



The St. Sam's PROPHETEER!



DICKY NUGENT

The "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" wouldn't be complete without one of Dicky Nugent's literary efforts; and although in this, his latest masterpiece, the orthography is unique, the story lacks nothing in fun and amusement.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Head's Swindle!

THE Head's jolly late this morning!" Burleigh, of the Sixth at St. Sam's, screwed up his face as he spoke, and rivetted his eyes on the Form-room clock.

"I suppose the old buffer's overslept," yawned Tallboy. "When you reach the ripe old age of ninety, you can't be eggspected to leap out of bed with the lark—or even with the sparro."

"And yet," said Bounder, "the Head's the sole of punctuality, as a rule. It's queer!"

The lofty and dignified members of the Sixth began to fidgett in their places. They lissened in vane for the fammiliar footmark of Dr. Birchemall, and the swish of his gown.

Prezzently, to wile away the time, they started to pelt each other with paper pellets. And instead of pouring over their books, they proceeded to pour ink down the nex of the fellows in front of them.

When they had grown weary of these jolly divershuns, the seniors started to play leap-frog over the desks.

The din in the Sixth Form-room was terrifick. It smote the ears of Mr. Justiss,

who was taking the Fifth in the next room. But Mr. Justiss didn't interfeer. Sounds of riot and revelry from the Sixth were quite usual; for the Head himself often joined in a game of leap-frog, as a welcome releef from Horris and Homer.

The time flew by, and still there was no sign of Dr. Birchemall.

"Better go and root him out," said Burleigh to Tallboy. "He mite be ill, or something."

"No such luck!" grunted Tallboy as he walked away from the hurly-burly with the burly Burleigh.

The two seniors went straight to the Head's study. Burleigh politely bashed the door with his boot, and marched in, with Tallboy at his heals.

"Good-mourning, Burleigh!"

It was not the Head's base voice that greeted the kaptin of St. Sam's, but the sweet dulset treble of Molly Birchemall, the Head's bewtiful and charming daughter. Molly was seated in her father's chair, idly pulling his blotting-pad to peaces.

"Good-mourning, Miss Molly!" said Burleigh, bowing like a night-errand of old. "Where is your esteemed pop? He hasn't

shown up in the Sixth Form-room yet."

Molly smiled—one of her bewitching smiles—from ear to ear.

"Father has forgotten all about lessons to-day," she said. "You'll find him at the tuckshop, busy with some new stunt of his."

"My hat!"

"The tuckshop dame having taken a holler-day," Molly went on, "my father thought it would be a pity to put up the shutters—espeshally at this time of the year, when jam-tarts sell like hot cakes. So he desided to take over the tuckshop himself, and pocket the prophets."

"On the make, as usual!" growled Tallboy. Then he flushed scarlett. "I—I'm sorry, Miss Molly. I was forgetting you were the Head's daughter—"

"I wish I could forget it!" sighed Molly. "My father is a regular old scamp—though I have done my best to bring him up in the way he should go. But these modern parents are hopelessly out of hand!"

"Quite!" agreed Burleigh. "You have my simperthy, Miss Molly. Come along, Tallboy! Let's go and interview the new tuckshop proprietor."

As they strolled across the sunny quad., the two seniors caught sight of Dr. Birchemall. He was perched on a pair of steps, putting the finishing tuches to a painted inscription above the door of the tuckshop.

The slap-dashing Head had not troubled to remove his gown, and that garment was simply smothered with red paint.

Burleigh and Tallboy chuckled as they gazed at the newly-painted inscription :

"UNDER NEW MANNIDGEMENT!"

The Head stepped back to survey his handiwork; and, forgetting where he stood, he stepped back into space.

"Yaroop!"

But for the presence of Burleigh and Tallboy, Dr. Birchemall would certainly have broken his neck. Instead of which, he broke his fall—thanks to the seniors. They rushed forward and caught him in the nick of time.

"That was a near thing, sir!" panted Burleigh. "I was hoping—I mean, I feared you would come an awful cropper!"

"Thank you, my boys!" gasped Dr. Birchemall. "But for your presents of mind, I should now be lying unconshus on the flagstones. By the way, what do you think of me as a sign-painter?"

Burleigh and Tallboy did not dare to say what they trooly thought. Their opinion of the Head's slap-dashing would have given that gentleman an appleplectic fit.

"So you've taken over the tuckshop, sir?" said Burleigh.

The Head nodded.

"I'm going to show the world how a tuckshop should be run," he said. "No fancy prices—no propheeteering—no stale stock unfit for yewman consumption! Smart, up-to-date serviss, and sivility and curtsey behind the counter. I've cleared out all the old stock, and got in an entirely new lot. Step inside and have a jinger-pop with me, as a reward for saving my life. It will only cost you a tanner."

