

# Putty's Christmas Jape!



A Stirring Long Complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, dealing with Putty Grace's scheme to brighten up Christmas at the school.

By Owen Conquest.

(Author of the well-known tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every week.)

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
Putty Tries it on!



**J**IMMY SILVER and his chums, Raby, Lovell, and Newcome, of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, were looking very serious as they strolled down the fourth Form passage.

Owing to an outbreak of influenza, the whole school was "booked" to spend Christmas at Rookwood. The Christmas holidays were "off," and the disappointment was naturally very great.

But this was not the real reason why Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking serious. They had made up their minds to have a good time in spite of everything, and were well on the warpath against their old enemies, Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side at Rookwood. But, unfortunately, Tommy Dodd & Co. had succeeded in getting in the first blow, and by rigging up a spoof ghost, had given the merry Classics quite a scare with the Phantom Abbot of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had been considerably chipped about this, and they felt that it was up to them.

"Putty Grace has got a wheeze," said Jimmy Silver. "He thinks he can dress up as a specialist from Harley Street and spoof the Moderns properly."

"It's rot!" said Lovell emphatically. "He couldn't do it!"

"That's what we told him, but I've been thinking it over," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "There may be something in it, after all!"

"Putty's a jolly good actor," said Newcome.

Lovell snorted.

"Yes, but—"

"He'd do it, if anybody could," said Raby.

"But—"

"Anyway, we're going to see him about it," said Jimmy Silver firmly. "So stop butting, Lovell, there's a good chap!"

"Here we are!"

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He opened the door of Study No. 2.

Putty Grace had been busy there most of the morning, evidently making preparations for the great wheeze that had been turned down so scornfully in the end study. He was there again now, and he nodded cheerily to the Fistical Four as they came in. A silk hat was standing on the table, and beside it lay a black frock-coat, and several other articles of attire, as well as ginger-coloured side-whiskers and a bald scalp. "Hallo, old toplets!" said Putty genially. "Are you going to lend a hand, after all?"

"You're going on with it?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"You bet!"

"Like your cheek, when we've told you it's no good!" said Arthur Edward Lovell warmly.

"Bow-wow!"

"I've been thinking it over, Putty," remarked the captain of the Fourth.

"If you think you can work it—"

"On my head!" said Putty confidently.

"We've got to stop these Modern boudners cackling somehow. We'll help."

"Will we?" grunted Lovell.

"Yes, fathead! Dry up!" said Jimmy Silver. "I've heard talk already of the Harley Street specialist that's coming to-day, Putty."

Putty of the Fourth chuckled.

"It's all over the school," he answered.

"I asked Tubby if he had heard that Dr. Shooter of Harley Street, the famous lung and chest specialist, was coming down here this afternoon. That was enough for Tubby. He wouldn't admit that he hadn't heard of it before me."

"Ha ha ha!"

"So he's spread it around," said Putty.

"Nobody quite knows how it started, but everybody's heard that the specialist is coming, and thinks he's been sent by the Head. And he's coming, right enough! I've got the things nearly ready. You fellows can lend a hand with the bags, getting them out of gates, if you like."

"Where are you going to make-up?"

"In the wood."

"Bit parky!" remarked Lovell.

"I'll have a first-class dressing-room, if you can have one put up ready for me, old top! Otherwise, the wood will have to do," said Putty serenely. "I can put the clobber into two bags; they won't attract any attention. Two of you fellows can take one each. Another can walk down to the village and bring the station hack along at three o'clock to the stile. That will look as if Dr. Shooter has arrived by train."

"Suppose you drop on old Manders?" asked Raby, with a deep breath. "You're pretty certain to."

"I shall dodge him, if I can."

"But if you can't?"

"Well, I can deal with old Manders,"

said Putty. "My dear chaps, you just pile in and help, and I tell you that this Christmas campaign against the Moderns will be the biggest jape in the history of Rookwood. They won't feel like cackling and chortling when the Harley Street specialist has done with them!"

"But—" began Lovell.

Putty waved his hand.

"But me no butts!" he said. "You're as full of butts as a billy-goat. Just ring-off and make yourself useful."

