post the Free "Gift Outfit" Coupon below, which is published for your convenience.

The Gift Parcel contains:

1. A bottle of "Harlene," the true liquid food and Tonic for the hair, which stimulates it to new growth.



Does your hair fall out when you brush and comb it? Is it brittle, dry, over-greasy, weak or lacking in lustre? These are hair-health defects which can be so easily and effectively overcome by "Harlene Hair-Drill." Try it to-day (see coupon on right).

2. A packet of the marvellous hair and scalp-cleansing "Cremex" Shampoo, which prepares the head for "Hair-Drill."

3. A bottle of "Uzon" Brillantine, which gives a final touch of beauty to the hair, and is especially beneficial to those whose scalp is inclined to be "dry."

4. The new "Hair-Drill" Manual, giving complete instructions.

You will be pleasantly surprised the first time you practise "Harlene Hair-Drill" (it occupies only two minutes a day) for it is a most delightfully refreshing toilet exercise.

"HARLENE" FOR MEN ALSO.

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To obtain the "Harlene" Four-Fold Gift cut out and send the following coupon, and you will have the packet delivered at your address per return of post. (Any of these preparations may be obtained from Chemists and Stores all over the world.)



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Detach and post to EDWARDS' HARLENE, Ltd., 20-26, Lamb's Conduit Street London, W.C. 1.

Dear Sirs,—Please send me your Free "Harlene" Four-Fold Hair-Growing Outfit, as described above. I enclose 2d. in stamps for postage and packing of Parcel.

POPULAR, 4/6/21.

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