

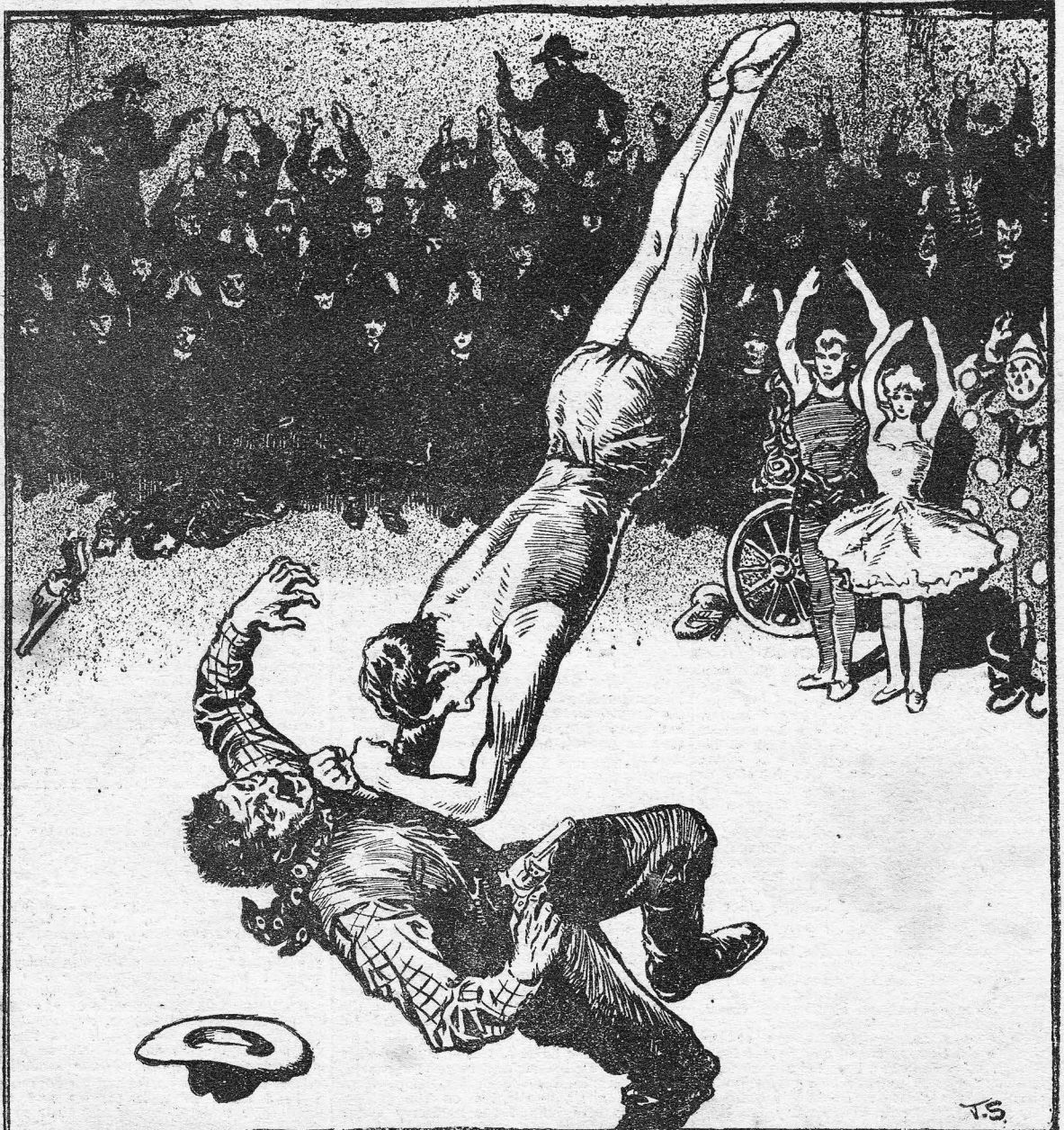
PACKED WITH SCHOOL, ADVENTURE, & DETECTIVE STORIES!

No. 90.  
New Series.

Week Ending  
October 9th,  
1920.

# The $1\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>d</sup> Popular

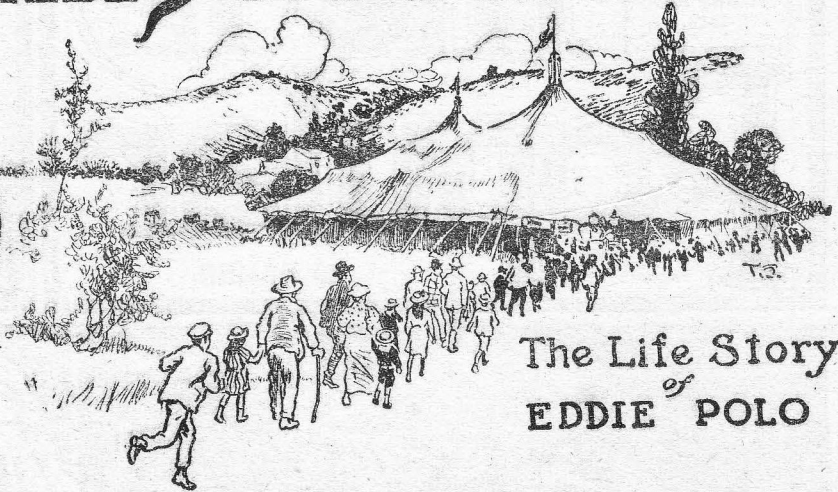
20 PAGES.



**EDDIE POLO'S GREATEST "STUNT"!**—A DIVE THROUGH THE AIR TO  
SAVE THE CIRCUS!  
(A Breathless Incident In Our Grand Story, "FIGHTING FOR FAME!")

A STORY WITH PLENTY OF THRILLING AND DARING STUNTS!

# Fighting for Fame!



The Life Story  
of  
**EDDIE POLO**

*A Thrilling Story of the Famous Film Star's Early Struggles and Triumphs.*

## THE THREADS OF THE STORY.

Eddie Polo, as an unknown boy acrobat, joins Busto's World-Famed Menagerie and Circus in Western America. He quickly makes his mark, and becomes great friends with Ginger, the clown, and Esta, Mr. Busto's charming daughter. By his skill in the ring, however, he incurs the jealousy of Del Rogerigno, the Spanish trapeze artiste, who makes several attempts to get rid of him by means of so-called "accidents."

Finally, in a fit of madness, the Spaniard sets fire to the great tent during the evening performance, and decamps on horseback with Mr. Busto's cash.

Eddie saves the situation by his cool bravery, and pursues Rogerigno, finally securing him. They are stopped by a sheriff, who returns with them to the circus. But he turns out to be a sham sheriff, and, instead of helping them, he makes off with the money and lets the Spaniard free. The circus performance in the new marquee is drawing to a close, when suddenly twelve bandits draw out revolvers and hold up the whole audience. Eddie, at the top of the tent at the time, makes an attempt to get through the roof.

(Now read on.)

## Eddie's Wonderful Dive!

**H**AND over hand, twisting this way and that, climbed the intrepid Eddie Polo, and at last clutched the rope.

He drew himself out on the canvas, and, lying on his face, peered forward. The roof of the tent was as bare as the back of his hand, but there were tracks showing where the knife-thrower had gone down the sloping roof. Inch by inch, foot by foot, using the torn canvas as a rope, Eddie slid down to the edge, and, still flat, peered over it.

For a moment he saw nothing, then, in a shadow cast by a van in the moonlight, he saw a skulking figure. And, even as he looked to make sure that it was Del Rogerigno, a second figure rushed across the moonlit patch of ground and joined the other in the shadow.

"Two of them," gasped Eddie Polo, in wonderment. "Now, who's the other joker? And I'm sure one of 'em is the greaser, though we did pack him off with a flea in his ear this morning. But who's the other chap? Surely it isn't one of the circus crowd. It can't be—everybody's in the tent."

He started at the remembrance of the scene in the tent, as it had met his eye for a second. Everybody had been holding up their hands. Surely it couldn't be an attempt to clean out the citizens? He hadn't heard of any gang of rustlers in that vicinity, and he'd been there a few days, mixing freely with the people.

"Anyhow," he told himself, "it's no use

lying here and waiting for something to turn up. The greaser—and I'm nearly sure it was him dropped that knife—won't come back now, he's seen I'm still alive, and, so far, unharmed. I'll just have a little look inside the circus-tent, and maybe there'll be another stunt I shall be called upon to do. Though how I'm going to get away from this place with a dozen gun-men looking for my blood is more than I know. Never mind, Eddie, my lad! You're not dead yet—and, maybe, you've got a long time to live. This is a situation you must handle—and handle swiftly, too—or it may get out of control."

He clucked to himself as the two skulking shadows slunk off into the night, going well away from the vans and the camp, a yapping dog, broken loose and come to investigate, at their heels. Then he turned, and, very carefully, started to make his way back to the interior of the tent.

It was terrible work, for the stiff canvas, wet with dew, was hard to the fingers. His nails broke, and his finger-ends began to bleed long before he had managed to claw his way back to the place where the flapping flag proclaimed the end of the central tent-pole; but he set his teeth, thankful that he was attired in the tights and singlet of his profession, and not hampered by ordinary clothing.

"Feels like trying to furl a sail in a storm," he muttered, as the wet canvas crinkled in his grip, and, hand over hand, body flat and toes dug in, he drew himself along. And then he jumped, and almost lost his hold.

There came to his ears a sharp crack, and then a bullet tore through the canvas alongside his head, and went whistling past his ear into the night. Again that crack, and again a bullet-hole appeared, but this time a little wider.

"Rotten shot," said Eddie, through set teeth, "whoever he is! I wonder how much the greaser has paid him to get me? Eddie, my lad, this is where you move—and move quickly—lest you roll off the edge of the tent and bring up with a sudden jerk—which may hurt you sadly—against the hard, cruel world down below!"

He raised himself on his knees and elbows, and the man with the pistol, straddle-legged in the centre of the ring below, saw the bulge in the canvas vanish as the lad did so.

And then the bulge appeared again, deeper this time than before. And twice it appeared, as Eddie Polo, his life in his hands, leapt into the air and alighted on the canvas, trying to give himself the necessary spring for the greatest and most daring jump of his adventurous life. And, after the third bounce, he flung himself forward, every ounce

of strength, of skill, and of determination he possessed going to the attempt.

He struck the pole with his shoulder, and the flapping flag smote him across the face like a whip. And then, clinging with both arms and legs to the projecting timber, he insinuated himself into the ventilator-hole, and, wriggling through, found himself with the canvas over his head and the great arena stretched like an aerial map below him.

It was a scene that gave him a thrill. At regular intervals, ranged round the tiers of seats with their backs to the canvas walls, were eleven men, all of whom held a huge Colt automatic in each hand. And these, with the exception of another man in the centre of the ring, were the only people whose hands weren't held high in the air. The man in the ring was he whose smoking gun showed him to be the fellow who had fired at Eddie through the roof, and Polo surmised correctly that he was the leader of the band. They hadn't spared even Esta, and she, with the clown, the strong man, the boxers, and the rest of the circus troupe, were huddled against the band wagon, covered by guns from two sides.

But the man in the centre of the ring, having, as he thought, disposed of Eddie Polo—the sudden absence of the bulge in the canvas overhead made him think that one of his shots had taken effect, and that the acrobat had rolled, a dead body, off the top of the tent already—had turned his attention to the real object of the surprise entertainment—the collecting of the audience's money, rings, watches, and other portable treasures. From his place of concealment in the roof, Eddie could hear his words in the still silence of the place.

"Waal, gents all," he said, with a strong nasal twang, "it's up ter yew ter make things conferrable fer yewreselves. What we wants—me an' my mates—is jest them bits o' yewre portable property as is worth our while collectin'. And I'm figgerin' that any coon as wants ter argify about ther matter 'ad better think twice, 'cos I ain't 'ere fer a long visit, or ther benefit of me health. So, gents all, save yewreselves all ther trouble yew kin, and jest chuck yewre coin and yewre personal adornments right inter this ring pronto, afore me an' my mates starts a-shootin'! And, in case some of yew thinks o' gettin' fresh, I'll jest warn yew all that ther first man as looks as if 'e'd like ter put a hand to ther darw is goin' on a non-stop across ther Divide medium suddint!"

And, as the citizens, having no option, put a hand down to their pockets and drew forth their wads of notes, and their purses, and their watches, and rings, and other gee-gaws, there was one who tried to draw swiftly. The ringman's gun barked, and the

citizen fell forward on his face with a gurgling cry.

"So," muttered Eddie Polo to himself, as he crouched in the tent top, "they're aiming to clean up this show and ruin everybody. That dago's at the bottom of this, I guess. Well, Eddie, my lad, you've only got one life, and you've chanced that a few times, but never in a better cause. This is where you play your last lone hand, and, if that audience hasn't got sense enough to take full advantage of the diversion you're going to create, they deserve to be robbed. Here goes!"

He slid down the central pole rapidly to where the flimsy platform was erected, and so intent upon collecting illicit wealth were the bandits that not an eye spotted him. Only Ginger, the clown, and Esta, the equestrienne, noted the swift passage; only these two saw Eddie crouch low, and then, with all the power and elasticity of his strong legs, launch himself through the air to the trapeze.

Their mingled gasp came to Eddie, but he had not time to look round. Had the guns of an army been suddenly pointed at him the lad would not have noticed them. Only two things could he see—the upper trapeze, a hundred feet above the ground, and the figure of the gunman in the ring.

And now he had caught the flying trapeze in his desperate dive; now he was swinging high through the air, the bar across his middle, his hands locked together above his head, as though he was about to dive from a great height into the sea. He measured the distance as he swung, and there came to him the thought that, whether he was successful or not, the dive must be the very end of his life. Surely he could not hope to escape from collision with the earth, in any case, and the earth was hard and cruel.

He shrugged his shoulders a little, swung again, and then, like a stone from a catapult, a bird rushing to its nest at close of day, with arms outstretched, and legs and body in one straight line, Eddie Polo thrust himself off the flying trapeze, and dived straight downwards, flashing as swift as lightning towards the gunman in the centre of the ring.

Someone shouted in sheer astonishment, Esta and Ginger gasped, and, heedless of the threatening guns, turned to each other. The girl closed her eyes, but Ginger could only stare. Then one of the gunmen recovered his wits, and, swift as light, snapped off half a dozen cartridges, aiming at the swiftly-falling figure of the lad. But he missed, and, before the sound of the last shot died away, Eddie had reached his mark.

As he came, the astounded gunman in the ring, warned by the shout and the upward gaze of the shooter, had turned round and looked aloft. Then he stepped back one pace, but could move no farther. For, with a rushing sound as of a mighty wind, to the accompaniment of a great gasp of astonishment, Eddie Polo was upon the gunman. He opened his hands at the moment of impact, and they caught the gunman clean in the chest. And he went down like a log, with Eddie Polo's form bearing him down, and lying prone above him—lying on his dead body, for the shock of the thrust and the swift bring-up had broken the bandit's neck.

And, as the man fell and Eddie rolled motionless on top of him, Busto and Bud Truefit kept their heads. Both drew revolvers, and, in the twinkling of an eye, each had fired three times, and half a dozen of the gun-holding bandits followed their leader to the ground.

And that was the signal for a sudden swift uprising, the flash of many pistols and the whizzing of many bullets, and the bandits, completely taken by surprise, tried at first to shoot back. Three more fell, and of the remaining two one put up his hands in surrender, and the other tried to bolt. But Bud Truefit got a head on him before he could reach the foot of the stairs leading out of the arena, and he fell forward on his face.

And as he went the enraged audience turned on the remaining survivor of the band, and, had it not been for Busto's swiftness, they would have swung him then and there as high as Eddie Polo's highest trapeze.

But Busto intervened, and demanded that the man should be tried first of all—a request in which he was backed by Bud Truefit and his band of cowboys as well as the sheriff of Texasville.

"This fellow must talk!" said Busto. "He's the only one left, and we want to find out

who put him up to this game. It's obvious that he and his pals weren't alone, because there's that knife dropping from the roof to be explained yet."

"That's 'oss-sense, boss!" said Bud Truefit. "Now, boys, I ain't no bandit, and when the right time comes I'll string the joint up meself with the greatest o' pleasure! But till 'e's found 'is tongue, and said what 'e's a-going ter say, there's no sense or reason in lynchin' 'im. So let bide, as the boss ses, an' presently, after we've seen to the gallant lad who's given 'is life, I'm much-afeered, for our sakes, we'll decide what ter do with this skunk!"

A roar of approval greeted the cowboy's words, and at a sign from him Rex the Strong Man put out a huge fist, and took the trembling bandit into his own personal keeping. Bud Truefit stepped up to the prisoner, his eyes filled with tears.

"Goldarn it, stranger," he said, his voice trembling with emotion, "but yew're onlucky ter-day, I'm thinkin'! Yew'd better make up yewre mind that yew'll tell everythin' yew know, 'cos if that little lad's finished—an' I'm mighty afeered 'e 'is—ther tortures what ther Redskins give ter ther prisoner's in ther early pioneeer days ain't a-goin' ter be even

must have loved—nay, worshipped—the boy who had done so much for them this day. The audience he had saved from being robbed—a trivial affair compared with what he had saved the circus from. Last night the lives of a thousand; this afternoon from ruin and beggary and unemployment; and, again, to-night from the loss of credit which would have resulted on the success of the hold-up, and upon which Garcia del Rogeriguo had counted for revenge against all his enemies.

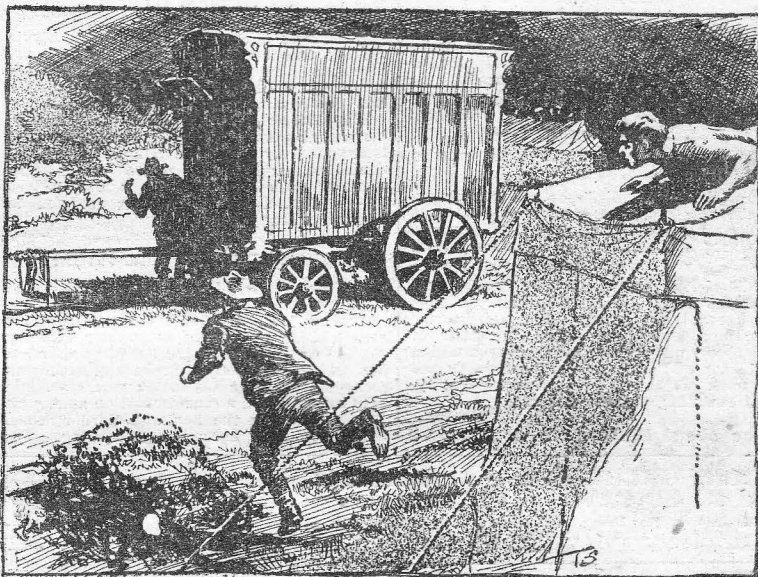
Small wonder the circus people loved him. Why, even the citizens were ready to commit murder for him—to commit murder with the greatest good will.

