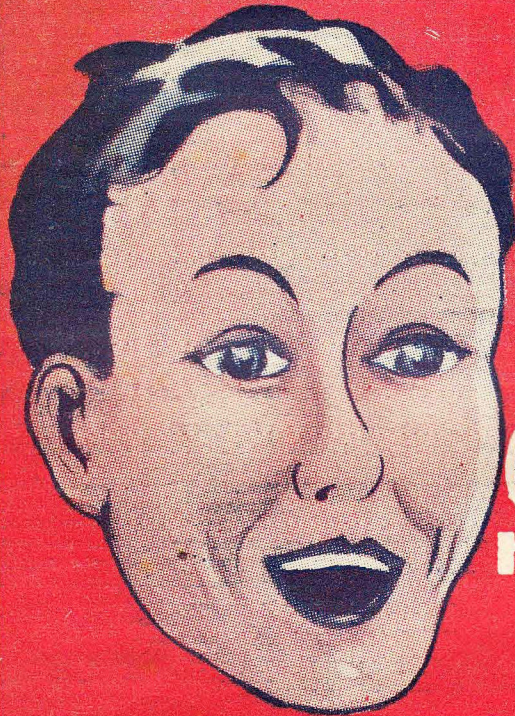


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# THE POPULAR

October 25th, 1930.  
No. 613 (New Series).  
EVERY TUESDAY, 2d.



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4

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## 7 COMPLETE TALES IN THIS BUMPER NUMBER!







But I shan't have much time to waste on him. I should like you to look after him a bit."

"Oh!" said Jimmy Silver.

It was very flattering; but Jimmy Silver had already gathered that Dickinson minor was some sort of a queer animal, and, though flattered, he was not exactly pleased.

"What's the matter with him?" he asked.

"Nothing. Only a bit queer."

"Dotty?" asked Jimmy.

"No!" roared Dickinson ferociously.

"Oh, all right! But a chap wants to know what he's taking on," said Jimmy.

The senior was silent for some moments.

"I'd better tell you out," he said. "The fact is, the kid has been allowed to run a bit wild at home. He's got a taste for rotten books—that fat-headed rubbish that is imported from abroad in lurid covers—things about Dead-shot Bill, and Deadwood Dave, and Blood-bedabbled Jack, and the rest of it. The silly little idiot has devoured that rot till his silly head's full of it, and he thinks and dreams about coal-black chargers, and masked highwaymen, and so on. He talks in a queer, highfalutin way, and his present ambition is to become a pirate!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Jimmy Silver whistled. He had met and known all sorts and conditions of fellows, but he had never happened upon exactly that kind of fellow before.

He did not wonder that Dickinson of the Sixth was worried about the forthcoming advent of his minor at Rookwood.

If Dickinson minor was as his major described him, it was certain that he would be most mercilessly chipped in the Fourth Form.

"The pater thinks Rookwood will do him good, and help to make him a bit more sensible," the prefect continued. "I've no doubt it will in the long run. But I don't want the kid ragged to death to begin with, and I can't always be jawing him myself. I was thinking that, considering the number of times I've let you off lickings you've fairly asked for, you might take the kid in hand for a bit at first, and—and talk sensibly to him, you know—put him into the junior football, and so on, and help him generally. And don't let him become the butt of the Form if you can help it."

Jimmy Silver nodded. It was a peculiarity of Jimmy Silver that he was always ready to help a lame dog over a stile. Any fellow who was down was sure of a helping hand from Jimmy; and it was evident that Dickinson minor, when he made his appearance in the Fourth Form at Rookwood, would be badly in want of a helping hand.

Apart from the question of the many lickings which, according to the prefect, Jimmy Silver had asked for and never received, he was quite willing to oblige.

Dickinson was watching him rather anxiously.

He felt himself in a difficulty, in which a good-natured and level-headed junior in the Fourth could help him more than anybody else. And he had judged Jimmy Silver's character correctly.

"I'm your man!" said Jimmy cheerily. "Leave him to me! I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle! Only one condition."

"Well?"

"Don't plant him on us in the end

study. We're four already. Anything short of that."

Dickinson grinned.

"I'll see that he's not planted in your study," he said.

"Then it's a go."

