

THE SCHOOLBOY REBELS TAKE THE OFFENSIVE THIS WEEK!

# The BOYS' FRIEND

"FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS!" "THE BOYS OF THE 'BOMBAY CASTLE'!" "TALES OF THE DORMITORY!"

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ONE PENNY.

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## THE REBELS' RAID!

A MAGNIFICENT NEW LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

By OWEN CONQUEST.

### The 1st Chapter.

Slow!

"Jimmy!"  
"Hallo!"  
"This is getting slow!"  
"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver spoke quite crustily. As a matter of fact, there was truth in the remark of Arthur Edward Lovell.

Things were getting a little "slow" in the schoolboy camp.

Lovell was the last to say so, but a good many others of the rebels of Rookwood had made the remark.

Jimmy Silver was seated on the banked-up parapet of the rebel camp, overlooking the deep trench that surrounded it.

A wintry sun was shining down upon the camp and the school allotments, in the midst of which it stood, and the school buildings in the distance.

In the School House the rest of Rookwood was at lessons.

In the camp on the allotments the Fourth Form were in garrison.

The Rookwood barring-out had lasted for days now.

Jimmy Silver, a born general, had laid his plans well.

The entrenched camp was too strong to be taken; the rebels had defended it well.

Jimmy had foreseen that, and he had been right.

What the Head would do when he found that the rebel Form could not be reduced by force was a puzzle to the rebels themselves.

The first flush of victory, over, the rebels were not quite so satisfied with the position of things.

At first they had rejoiced in their freedom and the unaccustomed absence of restraint and lessons.

But time began to hang on their hands.

They could not venture out of the camp, for there was a watch set, and stragglers were likely to be caught, and hauled before the Head—for severe punishment.

Another attack by the prefects would have been very welcome; but the prefects did not approach the camp save to keep the rest of Rookwood from communication with the rebels.

Townsend and Topham, and the rest of the nuts, who had joined up unwillingly, were loud in their grumbles.

The nuts did not matter so much; they grumbled anyway.

But the more reliable part of the garrison was growing bored.

The "moral" of the Fourth was suffering.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were thinking out that problem as they sat on the parapet.

"Slow," remarked George Raby thoughtfully, "isn't the word! Crawling, I should say. Yaw-aw!"

Jimmy Silver snorted.

"I never thought I'd want to go in to lessons," remarked Newcome, "but I'm blessed if I wouldn't like

to grind Latin with Bootles again for a change!"

Another snort from Jimmy Silver.

"Why don't the Head buck up?" growled Tommy Dodd, the Modern junior. "He ought to be trying to rout us out!"

"And giving us something to do!" grunted Lovell. "I've done nothing this morning except punch Towny's nose!"

"Yaw-aw-aw!" murmured Raby.

"Look here!" said Jimmy Silver hotly. "Shut up yawning, and think of setting an example to the rest! Suppose the fellows at the front got bored with being in the trenches, and let the Huns through? They must get horribly bored, but they don't howl about it! Well, shut up, then!"

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!"

"We've got to stick it out, haven't we?" demanded Jimmy.

"We shall never sheathe the sword—" began Lovell.

"Oh, don't give us that over again!" implored Tommy Dodd.

"It's bad enough, without House of Commons' eloquence thrown in!"

"You Modern ass!"

"You Classical fathead!" retorted Tommy Dodd.

"Do you want to be chucked into the trench?" demanded Lovell warmly.

"Yes—if you can chuck me!"

"I'll jolly soon—"

"Bow-wow!"

Lovell jumped up.

"Let's give the Moderns a jolly good licking all round!" he exclaimed. "That would be a bit of exercise, anyway."

"More exercise than would be good for you, I fancy!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Look here—"

"Rats!"

"Shut up!" roared Jimmy Silver, in exasperation. "No scrapping here, you silly chumps! Suppose the enemy rushed us while you're scrapping, you silly burlbers!"

Lovell sat down again, with a grunt.

"They won't rush us!" he snapped. "The Head's left us to stew in our own juice. He knows we shall get fed up with the barring-out at this rate."

"I'm not fed up!" snapped Jimmy.

"Everybody else is!"

"Blow everybody else!"

"Blow you, if you come to that!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "You know we've got to stick it. We started a barring-out, to last till the Head consented to expel Lattrey from Rookwood. Lattrey's still hanging on. If we surrender, we're beaten, and we've got to stand that cad in the school—the fellow who blinded Mornington! Are we going to stand that?"

"Never!"

"Well, then, what's the good of grousing?"

"It lets off steam," said Lovell.

"Br-r-r-r!"



## THE RETURN OF THE RAIDERS!

"Hallo, hallo! Here come the merry Pacifists!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

The Fistical Four looked wrathful at once.

Jimmy Silver's followers groused a good deal. It was the old British habit.

But in spite of grousing, they were prepared to hold out to the very end.

And grim looks were cast at the slackers as they came up to the group in a body, looking very determined.

### The 2nd Chapter. Bad for the Bolos!

Townsend, the dandy of the Fourth, led the party.

He was followed by Topham, Peele, and Gower, Classics; and Leggett and Cuffy, Moderns.

Six in all was the number of the Pacifists.

"Well?" rapped out Jimmy Silver.

"We've had enough of this!" began Townsend. And his followers chimed in:

"What-ho!"

"We want to end it."

"Hear, hear!"

"And we're jolly well going to!" continued Townsend. "We're fed up. It's no good stickin' it out any longer. The Head's leavin' us to get tired of it. We can't stick in this hole all the term, I suppose?"

"Look at our clothes!" said Topham plaintively.

"Look at my hands!" moaned Townsend.

"Is that all?" asked Jimmy Silver. "We want to chuck it. If you fellows want to stick it out, we're not stoppin' you!" snapped Townsend. "But we're goin' to drop it."

"Desert, you mean?"

"You can call it what you like. We're goin' to take our chance with the Head!"

"And the rest ought to do the same, if they've got any sense!" growled Peele.

"My dear James," murmured Cuffy, "the situation is exceedingly uncomfortable. Nor am I satisfied with resisting the just authority of the headmaster. I am sure my papa would be displeased."

"I've had enough!" announced Leggett, the sneak of the Modern side. "I didn't want to come here! I'm not going to stay. Let's all chuck it up."

"And what about Lattrey?" asked Jimmy quietly.

"Oh, bother Lattrey!"

"And Morny?"

"Well, Morny won't get his blessed sight back again by our stickin' here!" growled Topham. "I want Lattrey kicked out, but the Head don't see it. After all, old Chisholm is our headmaster."

"And we're goin'," said Townsend finally.

Jimmy Silver looked at them. "You're not going!" he said deliberately. "No desertions will be allowed. The Fourth Form, Classical and Modern, stick together in this affair. The Head can't sack the whole Form. He could sack a few. That's what we've got to think of. 'No surrender' is the word!"

"I tell you—"

"You're getting bored?" asked Jimmy.

"Bored to tears!" said Townsend pathetically.

"Well, I'll think of something to liven you up." Jimmy Silver stood up on the parapet, and shouted: "This way, you fellows! Roll up!"

There was a rush to the spot at once.

"What's up?" exclaimed Erroll.

"Another attack?"

"No; only these Bolos to deal with."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Friends, Romans, and countrymen!" said Jimmy Silver, addressing the rebels from the parapet. "Look at them! These dismal Bolos want us to end the barring-out by surrendering to the Head! Here is the Hidden Hand revealed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"These cheery pacifists want livening up. We are going to liven them up. They are sentenced to run the gauntlet."

"Look here—" began Townsend, in alarm.

"Line up!" roared Lovell.

"Bravo!"

"I—I say—" stammered Gower.

"My dear friends—" murmured Clarence Cuffy.

"You rotters—" began Leggett.

The Fistical Four jumped off the parapet, and formed up the rebels in a double row.

The juniors were grinning now. Boredom was banished for the moment by the excitement of punishing the "Bolos."

Every fellow caught up something—a cap, or a rope, or a stick—to deal with the delinquents.

Towny & Co. made a desperate rush to escape.

But they were headed off, and surrounded at once, and hustled to the end of the waiting row.

"Run!" commanded Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four and the three Tommies grasped the malcontents, and swung them towards the waiting lines. "Off!"

