

FIVE SHILLINGS FOR ONE SENTENCE! (See page 12).

Week Ending—
June 11th, 1921.

New
Series,
No. 125.

Greyfriars

The POPULAR

1 1/2d

Stories, Jokes & Pictures
of Greyfriars, Rookwood & St. Jims

Rookwood

St. Jims



**FRANK NUGENT DEMANDS A SEARCH OF
SKINNER'S STUDY.**

**HOW THE CULPRIT CONCEALS THE
EVIDENCE OF HIS GUILT.**

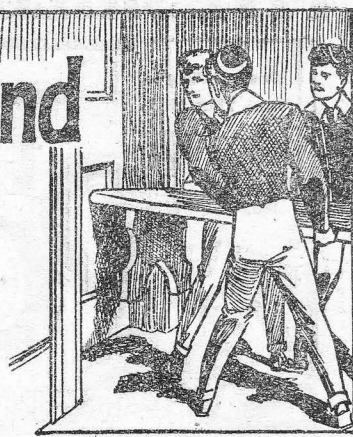
(A tense moment in the long, complete Greyfriars tale in this issue.)



Rallying Round Wharton!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale, dealing with the Early Schooldays of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Rallying Round!

"I SAY, Bob!"

Frank Nugent, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, called out the name as he saw Bob Cherry just ahead of him in the Remove passage. Bob Cherry turned at once.

He and Frank Nugent were not exactly on the best of terms at the moment. Harry Wharton, who shared Study No. 1 with Frank Nugent, was in the "punishment" of Greyfriars, awaiting public expulsion for a cowardly attack upon Loder, the bullying prefect of the Sixth.

Loder had been bullying Wharton, and the junior had openly declared his intention of getting his own back. But nobody dreamed that Harry Wharton would take a riding-crop to Loder and attack him in the quad in the middle of the night.

That was what Wharton apparently had done, for Loder had been found unconscious in the quadrangle by Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout, masters of the Remove and Fifth Forms, and was even then lying seriously ill in the school sanatorium.

Of all the chums Harry Wharton had, Frank Nugent alone steadfastly believed that Wharton was innocent of the attack on Loder.

Harry admitted using the riding-whip, but he declared that he had taken to his heels and run when Loder looked like getting the upper hand.

The last he had heard of Loder was the pattering of his feet as he gave chase.

Thus Bob Cherry, his usually sunny face somewhat clouded, was rather surprised that Frank Nugent should address him in so cordial a manner. However, he stopped, and Nugent caught up with him.

"Bob," said Frank earnestly, "it's about time we pulled together—rallied round to do something for Harry Wharton. I know you, Johnny Bull, and Inky are not of the opinion that Wharton is innocent, but you might be decent enough to give him a hearing."

"We have," said Bob Cherry uncomfortably. "Come to your study. Here, Marky!"

Mark Linley was passing, and at Bob's request he followed them to the study. Johnny Bull was found, and the door of Study No. 1 was closed behind them. In less than a minute there came a sound from the door which brought Frank Nugent to his feet.

Tiptoeing to the door, Nugent flung it open, and Billy Bunter, the fattest junior in the Remove, tumbled head-first into the study.

"Ow—yow!" he roared. "I say, you fellows—"

Frank Nugent seized him in a grasp of iron.

"What are you listening for?" he demanded warmly.

"Yow! Lemme alone! I wasn't listening. I wouldn't think of such a thing. Besides, it's all Skinner's fault!"

"Skinner's fault!" echoed Frank Nugent.

"He wanted me to—to find out what you chaps were gathering f-for!" stammered Billy Bunter. "I wasn't going to—"

"Kick him out!" snorted Bob Cherry.

There was no need to kick William George Bunter from the study. As soon as Nugent released him he fled as if for his life. Nugent closed the door, and looked significantly at the others.

"So Skinner was anxious to know what we were gathering for!" he said musingly. "Why should Skinner be interested in what we said? Wasn't Skinner also heard to utter threats against Loder about the same time as Harry Wharton?"

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry excitedly. "I remember, now I come to think of it, that I heard somebody moving in the dormitory after Wharton had gone out!"

"And Wharton has just told me, when I climbed up to the punishment-room, that he heard somebody in the quad whilst he was waiting for Loder," went on Nugent, his voice vibrating with restrained excitement. "Chaps, doesn't that help you to believe that old Harry is innocent?"

"We'll watch Skinner!" said Bob Cherry, ignoring the question. "We'll watch him day and night! He might give the game away. There might be bloodstains on the weapon he biffed over Loder, fr'instance!"

"Just so!" said Nugent. "We'll watch Skinner!"

And the matter was quickly arranged.

Frank Nugent was very quiet and thoughtful during afternoon lessons that day. His thoughts were not upon his work, however. He was thinking of Harry Wharton, still confined in the locked room.

Several times Mr. Quelch called him to order. Nugent certainly was a little trying for the most patient of Form-masters.

In response to a question as to who murdered the princes in the Tower, Nugent answered "Skinner!" much to Mr. Quelch's amazement—and to Skinner's also. The reply earned Nugent fifty lines.

After class was dismissed, Mr. Quelch signed to the junior to remain behind as he passed his desk. Nugent stopped.

"What is the matter with you this afternoon, Nugent?" Mr. Quelch asked

abruptly. "You are usually one of my best pupils, and this afternoon you have been the worst. What is the cause of it?"

Nugent coloured.

"I—I was thinking about my chum, sir," he stammered.

"Wharton, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"You still call him your chum?" said Mr. Quelch, looking at the junior curiously.

"Yes, sir!" said Nugent, in firm tones.

"After what he has done, Nugent?"

"I do not believe he has done anything, sir."

"But the injury to Loder—"

"That was somebody else, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled a little sadly.

"Your faith in your friend is a good trait in your character, Nugent," he said. "I wish I could share it. I have always had a high opinion of Wharton. With the exception of some faults of temper, I regarded his character as very good. But the evidence is too clear in this case. Wharton's own admissions make it clear."

"But he wouldn't have made those admissions, sir, if he had really done it," said Frank Nugent quickly.

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"I am afraid you are leaning on a broken reed, Nugent," he said. "I am very sorry that it is so, but I cannot think otherwise. You need not do the lines I imposed, but you must give more attention to your work."

"Thank you, sir. I—I hear that Loder is much better now, sir, and has seen some of his friends," said Nugent.

"That is the case."

"Could I see him, sir?"

"That rests with Loder. He is able to see you, if that is what you mean. But why do you wish to see Loder?"

"I think he may be able to tell me something about what happened, sir, which will help me to clear Wharton."

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly.

"You may certainly try, my lad," he said.

"Thank you, sir!"

Nugent left the Form-room, and made his way at once to Wingate's room, and tapped lightly on the door. The door was opened by Walker of the Sixth.

"What do you want?" he demanded, staring at the junior.

"May I speak to Loder?"

Walker turned his head towards the bed in the alcove.

"Do you want to see Nugent, of the Remove, Loder?" he asked.

"No!" came a growling voice.

Nugent grinned. He knew Loder's voice, and it did not sound as if the injured prefect was in a good temper.

4 Lord Mauleverer Edits the "Magnet" Library Supplement this Week!

"You can complain. As sure as I believe in Heaven, I believe you're the guilty party," said Frank Nugent solemnly.

"Guilty!" Skinner's voice was shrill and discordant. "Guilty of what, you fool?"

"Of the attack on Loder last night."

"Oh, you are mad!"

"I'm going to search this place!"

"You are not! I'll call on Mr. Quelch—"

"Mr. Quelch is here!" said a quiet voice.

The Form-master stood in the open doorway.

The juniors swung round towards him with startled looks. The Form-master's face was very angry. The terrific crashing in the Remove passage had been heard all over the school, and Mr. Quelch had hurried up to see what new mischief his unruly pupils were guilty of. Two or three prefects had followed him, very thoughtfully bringing canes in their hands.

"What is the cause of this disturbance?" Mr. Quelch demanded, in stern tones.

"They have broken into my study, sir!" Skinner exclaimed shrilly. "They broke in the lock, sir, because I wouldn't let them in."

"Is that true, Nugent?"

"Yes, sir," said Frank unflinchingly.

"Then why—"

"Skinner wouldn't let us in, sir."

"I suppose he had a right to keep you out of his study if he wished to do so, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

"I thought they wanted to rag me, sir!" exclaimed Skinner.

"Do you hear, Nugent?"

Frank did not flinch.

"Yes, sir. Skinner was lighting a fire, and we wanted to know what he was going to burn."

Mr. Quelch stared at the junior blankly.

"In the name of goodness, why?" he exclaimed.

"We suspect Skinner, sir."

"Suspect him! Of what?"

"Of having done what Wharton's accused of doing, sir," said Frank firmly. The Form-master gave a violent start.

"Nugent, are you serious?"

"Quite serious, sir."

"You suspect Skinner of having made that brutal attack upon Loder last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"He'd suspect anybody to get Wharton cleared, sir!" exclaimed Skinner, who was white to the lips now. "He'd lie about anybody for the sake of his rotten chum."

"Silence, Skinner! I do not believe that of Nugent for a moment," said Mr. Quelch sharply. "Nugent, you must have some grounds for this astounding statement."

"I have, sir."

"What are they?"

Nugent hesitated a moment. Satisfactory as the grounds of suspicion appeared to him, he felt that they would be flimsy, shadowy, in the eyes of the Form-master.

Skinner burst into a shrill, scoffing laugh.

"He has nothing to say now, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Silence! I am waiting to hear you, Nugent."

"Very well, sir. I suspect Skinner. I believe that he hit Loder with that bat, and that he lighted the fire here to burn the bat, and perhaps some clothing with bloodstains on it. He refuses to have his study searched. I believe he has enough evidence hidden here to convict him, if the place were searched. If you will

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order the study to be searched, sir, that will settle the point."

Mr. Quelch looked sharply at Nugent, and then at Skinner.

"Have you any objection to a search of the study, Skinner?" he asked.

Skinner drew a deep breath.

"Not if you order it, sir," he said.

"You hear that, Nugent?"

Nugent turned pale.

His brain almost swam at the thought that he was upon the wrong track after all—that he had suspected Skinner unjustly, and that it was merely Skinner's well-known obstinacy and ill-nature that had given some colour to the suspicions against him. Had he really made such a terrible mistake? If it proved to be so, the consequences would be serious for himself—such an accusation as that he had made against Skinner could not be lightly made. For a moment Nugent felt sick.

But he braced himself. Whatever risk he ran, it was for the honour of his chum—and he must not falter.

Besides, was not Skinner bluffing? Doubtless he guessed that Mr. Quelch would order a search in any case; and he was simply bluffing in appearing to invite one. At all events, there was only one course for Nugent to take.

"Let the study be searched, sir. I ask it in fairness to Wharton."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Very well. Not a stone shall be left unturned, Nugent, in getting at the truth of this matter; but if you have made a reckless and unfounded accusation against this boy, I warn you that the consequences will be severe for you."

Nugent bowed his head.

"I'm ready to face the consequences, sir, whatever they are," he said firmly.

"Very well, the study shall be searched."

Mr. Quelch called in Wingate and North, the two prefects who were looking in at the door. The Sixth-Formers entered.

"Will you oblige me by searching the study?" he said. "Skinner is suspected of having hidden there a cricket-bat and some articles of clothing. In justice to Skinner, if for that alone, the search should be made."

"Certainly, sir!" said Wingate.

And the search began.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Search!

FRANK NUGENT stood silent, with pale cheeks.

He had made the plunge now.

He had a feeling, which amounted to a moral certainty, that Skinner was guilty, and that proofs of his guilt could be obtained by searching for them. Yet when he came to look at it dispassionately, as others must look at it, he realised that he had made a plunge in the dark. If proofs were not found, he, Frank Nugent, would be held up to public scorn as a slanderer—a reckless and unscrupulous slanderer. That was what it amounted to. For if no proofs were found it would show that his accusation was hasty and unjust. And what right had he, or anyone else, to make hasty and unjust accusations, involving the honour of a schoolfellow? Frank realised very clearly that he was treading off thin ice; that search must end in the condemnation of Skinner or in his own disgrace. There was no middle course. His heart was beating

painfully; but he thought of his chum in the locked room, and set his lips.

