

THE POPULAR NEW STORY BOOK

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THE RIVALRY OF ST WODE'S

BY CHARLES HAMILTON

Vol. I (New Series), No. 12.

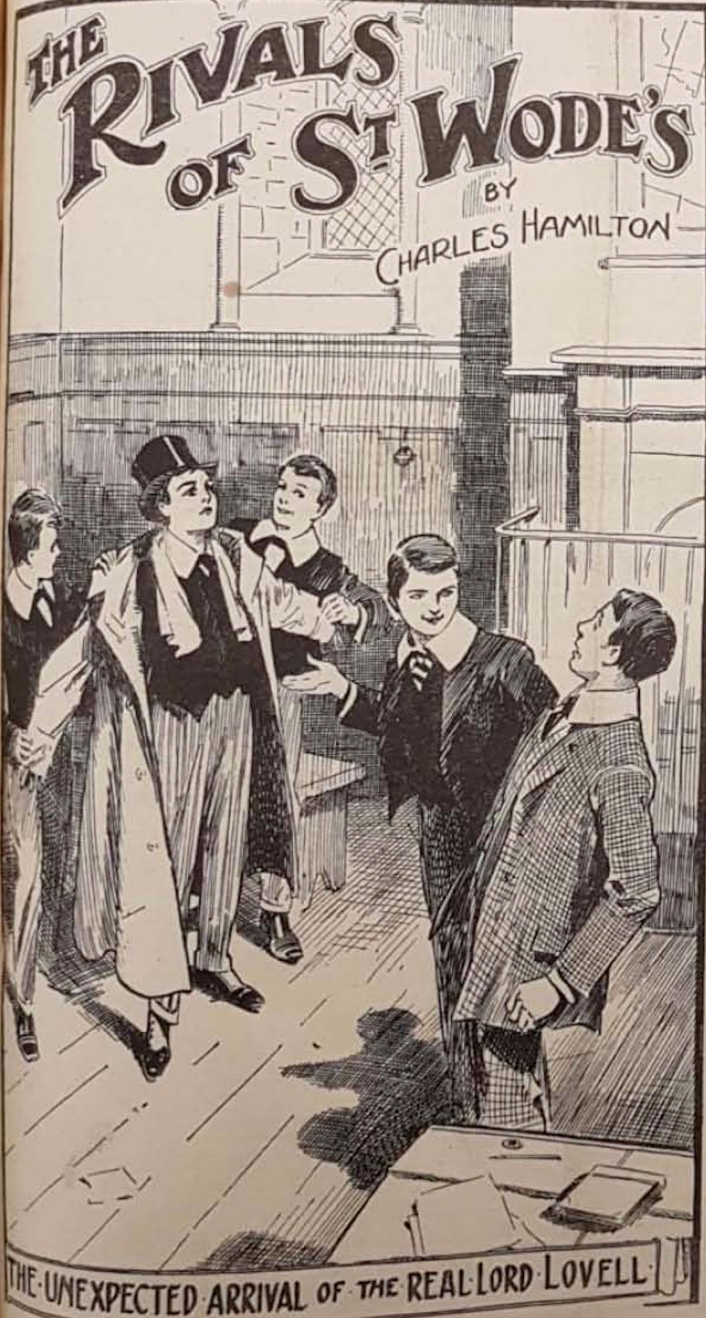
THE FIRST CHAPTERS

— OF —

A NEW SCHOOL TALE.

— BY THE —

Author of "The Rivals of St. Kit's."



Dick is Made Comfortable.

DICK PENWYN, panting with his exertions, and a little startled by the knowledge that he had knocked down three or four St. Wodians before he had been a quarter of an hour in the school, stood in a state of bewilderment. Blagden slapped him on the shoulder.

"Good for you, kid!" he exclaimed.

"You are good stuff, and no mistake. Why, they'd have had the grab to a certainty if you hadn't chipped in!"

"Yes, rather," said Bamford.

"I'm glad I helped," said Pen.

"I hardly knew whether I'd better at first. It's all very strange to me."

"Ha, ha! You'll get used to it. You see, we're always having rows in the Fourth, and we're up against Newcome's cads all the time."

"Phew! Look at the eggs!" said Bamford, opening the bag.

"My hat!"

The eggs, smashed in the fight, were clamorously splashed over the interior of the bag and over its other contents. Blagden growled.

"Well, it can't be helped!" he exclaimed. "We can do without the eggs. There's plenty of ham and beef, and bread and butter and cheese. And there's the cake and the jamparts."

"Rather eggs," grinned Bamford.

"Well, they put eggs in 'em, so I don't see why an egg or two outside should hurt 'em," said Blagden.

"Quite right."

"Now, let's have tea."

Bamford lifted up the teapot to pour out the tea. The fragrant scent of it was very welcome to Dick Penwyn, who was very hungry after a long journey. Ham and beef and crisp bread and butter seemed like the food of the gods to him then. He did not need a second invitation to begin. He ate well, and the juniors urged far more upon him than he could eat.

