

THE

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

# THE EMPIRE 1/2

THE WEEKLY STORY-PAPER.

Vol. 1. No. 23

## The Scapegrace of the Regiment.

A Grand New Tale of Army Life.



PERCIVAL POTT SHUT HIS EYES, AND RUSHED AT HIS ADVERSARY HAMMER AND TONGS.

Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and no reference is made to any living person. Actual names may be occasionally mentioned, but the Editor desires it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.

Tossed in the Blanket.

PASTY'S method of persuasion was to grind poor Pott's nose round and round on the table where they had stretched him. He had been turned so many times that it was quite a wonder it did not break off altogether.

While his other torturers idled away, Pott was squirmed under the blows of a broom-handle round and round. He fought and fought, but his persecutors were too strong for him.

At the end of the rest of the party, Pott was stretched on the table, and taking hold of the blanket, he suddenly dragged off the end, and shot into it, hitting the table with a leaden bump.

"Percival, towards, let me up!" cried Pott, trying to regain his feet.

"The rest had laid hold of the blanket, and all was ready to start the second part of the programme."

"Up-up-up—sh!" laughed the rest.

"Oh, we'll let you moanly squimper—up a lot higher than

you think! Go on, boys, on to it!"

"Leave!"

At the word every man flung his weight backwards with a lusty tug. The blanket tautened sluggishly, and Percival was lifted only a bare two feet from the floor.

The second tug, however, lifted him a good five, and the third higher than that, until at last he was whizzing up to the very ceiling.

If he had only had the sense to keep his arms folded and his heels together all would have been well.

Blanket-tossing is a silly sport and a dangerous one, but a man may be tossed in a blanket for hours and hours and come to no harm if he follows this simple rule and if the tossers do their tricks and let him crash to the floor.

But the higher Percival found himself going the more frantically he clutched and kicked.

"That!"

They had got him bumping the ceiling at last. It was their victim's head that brought that shower of whitewash down, but this only delighted Pasty the more.

"Steady! You'll hurt him!" cried one.

"Ert him? I want to 'urt him, you silly fool!" panted Pasty, tugging the harder. "Go on, boys, up with 'im! Knock 'is head through the ceiling if we can!"

It was only just then that Jack Lyon, waiting in the coffee-bar and wondering what on earth his chum was doing, suddenly noticed a

mysterious shadow rising and falling on the window of their barrack-room, visible across the square from where he sat.

"Why, what on earth can that be?" he asked himself.

It was something big and bulky, at any rate, and now and then he seemed to see the outline of waving arms and legs.

And then it dawned upon him that this was probably Private Percival Pott having some of the corners knocked off him.

In a moment he was on his feet and hurrying to his comrade's rescue.

He knew what blanket-tossing was. He had had some of it at school. What was more, he had seen a boy crippled for life by it, and by lads who wished him no harm, too.

With Percival Pott it was different. If Private Pasty Green was one of that blanket team Jack could see his chum being taken to hospital with a broken leg before the bugles blew "Lights Out."

As Jack Lyon was rushing across from the coffee-bar to the barrack-room to the rescue of his chum, who should he run full tilt into, but Privates Stuffy Sims and Stumpy Bagg.

These two, as the staidest old "trusties" in the section, had been taught them how to soldier, and generally keep a fatherly eye upon them.

"Hallo, somebody's just told us that they've got your crackpot friend upstairs, tossing him in a blanket!" panted Stuffy, who, like his bosom chum Stuffy, was overfat for sprinting.

"So I thought," answered Jack. "I saw a shadow buzzing up and down the window."

He shot ahead then, speeding up the staircase three steps at a time.

Jack was not above a practical joke and a bit of horseplay himself at times. He revelled in it, in fact. But he drew the line at blanket-tossing when a vicious little beast like Pasty Green was among the tossers.

As like as not they would half kill poor Percival before they had done with him.