"A—a tanner?" faltered Burleigh. "Isn't that sticking it on, sir? Dame Buxom used only to charge threepence a bottle—"

"Yes—for weak, watery stuff which had neither jinger nor pop in it!" snapped the Head. "My methods, Burleigh, are going to be vastly different from Dame Buxom's. Come inside and taste the real goods—foaming, delishus jinger-pop which will gurgle down your nex like nectar!"

So saying, Dr. Birchemall ushered the two seniors into the shop, and proseeded to pour out a very pail-looking liquid into a couple of cracked tumblers. It was very peculiar-looking jinger-pop.

"P'raps you would like to suck it through a straw?" suggested the Head. "Straws are only tuppence each!"

"My hat!" muttered Burleigh, under his breath. "Is this what he calls 'No propheeteering'?"

The seniors declined the straws and quaffed their jinger-pop, making rye faces as they did so. For the taste was nothing like the taste of jinger-pop. They had a shrood suspishun that the Head had filled his mineral-water

bottles from the school fountain, the water of which was far from fresh.

"Ug-gug-gug! Groooogh!" spluttered Burleigh.

"What garsty muck!" gurgled Tallboy.

Dr. Birchemall surveyed his first customers with a beaming smile.

"Sippit—drink it—drain it!" he eggishly claimed. "Bewtiful stuff—bright to the last drop!"

"Ow!"

"Ooooch!"

The faces of Burleigh and Tallboy were suddenly overspred by a sickly green pallor. Dumping their glasses on the counter, they staggered out of the shop.

"Hi! Woe, there!" shouted Dr. Birchemall eggishly. "Come back, you sneak-theefs! You haven't paid for your jinger-pop! I want a tanner from each of you, plus an extra penny for the use of the glass, plus a ferther penny for washing it up. That will be one-and-fourpence altogether!"

It struck Burleigh and Tallboy as very ironicle that they should have to pay one-and-fourpence for the priviledge of being poysoned. But they paid up without protest and tottered away, leaning on each other for support.

Dr. Birchemall chuckled as he swept the coins into the till.

"A very promising start!" he chortled. "If I go on at this rate, the tuckshop will prove a little gold-mine. Hark! I here the sound of scurrying feet. The mourning brake is bringing the boys to the tuckshop."

The next minnit a hussling, jossling crowd of juniors swarmed into the shop; and another big crowd halted outside to read the anounsement pasted in the window:



With a sickly pallor in their faces, Burleigh and Tallboy tottered from the tuckshop, leaning on each other for support.

"ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP
THIS IS THE CAFFY FOR COFFY!
THIS IS THE SHOP FOR 'POP'!
CAKES AND PASTRYS AT CUT-THROAT
PRICES!"

I SCREAM CORNETS!

I SCREAM WAFERS!

"Every purchaser of tuck to the valew of sixpence will be aloud to partissipate in THE LUCKY DIP. If lucky, he will draw a Free Voucher, entitling him to a ferther sixpenny-worth of tuck ABSOLUTELY FREE! The chance of a lifetime! No propheteering! No fancy prices, but prices you fancy! This shop is run on strictly fillanthropic lines!"

"ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Trouble in the Tuckshop!

CUSTOMERS rolled up to such purpuss that Dr. Birchemall was nearly swept off his feet by the yewman tidal-wave.

The tuckshop was packed to suffercation, and there was such a clammer of tungs that

the sellbyrated Tower of Babel was a mere whispering gallery by comparison.

"Sixpenn'orth of jam-tarts, please!"

"Sixpenn'orth of buns this way!"

"Six penny ices, please, sir!"

Dr. Birchemall frowned.

"Penny ices!" he roared, above the din.

"Who's asking for penny ices?"

"Me, sir!" said Jack Jolly eagerly.

"Then you'll be unlucky, Jolly. My ices are sixpence each. They are real cream-ices, cooked in my own refrigerater, and guaranteed to melt in the mouth. None of your beastly custard powders, like Dame Buxom used to serve. My ices are worth a bob of anybody's munny. But I am not a propheteer—not me. I am running this tuckshop for everybody's bennifit but my own. Is that clear, Jolly?"

"Clear as mud, sir," said Jack Jolly. "I'll have a sixpenny cornet, please."

Dr. Birchemall dived into the i-scream tub and ladelled out a very messy concoction, which he smacked into a cornet and handed to Jack Jolly; but not before that youth had tendered his sixpence, which the Head nawed with his teeth, and then wrung on

the counter, to make sure it was a good one.

Meanwhile, Tubby Barrell of the Fourth had scrambled round to the Head's side of the counter, and he wispered eagerly in Dr. Birchemall's ear.

