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# The BOYS' FRIEND

See inside for "The Boys of the 'Bombay Castle'!" By Duncan Storm.

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending December 29th, 1917.]

## ALGY OF THE THIRD!

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

### The 1st Chapter. Off to School.

Ta-ra-ra-a-a!  
Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, stood on the platform at Latcham Junction, blowing on his bugle.

The platform was crowded. It was the opening day of the new term at Rookwood, and fellows gathered at the junction from far and near, to take the local train for Coombe, near the old school.

Rookwood fellows of all ages and sizes swarmed up and down and round about, with a buzz of voices, and a stream of inquiries after baggage.

Porters were few and far between, and fellows who could not look after their belongings themselves, ran some risk of never having to look after them again.

Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, stood with a group of seniors, in lofty disregard of the din about him, while he waited for the local train.

The great Bulkeley wasn't bothering about baggage. He was calmly discussing the football prospects of Rookwood First Eleven, with Neville and Jones major and other great men of the Sixth.

Smythe of the Shell was principal in another group. The great Adolphus was laying down the law on the subject of the war—Adolphus having apparently taken the war under his wing.

He was pointing out to Howard and Tracy how much better he could have handled things than Haig or Robertson, and small fry like that.

Townsend and Topham, Peele and Gower, of the Classical Fourth, resplendent in shining toppers, formed another group, but they weren't talking of football or the war, either.

They were grousing on the subject of the stoppage of racing. Towny was of opinion that if a fellow couldn't put a quid on a gee-gee, the thing was being carried altogether too far, and that it was about time for the war to come to an end.

Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern side, came tramping along the platform, and in sheer exuberance of spirits knocked the shining toppers off the heads of Towny & Co.

Whereat the elegant Classicals shouted with wrath, and dived among innumerable legs and trolleys in search of their headgear, and the burning question of "racin'" had to remain unsettled for the time.

And Arthur Edward Lovell, alone in his glory, was blowing his bugle. He was blowing great guns.

Ta-ra-ra-ra-a-a!  
Wegg of the Third came along with a gang of fags, and stopped to yell at the energetic Fourth-Former.

"Shut up that row!" roared Wegg. "You silly ass, do you think you're sounding 'All clear' after an air-raid?"

"Ring off!" shouted Grant of the Third. "Dry up! Chuck it!" Lovell did not heed.

He blew. Bulkeley looked round at last. "Lovell!" he shouted.

"Hullo, Bulkeley!"



### THE FALL OF THE FISTICAL FOUR!

"Stop that row! There's row enough!"

"Tain't a row!"

"Well, stop it!"

"It's a signal," explained Lovell.

"Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome are here somewhere, and they haven't turned up yet. They know my bugle."

"You young ass!"

Ta-ra-ra-ra!

Bulkeley frowned, and Knowles of the Sixth made a stride towards Lovell, and took him by one ear. Lovell left off blowing then, and roared:

"Yow!"

"Hullo!" Raby and Newcome came rushing up recklessly "biffing" Adolphus Smythe & Co. out of the way. "Here you are, Lovell!"

"Yow-ow!" Lovell jerked his ear away from Knowles. "Yah! You Modern rotter! Hullo, you chaps!"

"Stop that row!" growled Knowles. "Br-r-r-r!"

Knowles strode away to look after his bags, with a scowl at Lovell. Lovell rubbed his ear wrathfully.

"Well, here we are again!" said Raby cheerfully. "Where's Jimmy Silver? Hasn't he turned up?"

"I've been bugling to you chaps!" growled Lovell. "Didn't you hear me?"

"Thought it was some bugler in the

camp," said Newcome. "There's a soldiers' camp outside."

"Well, you are an ass!"

"Same to you, and many of them, old scout! Where's Jimmy Silver?"

"Blessed if I know!"

Lovell cast a doubtful glance towards Bulkeley of the Sixth. Upon the whole, he decided not to blow his bugle again.

"Let's look for him," he suggested.

"Perhaps he hasn't come."

"Oh, he's come! I was at his place until yesterday, and he told me he would turn up for this train. He's bringing his cousin with him—a new kid for the Third Form."

"Oh, rats!" said Newcome. "Jimmy's not going to load us up with bags on the first day of term."

"What's the kid like?" asked Raby.

"A little beast!"

"Oh!"

"Smoky little scoundrel!" said Lovell. "Chummed up with Lattrey when Jimmy was idiot enough to have that cad at his place."

"Talk of angels!" grinned Raby. Lattrey of the Fourth came by. He was not looking happy.

Last term, Lattrey had been sent to Coventry by the Fourth Form; his sins were many and manifold. He was wondering whether that unpleasant sentence was to be resumed with the new term.

Lattrey had greeted several fellows about the station, but there had been a plentiful lack of appreciation on their part.

Rawson had turned his back on him. Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn, the Colonials, had been decidedly stand-offish, though they had spoken. Flynn had called him a "thafe of the woruld."

It was not encouraging.

He came by Lovell & Co. just in time to hear Lovell's remark, and a black scowl came over his face.

He passed on, and joined Adolphus Smythe, who was brushing his topper tenderly with a folded handkerchief.

"Hullo, Smythe!" he began.

"Hullo!" said Smythe distantly.

"Here we are again!"

"Oh, yass!"

"What price trying to get a carriage to ourselves to Coombe, Smythe?"

"I'm travellin' with my friends, thanks!" said Adolphus, and he walked away to join Howard and Tracy.

Lattrey was left with his teeth set. Lovell & Co. observed his discomfiture, and they grinned. They noted, too, that Towny & Co. turned their backs as Lattrey approached them.

Even the nuts of Rookwood did not want Lattrey's company.

"Where is that ass Jimmy?" grunted Lovell. "Let's look for him!"

Shove those Moderns out of the way."

Tommy Dodd & Co. were attending to a hamper. The three Classicals charged them from behind, and the three Moderns went sprawling over the hamper with loud yells.

By the time they had sorted themselves out, the Classicals were out of the reach of vengeance.

They tramped up and down, looking for Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Raby.

They came quite suddenly on Jimmy.

He was standing on a pile of baggage, in a rather insecure position, surveying the crowded platform over a sea of heads, evidently looking for somebody.

"Here we are, Jimmy!" roared Lovell. "Looking for us—what?"

Jimmy Silver glanced down.

"Hallo, you chaps! No, I wasn't looking for you."

"Oh, weren't you?"

"Nix. Have you seen my young cousin?"

"Blow your young cousin!"

"Not looking for us, weren't you?"

exclaimed Raby indignantly. "Well, we've been looking for you, you ungrateful Hun! Come down!"

"Can't! I'm looking for Algy!"

"We'll help you."

"You ass!" roared Jimmy Silver, as his chums, grinning, shoved at the pile of baggage he was standing upon.

"Look-out! Yaroooooh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Crash!

Jimmy Silver jumped clear of the reeling pile, and landed on his chums. There was a terrific bumping as they went down together in a heap, and boxes and bags and hampers and trunks rolled after them.

### The 2nd Chapter. Cousin Algy.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

Jimmy Silver jumped up breathlessly.

The mountain of baggage had been transformed into a plain.

There were wrathful shouts from all sides.

Lovell & Co. scrambled up.

"You ass, Jimmy!"

"You duffers!" roared Jimmy.

"Who did that?" shouted Bulkeley, striding towards the spot.

The Fistical Four did not linger to reply. They discreetly disappeared in the crowd.

"What larks!" grinned Lovell, when they were at a safe distance. "I don't think that stuff can have been packed very carefully."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver snorted.

"You asses! You chumps! I've got to find Algy!"

"Blow Algy!"

"What on earth have you lost him for?" exclaimed Raby. "Look there—the train's in. There won't be half enough seats! Come on!"

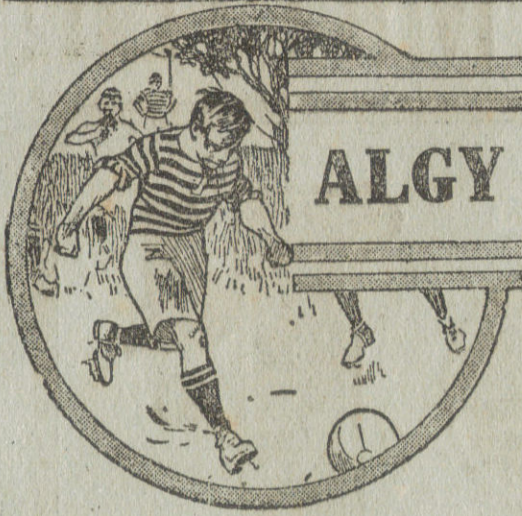
"But—"

"Come on!" shouted Lovell.

"They'll bag all the seats! Do you

(Continued on the next page.)





## ALGY OF THE THIRD!

(Continued from the previous page.)

want to stand up all the way to Coombe?"

"But Algy—"  
"Hang Algy!"  
"Look here—"  
"Bother and bless Algy!" snorted Lovell. "I'm fed up with Algy! Come and get a seat while there's one going!"

"Rats! I tell you—"  
"Help him along," said Lovell. "Look here, Jimmy, your fat-headed cousin is old enough to get into a train by himself, I suppose."  
"The pater told me to keep him under my eye."

"Well, you can't, if he's cleared off. He will turn up at Rookwood all right, won't he?"

"Ye-es; but—"  
"What did you lose him for, ass?"  
"I didn't! He dodged me when we got out of the express!" growled Jimmy Silver. "He didn't want to come to Rookwood at all. He wanted to go back to High Coombe, his old school."

"Pity they didn't let him," growled Lovell. "I'm sure we don't want him at Rookwood."  
"What are they sending him for?" demanded Raby.

Jimmy frowned.  
"He was in trouble at High Coombe—reckless young waster, you know. His pater thinks he will do better at Rookwood, with me to help look after him."

"That's what comes of being a shining light and an example to youth!" grinned Newcome. "You're too good, Jimmy!"

"Oh, rats! Where has that young villain got to?" exclaimed Jimmy in great exasperation. "I believe he's keeping out of my sight on purpose!"  
"Let him," said Lovell. "Come on!"

"I can't come without Algy!"  
"Yes, you can, and you're going to! Lay hold, you fellows!"  
With a chortle, Lovell & Co. seized Jimmy Silver, and propelled him forcibly towards the waiting train.

Jimmy resisted.  
"Look here, you chaps—"  
"They'll bag all the seats, ass!"  
"I don't care! I—"  
"But we do. Kim on!"

There was no help for it. Jimmy Silver was rushed to the train by his affectionate chums. They wanted his company on the run to Rookwood, and they did not want Algy's.

And if the troublesome Algy was keeping out of sight deliberately, Jimmy might lose the train looking for him; and his chums did not mean to allow that, by any means.

"Hallo! This way, you chaps!" called out the cheery voice of Kit Erroll of the Fourth.

"Jump in!" shouted Mornington.  
Erroll and Mornington had a carriage to themselves, so far. They had just hurred forth a Modern fellow who had sought to enter, and that unhappy Modern was disentangling himself from a trolley.

But they willingly made room for the Fistical Four, and Lovell & Co. hurled Jimmy Silver in, and followed him in.

"Any room?" called out Conroy, looking in.  
"By gad! This isn't a sardine-tin!" said Mornington.

"Can't be helped. There's no room anywhere. Jump in, you chaps!"  
Conroy and Van Ryn and Pons swarmed in. The carriage was intended to hold six, and there were nine in it now! Jimmy Silver, struggling towards the door, had no chance of getting out, especially as his grinning chums were hanging on to him.

Towny & Co. arrived and looked in. Conroy & Co. crammed the doorway, and smiled down at them.

"No room, dear boys!"  
"Look here, we've got to get in somewhere!" howled Townsend.  
"Try the engine!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or the guard's van!" chuckled Ryn. "Dogs travel in the guard's van. Same applies to pups."  
"You cheeky rotter!"  
Lattrey leaned out of the next carriage.

"This way, Towny!"  
"Oh!" said Townsend.  
He did not want the company of

the outcast of the Fourth, but it was a case of any port in a storm. Lattrey had coolly held the door shut from within, though he was alone in the carriage, and passengers had given him almost demoniac looks and hurried on.

There was plenty of room for the nuts. Towny and Topham, Peele and Gower scrambled in, and Selwyn of the Shell followed them before the open door could be closed.

