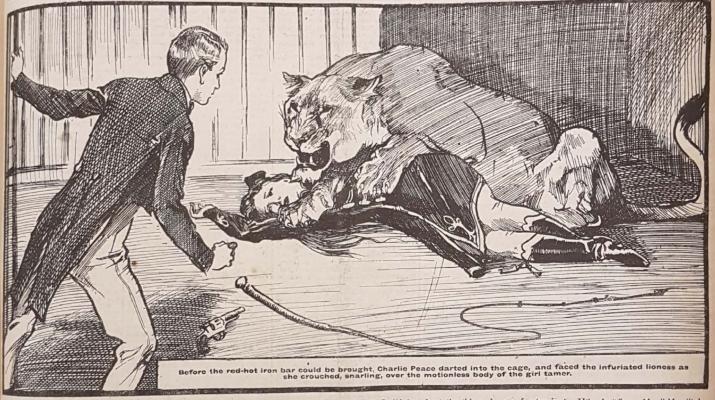




A SPLENDID TALE RK LANTER OF THE BOYHOOD OF CHARLES PEACE



Easters are informed that the canciers in the following Serial Story in party imaginary, and no reference a slusion is made to any living Benez. Actual names may be uninsticully mentioned, but the Editor Wals it to be distinctly understood all no adverse personal reflection is Sended.]

Charlie to the Rescue.

Charlie to the Rescue.

O I'm crafty, am I''' cried Charlie Peace, with a kind of Charlie Peace, and he can be compared to the case of the compared to the case of the compared to the case of the case. I'll keep Peace, The drone with Squeezer, and be peaced to the case of the

bbouring church clock quarter to nine, and he

quickened his pace. At nine Mrs. Burnett, the old woman who looked after the wardrobe and mended the costumes, sent Willie Worboise, one of the stable lads, out for her supper—generally a baked sheep's head and potatoes. Charlie's mouth watered as he thought of it. If he could reach Jagger's a little before nine, he would get the boy to buy two sheep's heads instead of one.

As luck would nave it, he rangainst Willie coming out of the door at the back of the circus, and he gave the lad his orders. Willie stared. He did not recognise the Marvellous Boy Violinist.

"Not know me, you silly kid? I'm Posno. My turn's coming on, and don't you forget it. Look sharp, and I'll give you twopence for vourself—if you promise not to spend it all on fags."

The boy grinned and darted away.

if you promise not to spend fags."

The boy grinned and darted away, and Charlie slipped into the darkness behind the circus door. The band was playing its loudest, and the tune was that which betokened Milo's apparance. Una and her lions would follow.

He groped his way to Mrs. Burnett's snuggery. The old lady, sur-

piparance. Una and her lions would follow.

He groped his way to Mrs. Burnett's snuggery. The old lady, surjest on the property of the state of the same of the sa

"Ah, to be sure! But I didn't know as you'd got a mother."

"Of course I have, but she lives a long way from here," said Charlie carelessly. "But just now I'm thinking about something else—supper. I've been walking miles and miles. I do believe I could eat a donkey's hind leg. Hailo, here's Willie! There's your twopence, my lad!"
For the next fen minutes Charlie was silent, but his Jaws were moving merrily. The toothsome "jemmy," as baked sheep's head is called in the "profession!" was fast disappearing. The band changed its tune. Milo had finished, and the creaking of wheels told that the trolley bearing the lones' cage was approaching the stage.

the lions' cage was approximate stage.

Charlie, feeling after the meal like a giant refreshed, went out of Mrs. Burnett's sninggery into a passage leading to the stage. On this stage the variety show artistes performed. He wanted to see the lions and Una nearer than it was possible from the front of the house. The cage was drawn parallel with and close to the stage.

drawn parallel with and close to the stage.

Charlie met no one, and he stationed himself in the wings. Presently Stella, to call her by her own name, came on to the stage, and, after bowing in acknowledgment of the applause, entered the cage.