"Yes, Barrell, I should be glad of an assistant," said the Head. "I can't cope with all these orders single-handed. You serve the buns and tarts, while I dispense the i-scream. And keep your eye on the Lucky Dip, to see that there's no cheating. The Dip contains a number of Free Vouchers and a number of blanks. The Vouchers are stamped '6d.' and they entitle the holders to sixpennyworth of tuck—free, grattis, and for nicks. The blanks, of cors'e, are worthless."

Tubby Barrell nodded. His fat face was beaming like a fool moon as he bussled around, serving tarts and buns to the clammerus customers.

A shower of coins—mostly sixpences—clattered musickally into the till; and Dr. Birchemall and his plump assistant were doing a roaring trade.

Most of the customers made a rush for the Lucky Dip, in the hope of securing a ferther sixpennyworth of tuck absolutely free.

Eager hands were plunged into the barrel of straw, and many of them came up clutching cards. But a lass and a lack! The cards were all blanks. Nobody was lucky enuff to secure any of the Free Vouchers with "6d." stamped on them.

Jack Jolly looked disgusted.

"It's a swindle!" he growled. "Strikes me the Head has filled this blessed barrel with blanks, and forgotten to put in the Free Vouchers!"



Tubby Barrell's hand came from the Lucky Dip clasping a card.
"Hooray!" he shouted. "I've drawn a Free Voucher!"

Dr. Birchemall overheard this remark.

"There is no swindle, Jolly!" he thundered. "There are duzzens and duzzens of Free Vouchers in that barrel. They only want bringing to the surfiss. Seek, and ye shall find. Keep on buying sixpenn'orths of tuck, and every purchase will entitle you to a dip!"

"That's all very well," grumbled Jack Jolly, "but I'm not a blessed millionaire!"

When bizziness had slacked off a little, Tubby Barrell turned to the Head.

"I should like to have a go at the Lucky Dip myself, sir," he said.

"So you shall!" said Dr. Birchemall affably. "Lissen to me, Barrell." And he lowered his voice so that only Tubby could here. "I want you to take this Free Voucher"—the Head slipped a card into Tubby's hand—"and pretend you've drawn it out of the Lucky Dip. See? Then you can have sixpennyworth of tuck for nicks. Make a big song about it, and that will induce all the others to try their luck. Do you compray?"

"I compray, sir!" grinned Tubby Barrell.

And he elbowed his way through a crowd of customers, and plunged his podgy hand into the Lucky Dip.

"Only a blank, I suppose!" growled Tubby as his hand came up clasping a card. "No, it isn't, though. It's a Free Voucher! Hooray! Sixpenn'orth of jam-tarts, please, sir!"



Pandemonium broke loose in the tuckshop. The angry fellows overturned chairs and tables and smashed everything they could lay hands on.

"Sertainly, Barrell!" said Dr. Birchemall, grinning all over his dile.

And he made a big parade of serving the fat junior with jam-tarts. Tubby Barrell made an even bigger parade of eating them.

"Free tarts!" he chortled, munching away contentedly. "I'm in clover!"

The luck of Tubby Barrell caused a fresh spurt of bizziness—which was just as the Head had intended. He was simply bombarded with orders, and he bussed about with serprizing agility for a man of his years.

The customers made a fresh onslaught upon the Lucky Dip, in the hope that Dame Fortune would smile on them. But the only person who smiled on them was Dr. Birchemall—a sly, sardonnick smile of sattisfaction.

Tubby Barrell smiled, too. He had finished his tarts, and he fel in the mood for more. So he desided to use his Free Voucher again, and pretend he had drawn it from the Lucky Dip. The ruse mite suxxed, or it mite not. Anyway, it was worth trying.

The Head's smile vannished suddenly as

he caught sight of Tubby making his way to the barrel. He glared and glowered at the fat junior, and made frantick signals to him ; but Tubby pretended not to see. He dived his hand into the barrel, and withdrew it with a woop of delight.

" Hooray ! My luck's in, you fellows, and no mistake ! I've drawn another Free Voucher ! "

" Well, I'm jiggered ! " eggsclaimed Jack Jolly, who had tried his luck several times without suxxess. " Some fellows get all the plums ! "

Tubby Barrell grinned, and turned to the Head.

" Another sixpenn'orth of tarts, please, sir ! " he said cheerfully.

With a very ill-grace, Dr. Birchemall served the tarts. He bent over the counter, and hist in Tubby Barrell's ear :

" That's quite enuff, Barrell ! Don't play that trick with the Free Voucher any more. I only meant you to do it once, as an advertissment."

" All serene, sir ! " said Tubby.