"How do you like this study?" asked Blagden, as he poured out Penwyn's fourth cup of tea.

"I think it's jolly," said Penwyn.

"I like to share it with me!"

"Very much."

"Bamford and I share it at present," Blagden explained; "but we usually go three to study here, and you would very likely be put in with us anyway. But you can ask Mr. Bush, to make sure. I'll take you to his study after tea."

"I'll ask him, you may be sure."

"Pass the ham this way. More ham, Pen!"

"Thank you!"

"Like it?"

"Ripping!"

"Don't forget to try the tarts. There's good."

The tea proceeded merrily. Dick Penwyn's heart was very full. He wondered whether the wide earth held another such splendid set of fellows as Blagden & Co.

"How did you come to know I was arriving to-day, Blagden?" he asked presently.

"Got it from Mr. Bush," said Blagden. "He mentioned it to me. But we've expected you for some time."

"It's jolly decent of you to treat

me like this," said Pen gratefully.

"But I suppose you're always kind to a new fellow?"

Blagden could not help grinning. As a matter of fact, he was rather given to ragging new boys.

"That depends," he said. "A fellow like you, of course, I could chum up with at once; but there's a chap expected at St. Wode's—may come any day—that we're going to be jolly well down on—a rotter, you know, who would be a disgrace to any school. We're going to make St. Wode's warm for him, and show him that we'd have done better to stay in the place he belongs to. I don't know exactly when he's coming, but we'll make things warm for him when he does. But if you've finished tea, old man, I'll take you to Bush's study. He will be expecting you."

Pen rose to his feet.

"I'm ready," he said.

"Come on, then!"

And Pen followed Blagden down the study. The other fellows, left alone, grinned at one another.

"What do you think of him?" asked Bamford.

"Oh, he's every inch a lord's son!" said Sleaf.

"You can tell it by his manner. There are lots of bounders swanking about in these days, but you can always tell the real thing when you see it."

"Just what I think," agreed Cotton.

"There's something about a gentleman—a something it's rather hard to define, but it's there, all the same."

"And he'll belong to our set, you bet!" grinned Bamford. "We've got him all right now."

"Oh, no doubt about that!"

The new boy at St. Wode's would have been very much surprised and enlightened if he had overheard those remarks. But he didn't.

His Lordship.

BLAGDEN led the new junior to the door of Mr. Bush's study, and there left him. He impressed upon Pen to come back to No. 5 Study as soon as he was finished with the Fourth Form-master.

"I don't know how long Whiskers will keep you," he said; "but when you come out, come up to my study, and I'll show you round. Don't let those other fellows get hold of you. They'll rag you bald-headed, you know. That chap Newcome you gave the upper-cut to is an awfully vicious beast."

"Right you are!" said Pen.

And Blagden left him. Pen knocked at Mr. Bush's door, and a sharp, clear voice bade him enter.

Pen was not encouraged by the voice. There was a querulous note in it that spoke of a carping and, perhaps, hard nature. He entered the study, and found that Mr. Bush, the master of the Fourth—commonly known, behind his back, of course, as old Basky or Whiskers—quite suited his voice. He was a thin man, with clammy limbs and a very acid

expression.

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expression.

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THE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL OF THE REAL LORD LOVELL

New Readers should turn to the back of the book for the first chapter.

A New and Interesting School Story for All.

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.



A New School Tale by Charles Hamilton Author of The Rivals of St. Kitz.

(Continued from previous page.)

face, and gleaming eyes almost hidden under thick brows. He wore whiskers which were of a much more pleasing colour than his hair and his eyebrows, and even the lad fresh from the country could not help suspecting that they were dyed. Mr. Bush looked at the boy. "Well, who are you?" he exclaimed. "Dick Penwyn, sir."

"I suppose our lady mother and our lordly father instructed us to be a new little boy? You young bouncer, I suppose old Bushy has just been battering you up, hasn't he?" Pen looked surprised. "Battering me up?" he exclaimed. "Yes; scolding you, and scawdning you—making him of a general."

Then he heard Newcome's voice about from the common-room, and a swarm of juniors surrounded the newcomer. They were making him out to be a new little boy. "You haven't been long. How did you find old Bushy?" "He wasn't very nice."

Blagen is Not Pleased. "W HO are you?" "Dick Penwyn looked at the angry junior in astonishment. "It had not yet dawned upon him that a mistake had been made—that Blagen & Co. had lavished all those kind attentions upon him because they believed him to be the titled fellow who was expected at St. Wode's."

and so evidently fully understood the fellow that he had to be on his left. He had made up his mind to be a snob. "The scholarship boy," he thought, "is the one who has come by the traitor's side."

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

"What do you mean?" demanded Blagden indignantly.

"I mean that you're not going to fight me," said Newcome.

"It wasn't his fault you missed him for a lord," said Blagden.

"It was fouling us all alone," said Newcome.

"Well, if he was, it was your own fault," said Blagden.

