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The Penny

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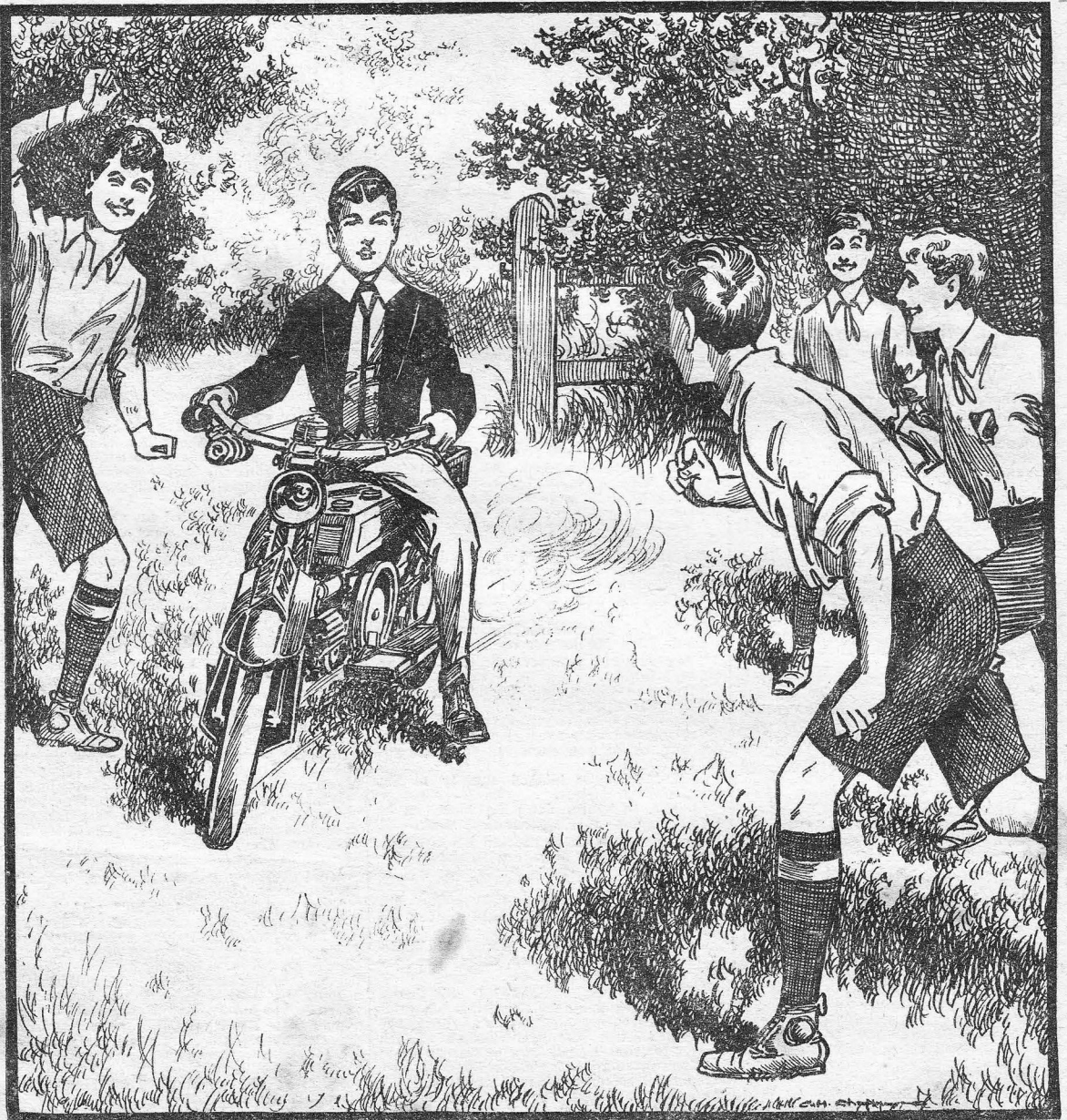
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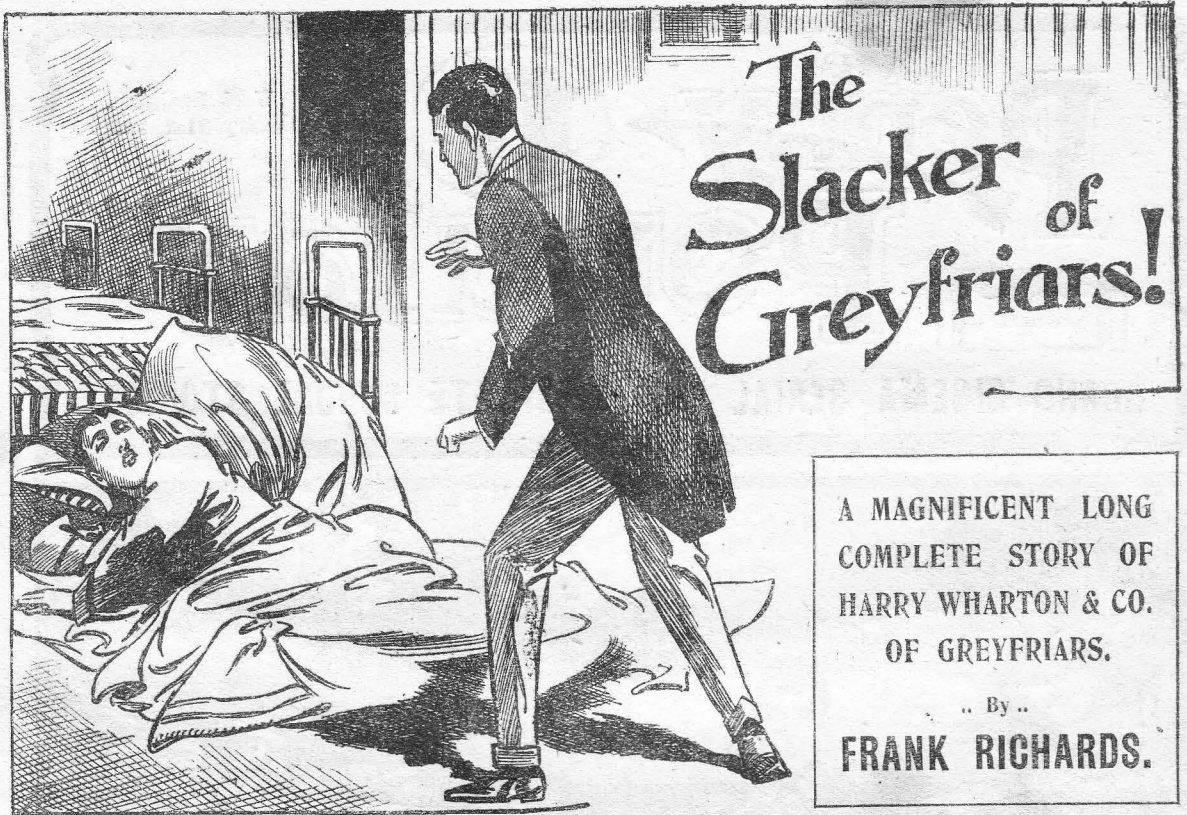
20 PAGES.

GRAND CINEMA SERIAL AND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.



THE WELCOME ARRIVAL OF LORD MAULEVERER!

(A Stirring Incident in the Magnificent Lona Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



A MAGNIFICENT LONG
COMPLETE STORY OF
HARRY WHARTON & CO.
OF GREYFRIARS.

.. By ..

FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Maully's Unlucky Day!**

CLANG, clang!
The rising-bell rang out sharply on the morning air.

In the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars there was a great deal of muttering and grumbling and lamentation.

For the morning was piercingly cold, and it was much more comfortable in bed than out.

"Clang, clang, clang!"
"Gosling seems to take a frenzied delight in tugging that bell-ropes!" growled Harry Wharton. "He doesn't like turning out in the cold himself, but he takes consolation from the fact that we've got to turn out, too!"

"Just hark at him!" said Nugent. "Anybody would think the school was on fire!"
Only one fellow in the dormitory seemed to welcome the rising-bell. That was Bob Cherry.

Bob was always early astir, no matter what the climatic conditions might be; and this particular morning was no exception. He sprang lightly out of bed, and proceeded to dress in the half-light of the February morning.

"Tumble out, you lazy slackers!" he said chidingly. "It's a topping day!"

"Groo!"
"It's perishingly cold!"

"I've a good mind to advocate to the Head," said Peter Todd, "that rising-bell should be postponed till midday."

"If you advocated a reform of that sort, Todd, the Head would advocate a jolly good licking!" said Vernon-Smith.

Having donned most of his garments, Bob Cherry started to perform a series of "physical jerks." He thrust his arms forward and outward and upward with great vigour, and in one of the outward movements he contrived, either by accident or design, to smite Billy Bunter on the nose. The fat junior emitted a fiendish yell.

"Yarooooh! Cherry, you beast, if it wasn't so jolly cold I'd get out of bed and slaughter you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The idea of Billy Bunter, the fat and flabby Owl of the Remove, slaughtering Bob Cherry was decidedly amusing.

"Out you get, porpoise!" said Bob.

Rather than remain in bed and receive another swipe from Bob Cherry's fist Billy Bunter turned out.

One by one the juniors vacated their snug beds, and when Wingate of the Sixth looked into the dormitory five minutes later only one bed was occupied.

Lord Mauleverer, the slacker and dandy of the Remove, had not even heard the harsh clanging of the rising-bell. He was still fast asleep, with a smile on his aristocratic features, as if he were enjoying an amusing dream.

"Mauleverer!" rapped out Wingate sharply.

No sound came from the schoolboy ear, save that of measured breathing.

The captain of Greyfriars strode towards Maully's bed, and shook the slumbering junior.

It was not a gentle shaking, and in a few seconds Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes.

"Yaw-aw-aw! Wharrer marrer?" he murmured drowsily.

"Time you were up and dressed," said Wingate. "Put a jerk into it!"

"Risin'-bell hasn't sounded yet—"

"It sounded ages ago! Are you going to get out, or do you want me to pitch you out?"

Lord Mauleverer blinked sleepily at the captain of Greyfriars.

"I say, Wingate, don't be hard on a fellow, begad! Just another forty winks—"

For answer, Wingate exerted his strength, and the bedclothes descended to the floor in a tumbled heap, with Maully on top of them.

Having, as he thought, fully roused the slacker of the Remove, Wingate quitted the dormitory.

No sooner had he gone than Lord Mauleverer closed his eyes, and calmly relapsed into slumber—on the floor!

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Dennis Carr—who was back again at Greyfriars after his London adventures. "Maully's about the slackest slacker who ever slacked! I can clearly see that I shall have to reform him!"

"You'll have a job," said Bob Cherry. "I've often tried to reform Maully myself, but it's N.G. He was born tired, and you'll be a wonderful fellow if you can make a hustler of him, Carr."

"Hear, hear!"

Dennis Carr glanced at the slumbering form of his study-mate; then he stepped to the washstand and procured a sponge, which he plunged into cold water.

"This ought to do the trick," he murmured, as he approached Maully.

"Steady on!" said Bob Cherry. "You're cribbing my pet methods of rousing slackers. The sponge stunt was invented by me, and it's copyright in the United States of America and throughout the civilised world."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Fisher T. Fish bristled up at this.

"Are you trying to make out that we're not civilised in the States?" he demanded.

"Well, if you're a fair sample of an American citizen, I should say that the people in the States were a set of bloated barbarians!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Fortunately for the United States, Fisher Tarleton Fish was not a fair sample of American youth. True, there were fellows just like him on the other side of the herring-pond, but, happily, they were in the minority.

Before Fish could think out a suitable retort, a sudden yell rang through the Remove dormitory.

Dennis Carr was engaged in squeezing the sponge over the noble features of Lord Mauleverer, with dire results to that youth.

Maully was swamped, his bedclothes were swamped, and the conditions were far too uncomfortable for him to remain where he was. He staggered to his feet, and shook himself like a drenched terrier.

"Ow! You've half-drowned me, begad!" he spluttered.

