

"Sorry, Squire," interrupted Dixon, "but ye're just a trifle late!"

"Late? What do you mean?" gasped the Squire.

"Farm's sold this mornin', sir."

"Hut," stammered Grabben, "you offered it to me!"

"Sartainly!" admitted Dixon. "I made ye a sartain offer at a sartain time for a sartain price, but ye didn't close for sartain. Now this mornin' I has a sartain offer at a sartain bigger price—an' I sartainly closed!"

For some seconds Squire Grabben could scarcely believe his ears. The farm purchased under his very nose!

"I—I can't believe it!" he stammered. "Who's the buyer?"

"Ibbotson."

"What Ibbotson?"

"Don't know, an' don't care!" returned Dixon cheerfully. "Pickle and Pottam, actin' for a party o' the name o' Ibbotson, bought the farm this mornin'. Shouldn't wonder, now, if they're off to neighbour Dyke's—"

That was quite enough for the squire. Wheeling his cob round he put him at a low fence, and tore off across country in the direction of Dyke's—

As he drew rein at the door of an farm-house he failed to notice a low bug, gy just turning out of the sandy lane in the high road.

"Your farm!" panted Jasper, when Mr. Dyke appeared in the doorway. "I'll buy it!"

"Ye won't!" came the decided reply. "Leastways not from me. Taint mine! Ye'd better see Pickle and Pottam, or, better still, the real buyer, Ibbotson. I don't know the gentleman, but no doubt, Pickle and Pottam'll—"

Squire Grabben waited to hear no more. In a blind fury he turned his cob's head and dashed down the sandy lane.

Out on the hard frosty road even he did not check the speed of his mount.

Instead of the old farmer's "properly, property, property," he heard, "Ibbotson, Ibbotson, Ibbotson," in the clatter of the cob's hoofs.

"Ibbotson? Ibbotson?" he muttered. "Who is this impudent interloper?"

On his arrival home, Squire Grabben found awaiting him a crowning example of the "interloper's impudence," in the form of the following brief note:—

"Rockburn School,
Dec. 7th. 19—.

Squire Grabben,

Sir.—Is it true that you wish to dispose of your estate? If so, any price in reason will be carefully considered by Messrs. Pickle and Pottam, solicitors, or by

Yours truly,
Marmaduke Ibbotson.

When Squire Grabben, a veritable volcano, arrived at Rockburn School, and requested to see "Ibbotson," he scarcely expected to be confronted by the cheerful, smiling countenance he had seen once before—through the boundary fence.

"What's this tomfoolery?" demanded the Squire. "Do you mean to tell me you've bought Dyke's farm and Dixon's farm?"

"For a third party yes," smiled Ibbotson cheerfully, "and if your estate is still in the market—oh, very well!" he

broke off, as the Squire, purple with rage, let out a storm of expletives, "just as you like, Squire Grabben! I won't press you, but you won't interfere with the 'hornet's nest' just yet—now, will you?"

Jasper Grabben didn't promise. He took his departure, and has never been seen within half a mile of the school gates since.

Within a very few days the school knew all about Ibbotson. He was the

only son of a prosperous jam manufacturer, who at that time was badly in need of a new fruit farm.

On arriving at Rockburn, the centre of a rich fruit-growing country, Ibbotson, junior, at once came to the conclusion that the spare farms would be "just the thing for the pater!"

Ibbotson, senior, on receipt of his son's glowing report—albeit of "indecent" length wired Pickle and Pottam, instructing them to make the necessary

inquiries. The firm did so, and made a favourable report. The rest we know.

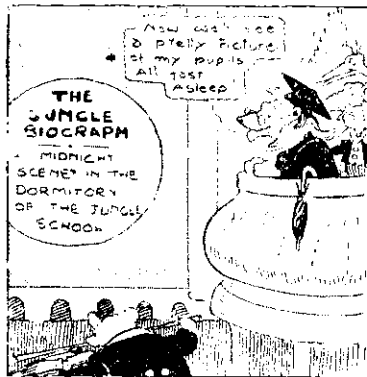
One thing more is worthy of mention. Four acres of fine level turf—Ibbotson junior's commission—has been added to the playing grounds. This, in the prospectus of the now flourishing school, is described as "The New Portion."

Rockburn boys, however, have another name for it, and as "Ibbotson's Piece" it will be known for all time.

Tom H. Fowler.

A JUNGLE JINKS.

DR. LION FORGETS HIMSELF AND GETS IN A RAGE.



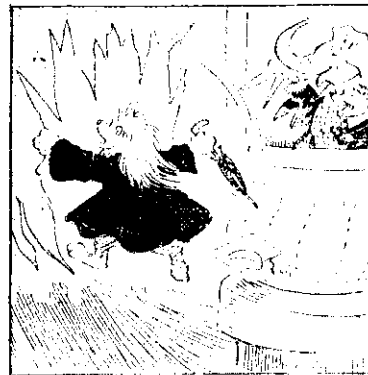
1. Of course you know it is Dr. Lion's custom to take some of his pupils to the pantomime after Christmas. Well, this year they had a private box at the Jungle Theatre, and everything went well till the moving photographs were put on.



2. When a picture of "a midnight scene in the Jungle School dormitory" was announced Dr. Lion was delighted, but the expression on his face suddenly changed when he saw all his naughty pupils engaged in a pillow fight. "You bad, wicked boys, how dare you get out of bed!" he roared.



3. In his anger the good doctor quite forgot it was only a photograph he was looking at. "Go to bed at once! Stop fighting, I say!" he cried again.



4. Of course, the boys in the photograph took not the slightest notice, and the doctor became so angry that he jumped out of his seat, right on to the stage; and it was only when he had gone clean through the sheet that he realised his mistake. How the boys did laugh!

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