"Look here—"

"You rotters—"

"My dear James—"

"Use your boots on them, Lovell. You've got the biggest boots at Rookwood."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

(Continued on the next page.)



Several boots were planted behind Townsend, and he ran. Towner was not much given to exertion, when he could help it, but this time he ran like a deer.

As he tore along desperately between the rows of juniors, he was smitten heartily on both sides.

Even Mornington, the blind junior, had lined up to take his "whack."

"Yaroooh! Yah! Oh, oh, oh! Yooop!" yelled Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Towner got through, and bolted into the allotment-shed like a rabbit into a burrow.

He did not come out again.

"Now, Topham—"

"I—I, say—I—I—" stammered Topham. "Yaroooh! Leave off kicking me, Conroy, you rotter! Oh, dear!"

Topham ran for his life.

"Now then, Leggett—"

"Look here—"

"Run, you ass!"

Leggett ran.

He was smitten as he ran, and he roared like a bull till he escaped into the shed after Townsend and Topham.

Peele, and then Gower, ran the gauntlet in hot haste, roaring as they ran. Clarence Cuffy, the duffer of Rookwood, came last.

He blinked sorrowfully at the Fistical Four as he swung towards the line.

"My dear James—" he murmured.

"Buck up!" snapped Lovell.

"My dear Arthur—"

"Are you going?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"My dear Thomas—"

"Get a move on!" shouted Raby.

"My dear George—"

"Oh, kick him!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently.

"My dear— Yaroooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The unfortunate Clarence ran, smitten, but more mercifully than his fellow-pacifists.

He joined the grinning party in the shed, and added his groans to theirs.

The line broke up in a roar of laughter.

"Holism" in the rebel camp had been damped down effectually.

Jimmy Silver and his chums resumed their seats on the parapet.

And then, much to Jimmy's exasperation, his comrades resumed their yawning.

"Lend me a hand, Erroll!" It was Mornington's voice.

Erroll helped his blind chum, and Mornington sat on the parapet.

His face was genial and cheerful.

"You fellows holdin' a council of war?" he asked.

"No; it's a yawning-match!" replied Jimmy Silver, with great sarcasm.

Mornington laughed.

"I've got a suggestion to make, if you'd care to hear it," he remarked.

"Anything to liven things up?" asked Lovell hopefully.

"Yaas."

"Then go ahead, for goodness' sake."

"Yes, pile in, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver cordially.

"The chaps seem to be gettin' fed up," observed Mornington. "That's the Head's game now—to tire us out, isn't it?"

"Looks like it!" grunted Tommy Dodd.

"He won't succeed," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, he might in the long run. War-weariness, you know," grinned Mornington. "But I've got an idea! You remember old Scipio?"

"Scipio!" said Jimmy, with a stare.

"Yes, that cheery old Roman merchant.

His idea was to carry the war into Africa, when Hannibal was in Italy," explained Mornington. "Hit the enemy where he lives, you know. Carryin' the war into Africa is the only way of gettin' things done."

"Well?"

"Well, carry the war into Africa, like merry old Scipio," said Mornington. "If the Head won't attack us, let us attack him!"

"Oh!" exclaimed all the juniors together, in astonishment.

And there was a pause.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### "Carrying the War into Africa."

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

Jimmy, great leader as he was, had felt himself at a loss, owing to the new tactics adopted by the Head.

Leaving the rebels in peace was, in a way, a confession of failure on the Head's part.

But it was an efficacious method, for inactivity was certain to cause discontent and doubt.

Probably, Dr. Chisholm expected the rebellion to die away of its own accord when the young rebels became tired of it, and then, by twos and threes perhaps, the Fourth-Formers would return to their obedience.

The ringleaders, who had expulsion to look for, might prefer to hold out to the bitter end; but if they were deserted by most of their followers they would be easy enough to deal with.

That, doubtless, was the Head's expectation, and Jimmy Silver, in his heart, had some apprehension that the method might be successful in the long run, at least partially.

The nuts were already more than fed up, and other fellows were growing dissatisfied.

Higgs had growled that it couldn't last for ever. Hooker was heard to say that they were in a rotten scrape. Jones minor confessed that he, for one, didn't see what was to come of it all.

Rows between Classics and Moderns had started, too.

Mornington's suggestion was startling enough, but the more Jimmy thought of it the better he liked it.

The reckless idea was quite in keeping with Valentine Mornington's character.

Blindness had made no difference to Morny in that respect.

There was a long silence, while the juniors thought it over.

Jimmy was still reflecting when Lovell spoke at last.

"Easier to say than to do, Morny."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders in quite his old way.

"If I could see, I'd show you it's easy enough," he said. "You'll have to leave me here—a dashed helpless log, hang it! I'm no use in a scrap. But I'd like to no end. Why not take the offensive? It's the only thing, too. Sooner or later the fellows will get thoroughly fed up with doin' nothin', and they'll begin to mooch off, just as the Head expects."

"They'll get stopped," growled Conroy, the Australian.

"You can't stop them when the pacifists are in a majority," answered Mornington.

"No; that's so."

"What do you say, Jimmy?" asked Kit Erroll.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"It's a good scheme," he said. "Morny's full of good ideas. We'll carry the war into Africa."

"Hear, hear!" said Conroy.

"But—" murmured Lovell dubiously.

Jimmy started to his feet.

"Something's got to be done, or else a rot will set in!" he exclaimed. "It's the rule at the Front to raid the Huns when they're lying doggo. The Head's lying doggo at present, and we're going to raid him."

"My hat!" murmured Raby.

"All the fellows are at classes now," resumed Jimmy Silver. "We can make a surprise attack."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The Head will be taking the Sixth."

"You're not thinking of handling the Head?" exclaimed Newcome.

Jimmy grinned.

"No exactly; we haven't come to that. I'm thinking of screwing him up in the Sixth Form-room, and screwing in the Fifth, and then ragging the place."

"Oh, good egg!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

"Oh, all right!" exclaimed Lovell. "If we come to close quarters with the Sixth, though—"

"Who's afraid of the Sixth?" demanded Tommy Dodd.

"If you think I am, you Modern worm—"

"Order!" rapped out Jimmy Silver. "No rags now! I want a dozen fellows to come with me—volunteers."

There was a buzz of excitement in the Fourth Form camp when the new "offensive" was made known.

Towner & Co. simply gasped at the idea, and certainly they had no intention of volunteering.

But the nuts were not alone in that; a good many of the fellows shook their heads over such a hairbrained scheme.

But a dozen volunteers were found easily enough.

The Fistical Four and the Three Tommies and the three Colonials made ten. Towle and Flynn made up the dozen.

Kit Erroll would gladly have joined up, but Jimmy wanted him to remain in command of the camp.

Morny would have jumped at the chance of an adventure, especially a risky one, but his blindness condemned him to inactivity.

Never had the dandy of Rookwood felt his misfortune so keenly as at that moment, though he said no word.

In a very short time the raiders were ready.

The whole garrison lined the parapet to watch them set out.

They crossed the trench by a plank to the outer parapet, and ran down the slope to the ground.

As they started towards the schoolhouse Sergeant Kettle came whisking round a corner of the building.

He rushed at the juniors at once.

"Got you at last!" he grinned, as his heavy hand dropped on Jimmy Silver's shoulder. "You come with me to the 'Ead, Master Silver!"

"Sock it to him!" shouted Conroy.

There was a swarm upon the sergeant at once.

Mr. Kettle said that he had "got" Jimmy Silver.

It looked rather as if Jimmy Silver had got him!

For in three seconds the burly old soldier was on his back, and Jimmy Silver was sitting on his chest.

Sergeant Kettle gasped wildly.

"Lemme gerrup!" he spluttered. "I'm going to take you to the 'Ead! 'Ead's horders, blow you!"

Jimmy Silver did not reply.

He whipped a cord from his pocket and tied the sergeant's wrists together, Lovell and Raby holding them for the purpose.

"Up with him!" said Jimmy, getting off the sergeant's chest at last.

Mr. Kettle was whisked to his feet.

"What's the game?" asked Tommy Dodd.

"Take him into camp."

"Wha-a-at for?"

"Prisoner of war."

"Oh, good!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, sergeant!"