At that moment Charlie caught sight of someone creeping among the scenery at the back. It was so dark he could not see precisely who it was, but the outline suggested Milo's bulky form. The figure presented itself but for a second, and then ghided away.

Charlie did not trouble himself

about the thing; he was far too interested in Stella, who was putting the animals through their performance with wonderful coolness.

The lioness she reserved for the last. The sleek, tawny creature seemed to-night to be in a tractable mood. She obeyed every order readily, her final feat being to spring from one side of the cage to the other, while Stella fired a pistol, and then to lie down as though she had been shot.

Everything weat well until this point was reached. The pistol was fired, and the lioness flung herself, down with great naturalness; but instead of remaining quiet as she had been taught, she gave a sudden snarl of rage, and in an instant was on her feet, her back arched, her tail lashing her sides.

The audience thought it was part of the show, and even when the creature bounded through the air upon the girl, knocked her down and pinned her right arm to the floor with one paw, while another was pressed heavily on her chest, they did not imagine anything was wrong. But on the brute sending up a hideous roar, and Jagger was heard shouting, "The hot bar! Quick, for Heaven's cake!" they rose in their seats, and the women began screaming.

Before the hot iron bar, always kept in readiness for such emergencies, could be brought, Charlierushed across the stage, and lifting the fastening of the cage door, darted in and faced the infuriated lioness.

Meanwhile, Stella was lying still and motionless, her face white as chalk. She had fainted.

Milo, the "Strong Man," Mystified.

Milo, the "Strong Man," Mystified.

OR a second the uproar, the shouts of the men, the screams of the frightened women, ceased. Breathlessly the horrifold spectators watched the boy croud on a level with that of the savage brute. Without showing the slightest sign of fear, Charlie Peace fixed his eyes on the yellow orbs dilated with rage.

"Come here—you!" said he, in low, deliberate, grating tones.

The effect was magical. Whether due to the tone of command, or to the magnetism in his eyes, it is hard to say. The lioness relaxed her muscles, and slowly removed her heavy paw from Stella's chest, poising it hesitatingly. Had Charlie Peace withdrawn his gaze but for an instant down it would have gone again, and wee for the poor victim!

"Come, you!"

The accents were more grating more determined, more masterful than ever. The creature seemed to shrink with fear. It left Stells, and crept slowly towards Charlie, its tail hanging limply, as though conscious it had done wrong.

"Over there—down!"

By this time Charlie was standing, and pointing threateningly to the other three lions, which were cowering in a corner of the cage. It was tell was standing and pointing threateningly to the other three lions, which were cowering in a corner of the cage. It was tell was tell as the property of the boy. The lioness

Continued on the next page.

## The Scapegrace of the Regiment.

(Continued.)

tip as to which to "plump" for and

tip as to which to "plump" for and, which to avoid.

For even in the smartest battalion there are some companies good and some rank bad.

Jack could imagine, for instance, that any "crush" Lieut, the Hon. Gaggleton Glynn had anything to do with would be bound to be rotten, and no place for them.

Then, again, they had no desire to fall into Sergeant Rigg's clutches permanently if they could avoid it.

But whether either of these belonged to E-the company they were told off to—they had not the ghost of an idea, and they were too proud to inquire.

awaiting them. This gloomy cup-board outside the door of one of the

awaiting them. This gloomy cupboard outside the door of one of the
barrack-rooms, seemed to Jack
rather less comfortable than the
prison-cell in which he had just spent
the night.

However, it was private, and after
a few years in a crowded barrackroom, most soldiers would be glad
enough to sling their cots in a coalcellar if they were allowed.

Unfortunately, Colour-sergeant
Bush, of E, seemed as gleomy as his
surroundings. Jack sized him up as
a weak man, and since a weak Colour
can only mean an indifferent company at best, he realised that once
again their luck was sadly out.

As was only to be expected, he
read them a lecture on the bad start
they had made in their new career;
hut so little heart did he put into it
that Jack found himself actually
yawning.

