

THE SCHOOLDAYS OF A FAMOUS AUTHOR! (SEE INSIDE.)

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE!

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending September 29th, 1917.]

A DISCREDIT TO THE SCHOOL!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.



DRASTIC TREATMENT FOR TOMMY DODD & CO.!

The 1st Chapter.

Tommy Dodd is Humorous!

"Good-morning!"
"So nice to see you, Mr. Boggs!"
"Top of the mornin', sir!"
Thus did the three Tommies of the Modern Fourth at Rookwood greet P.-c. Boggs of Coombe as he arrived at the school gates.
Tommy Cook and Tommy Dodd and Tommy Doyle were adorning the gateway with their persons, morning lessons being over at Rookwood.
Mr. Boggs, plump and ruddy, was breathing hard as he arrived. The walk from the village told upon the stout constable, whose circumference was greater than his activity.
Tommy Dodd & Co. raised their

caps very politely, and bowed to Mr. Boggs in the most graceful manner, their noses almost touching their knees.
Mr. Boggs ought really to have felt flattered by that respectful greeting. But he looked neither flattered nor gratified. He grunted.
"Huh!"
Possibly Mr. Boggs suspected that the three merry juniors were pulling his official leg.
"So kind of you to give us a look in," resumed Tommy Dodd. "Might a chap inquire whom you are after, Mr. Boggs?"
"Huh!"
"Has Mr. Manders been transgressing the grub rules?" inquired Cook.

"Or has Tubby Muffin been seen in possession of a chunk of toffee, contrary to the orders of the Tuck Controller, and within the meaning of the Act?" asked Tommy Dodd.
Mr. Boggs did not reply to those impertinent questions. He grunted a little more emphatically, gave the three Moderns a look of grim disapproval, and marched on towards the School House.
The three Tommies grinned cheerfully.
"Hallo! There's Muffin!" said Tommy Dodd, as the fat Classical came in sight in the quadrangle. "I think we ought to put Muffin on his guard, you chaps!"
"Eh?"
"What?"

"Follow me, and don't snigger, please. This is a serious matter," said Tommy Dodd severely.
Tubby Muffin looked dolorously at the three Moderns as they approached. Since morning lessons, Tubby Muffin had been seeking to borrow anything from sixpence to half-a-crown among the Classical fellows.
He had tried Jimmy Silver & Co., and the Colonial trio, and several more fellows, and the net result was nil.
He wondered whether the Moderns were likely to "part" under his persuasive eloquence. The dreadful alternative was waiting till dinner-time for something to eat.

"Got a tanner about you, Doddy?" he asked.

"Never mind tanners now," said Tommy Dodd seriously. "I think I ought to tip you the wink, Tubby. When did you break the food regulations last?"

"I—I haven't—"
"Then what does that mean?" Tommy Dodd pointed after the portly figure of P.-c. Boggs.

Tubby's jaw dropped.
"He—he—he hasn't come here for me, I suppose?" he exclaimed. "I—I say, you know—I—I— It was only a few biscuits, you know! I was frightfully hungry yesterday. I hadn't had anything since tea, excepting a tart and some apples and a few bananas and some nuts and toffee and things, and—and I was passing Mrs. Wick's, you know, so I—I—"
"I'm afraid you're in for it," said Tommy Dodd commiseratingly.

"Cheer up, though. It doesn't mean hanging."

"Only penal servitude, I think," said Tommy Cook thoughtfully.

"With hard labour," said Doyle.
"Yes, I suppose there would be hard labour," assented Tommy Dodd. "But as Tubby is so young, he may get let off with a few years in a reformatory!"

"Ow!" gasped Tubby.

"Or perhaps a hundred strokes with the birch, under the First Offenders' Act," said Tommy Dodd brightly. "Cheer up, Tubby!"

Tubby Muffin did not look cheerful, however.

Upon Tubby's fat conscience there were many sins, so far as the food regulations were concerned.

He blinked after P.-c. Boggs, who disappeared into the house.

"I—I say—I—I didn't know that beast was watching me yesterday," mumbled Tubby. "D-d-do you think he's come to report me to the Head, or to—to—to—?"

"I think I heard the handcuffs clink in his pocket!" said Tommy Doyle, with deep sympathy. "Faith, I'm sorry for ye, Tubby. Sure ye can't help being a pig, having been born one, and it's hard lines on ye."

"Yes, exactly—I—I mean, I—I ain't a pig, you know," stammered Tubby. "It was only a few biscuits, and—and some sugar, and—and some toffee, and—and—"

"And a few other things," said Tommy Dodd. "Upon the whole, Tubby, I think a reformatory is the right place for you."

And Tommy Dodd shook his head sadly, and walked away, and his chums followed him with equally grave looks.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Tubby Muffin.

The fat Classical rolled away to the School House greatly perturbed. His sins had found him out at last! Tubby was a patriotic youth, and he never intended to exceed the grub rules; but his inner Tubby ran away with him on such occasions.

A slap on the shoulder brought Tubby to a halt, and he blinked round and saw the Fistical Four—

(Continued on the next page.)



A DISCREDIT TO THE SCHOOL!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome of the Classical Fourth. "Been sentenced to death?" asked Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Keep smiling, you know. What is that terrific chivy about?" "I—I say, Jimmy—" "No!" said Jimmy promptly. "Money's tight!"

He supposed that the usual request was coming. "Tain't that!" said Tubby Muffin. "I—I say, suppose—suppose the Head found out that I'd gone over the grub rules—a—a little—" "A lot, you mean," grinned Lovell. "Well, perhaps more than a little," mumbled Tubby. "Wh-wh-what would you advise a fellow to do?" "Put some exercise books in your bags before you saw the Head about it," suggested Raby.

"Oh, I say, you know. It's awfully serious, you know—" "Make a clean breast of it, and be a good boy like your Uncle James, for ever afterwards!" said Jimmy Silver.

"D-d-do you think the Head would look over it for once?" asked Tubby. "He might!"

"I—I think I'll try." Tubby Muffin rolled into the house, and headed for Dr. Chisholm's study. He felt that it would be judicious to make a frank and free confession, before P.-c. Boggs had time to make his report.

With a thumping heart, Tubby Muffin tapped at the door of the Head's study, and he shuddered as the Head's deep voice said: "Come in!"

He went in.

The 2nd Chapter. Muffin Makes Discoveries.

Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood School, glanced sharply and impatiently at the fat Fourth-Former as he entered.

P.-c. Boggs was there, and he was apparently making some communication of importance to the Head, for the latter gentleman was looking very grave.

He ceased to speak as the junior entered, however.

"What is it, Muffin?" exclaimed the Head sharply. "You should not interrupt me when I am engaged. What is it?"

"If—if you please, sir—" "Well?"

"I—I know what Mr. Boggs has come about, sir," gasped Tubby. "I—I've come to confess, sir!" "Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head, in surprise. "What do you know about the matter, Muffin?" "My heye!" murmured Mr. Boggs.

"You may speak freely, Muffin. If you know anything, it is your duty to inform Mr. Boggs and me."

"Ye-es, sir! I—I didn't know Mr. Boggs was watching me! I mean, I—I'm sorry, and I thought I'd better make a clean breast of it, sir!"

"There is nothing to be afraid of, Muffin," said the Head, impatiently. "Kindly come to the point. You have met the man Mr. Boggs was speaking to me about? Where did you see him?"

"The—the man, sir—" "Yes, yes. If you have seen Geoffrey Gunner, it is your duty to tell Mr. Boggs at once."

"I—I—I—" Tubby Muffin felt as if his head were turning round. "I—I haven't, sir!" "You have not!" exclaimed the Head.

"Nunno, sir! I—I don't know the name," said Tubby, in bewilderment. "Muffin! You stated that you were aware of Mr. Boggs' object in visiting me."

"Yes, sir! About—about the biscuits—"

"The what!" thundered the Head. "The biscuits, sir!" gasped Tubby. "I—I forgot about the grub rules, sir—I mean the food regulations, and I dropped into Mrs. Wick's shop, and—and—it was only a few biscuits, sir, and a bit of cake, and some toffee and things—"

Mr. Boggs grinned.

Dr. Chisholm fixed a thunderous look on the unhappy Tubby. "You utterly ridiculous boy!" he exclaimed.

"Oh!" "You stupid boy! Did you suppose that Mr. Boggs had come here on your account?" exclaimed the Head.

"I—I—Tommy Dodd said—" stammered Tubby, realising that there was a mistake somewhere.

"Oh, you have been deluded by some practical joker, you utterly stupid boy. Leave my study at once."

The Head's glance wandered towards his cane. But he pointed to the door instead, and Tubby Muffin was only too glad to scuttle out of the study.

"Oh, crumbs!" mumbled Tubby, as he closed the door after himself. "That beast, Dodd—oh, dear!"

"Pray continue, Mr. Boggs," he heard the Head's voice say within the study.

Then Tubby Muffin's besetting sin overcame him. His fat ear approached the keyhole of the Head's door. Mr. Boggs' visit was evidently not in connection with him, but Tubby was very curious to know what it was about, and who "Geoffrey Gunner" might be.

"Certainly, sir!" boomed Mr. Boggs' voice. "I thought it my duty to inform you, sir, as this 'ere man Gunner was an hold Rookwood man."

Inspector Sharpe thinks he may have come into this 'ere district because of that there, sir. Course, a rascal like that there wouldn't dare to show himself at Rookwood, but he 'as come to this 'ere district, that's a cert, and he 'as been seen within a mile of the school."

"I do not understand, in the least why the man should do so, Mr. Boggs. I remember this man Gunner, when he was a boy at Rookwood—his record in the school was by no means good. He was no credit to his school. He could not possibly suppose that anyone here would aid him in any way, now that he is a criminal, and a fugitive from justice."

"That's so, sir! But he's 'ere right enough, and he ain't been found yet. If anything was seen of 'im—"

Tubby Muffin heard no more. A finger and a thumb closed like a vice upon his fat ear, and lifted him away from the keyhole.

He gasped, and blinked up at Bulkeley of the sixth, the captain of Rookwood.

Bulkeley did not speak.

He led the junior away down the passage, and away to his study.

There he picked up a cane.

"You young rascal," he said.

"I—I say, Bulkeley—"

"You have been caught caves-dropping before," said Bulkeley.

"You've got to get out of that kind of thing, Muffin. I'll help you. Hold out your paw."

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Now get out! If I catch you again—"

Tubby Muffin got out.

He rolled away into the quad, squeezing his fat hands, and mumbling dolorously. But when the pain had abated a little, a fat grin overspread Tubby's face.

He was in possession of a secret—he had startling news to impart, to surprise the other fellows with—and that was pure joy to the Paul Pry of Rookwood.

And Tubby Muffin proceeded to impart his startling discovery—in the strictest confidence—to about a dozen fellows, one after another—and by the time P.-c. Boggs tramped away with heavy tread to the gates, half the lower school of Rookwood knew all about the purport of his visit to the Head.

And, needless to say, it was discussed with the keenest interest by the Rookwood juniors.

The 3rd Chapter.

Jimmy Silver Makes Inquiries.

"By gad! Seen this?" Mornington of the Fourth uttered that ejaculation as he stopped before the notice-board in the hall with Erroll.

A good many of the classical juniors were gathered about it.

There was a new notice on the board, in the Head's writing, and it ran:—

"Until further orders, school bounds are restricted to the school precincts, except by special permission."

It was signed by Dr. Chisholm. "That's something new," remarked Erroll. "What the dickens is the whole school gated for?"

"I know!" announced Tubby Muffin triumphantly.

"Well, what do you know, podgy?" snapped Mornington.

"It's on account of that fellow Gunner."

"Oh!" "The Head don't want us to see him," grinned Tubby. "He's an old Rookwood chap, you know, and he's gone to the bad, and the peelers are after him—"

"Oh, I've heard that yarn," said Mornington, and he walked on with Erroll, leaving the fat Classical to find other listeners.

"A regular, desperate criminal, that chap, Gunner," Tubby went on, addressing Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn, the three Colonials. "A fearful character, you know, who was at Rookwood—"

"Bow-wow!" said the Colonial Co. together.

"But it's a fact, you know," said Tubby. "I heard Boggs telling the Head, and the Head said that Gunner was a regular rotter when he was at Rookwood—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "What are you cackling at?" demanded Tubby indignantly.

"I can fancy the Head describing anybody as a regular rotter—I don't think," chuckled Van Ryn.

"Well, perhaps, he didn't use exactly those words," said Tubby reflectively. "He said his record wasn't good, and—"

"Muffin, you have been listening at my door!" came a sharp, stern voice close behind the fat Classical.

Tubby fairly jumped as he heard the voice of the Head.

He spun round in dismay. "Oh, no, sir!" he gasped. "Certainly not! A—a fellow told me, sir—in—in confidence, sir—I—my hat! Where's the Head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "What are you cackling at?" demanded Tubby indignantly.

"I can fancy the Head describing anybody as a regular rotter—I don't think," chuckled Van Ryn.

"Well, perhaps, he didn't use exactly those words," said Tubby reflectively. "He said his record wasn't good, and—"

"Muffin, you have been listening at my door!" came a sharp, stern voice close behind the fat Classical.

Tubby fairly jumped as he heard the voice of the Head.

He spun round in dismay. "Oh, no, sir!" he gasped. "Certainly not! A—a fellow told me, sir—in—in confidence, sir—I—my hat! Where's the Head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tubby Muffin stared round him in astonishment. The Head was not to be seen, and there were only grinning juniors round him.

"I—I—Didn't you hear him, you fellows?" gasped Tubby.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Van Ryn. "Oh, you rotter!" yelled Tubby, remembering that the South African junior was the possessor of the weird gift of ventriloquism. "It was you all the time."

"Lucky for you it was," said Dick Van Ryn laughing. "The Head wouldn't be pleased to discover that you'd been listening at his door."

"I—I didn't, really, you know—it was quite by accident, and then that beast Bulkeley came along, and took me by the ear—Bulkeley's a rotten, unfeeling beast, you know—"

"Muffin!" thundered the voice of Bulkeley of the Sixth, behind Tubby.

But Tubby did not spin round in alarm this time. He only bestowed a fat wink upon the Fourth Form ventriloquist.

"You can't take me in a second time, you know," he grinned. "I say Bulkeley's a rotten beast—yar-oooh!"

Tubby broke off with a yell as Bulkeley's finger and thumb gripped his ear. It was Bulkeley, and not the ventriloquist, after all!

"What's that, Muffin?" asked the captain of Rookwood.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tubby in dismay. "Leggo my ear, Bulkeley, old chap. I—I was only saying what a splendid chap you were—"

"What?" "And—and how we all admire you, you know, and—yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Bulkeley walked on, leaving Tubby rubbing a crimson ear. The Colonial Co. strolled away, grinning.

"I say, Jimmy Silver—" The Fistical Four, after looking at the notice on the board, were going out into the quad. Tubby Muffin rolled after them. He was still bent on expatiating on his startling discoveries.

Tubby prided himself on being a fellow who "knew things." It was his boast that precious little went on at Rookwood without his knowing something about it.

Which really was not very surprising, considering Tubby's methods of obtaining information.

"I say, we're all gated, you know, on account of that fellow Gunner," said Tubby, trotting along with the Fistical Four. "It's rather hard cheese, ain't it. The queer thing is that the Head don't know we know why we're gated. He, he, he. I've found out, you know."

"You want a licking for finding

out!" growled Lovell. "What business is it of yours, anyway?"