Swiftly, tenderly, the doctors examined the lad. His heart beat, though faintly and irregularly.

"He stil lives," said the senior doctor, in an undertone, and there went up a great sigh of relief.

"Is he busted up much, guv'nors?" put in Ginger, his face haggard and drawn in spite of the grease-paint and red nose of his clown make-up.

The doctors felt Eddie from head to heel, stopping at all vital points to make sure there was no dislocation or fracture, and the crowd hung breathless till they passed



Eddie peered over the edge of the canvas roof. He saw a dark form rush across the moonlit ground and join another in the shadow of a caravan. (See page 2.)

child's play, to ther dope I'll serve out ter yew meself! Get that? And if yew know of any way of dyin' quick, take it, afore I puts me 'ands on yew fer keeps! 'Cos I kinda loved that Polo kid, I'm tellin' yew—I kinda loved 'im closer than any brother, and I'll clean yew and everythin' as belongs ter yew right off ther map afore I'm through! Keep an 'and on 'im, Rex, but don't break any bones!"

He glared for a mad minute into the bandit's face, and there was the grisly killing look in his eyes. Then he turned and strode into the ring of men around Eddie Polo's still prostrate form.

"Git back a bit, boys," he cried, "and give ther doc room ter work! That lad's worth a 'undred of us all, an' 'e ain't a-goin' ter be robbed of any of his chances of life fer ther sake of curiosity. Git back! Make a ring, an' let 'im fight for life ther second time ter-day!"

They fell back, and the two rough doctors of the village continued their work, after a grateful glance at the big cowboy. One leant over the gunman for a moment, but Busto pulled him aside.

"Don't waste time!" snapped the showman. "That chap's dead; if he ain't, so much ther worse fer him. But ther lad's not dead, I 'ope; but if you let him slip through your fingers 'e'll 'ave company across ther Great Divide,—more company even than 'e 'as now!"

The doctor nodded. He knew full well the rough temper of these men, and how they

onwards again. Over his neck, his ribs, his legs, and his arms they passed; they found no breakage, and yet it was impossible, they thought, that any lad could dive so fast and so far and still be intact. So they felt again, while Busto and Bud Truefit cursed their slowness, but realised that undue haste might mean the death of their favourite. So though they fidgeted they kept silence, that the doctors might work all the better.

"Nothing broken, as far as I can make out," was one's verdict at the end of a bitter ten minutes.

"I'm of the same opinion," added the other. Again that sigh, and, breaking in upon it, the sound of a woman crying for very relief. It was Esta, who had closed her eyes that she might not see the lad's sudden impact against the gunman. Esta, who was afraid she would never again see Eddie Polo's cheery smile or answer his careless, boyish greeting.

But, though Esta was the only one whose sobs could be heard, she was not alone in her weeping. Big strong men blew their noses thoroughly and needlessly. Red Cloud, the stoical Indian, grunted twice—a rare expression of emotion from him—and Rex the Strong Man loosed his hold for a second on the bandit. And the bandit took full advantage of that relapse.

He jumped forward once, and raced across to the stairs leading out of the tent, and it is a question for discussion as to who was really responsible for his death, for when they picked him up, he had more than thirty

# 4 The Last of Dirk Power in "Hunted Down!" a Thrilling Tale--

bullet holes in his body, while, sticking out of his back, was the haft of an Indian knife of the pattern used by Red Cloud for his circus feats.

They carried Eddie away from the tent, through the artistes' entrance, and they walked very delicately across the moonlit sward. Ginger and Esta held his hands on each side, four burly citizens of Texasville hefted him as gently as a child, and never a bump did he feel. But as they carried him up the short flight of steps into Busto's own caravan, he sighed a little, and half opened his eyes, then shut them again.

With trembling fingers Esta flung to right and left the gear that encumbered her own bunk in the van—the fluffy skirts, the tights and spangles of the ring, and a few articles of ordinary attire as well. She shook up, very tenderly, the pillow for Eddie's head, and as they laid him down she drew over him her own best plaid travelling-rug, ordinarily used as a blanket.

Eddie opened his eyes once, and for a second gazed straight into Esta's face. He did not seem to recognise her, and looked uncomprehendingly into the bearded countenances of those who had brought him in. Thence his eyes travelled to the doctor holding his wrist, and then to Busto and Truefit, who pushed aside the worthy citizens in order to get close. But there was no smile of recognition in Eddie's eyes—nothing but a blank, unwinking stare of wonderment.

"Say, you're a lot of strangers, anyway," he said. "But there's one missing. Where's that greaser, Del Rogeriguo?"

Esta pushed her way through the men to Eddie's side.

"It's all right, Eddie," she said soothingly. "You're safe and among your friends. But you don't need to worry about Del Rogeriguo any more; he's hundreds of miles away from here."

Eddie sighed, smiled at Esta weakly, and closed his eyes. He believed the girl, but she was wholly wrong. For Garcia del Rogeriguo, instead of being hundreds of miles away, was at that very moment within ten inches of her feet, concealed under the bed upon which lay his bitterest enemy, Eddie Polo, helpless and unconscious.

(More about Eddie Polo next week.)

## A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASSED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, "THE POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

### FOR NEXT FRIDAY:

A really great programme of stories is due to appear next week, which, I am sure, will receive a cordial reception at the hands of my reader-chums. It includes another splendid instalment of our great Cavalier and Roundhead serial. Harry Temple and his comrades come into touch with Noll Cromwell again, and a fierce battle rages under the shadows of Temple Chase. I have got one of my best artists to draw me a ripping full-size double cover to illustrate this, so make a point of looking out for this next Friday, and also remember the title of this story is

### "THE SWORD OF THE TEMPLES!"

By Edmund Burton.

Mr. Frank Richards also does his bit in making this an attractive number for my chums, and he gives us a really magnificent school story, dealing with Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter is very much to the fore with his ventriloquist tricks, at least, that is what is supposed by the Form fellows. But Billy denies it, and that's where the baffling mystery comes in. And it is only solved by—Well, I will leave that for you to discover when you read

### "SENTENCED BY THE FORM!"

By Frank Richards.

Another instalment of our grand detective serial, which has proved so popular with my readers will also be on the list of good things for next week. Ferrers Locke approaches an amazing climax in his latest new case, and his theories cause a great sensation among his friends and also the Scotland Yard officials. Do not on any account miss reading

### "THE EXPLOITS OF FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE!"

By Maurice Everard.

In his usual unique and masterly style, Owen Conquest gives us another story of Rookwood School. The title is:

### "THE ROOKWOOD DOG-HUNT!"

and, as may be imagined, it is full of fun and lively incident. Scout rivalry plays an important part in this amusing story, and the "hunt" is fast and furious!

In continuation of the amazing life story of

### FAMOUS EDDIE POLO,

next week's narrative will thrill my readers, and grip their interest from start to finish. Do not miss a word of

### "FIGHTING FOR FAME!"

### SPECIAL NOTICE.

Readers of the "Popular" who have just completed making up the model of Greyfriars School, which was published in our companion paper, "Chuckles," will be glad to hear that in the issue of "Chuckles" now on sale there appears the first part of the model of St. Jim's School. Everybody should get that to-day!

Your Editor

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**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
**Drastic Methods!**

**"W**HAT awful check!" Billy Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove, uttered that exclamation.

The fat junior had halted in front of the notice-board in the hall, and his little round eyes were gleaming indignantly behind his spectacles.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "That new bounder's got plenty of nerve, and no mistake!"

Skinner and Snoop and Stott, the cads of the Remove, who drifted up to the notice-board at that moment, agreed with Billy Bunter that it was awful cheek, and that the "new bounder"—meaning Lionel Terry, the newly appointed football coach at Greyfriars—had plenty of nerve.

The notice which roused the ire of Skinner & Co. and Billy Bunter ran as follows:

"The whole of the Remove will assemble on the football-ground this afternoon at two-thirty, in order to practice under the supervision of  
**LIONEL TERRY.**"

It was Wednesday afternoon, and a half-holiday.

Skinner & Co. had planned a little excursion to a retreat in Friar-dale Wood, where they might enjoy the luxury of a quiet smoke. And Billy Bunter had decided to invite himself to tea at Cliff House, where his sister Bessie was a pupil.

But these arrangements were knocked on the head by the announcement which appeared on the notice-board.

"This fellow Terry means business!" said Snoop.

"Compulsory footer! That's what it amounts to," remarked Skinner, with a scowl.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "I think it's a jolly shame! Why should we be bossed about by a low bounder from the London slums?"

"Echo answers 'Why'?" said Stott.

Bolsover major and Trevor and Treluce joined the little group at the notice-board, and the things they said about Lionel Terry, after reading his announcement, would scarcely bear repetition.

Terry was a young fellow of twenty or thereabouts. He was a close chum of Dennis Carr's and a rattling good sort. He had recently passed through some grim adventures. Thrown out of work by the death of his employer, and the subsequent failure of the business, he had tramped the country in search of employment, and the headmaster of Greyfriars had engaged him in a secretarial capacity.

This arrangement had not met with the approval of Sir Hilton Popper, one of the governors of the school. And Terry had been compelled to give up his job. But he had soon been given a fresh one, and one that was far more to his liking—the job of a football coach at the old school.

Terry was a keen sportsman, and, as Snoop had remarked, he meant business. He intended to throw himself heart and soul into his new duties, and the announcement on the notice-board was a beginning.

Harry Wharton & Co. had already seen

# THE SLACKERS' ELEVEN!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of HARRY WHARTON & Co. and LIONEL TERRY at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

that announcement. And they were not at all displeased at the prospect of an afternoon's strenuous exertion on the football-field.

But the slackers of the Remove—the fellows who were now congregated in front of the notice-board were furious.

Billy Bunter continued to let off steam. He rather fancied himself as an orator, and his shrill voice rang through the hall.

"Are we going to be dictated to by a low cad from the slums, you fellows? Are we going to tamely knuckle under to this precious piece of tyranny? Down with this beast Terry and all his works! Those are my sentiments!"

An ominous silence followed this outburst.

Billy Bunter construed that silence to mean that his audience was impressed. He did not know that a young, athletic-looking man had just stepped into the hall, and had paused to listen to his flow of eloquence. And he was too short-sighted to observe the warning glances of his schoolfellows. So he continued merrily:

"This cad Terry has wormed himself into the Head's good books, and just because he's been given the job of footer coach he thinks he's a Lord High Everything! He imagines—the low-down waster!—that he's cock of the walk, and that he can take liberties with us, the sons of gentlemen! What are you making faces at me for, Skinner?"

"Shurrup, you ass!" muttered Skinner.

"I refuse to shut up! I'm an outspoken sort of fellow, and I'm not afraid to say straight out what I think of this rotter Terry! He's a cad and a beast and an upstart and an outsider! And I'd tell him so to his face if he were here!"

"He is!" muttered Bolsover major.

"Eh?"

"He's just behind you!"

"W-w-what!"

Billy Bunter spun round with a startled gasp. And he nearly fell down as he encountered the stern gaze of Lionel Terry.

"Oh crumbs!" he muttered. "I've fairly put my foot in it now!"

"You have!" said Terry grimly. "What do you mean by making such grossly disrespectful remarks about me, you young rascal?"

"I—I—"

"I should be quite justified in hauling you up before your Form-master," said Terry. "But, as this is your first offence, I shall take no action!"

Billy Bunter drew a deep breath of relief. He had scarcely expected such leniency on the part of "a low cad from the slums."

Terry addressed himself to the group of juniors.

"It's two-thirty," he said. "Get down to the football-ground at once!"

There was a loud murmur of protest.

"You're not a master," said Bolsover major, "and you've no right to order us about!"

"Do as I tell you!" said Terry sternly.

"And supposing we refuse?"

"Then I shall call upon a number of prefects, with ashpants, to assist in enforcing my order!"

"Oh!"

Bolsover saw that Terry meant business. And he was wise enough not to defy the commands of the new football coach. He turned on his heel, and strode sullenly away; and the rest of the juniors, after some hesitation, followed.

"No use kicking against the new mer-

chant," said Bolsover. "The beaks will back him up, if we don't obey orders!"

"That's so!" grunted Skinner. "But it's a jolly shame that our half-holiday should be spoilt like this!"

"Hear, hear!"

Quite a crowd of Removites were already assembled on Little Side. They were in football garb, and they grinned as Skinner & Co. came into view.

"Here come the merry slackers!" said Bob Cherry. "Got your shooting-boots on, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Terry means to stand no nonsense!" said Dennis Carr. "And I don't blame him! It's high time the slackers were put through their paces!"

"Yes, rather!"

Terry arrived on the ground a few moments later. He smiled good-humouredly at the crowd of juniors.

"All here?" he inquired.

"I think so," said Harry Wharton, looking round.

"Better make certain," said Terry.

And he produced a notebook, in which the names of all the Removites were recorded. Then he called the roll.

There were two absentees—Fisher T. Fish and Wun Lung.

"Anybody know where Fish is?" asked Terry.

Nobody knew.

"Or Wun Lung?"

"Enjoying a pipe of opium in his own study most likely!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Terry turned to Harry Wharton.

"You and Carr can pick sides," he said, "and start playing right away."

The sides were duly chosen, and there were several juniors left over, including Skinner & Co., Billy Bunter, Lord Mauleverer, and Alonzo Todd.

"What about us?" demanded Skinner sullenly.

"There's another playing-pitch available," said Terry. "You can get ready for action. I intend to take you myself, as soon as I've routed out the two absentees. Wharton! Kindly see that nobody leaves the ground in my absence!"

The captain of the Remove nodded. And Terry went off in search of Fisher T. Fish and Wun Lung.

Those two bright youths were engaged in "dodging the column," to use an Army expression. They had seen Terry's announcement on the notice-board, and they had mutually decided to give the football-ground a wide berth. They had adjourned to the tuckshop immediately after dinner, and, although a full hour had elapsed they were still there, seated on stools in front of the counter.

"I guess that galoot Terry won't find us in this hyer place of refreshment!" said Fish.

And Wun Lung chuckled.

As it happened, however, the tuckshop was the very first place at which Terry called. He halted on the threshold, with a grim glance at the two truants.

"Can I serve you with anything, sir?" asked Mrs. Mibble respectfully.

"No, thanks, ma'am!" said Terry. "I've called to remove two of your customers—by force, if necessary. Why aren't you on the football-ground, Fish?"

The Yankee junior looked up defiantly. "I guess football's a mug's game!" he said. "That's all the more reason why you should be on the field!"

Fish scowled. When anybody hinted or implied that he was a mug it "got his mad up," as he would have expressed it.

"I sorter calculate that I'm staying hyer!" he said. "I wouldn't mind taking part in an exciting game of baseball. But football—shucks! It makes me tired!"

"Did you see my announcement on the notice-board?" demanded Terry.

"Yep."

"And you deliberately set my orders at defiance?"

"Yep."

Fish fondly imagined that he could "cheek" Terry as much as he liked. He considered that a football-coach was a very unimportant person indeed—a sort of menial, on a par with Gosling the porter.

"I guess you can go and chop chips!" he said.

Terry ignored this remark, and turned to Wun Lung.

"Why aren't you on the football-ground?"

"Me no savvy."

"Did you see my announcement?"

Wun Lung nodded.

"Then why didn't you obey my orders?"

"Me no savvy," repeated the Chinese junior.

Terry was a good-tempered fellow, but there was a limit to his patience. He was not prepared to argue with Fisher T. Fish and his fellow-truant. And his next move was very sudden and startling.

The Yankee junior found himself gripped round the waist, and swung off the stool on which he had been seated. He wriggled and squirmed in Terry's grasp, but his struggles were of no avail.

At the same time Terry had jerked Wun Lung off his perch, so that he had a junior under each arm.

With a cheery nod to the alarmed Mrs. Mumble, Terry strode out of the tuckshop with his human burden.

Both Fish and Wun Lung were light-weights, and as Terry was as strong as a lion he had little difficulty in conveying his captives to the football-ground.

A few moments later Harry Wharton & Co. witnessed the amusing spectacle of Terry arriving on the ground with Fisher T. Fish under one arm and Wun Lung under the other.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Talk about a giddy Samson!"

"Terry believes in drastic measures!"

chuckled Dennis Carr.

The football-coach suddenly released his grasp, and his two unwilling recruits fell floundering into a muddy puddle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The onlookers held their sides and roared. And the victims roared, too—with anguish.

"Now that we're all here," said Terry, with a smile, "we'll get to business!"

And the slackers of the Remove groaned in a dismal chorus.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### In the Toils!

**B**ILLY BUNTER rolled up to Terry with a woful expression on his plump countenance.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you?" inquired the new coach.

"Ow! I—I feel quite ill!" muttered the Owl of the Remove.

"I'm not surprised," said Terry. "You can't expect to be in good health when you're all fat and no muscle. What you need is plenty of exertion."

"Groo!"

"Go and stand in the goalmouth, and I'll give you some shots to save."

"I—I'm sorry," stammered Bunter, "but I can't possibly play!"

"Whem! Why can't you?"

"Ahem! I've just remembered that two of my titled relations are coming to see me this afternoon."

"In that case your titled relations can come down to the ground and see you perform."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Go and guard that net!" commanded Terry.

Billy Bunter could think of no more excuses at the moment. And there was a look on Terry's face which clearly showed that he meant to be obeyed. So the Owl of the Remove reluctantly took up his position in the goalmouth, and Terry beckoned to Bolsover major to pass him the ball.

"I don't know if you've had any goal-keeping experience before, Bunter," Terry said, "but the object is to prevent this leather sphere from entering the net. You can keep it out; you can boot it out; you can fist it out by any method you like. See?"

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Billy Bunter saw all right. But only for a moment. For when Terry lobbed the ball gently towards the goalmouth, the fat junior stopped it with his face. His spectacles were knocked off, and he was half-blinded with mud.

"Yarooooh!" he roared.

"I can clearly see that you'll never make a Sam Hardy," said Terry, with a sigh.