"I ain't coming!" bellowed Sergeant Kettle wrathfully. "I'd give you prisoner of war, you young raskils, if I had my 'ands loose!"

"March!" grinned Lovell. "Anybody got a pin to stick in him?"

"Ha, ha!"

"Old on!" gasped Mr. Kettle. "I—I—I'll go!"

"You'd better!"

"Buck up, old sobersides!"

With the grinning juniors grasping him on all sides, the captured sergeant was marched to the camp.

A loud cheer greeted his arrival there.

"Walk the plank, sergeant!" chortled Tommy Dodd.

"I won't!" howled Mr. Kettle.

"Pitch him into the trench, then!" commanded Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Kettle fairly jumped on to the plank.

The trench was too deep for him to want to be dropped into it.

Erroll, laughing, drew him over the inner parapet and down into the camp, where he was surrounded at once by a cheering crowd.

"Take care of him!" called out Jimmy Silver. "Don't let him eat his head off in idleness, either. Prisoners of war have to work these days."

"He can do the camp chores!" grinned Conroy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leave him to us!" grinned Oswald.

"We'll make him work!"

"You young raskils!" bellowed the sergeant. "Oh, my 'at! Stop lungin' at my back, young Higgs! Oh, you young rascalsions! Yow-ow!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. chortled as they left the camp again, much elated by their easy victory over the sergeant.

Ragging Mr. Kettle furnished a harmless and necessary amusement for the garrison while they were gone.

There was no doubt that the unfortunate sergeant would be made to work.

In a very cheery mood Jimmy Silver & Co. marched into the deserted quadrangle, and thence into the School House.

Tupper, the house-page, met them with a staring face.

"Cut off, Buttons," said Jimmy Silver, "and not a word about seeing us, or I'll cut off all your buttons and make you eat them!"

"My 'at!" grinned Tupper. "I won't say nothing, Master Silver!"

Tupper vanished below stairs.

"Come on!" said Jimmy.

And on tiptoe the raiders proceeded to the attack.

### The 4th Chapter.

#### The Offensive.

Jimmy Silver stopped outside the door of the Sixth Form-room.

There was a murmur of voices within. The Head of Rookwood was taking the top Form in Greek.

Certainly he had not the slightest suspicion that the rebels were on the war-path, and were "carrying the war into Africa," like Scipio of old.

Jimmy produced a strong gimlet from his pocket.

Quietly, steadily he drove it into the door at an angle towards the doorpost.

He had oiled it, and it penetrated swiftly and made no sound.

It was hard work as the gimlet was more and more deeply embedded in the tough wood.

But Jimmy's fingers and wrists were strong, and he drove it on almost without a pause.

In a few minutes the gimlet was driven in up to the handle.

The opening of that door was likely to be an exceedingly difficult task, for when the gimlet was driven in to its full length Jimmy twisted off the handle with a pair of pliers.

How the gimlet was to be extracted now was a problem he left to others to solve.

He had done his "bit."

He left the spot on tiptoe and joined his comrades in the passage.

Lovell came in from the quad, grinning.

"Well?" whispered Jimmy.

"It was jolly hard work!" said Lovell.

"It's done."

"Good!"

The Sixth-Form room had a door opening on to the quadrangle.

Lovell had glimpsed that door while Jimmy was engaged with the door on the corridor.

Conroy and Raby came back grinning; they also had been at work.

All the gimlets in the juniors' tool-chests had been commandeered for the work.

There was a door at each end of the Fifth-Form room.

Conroy and Raby had accounted for them.

The two senior Forms of Rookwood were prisoners now.

They would discover it when they tried to leave their quarters.

"What about the Shell?" grinned Van Ryn.

Jimmy considered.

"Got any more gimlets?" he asked.

"Here's one."

"And here's another."

"Some more up in the studies, Jimmy."

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "Screw in the Shell, too! May as well make a good job of it."

In ten minutes the Shell were fastened in.

The raiders chuckled over their success.

Hitherto all had been plane sailing; the raid had gone without a hitch.

As Lovell remarked, the Head was not in the same street with them when it came to generalship!

"Where next, O King?" asked Pons.

"Look for Lattrey!"

"Oh, good!"

"Most likely in the Form-room," said Lovell.

The raiders looked into the Fourth-Form room.

Lattrey and Tubby Muffin, the only two members of the Fourth who were not in rebellion, were there.

Mr. Bootles, the Form-master, was not bothering himself to take a Form of two members.

He had set Lattrey and Muffin tasks, and retired to his study.

Tubby Muffin stared and grinned at the sight of the raiders.

He was devoting more attention to a chunk of toffee than to his work.

Mark Lattrey started to his feet in alarm.

The cad of Rookwood had a gloomy look.

The rebellion of the Fourth was entirely on his account.

Although he knew that his father had some strong influence over the Head, Lattrey did not feel at all certain how the matter might turn out, and he was apprehensive.

His apprehension became very keen at the sight of Jimmy Silver & Co.

The rebels were swarming into the room, grinning.

Lattrey clenched his hands.

"So here you are, you worm!" said Lovell.

"I'll yell for the Head if you lay a finger on me!" snarled Lattrey.

"Yell away, dear boy—the Head can't come."

"Collar him!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Lattrey's going to leave Rookwood. We've kicked him out once, and he's come back. This time we'll tar and feather him before we kick him out."

"Hear, hear!"

Lattrey made a wild rush to the door. The grinning juniors collared him on all sides.

But fear lent the cad of the Fourth an accustomed energy. He wrenched himself free, and bolted out of the doorway like a deer.

"My hat! Collar him, you duffers!"

"After him!"

Like a pack of hounds after a fox the rebels rushed in hot pursuit of the fleeing outcast of Rookwood.

Lattrey fled for the Sixth Form-room to obtain the protection of the Head.

He reached it, and tore at the door; but the door did not open.

The rebels were whooping behind, and the outcast darted away in search of another refuge.

He dodged in the passages, and gained the Head's study, breathless and panting.

Jimmy Silver's outstretched hand was close behind him when Lattrey bolted headlong into that sacred apartment and slammed the door after him.

Click!

The key turned in the lock as Jimmy's hand grasped at the door.

Jimmy hurled himself on the door, but it did not open.

Inside he could hear Lattrey's thick panting.

"Locked in," growled Jimmy, in disgust.

the sergeant, at last. "Ow! I'll do anything you like, you young raskils! Yow!"

"Good! Release the prisoner," said Jimmy Silver. "Sorry, sergeant, but we're down on conchies in this camp."

"Who are you calling a conchy, you young villain?" spluttered Mr. Kettle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sergeant staggered to his feet. He was feeling ruffled and furious, but he did not argue any further.

He certainly had a strong conscientious objection to serving as a waiter in the rebel camp, but Field Punishment No. 1 was too much for him.

Dinner—a dinner of unaccustomed plenty—was spread in the open air, in the sunshine, and Sergeant Kettle had to attend to his new duties.

The first objection was met with a merciless application of field-punishment, and the military gentleman raised no further objections.

He had too many aches as it was. He was kept very busy.

It was quite useful to have a prisoner of war as a waiter, and it was highly entertaining to watch the sergeant's face as he did the waiting.

"Pepper, sergeant!"

"Bring me a clean plate, Kettle!"

"Hurry up, old sobersides!"

"Keep your thumb out of the gravy, Kettle!"

"Throw something at that fool of a waiter and wake him up!"

"Kettle, you ass, give me another cut!"

"Plates, Kettle!"

"Kick that fool Kettle, somebody!"

"Hurry up, sergeant!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sergeant Kettle hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels, as he hurried to and fro carrying out the bidding of the hungry diners.

The expression on his face would have excited the envy of a Von Tirpitz.

By the time dinner was over, the sergeant was feeling considerably fatigued and bewildered.

"Well done, sergeant!" said Jimmy Silver approvingly. "Keep on, and learn to keep your thumb out of the gravy, and you'll make a good waiter in the long run."

"Oh!" murmured the sergeant. "This 'ere is a dream. Oh!"

"You can have a peck at what's left, Kettle. After you've washed up, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Washed up!" murmured Mr. Kettle dazedly.

But he was past resistance.

He gathered up the huge quantity of crocks, and they were duly washed in the shed.