Wingate and North searched carefully. The Removites stood and watched them at work. Outside, in the passage, a crowd gradually collected. Mr. Quelch had the study door closed, but the fellows outside knew very well what was going on. Skinner's study was being searched! Why?

The reason was soon guessed, or whispered. There was a buzz of excitement in the Remove passage. Skinner was suspected of having attacked Loder, the offence for which Harry Wharton was condemned, and his room was being searched for evidence.

Nugent heard many of the comments passed in the passage, and his brow grew very troubled.

The whole school knew of the matter now.

There was no keeping it in—Skinner's guilt or Nugent's slander would be blazoned forth to the whole of Greyfriars.

If Nugent was wrong, he could not stay at the school after that. It would be impossible. He would have to go forth with his expelled chum—both in disgrace.

Bob Cherry and Bull and Linley were silent. In the faces of Bob and John Bull, at least, Nugent could read the thought that he had been too hasty.

Would the search never end?

Could they discover nothing?

Skinner was standing by the window, with his back to the panes, and a sneering smile on his face, his hands in his trousers pockets.

Evidently he expected nothing to come of the search of the study.

Wingate and North paused at last, and looked towards Mr. Quelch. They had turned out the study pretty thoroughly. North had even raked up the chimney, and brought down a shower of soot. He brought down nothing else. After all, the articles that were supposed to be hidden were not small—a cricket-bat, and a boy's clothes, or some articles of clothing. They could not be thrust into any little nook. And the two prefects had looked into every nook, turned everything out—and the Form-master and the juniors had been watching closely all the time. It seemed impossible—it was impossible—that anything had been missed.

Nugent was sick at heart.

"I think we have finished now, sir," said Wingate, in his quiet tones.

The Remove-master nodded.

"I think you are right," he said. "The room has been thoroughly examined, and there is no trace of the articles alleged to have been concealed. Have you anything more to say, Nugent?"

Nugent licked his dry lips.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"What have you to say?"

"Where 'is Skinner's cricket-bat?" said Frank desperately. "It doesn't seem to be here."

"I haven't one, sir," said Skinner.

"Rats!" exclaimed Bob Cherry promptly. "I remember Smith minor offering you four bob for it, and you wouldn't sell."

"I sold it to a pedlar afterwards, for more than that—six shillings, I believe, or six-and-six," said Skinner, with perfect calmness.

Nugent was defeated again. Mr. Quelch's eyes were upon him, hard and stern. The Remove boys had often compared Mr. Quelch's eyes to gimlets, so keen and piercing were they. Never had they seemed so much like gimlets as they did to the unfortunate Nugent at the present moment.

"Well, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch, and

ANSWERS
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his voice was like iron, "I am going to give you every possible chance of proving your accusation. Have you anything more to say?"

"Yes, sir. If Skinner attacked Loder last night—and I believe he did—there should be some stains of blood on the clothes he wore."

Skinner started.

"I think most likely he put his clothes on outside his nightshirt," went on Nugent. "He wouldn't take the trouble to put on shirt and collar. If we turn out at night for anything, we generally do that. Can Skinner's nightshirt be examined to see if there is any trace of blood on the sleeves, and his jacket also?"

Skinner turned white as death.

"Certainly," said Mr. Quelch; "I

to corner this young scoundrel, who had an answer ready for everything? The fact that the shirt was missing changed Nugent's strong suspicion into a certainty. He knew now that he was right.

But how was he to prove it?

Mr. Quelch looked puzzled. Skinner's reply was unexpected, and yet it was perfectly reasonable. If Nugent had intended to trump up that charge against him, his first step would have been to hide the shirt.

But Skinner's face was like chalk now. He knew that he, as well as Nugent, was upon very thin ice.

"Have you anything else to say, Nugent?"

Frank was desperately silent.

What could he say?

His very evidence was turned against

"There's thick ivy there, sir," exclaimed Nugent hurriedly. "And a cord could be tied there to hold a bundle. And now I think of it, I heard a creak when I was biffing at the study door. It was Skinner shutting the window. Look—look at his face, sir!"

Mr. Quelch glanced at Skinner.

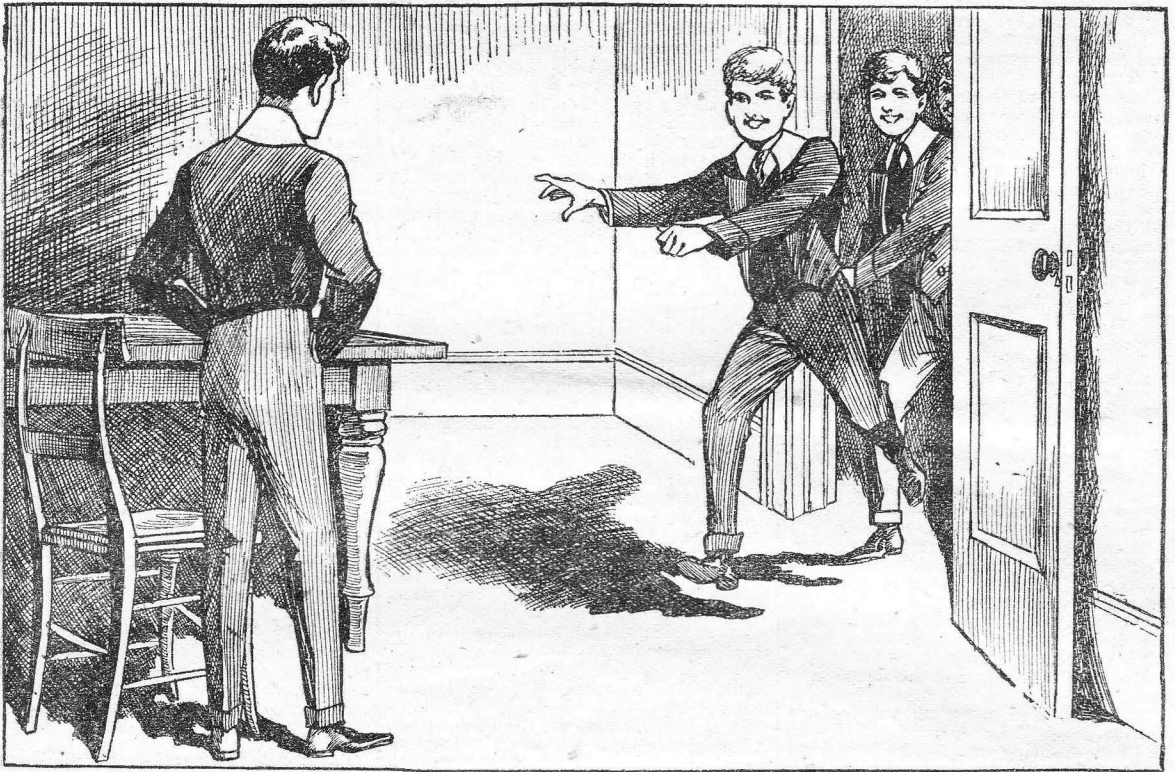
The wretched boy seemed about to faint.

If ever guilt was "writ large" in a human face, it was written in Skinner's at that moment. Mr. Quelch gave him one look, and then turned to North.

"Look in the ivy outside the window," he said.

"Yes, sir."

North opened the window. Skinner gave a low moan, and reeled against the wall of the study.



There was a grating of a key being turned in the lock. The door was flung open, and Nugent, followed by the rest of the Co., rushed in. "Hurrah! Come out of this! You are innocent! The real culprit has just confessed! You are free now!" gasped Nugent. (See Chapter 4.)

think this is verging on the farcical now, Nugent; but you shall have every chance, for if you have wronged Skinner, you will be asked to leave Greyfriars. I will write a message to Mrs. Kebble to do as you wish."

The message was written, and despatched by one of the juniors in the passage. They waited for a reply. In five minutes the fag returned with a written note, which Mr. Quelch opened. He elevated his eyebrows in surprise as he read.

His eyes turned upon Skinner for the first time with keen suspicion in them.

"Skinner!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir!"

"Mrs. Kebble says that a new night-shirt has been handed out for you, as the one you had has disappeared."

"Oh!" murmured Nugent.

Skinner's teeth clicked for a moment. "I don't know about that, sir. If it is gone, I suppose Nugent has taken it and hidden it, so as to be able to trump up this rotten charge against me."

Nugent bit his lip hard. How was he

himself, and made into proof of a conspiracy against Skinner. What was he to say?

Skinner's face did not regain its colour, but a grin of malicious triumph stole over it.

But Skinner triumphed too soon!

Frank's glance was roving desperately round the study. Suddenly it struck him, with the keenness of a flash that Skinner had been standing before the window all the time, and had not shifted his position once. Why? Surely his natural anxiety as to the search should have made him move, if only to follow the motions of the searchers. But he had not stirred.

Nugent made a step forward.

"The window!" he cried.

"What do you mean, Nugent—the window?" said Mr. Quelch testily.

"It has not been searched sir—outside the window."

"Nonsense! You can see the window-sill through the glass—"

"But not under the window, sir."

"Come, come!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

At the Eleventh Hour!

NORTH leaned out of the study window, and scanned the ivy below. He was heard to utter a low exclamation.

"Have you found anything, North?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a quiet voice.

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"There is a cord tied to the ivy, sir, and it seems to be supporting a weight. Whatever it is, is hidden in the ivy underneath. I am pulling it up."

"Very good."

North pulled on the cord. The bundle was jammed in thick, leafy ivy, and it came out with a jerk. North drew it in at the window. Something was wrapped round several articles, and from the end of the bundle protruded the cane handle of a cricket-bat.

There was a general exclamation in the study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "There's the bat!"

Nugent set his teeth. Had he succeeded at last? Was there some possible twist or turn by which Skinner could escape this terrible evidence?

"Open the bundle," said Mr. Quelch. It was opened. A cricket-bat and a nightshirt were disclosed to view, as well as a folded Eton jacket. A newspaper had been wrapped round them and tied with string.

Mr. Quelch picked up the articles one by one. On the wristbands of the nightshirt were red dull stains, and on the cuffs of the Eton jacket the same. There was no doubt what the stains were.

There was a deep, dull red on the cricket-bat, too, and deep scrapings on the wood, as if it had been cleaned to remove the stains at first before its owner decided to destroy it.

Every eye was turned upon Skinner.

"Well, Skinner?" said Mr. Quelch.

The boy stared at the tell-tale bundle, and his tongue was cleaving to the roof of his mouth.

"Have you anything to say, Skinner?" asked the Remove-master. "Nugent appears to have made out his charge. How do you account for these articles, Skinner?"

"His name is on the shirt, sir," said North.

"They're mine, I—I suppose, sir," muttered Skinner. "Nugent put them there, of course, so as to bear out what he said."

"It's Skinner's bat, sir," said Bob Cherry. "His initials are on it; and, besides, I know the bat perfectly well. I saw Skinner buy it in Friardale."

"That is your bat, Skinner?"

"Nugent put it there, sir."

Mr. Quelch's brow grew very stern.

"That is your bat. Only ten minutes ago, Skinner, you told me that you had sold your bat to a pedlar for six shillings, or six shillings and sixpence, you did not remember which."

Skinner staggered away.

There was a dead silence in the study. The wretched junior knew now that there was no hope. Out of his own mouth he was condemned.

"Your guilt is perfectly clear," said the Remove-master sternly.

Then Skinner collapsed.

His face worked, and he burst into tears.

"Oh, sir, I—I never meant to hurt him so much!" he groaned. "He—he had been bullying me, and he licked me because I wouldn't fag for him—though fagging's been abolished for the Remove, sir. He was a brute. Anybody will tell you what a brute he was. I waited for

him under the trees with the bat. I—I knew it was no good trying to fight a prefect, but I wanted to pay him out."