"But I wasn't," exclaimed Pen.

"I never knew I never guessed," said Blagden.

"He hit," yelled Blagden.

"I'm believing that Blagden was right," said Blagden.

"Shut up," said Blagden.

"You're not going to hammer me," said Newcome.

"You are, and he's had a long time to get used to it," said Blagden.

"I don't care," said Newcome.

"Will you get out of the way?" said Blagden.

"I won't," said Newcome.

"Then I'll," said Blagden.

"Blagden!" said Pen quietly, as he saw Newcome's eyes were very red.

"I'm obliged to you, but I can fight my own battles," said Newcome.

"Look here," he said, "you can't fight me. He's too big for you, and too heavy. I tell you he's a boxer, Blagden."

"I don't care," said Blagden.

"You can't let him touch you," said Blagden.

"I tell you you can take care of him," said Blagden.

"Oh, if I put it like that—"

"All I do, I'm obliged to you. I think you're very kind," said Pen.

"And I know you mean it, as you can take me for a lord," said Blagden.

"He hit," he shrieked Blagden.

"You for you, Blagden," said Newcome.

"But I must fight my own battles," said Pen.

"I don't care," said Blagden.

"I'll fight as long as I can stand, anyway."

"Oh, all serene, if you want to!" said Newcome.

"I don't care if his lordship, the kid—I forget his name; Pen, or something—he's hot stuff, don't you know? I say, I back you, you know, Pen, really, you know, what?"

"Thank you," said Pen, laughing.

"Then he was on his guard. Blagden was rushing at him now, with wary sets up, and Pen needed to look to himself.

Fist to Fist.

ORD LOVELL was pushed back a little by the younger juniors crowding forward to see the fight. His lordship did not seem to possess much determination as a character, which was probably no par with the soft, kind, irresolute expression upon his face. It seemed easy to push him anywhere, and he seemed where he was pushed. But he looked on at the fight with keen interest. No one would have taken him for a boxer, but he was manifestly keenly interested in the whole.

And that tussle between the new junior and the bully of the Fourth was interesting enough for anybody to watch.

Gravely to Blagden's amazement, he found that the Cornish lad could stand his fists in a really first-class manner.

Blagden was proud of his boxing, and he was bigger and looked stronger than his younger opponent.

But Dick Penwyn stood up to him.

Blagden's savage rush was stopped. He did not try to dodge it; he stood up to it, hitting out.

Blagden staggered back from a real right-hand on the chin, and an involuntary howl of pain went from his mouth.

"Faith," shouted Newcome.

"Faith, and that was a one!" yelled O'Donovan. "Blaggy is a sick man."

Blagden was looking rather sick; he was no doubt about that.

The blow had been stinging one.

Blagden roared, glaring at the new junior, and Dick Penwyn stood guard, watching him, but not following up his advantage.

"Go for him!" shouted Blagden.

"Go on him, you ass!" said Newcome.

"Go it, you duffer!" said O'Donovan.

"Go it, you Cornish school!" said Dick Penwyn.

But the rules of boxing he was obliged to follow up his adversary and knock him round the ring as long

as he liked, since no rounds had been arranged; but something was due to civility.

But Blagden did not keep him waiting long.

The Fourth Form bully ground his teeth at the mere thought of being spared by the Council school boy.

He came on again, with set teeth and gleaming eyes.

"My hat," said Newcome, "young Council-school will have to play up now."

"Yes, rather!" said Blagden.

"You're not playing up intently!" yelled O'Donovan. "Sure, and isn't he a broth as a boy intently?"

The juniors cheered.

Dick Penwyn was putting up a fight against his older and bigger adversary that the most prejudiced of them could not but admire.

But as Blagden undoubtedly was, and candidly as he had acted towards the new boy, prejudice was strong at St. Wode's, and there were few fellows present who would have cared to see Blagden lashed by a Council school boy.

But the St. Wode's fellows were mostly hard drivers, in the lower Forms at least, and so, like the Tuscans of old, they could not forbear a cheer as the new boy faced his big opponent, and drove him back.

And back and back Cecil Blagden was being driven now.

"You had taken his measure," he knew that, though smaller than

him. Therefore, he had never thought of arranging rounds and a time-keeper, as he would have done in a serious tussle.

Now he was regretting his over-confidence.

Pen seemed as fresh as ever after nearly ten minutes of steady mauling. His wind was perfect, his eyes steady and clear.

Blagden had bellows to mend with a vengeance.

It was pretty clear that the big Fourth Former would simply drop his hands soon, and stand at the mercy of the new junior; but as he had arranged the fight himself, he had no right to grumble at the conditions of it.

He would have bitten his tongue out before he would have called time, had he been being used.

But Bamford strode forward.

"Here, if this is going on, you'll have to have regular rounds," he exclaimed. "Can't have you mauling away like rats, like a couple of hoodlums. Hold on, both of you."

"Let 'em alone!" roared O'Donovan.

"Hats!"