"Still, we'll persevere with you. See if you can stop this one!"

"Yow! I've had enough!" moaned Billy Bunter.

"Stay where you are!" said Terry sternly, as the fat junior was about to come away from the posts.

So Bunter remained, and Terry tried another shot.

More by accident than design, the Owl of the Remove got his fist to the ball, and it came whizzing out on to the field of play.

"Splendid!" said Terry. "You're improving already! Now I'll give you a really fast one to stop!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter, in alarm. "Pip-pip-please can I clear off now? My titled relations will be along in a minute!"

"Your titled relations—if any—can keep off the grass!" said Terry. "Ready?"

"Ow!"

Terry sent in a scorching shot, and Billy Bunter promptly put up his hands in order to protect himself. In so doing he contrived to save not only his skin, but the shot.

The ball rebounded to the feet of Terry.

"Hot stuff!" said the football-coach approvingly. "You'll get your International cap yet, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter brightened up considerably. He was too obtuse to see that Terry was waxing sarcastic at his expense.

"Yes, I'm pretty good, what!" he said. "I shouldn't be surprised if Wingate approached me and asked me to keep goal for Greyfriars First."

"I should!" said Terry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Now, Todd!" said the coach, beckoning to the guileless Alonzo, who was standing in the offing. "Come and see if you can put the ball past Bunter."

Alonzo came forward rather doubtfully.

"I regret to state that my footballing capabilities are of a somewhat mediocre character," he said.

"Great Scott!" gasped Terry. "You haven't swallowed a dictionary by any chance, have you?"

"No, my dear fellow. I merely vouchsafed the observation—"

"Stow it!" said Terry. "Now, let's see if you can steer that ball into the net."

Alonzo rolled up his sleeves, and an expression of unusual ferocity came over his face.

"Beware, my dear Bunter!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm quite ready, Lonzy!" chuckled the fat junior.

Alonzo took a flying-kick at the leather. A huge lump of mud was churned up by his boot, but the ball remained exactly where it was. It had not been touched!

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo, in great surprise. "How very remarkable!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try again!" said Terry encouragingly.

And Alonzo prepared to renew his onslaught.

Billy Bunter stood in the goalmouth with legs akimbo, and a broad grin on his face. But the broad grin soon vanished when the ball, coming in from Alonzo's foot like a stone from a catapult, smote the plump custodian full in the chest, and caused him to sit down violently in the mud.

"Good for you, Todd!" said Terry. "Every time you do that, you get your money back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo turned to the coach with a beaming smile.

"Am I improving, my dear fellow?" he asked.

"Improving? Why, you'll be playing centre-forward for Tottenham Hotspur, if you go on at this rate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Had enough, Bunter?" inquired Terry.

"Groo—yes!" panted the fat junior, scrambling to his feet.

"Then somebody else can take a turn. Skinner!"

"I'm not going to be made a target of!" growled Skinner.

"Get in goal!" said Terry sharply. "You

don't want me to carry you there, I suppose?"

That threat caused Skinner to make hurried tracks for the goalmouth. And his experiences, when he got there, were no less painful than Billy Bunter's had been.

After various exhibitions of how to keep goal—or, rather, how not to keep goal—had been given, Terry instructed his pupils in the gentle art of shoulder-charging.

The slackers were compelled to struggle with each other for possession of the ball, and it was a highly diverting spectacle.

There were numerous casualties, and by the time the period of tuition came to an end Terry's pupils were plastered from head to foot with mud.

They had had more than enough.

Even Bolsover major, who could really play quite a passable game of football, was "whacked."

Billy Bunter was groaning, Skinner was gasping, and Fisher T. Fish was grunting. Lord Mauleverer was complaining of "that tired feelin'," and there were loud lamentations from the others.

The appointment of Lionel Terry as a football coach at Greyfriars had caused quite an upheaval amongst the slackers of the Remove.

They were hoping that that afternoon's experience would be the first and only one of its kind.

But Terry had no intention of relaxing his grip on the reins. He kept the slackers up to the mark, and made them turn out for practice at every available opportunity.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Lord Mauleverer, as he limped off the field one afternoon, almost dropping with fatigue. "Terry's a hard task-master, begad! Wish I could find some quiet place where the wicked cease from troublin' an' the weary are at rest."

"Same here, Mauly!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm wastin' away to a shadow!"

"I haven't noticed it, dear boy," said Mauly. "You seem as substantial as ever!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This man Terry," said Bolsover major, "needs to be quietly strangled on a dark night. He's making life absolutely unbearable. And why he should number me amongst the slackers I don't know!"

"Britons never shall be slaves!" said Skinner ironically. "And yet we're kept in iron fetters all the time by this beast Terry."

"Shame!"

"I sorter calculate that this merchant Terry wants boiling in oil," said Fisher T. Fish.

"If he lives in China we choppee office headee!" said Wun Lung.

"I'm afraid we couldn't go quite so far as that in a civilised country," said Bolsover.

"But we ought to make the boulder sit up somehow!"

When the slackers entered the school building they were met by Dennis Carr.

"Heard the latest?" asked Dennis, with a grin.

"Well?" snapped Skinner, who disliked Dennis Carr intensely, partly because he was a chum of Terry's.

"A slackers' eleven is being raised," said Dennis.

"Eh? Who by?"

"Terry, of course! Now that you've had a good spell of training, he's going to make you play a real match."

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Skinner.

"Who have we got to play, dear boy?" asked Lord Mauleverer nervously.

"The Fifth."

"Wha-a-a-t!"

There was a startled gasp from the Remove slackers.

The prospect of being pitted against the stalwarts of the Fifth Form was anything but pleasant.

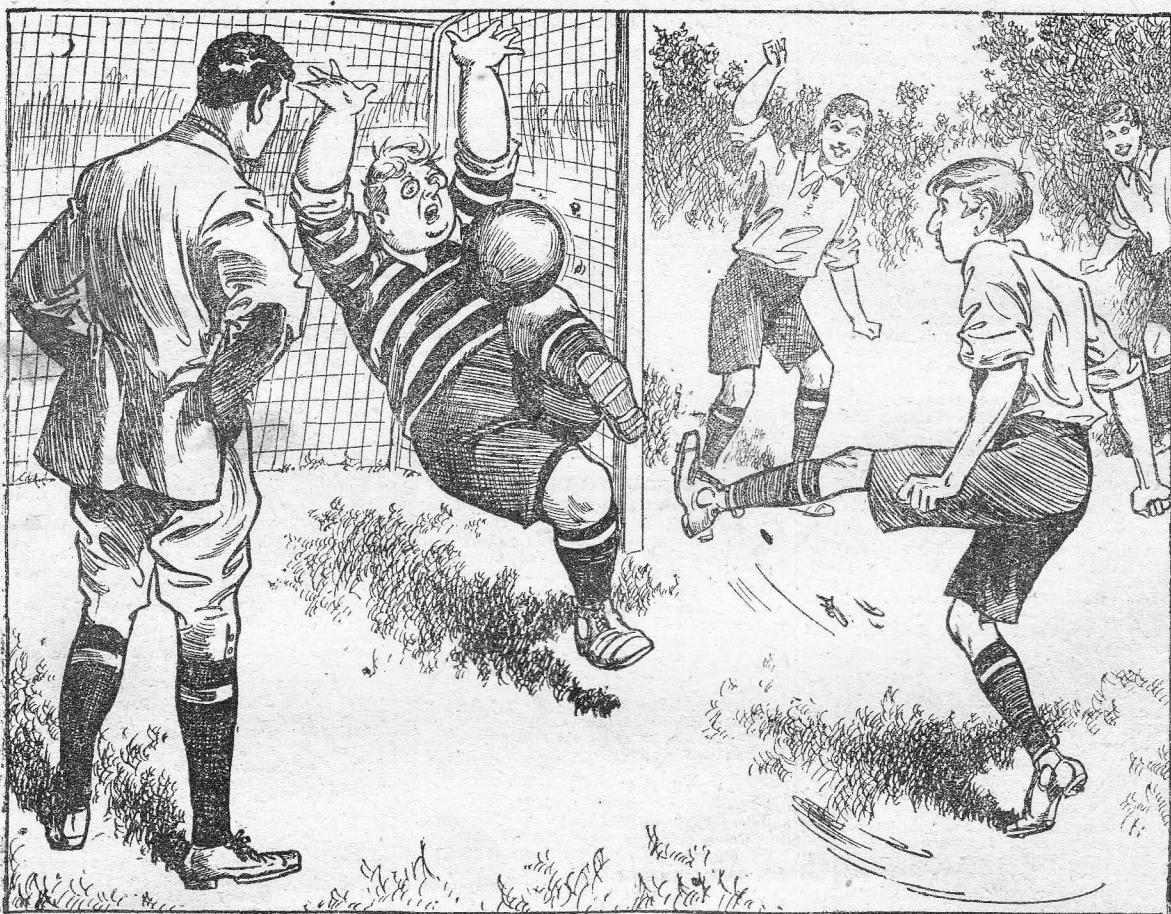
"I don't believe it!" said Bolsover at length.

"It's true enough," said Dennis Carr, with a chuckle. "The match is coming off to-morrow afternoon."

There was a chorus of protest and alarm from the slackers. They had already been made to look ridiculous in the eyes of their schoolfellows, and the additional humiliation of having to play the Fifth fairly put the lid on it, so to speak.

But there was always the chance that Dennis Carr was indulging in the gentle pastime of leg-pulling. And the slackers of the Remove fervently hoped that such would prove to be the case.

But they were doomed to disappointment.



The ball left Alonzo's foot like a stone from a catapult. It smote Bunter in goal full in the chest, and caused him to sit down violently in the mud. "Good for you, Alonzo!" said Terry. "Every time you do that you get your money back!" (See page 6.)

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Wheeze that Wouldn't Work!

**N**EXT morning a further announcement appeared on the notice-board in the hall—an announcement which caused weeping and gnashing of teeth amongst the slackers of the Remove.

#### "NOTICE!

A football match will be played this afternoon between the Fifth Form and a specially selected Remove Eleven, as follows:

Goal: W. G. Bunter; Backs: Bolsover and Trevor; Half-backs: Skinner, Snoop, and Stott; Forwards: F. T. Fish, A. Todd, H. Mauleverer, Trelice, and Wun Lung.

Kick-off 2.30. A record attendance is expected.

(Signed) LIONEL TERRY,  
Football Coach."

The Fifth-Formers were vastly amused by that announcement. Blundell, their skipper, declared that it would be infra dig, to play a match against such a freak eleven; but the others said that it would be great fun. And Horace Coker, who managed to persuade Blundell to give him a place in the team, declared that the Fifth would romp home to the tune of about twenty-five goals to nil.

As for Skinner & Co., and Billy Bunter, and Fisher T. Fish, and Lord Mauleverer, and Wun Lung, they were in a state of great alarm and apprehension. And some of them were defiant, into the bargain.

"Catch me playing!" growled Bolsover major.

"But you've got no choice in the matter, old man," said Skinner.

"Dashed if I'm going to turn myself into a prize comedian by playing with a set of freaks!" said the bully of the Remove.

"But how are you going to avoid it?" asked Stott.

"You'll see!"

Then the breakfast-gong sounded, and the slackers trooped disconsolately into the dining-hall.

Mr. Quelch was presiding, as usual, at the head of the Remove table, and the Form-master had the shock of his life when Bolsover major clutched him by the arm and nearly dragged him off his perch.

"Bolsover!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "How dare you!"

And then, to the stupefaction of the Remove-master and to the utter astonishment of the juniors, Bolsover major suddenly collapsed on the floor. And a deep groan reverberated through the hall.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, in alarm. "What ever is the matter, Bolsover?"

"Gerooooooh!"

"Are you ill, boy?"

For answer, Bolsover closed his eyes, and his form stiffened.

"Dear me! He appears to have fainted!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "It is remarkable, seeing that the colour has not ebbed from his cheeks. Wharton! Cherry! Carr! Pray remove your unfortunate schoolfellow to the sanatorium!"

The juniors thus addressed jumped up from their seats, and with great difficulty they managed to lift the inanimate form of the bully of the Remove.

Amid a buzz of excitement Bolsover major was carried out of the dining-hall. He groaned faintly once or twice, but as soon as he was outside the groans were converted into chuckles.

"Shamming!" said Bob Cherry. "Thought as much!"

"Bolsover, you rotter," said Harry Wharton, "what do you mean by it?"

"Shush!" muttered Bolsover. "Don't give me away, for goodness' sake!"

Dennis Carr's lip curled contemptuously.

"I can see what the little game is," he said. "Bolsover wants to dodge the match this afternoon."

"My hat!"

"I think we ought to report this to Terry," said Harry Wharton.

Bolsover turned fiercely upon the captain of the Remove.

"If you do," he said, "I'll have you branded as a sneak up and down Greyfriars."

"You—you—"

"We can't very well give him away," said Bob Cherry, "and he knows it. But there's nothing to prevent us from giving him a jolly good bumping!"

"Nothing at all!" said Dennis Carr. "Here goes!"

And the malingerer was soundly bumped on the floor of the passage.

Bolsover's yells of anguish penetrated to the dining-hall, and it was generally believed that he had recovered from his faint, and was suffering agonies.

Having bumped the bully of the Remove until he was aching all over, Harry Wharton and his two assistants dragged their victim away to the sanatorium.

On the landing they encountered the matron.

"Dear me!" said that good lady, in alarm. "What has happened?"

"Bolsover's feeling rather groggy, ma'am," said Bob Cherry. "I should advise you to keep him in bed for a few days, and feed him on thin gruel every four hours."

Bolsover groaned—a perfectly genuine groan this time. He was already beginning to regret having feigned illness. It would have been bad enough to have to play in the match against the Fifth, but it would be even worse to be detained in the sanny and fed with gruel. Bolsover realised that he had jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Having left the bully of the Remove to the tender mercies of the matron, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry and Dennis Carr returned to the dining-hall. They arrived

just in time to see Skinner of the Remove collapse at the breakfast-table.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "There appears to be quite an epidemic of fainting this morning!" Skinner!

There was no reply from the cad of the Remove. He was sprawling limply across Stott's knees, and Stott was looking down at him very compassionately.

Mr. Quelch beckoned to the three juniors who had removed Bolsover.

"Take Skinner out into the Close," he said. "Fresh air and some water from the fountain should revive him. And if he should still be feeling ill, you had better take him to the sanatorium."

"Very good, sir," said Wharton. "And Skinner was carried out of the Hall. "Bring him along to the fountain!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll jolly soon revive him!"

Skinner started to struggle as soon as they were outside the dining-hall. But there was no escape for him. He was borne along to the fountain, and his head was ducked in the wide and brimming bowl of water.

"Gerooogh!" spluttered Skinner frantically. "Gug-gug-gug!"

"Got over your fainting-fit?" inquired Dennis Carr.

"Oooooooo-och!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The ducking was repeated, and Skinner was stood on his feet. The water streamed down his face, and his hair was matted. He shook his clenched fist furiously at his school-fellows.

"You rotters!" he spluttered. "You beastly hooligans—"

"I think he wants another ducking!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

Skinner promptly took to his heels. He sped across the Close like a champion of the cinder-path. And he did not halt until he reached the sanatorium, where he explained to the matron that he was suffering from nearly every ailment known to the medical profession.

The cad of the Remove was allotted a bed next to Bolsover's. And during the interval between breakfast and morning school reinforcements arrived in the sanatorium.

Trevor and Treluce came up the stairs, coughing and wheezing like old men of ninety. And they coughed and wheezed so successfully that the matron was deceived into thinking that they had either hay-fever or whooping-cough. Anyway, she bundled them off to bed, and said that if there was no improvement during the morning she would have to summon the doctor from Friar-dale.

Snoop and Stott were the next arrivals. They complained of severe chills, and both were shivering as if they had the ague. Their faces were blue with cold—or perhaps it was due to a judicious application of blue chalk. Anyway, they both gave the impression of being very ill.

In one of the wards, which contained half a dozen beds, the schemers of the Remove were herded together. And those who had no breakfast were served with plates of thin gruel.

"Ugh!" grunted Bolsover major, making a wry face after he had lifted a spoonful of the liquid to his mouth. "This stuff's perfectly awful!"

"Never mind!" said Trevor. "We sha'n't have to face the Fifth this afternoon and a grinning crowd of sightseers!"

"No; that's one consolation!" said Treluce. It certainly seemed as if the match with the Fifth would have to be postponed.

With six members of the slackers' eleven in the sanatorium, it would be impossible to play the fixture.

When Mr. Quelch went into the Remove Form-room to conduct morning lessons he was astonished to find that no less than six of his pupils were absent.

"Where are Snoop, Stott, Trevor, and Treluce?" inquired the Form-master.

"In the sunny, sir," said Bulstrode.

"Bless my soul! Are they all ill?"

"Couldn't say, sir. But they will be as soon as the matron's fed them with gruel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch, frowning upon the class. "If this ribald merriment does not cease— Why, good gracious, Bunter, what is the matter?"

The Owl of the Remove was sprawling on his back, on the form, with his face contorted, and with his legs wildly thrashing the air.

"Yaroooogh!" he screamed shrilly.

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"Stow it, you fat idiot!" muttered Dennis Carr. "Anybody can see that you're putting it on!"

Mr. Quelch looked grim as that piercing scream rang through the Form-room.

"Bunter!" he rumbled.

"Ow-ow-ow! Yessir?"

"How dare you behave in this manner?"

"Yow! I'm in agony, sir!"

"This is a ruse on your part, Bunter, in order that you may be excused lessons, and sent to the sanatorium!"

"Nunno, sir! I assure you—"

But Mr. Quelch refused to accept the fat junior's assurance. He ordered him to come out before the class, and then administered three strokes on each hand with the pointer. Billy Bunter was obviously suffering then, and the yells which rang through the Form-room were quite genuine.

"Now go to your place!" rapped out Mr. Quelch, when the ordeal was over. "And do not dare to attempt to deceive me again!"

Groaning dismally, Billy Bunter rolled back to his place. And then, without a word of explanation to the class, Mr. Quelch suddenly turned, and swept out of the Form-room.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### An Amazing Triumph!

**S**KINNER, BOLSOVER & CO were not expecting visitors. And it was a surprise—and something of a shock—to them when Mr. Quelch suddenly appeared in the sanatorium.

The Remove-master discovered the six malingersers sitting up in bed in their pyjamas, exchanging lively conversation. But the voices died suddenly away when the juniors had become aware of Mr. Quelch's presence.