"You deliberately lay in ambush for a prefect with so dangerous a weapon as a cricket-bat!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"He—he had bullied me—"

"And you struck Loder down—"

"I didn't mean to hit him so hard, sir. I—I just meant to bowl him over, and make a mark or so!" groaned Skinner. "I didn't expect him to be stunned. When he went down in a heap I was horribly scared, and I ran. And—and you nearly caught me, sir, as I came in. And I was frightened to death, as I couldn't get into the dormitory, the other fellows being still awake. I've had an awful time since, sir!"

"And you allowed the blame to fall upon Wharton—"

"I—I—I—" Skinner groaned. "I was afraid of being expelled, sir—"

"You rotten liar!" broke out Nugent angrily. "You tried to put it on Wharton because you hate him, as much as anything else. You've been speaking against him all the time!"

Skinner did not reply.

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

"I will not give you my opinion of the baseness of your conduct, Skinner," he said. "You may follow me to the Head, to whom you will repeat the confession you have just made. Nugent, here is the key of Wharton's room. Go at once, and release him, and tell him that Skinner has confessed."

Nugent's face brightened.

"Yes, rather, sir!"

He hurried out of the study with the key. Bob Cherry and a crowd of juniors followed him. The news went over the school like wildfire. Skinner was guilty! Skinner had confessed! Wharton was innocent! Fellows gathered round to watch Skinner following Mr. Quelch to the Head's study. Skinner was pale as death, and he walked with his eyes on the floor. Many of the juniors felt sorry for him; he had taken a cowardly and cruel revenge upon Loder, but Loder had cruelly provoked him in the first place. It was his base attempt to shift the guilt upon an innocent boy that met with the strongest condemnation.

Nugent had no further thoughts for Skinner. He raced downstairs, and along the passage to Harry Wharton's prison, as if he were on the cinder-path. After him came a whooping, trampling crowd of juniors. Everyone was anxious to be among the first to break the news to Wharton.

Harry Wharton was pacing the narrow

limits of his prison with a gloomy brow, when he heard the terrific uproar in the passage outside. He paused in his walk, and turned towards the door.

There was the grating of a key being inserted in the lock—a click as it turned. The door was flung open. Wharton expected to see Gosling with his tea—but it was Frank Nugent who rushed in—Frank, wildly excited, and gasping for breath. After him came a wildly whooping crowd.

"Hurrah!"

"It's all right!"

"Come out of this!"

"Hurrah!"

Wharton stared at them blankly.

"What on earth—" he began.

"You're innocent!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"I know I am, ass—"

"I mean, it's proved—"

"It was Skinner—"

"He's confessed!"

Wharton gasped.

"Confessed! Skinner!"

"Yes, rather! He was bowled out, you see—we bowled him out, and he's had to own up!" shouted Nugent. "Do you understand?"

Wharton turned pale, and gasped for breath. It was so sudden, and so joyful, that it almost overcame him.

"Nugent found him out," said Bob Cherry. "Blessed if he didn't stek to the trail like a giddy bloodhound! We had our doubts all the time—but Nugent never had! He stuck to him like—like glue, and bowled him out."

"Oh, Frank, old man—" murmured Wharton.

"Come out of this," said Frank, linking arms with his chum. "Come out! You're going to have tea in the study. Isn't it ripping?"

"Yes, it's ripping! I sha'n't forget this, Franky!"

"Oh, that's all right! I did have a beast of a time, though," said Nugent. "If Skinner had been able to bluff it through, I should have been in an awful hole. But all's well that ends well. Everything in the garden's lovely now. Hurrah!"

And the Removites cheered loudly as they marched Harry Wharton in triumph out of the room where he had been imprisoned.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

THE END.

(Look out for another splendid long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co.'s early days at Greyfriars in next week's issue.)

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THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Talk on the Telephone!

TAP!
"Come in!" said Mr. Bootles. The master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood was finishing his morning paper in his study. It was nearly time for lessons.

The door opened, and Erroll of the Fourth came in.

Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his spectacles. The handsome face of the new junior at Rookwood was very grave.

"Well, what is it, Erroll?"

"May I ask you a favour, sir?" said Erroll hesitatingly.

"Certainly, my boy!"

Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his Erroll had not been long at Rookwood, but the Form-master had taken a liking to him, as most of the fellows had. Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth were his firm friends, and he had no enemy in the school but Mornington, the dandy of the Fourth.

"May I use your telephone, sir?"

"Ahem! If there is any necessity for you to use the telephone, Erroll, you may certainly do so. But—"

"I should like to speak to my father, sir!"

Mr. Bootles regarded him rather curiously.

"I understood that Captain Erroll had returned to British Honduras, my boy!"

"He is still in London, sir!"

"Ah, you wish to bid him a last good-bye! Is that it?" said Mr. Bootles, with a benignant smile. "My dear lad, I should certainly place no difficulty in your way. I have a very great respect for Captain Erroll, who distinguished himself so greatly at the Front. You may certainly use the telephone, Erroll, and you may wait till you get your call if there is any delay."

"Thank you, sir!" said Erroll gratefully.

"That's all right, Erroll! Come to the Form-room as soon as you have spoken to your father."

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Bootles glanced at his watch, laid down his newspaper, and quitted the study.

Erroll stepped towards the telephone.

It was a trunk-call he wanted, to speak to his father in London, and there was likely to be delay in getting it. Mr. Bootles had benevolently given him permission to wait, under the impression that he desired to speak once more to Captain Erroll before the latter started on his voyage.

There was a faint flush in Erroll's

checks as he took up the receiver. He had not deceived the Form-master, but he had certainly allowed Mr. Bootles to deceive himself.

"Number, please?"

"Trunks."

There was a long pause, and then a feminine voice demanded the number. Erroll gave it, and put up the receiver.

He went to the window, and stood looking out into the quadrangle while he waited for "Trunks" to ring him up.

The sunshine of early summer fell brightly into the old quadrangle of Rookwood.

Erroll stood looking out, with a gloomy brow.

He was looking his last on Rookwood.

That day was to be his last at the old school, and his heart was heavy with the thought of it.

Buzzzzzz!

He was through at last, and he crossed quickly to the telephone, and took up the receiver.

He gave the number again, and after a minute or so a cool, clear voice came through.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo! Who is speaking?"

"Captain Erroll. Who is that?"

"It is I, father—Kit!"

"I thought so. What are you telephoning for?"

"I have news for you."

"Mind how you talk. You understand?"

"I understand. But I must tell you, father. I am leaving Rookwood to-day!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"I suppose I shall find you when I return?"

"What do you mean, Kit? You are not to return! You are not to leave Rookwood. Are you out of your senses?"

"I have no choice, father!" Erroll's voice was calm and steady. "You remember our talk at the woodman's hut yesterday, in Coombe Wood?"

"Yes, yes!"

"It was overheard!"

"By gad! And by whom?"

"Mornington of the Fourth. I mentioned him to you—my enemy!"

"Was he spying on you, then?"

"Yes."

"And he knows—"

"Everything!"

An oath was audible on the telephone. The news came as a shock to Gentleman Jim, the cracksmán. Erroll smiled bitterly.

"He has betrayed you?" went on Gentleman Jim's voice at last.

"Not yet. He has promised to say nothing if I leave Rookwood to-day without any fuss. I have agreed. After lessons I shall go out as if for a walk, and shall not return to the school."

"Nothing has been said, then, so far?"

"Nothing as yet."

"Then the secret is safe till after lessons?"

"Yes."

"Hang on a moment, Kit. I must think this over."

"Yes, father."

The schoolboy waited. Far away in London, Gentleman Jim, the cracksmán, was thinking hard. It was a sudden blow to all his plans. The cracksmán had imposed himself upon the Head of Rookwood as "Captain Erroll."

He had placed Kit in the Fourth Form at Rookwood without a hitch. And all his plans were thrown into disarray by the enmity of a junior schoolboy. Mornington, the dandy of Rookwood, had been too much for Gentleman Jim, the cracksmán.

"Kit!" came the cracksmán's voice at last.

"Yes, father!" said Erroll dully.

"You are sure that Mornington has said nothing so far?"

"Quite sure. I should have heard of it fast enough if he had."

"Yes, yes, that is true. Do not leave Rookwood until you hear from me again."

"But—"

"Who is this Mornington? Tell me all you know about him. It is important."

"He is the richest fellow at Rookwood, a good deal of a bounder. I think he is an orphan. His guardian is his uncle, Sir Rupert Stacpoole, one of the governors of Rookwood. That is all I know of him."

"Good! Does his guardian come to see him sometimes?"

"I believe so."

"What telephone are you using?"

"My Form-master's. Mr. Bootles thinks I wanted to say good-bye to you before you sailed."

A chuckle was audible on the wires.

"That was very cute, Kit. Give me the number."

"You cannot telephone to me again, father—"

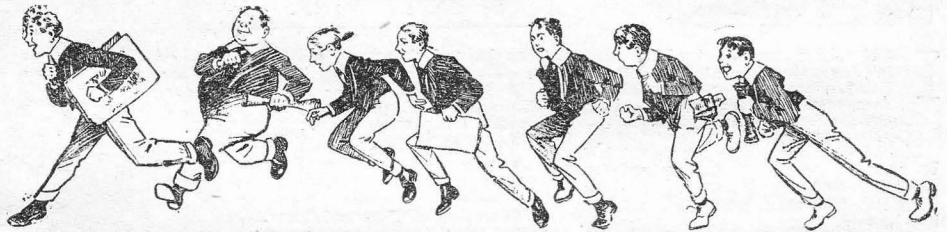
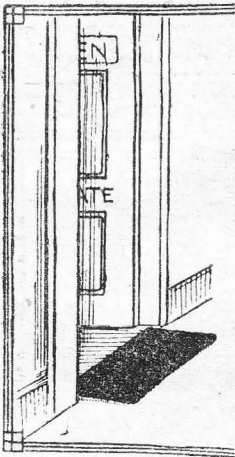
"Give me the number!"

Erroll gave it.

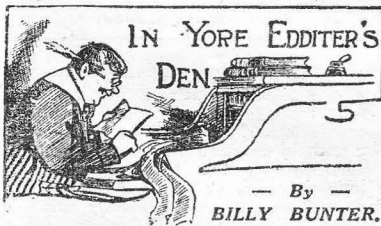
"Good! Leave the matter to me, Kit. Lucky you let me know. Mind, you are not to leave Rookwood. There will be time to do that when the game

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 Dear Readers,—By every post I reseve sholes and sholes of letters, which furnish abundant proof that my wonderful "Weekly" is more eagerly sort after than ever!

My "Speshul Numbers" have proved a sauce of speshul attraackshun, and have been devoured with rellish by my millyuns of boy and girl chums.

Torking about speshul numbers, one of my Manchester reeders has maid a very brilliunt and brainy suggestion. He says: "Why not have a Billy Bunter's Benefit Number, the whole of the profits to go to the edditer?"

I thort this was a reelly ripping idear, and I forwarded it on to the edditer of the "Poplar," who replide that their was nothing doing. "If you have a benefit," he wrote, "everybody will be wanting benefits. Your minor, and Baggy Trimble, and Fatty Wynn, to say nothing of Tubby Muffin, will be clamouring for special benefit numbers; and then the 'Greyfriars Herald' staff will get up on its hind legs and claim the same privilege. So I am afraid, Billy, that your Manchester reader's request must be put on the shelf."

Now, isn't that a shame? I mite have maid kwids and kwids out of a speshul benefiit number, and I should rank among the wellthiest fellos in the Remove.

But a lass! It is not to be. The edditer of the "Poplar" has spoken, and his wurd is like unto the laws of the Swedes and Nasturshuns.

I felt so bitterly disappointed at first that I neerly resined from my post. And then I realized the danger of such a policy, for Baggy Trimble or Tubby Muffin or Fatty Wynn wood be only too keen to step into my shooze. And I'm certain that not one of them could edit a paper so well as yore stout pal, W. G. B.

Meenwile, my "Weekly" kontinews to flurrish, and new readers are roped in every week. Trussed the British boy to no what's good for him in the way of fickshun.