"Well there's your order for your

that Jack tound mines.

They found their future coloursergeant seated in his "bunk"; "Well, there's your order for your

kits," concluded the colour mournfully. "You'll take those over to the quarter-master's store at two sharp, and get measured. And just see nobody pinches any of your stuff when you get it back to your room, because they're a pritty rum, lot. It's the one just below here," he explained, turning again to his little table littered with paysheets and papers, "Ask for Privates Baggs and Sims, and tell 'em I sent you. They'll look after you and show you the ropes,"

They'll look after you and sales the ropes."

The gloomy colour heaved a last heavy sigh, and taking this as a signal of dismissal. Jack winked at Pereival and led the way out.

"That man's just wasted as a soldier. He ought to have been an undertaker. He gives one the faceache simply to look at him," laughed Jack, as they descended the draughty staircase and halted at a dor marked "25 N.C.O.'s and Men."

Pushing this open, they found themselves in a big, bare room, scrupulously clean, with hed cots ranged round the four walls, two long tables with forms running down the centre, and in the middle a huge stove and an equally corrmous coal-bin.

Above each bed was a shelf on which was stowed the soldier's extra uniform and belongings, all packed and arranged according to instern, so that each shelf was as like the rest as peas in a pod.

Beneath was a row of pegs for belts and equipment, and beside the bed a rack for the rifle.

As it was close on time for the dinner bugle to sound, the room was full. A few men lounged on the ends of the fold-up bed-cots, reading papers, but the greater number were grouped about one of the tables, where, to judge by the rattle of a dice-box and the invitations of a 

gentleman with a strong Cockney accent to "Plank your money on the old made on this time. I was a same of the many of the old made of the strong cockney a gambling game was in I make you have a gambling game was in I make you have a gambling game was in Jul swing. "Excuse me, can supul swing which is Private Sims?" asked Jack, in a loud, clear voice. "asked Jack, in a loud, clear voice." asked Jack, Instantly the group bending over the table straightened up to take look at him, while out of its midd wot used to be a blessed bofficer on don't cher know—haw, haw, "Give i'm a cheer, boys! (her our conkerin" 'ero wot set! sheer our conkerin 'ero wot set! sheer our conker

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[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Story are purely imaximary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual name with the policy wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.]

The Most Popular School Story.

## THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S.

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

THIS HAS TAKEN PLACE.

Dick Penwyn, a sturdy Cornish lad who has been to a Council school, obtains a scholarship at St. Wode's. On his arrival there he is received with open arms by Blagden & Co. who mistake him for another new fellow—Lord Lovell. On discovering their mistake, Blagden & Co. become bitter enemies of both the new juniors, who chum together. To the disgust of his Form-fellows, "Bunny" Lovell is taken up by Crawcour & Co. of the Fifth, whose companionship, Pen sers plainly, is doing the easy-going young viscount no good. Bunny, however, will not listen to his friend's remonstrances, and Pen is wandering about disconsolately during one of his chum's visits to the "Blades," as Crawcour & Co. call themselves, when Newcome, of the Fourth, accosts him curiously. "Are you glad to be at St. THIS HAS TAKEN PLACE.

curiously.

"Are you glad to be at St.
Wode's, Penwyn?" he asks.

"Yes, in a way," replies Pen.

(Read on from here.)

Assistance for Newcome

Assistance for Newcome.

NLY in a way?" said Newcome, grinning.

"Yes, I know it's a rise in life for me, and may mean something for me in the future, and for my people. But the fellows here don't seem so hearty and unaffected as the fellows I'm used to."

Newcome chuckled. He wondered what Blagden and Co. would say it hey knew that the scholarship chap compared the St. Wode's fellows unfavourably with the Council-school chaps he was used to.

"Does that amuse you?" asked Pen.

zes, ratner. But it's all right," said Newcome. good-humouredly, "You'll get used to us, you know. We're not all bad; there are black sheep here, but if you're decent all the time, you'll get on with most of the fellows." Yes, rather. But it's all right,

the fellows."