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Dennis Carr. "I may not be captain of the Remove any longer, but I still share your study, and I mean to bring you up in the way you should go. I'm not going to have people pointing to our study and saying that it's a Home for Born-tired Slackers. You've got to buck up, Maully, and I'm going to help you do it. You'll probably have a rough passage; but I must be cruel, only to be kind."

"Yow!"
Shivering and reluctant, Lord Mauleverer started to dress.

"I knew somethin' like this would happen," he said. "It's Friday, an' Friday's my unlucky day."



Wharton was through, with only the goalie to beat, when Mauly dived for the ball in daring fashion, and took it off Wharton's toes, thus saving an almost certain goal. (See page 4.)

Lord Mauleverer was compelled to put in a sharp sprint, and by the time it was finished Mauly was nearly finished, too! He had bellows to mend, and he would have given a great deal to be allowed to take his ease on the study sofa. But the sofa was out of bounds.

The word "Bed-time!" came as a welcome relief to Mauly that evening, and he was only too glad to drag his weary limbs up to the Remove dormitory.

As soon as his head touched the pillow he was asleep; and he continued to sleep like a log until rising-bell.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Desperate Resolve!

DURING the next few days, Mauly bucked enormously.

His schoolfellows hardly recognised in him the Mauly of old. The Ethiopian had changed his skin, and the leopard his spots; and Lord Mauleverer was no longer a slacker, but was brimful of energy.

Had Dennis Carr relaxed his vigilance for a single moment Mauly would have relapsed into the same old slacker.

But Dennis was constantly keeping his study-mate up to the mark, and Sir Jimmy Vivian lent a hand—or a boot—when necessary.

Mauly never failed to turn out at rising-bell; he was never late for breakfast, or for any other function, for that matter; he worked hard and diligently in the Form-room; he continued to play football in the afternoon, and even Wingate of the Sixth went so far as to admit that Mauly had the makings of a first-class goalkeeper—in short, Mauly was wonderful. He worked hard and played hard. But the question was, would he keep it up?

The day of the Rookwood match dawned at

length, and Harry Wharton took a very strong team to the Hampshire school—the strongest, in fact, that he could raise. The forward line—consisting of Wharton, Nugent, Dennis Carr, Hurree Singh, and Vernon-Smith—was a really fine one.

It was a long way to Rookwood, and consequently the Greyfriars team had to start early. They took with them one reserve—Dick Penfold.

"The last time we went to Rookwood," said Bob Cherry, who reclined in a corner-seat in the railway-carriage, "Jimmy Silver & Co. trounced us to the tune of three goals to one. That sort of thing mustn't occur again."

"Cheer up!" said Dennis Carr. "It won't!" Dennis Carr's optimism was not shared by the other members of the team.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were dour fighters on their native heath; and although Harry Wharton was hopeful of forcing a draw, he had too high an opinion of the Rookwood players to anticipate a victory.

Nevertheless, the Friars were in good spirits as the train rumbled into Coombe, which was the station for Rookwood.

And then a calamity occurred.

Bulstrode alighted from the train before it stopped, and he came a considerable cropper.

A porter assisted him to his feet, but the junior was very white, and he turned to his schoolfellows with a rueful smile.

"Afraid I've sprained my wrist," he said.

"Oh trumps!"

"Let's have a look," said Peter Todd.

"Yes, you've sprained it right enough. You were a chump to get out before the train stopped."

"I know. But the mischief's done now."

Harry Wharton looked worried and dismayed.

"If it was any other member of the team

it wouldn't matter so much," he said. "But you're the goalie, and Penfold can't play in goal—can you Pen?"

Penfold shook his head. "I'll play," said Bulstrode pluckily, "and use my sound arm to clear the shots."

"My dear chap, you'd never be able to hold the Rookwood forwards at bay."

"What's to be done?" asked Nugent helplessly.

And then Dennis Carr made an astounding suggestion.

"Wire for Mauly," he said.

"This is no time for joking!" said Wharton curtly.

"I'm not joking. You know as well as I do that Mauly's a great goalie. He's almost up to Bulstrode's weight."

"That's so," said Bob Cherry. "But a wire wouldn't get him in time. He'd have to come on by train, and the next train doesn't land at Coombe until five. The match will be over by then."

Dennis Carr was not taken aback.

"There are more ways than one of killing a cat," he said, "and there are more ways than one of getting to Rookwood."

"Don't talk in riddles!" snapped Wharton, who was not in the best of temper. "Mauly can't possibly come by train. How else would it be possible for him to come?"

"He's rolling in riches," said Dennis, "and he'd cheerfully hire a car to bring him over. He'll get here somehow, anyway."

"I think it would be well worth while to wire him," said Vernon-Smith.

"All right," said Wharton. "But I'm willing to wager a study feed that he doesn't turn up."

"Done!" said Dennis Carr promptly.

A wire was despatched from Coombe Post Office to Lord Mauleverer. It was worded as follows:

say the same about Prout's motor-bike. The collision dented it a bit, an' I had to push it the rest of the way."

"And when you got back?" said Nugent.
"Prout was waitin' for me in the Close. Gosling told him I had bugged the motor-bike, an' Prout was prancin' up an' down like a maniac! I've got to pay for the damage done to the motor-bike, an' I've had a fearful lickin' into the bargain!"

"Poor old Mauly!" said Johnny Bull.
"Bunter says that Prout busted a dozen canes—"

"Well, he certainly busted two."
"My hat!"

"I'm goin' to retire from active service after this!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I believe you regarded me as a promisin' pupil, Carr, an' I'm sorry to disappoint you. But I've used up all my energy, an' enjoyed the full benefit of Prout's, an' I think it's time I eased up. No more footer for me!"

"Rats! You'll be as fit as a fiddle by to-morrow!" said Dennis Carr cheerfully.

But he was wrong.

Next morning the clang of the rising-bell fell on deaf ears, so far as Lord Mauleverer was concerned.

Mauly refused to budge from his bed, and he also refused to go for his usual early-morning sprint in the Close.

At the breakfast-table Mauly was conspicuous by his absence. Mr. Quelch had to send a special messenger to the Remove dormitory to summon the schoolboy earl, who was awarded five hundred lines for "incorrigible laziness," to quote the Form-master's words.

Later in the day, when Dennis Carr asked his study-mate if he was going to play footer, the reply was emphatically in the negative.

"Do you want me to frog-march you down to the field?" demanded Dennis.

Mauly shrugged his shoulders.

"You can take what action you like," he

said, "but you'll never induce me to kick a football—never!"

And Dennis Carr gave it up.

From that time onwards Lord Mauleverer took no active part in the affairs of the Remove. A few days before he had been third from the top in class, but he now slid downwards so rapidly that he was soon third from the bottom, the two fellows beneath him being Bolsover major and Billy Bunter.

So far as football was concerned, Mauly never went near the ground. All his spare time—and a great deal that was not spare—was spent on the study sofa.

In short, Mauly's brief spell of activity was over.

That terrible ordeal in Prout's study had knocked all the stuffing out of the schoolboy earl, and he was not likely to be in the limelight again for some considerable time.

But Harry Wharton & Co. would always remember their elegant chum's sparkling display of goalkeeping against Rookwood, and on that account they made up their minds to be more lenient in future with the slacker of Greyfriars.

THE END.

NEXT FRIDAY'S
Grand Long Story of
Harry Wharton & Co., at
Greyfriars School, is entitled
"BUNTER, THE BONE-SETTER!"
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Order Your Copy Now!

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Back Numbers, Etc., Wanted.

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Fred. H. Ricketts, c.o. A. E. Duncan & Son, 9, Mincing Lane, E.C., has for sale "Magnets" Nos. 579-605, "Boys' Friends" 836-935, and "Penny Populars"—new series—1-30; 5s. the lot.

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H. Moore, 57, Darnley Road, Gravesend, Kent, wants "Levison for St. Jim's," 2d., and "School and Sport," 6d.

F. Wallace, 2, Ifold Cottage, Lee Street, Hoveley, Surrey, wants "Magnets" Nos. 603 and 604; 3d. each offered.

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G. H. Dunbar, 25, Walmer Road, Fratton, Portsmouth, has for sale "Gems" Nos. 144, 168, 194, 204, 221, 238, 240-1, 275, 283, 288, 290, 293, 298, 303-4, 314, 316, 318, 320, 321, 323-7, 330, 332, 333, 335-345, 347, and 370.

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**MAGNIFICENT
COLOURED PICTURE
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GIVEN FREE**



This is a small line drawing of the Plate to be Given Free. Actual size of Plate with engraving is 7½ inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy, 1st Class, JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL, V.C. The Battle of Jutland, May 31st—June 1st, 1916. From the Picture by F. O. Salisbury, painted for the Admiralty on board H.M.S. Chester." The closing date of this offer will be published in this paper in a week or so. No application will be accepted after that date.

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Our Grand New Serial, dealing with the Adventures of a Young Acrobat who Rose to Fame and Fortune as a Cinema Star.

By STANTON HOPE.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Micky Denver, an orphan lad, is an acrobat in Beauman's Gigantic Circus. One night, in Liverpool, he is accused unjustly by Boris Beaman, the bullying proprietor, of having stolen a gold watch. The evidence is black against him, and Micky is arrested, but escapes to the river-front and stows away on a tramp-steamer called the Plunger. When the ship brings up in New York Harbour, Micky escapes through an open port and swims ashore. In New York he meets a slim, red-headed American, Alec P. Figg, who is also anxious to get out West. With him Micky "jumps" the "Chicago Flyer," and by stages they beat their way to

Kansas City. Figg, known as Smart Alec, is one of the most expert cracksmen on the Continent, and he attempts to crack the hotel safe. Micky frustrates him, and makes the rest of his way to Los Angeles alone. Once in the city he loses no time in trying to get taken on at the cinema studios, but without success. One day he visits Santa Monica, on the coast, and there he rescues a cinema star named Mary Maidstone from the surf. On the beach, afterwards, he is introduced to a slim, clean-shaven stranger, who turns out to be none other than the great Charlie Chaplin!

(Now read on.)

Micky Among the Stars!

WHEN Micky heard the cinema director address the slim young man as Mr. Chaplin, he could scarcely believe his ears. He gazed open-eyed at the stranger, scrutinising in turn his straw hat, handsome, clean-shaven face, bow-tie, smart grey lounge suit, and white buckskin shoes. So comical was the bewilderment in the face of the English lad that the stranger and the cinema director exchanged glances with twinkles of merriment in their eyes.

"I don't think I introduced you two properly," chuckled the director. Then, turning to Micky, he asked: "What's your name, lad?"

"Micky Denver, sir."

"Now we'll get this right," said the director. "Allow me to introduce Mr. Micky Denver, Mr. Chaplin. Mr. Denver, this is Mr. Charles Chaplin."

The stranger showed a perfect set of white teeth in a frank smile, and held out his hand.

"I'm proud to make your acquaintance, Micky," he said sincerely, "though Romery's formality seems hardly necessary."

Micky took the proffered hand, still bewildered by this unexpected meeting with the world's greatest cinema star.

"But—but I don't quite understand," he stammered. "You—you've—"

Micky paused in his embarrassment, but the great film star gave him a friendly nod of encouragement.

"Well, what have I done?" he smiled.

"You've shaved your moustache, sir!" burst out Micky. "Last time I saw you at the Star Picture Palace in Liverpool you had a ripping little black one, you know!"

"Waw—haw, haw!"

The cinema director let out a wild, unearthly yell and doubled up to such an extent that Micky began to fear he was subject to fits. The good-looking young man who had been introduced as Charlie Chaplin drew an immaculate mauve silk handkerchief from his breast-pocket and blew his nose violently several times.

"I say, sir," said Micky, a dark suspicion creeping into his mind, "I suppose this chap's trying to be funny, and has been pulling my leg about you being Charlie Chaplin? Why, I saw you come along the sands just now, and you were walking quite decently, you know!"