My only regrett is that I haven't the space to reply to my numerous korrespondents. I can't reply threw the post bekwase none of the meen beests in the Remove will lend me any stamps; and I karn't reply threw the paper, owing to the konsiderations of space a-4-menshuned.

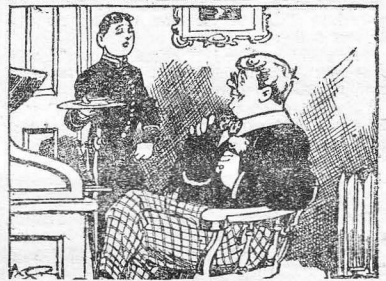
Still, I will ask every reeder who has ritten to me to axcept my best thanks and good wishes. May there shaddoes never grow less, as the saying goes!

This is not a speshul number, but it's a jolly good one, as you will all agree. Why? Bekwase the ingredients have been prepared, not by sun ineggspierenced jernalist, but by

Yore Edditer

— THE —
SECRET OF SUCCESS!
By **BILLY BUNTER.**

Translated into King's English and versified by Dick Penfold.



I worked as a kid (I shall never forget) On the "Courtfield, Wapshot, & Pegg Gazette."

I scrubbed the floor of the editor's den, And many fine articles fell from my pen.

I worked so well they rewarded me, By giving me a paper of my own, you see!

I corrected the proofs, and I set the type, And I polished the bowl of the editor's pipe.

I reported the weddings, and fetes, and things, And I sat down to dinner with mayors and kings.

I sat down to dinner so frequently That I turned the scales at fourteen-three!

When our "rag" came out on a Friday night

The local people went mad with delight. They read the articles penned by me, And they chanted the praises of W.G.B.!

I wrote and spelt so accurately That now I have a paper of my own, you see!

Now, journalists all, whoever you may be,

If you want to climb to the top of the tree;

If you fain would become a successful "chief,"

Just take my tip, and you'll never come to grief!

Simply model yourselves, you fellows, on ME,

And you'll all become editors-in-chief, you see!

THE POPULAR.—No. 125.

FLASHES FROM FAG-LAND!

By **SAMMY BUNTER.**

Hear we are agane, deer reeders—all alive and kicking, like the tadpoles which Dicky Nugent fished out of the duckpond yesterday.

Torking about fishing for tadpoles, I'm a bit of an angler myself. I fished for three hours from the jetty at Pegg on the last 2-hollerday, and then discovered that I hadn't bated my line! However, I soon caught a fat worm (I don't meen my majer!), and I brought back to Greyfriars with me a small codfish, a cuple of spratts, and a hundredweight of seaweed!

Whilst on the subjick of fish, I must tell you all about the shocking axident that befell young Tubby. He was having supper at Gatty's Fish and Oyster Bar, when sum-boddy stuck a fish-fork in his foot. Poor

Tubby's in the sanny now, suffering from toemane poysoning!

Gatty's Bar is in the fags' Kommon-room, of course. I never patternize it myself, bekwase it's too eggspensive, and the Dover souls seem to have no boddy in them. You karn't get sufficient at Gatty's Bar to sattisfy a small sparrow!

"Always katch yore own fish"—that's my mottoe. And do yore own boyling, baking, and roasting. Then you can always be sure of getting nice, fresh fish—not fish that's as old as Fisher T. of the Remove!

By the way, why do peepule use that silly eggspression, "A rod in pickle"? I soaked my fishing-rod in musterd pickles for 24 hours, but it didn't make it any better. In fackt, it was in an awful pickle!

Then their's another stupid eggspression that peepule use. They tork about "a nice kettle of fish." Well, I put a lot of fish in a kettle, and they took hours to boil! And when they were dun, they didn't taste at all nice! You mite just as well say "A nice tee-pot of fish!" Bar! Such eggspresions are hopelessly out of plaice!



By FATTY WYNN.

I WAS rolling along Wayland High Street, in company with Figgins, Kerr, and Gussy, when Lowther of the Shell bore down upon us on his bicycle.

Figgins sang out to the cyclist. "Cheero, Monty!"

Instead of returning the cheery salutation, Lowther jumped off his machine, and turned to us with an unusually grave expression.

"Rotten luck about poor old Taggles, isn't it?" he said.

"Eh? What's w'ong with Taggles, deah boy?" asked Gussy.

"He's lost his leg," said Lowther solemnly. "What!"

We stared in amazement at the humorist of the Shell. But for once in a way Lowther was not laughing. Indeed, it looked as if he might start blubbing at any moment.

"Poor old Taggles!" he muttered, in broken accents.

"But—but when did this awful accident happen—if it did happen?" asked Figgins. He could not bring himself to believe that Taggles, the porter, had really lost a limb.

"Only an hour ago," said Lowther. "I don't know what you're grinning at, Kerr. It's a serious thing for a man of Taggy's age to lose a leg."

"How did he lose it?" asked Kerr. "I suppose you've been pulling his leg to such an extent that you pulled it off?"

"Don't jest on such a serious subject," said Lowther reproachfully.

"Do you mean to tell us—honour bright—that Taggles has lost his leg?" exclaimed Kerr.

"Honour bright!" was the solemn reply.

Kerr grew suddenly grave. And Figgins and Gussy looked quite distressed.

"What a dweadfully twagic thing!" said Gussy. "Have you any idea how it happened, Lowthah?"

"The kitchen cat was responsible, I believe," was the reply.

The light of understanding dawned upon Gussy.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated. "I think I know how it happened, deah boys. I was weadin' an article in the papah the othah day about vicious cats. A cat-bite is often just as dangewous as a dog-bite. Taggles has doubtless been badly bitten, an' his leg became poisoned an' had to be amputated."

Lowther uttered a queer sort of gurgle.

"Did you say anythin', Lowthah?" inquired Gussy.

"Nunno! I was merely trying to choke back my emotion."

"This is most appalling news, and no error!" said Figgins. "We'll go along and see poor old Taggy at once, and see if we can cheer him up. He's in the Cottage Hospital, I take it, Lowther?"

Monty shook his head.

"He's still at St. Jim's," he said.

"Still at St. Jim's! Hasn't anybody sent for the ambulance?"

"Not to my knowledge," said Lowther.

"You mean to say the operation was performed in Taggy's lodge?" exclaimed Kerr.

"I know nothing of the operation. I simply know that Taggles has lost his leg. And, naturally, he's awfully cut up about it."

"He must be taken to hospital at once!" said the horrified Gussy. "We will collect the ambulance ourselves, deah boys, an' hupwy back to St. Jim's."

"Good weeze!" said Figgins.

We proceeded without delay to the ambulance-station, while Monty Lowther remounted his machine and rode away. His conduct seemed to us rather callous. Fancy going for a joy-ride when poor old Taggles was maimed for life!

We had no difficulty in obtaining the ambulance. We pointed out that it was a most urgent case, and the driver bade us

hop in, and then went full speed ahead to St. Jim's.

A few moments later the vehicle swung through the school gateway, and slowed up outside the porter's lodge.

And then we had the surprise of our lives!

The familiar figure of Taggles appeared on the doorstep, surveying the ambulance in wonder.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Gussy.

For Taggy's limbs were intact!

"Wot I say is this 'ere," said Taggles

"As hanybody met with a haxxident?"

"We—we thought you had!" gasped Figgins.

Taggles shook his head.

"I've sertynly been the victim of a calamity—" he began.

"But you haven't lost your leg!" said Kerr.

Taggles grunted.

"I ain't lost one of me lower limbs if that's wot you mean, Master Kerr. But I've lost me leg."

"You silly old duffer!" roared Kerr. "You say that you haven't lost one of your lower limbs, and in the same breath you tell us that you've lost your leg!"

"Yes—a leg of mutton," explained Taggles.

"What!"

"Which I 'ad a prime leg of mutton for to-morrer's dinner, an' that there kitchen cat—drat the beast!—came prowlin' into my lodge an' took it off the table."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Figgins. "I can

see through it now. This is a little joke of Lowther's! He always was a funny merchant."

"Well, it was, quite true what he said about Taggles losin' his leg," I said. "But he didn't add that it was a leg of mutton!"

"It's a gweat relief to know that Taggy is still sound in wind an' limb," said Gussy.

"All the same, we can't allow Lowthah to play pwaetical jokes of this sort at our expense. We'll bump the beggah when he comes in!"

"Yes, rather!"

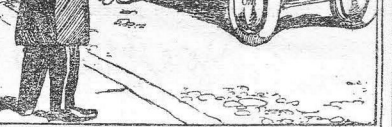
The driver of the ambulance turned to us with a snort.

"So you've brought me here for nothing!" he growled.

Gussy promptly slipped a ten-shilling note into the man's hand, and he was considerably mollified.

The ambulance disappeared through the school gateway in a cloud of dust, and we waited for Lowther to return.

But the humorist of the Shell was wise in his generation. He was careful to keep out of the way until the affair had blown over, and he missed the bumping which he so richly deserved for pulling our legs!



A few minutes later the ambulance swung through the school gateway and slowed up outside the porter's lodge.

FALSE PRETENCES!

By ARTHUR NEWCOME
(of Rookwood.)

Tubby Muffin departed, bag in hand, for the station.

TUBBY MUFFIN was feeling homesick. It's a feeling that most of us get at some time or another, but we have to possess our souls in patience until the vac comes. The summer vac, however, was still a long way off, and Tubby Muffin was not disposed to wait patiently until it arrived. He was simply longing for a spell of freedom.

"I'm feeling out of sorts, you fellows," he confided to us one evening in the Junior Common-room. "It's lack of nourishment that has pulled me down. A fellow never gets enough grub to keep body and soul together in this beastly hole. I want a complete rest and change."

"So do most of us," said Jimmy Silver, "but we've got to wait till the vac comes round."

"Rats! I mean to have at least three days' holiday right away," said Tubby. "Three days at Aunt Christabel's will set me on my feet again. Aunt Christabel has a well-stocked larder, and I shall be in my element."

"But the Head won't give you permission to go to your aunt's," said Lovell.

"P'raps not. But I mean to get three days' holiday out of the old buffer, anyway. I'll go and tackle him right away."

So saying, Tubby Muffin rolled out of the Common-room.

Not many of us would have had the "cheek" to beard the Head in his den. But the fat junior had no compunctions. He rapped boldly on the door of the Head's study, and the deep, stern voice of Dr. Chisholm bade him enter.

"Well, Muffin, what is it?" said the Head testily. "I am not in the humour to be distrurbed."

"I've come to ask you if I can take three days off, sir?" said Tubby.

"What!"

"You see, sir, the Australian cricket team is playing Hampshire to-morrow at Southampton."

The Head stared.

"I quite fail to see what bearing that has upon your request, Muffin," he said.

"Why, didn't you know, sir? I've got an uncle in the Australian Eleven!"

"Indeed! This is news to me."

"I haven't seen my uncle for ages, sir," said Tubby. "He's been buried in the heart of Australia for donkeys' years, and this is his first visit to England. He'll be frightfully disappointed if I'm not present on the ground to cheer him on!"

(Continued on col. 1, page iv.)

FALSE PRETENCES!

(Continued from page ii.)

"I hope you are telling me the truth, Muffin," said the Head. "What is your uncle's name?"

"Mr. MacBardsley-Collins, sir," said Tubby promptly.

"And you wish to take three days off in order to see the match?"

"Yes, please, sir," said Tubby eagerly.

"In the event of my giving you permission, where will you stay?"

"At the South Western Hotel, sir, with my uncle."

"Very well, Muffin. As you have not seen your uncle for such a long time, and the case is an exceptional one, I will allow you to go. You must be back on Saturday evening without fail."

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

When Tubby Muffin entered the Junior Common-room a few moments later he seemed to be walking on air.

"I've worked the oracle, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "I shall travel by the first train in the morning."

"You—you mean to say the Head's given you permission to take three days off?" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Tubby nodded.

"Three glorious days of freedom!" he said, with a fat chuckle.

We envied Tubby Muffin his good fortune when he departed, bag in hand, for the station.

For three long days we had no news of our prize porpoise.