"He gets here to-morrow at three. You might like to meet him at the station?" the prefect suggested.

Jimmy Silver made a slightly wry face. His afternoon's holiday was already arranged for. But he nodded.

"Right you are, Dickinson!"

"Then that's all," said the Sixth-Former. "You can cut off."

Jimmy Silver cut off.

Just Like Jimmy!

"ROT!"

"Bosh!"

"Tosh!"

Thus the Co.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were not enthusiastic when Jimmy Silver, on his return to the end study, announced what it was that Dickinson of the Sixth wanted.

"It's simply piffle!" growled Lovell.

"Blow Dickinson, and blow his precious minor! You're an ass, Jimmy!"

"And a fathead!" remarked Newcome.

"And a burbling duffer!" added Raby.

"He's always doing it!" went on Lovell, in an aggrieved voice. "Find any chap that's queer, or off his rocker, or down on his luck, and you find Jimmy Silver backing him up! He's always doing it! I'm fed-up with it!"

"Well, Dickinson asked me," said Jimmy defensively.

"Couldn't you say no?"

"Well, I never thought of saying no," admitted Jimmy. "Besides, I didn't want to say no. Why shouldn't I help a lame dog over a stile?"

"Tain't a lame dog—it's a silly idiot, by your description! This study will get called a home for idiots!"

"Well, that's what it was before I came!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"Why, you fathead—"

"Dickinson is a good sort, and it ain't bad policy to be on the right side of a prefect, either," said Jimmy Silver. "Dash it all, let's look after his young idiot of a minor a bit!"

"Blow his young idiot of a minor!" growled Lovell. "What about the footer to-morrow afternoon? Have you forgotten that?"

"Well, that's rather hard cheese, I admit," said Jimmy. "I won't ask you fellows to cut it to come with me—"

"Better not!" grunted Raby.

"You can captain the Classical team, Lovell. After all, you can beat the Moderns without me for once."

Lovell looked a little mollified.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "But we want you in the front line. Tommy Dodd & Co. are in great form. But I know it's no good talking to you. Br-r-r!"

So the discussion ended, and the Fistical Four had tea.

As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver was not looking forward with any great joy to the arrival of Dickinson's peculiar minor. But he had said that he would look after the young duffer, and he was going to do it.

But, on the following afternoon it came as a wrench to the captain of the

Fourth to turn his back on the football-field for the sake of Dickinson minor.

There was a junior match between Classicals and Moderns, and Jimmy Silver ought to have been in command of the Classical team.

He went down to the ground with his comrades, and watched the teams line up for the game.

Lovell won the toss, and kicked off, and Jimmy Silver looked at his watch, and then looked on anxiously.

Tommy Dodd & Co.—the Moderns—were attacking hotly.

There was no doubt that the Modern juniors were in great form, and that the Classicals needed their strongest side to oppose them.

Jimmy Silver silently blessed Dickinson minor.

The Moderns attacked hotly, and within ten minutes Tommy Dodd had put the ball in the net, in spite of Raby's efforts to save.

"Looks like a Modern win, deah boys," drawled Smythe of the Shell, who had sauntered down with Howard and Tracy to look on with a patronising eye. "That's what these Fourth Form kids call footah! By gad!"

"Classical footer ain't much since we stood out of it," remarked Howard, with a shake of the head.

Jimmy Silver manfully resisted the desire to knock Howard and Smythe's heads together, and walked away to the gates. He was badly wanted in the Classical team, but it couldn't be helped.

He reached Coombe well before three, and entered the railway station to wait on the platform for Dickinson minor.

The train was signalled, and a few minutes later it came in. It was a slow local train from Lantham. It crawled in, and stopped, and several passengers alighted. Jimmy scanned them, but it was evident that the new boy for Rookwood was not among them. He glanced into the carriages, thinking that perhaps the new kid had not observed the name of the station.

In a corner of a first-class carriage a lad of about his own age was seated.

He was dressed in Etons, with a silk hat pushed on his head, and he was reading.

Deavouring was rather the word.

His eyes were glued upon the book in his hand—a book with a cover in lurid colours, upon which was depicted a long-haired trapper with a revolver in each hand, killing Red Indians at a great rate. Evidently the youth had forgotten time and space in his keen interest in the gory adventures of "Trapper Bill, the Dead-shot Desperado of the Rocky Mountains!"