But when he had gobbled the second lot of tarts, and fairly wetted his appetite, he could not resist having yet another go at the Lucky Dip. Tubby was not greedy, but he liked a lot !

When, for the third time in suxxession, the fat junior drew a Free Voucher from the barrel, there was a loud mermer of amazement, cuppled with a low growl of suspishun.

" That's three times running ! " cried Frank Fearless. " It can't be a coincidence. It must be a put-up job ! "

" Shame ! "

Heedless of the howls of the mob, Tubby Barrell pushed his way to the counter. He blinked jenially at the Head.

" I'll have sixpenn'orth of doe-nutts this time, for a change ! " he said.

Dr. Birchemall's face was a study. He looked perfectly feendish.

" You—you— ! " spluttered the Head. " Of all the cheek ! Of all the ordassity ! How dare you try to practiss such a low-down swindle on your headmaster, Barrell ? "

Tubby Barrell coward before the Head's feerce glare.

" Oh, really, sir ! I'm not trying to swindle

you. I drew this Free Voucher out of the Lucky Dip—"

" No, you never ! " roared the Head, who was too eggsited to realise what he was saying. " You lying young sneek-theef ! You never drew a single Voucher out of that barrel, for the very good reason that there was not a single Free Voucher in it ! "

As the Head made this unintenshunal confession, a roar of rage went up from the crowd in the tuckshop. Too late, Dr. Birchemall realised that in opening his mouth too wide he had put his foot in it !

" We've been swindled ! " howled Jack Jolly. " We've blued all our tanners for nothing ! The Lucky Dip was all a spoof ! "

" Shame ! "

" Let's reck the shop ! " cried Frank Fearless, wrecklessly.

The angry crowd needed no second bidding. Pandymonium broke loose in the tuckshop. Stools were overturned ; dishes and glasses were swept from the counter ; and the sound of the shivering glass made the Head shiver, too.

Dr. Birchemall realised that this was no place for him. He had better " get," he reflected, wile the going was good. But before beating a retreat from that seen of commotion and confusion, the Head rushed to the till, and transferred all the munny to his pockets. He was taking his leave, but he wasn't going to leave his takings !

There was a back way out, through Dame Buxom's little parler. And Dr. Birchemall, his pockets loaded with plunder, vannished as suddenly as a spirrit ; leaving the tuckshop to the tender mercies of the mob.

" Rather a pity," panted the Head as he scuttled across the quad, " that my little venture has come to such an untimely end. As for the dammidge those young hooligans are doing, Dame Buxom will have to make that good. I'll tell the good dame there has been an earthquake in her absence."

A few minnits later Dr. Birchemall was bizzily engaged in counting out the spoils in his study. And he discovered that he really hadn't done badly, for a gentleman who never propheeteered !

THE END

BUNTER COMES TO TEA!



WHEN my Aunt Kate, of Kensal Rise,
Who something of a saint is,
Sent me a hamper packed with pies,
And other tempting dainties,
Some cheerful chump proposed to me
That Billy Bunter came to tea !

I'm not in love with Bunter, mind,
With all his vice and vanities ;
But feeling generously inclined,
I said : " A ripping pian it is ! "
And sent a note at half-past three :
" Dear Bunter—will you come to tea ? "

Upon a cloth of virgin white
We set that feed majestic ;
With everything correct and right
(Tom Brown's a skilled domestic !)
Happy our humour, great our glee,
When Billy Bunter came to tea.

" I say, you fellows," Bunter cried,
" I'm off my feed—don't giggle !
There's something very wrong inside,
It makes me writhe and wriggle !
I'll merely peck a trifle, see ? "
Could this be *Bunter* come to tea ?

I carved the chicken with a will,
And served it with a flourish.
" Come, Bunty ! this won't make you ill ;
"Twill fortify and nourish.
So try and peck enough for three,
Like a true *Bunter* come to tea."

Then Bunter's fat and famous jaws
Commenced, in manner vicious ;
He ate and ate, without a pause,
Except to say, " Delicious ! "
Ye Gods ! It was a sight to see,
When Billy Bunter came to tea !

Trifles of this and tastes of that,
Samples of all and sundry ;
In spellbound silence there we sat ;
My brow grew dark and thundery.
Soon there was nothing left for me,
When Billy Bunter came to tea.

He swept the board and left us dumb !
Such was his greed and gumption,
That not a solitary crumb
Remained for our consumption.
He gorged enough for *three times three*,
When Billy Bunter came to tea !

With hollow groan and haunting moan,
He sank beneath the table ;
We hailed the doctor on the 'phone—
" Come quickly as you're able ! "
Never again, is my decree,
Shall *Billy Bunter* come to tea !

DICK
PENFOLD.