Then Lattrey closed it and held it. "Open that door, you rotter!" shouted Tommy Dodd, arriving with a horde of Moderns.

"Full up!"  
"Go an' eat coke!"  
"Everything's full up! We've got to stand!"

"Stand on the platform, then, dear boy!" grinned Townsend. "You're not goin' to stand in here!"  
"We can't stand Moderns!" chuckled Peele.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Tommy Dodd dragged at the door in vain, shook his fist at the grinning Classics, and passed on. The Colonial Co. grinned at him from the next carriage.

"No room, dear boys!" chortled Conroy. "Better hang on behind."  
"Yah! Classical rotters!"  
"Yah! Modern fatheads!"  
And the Moderns went on down the train.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver's voice was loud and eloquent in the carriage. "Lemme go, you silly chumps! I've got to find my cousin! He may be left behind! Lovell, I'll punch your head!"

"I don't see how you'll do it while we're hidding your paws," snarled Lovell. "Keep on smiling, you know—your own merry maxim."

"I tell you—"  
"Rats!"  
"Your cousin, Jimmy?" exclaimed Erroll. "I can see him on the platform. Shall I hail him?"

"Do, old chap!"  
"No room for fags in here, by gad!" said Mornington.  
"Oh, we can make room for one!"  
Erroll put his head from the window.

"This way, Algy! Your cousin is here!"  
Algy Silver started and looked at him. The new fag for Rookwood had a sullen expression on his face. It was not in a happy or contented mood that he was going to his new school.

"My Cousin Jimmy in there?" he asked.  
"Yes."  
"Then I'm not comin' in!"  
"Why—what— Jimmy wants you!"

"Let Jimmy want!"  
And Algy sniffed and moved on. Apparently he was not yearning for the society of his Cousin Jimmy, who was to have the thankless task of looking after him at Rookwood School.

"Hallo, Algy!"  
It was Lattrey.  
"Hallo! Room in there?" asked Algy, with a friendly grin.

"Oh, yes; we'll make room."  
"Can't be done!" exclaimed Townsend warmly. "No blessed fags wanted in this carriage! Cut off, young 'un!"

"Keep that door shut, Lattrey!" shouted Topham.  
But Lattrey opened the door, and Algy Silver scrambled in. The door was shut again immediately, to stop a rush.

Lattrey's companions eyed him angrily. The carriage was already full.

"You silly ass!" began Selwyn.  
"Look here, Lattrey—"  
"Oh, go easy," said Lattrey. "I let you in, didn't I? I was keepin' the carriage for you, Towny."

Towny sniffed.  
"And Algy is one of the sports," said Lattrey. "We can get a game going down to Coombe, and Algy's keen on it."  
"Catch me playin' with fags!" sniffed Topham.

"Draw a line somewhere."  
"Chuck him out!"  
"You try chuckin' me out!" said Algy Silver belligerently. "When I was at High Coombe I licked better fellows than you, I can tell you!"

"Wha-a-t?"  
"I suppose you're Fourth?" said Algy. "Well, I'm Third; and I'm a better man than you any day, you with the scarecrow necktie!"

But he could not very well refuse

Townsend turned crimson with wrath.

Algy Silver was not much like his Cousin Jimmy in some respects. He was a young rascal in a good many ways. But certainly he seemed to have his share of the family fighting spirit.

"Oh, let him alone!" said Lattrey, laughing. "I tell you Algy Silver is one of the sports."

"Silver?" exclaimed Peele. "Jimmy Silver's cousin."  
"Oh, and he's one of the sports, is he?" exclaimed Peele; and all the nuts looked at Algy very curiously.

"Quite a blade," grinned Lattrey. "Hallo, we're off!"

The crowded train was moving out of Latcham at last. Jimmy Silver was released by his chums, in great wrath.

"If my cousin's lost the train, I'll punch your heads all round!" gasped Jimmy.  
"All serene," said Erroll. "He hasn't lost it. He's got in the next carriage."

"Oh, good!" said Jimmy, relieved. Erroll did not add that it was Lattrey, the blackguard of Rookwood, who had taken Algy into the next carriage. That information certainly would not have made the journey a cheerful one for Jimmy Silver.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### Lattrey's Little Game.

Algy Silver was standing as the train glided out of the station. He looked out of the window for some minutes, watching the great khaki camp that lay outside the town of Latcham. But as the train ran on into the open country, he turned from the window.

"Make room for a chap," he remarked.  
"Go an' eat coke!" said Townsend politely.

"Oh, make room," said Lattrey. "Here you are, kid."  
Lattrey made as much room as he could, and Algy squeezed in between him and Peele. Peele scowled, and put out an elbow; but Algy shoved, and the elbow had to give way.

And Peele, for reasons best known to himself, let Algy have his way.

The fact was that the fag, though younger and smaller than the Fourth-Formers, looked a good deal tougher, and more likely to give a good account of himself in a fistical encounter.

It was pretty evident that he was not the kind of fag who could be cuffed with impunity.

Lattrey smiled, and took out a cigarette-case. He held it out liberally.

"Help yourselves, you fellows."  
"Thanks, no," said Townsend drily. Peele hesitated, but he shook his head, and Gower looked another way. Selwyn, the nut of the Shell, took out his own case.

Lattrey's eyes gleamed. Only Algy helped himself to a smoke, and Lattrey gave him a light.

The nuts were looking frigid. They were quite well aware that the outcast of Rookwood was seeking to re-establish himself on the old footing with them.

Towny & Co. did not intend to let him do so. They were not particular, as a rule, but they drew the line at Lattrey.

He had helped them to a carriage, certainly; but that called for little thanks, as he had evidently only done it to get into favour again. Lattrey was not an obliging fellow, as a rule.

But Algy was quite friendly with the cad of Rookwood.

He did not know Lattrey as the others did, for one thing. And he had made friends with Lattrey during the vacation.

Lattrey resembled in many respects Algy's lamented friend De Vere, of High Coombe, whose fascinating society his father did not intend to let him enjoy again.

Algy's father, a commander in the Royal Navy, had little time ashore, and he had seen little of his son of late, but what he had seen had not satisfied him.

Acting partly on the advice of Jimmy's father, the commander had decided to send the boy to Jimmy's school, and thus part him effectually from the fellows he had known at High Coombe—who, with Algy, had been severely reprimanded by their headmaster at the close of the previous term.

The headmaster's report had given Commander Silver much food for thought, and he was very glad that his wilful son should be as much as possible in Jimmy's company.

Jimmy had not been overjoyed, by any means, at the prospect of having Algy to look after at Rookwood.

But he could not very well refuse

his father's request, and, moreover, he was good-natured to a fault. He meant to do his best.

But Algy was wrathful and indignant. Being taken away from High Coombe he regarded as sheer tyranny. The fact that his headmaster had very nearly decided to send him away, anyhow, made no difference.

And Algy was determined that if Cousin Jimmy tried to look after him, Cousin Jimmy should have his hands full.

And since Jimmy had warned him against having anything to do with Mark Lattrey, the cheerful young gentleman's fixed intention was to chum up with Lattrey as much as their different standing in the school allowed.

He lighted up cheerfully, and his eyes glistened as Lattrey produced a pack of cards from an inside pocket.

"Care for a game?" smiled Lattrey. "You bet!"

"Think your cousin will mind?"  
Algy's eyes flashed.

"Hang my cousin!" he snapped. "Do you think I'm goin' to be ordered about by my cousin?"

"Well, I suppose that's what you're being sent to Rookwood for, isn't it?"  
"It won't work out like that, all the same," said Algy savagely. "My Uncle Silver put me in the train with Jimmy, and gave me a sermon. Well, I dodged Jimmy at the junction, and I'm not with him now, am I?"

"Good for you!" said Lattrey, laughing. "Jimmy Silver won't find you so jolly easy to handle."

"He'd better not try!"  
Peele and Gower began to be interested. They were "up against" Jimmy Silver in every way, and it dawned upon them that by means of the sportive Algy they would be able to pay off some old scores which had waited quite a long time.

"Nap or banker?" smiled Lattrey. "Oh, nap."  
"I don't mind if I take a hand," said Peele, quite thawing.

"Same here," said Gower, after a moment's hesitation.

Lattrey nodded and smiled. Two of the nuts had come round, at all events. He spread out a newspaper for a card-table and the four began to play.

Townsend and Topham looked on glumly. Algy, to their surprise, was playing with shillings and half-crowns, not pence. The game was worthy of the dignity of the nuts of the Fourth, and they wanted to participate.

But Towny and Topy were rather more particular than Peele and Gower, and much more unwilling to chum up again with Lattrey.

They waited some time, but the temptation was too strong, and they announced at last that they didn't mind "takin' a hand."

Lattrey smiled agreeably, and welcomed them into the game, and they played, Selwyn of the Shell watching them. Selwyn joined in at last.

All the young rascals were smoking now, and all attention was given to the game. Currency notes as well as half-crowns flicked on the newspaper.

It was more than half an hour's run to Coombe, and there was plenty of time to win and lose money.

The atmosphere of the carriage was soon like that of a tap-room, but the nuts of Rookwood did not mind that.

Algy was winning. Especially when Lattrey had the dealing the fag secured good hands, and he played recklessly, and so his winnings were very considerable.

The nuts more than suspected Lattrey's skill in manipulating cards; but, naturally, they did not suspect him of cheating for the purpose of losing to an opponent.

That, as a matter of fact, was what Lattrey was doing.

Algy Silver had plenty of money, and Lattrey had his own intentions with regard to it in the future.

But for the present his object was to encourage the fag in reckless rascality, and for that purpose the easiest method was to let him win money.

And win he did. And when Coombe came in sight down the line, Algy of the Third was three pounds richer than when he had entered the train at Latcham.

Quite a little heap of money clinked in his pocket, and Algy was breathlessly excited. He had been a "goer" at High Coombe, but he had never had such luck in his little games there.

"Hallo! There's the station," snapped Townsend. "I suppose we shall have to chuck it."

Townsend was a pound out of pocket.

"All serene," said Lattrey. "Algy's the winner; but Algy won't mind givin' you your revenge."  
"Like a bird," said Algy.

"All of you come into my study after calling-over this evenin'," said Lattrey. "We can have a good game. No prep on openin' night, you know."

Townsend bit his lip. He wanted to wipe out his defeat with the cards, but he did not want to get on visiting terms with Lattrey.

"No; you come to my study," he said.

"Rawson will be there; he'll kick up a row."  
"We may get rid of that cad this term," growled Townsend. "I hope he'll change into another study."

"But if he doesn't—"  
"Well, we'll come, then."  
"Right-ho!"

The train stopped.  
Cigarettes were thrown away, and the cards disappeared. Lattrey threw open the door and jumped out.

Algy followed him. And at the same moment the door of the next carriage opened, and Jimmy Silver & Co. poured out on the platform, and the first thing that met Jimmy's eyes was his cousin and Lattrey standing together, evidently on the very best of terms.

### The 4th Chapter. Pleasant for Jimmy!

Jimmy Silver's brows contracted. Looking after Algy was not an easy or agreeable task. He knew from the start that Algy did not mean to make it any easier for him than he could help. But this was a little too much.

Jimmy did not need telling how the nuts had been passing the time on their journey. An atmosphere of smoke still hung about them, and Algy's fingers were deeply stained with brown. He looked over-excited and tired. And if Jimmy had had any doubts, Lattrey's mocking glance would have removed them.

Jimmy strode towards the nuts, his eyes gleaming under his knitted brows.

Towny & Co. grinned. They understood what Jimmy's look meant and they were amused. They sauntered away, leaving Lattrey and his protege to face the angry captain of the Fourth.

"Algy!" rapped out Jimmy.  
"Hallo!" said the fag coolly.  
"What have you been travelling with that fellow for?"

"Did you want me to stay behind at Latcham?" queried Algy.  
"I wanted you to keep with me."  
"Well, I didn't want to."

Jimmy controlled his anger with an effort.  
"What have you been doing?" he asked.

"Find out!"  
"I don't need to find out," said Jimmy Silver angrily. "I know, you smoky little cad!"

"Well, if you know, there's no need to ask," said Algy calmly.

Lattrey grinned, and Jimmy turned on him fiercely.

"I've warned you to let my cousin alone, Lattrey," he said between his teeth.

"Mustn't I answer if he speaks to me?" smiled Lattrey.  
"He doesn't want to speak to you, if you let him alone."

