

GRAND NEW CIRCUS STORY BY SIDNEY DREW.

# The Boys' Realm. 1<sup>st</sup>

of Sport & Adventure.

## PRINCE of the CIRCUS.

A Story of  
the Ring & Caravans.  
by Sidney Drew.



H.M. Lewis.



REMEMBER when I was in the Third  
"Lucky Third!"  
"It was the best Form in the

school."

When the grey eyes twinkled merrily  
from under his hat, the captain of the  
Fourth Form, who had been in the school  
for six years, looked at the boy with a  
glance of surprise.

"You are now a subaltern in a crack  
regiment," he said, "and you are the  
most popular boy in the school. You are  
the Third, leader of the lower school,  
and you are the best Form in the school."  
The boy smiled and looked at the speaker  
with a glance of surprise.

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# THE SILVER CUPS.

A Rattling Complete Yarn of Pelham School.

"And if I had a face like yours I should paint  
it with gallant, and use it for a shield-  
bearer!" Taffy yelled, advancing with a  
threatening air.

Marker was of a bellicose tendency only when  
he had a mob of assistants. He retreated pre-  
cipitately, calling on his fellow Fourth-Formers  
for aid, and a pitched battle seemed imminent,  
when Jack Noble leapt forth with a more  
artistic method of harassing the enemy.

"Halfpence, my sons!" he bawled. "Let's  
go and bag the gym, and do a little practice."  
"Higgins won't let us," retorted Macpinn,  
commonly known as "Fighting Mac."  
Higgins, he it said, was the gymnastic in-  
structor, and the natural hugar of those  
enthusiastic spirits who regarded the gym as  
an ideal spot for ragging. Higgins held other  
views, which he never hesitated to impress with  
a swagger-stick.

"Higgins is up in London, buying a new  
tennis-net," Noble roared, "and everybody else  
is down at the river. Come on!"

The Third-Formers needed no second invita-  
tion. They swept Clifford & Co. aside, poured  
out of the quadrangle, and charged towards the  
gymnasium, but at a rapid speed.

The Fourthies were not slow in realising the  
meaning of this sudden move. They followed  
lootless; but Noble and his men arrived with  
half a minute to spare, and thrusting their  
heads into the gym. A cheer went up as they  
discovered that it was tenanted only by Ginger  
Dickinson, a Fifth fellow, of mild aspect and  
timid habits. He was seated on the vault-  
ing-horse, perusing a Greek history with an  
earnestness that was positively unwholesome.

Before he realised what was happening Fight-  
ing Mac, who had been lurking in the doorway,  
a dismal yell of protest was drowned by the  
closing of the door, and the Third-Formers  
burst into a shout of delight as they shot the  
belly out in time to prevent the ingress of  
Clifford and his minions.

"What a stunning lark!" Bob Russell  
grinned. "This'll make old Cliff's hair curl  
two years."

"And the Head'll make us curl one year, if  
we're copped," added Poddles enthusiastically.

"Rats! The Head's down by the river,  
and we could have been if it hadn't been for  
old Graham's speech. The last race doesn't  
come off until a quarter to six. We've an hour  
yet."

"What about Dickinson?"  
"He's forgotten what happened by this  
time," returned Jack Noble. "Probably he  
thinks some Greek god reached down and gave  
him a short-arm job, just for old time's sake."  
"Hi, hi, hi!"

"The lordly Clifford has arrived."  
There could be no doubting this last asser-  
tion.

Clifford had delivered himself against the  
door with all the gay abandon of a sack of  
coals, and a moment afterwards his voice rose  
protestingly.

"Get in, you beasts!"  
"It's fine having the gym to ourselves like  
this, ain't it, Jack?" said Bob Russell loudly,  
as he performed a noisy clog-dance on the  
spring-board.

"Come haring in just when you want the  
apparatus."  
"Cliffy and his worms won't have a chance  
to win those cups," returned Noble, in tones  
which would have been excessively loud if  
Russell had been a quarter of a mile away.

"Fancy that windy ass Marker thinking he's  
any good at gym! I've seen a pig-  
sticker in it!" bawled the subject of these  
remarks through the keyhole. "We'll give you  
beans for this!"  
"Bile beans!"  
"You'll get jolly well lammed when we get  
in."

the air. Jack Noble's voice, barking com-  
mands in imitation of the instructor, seemed  
more irritating to their ears than the sound of  
a two-and-a-halfpenny photograph running  
backwards. Convinced that no good could be  
gained by assaulting the door, they drew back,  
and surveyed the building with smouldering  
eyes.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bayne suddenly. "I  
have it!"  
"We didn't think anybody else had it, you  
ass!" snarled Clifford.