Again the cinema director gave a mighty squirm and made curious noises as though he had a large fish-bone stuck in his throat. The young man wiped two tears that trickled from his eyes, and replaced his exquisite handkerchief.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Micky," he said, "but I'm afraid I must plead guilty to the charge of our friend Romery here. I am Charlie Chaplin. I'm not really such

an extraordinary-looking person as my film pictures would suggest, am I?"

Micky gazed in heartfelt admiration at this well-dressed young man, who, by his skill and humour, had climbed to the very topmost rung of cinema success.

"You're jolly good-looking, I reckon, sir!" he cried frankly. "I've seen you scores of times at the picture-palaces at home, and I wouldn't have believed you could have looked so different in real life."

Micky paused as a great idea came to his mind. Not three feet away from him was one of the "Big Four" of Filmland, a man who, by the raising of his little finger, could flick him, Micky, into the studio job he had been seeking in vain for the last three weary weeks. He knew that a certain amount of cheek is necessary in the composition of anyone anxious to better himself, and that little is given in this world unless it is boldly asked for. Opportunity was knocking at his door, and he determined to grasp it with both hands.

"I say, sir," he said, "you'll think it awful cheeky of me, I know, but I've always had the ambition to work for the cinema, and I've beat it all the way from England for the express purpose of landing such a job in Los Angeles. Can you find me one in your studio, sir? I'm willing to tackle anything so long as there's the chance of my becoming a cinema actor one day."

The great Charlie drew a white slip of pasteboard from his pocket.

"Call at that address, Micky," he said, "and we'll talk it over. Come round to the studio at about five o'clock on Thursday, if you can, for Mrs. Chaplin will be there as well then, and I know she'll want to thank you for saving the life of her great chum, Mary Maidstone."

So great had Micky's interest been in the famous cinema star that he received quite a shock when he saw the burly man of the tortoiseshell spectacles, who had carried the actress from the rocks, hastening towards him. With a hasty excuse to Charlie Chaplin, he tried to make off down the beach, but the director, Romery, laid violent hands on him and dragged him back.

"That's right, Romery!" puffed the big man. "Don't let the young rascal get away! We've got quite a lot to say to him before he hits the trail again." Then, seeing the great film star standing by, he said jocularly: "Why, hallo, Charlie, old son! Have you just autied down for the day?"

Micky felt something akin to awe for this big man with the tortoiseshell spectacles whose personality seemed to dwarf into insignificance all others about him, and who could so casually address the world-famed Chaplin as "Charlie, old son!"

After a few moments conversation with the star, the big man drew Micky towards the knot of people whence he had emerged a few minutes before.

"I'm to take you to Miss Maidstone, lad,"

he announced. "She is beginning to feel quite herself again, and wants to thank you personally for the splendid act of heroism that was the means of saving her life."

Micky took little notice of the eulogistic remarks and the hearty thumps on the back which were showered on him as he was ushered through the group of onlookers, but he flushed to the roots of his hair as he found himself face to face with the star actress of the great Broadworth Company for whom he had risked his life.

Mary Maidstone met Micky with outstretched hands and a sweet smile of welcome on her beautiful face.

"How can I thank you?" she murmured, a tinge of pink surmounting her cheeks as she clasped the hands of her rescuer. "Certainly I can't express the gratitude of my heart in words. You'd understand what I feel perhaps if you could imagine the awful despair I experienced as I found myself powerless in that raging surf, and then to see you dive in from the rock. Oh, it was just splendid!"

Like most healthy English lads, Micky had not the capacity for bearing praise gracefully, and his eyes left the glowing face of the cinema star, and furtively sought a loophole of escape through the crowd. Fortunately, further embarrassment was saved him by Chappie, who, having warmed up a bit under Micky's coat, now poked his head out to see what all the fuss was about. At the sight of the little dog a cry of delight left the lips of the girl.

"Why, it was this little dog that first jumped into the sea after me!" she cried, darting forward and snatching Chappie from Micky's arms. "You dear, brave old thing!"

She patted Chappie's wiry, bedraggled coat affectionately, and the little terrier wagged his stumpy tail with every manifestation of delight at the notice that was being taken of him. Unlike his master, Chappie was not in the very least embarrassed by the gratitude of the young girl; indeed, had he been offered a nice big bone then and there he would have accepted it as but a natural part of the tribute due to him.

Hearing of the part the little mongrel played in the rescue, all the other ladies present flocked round, and Chappie was thoroughly enjoying himself, when the big man with the round tortoiseshell spectacles intervened.

"Now, ladies," he said, "you must allow me to get these drenched young people to a hotel. Put that dog down, Mary, and come at once!"

The crowd parted, and the girl allowed herself to be led by this domineering man along the beach, still, however, retaining Chappie in her arms.

"You look after that lad, Buddy!" called he of the tortoiseshell specs to the plump, red-faced man whom Micky had seen restoring



"Why it was this little dog that first jumped into the sea after me!" cried the cinema star, darting forward and snatching Chappie from Micky's arms. "You dear, brave old thing!" (See page 8.)

Chappie in such an effective fashion. "Bring him along to the Rockview!"

"I'll keep an eye on him, never fear, sir!" And the little stout man strode across in a very determined manner and slipped his arm through the lad's in spite of the sopping state of Micky's clothes.

As they stepped out after the others a tall, athletic figure in a woollen surfing costume intercepted them. Micky rightly judged him to be the man who had attempted the rescue of the actress from the beach, but the swimmer was now a more decorative figure owing to the additional embellishments of a faultless panama on his head, an immaculate check sporting coat over his shoulder, and a rimless monocle stuck in his right eye.

"Hi, stop, Gaylord, my dear old chappie!" he called. "I want to be introduced to the hewo, you know!"

But there was no need for an introduction as far as Micky was concerned, for in spite of the man's bizarre appearance he recognised him at once. It was Reginald Clarence Eton, the nut of the Broadworth Company, and dude in many a fine photo-play he had witnessed at home. A splendid athlete and dare-devil to boot, "Reggie" was known and loved by picture-goers the world over.

Buddy Gaylord obviously had his eye on the retreating form of the big man and the rescued actress, but he hastily obtained Micky's name, and performed the formality in the precise way he knew the nut required.

"I hope to have the pleasah of meeting you again latah," said the dude to Micky. "I heah you are going to the Wockview, so I shall look in and bring you a change of waiment in case you require it."

Micky's thanks were interrupted by a gurgling fit of laughter from his stout companion.

"Say, Reggie," spluttered Buddy Gaylord, "bring the coat and pants, if you must, but please—oh, please, spare him the agony of your fancy-vests!"

Reginald Clarence Eton gave the stout man a glance of lofty disdain, and turned to Micky.

"Take no notice of this low fellow's wibaldery," he said, "and, wemembah, if I

can be of any assistance to you in future, I way command me!"

By this time Buddy Gaylord was fuming in his impatience.

"We'll have to get a hustle on, Micky," he said, dragging the lad away; "the boss isn't the sort o' man you might care to disobey."

As they hastened across the sands in an endeavour to catch up the two in front, Micky took the opportunity of asking who the burly individual wearing the tortoiseshell spectacles might be.

"By gum, haven't you guessed?" puffed Buddy Gaylord. "That's Kennedy N. Broadworth, the Big Noise, head o' the company, and producer o' all the screen-thrills that have ever appeared under the Broadworth trade-mark! They call him 'K.N.' out here in the West, and 'cayenne' he is, let me tell! The tall guy who gave you the knock-down to Charlie Chaplin is Jeffrey J. Romery, the chief director o' the company. Jeff is a Southerner from Tennessee, and one o' the best."

Despite Micky's protests, Mr. Broadworth booked him a room at the Rockview Hotel, and ordered him to take a hot bath. After he had finished his refreshing ablutions, the lad found a brand-new suit of American-cut clothes laid out for him, and these he donned wondering how on earth the cinema people had managed to secure his exact fit in such a short space of time. Had he known the great film-producer a little better he would not have been surprised at anything he did.

When he had finished dressing, and he had had his arm tended by a doctor sent up by the producer, Micky went down to the foyer of the magnificent hotel, and there he ran into Mr. Broadworth, who was talking to Reginald C. Eton.

"Ah, here you are, sonny!" exclaimed the great producer. "I've arranged some lunch on the terrace, and you must join us!"

The brand of courage which enabled Micky to dive into the raging surf near the deadly rocks without a tremor, failed him completely at the prospect of a lunch with these world-famous cinema people who considered themselves indebted to him.

"It's—it's very kind of you, sir," he stam-

mered. "But when my other clothes are dry I'll be getting along!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!"

The tone of finality about the great producer's remark brooked of no further argument, and Micky resigned himself to his fate.

"I say, you know," said Reginald C. Eton, as they made their way to the terrace, "my valet brought you up a wipping suit in green and yellow stripes, but as you are already wigged out, it's hardly worth changing."

Mr. Broadworth smiled hugely. "I guess the lad feels himself quite conspicuous enough," he remarked, "without being bedecked in your Armistice Day, hip-hooray creations!"

Outside Micky gazed round for Chappie, where he had ordered the little dog to lie down when he had entered the hotel. Mr. Broadworth noticed the lad peering about for his four-footed friend and hastened to reassure him.

"I ordered the waiter to give him some dinner," he said. "No doubt Miss Maidstone will bring him to you when she comes!"

Several members of the Broadworth Company and many other fashionably-dressed Americans were seated at the tables along the pleasant terrace, and all eyes were turned on Micky as he walked along between the great film-producer and the best-known dude of the cinema-screens. Had he followed his desire he would have run miles from the place, but he braced himself to undergo the ordeal, though his face flushed scarlet under the scrutiny he received, and his fingers nervously sought the lapels of his immaculate coat.

An obsequious waiter approached Mr. Broadworth and ushered them to a table marked "Reserved," which was set for four persons. Micky rightly guessed that Mary Maidstone was to be the fourth guest of the producer's.

As they sat waiting for the arrival of the actress, Mr. Broadworth tactfully questioned the lad as to his business, inclinations, and prospects, and Micky gave a curtailed account of his life as an acrobat in England and his adventures in the United States in search of

a cinema job. Apart from the high personal regard in which the great American film-producer held his star actress, the girl was worth many thousands of dollars to him from the business standpoint, and he recognised and hoped to discover some means to repay the great debt he owed the English lad for saving her life.

"See here, sonny!" he said, after a thoughtful pause. "That job of yours selling chewing-gum at the Kinema de Luxe is no good to you. I'll find you a billet in my studio under Buddy Gaylord, my chief property man, and if you make good in that you shall have your chance to climb higher in the tree."

Micky beamed with delight at this definite offer, but he suddenly remembered his appointment at the Chaplin studios.

"It's jolly good of you, sir!" he cried. "But when I met Mr. Charlie Chaplin on the beach an hour ago I sounded him for a job, and he gave me an appointment to call and see him on Thursday."

"I guess you've sure been taking time by the forelock, sonny," smiled the producer, "and that's the way to get on in life. It's the spirit I like to see among my own people."

"But, weally, you know, Micky," burst in Reggie, "if you're a beastly ackwobot, you'll have much more opportunity with my good friend, Broadworth here, than with that boundah Chaplin. The great Charles produces comedies chiefly, as you know, and you won't get the scope in those you would in a company that specialises in thwills like ours."

Micky clearly saw the point of this advice, for his definite object had been to one day appear in such stunts as he had seen in the magnificent photo-plays bearing the Broadworth brand.

"Don't be in such a hurry, sonny," said the producer; "think it well over, and let me know what you decide. Ah, here comes Miss Maidstone."

Micky turned to see the girl he had rescued from the sea, a vision of loveliness in a simple pale-blue dress, tripping daintily towards them. At her heels came Chappie, looking from right to left in search of his young master. Directly the little dog caught sight of Micky he bounded forward, and, standing on his hind-legs, pawed the lad with every manifestation of delight.

The men rose from the table to greet the girl.

"Feeling all right again, Mary?" asked Mr. Broadworth.

"I'm quite fit now," affirmed the star, "and so is my little canine friend. He's had the biggest plate of bones he's ever seen in his life. I warrant!"