"Oh, yes, I do!" struck in Algy. "And I'm jolly well goin' to, Jimmy, if I like!"

"Come on, Jimmy!" shouted Lovell, along the platform.

Jimmy breathed hard. He was greatly inclined to take Lattrey by the neck, there and then, and rub his nose on the platform. Instead of that, he caught his cousin by the arm.

"Come on, Algy!"  
"I'm not coming with you. I don't want to."

"Don't you!" said Jimmy grimly. "Well, whether you want to or not, you're coming—see?"

And with a powerful grip that Algy could not resist, he marched the fag away down the platform.

Lattrey smiled as he strolled away. The state of feeling between the two cousins was quite according to his wishes. Algy was rebellious, and Jimmy was already growing exasperated. It did not seem likely that Jimmy would be able to preserve his patience for long, and when he lost it there would be real trouble between the two, and that was all to the good from Lattrey's peculiar point of view.

"Hurry up, or the Modern cads will bag the brakes, Jimmy!" exclaimed Lovell.

"I'm coming."  
"That your cousin?" asked Raby, glancing at the sullen fag.

"Yes, that's Algy."  
"How do you do, Algy?" asked Raby, with great politeness.

Algy scowled.

"Rats!" was his reply.

"Oh, crumbs!"



"Keep a civil tongue in your head, you scrubby little beast!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Let go my arm, hang you!" "Oh, come on!" said Lovell. "If that fag belonged to me, Jimmy, I'd kick him from one end of the platform to the other!"

"Well, he doesn't belong to you," said Jimmy tartly. Lovell laughed.

"Keep your wool on, old son!" "Oh, let's get on!" growled Jimmy Silver.

His sunny temper was suffering. With the sullen fag's arm still in his grasp, he accompanied his chums from the station. There was a grunt from Lovell.

"No brakes!" "I say, we've got to walk to the school, you chaps," said Tom Rawson. "Even the high and mighty Sixth have got to walk. Brakes are off."

"Rotten!" growled Townsend. "Oh, it won't hurt us!" "Mayn't hurt you, I don't like it."

"Lump it, then!" said Rawson cheerfully. "Confound it!" said Knowles of the Sixth, as he came out of the station with Frampton and Catesby.

"No brakes! I really think the Head might have had some brakes for us, as usual." "War-time, you know," said Bulkeley.

"Bother the war!" "Look here, Knowles—" said Bulkeley warmly. "Oh, bother!"

Knowles marched off savagely. Jimmy Silver & Co. started walking cheerily enough. It was not much of a hardship for war-time.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, was at the station, fussing over baggage. The juniors were quite willing to leave Mr. Bootles to fuss over it.

It was a cold, clear day, and the walk was agreeable enough. The Bistical Four were in great spirits, only Jimmy being a little worried by his unwilling companion.

He dropped behind his chums a little to speak to Algy. The latter was released from the detaining grip on his arm, and looked more than half inclined to bolt.

"Look here, Algy, old chap," said Jimmy mildly, "stick to me, you know. You're a new kid at Rookwood, and I'm going to see you through."

"I'm not green," said Algy disdainfully. "I've been to school before, haven't I? I don't suppose Rookwood is much of a show after my old school."

"Oh!" murmured Jimmy. "I know the ropes, I suppose. Do you think I shall go to the Head, and ask him where I'm to sleep, or ask a prefect to find the pencil-case I've lost?" asked Algy sarcastically.

"Well, I sha'n't! I know my way about, and I don't want any dashed mentor to guide me! I'm jolly well not goin' to be guided, either! You can work off the guide-philosopher-and-friend bizney on somebody who wants it. I don't!"

"Algy, kid," said Jimmy, as quietly as before, "you mayn't be as green as most new kids, but you don't know Rookwood yet. I'm going to take you to the master of your form—"

"I can find him for myself." "You'll have to see the Head." "I'm not afraid of the Head! Blessed old dodderer like my head-master at High Coombe, I expect."

Jimmy breathed hard. "Besides, I've got a friend to see me through, if I want one," said Algy Silver. "You needn't trouble, Jimmy!"

"Do you mean Lattrey?" "Yes, I do!" said Algy defiantly. "You know the kind of fellow Lattrey is, Algy!"

"Oh, yes, I know; quite my sort." "He's the worst fellow at Rookwood!"

"I may cut him out in that line," said Algy coolly. "I was considered rather a corker at my old school!"

"Wha-a-t!" "You should have heard the Head jawin' me the day I left," said Algy, with a grin. "Fairly waxy the old sport was. He'd found out about our playin' bridge in the shed, with smokes an' so on, and it put him into a rare wax. His cheery old whiskers were fairly bristlin' as he talked to me. Blessed if I didn't think he would be burstin' somethin' the way he went it!"

Jimmy was helplessly silent. How he was to deal with this reckless young rascal was a puzzle. He had not seen much of his cousin heretofore, and Algy was rather a new experience to him. He knew that the boy was not really bad, but he was wilful, obstinate, and utterly

reckless, and he was a puzzle to Jimmy.

The expression on Jimmy's face made Algy break into a laugh. "Shocked you, old scout?" he asked. "By gad, you should see my old pal De Vere at High Coombe; I'm a little angel beside him!"

"Your pal De Vere at High Coombe ought to be in a reformatory, I should think!" growled Jimmy.

"Just what the Head said to him," grinned Algy. "De Vere wouldn't have got back to High Coombe this term only his people chipped in, and no end of influence was brought to bear on the Head. He wrote to me so. He'll be disappointed at not seein' me there. I'm disappointed, too. I wanted to go back. But if you think you're goin' to keep me in a bandbox at Rookwood, Jimmy, you're off-side. I'll turn your hair grey if you try it! That's a tip!"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Jimmy, losing patience at last. "Look here, it's no good persuading you—"

"Not a bit!" assented Algy. "Then I'll talk straight. You're to leave Lattrey alone!"

"Rats!" "You won't?" "No, I won't!" "You're not to play cards or smoke with him or anybody else!" went on Jimmy, breathing hard.

"Bow-wow!" "And if I catch you doing it I'll

lick you till you can't howl!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

Algy measured him with his eye. "Two can play at that game," he remarked. "I'll give you a bit of a tussle if you try it on, Jimmy!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver. He felt quite overcome, and he did not say another word before Rookwood was reached. In the crowd at the gates Algy dodged away and disappeared. Evidently he did not want his cousin's kind offices on his first day at Rookwood.

And Algy cut. Jimmy Silver moved away slowly. He was puzzled and troubled. His father and his uncle both expected that he would take Algy in hand, and see him through his troubles at Rookwood.

How he was going to take Algy in hand was a mystery. Certainly he could give the cheeky young rascal a tremendous licking; but even that was not likely to be effective, for Algy was certain to make a fight of it; and instead of a licking for his own good, it would figure as a fight between a big fellow and a small one. Which was not attractive to Jimmy.

The simplest plan would have been to wash his hands of his cousin, and leave him to go his own way, but that Jimmy could not do.

What exactly he could do was not clear. However, Algy was driven out of his mind, as Lovell & Co. ran him down, and carried him off to the big hall, where a celebration was going on. For a time Jimmy forgot his cousin.

Algy was brought back to his mind later. Bulkeley of the Sixth beckoned to Jimmy, as he spotted him in the hall. Jimmy came up cheerily.

"You've got a cousin among the new kids, Silver?" asked Bulkeley. "I understand that young Silver of the Third is a relation of yours?"

"Yes, Bulkeley," said Jimmy, his heart sinking. He could see that Algy was already in the black books of the head prefect.

"Well, you'd better keep an eye on him," said Bulkeley quietly. "You're an old hand here, in a way, and you may be of use to him. It would be only good-natured. He's been caught smoking first day of term, and I've caned him. Better look after him a bit, Silver, or he'll get landed into trouble!"

"Yes, Bulkeley," said Jimmy dispiritedly. He could see that the Rookwood captain thought he had been selfish, in neglecting a young cousin just stranded in the school. But there was nothing Jimmy could say; in fact, Bulkeley turned away without waiting for a reply.

Jimmy stood with a frowning face, till a sudden slap on the back made him jump and utter a howl. "Hullo! What's the trouble?" asked Tommy Dodd gaily. "Lost a quid and found a tanner, dear boy?"

"It's your face—it worries me!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Take it away and bury it!"

He strode away glumly, and ran into Lovell & Co. They seized him at once.

"Now, then, look chippy!" said Lovell, shaking him. "None of your scowling on the first day of term. No prep to-night! I say, Towny and Topsy tried to collar the end study; fancy that!"

"Hullo! Is that firstly? I'll cut before you get to seventhly!"

He did not venture to hint that doubt to his chums.

An invitation to the end study was a tremendous honour for a fag, and it did not even cross Lovell & Co.'s minds that Jimmy's cousin might decline it without thanks.

"We're going to get in the prog now," said Raby. "You find young Hopeful, and bring him along, Jimmy. We'll make a fuss of him."

"Good!" said Jimmy. And he went to look for Algy, in a somewhat dubious frame of mind, while Lovell & Co. prepared the feast—as lavishly as was possible with due regard to the stern injunctions of the Food Controller.

**The 6th Chapter.**  
**The Heavy Hand.**

Jimmy Silver looked round the crowded Big Hall first. It was swarming with fellows, Classical and Modern. Nearly all the seniors were there, and most of the juniors.

Several new boys were "mooching" about like lost sheep. But Algy Silver was not in the least like a lost sheep, and he was not there.

Jimmy scouted along the passages, and then tried the Third Form-room. There were some of the Third there, and a row was going on. Jimmy looked in, and had the pleasure of hearing a slanging match among Wegg & Co.

"Seen my cousin?" called out Jimmy. "Didn't know you had one!" grunted Pipkin of the Third.

"New kid in your Form," said Jimmy good-humouredly. Wegg gave a snort.

"That cheeky kid I pasted, I suppose!" he exclaimed. "He pasted you!" said Pipkin. "My foot slipped!" exclaimed Wegg excitedly. "But for that, I'd have been all over him. I tell you—"

Jimmy left the slanging-match in full blast; there was evidently no information to be gained there.

He looked out into the dusky quadrangle, but it was unlikely that Algy would be out of doors. Then he reflected.

The thought of Lattrey came into his mind. Jimmy felt a throb of anger at his heart as he thought of the cad of the Fourth.

Algy had disappeared from public view, and Jimmy felt that he would find him in Lattrey's study. He wondered that he had not thought of it before.

His brow was grim as he made his way up to the Fourth-Form passage. There was a light under Lattrey's door, the first door in the passage. Jimmy remembered that he had not seen Lattrey or Townsend & Co. when he looked round Big Hall.

He could guess how they were occupied, taking advantage of the relaxation of first day at school. Prefects were very unlikely to be "nosing" into the junior studies that evening.

There was a buzz of low voices in Lattrey's study, which the cad of the Fourth shared with Peele and Gower.

Plainly, Lattrey was no longer the outcast he had been the previous term. He had succeeded in making his peace with the nuts, at least.

Jimmy tapped at the door, and turned the handle. The door did not open. It was locked on the inside. Little risk as there was of a visit from a prefect or a master, Lattrey was not taking chances.

Jimmy Silver knocked again, more loudly. "Hullo! Who's there?" called out Lattrey.

"It's I! Is my cousin with you?" asked Jimmy quietly. There was a laugh in the study, but no answer. Jimmy knocked savagely on the panels. His temper was rising.

"Let me in, Lattrey!" "I don't remember asking you here, Silver!"

"My cousin is there." "I'm not extendin' the hospitality of my study to the whole of the interestin' family of Silver, dear boy!" And there was another laugh.

"Are you there, Algy?" called out Jimmy. "Hullo, cocky!" came Algy's voice. "What do you want?"

"I want you to come to supper in my study, Algy."

"Thanks! Sorry; can't come!" "Why can't you come, kid?" "I'm goin' to have supper with my own friends."

Jimmy Silver breathed hard through his nose. Algy's remark was followed by quite an outburst of chortling among the nuts.

"Will you let me in, Algy?" asked Jimmy, as calmly as he could. "Can't, I'm busy!"

"What are you up to, then?"



Tommy Dodd & Co. came tramping along the platform, and in sheer exuberance of spirits knocked the shining toppers off the heads of the nuts.