"Some fellows know what's going on, and some don't," said Tubby Muffin complacently. "I'm one that does. I say, it's rather a disgrace to the school, isn't it, for an old Rookwood chap to be an awful criminal?"

Fancy, his coming hanging round his old school, with the bobbies after him, you know! I say, I heard the Head say—Yoooooop!"

Tubby Muffin did not mean to imply that he had heard the Head utter that remarkable ejaculation. He uttered that on his own as Lovell grasped him and sat him down in the quad.

The Fistical Four left him there; and when Tubby recovered his breath he drifted away to the Modern side to find fresh audiences.

Jimmy Silver was looking thoughtful.

"Tubby's an eavesdropping little beast," he remarked, "and he's got an imagination that would make his fortune as a war-correspondent! But I think he's telling us the facts this time, or as near as the fat Prussian can get to facts. The school bounds being drawn in shows that there's something up."

"But it's all rot!" said Lovell un- easily. "Rookwood chaps don't become criminals. Tubby's got it wrong, somehow."

"There are black sheep in every flock," said Jimmy Silver. "Must be bad specimens produced even by Rookwood. Look at Lattrey of the Fourth, for instance. He might turn out to be a burglar any day. And there's Leggett. He says he's going into the House of Commons when he grows up, and he looks capable of it. Some Rookwooders have gone to the bad. I dare say—precious few, of course, but some."

"Well, I suppose it's possible," Lovell admitted.

"The chap must have been a Modern," remarked Raby.

"No doubt about that," said Newcome. "He was a Modern, right enough, if he was a Rookwood chap at all."

Jimmy Silver reflected.

"Well, there hasn't been a Modern side at Rookwood for such a jolly long time," he remarked. "Gunner may have been here before the Modern side was instituted, when Rookwood was all Classical. But we're jolly well going to find out something about Gunner. There must be some folk about the school who remember him, as well as the Head. We can't ask them—very well ask the Head."

"Ha, ha! No."

"Old Mack has been here for centuries, more or less," said Jimmy. "Let's go and jaw old Mack on the subject. He will know."

The old porter of Rookwood was in his lodge, and he looked rather suspiciously at the Fistical Four when they presented themselves. Old Mack had had his rubs with those cheerful young gentlemen.

"Good-afternoon, Mack!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "How's the rheumatism?"

"None the better for your asking, Master Silver," replied old Mack grumpily.

Jimmy coughed.

Apparently Mack was in a grumpy mood, and disinclined to listen to the voice of the charmer.

"You've been here a jolly long time, haven't you, Mack?" Jimmy went on, with polished politeness. "Quite an institution at Rookwood. The school wouldn't be the same without you, Mack."

"Grunt!"

"Do you remember a chap named Gunner, who was here once?" continued Jimmy, coming to the point.

The old porter looked rather sharply at him.

"Yes, I do!" he said shortly.

"Oh! There was such a chap, then?" exclaimed Newcome.

"Yes, there was."

"What sort of a chap was he, Mack?" asked Raby.

"Very like you young gentlemen," said the porter grimly. "Never had no respect for his elders—"

"Oh, Mack!"

"Never had any more manners than a Prooshian 'Un!"

"Oh!"

"And was always cheeky, and poking 'iself in where he wasn't asked."

"Ahem!"

"And he was like you young gents in other ways, too," continued old Mack, beginning to relish the conversation. "He went to the bad!"

"H'm!"

"Ended up in prison, so I 'eard," said Mack. "Which I 'ope as you young gentlemen won't go and do likewise."

"Look here—"

"But I 'as my doubts," added Mack grimly.

The Fistical Four gave old Mack expressive looks. The crusty old gentleman seemed to be getting the best of that pleasant conversation.

"You grouching old fossil—" began Lovell, apparently thinking that further politeness would be wasted on Mack.

"Shush!" said Jimmy Silver. "Mack, old scout, was this chap Gunner a Classical or a Modern?"

"Which I disremember," said Mack.

"Oh, Mack don't remember anything!" said Raby. "I don't suppose he remembers the reign of George the Third, though he was grown-up then."

"I wasn't!" roared Mack. Mack was a little hazy as to when King George the Third had reigned, but he knew that Raby was attributing to him an age much greater than the sixty years he owned to.

"And I remember that feller Gunner well, too. He was on the Modern side, which was soon after it was instituted 'ere, and he became a solicitor arter he left. There ain't nothing wrong with my memory, wotever there may be with the manners of some folks!"

And Mack snorted, and went into his back room. The Fistical Four strolled out of the lodge, satisfied with the information they had gained.

"A Modern, you see!" grinned Lovell. "Of course, he was a Modern, if he turned out a bad lot. I think we may as well mention this to Tommy Dodd."

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. proceeded to look for their old rivals of the Modern side. They felt sure that Tommy Dodd would be interested to learn that Geoffrey Gunner, now a fugitive from justice, had been on the Modern side at Rookwood when he honoured the school with his presence.

The 4th Chapter.

Tommy Dodd is Equal to the Occasion.

"Whither bound?" asked Tommy Cook.

The Modern Fourth had just been dismissed by Mr. Manders, after the chemistry class, which was known at Rookwood by the less euphonious name of "stinks."

Tommy Dodd was walking his two inseparable comrades across the quad, what time the Fistical Four were pursuing their inquiries at the porter's lodge.

"Tuckshop!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Nothing doing!" said Tommy Doyle. "Sure, we've got our allowance for the day, Tommy. Ye're not after breaking the grub rules?"

"Fathad! We're going to see the sergeant."

"Faith, and phwat do we want to see the sergeant for?" exclaimed Doyle, in surprise. "Do you want a yarn about the Boer War?"

"Follow your leader!" said Tommy Dodd autocratically. "Sergeant Kettle's an old chap, Tommy."

"Old as Methuselah, or very nearly," agreed Doyle. "But—"

"He's been at Rookwood a thousand years or so."

"Twenty, at least," said Cook.

"He joined up again for the South African War, I've heard, and came back again. That was before our time."

"Yes, a trifle," grinned Tommy Dodd. "Well, we're going to visit the merry old sergeant, on account of his age."

"Are you off your 'rbcker?" demanded Cook.

"Bow-wow!"

Tommy Dodd led his two companions to the school shop, which old Sergeant Kettle kept in the ancient disused clock-tower. The sergeant was there, sitting on a barrel, and smoking the pipe of peace, untroubled by customers at the moment.

"Hallo, sergeant!" said Tommy Dodd genially. "I suppose you remember all the Classical chaps at Rookwood for the last twenty years or so?"

The sergeant grinned.

"Not quite, Master Dodd."

"Do you remember a Classical chap named Gunner?"

Sergeant Kettle reflected, and shook his head.

"It might be anything from fifteen to twenty years ago," urged Tommy Dodd. "I know you were away part of the time in Africa; but surely you heard of the chap, at least. He seems to have gone to the bad after he left Rookwood."

"Perhaps he wasn't a Classical intirely?" suggested Doyle.

"Fathad!"

"But, sure—"

"Of course he was a Classical!" said Tommy Dodd, unconsciously reasoning upon the same lines as the Fistical Four. "He must have been, as he turned out a bad character."

"Oh, I see! Faith, and it's a dead cert, then!" grinned Doyle.

"Classical, right enough," said Cook. "Don't you remember a Classical chap named Gunner, sergeant?"

Sergeant Kettle shook his head again.

"No. I remember there was a young gent on the Modern side of that name—"

"The Modern side!" exclaimed the three Tommies together.

"Yes. I remember him, arter I came back from the war," said the sergeant. "He was in the Fifth then, and a regular rip. He was always in trouble for smoking or getting out of bounds, and tricks of that kind. Not a nice young gent at all. Geoffrey Gunner was the name."

The three Tommies looked at one another rather queerly. They were getting information about the old Rookwooder, but not precisely the kind they wanted.

"I heard afterwards he was artiled to a solicitor, or something of the sort," said the sergeant. "He became a solicitor himself, and after that—"

"Go on, sergeant."

The sergeant hesitated.

"Look here; we've heard something about him," said Tommy Dodd. "We want to know whether it's true. Did he go on the rocks?"

"He was mixed up in a swindle, sir," said the sergeant. "Something about keeping a client's money, and losing it in spec—spec—something—"

"Speculation?"

"Yes; that's it. It was called miss—miss—miss— The old sergeant made an effort to remember. "Miss something—"

"Misappropriation?"

"That's the word—misappropriation of funds, I think."

"Did he go to chokey?"

"Yes, Master Dodd."

"My hat! Is he there now?" asked Cook.

"I s'pose he is."

"And you're sure he was a Modern?" asked Tommy Dodd, with a lingering hope that the sergeant might be mistaken on that point.

"Quite sure. I remember him well."

"Oh, rotten!" said Dodd.

The three Tommies left the tuck-shop in a decidedly dissatisfied frame of mind. They had hoped, if not taken it for granted, that Geoffrey Gunner, who had gone to the bad, had been a Classical during his Rookwood career. The discovery that he had been on the Modern side was disconcerting.

But Tommy Dodd's fertile brain was equal to the emergency.

"It's a sad case!" he said at last.

"Rotter!" agreed Doyle and Cook.

"Shocking miscarriage of justice!" continued Tommy Dodd.

"Eh? Shocking what?"

"Miscarriage of justice!" said Tommy Dodd firmly. "This poor fellow—"

"What poor fellow?" howled Doyle.

"Gunner."

"He isn't a poor fellow—he's a gal-bird!" said Cook.

"This poor fellow," said Tommy Dodd, undaunted, "is the victim of a miscarriage of justice. These things do happen, you know. There was Convict 83, or 99, or something—chap sent to prison when he was perfectly innocent—"

"Bow-wow!"

"The same thing, evidently, happened in the case of poor Gunner—"

"Evidently!" murmured Cook.

"Evidently!" repeated Tommy Dodd.

"He never misappropriated his clients' money. I feel certain that he was incapable of doing anything of the sort."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"He was found guilty on circumstantial evidence—"

"How do you know he was?"

"I feel sure of it."

"Oh!"

"Circumstantial evidence," said Tommy Dodd, nodding his head sagely. "Lots of innocent chaps in novels are sent to chokey on circumstantial evidence."

"But Gunner wasn't in a novel."

"Fathead! It happens in real life sometimes. Look what old duffers judges are!" said Tommy Dodd argumentatively.

"Why, Classical chaps from Rookwood become judges sometimes. I shouldn't wonder if it was a Classical chap who tried poor old Gunner, and found him guilty on circumstantial evidence."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Or very likely," continued Tommy Dodd, warming up—"very likely it was some Classical sneak who misappropriated the money, and put it on to poor old Gunner."

"Great pip!"

"How do we know there wasn't an old Rookwooder, a Classical chap, employed in the bank, or the office,

or wherever it was?" said Tommy.

"In the dead of night—"

"The—the what?" gasped Cook.

"The dead of night. In the dead of night he sneaked into the office, or the bank, as the case may be, and—"

and misappropriated the tin, you know, and left poor old Gunner's hanky there, or his socks, or something, to make the fat-headed police believe that a Modern did it."

"Oh, begorra!" murmured Doyle, quite overcome by Tommy Dodd's remarkable imaginative powers.

"Draw it mild, you know!" gasped Cook.

Tommy Dodd sniffed.

"I believe it's most likely that it happened just like that," he said obstinately. "The circumstantial evidence was against poor old Gunner, and he was sent to chokey. I shouldn't be surprised to hear that some Classical sneak was living in clover on the misappropriated money to this day—very likely going in for war-profiteering with it now. It would be like him."

"Like who?" howled Cook.

"Him! The Classical rotter I'm speaking about!"

"But how do you know there was a Classical chap mixed up in the bizney at all?" said Cook dazedly.

"Well, I don't know it for certain, of course," admitted Tommy Dodd.

"But it looks to me very probable."

"Probable! My hat!"

"Hallo, here are those Classical

"In the dead of night!" chimed in Doyle.

"And bagged the tin," said Tommy Dodd, "and left poor old Gunner's hanky there to throw suspicion on him."

"Gammon!" exclaimed Lovell, taken quite aback.

"And it's just what might have been expected of a Classical, I must say that!" said Cook, loyally backing up his leader. "Just a Classical trick, and no mistake! He's going in for war-profiteering now. Yah!"

And the three Tommies elevated their noses into the air disdainfully, and walked away, leaving Jimmy Silver & Co. staring. The wind had been taken out of the Classical sails!

The 5th Chapter.

Van Ryn Takes a Hand.

For a day or two the chief topic of conversation among the juniors at Rookwood was that shady character, Geoffrey Gunner, once a Rookwood fellow.

The Rookwooders were keenly interested in him.

They were anxious to get more particulars about him, but details were hard to get.

That he had been a solicitor, that he had misappropriated his clients' cash, and had been sent to chokey for doing so was known. It was also evident that he must have escaped from that delightful resort, chokey, since

Judges weren't infallible, and all sorts of duffers served on juries, according to Tommy Dodd.

"F'rinstance," said Tommy Dodd, "when those Classical chumps over the way grow up they'll serve on juries, you know. Well, what sort of a verdict would they give? What sort of brains would they bring to the job? Would any chap here take any notice of their giddy verdict?"

To which the Moderns replied unanimously:

"No fear!"

"So, you see," said Tommy Dodd, "Gunner was as innocent as a baby. Perhaps the truth will come out some day. And mark my words, when it does it will come out that the real criminal was a chap who was once a Classical at Rookwood, I feel sure of it."

And the Moderns duly marked his words.

The Classicals felt more inclined to mark his features.

Anyhow, with that attitude taken up by the Moderns, it was impossible for the Classicals to "crow" on the subject. They could not "rub it in" that a Modern's natural destination was "chokey," while the Moderns persisted in regarding Gunner as an unhappy victim of a miscarriage of justice.

Indeed, Tommy Dodd went so far as to declare that if Gunner turned up at Rookwood he would ask him into his study to tea as an "Old Boy"

Jimmy shook his head.

"We shall know when he's caught," he replied. "Bounds will be extended again. So long as we're gated we know he's still loose. Looks as if he's a dangerous character, or the Head wouldn't be so jolly careful."

Lovell grinned.

"The cream of the joke is that the Head doesn't know we know anything about it," he remarked. "I dare say it's the talk of the village, but we're not supposed to go down to Coombe now. Lattrey went down yesterday on the quiet, and he says he heard people talking about it."

Dick Van Ryn's cheery face looked into the study.

The South African junior was grinning.

"You fellows coming?" he asked. "Whither?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"To see a lark."

"In a cage?" asked Lovell. "Look here, Dutchy, you oughtn't to keep a lark in a cage."

"Ha, ha! No."

"Then how can we see it if it's not in a cage?" demanded Lovell.

"Larks don't stand still to be looked over, do they?"

"This one will," grinned Van Ryn. "Come along with your Dutch uncle, and see."

The Fistical Four followed him from the study, Lovell looking mystified, and the other three grinning. They guessed the kind of "lark" Dick Van Ryn alluded to was not of the ornithological variety.

Pons and Conroy joined them in the passage. All three of the Colonial chumps wore smiling looks.

"Well, where's the lark?" asked Lovell.

"It hasn't come off yet," said Pons.

"What is it on?" asked the puzzled Lovell.

"On! It's not on yet," said Pons, equally puzzled.

"Well, of all the chumps!" exclaimed Lovell. "If it's not on, how can it come off? Do you mean it's on a tree?"