Percival was still hitting the ceiling with a leaden bump at every flight when Jack burst into the room. Painful experience fortunately had taught him to give up trying to clutch at empty air, and to use his hands and elbows to protect his skull.

"Hallo! You seem to be thoroughly amusing yourselves, you fellows," said Jack quite quietly, for to break up the ring round the blanket suddenly would have meant that his chum would have come crashing to the floor.

As it was, a few of the men turned their heads and so forgot to heave with the rest. The result was that Percival at the next toss was merely shot out sideways, bowling over two of his tormentors like rabbits.

One of these, by the greatest good luck, was Private Green, the master of the revets. The bewildered and helpless Percival took an involuntary dive into the little Cockney's bread-basket, flattening him out like a pancake.

"Ooo—oop! 'Eip! Ouch-oo-ah!" whooped Pasty, rolling over and over, and fighting frantically for his breath.

Percival too dazed and dizzy to know what had happened, but determined now that he was on the floor to remain there, had anchored himself with a despairing grip to one of Pasty's ears.

"'Eip! Ooo! Murder! Leggo!" howled Pasty, for Percival was clinging like a limpet in an Atlantic gale.

Jack, who had come prepared to punch every head in the room if necessary, simply doubled up with mirth to see the tables turned so magnificently.

But Stuffy Sims, as senior of the room, seemed to think that the fun had gone far enough. So, taking Pott by the neck, while Stumpy laid hold of his heels, they tore him from his frenzied grip and dropped him on to his cot.

Percival did not seem to mind where he was, as long as it was not on the ceiling. He was too sick and

Continued on the next page.



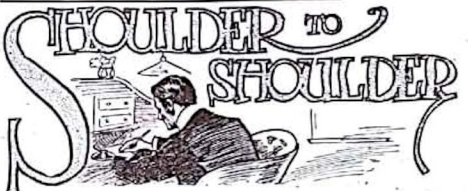
The Scaperegrat of the Regiment.

to storm out of his dark secret... In fact, he had almost forgotten...

are you addressing me?" demanded... "Yes, dear boy," mimicked the Sluggish...

The Sluggish's face was black as thunder... As for Sergeant Brown, it was evident...

THE EDITOR'S TWO COLUMNS.



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

"TOM MERRY'S ISLAND" THIS story is not yet quite ready...

"TOM MERRY'S ISLAND" Our next issue will contain another tale of "Panther" Grayle...

A MESSAGE FROM TOM MERRY! "St. Jim's," My dear Empire... Those of you who love me...

THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S, and the tale of Charles Peace—"The Dark Lantern."

begin to eat she opened a slight conversation... "It looks like rain," she said.

A REMINDER! My new readers should know that a prio...

QUITE SATISFIED. "Dear Editor,—Let me thank you for the ripping tales you have published in the famous EMPIRE Library."

MY MESSAGE. Now I must conclude, but before bidding you good-bye I'll need...

TWO PAPERS TO GET THIS WEEK.

Readers of the EMPIRE Library who want another paper to read between now and next Wednesday should buy either "The Gem" Library or "The Boys' Herald."

A WONDERFUL FREE OFFER.

FOUR DAYS IN LONDON DURING CORONATION WEEK made by the Editor, and the competition whereby the six readers will be selected is not only a very simple one, but open to readers of all ages between nine and twenty.



Jenkins (after painful performance on violin): "What do you think, old chap, of my execution? Musical Neighbour: "I think it would be a very good idea."

POSTCARD EXCHANGE.

The following readers desire to exchange postcards:

- 49th LIST. J. Large-Hill, 8, George Street, Uxbridge, London, England, with Birmingham, England, Canada, Great Britain. Miss L. Shoemaker, 206, Brighton Road, South Croydon, Surrey, England, with Yorkshire, England. S. Nicholls, 63, The Crescent, Stamford Hill, London, England, with Birmingham, England. I. Freedman, 23, Byron Street, Leeds, England, with U.S.A. L. C. Sach, 157, Cumberland Street, Ipswich, England, with S. India.