"Cheek!" exclaimed Jimmy warmly. "We slung 'em out!" said Raby, grinning. "We held Towny's head under the bath tap till he begged us to keep the end study this term!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Ah, now you're looking better," said Lovell. "I say, it will run to a decent supper in the end study to-night. The Colonial chaps are comin'; I've asked them!"

"Good!" said Jimmy. "Erroll and Mornington, too! Queer how jolly friendly we're getting with Morny. He seems quite decent this term!"

"Oh, he's all right!" "And I've been thinking," said Lovell, with the air of a fellow who was about to make a tremendous concession, and he knew it, "we'll have your young cousin to supper, Jimmy!"

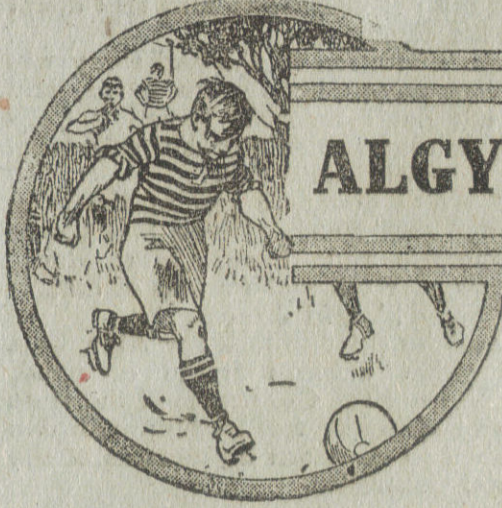
"We don't mind," said Raby and Newcome together, generously. Jimmy smiled faintly.

His chums were making that concession to please him. And it was a concession, too.

They did not like Algy, which was not surprising. And they did not yearn after the society of Third-Form fags, anyway. But for Jimmy's sake they were nobly prepared to swallow Algy whole, so to speak.

"Thanks," said Jimmy, inwardly wondering whether Algy would come.





## ALGY OF THE THIRD!

(Continued from the previous page.)

grandfather again, Algy!" said Lattrey, and there was a chortle in the study.

"Let him rip!" said Algy. "Cut for deal, Topham!"

"Will you open this door, Lattrey?" asked Jimmy Silver very quietly.

"Oh, no!"

"I shall burst it in if you don't!"

"Ha, ha! Go ahead!"

Lattrey did not believe for a moment that the captain of the Fourth would carry out his threat. He was speedily undeceived.

"Smash the lock in!" said Jimmy laconically.

"Any old thing!" grinned Lovell.

The heavy oaken door crashed on the door with a terrific concussion. The door creaked and groaned, and the lock almost snapped. There were startled exclamations within the study.

"You fool!" shouted Lattrey furiously. "Do you want to have half the school up here, with that row?"

"I don't care!"

"You cad, you want to sneak! That's what you mean!"

"Are you going to open the door?"

"No!" yelled Lattrey.

Crash!

There was an ominous crack from the lock. It was not likely to resist much longer.

"Dash it all, they'll have it through!" exclaimed Gower. "Better open the door!"

Crash!

The door was swiftly unlocked and thrown open. In a few minutes it would have been burst in. Gower opened it savagely. Lovell and Raby set down the form, and Jimmy Silver & Co. marched into the study.

### The 7th Chapter. Rough Justice.

Lattrey & Co. were all on their feet now.

They were all looking angry, and Algy Silver was almost crimson with anger. He shook his fist at his cousin as the unwelcome visitors crowded in.

"By gad, what a merry scene!" drawled Mornington.

"Filthy tap-room!" said Lovell, with a snort.

Lattrey's eyes glittered at them.

"You've forced your way into my study," he said thickly. "Now get out. You're not wanted here."

"Yes, get out, you cads!" shouted Algy. "Do you think you're going to bully me, Jimmy Silver? Mind your own business, hang you!"

Jimmy did not heed.

"Lovell, take that young scoundrel out and sling him downstairs, will you?" he asked.

"Pleasure!" said Lovell.

Algy put up his hands as Lovell advanced on him. Lovell laughed, and grasped him. But he yelled the next moment as Algy's fist came home on his nose with a crack that brought the water to his eyes with a rush.

"Ow-yow!" gasped Lovell.

Algy hit out again savagely, but Lovell's temper was up now.

He grasped the fag by the back of his collar and the seat of his trousers, and swung him, kicking, into the air.

"Yaroorh! Put me down!" shrieked Algy.

"You come on, you young cad!" said Lovell grimly. "If you were half as big as me I'd wallop you till you couldn't crawl. Come on!"

Algy, with his arms and legs flying wildly, was borne out of the study, helpless in Lovell's powerful grasp.

His furious voice died away down the passage towards the stairs.

A sound of bumping followed.

Lovell was taking Algy downstairs by the simplest process—that of yanking him along and bumping him on every stair.

Algy's yells died away in the distance. Lovell returned to the study after some minutes, with a face crimson from exertion, but grinning.

"Algy's gone," he remarked.

"And now you'd better go!" said Lattrey fiercely.

Townsend exchanged a glance with Topham.

"Better be gettin' back to our quarters, Topy!" he murmured.

"Not just yet!" said Jimmy Silver grimly.

"Look here, Silver—"

"Hold your tongue! I've got something to say to you fellows," said Jimmy, in steady tones. "My cousin Algy is a young rascal. That's no reason why you should be making him worse. You're older than he is, and know better than he does. You'd be kicked out of the school if the Head knew your little game here. I can't bring the Head down on you. I'm going to deal with you myself."

"And what are you goin' to do?" asked Peele, with a sneer.

"I'm going to thrash every cad here with this cricket-stump!" said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I hope that'll be a lesson to you to leave my cousin out of your rotten games. If that lesson isn't enough, it will be repeated. You've chosen to act like rotten blackguards, and now you're going through it!"

"Hear, hear!" chirped Lovell.

"Why, you cheeky cad," gasped Townsend, in rage and amazement, "you dare—"

"You dare not!" panted Lattrey.

"You'll see. Collar them!"

Towny and Topy made a furious rush at the doorway, and were promptly collared and held by Lovell and Raby. Peele and Gower put up their hands savagely, but the Colonial Co. soon collared them.

Lattrey, with a snarl like a wild animal, grabbed at the poker in the grate. But Erroll and Mornington caught him before he could grasp it. Newcome, with a grin, closed the study door. Jimmy Silver waited calmly till the nuts were secured.

"Let me go!" yelled Lattrey.

"You hounds!"

"Better language, dear boy!" remonstrated Mornington. "You're in for it, old scout. Dash it all, you've called the tune, now you're goin' to pay the piper!"

"Lattrey first!" said Jimmy Silver, grasping the stump hard. "Face down on the table!"

Lattrey, struggling furiously, was flung on the table, sending cards, money, and smokes scattering right and left.

Struggling furiously still, he was held there by his neck and his feet, while Jimmy Silver got to work with the stump.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh, crums! Ow-ow! You rotters! Yew-woop!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Only six!" said Lovell. "Better make it a dozen."

"That'll do. Pitch him away!"

Bump!

Lattrey was deposited in a corner of the study.

"Towny next!"

"Look here, you rotters! Look here! I—oh—ah—yoop!"

Townsend was dismissed, yelling, with six. Topham came next, struggling wildly, but he had to take his six. They were pitched neck and crop out of the study after the infliction. With furious faces and many groans, they limped away to their own quarters.

"Now Peele!" said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"You rotters!" panted Peele. "I—I promise to have nothin' to do with your dashed cousin, Silver!"

"A licking will help you to remember your promise!"

Whack, whack!

"Oh, you beast! Oh dear!"

Peele had his six, and was plumped down on Lattrey in the corner. Then Gower went through his ordeal, with a white, furious face.

"That job's jobbed," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. "Supper will be getting cold, you fellows."

"The merry circus is over," said Mornington. "Gentlemen, let me beg you to reflect on your sins and turn over a new leaf, followin' my shinin' example. Ta-ta!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. quitted the study, leaving fury behind them.

Over supper in the end study Jimmy recovered his serenity.

"Don't worry, old scout!" said Lovell. "I don't know whether dear old Algy will change his spots in a hurry, but one thing's jolly certain—he won't get much encouragement in the Fourth when he's goin' on the merry ran-dan. I fancy Towny & Co. will keep him at arm's-length after this—or a little farther. Remember your own merry maxim, and keep smiling!"

And Jimmy Silver smiled.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"UNDER THE SHADOW!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!

## IN THE CART!

A SPLENDID COMPLETE TALE OF THE JUNIORS AT ST. JIM'S.

By RICHARD BEDFERN, of the New House.

Clampe was in an irritable mood. There was a savage scowl on his face, and the reason for it was that Figgins had taken it upon himself to administer castigation to Clampe for his shabby ways.

Clampe was not feeling at all well disposed towards Figgins as he strode through the village.

He was mooching along and scowling at the pavement, when he received a hearty slap on the back, and a still heartier voice shouted:

"That's the spirit, my boy! Always face the world with a sunny smile!"

Not much of the sunny smile was visible upon Clampe's face as he scowled up at a man in khaki, but the Tommy was all affability.

Still, he had no time to receive all the benefits of Clampe's sunny smile, for a man in a paint-smudged jacket over the way was already hailing him.

Dealing Clampe another affectionate slap on the back, the Tommy crossed over and indulged in a hearty hand-shake with his friend of the apron, whereupon the pair marched arm-in-arm into the old Swill and Swigg Inn.

Clampe scowled at the Tommy, and scowled at the man of the apron; but when he looked at the hand-cart which the M. of the A. had left outside the pub, his scowl brightened into an apology for a smile.

Though probably you don't see anything to create covetousness in a common hand-cart, full of dirty paint-cans and brushes and bits of worthless odds and ends, Leslie Clampe lost no time in making off with it as hard as he could go.

He pulled up in a lonely part of the road, donned a dirty apron and white jacket which were upon it, snatched a large and tattered cap from the head of a passing urchin, transferred it to his own, smeared his face with half a dozen different colours, applied his boot to the astonished urchin, and headed once more for the school, pushing the cart in front of him.

In passing through the gates of St. Jim's the painter bestowed an affable nod upon the amazed and disgusted Taggles, and came to a halt at the foot of the New House steps.

"Which you'll show me the way to Mister Ratcliff's room, you will?" he asked gruffly, addressing one of the idle crowd which flocked round him.

"Which I will!" agreed Owen, the one addressed.

Clampe followed Owen up to Ratty's room.

There he made use of his colours in a manner which certainly might have been more artistic, but could not have been more lavish or more diversified.

Paint was slapped with equal thickness and brilliancy on everything.

When it seemed that there was nothing left unpainted, Ratty came scurrying in.

He jumped on Figgy's toe in the passage, and brought him along to his study to give him a couple on each hand for being in the way. The sight of the study did not please him at all.

"What—why—what is the reason for this disgraceful— Bless my poor soul!"

"Which my name's Bill Bones!"

"That is beside the point!" roared Ratty, his wrath not appeased by this introduction to the man.

"Which you sent a gentleman into my place to-day, you did," resumed the painter, wagging a forefinger at Ratty, "saying as 'ow I was to paint your room brighter for the winter weather."

"This—this is outrageous!" exclaimed Ratty. "Who—who was the person?"

"Which it was Figs," said the painter, pondering slowly—"or Figgins, or— Why, that's the very pusson hisself with you!"

Ratty fixed a pair of beady eyes upon poor, bewildered Figgy.

"You will oblige me by explaining this matter, Figgins!" he said acidly.

"Which," broke in the painter stubbornly, "I wants my money—"

"Go!" barked Mr. Ratcliff, with asperity. "Leave this room!"

"Which I'm an honest man, and has done honest work—"

The troublesome painter was hustled out of the room, spilling the paint out of his can on to the floor, save for one or two—red and yellow—which he reserved for the passage.

Ratty gave Figgy six of the heartiest on each hand, and a thousand lines into the bargain.

Figgins crawled into Study No. 4 groaning pitifully. Kerr and Wynn,

who were waiting for him, did their best to sympathise.

"I wish I knew what rotter had used my name to tell that fool of a painter to come here!" moaned Figgy. "I'd chop the cad into little pieces!"

"The thing is," said Kerr, "to think over what chaps you have been taking the high hand with lately. Who's the latest chap to be kept in order?"

Figgy tried to reflect.

"Well, I had to rag Clampe just after dinner for smoking in the study."