"Ah!" said the Form-master grimly. "So this is a wholesale deception?"

"Nunno, sir!" stammered Skinner.

"You are malingering—all of you!"

"No, sir!"

"Not at all, sir!"

"You're quite mistaken, sir!"

Mr. Quelch crossed over to the mantelpiece, and took down the thermometer.

"I intend to take your temperature," he said. "Now, Skinner!"

The cad of the Remove reluctantly placed the thermometer in his mouth. Probably he was wishing it was a cigarette.

After the necessary interval had elapsed Mr. Quelch took the instrument, and examined it.

"Normal!" he said tersely. "Get your clothes on, Skinner, and go down to the Form-room!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Now, Bolsover!"

Bolsover's temperature was normal also. So was Snoop's and Stott's and Trevor's.

Treluce, whose bed was near the fireplace, made an effort to warm the thermometer when Mr. Quelch wasn't looking. Unfortunately, the Remove-master turned and caught him in the act.

"How dare you, boy?" he exclaimed sternly. "Hand me that instrument at once, and get up!"

"But I'm ill, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"I'm suffering awful pain, sir—"

"You will be able to say that with perfect truth in a few moments!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Get up and dress, all of you, and go down to the Form-room, where I will deal with you as you deserve!"

The slackers of the Remove realised the futility of further deception. And they reluctantly got into their clothes, and went downstairs.

Shortly afterwards, sounds of steady swishing emanated from the Remove Form-room, accompanied by various notes of anguish, in treble and bass and falsetto. Bolsover major supplied the bass and Skinner the falsetto. The remainder were trebles.

"Now go to your places!" said Mr. Quelch, laying aside the pointer. "I have a good mind to deprive you of all your half-holiday this afternoon—"

The culprits looked up hopefully. They would have welcomed such a punishment with open arms, so to speak, for it would have precluded their taking part in the football match.

"I shall not, however, take that step," Mr. Quelch went on.

"Oh crumbs!"

The slackers had to resign themselves to the inevitable.

No chance of escape presented itself after dinner, for Terry founded up the members

of the Slackers' Eleven, and, after supervising them while they changed into football garb, he escorted them on to the field of play.

An enormous crowd had gathered round the touchline to see the fun.

The Fifth fielded their usual side, with one exception. The exception was Horace Coker.

Coker played football in a manner which would have made the angels weep. But Blundell, who skipped the side, considered that there would be no harm in playing Coker when the result—a smashing victory for the Fifth—was a foregone conclusion.

Terry acted as referee, and there was an ironical cheer as the ball was set in motion.

There was only one team in it at the start.

The Fifth Form forwards raced away, and Blundell, beating the backs, was left with an open goal.

Billy Bunter, who was holding the fort for the slackers waited expectantly for the leather to come whizzing in. But it never came. For at that moment Coker charged Blundell heavily off the ball, which rolled to the feet of Bolsover major, who punted it up the field.

Blundell was almost speechless with rage and vexation.

The game proceeded on very one-sided lines. The slackers of the Remove were outclassed, and would have been completely overwhelmed but for the merry antics of Coker, who continued to charge his own men off the ball.

A casual spectator would have imagined that Coker was selling the match. For he prevented the Fifth from scoring on at least half a dozen occasions.

When half-time arrived, the score-sheet was blank, and there was quite a commotion amongst the spectators.

The slackers' eleven were actually on level terms with their hefty opponents of the Fifth!

When the game was resumed the slackers played up surprisingly well. They were doubtless encouraged by the fact that the Fifth had been unable to secure the lead.

Bolsover and Trevor, at back, defended stoutly. The halves were not brilliant, but they were triers to a man. And in the forward line Lord Mauleverer and Treluce played real football. Mauly had been half asleep during the first half, but he was wide-awake now, and the bouts of passing between him and Treluce called forth the applause of the crowd.

The Fifth were still having the better of the exchanges, of course. And on one occasion Potter and Green kept Coker out of the way—literally holding him off—while Blundell made a dash for goal.

The Fifth-former sent the leather whizzing in, but Billy Bunter's plump fist met the ball, and turned it round the post.

"Bravo, Bunter!"

"Well saved, sir!"

It had been a gigantic fluke. But Billy Bunter swelled with pride.

With only ten minutes to go, the score-sheet was still blank. And then Lord Mauleverer broke away, and made a dangerous raid on the Fifth Form goal. Coker saw him coming, and for once in a way he decided to tackle a member of the opposing side. But he made the fatal mistake of tackling him with hands! He pushed Mauly off the ball, and there were loud cries of:

"Foul!"

"Penalty!"

Terry pointed to the penalty-mark, and Bolsover major came up and took the kick. He sent the leather crashing into the net, amid wild whoops of applause.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"The slackers are on top!"

In the closing stages the Fifth-formers played up desperately. But Bolsover and Trevor kept them at bay, and the final whistle rang out, with the slackers victorious by a goal to nothing!

Needless to state, there was a tremendous celebration in the junior Common-room that evening, and Terry honoured the banquet with his presence. And he told the members of the winning team that they had played up so well that he would leave them alone for a bit, and give them a respite from footer practice—a concession which was heartily appreciated by the Slackers' Eleven!

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "SENTENCED BY THE FORM!" Make a point of ordering EARLY.)



A GRAND ROMANTIC STORY THAT YOU WILL ENJOY READING.



The story opens with the death of Sir John Temple, the old master of the Chase. Harry, his son, now becomes the new master. Walter Temple, his cousin, pays him a visit on the same night, and hears of a wonderful sword belonging to the Temples—a sword with a strange influence. It is supposed that when carried by any member of the family in battle it will guard him from hurt in the fight, and make him invincible over his enemy. Walter has a great longing for the sword, and next morning vanishes suddenly,

hearing it with him. A little later war is declared between the King and Parliament, and Harry Temple, with his friend Will Howard, join the Royalists' forces.

After a fight with the Roundheads they are forced to stay a night at the Chase until they are able to join their regiment again. Walter, cut off from his troop in the same neighbourhood, comes across them at the Hall. And he puts Cromwell on their track.

Walter accuses them of being spies, in an attempt to get rid of them, but Cromwell

hears of Harry's story of the sword and the robbery and believes him. Walter, fearing Cromwell's anger, flies from the house, pursued by his cousin and Will Howard. Walter falls in with a woodman, who offers him food and shelter for the night, and whilst he is sleeping, steals the sword from his side, and makes off.

Will and Harry, who are still following Walter, suddenly come upon a troop of horsemen riding towards them.

(Now read on.)

#### INTRODUCTION.

#### On the Track Again!

WILL waved his hand excitedly, and then uttered an additional gasp.

"Why, lad, dost not see who they are? Our own fellows. There's Sylvester, an' I mistake not."

The Royalist troopers drew rein, looking as surprised as they. Then Sylvester uttered an amused laugh.

"Marry, 'tis a small world, friends! I had given ye up as dead, for I saw Noll's rascallions surround ye just before we scattered. So ye escaped from his claws?"

"Ay—and ye?"

"Oh, we managed that also, though 'tis a pill we have not yet digested. We liked not running from the foe, even though 'twas our only hope. Captain Fairfax fell, alas!"

"We saw it." Will removed his hat. "He died as befitted a soldier of the King! And Mortimer?"

"He and the remnants of our troop were with us till but three hours ago, and we were about to follow them when we perceived you approaching."

"Where have they ridden?"

"To join up with my Lord Goring, whom, they tell us here, is encamped some ten miles further on. The others have pushed ahead with a prisoner whom we took yestere'en, and whose information may be useful."

"A Roundhead?"

"Ay, a dark fellow, who had naught wherewith to defend himself, save an empty scabbard. We took him, half-dead from exposure. What is't lad? You seem mighty startled!"

For Harry's eyes had opened wide with surprise, as he stared hard at Sylvester.

"An empty scabbard, you say?" he exclaimed. "Was the man very swarthy, and stoutly built?"

"Of a surety! A strong-looking knave, who would have given us much trouble, I warrant, had he not been past resisting."

The comrades exchanged a meaning glance. The description was surprisingly like that of Walter Temple.

"And he made no mention of what became of the blade?" asked Harry presently. But Sylvester shook his head.

"He said he lost it; but 'twas a strange thing that shortly before Mortimer should have purchased a fine jewelled rapier, without a scabbard, from an old man, who said a Roundhead trooper had given it to him in exchange for food—"

"Zounds!" exclaimed Will, excitedly breaking in. "'Tis an odd string of happenings, this, Master Harry! Methinks we had best haste after friend Mortimer, for your cousin is a most cunning rascal! Hast two spare horses, Sylvester?"

The trooper nodded towards the village.

"Yonder ye should get a couple—a sort—but they be good for ten miles, I warrant." Less than fifteen minutes later the little party was galloping towards my Lord Goring's camp, Harry and Will mounted on as pair of steeds as ever disgraced King Charles' cavalry.

#### So Near, and Yet—

MORTIMER'S little party had made good headway through the woods, and were beginning to congratulate themselves on the possibility of escaping unscathed from the danger-zone when a strange sound made them halt and look askance at each other.

Somewhere, as yet afar off, a faint sighing arose, growing more pronounced with each passing minute, whilst from the heavy clouds which suddenly obscured the moon, white flakes began to fall thickly.

"A bad pass, friends," said Mortimer gravely. "'Twill be worse than the last, I fear, so there's small use in our attempting to push forward; but here's a fairly sheltered spot, which may serve to protect us in a sort of fashion."

The shelter was poor enough, in all conscience, but beggars cannot be choosers. Huddled together for warmth, they crouched down at the base of a giant tree-trunk, whose bare branches stretched thickly on every side. The horses were tethered in a ring round their riders, forming a rough shield against the cutting blast.

'Tis said that snow induces slumber, and so it was with Mortimer's party, who, one and all, were soon sleeping soundly. How long they would have remained so 'tis doubtful to say, but for a sudden extra severe gust of wind, which shook the boughs violently and dislodged a mass of snow that had collected in one of the forks. It fell right upon the nape of Sylvester's bent neck, and roused him with a shuddering gasp.

"A blight upon this accursed weather!" he grinned, when he had discovered the cause of his waking. "A man cannot even snatch an hour's sleep. Zounds! What's this?"

The horse immediately in front of him tossed its head restlessly and uttered a low whinny. Sylvester stared out, striving to pierce the gloom, but at first saw nothing.

Then through the whirling smother something blacker than the surrounding darkness seemed to move. Sylvester clutched Mortimer's arm, giving it a gentle squeeze.

"Hist! Look yonder, but make no sound! Dost see aught?"

Mortimer shaded his eyes, and gazed in the direction his companion indicated. Yes, there certainly was something—or someone—coming towards them haltingly, with a staggering motion.

"Mayhap a scout—one of Noll's," he muttered, rising carefully to his feet. "And 'tis well to make sure he returns with no word of our presence, or— You take the other side of the horse, Sylvester."

A slight gasp of surprise, a faint rattle of accoutrements, and the nocturnal visitor was wriggling vainly in Mortimer's wiry arms. But he showed little fight, and presently remained quite passive, whilst a light was cautiously ignited.

"Ah! A Roundhead, but as far gone as we are ourselves! Hold him you, Sylvester, till I have a good look at the knave!"

The others had also awakened by now, and came crowding round as Mortimer took a quick survey of the prisoner.

"Od's life, an empty scabbard!" he exclaimed. "Hast left the blade in a foeman's carcass, Master Rebel?"

"Nay," was the mumbled reply. "I—I lost it an hour back."

"Fell out, I suppose?" said the trooper, sarcastically. "'Tis quite a common habit with swords. How many more are with you?"

"None—as I live, none! I am quite alone." "H'm!" Mortimer stared searchingly into the other's face and felt reassured, in spite of himself. "Then we'll supply you with right gentlemanly company. This way, sirrah!"

They led him towards the tree, watching him carefully till daylight, when, the snow having abated somewhat, they continued their way—the captive riding in their midst, mounted on the pommel of Mortimer's saddle.

'Twas some hours later that they came within sight of a small hamlet—now almost deserted by all save women, children, and elderly men—where a meal was partaken of,

and a council of war held. Whilst the latter was in progress it became known that my Lord Goring had taken up his quarters some ten miles further on, and Mortimer's eyes lit up with a joyful gleam.

"Good!" he exclaimed, thumping the table with his clenched fist. "The best news we've had since Noll defeated us! We will join him at once, friends—that is, all but a few of ye, who must needs remain here for a spell to bring word should Noll Cromwell advance this way. We will take this rascal, also; he may have some useful information to give or sell."

Ten minutes later they were galloping along the snow-covered track, their horses' hoofs kicking up the powdery substance like smoke.

During the ride Walter Temple (for the captive, of course, was he) suddenly caught sight of the bare blade thrust through Mortimer's belt, and he stifled a gasp of amazement with difficulty; nor could he tear his gaze from the weapon, which seemed to hold for him a strange fascination.

When the big Royalist encampment was reached, Mortimer went to make his report; then, some little time later, my Lord Goring sent for the prisoner.

"You are of the rebel Cromwell's force?" he asked.

"Of Colonel Cromwell's—yes—or, rather, I was," came the reply.

"The title is immaterial," said Goring sarcastically. "However, we'll call him colonel, then, an' it honour you. 'Tis reported he is somewhere within thirty miles of us. Where is he at present quartered?"

Walter smiled a trifle grimly. A short time ago his cousin and Will Howard had been placed in a similar position to that in which he now found himself. They had remained silent; he would do likewise—unless it suited his purpose to act otherwise.

"We wish to know Cromwell's position and strength," repeated Goring impatiently, "and you can tell us."

Walter seemed to ponder for a few moments; then, letting his gaze sweep rapidly over the tent's occupants, he stopped suddenly at Mortimer.

"Ay," he said "I do know what you seek to learn."

"And you will speak?"

"At a price!"

Lord Goring sprang to his feet.

"Name it! Your liberty?"

"Ay," replied the prisoner slyly. "My liberty, for one thing."

"And the other?"

Walter pointed towards the bejewelled rapier, which still remained in Mortimer's belt.

"That sword!" he said quietly.

Lord Goring's eyebrows went up in surprise.

"Odd's life!" he exclaimed. "A strange request, but—"

"Not so strange when 'tis for my own property I ask! I lost the weapon a short while back, and this fellow must have found it."

"But—but," broke in Mortimer, "I bought the blade from an old woodman, who said a Roundhead trooper had given it to him in exchange for food!"

Walter bit his lip, as he realised his blunder; but my Lord Goring did not seem to trouble overmuch about the circumstance. He was far too eager to secure the information which would prove so invaluable to him to worry over anything else.

"There seems to be some misunderstanding," he said; "but it concerns us not. Your liberty and the sword, sirrah, are at your disposal directly you have satisfied us on that other matter."

Walter spoke rapidly for a few minutes, the company eagerly drinking in each word as it fell from his lips. Presently the Royalist leader nodded to Mortimer.

"Hand the rascal the blade," he said, "and I will see that you are properly recompensed for its loss. Now, sirrah, there is one half of your price—the other lies yonder!"

He pointed to the open tent-flap, and Walter swung round with a grim smile on his lips; but ere he had taken more than a couple of strides the opening was suddenly darkened, and two figures—a big man and a wiry youth—stepped inside.

"Hold! My lord, I pray you hearken a moment to what I have to tell! This man lies, for the sword is mine!"

Walter Temple staggered back, his teeth meeting with a snap, for the newcomers were his cousin Harry and big Will Howard!

THE POPULAR.—No. 90.

### The Highest Throw—And Its Consequences!

MY Lord Goring stared from one to the other alternately, puzzled wonder written large in his face.

He had little time for any but the king's business, yet the peculiar circumstances of this dramatic interruption had aroused his interest, in spite of himself. He nodded to Harry.

"Speak!" he commanded. "And quickly, for we have little time to spare!"

The boy gave a rapid outline of all that had taken place since the rapier disappeared from his father's bedchamber at Temple Chase, and Goring listened attentively. Then, as the conclusion of the narrative was reached, he leaned back, stroking his chin thoughtfully.

"'Tis an odd tale," he said, "and I scarcely know which side to believe. This fellow here says the sword is his own; you declare he stole it from you. As to the legend, 'tis also strange, but I believe not overmuch in these old wives' stories. How would you know, sirrah?"

He looked questioningly at Harry, who, in turn, shot a quick glance at his cousin. Walter had not uttered a word during the whole recital, but had remained standing there, with a half-contemptuous, half-anxious expression on his face.

"My lord," the boy said presently, "I am a King's soldier, and an honourable one, I trust. I have nothing to gain by lying—my cousin has everything. Moreover, here is a witness who will bear me out in every detail. Will, old friend, have I spoken truly or otherwise?"

"Ay, Master Harry," replied the big fellow vehemently. "I can bear testimony to every word you have uttered. I have known you from the cradle, and never heard you speak a lie yet!"

"That may be," objected Goring; "but we must not forget that both you, boy, and your sole witness are apparently lifelong comrades. In fairness to this other man, who has no one to support him, I fear I cannot accept your friend's testimony, true though it may be. Ah, I have it! We have but a short quarter of an hour to spare. Ye shall fight for possession of the rapier." He turned to his officers. "What say ye, gentlemen?"

There was an excited chorus of approval. Warlike fellows, one and all, they warmly welcomed their leader's suggestion, which was indeed a novel one.

"Good!" said my Lord Goring. "Now, draw ye, and may the best man gain. Stay a moment! It were but any truth in the legend, 'tis unfair that both of ye should not have equal opportunity of using the weapon. There is a dice-box. Whichever of ye throws highest wields the strange blade."

Walter advanced and took up the box, with hands that trembled ever so slightly. His face was rather pale, and his mouth twitched nervously as the two ivory cubes clattered on the table. They showed a five and a four.

"Nine!" said Goring. "Now you, sirrah!"

Harry shook the dice and cast in his turn.

'Twas a double five.

"Ten!" chuckled Will. "The luck has changed, lad—the luck has changed!"

Beads of perspiration formed on Walter's forehead as he saw the result of his cousin's throw. That Harry was his master at fence he well knew from previous experience, but now that he was destined to use the mysterious rapier, what would be the—

"My lord," he said hastily, "I claim another throw! My hand shook so that I—"

"Nay," interrupted the other; "a shaking hand matters little in a cast of dice."

Harry stepped forward, though why he did so not even himself could ever say. Mayhap 'twas a sense of chivalry towards his cousin, who had done so little to deserve it; or maybe he felt that even a suggestion of advantage to himself seemed unfair—I know not.