"I hope I shall be decent."

"Don't be touchy," said Newcome quietly. "I'm not getting at
you. I'm not a snob, and I know
you're all right. At the same time,
you can't expect all the fellows to see
it—all at once."

"I suppose not."

"You're why got to thick to you."

"I suppose not."
"You've only got to stick to your guns and play the game to pull through. A chap can never be really done in, except by himself. That's my opinion!"
"I dare say you're right."
"Oth "The wints!" said Newcome

"I dare say you're right."

"Oh, I'm right!" said Newcome cheerfully, "You depend on your uncle! Look here, you must have been through this stuff in the scholar-ship exam. I know there are Fifthformers here who couldn't pass it, though it's only to admit you to the Fourth!"

Fourth:" Season you to the "Very likely!"
"Well, go through this with me, there's a good fellow," said Newcome.
"Your friend doesn't want you now, does he—I mean Lovell! I believe you've chummed up with him!"
"Yes," said Pen.
"He doesn't want you for a minute, I suppose?"

"No." said Pen, flushing. "He doesn't want me."
"Oh!" murnured Newcome, noting the flush in the junior's cheek.
"Falling out already? Well, it's none of my biznev."
"Did you speak?"
"Yes; help me with this beast Horace," said Newcome. "What I can't make out is, why they should be lords of the earth and exalted to the gods as well—those chaps in the chariots, you know."
Pen laughed, and cheerfully went through the old familiar ode with Newcome. The St. Wode's, fellow passed no remark on the matter, but he could not help being struck by the clearners and precision of the scholarship lad's knowledge.
After ten mimutes Newcome had learned more from Pen than he was likely to learn from Mr. Bush in a week.
"Thanks old man," he said grate-

likely to learn from Mr. Bush in a week.

"Thanks, old man," he said gratefully, when Pen had finished. "You make it elearer than old Bush does." He chuckled. "Won't I surprise him in the morning, too! As a matter of fact, Penwyn, it's an open secret that old Bushy-whiskers is weak in the classics—jolly weak, and Horace is his bugbear. He has to mug it up in his study, you know, before he takes us, and one or two of the fellows, have caught him tripping—yes, rather! My hat! He comes down heavy on them, too! He's a University man, too, old Bushy is—I know that—but all sorts of chaps get into the University now," said Newcome cheerfully. "I shouldn't wonder if he's one of those scholarship outsiders—my hat! Excuse me, old man," he broke off remorsefully," I—I didn't notice what I was saying! "m awfully sorry—I really am." man," he broke off remorserum.

I didn't notice what I was sa
I'm awfully sorry—I really am.
Pen had reddened.

I'm awtuly sorty—I really am.

Pen had reddened.

"Oh, don't mind me!" he said.

"I'm learning not to be touchy. If
Mr. Bush was a scholarship chap,
though, I should think it's to his
credit, not against him."

"So should I, really," said Newcome hesitatingly. "I suppose it's
more to a chap's credit to do things
himself than to have his pater pay
for them. But—but that's not the
way it's generally looked at, you
know. I dare say a chap can become
snobbish without thinking, you see.
I could have bitten my tongue out for
saying what I just said; but I didn't
really mean anything."

"It's all right."

"After you'd just helped me, too,

"It's all right."
"After you'd just helped me, too, like the jolly brick you are," said Newcome.
"I'm so jolly sorry, Penwyn."

Pen smiled.

"Don't say anything more about it," he said. "It's nothing! As for Mr. Bush, if he is a scholarship chap himself..."

"Penwyn! Penwyn! Boy! How

Pen jumped up.
Mr. Bush had entered the common-room, unseen by the two juniors as they sat facing the fire, and he had evidently heard what the Cornish lad said.

He stood facing the two alarmed boys—his hands trembling, his fea-tures convulsed with rage.

Drives to Revolt.

PENWYN!" Mr. Bush was stammering in his rage, his words coming out thickly.
"Penwyn! How dare you,

Penwyn! How dare you.

