

This mastiff "nose" what it wants—Matt's sausages!

# THE SECRET EATER OF ST MIKE'S



**M**ATT CRANNIS, the new science master at St Michael's, was taking net practice for the Junior cricket team. He had not been exactly welcomed at the famous, and very snooty, public school. But the spin he could put on the ball and his skill with the bat, had gone a long way to making him more acceptable to both boys and masters.

Now he squared up to the bowling of the Junior team. The best way to judge their skill was to be on the receiving end. Young Todhunter ran up to the far stump and unleashed a real humdinger!

Matt had his eye on it from the moment it left the boy's hand. He reckoned he had it taped, and braced himself to paste it slap into the net, just to show what he could do.

"Fish and chips!" The words were clearly uttered and just loud enough to reach his ears. He started, as though prodded with a pin. Todhunter's fast ball spreadeagled his stumps!

"Howzatt!" Todhunter chortled, and demanded that Matt give up the bat. But Matt shook his head. Was he hearing things? He glanced quickly at the line of small faces that peered at him from beyond the netting.

He replaced the stumps and took his stand again. Todhunter, after announcing to all and sundry that it "wasn't fair,"

came up to the stump and delivered another scorcher.

Matt prepared to drive it back every bit as fast as it approached him. He braced his muscles and—

"Peas an' faggots!"

Again he flinched—and this time the ball removed the middle stump clean out of the ground. But Matt did not even bother to look. He concentrated his gaze on the line of faces beyond the nets.

There were half a dozen of them, and all were unmistakably the products of St Michael's, blue-blooded youngsters.

**IT TAKES THE PLACE OF HONOUR AT ST MIKE'S —**



**MATT'S MOUTH-WATERING SUPPER!**

Or were they? The last boy but one? Matt stared even harder! That boy looked different. He did not have the kind of face that the boys of St Mike's had. And the eyes were beady and dark, and as alive as a ferret's!

"What's your name?" Matt snapped without hesitation.

"Charley Budd—sir!" the face answered. Charley had a habit of tacking on the "sir" sufficiently long after the rest of the sentence to make it quite unmistakably an insult.

"I'll have a word with you, Budd!" Matt said firmly. "Carry on the rest of you until I get back!"

Firmly he led the way across the green-sward to the Junior pavilion. But although he looked outwardly as though he was completely master of the situation, inwardly he was quaking!

For Matt had a terrible secret—and he feared that this Charley Budd had guessed it!

Although Matt had the job of first science master at St Michael's, he was quite a different type from the other masters at this very famous public school.

Matt had fought his way up from humble beginnings, and he had won his qualifications at the university by sheer hard work. His record as a science master was so good that Dr Granite, the Dean, had engaged him immediately.

Unfortunately Matt had another side to his character. He had an outsize appetite. At times he suffered from an overpowering desire for lots and lots of solid food.

When he felt like this he just had to eat and eat to bursting point. Not that delicate nonsense that they called food at St Mike's, but solid helpings of fish and chips, or faggots and peas, or black pudding of the blackest kind.

So when this Charley Budd had said these strange words into his ear as he braced up to Todhunter's bowling, Matt's first thought was that someone at St Mike's had discovered his secret.

He knew that neither Dr Granite nor the other masters would tolerate him for an instant if they knew he slipped out of school after dark to gorge secretly at eating places in the town!

Safely inside the Junior pavilion, Matt turned to Charley Budd.

"Come on, let's have it!" he snapped. "You don't look like an earl or a duke to me, Budd. Not even a humble baronet. You look like something from between the gasworks and the cemetery."

"Ow did you guess, guv?" Charley

answered. "S'matter of fact I live at No. 209 Alma Terrace."

"Well, what are you doing here?" Matt demanded.

"Me dad won the football pools!" Charley explained. "'Ad two lines dead right. Three 'undred thousand quid, that's wot 'e got."

"Crikey!" Matt said, caught off guard. "I'll bet that's a lot more than some of these barts have tucked away!"

"I'll say it is, guv!" Charley confided. "S'matter of fact, they didn't like the idea of me coming 'ere at all. Not as I wanted to come, see? But Dad was keen on it."