It was at eight o'clock on Saturday evening that Tubby put in an appearance. Before we could question him on the subject of his holiday a message came to the effect that the Head wished to see him immediately.

Tubby looked rather uneasy as he made his way to the Head's study.

"Well, Muffin," said the Head, as Tubby entered. "Did you see your uncle?"

"Of course, sir! He made a great show in the Australian Eleven—flogged the Hampshire bowling to all parts of the field, sir!"

The Head looked grim.

"I did not see the result of the match in the papers," he said.

Tubby Muffin drew a breath of relief.

"And the reason why I did not see the result of the match in the papers was that it was never played!" the Head added.

"Nun-nun-not played, sir?" Tubby stammered.

"No. The fixture was cancelled at the eleventh hour, owing to the Australians having another engagement."

"Oh crumbs!"

"You have therefore been describing to me a match which you did not see—a match which never took place!"

Tubby Muffin gave a hollow groan.

"You have lied to me, Muffin!" said the Head sternly. "Moreover, you have no uncle who is in any way connected with the Australian team."

"Oh!"

"I do not know where you have been spending your holiday, but I assume that you visited an aunt in Sussex. Am I not right?"

"Ye-o-e-g, sir!"

"I will not waste any more words on you," said the Head. "You will be publicly flogged on Monday morning. Now go!"

Tubby Muffin crawled away.

He had obtained his three days of freedom, but they had cost him dear—as he discovered when the Head's birch rose and fell on Monday morning!

THE POPULAR.—No. 125.



How to be Hansom!

By Tubby Muffin

I have entitled this article, "How to be Hansom." But I don't mean Hansom of the Fifth. No jolly fear! Hansom is very far from being hansom. In fact, he is, without exception, the ugliest fello at Rookwood.

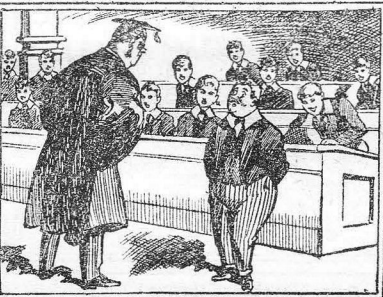
Well, the other day somebody suggested a Beauty Contest, in which members of the Fourth Form (Classical Side) were to compete. Bulkeley of the Sixth promised to be the judge, and the first prize was to be a free feed at the tuckshop. We all had to pay an entrance-fee of a tanner to go in for the competition, and the hole of the tanners were lumped together in order to provide the free feed.

Of course, I new I should win hands down, for their's nobody in the Fourth who can hold a candle to me for good looks.

Still, I wanted to make absolutely certain of bagging the prize, so I consulted some of the advertisements in a weekly periodical.

"Hansom men," I was told, "are slightly sunburnt." I took that to inklood boys as well, so I sent for a tin of "Bronzo" with which to tan my face. (I've often had my hands tanned before now, but not my chivvy!)

I then came across another advertisement which said, "Be manly, and cultivate a military mistosh! Apply a little 'Sprouto' to yore upper-lip, and you will have a fine manly mistosh within a couple of days!"



"Good gracious, Muffin!" gasped Bootles. "What is the meaning of that peculiar growth on yore upper-lipp, and yore bronse complexshun?"

"Sprouto' is wonderful stuff, and you can buy a tin for forepense. Turns boys into men!"

I borroed a forepenny stamp from Kit Erroll, and sent for a supply of "Sprouto."

By return of post I reeseved two parcels. One contained the "Bronzo," and the other the "Sprouto." I retired to the solly-chewed of my studdy early in the morning, and tanned my face with the "Bronzo." Then, after reeding the direckshuns on the tin, I applide some "Sprouto" to my upper-lipp.

When I went in to mourning lessons, Bootles said to me:

"Why, Muffin, what ever have you been doing to yore face? You look even more unprepossessing than usual!"

"Ahem! I must have caught the sun, sir!" I stammered.

"Are you a kricketer, Muffin?" asked Bootles.

"Yessir!"

"A smart feeldsman?"

"Of course, sir!"

"Then I must congratulate you on yore remarkable feet of catching the sun!"

At this there was a titter from the class. (It's always discreet to lart at a master's feebles joaks.)

Bootles maid no fether reverence to my face until two days later—the day of the Beauty Contest.

By this time my upper-lipp was covered

with hares, and Jimmy Silver & Co. rored with larfter whenever they saw me.

"Good gracious, Muffin!" gasped Bootles. "I hardly rekernized you when you came into the Form-room! Yore appearance is eggstrordinary! What is the meaning of that peculiar growth on yore upper-lipp?"

"Don't call it a growth, sir," I said in pained toans. "It's a mistosh!"

"Good 'Evans!" gasped Bootles. "It is perfectly loodicruss for a boy of yore tender yeers to have a mistosh! Why, you look five yeers older than you reely are!"

I did not regard that remark as very complimentary.

"I don't mind looking old, sir," I said, "so long as I look manly."

"Manly!" echoed Bootles. "Why, you look as if you had just been released from a komic opera!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" rored the class.

And then Bootles maid another feeble joak.

"I shall have to introduce a sort of Day-light Shaving Act, Muffin," he said. "In other words, you must go down to the villidge, and have those absurd hares removed at wunce!"

"Oh, crumms! But I shall want them, sir, for the Beauty Contest!"

At this there was another rore of larfter from the class.

"You are an utterly absurd boy, Muffin!" said Bootles. "You cannot possibly hope to win a Beauty Contest with a face like that! You will proseed at wunce to the barber's, and have that appology for a mistosh taken away; and then you will give yore face a good skrub, and remove the tan!"

"But—but hansom men are always slightly sunburnt, sir!" I protested. "The advertisement says so!"

Bootles smiled sarcastic-like.

"It is trew that a sunburnt appearance mite make men hansom, Muffin," he said, "but that remark does not apply to boys—boys of yore type, at leest. Nothing short of being re-created could possibly make you hansom! Go at wunce, you stupid boy, and follo out my instruckshuns!"

Very reluctantly I went down to the villidge, and got the barber to shave my upper-lipp.

As the hares dropped on to the cloth I trembled like a fritened rabbit, for I was afrade the barber mite cut me. He weilded the razer in a very careless manner.

However, I escaped without a skrathe, and when I got back to Rookwood I spent an hour in the barf-room getting the tan off my face. After which, I was my normal self wunce more.

In dew corse the Beauty Contest took plaiice, and the prize was awarded, as you may guess, to R. Muffin.

But it wasn't the first prize; it was the booby prize, and it consisted of a putty meddle!

The first prize went to that ugly beest, Teddy Grace, who hasn't as much beauty in the whole of his figger as I have in my little finger! I eggspcet he bribed Bulkeley of the Sixth be-4-hand!

I have no doubt—that if I had been aloud to retain my wonderful mistosh and my tanned komplexion I should have romped home with the first prize.

Konfound that old buffer Bootles! He's always poking his nose in wear it isn't wanted!

If it is yore ambishun to be hansom, deer reeder, you will now no how to proseed. Purchass a tin of "Bronzo" and a tin of "Sprouto," and you will akwire a smart, manly appearance, calculated to win the hand and hart of any fare maiden.

But I hope you won't run up against a Form-master like Bootles, who orders you to have yore mistosh shaved off just as you are beginning to blossom fourth into an Adonis!

THE END.

Gentleman Jim's Stratagem!

(Continued from page 8.)

the grasp of the two men, rushed towards the waiting cart.

His arms and legs flew wildly in the air as he was tossed into the vehicle.

"Help!"
Mornington had time for only that one cry.

The carter was on him, kneeling on him as he lay panting in the bottom of the cart. His eyes blazed down at the dazed junior of Rookwood.

"Silence!"

"You—you hound!" panted Mornington; he was astounded, dazed by the strange attack, but he was not terrified. It was rage, not fear, that was in his looks. "What does this mean, you scoundrel?"

"Silence!"
The second man clambered in. As Mornington sought to shout again, he drove a wad of rag into his mouth, and the junior's shout died in a choked gurgle.

The carter dragged a cord from his pocket.

In a minute or less, the kidnapped junior was bound hand and foot, and lay helpless in the bottom of the cart.

The gag jammed in his mouth kept him silent. He lay helpless, only his eyes blazing defiance and fury at his kidnappers.

The carter jumped down into the road. The man he had called "Badger" covered a tarpaulin over the bound junior.

The carter stepped back to the cross-roads, and looked this way and that. The clumps of trees by the roadside had screened the scene. In the fields, at a distance, labourers were working, but none had seen the kidnapping.

"All O.K., Badger?" he said.

"Easy as winkin', guv'nor."

"Get going, then."

"What-ho!"

Badger sat in the cart, after taking the nosebag from the horse. The carter mounted in front, taking the whip and reins. The clumsy cart rolled off up the lane towards Bagshot School.

Halfway to Bagshot it turned into a rough cart-track that led across Coombe Moor. It followed the track for half a mile or more, and then turned upon the moor itself, jolting and bumping away over the rough ground. Under the tarpaulin in the cart Mornington lay helpless and silent.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Held By the Enemy!

MORNINGTON writhed helplessly in his bonds under the tarpaulin as the cart jolted over the rough ground.

The Rookwood junior could see nothing, hear nothing but the heavy bumps of the wheels on the moor.

The rage that consumed him died away, however, and his struggles ceased. He realised his helplessness. He was utterly at the mercy of the ruffians who had kidnapped him. What was their object? Who were they? He asked himself those questions a score of times without being able to find an answer.

What did it mean? What could it mean? Whither was he being taken? The kidnapping had been carefully planned; he realised that. The cart had been in waiting, the kidnappers ready for him to pass. How had they known that he was leaving the school at

that time—a time when all the fellows were usually within gates?

Evidently they had known.

It was a hopeless puzzle. He waited with feverish anxiety for the strange journey to come to an end. He could not guess in what direction he was being taken; only the jolting of the vehicle told him that he was traversing the pathless moorland.

The cart stopped at last.

The tarpaulin, after some delay, was drawn aside, and Mornington blinked in the sudden sunshine.

He sat up with difficulty.

Round him stretched the wide moor, dotted here and there with gorse and trees.

No habitation was in sight.

The cart had halted in a hollow of the moor, and the view was cut off on all sides by rising ground.

He looked at his captors.

The ruffian Badger grinned down at him. It was the man who had played the part of a carter who was the leader, Mornington knew. He knew, too, that the man could not be a carter. Who and what was he?

"Get him out, Badger."

"Right-ho, guv'nor!"

Mornington was lifted from the cart in the ruffian's strong arms. The cord about his ankles was loosened.

"Walk!" said Badger laconically.

His heavy grasp was on the Rookwood junior's shoulder. Mornington moved along as the man led him.

The grassy slopes of the moor, as he saw now, were marked and scarred by old quarry workings. He remembered the disused Coombe quarries, which had lain idle for a hundred years or more, and were mostly flooded. Why had the kidnappers brought him there?

The carter had tied the horse, and he was moving ahead. Badger followed with Mornington.

They followed a sloping path into the deepest part of the grassy hollow.

From there a rough and precipitous way led down into one of the old quarry workings.

Fifty feet below the level of the moor, in the shadowy old working, they stopped.

Here a gap opened in the quarry side, where slaty edges cropped out into view. It was like a small cave, extending a dozen feet into the earth, closed on all sides but one.

Mornington stood alone, while Badger returned the way he had come. The carter remained with the kidnapped junior.

Mornington's eyes scanned him savagely.

The carter met his glance, and smiled slightly. He removed the gag from the junior's mouth.

"You know where you are, I suppose?" he said.

Mornington gasped for breath.

"Yes. What am I brought here for?"

"You are a prisoner, as you can see."

"I know you have kidnapped me, you scoundrel! But what is it for? I suppose you've got some reason?"

"Naturally."

"Who are you?" Mornington watched the man's face savagely. "I've heard your voice before; I'm sure of that."

"You have seen me before," smiled the carter. "You need not be alarmed, Master Mornington. You are not going to be hurt. You will simply remain here a prisoner for a few days—"

"You think you can keep me here?" panted Mornington. "I shall be searched for. My uncle is expecting me in Latcham this very minute—"

"Your uncle is not in Latcham."