Den looked at him in surprise.

Mr. Bush had heard his remark, but he did not see why it should offend the master of the Fourth.

Pen had been about to say nothing that had any harm in it—ill as Mr. Bush had treated him, he was not the fellow to carp and growl about a master behind his back.

But Mr. Bush had evidently taken very great exception to the words which Pen regarded as perfectly harmless.

harmless.

His face was quite white with passion, and his eyes were scintillating with an unpleasant greenish light.



"I am waiting for you, Penwyn," sald Mr. Bush ominously. "Hold out your hand." But Pen put his ur hand." But Pen hands behind him

"Penwyn, you—you gutter-brat!" said Mr. Bush thickly.
"How dare you talk about me! I say, how dare you slander me, sir!"
Pen crimsoned.
"I was not slandering you, sir," he said quietly. "I was saying—"
"You—you wretched beggar from the streets!" said Mr. Bush. "A disgrace to the Council-school where you were taught, you have come here to be a greater disgrace to &t. Wode's!"
"Hear, hear!" murmured Blacden.

"Hear, hear!" murmured Blagden.
Pen bit his lip.
"You'll not find it pay to slander
your masters," said Mr. Bush.
"There is severe number.

"You'll not find it pay to slander your masters," said Mr. Bush. "There is severe punishment provided at St. Wode's for that kind of villainy, Penwyn. You cannot bring the habits of the—the ciminal classes here with impunity." I will tell you what I was about to say."

"Boy! I distinctly heard you!"

"I was asying, sir, that if you had been a scholarship boy yourself, you would probably, show more consideration for me as a 'scholarship boy," said Pen. "That is what I was saving when you interrupted me."

Mr. Bush glared at him.

"And how dare you assume that a master at St. Wode's has had the same diggraceful upbringing as yourself, you gutter outcast?" he thundered.

"I have not had a disgraceful up-bringing, sir," said Pen, his lip trembling, "I was brought up by my father."
"Ah. some

"Ah, some low, ill-mannered wretch like yourself, only too eager to thrust his son into a place he was not fit for!" fit for

fit for!"

Pen's eyes burned.

"If you speak of my father in that way again, sir, I shall complain to the Head!" he said, in low, determined

way again, sir, I shall complain to the Head!" he said, in low, determined tones.

"Go it!" murmered Newcome, not loud enough for Mr. Bush to \*\*par.

Mr. Bush had simply staggered back in astonishment. He was more astonished than enraged at the words of the scholarship boy.

"What—what!" he stammered.
Pen set his lips firmly. So long as the form-master, in his mean, spiteful way, sneered at and abused him, Pen could stand it, and meant to stand it. But that his father—the honest, kind, brave father, who had worked for him and made endless sacrifices for his sake—sacrifices Pen might never be able, to repay—that John Penwyn should be spoken of insultingly by so mean a creature as Mr. Bush—that was not to be endured. Pen would not have stayed at St. Wode's to endure it. He would sooner have given up all his prospects there, and shaken the dust of the place from his feet for ever.

He faced the Form-master calmly. There was a dangerous gleam in his vers now. The glance of everyone.

There was a dangerous gleam in his eyes now. The glance of everyone in the room was upon the singular scene. The fellows were almost scene. The fellows were almost breathless, wondering how the Form-master would take the cheek of the scholarship chap.

Mr. Bush's fingers were elenching and unclenching with rage. But he knew that he had gone too

and unclenching with rage.

But he knew that he had gone too far.

Ite read determination in Pen's face, and he knew that if his words were reported to the head-master of St. Wode's in a complaint from the scholarship boy, he would have a very painful scene to go through with Dr. Wimperis. The Head was very strong on the subject of the masters keeping their dignity before the boys. In fact, Mr. Bush saw a possibility of his having to leave St. Wode's if the Cornish junior carried out his threat. He choked back the furious words that leaped to his lips.