"Ha, ha!" roared the Canadian junior. "It's not that kind of lark, fathead! It's a lark on the Moderns."

"Oh, I see! What sort of a lark?"

"Wait and see!" smiled Conroy.

The juniors walked out into the quadrangle.

They bent their steps in the direction of the new clock-tower on the Modern side. Round the little arched doorway that gave admittance to that edifice a number of juniors were gathered, mostly Moderns.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were there, looking somewhat excited. Tubby Muffin, the plump Classical, was there also, and he was wildly excited.

"I tell you I heard him!" he was saying, as Jimmy Silver & Co. came up. "I heard him as plain as anything. Some other fellows did. Van Ryn and Pons must have heard him. They were standing near here."

"Rats!" said Pons.

"Well, I heard him," persisted Tubby Muffin. "I tell you I heard him plain. He was calling out."

"Gammon!" said Tommy Dodd doubtfully. "It's all rot. How could he get into the clock-tower? It's locked."

"May have been hiding in there a long time."

"Oh, piffle!"

"What on earth are you burbling about?" asked Jimmy Silver, in amazement. "Is old Mack shut up in the tower? I remember he got shut in once."

"It's Gunner!" gasped Tubby Muffin.

"Gunner!" yelled Van Ryn.

"Yes."

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Piffle!"

"I tell you I heard him!" shouted the fat Classical indignantly. "I was walking past here with Van Ryn and Pons, and I heard him call out."

"Tell us another."

"Well, I'm jolly well going to tell Mr. Bootles," said Tubby warmly. "Leggo my shoulder, Dodd. Bootles ought to know, so that he can send for the bobbies."

Tommy Dodd knitted his brows.

"It's all rot," he said. "But if Gunner happened to be there, he's not going to be given away. He's an innocent man!"

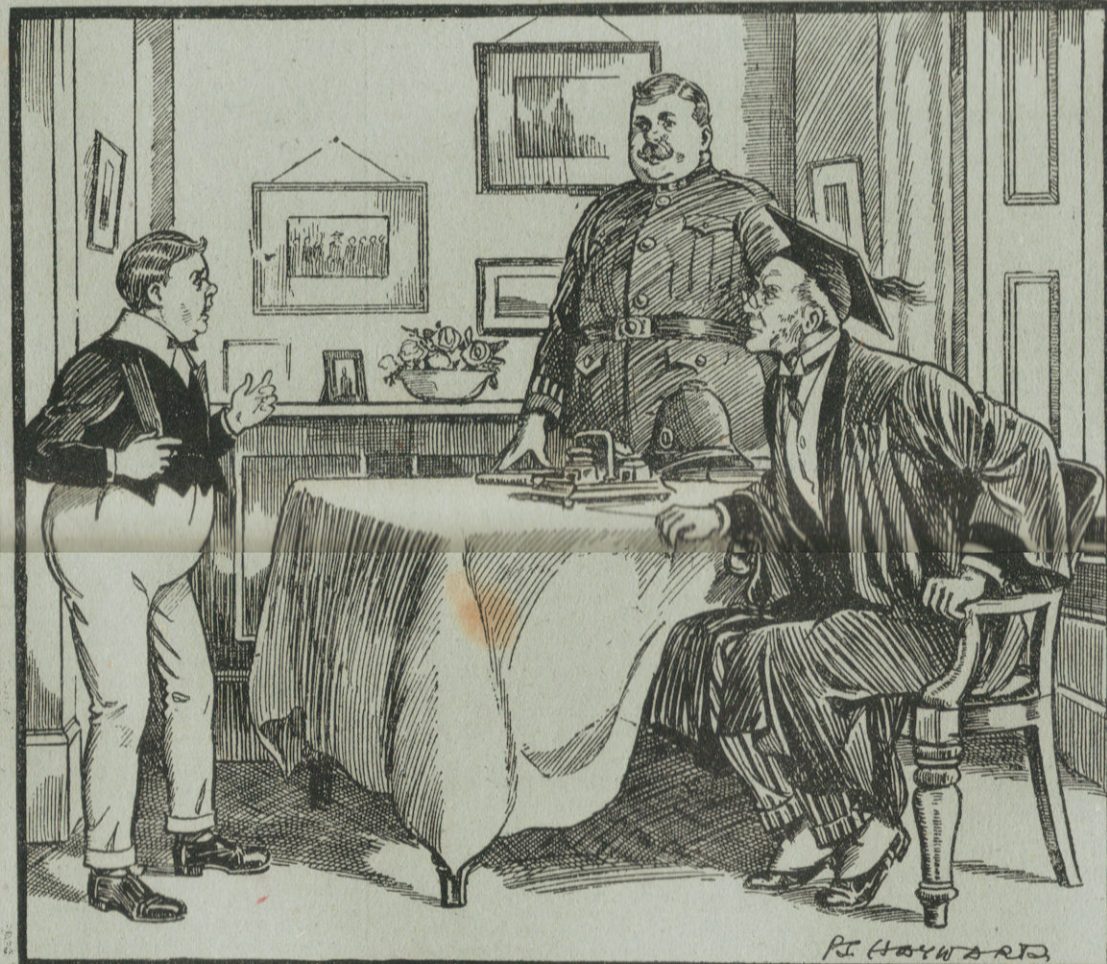
"Bow-wow!" chorused the Classicals.

"The victim of circumstantial evidence!" roared Tommy.

"Rats!"

"And he's not going to be given away," said Tommy Dodd. "I suppose even you Classical rotters don't want to turn informer."

"But he can't be there," said Van



"I—I know what Mr. Boggs has come about, sir," gasped Tubby Muffin. "I—I've come to confess, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head, in surprise. "What do you know about the matter, Muffin?"

worms, and they look as if they've found out something!" growled Tommy Dodd, as the Fistical Four, with smiling faces, came sauntering from the direction of the porter's lodge.

"Hallo, dear boys!" said Jimmy Silver sweetly. "We've been hearing about an old chap of your side—"

"A regular Modern specimen!" grinned Lovell.

"Merry merchant named Gunner!" chuckled Raby.

"Mind you don't follow in his footsteps!" roared Newcome. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mean poor old Gunner!" said Tommy Dodd sadly.

"Poor old rats!" said Jimmy Silver.

"We mean that blessed Modern who went to chokey—not the only one who ought to have gone, I'll be bound!"

"You don't know the facts," said Tommy Dodd scornfully. "Wait till the facts come out before you crow! There's reason to believe that the murder—I mean the misappropriation—was committed by a Classical chap—"

"What?" ejaculated the Fistical Four in chorus.

"Who sneaked into the bank—I mean the office—"

said Cook.

he was free and in the neighbourhood of the school.

Why he had come to that neighbourhood was a very interesting mystery. And the question of his guilt or his innocence was keenly debated in the junior studies.

The Classicals, to a man, hadn't the slightest doubt on the subject. They maintained that he had turned out just as a Modern chap might be expected to turn out.

As a judge and jury had decided that Gunner was guilty, it might have been supposed that that question was settled.

But for the Modern juniors at Rookwood it wasn't settled at all, not in the least.

Tommy Dodd's remarkable theory that Gunner was a wronged man caught on very much, on the Modern side.

Indeed, the Moderns favoured Tommy's still more startling theory that a Classical chap had, somehow, been at the bottom of the whole business.

Tommy Dodd was eloquent on the subject. He pointed out that innocent men had been sent to prison, and had even been hanged. Such occurrences were, fortunately, rare, but it was no use denying that they had happened.

whom the Moderns would be delighted to honour.

"Cheeky asses!" growled Lovell in the end study. Lovell was quite exasperated by the attitude of the Moderns on the subject. "The man's a blessed swindler, you know, and they're making out that he's a sort of romantic victim. I jolly well wish that the bobbies would lay him by the heels. Why, if Tommy Dodd saw him, very likely he'd turn out to be some beetle-browed villain with a face like the Kaiser!"

"Most likely!" agreed Raby.

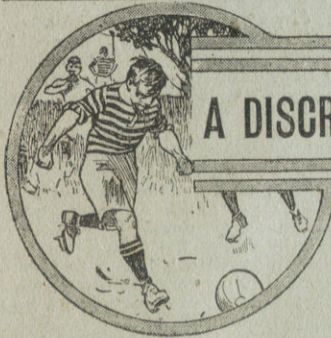
"I know if I see the beast I'll jolly well hand him over!" said Newcome. "My opinion is that a lot of the other Moderns ought to be handed over with him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It's jolly queer what he's come hanging about Rookwood for!" remarked Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "He can't expect to get any help here. Even the Moderns wouldn't go so far as that."

"And it's queer, too, that the bobbies don't nail him!" said Lovell. "I suppose he's skulking in the woods, but they ought to rout him out."

"Perhaps they have!" suggested Raby.



A DISCREDIT TO THE SCHOOL!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Ryn. "I certainly never heard him call out." "Neither did I," said Pons. "I did," said Tubby Muffin, "and I'm going to Bootles— Yow-ow!" "Stay where you are!" growled Tommy Dodd. "I say, you know he's a swindler, you know, and a gaolbird— Yow-ow! Leave off pulling my ear, you rotter!" wailed Tubby. "Hark!" exclaimed Tommy Cook suddenly. There was a breathless hush among the juniors as a faint voice proceeded from the oaken door of the clock-tower. "Help!"

The 6th Chapter.

Tommy Dodd to the Rescue.

"Help!" It was plain enough. The voice was faint and low, as of a man in the last stages of hunger or exhaustion, but it was audible to every fellow there. The Rookwood juniors looked at one another with startled faces. Tommy Dodd drew a quick, hurried breath, and stepped closer to the little door. He tapped on the thick oak with his knuckles. "Who's that?" he breathed. "Help!" "Who are you?" "My name's Gunner."

"Yes." "Were you condemned on circumstantial evidence?" "Exactly." "There, you see," said Tommy Dodd, looking round. "He says so himself." "He would!" remarked Lovell. "Oh, dry up! I believe every word he says." "You're an ass!" "Help!" came the feeble tones again. "I'm starving! Send for the police—I don't care! Only let me out!" "Buck up!" said Tommy Dodd. "We're going to see you through, Gunner." "Bless you!" "Anyway, we'll get you some grub," said Tommy Dodd. "Cook, old chap, cut off to the study, and get whatever there is!" "What about tea?" asked Tommy Cook. "Dodd glared at him. "Bother tea! Blow tea! Fetch the grub, you ass!" "Oh, all right!" Tommy Cook vanished in the direction of Mr. Manders' House. Tommy Dodd bent down at the door, and whispered in the keyhole. "Can you hear me, Gunner?" "Yes." "I'm Dodd, of the Modern Fourth. All the Modern chaps believe in your innocence, old fellow." "Bless you!" "We're going to help you, somehow. You see, the door's locked," said Tommy Dodd. "We shall have to get the key, somehow."

going to get the key from old Mack, somehow." Tommy Dodd cut away to the porter's lodge. The juniors waited for his return, in a state of considerable excitement. There had been so much discussion of the missing Gunner, that it was highly exciting to find that the hapless fugitive had actually taken refuge within the walls of Rookwood itself. Tommy Dodd came scudding back in a few minutes. "Got it, bedad?" exclaimed Doyle. Tommy drew a key from his pocket, and held it up in triumph. "Here it is! Old Mack keeps it hanging over his mantelpiece, and I cut in and bagged it. He wasn't there, thank goodness! Now it's all serene."

Tommy pushed the key into the door, with a grating sound. There was a sudden whimper of terror. "Oh, run down at last! I am lost!" "It's all right, Gunner!" called out Tommy Dodd hastily. "Only me, you know." "Keep off! I will fight for my liberty! I am armed—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tommy. "I—I say, old chap, it's all serene. I'm a friend, you know. I'm coming to help you. I'm Dodd." "Pursue me if you dare!" came in hoarse tones. "I am armed and desperate!" "Bedad!" murmured Tommy Doyle. "Mind how you open that door, Tommy—"

But Tommy Dodd did not heed. He turned the key in the lock, and threw the oaken door wide open. There was a general scuttling back of the juniors. They expected to see a haggard, desperate convict, probably with a revolver in his hand. But the dusky space was bare, and Tommy Dodd blinked in, without seeing a trace of the hapless refugee.

The 7th Chapter.

Missing!

"Gunner!" panted Tommy Dodd. There was no reply. "Poor chap!" said Tommy Dodd. "I dare say he's half off his poor old head with hunger and fright. He's bolted up the stairs." "Lucky the door's not bolted, too!" remarked Lovell, with an attempt at humour. "Oh, don't be funny! I'm going up."

"Mind his revolver!" exclaimed Van Ryn, in alarm. "Suppose he takes you for a bobby, and begins shooting?" "Rats! He won't!" "Faith, and he might intirely!" said Tommy Doyle uneasily. "He seems to be half cracked."

"Well, I'm going to risk it." "Here's the grub!" exclaimed Tommy Cook, hurrying up with a bundle under his arm. "Where's your poor old Gunner?" "Bolted up the staircase," said Tommy Dodd. "He's taken the alarm. I'm going after him. Come on!"

The three Tommies entered the tower, two of them, at least, feeling rather uneasy. But Tommy Dodd led the way, as brave as a lion. "Let's go after them," said Dick Van Ryn. "They're not going to face the merry danger alone."

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver. The three Colonials and the Fistical Four rushed in after the Moderns, and mounted the narrow, winding stair behind them. "Get out!" snapped Tommy Dodd, looking back. "You Classics ain't wanted here."

"We're sharing the merry risk," said Jimmy Silver. "Can't let you Modern kids run into danger." "There isn't any danger, fathead!"

"It may give you an awful shock to see him!" said Pons. "Eh! Why should it?" "Well, he may have a face like most Modern chaps." "Ha, ha, ha!" "Shut up!" roared Tommy Dodd ferociously. "This isn't a time for cackling, or a place, either."

And Tommy Dodd tramped on wrathfully up the stairs. Cook and Doyle followed him, and after them came the Classics, crowding the stairs. No sign of the convict was seen on the staircase. "The duffer!" muttered Cook. "He's gone out on the platform at the top. He may be seen from the quad."

"Hurry up!" said Dodd. A little door at the back of the clock-room gave access to the open platform, surrounded by a parapet. The three Tommies emerged into the open air. From that elevated point they had a splendid view of Rookwood and the surrounding country. But they were not thinking of views. They were thinking of the unhappy fugitive, and, to their amazement, they found that the platform was untenanted.

"Howly mother av Moses! Where is he?" ejaculated Doyle. Tommy Doyle looked dazed. "My hat! He—he can't have jumped off, surely!" "Oh, begorra!"

With dreadful doubts in their breasts as to what the desperate man might have done, the three Tommies looked over the parapet and scanned the ground below. They saw nothing, however, but a crowd of juniors, looking upward. "Where is he?" Jimmy Silver & Co. came through the little door. "Where is the merry convict?" "He—he's not here!" "Hark!" exclaimed Van Ryn. From below, in the depths of the dusky winding staircase, came a voice.

"Help! Master Dodd, where are you?" Tommy Dodd jumped. "Great pip! He's below!" "How could we have passed him?" stammered Doyle. "Must have been hidden somewhere. Come on!" Tommy Dodd & Co. dashed into the staircase again, and the Classics followed them.

"Where are you, Gunner?" called out Tommy Dodd, halting on a landing half-way down the staircase. "Here!" came a faint voice. "Where?" "Down below! Come quick! I'm fainting!" "Oh, my hat!"