The suspense was telling on his temper.  
"I don't mean that. I was going to say that  
we might be able to get in through the bath-  
room window. Chaps have gone out that way,  
so why shouldn't we get in?"

Before the sentence was fairly concluded the  
Fourth-Formers, who numbered close upon  
thirty, were trooping on one another's heels as  
they crowded to the rear of the gym. Sure  
enough, the bath-room window was open to the  
extent of a couple of inches. Clifford emitted  
a yell of triumph, as he turned to the others.

"Gimme a leg-up, Marker," he whispered  
bastily. "You chaps follow as quietly as you  
can, and we'll bag the sponges, and wipe those  
ass-eyes!"

Pushed on Marker's back, he was able to  
grasp the sill and draw himself up. Gently,  
inch by inch, he lifted the window-sill, until  
he was able to crawl into the white-tiled cool-  
ness of the bath-room. At one end the floor  
space was occupied by a plunge-bath, while  
overhead the ceiling was painted like a sea  
and the admission of the shower.

One by one the Fourthies entered, and soon  
the room was packed so tightly that those on  
the rim of the plunge-bath were in imminent  
peril of being pitched into the still water. At  
the opposite end of the apartment were the  
washstands, and from these the avengers appropri-  
ated a score of sponges, which were rendered  
fat and weighty by a dip into the bath.

Until that moment the proceedings had gone  
with delightful smoothness. It was distinctly  
unfortunate that Jenkins should have lost his  
footing. He slipped afterwards that Bayne  
pushed him; an accusation which was warmly  
denied by the gentleman in question. Be that  
as it may, there is no disputing the fact that he  
suddenly made what looked like a violent  
attempt to sit down in mid-air, with the result  
that he fell flat on his back in the plunge-bath.

A noisy splash was capped by a half-strangled  
yell, and he vanished from view with a swift-  
ness that smacked of magic.

"The hind-head chump!" Clifford wailed,  
from his post by the door. "Shut up that  
ghastly row, if you leave!"

"Guzzle-guzzle-wow!" observed Jenkins,  
with force and enthusiasm, bringing his head  
into view for a second.

"They'll hear us in the gym!" hissed the  
leader of the lower school frantically. "Make  
the ass shut—"  
Sssss—ssss!

As he turned to emphasise his remarks,  
Clifford inadvertently stood time by laying  
hold of the chain which controlled the shower-  
bath. Instantly a drenching downpour com-  
menced, and in the excitement three more boys  
went hurrying after Jenkins, despite their  
frenzied efforts to the contrary.

For the next few moments the bath-room  
could scarcely have been recommended to any-  
body, save such of the quiet. Half the  
Fourth-Formers were bawling for somebody to  
turn off the icy shower; others were struggling  
desperately on the verge of the fatal plunge;  
while the remainder fought like an old-time  
galleys crew to reach the window. A yell of  
despair burst from Clifford's lips, and he made a  
hasty clutch at the chain which had done him  
mischief. So much energy did he put into the  
action, that it came away in his hand, and the  
downpour continued with redoubled force.

Chloroform, it is told, has a narcotic effect  
with a sudden inspiration. "Follow me, and help  
smash those Third Form muzzers!"

This was a masterstroke. The Fourth-  
Formers were swelling with rage and chagrin,  
and felt equal to the sanguinary massacre of an  
army. A short, sharp cheer rose as Clifford  
kicked the door open, and they poured, like a  
released torrent, along the short passage leading  
to the gymnasium.

But Nemesis, once she takes a job in hand,  
 seldom fails to see it to a finish.

During the spell of excitement in the bath-  
room, a change had taken place in the gym.  
From the window, Lanky Stow had perceived  
the Head approaching, in company of a party  
of ladies and gentlemen who had tired of the  
river sports, and were making a tour of the  
premises under his guidance. Realising that  
the gymnasium was about to be invaded, the  
Third-Formers "folded their tents like the  
Arabs," and about a dozen minutes before the  
visitors arrived, the place was apparently de-  
serted.