Pen did not speak. He had no desire to triumph over the Formmaster in any way. He was only determined that his father should not be spoken of disrespectfully by Mr. Bush or by anybody else. He would not have stood it from the Hoad himself.

"Penwyn!" said Mr. Bush, at last, "I—I hardly know how to deal with you. You—you are such a ruffian, such an untamed hooligan!"

"He ought to be expelled, sir," said Blagden.

"Quite right, Blagden. This, boy certainly should be expelled; it is not fit that he should mix with the sons of gentlemen. I trust, however, that you do not allow his presence to contaminate you more than you can help."

"Trust us for that, sir," said

help."
"Trust us for that, sir," said Blagden.
"Oh, yes, sir!"
"Cads!" murn

"Chase" murmured Newcome.
"Cads" murmured Newcome.
"Fancy sucking up to old Bushy like that! Pah!"
"I—I hardly know what to say to you, Penwyn," said Mr. Bush. "I suppose it is useless to complain of your manner—disgusting and disgraceful as they are."
Pen did not reply.
Mr. Bush went on victoriously. The mean-hearted man realised that so

long as he only insulted Pen, and not Pen's father, he was in no danger of that dreaded complaint to the Head. And although the owed that to Pen's forbearance, he was not the less keen to take, advantage of he was not the less keen to see," said Mr. Bush the disgrace ye have brought upon them. I am only sorry that there is no means of relieving St. Wode's of your presence. Still Pen was silent. Only his expending St. Wode's of your presence. Still Pen was silent. Only his cet burned. He had hardened himself to this, and he could stand it.

"But there is one resource in your case, Penwyn—you can be case, enwyn—you can be case, the had in his hand. He had come to the junior room to case somehold else, but he formed to the same to

come to the junior room to cane somebody else, but he forgot that w. "Hold out your hand, Penwyn."

hunted look came into Pen's

How long was this to last?

How long was this to last? His hands were yet aching from the last caning Mr. Bush had found an excuse for giving him.

Was he called upon to submit to constant ill-usage—to be savagely, cruelly caned whenever it suited the cruel temper of the mean spirited man who was in authority over him!

Was life worth living on such terms—were the advantages his St. Wode's scholarship had brought him worth the price?

the price?

the price?

Pen was not a soft lad-he could stand punishment. But constant, undeserved punishment, that was a different matter.

"I am waiting for you, Penwyn," said Mr. Bush ominously.

Pen's hands were still down at his

The Fourth Form were simply

The Fourth Form were simply breathless.
Was the scholarship chap—the Council-school bounder—going to defy the master of his Form?
It seemed impossible.
There was no fellow in the & Wode's Fourth who would hate dared to do it! Did the Connib junior, the scholarship boy, dare more than the rest of the Form, then?
Surely not! But—

Surely not! But—
But he did not hold out his hand

But he did not hold out his hand. The silence was tense—the excitement thrilling to the juniors who were looking on. For once there was something like sympathy for Pen in many of the faces round him. Plucky, at least, the fellows knew it was to "back up" against old Bushy. They might dislike Pen, but they enjoyed seeing the domineering, evil-tempered Form-master taken down. down. Penwyn!"

"Penwyn!"
"Yes, sir," said Pen quietly.
"Is low, calm voice cut the silence
like a knife. There was no defaare
in it, but there was no fear. There
was only steady calmness.
"Penwyn! You heard me!"
"Yes, sir."
"I told you to hold out your
hand."
"Yes, sir."

hand."
"Yes, sir."
"Obey me."
"Why am I to be caned, sir!"
"Do you dare to question me boy?" thundered Mr. Bush. "Hold out your hand at once, sir, or or it will thrash you, sir, where you stand. Hold out your hand instant!
Penwyn."

Mr. Bush's bluster was a sign that he was unsure of his position now. Pen did not know that. But he did not surrender

not surrender.

He put his hands behind him.
"You—you refuse to obey mentioned Mr. Bush, hardly believed

(Another splendid instalment of this about ing tale next week.)