"Hallo!" Jimmy Silver shouted into the carriage.

The youth did not heed.

Jimmy jerked at the book. Then the youth started, and blinked at him.

"Are you the new kid for Rookwood?" demanded Jimmy.

"Eh? What? Yes."

"Then here's your station!"

"Oh, all right!"

The new boy scrambled out of the carriage, only just in time. The train was already on the move. The guard shoved him aside wrathfully, and slammed the carriage door.

"Hold on!" yelled Dickinson minor excitedly. "I've left my books in the carriage! Guard! Guard!"

"Come back, you ass!" yelled Jimmy Silver, grabbing the new boy as he jumped towards the carriage. "Do you want to be killed?"



"My books——"

"Keep off, ass!"

Jimmy Silver held the new junior back by main force. The train glided on along the metals, and disappeared down the line. Dickinson minor gave a sort of howl, like an animal robbed of its young, and glared at Jimmy Silver.

"You fathead!" he exclaimed wrathfully.

"Ass!"

"You dummy——"

"Do you want a thick ear, you new bouncer?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver wrathfully. "If I hadn't yanked you out, you'd have gone on to the next station!"

"Now I've lost my books!" howled Dickinson minor.

"Plenty more at Rookwood," said Jimmy. "Serve you right, too! Besides, you can get the books back. Nobody wants to steal a set of school books, I suppose?"

"School books!" Dickinson minor snorted. "Who's talking about school books? They weren't school books!"

"Oh!" said Jimmy. "More stuff like that you've got in your paw—what?"

"Yes," said the new junior mournfully. "A rippin' set! There was 'Dead-shot Dave, the Dashing Desperado of Dead Man's Gulch!' and 'Sweeney Tod, the Bloodcurdling Barber!' and 'Pink Pirate——'"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And 'Bloodstained Bill; or, Barrels of Blood!'" said Dickinson minor. "That was a real topper!"

"It must have been," agreed Jimmy Silver. "You're jolly lucky to have lost them, I should say! You'd get into a row if you were seen reading them at Rookwood."

"Well, I've got some more in my box," said Dickinson minor, taking comfort. "I'll lend you some if you like."

"I'll lend you a thick ear, if you do," growled Jimmy Silver. "Look here, I've come here to meet you, and take you to the school. Come and look after your box."

"Oh, all right!"

Dickinson minor shoved his lurid volume into his pocket, and followed Jimmy Silver. The trunk was taken out by the old porter, and instructions given for sending it on to the school, and then Jimmy Silver walked off his new acquaintance towards Rookwood.

### A Very Peculiar New Boy!

DICKINSON MINOR had not impressed the captain of the Fourth very favourably.

He was a weedy youth, with a pallid complexion, and his appearance showed that he was not much given to healthy outdoor exercise.

However, Jimmy Silver intended to make the best of him, so he talked to him as cheerily as possible on the way to Rookwood.

He tried the new junior on every subject interesting to himself, but found him wanting in all of them.

Dickinson minor did not play football, and did not want to. He had hardly ever played cricket, and didn't care for it. He did not swim, he did

not row, and he did not box. Indeed, Jimmy couldn't see what excuse he had for being alive at all.

Talk on those subjects quickly palled upon Dickinson minor. His book came out of his pocket, and he began to read it as he walked along the lane.

Jimmy Silver whistled.

Deep in the engrossing adventures of Trapper Bill, Dickinson minor forgot his companion. He slowed down, his eyes glued on the book. Once Jimmy had to jerk him out of the way of a market-cart.

"What's that piffle you're reading?" asked Jimmy, at last.

"Eh?"

"What's that rot about?"

"It isn't rot," said Dickinson minor, his eyes gleaming, "it's gorgeous. Just listen to this bit—I'll read it out——"

Jimmy Silver listened.

"Trapper Bill stood with his back to the wall, a revolver gleaming in each hand. Dead Redskins lay in heaps before him. The revolvers sputtered forth fire and death, amid shrieks of horror, and rage, and agony, and fury. Blood was drenching the floor of the ranch. The wounded Redskins rolled and writhed at the bloodstained feet of the intrepid trapper. Blood gushed forth from gaping wounds. Huge and ghastly splashes of blood——"

"Chuck it!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Isn't that ripping?"