"By Jove, you know, I think it's rotten to interfere now, don't you see?" said Lord Lovell, with a shake of the head. "Rotten, don't you see? What?"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Oh, that's cadish, you know! Look here, that chap—I forget his name—his name, you know—Penwyn, or something. Let 'em alone."



"I may as well tell you at once, Penwyn," said Mr. Bush acidly, "that any insolence will not be tolerated at St. Wode's."

Blagden shorter in the reach, he was as strong and in better condition, with a better wind.

And he let himself go.

Blagden's guard seemed to be no where. Either his skill had deserted him, or the new boy's skill was greater. He was driven twice round the ring of juniors, under the raining blows of the Cornishman.

"My word," said Beeton, one of Blagden's chums—"my word! Where did the kid learn to hit like that? What's Blaggy thinking of to let him!"

Newcome chuckled.

"I fancy Blaggy can't help himself," he said. "He's jolly well not doing it for fun; you may be sure of that."

"Faith, and he's big enough to eat young Council-school!"

"But he can't do it."

"Sure, you're right."

"I'll bet that Blaggy would be glad to have the gloves on by this time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blagden was simply staggering now. Dick Penwyn had not passed unscathed. His nose was swelling, and his ear bruised. There was a dark shade under his right eye, but his punishment was slight compared to Blagden's.

The Fourth Form bully was almost at his last gasp.

He had expected to wipe the new boy off the floor in a few minutes and thrash him to his heart's con-

tent. Therefore, he had never thought of arranging rounds and a time-keeper, as he would have done in a serious tussle.

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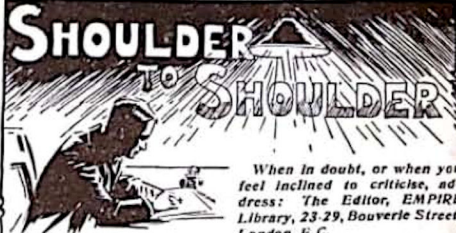
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THE EDITOR'S TWO COLUMNS.



When in doubt, or when you feel inclined to criticise, address: The Editor, EMPIRE LIBRARY, 23-29, Boulevard Street, London, E.C.

THIS ISSUE contains the second instalment of our new school story, "The Rivals of St. Wode's," by Charles Hamilton.

Now, this writer achieved such popularity with his tale entitled "The Rivals of St. Kit" that I am particularly anxious for you to let me know how you like his.

NEW STORY.

Practically every letter I have received has mentioned, in varying terms of praise, "The Rivals of St. Kit's," and I am naturally looking forward to getting the same expressions of approval from you all respecting the

"RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S."

There was a diabolical keen. Who played till he grew very lean. When he took to his bed, His friends softly said, "His last throws of summer we've seen."

In response to my request for letters of criticism, I have received such a big batch that I have had a very difficult task in selecting the winner of the half-a-crown offered, but here is what I consider the best for this week:

"Dear Editor,—I am writing you this letter to let you know what I honestly think about the EMPIRE LIBRARY. In the first place, I must tell you that I have taken the EMPIRE from the first number—when it was in a smaller form, with a pink cover—and a letter halfpennyworth of reading has no one could get for. "The tales at present are just A.1., especially 'Cousin Ethel.' No boy could wish for a better tale, and I am sure I do not myself. "The detective tale is ripping, and I only wish there were more of it. I myself think that for a detective tale it is just grand. "The 'Land of the Black,' in my estimation, is just the sort of adventure story a boy likes, for there is good, wholesome reading in it. As for your old serial, 'The Rivals of St. Kit's,' you could not have chosen a better story of school life, and I only wish it was to be continued instead of concluded for a long time to come, for it has been interesting and thrilling from the beginning and right the way through; and I always read this story before anything else in the paper, directly I buy it. On the whole, with the rest of its numerous contents, I think that the EMPIRE is in the front rank of halfpennyworth of reading for getting a copy every week, I order it in advance, and in consequence my spare time is spent in reading something worth reading. When I have finished with my copy, I pass it on to a chum, who thoroughly enjoys reading it, and I have also told a lot of my friends about it. I cannot find any fault with 'The Rivals of St. Kit' at all except that there is a whole week to wait between one publication and another. "I wish the EMPIRE luck and success as it grows older, and I shall do all in my power to do more widely circulate one of the best books that has ever been published. Long live it live!" M. G.

POSTCARD EXCHANGE.

The following readers desire to exchange postcards:

38th LIST.

- M. L. Woolberry, Wahroonga, Deloraine, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to exchange postcards with readers in South Africa.
- A. J. Jacobs, 81, Hill Road, Bandra, India, with Manchester, London, England.
- Miss B. Whorwood, 24, Rathgar Street, London, Ontario, Canada, with Southend, England.
- Lance corporal W. Twitchee, No. 825, "G" Company, Barrack, India, with Scotland.
- Private A. McCreadie, No. 10066, "A" Company, at Seaforth Highlanders, Glasgow, India, with Newcastle-on-Tyne, England.
- Miss S. Pierce, 130, Foles Street, East Sydney, Australia, with Surrey, England.
- Miss R. Hanby, Otiorohanga, Auckland, New Zealand, with Mexico; Calcutta, India; Italy; Argentine; Sumatra; Swatow, U.S.A.; Canada; Nova Scotia.
- R. T. Parkins, 148, Sutherland Street, Paddington, Sydney, Australia, with Canada.
- Mrs. V. Hopkins, Duoit Street, Lower Paarl, South Africa, with New Zealand, Western Australia.