The sensation of sitting at a table spread with silver, cut glass, and fine linen, and surrounded by such fashionably-dressed folk as frequented the Rockevy, was decidedly a novel one for Micky. But, notwithstanding the novelty of his position, the natural inbred polish of the lad's composition asserted itself, and he made an excellent impression on the three cinema people by his frank ways and gentlemanly manners.

Chappie, too, proved that, although he had no pedigree as long as a beanstalk, he, nevertheless, knew how a small dog should behave in such exalted company, and sat patiently by Micky's side without a murmur. Even when a tiny Pekinese—a breed for which he had the utmost loathing—passed close to him, led by a lady on a broad black ribbon, he merely gave a dignified sniff, and averted his eyes from the temptation.

The terrace on which the lunch was served overlooked some of the charming hotel grounds, in which flourished palms, orange-trees, and other semi-tropical vegetation, while between the luxurious foliage could be obtained glimpses of the sparkling blue Pacific beyond.

"Our young friend, Micky Denver, here," said Mr. Broadworth to the actress during lunch, "is keen to become a cinema actor, so I've offered him a chance in my studio."

The girl clapped her hands together in glee.

"How bully!" she exclaimed. "And he must leave that horrid old lodging-house where he is staying! Mrs. Gaylord, I'm sure, would find room for him at her home."

"Mr. Broadworth kindly told me I could think it over," put in Micky, "and so I'll let him know on Friday morning."

"Anyway," said the producer, "I'll ask Gaylord if he can fix you up at his place for the time being. It is close to Cinema City, and you'll be handy for all the studios."

"Bai Jove, Micky," cried Reginald, "you

weally must join our happy family, you know! Mr. Broadworth, I can assure you, is a regular father to us all, and like all producers in this swange country, is particularly partial to Englishmen for the films. I have lived out here for several years myself, but, though you would hardly credit it, I'm an Englishman myself."

"Ha, ha!" roared the great producer. "I opine the only person liable to mistake you for a nephew of Uncle Sam, Reggie, would be a Bashiebazook from the interior of Oompawoopaland!"

The famous dude looked a trifle hurt, as it was a matter of pride with him that, although he wore the extremes of Bond Street fashion, and often sported spats and a monocle, he had greatly adapted his speech and manners to the country of his adoption. Reggie's adaptability, unknown to him, was a source of much humour among the native Americans at the studio.

Excusing himself, Mr. Broadworth left his three guests toying with their dessert, and went off to find his chief property man and make the necessary arrangements for Micky to take up his abode temporarily in the home of the Gaylords.

A few minutes later he returned with Buddy Gaylord himself.

"I've fixed everything up for you, sonny," he said to Micky, "and you can get your gear from the place you're staying at and take it along to Mr. Gaylord's as soon as you like."

Micky rose with the others, and as he did so a violent twinge of pain shot through his damaged left hand, and he turned pale, and staggered against the table.

"Good gracious, you're hurt, Micky!" cried the young actress, a look of deep concern in her big eyes. "You never told me!"

"I—I'm all right, really," said Micky, recovering himself a little. "It—it is nothing, really."

Mary Maidstone shot a look of inquiry in the direction of the film-producer.

"The lad hurt his arm a bit on the rocks," explained Mr. Broadworth. "He has had it dressed properly already, and we'll have the doctor to tend it again in Los Angeles."

"I'm going to take him back to town in my car," said the actress, in the tone of one used to having her own way. "Buddy shall come, too, and must see that he takes things easily for a day or two."

Five minutes later a beautiful, olive-green limousine drew up to the hotel entrance with a soft purring sound, and Mr. Broadworth helped Mary Maidstone and Micky into their seats. Then Buddy Gaylord, holding Chappie under his arm, climbed in, and the car shot forward on its journey to Los Angeles.

Micky sank among the soft cushions, with a sigh of perfect happiness. Less than a month before he had entered that great hub of the cinema world in a jolting freight-van in the company of railway brakemen; now he was returning to his dream city in a smoothly-gliding limousine with one of the most popular stars in filmland!

"Props" for the "Pictures."

MICKY was only too glad to give up his cubicle in the Pacific lodging-house, and take up his residence in the charming home of Buddy Gaylord and his excellent spouse. He also wrote to the manager of the Kinema de Luxe, in Orange Street, and gave up his job there, and this he did joyfully enough, glad to be free of the necessity of shouting the hated cry: "Chocolates, chiclets, and salted peanuts!"

Mrs. Gaylord took the English lad to her heart at once. This buxom, motherly woman was a keen judge of character, and Micky's frank ways and modesty appealed to her tremendously.

Her chief delight was in her home, but she also acted in an official capacity at the studio. When her only child had died a year before, Mr. Broadworth, a marvelous judge of character himself, had offered her the post of "studio mother."

Her duties were to act as guardian to the many girls employed by the great cinema company, and as adviser to the hundreds of members of her own sex who were always to be seen waiting in queues on the lot on the chance of obtaining work in big productions. On many an occasion the motherly woman had helped some poor lass back to the distant home from which she had run away, lured by the glamour of the "silver screen."

Nothing would suit Buddy Gaylord and his

genial spouse than that Micky should rest and enjoy himself until his arm had mended properly, and the English lad made the most of those halcyon days.

The Gaylords' house was situated close to Cinema City on the outskirts of Los Angeles, and commanded a perfect view of the foothills of the lovely San Gabriel range. The only task Micky was allowed to perform was the pleasant one of plucking of the oranges, peaches, persimmons, and passion fruit, with the morning dew sparkling upon them, for the luscious salads which were on the menu daily.

At last the day of which Micky had thought during all his waking hours, and dreamt of at night, came round. With infinite care to the minutest details of his toilet, the lad dressed himself in the immaculate American-cut suit with which Mr. Broadworth had supplied him in Santa Monica. Then he took leave of kindly Mrs. Gaylord, and, with Chappie trotting contentedly at his heels, he set off for his interview with the great Charlie Chaplin.

Micky arrived at the Chaplin studio in plenty of time; and it was as well that he did, for, in spite of showing the ear he had received from the cinema star, he had great difficulty in getting anybody to believe he had been invited there to tea. However, he was rescued finally by a smartly-dressed youth who had been sent to receive him.

"Mr. Chaplin has been called away on business, Mr. Denver, but he'll be back soon, I expect," said the youth. "Mrs. Chaplin is here, though, and is expecting you."

Following his guide through the lot, Micky passed a farmhouse built of wood in the Western style and painted grey, with fences complete, and he wondered whether the great Charles was engaged on another film along the lines of "Sunnyside Farm."

On a neat lawn outside a pretty bungalow, in which were situated the dressing-rooms of the principal stars, three young ladies were reclining in wicker chairs. One of them, a pretty girl in a dove-grey dress, rose as Micky approached, and extended a hand in greeting. It was Mrs. Charlie Chaplin, better known to the lovers of the "movies" as Mildred Harris!

"How do you do, Mr. Denver?" she murmured. "My husband has told me all about you. He was called away on an urgent matter of business with Mr. Griffith, the producer, and left his apologies in case he was unable to return in time to receive you himself."

Mrs. Chaplin then introduced her two friends, and the employee of the studio who had brought Micky along took the opportunity to slip away unobserved.

Micky felt awkward and nervous as he took his seat, and sincerely wished that Charlie Chaplin had been present to level matters up a bit; but he was soon put quite at his ease by the three ladies. All three had heard of the lad's plucky rescue of Mary Maidstone from the surf at Santa Monica, and made much of him, and, doubtless, had Micky not been a sensible, level-headed young person, his head would have been quite turned by the attention he received.

As time passed Micky looked anxiously for the return of the great Charlie, for he was very desirous to discuss with him the matter of his employment at the studio.

When tea had been cleared away by deft-fingered waiters, Mrs. Chaplin, who, with the quick perception of her sex, had guessed what was troubling her guest, tactfully broached the subject.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Denver," she said, "my husband left a message with me for you in case he did not get back in time to see you himself. It is about the matter you mentioned to him on the beach at Santa Monica."

Micky leaned forward eagerly.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Chaplin?"

The pretty girl smiled winsomely, and, knowing by Micky's manner that she could offer no offence by speaking openly before her friends, launched on a delicate task.

"Perhaps you do not know," she went on, "that Mr. Broadworth came to see my husband with reference to your desire to join the ranks of us cinema folk. At any rate, they had quite a long chat about you, and, having heard of Mr. Broadworth's intentions, Mr. Chaplin feels that, considering your special qualifications, he would only be standing in the light of your highest interests if he—if he—"

Micky hastened to bridge the awkward pause.

"I—I understand, Mrs. Chaplin," he said quietly.

He stopped, lost in a sense of keen disappointment. He had looked forward, perhaps too whole-heartedly, to being associated with the world's greatest cinema star, and to have his hopes shattered even at the hands of this gentleman was a bitter pill indeed.

Mrs. Chaplin gently laid a soft white hand on the lad's arm.

"I can see you are disappointed," she said; "but, believe me, my husband only had your interest at heart, and I am sure you will thank him one day for his present attitude. Don't you see that you would never have the opportunity here that you will have in Mr. Broadworth's company?"

In spite of himself Micky did see. He would have to begin at the bottom in whichever studio he found employment, and, although Mrs. Chaplin put the matter so delicately, he knew that Charlie Chaplin was, and always would be, the only big star in all the films in which he took part; whereas a company such as Broadworth's always had their eyes open for fresh talent among their personnel. Charlie Chaplin was right.

"I am sorry my husband himself was unable to be here to explain matters," said Mrs. Chaplin; "but, as I said, I am sure you will thank him one day for pointing out the advantage of associating yourself with Broadworth's. Mr. Broadworth is the head of a big, happy family. We know many members of his company, and better folk than Mary Maidstone, Jeff Romery, Reggie Eton, Buddy Gaylord, and most of the others you couldn't find if you searched the States from California to Maine!"

"Thank you!" said Micky. "I reckon you're right, Mrs. Chaplin, and I'll ask Mr. Broadworth to let me get to work with his company right away."

Micky rose, preparatory to taking his departure.

"I'm so glad you came, Mr. Denver," said Mrs. Chaplin; "and when we return from the East—for we're going to Boston shortly—you must come and see us, and next time, I promise you, my husband shall be on the scene, if I have to drag him from his work!" With a smile she extended her hand. "Good-bye! I'm sure your keenness will bring you success in the end."

The Americans could give Micky no points in the matter of hustling, and once clear of the Chaplin studio he lost no time in making his way to the lot of the Broadworth Company.

Late though it was, the great producer was very busy at work in his office, but he spared the English lad exactly two minutes, and in that space of time it was arranged that Micky should start his work under Buddy Gaylord, the property-man, on the very next morning.

All feelings of disappointment at not being associated with the great and only Charles had disappeared as he hurried home and reported his experiences to the genial couple with whom he was staying.

Buddy Gaylord, like his buxom spouse, had taken a great liking to the lad, and he was glad to know that Micky was to get his first insight into making the movies under his wing.

On the following morning Micky awakened with the first song of the birds in the swaying palms outside his window, and blithely set forth on his pleasant task of plucking enough golden fruit from the orange-trees for the usual breakfast appetiser of the household.

The meal over, he set off gaily with the jovial property-man for his first day's duty at the studio. At last, after years of hardship at home and weeks of bitter suffering, trials, and disappointments since leaving Liverpool as a stowaway, not a cloud appeared in his sky in this paradise of the Pacific slope. But the gods decree that no mortal shall have smooth sailing for long in this wicked world, and already, unknown to himself, the dark clouds were gathering below Micky's horizon ready to rise and burst in storm about his head.

Buddy Gaylord, or "Props," as many called him, was by way of being a marvel in his own particular line. Did the scenario—the complete synopsis and instructions of a photo-play—call for a horseshoe tiepin or a complete suit of Japanese samurai armour and he was asked for the requirement at noon, Buddy would usually supply that want in less time than it took the director to get served at the studio "Quick Lunch."