"Groogh!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"It makes me feel sick."

"Well, you are a duffer!" said Dickinson minor disdainfully. "That's splendid! When I grow up, I'm going to be a trapper in the Rocky Mountains."

"The dickens you are!" said Jimmy.

"Or else a pirate."

"I thought pirates were out of date."

"A bold, daring spirit might revive the glories of the black flag. Perhaps some day Dead-shot Dickinson will sweep the seas——"

"Dead-shot, Dickinson!" shrieked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, rather! You see how I'll make 'em walk the plank, when I'm known as the Terror of the Pacific!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I don't see why I should stay at school, either. Black Flag Billy became a pirate when he was fourteen," said Dickinson minor. "I'm nearly fifteen."

"Quite old enough to be a pirate," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Why should not I lead them on with foreign brand, far flashing in my red right hand?" demanded Dickinson.

"Ha, ha, ha! Lead who on?"

"My trusty band, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver was near the verge of hysterics. To think of this weedy, pallid duffer with a red right hand, and a trusty band, was excruciating. Dickinson minor blinked at him, and scowled, and returned to his book.

Jimmy Silver whistled. Dickinson major's description of his minor had fallen short of reality. That any fellow could be such an arrant ass seemed almost incredible. Jimmy really wondered whether the boy was a little wrong in his head.

"Look here, buck up a bit!" said Jimmy restively. "I want to see the finish of the footer match. No good crawling like this."

"You buzz off, then!" said Dickinson.

"You'd better come with me. You can read that rot afterwards."

"Rats!"

"Jolly good mind to run you along by your neck," growled Jimmy.

"Unhand me!"

"Eh?"

"Unhand me!" repeated Dickinson. "Oh, my hat!"

Jimmy Silver unhanded him. Dickinson minor's language savoured of the thrilling yarns in which he delighted.

"My only Uncle Peter!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "If you talk like that at Rookwood, Dickinson, you'll be chipped to death."

"Bah!"

That did it!

Jimmy Silver wasted no more time in words. He seized Dickinson by the back of the neck and ran him up the road, into the school gates and across the quad.

"Unhand me!" shrieked the new boy.

"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver rushed his captive up to the Sixth Form passage, and pushed open the door of Dickinson's study.

"Here he is!" he announced.

"Groogh!"

Dickinson minor was shot into the study like a stone from a catapult. He crashed on the table, and rolled off, and sprawled on the floor. Jimmy Silver beat a hurried retreat.

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, was in the study talking to Dickinson of the Sixth. The two prefects stared at the sprawling new boy.

"Hallo! Who's that?" said Bulkeley.

"My minor!" growled Dickinson.

"Get up, Sid, you young idiot!"

Sidney sat up.

"Gerrooogh!" he said.

The prefect grasped him by the shoulder, and jerked him to his feet. Dickinson minor gasped for breath.

"Unhand me!" he snapped.

"What!" yelled his major.

"Unhand me!"

"Is he dotty?" asked Bulkeley, in astonishment.

"Jolly near it!" groaned Dickinson major. "He gets that rot out of American books about buccaneers and pirates, and Redskins. He's been whopped for it. I've whopped him regularly every vacation, I suppose I'd better whop him now."

"Stand back!" said the cheerful minor. "If I had my trusty rifle——"

"Your what?" shrieked Bulkeley.

"You wait till I'm a bit older, George," said the new junior. "Wait till I get a trusty rifle, that's all."

"That's how he goes on," said the major hopelessly. "I suppose he's a bit cracked."

Dickinson minor snorted.

"Pirate Dick was supposed to be cracked when he killed his uncle, and ran away to sea," he said. "But he became the Terror of the Pacific."

"Well, my hat!" said Bulkeley.

Dickinson major looked round for a cane. But he changed his mind.

"You're late, Sid," he said. "I'll take you to your Form master. Come on! See you later, Bulkeley."

The prefect marched his hopeful minor off to Mr. Dalton's study, and Bulkeley stared after them blankly. Then he chuckled. Dickinson minor was quite a new thing in his experience. And the captain of Rookwood felt exceedingly glad that he was Dickinson minor and not Bulkeley minor.