VENTRILQUIZISM. One of my Yorkshire readers has taken up ventriloquism as a hobby; but he is somewhat handicapped by the lack of a ventriloquist figure, and seeks to obtain one second-hand.

I should advise you, Harold Fisher, failing to find what you want in the advertisement columns of this paper, to insert a small advertisement in "The Boys' Herald" Hobby Club column. I have no doubt if you write to the Editor, enclosing the necessary coupons, that you may be able to get something suitable for your requirements.

Cries a youthful inventor: "Good-bye! With my airship I'll traverse the sky." But his friends all declare, As he mounts in the air, What he says in the first line's no lie.

A REMINDER.

My new readers should note, and my old readers should remember, that the price of half-a-crown will be given for the best contribution in these columns. My readers can send in practically anything they like, so long as it is likely to be of interest to others. Jokes, limericks, useful hints—all these are suitable.

A nervous old lady, named Kay, Hailed a monster you one rainy day. As she scrambled aboard, A horse-cabby roared: "Look alive! It's the last time you may!"

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

First on the list for our next issue comes another fine instalment of our new story, "The Rivals of St. Wode's." Second, the further adventures of the two little waifs in Edwin Home's story. Third, a complete tale of "Pantner" Grayle, entitled "The Prisoner of the Bar." Then follows "Cousin Ethel's School-days," "The Grammar School Ventriloquist," a complete tale of Gordon Gay & Co., the "pictured" adventures of Wandering Willie, and, to complete the budget of contents, the continuation of F. St. Mars' story, "The Land of the Black."

Now I must close with confidence look forward to a rattling good number, so au revoir till next Wednesday.

A Novel and Interesting Story for All.

COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS

A TALE OF TOM MERRY'S CHUM BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

GLANCE OVER THIS.

Ethel Cleveland is a new girl at St. Freda's, and on her first day at school is attracted by the personality of Dolores Pellham, a high-spirited girl of St. Mary's.

Ethel takes Dolores over to St. Jim's College, where Arthur D'Arcy, her cousin, is at school, and the story begins.

One afternoon Ethel is sitting in the garden at St. Freda's with Dolores when a note is brought her by the stationer's boy. It is from her cousin, Arthur D'Arcy, asking her to meet him alone at three o'clock by a certain stile. Ethel is puzzled by Arthur's secrecy, but decides to go.

My cousin is waiting for me near St. Freda's, she explains to Dolores.

Enid Craven's Find.

"Why doesn't he come here?" "I don't know."

"Are you going?" "I don't know."

"Shall I come with you?" asked Dolores indifferently.

Ethel coloured.

"I don't know particularly to go alone," she said. "I don't know why, but he says it is very important."

"Oh, don't go!" said Dolores.

"Let him come here."

"He asks me to."

"Oh, do as you please," said Dolores.

"Of course, I don't want to detain you if you want to go."

"I don't want to go specially, but I cannot very well refuse Arthur."

"Ethel," she says, "you will not be offended about nothing, Dolores."

"I am not offended at all," said Dolores, in her most stately way.

Ethel nodded, and ran out of the garden. It was very near the time Arthur Augustus had fixed in his note for their meeting, and she was anxious not to be late. She was curious to know what it was that was so important, and why Arthur Augustus was so very mysterious about it.

She could only surmise that something unusual had happened at St. Jim's; though even then there appeared to be no reason why D'Arcy should be so mysterious.

Ethel put on her hat and left the school. The stile was only a few minutes' walk from St. Freda's.

As the girl passed out of the gates she met Enid Craven. Ethel had hardly spoken to Enid since that day when she had spoken to comfort her in the cubicle, after Enid's narrow escape from expulsion. Ethel's kind words had made no lasting impression upon Enid; the natural repugnance between the two girls was too strong for that. And Ethel's growing position at St. Freda's was a thorn in the side of the jealous and bitter girl.

Enid looked after her with a far from affectionate expression.

The keen wind caught Cousin Ethel as she went out into the road, and she threw her hand up to her hat. Something white fluttered from her hand, and blew along the road. It was the note.

Ethel's eye caught it, and she wondered what it was.

The wind blew it fairly to her feet, and it rested for a moment close to her, and instinctively Enid put out her hand and covered it.

Ethel, with her hair blowing about her face, looked round for the note she had lost, and came running back with flushed cheeks and panting breath.

"Have you lost anything?" asked Enid.

"Yes—a note."