Then the sergeant was allowed to have his own dinner; it was felt that he had earned it.

The sergeant looked quite dazed as he ate his dinner.

These "goings-on" quite flabbergasted him, and he felt that it was time for the skies to fall.

It was evident that he was not going to have a happy time as a prisoner of war in the rebel camp.

Sergeant Kettle was a great stickler for discipline—applied to others, of course.

Applied to himself, it did not seem to possess such eminent advantages.

But he was in for it—and he was booked for stern discipline so long as the rebellion at Rookwood lasted.

And the sergeant wondered dazedly how long that would be.

The 6th Chapter.

A Peck of Troubles!

"Must be screwed outside, sir."

It was Bulkeley who spoke.

Morning lessons were not quite at an end, or would not have been under other circumstances.

But the discovery that the door was fastened outside had quite taken the Head's thoughts off lessons.

Dr. Chisholm's face was a study.

In the presence of the Sixth he could not give expression to the wrath that flamed in his breast.

He had his dignity to consider. But it was difficult to exercise self-restraint at such a time.

It had seemed to Dr. Chisholm that there was only one way of dealing with the rebels. He had tried every other way and failed, and he had resolved, though with bitter anger, to leave the Fourth Form to fire of their peculiar adventure.

It had certainly not occurred to him that the schoolboy mutineers would dream of passing from the defensive to the offensive.

But they had done it!

His feelings were almost too deep for words, and even words had to be restrained in the presence of the Form.

"Screwed!" he repeated. "Screwed outside! This is—this is incredible! The door must be opened somehow, Bulkeley."

"I'll try again, sir."

Bulkeley and Neville grasped the door-handle together, and tugged. But naturally they could not move it.

They gave it up at last, panting a little.

Knowles and Cartweg were tugging at the other door, but with the same result.

The Sixth were looking very serious, though some of them were inclined to grin.

The terrific "cheek" of the juniors tickled some of the seniors.

There was a long pause.

The Head was utterly at a loss.

The previous situation had been difficult to deal with. The present situation was worse.

"I could climb out of the window, sir," said Bulkeley, at last. "I can get tools outside, and open the door somehow."

"Pray do, Bulkeley!" gasped the Head.

The captain of Rookwood carried out his own suggestion.

He dropped from a window into the quadrangle.

He hurried round into the House, and was greeted by a sound of loud knocking from the Shell and Fifth Form rooms.

Those Forms had discovered by this time that they could not get out.

The Second and Third fags were free, and they were chortling at a great rate, apparently enjoying the present extraordinary state of affairs.

They grinned cheerfully at Bulkeley, who was frowning.

Bulkeley examined the Form-room door from without, and gave up as hopeless the idea of extracting the gimlet from which the handle had been wrenched.

He tapped at the door.

"Well, Bulkeley?" came the Head's voice from within.

"It looks like a gimlet, driven right in, sir."

"Withdraw it, then."

"The handle has been taken off, sir, and the end is flush with the wood."

"Bless my soul!"

"I shall have to force the door somehow, sir. It may do some damage."

"That cannot be helped, Bulkeley. Pray open the door as speedily as possible."

"Very well, sir."

Bulkeley went in search of tools.

He returned, and started work on the door.

It was not an easy task, but the door was forced open at last, much chipped and disfigured.

Dr. Chisholm came out.

He glanced at the chipped and torn wood, and the broken gimlet.

His brow was like thunder.

"The other doors seem to be fastened in the same way, sir," remarked Bulkeley.

Dr. Chisholm breathed very hard.

Jimmy Silver in the rebellion, and he would gladly have taken his stand with the rebels in the camp, if the Fourth had admitted fag recruits.

He strolled away to the school shop, but the sergeant was not there.

Then he looked in the direction of the rebel camp.

Jimmy Silver hailed him over the trench.

"Hallo, Algy!"

Algy came up, grinning.

"Seen anything of the sergeant?" he asked. "His nibs wants him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Algy.

"Show yourself, sergeant!" called out Jimmy Silver.

The sergeant had finished washing up, and two or three juniors rushed him to the parapet and hoisted him up.

He turned a purple face to the grinning fag across the trench.

"You can tell the Head he's here," said Jimmy Silver. "Tell him Kettle is a prisoner of war, and we've made him camp waiter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Algy.

He scuttled back to the School House, chortling.

But his face was quite grave when he came up to the Head, who was waiting impatiently in the corridor.

"Well," said Dr. Chisholm, frowning, "have you told the sergeant?"

"He can't come, sir."

"What?"

"He's a prisoner, sir," said Algy demurely. "They've taken him prisoner, and made him camp waiter, sir."

The Head breathed hard.

"Do you mean to say, boy, that Sergeant Kettle is detained by—by—the Fourth Form?"

"Yes, sir; they've made him waiter."

"Enough! You may go."

Algy Silver went, and in a few

Lattrey's eyes glittered, but he left the study without making a reply.

The Head, left alone, paced the room with knitted brow.

It was several days since he had written to Mr. Lattrey, but that gentleman had not deigned to come to Rookwood yet.

The Head's grim reflections were interrupted by a tap at the door, and he rapped out angrily, "Come in!"

It was Mr. Bootles who entered.

The Fourth Form-master had a worried look.

"Well, Mr. Bootles?"

"Mrs. Maloney has spoken to me, sir, on the subject of the boys' dinner."

"I really do not see, Mr. Bootles, why the housekeeper should speak to you on that matter, or you to me."

"Ahem! The matter is—is difficult, as there appears to be no dinner—"

"What?"

"It appears, sir, that the—the juniors have—ahem!—raided the kitchen, and taken away everything that was prepared for dinner."

The Head sank into a chair.

"Is—is—is it possible?" he said feebly.

"Apparently, yes, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Mrs. Maloney is in a difficulty, sir, and the cook appears to be somewhat excited, and—and—"

"Oh, dear! Doubtless Mrs. Maloney has some further supplies—"

"But it is already dinner-time for the boys, sir."

"Cold viands of some kind, Mr. Bootles—something from the school shop."

"The stock in the sergeant's shop was entirely cleared out a few days ago by Silver and his companions!"

as I am a very busy man," answered Mr. Lattrey calmly. "Neither do I quite understand why you wish to see me again so soon. However, I am at your service."

"I—I wish—"

"One word, sir. I met my son as I came in, and he informed me that you had bidden him prepare to leave the school with me. Does that mean that you intend to break our agreement?"

"It means that I think of making a final appeal to you to take your son away from Rookwood, in spite of the treacherous power you have over me," said the Head.

"That matter is settled and closed."

"Circumstances have changed since you were last here, Mr. Lattrey. The Form to which your son belongs is in revolt."

Mr. Lattrey raised his eyebrows.

"That is extraordinary news," he said.

"They refuse to submit to order until your son is sent away from Rookwood. Apart from the question of discipline, I cannot blame them; they do not wish to associate with a young ruffian. They know nothing of the fact that you have used your knowledge of a family secret to force me to keep the boy here," added the Head bitterly. "There is a barring-out in the school, sir, and entirely upon your son's account."

"That is your business, sir, and not mine," said Mr. Lattrey, unmoved. "I should say that it is a headmaster's duty to maintain discipline."

"This is not an ordinary case. The whole Form are in revolt, and they have entrenched themselves upon the school allotments, and refuse to submit. Force has been used unavailingly. The school, sir, is in a state that I had never before dreamed to be possible. I make a final appeal to you, sir, to take your son away from Rookwood."

"That is quite impossible," said Mr. Lattrey coldly. "I do not intend to have my son turned out of school in disgrace on account of a set of unruly boys. If they will not submit to law and order, coercion is necessary."

"Coercion has been tried, and has failed. I do not mean to say that I shall pardon this insubordination. The rebellion will be severely punished. But I see no prospect of a settlement so long as Mark Lattrey remains here. Rebels as they are, the Fourth Form at present enjoy the sympathy of the whole school—even, I fear, of some of the masters. All fail to understand why I have allowed your son to remain."

Mr. Lattrey nodded.

"The rebellion should be put down," he said. "In the hands of a practical man—like myself, for instance—it would not be a difficult task."

"You are very welcome to try!" snapped the Head.