Arthur Edward Lovell suppressed his feelings. The Fistical Four proceeded to give Putty their aid, and half an hour later they strolled out of the gates of Rookwood, one by one, Jimmy and Raby carrying a bag each. Lovell, still inwardly rebellious, walked down to Coombe for the hack, while the other three accompanied Putty into the wood, to help him with his peculiar toilet.

And when Tommy Dodd & Co. looked for the great chiefs of the Classical Fourth, to give them a little more playful chipping on the subject of ghosts, they found that the Fistical Four were missing.

"Cleared off to get out of the lime-light!" chuckled Tommy Dodd. "We'll laugh 'em to death all through Christmas with this yarn, you fellows!"

"Sure we will, intoirly!" said Doyle.

"They're played out on the Classical side, you know," said Tommy Dodd disparagingly. "They can't keep their end

up. Hardly worth the trouble of pulling their legs, really. But we must do something to keep ourselves lively over Christmas."

"Hallo! Who's this Johnny?" said Cook, as the hack from Coombe station turned in at the gates.

Tubby Muffin came rolling up. "That'll be the specialist," he said. "Oh, the giddy chest man from Harley Street!" said Tommy Dodd. "I heard that the Head was sending down a specialist to look over us. May mean that we can get off for Christmas, after all."

"Good!"  
And the three Tommies capped the Harley Street specialist very respectfully.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Mr. Manders Catches It!

**A** GOOD many eyes were turned upon the gentleman in the station hack as it rolled up the drive to Mr. Manders' House.

Nearly everybody at Rookwood had heard of the expected specialist, and the fellows were rather interested in him.

He was a rather small gentleman, wrapped in an overcoat with an imposing fur collar. He wore steel-rimmed glasses, ginger whiskers, and a shining silk-hat. His complexion was rather pale, his eyebrows thick and bushy. He looked about fifty-five; but he was, as Tommy Dodd remarked to his chums, small for his age.

"Little, but good, perhaps!" said Tommy Doyle hopefully. "Sure, I hope he'll let us off for Christmas."

The hack stopped outside Mr. Manders' House.

The little gentleman hopped out actively enough.

Knowles of the Sixth was just coming out, and he paused at the sight of the stranger, and raised his hat civilly.

"This is—ahem!—Rookwood, I suppose?" said the little gentleman, in a rather high-pitched voice.

"Yes, sir," answered Knowles.

"Is Dr. Chisholm at home?"

"The Head's away for Christmas, sir," answered Knowles.

"Ah! He has not returned?"

"Oh, no!"

"Someone is here in authority, I suppose?" said the little gentleman snappishly.

"I am Dr. Shooter—Dr. Shooter, of Harley Street! I presume you have heard the name?"

"Not that I know of," answered Knowles, not over-pleased by the little gentleman's snappy manner.

Mr. Manders is in charge here now, if you wish to see him. I'll call the page—"

"I am here to see the boys! My time is of value! I—ahem!—have to catch my train. I understand that a number of the boys here are down with influenza?"

"Yes, Dr. Shooter. I'll take you to the sanatorium, if you like," said Knowles.

The man from Harley Street shook his head.

"My business is with the boys who are not yet taken ill," he answered. "I have to examine them."

"You'd better speak to Mr. Manders, then. Here he is," said Knowles.

Mr. Manders, the science master, had seen the hack from his study window. He came to the door.

"Dr. Shooter, sir, of Harley Street!" said Knowles. "The specialist sent by the Head."

"I have heard nothing of it!" snapped Mr. Manders. "The Head has not informed me of his intention to send a specialist here?"

"There's been a lot of talk about it, sir!" said Knowles in surprise.

"I repeat that I have heard nothing of it! This is very—very unusual!"

said Mr. Manders. "Really, Dr. Shooter, it is very extraordinary! Not a word has been said to me—"

"Are you in control here, sir?"

"Most certainly!"

"Then it is extraordinary—most extraordinary!" snapped Dr. Shooter.

"Most careless—most absentminded of Dr. Chisholm! But excuse me, sir—"

The little gentleman came nearer to the thin, angular Modern master. "My dear sir, what are you doing in the open air—so unprotected, too? Do you wish to see another sun rise or not?"

"What—what!" ejaculated Mr. Manders.

"Pray let me see you in your study at once!" said Dr. Shooter. "You alarm me, sir—your colour—your temperature! For goodness' sake let us lose no time! The boys can wait!"

