

celebration, sir?"

Matt decided he'd better let them have their way. He appreciated their need for food. His own need for food was ten times greater.

Not that he was likely to get a fill-up at the Regency. It was a smart place, patronised by the boys and their parents on visiting days.

The coach pulled up, and the boys got out.

"You can have three-quarters of an hour," Matt said firmly. "We must be back at the school by eight. Don't forget there's prep to be done, chaps!"

There were groans, but the boys took it in good part. Off they went into the Regency.

"Excuse me, guv, but I'll slip off, too!" the coach driver said gruffly. "There's a little eating 'ouse just round the corner where I can 'ave a plate of tripe an' onions."

For two pins Matt would have joined him. It was only his blazer and white flannels that made him think twice.

So Matt stayed by himself in the coach, nursing his hunger.

But he was not alone! Charley Budd's ferret face appeared over the front seat.

"Ear that — sir?" he said huskily. "Tripe an' onions round the corner! Wot about it?"

"Don't be ridiculous!" Matt complained, wishing Budd anywhere but where he was, tormenting him. "Out of the question!"

"Tell you what," Charley said. "Places what sell real food are always ready to put some up in paper for gents who can't stay. I'll slip round and get some, guv."

"No!" Matt snapped, fighting his inner man. "No! No! No!"

But he was losing his battle!

"On second thoughts, I have an idea," he said, trying to be calm. "My poor brother—the composer, you know—never has a square meal for days on end. Perhaps it would be a charitable thing if I took him a little—er, sustaining food. Some faggots, or perhaps a really rich meat pie."

"Done!" Charley cried, already half out of the coach. "I won't be long—sir!"

The Drop Kick.

MATT sat back, feeling satisfaction flow over him. Budd would do the job all right! Budd knew what sort of food a hungry fellow wanted.

But Charley was gone for quite a while! Matt looked anxiously at his wrist watch. Any minute now the chaps

would be coming out of the Regency Road House.

The driver returned, full of tripe and onions. Another few minutes and it would be too late!

Even as the door of the Regency opened to disclose Todhunter leading his team back, Charley raced up, a newspaper parcel in his hand.

"Sorry, guv!" he whispered. "When I saw their chips, all frying, I just 'ad to eat 'em



WHAT WAS THE SECRET THAT THE CHIPPEWAY INDIANS GUARDED SO CLOSELY?

It was something that the Chippeway braves meant to keep to themselves at all costs—as a raiding party of Blackfeet found out! It was also the thing that made the Chippeways one of the most feared tribes in North America!

You can read about this amazing secret in NEXT WEEK's all-action cover story—

"THE ISLAND OF RED ARROWS!"



there and then. But I got what you want in 'ere. Where can we hide it?"

Matt's eye fell on the green baize bag with the cup in it. Quickly he loosened the string, felt for the pointed lid to the cup and pulled it off.

In two shakes the newspaper parcel was securely stowed in the cup, the lid was back on, and the green bag laced and tied. But it was only just in time! The young aristocrats were filing into the coach and the driver was revving the engine.

"Couple o' meat pies!" Charley whispered. "About ten inches of black pudding and two cold faggots. Will that do for the poor beggar, sir?"

"It certainly will!" Matt replied.

He smiled happily.

They were soon back at the school, but their good news had travelled even faster. As the coach passed under the memorial arch and into the outer quad, the rest of the school burst out of prep and gathered to cheer.

Soon a great crowd of boys were gathered round the coach. Even the most senior boys had decided to raise a lofty acclamation.

"The cup!" the cry went up. "Let's see the cup!"

Matt handed the baize bag to Todhunter, who unlaced it

and took out the cup. Matt was so excited by this wonderful reception that he quite forgot for a moment just what was inside the silver vessel!

It was only when Todhunter was hoisted up on to shoulders, and raised the cup high above his head, that Matt remembered.

If the top came off the cup —! It didn't bear thinking about!

Everyone joined in singing the school song, and they headed for Big Hall.

On the steps they were met by Dr Granite, as near smiling as he was ever likely to be. The doors were flung wide and the cup went on into the hall.

There, amidst thunderous cheers, it was placed on a ledge all ready to receive it, flanked on either side by honours lists of boys who had done well for themselves!

Then the meeting broke up. Everyone went off to prep or back to the common room. All, that is, except Matt. Matt went up to his room. He wanted to think out how he was going to recover the precious contents of the cup without being spotted.

He must wait until all was quiet. The boys would soon be going up to their dormitories. That would leave the field clear for him.

He noticed that Fossil, his school servant, had laid out his black master's gown for him, in case he wanted to go to the common room.

Funny, though. His mortar board was missing! Fossil was usually so careful about things like that. Perhaps he had taken it away to clean it.

No matter. The last thing Matt wanted that night was a gown and mortar board. All he wanted was the grub locked up in that Governors' Cup!

The bell rang for bed, and Matt gave the boys quarter of an hour to get away. Then he crept down the stairs, across the quad, and into Big Hall by the side entrance.

The cup glinted in the light from outside. Silently Matt crossed the wide floor, climbed the dais, and reached for a chair. Then, standing on the seat, he reached up and lifted down the cup.

His hands were trembling as he removed the top. He reached inside to grasp the finest meal he had thought about for days.

The cup was empty!

Not a shadow of a doubt! The priceless contents of the Governors' Cup had gone! Some scoundrel had stolen his grub!

He stuffed the cup back on the shelf, climbed down, and headed for the door.

Outside, he did not feel like

going back to his room. He set off morosely, following a gravel path through the ornamental gardens.

He came to the side of the open-air swimming bath and followed the paling fence, kicking his heels in the starlight.

"Sir!" The gruff whisper came out of the darkness. "That you, sir?"

It was Charley Budd! Oh, wonderful boy! He must have removed the grub—and brought it to Matt. Matt's mouth began to water.

"'Ere, guv. I got something for you!" Charley appeared out of the darkness, a dark object in his hands. "Take it, quick. I gotta get back before the dorm prefect spots I'm out!"

He thrust the object into Matt's outstretched, trembling hands. Matt could see little in the darkness, but the outline of the object was unmistakable!

It was the missing mortar board! The one that Fossil had not laid out in his room with the gown!

Matt was furious.

He took two sharp steps forward, dropped the board, and let fly with his foot.

It was a beautiful kick! The toe of his shoe came fair and square into the board part of the hat. It sailed up in the air like a comet and landed with a splash in the swimming bath.

"What did you want to do that for, guv?" Charley asked hoarsely. "Doesn't your brother need any grub tonight? It'll keep, you know."

"Grub!" Matt said, startled. "What do you expect me to do? Eat my mortar board?"

"I put the grub in it!" It was Charley's turn to sound annoyed. "I 'ad to put it in something like your 'at. Then if I got caught by a prefect I'd say I was just taking your 'at back to you."

That was not quite the end of the night's events for Matt. But after what he had been through that day, death by drowning seemed a little thing.

He went round to the pool and tried to fish his mortar board out. Otherwise they would connect him with the two heavy pies and the faggots they would find disintegrating at the bottom of the pool.

He ended up by wading out to recover his hat, and that was that. He went back to his room cold, hungry, and thoroughly fed-up. But at least there was one consolation.

In Charley Budd he had found a kindred soul at St Mike's. Here was a boy who knew what real eating meant. Perhaps Matt could use him!

NEXT THURSDAY — Matt gets his dream job—chairman of the school kitchen committee.