"I see. Keeping the Form in order by starting a scrap with Clampe!" said Kerr blandly. "Now, Clampe isn't the chap to suffer any unbearable qualms of conscience for doing a trick like this, is he?"

"You think Clampe's had a hand in it?" exclaimed Figgy, starting up.

"There is just a remote possibility," said Kerr, with a smile, "that the painter himself was Clampe. I remember thinking it rather curious at the time that a jobbing decorator should wear an Eton collar, and have his trousers scrupulously creased—"

Figgy was becoming quite frantic.

"I'll catch him up! He can't have gone far. By jingo—"

His voice was drowned by the clattering of his footsteps going down the stairs.

Figgy's long legs very quickly brought him in sight of the cart, standing by the side of the road. The apron and jacket and cap were thrown carelessly into the cart, and, by the sound of splashing water over the other side of the hedge, Figgy rightly guessed that Clampe was washing the smudges of paint from his hands and face in the roadside stream.

Figgy lost no time in idle words.

He leaped over the hedge, picked Clampe up, dropped him into the muddest part of the ditch, dragged him out, bound him hand and foot, poured cans of paint over him, and finally bundled him into the cart.

Then he in his turn donned the apron, jacket, and cap, and strode along towards the village, dragging the cart behind him.

He attracted a great deal of attention in the village.

The young urchins, under the impression that Clampe was a public Aunt Sally, took an unholy delight in shying things at him, especially one small customer without a cap, who, deeming himself rather too minute a personage to attack the big painter wearing a cap, took summary vengeance upon the helpless Clampe by sending showers of Uncle Clegg's eggs on his cranium.

Mr. Ratcliff was at that moment emerging from the chemist's, and, having had quite enough of decorators and their carts for one day, would doubtless have hurried past had he not caught sight of Clampe.

"Dear me! Clampe!" he called out. "Come down from that ridiculous position at once! Stop, you fellow!"

The fellow addressed only walked the faster, and Mr. Ratcliff hastened after the cart yelling "Stop, stop!"

Then, as if he had only just heard, the painter stopped suddenly—so suddenly that Ratty biffed his weedy chest against the back of the cart and fell flat.

But probably it was a pin, and not Mr. Ratcliff, that the painter stopped for. He stooped to pick it up for luck, thereby releasing his hold of the handles of the cart, which promptly flew up into an oblique position, and the wretched Clampe rolled out on to the top of Ratty.

And verily, verily it came to pass that a man, with a fiendish expression upon his face, standing outside the Old Swill and Swigg Inn, and wearing a paint-smudged apron and jacket withal, suddenly burst into life at the appearance of the cart along the street.

He swooped down upon the confused heap, baring his arms as he ran, and swiped poor Clampe up and down the road in a most unpleasant fashion.

Clampe did at last manage to reach St. Jim's. He had considerable difficulty in explaining matters to Ratty on the way. It will be some time before he forgets that woeful Wednesday when he was, in a double sense, In the Cart!

THE END.

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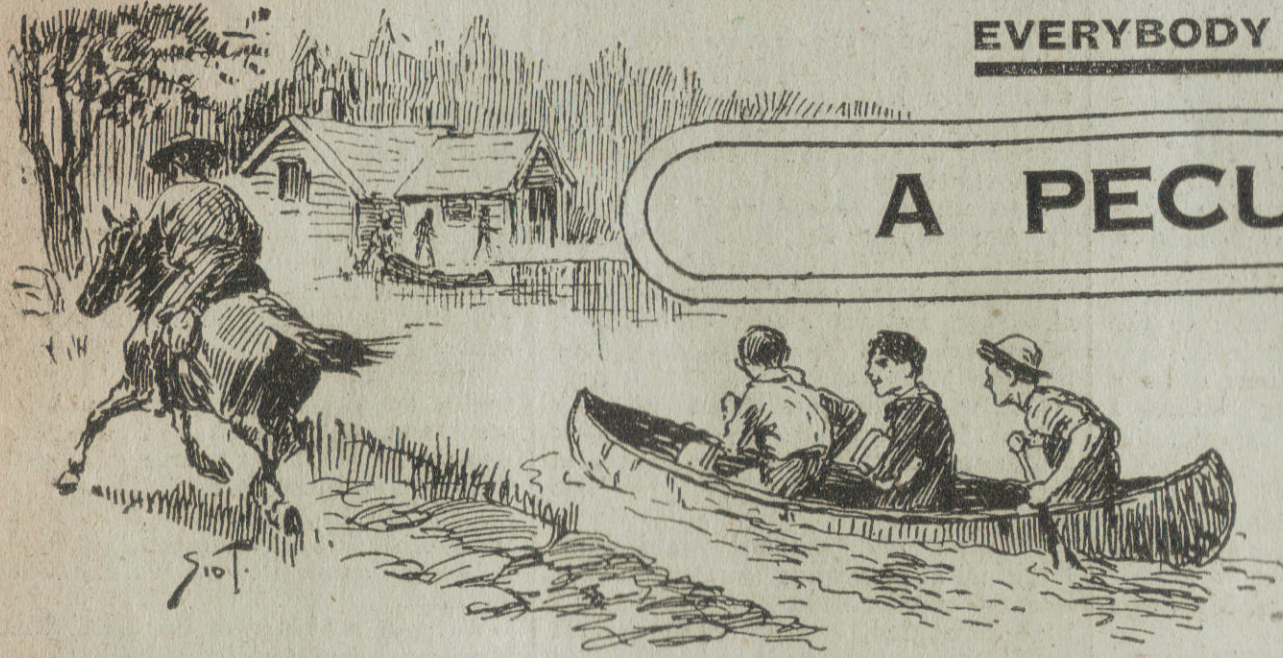


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## A PECULIAR PERSECUTION!

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Schooldays of Frank Richards, the Famous Author of  
the Tales of Harry Wharton & Co.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.  
Astounding!

"Hallo, there's somebody with Beau!" said Frank Richards. "And it's a Chin!" remarked Bob Lawless.

Frank and Bob cantered up the trail from the Lawless ranch to the fork where they were accustomed to meet their chum, Vere Beauclerc, on the way to Cedar Creek School.

Beauclerc was waiting for them at the fork of the trail. He was not alone this morning, as the two cousins rode up, and jumped down from their ponies.

A fat man in loose garments, with a yellow complexion and almond-shaped eyes and a pigtail, was standing in the trail, talking to him with many gestures.

The man was evidently a "Chin," one of the Chinese laundrymen who washed and mended for the citizens of Thompson Town.

He saluted the two schoolboys gracefully as they joined their chum. "Goodee-mornee!" he said.

"Good-morning, John!" said Bob Lawless cheerfully. In the Far West all Chinamen are "Johns."

Vere Beauclerc turned a puzzled look on his comrades.

"This is jolly queer, you fellows," he remarked.

"What is?" asked Frank. "I met Ching Ling on the trail," said Beauclerc. "He's going to the school."

"Me goee!" grinned Ching Ling.

"Oh, yes. Some!" "And he's told me what he's going for," continued Vere Beauclerc. "I think he must be a little potty."

"Chinee allee light," said Ching Ling. "Allee samee Melican man."

"Well, what's he going to the school for, then?" asked Bob Lawless. "Laundry work, I suppose?"

"No. He's going to propose to Miss Meadows—he says so, at least."

"What!" yelled Frank Richards and Bob Lawless simultaneously.

The Chinaman nodded and grinned expansively.

Evidently Ching Ling, the laundryman of Thompson, did not see anything extraordinary in his journey to Cedar Creek School to propose to Miss Meadows, the Canadian schoolmistress.

"Allee light!" he said. "What you tinkee? Me poppee question. Some!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Frank Richards. "Is he dotty?"

"He must be, I think," said Beauclerc. "Miss Meadows will be annoyed if the howling ass does anything of the sort. I've tried to persuade him to give up the idea. I think he's really a bit touched."

"No touched," said Ching Ling. "Me poppee. Oh, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards laughed, too. There was something absurd in the idea of the fat, pigtailed laundryman visiting Cedar Creek to propose to the schoolmistress.

What could have put the idea into Ching Ling's pigtailed head was a mystery—as yet.

But it was pretty certain that the grave, quiet Miss Meadows would not regard the affair as comic. She was quite certain to be annoyed.

"Look here, Chin," exclaimed Frank, "you can't do this, you know!"

"Oh, yes," said Ching Ling. "Me goee! Oh, yes. What you tinkee?"

"You'll be fired out!" said Bob warningly. "Can't you see it's like your cheek, you blessed heathen?"

"Chinee good fellee," said Ching Ling warmly. "Miss Meadee wantee husband!"

"What!"

"Beautiful Missee Meadee sayee so," said Ching Ling. "Lots Melican man in Thompson goee poppee. Me first, catchee nicee Canadian girlee. What you tinkee?"

The three schoolboys gazed blankly at Ching Ling. The laundryman of Thompson was evidently in earnest.

And it was clear that he was not intoxicated.

"Miss Meadows said so?" repeated Beauclerc blankly.

"Yes; in papee. Advertisement."

"What!" yelled Bob Lawless.

The Chinaman looked amazed at the surprise of the Cedar Creek fellows. He was a serious Chinaman, bound upon a serious errand, and he did not see any cause for surprise or merriment.

"Allee light," he said. "Missee Meadee likee Chin, p'laps. Me good Chinese boy. Oh, yes. Me see advertisement, and jumpee. What you tinkee?"

"If you're not mad, tell us what you mean, you heathen jay!" exclaimed Bob. "If you say that our schoolmistress has been advertising in such a way, we'll roll you in the mud and cut your pigtail off!"

Ching Ling jumped back in alarm. "Allee blue!" he exclaimed.

"Chinee tellee fluth. You lookee."

From some recess in his voluminous garments, Ching Ling produced a greasy and crumpled copy of the "Thompson Press," the local paper in that section of the Thompson Valley.

"Miss Meadows has an advertisement in that paper," said Frank Richards, with a nod. "I took it to

"SCHOOLMISTRESS, age twenty-three, tall, considered good-looking, would be glad to hear from a bachelor of equal position, with a view to matrimony. Photographs exchanged. MISS MEADOWS, Cedar Creek School, Thompson Valley."

"Great Scott!" gasped Bob Lawless.

The schoolboys could scarcely believe their eyes.

It was there in plain print, but it was simply incredible that Miss Meadows, the grave schoolmistress, could have inserted such an advertisement.

"It's a spoof!" exclaimed Frank at last.

Bob Lawless nodded.

"I know the pilgrims in Thompson put in funny ads. in that column for a joke," he said. "Billy Cook did once. It's a rotten joke."

"But Mr. Penrose knows Miss Meadows," said Beauclerc. "He would know it was spoof, and he wouldn't put it in."

"My hat! That's so, too."

It was an utter puzzle—to the three chums. But to Ching Ling it seemed quite comprehensible. He saw no reason why Miss Meadows should not look upon him as an eligible bachelor.

Frank Richards knitted his brows.

bachelee. Me goee and poppee. What you tinkee?"

The chums had nothing to say. The Chinese laundryman was quite within his rights in answering that extraordinary advertisement in person.

"Well, it beats me," said Bob Lawless. "All the same, I'd advise you to hop off home, Ching Ling."

"Me goee."

The chums of Cedar Creek strode up on the trail towards the school, Frank and Bob leading their ponies. Vere Beauclerc walked with them; he had no horse. Ching Ling trotted along with them, smiling expansively.

The Chinaman evidently hoped for a favourable reception from Miss Meadows at Cedar Creek.

He was taking the first opportunity of answering the advertisement, in order to be first in the field and have first chance.

The four of them arrived together at the gate of the school, Ching Ling fat and satisfied, Frank Richards & Co. puzzled and mystified.

It was impossible that Mr. Penrose could have put such an advertisement in his paper without written authority from Miss Meadows. And Frank well remembered the newspaper man's astonishment over Miss Meadows'



"The—the man must be mad!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, aghast. "No maddee," said Ching Ling anxiously. "Me love beautiful missee. Missee Meadee wantee husband. Ching Ling wantee wiffee. What you sayee?"

the office for her a couple of days ago. I understood that it was for a handy man, to take Black Sam's place while he is laid up."

"You lookee!" said Ching Ling. He unfolded the paper and held it out, pointing to a paragraph at the top of the "Matrimonial Column."

That column was a new enterprise of Mr. Penrose, the pushing editor of the "Thompson Press."