Were he asked to supply a ping-pong ball or the complete accoutrements of a company

of the Prussian Guard; Buddy would accept the order without batting an eyelid, and go about his business as though he had merely been asked for the loan of a box of matches. There is nothing you can think of, from a China pagoda down to a China egg, that this extraordinary little man could not beg, borrow, buy, hire, or make, if it were required as a "prop" for the "pictures."

Buddy let Micky down lightly at first, and the lad's first few days at the Broadworth studios were more in the nature of a delightful holiday than work. Although in charge of one of the busiest departments of the studio, the genial property-man, nevertheless, found time to show Micky his vast stores of articles of all descriptions, great and small, which had been, or were likely to be, in demand for the company's productions.

It had taken Buddy a long time to make that collection, and he was justly proud of it as one of the finest in Cinema City. Furniture of all periods, variety of clocks, books, weapons of every description, curios and wearing apparel from China, the South Seas, Alaska, Egypt, and almost every other land, modern Yankee inventions, and thousands of other articles, both rare and common, were in the vast stores for the use of the film requirements, and, incidentally, for the bewilderment of Micky. But Buddy had everything catalogued, and could put his hand on most requirements at a minute's notice.

In addition to the stores, the property-man showed the lad over the workshops, where a number of his staff were engaged on the construction of papier-mache articles.

"I guess papier-mache is the most wonderful material ever invented," said Buddy, as he conducted Micky round.

He paused, and slipped a fresh wafer of pepsin-gum in his mouth; and Micky, who by this time had learned to regard this action of Buddy's as a prelude to an instructive lecture, waited expectantly.

"I dessay it's struck you sometimes," he recommenced, "when you've sat in your British kinemas, that all isn't gold that glitters on the silver screen; in other words, that some o' the articles shown in the films ain't exactly the real goods. Now, I'm not saying that all the things that look expensive are 'phoney, 'cause they're not. In this studio, for instance, 'K. N.' insists on the genuine thing, if it will photograph as well as a fake. But there's where we get up against it."

The camera is a funny animal, with curious likes and dislikes, and it has a natural dislike for quite a lot o' things. Gold's one o' them; so's brass, so's china, so's burnished steel. When you photograph them, you get what is called halation—that is, light thrown back into the lens o' the camera. The consequence is that the film gets blurred with light. Is that clear?"

"Quite."

Buddy changed the piece of gum to his other cheek with a deft twist of his tongue, and continued:

"Now, that's where papier-mache comes in. You can make a Toby-jug or a twenty-foot bronze statue o' Washington with it, and it'll look like the real goods and photograph a thousand times better."

Finding Buddy in such a communicative mood, Micky pumped him on other subjects connected with the cinema.

"D'you think the cinema school is a big help to becoming a film actor, Buddy?" he asked.

"Cinema school! I guess you're not wise to 'em, kid!" said Buddy, chewing viciously. "I opine the only real school is to start as a super in a studio, keep your ears and eyes open, and take heed of the chin goods the director hands out to you!"

"Then I'll keep my ears open when Jeff Romery's directing the filming of the pictures."

"You couldn't do better, kid. Jeff's one of the tip-top men of the game, or K. N. wouldn't be paying him ten thousand bucks a year. He may give you a chance in 'mob stuff' one day. Then, remember to act slowly—the camera don't like quick movements. Also you might practise registering facial expressions in front of the mirror at nights."

"Have you ever acted for the films, Buddy?" asked Micky.

Buddy laughed, and took the gum from his cheek.

"'Props' is in my line," he said. "I've got no use for covering my face with yellow grease-paint, and spoiling my eyes in 'close-ups.' Yep, those powerful arc lights sure play

havoc with the sensitive nerves of the eyes. It'd a wonder to me all cinema actors aren't blinded after a few months' work."

And with that cheerful remark Buddy strode off.

A few days after Micky had started work under "Props," the studio experienced one of those "off" days, when everything seemed to go wrong.

Everybody was on tenterhooks, and Romery himself, outwardly calm, but inwardly a seething furnace of impatience, was having his work cut out to get anything done at all. The reason was that Floyd Unwin, principal male star of the Broadworth company, and performer of most of the dare-devil stunts for their films, was in one of his most truculent moods.

Famous as the star was, Micky took an instant dislike to him, and he remembered and saw significance in the fact that Mrs. Chaplin had left Unwin's name out when naming her friends of the Broadworth Company.

On his part, too, Unwin quickly showed his instant dislike and contempt for the English lad; and this, perhaps, was not wholly unconnected with the fact that Micky was held in such high regard by Mary Maidstone.

Deep in his heart, Unwin was jealous of anybody for whom the young actress showed a preference, and the fact that Micky had proved himself of such inestimable service to her was absolute gall to the man.

In the studio proper, beneath the rows of high-power arc-lamps, was set an interior scene, depicting a room of a Fifth Avenue mansion, magnificently furnished after the Oriental style.

Romery, the director, exercised his vast store of tact to the full with the obstreperous star, and, finally, after twice running through the scene, in which Unwin had to examine a wonderful antique Indian vase, which played an important part in the plot, he prepared to film it.

"Action!"

A score of arc-lights blazed forth over the scene, and the actor took up his position within the six-foot focus area.

"Shoot!"

The camera-man began to revolve the handle of his machine, and with slow, deliberate movements, the actor rose from an armchair, took up the vase, and turned it over in his hands. Half-way through the scene, at a signal from Romery, the camera-man gently propelled his camera forward along the brass rails under its stand for a "close-up," and then withdrew it to its original position.

"Cut!"

At once the camera-man ceased filming, and the dazzling arc-lights faded.

"Now," said Romery, "I guess we'll get ahead with scene number nine."

Then, turning to Micky, who was standing some distance behind him, he said:

"Shift that vase to the pedestal in the corner of the set, son."

"And be careful with it, young Johnny Bull!" growled Unwin. "It's absolutely unique, and was hired from a dealer in Los Angeles specially for this production. I guess it's worth eighty thousand dollars if a cent."

There was no need for Micky to be told to be careful; he was naturally so, and, moreover, he saw from the corner of his eye the great K. N. Broadworth himself coming through the studio.

He gingerly lifted the vase, and turned towards the pedestal. The door in the background of the scene was partly open, and peering in was a hideous being who more nearly resembled a gorilla than a man.

It was as though some vague, horrible vision of the past had materialised before his eyes, and, with a low cry, Micky staggered back.

As he did so, the antique Indian vase slipped from his nerveless fingers and crashed in a thousand pieces on the floor!

**ANOTHER LONG INSTALMENT
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STORY OF THE CINEMA WILL
APPEAR IN NEXT FRIDAY'S
PENNY POPULAR.**

LORD BAGLEY OF BAGLEY TOWERS!

A COMPLETE SHORT STORY OF ST. JIM'S.

“LOOKS as though we've drawn a blank, kids!”

Tom Merry turned and made the remark to his chums, Manners and Lowther. The Terrible Three were in the old second-hand shop in Rylcombe, looking for back volumes of the “Boys' Friend.”

“Thought we shouldn't have any luck,” said Manners. “It isn't often old volumes of the ‘Boys' Friend’ are put up for sale, and when they are they go like hot cakes!”

“I say, look at that picture over there!” exclaimed Monty Lowther suddenly. “Looks like one of Trimble's giddy ancestors!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

The picture indicated was a cheap oleograph of a very fat man—not at all unlike an elderly edition of Bagley Trimble of St. Jim's. He was dressed in the stock collar and cravat of olden days.

“My hat!” cried Tom Merry. “What a chance for a wheeze on old Baggy!”

“By Jove, yes!”

Monty Lowther and Manners say through the idea immediately. Baggy was always bragging about his ancestors of Bagley Towers, who, according to him, were supposed to have been wonderful men of noble blood. Here was a chance of working a splendid stunt against the gullible Baggy.

In a moment Tom Merry was inquiring the price of the picture.

“One-and-sixpence, sir!” answered the old man, looking a little surprised that the three schoolboys should be interested in such an obviously worthless work of art.

The money was quickly paid, and the picture changed hands.

“Suppose you haven't got a frame for it?” asked Monty Lowther.

“Well, you know, frames are very dear just now, sir,” answered the ancient shopkeeper. “It's the glass, you see.”

“Have you got a cheap one without glass, then?” asked Monty Lowther.

“Ah, now, let me see,” reflected the old man. “I might be able to find out for you, young gent's.”

He knew quite well just where he had one which would do, but he wanted to produce it as though as a favour.

Tom Merry & Co. grinned gleefully as the old man turned to get the frame.

“That ought to do just right!” exclaimed Manners, when the frame was exhibited.

“It's certainly got the advantage of looking old!” laughed Monty Lowther.

“Yes, it looks about a thousand,” said Tom Merry.

After some discussion the frame was purchased for two shillings, and the Shell juniors hastened back to St. Jim's with their purchases.

When they reached Study No. 10 they locked the door and commenced operations on the picture.

“What shall we write on the back of it?” asked Lowther, with a chuckle.

“I'll write on ‘Lord Bagley of Bagley Towers—1793.’ How's that?” responded Tom Merry.

“The very thing!” grinned Manners. “But you must do it in watery ink, so that it looks as if it's fading off with age.”

Lowther ran out and watered the ink down, and Tom Merry soon scrawled the words on the back of the picture: “Lord Bagley of Bagley Towers—1793.”

Then they rubbed some fine dust from the fireplace over it, just to disguise the freshness of it, and then the picture was placed just inside the frame, though not fixed.

“Now we're ready for Baggy,” declared Tom Merry. “Go and tell him the good news.”

Monty Lowther hurried out of the study and started the search for Baggy Trimble. He was not in his study, and Monty was about to inquire of Mellish, whom he saw in the distance, when he thought of the tuckshop. Of course, that was the first place to look.

Sure enough, Baggy Trimble was there, just finishing off two shillings' worth of jam-puffs.

“I say, porpoise, we want to have a chat with you up in the study,” said Monty. “Got some very important news for you!”

Baggy Trimble looked a little startled. It

was rarely that the Terrible Three wanted him for anything, and when they did it was usually to administer chastisement in some form or other.

“Er—what's it about?” stammered Baggy cautiously. “I—I haven't done anything—really I haven't!”

“Nobody said you had, fathead!” retorted Monty. “We've got something very special to show you.”

“All right,” replied Baggy, and he followed Monty Lowther from the tuckshop, though there was considerable hesitancy in his movements.

Monty Lowther took him by the arm to encourage him, and Baggy felt easier, though he could not shake off a feeling of uncertainty as to what was going to happen to him.

“Here he is!” exclaimed Monty, as he pushed open the study door.

Baggy was obviously feeling very nervous by this time, and he halted in the doorway as Lowther released his arm.

“Hallo, Baggy!” cried Tom Merry. “I say, we've made a great discovery! Come and look at this!”

Tom Merry's tone was quite friendly, and Tubby at once felt reassured. He advanced towards the table, and the leader of the Terrible Three pointed to the picture which lay in the frame as they had placed it, looking as though it had just been unfasted.

Baggy was quite mystified at first by this invitation to Study No. 10. He thought that Tom Merry & Co. had at last realised their duty towards him, and were about to admit him as a friend.

Then his glance fell upon the signature at the back of the picture. He bent down and scrutinised it, and then gave a gasp of wonder and amazement.

“My hat, you fellows, this is one of my titled ancestors!” he exclaimed. “Where did you get hold of this?”

“We picked it up in the second-hand shop in Rylcombe this afternoon,” replied Tom Merry, with difficulty suppressing a grin.

With frantic haste Baggy turned the picture over and studied the portrait on the other side.

“There's no doubt about it,” he muttered. “Why, my pater's the living image of this old fellow!”

“We thought you'd be interested in it,” said Tom Merry, “so we bought it. You can have it for five bob.”

“Oh!” responded Baggy. “Well, as it happens, I haven't got five bob just now, but I'll let you have it as soon as I get another remittance from—er—from Bagley Towers!”

A tone of haughtiness crept into his voice as he spoke, and Tom Merry & Co. knew that the picture was beginning to take effect at once.