Look Out for Tom Merry.



Buy Wholesale.

Readers are informed that the characters in the following story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be occasionally mentioned, but for obvious reasons it is to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.

Our Amusing Complete School Tale.



# Gordon Gay's Disguise.

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

CHAPTER I.  
The Fourth-Form Juniors and Miss Holyday.

LAWSON, the handsome captain of Rylcombe Grammar School, was looking serious, and Gordon Gay, the leader of the Fourth Form, was looking positively fierce. The two Grammarians were in earnest conversation, but the captain's face was now clouded with a frown.

"I'm jolly sorry, Lawson, old son," he said, after an extra long pause. "It's a rotten thing to say, but not to the kids in the Fourth Form as to turn out on Wednesday night at Mulberry College—not a class one excepting my own."

"Well, why won't they?" he exclaimed. "Things are coming to a pretty pass at Rylcombe, when only five of eleven is keen enough to play in an important match!"

"That seems to jolly mysterious about it, too," muttered Gordon Gay. "You've seen a number of our hanging about the village looking as though they had lost a bob and found a tanner."

"The young idiots must be in a rage," he said. "I saw Monk and Lane escorting the girl from the station along Rylcombe Lane only this afternoon. They both looked as though they could have assaulted one another; and that isn't usual for them, is it?"

"My hat, no!" replied Gordon Gay. "They're as thick as thieves! I should think you're right. The amuses must be here!"

"Well, they'll jolly soon have to get out of it," growled Lawson, and he'll—I'll—"

"You'll what?" said Gordon Gay, and he'll—I'll—"

"Or I'll scratch the remaining five matches of the season. I'm going to let other schools see what a crowd of slackers we have at Rylcombe, do you? I'll catch them, and you can tell your own school."

entered there was a confused scuffling, and three pieces of note-paper were put hurriedly under three pieces of blotting-paper.

"Hullo, kids!" he said. "There's no need to be afraid. What's the matter? Writing secret documents of State?"

"No, Gay," said Horace Tadpole; "but mine is an important letter, and I would ask you to desist from interrupting it."

"Oh, dry up, you duffer!" interrupted Gordon Gay, grinning at the long-haired artist of the Grammar School. "I'm going to draw up the team for Wednesday's match against Mulberry. If the chaps won't turn out, Lawson says he'll scratch the last games of the season."

Jack and Harry Wootton coughed nervously, and then resumed their writing.

Gordon Gay seated himself at the table, and commenced writing on a strip of paper.

"Of course, you kids'll turn up," he asked. "I know I can rely on you."

Harry Wootton cleared his throat. "That for Wednesday," he asked. "Yes, against Mulberry."

"Ah! I'm afraid I can't turn out," he said. "I'm very sorry, but I try and get some else for Wednesday. You will remember I mentioned it before."

Gordon Gay looked at his Australian friend in amazement. "Can't turn out?" he shouted. "You-you can't turn out? Why can't you?"

with a grin. "They're sorry, but it can't be helped."

Gordon Gay crumpled the slip of paper up, and then threw the pencil on to the table.

"Then we can't play Mulberry College!" he growled. "We can't play because the Fourth Form is in a lather! I saw you!"

The three juniors flushed, and looked at their leader sheepishly.

"You seem to think—to think we're in love!" cried Harry Wootton. "You're taking a beastly lot for granted. I tell you I've got to make a call. I'm sorry, but—but I hope you'll be able to make up an eleven."

Gordon Gay granted, and then the three juniors left the study without saying another word.

"The howling 'fathens,'" murmured Gordon Gay to himself. "But I think I'll teach 'em a lesson. Anyway, I'll try. We can't have our last three matches scratched."

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"I thought you said something about chrysanthemum," persisted Tadpole. "Are you quite sure you didn't?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the elated Wootton. "What if I did—eh, you dummy?"