It was full of matrimonial advertisements, some of them genuine, and some of them fictitious, the work of the jokers of Thompson.

The three schoolboys read the special paragraph to which Ching Ling pointed with a yellow finger.

They fairly gaped as they read it. For it ran:

"That must be the advertisement I took to the newspaper office in Thompson for Miss Meadows the other day," he said quietly. "I remember Mr. Penrose was astonished when he saw it, and I couldn't understand the reason then. You fellows remember I told you; it was on Tuesday, when you stayed at the school to help Mr. Slimmey split logs. That cad Gunten lassoed me on the trail, and tied me to a tree for an hour."

"I remember," said Beauclerc. "This must be the advertisement you took, then. But—but—but what can be the meaning of it?"

"I can't understand."

"Allee light," said Ching Ling. "Missee Meadee wantee nicee

letter, which Frank had taken to the office.

There seemed no room for a mistake in the matter.

Yet, unless Miss Meadows had taken leave of her senses, there must be a mistake somewhere, the schoolboys felt convinced.

"Ching Ling," said Frank, as they reached the school, "don't let the fellows see that paper here!"

"Why notee?"

"Well, you'd better not," said Frank uneasily. "Miss Meadows would be offended if the kids saw it."

Ching Ling nodded. "Ali lightee. No showee papee." And they entered the school enclosure together.

## The 2nd Chapter.

## A Disappointment for Ching Ling.

It was close on time for morning lessons, and most of the Cedar Creek fellows had arrived, and were in the schoolground. Some of them gathered round the Chin as he came smiling in.

"Hallo, who's your Oriental pard?" grinned Eben Hacke.

"It's the laundryman from Thompson," said Chunky Todgers. "There's your way, John!"

Ching Ling shook his head. "Me comee see Missee Meadee," he said.

Kerr Gunten and Keller, the two Swiss schoolboys, came forward. There was a peculiar expression upon Gunten's heavy, sallow face.

"You want to see Miss Meadows, John?" he asked.

"What you tinkee? Me comee poppee question!" said Ching Ling calmly.

Evidently Ching Ling was prepared to take the whole wide world into his confidence on that subject.

"What's that?" exclaimed Tom Lawrence.

"You cheeky heathen!" shouted Chunky Todgers.

Gunten laughed. "Miss Meadows is in the porch," he said. "This way, Chin!"

"Tankee!"

"Shut up, Gunten!" growled Bob Lawless.

"Shut up, Gunten!" growled Bob Lawless.

Gunten, unheeding, led the Chinaman to the schoolhouse porch, where Miss Meadows could be seen chatting with Mr. Slimmey, the assistant-master. Ching Ling trotted contentedly after the Swiss.

He left the crowd of schoolboys in a buzz of astonishment. Most of them gathered round to look on.

Gunten was evidently pleased. The rogue of the lumber school had a bitter animosity towards Miss Meadows. Only a few days before, the schoolmistress had caught him in an act of rascality, and Gunten had been severely punished.

"I've a jolly good mind to punch that foreign cad's head!" growled Frank Richards.

"Why don't you?" said Bob cheerily. "I'd have snatched him bald-headed if he'd roped me to a tree, as he did you the other day."

"He made me promise to let it drop before he untied me," said Frank. "I was taken by surprise, and lassoed."

"He tied you to a tree, and left you there," said Vere Beauclerc thoughtfully.

"Yes; for an hour, in the timber."

"You had Miss Meadows' letter to the 'Press' office with you?"

"Yes; I was on my way to Thompson with it."

"Did Gunten touch the letter?" asked Beauclerc very quietly.

Frank Richards started. "Yes, Beau. He took it away from me, and pretended that he was going to deliver it himself, and leave me tied to the tree all night. He came back afterwards, and let me loose, though."

"Had he tampered with the letter?"

"I—I think not. It looked just the same," Frank Richards drew a quick breath. "Beau, you don't think he could have—"

"I know that's a very extraordinary advertisement for Miss Meadows to have put in the paper," said Beauclerc. "If the letter was in Gunten's hands—"

"It was, for a good hour—in his pocket, anyway."

"That may account for it."

"But it hadn't been opened, so far as I could see," said Frank, "or so far as Mr. Penrose could see, either."

"Gunten is a cunning beast!"

"But—but he wouldn't dare—"

"Hallo! Ching Ling's getting down to business," said Bob Lawless. "This is going to be funny!"

Half Cedar Creek was looking on, as Ching Ling entered the porch.





A PECULIAR PERSECUTION!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Miss Meadows gave him an inquiring look.

The Chinaman took off his broad hat, and bowed to the ground before the surprised schoolmistress.

"Beautiful missee!" he murmured. "What!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Lovelee missee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the schoolground outside. Miss Meadows frowned.

"Is the man intoxicated?" she exclaimed in amazement.

"He must be, I should think," said Mr. Slimmey, blinking at Ching Ling over his gold-rimmed glasses. "Get away at once, my man!"

Ching Ling did not heed. He was there to propose to Miss Meadows, and he had his way of doing it. Certainly he was not to be stopped.

"Lovelee Missee Meadee, with eyes like blight staree!" he said. "Ching Ling lovee Miss Meadee! Lovelee missee makee Ching Ling velly happee if takee. Ching Ling goodee Chinese. Makee first-late husband!"

Miss Meadows almost tottered. "The—the man must be mad!" she exclaimed, aghast.

"No maddee!" exclaimed Ching Ling anxiously. "Me love beautiful missee! Missee Meadee wantee husband. Ching Ling wantee wiffee. Is it a flade? What you sayee?"

"Bless my soul!" was what Miss Meadows said.

"You sayee yes!" said Ching Ling. "What you tinkee? Chinese lich man—good laundry in Thompson, three Chinese workee for Ching Ling—seven hundred dollar in bankee. Nicee housee, allee samee Melican man. You sayee yesee, and Ching Ling goey to Mission and fetchee parson. What you tinkee?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ching Ling had no objection to making his flattering proposal in public. Miss Meadows' face was crimson as she heard the howl from the schoolground.

"Ching Ling, go away at once!" she exclaimed. "How dare you speak to me like this! You must have been drinking!"

"No dlinkee," said Ching Ling eagerly. "Chinaman teetotallee. Nevel touchee tanglefoot. Little opium sometimee; allee lightee. You marry with Ching Ling, lovelee missee, me velly happee."

"Will you go away?" exclaimed Miss Meadows angrily.

Ching Ling looked deeply disappointed.

"No wantee Ching Ling?" he asked sorrowfully.

"Certainly not, you stupid man!"

"Ching Ling's heart velly heavee," said the Chinaman sadly. "Me gocee smokee opium if Missee Meadee no takee."

"You are a ridiculous, silly man!" said Miss Meadows severely. "Go away at once!"

"Chinee solly."

And Ching Ling, with a downcast face, bowed to the ground again, and trotted away. Miss Meadows went into the house, crimson with vexation.

"Poor old John!" gasped Bob Lawless. "He's got it in the neck! Miss Meadows wasn't advertising for a Chinese husband, at any rate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rejected suitor disappeared, and the school bell began to ring. The Cedar Creek fellows were grinning as they went into the school-room.

Miss Meadows appeared a few minutes late to take her class. And that morning the usually kind and good-tempered schoolmistress was a little sharp.

The ridiculous scene in the porch troubled her, and she knew that the whole school was greatly tickled by Ching Ling's extraordinary proposal.

What could have induced the sedate Chinese laundryman to act in such a manner was a mystery to Miss Meadows, unless the man had been drinking.

Cedar Creek School settled down to work. But the incidents of that morning were not over yet.

The 3rd Chapter.

Bill Sanders Tries His Luck!

"Hem!"

Miss Meadows was busy with her class when the door of the big school-room opened, and that loud cough was heard in the doorway.

The schoolmistress glanced round sharply. She was already vexed.

A big man, in heavy boots, leather crackers, and a red shirt, stood

framed in the doorway. He took off a huge Stetson hat, and ducked his shock head respectfully to the schoolmistress.

"Morning, marm!" he said, in a deep, gruff voice.

"What do you want here?" asked Miss Meadows.

There was a suppressed chuckle from Gunten. Frank Richards and his chums exchanged glances.

Frank could guess that the red-shirted man was another suitor, though, evidently, Miss Meadows did not.

"Skuse me, Miss Meadows. You know me—Bill Sanders, of Thompson!" said the red-shirted gentleman.

"Well, well; what is wanted?"

"Pr'aps you could step out hyer for a minute!" suggested Mr. Sanders. "It's ruther a dellykit matter!"

"Very well," said Miss Meadows impatiently.

She left the class, and went out into the porch. Mr. Sanders respectfully retiring before her.

The big-limbed, heavily-bearded frontiersman was a little red in the cheeks. His manner was hesitating.

Bill Sanders was accustomed to facing the grizzly bear in his native haunts without a tremor. But he felt more than one tremor under the calm, clear eyes of the Cedar Creek schoolmistress.

"Well?" said Miss Meadows.

"Pr'aps you'd rather I said it a bit private-like," suggested Mr. Sanders, with a glance towards Miss Meadows' sitting-room.

"Surely you can say here what you have to say," said Miss Meadows.

"You have interrupted school lessons, Mr. Sanders. Pray make haste as I must return to my class."

"Skuse me, marm," said Mr. Sanders, his rich colour deepening. "Pr'aps I've come at an orkard moment. But I was afraid some of the boys might be afore me. Half the Thompson gabots will be on this, I calculate."

"To what?" exclaimed Miss Meadows impatiently. "I do not understand you. What are you alluding to?"

"Course, I ain't used to torkin' to purty gals," confessed Mr. Sanders.

"No offence, marm. Bill Sanders' manners may be rough, but his heart is in the right place. No galoot can say that Bill Sanders—that's me—was ever rough to a woman, marm, 'cepting p'r'aps a Injun squaw wot had stolen my blankets. I ain't wot you'd call a beauty, marm, and I knows it, and I don't wear store clothes like them dudes east. But, though I says it, marm, I'll make as good a husband as you'll scare up between the Rockies and the Pacific Coast!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Hearin' that you wanted a husband, marm—"

"What!" shrieked Miss Meadows.

"No offence, marm. I speak plain Canadian," said Bill Sanders.

"Maybe I'm a bit rough, but you'll get used to that. Hearing, marm, that you wanted a husband, I says to myself, 'Bill, my coon, I says, you're on in this game, you are! That little bit of goods up at the school is jest wot you want! I—'"

"How dare you!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, her face aflame.

Bill Sanders looked astonished.

"No offence, marm. I may be a bit rough, but I've got the dust. Six hundred dollars was my last clean-up, after three months on grub-stakes in the Gold Range. I says to myself, says I, 'with that, Bill, my coon, says I, you want to get married and settled, and open a lickin' saloon at Kamloops,' says I. Marm, how would you like to perside over a lickin' saloon at Kamloops—high-class, too, mind you? And, you take my word for it, Bill Sanders is the husband you want!"

The honest frontiersman was speaking with great earnestness.

Miss Meadows, bereft of the power of speech, could only gaze at him. She was acutely conscious that every word uttered in the powerful, booming voice of Bill Sanders could be heard all over the school-room.

"So say the word, marm," said Bill cheerily, "and I'll hustle down to the Mission, and rope in the chin-music man, and we'll be hitched as soon as you like."

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Miss Meadows faintly.

The pretty schoolmistress had, as a matter of fact, received a good many proposals in her time. But certainly she had never had two in one morning before, and from such remarkable suitors.

"Is it yep, marm?" asked Bill. "No!" gasped Miss Meadows. "Certainly not!"

Bill's face fell. "You don't cotton to me?" he asked.

"I—I—I—I suppose you are serious," stammered Miss Meadows. "But the answer certainly is 'No!' Good-morning!"

Bill Sanders made a move to the door, and then he turned back.

"Skuse me, marm. There'll be a crowd of galoots along later, I reckon."

"What!"

"Maybe I'm a bit too rough for you," confessed Bill Sanders. "But you take a tip from me, marm. Don't you take Poker Pete."

"Poker Pete!" said Miss Meadows faintly.

"Yep. He's a dude in store-clothes, but he's pizen—as pizen as an Injun," said Bill Sanders impressively. "And I tell you wot, if Poker Pete worrits you, you let me know, and I'll lay that man out so quick it will make his head swim. Good-morning, marm! If you should change your mind, marm, I'm always to be found at the Red Dog Saloon in Cedar Camp, till I go on the trail again."