"What note? Did it blow this way?"

"It must have. I thought you might have seen it," said Enid.

Enid shook her head. She did not care to actually tell a falsehood, but

the shake of the head was as near a lie as was possible.

"After all, it does not matter."

She ran down the lane, fearing to be late for her appointment. As soon as she was out of sight, Enid Craven removed her hand from the note and picked it up.

D'Arcy's Great Wheeze.

"Ethel, dear boy—I mean dear Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his silk topper in his graceful way as Ethel came up to the stile in Bedford Lane, with sparkling eyes, and cheeks red from running.

"What is it, Arthur?"

"Oh—"

"What has happened?"

"Nothing."

"What is wrong, then?"

"I am not aware of anything 'bein' wrong, Ethel."

"Really, Arthur—"

"Everything is all right so far as I know," said Arthur Augustus, looking puzzled.

Ethel gave him an indignant look.

"Then why did you alarm me with your note?"

pose you remember the study feels we've had at St. Jim's?"

"Yes, certainly."

"You can't have study feels at St. Freda's because you haven't any studies. I regard that as wotten."

Ethel laughed.

"My dear Arthur—"

"But there is no reason why you shouldn't have a dorm feed," said Arthur Augustus, "and that is the wheeze."

"A dorm feed?" repeated Ethel, in wonder.

"Yess, wathah! You see," went on D'Arcy confidentially, "we often have that sort of thing in the School House at St. Jim's after lights out, you know. We light up candles or like lanterns, and have a feed."

"I don't think I should care for it," said Ethel. "You might catch cold."

"We are waddy to wick that, you know."

"And you might have indigestion, and make your nose red," said Ethel severely.

"We'llly, Ethel—"

"It's very naughty of you, Arthur."

Arthur gasped. He was prepared to be considered very dogmatic or very reckless, or very dashing; but very naughty was not pleasing.

"We'llly, Ethel—"

"But you did not send me that absurd note so that I could come here and hear about your absurd dormitory feeds, did you?" exclaimed Ethel.

"Er—no! Ahem! My dear is that you gals should do the same thing. When you twy it, you will find it wippen' to have a dorm feed."

"I hardly think so."

"Take my word for it, my dear gal, as your ibrilth," said Arthur Augustus, with quite a fatherly manner. "There is not the slightest doubt on the subject. Now, I have had a fivah fenny my goverment, and I am prepared to stand twat."

"Arthur!"

"And the sweets as 'Ink—"

"Ink! Oh—"

"And several ethish things undah uthah names," said D'Arcy. "You will get the whole lot in wathah any- body likes, the biggest splash on the subject. It's a jolly wippen' dodge, don't you think so?"

Ethel did not know what to say.

She was looking so thoroughly pleased with herself and the method he had adopted to elude her inquiries, that she expected that she would probably be penetrated at once by the mistress, Ethel her with dismay.

"But the thought of piles of indigestible eatables being delivered to her at St. Freda's, in a disguise which would probably be penetrated at once by the mistress, Ethel her with dismay.

"Arthur! You must rot—"

"It's done, deals gal. It's all wight!"

"I—I wish you had spoken to me first," said Ethel, very much distressed. "Why didn't you come up to the school and see me?"

"D'Arcy shook his head.

"It was more than I could meet you here, Ethel, you see—less likely to attract attention, don't you know."

"Nothing could be more likely to attract attention than sending me a note by the stationer's boy," Ethel exclaimed.

D'Arcy's face fell.

"But, I never thought of that! But I was afraid of wassin' suspish, Ethel. You see, we shall have to be very cautious, if I'm to help you get up those dormitory feeds. I mustn't be seen wathah the coll. Bah Jove! There's one of the St. Freda's gals comin' this way! I must be off."

"Arthur!"

"Ereessu me, deah gal—caution, you know, don't want to get you into a wot."

And Arthur Augustus jumped over the stile and vanished.

Ethel turned over her head, to see Enid Craven approaching.

Arthur Augustus was gone, and Enid was looking at her suspiciously.

Ethel, with a troubled look on her face, walked back slowly in the direction of St. Freda's.

Whether she would see Arthur Augustus again she did not know. The swell of St. Jim's was growing so very mysterious that he was not to be depended upon in any way.

But what she was to do with the eatables that he had ordered for her was a puzzle. She did not know who was to send them, or when they were to come. What would be the result if Miss Pendolf or Miss Tyrell discovered that consignments of indigestible morsels were arriving for her under cover of innocence? And if D'Arcy's great "wheeze" became known, it might lead to the swell of St. Jim's being forbidden to visit St. Freda's.

Ethel's face was troubled as she went back to school. As she came up to the gates, she caught sight of a van in the side lane which led to the tradesman's entrance. The van had a Burford confectioner's name upon it.

Ethel glanced at it in dismay, and she wore a troubled look as she went in. She knew what it meant. The first consignment had arrived.

Hats, With Care.

"D'EAR me!" said Mrs. Filby.