The three Moderns tore down the stairs. They were perplexed, and considerably exasperated with the elusive Mr. Gunner by this time. "Here he is!" exclaimed Cook, as a bulky form loomed up in the open doorway on the ground floor. "Look here, Gunner. My hat! It's Mack!" Mack glared at the Modern juniors. "Which my key has been took!" he roared. "And 'ere it is in the door. Who took that there key, hay? Come out of there, you young vagabonds, or I'll report yer!"

"Oh, crumbs! It's all up now!" muttered Tommy Dodd. "Come hout! Which you know well enough that you ain't allowed in there, you and your monkey tricks!" snorted old Mack.

The Moderns crowded out, in dismay, followed by Jimmy Silver & Co. Tommy Dodd only hoped that Mack would not detect the presence of the hidden convict. But as the old porter was dragging the door shut, the faint voice was heard again. "Mack! Mack! Aren't you going to help me?"

"Oh, the ass, he's giving himself away!" muttered Tommy Dodd. "As if old Mack will help him! Oh, the duffer!" Mack gave a jump. "Who's that?" he ejaculated. "I'm your old pal, Gunner." "Gunner!" yelled Mack. "Yes, old fellow, the man who worked beside you in the stone-breaking gang at Dartmoor. You're going to help an old pal, Mack!" "Hallo, we're learning something about Mack!" exclaimed Cook.

Mack was purple. "Which it's a lie!" he roared. "I never was at Dartmoor, and if you're Gunner, you're going to be 'anded over, you rascal! I'll 'ave you out of that in a jiffy, you see. Coming 'ere to 'ide from the peelers, wot? I'll show you!"

Mack rushed into the tower. "All up now!" said Van Ryn, touching Tommy Dodd on the elbow. "You've done your best, Tommy." "Poor old Gunner!" said Tommy. "Still, I don't think Mack will find him," added the South African junior thoughtfully. "He's bound to, you ass!"

Dick Van Ryn shook his head. "Mack will be jolly clever if he does!" he remarked. "You see, there's nobody there!" "What!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver & Co. The "lark" had been a success, from the point of view of the Classics.

"Thanks awfully for the pleasant conversation we've had, Tommy," said Van Ryn affably. "Ha, ha, ha!" Tommy Dodd stared at the South African. "Are you off your rocker, you Dutch duffer?" he exclaimed. "We haven't had any conversation?"

"Yes, we have, dear boy," grinned Van Ryn, "and it's been awfully entertaining. And next time you have a talk with a convict hidden behind a door, make sure that the merry convict isn't a ventriloquist standing beside you all the time." "Wha-a-t!"

"Oh, begorra!" "You spoofing rotter!" yelled Cook. "Ha, ha, ha!" Van Ryn and his comrades walked away, chuckling. The entertainment was over—for all excepting old Mack, who, in great perplexity, was still searching the interior of the clock-tower.

Tommy Dodd & Co. gazed after the Rookwood ventriloquist with really extraordinary expressions on their faces. "My—my hat!" stammered Tommy Dodd at last. "Spoofed—spoofed all the time by that Classical beast!"

Old Mack came out of the tower with a very puzzled expression on his face. He had found nobody there. Shaking his head very gravely, old Mack locked the door and carried away the key. "Spoofed!" mumbled Tommy Dodd. "Oh, crumbs! I—I never thought—"

"Oh, bedad! Aft'er him!" gasped Tommy Doyle. "Squash him! Jump on him! Scalp him!" The feelings of the three Tommies were really too deep for words. It was a time for action—drastic action. They charged after the grinning Classics, and hurled themselves upon Dick Van Ryn.

"Now, you funny idiot!" "Now, you joking duffer!" "Scalp him!" But Classical hands were laid on the three Tommies, on all sides, and they were dragged off the ventriloquist and bumped on the ground. Jimmy Silver & Co. sauntered away chortling, leaving them there.

Tommy Dodd sat up. "Oh, crumbs!" "Faith, it's a howling ass ye are, Tommy," gasped Doyle. "The Classics will be laughing us to death over this!" "Look here—"

"Of all the silly asses, you're the silly-assiest!" snorted Tommy Cook. "Why I—I—" "Yah!" And with that expressive remark, Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle marched off, leaving Tommy Dodd speechless. And for a long time afterwards, it was only necessary to whisper the name "Gunner" in Tommy Dodd's ear, in order to arouse him to a pitch of Hunnish fury.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

THE ROOKWOOD REFUGEE!

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BOB TRAVERS AT ST. JIM'S!

A Splendid Complete Story of Bob Travers, the Boy Boxer, introducing Tom Merry & Co.

By HERBERT BRITTON.

The 1st Chapter. Grundy Lays Claim.

"St. Jim's at last!" Thus Bob Travers, the boy boxer, as he trudged along the quiet country lane leading to the famous Sussex school.

At his side walked John Matthews, the great boxing promoter, the man whose name was famous throughout the length and breadth of the boxing world.

"Fine old school—what!" remarked Matthews, with a hearty laugh.

"Rather!" agreed Bob. "And a fine lot of fellows they are there, too!" continued the boxing promoter. "Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins and D'Arcy—all ripping good fellows every one of them. Ah, they're waiting for us at the gates!"

Bob Travers gazed ahead at the old gateway of St. Jim's, and there, true enough, were half a dozen or so Fourth-Formers grouped together, waving their caps in the air.

In another moment the boy boxer had reached his destination.

John Matthews shook hands with the St. Jim's juniors. He knew them well, for recently he had taken a great interest in schoolboy boxing, and had stayed near the school for a time.

"Very pleased to see you again, boys!" said John Matthews. "This is Bob Travers—the boxing promoter turned his glance in Bob's direction—who has come to box your champion boxer."

"How d'you do, Travers, old scout?" said Tom Merry eagerly, holding out his hand to the boy boxer. "Very pleased to see you at St. Jim's."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, fixing his monocle firmly into his eye. "And I hope

"Dey up, Gussy, old son!" said Jack Blake.

"Wealy, Blake—" "Shut up, do! Can't you see Travers is tired after his journey and wants his tea? This isn't the time for speeches."

"Wealy, Blake, I hadn't thought of—"

"That's the trouble," said Jack Blake blandly. "You never do think. Come on, Travers! Tea's waiting in Study No. 6. You, too, Mr. Matthews. We want you to have tea—"

The boxing promoter shook his head.

"It's very kind of you, my boy," he said kindly. "I should have been delighted to join you, but the fact is, I have already been invited to tea with Dr. Holmes. However, if Bob cares to go with you—"

"Rather!" declared Bob quickly. "A study feed will remind me of old times."

"Be careful, though, Bob," said John Matthews warningly. "You're in training, and—"

"You can trust me, Mr. Matthews," said Bob, "not to eat more than's good for me."

"Very well," said the genial boxing promoter. "I will see you directly after tea."

"Good!"

John Matthews wended his way towards the Head's House, whilst Tom Merry and his chums surrounded the boy boxer, and led him in the direction of Study No. 6.

Fatty Wynn and Kerr, and Manners and Lowther, and one or two other juniors were already in the room, and they greeted Bob in a most hearty manner.

"Sit down, Travers!" ordered Tom Merry.

Bob sat down, whilst Jack Blake poured out the tea, and Manners passed round the bread-and-butter. It was a happy gathering, and Bob felt very much at home with the St. Jim's juniors.

There was a constant flow of cheery conversation in the study, and Bob was kept busy relating his experiences and fights to the eager juniors.

"I understand the fight's to come off to-morrow afternoon?" remarked Bob at length.

"Yes," replied Jack Blake. "It's

a half, you know, and as there's no footer match on, I reckon there'll be no lack of onlookers. Mind you, old scout, you're not going to have a walk-over."

"No fear!" chimed in Manners and Lowther.

"Oh, good!" said Bob. "I enjoy a hard tussle, and— Hallo! What's all the row about?"

The row was caused by the door being suddenly flung violently open. The same instant the form of a burly, well-built junior came tearing into the study.

He was hot from running, and there was a look of angry annoyance on his face.

"Nice manners, I must say!" remarked Jack Blake. "What's the game, Grundy?"

"I—I—I—" faltered George Alfred Grundy, glaring at the juniors in turn.

"Wealy, Gwunday," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "can't you see we have a visitah?"

"Oh, rats!" snorted Grundy.

"Bai Jove, I weally must disapprove of your conduct, deah boy. In fact, I considah you ought to apologise for entewing the study in such a disgweaceful mannah!"

"Look here!" snapped Grundy.

"Why haven't you taken the trouble to introduce Travers to me?"

"No hurry, surely?" said Jack Blake. "Any old time will do for that."

"Oh, will it?" said Grundy, with a sniff. "He ought to have been introduced to me first."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glared fiercely at the laughing juniors.

"What are you laughing at?" he snapped.

"Something jolly funny," said Jack Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, are you?" said Grundy.

"Well, I'll trouble you to be a bit more serious. As I was saying, Travers ought to have been introduced to me!"

"All right, then!" said Jack Blake, jumping quickly to his feet. "Anything to satisfy you. We'll get the job over now at once. Travers, this is the great George Alfred Grundy, the biggest idiot—I mean, the silliest—"

Oh, hang, I've forgotten what you really are, Grundy! Never mind. Shake hands, and hop it quick!"

If looks could have killed, Jack Blake would certainly have expired from the frozen glare which the great George Alfred bestowed upon him.

Grundy, however, said nothing to the laughing junior. He took Bob Travers' hand, and gave it a hearty grip.

"Very pleased to make your acquaintance, Travers!" he said grandiloquently. "I hope we shall have a jolly good fight, and may the—"

"What's that?" broke in Jack Blake.

"Just like you to chip in, Blake, when anybody's talking!" said Grundy cuttingly.

"Enough to make anybody chip in!" said Jack Blake. "Who said you were going to meet Travers?"

"Well, as the representative of St. Jim's—"

"The what?"

"The representative of St. Jim's," continued Grundy, unmoved. "The fellow who's going to box Travers for the honour of the school."

"Well, what about him?"

Grundy eyed Jack Blake critically up and down.

"Gone dotty, or what?" he asked.

"I suppose you're not keeping it secret from Travers the name of the fellow he's going to box?"

"Not a bit. We've told him, and—"

"Oh, good!" said George Alfred, beaming at Bob. "We shall meet in the ring at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon, then."

"You jolly well won't!" declared Jack Blake firmly. "Travers has got to meet the champion junior boxer of St. Jim's at that time, and—"

"I know he has," said Grundy quite calmly; "and as I'm the champion of St. Jim's—"

"You jolly well won't!" declared Jack Blake firmly. "Travers has got to meet the champion junior boxer of St. Jim's at that time, and—"

"I know he has," said Grundy quite calmly; "and as I'm the champion of St. Jim's—"

"Yes," replied Jack Blake. "It's

deal most firmly with Gwunday if he makes any more absurd claims."

With that firm resolve, D'Arcy turned to his tea, and the other juniors followed suit. Notwithstanding Grundy's interruption, it proved a most enjoyable meal, and Bob Travers felt sorry when the time came for him to wend his way to the little room which had been lent to him during his brief stay at St. Jim's.

The 2nd Chapter. Well Won!

The next morning Bob Travers was up bright and early. He slipped on a pair of trousers and a sweater, with the intention of going for a short walk before breakfast.

Making his way into the deserted quad, Bob found to his amazement that the gates were locked.

Taggles, St. Jim's one and only porter, had received instructions that Bob would be going out before breakfast, and that it was his duty to see that the gates were open.

Bob, therefore, was compelled to knock up the old porter.

Half-awake, Taggles made his appearance, and demanded to know what Bob wanted. The boy boxer explained.

Taggles almost spluttered with annoyance at being awakened so early.

"What I wants to know is this?" he said. "What do they want to make sech a fuss of a blessed boxer? Why, when I was a boy—"

Bob was not eager to know what happened in the far-off days when Taggles was a boy, so he slipped a shilling into the porter's hand.

"Thankee kindly, young sir," he

"You?" ejaculated Jack Blake, in surprise. "Great Scott! Who ever put that silly notion into your head?" Grundy adopted an injured air.

"Now, look here, Blake," he said, "you know as well as I do that I'm the best boxer in the Fourth and Shell."

"The biggest lunatic!"

"Look here—"

"Buzz off, do! We're tired of listening to your rot!"

"But about the fight to-morrow," protested Grundy. "I suppose—"

"Don't suppose," said Jack Blake. "You'll overstrain yourself if you do. The fight's all arranged. Tom Merry's going to box for St. Jim's, and if you care to behave yourself you can look on."

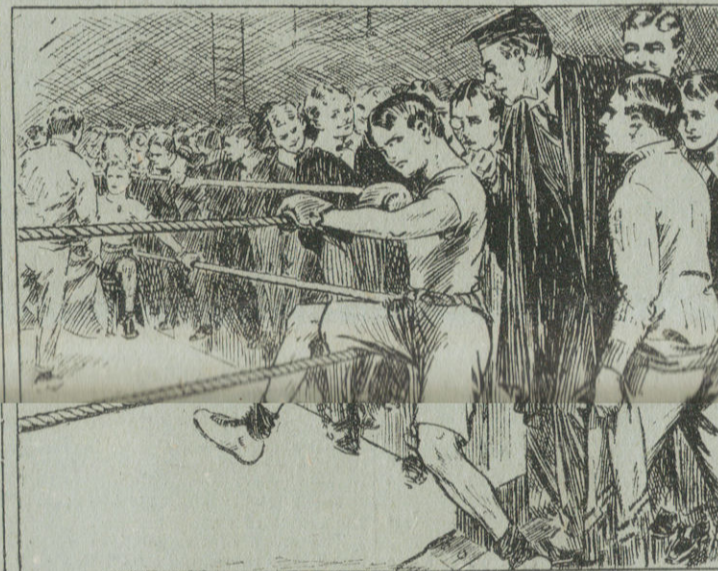
"D'you mean to say you've chosen Tom Merry to represent the school?"

"Exactly."

"You didn't ask me for my opinion on the selection!" said Grundy.

"Go hon!"

"No, you didn't," went on George Alfred, "and I reckon it's jolly unfair to let the school down in this way. As the best junior boxer, I ought—"



"Grundy, what are you doing?" exclaimed Mr. Railton. Grundy looked up in surprise. "I'm—er—going to box Travers," he said.

Jack Blake gave an impatient gesture.

"Can't you change the record," he exclaimed. "We've had all that before. We know who's the best boxer, and—"

"You refuse to listen to my claims, then?"

"Oh, if you like; we'll listen to anything—another time," said Blake. "Just leave us alone for a few minutes, there's a good chap. I'm jolly thirsty, and my tea must be cold by now."

With a sniff of contempt, George Alfred Grundy turned on his heel, and strode towards the door. Just as he was about to enter the passage, he turned round.

"You fellows will hear more about this later," he said. "I'm sticking up for St. Jim's, I am, and what's more, I'm not going to see it let down in this manner. The best boxer will meet Travers, else I'll know the reason why."

"Cheer-o," sang out Jack Blake, and as he closed the door after the departed Grundy, the juniors in Study No. 6 broke into roars of laughter.

"Grundy'll be the death of me one of these days," laughed Tom Merry.

"Can he box?" asked Bob Travers.

"Oh, yes," replied Jack Blake. "He can box a bit, but there are quite half-a-dozen fellows who can put him in the shade. Grundy's a decent chap, but he's so jolly cocksure."