"My lord," he said, "I pray you let him have another chance! It may have been as he says."

Goring shot a contemptuous glance at Walter, who flushed somewhat shamefacedly under it, and pushed the dice-box across.

"Take it!" he said curtly.

Walter shook again—a six and a four—and the Royalist commander stamped his foot impatiently.

"Ten!" he exclaimed. "You must cast once more, boy! Quickly now, for a full five minutes have gone!"

Harry gave the box a vigorous shake, and all eyes were fixed on the two dice as they rolled out—a double-six!

Will Howard uttered another delighted gasp, as he saw the result of his comrade's second throw.

"Twelve, Master Harry! The luck still holds!"

Walter silently unbuckled the sword-belt from his waist, and handed it to his cousin, with a strange look in his eyes. 'Twas an expression often seen in the faces of men who have faced death, knowing full well that their chances of escaping it are infinitesimal.

Then, as Harry drew the shining blade from its scabbard, Walter at random chose one of the many weapons which were offered to him, and took up his position.

"On guard! Engage!"

Clash!

The two blades met, circled, and met again, their rasping being the only sound which broke the intense stillness of that tent, whose occupants leaned forward, watching breathlessly.

Walter feinted, dropping almost on one knee, and lunged upwards. 'Twas a cunning stroke, and might have succeeded against any ordinary foe; but the mysterious sword parried it easily enough, and thrust in return.

The point pierced the sleeve of Walter's doublet, ripping his forearm, and drawing blood, which trickled down to his wrist; but he scarcely noticed it, though the others did.

"Ah!" muttered Will Howard. "A goodly stroke, lad! First blood to the Sword of the Templars!"

Clash! Buzz-z-z!

The blades locked, and slid along each other from point to hilt. Walter's arm was beginning to pain him now, and he swiftly changed hands. His face had taken on a peculiar sickly colour, as each passing minute told him more and more plainly that he was fighting a hopeless battle; but he also realised at the same time that in doing his very utmost to turn the tables lay his only chance of regaining the rapier.

His left hand was hardly trustworthy, so, setting his teeth to bear the pain, he again changed the hilt to the right; but the action nearly proved his undoing. His cousin's blade almost touched his chest, as he desperately parried it and sprang back.

Harry followed relentlessly, pressing the fight hard, and keeping Walter ever on the move. Back, back, the latter went, the audience at the rear moving aside to give the combatants space. Back, until the canvas wall rubbed his shoulders, and forced him to halt.

The perspiration was running in little streams down Walter's face; his arm was searing hot, and heavy as lead; his knees seemed to be turning to water, and, as through a mist, he saw the vengeful point of the mysterious sword darting back and forth like a pencil of flame. Then—

Click!

Harry's weapon locked in the hilt of his cousin's, and tore it from his hand. It fell with a clatter to the ground, and Walter's arms dropped helplessly to his sides.

"The day is yours, coz!" he said thickly. "Strike! But do so quickly, in Heaven's name!"

Harry lowered his steel, his lip curling contemptuously.

"Nay," he replied, "I am a soldier—not a murderer! I do not cut down an unarmed foe!"

He kicked the other weapon aside, and sheathed his own.

"Methinks, cousin," he continued, "our score is settled. I have conquered you in fair fight, and claim the prize! This is the parting of our ways!"

Walter made no reply, merely shrugging his shoulders resignedly. 'Twas naught to him that his cousin had chivalrously spared his life, when he had held it in the hollow of his hand, to do as he wished. He did not mentally reverse the position, and consider how he would have acted had he been the victor. Nay. Such things meant little to a man of Walter Temple's disposition; he only knew that the rapier had been wrested from his grasp, and from that moment he commenced planning how he should endeavour to regain it.

My Lord Goring rapped the table sharply with his knuckles, breaking the strained silence at last.

"Our time is up, gentlemen! It has been

a fair bout, and the best man has vanquished! The sword is yours, Sir Cavalier! See that you bear it honourably for the King, as no doubt you will! And now, friends, we have Noll Cromwell's position and strength, and the prisoner has spoken truly, so let us depart; but 'twere best to keep yonder fellow until we can confirm the accuracy of his information, as a man who speaks falsely on one thing may do likewise on another. Come, gentlemen!"

He left the tent, followed by his staff, and Harry, Will, and Mortimer, and in a short time the camp was practically deserted, the great force moving through the snowy woodland towards Cromwell's temporary stronghold.

And as Walter Temple, closely guarded, gazed after the retreating host, he uttered a malediction so full of vindictiveness and seething hate that even his stolid gaolers looked at him in amazement.

"The parting of the ways, you say, cousin! Nay, I think not! You have yet to learn that I am not so easily checkmated! You will learn it to your cost, e'en if it takes years in the teaching!"

### The Siege of Temple Chase!

**I**N the meantime, how fared it with Oliver Cromwell's forces, which we left so snugly quartered at the Chase, taking a well-earned rest from their labours whilst the opportunity offered itself?

Since the daring escape of Walter Temple, followed almost immediately by that of the two prisoners, nothing had occurred which deserves special mention here.

Cromwell had bigger things to occupy his thoughts than the disappearance of these three individuals, and he worried not over-much about the matter after the first few minutes. Walter Temple he considered himself well rid of—were there not always the possibility of his selling information to the enemy—and the others, in his innermost soul, he secretly admired. Their gallant bearing had made a most favourable impression on his soldier's heart, and if they had succeeded in getting clear—well, so be it! After all, they were only two more foes to reckon with, if ever they were opposed to him in the future, and two extra ones would make but a small difference.

Thus it was that a more amazed quartet of troopers than those who had been ordered to guard Harry and Will were not to be found in all England when it became known that no punishment was to be meted out to them for their carelessness; for, as Will Howard had prophesied, the most minute scrutiny had utterly failed to solve the secret of the sliding panel.

In any case, they had suffered sufficiently as it was, for three of them moved stiffly when they walked, bearing witness to the solidity of the heavy oak settee which Howard had thrust upon them, whilst the wrist of the fourth was strained and mighty painful, through his blade striking so forcibly against the woodwork when he made that wild lunge at the big fellow's departing body as it vanished through the gap.

Cromwell found the quarters at Temple Chase comfortable in the extreme, and, great soldier though he was, he appreciated comfort as much as any other human being. So, the tide of battle having flowed elsewhere for the present, he remained there to recoup himself for the even more stirring times which he knew must still lie ahead.

Yet his rest was to be but short-lived. Towards evening on the day after his arrival, a scout cantered in with the news that Lord Goring was advancing on the Chase with a huge force under his command. Indeed, he was even now on the outskirts of the park, and almost within striking distance.

Cromwell sprang up, startled for the moment out of his customary calmness.

"Goring!" he repeated. "Nay, surely not! He cannot be so near, without our knowing of it before! Why, after his defeat of Sir William Waller he was in action leagues away to the northward!"

'Twas small wonder that Cromwell was surprised, for he knew nothing of the many forced marches which Goring had accomplished immediately after his great victory over the Roundhead commander.

"Ay, colonel, 'tis strange, I grant you—but true, nevertheless," replied the scout. "I know him well, and have seen him riding at the head of his force scarce a half-hour back, whilst I lay concealed."

"You were not seen?"

"I warrant not, colonel!" was the confident response. "I am too tried a scout to give myself away like a blundering cow! Unless some of the others have been perceived, the enemy must still believe their coming to be quite unsuspected."

Noll Cromwell smiled grimly, a bright glitter flashing into his eyes.

"Marry, then, we will do our best to banish that belief!" he said. "Gentlemen, there is no time to lose! This place is strong, and the food plentiful. Where is that rascally servant? Bring him hither immediately!"

Travers—who had long since returned from a futile search for horses wherewith to supply his young master and Will Howard, and had been amazed to find the Chase in the hands of the Ironsides—came forward tremblingly.

"Now, old man!" said Cromwell shortly. "You need not shake like some great jelly! I mean you no hurt, an' you answer my questions quickly and truthfully. Are there many secret ways into this place—large

the core that he was, he would have given his life to defeat the purpose of the King's enemies, but he knew he was perfectly helpless. 'Twas even as he had said. Though strangely-built enough, Temple Chase had never been intended to serve as a fortress.

One by one, he bolted and barred each heavy shutter, muttering discontentedly all the while, to the secret amusement of his companions, until the ground floor of the mansion was almost as black as night.

The work was accomplished none too soon, for scarce had they returned to the upper apartments ere a volley of musketry rang out, shattering three of the beautiful stained-glass windows above the great door, and tearing ugly patches in the carved panelling of the opposite wall. The attack on Temple Chase had commenced.

Yet inside the mansion itself were but a small compliment of Cromwell's big force, the main body being quartered in the woods at the rear. My Lord Goring had approached from the side, and had then moved round to the front, spreading his men out fanwise.



Click! Harry's weapon locked in the hilt of his cousin's, and tore it from his hand. It flew into the air, then fell with a clatter to the ground. (See page 10.)

enough to admit more than half a dozen men at a time, I mean?"

Travers considered for a moment, but then shook his head.

"Nay, Sir Ironside," he replied, "there are several passages and panels, yet they are but small. Not more than three at most could pass abreast."

"You speak the truth?"

"Ay, 'tis even as I have said! Temple Chase is not a stronghold, and the main door is the only large one."

"Good!" muttered Cromwell, in a low voice to his second-in-command. "I feared that someone who knew this place well might be amongst Goring's followers. Then aloud: "And the lower windows—how can they be protected?"

"By strong shutters only, as you have seen," replied Travers.

"Then look to it that they are closed—you know where each one is. Two of ye accompany him, and see that the work is carried out quickly. There is no time to lose!"

Travers' face was miserable in the extreme as he made a tour of the premises accompanied by a couple of sharp-eyed officers, and secured each separate window. Royalist to

But even that small force within was well situated, and kept the others busy for a time. Volley after volley rang out from the upper windows, tearing through the trees, and making wide gaps in the ranks of the opposing host, who, though still mainly concealed, were in such large numbers that they presented a very fair target.

Consequently, Goring spread his men more evenly, extending one flank until the Chase occupied the centre of a rough semicircle. A brisk fire was kept up by the infantry, who alone were armed with ordnance, and the stonework of the mansion soon began to exhibit numerous traces of the bombardment. Scarce a window at the front or on either of the two sides was left intact, whilst the ground-floor ones were completely shattered, only the stout shutters, scarred and chipped, remaining.

Then Goring made ready to play his trump card.

(There will be a further instalment of this romantic adventure serial in next week's issue of the POPULAR. Tell your friends about it.)

# JIMMY'S GREAT IDEA!

A Splendid Long Complete Tale of JIMMY SILVER & Co.,  
the Famous Chums of Rookwood.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Simply Great!

**W**HY not?" Jimmy Silver, captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, suddenly asked that question. Lovell and Raby and Newcome stared at him.

As nobody had made any remark, and Jimmy Silver's question broke a silence that had lasted several minutes, they were naturally surprised.

"Why not?" repeated Jimmy Silver emphatically.

"Why not who, which, or what?" asked Lovell.

"We could do it."

"We could do what, fathead?"

"They do it at Greyfriars," said Jimmy, unheeding, "and they do it at St. Jim's. Why not at Rookwood?"

Jimmy Silver had been thinking, and he was evidently speaking in answer to his own thoughts.

"Of course, we shall have to go one better than Greyfriars. That's up to us. But we can do it." Jimmy Silver rubbed his hands. "We can do it all right. This study never gets left. Hallo! Wharrer you at, you dummies?"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome had lost patience. They rose as one man and grasped their study leader, and proceeded to knock his head against the wall.

Crack!

"Yaroooh! Leggo, you fatheads!"

"Now, what are you burbling about?" demanded Lovell.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Crack!

"Are you going to explain?"

"Oh, my hat! Oh, my onion! You silly asses! Yarooop!"

Crack! Biff!

"Leggo! Chuck it!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Ain't I just going to explain, you silly jabberwocks! Leggo!"

"Better give him another and make him buck up," said Raby.

Crack!

"Ow! Help! Yow!"

Jimmy Silver wrenched himself away from the grasp of his chums, and picked up the poker.

"You silly duffers! Ow, my napper! You burbling chumps! I'll jolly well—"

"Pax!" said Lovell cheerfully. "Now tell us what you're burbling about!"

Jimmy Silver looked greatly inclined to begin on his affectionate chums with the poker. But he restrained his feelings and rubbed his head instead.

"You silly duffers! Lot of good a chap thinking out stunning wheezes in this study!" he roared.

"Cut the cackle and get to the hosses!" urged Lovell. "Is it something up against the Moderns?"

"Blow the Moderns!"

"Or are you just talking out of your silly neck?" said Raby.

"Grooooh!"

"Do you want another bump?" roared Lovell.

"Keep off, you ass! Shut up, and I'll tell you the scheme!" said Jimmy Silver, still rubbing his head. "It's the catch of the season. It's the greatest wheeze we've ever wheezed. Look at that!"

Jimmy Silver drew from his pocket a crumpled paper and tossed it on the table. His chums eyed it curiously.

THE POPULAR.—No. 90.

"What the thunder is that?" demanded Lovell.

"Can't you see the title on it, duffer? It's a school mag, you ass! It's a current number of the 'Greyfriars Herald,' fathead! Whar-ton sent it to me from Greyfriars, dummy! And that's put the wheeze into my head, image!"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome turned over the copy of the "Greyfriars Herald," and looked at it. It was a school magazine, evidently enough—edited by Study No. 1, and filled with the literary efforts of the Greyfriars boys and other well-known writers.

"Well, and what's the wheeze?" demanded Lovell. "I've seen school mags before. Nothing startling in that, is there?"

"We haven't one at Rookwood."

"There's the 'School Record,' run by the Sixth," said Newcome. "Nobody ever reads it, of course. But there it is."

Jimmy Silver sniffed.

"I'm not talking about that kind of rot! I'm talking about a junior paper—the real thing. There's one at Greyfriars, and they've got one at St. Jim's—'Tom Merry's Weekly.' Well, why shouldn't there be a 'Jimmy Silver's Weekly'?"

"Oh!"

"That's the wheeze—a regular ripping, stunning—"

"Blessed second-hand wheeze you've picked up from Greyfriars!" sniffed Raby.

"Tain't done at Rookwood, anyway, fathead! Nobody here seems to have had brains enough before I came," said Jimmy Silver modestly. "Just think how the Moderns would have jumped at the idea if they had the brains to think of it. We'll bring out a number slanging the Moderns right and left—stories and poems, written by ourselves."

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

"Tommy Dodd will turn green and yellow when he sees the first number," said Jimmy Silver gleefully. "He will get left again—those Moderns are always getting left. We'll keep it dark, of course. Quite dark till the first number comes out. We'll have it printed by a firm in London same as they do—that's a ripping idea. No room here for a printing-plant."

"Well, hardly," grinned Lovell.

"And we'll jolly well begin on the first number at once," said Jimmy Silver.

"Dick Oswald's asked us to go to tea," demurred Raby.

"Blow tea!"

"There's sausages and fried taters. Jones told me so."

"Bust Jones, and his fried taters! Hang tea! Are you going to guzzle while this wheeze is waiting, like Nero fiddling while Rome was burning?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"But I'm jolly hungry!" said Raby plaintively. Raby had a healthy appetite; indeed, his appetite was more highly developed than his literary gifts.

"Then you can gnaw a biscuit while we're at work. I tell you we've got to get ahead before the wheeze gets out. Suppose Tommy Dodd should scent it out, and bring out a rival paper before ours?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, all right!" said Raby heroically, though the thoughts of sausages and fried potatoes still lingered in his mind.

"We'll lock the door and keep silly duffers from bothering us," said Jimmy. "Now get some impot paper, and let's pile in."

There was impot paper in plenty. There were also pens and ink. So far, the amateur editors were well provided. They sat down

round the table, and as they did so a knock came at the locked door.

"Go away!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"Hallo! What's the door locked for?" came Dick Oswald's cheery voice.

"Buzz off!"

"But tea's ready."

"Sorry! Owing to pressure of business, we are unable at the present moment to accept your kind invitation!" said Jimmy Silver elaborately.

"I say—" began Raby.

"Bow-wow!"

"My hat!" came from Oswald. "I say, the sosses are going! Jones minor and Hooker have started on them already. That's a tip!"

And Oswald returned to his study, anxious for his share in the sausages and fried potatoes before Jones minor and Hooker made a clearance.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Going Strong!

**F**OUR pens were dipped in the ink. Four beautifully blank sheets of foolscap lay before four thoughtful juniors, whose brows were deeply wrinkled.

All was ready for the start.

But, somehow, it appeared a little difficult to get going. Literary work was rather new to the Fistical Four.

On the football-field they could hold their own with anybody in the Lower School at Rookwood. At fisticuffs they were unequalled. At the planning and carrying out raids they had few superiors. But it was the first time they had tried their hand at editing a paper, and it came a little slowly.

"The first thing to settle is the title of the paper," said Jimmy Silver, at last.

"Of course," assented Lovell. "I didn't think of that!"

"You wouldn't!" agreed Jimmy.

"Look here—"

"What about the 'Rookwood Times'?" suggested Newcome.

"Too stodgy!"

"The 'End Study's Weekly'!" suggested Raby.

"Too clumsy! Besides, the fellows would make idiotic jokes about it—about the end study being weak in the head, and so forth. I was thinking of 'Jimmy Silver's Journal.'"

"Then, where do we come in?" demanded Lovell indignantly.

"You come in as sub-editors. A paper must have a title, you agree to that."

"It's going to be a Classical paper," said Lovell. "That ought to be in the title, to show that the Modern worms haven't any hand in it. What about the 'Classical Cough-Drop'?"

"Rotten! Besides, it's a Rookwood paper; the Classical side represents Rookwood, the Modern being of no account whatever."

"Well, that's so. The 'Rookwood Representative,' then?"

"Life's too short for a name like that!"

"Look here! I can see that you mean to stick your own silly name on the paper!" growled Lovell. "Suppose we call it the 'Fistical Gazette,' after all of us?"

"That sounds like a prize-fighting paper. 'Jimmy Silver's Journal' is right on the mark!"

"Oh, for goodness' sake make it 'Jimmy Silver's Journal,' and let's get on!" said Newcome. "Jimmy will talk our heads off till we do!"

"It's alliterative, you see!" explained Jimmy. "A 'J' in 'Jimmy' and a 'J' in 'Journal,' catches the eye."