"I am quite ready to try," said Mr. Lattrey. "If you place the matter in my hands, I will remain here this night and deal with them in the morning. I have not the slightest doubt that I shall be successful."

Dr. Chisholm's eyes glistened.

But it was borne in upon his mind, nevertheless, that the hard, cold man of practical affairs was perhaps right.

He was more fitted to deal with such an extraordinary situation than the scholarly Head of Rookwood.

There was a pause. The Head spoke at last.

"I accept your offer, Mr. Lattrey."

"I am quite at your service, sir."

When the moon rose over Rookwood Mr. Lattrey sauntered round to the allotments to look at the position.

He returned to the School House with a thoughtful shade on his brow.

Dr. Chisholm met him in the doorway.

"Well?" he said.

Mr. Lattrey smiled slightly.

"To-morrow morning, sir, I will take the matter in hand, and I undertake to place the camp in your hands in a few hours."

He went with the Head to his study, and a minute later Algy Silver came out of the window recess, grinning.

Algy slipped out of the house and scuttled away to the allotments.

"Jimmy!" he called over the trench.

Jimmy Silver's head appeared above the parapet.

"Hallo! Is that you, Algy?"

"You bet! I say, Jimmy, old Lattrey's down here now!"

"Has he come to take Lattrey away?"

"No jolly fear!" answered Algy, with a chuckle. "I just heard him speak to the Head. He's going to take you in hand!"

"My hat!"

"He's undertaken to bounce you out of that show in a few hours to-morrow morning. I heard him say so. I came to give you the tip. He looks a regular cunning old fox. Keep your eyes peeled."

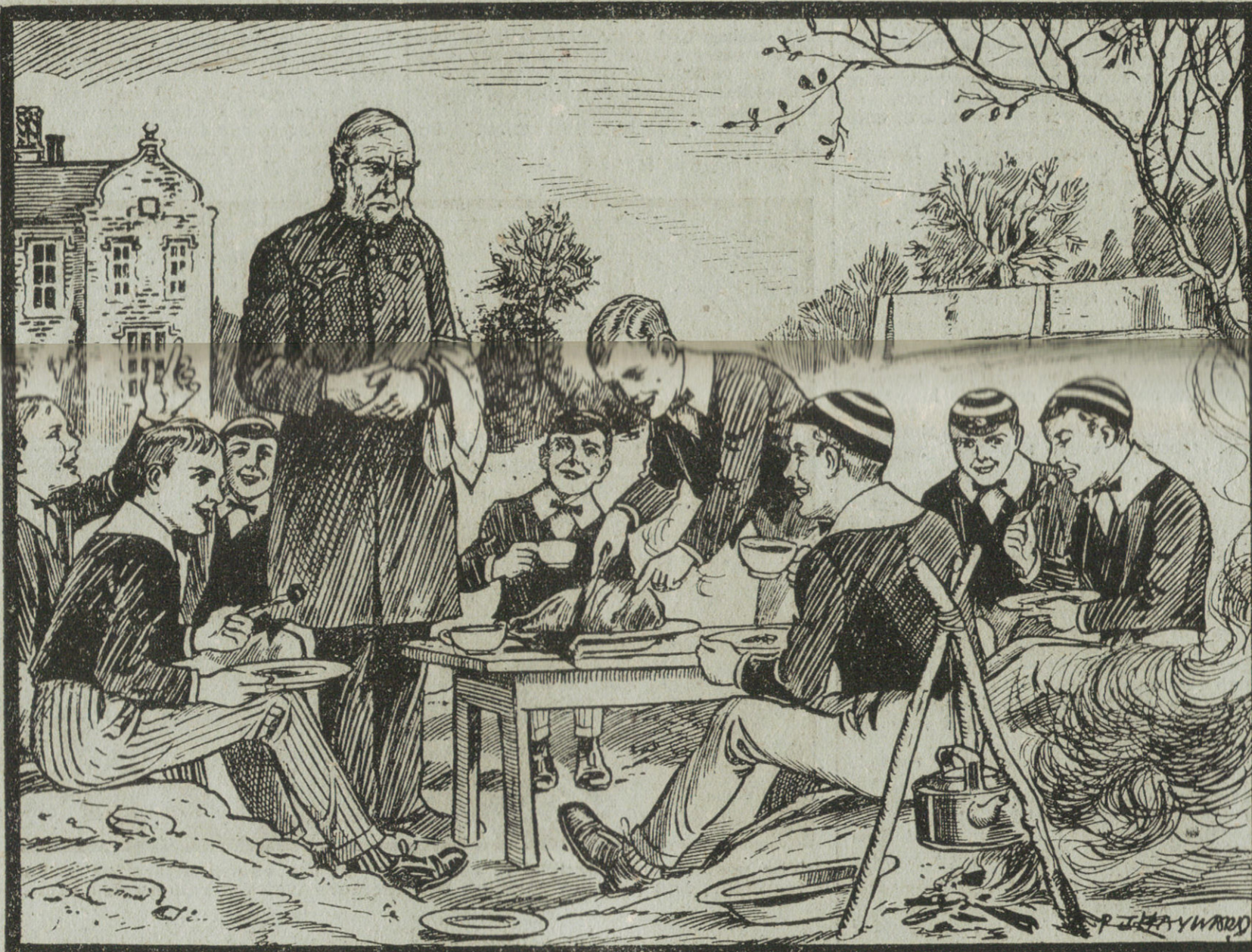
Algy vanished into the shadows.

"My only hat!" said Jimmy Silver.

Algy's warning had caused some excitement in the school camp.

And all the entrenched rebels looked forward with keen anticipation, and perhaps a little uneasiness, to the morrow.

THE END.



The expression on the sergeant's face as he waited upon the juniors would have excited the envy of Von Tirpitz.

"Open them, if you can, Bulkeley. I will send for a carpenter to make good the damage."

"Yes, sir."

Bulkeley set to work, and the Head, in a state of considerable agitation, rustled away to his study.

He was rather anxious not to meet the eyes of the school just then, if it could be avoided.

The Head was fully conscious of the ridiculous side of the affair, and his cheeks burned at the thought of being made an object of ridicule to all Rookwood.

He turned the handle of his study door savagely, but it did not open.

His eyes fairly blazed as he discerned the gimlet driven in up to the hilt, with the handle gone.

"Is—is that you, sir?" came a quavering voice from inside the study.

"Lattrey!" exclaimed the Head.

"Ye-es, sir."

"What are you doing in my study, Lattrey?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm angrily. "They—they were after me, sir," mumbled Lattrey. "I—I locked myself in. They were going to tar and feather me, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

Lattrey unlocked the door. But it could not be opened.

The Head stood nonplussed.

The situation was almost too much for him.

He rustled down the passage, and called to a fag of the Third.

"Fetch the sergeant here!"

"Yes, sir," said Algy Silver.

The Head's expression was not amiable; he did not feel kindly towards any member of the Silver family at that moment.

Algy grinned as soon as he was out of sight of the Head.

Although he did not pull with his Cousin Jimmy, he was quite at one with

minutes he had told the story to all the Third.

The discovery that the school sergeant had become general waiter in the rebel camp tickled those young gentlemen immensely.

Dr. Chisholm could hear yells of laughter in the distance, and he did not need telling the cause.

He strode away, after some thought, and called Tupper to the task of forcing the study door, as the sergeant was not available.

Tupper got the door open at last, and it was in a somewhat battered state by the time he had finished.

The Head affected not to notice that the page was grinning as he went away.

He strode into the study, and Lattrey shrank from his frowning look.

He retreated towards the door, with the Head's angry eye upon him.

"Lattrey!" rapped out the Head.

"Ye-es, sir?"

"On another occasion, kindly do not enter my study. I shall punish you most severely if you do."

"Very well, sir," faltered the outcast of Rookwood.

"I may add, Lattrey, that your father will be at Rookwood this evening, and that you had better make your preparations for leaving the school with him," said the Head, in a hard voice.

"Really, Mr. Bootles! Bless my soul! The boys must be satisfied with bread and cheese for once. Tell Mrs. Maloney to do the best she can. Bless my soul! Tell her and—the cook that I regret exceedingly— This—this is unexampled. However, it cannot be helped! Pray do not consult me further in the matter, Mr. Bootles."

Mr. Bootles left the study.