Horace Tadpole's hand flew to his breast-pocket to see if his love-letter were safe, and then he blinked stupidly at the grinning junior standing before him.

"It must have been my fancy," he said. "I—I—I was thinking what a rippingly artistic flower the chrysanthemum is. Do—do they grow real ones about here at this time of the year?"

"No, no, I don't think they do," Tadpole replied. "Jack Wootton, I wish they did!"

Horace Tadpole blinked again. "Why—why do you wish they did?" he said quickly.

"Because they're my favourite flower," replied the Australian junior, giving a deep sigh. "And—and I know somebody else who is passionately fond of them. They're a bit big for buttonholes, but—"

"Thump!" The study door was flung open, and Harry Wootton rushed into the room and effectually interrupted his brother.

"A letter for me!" he demanded. "Where is it? Ah, here it is! Gay said there was one, and I half expected it."

and the next moment was engrossed in reading the contents of the envelope.

"My only fat aunt!" he exclaimed as he read. "Five—five o'clock—chrysanthemum!"

Jack Wootton and Horace Tadpole

body got a gardening-book to lend me for half a shilling!"

"I thought you said something about chrysanthemum," persisted Tadpole. "Are you quite sure you didn't?"

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## CHAPTER 2.

The Love-Letters.

"MY dear Horace—I am writing to ask you to try and meet me at Rylcombe Station to-morrow afternoon about five o'clock. I want to see you very badly, and you will probably be more than surprised at what I have to say."

"I shall consider it an honour if you wear a large yellow chrysanthemum in your buttonhole. I know they are out of season, but you can get beautiful one at the Rylcombe General Stores. Will you please wear one, as it is my favourite flower."

"Mind you do not keep me waiting—Yours, MIDGE HOLBROT."

Jack and Harry Wootton coughed nervously, and then resumed their writing.

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Gordon Gay looked at his Australian friend in amazement. "Can't turn out?" he shouted. "You-you can't turn out? Why can't you?"

stared at their study-mate in amazement.

"What?" they cried.

"What do you mean?" snapped Harry Wootton.

Jack Wootton looked confused.

"What's that about chrysanthemum—in fact, who's that letter from?" he said.

"Oh, it's from a friend!" replied Wootton minor laughingly. "Merely from a friend. I was going to tell you that I shan't be in to tea this evening."

Tap—tap! There was a gentle knock on the study door, and in response to the cry of "Come in, fathend!" Frank Monk opened the door, and poked his head into the study.

"Hullo!" he cried. "All at home?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" growled Jack Wootton. "All existing Gay, anyway."

Frank Monk turned in alarm, and the next moment he stood face to face with Jack Wootton. The two juniors were dressed quite "respectably." Their trousers had beautiful creases; their hair was well plastered down, and clean collars and ruddy cheeks were to be seen in the glare of the day. But what attracted each one's attention was the huge, artificial, yellow chrysanthemum which decorated each one's breast.

"Hullo, Wootton!"

The two Grammarians spoke simultaneously, and then there was an embarrassing silence.

"Going by train?" asked Wootton at last. "Four-fifty, I suppose?"

"No; are you?"

"Yes—er, I mean, no," faltered the unfortunate Wootton.

He shuffled his feet about nervously for a few moments, and a look of relief spread over his flushed face when he heard footsteps coming in the direction of the book-overflow. Another minute, and Lane and Tadpole walked through the doorway.

"My hat!" murmured Wootton to himself. "I thought it was her!"

Wootton and Frank Monk suspiciously, and their stony stares were returned with interest for each Lane and Tadpole were peering as though they had stepped from a hutchbox.



"I consider you a lot of naughty boys," said the girl, facing the crowd of juniors. "Why aren't you practising for to-morrow's important football match?"

Look Out for Tom Merry in this Paper.



Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person...