Mrs. Filby, the house-keeper, was surprised.

She had been surprised. It was not always—in fact, it was not frequently—that hats were delivered to St. Freda's by confectioners' vans.

But here was the confectioner's van, and here was the box with the big, fat hat on it.

"Hats, with care!"

It was addressed to Miss Ethel Cleveland, St. Freda's.

And Mrs. Filby was surprised.

She looked at the box and she looked at the hat. She lifted the box, and thought it weighed a little like a box for hats.

"You are sure there is no mistake?" she asked.

The boy grinned. He had more than a suspicion of what was inside the box.

"All right, mum," he said.

"Has Mr. Puffton opened a millinery department?" demanded Mrs. Filby.

"Not that I knows on, mum."

"Then how does he come to be sending a hat to Miss Cleveland?"

"Another instalment of this pupular scarf in 'at. Wether's LIBRARY, Order in advance. Price One Halfpenny."



"Excuse me, deah gal," said Arthur D'Arcy, suddenly. "Here's one of St. Freda's gals comin' into way. You know I don't want to get you into a wot!" And Arthur Augustus jumped over the stile and vanished, as Enid Craven approached.

"Bah Jove! I never meant to alarm you, Ethel."

"Why is it necessary to meet you here, and why did you write in so mysterious a way?" demanded Ethel.

Arthur smiled mysteriously.

"Because it's necessary to keep it dark, deah gal."

"To keep what dark?"

"The wheeze."

"The—the what?"

"The wheeze, you know."

"I don't know, and I don't understand in the least," said Ethel.

"What do you mean?"

"Such as putting rats in the head-mistress's hatbox," suggested Cousin Ethel, with a smile.

"Well, I only advised that for excitement's sake," said Arthur Augustus.

"But this is not a jape on the head that I am thinkin' of now. I sup-

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'llly, Ethel—"

"You must be as prepared to stand us a dorm feed!" asked Ethel, laughing.

"Yass, wathah!"

"My dear Arthur, we couldn't think of such a thing. It would be impossible, and I shouldn't like it. Please give up the idea."

"I'mposse, deah gal!"

"Why impossible?"

"The gwah is already ordahed."

"What?"

"I have made all the arrangements," said Arthur Augustus, with great satisfaction. "You wememthah what an awfully deep fellow I am."

"Dear me! What have you done?"

"I've ordahed a hundred jantarts of the best quality, and they will be sent to you in a bandbox labelled 'Hats,' so that they will pass in without excusin' the least suspish."

"Oh!"

"Then there's the ginger-beer. That will come in in a box labelled 'Soda.'" "Oh, dear!" "Then the cake will come in as 'Books.'"

WANTS YOUR CO-OPERATION. EMPIRE—No. 12.

A CAPITAL LITTLE SHORT COMPLETE STORY.

FRANK MONK & Co. HAMPER



A Tale of the Chums of Rylcombe Grammar School. BY PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

Tadpole Has Some News.

HERE'S one thing I never have to grumble about to the dear old mater," said Carboy, grinning at his two study chums in the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School. "She always absolutely crams a hamper to the last eighth of an inch."

"Hear, hear!" assented Frank Monk and Laney. Carboy returned the letter he had just received to the envelope, and pushed it into the breast-pocket of his Eton jacket. "Of course, I don't know what the size of this one'll be, but I think we'll have a few kids in to share the feed," he said.

"Hear, hear!" Carboy grinned as his two chums reared their asses once more, and this time they emphasised their entire agreement by banging their fists upon the large table in the common-room. "Well, I've got two out to finish off," said Carboy, after a brief pause. "I can't have that on my mind when we have the hamper."

"My hat!" laughed Frank Monk. "Rather not! And that reminds me I've got a few lines. Let's go and get 'em done!" "Right-ho!" said Carboy. "Come on, Laney!" And the three chums filed out of the common room, and made their way to their study.

"G'ay!" "Now, shut up, Taddy," growled Gordon Gay, who was seated before the table with six two out to finish off. "I've got to learn a jolly difficult part, and I can't do it if you're going to gaw."

"I want to explain to you how we can score off Frank Monk & Co." said Gordon Gay, Frank Wootton, and Harry Wootton turned their heads round with a jerk which threatened to dislocate their necks. "What's that?" they cried, so loudly that Horace Tadpole gave a jump. "I-I happened to be looking for a tube of paint which I dropped by the fireplace in common-room," explained Taddy, after a moment's pause. "It was a tube of crimson which I wanted rather badly. I think I'll paint that angel's eyes red in my great picture of—"

It'll be a rattling good wheeze. They'll think they'll be able to have a feed at our expense, and then have another in their own study."

"GOD AFTERNON, Mr. Giles!" "Afternoon, young gentlemen!" "Hope you've got that hamper," said Gordon Gay, as the old, grey-haired carrier almost tumbled from his box-seat to the road. "Ay, ay, young gentlemen," replied Mr. Giles. "There be a big one, an'—"

"Good egg!" interrupted Gordon Gay. "You're always welcome, you know, Mr. Giles. Hand it down, and we'll save you a bag of lagging it into the lodge."