"So he seemed," said Bob Travers with a smile. "I suppose he won't cause any trouble?"

"Oh, well," said Blake. "He'll probably kick up a bit of a fuss, but we know Grundy of old, and we're quite capable of dealing with him."

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I shall certainly

said. "What I always see is, boxing is a fine game, and every young feller ought to learn to use his fists. I 'opes as you'll enjoy your walk, young sir."

Bob laughed to himself as the old porter opened the gates. Money had, indeed, a wonderful effect on Taggles.

In another moment Bob was striding down the quiet lane leading to Rylcombe, at a good pace. He was eagerly looking forward to his contest that afternoon with Tom Merry.

Until recently, Bob had been employed at Barnett's Boxing Booth, but one night the booth had been wrecked by a terrific storm. Then John Matthews, the bluff, good-hearted boxing promoter, had appeared on the scene, and had promised to supply Joe Barnett with a new booth, providing Bob Travers boxed and defeated no less than six champion schoolboy boxers.

Tom Merry was to be Bob's first opponent, and a tough one, too. Bob knew that only too well. But the boy boxer was not in the least perturbed. He realised that Joe Barnett's whole future depended upon him, and he looked forward to the coming contest with a feeling of great confidence.

Bob walked a mile or so past Rylcombe, and then returned to St. Jim's. He had enjoyed the walk immensely, and he did full justice to the meal that was set before him when he got back to his quarters.

Bob spent the rest of the morning in resting and partaking of a little punchball practice, and then, directly after dinner, he set out for the large and airy gymnasium, in which the boxing contest was to take place.

A large number of juniors were already there, and they gave Bob a

hearty cheer as he entered in boxing shorts and slippers, wearing his old school colours round his middle.

Tom Merry was already there with his seconds, Manners and Lowther, whilst Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, who was to be referee and time-keeper, stood by the ring, watch in hand.

John Matthews was also there, chatting in a jovial way to Mr. Railton, the School House master.

It had been arranged that Jack Blake and Digby should second Bob, and they stood by the boy boxer as he sat in his corner waiting for the call of time.

Suddenly the sound of rushing feet could be heard outside the gym, and the attention of the juniors was turned in the direction of the door.

Next instant the door was flung open in a most unceremonious manner, and Grundy, attired from top to bottom in boxing "clobber," dashed in, followed by his chums Wilkins and Gunn.

"Sorry to keep you chaps waiting," said Grundy, striding towards the ring.

"Ring off, Grundy!" sung out Jack Blake.

"What's the matter, Grundy?" inquired Kildare, stepping forward.

"I'm going to box Travers," said Grundy firmly.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Kildare.

"Two of you can't box the chap at once. Tom Merry's been chosen to represent St. Jim's, and—"

"Quite so, Kildare," said Grundy.

"But, look here, it's not fair to the school. Don't you think the best junior boxer should—"

"Shut up, Grundy!" sang out several of the juniors.

"Chain him up, Kildare!"

"Get on with the fight!"

Grundy was quite unmoved by his hostile reception.

"I'm quite ready," he said, commencing to step inside the ring.

"Grundy, what are you doing?"

George Alfred looked up quickly to see Mr. Railton's strong, athletic form bending over him.

"I—I—I—" he stammered. "I'm—er—going to box Travers!"

"Don't be so ridiculous," said Mr. Railton severely. "You can't box at the same time as Merry. If Travers is willing, you can box him another time. Come out of the ring at once, and take your place at the back!"

"But—" faltered Grundy.

"Do you hear me?" asked the School House master sternly.

Grundy did hear, and he evidently thought it best to heed, for he stepped out of the ring, and to the accompaniment of hilarious laughter on the part of the juniors, took his place at the rear.

"You kids ready?" asked Kildare, turning first to Tom Merry and then to Bob Travers.

"Yes."

"Time!"

Bob Travers rose quickly, as did his opponent, and the two shook hands.

Bob had never seen Tom Merry box before. He therefore boxed warily at first. He soon felt the weight of Tom Merry's young fists, for suddenly the latter feinted with his right, and swung his left quickly to Bob's face.

The blow struck home, and the St. Jim's juniors cheered their hero.

"Well hit, Tom Merry!"

"Give him another!"

"Go it, St. Jim's!"

Tom Merry endeavoured to repeat the blow, but his attempt met with failure. Bob Travers could not be caught napping twice. He darted quickly into the fray, and sent his left and right in quick succession at Tom Merry's chest.

"Good man, Travers!" shouted the St. Jim's fellows, sportsmen to the core, and they had occasion a moment later to applaud the boy boxer again, for he delivered a magnificent upper-cut that lifted Tom Merry off his feet.

The first round ended with the points slightly in Bob Travers' favour.

"Time!"

The two boxers were soon on their feet again, each sparring for an opening. Tom Merry stuck manfully to his guns. He knew that Bob had had experience in professional boxing, and that he knew a great deal more about the game than he did, but all the same, he did not intend to go down without putting up a stiff fight.

And a stiff fight it was, too. Blow after blow Bob struck at the St. Jim's junior, only to receive the same in return. Tom Merry knew how to hit, and he let Bob have the full benefit of his blows.

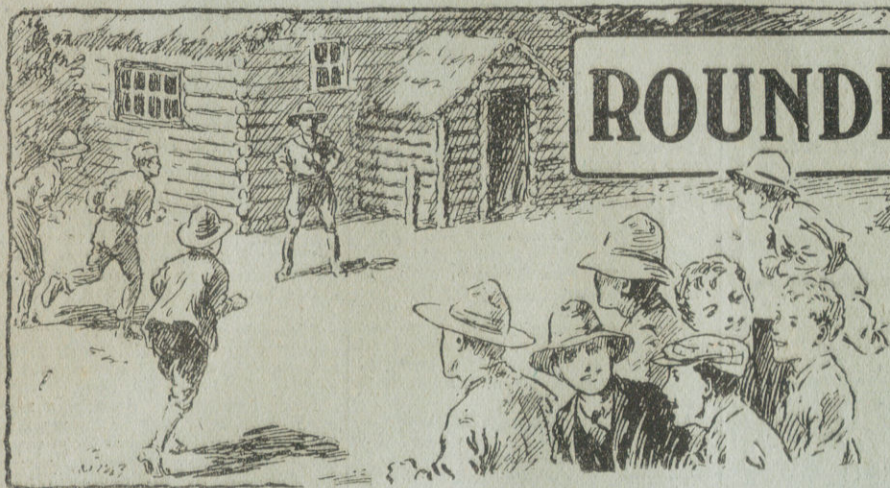
Nevertheless, Tom Merry hardly gave more than he received, and at the end of the second round Bob was still ahead on points.

"Well done, Tom Merry!" shouted Figgins of the New House.

"Time!"

"Well done, Tom Merry!" shouted Figgins of the New House.

(Continued on page 156, col. 5.)



ROUNDING UP THE RUSTLER!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story,
dealing with the Schooldays of Frank
Richards, the Famous Author of the Tales of
Harry Wharton & Co.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

The M.P.'s.

"The M.P.'s will be here this morning!" Bob Lawless remarked at the breakfast-table at the Lawless ranch. Frank Richards looked up inquiringly.

"The M.P.'s!" he repeated. "Yes. You haven't seen the M.P.'s yet?"

"No," said Frank. "I've seen some in London, but I haven't seen any Canadian M.P.'s yet."

"In London!" ejaculated Bob. "Yes."

"Do you mean London, Ontario?" "No; London in England," said Frank. "There are lots of M.P.'s in London. The Houses of Parliament are there, you know!"

Bob Lawless stared at him for a moment, and then burst into a chuckle. "Oh, I see! Well, our M.P.'s are a bit different from your M.P.'s," he said, still chuckling. "We may see them before we get off to school—they're sure to be early. They're coming here about the affair of that Mexican who winged poor Beaulerc."

"My hat!" Frank Richards stared at his Canadian cousin. "Do you mean to say that M.P.'s are coming here about that?"

"I guess so."

"How many of them?" "Three, I think."

"Well, I thought I was getting used to Canada," said Frank Richards. "But I shouldn't have expected to hear that M.P.'s were coming to look for a horse-thief. Where are they coming from?"

"Kamloops."

"And what are they going to do?" "Take the trail after the Mexican."

"My word!"

Frank Richards went on with his breakfast, still in a state of astonishment. Mr. Lawless had gone out on the ranch before the boys were down, but he came in as they rose from the breakfast-table. The rancher had a rifle under his arm, and a somewhat grim expression on his bronzed face.

"You're going with the M.P.'s, dad?" asked Bob, with a glance at the rifle.

"Yes, Bob. We are taking along one of the Kootenays to pick up the trail," said the rancher.

"Ahem! I'm rather good at a trail, dad!"

Mr. Lawless laughed. "And Frank would simply enjoy talking a hand," said Bob eagerly.

"Can't we cut school to-day, dad, and come along after that rustler?"

"I guess not," said Mr. Lawless. "I've no doubt your assistance would be very valuable. But you're not going into danger, my boy."

"Frank's never seen a Canadian M.P., dad."

"Never, uncle!" said Frank Richards.

But the rancher shook his head. "You will go off to school," he said. "This man Garcia is a desperate character, and there will be shooting when he is run down. The farther away you youngsters are the better."

"But—" began Bob.

"It's time you were off, too. Go and say good-bye to Beaulerc, and get to your ponies," said Mr. Lawless.

Frank and Bob went upstairs to the room where Beaulerc lay in bed. They found the wounded boy pale, but quite calm and cheerful. He gave them a pleasant smile.

"Well, how do you feel this morning, Beaulerc?" asked Frank.

"Pretty rotten. But the doctor says I'm mending," said Beaulerc. "It will be a week or more before I come back to school. Still, I'm lucky."

"Not so lucky as I was, I guess," said Bob Lawless. "I sha'n't forget, Beaulerc, that you got in the way when that Mexican villain was pot-

ting at me at the Indian ford. I'm sorry we had a scrap the other day."

Beaulerc smiled again. "That's all over and forgotten," he said. "I was to blame." His pale face coloured a little. "I've been thinking a good bit, you fellows, while I've been lying here. I'm sorry I didn't get on better with you and with the other fellows. I was a bit of an ass, I'm afraid."

"Well, you were, as a matter of fact," said Frank Richards, smiling. "The fellows at Cedar Creek School were willing to be friendly enough if you had let them."

"I know! I—I was a duffer—a bit of a snob, in fact," said Beaulerc frankly. "I didn't mean to be, but there it was. When I get back I shall make a fresh start. And—and if you fellows care to be friends with me, after the way I treated you, I shall be jolly glad!"

Frank's face brightened. He had hardly expected that from the remittance man's son. Beaulerc had never seemed able to forget that he belonged to a noble family in the Old Country.

His father was a wastrel, hanging about the camps, and subsisting upon remittances from England, but keeping up all the pride of a Spanish grandee notwithstanding; and Beaulerc had inherited all his class prejudices.

But the remittance man's son had evidently been thinking matters over while he lay ill in the ranch-house.

And Frank, who had felt friendly towards him in spite of his foibles, was glad to see the change.

He pressed Beaulerc's white hand as it lay on the coverlet.

"That's all right, old chap! We're going to be your pals, whether you like it or not. We've decided that already."

"You bet!" said Bob Lawless heartily.

"Thank you!" said Beaulerc simply.

"Your pater's coming over to see you to-day," said Bob. "Good-bye, old scout! Keep your pecker up!"

The cousins descended, and went out for their ponies. It was time to start for the school at Cedar Creek.

"The M.P.'s haven't turned up yet," remarked Frank, as he saddled his pony.

"We may meet them on the trail," said Bob. "I wish we could go with them; better fun trailing down a rustler than grinding verbs at school, Frank."

"Yes, rather!"

The two cousins mounted, and rode away from the ranch.

Frank Richards was in rather a puzzled frame of mind.

The whole section had been aroused by the news of the "rustler" who had robbed the cousins on their way home from school the week before, and who had wounded Vere Beaulerc with a cowardly shot from the thicket.

Outrages of that kind were rare enough in the section, and the man from Mexico was not likely to escape justice very long.

Frank would not have been surprised to see a sheriff's posse on the trail, but it was surprising news to him that trailing down a rustler was one of the duties of the Canadian M.P.'s.

He half suspected that his cousin Bob, who was of a humorous turn of mind, was pulling his leg. But Bob seemed quite serious about it.

About a mile from the ranch three horsemen came in sight, riding out of the timber.

"There they are!" exclaimed Bob. Frank looked at the three riders approaching along the trail.

They were splendidly-built fellows, each over six feet in height, and burly and broad-shouldered. He noted that they were in uniform, with rifles on

their backs. They were young men—the oldest certainly not over thirty.

"My hat!" exclaimed Frank. "And they're M.P.'s!"

"I guess so."

"They look more like soldiers than members of Parliament."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Lawless roared. "I don't see where the cackle comes in," said Frank. "You told me they were Canadian M.P.'s."

"Ha, ha, ha! So they are!" roared Bob. "But in British Columbia M.P. stands for Mounted Police, not Member of Parliament."

"Oh!" ejaculated Frank. He understood now.

The three horsemen in uniform were members of that famous body, the Canadian North-West Mounted Police.

That famous corps, few in number but great in quality, kept law and order in the vast regions between the Great Lakes and the Yukon.

"A bit different from your M.P.'s in London, hey?" grinned Bob.

"Yes," said Frank, joining in the laugh. "Quite."

The schoolboys saluted the M.P.'s as they passed.

The troopers, though they had evidently been on the trail most of the night from Kamloops, looked as fresh as paint.

They returned the schoolboys' salute, and rode on at a gallop towards the ranch.

Frank and Bob rode on to the lumber school, where they arrived just in time for morning lessons.

The 2nd Chapter.

The Mexican Again.

Cedar Creek School was in rather a state of excitement that Monday morning.

Frank Richards and his cousin were the centre of attention.

The story of the Mexican rustler was known there, and the Cedar Creek fellows were keen to hear all about it.

After morning classes the cousins were surrounded in the school-grounds by a crowd of inquirers.

"Tell us all about it," said Chunky Todgers.

"I guess we want to hear the yarn," remarked Eben Hacke. "I hear that that guy Beaulerc has got drilled."

"How did it happen?" asked Lawrence.

Frank Richards explained. "The Mexican was in the timber when we went home from school last Friday. He robbed us of our horses, and we got them back—or, rather, Bob Lawless did. The chap laid for Bob afterwards at Indian ford, and shot at him from the timber, and Beaulerc got between, and got the bullet. That's all."

"By gum!" said Hacke. "Beaulerc is the real goods, and no mistake."

"One of the best!" said Bob.

"I calculate he's got sand," said the American youth, "and I reckon I'll let him off the walloping I was going to hand him—just a few."

"And what's become of the rustler?" asked Chunky Todgers, his round eyes wide open.

"The Mounted Police are after him."

"Then I guess he's a goner," said Hacke confidently.

Miss Meadows, the schoolmistress, called the cousins into her room, to hear an account of their adventure, and then Mr. Slimmey, the assistant-master, had to be satisfied. Then it was dinner-time.

After dinner Bob Lawless and Frank left the log schoolhouse together.

Frank was heading for the creek, where lay the canoe he was learning to handle under his Canadian cousin's tuition. But Bob called a halt.

"Let's get the hosses," he said. "All serene. We've got an hour

before afternoon classes," said Frank. "Where shall we go?"