"What!"

"And he will not know that you have disappeared until he hears it from Rookwood."

Mornington staggered.

He began to understand now.

"Then—then the telephone-call—it was not Sir Rupert Stacpoole?" he stammered.

"It was I."

"But you—you—how did you know anything about me—about my uncle? I—I don't understand." Even as he was speaking a light broke upon the junior's mind. "Erroll!"

Badger came back into the cave with bundles in his arms. He put down the bundles, and tramped away again to the cart.

Mornington glanced at the things—a roll of blankets, several rugs, a camp-chair, cooking utensils. Evidently the kidnappers were making preparations for camping in that desolate recess.

His eyes fixed on the pretended carter again.

"I know you now!" he muttered. "I know your voice. You are the man who brought Erroll to Rookwood, calling yourself Captain Erroll. You are the man he met in the woodman's hut. You are Erroll's father, the cracksman—Gentleman Jim!"

"It has taken you a long time to guess it," smiled Gentleman Jim.

Mornington ground his teeth with rage.

"You've brought me here so that I can't give Erroll away to the Head!" he exclaimed.

"You've guessed it."

"But—but— Oh, you're mad!" panted Mornington. "You can't keep me here long. I shall be hunted for. Suppose they don't find me for a week, even a month, it comes to the same thing. The minute I set foot in Rookwood again I shall tell Dr. Chisholm everything."

"You will be welcome to," yawned Gentleman Jim.

He turned away from the junior as Badger entered the excavation again, his arms full.

The two rascals unpacked the bundles together, Mornington watching them with a moody brow.

Gentleman Jim uncoiled a thin, strong chain, with a padlock at the end. Badger was driving a stake into a cleft in the hard ground.

"You will find this more comfy than being tied up, my boy," said the cracksman, as he passed the chain round Mornington's waist and locked it.

"You hound!"

The cracksman fastened the end of the chain to the stake. Mornington had a freedom of eight or nine feet. Then the cracksman cut through the bonds on his limbs.

"I am going now, Master Mornington," said Gentleman Jim quietly. "One word of warning before I go. This is a lonely spot, miles from any house. If you shout you will not be heard. But we do not intend to run risks. If you utter one cry you will be gagged. If you have any regard for your own comfort you will toe the line quietly."

Mornington gritted his teeth.

"You will be cared for as well as circumstances permit," resumed Gentleman Jim. "You are being kept out of the way till you cannot do any further harm. That is all."

He turned away with that, and left the excavation.

Mornington heard his footsteps die away in the hollow. A few minutes later the sound of wheels rumbling in the distance came to his ears.

Gentleman Jim ha ha gone!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

"WHERE'S Mornington?"

That was the question in the Classical Fourth dormitory.

"By gad, he's keepin' it up!" said Townsend, with a grin. "Bootles will have somethin' to say when he comes back!"

"He's giv'n Nunky the slip, and gone on the spree," opined Peele. "Just like Morny!"

"Well, I suppose nothing can have happened to him," said Jimmy Silver, as he kicked off his boots. "He's making a day of it, that's all."

"Just like him!" growled Lovell.

Erroll made no remark.

His face was pale.

The absence of Mornington was being prolonged. So far it had saved him from the revelation that meant ruin to his hopes.

Was it merely the recklessness of the blackguard of Rookwood manifesting itself once more in this way? Or—

With a chill at his heart, the unhappy junior thought of Gentleman Jim.

The cracksman had bidden him remain at the school; he had undertaken that Mornington should keep silence.

Was Mornington's absence due to some scheme of the cracksman? Was it a coincidence, or a plot of Gentleman Jim? He could not tell, but his heart was heavy. There was no sleep for Erroll of the Fourth that night.

The rest of the Fourth were not anxious about the missing junior. They had no doubt that he would turn up late with some "yarn" to satisfy Mr. Bootles.

But Mr. Bootles, who did not know Mornington quite so well as his Form-fellows knew him, was decidedly anxious.

After Bulkeley had put out the lights for the Classical Fourth, he went down to the Fourth Form-master's study.

"Mornington has not come in, sir!" he announced.

"It is extraordinary," said Mr. Bootles. "I cannot help fearing that some accident has happened to him, Bulkeley. Even his guardian has no right to keep him late for bedtime. I will telephone to Sir Rupert, and ask him whether Mornington left him in time to get home for bed."

The worried Form-master turned to the telephone, and rang up the Royal George, at Latcham.

"Hallo!"

"I wish to speak to Sir Rupert Stacpoole. Is he still at the hotel?" said Mr. Bootles, into the transmitter.

"What name?"

"Sir Rupert Stacpoole."

"No gentleman of that name here, sir."

"Dear me! Has he left?"

"I do not think anyone of that name has been here, sir; but I will inquire."

"Thank you!" said Mr. Bootles, very much surprised.

He waited.

The voice came through again in a few minutes.

"No one of that name at this hotel, sir."

"Dear me! That is very extraordinary! Sir Rupert Stacpoole telephoned to me from your hotel early to-day."

"Some mistake, sir."

"Kindly tell me this. Has a boy belonging to this school—Rookwood—called at your hotel to-day to see a gentleman there?"

"I will inquire."

Another delay, while Mr. Bootles wrinkled his brows in perplexity. He was both puzzled and alarmed by this time.

THE POPULAR.—No. 125.

Again the voice came through from Latcham.

"Nothing is known here of any school-boy having called, sir. Perhaps it is some other hotel you want. This is the Royal George, Latcham."

"Yes, yes; that is right. You are sure that Sir Rupert Stacpoole has not been at your hotel, and that his nephew from Rookwood School has not called upon him?"

"Absolutely."

"It is extraordinary!"

Mr. Bootles rang off, and hurried out of the study. He was disquieted and alarmed. He found Dr. Chisholm in his study, and hurriedly explained the matter to him.

The Head listened in utter astonishment.

"This is astounding, Mr. Bootles. It appears that the telephone-call did not come from Mornington's uncle at all, then!"

"Apparently not."

"It is extraordinary! And the boy has not returned from Latcham?"

"No; neither is he known to have arrived there."

The Head knitted his brows. The strange affair put him entirely at a loss.

"I must speak to Sir Rupert Stacpoole!" he said at last. "It appears that someone has used his name, in order to obtain a holiday for Mornington. We shall see."

The Head rang up the baronet's town house, and waited for his trunk call to be put through.

The Head was looking anxious now.

He had returned to his papers, but his brow was knitted. The telephone-bell rang at last, and the Head took up the receiver.

"Is that Sir Rupert Stacpoole?"

"Yes, yes." The thin, cracked voice of the old gentleman came through.

"What is it?"

"This is Rookwood School; Dr. Chisholm speaking. Have you any knowledge of your nephew's present whereabouts?"

"Eh? Is he not at Rookwood?"

"He left early this afternoon, presumably to visit you at Latcham."

"What? What? I have not been to Latcham. I have not left London to-day. What do you mean?"

"Mr. Bootles received a telephone-call from Latcham in your name, asking for Mornington to visit you at the Royal

George Hotel there. He went, and has not returned."

"Bless my soul! Some trick to get the young rascal a holiday, I presume. But he has not returned?"

"He has not."

"Good heavens! Well, I know nothing of the matter. Reckless young rascal! Let me know in the mornin' that he is all right."

"Oh, certainly!"

The Head put up the receiver, and looked at Mr. Bootles.

That gentleman looked at him.

"This is very strange," said Dr. Chisholm. "We had better wait a little longer, and if Mornington does not return, I shall conclude that he has met with an accident, and the police had better be communicated with."

"Very well, sir!"

Mr. Bootles left the study. It was his bedtime now; but he did not go to bed.

At eleven o'clock all Rookwood had turned in, excepting Mr. Bootles and the Head. Mornington had not returned.

Then Dr. Chisholm, really alarmed, rang up Coombe Police Station, and then the police-station at Latcham.

Neither had any information to give him; neither knew of any accident having happened to a schoolboy.

The Head went to bed at last, and Mr. Bootles followed his example, both in a very uneasy frame of mind.

In the morning, when the Rookwood fellows came down from the dormitories, the news spread through the school like wildfire. Morny had been away all night, and had not yet returned.

The telephone-bell rang very often in the Head's study that morning. In the afternoon Sir Rupert Stacpoole arrived at the school, looking pale and worried.

A police-inspector called from Latcham, and was shut up with the Head for some time.

Rookwood thrilled with the strange news.

Mornington of the Fourth had disappeared without leaving a trace behind him!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Father and Son!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. discussed the strange mystery in every tone of amazement that day. All Rookwood was talking of it. Tommy Dodd & Co. came over from the Modern side to learn all particulars, and to give their opinion.

The only junior in the school, in fact, who did not discuss the mystery, and venture an opinion on it, was Kit Erroll.

Erroll was silent.

The all-absorbing topic of Morny's disappearance prevented the fellows from noticing Erroll specially. Otherwise they could not have failed to note his pallor and his harassed looks.

Afternoon lessons were almost a farce, so far as the juniors were concerned. They could think of nothing but Mornington.


There were many theories among the juniors. An accident seemed scarcely possible, for even if there had been a fatal accident, the search must have discovered Mornington by this time.

Tubby Muffin certainly suggested that Morny had run away to sea to become a pirate, but that suggestion was not taken seriously.

But unless Mornington had run away from Rookwood, he must have been taken off by force; and a case of kidnapping, amazing as it seemed, was the only explanation.

As a matter of fact, the Head had already come to the conclusion that it was a case of kidnapping, and so had the police.

READ THE
FUNNY ADVENTURES OF
**BREEZY
BEN**



EVERY
FRIDAY
IN
CHUCKLES
THE COLOURED PICTURE PAPER... 12

Sir Rupert Stacpoole was in full expectation of receiving a demand for money from the unknown miscreants as the price of his ward's liberty. But if that was the kidnapers' intention, they were in no hurry, for no word came to the baronet.

Kit Erroll said no word. He was the only fellow at Rookwood who could have thrown light on the subject.

For his doubts were gone now. He knew that Mornington's disappearance was the work of Gentleman Jim.

It was at that price that he was to remain at Rookwood. While Mornington was gone he was safe there.

Jimmy Silver looked for Erroll after tea, and found him in Little Quad, with a letter in his hand. The school page had brought it to him, explaining that it had been handed to him by a lad from the village.

Erroll understood, and he "tipped" the page, and retired to Little Quad to read the letter. He coloured, and thrust it hastily into his pocket as Jimmy Silver came up.

"I've been looking for you," said Jimmy cheerily. "What about the cricket?"

"I—I don't feel so fit as usual to-day," said Erroll. "I won't come down to the cricket, if you don't mind."

"All serene. It's a free country," said Jimmy; and he went off to join his chums.

Erroll took the note from his pocket again.

There was a single line scribbled upon it in pencil:

"The hut at six-thirty."

There was no signature, but that was not necessary. He knew the handwriting of Gentleman Jim.

Erroll tore the note into fragments, and threw them into the fountain. Then he walked down to the gates.

The days were drawing out now, and locking-up was later. Erroll strolled out of gates with an assumption of carelessness; but once out of sight of Rookwood, he broke into a run.

It was already past six.

He crossed the fields to the wood, and plunged into the trees. Without a pause, he made his way to the old woodman's hut in the heart of the wood—the spot where he had met the cracksmen before, and where Mornington had played the spy upon them.

The old hut was silent and deserted when he arrived there. Gentleman Jim had not yet put in an appearance.

The junior, breathing hard after his hurry, sat on the log in the hut to wait. But he could not keep still.

He rose again and raced to and fro, occasionally glancing anxiously out at the shattered doorway.

There was a step in the grass at last, and Erroll uttered an exclamation.

"Father!"

Gentleman Jim stepped into the hut.

The Rookwood fellows who had seen him as "Captain Erroll" would not have known him now. He had discarded the cart's garb, and he looked like a business man of middle age. It was not judicious for "Captain Erroll" to risk being seen near Rookwood without coming to the school.