“I'm much obliged to you fellows,” went on Baggy, placing the picture and the frame under his arm. “My pater'll be glad to get this portrait of Lord Bagley to shove up in the hall of Bagley Towers with the other ancestors.”

“I reckon he will,” said Monty Lowther solemnly. “I say, though, you won't forget the five bob, will you?”

“Oh, no,” replied Baggy casually. “I've no doubt my pater will send it along as soon as he gets this. I reckon this is the old chap who took part in the Wars of the Roscs; there was one in it, I know. He got wounded at the Battle of Agincourt!”

There was a ripping sound, like the tearing of cloth, from the opposite side of the room, but it was only Manners trying to stifle a laugh.

Within a quarter of an hour every junior in the Shell had heard about the wonderful portrait of Trimble's ancestor, and most of them had seen it—and, incidentally, seen through the wheeze. But nobody took the trouble to enlighten Baggy. He swaggered about, only in a very lofty manner condescending to speak to his Form fellows.

“Let's have a look at Lord Bagley!” exclaimed Jack Blake, entering the Shell passage at that moment with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby.

“All right,” said Baggy generously. “You can have a look, but don't go messing it

about, because it's got to go up in the hall at Bagley Towers!”

“Bai Jove!” cried Gussy, scowling his monocle into his eye. “Twimble's wemarkably like the old johnnie, isn't he?”

Baggy swelled with pride—that is, if it were possible for him to swell still larger.

“Of course, there's always been a wonderful family likeness with all the Bagleys,” declared Trimble, trying to speak in a calm and measured voice, though in reality he was bursting with excitement.

Every fellow at St. Jim's knew well enough that there was no such place as Bagley Towers, and also that Trimble had no titled relations; but there is no doubt that at that moment Baggy himself really believed in both.

“Well, you fellows, I must get this portrait of Lord Bagley packed up now,” said Baggy, “because I want to get it off to my people by the next post. It'll create a great sensation at Bagley Towers!”

“I'll bet it will!” exclaimed Monty Lowther in an undertone to his chums.

For the rest of that day Baggy Trimble swaggered about the school premises with his head well in the air, occasionally deigning to bestow a nod in passing at one or other of the leading lights of St. Jim's. To the smaller fry he paid no heed at all.

During the evening Figgins & Co. of the New House came across to discuss the portrait of Lord Bagley with Trimble, but Baggy was disinclined to say very much to them; he considered that he had now become much too important a personage to hold converse with New House fellows.

The afternoon of the next day was a half-holiday. When he had any money Baggy spent his half-holidays in the tuckshop; but to-day he was absolutely stony, a most undignified position for a fellow with titled ancestors; at least, so he thought.

He strutted about the quad, nodding in a patronising way to other fellows as they passed him, and if annoyed him that they did not cluster round and seek his friendship, in view of the fact that it had been proved beyond all doubt that he was descended from a noble line.

Then the fact that he was out of cash began to worry him seriously. On this day of all days he was unable to visit the tuckshop, for Mrs. Taggles had long since refused him credit, and he had sense enough to realise that it was very unlikely that she would be influenced by the proof of his noble birth.

“I say, Lowther, old man!” he called, as Monty Lowther hove in sight. “I'd like a word with you!”

“Say on!” cried Monty, pulling up as Baggy approached.

“I was just thinking that you'd probably like to come down to Bagley Towers with me next vac,” remarked Baggy loftily. “If you like we'll fix it up. But, I say, at the moment I'm right out of cash, y'know. I expected a remittance this morning, but my pater must have overlooked it, and it happens that I'm right out!”

“Sorry, old bean, but I've got nothing to lend!” answered Monty Lowther, before Baggy could ask for a loan.

Monty Lowther swung round on his heel and strolled off.

“Rotten way to treat a fellow whose ancestors took part in the Wars of the Roscs!” muttered Baggy. “Suppose I shall have to tap someone else.”

“Blake!”

“Hallo!”

“Could you manage to accommodate me with a small loan for—”

Baggy got no farther.

“Nothing doing, porpoise!” exclaimed Jack Blake. “Pity that giddy old ancestor of yours didn't leave you some cash!”

“He did leave a lot,” replied Baggy, “but it hasn't come to me yet.”

“We've noticed that, old son.”

Baggy gave a sigh. He thought it curious that fellows should not be anxious to lend money to a chap with such an ancestor as Lord Bagley.

He tried three or four more fellows, but on each occasion he drew blank. He felt disappointed and sore. However, he endeavoured not to show it, and still kept up his attitude of lofty indifference to all around him.

It was in the evening of the next day that the crushing blow descended upon him. He was waiting in a prominent position at the head of the stairs for the letters to come up, for by this post he expected one from his father, congratulating him upon his find, and enclosing a remittance.

(Continued on col. 2, page 18.)



THE FIRST CHAPTER. War Profits.

"TUPPENCE-HA-PENNY!"

Tubby Muffin of the Fourth Form made that remark, in tones of sulphurous indignation, as he came into the junior Common-room at Rookwood. "Tuppence-ha-penny!" he repeated. "Do you hear?"

Jimmy Silver looked round. "Ask next door!" he suggested.

"Eh?"
"Don't you know what Shakespeare says, you—"

"Blow Shakespeare!"
"Shakespeare says, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be!'" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Shut up!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Tubby Muffin. "I'm not trying to borrow tuppence-ha-penny. Ginger-pop has gone up. It's tuppence-ha-penny at the tuckshop now."

"Oh!"
"Tuppence-ha-penny!" repeated Tubby, in tones of thrilling indignation. "Old Kettle says it can't be sold for less. Fancy old Kettle joining the profiteers! I say, something ought to be done, you know."

"Looks as if we shall be done," remarked Lovell. "Old Kettle is going it rather strong, though, with tarts twopence each, and ginger-pop twopence-ha-penny."

"Everything's gone up," said Tubby ingu-
bruously. "I don't think they ought to have had a war at all, when it makes the price of grub go up. When it comes to paying tuppence-ha-penny for ginger-pop, it's really time to call a halt, you know. I don't suppose Asquith foresaw that in 1914."

"I don't suppose he did," grinned Raby. "You know what these politicians are. They never think of the really important things."

"That's all very well," grunted the fat Classical. "But look here, what's going to be done? We shall starve at this rate."

"You look like starving," said Newcome sympathetically.

"I'm growing thin," said Tubby, with pathos in his voice. "I'm losing flesh. I know I am. We don't get enough to eat here. Bootles makes faces at a chap if he asks for a fourth helping—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It isn't a laughing matter," said Tubby warmly. "A chap used to be able to eke it out at the tuckshop; but with prices going up all round, what's a chap to do? If rotters are going to be allowed to charge us double for our grub, it's the limit!"

"Yes, something ought to be done," remarked Jimmy Silver. "We ought to put our foot down, you chaps."

"Can't be helped," said Lovell, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I believe profiteering is catching, like measles. Old Kettle's caught it."

"Chap naturally wants to make hay while the sun shines," remarked Leggett of the Fourth. "I'd do the same."

"Yes, I've no doubt you would," said Jimmy Silver, with a scornful glance at the cad of the Fourth. "But you can't call it honest."

"Oh, rot! I suppose there wouldn't be

anything sold at all if somebody didn't make a profit out of it," sneered Leggett.

"Oh, dry up! Look here, you chaps. Old Kettle isn't a bad sort; but he's going past the limit, and he's got to be stopped," said Jimmy Silver. "I've got an idea for stopping him, too."

"Expound," said Lovell.
"Suppose we go and tell him that if his prices don't come down to the level of Mrs. Wicks', we won't deal with him any more."
"Rot!" said Townsend. "We can't go down to the village for our tuck. Too much fag."

"We could keep it up for a week, and that would give him a lesson."

"Catch me!" said Topham. "I'm not faggin' down to the village every time I want a bun to save a ha'penny."

"The ha'pennies mount up in the long run."
"I dare say you're short of ha'pennies," said Topham loftily.

Jimmy Silver did not heed that remark. "Hands up for boycotting the school shop for a week!" he called out.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome put up their hands. Oswald and Flynn followed suit. But the rest of the Classical juniors only grinned.

"Too much fag!" said Peele.

"Silly rot!" remarked Mornington.

Jimmy Silver grunted.

"Well, if you're not willing to help yourselves, you must expect to be swindled," he said.

"By the way, we'd better get our supper before the shop closes," grinned Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go down to the village for it," chuckled Townsend. "Perhaps Bulkeley will give you a pass out of gates—perhaps."

"And perhaps it's worth a mile there and back to save tuppence," said Peele. "I suppose it is, if you're hard up for twopence."

"Oh, come on," said Jimmy Silver gruffly. And he left the Common-room with his chums, leaving a general chortle behind him.

The Fistical Four crossed the dusky quadrangle to the school shop. Tubby Muffin was there, imbibing the ginger-beer, which had cost him twopence-halfpenny.

Old Sergeant Kettle was behind the counter. Jimmy Silver gave his orders rather gruffly. Schoolboy allowances did not go so far as they went once upon a time, and funds had to be laid out with care.

"Ham's gone up," the sergeant remarked casually. "It's another tuppence."

"Oh, is it?" grunted Jimmy.

"And a pound of jam comes to another penny now."

"What for?"

"Gone up, you know," said Sergeant Kettle affably.

"Anything else gone up?"

"And bloater-paste is another penny—"
"I suppose the bloaters have got a rise in wages!" said Jimmy Silver sarcastically. The sergeant did not seem to hear.

"And cheese is another a'penny," he remarked. He set out the goods on the counter, and made a calculation. "Two-and-threepence for that lot, Master Silver."

"One-and-tenpence," said Jimmy Silver.

"Two-and-threepence, please."

.. THE ..

ROOKWOOD STORES!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

A MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO., THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

"One-and-tenpence!" roared Jimmy Silver. The sergeant shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, shell out, and let's get off, Jimmy," said Lovell. "I'm hungry, and it's close on bed-time."

"I'm shocked at you, sergeant," said Jimmy Silver. "You're an old soldier, too, and so you ought to know better."

"Prices have gone up, Master Silver," said the sergeant, unmoved.

"Buck up, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"We're not taking any," he said. "Is that lot one-and-tenpence, sergeant?"

"No, it ain't. It's two-and-threepence."

"Then you can keep it!"

"Look here, Jimmy, we can't go down to Coombe at this time of night!" exclaimed Raby. "It's too jolly late."

"We can go without."

"Oh, my hat!"

"It's up to us," said Jimmy resolutely. "If all the fellows were of my mind they wouldn't touch another thing here till the prices were reasonable."

"But what about supper?" demanded Newcome.

"Blow supper!"

"But I'm hungry."

"My dear chap, you'll be much better if you don't eat a lot of supper! Nothing like going into training."

"Look here, I'm jolly well not going into training to do without meals!" exclaimed Newcome. "Don't be a silly ass!"

"Yes, don't be a silly ass, Jimmy," urged Lovell.

"You fellows can please yourselves," said Jimmy. "I'm not taking any. You ought to back me up."

"Are you taking them things?" asked the sergeant stolidly.

"No."

"Please yourself, Master Silver."

"Oh, you're an ass!" growled Lovell. "Let's get out. I suppose we've got to back you up, you howling duffer!"

The Fistical Four left the tuckshop. Tubby Muffin followed them out, and caught Jimmy by the sleeve.

"I say, Silver—"

"Well, fatty?"

"You're not going to spend any money at the tuckshop—"

"No!" growled Jimmy.

"Then I've got an idea!"

"Well?"

"Lend it to me."

"Eh?"

"You won't want it, you know, as you're going without your supper. I'd rather not go without mine, so you can lend me the tin—Yarooooooh!"