"Pray come in, sir!" gasped Mr. Manders.

The Modern master was much given



**MR. MANDERS' REMEDY!** When the school doctor arrived, he found Mr. Manders in bed, stretched on his right side, with water-bottles at his feet, and waving his left arm in the air. (See Chapter 4.)

to being alarmed for his health; the slightest ache or pain always threw him into a flutter; and since influenza had broken out at Rookwood Mr. Manders had lived on tenterhooks. Possibly Dr. Shooter of Harley Street was aware of that.

Mr. Manders hurried the little gentleman into the house. In the hall the specialist removed his overcoat, disclosing a well-fitting black frock-coat. It had a very professional look, and, though short in stature—for a man—Dr. Shooter had a considerable circumference.

Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled in at the gates, and came over towards Mr. Manders' House. They glanced at the waiting hack.

"Anybody arrived?" asked Jimmy Silver carelessly.

"The Harley Street man," said Tommy Dodd. "Some sort of a specialist about people's insides. He's just gone in with Manders."

"With Manders!" ejaculated Lovell.

"Oh, my hat!"

"The Head hasn't told Manders he

was coming," said Tommy Cook. "Bit careless of the old bird, wasn't it?"

"Very!" said Jimmy Silver.

The Pistical Four strolled away towards the Classical side, smiling.

Arthur Edward Lovell drew a deep breath.

"What a neck!" he murmured.

"Fancy interviewing old Manders personally! Suppose the Manders bird sees through him?"

"Let's hope he won't!" said Jimmy Silver fervently.

"Hear, hear!"

"I'd like to know how he's getting on with Manders," remarked Raby, staring towards Mr. Manders' window from a safe distance.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Shooter of Harley Street was getting on quite well with Mr. Manders. At that very moment he had a stethoscope to Mr. Manders' bony breast, and was listening to it, with an expression of owl-like gravity on his face.

Mr. Manders was watching him anxiously.

Mr. Manders was too concerned about his own precious health to think for a moment of questioning the specialist's bona-fides.

The expression on Dr. Shooter's face grew more and more portentous.

"Are you under the care of a doctor now?" he rapped out.

"I have taken advice from Dr. Bolton," faltered Mr. Manders. "You—you do not think that the lung is affected?"

"When can I see Dr. Bolton?"

"He will arrive at the sanatorium at five."

"Very good. I shall be here then. I prefer to make no statement for the present, Mr. Manders. I must—ahem!—consult your own doctor first. You will go to bed immediately."

"To—to bed?"

"Place a hot mustard-plaster on your chest—as hot as you can bear it, or a little hotter—"

"C-c-certainly!"

"And your feet in boiling water."

"Bub-bub-boiling—"

"As near boiling as you can stand, I mean," said Dr. Shooter hastily.

"Lose no time." He rose. "I have much to do here. Perhaps you will instruct the prefects to see that my directions are carried out. Unless you desire to be seriously ill, you will go to bed at once!"

"C-c-certainly!" gasped Mr. Manders.

"B-b-but how can I have my feet in—in bub-bub-boiling water if—I am in bed?"

"Hot-water bottles will do—very hot! The hotter the better! Are you subject to coughs?"

"I—I cough a little."

"Does it leave you with a sharp needle-like pain on the left side?"

"I—I believe it does!" gasped Mr. Manders. "Yes—yes, I am sure it does!"

"I thought so." Dr. Shooter shook his bald head portentously. "Lie on your right side in bed—"

"Yes, yes—"

"And wave your left arm in the air regularly to and fro. Keep this up for twenty minutes exactly. Then, after ten minutes' rest, resume."

"Yes, yes."

"Lose no time. If any time is lost, I will not answer for the consequences."

Mr. Manders lost no time. Knowles and Frampton, the Modern prefects, were called in to hear his hurried instructions, and then Mr. Manders fairly bolted for his bed-room.

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The housekeeper was kept busy for some little time carrying out the specialist's instructions to Mr. Manders' satisfaction. But at last the Modern master was safe under a pile of blankets, with hot-water bottles sizzling at his feet, and was waving his left arm in the air, regularly and rhythmically.

And while Mr. Manders was keeping himself busy with that extraordinary occupation, Dr. Shooter of Harley Street was very busy elsewhere.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. Doctor's Orders!