A well-appointed and commodious gymna-  
sium, the Head observed, in his best good  
look, the manner of the building itself was the  
gift of one of our distinguished alumni—Sir Grant  
Travers. We have since been the recipients  
of—

"Hi—!"  
The Head was allowed to proceed no further  
with his speech, which he was in the habit of  
fring off some scores of times during each term.  
At that moment the door leading to the bath-  
room burst open, and thirty dripping boys po-  
loped themselves into the gym. Giving vent  
to a series of yells which would have made a  
band of Red Indians pale with envy, they dis-  
charged their sponges point-blank at the party  
of sightseers.

The mistletoes were heavily charged with water,  
and weighed something like two pounds a-piece.  
Therefore, it is not surprising that the visitors  
were deeply impressed by the display. A rather  
stout lady, who had just come forward to inquire  
why the punching ball was fastened to the floor  
at both ends, received seven of the sponges in  
her hat, which was, fortunately, a large sample  
of the "Merry Widow" brand, and bore up  
nobly under the strain. The Head himself was  
very nearly drowned by a sponge that descended  
from above, like some new species of shooting-  
star, and settled on his bald head, and a little  
gentleman who was bringing up the rear took  
an unpremeditated back-somersault over the  
vaulting-horse with an exco and agility that  
surprised himself.

But, if the feelings of the visitors were dis-  
agreeable, they were nothing to those that  
surged in the breasts of the Fourth-Formers as  
they realised what had happened.

For one terrible second they remained rooted  
to the floor, gazing on the scene of havoc, and  
the gathering storm in the Head's eyes. Then  
they wavered, broke, and fled ignominiously,  
and the dripping interior of the bath-room swallowed  
them from view.

(Continued on the next page.)



Fighting Mac leapt forward and butted Clifford in the region of the waistcoat. At the same moment Jack Noble seized a large ham, and wielded it with telling effect. Clifford's jaws were not turning out the success he had expected.

## THE 2ND CHAPTER.

## A Fall in Favourites.

OMING down to Morrison's, old son.

"Rather a sweat-what!" returned Marker, who was lying at his ease in the only comfortable chair that Clifford's school boasted.

The leader of the Pelham juniors executed a nervous movement with the left side of his face, under the impression that he was performing a nervous wink.

"You'll miss the treat of your young life, if you don't come down to Morrison's," he grinned mischievously.

"Hallo, hallo! Is there a jape on?"

"Jape! Have you forgotten that the competition comes off to-night?"

"Of course not. That's why I don't want to sweat."

"And do you think I'm going to let Jack Noble and his crowd come up to the scruffy old cool and smiling?" pursued the unscrupulous Fourth-Form captain, in a low tone. "Not for Cluffy! I haven't forgotten that trick in the gym, and the things he said afterwards."

Marker shifted uneasily, as if stirred by unpleasant memories.

"What are you going to do?" he asked doubtfully. "If we try to rag them we may get backed-up ourselves."

"Something better than that. I've found out that Noble and a few of his pals go down to Morrison's every afternoon and have a bit of a tuck-in." Clifford paused, and glanced covertly at the door as he proceeded to a hushed whisper.

"Old Morrison! Do anything for money, and I've bribed him to put some stuff into the grub."

Marker's jaw dropped, and he paled slightly.

"Poison!" he gasped.

"No, you howling ass! It's none stuff I've heard out of you. It won't do them any harm, but they'll feel more like dis-clutch than gymnasts to-night. Come and see the fun!"

Marker's ideas of fun had been slightly warped by his associations with the noble Clifford. He arose with an apprehensive grimace, and grabbed his cap. On the way out they picked up Haynes, who was just finishing a task in the detention-room, and the three cronies set forth in company.

Morrison's, he it explained, was not a regular school shop. It was used by those businesses commonly described as a huxter's, and obtained a fair share of custom by reason of its remoteness from other shops. There one might obtain pastry, sweets, fishing-tackle, bread, meat, toys, newspapers, stamps, vegetables, books, stationery, and most other things. The proprietor was an unassuming mixture of insurer, miser, and tradesman, and was looked on with suspicion by the school authorities. He was strongly suspected of supplying cigarettes, cigars, and strong liquors to certain sportive members of the Sixth, to say nothing of lending money at exorbitant rates of interest. The Junior School, however, found him very useful, as he was always ready to allow a fellow unlimited "tuck," whereas, at the school shop, the facilities in this direction were strictly limited.

Morrison was an unkempt, shaggy old man, and his premises seemed to have acquired a strong flavour of his personality. The shop was veiled in gloom on the sunniest days, and was pervaded by a smell that could almost be felt. Clifford sniffed disgustfully as he led his two friends over the threshold.