"Dad didn't seem to want our help in trailing down the rustler," grinned Bob. "But there's no harm in taking a ride over towards Indian ford, to see how they're getting on. They're bound to pick up the trail there, as it's the last place where Garcia was seen."

"Good!" said Frank. "But they've had all the morning, and they're pretty certain to be gone long ago."

"I guess we may see some of the fun if we hustle," said Bob. "Anyhow, we'll take a trot that way. You're not scared of the greaser?"

"Rats!" said Frank cheerily.

The chums rode away from the lumber school at a trot. But as soon as they were out of sight of Cedar Creek they broke into a gallop.

The Indian ford, on a fork of the Fraser River, was a good many miles from Cedar Creek, but the wiry Canadian ponies covered the ground in good style.

The schoolboys came in sight of the ford at last, and halted on the spot where Bob's fight with Beaulerc had taken place two days previously, and where the remittance man's son had fallen to the Mexican's treacherous shot, intended for Bob Lawless.

There were many hoof-prints on the grassy bank, and tracks among the timber, but there was no sign of the Canadian North-West M.P.'s. Evidently the trailers had come and gone long ago—in the morning hours.

Bob Lawless climbed to the top of a high tree, and scanned the plain, but there was no rider in sight.

"Nix!" he said, as he dropped to the ground again. "We've had our ride for nothing. I wonder whether they've got the Mexican yet!"

"Might be fifty miles away!" said Frank.

"Well, he might be; but if he was unmounted it's more likely that he's skulking in the timber somewhere. He had no horse when we saw him, and unless he's stolen one since—"

"Time we got back!" remarked Frank.

"Yes; I guess we shall have to hustle, too, to get in before lessons. Come on, and let her rip!" said Bob.

The chums jumped on their ponies, and rode away for Cedar Creek. Halfway to the school they rode through a belt of larch and tamarac, keeping up the gallop on the trail among the trees.

It was well for them that they were going at full speed, for as they dashed along the dusky trail a sudden shot rang out from the timber.

Crack!

A thick-set man, with curly black hair and black eyes and a swarthy face, leaped out of the trees, with a smoking rifle in his hand.

"The greaser!" yelled Bob. "Ride for it!"

The schoolboys bent low in their saddles, and urged on the ponies. In a few minutes they were clear of the timber, and galloping over the open prairie.

Not till the timber was left a mile behind, however, did they slacken rein.

"By gum!" gasped Bob, when they slowed at last. "That was a narrow shave. Did the shot go anywhere near you, Frank?"

"Blessed if I know where it went. It didn't hit me, anyway."

"He wants a mount," said Bob, looking back. "He's skulking in the timber, as I guessed. He would pot anybody for a horse to get away on. Franky, old man, we were a pair of silly chumps to go to the ford at all."

Frank Richards nodded. That reflection had occurred to his mind also.

"And he's not so very far from the school," said Bob thoughtfully. "He could steal a horse there—if he's given the chance. I fancy he was heading in this direction, Frank. If he knows anything about this section, and I

guess he does, he knows there are horses at Cedar Creek. We'd better tell Miss Meadows about this."

And as soon as the breathless chums arrived at the school, they hurried to inform Miss Meadows of the Mexican's proximity.

The schoolmistress listened quietly. "You should not have gone," she said. "But never mind that now. Call the others, and bring all the horses inside the corral at once."

"Yes, ma'am."

There were six or seven horses and ponies grazing along the creek, belonging to fellows who came a good distance to school.

Half a dozen fellows brought them within the corral at once, and the school gate was closed and barrel.

Whether the "rustler" would appear at the school that afternoon was a thrilling question for all Cedar Creek.

The desperate rascal needed a horse to escape upon, and a horse was to be obtained at the school; and it seemed possible enough that he would make the attempt.

Frank Richards regarded Miss Meadows rather curiously when he came in to report that the horses were corralled. He expected to see some sign of nervousness in the young lady. But the Canadian schoolmistress was perfectly calm and quiet.

"Thank you, Richards," she said. "You may go into the school-room."

As Frank went he noticed that Miss Meadows was loading the shotgun that usually hung in the hall.

The schoolmistress, with the gun under her arm, went the round of the strong timber palisade that surrounded the school-ground, and examined the fastenings of the gate.

It was evident that Miss Meadows anticipated that the Mexican might appear there, and that she did not intend to admit him within the gates if he did. There was keen excitement in the school that afternoon.

Miss Meadows did not take her class as usual, and they were turned over to Mr. Slimmey. Frank guessed that the schoolmistress was keeping watch.

"Suppose he comes, Bob?" Frank whispered.

"I guess he'll be kept out!" said Bob. "There's enough of us to keep him out. I wish I'd brought my gun."

"Please be silent in class," said the mild Mr. Slimmey.

But there was much less attention than usual given to lessons that afternoon. All ears were listening—not to Mr. Slimmey's mild voice, but for some sound from without.

And suddenly Bob Lawless started up.

"Hark!"

Knock! Knock! Bang!

"B-b-by gum!" stuttered Chunky Todgers. "B-b-by g-g-gum! It's somebody at the gate! Oh, dear!"

"The Mexican!" muttered Frank. "Please keep your seats!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

But Mr. Slimmey was not heeded. Frank and Bob rushed out of the school-room, and a dozen fellows followed them, and Mr. Slimmey was left with the girls of the class. The knocking on the gate was loud and furious, and a savage voice could be heard:

"Open! Open! Carambo! Will you open?"

It was the Mexican!

The 3rd Chapter.

Keep Out!

Frank Richards ran towards the gate, with Bob at his heels.

Frank had some vague idea of backing up Miss Meadows; certainly, he did not intend that the schoolmistress should face the desperado alone.

But the Canadian girl was perfectly cool.

ROUNDING UP THE RUSTLER!

(Continued from the previous page.)



She had stepped upon a bench within the barred gate, and stood looking over the top of the gate at the man without. The shot-gun was in her hands, and her hands did not tremble.

The Mexican stood without, thumping savagely on the gate. He ceased, and looked up furiously as Miss Meadows looked down on him from within.

The ruffian was breathless, dusty, and evidently fatigued. His swarthy face was thick with perspiration, and red with rage.

"Senorita, open the gate!" he said hoarsely.

"You cannot enter here," said Miss Meadows quietly. "What do you want?"

"Carambo! Un caballo—a horse—a horse!" hissed the Mexican. "Let me in! I will harm no one. I want simply a horse, and that I must have!"

"You will have nothing here," said Miss Meadows quietly. "Go your way!"

The Mexican ground his teeth.

"Woman, let me in!" he shouted. "I am a desperate man! I tell you that I must have a horse, and I know there are horses here!"

"You will not be allowed to enter. If you attempt to do so, I shall shoot!"

The ruffian laughed savagely.

"With that popgun?" he said. "Look you, senorita! The Mounted Police are on my track. I have escaped them so far, but I must have a horse, or I am lost! Death to anyone who stands in my way! Listen! I am Pedro Garcia, and in my country I have killed more men than I can count on the fingers of my hands. Your life is no more to me than a mosquito's. Open the gate!"

"I have warned you!" said Miss Meadows coldly.

"Will you let me in?"

"No!"

"Carambo!"

The dusky hand dragged at a revolver, and Miss Meadows stepped down within the gate. Her face was a little pale, but quite calm.

"What are you doing here?" she exclaimed, as she caught sight of the boys. "Go back into the schoolroom at once!"

"But, ma'am—" protested Frank. "Go back, I tell you!"

The boys unwillingly retreated. But they did not go into the building.

There was a loud report outside the gate, and a bullet seared through the stout wood.

Then two dusky hands appeared on top of the gate. The Mexican had made a jump and caught it, evidently to climb over.

Bob Lawless stooped, and picked up a jagged stone, and Frank Richards and Eben Hacke followed his example.

A fierce and swarthy face rose over the top of the gate.

Miss Meadows levelled the shot-gun.

"Go!" she said quietly.

The fierce, black eyes of the Mexican glared at her.

"You dare not!" he hissed.

"You will see, if you do not go!" Whiz! Whiz!

The stones flew through the air, with good aim. One of them grazed the Mexican's ear, but another crashed fairly into the dusky face.

"Carambo!"

There was a howl of rage and pain from the ruffian, and the dusky face disappeared instantly. He was heard to roll on the ground outside, shrieking out Spanish oaths as he rolled.

"Good shot, Franky!" yelled Bob. "Bravo!"

"Right on the wicket!" chuckled Frank.

Outside the gate, the Mexican was still cursing furiously. But his head did not rise into view again. His footsteps moved away, following the line of the palisade round.

"Hark!" exclaimed Bob Lawless suddenly.

From somewhere in the distance came the crack of a rifle. A loud shout followed.

There was a growl of fury from the Mexican, and his footsteps were heard retreating towards the creek.

"The Mounted Police!" shouted Bob, as galloping hoof-beats approached the gate.

Frank Richards jumped on the bench, and looked over the gate. The Mexican was running down to the creek as fast as his legs could carry

him, panting and cursing. From the opposite direction, three horsemen came riding at top speed, and Frank recognised the Mounted Police he had passed on the trail that morning.

The troopers were evidently close on the track of the rustler.

They rode past the gate, and straight on towards the creek, shouting to the Mexican to halt.

Pedro Garcia did not heed.

With desperate bounds, he reached the creek, and dragged Bob Lawless' bark canoe into the water. He leaped into it, and grasped the paddle.

"Stop, or you are a dead man!" roared the sergeant, raising his rifle.

The Mexican, with a yell of defiance, pushed off into the stream.

Crack!

There was another yell from the rustler; he was evidently hit. But he was not disabled, and the canoe shot away, the Mexican paddling desperately, and in a moment or two more vanished down the creek, hidden by the trees.

With a crash of hoofs, the troopers

It was long past the hour when the school usually scattered to their homes.

But, as yet, none had gone out of gates. With the armed desperado lurking in the vicinity, the schoolmistress would not allow them to go.

That the Mexican was not far away, and that he had not yet been captured, was evident from the sounds that came, on the wind, from down the creek.

Frank Richards listened, with his heart beating.

Crack-ack-ack!

The reports were faint in the distance, but unmistakable. Down the creek, beyond the timber, rifles were busy, and every few minutes a report was borne faintly on the wind to the listening ears at the lumber school.

"He's corralled somewhere, I guess," went on Bob; "and he's holding up the Mounted Police. Tread, perhaps."

Crack-ack!

"That's the Mounted Police rifle," said Bob. "The greaser's only got a shooting-iron, I reckon—only a revolver. That's a rifle-shot. They're peppering him, somewhere. On the island, perhaps."

"We can't clear off till it's over," said Frank.

Bob grinned.

"He may hold them off any time. We're booked for camping out here till the morning, I reckon."

"There'll be a lot of anxiety, if the

think further, laid his hands on the top of the gate, and vaulted over.

Frank Richards did not stop to reflect. He dropped over the gate after his chum.

In a minute or less, they were in the timber by the creek, and out of sight of the lumber school.

"Miss Meadows would be rather mad if she knew we had vamoosed," grinned Bob. "But she won't miss us in the crowd. That's all O.K."

Crack-ack! came faintly on the wind.

"Follow on, Franky."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Lawless led the way.

The chums tramped along the creek, keeping their eyes and ears wide open.

An occasional shot still rang out in the distance, louder to their ears as they advanced.

"Here's the hosses!" muttered Bob suddenly.

In the timber they came upon three horses tethered on a trail-rop, cropping the herbage by the creek. They were the North-West M.P.'s steeds. The firing was close at hand now.

"He's on the island, as I reckoned," said Bob.

Standing on the bank, close to the water, the chums looked along the creek, red now in the setting sun.

Almost in the middle of the stream, a small island rose from the water, thickly covered with spruce and

use at the distance, but at close quarters—"

The rifles rang out again. A sudden yell sounded from the island, though nothing but the green spruce could be seen. A bullet had gone very close to the hidden rustler.

The schoolboys pressed on along the bank. A stalwart Canadian who was lying behind a tree, with a rifle before him bearing on the island, sprang to his feet.

It was the Mounted Police sergeant. Close by him a trooper sat against a trunk, with one arm thickly bandaged, and his face pale under its tan. The rustler's revolver had claimed one victim, at least.

"All serene, sergeant!" exclaimed Bob Lawless hastily, as the big man swung round on them.

"Young Lawless! What are you doing here?" growled the sergeant.

"I guess we came to see how the circus is getting on," said Bob coolly. "All O.K., Mr. Lasalle. We're not afraid of lead, and we know how to keep in cover."

The sergeant, with a grunt, reloaded his rifle.

"He's winged," he said. "Twice, I reckon. The clumsy guy ran the canoe on the island, and I reckoned we had him. But he winged Dave with his revolver, and we had to let up. He could shoot down a dozen men from there, before they could set foot on the island. But he's corralled, the scoundrel. Johnson's crossed over to the other bank to keep him busy from there."

Sergeant Lasalle threw himself into the grass again, and opened fire on the island through the thickets.

The schoolboys, keeping well back among the trees, watched breathlessly.

It seemed certain that sooner or later the searching fire would find out the hidden desperado on the island, and either disable him or force him to show himself and surrender.

But the sun was sinking lower and lower towards the Pacific.

"I guess he's waiting for dark, Franky," Bob muttered. "Once it's dark, he'll swim for the bank and chance it."

"And he'll get clear," said Frank.

"And he'll get clear," said Frank. "Nobody could track a man through these woods in the dark surely."

Bob shook his head.

"I guess not. It means the hunt again to-morrow, and if the rascal gets into the hills, he may get clear. If he had bagged that horse he wanted at the school, he would be clear now."

Crack-ack!

The rifles were ringing out in unison again. Still no sound or movement from the island. It was possible that a bullet had already found its billet, and that the Mexican desperado lay stretched in death amid the thick spruce.

But it was more likely that he was watchful and alert, and hoping that a rush would be made, which would enable him to use his revolver with effect.

Two lucky shots would have rid him of his pursuers, and enabled him to flee in security. As he lay low on the island, the Mexican must have been longing for the troopers to attempt a second rush.

But the North-West M.P.'s did not intend to play into his hands in that way.

The dusk was deepening on the creek, and the timber was growing dim.

Frank Richards stood watching the silent island, and the drift logs that washed down to it on the current.

A sudden thought flashed into his mind, and he caught Bob Lawless by the arm.

"Bob! A good swimmer could get to the island—"

"And get a bullet through the head half-way!" growled Bob.

"Swimming behind one of those logs, Bob," said Frank, his eyes gleaming. "Look here, I could swim and shove a log along in front of me. The Mexican's got to lie low while the firing's going on, and he wouldn't see!"

"By gum!" said Bob, struck by the idea.

Sergeant Lasalle turned on his elbow, and looked up at the chums in the growing dusk.

"Would you be willing to take the risk, young greenhorn?" he asked, with a curious glance at the English lad.

"Yes, I would," said Frank. "That villain shot down a pal of mine, and I'd do anything to help get him collared."

The burly sergeant laughed.

"Well, I guess you won't be allowed to do anything of the sort," he said.

"Oh!" said Frank, a little crestfallen.



"Go!" said Miss Meadows quietly, as she levelled the shot-gun. "You dare not!" hissed the Mexican. "You will see if you do not go!" said Miss Meadows. At the same moment a stone, deftly aimed by Frank Richards, crashed into the man's face.

rode away down the bank, in hot pursuit.