"WHAT rot!" said Tommy Dodd.  
"Bosh!" said Cook.  
"Now then, hurry up!" shouted Knowles.

The order had gone forth for all junior members of the Modern Side to line up in the quadrangle for Dr. Shooter to examine them. Knowles had ventured to suggest gathering up the Classics also, but Dr. Shooter had snapped him short. The specialist had his own methods, and he preferred to examine the Moderns first.

So the Modern juniors were lined up by the prefects—watched by a crowd of grinning Classics.

Why the Classics were grinning was rather a puzzle to Tommy Dodd & Co., who supposed that the Classics' turn was coming. But certainly they were grinning widely.

Perhaps Jimmy Silver & Co had been whispering among their chums. Certainly the Classical fellows seemed to be taking the proceedings in a hilarious spirit.

The afternoon was frosty, but sunny. In the winter sunlight the Modern juniors stood ranked in the quad, waiting for the specialist and looking anything but pleased. A medical examination in the open air was rather unusual.

Dr. Shooter came whisking out of Mr. Manders' House. He jammed on his silk hat and walked along the line of the Moderns, blinking at them through his steel-rimmed glasses.

"A precious-looking set!" he said to

Knowles, loud enough for all the Moderns to hear. "Do they play football?"

"Why, yes——"

"They don't look it! Stand upright, you! What is your name?"

"Dodd, sir!" said Tommy, with a ferocious politeness.

"Bodd, stand upright!"

"Dodd, sir—not Bodd!"

"Put up your shoulders. Don't hunch yourself like a sack of coke, Jodd! Goodness gracious, what a set of unfit slackers!"

The Modern juniors exchanged looks. They simply yearned to take Dr. Shooter by the neck and rag him in a manner that would have been anything but slack. But they had to resign themselves to their fate.

"Put out your tongues!" snapped Dr. Shooter.

"Shocking!" snapped the specialist.

"Here, you, Podd—is your name Podd?"

"Dodd!" hissed Tommy.

"Dodd, then. You eat too much toffee. Keep your tongue out, boy! All of you put your tongues out to the fullest extent."

The unhappy Moderns projected their tongues. There was a ripple of laughter from the Classical crowd. Arthur Edward Lovell dabbed his eyes with his handkerchief.

Dr. Shooter blinked at the Modern juniors as they stood with their tongues out to the fullest extent.

"Shocking!" he said again.

"What's the matter with us, sir?" asked Tommy Dodd between his teeth.

"Everything! Knowles—your name is Knowles, I think——"

"Yes, sir!" said the Modern prefect.

"You are in charge of these boys now that Mr. Manders is indisposed?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very good! I am very dissatisfied with them. They look more like moulted scarecrows than healthy schoolboys—like the boys yonder, for instance." Dr. Shooter jerked his thumb towards the Classical crowd.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Knowles, while the Modern juniors gritted their teeth.

"Every boy here is in a state more or

less serious," continued the gentleman from Harley Street. "They must be put to bed at once!"

"All of them, sir?" gasped Knowles.

"Every one!"

"In the sanatorium?"

"No; not in the sanatorium—certainly not in the sanatorium! In their dormitory!"

"Very well, sir!"

"They must have nothing to eat for the remainder of the day, excepting a little dry bread, and perhaps a little water——"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"You will see to this, Master Knowles?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"When Dr. Bolton arrives, pray ask him to look at them, and he will give further instructions."

"Very good, sir! Get into your dormitories!" added Knowles, turning to the infuriated crowd of Modern juniors.

Dr. Shooter watched them into the house, and then turned to Knowles.

"See that my orders are carried out. I will not answer for the consequences otherwise. Good-afternoon!"

"Are—are you not going to examine the Classics, sir—the other boys——"

"I have no time now. I have a train to catch. Good-afternoon!" Dr. Shooter stepped into the station hack. "Drive to the station—as fast as you can go!"

"Yessir!" said the driver.

And the hack rolled out of the gates. There was a yell from the crowd of Classics.

"Three cheers for Dr. Shooter!" yelled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hip-pip-hurrah!"