"And a jay as chief editor," remarked Lovell thoughtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "If you're going to be funny, Lovell—"  
 "I'm only being alliterative!"  
 "Fathead!"  
 Jimmy Silver scrawled across his sheet of impot-paper the imposing title "Jimmy Silver's Journal."

A start had been made!  
 "Now what about the contents?" he said. "We shall want a leading article by the chief editor, of course, that's me. An article on footer by the best footballer—that's me. A page of jokes by the most humorous chap in the study—that's me. A series of cartoons by the best cartoonist here—that's me."

"Are you going to do the blessed lot?" asked Raby, somewhat excitedly. "If you are, I'm jolly well going to see if there's any sausages and taters left in Oswald's study!"  
 "For goodness' sake sit down and write a sonnet on sosses and taters!" said Jimmy Silver. "That's about your mark!"

"I'm going to do the football article!" said Lovell determinedly.  
 "Well, go ahead! I'll go over it, and revise it."

"Let me catch you going over my article!" said Lovell. "I'll jolly well soon go over you, Jimmy Silver!"

"Look here! I'm going to be chief editor—"  
 "That ain't settled yet! As an older fellow, I think I ought to be chief editor."

"That's rot, of course! Old fellows are no good in editorial offices. But we'll put it to the vote. Hands up for me!"

Jimmy Silver put his own hand up. It remained in solitary state.

Jimmy Silver glared.  
 "Look here you duffers, I—"

"Now, hands up for me!" chuckled Lovell, putting up his own hand.

But Lovell's hand also went up alone.

"Look here! Ain't you going to vote, you duffers?" he exclaimed.

"Hands up for me!" said Raby cheerfully. And up went his hand alone. "I say, Newcome, why—"

"Hands up for me!" chortled Newcome.

"Now, look here, you duffer—"  
 "Don't be an ass—"  
 "Somebody's got to be editor!"

The Fistical Four looked at one another. It was a new difficulty. Each of the quartette was convinced of his own special claims to the chief editorship.

"We shall get on at this rate—I don't think!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Blessed if I thought you clapps were such conceited duffers! The proper caper is to elect the chap most suitable for the job."

"That's what I want," agreed Lovell.  
 "Same here!"  
 "Me, too!"

There was another pause. Excepting for the title, "Jimmy Silver's Journal," the sheets of impot-paper still presented a beautiful blank. Matters were not progressing in the editorial office.

"I'll tell you what," said Lovell. "We'll put on the paper 'Edited by the End Study.' We'll all have equal whacks."  
 "Hear, hear!"

"Edited by the End Study," Lovell wrote on his paper. And Newcome and Raby followed his example.

Jimmy Silver snorted, and gave in.

The quartette settled down to work. With knitted brows and pursed lips and inky fingers they laboured.

And at last the ideas began to work. The first number of "Jimmy Silver's Journal" was under way.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
 In the Hands of the Enemy!**

**T**HOSE Classical asses are up to something!" Tommy Dodd made that remark to his chums, Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, a couple of days later.

The three Tommies were chatting under the beeches in the quad, when Jimmy Silver & Co. passed them, deep in talk.

As a rule, the three Tommies seldom met without mutual chipping. But just now the Classical chums seemed to have no eyes for their rivals.

They went on their way, deep in conversation in subdued voices, and did not even glance at the three Moderns.

"They're up to something!" repeated Tommy Dodd, with conviction. "And, of course, it's something up against us. They're planning something. They were locked in their study the other day when I went over."

"I don't want to hear their Classical piffle!"  
 "But, sure, it wasn't so bad intoirly. The other lines were—"

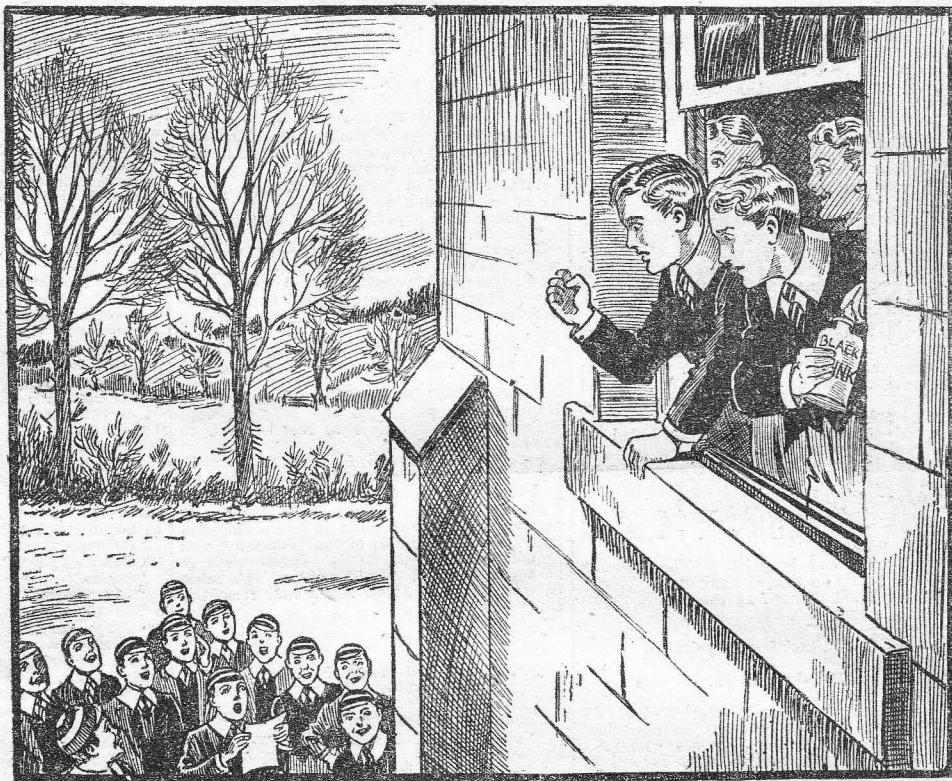
"Shut up, old chap! Your fault is that you jaw too much!"

"But it was funny, intoirly. It wint on like this—"

"For goodness' sake, dry up! Now, the question is, what are those Classical duffers getting up to?" said Tommy Dodd. "It's against us, of course. They never own up that we're top side at Rookwood. Some wheeze of Jimmy Silver's, I suppose. We're going to find it out!"

"Hear, hear!" said Tommy Dodd's followers. "Whatever it is, it's something to do with their silly scribbling!" said Tommy Dodd sagely. "We'll collar some of their rot and see what it is. If it's some game to guy us, we'll jolly soon put a stopper-on! Keep an eye on them in class this afternoon!"

"What-ho!"  
 That afternoon the three Tommies were



There was a roar of voices down below as the Moderns chanted their version of Lovell's famous "Owed." Crimson with wrath, Lovell grasped the ink-bottle and strode to the study window. (See Chapter 4.)

I've heard that they've been sporting their oaks lots of times since."

"They've been leaving the footer practice," said Doyle, with a nod.

"And scribbling in class," said Tommy Cook. "Bootles was down on them only this morning, you remember."

Tommy Dodd nodded thoughtfully. "I remember. Jimmy Silver and Lovell were scribbling under their desks when Bootles spotted them. He made them throw it on the fire, whatever it was!"

"And Towle saw it," went on Cook. "He says Jimmy Silver's writing poetry."

"Well, he's duffer enough for anything. But what the thump could he be writing poetry for? Something about us, I suppose!"

"And, sure, Newcome was doing some limericks in the Common-room last evening," said Tommy Doyle. "I saw it. It was rather funny, too. It was about you, Tommy."

"Some rot!" said Tommy Dodd.

"It wint loike this, as far as I can remember:"

"There was a young duffer named Dodd, Whose face was remarkably odd—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tommy Dodd gruffly.

mostly occupied on the Modern side. But they came into the Fourth Form-room with the rest of the Modern Fourth-Formers for the last lesson, and sat with the Classicals.

The first thing that Tommy Dodd noticed, was that the Fistical Four were whispering together.

It confirmed his suspicions that something was "on," especially when the four Classicals glanced at him and grinned.

Tommy Dodd was determined to probe the mystery.

During last lessons, Mr. Bootles being a little unobservant, Lovell was busy with a paper under his desk. He was wrinking his brows and scribbling in pencil. Tommy Dodd was far from unobservant. What on earth Lovell was scribbling on that paper was a mystery.

That it was something up against the Moderns Tommy Dodd felt assured, though in what way he could not guess; but he meant to know.

When the Fourth were dismissed the Fistical Four came out together, and the three Tommies were close behind them.

"We'll go up to the study and get on," said Jimmy Silver.



it there were many traces in that bath-room. But the famous ode remained in their possession, and it was pinned up on the wall in Tommy Dodd's study, where it was read with huge delight by every junior on the Modern side.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**  
**The Great Secret!**

**T**HE Classical Fourth were amazed. So were the Modern Fourth. The mystery of the end study was simply staggering.

The secret had been well kept. Not a word had been breathed outside the end study concerning the "Journal," and day followed day without a word being breathed.

Meanwhile, the Fistical Four were at work. The first number, like the little peach in the orchard, grew, and grew, and grew.

Even to their best chums, even to Mornoy, or Kit Errol, or Rawson, the editors had not said a word.

The first number of "Jimmy Silver's Journal" was to burst upon an astonished Rookwood, like a meteor, upon Classicals and Moderns alike.

Curiosity was at its height in the Fourth Form. The Fistical Four were the leaders of the Form, at least, upon the Classical side. The mystery that surrounded their proceedings brought them more into the public eye than ever.

Indeed, Flynn of the Fourth proposed collaring them and holding their heads under the pump in Little Quad till they gave a full explanation. Such drastic measures might have been resorted to had not Jimmy Silver announced on Friday that on the morrow afternoon the secret would be out.

So the exasperated Classicals waited for Saturday afternoon.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were still more exercised in mind than the Classical juniors. Having raided Lovell's ode, they had concluded that the duffers in the end study had taken to writing poetry. But the continued mystery showed clearly that there was more in it than that. There was something "on"—something of a very unusual nature.

They cudgelled their brains to guess what it was. They entered into chummy talks with the Classical fellows to worm the secret out of them. But they found that the Classicals knew no more than they knew themselves.

The great secret was locked in the breasts of Jimmy Silver & Co., and they were as mum as oysters.

"But it's up against us," Tommy Dodd declared in his study on the Modern side. "I jolly well know that. It's a wheeze of some kind. But it beats me!"

"It beats Banagher," said Tommy Doyle. "Sure, if they're writin' poetry like Lovell, the joke will be up against him, not us."

"Tain't that! There's something else." Tommy Dodd wrinkled his brows. "It's some rotten Classical scheme to give us the kybosh. I hear that all the fellows are to be told on Saturday afternoon. There's going to be a regular meeting in the Common-room, and then it will be out."

"Sure, we'll know, then!"

"Too late, fathead, if it's anything up against us!" snapped Tommy Dodd. "Whatever it is, they've got it in their study. They've been writing no end. I've found out that Booties has jawed them for using so much paper, and he won't give them any more. What the dickens have they been writing?"

"Give it up," said Cook hopelessly. "It beats me hollow."

"Well, I'm going to find out," said Tommy Dodd determinedly. "I'm going to jolly well explore their study."

"We've tried that. They're too much on the watch. The minute lessons are over they're there—at least, one of them. They lock the door when they come down to dinner, too."

"And they lock it at night," said Doyle. "I've tried it. Jimmy Silver has to unlock it in the morning for the maid to get in for sweeping."

"I'm not going out of lesson-time," said Tommy Dodd. "I know that's N. G. I'm going in lesson-time."

"But you can't."

"Can't" is a word that don't belong to this study, fathead! We have chemistry to-morrow morning with Manders, while the Classicals are mugging up their silly Latin bosh. Well, I'm going to cut stinks."

Doyle and Cook stared at Tommy Dodd

aghast. To "cut" a lesson, especially a lesson taken by Mr. Manders, was a desperate expedient. But Tommy was desperate. "You'll get scalped, you ass!" gasped Cook.

"Scalped alive!" ejaculated Doyle.

"I'll chance it," said Tommy resolutely. "It's the only way. It's that or nothing. Silver leaves the door locked till morning lessons, and only unlocks it just before classes, because the maid has to go in. Then they're always on the spot the moment they're dismissed. It's during lessons, or not at all. And I'm jolly well going to chance it, and blow Manders!"

"It means a licking!"

"Let it!"

The following morning—Saturday—the Moderns turned up with the Classicals for first lesson with Mr. Booties in the Form-room. Jimmy Silver smiled at them benignantly. He knew the intense curiosity that was burning in the Modern breasts. But he had no fear of a raid on his study. Expecting during morning lessons, when access to the study had to be allowed to the housemaids, the end study was kept locked, and the lock had baffled all surreptitious attempts to probe the mystery. And Jimmy Silver was always the first to reach the end study after morning lessons, either to remain there or lock the door and take away the key.

The desperate expedient that had come into Tommy Dodd's mind was not likely to occur to him. Mr. Manders was a tartar of the most tartaric order, and cutting a lesson with him was equivalent to putting one's head into the lion's jaws.

Even Tommy Dodd shivered a little at the idea. But he was none the less determined.

After first lesson the Modern juniors filed out of the Form-room, leaving the Classicals to grind Latin with Mr. Booties. The Moderns crossed to the Modern side, where the laboratories were. In the quad Tommy Dodd left them.

"Where are you off to, you duffer?" called out Towle. "You'll get licked!"

But Tommy did not even glance back. He ran into the School House, whipped up the stairs, and dashed along to the end study. The housemaid had finished there. The famous apartment was newly swept and garnished. And it was empty and at the mercy of the raider. Tommy Dodd's heart beat faster as he slipped in and closed the door behind him. He knew what he was risking and what he would get. But the die was cast now. By that time the Moderns were in the laboratory, and Mr. Manders must have noticed his absence. There was a licking to come. But the chief of the Moderns dismissed that uncomfortable thought from his mind as he proceeded to search the end study in search of the mystery.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.**  
**Tommy Dodd Chips In!**

**G**REAT Christopher Columbus!"

Thus Tommy Dodd. He had found it.

The search—upon which he was prepared to spend an hour, if needed—had taken only a few minutes.

There, in Jimmy Silver's desk, it lay. It was a little bundle wrapped in brown paper. Outside was written, in large characters:

**"JIMMY SILVER'S JOURNAL."**

Tommy Dodd stared at it. "Jimmy Silver's Journal!" he gasped. "Oh, my hat!"

He whipped open the brown-paper cover. Within, the complete first number of the Rookwood paper lay under his astonished eyes.

"A school paper! By gum!" Tommy Dodd gasped. "Oh, the deep boudners! So that's what they were keeping dark!"

The secret was out now.

Tommy Dodd turned over the leaves, glancing at the contents. He grinned as he came upon the "Ode to Rookwood," this time not spelt "Owed." He grinned again at Jimmy Silver's leading article and then frowned. The article began:

"We have the honour of presenting the first number of our new magazine—a Classical journal, edited by Classicals, and Classical from start to finish. No Modern rot about this journal. We trust that we shall meet with hearty support from our readers. If a sufficient number of advance orders are received, the next number will be printed and bound by a firm in London, in the best

possible style, equalling the oldest established school papers. Classicals will find splendid stories, original jokes, and witty parts in this number. Moderns will find a good deal of instruction, in spelling, etc. It must be distinctly understood that Moderns reading this number must wash their hands, and leave none of their usual grubby finger-marks on it. Not being Scotland Yard detectives, we have no use for a set of finger-prints. Soap for Moderns provided in the bath-room free of charge."

"Cheeky ass!" growled Tommy Dodd. On the next page was "Manners for Moderns," by A. E. Lovell. It started:

"A Modern kid is generally known by the colour of his hands. They generally need washing. This is partly caused by mucking about with rotten chemicals, and partly by sluvvenliness. A Modern kid should try to imitate the Classicals. Thus he will learn nice manners.

"A Modern kid should always cap a Classical. This will show a proper sense of respect for his superiors.

"A Modern kid should watch the end study when they are playing football. Thus he will learn the rudiments of the game."

There was a good deal more of this, which made Tommy Dodd snort. He turned over the leaf and came upon "Limericks," by A. Newcome. The first one ran:

"There was a young fellow named Dodd,  
Whose face was remarkably odd;  
He was rather an ass,  
And his manners, alas!  
Would have shocked any convict in quod."

"The silly chump!" growled Tommy Dodd. "I'll make his face remarkably odd before I've done with him! Blow their silly old limericks!"

He turned over the leaf. Next came a poem by Raby:

"At Rookwood we take a great pride  
In the ripping old Classical side;  
At footer or cricket,  
We're right on the wicket,  
And the Moderns are licked to the wide."

"There is only one fault, we admit,  
In this ripping old college—to wit,  
There's a Modern side—see?  
Which is simply N. G.,  
And they ought to be hoofed out of it."

There was more of Raby's poem, but Tommy Dodd did not stay to read more. He snorted and turned the leaf. There came next a series of conundrums, by "Uncle James." Tommy Dodd sampled a few:

"What's the difference between a Modern and a donkey?—None.

"Why is Tommy Dodd's face like a kite? Because he was built that way."

"My hat! And that's the stuff they've been fagging at for a week!" growled Tommy Dodd, much incensed. "Silly asses! Hallo! What's this?"

Advertisements came next. Tommy Dodd glanced at them.

"MISSING for fifteen years!—The contents of a brain-box. Anyone finding same return to owner.—Thomas Dodd, Modern side.

"LOST, STOLEN, or STRAYED!—A hairbrush (unused); also a cake of soap (unused) and a nailbrush (unused).—Leggett, Modern side.

"£5 REWARD.—The above reward will be paid to anyone who can teach Tommy Dodd to kick a goal.

"WANTED!—Lessons in manners, deportment, and self-respect to superiors, by every member of the Modern side at Rookwood."

Tommy Dodd breathed hard through his nose. The "Journal" was all on a par with these examples. From cover to cover it contained slanging of the Modern side.

Tommy Dodd closed the paper and reflected.

This was the surprise Jimmy Silver & Co. were to spring upon the school that afternoon immediately after lessons. Classicals and Moderns were to turn up in the Common-room to hear the secret—if they wanted to hear it.

Then Jimmy Silver was going to announce—as Tommy Dodd knew now—the existence of THE POPULAR.—No. 90.

that stunning new wheeze—a school magazine, founded by Classics, run by Classics—Classical from start to finish.

