

He paid his cash and walked out. On the pavement he waited only to open the cover of the "Lives," place the steaming-hot parcel inside, and firmly press the best morocco leather boards back into place!

Now for home, the fire escape, and the meal to end all meals! Matt put his head down and set off at a smartish pace.

Unfortunately he was in so much of a hurry that he instinctively took the shortest route back.

He emerged into the lights of the High Street and cannoned off a tall figure striding along, head held high.

Matt looked up into the flinty eyes of Dr Granite.

"Ah, Crannis!" the Dean snapped. "What are you doing here? Surely you know I do not encourage the staff to visit this part of the town?"

Matt had a fraction of a second to think, and did he use it! The old raincoat, the cap—he might get away with it!

"I think perhaps you've mistaken me for my twin brother, sir!" he said loftily. "I have never had the pleasure of an introduction to you, even though my name is Crannis. Ned Crannis, to be exact!"

"Well, I'm blessed!" the Dean said, visibly shaken. "Why, you're the living image of your brother Matthew! I must beg your pardon, Mister Crannis. But is not that the 'Lives of Men of Principle' I see under your arm, my dear chap?"

That had torn it! It was too late now to ditch the book and its secret contents.

"As a matter of fact it is," Matt answered. "My brother Matt lent it to me. He speaks very highly of it and I must say I agree. I'm just on my way to the school to return it to him!"

"Then I can repay my recent rudeness by being of assistance to you, my dear sir!" the Dean said. "I am Doctor Granite, Dean of St Michael's, and I'm just on my way back there.

"I will return the book for you, Mister Crannis," he continued grandly. "It will be a pleasure—no, don't protest! It will be a real pleasure to return the book!"

And very firmly the Dean removed the book from under Matt's arm and tucked it under his own.

"Your brother shall have it within half an hour, I promise!" Dr Granite said. "And now good-night to you, my dear chap. Good-night!"

There was only a faint chance Matt could save the situation. He began to run back along the route he had taken from the school that night.

He reached the postern gate

in record time, hurled himself through and made for the quad. He tore off the old mackintosh and cap and threw them behind a laurel bush.

Near the Norman-arched doorway which it was Dr Granite's privilege to use, Matt paused. He tried to get his breath back by drinking in great lungfuls of air.

He had partially restored normal breathing when he heard the march of the Dean's feet, and the door swung open.

"Good evening, Dean!" Matt said as cheerfully as he could. "A perfect night for walking, sir!"

desk, was a whole line of identical volumes of the "Lives"! An idea came into Matt's mind.

The Dean placed the volume containing the fish and chips on his desk.

"One moment, Crannis," Dr Granite said. "I'll order my man to heat us up a cup of milk to refresh us."

He turned and went back to the door. He opened it and put no more than his head and shoulders outside. But it was enough for Matt.

In a flash he grabbed one of the volumes off the shelf, placed it on the desk, and replaced his own, desecrated volume on the

the Dean's desk and hurled it with a tremendous crash through the french windows!

"There was a prowler at the window!" yelled Matt.

The Dean hit the deck, collected himself and stared at the smashed window, Matt grabbed the fish-and-chip book off the shelf and made for the study door, beating the Dean by a split second.

Out into the quad the two men raced, but there was no sign of Matt's intruder."

"I saw something!" Matt panted. "I'm certain I saw something!"

"So did the cat, Crannis!" the Dean gasped. "Very clever animal that! Psychic, you know. It must have been one of the ghosts of St Michael's."

And there the matter was left.

Matt went off to his room, his precious volume of fish and chips under his arm. The Dean went to bed.

He decided that this scientist fellow, Crannis, wasn't such a bad chap after all. Interested in the "Lives" enough to lend it to his brother. And sufficiently in tune with the high ideals of St Michael's to see its ghostly old boys already.

Matt reached his room and lit his gas fire. Better late than never! He would warm up the fish and chips and still have a good feed, even though it would soon be morning.

He opened the book—and collapsed in an armchair!

It was full of pages. He had taken the wrong book!

He went to bed hungry and dispirited.

Some days later a celebrated old boy of St Mike's, Sir Marcus Drippit, Envoy Extraordinary to Findalasia, visited the school. Dr Granite was so pleased with the success of this lad whose mind he had so often improved with the malacca cane, that he took him to his study.

There the Dean gave Sir Marcus a glass of milk—and presented him with a volume of the "Lives" so that he could study it and do better still.

Sir Marcus opened the heavy book—and his jaw dropped!

So did Dr Granite's!

"Ha, ha!" Sir Marcus managed in a rather weak voice.

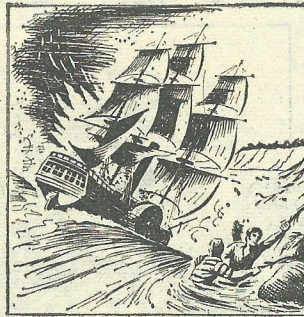
"Looks like St Michael's can still jape in the old style, Dean!"

They both stared at a congealed mess of oil-soaked newspaper, cold, clammy chipped potatoes, and dried fish.

"Yes!" Dr Granite said shortly. "St Michael's can always jape better than any other school in the world, Sir Marcus. But it won't happen again!"

Look out for another outside helping of laughs NEXT WEEK when Matt continues his desperate search for food!

THE VOYAGE OF NO RETURN!



The Royal Navy sends an American gun-running ship to her doom—over Niagara Falls!

See this in pictures NEXT WEEK in an all-action

Hotspur True Adventure Story.

"Crannis?" the Dean barked. "That's a fortunate thing. Save me sending for you. Your brother gave me your copy of the 'Lives' to return to you."

"Oh, good!" Matt said eagerly, thinking of the luscious grub lying hidden under the cover. "Can I take it, sir? I always like to read a passage before I go to bed."

"Oh, excellent man!" the Dean chortled. "But we must do this together. Come with me to my study. I'd like to run through a few pages with you. Come along—I won't keep you long!"

The Lost "Lives."

As they walked across the quad to the Dean's house, Matt realised that his future career as a master at St Michael's now hung by a hair. Nothing, it seemed, could prevent the awful discovery of the secret contents of the "Lives."

Matt followed Dr Granite into the Dean's study.

It was a dark room, furnished with old leather armchairs, a desk, and a thick carpet.

Every inch of wall-space except the door and the big french windows was occupied by row upon row of books.

As they came in, Matt stared at the books, all ancient volumes bound in cracked leather.

His heart leapt! At one end of a shelf, quite near the Dean's

shelf. It took only three seconds.

By the time the Dean had turned back, Matt's future, for the moment anyway, was saved!

The Dean sat down, opened his beloved book, and began to read—and talk.

For two solid hours he talked. Only one thing kept Matt awake.

That was the search for the answer to the problem of how he was going to get the fish and chip volume back to his attic room.

About half-past twelve the Dean dozed off! It was the chance Matt had been waiting for. He got out of his chair, an inch at a time.

But at last he was on his feet, and he began to tip-toe across the study towards the desk, behind which Dr Granite slumbered.

In the dim shadows of the study he overlooked the Dean's cat. It was a big, fat animal, and had gone to sleep, too.

Matt reached for the fish-and-chip volume on the shelf—and his foot came down on the end of the cat's tail!

The cat let out an almighty squawk that awakened the echoes from one end of St Mike's to the other!

The Dean shot out of his slumbers like a rocket, jumping at least three feet—almost as high as the cat and only a few inches lower than Matt!

But Matt was thinking the fastest of the three!

"There he goes!" he roared, and at the same instant he snatched the heavy tome off