And the Classical crowd broke up, chortling and chuckling. But the hapless Moderns—sent to bed at half-past three in the afternoon, on a diet of bread and water—did not feel like chortling or chuckling. Their feelings were homicidal; and in the Modern dormitories there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Merry Christmas!

PUTTY of the Fourth strolled in at the school gates half an hour later.

Dr. Shooter had not gone quite so far as the station in the hack!

There was a beatific smile on Putty's face as he strolled in and sauntered across the quad to the School House.

"Hallo, where are the merry Moderns?" he asked as he joined Jimmy Silver & Co. in the School House doorway.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell.

"Gone to bed—with bread and water for tea!" chuckled Mornington. "And—and it was really you?"

"Blessed if I can quite believe it now!" said Erroll, laughing.

Putty smiled complacently.

"Didn't I say I could do it on my head?" he asked. "Do you think I could do it, Lovell—what?"

Lovell gave a gurgle.

"It was great!" he said. "You're a cheeky ass, Putty—but it was great! Gorgeous!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

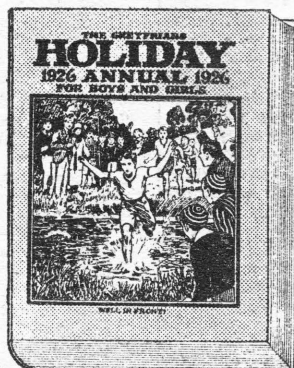
"But what on earth will Dr. Bolton say when he hears of what the specialist has ordered?" said Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Classical chums yelled again. What the school doctor thought when

# THE WORLD'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT!

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he arrived at five o'clock, and found Mr. Manders' House in such an extraordinary state, he did not confide to Jimmy Silver & Co. But his thoughts must have been interesting. Mr. Manders, stretched on his right side, with hot-water bottles at his feet, was rhythmically waving his left arm in the air—and the Modern Fourth and the Modern fags were in bed, and their "tea" of bread and water had been brought up to them. It was really a wonder that Dr. Bolton did not faint. He lost no time in countermanding the orders of the Harley Street specialist—indeed, he told Mr. Manders that the whole thing was absurd, and that he—Mr. Manders—must have been taken in by some lunatic.

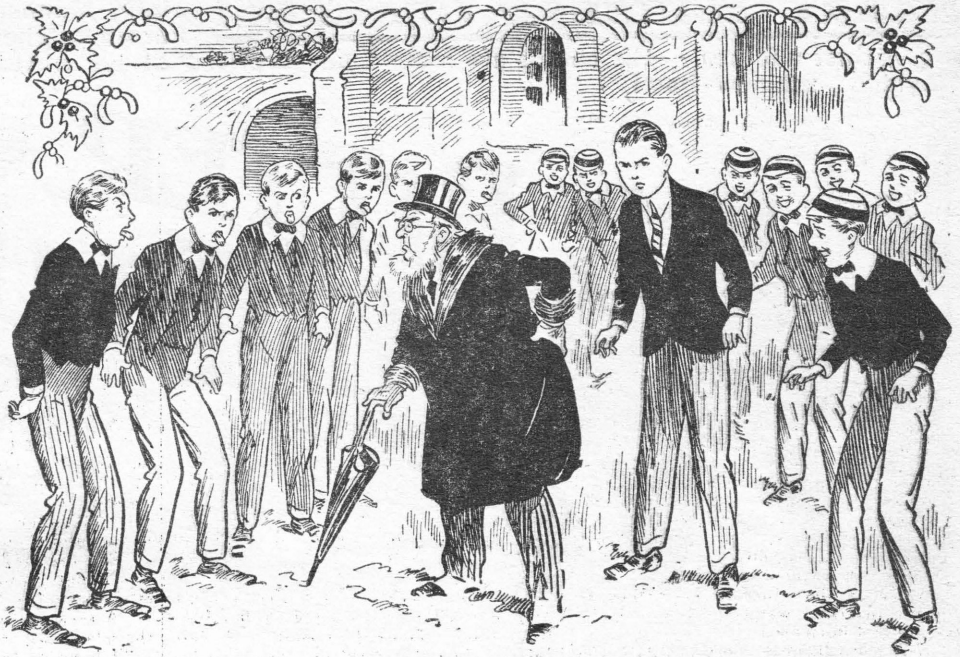
That evening Tommy Dodd & Co. came over to the School House and dropped into the end study. Smiling faces greeted them there from the Fistical Four and Putty of the Fourth.