Dr. Chisholm resumed his uneasy pacing.

A sense of defeat was growing upon him, yet he dared not be defeated.

The decision was in the hands of Lucas Lattrey, and he was hard as iron.

What was the outcome of all this to be? The Head of Rookwood hardly dared ask himself the question.

But while the Head pondered grimly and gloomily over the situation, there was nothing but satisfaction in the rebel camp.

The "offensive" had been a great success, and it was quite certain that the enemy could not stand that kind of thing for long.

Somebody would have to give in, and it would not be the rebels. Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking forward to victory.

The 7th Chapter.

Algy's Warning.

"Mr. Lattrey!"

Dr. Chisholm rose, with a harassed look, to greet his visitor, as Mr. Lattrey was shown in.

Lucas Lattrey looked at him curiously.

The signs of worry in the Head's usually calm face could not escape the keen eyes of the inquiry agent.

"I am glad you have come," said the Head, in a low voice. "Kindly take a chair. I—I expected you before."

"I have been unable to come before,

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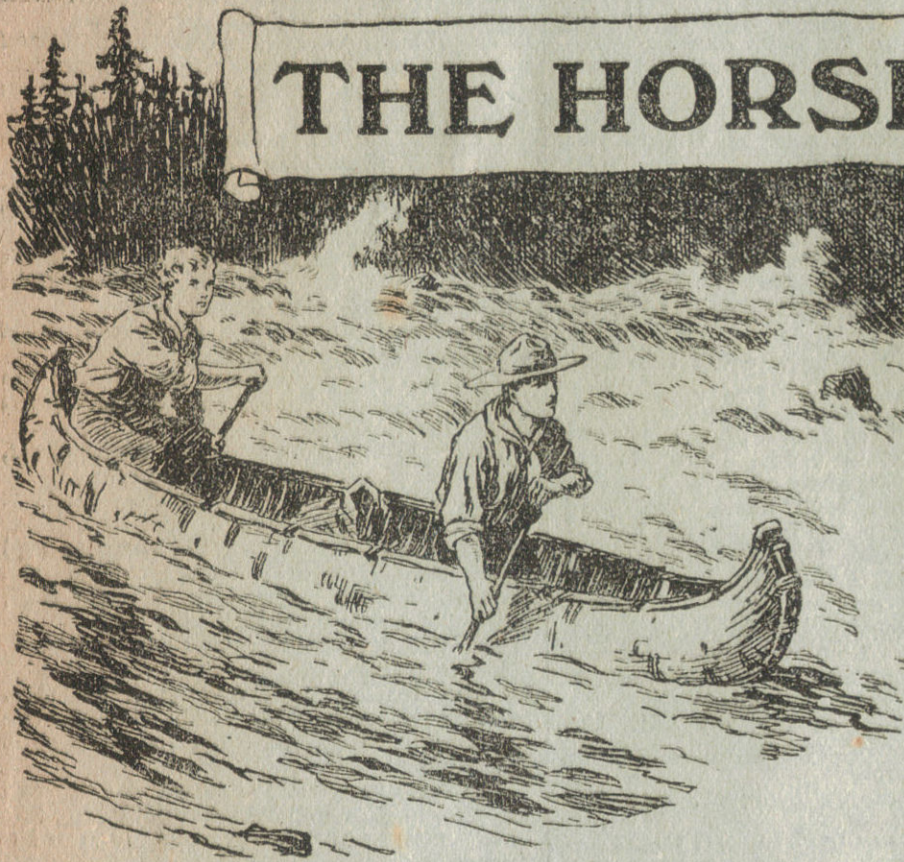
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DON'T MISS IT!

# THE HORSE HUNTERS!

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



## The 1st Chapter.

### The Runaway!

Thud, thud, thud!  
Clatter, clatter!  
"Hallo! What's on?" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

The Cedar Creek fellows were chatting about the gateway, after morning lessons, when the galloping hoof-beats came to their ears.

All eyes were turned up the trail at once.

There had been a thaw, and the trail was wet and muddy, and clotted with half-melted snow.

Along it the leafless larches dripped with water.

From the timber in the distance a riderless horse suddenly dashed into view.

Down the trail it came, with tossing head and floating mane, and stirrups clattering against the girths.

Frank Richards uttered an exclamation. "It's the black horse, Bob!"

"By gad! So it is!" said Vere Beauclerc. "Stand out of the way, you fellows!"

The Cedar Creek fellows were crowding back into the gateway.

The maddened horse would be passing the gates in a couple of minutes, and it was death to be in the path.

That the animal was pursued was evident, though the pursuers had not yet come into sight.

"That's Poker Pete's horse!" said Gunten. "I've seen him in Thompson!"

"My popper's horse," answered Bob Lawless. "Poker Pete sold him to my popper a few days ago."

Gunten grinned.

"I guess it was a bad bargain for your popper, then. That beast's too savage to ride. I wouldn't have given ten dollars for him!"

"Worth three hundred, if it wasn't for his temper," remarked Chunky Todgers. "Popper gave three-fifty," said Bob.

"He won't see it again, then," grinned Gunten.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!  
The runaway was crashing past the gates, his nostrils steaming, and his eye-balls rolling and showing the white.

The schoolboys crowded farther back, but the horse was past in a flash, and thundering on down the trail towards the distant town of Thompson.

"The ranch men are after him, I guess," remarked Bob. "Oh, by thunder!" he added, as the pursuers came in sight from the timber. "Poker Pete and Euchre Dick! They're after popper's gee!"

The two horsemen were riding hard, but their mounts were not equal in speed to the fugitive stallion.

back," sneered Gunten. "I reckon a man can beat his horse if he likes!"

"You would!" grunted Bob.

The dinner-bell rang, and the Cedar Creek fellows went to the schoolhouse; such of them as stayed for dinner at the school.

"Last day at school this week, Franky," said Bob, tapping his cousin on the arm. "We're going to join in hunting the gee-gee to-morrow, if he's not caught to-day."

"He won't be seen again in the Thompson Valley, if Poker Pete ropes him in," said Frank. "The rotter means to steal the horse if he can."

"I guess he won't rope him in, though." The schoolboys went in to dinner.

Frank Richards was thoughtful and troubled.

It was through him that Rancher Lawless had forced the brutal card-sharper to sell the black horse, taking the law into his own hands to that extent.

He had paid a good sum for the animal; more than it would have fetched at Kamloops in the market.

But the "sport" had been bitterly enraged, and Frank could see, now, that Poker Pete had determined to hunt for the animal, and recover him if he could, in spite of the forced sale.

As the animal was a runaway, and would be captured, if at all, far afield in the timber or the plains, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to bring the thief home to the card-sharper.

It was not agreeable to Frank to feel that he might have been the cause of his uncle losing so considerable a sum as three hundred and fifty dollars.

Mr. Lawless was one of the wealthiest ranchers in that section of British Columbia, but the sum was a large one, nevertheless.

Bob Lawless guessed what was in his cousin's mind.

"All serene, Franky," he said, when they came out after dinner. "That card-sharper won't catch him in a month of Sundays. And we're going to take a hand to-morrow—and we'll do the trick, you bet!"

And Frank could only hope that his chum would turn out to be a true prophet.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### At Close Quarters.

"Look out!"

It was a sudden yell from Harold Hopkins, in the gateway.

The Cockney schoolboy came running in, with a startled face.

The school-ground was crowded with boys and girls, and they all looked at Hopkins, as he dashed in.

"What's up?" called out Dick Dawson. "The 'orse!" yelled Hopkins.

"What?"

"Look out—the 'orse!" Hopkins bolted for the porch of the lumber schoolhouse.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!  
Crack!

The crash of hoofs was accompanied by the sudden ringing of a pistol-shot.

As startled eyes turned on the open gateway, the black horse was suddenly seen there, with tossing mane and rolling eyes.

The animal was evidently in a maddened and frantic state.

"By gad! Run for cover!" shouted Beauclerc.

Crack!

Poker Pete fired again as he rode in through the gateway.

There was a squeal from the black horse; the bullet had gone very close.

In maddened excitement the animal reared, and crashed his hoofs at the palisade.

Then he resumed his wild careering round the enclosure.

Bob Lawless gave a sudden cry. "Molly! Molly!"