"I wonder you don't use a suction-cleanser in here, Mr. Morrison," he grumbled. "It's awfully filthy! I could cut a smell like this with a safety-razor."

"Nobody but you to come in!" growled the old man sulkily. "Then as don't like it, can stop outside!"

"We stopped outside. If we hadn't, we would have gone past. Hallo, Noble!"

Clifford, with feigned surprise, turned to Jack Noble, Bob Russell, Fighting Mac, Drake, Taffy, and Lanky Stow. These stalwarts of the Third were all seated in the parlour adjoining the shop, and were obviously awaiting the ices and ginger-leaves which Morrison was engaged in preparing.

"Is that you, Clifford?" Noble returned politely. "The air in this shop is so rank that I did not smell you coming in! I suppose you are going to scratch to us to-night?"

"There won't be anything left to scratch to when we have done with you, kid," said Marker, eyeing the Third-Formers' refreshments with a fearful interest. "You don't stand a dog's chance!"

"Then we haven't as much chance as you have!"

"Don't try to be funny."

"Ah, we're not all alike, my boy!"

"What'd you mean?"

"You're the funniest thing I've ever seen, and you don't try, either. It comes natural."

Marker grinned, but felt himself unequal to continuing the war of wits. He joined his two companions in ordering lemonade and buns, and they leaned against the counter. The Third-Formers were making short work of the adulterated ices, and an air of nervous excitement began to pervade Clifford's despite their efforts to conceal it. When, however, Haynes attempted to drink his bun, even Jack Noble noticed it, and he was not given to paying much attention to his enemies of the Sixth.

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"Can't you hear when a gentleman speaks, you don't add up?"

"I'll find out when a gentleman comes in," retorted the huxter. "I haven't any clams with present company."

The Fourth-Formers accepted this impertinent retort in silence. As if drawn by a magnet, their eyes had returned to Jack Noble and his cronies, who had demolished the ices, and were lingering in a leisurely fashion over the ginger-leaves.

"You chaps are getting the prize competition on your nerves," Taffy grinned. "You look as nervous as an old woman on a fireworks."

"Cluffy, I bet that you—Oh, I'm feeling rotten, you chaps!"

The pained with a sudden ejaculation, and placed one hand over the pit of his stomach. His face wore a ghastly expression as he turned it on his startled cronies.

"It must be the air in here!" he muttered.

"It smells like a well-oiled house! I'll—I'll go outside for a bit. I think!"

The others opened their mouths to commiserate with the Welsh boy, but the words never left their tongues. A limp dejection had suddenly overtaken them.

"It's funny," Bob Russell ejaculated. "I feel as if I couldn't stir up my inside with a pudding-spoon."

"And I've got blue lightning on the brain!" burst out Lanky Stow.

"My inside feels like a cinematograph show!" moaned Drake. "Ouch! I believe we've been poisoned."

The Third-Formers certainly looked a most unhealthily collection. Jack Noble had drooped forward like a weed in the sun, and was hanging with his head on the table. Bob Russell was leaning against the wall as if his legs were giving way. Lanky Stow and Taffy were clapping each other for mutual support, while Drake and Fighting Mac were sliding gently under the table.

"Looky yere! I don't want no more of this yere!" Morrison ejaculated, with a nervous yelp. "You want to play these yere monkey tricks, just get outside. There was as good ice as 'ave ever been here!"

"Monkey tricks!" groaned Noble, rolling up his eyes. "Ugh, I'm dying! Ugh, there's a ghastly pain gnawing at my innards! Good-bye!"

"Yarrah! Ouch!"

Jack Noble's pathetic farewell was marred by a Gaelic shriek from Fighting Mac.

Springing up with volcanic violence, he launched himself through the air like a sky-rocket, and came into contact with a mound of biscuits. Crash! The air thickened with flying biscuits as the tin came down with a deafening clatter, spreading their contents in every direction. Fighting Mac leaped onwards and

butted Clifford in the region of the waistcoat with horrible force, sending him head over heels into a corner.

The other victims of Clifford's little plot were no less alarmed.

Jack Noble had seized a large ham, and was using it as a club with which to play golf and ping-pong with whatever came in his way. Taffy was endeavouring to stand on his head on the counter, hoisting a large motor-horn.

Bob Russell and Drake were racing round and round the table, with occasional incursions into the warehouse behind the shop, while Lanky Stow had disappeared under the counter, and was writhing there in the midst of Morrison's.