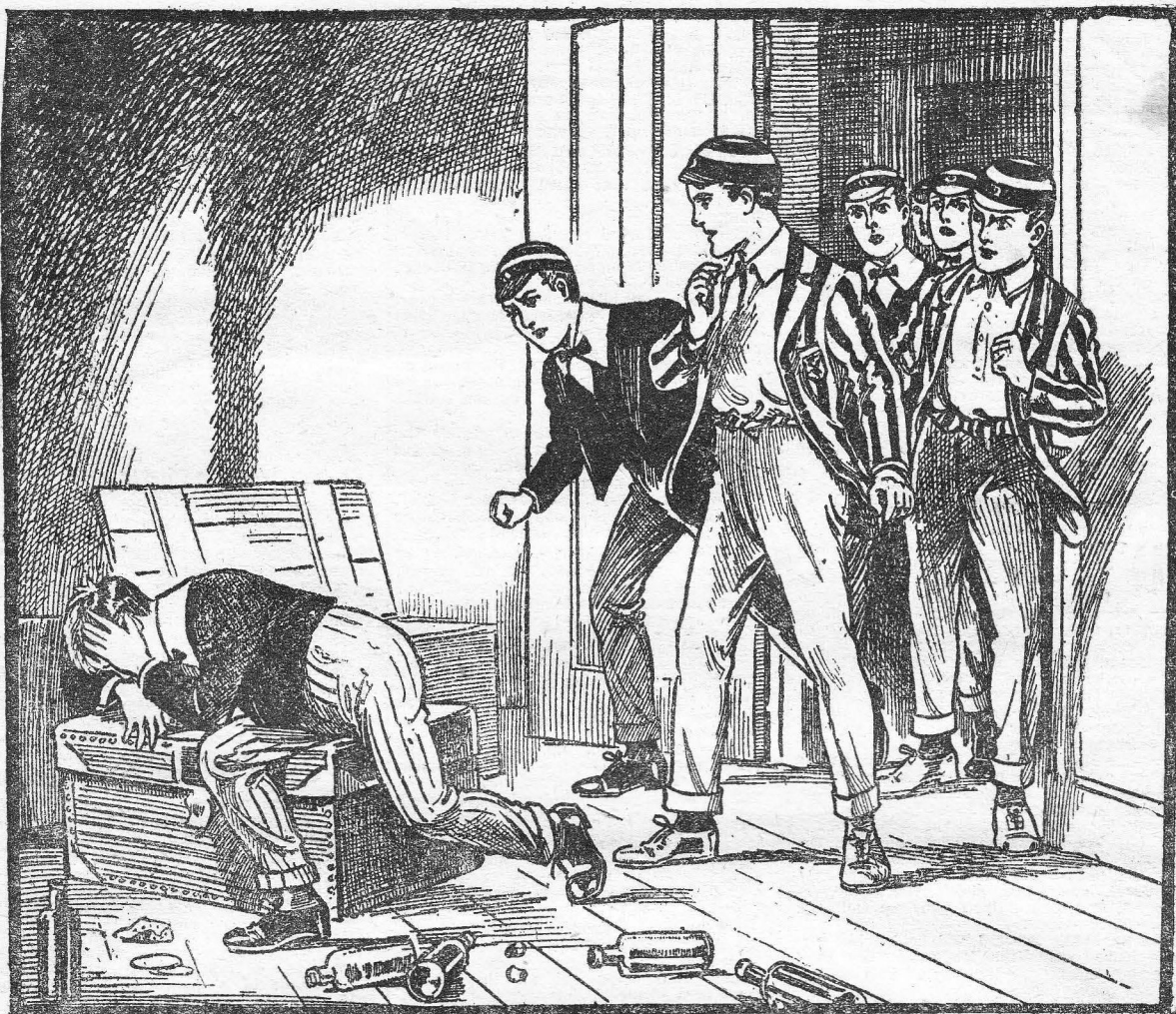
Tubby Muffin found himself sitting down suddenly in the quad, and the Fistical Four walked on and left him there.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Co-operation.

"I've got it!"

Jimmy Silver uttered that exclamation suddenly at tea in the end study the next day.

His eyes were glistening.



Jimmy Silver hurriedly unlocked the door and the Classical Juniors entered. Tubby Muffin was stretched across a trunk, with a face like chalk, his eyes staring wide, groaning from the depths of his heart. (See page 18.)

a ripping idea, and more especially that it would be one in the eye for the Moderns if it was a success.

That it would be a success was a foregone conclusion, according to Jimmy Silver, on the principle that the end study never made mistakes.

There were fifteen shareholders to begin with, and each of them subscribed five shillings, which made a sum of three pounds fifteen shillings. This was quite a moderate capital for a co-operative society, but Jimmy Silver considered that it was sufficient for a beginning.

Later, when the profits rolled in, the dividends could be invested in the business, and it could be conducted on a larger scale.

Indeed, the ambitious Jimmy was already scheming to make the Rookwood Co-operative Stores a permanent institution, with a man in charge, and tuck at reasonable prices for the whole school.

Out of the huge profits an attendant's wages could be paid, as Jimmy explained to the somewhat sceptical end study.

Lovell & Co. had their doubts, but they were willing to give Jimmy his head, as Lovell expressed it. Indeed, Jimmy had to be given his head, anyway.

Fifteen fellows had put down their names as shareholders for a subscription of five shillings each, and the Fistical Four had actually handed in the money, with an extra five shillings from Jimmy as Muffin's share.

But the rest of the subscriptions were a little difficult to collect.

Fellows who entered quite keenly into the scheme found that they were a little short of tin, and several shareholders showed a

disposition to invest on the same lines as Tubby Muffin.

But the energetic Jimmy dunned them without mercy, and the money was gradually shelled out, in some cases the shillings being extracted like teeth.

It was a proud moment for Jimmy Silver when the three pounds fifteen—an imposing sum—lay on the study table.

That same day Jimmy Silver cycled over to Rookham to make his arrangements with the wholesale firm there.

He came back in cheerful spirits. Tommy Dodd & Co. met him as he wheeled his bike in at the gates.

"Well, how's the co-op society going on?" Tommy Dodd asked affably.

"Ripping!"

"You don't want a Modern manager?"

"Thanks, no! We want it to be a success, you know."

"How many terms will it take you to raise the capital?" Tommy Dodd wanted to know. Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"The capital's raised, my son, and spent," he said. "I've just done the trick, and tomorrow afternoon we get the stuff!"

"Gammon!"

"Well, you'll see," said Jimmy. "Three pounds fifteen worth of best tuck; we get it by the carrier to-morrow afternoon, and Smith & Co. pay for delivery. What do you think of that?"

"You're really making it go!" said Tommy Dodd admiringly.

"And we sell at half tuckshop prices," said Jimmy. "Fifty per cent on the prices for non-members; but you'll save money by dealing with us. You can take shares if you like—under the best Classical management."

"Bow-wow!"

"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver wheeled his bike on, and the three Tommies looked at one another.

"Looks like being a success, after all," said Tommy Dodd thoughtfully. "Those Classical asses will be crowing over us if it turns out all right."

"This is where we take a back seat," remarked Tommy Cook.

"No, we don't!" said Dodd emphatically. "We've offered Jimmy Silver to come into the firm, under Modern management. We couldn't say fairer than that. Well, it's up to us to knock it on the head."

"But how?" asked Doyle. "I can tell you the Modern chaps will all be dealing with them soon. They won't pay higher prices at the tuckshop if they can help it."

"It will be a regular corker," said Cook. "We ought to have thought of it, Tommy. We're put in the shade this time."

"It won't be a success," said Tommy Dodd decidedly. "Under Modern management it might be. But those Classics can't manage anything. Suppose they have to open their giddy stores without any tuck?"

"But it's coming to-morrow."
"The carrier's going to deliver it," said Tommy Dodd. "Suppose he delivered it to the wrong chaps."

"Eh?"

"Us, for example!"

"Oh!"

"That's the idea," said Tommy Dodd. "They can't run a co-operative stores without anything to sell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We take possession of the tuck," pursued

The Rookwood Stores.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Must play the game," said Jimmy, as his chums glared at him. "It's only what we might have done to the Moderns if they'd had the brains to think of starting a co-operative stores."

"What's the good of a co-operative stores without any grub?" demanded Raby.

"I—I say, Silver—"

Tubby Muffin came, panting and perspiring, down the road.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Jimmy crossly. "Don't you bother now, Tubby!"

"I—I say, the Moderns—they've got it!" gasped Tubby.

"I know that!"

"They're hiding the packing-case in the wood!"

Jimmy Silver jumped.

"You've seen them?" he exclaimed.

Tubby panted.

"Yes, rather. I trotted along to meet the carrier, as he was late, and saw the beasts. They're sticking the packing-case in the wood, and covering it up with branches and things. And I know just where they're putting it!" trilled Tubby triumphantly.

"Yarrah! Wharrer you at?"

Tubby sat down suddenly as Jimmy Silver gave him a tremendous thump on the shoulder.

"Yow-ow-ow! Wharrer you punching me for?" he roared.

"That wasn't a punch, you ass—that was a token of admiration!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Yow-wow!"

"Call the chaps!" rapped out Jimmy.

"We'll have that packing-case before the Moderns know where they are. Get a dozen chaps, and we'll mop them up!"

"Hurray!"

"Hurray!"

In a few minutes Oswald and Flynn and Biggs and three or four more fellows were gathered. The indignation of the Rookwood co-operators knew no bounds when they learned that their supplies had been seized by the enemy as contraband of war.

Jimmy Silver led the way, and the Classics started up the road, with Tubby Muffin as guide. Tubby had done the distance once at top speed, and he grunted and gasped as Jimmy urged him on. But Jimmy had hold of his fat ear, and it was impossible for Tubby to slacken down.

Jimmy Silver & Co. reached the wood, and Tubby Muffin led them triumphantly to the spot where he had watched the raiders concealing the packing-case.

The case was certainly well hidden, and, but for Tubby's guidance, the Classics would certainly have had no chance of unearthing it.

As it was, however, they found it without difficulty, and the branches and twigs were dragged away, and the prize revealed.

"Good luck!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"You're worth your weight in currency-notes, Tubby! Jolly lucky you have such a nose for grub!"

"I—I say, we'd better open it!" said Tubby eagerly. "I'm hungry—"

"Get it up on your shoulders," said Jimmy.

"We can carry it among us."

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Shurrup! I'll stand you half a dozen tarts when the shop opens!" said Jimmy.

"Now, get under this case, and shut up!"

The case was big and heavy, but there were plenty of carriers. In great triumph the Classics bore it down the road to Rookwood.

There was a howl as they carried it in at the gates.

Tommy Dodd and nearly all the Modern Fourth were coming down from Mr. Manders' House, just ready to start out for the picnic.

Tommy Dodd could scarcely believe his eyes as the Classics marched in with the packing-case, and dumped it down at the porter's lodge.

"They—they—they've found it!" gasped Tommy.

"How did you find it, you rotters?" roared Cook.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you can't dish the Classics, you know!" said Jimmy Silver coolly. "We simply walked straight to the place and picked it up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Somebody must have seen us!" stammered Tommy Dodd.

"He, he, he!" cackled Tubby. "You're done, you rotters! I was watching you all the time. He, he, he!"

The Moderns looked at one another in a sickly way. The picnic was off—very much off. The packing-case was in the porter's lodge, and there it could not be raided. And old Mack, with the assistance of Jimmy Silver & Co., bore it away to the box-room on the Classical side.

"Done!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"And what about the picnic?" demanded Leggett.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Tommy Dodd crossly.

The picnic was off, and for some minutes the disappointed Moderns were busy in telling Tommy Dodd what they thought of him. And the three Tommies could only hide their diminished heads.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Chance of a Lifetime.

TUBBY MUFFIN grunted discontentedly.

Tubby was dissatisfied.

It could not be denied that Tubby had been instrumental in rescuing the property of the co-operative society from the hands of the enemy.

Yet Tubby was hungry, and the supplies were locked up in the box-room, and the key was in Jimmy Silver's pocket.

It was in vain that Tubby had offered to stay in the box-room with the tuck and mind it in case of any further attempts on the part of the enemy.

He joined Mornington & Co. when the Nuts of the Fourth came out to get a little fresh air after playing bridge in the study. They grinned heartlessly when Tubby told his tale of woe, and replied unanimously "Rats!" when Tubby suggested that a small loan would tide him over till tea-time.