"You're here first this time, Kit," he said, with a smile. "So you got my note?"

"Yes. I came at once."

"Good!" Gentleman Jim bit the end from a cigar, lighted it, and blew out a wreath of smoke. "All goes well, Kit. You can sleep quietly to-night in the dormitory at Rookwood. Mornington will not talk."

"Where is he?" muttered the schoolboy.

Gentleman Jim grinned through the smoke.

"In a safe place, Kit. The Badger is looking after him. You remember the Badger?"

Erroll shuddered.

"I remember him! It was from him I first learned—"

He broke off.

"That your father was Gentleman Jim, the cracksmen," said the adventurer, laughing. "I should have told you sooner or later, Kit. You had to know. You were already wondering, long before you knew the facts."

"Where is Mornington?"

"Not very far from you," smiled Gentleman Jim. "You remember telling me of the old quarries on the moor in your letters?"

"Yes, yes!"

and as soon as he is released the truth will be known. You will have to leave Rookwood. The plans I laid did not count on this chance. Mornington's interference has shattered them. You cannot remain at Rookwood, as I intended. It would have been a great advantage to you. It would have made you more useful to us in many ways. But that is over now."

"Let me go at once, and let Mornington return."

The cracksmen did not seem to hear.

"But the game is not up, Kit. You can make a fresh start elsewhere," he said. "Another school at a distance, perhaps, under a fresh name."

"No! I have done with it. I am tired of lies and imposture. I did not think there would be great harm in taking a name that was not mine, to get



Struggling violently, the Rookwood junior was swept off the ground, and, in the grasp of the two men, rushed towards the waiting cart. (See chapter 3.)

"Well, I have made use of them, that is all. It did not take me long to make my plans, and I lost no time carrying them out. All goes well. The boy cannot be traced, that is certain. He will remain in my hands as long as I choose."

"And then?"

Gentleman Jim shrugged his shoulders. "Then he can go back to Rookwood or to the dickens!"

"Father, when he comes back I shall be given away. Why did you not let me leave Rookwood to-day instead—"

"Because your work is not done at Rookwood!" said the cracksmen coolly. "We may as well have this out, Kit. You must know by this time why you are at the school."

"You told me that it was to give me a start in life, to enable me to learn to earn my bread, and to hold up my head among decent people!" said the schoolboy bitterly.

"And that still holds good. But you must be useful as well, Kit. Mornington cannot be kept a prisoner indefinitely,

away from—from—" He did not finish. "But I've made friends there—decent fellows who would despise me if they knew. I'm done with it. When I leave Rookwood, no more of it."

"And what will you do?" sneered the cracksmen.

"Work for my bread, or starve!" said the boy between his teeth. "That is what I have determined, and nothing shall change me."

"A turn of starvation may help to teach you sense!" said the cracksmen, with a sneer. "But before you leave Rookwood, Kit, there is work to be done. Mornington cannot betray you so long as he is kept safe. Before he is released our work at the school must be finished, and you will be safe away. I have information about the place. The school silver alone is worth more than a thousand pounds, and there are other things. You are in the place. You can give me the information I need to make

(Continued on page 16.)

POPULAR FAVOURITES!

No. 17.—ROBERT ARTHUR DIGBY.



Robert Arthur is perhaps one of the oldest members of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. He was there with Herries and Blake long before the Terrible Three appeared, and even before the noble Gussy.

There is no need to probe deeper into what happened then; all that we are concerned about now is, who and what Dig is, what he does, and how he does it. Of course, we all know he's a schoolboy of St. Jim's, and what his name is, but at present we want to introduce ourselves to his real self—his real character.

He has as good brains as anyone in Study No. 6. First of all, he is more level-headed than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, quicker and smarter than Herries, and perhaps cleverer than Blake. Of course, by saying all this we are praising Dig tremendously, and calling him an exceptionally clever boy. But he is not that; just a trifle better than his study-mates on several points.

Dig is small and light and active. Herries is burly, and by no means quick in his movements, but makes up for that to some extent by being stronger. Once the question of their respective capabilities was a very searching test. They happened to be rivals for a place in a team that was to go on a cricketing tour: There were ten selected, that left one place to be filled, and both Dig and Herries came forward to press their claims.

It seemed a problem that could only be worked out one way. And that way was given a trial. They boxed for it. They fought twelve rounds, and finished up even. The matter was then to be settled in a practice match; but both scored 20, so that failed. Then a race to Wayland followed, ending in a dead-heat. And in the end, the exasperating question was settled by them both going. Both distinguished themselves very much, and caused the promoter, A. A. D'Arcy, to thank himself he did take them.

Although this is ancient history to some of you, and new to others, it all helps to give one a fairly clear idea of our character, and well worth mentioning.

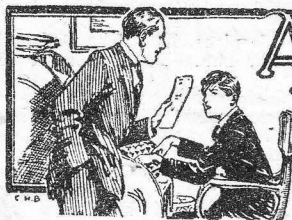
In one or two instances it has shown that Dig is very simple, honest-natured, and generous, though he is no fool. He was the victim of the scheming of Cutts of the Fifth for a long time. He had a lot of trouble with the cad of the Fifth, but his friends came on the scene. It's a long yarn, too long to be narrated here.

As a footballer and cricketer he is very reliable, though he doesn't come up to the standard set by such fellows as Tom Merry, George Figgins, Kerr, Levison, and one or two others. But there is still that one good point—always wanted—reliability, in him.

A fellow of the right sort, a clean, decent, ordinary schoolboy, eminently likeable, and very straight.

That's Dig!

THE POPULAR.—No. 125.



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

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

FOR NEXT FRIDAY!

For next Friday we have another splendid budget of reading, including two long complete school stories. The first story is entitled:

"THE REMOVE SAILORS."
By Frank Richards.

Harry Wharton & Co. go down to the sea to bathe, and are carried away by a rascally captain, and forced to work aboard a ship. So, whether they like it or not, the Removites become sailors. This is really a splendid story.

The second complete school story is entitled:

"A FRIENDSHIP FOUNDED."
By Owen Conquest.

This story deals with the end of the feud between Kit Erroll and Val Mornington, and the manner in which the "fight ends" will surprise you all.

There will also be another grand supplement in our next issue.

"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY."

As usual, Billy gives you plenty of funny articles and fiction, and the four pages are crammed with interesting contributions from all the three famous schools—Rookwood, Greyfriars, and St. Jim's. Readers will do well to order their copies of "The Popular" well in advance!

POPLETS COMPETITION.—No. 19.

Examples for this week's competition:

Wasting Good Food. For the Present.
Ending the Quarrel. A Tuck-shop Tragedy.
Makes Matters Worse. A New Excuse.
Bullying the Empire. D'Arcy and Dignity.
Bunter the Bowler. Willing to Join.
Attracts Many Readers. When Loder's Good.

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 "Poptets" must be written on one side of a POSTCARD, and not more than two "Poptets" can be sent in by one reader each week.

2. The postcards must be addressed "Poptets" No. 19, the "Popular," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

3. No correspondence can be entered into in connection with "Poptets."

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 16th.

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

SPORT!

Every boy loves sport. Every boy loves a sports story. We have a grand, extra-long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, in this week's "Magnet" Library, which deals with a sports tournament at Greyfriars. A team of Lancashire lads comes to the school, and great is the rivalry between them and the Remove.

Therefore, I say to every boy, get this week's "Magnet" Library, and read the finest sports story ever written. Read how Billy Bunter wanted to box for the Remove—and how he boxed! It's a scream!

Boxing, swimming, running, cycling—all kinds of sports. There is nothing to beat a really splendid school and sports story, my chums, and I am sure you will be very pleased I gave you the tip if you get the "Magnet" Library for the week-end.

RESULT OF POPPLETS COMPETITION No. 13.

The prize of five shillings has been awarded to the following readers:

Herbert, Brettell, 5, Attwood Street, Lye, Stourbridge.

Example: When Help Required.
Poptet: Apply Study 1, Remove.

S. Bayliss, The Red House, West Byfleet, Surrey.

Refusing to Fag.
Result of Hard "Knox."

F. Gould, 9, Spout Lane, Walsall.
When Help Required.
True Friends Prove Themselves.

J. Edwards, Jenkin Allis, Knighton, Rads.
Cheering the Loser.
Good Sportsmen Always Do.

Mary Young, 53, Union Street, Kirkintilloch, Scotland.

Cheering the Loser.
The Sportsman's Way.

Herbert Shaw, 61, Pontypridd Road, Porth, Rhondda, Glam.

Cheering the Loser
Shows Good Sportsmanship.

J. Mather, 718, Atherton Road, Hindley Green, near Wigan.

Gussy's Tense Solos.
Be (hoot) itfully Sublime.

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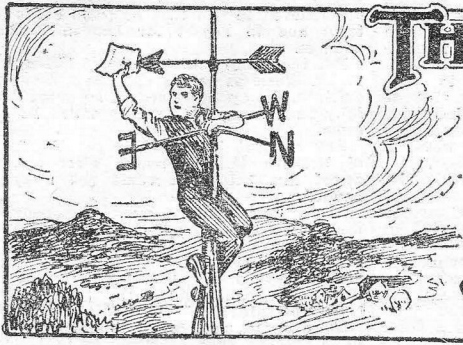
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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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 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 he phones to Hesketh Moir, the great detective.

Hopson, a clerk of Mr. Henderson's, arrives with Moir, and is walking through the grounds when he overhears a conversation between Dr. Steele and the French maid. It appears that the girl, who had helped Steele to place the pearls in Dick's trunk, threatens to give the whole show away. Dr. Steele, in his anger, reminds her that he is acquainted with her past dark history, and will reveal her real identity to the police if she as much as breathes a word.

(Now read on.)

His Chance At Last!

"Ah! That surprises you, doesn't it?" sneered the doctor. "I know more than you think! When your pretty face caught my fancy in the Montemarte I went to the trouble of finding out all I could about you, and I learned just who and what you were. That didn't matter to me. I could see you might even be useful to me in my own work, and so I followed you back here to England! But I warn you, Madelaine Montrose, if you so much as breathe a word of what I told you to do for me—if you tell them that it was to me that you handed the pearls—then before Heaven I'll expose you, and have you handed over to the police! And, remember, Madelaine, the gendarmes of Paris are looking for you very diligently, with a warrant for your arrest over that nasty little affair of Le Moulin Rouge!"

The girl hesitated for a moment, gazing into the rage-distorted features of Dr. Jasper Steele.

"If I go to prison, then you will also go with me!" she warned at last.

The doctor laughed callously. "Rubbish!" he retorted. "I have done nothing criminal. I did not steal the pearls. I shall say that it was you who took them and hid them in Trafford's luggage, hoping to retrieve them later. No, my dear; I shall not go to prison. There is no warrant out for me, but things will be different for you! Now, what is it to be? Look sharp!"

And Dr. Steele gave the poor girl's arm a savage twist which brought forth another little cry of pain.

Peter Hopson, seated in the summer-house, had the greatest difficulty in controlling himself. His impulse was to dash out and protect the defenceless girl, but wisdom bade him bide his time.

"Come on!" snarled the doctor again. "Answer me! What are you going to do, Madelaine?"

"Sacre Coeur!" wailed the poor little French maid. "But you are cruel, monsieur! 'Tis true I am Madelaine Montrose, but since I've been with Madame Henderson I've run straight! I swear I've! Oh, have mercy, monsieur! Do not send me to prison!"

"Either that, or your silence!" roared the doctor.

"Then I must promise not to speak!" cried the French maid.

"I can trust you?"

"Oui, monsieur! I tell you I will not speak! Even if zey arrest me, I will keep silent! But you will wait for me, monsieur—you will marry me as you promised?"

The doctor gave a callous laugh.

"You keep your promise first," he sneered, "and we'll start talking about mine afterwards!"

Then, with a final brutal twist of the girl's arm, he flung her from him, and, turning upon his heel, strode off without another word.