It was Molly Lawrence, one of the pupils in Miss Meadows' class.

The girl had run behind the schoolhouse, and was now running round to the porch to get indoors.

"Quick, Molly!" yelled Tom Lawrence. He ran out to meet his sister, but Frank Richards was first.

The girl, in her fear and excitement, stumbled over a log, and fell to the ground, almost in the path of the runaway, who was dashing back towards the gates.

Her peril was so terrible that it almost froze the crowd in the porch.

Frank's heart throbbed as he ran to her.

He did not look towards the black horse, but the beating of the oncoming hoofs sounded in his ears like thunder.

He reached the girl, and caught her up.

Thud, thud! Snort!  
With a desperate effort Frank Richards threw the girl upon his shoulder, and raced back to the porch.

"Look out, Franky!"

The black horse had turned, with savagely gleaming eyes, on the boy almost in his path.

The great jaws were open, and the cruel, white teeth bared to tear him, as the ferocious animal closed in on him from behind.

Bob Lawless sprang forward, with a stool in his hand caught up from the porch.

He hurled it straight at the lunging head of the black stallion, and there was a squeal of pain from the animal as the stool struck fairly on the black muzzle.

The beast swerved round, neighing shrilly, and headed for the gates again.

Bob and Tom Lawrence grasped Frank and dragged him into the porch.

Molly Lawrence slid to her feet, almost fainting.

Frank reeled against Bob, who caught him and held him. His face was white.

Crack!  
Poker Pete fired again as the animal disappeared through the gates.

Frank Richards' eyes blazed as he saw him.

It was the cruelty of his former owner, as much as anything else, that had turned a splendid animal into a savage brute.

Frank ran out of the porch, caught up the stool, and flung it fairly at the sport as the latter fired.

The shot sped, but it missed by yards, as the flying stool struck Poker Pete in the side.

The sport uttered a yell of pain, and rolled out of his saddle with a heavy bump to the ground.

"Well hit!" chuckled Vere Beauclerc. Poker Pete scrambled to his feet, mad with rage.

The revolver had dropped from his hand, and Bob Lawless caught it up.

With a toss of his arm he dropped the dangerous weapon into a pool of water near at hand.

"That's safer there!" he remarked. Poker Pete strode towards Frank, and Beauclerc and Bob jumped to their chum's aid at once.

The sport thought better of it. He scraped his useless revolver out of the pool, remounted, and rode out of the gates, with a string of savage oaths upon his lips.

"The rotter!" panted Frank. "He won't shoot at the horse again in a hurry, at any rate."

"By gum, though," murmured Bob, "that black horse is dangerous, Franky! He may do some harm if he's not roped in."

"It's that brute's fault!"

"I guess so, more or less."

The chums went to the gates, and looked out. The black horse had vanished, but Poker Pete could be seen riding away towards Thompson at a moderate pace.

The sport had evidently given up the hunt, for the time at least.

## The 3rd Chapter.

### On the Trail!

"You'll come to-morrow, Cherub?" Bob Lawless asked, as the three chums quitted Cedar Creek School after lessons that day.

Vere Beauclerc hesitated.

"No school to-morrow, Beau," said Frank Richards. "Anything special to do at home?"

"No. But—"

"I'll bring you a pony from the ranch," said Bob, with a laugh. "You won't let my popper make you a present of one, but you'll let me lend you one—eh?"

"Right you are!" said Beauclerc, colouring and laughing. "I'll be ready to-morrow morning, then. What time?"

"Half an hour after sun-up, at the fork of the trail," answered Bob.

"Right-ho!"

The chums parted at the fork, and Beauclerc disappeared in the dusk, on the

"I hope so," said Frank, with a smile. The chums arrived at the ranch, and at supper Mr. Lawless was told of the happenings at the lumber-school that morning.

The rancher knitted his brows over the story.

"Shooting at my horse, was he?" he exclaimed. "I'll see Mister Poker Pete about that! What was he after the horse at all for, the horse-thief! By thunder, I guess I'll put it to him plain!"

"We're thinking of taking the trail after him to-morrow, uncle, as it's a holiday," remarked Frank Richards.

The cloud cleared from the rancher's brow, and he burst into a laugh.

He seemed as much amused at the idea as his foreman had been.

"You're welcome to try, my boy," he answered. "Don't get too near his hoofs or his teeth; not that you're likely to."

And the rancher laughed again.

The next morning Frank and Bob came down early and in a determined mood.

They wanted very much to show both Mr. Lawless and Billy Cook that they were not quite so helpless on the trail as those gentlemen supposed.

Three ponies were saddled, and Bob Lawless packed provisions for the day into the saddle-bags.

The hunt was to last till successful, or until darkness drove them home.

As they rode down the trail, Bob leading the spare horse for Vere Beauclerc, they came upon Billy Cook and a Kootenay cattleman, riding in the same direction as themselves.

"Hallo!" shouted Bob. "Whither bound, William?"

Billy Cook looked round with a grin as Bob and Frank rode up.

"Arter the gee-gee," he said. "That your game?"

"You bet."

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Oh, not so much of your cackle, Billy!" exclaimed Bob testily. "Do you think we can't follow a trail or throw a lasso?"

"I guess I'll eat all the hosses you catch this hyer day, Mister Bob!" answered the foreman. And the Kootenay grinned.

"Where are you looking for him?" asked Frank.

"He's been seen again in the woods near Cedar Creek," replied Cook. "I guess we shall spot his trail somewheres."

"That's our way."

"Then I'll have your kumpany; and mind, I'm goin' to eat all the hosses you catch!" grinned the ranchman.

"Rats!" retorted Frank laughingly.

They trotted on through the timber, and found Vere Beauclerc waiting at the fork of the trail.

The remittance-man's son was in good time.

He vaulted lightly into the saddle of the led horse, and rode on with the party.

"You've brought a rope," remarked



"Look out, Franky!" The black horse had turned, with savagely gleaming eyes. Next moment the ferocious animal closed on the junior from behind.

The black horse had turned, with savagely gleaming eyes, on the boy almost in his path.

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path through the timber, to the lonely shack by the creek.

Frank and Bob rode on to the ranch, in a thoughtful mood.

Soon Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch, loomed up on the trail, and the chums drew rein.

"Seen anything of the runaway yet, Billy?" called out Bob Lawless.

"Nope. Some of the boys got arter him yesterday," answered Billy Cook. "But he showed 'em a clean pair of heels. I tell you, that black critter is some horse! Never saw his like for speed in Canada."

"We're going to take a hand in hunting him to-morrow."

"Haw, haw, haw!" reared the ranchman.

Bob, with a glance at the lasso coiled up over Vere's arm.

"Yes; I've practised a good bit with the riata," said Beauclerc. "If I get a chance at the black horse it may come in useful."

Billy Cook chuckled.

"Hallo! Look out!" shouted Frank suddenly.

There was a sudden thudding of hoofs on the trail.

The black horse burst from the dripping larches and dashed by the party, vanishing down the trail in a thunder of hoofs.

"By gum!" gasped Billy Cook. "Somebody's arter him!" exclaimed Bob.

"Poker Pete, by thunder!"

The sport came thundering down the trail in hot pursuit.

Billy Cook drew up in the middle of the trail, and Poker Pete was forced to draw rein.

There was a grim expression on the cattleman's bronzed face.

"Stop's the word!" he rapped out.

"Let me pass, you fool!" shouted Poker Pete.

## THE HORSE HUNTERS!



(Continued from the previous page.)

"I guess not!" said the ranchman coolly. "You're after Mr. Lawless' boss, my sportive friend. Let up!"

"Hang you! It's my horse!" "I reckon I was a witness to the sale, and saw three hundred and fifty of the best paid over," grinned Billy Cook. "You'll turn right round and get back, Mister Poker Pete, or else I'll have you off that horse of yours in a brace of shakes, and I guess I'll dust up the trail with your kerkiss!"

The sport ground his teeth. Frank Richards & Co. had halted, prepared to back up the ranch foreman if necessary.

But it was not necessary. Poker Pete, with a curse, wheeled his horse and rode back up the trail. The sport of Thompson did not care to try conclusions with the brawny ranch foreman.

"I guess that lets him out," remarked Billy Cook, with a grin. "Now I'm after that gee. You youngsters had better keep clear."