Tommy Dodd admitted that it was a ripping idea. He could have kicked himself for not having thought of it.

But he hadn't.

Very likely Jimmy Silver had borrowed the idea from somewhere, he reflected disdainfully. But, even so, the fact remained that it was Jimmy Silver who had borrowed it, and not Tommy Dodd.

That the paper would be a success Tommy Dodd could easily foresee. As soon as it was known, the editorial office would be besieged with eager contributors. The thing would go with a bang.

It would be one more score for the Classics—one more defeat for the Moderns! There was no getting out of that.

Tommy Dodd wrinkled his brows.

He felt that it would be mean to put the magazine into the grate and set a match to it. That would be rotten, and he knew it. He was tempted to do it, but he manfully resisted the temptation. A jape was a jape, but that would be too thick.

If only by some means he could turn the Classical triumph into a defeat—that was what he wanted. Forewarned was forearmed, and he had been forewarned. He was in possession of the secret, quite unknown to Jimmy Silver & Co. Was there "anything doing"?

He thought that out.

In the laboratories on the Modern side Mr. Manders was at work with his class, with a caning ready for Tommy Dodd when he came. But Tommy Dodd had utterly forgotten Mr. Manders and his cane. All his thoughts were bent upon the problem in hand—to turn the tables somehow on the Classics.

Suddenly his eyes gleamed.

"Eureka!" he ejaculated.

He pounced upon the "Journal."

For the next five minutes he was very busy. Then he quitted the study, chortling.

In Jimmy Silver's desk the brown paper packet lay, just as it had lain when the Modern junior entered the study. If there was any difference it did not show on the outside.

Tommy Dodd closed the door carefully, and scudded away.

He arrived on the Modern side breathless. Mr. Manders greeted him with a frown and three on each hand, which made Tommy Dodd fairly wriggle.

But he felt that it was worth it.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Quite a Surprise!

"DISMISS!" Jimmy Silver & Co. heard that word gladly.

The Classical Fourth streamed out of the Form-room.

There was a buzz at once in the passage.

"Now, then, Jimmy Silver—"

"Get it out, you duffer!"

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely. The whole crowd were eager for news. This was exactly as it should be, of course. It was a natural and fitting tribute to the importance of the end study.

"Meeting in the Common-room," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll cut off to the study and get it. It's all ready."

"Phwat's ready?" demanded Flynn.

"You'll soon see, my infant. Get along to the Common-room. We've only got one copy of the first number."

"The first number of what?" shouted Oswald.

## GIVEN FREE!

### "WHO'S WHO IN FILMLAND?"

A wonderful 32-page booklet packed with Pictures, giving latest information about

THE STARS OF THE CINEMA IN "THE MAGNET LIBRARY."

NOW ON SALE!

THE POPULAR.—No. 90.

"Wait and see, as Mr. Asquith says!" chuckled Jimmy.

"Hallo! What about the giddy mystery?" asked Tommy Dodd, coming in with a crowd of Moderns. "Is the deadly secret revealed yet?"

"You go into the Common-room, and you'll hear it with the rest," said Jimmy Silver. "This is going to knock you Modern bounders into a cocked hat. I can promise you that."

Tommy Dodd grinned cheerfully.

"If you can knock us into a cocked hat, you're welcome," he remarked. "I believe that when I see it!"

"Bow-wow!"

The Fourth Form, Classics and Moderns, crowded into the Common-room, while Jimmy Silver cut off to the end study.

The Moderns were all grinning, for some reason best known to themselves, but the Classics were all puzzled and curious.

But Jimmy Silver did not keep them waiting long.

He came down the stairs by way of the banisters, with the brown-paper packet in his hand, which he had caught up from his desk. He came breathlessly into the crowded Common-room.

"Here you are!" he exclaimed.

There was a crowding round at once. The sight of that mysterious packet raised curiosity to burning point.

"Phwat is it intirely?" roared Flynn.

"Order!" shouted Lovell.

"Don't crowd!" bawled Newcome.

"Ha, ha, ha! Give Jimmy Silver his head!" chortled Tommy Dodd. "This is where we get the giddy surprise of our lives! Go it, Silver!"

"Shut up, you Modern bounders! What are you cackling at?" exclaimed Raby. "You're going to get the kybosh, I promise you that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver advanced to the table, packet in hand.

"Gentlemen—" he began.

"Cut it short!" howled Flynn.

"Gentlemen and Moderns—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have the honour of making an important and interesting announcement. Heretofore—"

"Here to which?" ejaculated Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Heretofore!" thundered Jimmy Silver.

"Heretofore other schools have had a school paper, while we at Rookwood have subsisted upon a miserable Sixth Form magazine. Gentlemen, Rookwood has suffered from a long-felt want, without knowing it. The breach is about to be filled. That long-felt want will be supplied. Gentlemen, I have here the first number of the new Rookwood paper—Jimmy Silver's Journal."

"My hat!"

"A school paper!" ejaculated Oswald.

"What a ripping idea!"

"Tophole!"

"Beats you Modern bounders—what!" chortled Oswald.

"Oh, let's see that paper!" said Tommy Dodd carelessly. "Perhaps you won't be so jolly pleased with it when you see it!"

Jimmy Silver glared at his old rival. He had expected to see the Moderns surprised and furious. But they took the announcement quite calmly. It did not seem to surprise them in the least.

"You—you knew!" shouted Jimmy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, of course, we knew!" said Tommy Dodd, in a tone of mild surprise. "You don't think you could pull the wool over our eyes, do you? My dear chap, you'd have to get up very early in the morning to do that."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Tommy Doyle. "Very early intirely!"

"How do you know?" roared Lovell.

"Oh, we're up to snuff, you know! But we let you run on; in fact, I've even given you a little assistance."

"That you jolly well haven't!" said Jimmy warmly. "This paper is produced by Classics—run by Classics—"

"And improved by Moderns!" said Tommy Dodd.

"It's not! You haven't touched it, and you know it!" roared Lovell.

"Well, let's see the paper," said Oswald. "Never mind those Modern bounders! Let's see the giddy 'Journal'!"

Jimmy Silver sniffed, and opened the packet. Tommy Dodd's claim to have improved the paper was exasperating under the circumstances.

The paper was lifted out and held up to view.

On the front page was the title, in flourishing letters, "Jimmy Silver's Journal." It looked quite imposing. The magazine was composed of eight leaves of impot paper, pinned together at the back. It was a sufficiently creditable production for the first number.

"By gum, that looks all right!" said Oswald. "Let's see what's inside it, though!"

"Oh, do!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

The Classical juniors crowded round Jimmy Silver as the magazine was opened on the table. Jimmy Silver's eyes opened wide as they fell on the first page.

It was beautifully blank, save for one line in the centre:

"Notice! This paper has been carefully re-edited, and all the rubbish left out.—By Order."

"What the dickens—" said Oswald.

"My-mum-my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver. He stared at his precious magazine dumb-founded.

Oswald turned over the leaves.

One blank page succeeded another.

Every sheet presented a beautiful blank.

The Fistical Four could scarcely believe their eyes. They had left that magazine all ready for publication, filled from cover to cover with their own literary efforts in their own handwriting. Now, save for that line on the front page, all was blank!

Oswald turned over page after page, to the very end.

Blankness!

Not a line—not a word!

Then the joke dawned upon the Classical juniors, and there was a roar. All the "rubbish" had been left out, and the whole contents of the paper taken away. They understood.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't our paper!" roared Lovell. "Our paper's been taken out of the cover, and these blank pages put in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Re-edited!" chortled Tommy Cook. "All the rubbish taken out. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You Modern worms have done this!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All the rubbish!" gasped Oswald. "Oh dear! Oh, Jimmy!"

"Gentlemen," said Tommy Dodd, "I move a vote of thanks to the person or persons who have saved us from Lovell's poems, Jimmy Silver's leading article, Raby's rot, and Newcome's limericks. I move that that person deserves well of his country."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Common-room was in a roar. The expression on the faces of Jimmy Silver & Co. were, as Oswald said, worth a guinea a box.

The Fistical Four looked at "Jimmy Silver's Journal," from which all the rubbish had had been taken out, and they looked at one another. Then with one accord they rushed upon Tommy Dodd.

Classicals and Moderns were yelling with laughter, especially the Moderns. The Fistical Four, after a week's literary labour, had been "dished."

Where the real contents of the journal had gone they did not know—they suspected to Tommy Dodd's study. All they had to show to the expectant Fourth was a bundle of blank sheets from which all the rubbish had been taken out.

They rushed at Tommy Dodd like Huns.

But the Moderns closed round their leader, and the enraged Classics were hurled off, and Tommy Dodd & Co. streamed out of the Common-room, roaring. The Classics followed them, roaring, too.

The Fistical Four remained alone, gasping, with the first number of "Jimmy Silver's Journal."

"Dished!" groaned Lovell.

"Diddled!" said Raby.

"Done!" mumbled Newcome.

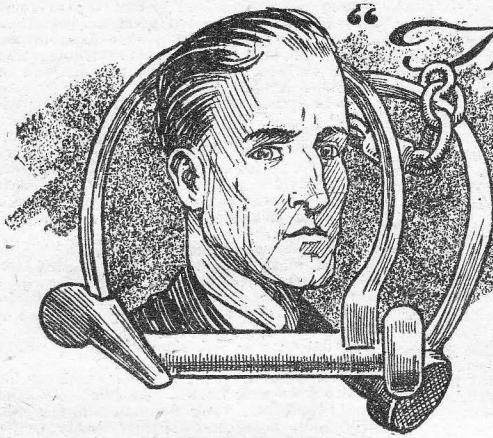
And Jimmy Silver said never a word. He took up the magazine and strode over to the fireplace; and in a few minutes only a few ashes remained to mark where once had been the first number of "Jimmy Silver's Journal."

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "THE ROOK. WOOD DOG-HUNT!" Make sure of your copy by ordering EARLY!)



TALES OF A WORLD-FAMOUS MASTER-DETECTIVE!



# The EXPLOITS OF FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE!"

A Grand New Story, dealing with the  
Adventures of FERRERS LOCKE, the  
Famous Detective.

By MAURICE EVERARD.

## A Crimson Trail.

**T**HE man who killed him would be rendering a public service to his fellows," Delgray said.

"But, my dear Delgray, you can't possibly be serious. Killing is murder, and murder is a crime against the law as well as against the individual," Harter said, taking his pipe from his lips and tracing fancy whorls with the stem in the middle of his hot palm. "Where are you going to draw the line? A fellow's life is his own, unless the law finds him guilty of killing another, when it ceases to be his, and automatically becomes subject to the law."

Delgray shook his dark head, and his eyes were unnaturally bright as he crossed the club smoke-room, and stared from the top of the steps out across the sweeping expanse of well-kept lawn, busy tennis-courts, across the glittering river, to the slope crowned with forest trees.

"You argue from the legal standpoint; I from the moral," the sunburnt young man continued, glancing suddenly at his watch. "The weakness of your case lies in the fact that the law may not find the shedder of innocent blood guilty, in which case he not only goes scot-free and retains his own worthless life, but remains a danger to the community at large. Now, I maintain that the fellow who rids the world of such a beast is rather to be praised than punished. Anyway, he must always enjoy the satisfaction of knowing he had done a signal duty both to himself and those who have suffered at the other's hands."

Sartoris, lazily swinging a racquet as he came breathing hard across the lawn, stopped abruptly, and regarded young Delgray with a questioning stare.

"All of which very dangerous profession of belief refers to whom?" he asked.

Delgray started, and passed a silk handkerchief over a suddenly moist brow.

"To Paul Rodriguez, if you particularly want to know," he flung out, without meaning to be rude. "This summer's sun, blazing down on a baked earth, takes my mind back to several bad spots where Rodriguez and I, unluckily, have met. I can remember just such an afternoon, way back in the Never-never, with a mining camp stewing and

broiling in gassy heat; the death-like stillness broken suddenly by a scuffle from a corrugated shack; oaths, a shout, the crack of a pistol, a dead man lying on his face, and Paul Rodriguez running like a hare, with a smoking weapon in his hands, for the cover of the hills."

"And the shot man's crime, Delgray?" Harter asked, passing his pouch to the perspiring Sartoris.

"That the poor, unlucky chap had spotted Rodriguez with a bunch of faked cards. He called the dago what he was, and the Spanish blood in Rodriguez—bad blood at that—leapt up and caused the hidden pistol-barrel to spit fire and smoke. The miner just coughed out his lungs on the earth floor, and Rodriguez turned up in Sydney a month later under another name. When a Yank boat took him across to Honolulu, he bulged with gold—other men's gold—which made more trouble in an already too sad world."

Sartoris stared up through a cloud of blue vapour to the ramblér-clad walls seething and frothing with red and white blossoms.

"All of which refers to the exceedingly prosperous and self-satisfied gentleman sitting writing at his desk in the room above," he remarked, as he rejoined the group of talkers. "Well, all I can say is, Henry, it's lucky he made a point of closing the French windows in his writing-room, or the club lawn would get busy over a five-o'clock-in-the-morning push, with pistols for two and coffee for one."

The hard glitter never left Delgray's eyes. "An unnecessary risk of a decent chap's life," he answered, with a hard laugh. "Not that I should care very much whether I died to-morrow, but I'd rather peg out decently than at that dog's hands! Which brings me back to my original point—that the man who kills him will be doing his fellows a power of good."

Sartoris winked across at Harter. As yet the cloud of tragedy seemed so far off as not to be discernible. But a sudden rush of wind can bring it up in a burnished, blazing sky, and the breaking of the storm amazes by its suddenness.

"Can't you tell us something more about our disreputable fellow-member?" Harter urged teasingly. "Not that I believe in a club smoke-room being turned into a scandal-shop, but Rodriguez's secretiveness makes him doubly interesting, and not a soul here knew a word about him till you weighed in from the Argentine."

Delgray shifted his position ever so slightly, seemingly watching the inverted bowl of the brass sky with the sun dropping slowly and throbbing fiercer heat.

"I could tell you of things which would chill your blood; of kanakas whipped to the bone by that man's greed, of men and women—ay, and children, even—mutilated in the Congo to swell a company's rubber and to let Rodriguez get away at the end of the season with a fatter purse. Death, blood, tragedy, pain—he has wallowed in it up to the eyes; and to-day, this very afternoon, finds him well clothed and prosperous, his hands flashing with stones that have cost men's lives, his oily body reeking with self-satisfaction, honoured member of a gentleman's club delightfully situated fourteen miles out of London, a restored mansion

housing an ogre, and not one among us with the nerve to kill him."

"Which reflects credit on an eminently respectable and expensive institution," Harter declared, "and saves a luxurious home for wealthy, idle bachelors, and successful overseas travellers from coming inconveniently under the glaring eye of public question. Better ask Leaves to mix you a cocktail, and join me—"

The suggestion was never finished, for the quiet of the long afternoon, with the hot blue shadows falling across the river, was shattered by a whip-like explosion, a muffled scream, and the dull thud of a heavy body overhead.

Harter sprang up, overturning his chair. "My Heaven, Delgray, your wish has come true!" he said, in a hushed whisper. "What you desired has happened."

Delgray laughed, ever so slightly, and hardly shifted his position.

"Perhaps not," he said languidly, as though the affair had no interest for him.

"Perhaps yes," Sartoris muttered, halfway to the door. "Come on, Harter, we must see. Something has happened to make him groan like that."

As they raced upstairs to Paul Rodriguez's luxurious private suite of rooms in the World-wide Club, the fears of Sartoris seemed justified. Pausing a moment irresolutely outside the closed door, they caught the measured gasping of a man in pain and the noise of his moving as he strove to drag himself across the floor.

"Curse it, the door's locked!" Harter said, tugging at the handle. "Silly fool! What did he want writing behind locked doors? He'll die before we can get to him."

The thought roused Sartoris to action. As the bigger and stronger of the two, he motioned the other aside, and picking up a heavy oak chair, dashed it against the panels. In a few minutes the door flew open, hanging on one hinge. Sartoris rushed in and stumbled headlong over a motionless form stretched face downwards.

Paul Rodriguez was dead, lifeless as the proverbial door-nail. That much was plain when they raised one arm and it dropped dully to the carpet, along which a crimson stream widened visibly.

And there was a crimson trail from beside the chair to the spot where the death-grip had seized him. Across the hot, close room drifted a slowly vanishing cloud of acrid vapour.

Harter straightened up, and glanced round. "Died of a revolver-shot—side of the head—through one side and out the other. Poor wretch!"

"Delgray wouldn't say so," Sartoris retorted, looking grim. "We'd better forget that conversation. It might be awkward."

"Why awkward, my friends?" asked a smooth voice in the doorway, and, glancing round, they saw Delgray watching them bait amusedly.

"Rodriguez is dead!" Harter said, lifting the lifeless body in his arms.

"Thank Heaven!" replied Delgray, sighing relievedly. "But he died too quickly."

"Never mind! Ring that bell. Tell Leaves to telephone for a doctor, and afterwards for the police."

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The young man shrugged his shoulders, and turned away.

"Yes; the police must be informed," he admitted casually, and they heard his footsteps slowly descending the stairs.

Jeeves was found busy at the courts, dispensing iced drinks to perspiring players. He paled, dropped the tray, and ran. A death at the club meant more to Jeeves than loss of time.

At 4.15 the police were in possession.

### The Blank Wall.

As the telephone bell in the outer room whirred, Ferrers Locke looked up from the litter of papers on his desk, and pushed back his chair with a weary sigh. Not that he usually allowed the telephone or any other noise to interrupt him or take his thoughts from a given concentrated point. Locke could figure out a case as satisfactorily in a crowded omnibus as in the quiet of his room.

But this morning he would have been the first to admit he was deadly sick of the trunk-line transfer forgery case. It lacked the

The Scotland Yard man screwed up his lips and smiled sheepishly.

"The Yard is wrong—for once. We're at a dead end over this World-wide Club affair. Can't make head or tail of it. Members rich and influential men, pots of money behind it, you know. Must do something to keep 'em quiet."

"And can't you?"

"Not a bit. We're up against a blank wall. Whole affair shrouded in mystery. Delkin was put on it, but drew blank. Calkett tried, so did Rogers. Same result. They gave me a show, and I look like falling down. Bit rough, isn't it, after the tries I've had?"