So savage had been the force with which Dr. Steele had flung the girl away that she went sprawling across a gravel path, and fell prone upon her knees before the summer-house within a few inches of where sat the witness of the interview, Peter Hopson.

Now he bent down, and, placing his arms about the heavy shoulders of the French maid, he gently helped her to her feet and drew her within the shelter of the summer-house.

"Don't cry!" he whispered. The girl gave a start, and, turning, gazed with frightened eyes into the sympathetic face of the poor clerk.

"But 'oo are you?" she cried anxiously. "You've 'eard everything?"

"Yes, everything!" answered Peter Hopson.

"And you are another of the police?" cried Annette, in terror. "Yes, yes, of course! I saw you come wiz zee other man! Oh, mon Dieu—mon Dieu, this is the end!"

"No, no!" cried Hopson quickly. "I am not a policeman. True, I came with the detective, but only to show him the way. Listen! I did hear everything that you and that man said to each other, but I will help you if only you will stop crying and answer a few questions."

"And you are not zee police?" asked the girl again, as if unwilling to believe.

"No, no! I swear I am not!" answered

Hopson. "But, tell me, who was that who was talking to you?"

"It was Dr. Jasper Steele!" sobbed the girl. "E promised to marry me!"

"Yes, yes; I know!" went on Peter Hopson. "I heard you say so, and I heard him admit it. Now, listen! I am going to see Mr. Trafford, and tell him everything!"

"No, no! You must not do that!" cried Annette, beside herself with fear.

"Hush! I shall protect you!" continued Hopson. "Listen! I shall tell him everything, but he will look after you. When the truth is known of how the doctor tried to make Mr. Trafford look like a thief, he may turn and try to harm you; but if you leave that to me and Mr. Trafford, I think it will be all right."

"Will you trust me? Remember, already it may have been discovered that your story about going on that message was not true. You had better let me help you! Will you?" "Oh, yes, monsieur! I will—I will!" cried Annette, drying her eyes.

"Very good," answered Peter Hopson. "You leave it to me, and all will come right. Now, you run along back to the house and go on with your work as if nothing had happened, and I will go and see Mr. Trafford."

"Thank you, sir! I'll go at once," answered Annette.

And without further delay she turned and hastened back to the house.

Peter Hopson watched her disappear into the house by one of the side doors.

Then he rose to his feet.

"Now for it!" he cried, a light of determination in his eyes. "We'll see if Peter Hopson can't pay back his debt to Richard Trafford!"

Peter Hopson Repays His Debt!

WITH buoyant tread and a triumphant expression upon his face, Mr. Eustace K. Henderson's poor clerk, Peter Hopson, bent his footsteps in the direction of one of the garden doors of Shorton Towers.

Never had he felt more pleased in his life than at that moment.

Was not the prospect of being able to repay the kindness which Dick Trafford had shown him looming in the distance?

Thanks to the fortunate accident of over-hearing the conversation between Dr. Jasper Steele and Mrs. Henderson's little French maid, Annette Fort, he was in a position to do inestimably good work for his benefactor, and he meant to do it.

He was going to once and for all clear Dick Trafford of all stigma which might have attached itself to him in consequence of Dr. Steele's treacherous plot.

With more courage and self-assurance than we suppose Peter Hopson had ever possessed in his life before, he made his way boldly up the gravel path which led to the main door into the house.

Arrived at the spacious hall, he unhesitatingly rang the bell.

The pompous butler made his appearance, and raised his eyebrows ever so slightly upon perceiving the identity of the individual who had summoned him.

He knew quite well who Peter Hopson was—that he filled the very minor position of

And then a sudden and desperate idea occurred to the scoundrelly doctor.

He would double back on his tracks to elude his pursuers.

Now his own train was at a standstill in the station, and without wasting a moment of precious time, Dr. Steele approached that door of his carriage which was nearest the stationary down train upon the other line, and as he did so he thanked Heaven that he was fortunate enough to have the carriage to himself.

In the other train he espied another empty carriage.

In a flash he had opened the door of his carriage and swung himself out swiftly on to the footboard, then he gave a leap and landed upon the footboard of the down train, which even at that moment commenced to move forward.

The next instant Dr. Jasper Steele had wrenched open the door to the empty carriage of the down train, and climbing into it, and slamming the door to after him, he sank back upon the cushions with a sigh of relief.

"Beaten them!" he breathed. "They'll never get me now!"

And he was right—they never did! The train which the doctor had so luckily for himself been able to change to was bound direct for Eastbourne, where the doctor alighted.

From this seaside resort he worked his way along the coast until he reached Dover, and there he boarded a cross-Channel steamer to France, to lie low until the hue and cry which would be raised after him had died down.

Full Steam Ahead for the Pictures!

AND back in Shoreton Towers a very happy little gathering took place—all were happy, that is to say, with the exception of Mr. Hesketh Moir, the detective, who had been so neatly outwitted by the doctor.

Mr. Eustace K. Henderson sat at the head of the table in his study with his solicitor, Mr. Robinson, on his left, while the poor clerk, Peter Hopson, sat at the cinema magnate's left elbow, ready with shorthand notebook and pencil to take down anything required.

The only other two individuals present were Mrs. Henderson and Dick Trafford.

The detective was still frantically ringing up police-stations all over the country in a desperate effort to prevent Dr. Jasper Steele from escaping him—but he was too late.

"Well," said Mr. Henderson, "now that the mystery of my wife's pearls has been most satisfactorily cleared up, I think we might get to business, Mr. Trafford, and go full speed ahead for the picture work I have engaged you!"

Dick Trafford nodded his head emphatically. He was keen and anxious to begin.

"I don't think we need trouble our heads again with Dr. Jasper Steele," went on Mr. Henderson. "He's gone—and I don't suppose we shall see anything more of him."

And as Mr. Henderson spoke the words, a feeling of intense happiness rose in the breast of Peter Hopson, as he realised that the sudden flight of the doctor had prevented him from exposing the true character and past life of the little French maid, Annette Foret. She, at any rate, had no longer anything to fear from him, and Peter Hopson was glad that this girl, who was trying so hard to make good after her early lapses, was to be given a chance to win out. He felt sure that this last little divergence from the straight and narrow path would have its good results.

Mr. Henderson was speaking again: "But, Mr. Trafford," he said, "before we finally dismiss all thought and reference to the doctor, I should be interested to hear why he seemed so bitter and vindictively disposed towards you."

Dick gave a short laugh.

"Oh, I don't mind telling you that, Mr. Henderson," he answered. "Now that Dr. Steele is no longer under your roof as a guest, I no longer have any reason to remain silent."

And then, without further hesitation, Dick Trafford told Mr. Henderson how he had shown up the scoundrelly headmaster before the governors of St. Peter's by sticking that incriminating letter upon the arrow of the weathercock.

The letter which he had found from the unscrupulous manager of the catering firm

which supplied St. Peter's with food, in which it was clearly revealed that only half the amount allowed by the governors for the feeding of the boys was really being used, and that the balance was going half each into the pockets of this swindling catering manager, and the scoundrelly headmaster, Dr. Jasper Steele.

"Even as he was relieved of his position as headmaster by the governors, and sent in disgrace to his study, whilst they deliberated as to whether they should prosecute him or not," concluded Dick, "he passed within a few feet of me, and even then he swore to get even with me for having exposed his dishonesty, and I suppose this was the way he tried to do it. He very nearly succeeded, too, and had it not been for the kindness of Mrs. Henderson here, in interceding upon my behalf, I really think the doctor's plan might have had the result he hoped it might."

"Hush, hush!" cried Mr. Henderson quickly, as he raised his hand in protest. "You must forgive me, Mr. Trafford, if at first I seemed inclined to suspect you. All that is satisfactorily cleared up now, and I should esteem it a favour if you would never refer to it again."

"But this adventure of yours in connection with the weathercock on the spire at St. Peter's School! It is really most interesting, and I compliment you upon your pluck in acting as you did. You risked your life to better your schoolmates. A very noble act! But the idea of scaling a tall spire such as I know that to be, shows me that you are indeed the type of dare-devil I have been looking for."

"Some day we may include some such incident in a moving-picture story. You could always do it again, of course. But for the time being, let us both sign this new contract which Mr. Robinson has, at my instructions, been preparing."

"The first one, which was destroyed owing to a regrettable misunderstanding was, I think, for five thousand pounds a year. This one you will find is for six thousand. No, no!" cried Mr. Henderson as he saw protest coming from Dick. "I wish you to accept it without question. I have deeply wronged you within the last few hours, and this is my way of showing my regret. Sign the contract, Mr. Trafford, and we'll get right ahead with the cinema work to-day. I'll take you down to the studio in my car presently."

"Thank you, sir," answered Dick. "And when do we start the actual picture work?"

Mr. Henderson shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "If the light's good enough, we might try out something this afternoon."

"Good!" returned Dick. "Well, I'm ready, when you are!"

It was the afternoon following that eventful morning upon which the treachery of Dr. Jasper Steele had been revealed by Peter Hopson, that a powerful six-cylinder car ran through the village of Brancaster.

"We're nearly there!" remarked Henderson, as he turned from the drying-wheel to Dick who sat beside him. "You see that huge, glass-roofed erection in the distance?"

Dick nodded.

"That's my studio," announced Henderson, with pardonable pride. "A day and night studio. By day I can 'take' in the light which streams in through the glass roof—which, if I desire, I can slide to one side—and by night I can 'take' equally well, for I have one of the most comprehensive electric installations of mercury vapour lamps that you can see this side of the Atlantic. I make my own power, too, so that I am completely independent of the vagaries of any electric light company, and need never worry about possible strikes. I believe in being self-reliant; it's the only way to go ahead. So sure as you depend upon any particular concern to help you carry on your business, you may be certain that they will let you down at the vital moment."

"All my workpeople live in the vicinity, and I have a private telephone-exchange. Each little cottage has its instrument, and thus I can summon any one or all of my employes to the studio at a moment's notice, if necessary."

"I'm afraid I rather took Brancaster by storm when I first arrived and started work," went on Henderson. "They couldn't understand things at all at first, but after a bit they ceased to regard me as a magician who conjured up a little city in their midst, but as a go-ahead Yankee, who was prepared to pay liberally to those who assisted him in his enterprise. It was amusing to see the old-fashioned villagers coming round one by one. I've got them all working for me now. Fishing used to be their main way of getting a living, but I don't suppose you could find a fisherman now who practised his trade. No; they're either all working in the factory developing and printing the films, or else the more intelligent of them are developing into actors and actresses."

"You'd be surprised what a lot of latent artistic talent there is to be found in a tiny little place like this. I was myself!"

(To be continued.)

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GENTLEMAN JIM'S STRATAGEM!

(Continued from page 11.)

all safe for me to enter, and when we are ready you will let me in at night—"

"Never! Never that!"
The cracksman's eyes gleamed dangerously.

"That is the way you speak to your father, Kit!" he said in a hard voice. "Take care!"

The boy gave him a bitter look. "Are you my father?" he said.

"What!" Gentleman Jim started forward, his eyes on the boy's face.

"What do you say? Who has been tell-

ing you—" He broke off. "You mad young fool! What has put that folly into your head?"

"I have thought of it many times," said Erroll, with quiet bitterness. "You have never treated me as a son. I never knew a mother. I never knew a relation."

"Oh, you are mad!" muttered Gentleman Jim. "I have no more time to waste here, Kit. Remember my orders!"

"I will not obey them!" said Erroll steadily. "I told you at our wretched home that you should never make me a thief. You cheated me into going to Rookwood. You said nothing of this then. I will die before I will lift a finger to help you to rob Rookwood!"

"You will obey, Kit, or you will take the consequences!" said Gentleman Jim

between his teeth. "Enough now. I shall see you again. Return to the school, and hold your tongue!"
The cracksman turned away and disappeared into the wood. With a heavy heart Kit Erroll tramped away to Rookwood.

It had come at last—what he had known must come.

Gentleman Jim might give his orders, but they would not be obeyed. Upon that point at least Kit Erroll's mind was clear, and his resolution would never be shaken.

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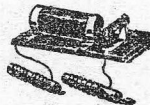
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