

down to business.

Ginger was delighted. He secretly hoped that one day his own, very special way of English cooking would be famous, and he would be able to open a real smart joint in London for the toffs. He leapt at the opportunity to display his skill to the nobles of St Mike's.

Of course, the secret got out somehow, and the day before St Aubyn's evening out, Dr Granite stopped Matt in the quad.

Nothing could alter the Dean's opinion that Matt was some sort of witch doctor who had put a spell on him the day he had gone to the lab! Otherwise, how could you explain the appointment of Matt to the Kitchen Committee? And that extraordinary free half hour the Dean had given to the boys?

Dr Granite, therefore, kept his distance as he spoke to the science master.

"They tell me, Crannis," he said loftily, "that you've got an outside cook in for tomorrow evening."

"That's right, sir," Matt answered cheerily. The prospect of the blow-out he was going to have the following night gave him tremendous self-confidence. "Otherwise I'm afraid it would have been biscuits and cheese."

"Hope this fellow you've got knows his condiments!" the Dean grumbled. "The responsibility is on your shoulders, Crannis, if he poisons us all."

"He'll be all right, sir—I promise you!" Matt said. "He's one of the best in the business."

Dr Granite moved off. He couldn't make up his mind whether to risk this new chap's cooking, or go out to dinner.

### The Super Supper

**F**RIDAY afternoon came, and Matt watched St Aubyn depart for his rally.

After tea Ginger Bacon arrived. He'd brought a beautiful new, clean, white apron for the job, and the tallest white hat Matt had ever seen.

Matt took him down to the kitchens. The science master glanced at the clock, and was tempted to persuade Ginger to cook him a "taster" in advance of school supper, scheduled for seven-thirty. But on second thoughts he decided to wait.

Ginger put on his beautiful rig-out and admired himself in the mirror. He puffed his rosy cheeks, and blew out.

"Cor!" he said at last. "I'm there, Mr Crannis! All me life I've wanted to cook grub for belted earls and crowned eads. And now I'm goin' to do it. Stand back, me lucky lads.

You're going to get the meal of your young lives!"

Matt went up to his attic room and tried to cool off.

It was no good! He just had to go down and see how Ginger was getting on. It was a very good thing he did!

For success had gone to Ginger's head!

Matt found him surrounded by mixed herbs, pots, pans, and sauces! While the kitchen hands stood around admiringly, he added drops of vinegar to the mess in a saucepan, and tasted it. "Cor!" he breathed.

"Lovely!"

"What on earth are you doing?" Matt cried. "Why aren't the chips in the fat, Ginger?"

Ginger regarded him with a level gaze.

mutiny. Ginger subsided, grumbling, and started calling for the chips and batter.

Matt stayed long enough to see the first batch of chips go tumbling into the ovens to keep warm, and then he went back upstairs.

It had been a near thing, a darned near thing!

He heard the warning bell for the evening meal ringing, and he could barely conceal his excitement. This was going to be the most memorable night he would ever spend at St Mike's!

The second bell clanged, and he heard the boys filing into the dining-hall. The hub-bub of conversation rose to the rafters.

This was the moment for Matt. He went down and walked into the dining-hall.

tuned his ears to their comments.

"By jove! What's for supper tonight, chaps?" the Earl of Mulcaster, one of the Juniors, asked. "I must say it smells good!"

At his side the thirteen-year-old Duke of Ragwort sunk his teeth into a forkful of chips and crunched appreciatively.

"Tastes good, too!" he replied to his buddy. "I wish the mater knew this recipe!"

On every side Matt heard words of appreciation. There was no doubt that the boys liked what they were getting, and wanted more.

But Ginger was right on the ball! The lifts that communicated with the kitchens went up and down, clattering with empties, groaning with fresh dishes.

Matt walked up and down, forcing himself to wait in patience until the school had finished its meal.

Once or twice he was tempted to go up to the high table and join the masters who sat there. In fact, Van Post, the sports master, called an invitation to him.

"I say!" he said. "Come and have a crack at the victuals. Is it true St Aubyn's out at some party or other?"

Matt said it was, and that another chef was taking his place.

"Good show!" Van Post cried. "I don't know what he calls this spread, but it's dashed comfy on the old breadbasket!"

Matt smiled a reply, but headed back down the hall. Pity to take the edge off his appetite in view of the monster portion Ginger Bacon would be putting on one side below decks!

### Pipped At The Post

**A**T last it was finished! Knives and forks clattered to a rest.

Everyone stood up. The senior prefect dismissed the boys in Latin, and they filed out.

Only then did Matt descend to the kitchen. He found Ginger mopping his brow with a handkerchief. The kitchen hands were sitting around, looking fat and well-fed. They'd obviously taken time off to enjoy their share of the spread!

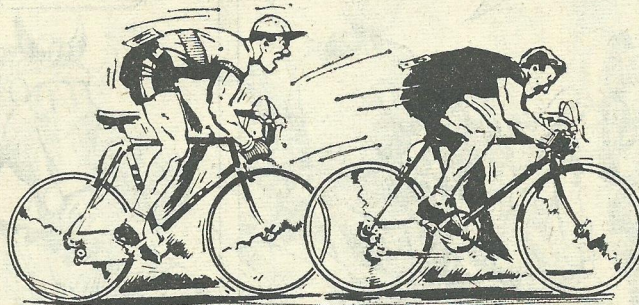
"Ginger, you did marvelously!" Matt cried. "It was a great success. Heck, I'll bet there'll be fish and chips on the menu in half the stately homes of England at the end of term!"

"They liked it?" Ginger asked. "Them flippin' toffs liked my grub?"

"Liked it? They lapped it up!" Matt was enthusiastic.

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## THE BATTLE OF WHIRRING WHEELS



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## THE YELLOW JERSEY

"Chips?" he echoed. "Chips—French fried potatoes, d'you mean, Mr Crannis?"

"I said chips!" Matt snapped. "Get cracking, Ginger!"

"I said French fried!" Ginger growled. "An' leave me alone. I'm busy wiv me sauce!"

"Fish and chips don't need sauce—except vinegar!" Matt snapped.

"Fish and chips?" Ginger said. "Who's talking about fish an' chips. Tonight I'm doin' me masterpiece. Fish with sauce Ginger Bacon. Superb, Mr Crannis! Just wait until you taste it!"

This was the supreme crisis—and Matt met it like a man!

"Now get this straight!" he barked in a parade-ground voice.

"I got you to come up here, Ginger, to cook fish and chips! If you don't cook fish and chips, you can take your hat and buzz off. You're the finest fish-and-chip cooker in England. Now you can prove it to the cream of the aristocracy!"

Matt's firm line quelled the

No one took any notice of him. At the far end, on the raised platform, half a dozen masters sat at the high table. It was the usual Friday night set-up!

The lifts that hauled the food up from the kitchens below began to rattle and bang. Then the hatches were opened, and the food was carried to the long tables.

And what food it was! Enormous white dishes almost cracking under the weight of golden chips. Big platters stacked high with the fish, each encased in golden-brown batter, gleaming with fat!

It was the sight that haunted Matt in his hunger-wrecked nightmares.

Matt strolled down between the tables as the portions were doled out to the boys. In his job as chairman of the Kitchen Committee he was supposed to listen for complaints.

But tonight there were no complaints! As the plates passed down the tables, the smaller boys got their portions first. Matt