Locke closed his eyes reflectively. He could recall now that in the long ago, before he rose to his sub-inspectorship, Mauvell had been more than a trifle decent. In the Hesper Street Mystery he had given the private detective a hand when the Yard, as a body, was dead against the unofficial man coming in. And then in the Ring Frauds he had dropped the clue which brought success and almost a small fortune to the struggling young man in Euston Street. But all this was in the long ago, and Mauvell, in his rising success, had more than once entrenched

or illicitly lifted from some Peruvian buried temple I can't say. Anyway, there he was, a man of wealth, well known to travellers and drift-men, none too good a reputation, so far as we can gather, shot dead in the middle of the hot August afternoon, and not a clue to show how he met his end or at whose hand."

Locke jerked himself into an upright position.

"Sounds good. What were the circumstances?"

"As interesting as perplexing. Two fellows, named Harter and Sartoris, both gentlemen and very decent chaps, I should judge, found him after breaking down the door of his writing-room."

"The door was locked on the inside?"

"Yes, and, strangely enough, bolted too with a small brass bolt which Rodriguez had put on himself, apparently to guard against anyone stealing in on him by means of a skeleton or duplicate key."

"What was he doing before he was shot? Have you been able to discover?"

"Yes. He was writing. It appears his habits were well known. At two o'clock he would lunch at a table by himself in the club grill-room, doing himself remarkably well—wine, cigar, liqueur—generally rising about 2.45 for a glance through the illustrated papers in the lounge. Sharp at three o'clock it was his invariable custom—at least ever since he's been at the club, a matter of seven weeks prior to his death—to shut himself up in his room. He rented a private suite, the most expensive in the show. There he wrote steadily until a quarter-past four, when he generally repaired to the lawns and took tea. We are concerned with what happened between three and four o'clock."

Locke's eyes were closed again. He was fixing the strange time-table in his mind.

"Go on, I'm getting something of the type. Prosperous-looking man, doing himself well amongst a crowd of clubmen, but always keeping his business to himself."

"Apparently a very wise precaution," Mauvell admitted. "For when we came to examine his work we found he had been engaged in making up espionage reports for the benefit of some Government other than our own. That was probably why he locked and bolted the door."

"Which reminds me," the detective interrupted, raising his hand. "I'm a trifle interested in that bolt. Have you been able to establish when he fixed it?"

Mauvell produced a sheaf of papers.

"Pretty well. Some time the last week in July. The club servants can swear to that, because certain repainting of the premises was in hand, and the man who painted Rodriguez's door can swear there was no bolt or screw-holes then. Consequently it must have been fixed after the 28th, the date when the painting was done."

Of all men, Ferrers Locke was the most patient and methodical. More arresting details, he knew, would follow, but it was a habit of his to build up little pieces, and later to work them into the main structure. That was why he asked the next question.

"You mentioned something about certain written reports, made up daily between the hours of three and four. Of course, after this man's death you secured these papers. How far do they date back?"

Mauvell consulted his notes.

"We have copies dated the 16th of July. Why do you ask?"

Locke laughed.

"To give you a gratuitous piece of information. The brass bolt was not fixed to the door of the writing-room for fear of anyone breaking in on him and discovering the nature of the work which engaged him, or, obviously, it would have been put there earlier than the last week in July. Rodriguez had some other and more pressing reason; just what remains to be discovered."

The Scotland Yard man looked surprised.

"I'd never thought of that. Now I begin to see how you work up your successes."

"Not necessarily," Locke replied, shaking his head. "That is only one little point, which may or may not lead to big things. I merely point it out in passing as something which ought not to be overlooked. Well, what occurred, to the best of your knowledge, on the fatal afternoon?"

"When our men got there they found the local police crowded in the room, a sumptuous place of rich carpets, superb hangings, and fine furniture. Luckily they hadn't disturbed anything except to pick the dead man up from the floor and put him on a couch—at least, I believe the doctor did that with the help of a club waiter, named Jeeves, and Mr. Harter."



In a few minutes the door flew open, hanging on one hinge, and Sartoris, still with the heavy oak chair in his hands, stumbled into the room. An amazing scene met his eyes! (See page 17.)

human element, always a rallying-point for the student of crime.

"Well, Hay, what is it?" he asked, as his secretary poked his nose cautiously round the edge of the door.

"One of your pet abominations wants to worry you, sir," Hay said, with an assured grin. "Inspector Mauvell desires to know if you could give him half an hour on important business."

"Important to him, or me?" Ferrers Locke asked, with a sly smile.

The young man laughed.

"Scotland Yard doesn't work for a private detective's benefit. Shall I say you're busy?"

Locke rose from his chair and knocked his pipe on the grate.

"No. Tell him I'll give him an hour, if he likes to nip round now in a taxi."

In twenty minutes Assistant-inspector Mauvell was knocking at Ferrers Locke's door.

"Come in! Glad to see you. Sit down and smoke," Locke said genially. "Now, Mauvell, what's the trouble?"

"I see you've sensed some," the other returned, passing his hand over his puckered brow. "How are you off for time?"

"All depends on the nature of the case. What's wrong?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 90.

himself behind the Yard's official red-tape and annoying superiority.

Perhaps the instinct to try his hand where others had failed moved Locke.

"Well, what's it all about? I'm in the dark," he said, glancing at his diary. "From the 4th to the 19th I was in Lisbon. On the 23rd I reached London, sat myself down at a dry-as-dust affair, and here it is in front of me now."

Mauvell settled himself.

"The most mysterious affair we've struck for a long time. On Wednesday afternoon, August 11th, at six o'clock, a message came through from the Milehurst police. Would we send a man down to investigate something which had them beat—the case of a rich foreigner, temporary resident of the World-wide? Of course, you know all about the club and the sort of fellows it houses."

"Chaps from the four corners and the dead-end—all moneyed jokers, and lots of titles among them, I believe. Well, carry on."

"The dead man's name was Rodriguez—Paul Morale Rodriguez—native of Cordova, a long way back. Spoke English like a Balliol man; ran mines, trafficked in diamonds, held land, dealt in rubber, and has done worse than sell Inca pots for thirty thousand pounds in London—though whether the pots were his

"H'm! That's a pity! Better if you had seen him exactly in the position in which he died."

"Mr. Harter and Mr. Sartoris have testified to that. It appears they and another gentleman, named Delgray, were sitting on the balcony which runs round the floor beneath Mr. Rodriguez's suite of rooms. The three of them were talking and smoking, generally lazing the hot afternoon away, when they heard a shot fired and the noise of the body falling to the floor."

"Are you sure that—that the body fell?"

"Quite certain. All three men have sworn to it. Mr. Harter and Mr. Sartoris were the first to go up. They broke the door down, and found Rodriguez lying on his face, his arms outflung, and a bullet wound through the temple to the brain."

"Which side, Mauvell?"

"Entered on the left—apparently as he sat writing at his desk. He must have started up, staggered across the room to ring the bell, but fell dead just in front of the door."

"Any proof of what you surmise?"

"A good deal. For one thing, his left hand was bloodstained where he had clapped it to his temple. The right still clutched a pen, and from the chair to the door were splashes of blood on the carpet."

"Not a case of suicide, I suppose?"

"Hardly possible, because we haven't found the weapon."

"Then shot from outside?"

"Impossible, for the simple reason that all the windows were securely fastened from the inside."

Locke rose to his feet, and began to pace the room thoughtfully.

"Any of the panes of glass shattered?" he asked, looking up.

The other shook his head.

"Not one."

"You are quite certain broken glass hadn't been removed and a new piece put in between the time death occurred and the police were summoned?"

"Absolutely certain. For one thing, we have no reason to suspect the truth of Mr. Harter's and Mr. Sartoris' statements; and, for another, the putty-work of every pane has been examined and proved to be old."

"Despite the fact that repainting had been done, and at such time it is often customary to replace cracked panes with new glass?"

Mauvell looked almost annoyed by Ferrers Locke's insistence on this ridiculous point.

"We have established to our satisfaction that nothing of the sort happened. The same point occurred to Delkin, who hunted up all the workmen, saw the time and materials sheets, and satisfied himself nothing but repainting was done."

Locke nodded.

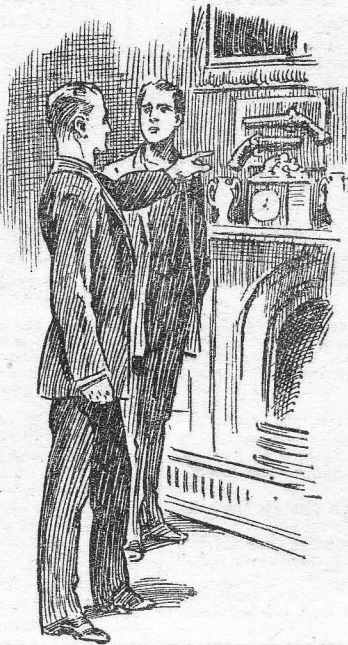
"Very well; let it pass. How about the fireplace?"

"There is a grid or grill, quite intact, some four or five feet up across the chimney-shaft. We examined that, too. It was very sooty and rusty, but quite in order—apparently never moved since it was put in ages ago."

"The floors and walls?"

"All solid—and ceiling, too. We examined every square inch. Not a trap or opening anywhere."

"Then, for all practical purposes, when this



"There's the weapon that was used to shoot Rodriguez," said Locke, pointing to one of a pair of old-fashioned small-bore horse-pistols hanging on the wall. (See this page.)

man met his end he was seated in a closed vault?"

"That's how we regard it."

"He was dead when the doctor arrived?"

"Stone dead. His end must have been almost instantaneous. The gentlemen I have mentioned both say he was lifeless when they burst into the room. Now, what do you make of it?"

Was it Ferrers Locke's fancy, or did a sneer really underlie Inspector Mauvell's words? For an instant the suspicion flashed in on him that this man had been sent by his colleagues purposely to get him on to an apparently insoluble case. It would please the Yard, he knew, to see a real big failure chalked against Ferrers Locke.

For a moment he toyed with this thought unpleasantly.

"I've come to look upon the whole affair as beyond the power of the human brain to elucidate," Mauvell interjected.

Locke spun round.

"I don't agree," he said curtly. "To every riddle there is an answer; to every crime, an explanation and an author."

"Would you like to try your hand at it?"

Mauvell asked.

Locke looked him steadily between the eyes.

"Let me have the keys of the sealed-up room, place me in possession of all the information you possess, and I guarantee to discover what or who caused Paul Rodriguez's death."

**Little Things.**

IT was a practice with Ferrers Locke often to start on a case where his less fortunate rivals left off. This was true in the strange affair of the World-wide Club.

Mauvell and his colleagues were up

against a blank wall, to use the assistant-inspector's own words. After a moderately short, though trying time, they gave up staring at the blank wall and looked hopelessly round, on the off-chance of picking up some overlooked clue ultimately destined to bring them success.

Locke's method was different. He took up his position before the blank wall, which was not really a blank wall at all; for facing Paul Rodriguez, as he had sat in his chair writing up to the moment of his death, were quite a number of passable pictures calculated to please and impress one who was not a connoisseur.

Locke had put himself in Rodriguez's place. Time, the hour of three, or thereabouts. John Hay was busy taking measurements.

"I am sitting here writing—writing my report to a foreign Government," Locke announced quietly. "My door is locked and bolted on the inside for one of two reasons, perhaps something of both—to keep people from breaking in on me before I can hide my papers, but more likely because I have a fear of someone, a fear which has come upon me only the last week or so—in fact, since about the beginning of August. Outside, men are shouting at the nets or laughing at the courts. Men who lounge in punts or skiffs on the river have a habit of making themselves heard a good distance off. Besides, there are always loungers on the terrace or the balcony of the clubhouse. Their voices distract me. I will keep the windows shut—not for fear of anyone entering, because no one can come in without a ladder, and even an enemy doesn't attack in daylight with so many men about. Suddenly the stillness is shattered by the report of a pistol. Both Harter and Sartoris swear to that. The figure on the chair—that is, myself—rises, staggers, sways across the room, and falls. I am lying here dead when they burst the door down, and the room is full of smoke. Hay, who fired the shot?"

The young man glanced up and laughed.

"Find the weapon that did it, and I might be able to discover," he said.

Locke went back to the dead man's revolving-chair, swung slowly round, and pointed to something high up against the wall over the mantelpiece.

"There is the weapon," he said, extending his arm in a line with one of a pair of old-fashioned small-bore horse-pistols. "Hand it down, and ten to one this part of the business is proved."

Hay started back in surprise.

"But surely, Mr. Locke, you don't seriously believe that Rodriguez shot himself with that old-fashioned affair, and then managed to put it back in place against the wall? Sartoris and Harter say they heard the fall of the body almost before the noise of the explosion had died down. Besides, the police are sure to have looked at the pistols."

Locke laughed.

"My dear Hay, that is just why I attach some importance to my theory. Of course, the police took down and examined the pistols, unless they possess even less brains than I give them credit for. But they probably told themselves antique pistols of George's day don't fire cartridges or conical-shaped bullets; and as the piece of lead extracted from Rodriguez's skull had once formed part and parcel of a 32 cartridge, the small horse-pistols were promptly wiped out of their sphere of reckoning. Get both of them down."

Hay obeyed, and brought with him a couple of champagne corks, used to set the weapons at an angle against the wall.

Locke took the right-hand pistol and glanced down the barrel.

He put his little finger in, and brought it out black with little tiny powdery flakes.

"Do the same to yours," he commanded Hay.

Hay's finger came out red with rust.

The detective smiled complacently.

"Point number one established beyond a doubt. I find my first real clue right outside the circle of reckoning traversed by the police. They put these pistols aside as beyond the possibility of the case altogether. I discovered that this very thing caused the death!"

(Another instalment of this grand detective serial next week.)

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**MAKE** up your mind **TO-DAY** to get the Free 4-in-1 Gift Package here offered you. Don't wait to "think it over" or you may miss for ever a golden opportunity for maintaining or developing hair beauty. The gift of a Free "Harlene Hair-Drill" Outfit that is now offered you will help you to escape from every form of hair trouble quickly, or, if no such trouble exists, will enable you to add immensely to the beauty and luxuriance of your hair.

## FREE.



There is not the least difficulty in obtaining one of these Free 4-in-1 Gifts of Beauty, for all you have to do is to send your name and address, with 4d. in stamps and the following coupon, and a Free Four-fold Seven Days' Trial "Harlene Hair-Drill" Outfit will at once be despatched to you.

### WRITE TO-DAY FOR FREE OUTFIT.

This wonderful "Harlene Hair-Drill" only takes up about two minutes of your time—an addition to the time spent on your toilet daily that is repaid a thousandfold because it relieves you from all hair troubles, makes your hair grow thicker and stronger, strengthens the roots of your hair, imparts a charming naturally healthy "waviness" to women's hair, gives it a radiantly beautiful look which makes all the difference, and keeps on improving it in quality and quantity until it reaches its highest possible standard of health, strength and beauty.

After a Free Trial you will be able to obtain further supplies of "Harlene" at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 9d. per bottle; "Uzon" Brilliantine, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per bottle; "Cremex" Shampoo Powders, 1s. 1½d. per box of seven shampoos (single packets, 2d. each), from all Chemists and Stores, or will be sent direct on receipt of 6d. extra for postage by Edwards' Harlene, Ltd., 20, 22, 24 and 26, Lamb's Conduit St., London, W.C.1.

### DON'T BE CONTENT WITH IMPOVERISHED HAIR.

Thousands who were formerly worried about the poor condition of their hair have been amazed and delighted at the wonder-working powers of "Harlene Hair-Drill". You will be the same if you write to-day and accept by return a Free "Harlene Hair-Drill" Outfit. You are only asked to send the sum of 4d. in stamps to cover cost of postage and packing, and this Free 4-in-1 Gift will be despatched to your address in any part of the United Kingdom promptly. It will include:—

1. A Free Trial Bottle of "Harlene-for-the-Hair," now universally recognised as the greatest of all hair tonics, and as used by Royalty, the nobility, the aristocracy, social leaders, public people, and millions of men and women in every grade of society.
2. A Free Trial Cremex Shampoo Powder, which cleanses the scalp and hair and soon frees it from all scurf and dust.
3. A Free Trial Bottle of "Uzon," another preparation that has won world-favour and world-praise from all sorts and conditions of people for giving the final touch of radiant beauty to the Hair.
4. Last, but not least, the "Harlene Hair-Drill" Manual, containing full instructions for carrying out Hair-Drill in the most successful and resultful way.

### FREE "HAIR-DRILL" COUPON.

Cut out and post to EDWARDS' HARLENE, LTD., 20, 22, 24 and 26, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C.1.

Dear Sirs,—Please send me your Free "Harlene" Four-Fold Hair-Growing Outfit as described. I enclose 4d. in stamps for postage and packing to my address. Popular, 9/10/20.

#### NOTE TO READER.

Write your full name and address clearly on a plain piece of paper, pin this coupon to it, and post as directed above. (Mark envelope "Sample Dept.")

**NICKEL**

## SILVER WATCHES

DELIVERED ON FIRST PAYMENT OF

# 2/- ONLY. YOU HAVE WATCH WHILST PAYING FOR IT.



Gent's full-size Railway timekeeping Keyless Lever Watch; Stout Nickel Silver or Oxidized Damp and Dust Proof Cases, plain dial, perfectly balanced superior Lever Movement, splendid timekeeper. Price for either pocket or wrist, 15/- each. Luminous dial (see time in dark), 2/- extra. Ladies' Chain or Wrist, 2/- extra.

We will send either of these watches on receipt of P.O. for 2/-. After receiving watch you send us a further 2/-, and promise to pay the remaining 11/- by weekly or monthly instalments. For cash with order enclose 14/- only. Five years' warranty given with every watch.

To avoid disappointment, send 2/- and 6d. extra postage at once. No unpleasant inquiries. All orders executed in rotation.

**The LEVER WATCH Co. (M Dept.),**  
42a, Stockwell Green, London, S.W. 9.

**MAGIC TRICKS,** Illusions, etc.—Parcels 2/6, 5/6, 10/6, and 10/6. Sample Trick, 1/—  
T. W. HARRISON, 239, Pentonville Road, London, N. 1.

## CUT THIS OUT

"The Popular." PEN COUPON. Value 2d.

Send this coupon with P.O. for only 5/- direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet St., London, E.C. 4. In return you will receive (post free) a splendid British Made 14-ct Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6. If you save 12 further coupons, each will count as 2d. off the price; so you may send 13 coupons and only 3/-. Say whether you want a fine, medium, or broad nib. This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the POPULAR readers. (Foreign postage extra.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Self Filling, or Safety Models, 2/- extra.

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