"By gum!" muttered Bob Lawless, breathing hard. "By gum! They're after him! They'll have him, sure!"

The Mexican had vanished; the thunder of hoofs died away in the distance. The chase had swept far from the lumber school.

"Kindly return to your class, my boys," said Miss Meadows severely.

And the Cedar Creek fellows crowded back into the school-room, glowing with excitement.

There was no further alarm at the log school that afternoon, but there was little school work done. Everyone was thinking of the chase down the creek, and surmising how it had ended.

And when classes were dismissed, a good many fellows hoped to follow the trail of the Mounted Police down the creek, and learn what had happened—among them Frank and Bob. But an unexpected order to remain within gates checked them.

Until some news was received of the Mexican, Miss Meadows had very wisely decided that it was not safe for her pupils to return to their homes. For the present, therefore, the whole school remained within gates.

The 4th Chapter. Cornered!

"Listen, Franky!"

The chums of Cedar Creek were looking out over the gate as the sun sank lower in the west.

fellows don't get home—and the girls, too," said Frank.

"I guess so, but it can't be helped. Miss Meadows can't let them out while that rustler is around."

The chums stood and listened to the distant firing.

Frank's heart was beating with excitement. To the English lad, it was a strange and thrilling experience.

His eyes met Bob's, and their expressions showed that the same thought was in both their minds.

"I'm tired of sticking here," muttered Bob.

"Just what I was thinking," Frank set his lips. "Look here, Bob, that swarthy villain shot down Vere Beauclerc. It's up to us to help lay him by the heels—if we could help."

"I wonder!" said Bob slowly.

"Hark! They're firing again!"

Crack-ack!

"There's only two shooters going now," said Bob, listening intently. "I guess one of the M.P.'s has been winged."

"Oh, Bob!"

"Looks like it to me. He's a desperate scoundrel, Franky. This means ten years for him, at least, if he's rounded up. He won't stick at much to get clear. Look here, we're going to see what's going on. Are you game?"

"What-ho!"

"Then here goes!"

Bob Lawless, without waiting to

larch. Round it the waters raced, for it was not far above the rapids.

Past the island, drift logs scurried past on the current. Somewhere amid the foliage of the little river-isle lurked the Mexican horse-thief. There was no doubt about that.

For from both banks of the river, rifle-shots came from the timber, the bullets tearing into the foliage on the island.

One of the troopers had crossed the creek, evidently to cut off the escape of the Mexican on that side.

From both sides that fusillade was kept up, and the bullets tore through the spruce on the island, forcing the Mexican to lie very low in cover.

"He's there right enough," said Bob. "I guess he don't know how to handle a Canadian canoe, the clumsy greaser. I reckon he came to grief on the island, and the canoe's gone over the rapids. My birch-bark canoe. The thief! I dare say I'll find it at the camp below to-morrow—what's left of it. They've got the rustler fairly fixed."

Crack-ack!

The bullets seemed to be searching out every corner of the little islet, which was not more than a dozen yards across. No sound came from the desperado hidden there; his revolver did not answer the rifles.

"Why doesn't he shoot, Bob?" muttered Frank.

"Keeping his lead for a rush, I guess. His popgun wouldn't be much

(Continued at foot of next page.)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

I would like all my readers to look upon me as their real friend, someone to whom they can come for help and advice when they are in doubt or difficulty. It is never "too much trouble" to me to be of use to my boy and girl friends if they feel they would like to write to me.

THE COMPANION PAPERS:

THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1d. Every Monday.

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Monday.

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"CHUCKLES," PRICE 1d. Every Friday.

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, The BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME.

Bound to Meet with Approval.

I have not the slightest doubt that the five magnificent stories due to appear in our next issue will meet with general approval. There is not a dull line in one of the stories, and they are full of "go" from start to finish.

The splendid long, complete tale, dealing with the schooldays of Frank Richards, the famous author, which is entitled

"THE ROGUE OF THE SCHOOL!"

By Martin Clifford,

is, without doubt, one of the finest stories of the series. A Swiss junior named Gunten holds a sweep on a horse-race, much to the resentment of Frank Richards, who, rightly enough, does not approve of boys taking part in sweepstakes. At first he refuses to take part in the sweep, but Gunten's remarks are of the bitterest kind, and Frank at length gives way.

Frank Richards does not trust the Swiss junior. He suspects him to be of a crafty nature, and he is not far wrong. Gunten is determined to win the sweepstake money by hook or by crook. But he reckons without Frank Richards. Frank proves one too many for him, and is successful in defeating the artful schemes of the crafty Swiss junior.

There will be another thrilling long instalment of

"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm,

in our next issue. I have received many letters from readers just lately to the effect that they were sorry when "The Secret City!" concluded, but they are amply recompensed with Mr. Duncan Storm's latest story dealing with the school afloat.

The boys have some high old times in our next instalment, in spite of the fact that they are in the clutches of the rascally Bu Mohamed. Cork Malone, one of the boys of the floating school, starts up a queer howl, which scares the tribesmen. Then there are ructions with a vengeance. But, all the same, the boys are still prisoners, and they little realise the desperate nature of their captor.

Next Monday's magnificent long, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. is entitled

"THE ROOKWOOD REFUGEE!"

By Owen Conquest.

A quantity of goods has been stolen from Sergeant Kettle's tuckshop, with the result that Tubby Muffin is under suspicion. Tubby pleads his innocence, and his guilt cannot be proved. The affair is an absolute mystery.

The juniors are still gated, owing to the fact that an escaped convict is known to be lurking in the neighbourhood. Tommy Dodd & Co. make the suggestion that the convict may be responsible for stealing the food. His chums scoff at the suggestion, but Tommy Dodd is unshaken in his opinion.

The leader of the Modern juniors, knowing that the convict was at one

time at Rookwood, and suspecting that he is hiding near the school, decides to undertake a search for the man. His chums go with him, and it is a good job they do, for their search leads them into a most thrilling adventure.

Tommy Dood imagines the missing convict to be a most mild-tempered man, but he receives a rude surprise when they come face to face. Many exciting events occur ere the missing convict is captured and handed over to the police.

Our next story of Dick, Frank, and Joe, the Crusoe Island adventurers, is entitled

"PIEFACE'S PERIL!"

By Maurice Everard.

Pieface incurs the enmity of the "boss" of the travelling menagerie. The latter is a most revengeful man, and he resolves to get his own back

on the black boy. Pieface finds himself in a cage with a desperate gorilla, and — Well, I am not going to tell you what happens then. It will probably spoil your interest in the story were I to let you into this secret.

The concluding story in next Monday's grand issue is a splendid long, complete story, introducing Bob Travers, the boy boxer, entitled

"A STRANGE COMPACT!"

By Herbert Britton.

In this story Bob Travers goes to Bagshot School to box Cecil Pankley, who is already familiar to readers of the BOYS' FRIEND. John Matthews, the bluff, good-hearted boxing promoter, makes an amazing suggestion to Bob. He suggests that Bob shall fight to lose!

To say that Bob is astounded at the suggestion is to put it mildly. It goes against all his principles to do such a thing, but what can he do? If he fails to fall in with John Matthews's proposition, the latter will probably refuse to keep his part of the bargain he has made with Bob.

What does the boy boxer do? To learn the answer to this question, you must not fail to read next Monday's splendid long, complete tale.

In conclusion, let me urge every one of you to make a point of ordering your copies in advance. Owing to the splendid attractions which are now appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND, there is, naturally, a great demand for the paper. It is, therefore, obvious that only those readers who order in ad-

vance will be sure of securing their copies when publication day arrives.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

I suppose that there are some readers of the BOYS' FRIEND who do not read the "Gem" and "Magnet," but I don't know why. Oh, well, of course, there is always the financial question to be considered, and "Can't afford it" is quite a good excuse. But for those who can afford it—and I think they are the majority—but don't, I would say: "Get this week's issues of the two papers named, and see if they don't suit your taste!" I think they will. The "Magnet" has a splendid long story, entitled

"THE GREYFRIARS INQUISITION!"

as well as an article in a very popular series called "The Greyfriars Gallery," and a short story or two. In the "Gem" you will find

"THE TRIBULATIONS OF TRIMBLE!"

and a long instalment of the great new serial

"THE TWINS FROM TASMANIA!"

Your Editor



ROUNDING UP THE RUSTLER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

The big M.P. rose to his feet. "But I guess it's a cinch!" he said. "I reckon that I'm going to try that game. The greaser is playing for time. After dark he may get clear, if we haven't winged him before; and he's lying close. Can you handle a rifle, Bob Lawless?"

"Can a duck swim?" said Bob disdainfully. "I guess I'll ask you to take my gun, then, and keep it up for me," said the sergeant. "The greaser won't notice any difference, then. I'll get across and have a word with Johnson, and then we'll see. Take the rifle, and let's see how you shape."

He handed the rifle and bandolier to Bob Lawless.

The Canadian lad loaded the weapon at once, and dropped on his knee in the thicket, where the sergeant had lain.

The rifle came up to his shoulder, and the barrel peered through the leaves, bearing on the island across the stretch of dusky water.

Crack! The bullet tore its way through the foliage on the island, scattering twigs and leaves as it whizzed on its way.

"Good man!" said the sergeant approvingly. "Keep that up, kid!" "I'm your man," said Bob.

The sergeant disappeared through the trees, going up the creek. The two schoolboys were left alone with the wounded trooper.

Bob Lawless, lying in the thicket, kept up the fire on the island with the sergeant's rifle, and Frank Richards watched him and waited. The wounded trooper lighted a cigarette with his undamaged hand.

"I guess that Mex is a gone coon!" he remarked. And he smoked quietly, heedless, apparently, of the wound that made his strong right arm helpless.

The 5th Chapter.

Rounding Up the Rustler!

Frank Richards peered out from the trees with alert eyes, his heart thumping with excitement.

The sergeant had gone up the creek,

where, out of shot of the island, he could cross to the other side and speak to his comrade there. That could not have taken him long. What was he doing now?

Frank watched the driftwood on the stream with alert eyes.

He would willingly have taken the risk himself, for the purpose of bringing to justice the lawless ruffian who had shot down Vere Beauclerc.

But, at least, his suggestion had been acted upon. It was the last chance of "corralling" the desperado before the fall of darkness gave him an opportunity to escape.

Scan the stream as he would, he could not make out a swimmer. But at last he gave a sudden start, and his heart thumped faster.

"He's there, Bob!" he muttered.

"Good!" said Bob; and he pumped out another bullet at the island.

Down the stream a large mass of driftwood came floating on the current, directly towards the island, in the centre of the stream.

It was composed of several saplings, with branches, and a mass of drenched foliage, and looked like many other masses of driftwood; but Frank guessed that the sergeant had lashed the fragments together.

For behind the driftwood a bare head was discernible on the surface of the water.

The sergeant was swimming steadily, only the top of his head showing, and the mass of driftwood completely concealing him from view of the island. From the banks only could he be seen.

Had the Mexican mounted one of the trees on his isle of refuge, he could have spotted the sergeant in the stream. But the Mexican was lying low, deep in the thick spruce and larch, to escape the bullets that were humming every few minutes over him.

The trooper on the other bank had evidently received instructions similar to Bob Lawless. The firing was faster than ever now, and the man on the island could not have stood upon his feet without imminent danger of being "plugged."

But, crouching low among the spruce, the ruffian was watching the river, ready for the rush he expected and hoped for, revolver in hand, and savage ferocity in his breast.

But the fierce, unrelenting eyes did not specially note the driftwood, like so many others, that kept steadily to the centre of the stream, and floated down slowly but surely upon his refuge.

Frank Richards watched it breathlessly.

The sergeant swam steadily, but he had no need of much exertion, for the driftwood half supported him, and the current floated him on.

Bob Lawless could see him now without turning his head. He went on steadily reloading and firing into the foliage on the isle.

The North-West M.P. was taking his life in his hand. For if the Mexican had suspected the trick, if he had seen some slight sign to arouse his suspicion, he could have riddled the driftwood with revolver shots from where he lay, and Sergeant Lasalle would have floated down to the rapids a dead man.

But to the Canadian sergeant danger was an old acquaintance, and he was carrying out his perilous task as calmly as if he were strolling along the High Street of Edmonton.

Closer and closer to the island drew the drifting mass, still hiding the head of the swimmer from the watchful eyes of the Mexican.

Frank Richards' heart beat almost to suffocation as the driftwood, swirling on the current, bumped on the shore of the little island.

The Canadian sergeant had reached his goal.

Still keeping in cover of the driftwood, he was wading in shallow water till he could keep in cover no longer, and then a sudden, desperate bound carried him ashore, and into the spruce thickets.

Instantly the firing from the banks of the creek ceased.

Another shot at the island was as likely to hit the sergeant as the Mexican rustler now.

A shout was heard across the darkening creek—a shout of rage from the Mexican, who understood at last how he had been tricked, as the Canadian sergeant plunged ashore. Crack-ack-ack-ack!

It was a sudden, staccato outbreak of revolver shots.

Bob Lawless sprang to his feet. His face was pale and set. It was a moment of tense anxiety to the chums of Cedar Creek.

Frank Richards set his teeth hard. From the island, across the silent waters, came the sound of crashing in the thickets, and further pistol shots.

It was man to man now—the big Canadian sergeant against the desperate Mexican rustler—man to man, hidden by the dusky thickets.

The shooting ceased suddenly, but the sounds of a struggle could be heard in the evening stillness. The chums could hear the breaking of twigs, the trampling of feet, and even the fierce panting of the men who were fighting desperately there out of their sight.

There was a splash in the creek as the trooper on the other bank plunged into the water and swam for the island.

The schoolboys saw him scramble ashore there, dim in the thickening dusk. Frank Richards made a movement towards the creek, and Bob Lawless joined him, throwing down the rifle.

"Come on, Frank!" he breathed.

The chums plunged into the water together, and swam on the current to the island. But the sounds of strife had ceased before they dragged themselves ashore there. They plunged into the spruce thickets breathlessly.

On the ground the Mexican desperado lay, with his arms bound down to his sides, his teeth showing like those of a wild animal, and his black eyes glittering with rage and hatred.

The trooper was knotting a cord about his arms quietly and methodically. Sergeant Lasalle was wiping blood from his face, where a revolver-bullet had gone very close.

"Got him!" panted Bob.

The Canadian sergeant laughed quietly.

"I guess I have!" he remarked. "He won't get loose again in a hurry. By gad, it was a tussle, all the same!" "You're wounded!" exclaimed Frank.

"Only a scratch, sonny, though another inch would have done the business; but I was too close on him." The big sergeant smiled down at the savage captive. "Ready to travel, Mr. Greaser?" "Carambo!"

"We've got to get him back to the bank," said the sergeant. "I reckon we can hold him up between us, Johnson, without drowning him. He won't have his paws loose again in a hurry, anyhow."

"I reckon so, sergeant." "You can tell your father we've got him, Lawless, and that he'll be safe

NEXT MONDAY!

"THE ROGUE OF THE SCHOOL!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!

CRUSOE ISLAND



(Continued from the previous page.)

He led the way down the steep path to the beach, and the natives dropped back into line at his approach.

Frank was possessed of plenty of pluck. Still, in a case like this, something more than nerve was required—that wonderful gift of tact which has the power to avert many awkward situations.

"It's no use trying to resist those chaps by force," he whispered to Dick. "Look at the way our brown fellows are enjoying themselves with those animals. Evidently this travelling show has visited here before—long before we ever came. They seem to like it. In which case, it won't be the slightest use to order the showman and his crew off the island."