"And I saved the tuck from the Moderns," said Tubby mournfully, "and now that awful beast Silver has locked it up. Just as if I couldn't be trusted with it, you know!"

"And, of course, you could!" grinned Mornington.

"Well, I think I'm entitled to a snack,"

said Tubby. "Still, if you like to lend me a bob, Morny—"

"Bow-wow! Why don't you help yourself?" suggested Mornington. The dandy of the Fourth winked at his chums. "You're really entitled to it."

The Nuts grinned. If Tubby Muffin could be started on the tuck, there was not likely to be much left for the co-operative stores at tea-time.

"I can't get at it!" sighed Tubby. "The beast has got the key in his pocket!"

"Unjust, I call it!" said Mornington seriously. "We ought to help Muffin somehow, you chaps. We ought to see him righted."

"Just what I think!" said Tubby eagerly. "Suppose you lend me a bob—"

"Old Mack has keys to all the rooms," said Mornington. "Juniors ain't allowed to lock up the box-rooms and take away the keys. If you mentioned to Mack that somebody has locked the Fourth box-room he'd lend you a key."

"Not unless I tipped him," he said, "and I'm stony."

"Well, I think we ought to see you through, Tubby," said Mornington thoughtfully. "I'll go and speak to Mack, if you like."

"Good egg!" said Tubby heartily.

Mornington sauntered away to the porter's lodge.

He came back in a few minutes, and handed the key to Tubby.

"It's got to be taken back," he said. "You'd better open the door, and give me back the key."

"Night-ho!"

Tubby Muffin's feet fairly flew on the way to the box-room at the end of the Fourth Form passage.

He unlocked the door, and, leaving the key in the outside of the lock, bolted in.

Mornington coolly locked the door after him, and extracted the key.

"I'll take this back to Mack," he remarked. "Isn't it a pleasure to make a dear school fellow happy, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Nuts.

Within the box-room there was a sound of crackling wood. Tubby Muffin was already busy on the packing-case.

Tubby, to do him justice, intended to take only the six jam-tarts Jimmy Silver had promised him.

But to Tubby Muffin six jam-tarts were simply as six drops of water in the deep ocean.

They vanished almost in a twinkling.

Then Tubby eyed the packing-case hungrily. He decided that he would be justified in trying the doughnuts. The co-operative society could put them down to his account. Surely he was, as a shareholder, entitled to run an account! Tubby honestly intended to take only three doughnuts. And he hardly realised that the whole supply was gone before he had finished the last one.

Naturally, Tubby was thirsty.

Ginger-pop was soon popping merrily.

The number of bottles of ginger-pop Tubby found himself able to consume was extraordinary.

Then a big fruity cake tempted him, and he fell.

After that he made no further effort to resist temptation. He was no more capable of temperance than a pig in clover.

It was the chance of a lifetime for Tubby

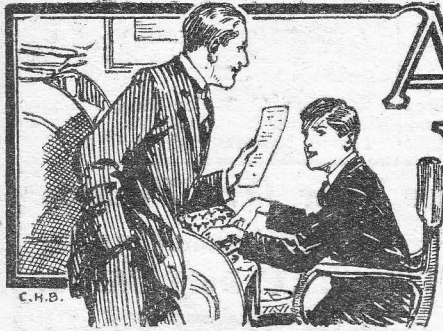


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A TEMPTING PROSPECT.

There were nine pages of a letter just received about the sunshiny land where the Malays live, and where in the past they toyed with the kris. They still sport the gay sarong. The description of life in Malacca, where the canes come from, was alluring, and one wanted to pack up and get off quick to see the flowers and the sunny mists and the hefty palms, with all the other wonders. The gorgeous dragonflies and butterflies go in for a sort of colour competition, and the scenery defies description.

But there is, alas! a cloud to lie silver lining. Same here! When you lie awake in your thatched bungalow you hear a sort of swishing slap on the roof, and you know it is a snake trying to find the window. Then lizards drop down your neck as you sit at dinner, or drown themselves miserably in the soup; while the mosquitoes—well, you may have heard of the romance called "The Three Mosquitoes, and Twenty Minutes After"—or am I thinking of the "The Three Musketeers"?

Anyway, the mosquitoes in this part of the world are very trying. After all, the Old Country has points.

WAITING FOR THE OTHER FELLOW.

This is pretty nearly always a mistake. It is generally best to go in straight, and do the job yourself. The men who come out on top, and of whom the world speaks, are usually those who start out a new line, and do not hesitate to see what may happen, like the two gentlemen in the well-known old rhyme:

"Lord Chatham, with his sword drawn, was waiting for Sir Richard Strahan.
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em, was waiting for the Earl of Chatham."

Well, they both waited, and it did not come to much.

A friend I met the other day—a typical young Englishman, all fire and dash—is of quite another mould. He told me that he thought of starting for the West with an eye to the cinema. He has not been inspired by "Mick o' the Movies." It is a long-cherished notion. He aims at Los Angeles, and, as he is splendidly endowed with most of the qualities which spell fame and fortune, he will probably get there—that is, of course, he will get to Los Angeles if he really decides on the step, but he will also arrive at the terminus of success.

Naturally, it is only about one man in, say, a hundred thousand who could conceivably pack up and trek for the Occident. There are generally too many ties and responsibilities at home. But it is a treat to look at the few exceptions, breaking away from clinging tradition and taking the big route of romance and adventure which leads through the world, accepting the discomforts, and being always ready for what turns up.

I hope in the case of the plucky young chap who contemplates the move to the movies it will be the ace of trumps which turns up all the time.

Please note that I should not dream of advocating anything of the sort to the chums who write to me, and say they want to be film-actors. In most cases they would be well advised to stick to their present jobs like glue. The man I refer to is a man, one of the all-round sort, who is likely to make good wherever he chooses to pitch his tent. Like many another fellow who is going quietly about his business down the street to-day, he did magnificently in the war—the eye-opening war which, like a big tempest, swept away for ever some of the old, narrow-minded views of the world.

"MICK O' THE MOVIES."

A correspondent in South-East London writes to tell me that, while the school stories in the PENNY POPULAR are "really exceptional," he is disappointed in the new serial. He says the tale is good, but he would prefer stories about life at school. And yet the "P. P." has a myriad readers who like to have a change, and who are following the fascinating narrative in question with ever-increasing zest.

I feel that my correspondent is taking a one-sided view. Stories about the big life of the world, which is a sort of continuation school, will always attract, say what this reader may. Besides, Mick and his dog and the life at Los Angeles make up a yarn which is not in any sense ordinary. I hope all my friends will follow this story.

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

This is a bit of good news. A few copies of the "Holiday Annual" may still be obtained from the publisher at these offices, price, with postage, 5s. 6d. Please make a note of the interesting little fact. I mention it because I have received a great number of disappointed letters—that is, the writers were disappointed, and it is all the same in the end, as the old woman said when she found she had taken the wrong circle train, and had to go all round London to get to her destination.

I would much rather my chums were not disappointed. That's why I drop this hint.

A SHORTHAND DIARY.

A correspondent at South Shields says he agrees with the remarks in Chat about the usefulness of shorthand. "I keep my 1920 diary in it," he says. What is more, he wrote a bit of his letter in Pitman, and it was as easy to read as his clear, neat longhand.

My chum is a great chess player, and he seems, in a general way, to be raking in the knowledge at a tremendous rate.

He adds: "I think your Chat is a great asset, and it deserves its name, as it is awfully chatty, and contains items which make most pleasant reading. Some are even educational, which I regard as a good thing."

Many thanks! By the way, the writer not only checks the king in chess, but also the consignments of fish, he being general clerk on the Fish Quay at North Shields.

WHAT ABOUT THIS ?

Questions about Greyfriars are many and various. A reader asks me about the scholarships at the school, also whether any great men have sprung from Greyfriars. Likewise, he wishes to know what Harry Wharton does to his hair!

It was rather an absurd letter, but redeemed by its envelope. As a rule, the inner part is what matters. Here it was different.

The envelope was a small Royal Academy of clever sketches, showing some of the characters in their Sunday best, and with their hair well brilliantined. The postman had hard work to find the address. The sketcher is clever, but he should not puzzle the Post Office. It does not like it.

THE QUEST OF THE CRIMSON STAR.

A correspondent, E. G. Lane, of Bow Road, writes about this famous yarn. There is no need for him to look for the star in question, as he has a copy, and he read the tale again the other day, finding a thrill on every page. "Can I have another story like it?"

I hope so—or, at least, as good! Something, say, about those wireless signals from Mars! Much obliged to my correspondent for his cheery way of putting things.

DELIGHTED DROYLSDEN.

I found in my postbag the following quotation:

"And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Will fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

That is, such will happen, thanks to the Companion Papers which Fred Barry received, and which charmed him mightily. May the famous weeklies continue their good works, and thanks to F. B. for his capital note.

GEMS FROM THE ANTIPODES.

I was not referring to the Companion Paper which shares so many honours with the "P. P.," but to the cheery remarks which reach me week after week from the little old island of Australia.

"We Australians would enjoy a story about Kangaroo. I suppose it is rather selfish."

Not at all. As the French say, Point du tout! Wherever possible I get a story dealing with Australian fellows, but, naturally, they have to take turns. By the way, this correspondent, Charles Cannon, of Leitchhardt, says that Baggy is "over the fence." There is positively no luck for Mr. Trimble these days!

EIGHTEEN MONTHS ON HIS BACK.

I was much impressed by a letter from Luton, written by a lad, aged eleven, who for the past year and a half has been laid up with spine trouble. Hard luck this, but, with the spirit the brave fellow is showing, one is led to hope that he will conquer the terrible business. That is, he has already conquered in a measure, for his philosophy is rising superior to all the sadness of his life.

His letter was a model—full of light-heartedness and self-reliance. He is a great reader, and, to judge from the style of his note, he is putting up as good a fight as ever any soldier did in a tight place. This is the kind of thing that calls for something equal to the V.C.

A TRUE WORD

"As for Grundy, why every decent person likes him. He can't help his feet."

I take that comment from a brainy, breezy letter which comes from Newport, Mon. It is full of good things, and the writer has a generous, warm-hearted way of giving others credit for the best—which method, by the way, is the sure way of obtaining the best.

She—yes, the writer is a girl—likes Levison and Cardew. She asks if Cardew has a mother and father. No; he is an orphan, brought up by his grandfather, Lord Reckness. So far as I know, Racke has no brothers and sisters, and my girl chum need not waste her pity on them, as it would be lost, the said relatives not existing.

Levison has only one sister, Doris to wit. Very hard some of the critics are, too, on Miss Doris.

But to return to George Alfred Grundy. He had been misunderstood to a terrible extent. Let's have justice done to him. He can't help his feet! It is a good, sound notion that. Often enough people are prejudiced because of some outstanding characteristic or oddity. Just as well to remember that they can't help that part. Criticise them, by all means, for what they are responsible for, and can help.

READERS' NOTICES.
Correspondence, Etc., Wanted.

Miss M. Holme, 35, Grove Road, Hawthorne, Victoria, Australia—with readers anywhere, interested in the Companion Papers, age 14-15.

Miss E. Ingham, Euston Avenue, Highgate, S. Australia—with readers anywhere, age 15-17.

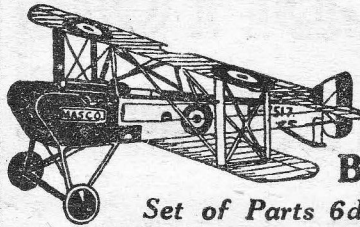
C. Parkin, 54, Brunswick Street, Leamington—with readers interested in fretwork.

L. Wilby, 1, Nelson Place, Williamstown, Victoria, Australia, wants members for the Fairfield Amateur Magazine and Correspondence Club.

D. Webb, Don, via Devonport, Tasmania—with readers anywhere, age 18-20.

A. Lewin, St. Saviour Street, Oudtshoorn, S. Africa—with readers anywhere.

G. Fisher, 12, Station Road, Abingdon, Berks, wants members for the "Thames" Correspondence Club.



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