"The yere go mad!" the latter spat, his leathery old face pallid with fear. "I must 'ave friz them ices too 'ard, or something! Keep 'em off, Master Clifford! That stuff you gimme has went 'em stark, staring mad!"

Jack Noble, abandoning his golf, suddenly dashed upon him. There was no time to get out of the way, even if the grocer's bulk had made such a course possible. The Third-Former landed squarely in the middle of the grocer's legs, and he went spinning backwards. He shut up as noisily as one might close a two-foot rule, and reeled against a tier of bottled meats and jams which backed the window. For an agonised second he struggled desperately to maintain his position. With a wailing cry, a stateliness which made it appear as though he were performing the trick purposely, he vanished into the window to the sound of the most appalling crash ever heard at Pelham.

But the Third-Former worthies seemed oblivious of the disaster. They were working. Russell and Drake had seized upon the dazed and terrified Clifford, and rained him, face downwards, in a crop of eggs. Unsatisfied with this playful exhibition, they completed the business by pelting him with balls of fresh butter.

"We must get out of this!" Haynes quavered to Marker, starting back as a sere and yellow egg whistled past his nose, and burst on the wall with a snarl that nearly broke the windows.

"That stuff Cluffy gave them, has driven 'em crazy. Keep 'em off, yere madman!"

He aimed a blow at Fighting Mac with a chair, and edged towards the door.

"Oh, lor, lor!" Marker groaned. "This is frightful! Can't we—can't we do something?"

The doctor—call the fellow—yere for the head! Have an egg!" palpitated Haynes incoherently. "Great jumping lumps of bees—y! Look at that!"

They were out in the open now, and he had lost his awe and most astounding sight had now fallen to his lot to behold. Even at that fearful moment a weak spasm of laughter rose to his blue lips. The shop window was a heaving mass of cheese, jam, sides of bacon, flour, eggs, butter, and cardboard boxes, from

which arms and legs emerged occasionally, to wave wildly for a few seconds ere being buried in some new avalanche of groceries. The sight by some new fascination for the two Fourth-Formers. They remained open-mouthed and staring, eyeing the colossal wreckage with quivering, speechless horror.

proving a bigger thing than they had expected. Then came a new event, and one that assumed them more than all that had gone before.

From the interior of the shop Jack Noble emerged, unarmoured with Fighting Mac. Behind him came Bob Russell, Taffy and Stow.

They were a little dishevelled and somewhat worn as regards complexion, but otherwise as cool and calm as if they had been on the way to church. Like the animals leaving the Ark, they came forth two by two, favouring Haynes and Marker with pleasant smiles as they passed.

"My hat!" the latter gurgled. "My best Sunday hat! Then you've—you've recovered!"

Jack Noble laughed gently.

"There was nothing to recover from, old boys. Taffy happened to overthrow our door friend Cluffy, and our arrangements with that fellow Morrison, and we put a spoke in his wheel. We charged that stuff you got in the lab, for

sols, which didn't do us any harm, though it tasted beastly."

"You idiots!" wailed Haynes wildly. "This'll cost you twenty quid for a cert!"

"Cluffy can arrange that with old Morrison, and then send an account of the affair to the Head." Jack returned, with meaning. "We shouldn't trouble ourselves about it. For my part, I think it'll only serve you right for leaving nothing to do with a shady old rascal like Morrison."

Marker and Haynes said nothing, for the simple reason that they had nothing to say. They cast a frightened glance at the shop, which looked as if it had been visited by several centuries and earthquakes; then they revealed their true calibre by hurrying away and leaving Clifford to face the music alone.

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covered by an iron grating. A

attention to the person that was

one, and had been, that was

the outside. It seemed that

but to sit and wait for

But he did not intend to

fallen across the lobby

postage, and with

possessed himself of the

berthing himself on the

There, he sat, and

under the position of

cramped position in the

stand he could have

as easy. As it was, he

a matter of time.

The tales seemed

length he had seemed

admit of the passage

scrambled through, only

rough in the splintered

five minutes was

himself. Finally he

left the pocket of his

took himself away, and

the sleep stone

Clifford's shock

was evident. The

the cellar passage, he

he was as far from

as he had been before

Shanah! Shanah!

his weapons, dealing

vicinity of the

ore the job was

hour late for the

And he was not

adjusted the shutters

the morning. Spring

more found him

malice. This time,

paratively simpler.

Two minutes later

swelling figure burst

the figure of a

and, elated

he ignored them all

where Bob Graham

"Where the dickens

that worried blurted

Clifford looked in