Dick agreed, and followed his chum across the sparkling sand to where the white men stood.

It was easy to pick out the boss. They spotted him at once, by his clean clothes and general air of prosperity.

He was a tall, big fellow, with a healthfully tanned face and a pointed, well-kept, golden-brown beard.

At sight of the boys he swung round with a start, and regarded them intently.

"Waal, and what might you two youngsters be doing here, right down in Liriki?" he said. "Glad to make your acquaintance, I'm sure. Let me introduce you to my partners, and at the same time make myself known. I'm Andrew Gordon, owner and head-man of Gordon's world-wide and famous menagerie of wild, untamed, and performing animals."

Frank wasn't disposed to be unfriendly. "You've drawn in here to give your beasts a rest, I suppose?" he inquired cautiously.

The man threw back his head and laughed, and they caught the ripple of the strong muscles in his fine throat.

"Not exactly that, now, young sir. If you want to know, I made for this island for the express purpose of giving a show. Let me explain that this caboodle of mine is one of the wonders of the Southern Seas, and for five-and-twenty years now I've used that tramp to lug the ark about."

"We touch at different places, land our animals, and select a pitch, and give a performance, for which we charge admission. Natives mighty glad to see us, believe me. Charge anything from three covies to a seed-pearl for the best seats."

"My hat, the brown lads and their lassies roll up in thousands at some of these places, and we don't do at all bad business. Willing, of course, to pay a small bonus on our takings to the head-man of the island, for permission to land and use his grounds."

"Which bonus, then, will come to me," said Frank boldly. "You see, the king of this island is a white man—Mr. Tremorne—and he's left me in charge while he's away at Apia, trading all the stuff of value he had on the island."

Mr. Gordon's golden-brown eyes flickered ever so slightly.

"I see. Then you've no objection to our opening a show?"

"Not at all," replied the boy, "provided you behave yourself, and don't take advantage of our natives. Excuse my being frank with you, but we've had traders here who have done their best to rob these poor, ignorant fellows right and left of their hard-earned possessions. That is something we do not allow."

Gordon nodded. "I get you, and all's square and above-board with me. You won't have cause to complain. We'll give our show, look for fair takings, pay a percentage, and leave you all on the best of terms. Now, that's a deal, isn't it? Right! Then we'll get straight to work!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Getting Even with the Showman.

It was the first time Frank had been left in charge of the island, and the job wasn't a particularly easy one.

Liriki's population of between two and three thousand was a peculiarly treacherous and changeable one, and more than once had shown itself in-

clined to rebel against its own choice of a white king.

Joe Tremorne, however, knew what was best for the islanders. He ruled them with justice, tempered with mercy, and under him there was no repression.

But Joe was away, and, for the time being, Frank Polruan, an absolutely untrained hand at the game of kingship, ruled in his stead.

Probably all would have gone well had the old man been there to superintend matters, but he wasn't, and there lay the trouble.

On the surface everything promised well. Gordon's South Seas Travelling Menagerie looked like proving an unqualified success.

The natives were in high good-humour at the thought of strange wild animals, such as were foreign to them, being exhibited for their amusement, and they flocked to the beach in hundreds to assist in the arrangements.

Frank and Dick very wisely drew apart, watching the preparations.

The big space where the native councils, and sometimes the native sacrifices were held, was commanded by the showman, who before the end of that day had caused to be erected a circular palisade, with two openings, where the admission money, either in shells, seed-pearls, copra, or covies, was to be collected by his satellites.

Inside portions of tree-trunks were driven into the earth, and planks, brought specially from the steamer, were nailed across them to provide seats for the more wealthy patrons. Behind the arena more stakes were erected, and covered with canvas both on top and round the sides.

Into this enclosure the animals were driven, and all was ready for the show.

To Dick and Frank it was a wretchedly poor affair. The tricks of the performing monkeys they had witnessed dozens of times in circuses at home.

The two forest, man-eating lions were toothless and mangy, and probably wouldn't have eaten anything tougher than soaked bread.

The one and only horned animal in existence was nothing but a worn-out African gnu; while the South American spotted leopard had already been painted over before the show began.

However, all the islanders flocked to watch the performance on the first afternoon, and doubtless the proprietor took a good deal of native money.

But as the enclosure emptied Frank overheard not a few grumbling remarks among the older people, and opined that Gordon's profitable stay on the island wouldn't last long, for which he was secretly grateful.

When the business was over, Gordon, with his hands tucked well into the pockets of his white drill trousers, strolled leisurely to where Frank was standing, and proffered a long cigar.

"Thanks, I don't smoke!" said the boy. "But if you care to leave it, and a few more like it, for the white king of this place, when he returns, I'm sure he'll be very much obliged."

The showman nodded good-humouredly.

"Sure thing. Hi! You, Dopey Bill, run out to the ship, and bring back a box o' my special breath-sweeteners from my cabin. They're wanted as a present for Mr. Tremorne."

Frank's opinion of the showman began to improve.

"Well, I reckon, if you can be generous, so can we," he said. "Perhaps you and your friends, Mr. Gordon, would like to step over to our quarters and take some tea?"

"Splendid! Splendid!" cried the showman. "A thing I've heard a good deal about, and not tasted for many years, is tea. Right, young sir, we'll take you at your word, and come along. Now, what did you think of the show?"

"Oh, all right!"

"Only all right—eh? Doesn't knock you flat?"

"Not altogether."

"Wants a few more special attractions, I suppose?"

"They wouldn't do any harm. I'm

afraid you've shown the natives only the same animals and the same tricks which they saw when you visited the island five years ago."

Gordon looked thoughtful.

"All right. We must try and think of something a bit more exciting for them. Right you are, young man. And as soon as all this gear's safely stored for the night, you can expect us over your end."

The chums had hidden all the spare arms and ammunition, keeping only their own loaded rifles handy in reserve, when the showman and his followers appeared.

Pieface was busy in his improvised galley, preparing quite a decent meal, when the party arrived.

He had tethered the bunjik, or baby elephant, outside the cookhouse door, and that playful rascal was amusing himself by rolling over and over on his master's newly-washed clothes, which Pie had laid out to dry in the sun.

Frank, standing at the door of the hut, saw Gordon break from the trees, and come to a dead halt in the middle of the open space, not sixty yards from where the bunjik stood.

Slowly the smile died on his big face. He removed the cigar from his lips, and in a voice that rolled like thunder exclaimed:

"That yar lump o' hide and flesh belongs to me!"

The effect of his words was magical. Bunjik ceased his play, scrambled to his heavy feet, and, lifting his trunk high, screamed shrilly.

Frank saw the small, beady eyes become bloodshot, and the creature's body quivered with mingled fear and anger at sight of its owner.

"Hi! That bunjik is mine!" shouted Gordon. "Why hev you tied it up? Say, you Raynor, go back and fetch a thong whip! I'm going to teach the little brute a lesson for jumping overboard from the ark and swimming ashore!"

Evidently the baby-elephant expected what was coming, for, trumpeting wildly, he ran round and round the post, tugging with all his might at the stout iron chain.

The noise brought Pieface to the door.

TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

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"Now, then, my thick-skin lad, wot you make all dat rowdies for?" he asked.

Instantly the clamour ceased, and Bunjik trotted to the black boy's side, and curled his trunk round the roll of salt junk which Pieface held in his hand.

"Blow me sky high; what's that nigger doin' wi' my bunjik?" cried Gordon.

Frank stepped forward. "I guess he belongs to Pie," he said. "You see, sir, Pie rescued him from the sea, and fed him when he was half-starved. I guess the little fellow will want to stay with his new master."

"And I guess the little brute isn't going to," snapped the showman, as the man Raynor appeared, carrying a heavy sjambok. "I'm going to teach him the lesson of his life. Only way to train animals, you know—make 'em obey you!"

"Better not touch dis yar one, anyhow," said Pie, suddenly stepping forward and doubling his big fist.

"Now, see 'ere, you apology for a white man—don't you lay dat whip on dat yar bunjik! He belongs to dis chile, and don't you forget it!"

"That'll do, coloured trash! I don't take lip from you!" snarled Gordon, taking the whip from the other, and sending its long lash through the air with a whistling shriek. "Out of the way, or you'll get the bunjik's share."

Frank scented trouble, and moved to the shack for his gun.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the black's shoulders square, and the muscles of his fine young body ripple under the silken skin.

"I've warned you!" said Pie quietly; but the man paid no heed. He swung the thong once, twice, round his head, then Pieface went for him with a straight-from-the-shoulder drive.

Sixteen ounces of muscle and bone, with the driving power of a gun behind, caught the showman on that part of the chin which he never shaved.

Many cyclones had struck him in the South Seas, but this was a hurri-

cane, a tornado, and a typhoon all in one.

He went up, sailed through the air, seeing more constellations than the sky could boast of on an autumn night, and came to earth in peaceful oblivion.

Pie grunted something in the African tongue, broke the hide whip over his knee, and, re-entering the galley, went on with his cooking.

Frank helped the showman to his feet when he came round, and tried to smooth over the difficulty.

"You see, Mr. Gordon," he said.

"We run everything on straight white-men's lines here. And one thing a decent white man always does is to treat dumb animals kindly."

Gordon passed a tender hand over his swollen chin.

"But that fellow is black."

"Yes; black, but with a big, white heart. He has won the bunjik's regard by kindness, and if you're a wise man you'll leave them alone."

"And if I'm not wise?"

"Then you'll have me and my cousin to reckon with."

"Bah! You're only boys, and what could you do, with all my crowd against you?"

"As to that," Frank's eyes glinted dangerously, "you'll find we make much better friends than enemies."

The man was thoughtful for a moment.

"All right. I'll take your advice. We'll forget the thing ever happened. If you don't mind, I'd like to shake hands with that black fellow, and tell him he can keep the bunjik as a little present from me."

He shouldered his way into the steaming galley.

"Here, I say you! I didn't quite catch your name! I'm real sorry for threatening to hit that bunjik. If you'll call the quarrel off, I guess we can come to terms!"

Pie swung round slowly.

"De only terms dis chile will come to is to see you doan eber hit dat pore hefferlans again. I tell you she's mine; fetched her out of the sea, I did, and fed her, and now she's got a good 'ome, she won't be goin' back to dat travellin' show agen, you onnerstand?"

Gordon remembered the strength of that mighty fist, and nodded.

"I tell you, I'm willing to cry quits. You can keep the elephant, and I'll never touch her again. And now, if you've no objection, I'd esteem it an honour to shake hands."

Pie was the best-natured chap in all the world. If the man was sincere, he had no wish to harbour animosity.

"All right," he said, giving the egg a shake in the frying-pan. "I'll shake handsums wid you, only I'd like you better if you promised neber to use one ob dem rhino whips again."

"I promise I never will," said Gordon. "There, I guess from now we can start all friendly like. By Jove, what a grip you've got for a young man of twenty-two!"

"I'm only seventeen, and when I'm twenty-two I'll be able to carry dat hefferlans about on dese yar shoulders ob mine," the black boy retorted, showing his splendid white teeth.

"Now, Mistah Gordon, you can go into dat hut and tell the young gennelmen the tea's ready in two waggles of a nannygoat's tail."

The showman nodded assent, and passed out. Frank was waiting for him.

"Welcome to our little Liriki home," he said, having heard all that passed. "You're quite welcome to make yourselves at home here for this evening, and to-morrow you can go ahead with your circus. But just one thing before we sit down—you didn't say exactly when you proposed to leave."

"I leave Liriki on Friday night," replied the man, his brown eyes gleaming strangely. "Is that too long a stay with you?"

Frank laughed.

"Not so long as we plainly understand each other. I only thought I'd mention it in case the king, when he comes back, disapproves of my allowing you to be here."

"He couldn't very well have disapproved, seeing there are so many of us," said Gordon. "Still, we're not going to talk about might. Right's the thing, ain't it, sonny? And as we've fixed everything right between us, I guess I'll come inside and enjoy an excellent tea."

So, in this way, Pie got his baby elephant for nothing.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"PIEFACE'S PERIL!"

By MAURICE EVERARD.
DON'T MISS IT!

BOB TRAVERS AT ST. JIM'S!

By HERBERT BRITTON.

(Continued from page 151.)

"Yaas, I weally think Tom Mewwy has done vewwy well, so far," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Hear, hear!"

"Time!"

At the commencement of the third round Tom Merry showed that he was tiring slightly. The juniors cheered him whole-heartedly, and he went for Bob with great determination.

Smack! Thud! Smack! It was a ding-dong struggle, and neither boxer spared himself. Tom Merry staggered Bob with a right upper-cut, but an instant later he himself was sent reeling from a similar blow.

Both boxers were tiring, but Tom Merry was in a slightly worse condition than his opponent. A straight left sent him reeling to the ropes, but by a supreme effort he remained on his feet.

The St. Jim's junior was now looking very groggy, and Bob, too, was not looking so fresh as when he started.

Tom Merry's defence weakened slightly, and, seeing his opportunity, Bob swung his left and right in quick succession at the St. Jim's junior's face and body.

They were powerful blows—too powerful for Tom Merry. He sank to the floor, and Kildare commenced to count.

"One, two, three, four—"

Was Tom Merry beaten? Could he rise before the fatal count?

"Five, six, seven, eight—"

Just when the St. Jim's juniors had given the fight up as lost, Tom Merry rose slowly to his feet, and faced his opponent. It had been a great effort to recover from the last two blows he had received, but he had made it, and his supporters cheered him excitedly.

Bob Travers waited for his opponent to advance towards him. He saw that he was unsteady on his feet, he saw that the fight was his as soon as he cared to finish it.

Tom Merry put up a spirited attempt to last out the round, but Bob's professional experience was against the St. Jim's junior, and at length a stiff upper-cut laid him out full length on the floor of the ring.

Tom Merry was beaten—beaten by a more experienced boxer! Nevertheless, he was not disgraced. Bob Travers helped the St. Jim's junior to his feet, and as the two shook hands like thorough sportsmen, the hall echoed with excited cheering.

"Well done, Travers!"

"Good old Tom Merry!"

George Alfred Grundy gazed upon the scene with a solemn air.

"Now, if only the best junior boxer had been chosen," he began.

"Oh, rats!" cried Jack Blake. "Bob Travers is a champion. He'd have put you out in one round. Why, he could have boxed you with one finger!"

"If you're looking for trouble, Blake," said Grundy.

"Not at all," said Jack Blake, with a laugh, as he made off. "I'm going to get Travers to show me that straight left of his, and when I've learnt it I'll tackle you, old son!"

"Oh, will you?" said Grundy, with a sniff, turning to his chums Wilkins and Gunn, who, loyal chums that they were, supported him in all his schemes and ideas, misplaced ones though they might be.

"Well done, Bob, my boy!" said John Matthews, as he and Bob Travers were seated at tea some time later. "You've done well to beat Tom Merry. If you box in all your future matches like that, there won't be much doubt about my having to purchase that booth for old Joe Barnett!"

"I hope not," said Bob cheerfully. "By the way, who is my next opponent, Mr. Matthews?"

"Gordon Gay, of Rylecombe Grammar School," explained John Matthews; "another hard nut to crack!"

Bob laughed heartily.

"I must see whether I cannot crack it!" he replied.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"A STRANGE COMPACT!"

By HERBERT BRITTON.
DON'T MISS IT!