And Bill Sanders took his departure.

Miss Meadows stood rooted to the floor.

Mr. Sanders' hint that there would be "a crowd along later" astounded the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek.

Unless "popping the question" was spreading like an epidemic in the Thompson Valley, there was no accounting for it.

With a heightened colour Miss Meadows returned to the school-room.

The persecuted lady affected not to notice the half-suppressed smiles among her class.

Fortunately, the morning finished without any further claimants for Miss Meadows' hand arriving at Cedar Creek.

School was dismissed at last.

But as the Cedar Creek fellows streamed out of the log School House there was a sound of wild uproar at the gates.

"Hillo! There's a scrap on!" yelled Bob Lawless. "Come on!"

And there was a rush to the scene of the conflict.

The 4th Chapter.

Rivals.

"Take that, you galoot!"

"I guess I'll lay you out, you jay!"

"Yah!"

"G-r-r-r-r!"

Frank Richards and the rest gathered round in utter astonishment.

Two powerfully-built fellows were locked in deadly conflict in the gateway of the school. Some of the fellows recognised them.

One was a big-limbed cattleman, who rejoiced in the name of Sam Huggins. The other was a tall man in store-clothes, who was bar-tender at Gunten's store in Thompson, and was called 'Frisco Bill.

Why they had chosen the school gateway as the scene of combat was a mystery. But the fight was in deadly earnest.

They were dutching and thumping one another at a terrific rate. Both noses were streaming crimson, one eye of each was closed, and they were gasping, panting, and threatening furiously.

"Hallo! What's that game?" shouted Bob Lawless.

"Go it, 'Frisco!"

"Lam him, Sammy!"

The Cedar Creek fellows gathered round in great excitement. Mr. Slimmey came hurrying down from the schoolhouse.

"My good fellows, you must not fight here!" he exclaimed. "Please desist at once!"

The combatants did not heed Mr. Slimmey.

That gentleman essayed to separate them.

It was an unfortunate attempt.

A powerful drive from 'Frisco Bill, intended for Sam Huggins' nose, landed upon Mr. Slimmey's chest instead.

The unfortunate young man went spinning away, and collapsed in a heap on the ground, gasping.

The fight in the gateway went on uninterrupted.

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Slimmey, sitting up. "Bless my soul! Where are my glasses? Has anyone seen my glasses? Thank you, Richards."

Mr. Slimmey did not interfere again. He realised that he was not quite equal to the task.

she came hurrying down to the gates with knitted brows. Miss Meadows was really having a most exciting morning.

"Stop this at once!" she exclaimed authoritatively.

The combat ceased as if by magic at the sound of Miss Meadows' voice.

Sam Huggins and 'Frisco Bill, exchanging mutual glares of defiance, separated, and stood panting for breath.

"How dare you fight at this school!" exclaimed Miss Meadows indignantly. "Where the boys and girls can see you! Are you not ashamed?"

"Skuse me, marm," said Sam Huggins, in a gasping voice. "I kim hyer as peaceful as any lamb, but that slab-sided, bottle-nosed galoot—"

"I guess I came hyer quiet and peaceful as the pastor at the Mission, marm," said 'Frisco Bill. "But that sneaking, mouse-coloured mugwump—"

"I wouldn't have let you see me like this hyer, marm, not for all the gold bricks in the Cascade Mountains," said Mr. Huggins, in real distress. "I guess I'm as quiet and law-abiding a citizen as any you could dig up north of the Line, marm. But that bottle-nosed polecat—"

"Well, please go away," said Miss Meadows.

"But I guess I'm hyer on business, marm."

"Same hyer, marm," chimed in 'Frisco Bill. "And the same business, too. And when I found that that lantern-jawed apology for a Digger Injun was hyer to cut me out, marm, naturally I socked it to him. Any gentleman would have, I guess!"

"The cheeky, sassy, pink-eyed rabbit is hyer to cut me out!" roared Sam Huggins. "And I guess I ain't taking a back seat before any mouldy mugwump from 'Frisco—not Sam Huggins!"

"Look hyer, you shoat—"

"Look hyer, you greaser—"

"Stop!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, as the combat was evidently about to recommence. "Stop at once!"

"What you says, marm, goes," said 'Frisco Bill. "But for your presence, marm, I'd lay him out as flat as the top of a cask."

"If it wasn't for you lookin' on, marm, I'd tie him up in so many knots he'd never get hisself untangled," said Mr. Huggins.

"Please, please be quiet!" exclaimed the distressed schoolmistress. "If you have any business here, please tell me what it is."

"I'll tell you wot, marm," exclaimed Mr. Huggins, as if struck by a bright idea. "You see us hyer, marm, and you shall choose. That's a fair game."

"I guess I'm agreeable to that," said 'Frisco Bill promptly. "The schoolmarm has too much boss-sense to choose a scraggy, bottle-nosed—"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, her heart sinking.

"Marm, we happened along together," said 'Frisco Bill. "I was for knocking that mugwump out, but it's your funeral, you're to choose. Marm, I'm a bar-tender at Gunten's store in Thompson, with enough dust saved to open a store of my own. I guess, marm, that if you take me, I'll look arter you like I would arter a prize bull pup. That's my say-so!"

"And hyer's me, marm," said Sam Huggins persuasively. "I'm foreman on Lawrence's ranch, with a nice little cabin, firewood found, and three acres of garden with a Chinaman to look arter it. Marm, you wouldn't go for to throw yourself away on a blue-nosed bar-tender from 'Frisco."

There was an irrepressible chuckle from the Cedar Creek fellows. The epidemic of proposals was evidently spreading.

Miss Meadows' face was crimson.

"Choose, marm!" said 'Frisco Bill. "Say I'm the man, marm," urged Mr. Huggins.

"Will you both please go away?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, with asperity. "I never heard of anything so ridiculous. I suppose it is not your intention to insult me!"

"Insult you, marm!" exclaimed Sam Huggins, in astonishment. "Let me catch any galoot insulting you, marm, and I'll let daylight through him so's you'd think he was a colander, marm!"

"You're insulting the schoolmarm, you bandy-legged son of a coyote," said 'Frisco Bill scornfully. "That's what the schoolmarm means. I'm the man, ain't I, marm?"

"Certainly not!"

"Oh, gosh! Then who's the man?"

In spite of her vexation, Miss Meadows could hardly repress a smile.

"Neither!" she exclaimed. "I am not thinking of anything of the kind."

and I wish you would both go away quietly."

"Burn my socks!" exclaimed Sam Huggins, in surprise. "But hearing as you wanted a husband, marm—"

"How dare you!" exclaimed Miss Meadows angrily.

"No offence, marm. But the galoots in Thompson—"

"Kindly say no more! I have asked you to go away!" said the schoolmistress tartly.

"Sure, marm! 'Frisco, old sport, we've been lambasting one another for nothing," said Mr. Huggins dejectedly. "Get a move on, pard! We ain't wanted here!"

And the two suitors plodded away on the trail to Thompson, probably to seek consolation at 'Frisco Bill's own bar.

Without a glance at the boys, Miss Meadows went hurriedly back to the house.

She was in a troubled and distressed state of mind.

This sudden eruption of proposals was utterly inexplicable to the schoolmistress.

Kern Gunten could have explained it, if he had chosen.

"Well, my hat!" said Frank Richards, after Miss Meadows was gone. "This is getting rather thick. I suppose there'll be more."

"You bet!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Miss Meadows is the greatest catch in this section. The boys won't let a chance like this slip!"

"Blessed if I see why she should cut up so rusty," said Chunky Todgers. "Gunten's got a copy of the 'Thompson Press,' and there's Miss Meadows' advertisement in the matrimonial column there. I've seen it!"

"So have I," said Lawrence. "It beats me. 'Tain't like Miss Meadows!"

"It is a trick!" said Beauclero quietly.

"A trick?" exclaimed Gunten. "How could it be a trick?"

"I fancy I know," said Beauclero contemptuously. And he turned away, leaving the Swiss shrugging his shoulders.

The 5th Chapter.

More and More.

After dinner, another visitor arrived at the lumber school. It was Poker Pete, the smooth-faced, well-dressed, silky-mannered "sport" of Thompson.

The schoolboys watched the card-sharper as he went into the school-house. They could guess why he had come.

He came out in about two minutes, with a dark and angry face.

Evidently, Poker Pete's suit had not prospered.

The "sport" cast an angry look at the grinning schoolboys, as he strode away to the gate. He jumped on his horse and rode away, followed by a general chuckle.

"Who'll be next?" grinned Bob Lawless.

Afternoon lessons came next.

During lessons, several visitors were heard to arrive, but Miss Meadows had given instructions to Sally, and they were sent bootless away.

Lessons passed off without interruption.

Miss Meadows' temper was not so sweet as usual that afternoon, as was not to be wondered at, under the circumstances.

She was puzzled, and mystified, and vexed.

Mr. Slimmey glanced at her very curiously once or twice, and coloured deeply when he caught her eye.

After lessons, when the school was dismissed, and Miss Meadows retired to her study, Mr. Slimmey followed her there, and tapped at the door. The schoolmistress' voice bade him enter.

"Pray excuse me, Miss Meadows," said Mr. Slimmey, blushing deeply. "I—I have twice had the honour to ask you—"

He began to stammer. "I—I— You are aware, Miss Meadows—that—that I should be honoured and glad if you would consent—"

"Really, Mr. Slimmey, as I have twice answered your question in the negative, it is somewhat inconsiderate to ask me again," said Miss Meadows, with much less kindness than she usually showed to the assistant master of Cedar Creek.

Mr. Slimmey's blush deepened.

"Pray forgive me," he said. "I—I should not have repeated my question, only—only—"

"Only what?" asked Miss Meadows, with what was perilously like a snap.

"Only, as I saw the 'Thompson Press' this morning, I—I—"

Mr. Slimmey floundered hopelessly.

Miss Meadows raised her eyebrows.

(Continued at foot of next page.)



# LETTERS IN YOUR EDITORS' 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.

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."

## NO COMPLAINTS!

Every Story Popular!

Never before have the stories in the BOYS' FRIEND been so popular as they are at the present time. Every day of the week I receive shoals of praising letters from loyal readers, and it gives me unbounded pleasure to record the fact that letters of complaint are conspicuous by their absence.

I have worked my very hardest to make the BOYS' FRIEND the most popular boys' paper on the market, and that I have succeeded is proved by our stupendous circulation figures. Our stories are of the highest quality, and I can assure my readers that I shall always strive my very utmost to keep them at their present supreme standard.

Next Monday's magnificent tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. is one that will, I feel confident, make a deep impression on you. It is entitled:

## "UNDER THE SHADOW!"

By Owen Conquest,

and, without a word of exaggeration, it is the finest story of the Rookwood chums that has ever appeared.

In this tale you will read how Lattrey threw a snowball, containing a stone, at Mornington, with the intention of doing the dandy of Rookwood an injury.

You will also read of how Mornington resolved to give the cad of the Fourth the thrashing he deserved, how he put his resolve into action, and how Lattrey, by a blackguardly act, was responsible for robbing Mornington of his sight.

Lattrey struck Mornington with a heavy candlestick. He little realised at the time that it would have the effect of making Morny blind. But such is the case; Mornington is sightless. He cannot see his chums; nothing but darkness and despair confront him.

Our next story dealing with the schooldays of Frank Richards, the

## THE COMPANION PAPERS:

- THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1d. Every Monday.
- THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Monday.
- THE "GEM" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Wednesday.
- THE "BOYS' FRIEND" COMPLETE LIBRARY.
- THE "PENNY POPULAR." Every Friday.
- "CHUCKLES," PRICE 1d. Every Friday.

famous author, is also deserving of special mention. It is entitled:

## "SAVED BY THE SERGEANT!"

By Martin Clifford,

and in it is described how Frank Richards was accused of inserting the "matrimonial" advertisement in the local paper, how many of his school-fellows believed him guilty, and

treated him accordingly, and how, in the end, Sergeant Lasalle, of the North-West Mounted Police, played a part in the affair. You will, I am confident, enjoy reading how the sergeant cleverly cross-examined Gunten, and completely cleared Frank Richards of all suspicion.

Next Monday's splendid instalment of

## "THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm,

will be much longer than usual, and you will find in it humorous incidents by the score.