"To-morrow's Christmas!" said Tommy Dodd. "I propose chucking rags for the day—what?"

"Done!" said Jimmy Silver.

"We've had an awful afternoon," said Tommy feelingly. "As bad as you felt when you saw the Rookwood ghost, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "That ghost's a back number, Doddy—the specialist is the latest thing. Would you like to see him again?"



**THE SPECIALISTS' EXAMINATION!** "All of you put out your tongues to the fullest extent!" ordered the specialist. The unhappy Moderns projected their tongues. There was a ripple of laughter from the Classical crowd. Dr. Shooter blinked at the Modern juniors. "Shocking!" he said. (See Chapter 3.)

"Wouldn't I just!" said Tommy Dodd, clenching his hands.

"Ha, ha! Let's introduce him."

"Eh?"

"Dr. Putty Shooter of Study No. 2 and Harley Street!" chortled Jimmy Silver, "minus his ginger whiskers and bald scalp—but the same merchant."

It took a full minute for the three Tommies to comprehend. Then, with one accord, they rushed on Putty of the Fourth and smote him hip and thigh. But the Fistical Four rushed to the rescue, and the three Tommies left the

end study with five pairs of boots helping them to go. And a roar of laughter followed the discomfited Moderns down the passage.

But the hatchet was buried the next day—for one day only. On Boxing Day it was quite certain that the warfare would be renewed; but in the meantime the Rivals of Rookwood spent a very peaceful and a merry Christmas.

THE END.

## OUR EDITOR'S CHRISTMAS CHAT!

### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!

**A** MERRY CHRISTMAS, and a Happy New Year to all my readers! To do honour to the occasion, the POPULAR has this week a Special Christmas Number. Now is the time when all my chums are thinking of the great festive week—a time of good will to all men. I should like to be with you all when the jolly old turkey and plum-puddings grace the festive board, but as this cannot be, you have my best wishes for a good time.

One reader, in a letter said, that, next to the Christmas dinner, with all its nice fat turkeys and chickens and puddings, comes the time when he can sit before a blazing Yule-log fire with a copy of his favourite paper, the old "Pop." Certainly, my chum knows a good thing when he sees it, and a good time when he has it. I hope he will let me know how he spent his holidays this year, and I shall expect other chums to do the same. I have never been disappointed

so far with readers' letters, and I hope I never shall be.

### THE NEW YEAR!

You will be pleased to know that a wonderful programme of stories is in preparation for the coming new year. Although we regret having to lose such old pals as Frank Richards & Co., the cheery chums of the School in the Backwoods, we say good-bye in proper fashion, and look forward to the NEW SERIES OF ROMANCES that will commence with next week's issue. Those romances of the old times introduce old friends as ROBIN HOOD and his Merry Men of Sherwood and many other well-known romantic figures. Written by famous authors, these stories are better than we have ever had, and you may be sure of some rare good yarns.

"ROBIN HOOD'S CHRISTMAS VISIT!" next Tuesday sets the ball rolling in right royal manner, so keep a weather-eye open for the coming treat.

### NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME!

Our Christmas Week programme next Tuesday contains stories of St. Jim's, Rookwood, and Greyfriars, another long instalment of our popular Wild West romance, "Buffalo Bill—Outlaw!"

and the long complete story of Robin Hood. Then there will be another Hobbies Supplement, in which will be some interesting and instructive articles to interest all readers. To make sure of your issue place an order with your newsagent now, then you will not be disappointed next Tuesday.

### THE YULE-LOG!

The old custom of fetching in the Yule-log, which was practised in the times gone by is to be revived in the household of one of my readers. In a letter he tells me of the scheme which he has organised between a few pals. Dressed in white capes with red crowns on their heads, they will march forth on Christmas Day, into the woods that lie near their home, and rope in a log which has been cut and ready for their coming. I am not sure why he is adopting this costume or headgear, but he thinks it is the right thing for the occasion, and so it doesn't matter overmuch. The log is dragged to the house amidst the cheers of the party there. Then it is thrown to the flames, and the toast is drunk over the leaping sparks. It seems to me a splendid idea, and I wish I could help pull the log in with them.

YOUR EDITOR.