THE RIVALRY OF ST. WODE'S. A Grand School Tale. By Charles Hamilton.

GLANCE OVER THIS FIRST... Penney, a sturdy Cornish lad, had been to a Council school...

out" to go to play cards in Crawcour's study, when Newcome, of the Fourth, seeing Pen's distress...

Bunny Promises.

"My deal, I think!" said Crawcour. "Yes, yes," said Bunny. Penge lighted a cigarette...

the viscount was well supplied with money, there was a limit to his resources. He did not like the idea of again writing to his father for money...

Crawcour sprang to his feet in alarm. If it were another fellow of the Fifth or even a prefect, he did not care so much...

The Blades remained pale and trembling. In the dusk of the passage, they had caught sight only dimly of the master's form...

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THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"My hat!" shouted Crawcour. "What's the matter?" "We've been done."

"Yes, sir." "I have found you gambling." "Only having a little flutter, sir."

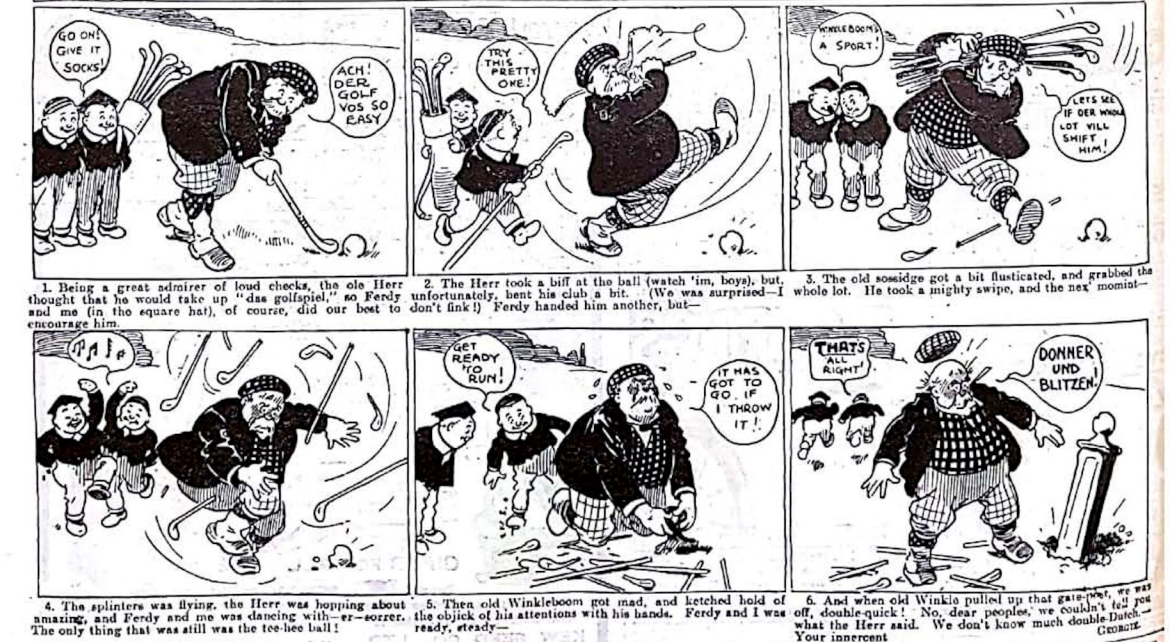


In the doorway stood a bearded figure in cap and gown, it did not enter the study, but raised a hand and pointed to Bunny.

out disturbing Bunny, who was already asleep. The next morning, when Pen rose, he looked curiously at the vicount.

"Thanks very much, Crawfish! But it can't be done. I'm sorry!" "Why not?" he asked.

ACH! BUT DER GOLF VOS A ROTTEN GAME!!



1. Being a great admirer of loud checks, the old Herr thought that he would take up... 2. The Herr took a bluff at the ball (watch 'im, boys), but...