"Thank 'ee, young gentlemen," said the carrier, drawing a hamper from the back of the cart. "Here be one, an'—"

"Come on, chaps!" cried Gordon Gay, grasping the large wicker basket by one handle, and turning to the two Woottons. "Quickly, now."

"My hat!" muttered Gordon Gay, as the door of Study 13 closed safely on the commotion caused by the hamper. "That was rather exciting."

preserves in glass bottles, fruit, fancy bread rolls, a packet of butter, a large piece of Gonzorolla cheese, a large pot of straw-berried jam, and another one of marzipan, and some fancy Japanese paper serviettes, and a fine tongue with a pink paper frill round it had the position of prime importance at the head of the table. "My only fat aunt!" said Harry Wootton, rolling his eyes in ecstasy at the sight. "Have you ever seen anything to beat it?"

"Well," he said at last, "I think—"

"Tap, tap!" A light knock on the door interrupted the leader of Study 13, and the next moment a grinning flag put his head into the room. "G'ay lover!" he cried. "That's me, kid. What is it?"

"Note from Monk. Here you are. He told me to wait for a reply, or, if there wasn't any reply, he said 'tell the silly fatheads to buck up!'"

"Dear G'ay,—We know a feed will do you dummes in Study 13 a lot of good, so if you like you can help us to gorge a hamper which Carboy's mater has sent. You

she might send a blessed hamper every day!" "Gordon Gay & Co. in the corridor without, looked at each other askance. "What in the dickens are they talking about?" muttered Gordon Gay. "Hamper! What blessed hamper?" "Get in!" said Harry Wootton. "They're huffing it, so go gently!"

"Come in, fatheads!" shouted Frank Monk. "Don't be afraid of it!" Gordon Gay grinned for a moment, and then walked boldly in, followed by the two Woottons and Horace Tadpole.

"Seems funny they haven't come," he muttered. "The twenty minutes is up, and—"

"Well, let's give them another five minutes," said Gordon Gay, and then if they don't turn up, we'll go and drag them out. After all, we can't gorge their grub without sharing it, you know."

"I do think this has been a bumper feed, and I suggest we pass a vote of thanks to my mater. You know, unfortunately, she doesn't quite grasp how we appreciate her hampers."

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"We've left. I can tell you that, mater has absolutely outdone me this time. We had only one cup of tea. When did it come?"

"What did you say, Carboy?" "The hamper of course, dummy!" Carboy looked puzzled. "This afternoon, about half an hour ago," he replied. "I had gone to the lodge to get it, and I suppose he passed in his 125 at the usual time."

"What's that?" cried Gordon Gay, facing Carpenter, who appeared to be leading the raid. Carpenter's face was crimson with rage. "You cads!" he roared. "I, blessed cads, you've tried to steal my grub by sending to get a hamper feed in my study. I've sent you down to the lodge. I found that wasn't any blessed hamper for me. Because an old aunt wrote me and told what time to expect it. Besides that young Ross saw you lag it off, and he ran it up here, and—"

"The cads!" roared Carpenter, following. "But look—"

"Gordon Gay opened his mouth to explain. He saw that he had made a mistake; but he was too late now, and before he could say anything more he was swept off his feet by the yelling juniors."

"Half an hour later Frank Monk & Co. looked into Study 13. "My only hat!" exclaimed Gordon Gay's rival. "What on earth is that?"

"It's the hamper the grub came in," replied Gordon Gay, grinning in spite of himself. "You've dragged the hamper out, and looked for the label. 'Ah, here it is!'" he said, after a moment's pause.



"Come on, chaps!" cried Carpenter, the leader of the raiders. "Daub some of that jam on their pretty faces!"

know what Mrs. Carboy sends, so you can be sure of a rattling good feed.—Yours, FRANK MONK. "S—You might bring a tablecloth and you and Laney if you don't mind. Somebody has lagged orders.—F. M. "P.P.S.—Carboy says we want some forks.—F.M. "P.P.S.—You might chuck in one or two spoons as well."

"Yes, of course," said Gordon Gay, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. "Tell him we are sorry we can't come, but will be and Laney and Carboy join us in a feed!" "Right!" cried the flag, and he hurried off, slamming the study door to with a bang.

CHAPTER 3. A Slight Mistake.

IT'S absolute rot waiting for the dummes any longer!" growled Harry Wootton. "If Monkey & Co. really wanted a feed, they would have been along here at once."

Printed and Published by the Proprietors at 23, Bouverie Street, London, England. Agents for Australia: Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Wellington, N.Z. South Africa: Central News. The Empire, No. 12. Agency, Ltd., Cape Town and Johannesburg. Canada: The Imperial News Co., Ltd., Toronto. Subscription, 6s. 6d. per annum. Saturday, January 14th, 1916.

WANDERING WILLIE BE HERE AGAIN NEXT WEEK