The scene where the boys drive a cab down the Street of Stairs is a rollicking one from start to finish, and the adventures of the boys in the ruined city of Pompeii are exciting in the extreme. Cecil, the orang-outang, accompanies the chums, and—well, where Cecil is there is bound to be any amount of fun.

The tale of the dormitory, due to appear in our next issue, is entitled:

## "THE MYSTERY OF MORGAN!"

By Dick Oswald.

This is a tale of Pankley & Co., of Bagshot School.

A new boy arrives at the school, he is known to be a great hero, and yet he funks a fight. The Bagshot juniors are amazed, but when they become acquainted with the reason for the new boy's "cowardice," they have nothing but admiration for the fellow.

Remember, my chums, the only way to make sure of securing your copies of the BOYS' FRIEND is to order in advance. The taking of this necessary precaution will probably save you an endless amount of trouble.

Your Editor



## A PECULIAR PERSECUTION!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"What has the 'Thompson Press' to do with it?" she asked.

"Nothing!" gasped Mr. Slimmey. And he retired hastily.

He brushed against a plump, pink-nosed gentleman in the porch. It was Mr. Penrose, the editor, publisher, and printer of the local paper in Thompson.

Mr. Slimmey glanced with some surprise at the editorial gentleman.

The proprietor of the 'Thompson Press' was not usually troubled by any idea of editorial dignity. He dressed as carelessly as any man in Thompson, and was generally seen with a pipe in his mouth, and muddy cowhide boots.

Now he was clad in "store" clothes, and was neat and trim, from head to foot.

His beard had been trimmed. He wore a white collar, his boots were shiny, and he carried gloves in one hand. Even his nose, which had been reddened by long devotion to the potent fire-water, had been dabbed with powder, to tone down its rich hue.

Mr. Penrose was "dressed to kill." "Good-day to you, Slimmey!" said Mr. Penrose. "Is Miss Meadows at home?"

"Yes," gasped Mr. Slimmey. He could guess what Mr. Penrose wanted now, and what his unaccustomed finery meant.

It was another proposal that was hanging over Ethel Meadows. And others could guess, too, for Mr. Slimmey caught sight of several grinning faces outside the porch.

Mr. Penrose tapped at Miss Meadows' door, and entered.

Paul Slimmey sank on a seat in the porch, with a pale face, and polished his glasses nervously.

Poor Mr. Slimmey had been a humble and devoted admirer of Ethel Meadows ever since he had come to Cedar Creek as assistant master.

Such rivals as Bill Sanders, 'Frisco Bill, and Poker Pete, he did not fear; but he wondered whether Mr. Penrose would have better luck, and the thought was anguish to the unfortunate young man.

Without giving a thought to Mr. Slimmey, the editor of the 'Thompson Press' presented himself in the schoolmistress' study.

Miss Meadows greeted him civilly, without showing her surprise at the unusually gorgeous "get-up" of the man from Thompson.

"Possibly you can guess the object of my call, Miss Meadows," said Mr. Penrose genially.

The schoolmistress started, and compressed her lips. It was evidently "another of them."

"Really, Mr. Penrose—"

Mr. Penrose bowed deeply. "Madam, I have the honour to lay my heart at your feet!" he exclaimed.

"Miss Meadows—Ethel—will you deign to accept—"

Miss Meadows' eyes flashed. "If this is meant as a joke, Mr. Penrose, I can only say that it is in the worst of taste!" she exclaimed angrily.

Mr. Penrose straightened up, with a jump.

"A—a—a joke, Miss Meadows!" he stammered.

"Yes! I consider—"

"Could you suspect me of joking upon such a subject, madam?" said Mr. Penrose, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Then what does it mean?" exclaimed the exasperated schoolmistress. "The whole day I have been persecuted by proposals from men I hardly know by sight. Since you have added yourself to the number, Mr. Penrose, you may be able to explain what it all means!"

Mr. Penrose fairly blinked. "Madam, I have long adored you," he said. "I should never have ventured to put my fortune to the test, however, having little to offer but a devoted heart, but for the encouragement I received—"

"Encouragement?"

"Certainly, madam!"

"How can you possibly say so, when I have not even spoken to you twice in as many months?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"But—but your advertisement, madam, in the 'Press'!" said Mr. Penrose, in bewilderment. "Surely I had a right to take that as an encouragement!"

"My—my advertisement!"

"Yes, madam, in my own paper, set up in type by my own hands," said Mr. Penrose. "If that is not an encouragement, I guess I do not know what it is!"

Miss Meadows looked bewildered. "But—but what has my advertisement to do with it?" she exclaimed.

"What encouragement could anyone draw from an advertisement for a handy-man?"

"For a what?" yelled Mr. Penrose. "An odd-job man required at the school—"

"I have received no advertisement from you, madam, for an odd-job man or a handy-man," said Mr. Penrose drily.

"You must be mistaken. Richards assured me on Tuesday that he had delivered the advertisement at your office, and he brought me your receipt."

advertisement, madam, appeared in our matrimonial column."

"In—in—in what?" Miss Meadows sank back into her chair, aghast.

"In our matrimonial column, madam. Here it is—read for yourself!"

Mr. Penrose was never without a copy of his paper. He drew it from his pocket, unfolded it, and placed the matrimonial column under Miss Meadows' eyes.

The schoolmistress' eyes dilated as she read:

"SCHOOLMISTRESS, age twenty-three, tall, considered good-looking, would be glad to hear from a bachelor of equal position, with a view to matrimony. Photographs exchanged. Miss MEADOWS, Cedar Creek School, Thompson Valley."

### The 6th Chapter. The Guilty Party!

There was a dead silence in the room for some minutes.

Mr. Penrose gazed curiously at the schoolmistress. He could not understand.

"Good heavens!" said Miss Meadows at last, faintly. "You—you—you have dared to insert that wicked, false advertisement in my name, Mr. Penrose?"

Mr. Penrose coloured.

"Madam, that is the advertisement handed to me, with an accompanying letter written by yourself, by the lad Richards on Tuesday."

"Impossible!"

"Madam!"

"It is some wicked trick!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, recovering herself. "Have you the letter with you?"

"I have it here."

Mr. Penrose laid a letter on the desk. Miss Meadows recognised her own letter, written two days before. It ran, in her well-known handwriting:

"Dear Mr. Penrose,

"Please insert the enclosed advertisement in this week's 'Press.' I should very much like it to appear this week, if possible, as the man is badly wanted here.

"Yours sincerely,

"E. MEADOWS."

"That is my letter," said Miss Meadows steadily. "It was accompanied by an advertisement for a handy-man for the school."

"Madam!"

"Do you doubt my word, sir?"

"Nunno!" gasped Mr. Penrose. "But that is the advertisement I received. Here is the original."

Miss Meadows glanced at the pencilled sheet he handed her.

"That writing is something like my own," she said. "It is not mine, however. The advertisement was, in fact, written by Mr. Slimmey." She stepped to the door. "Mr. Slimmey, please step in here!"

The young man came in.

"Mr. Slimmey, you drew up my advertisement for the 'Thompson Press,'" said Miss Meadows—"the one that was taken by Frank Richards?"

"Yes," said Mr. Slimmey. "You refer to the advertisement for a handy-man, to take Black Sam's place while he is ill."

"Quite so! There was no other."

"No other!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

"None."

"But—but—but—" stammered Mr. Slimmey.

"Mr. Penrose, how many advertisements did you receive from me?"

"Only one, madam!" said Mr. Penrose, with a bow.

"Then you can see what has happened," said Miss Meadows, with a flash in her eyes. "The advertisement enclosed in my letter to you was taken out and destroyed. This wicked advertisement was put in its place!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Penrose.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

"How could you imagine that I should insert such an advertisement in your paper?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, almost crying with vexation.

"I—I—I confess I was very much surprised," said Mr. Penrose. "I—I certainly was surprised, Miss Meadows! I remember questioning the boy Richards. But—but there was your letter with the enclosure. I knew your hand well—and there was certainly no sign that the envelope had been opened."

"What an infamous trick!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

Miss Meadows compressed her lips. "The boy Richards took the letter to Thompson," she said. "It must have been opened, and the advertisements changed, while in his hands. Heaven knows why that boy should have played so mean and cowardly a trick upon me. I have never given him, or anyone else, cause to take so cowardly a revenge."

"By gad!" said Mr. Penrose. "I—I can only apologise, Miss Meadows. I—I don't know what to say—"

"I cannot blame you, as you had my written authority with the advertisement," said Miss Meadows. "You might have known—but even Mr. Slimmey believed that that wicked advertisement was my own!"

"Miss Meadows, I—I beg your pardon!" stammered Mr. Slimmey, overwhelmed with remorse. "I—I was astounded when I saw it, but—but I could not imagine—"

He stammered miserably. "The boy Richards is to blame," said Mr. Penrose, taking up his hat. "I am sorry I have troubled you this afternoon, Miss Meadows—but it has at least led to clearing up the matter. An explanation shall be inserted in the 'Thompson Press,' in a prominent position."

"That is the least you can do."

"Madam, a second edition of this week's paper shall be printed!" exclaimed Mr. Penrose. "The story

shall be told plainly, and this unfeeling trick exposed. I will see about the matter this very evening."

And Mr. Penrose departed hastily.

Miss Meadows sank into her chair again. In spite of her self-control, the tears were flowing down her cheeks—tears of bitter chagrin and

humiliation.

Mr. Slimmey stood in great distress.

The schoolmistress looked up at last, quietly. The colour burned in her cheeks.

"It is infamous!" she said. "Mr. Slimmey, will you kindly see whether that boy has left the school yet? If not, bring him here to me!"

"Certainly, Miss Meadows!" said Mr. Slimmey, glad to be able to do something. And he hurried away.

But he returned in a few minutes alone.

"The boys are all gone, Miss Meadows."

"It matters little," said Miss Meadows quietly. "I shall see Richards to-morrow morning. Thank you, Mr. Slimmey."

Mr. Slimmey went out slowly, and closed the door behind him. He hardly dared look at Miss Meadows, but he knew that he left her in tears.

The young master's feelings towards Frank Richards were not amiable as he went slowly to his cabin by the creek.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards and Bob Lawless were riding cheerily on the home trail, after leaving Beauldère, as usual, at the fork.

The merry Bob was chuckling over the epidemic of proposals at the lumber school that day—Bob's eyes were always keenest to see the comic side of any occurrence.

But Frank Richards was thoughtful.

The more he thought of it the more he realised that that advertisement in the matrimonial column of the 'Thompson Press' could not have come from Miss Meadows. It was simply incredible.

It followed, therefore, that the letter had been tampered with while it was in his charge. Only Gunten could have done it, and he had never suspected it.

If it was so, there would be stern inquiry, and what proof could he adduce that the Swiss had ever touched the letter at all?

Frank Richards did not feel happy as he looked forward to the morrow at the lumber school. And, if he had only known, he had ample reason for his misgivings.

THE END.

## NEXT MONDAY.

## "SAVED BY THE SERGEANT!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!



# TALES OF THE DORMITORY!

A Great New Series of Short Complete Tales, Told by Juniors at Rookwood School.

THIS WEEK: "JAKE MURDON'S CHRISTMAS!" - BY CHARLES PONS.



Before Black Jem could level a firearm we were on him, and crashed to the ground in a heap.

"Something with a Christmassy touch," said Jimmy Silver, "would go down jolly well to-night. It's getting near Christmas, and there's a sort of Yule log feeling in the air."

### The 1st Chapter. Wanted!

The time that this took place was when I was quite a youngster living in the backwoods. My father was a trapper, and a rough-and-ready man, but the dearest fellow in all the world.

"What has?" "Fire-water," said the man. "There's someone in this district running an illicit still. Its been going on for a bit, but the fellow who's doing it has turned out a special lot for Christmas-time. Hell spend a merry Christmas if I catch sight of him!"

I nodded. If I had not known Bob I should have considered his father guilty of the charge at once. The evidence was pretty black, as you will see.

same thing days before us, and we could depend that they would not miss much. Half an hour passed, and we discovered absolutely nothing. Bob began to get a bit fed up.

The ground got more broken, and made it difficult going for the horses. Suddenly I spotted something moving in the trees. "What's that?" I asked.

NEXT MONDAY! 'THE MYSTERY OF MORGAN!' By DICK OSWALD. DON'T MISS IT!