He dashed away after the vanished stallion, followed by the Kootenay. Frank Richards & Co. rode after them at once.

"We're on in this scene, I guess!" remarked Bob Lawless.

"You bet!" said Frank tersely.

"Poker Pete's routed the gee-gee out for us!" grinned Bob. "I suppose the brute was feeding in the wood. He looks a bit thin, though. He'd have come near starving but for the thaw. Don't you throttle me with that rope, Cherub, old scout!"

Beaulerc laughed. He had taken his coiled lariat in his hand ready for use.

The three schoolboys rode hot on the trail, and they were close behind Billy Cook and his companion as the latter dashed out of the timber upon the plain.

### The 4th Chapter.

#### Hunting the Wild Horse.

"There he is!" Bob Lawless pointed with his riding-whip.

Away on the rolling plain, as they rode out of the timber, the black horse came in sight, grubbing in the half-melted snow in search of food.

Billy Cook and the Kootenay had separated, the latter taking a devious course, to head off the escape of the black stallion.

"You youngsters keep back!" said the ranchman. "You don't want to skere the critter till Coal Sacks gets the wind of him."

"Right you are!" answered Bob. But the black horse was not so easily headed off.

He raised his head and glared round, and broke at once into a gallop, heading for the distant hills at a great burst of speed.

"By gad, what a ripper!" exclaimed Vere Beaulerc, his eyes glistening, as the horse-hunters galloped in hot pursuit. "Isn't he a beauty!" agreed Frank Richards. "By Jove! I don't fancy we shall run him down on these gees!"

They rode hard in pursuit, but did not gain an inch on the black horse.

Indeed, it was easy to see that if the fugitive had not been content with keeping his distance he could have shown a clean pair of heels to the pursuit.

Thud, thud, thud! the hoofs rang on the squashy plain, wet and squashy in the thaw.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Billy Cook suddenly. "There's a chance!"

He waved his coiled lasso wildly. Far ahead, following a scarcely marked track across the plain, was the post-wagon from Thompson, driven by Kern Gunten, that being Gunten's Saturday task.

The Swiss looked round, and drew in his pair of horses, as he heard the thudding and shouting in the distance.

The black horse was heading straight for the post-wagon when it appeared from behind a ridge in the plain.

Kern Gunten jumped up in his seat, and waved his whip and shouted, to drive back the runaway into the hands of the pursuers.

The black horse swerved, and darted off at almost right angles to his previous course.

"Good!" muttered Billy Cook. He swerved and galloped across to cut off the runaway.

The others rode hard on his track.

A good half-mile had been saved by the turning aside of the runaway, and the hunters made the most of it.

With a desperate spurt, Billy Cook rode within cast of the black horse.

His lariat uncoiled in the air as it flew. The noose struck the tossing head of the runaway and fell.

The ranchman muttered something between his teeth. The cast had missed.

Whiz!

Vere Beaulerc, still riding at top

speed, made his cast as the disappointed ranchman dragged in his rope.

There was a wild squeal from the runaway.

Vere Beaulerc had had better luck head and tautened.

The noose settled fairly over the tossing head and tautened.

"Roped!" yelled Bob Lawless, in exuberant delight.

The black stallion stopped for a second, and then sprang away fiercely.

The rope ran to its full length like a flash. But the end was secured to Vere's saddle.

He rode on hard, or his pony would have been dragged over by the furious efforts of the runaway to escape.

"Caught!" shouted Frank.

"By gum!" panted Billy Cook.

The ranchman had his lasso ready again, and he rode on rapidly.

Fiercely as the runaway was struggling to escape, the pull of the rope slackened him, and Billy Cook easily made a second cast.

His rope settled over the head of the black stallion.

"Our boss, I reckon!" he panted.

"Looks like it!" grinned Bob Lawless.

"Good old Cherub!"

"Give him rope, younker!"

"All right!"

Beaulerc understood what was required.

The black horse, roped in by two lassoes, whirled round and charged savagely at his captors.

He came on with foaming jaws and glistening teeth, and it was a sight well calculated to shake any but the strongest nerve.

But the black horse had no chance now.

Beaulerc and the ranchman rode widely separated, and the two taut lassoes held the runaway a prisoner at equal distances from each.

There, helpless at the ends of the ropes, the mad fury of the horse was spent in frantic rearing and plunging and savaging.

The hunters watched him grimly, from a safe distance.

The Kootenay Coal Sacks threw in a third rope, and the black stallion was more helpless than ever.

The hunters turned homeward.

Three lassoes constrained the captured horse to follow, and still the horsemen rode wide and gave him plenty of room.

Frank and Bob rode after them in great spirits.

The capture had been made, and made effectively, and it was their chum who had roped in the black stallion.

Cedar Creek School had come to the fore, after all.

There was a long ride before the hunters, for the chase had taken them many a mile afield.

The black horse, fatigued, almost exhausted, at last, by its vain resistance, trotted on sullenly amidst its captors.

The animal was still saddled and bridled, as when it had escaped from Poker Pete days before, and it must have been considerably irked, which perhaps accounted in part for its savageness.

But there was no doubt that the brute had a savage temper, and it was not surprising that the sport of Thompson had failed to subdue it.

Poker Pete was no horseman; his only method of subduing an animal was brute force and cruelty.

Bob Lawless doubted whether the animal would ever be of much use, now that he was caught. The vicious gleam in his eyes was unmistakable, and Bob, though a fearless rider, would not have cared to mount him—if it had been possible.

"By gum!" said Billy Cook. "I reckon Poker Pete had a bad bargain in that boss, and he ought to have been glad to get rid of him. I guess I wouldn't sit that critter for a month's pay doubled."

"Same here!" confessed Frank Richards.

It was yet early in the afternoon, when the cavalcade arrived at the Lawless Ranch.

Mr. Lawless came out to meet them, with great satisfaction in his looks, at the sight of the captured stallion.

"You've got him, Billy?" he exclaimed.

Billy Cook looked rather shamefaced.

"Boss, I never got him," he answered.

"It was young Beaulerc that roped him in, and that's the truth."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the rancher, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless, feeling that it was his turn to laugh now.

"Cedar Creek comes out on top, dad!"

"Billy Cook's undertaken to eat the horse, if we caught it," chuckled Frank Richards.

"I own up!" said Cook. "I was shooting off my mouth, and I own up. The younker did it, and I own up! But I tell you, boss, I guess there ain't a man on this hyer ranch that'll care to ride that boss, now we've got it."

"He looks a savage brute," agreed Mr. Lawless, eyeing the sullen animal with a critical eye. "I can't say I like his looks. He may have to be shot, but we'll give him a chance."

"Shot?" exclaimed Vere Beaulerc.

"I guess so, my lad, unless he improves in temper—there's the very devil in his eye," said the rancher. "Shove him in the corral now, Billy, and see that he has plenty to eat. Keep the rope on him."

"You bet!"

The three ropes had to be left on the black horse after he was led into the corral, for, at the slightest attempt to approach him, his teeth were bared, and his eyes glittered with fury.

Mr. Lawless shook his head as he regarded him over the fence.

Vere Beaulerc was thoughtful and clouded as he went into the ranch house with his chums to a late lunch.

"Penny for 'em, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob, clapping him on the shoulder.

Beaulerc coloured.

"I—I was thinking I'd like to try and ride that horse, Bob."

Bob Lawless whistled.

"Off your chump?" he asked. "Billy Cook wouldn't try it, now, and he's the best hand with a boss in the Thompson Valley."

"Still, I'd like—"

"Popper wouldn't let you," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "He doesn't want you to be taken home in pieces, Cherub."

The matter was dropped, with that, but before Vere Beaulerc left the ranch, he went round to the corral to take a last look at the black stallion.

The animal had an enclosure of the corral to himself, and he was trampling restlessly, the ropes trailing about him.

"It's a splendid brute," Beaulerc said. "I believe I could handle him, Bob."

"Swank!" grinned Bob.

"No—really—"

"You're jolly well not going to try; we can't spare you, Cherub. Here, come on!"

Bob marched his guest away.

### The 5th Chapter.

#### Demon's Master.

Vere Beaulerc was waiting at the fork of the trail, as usual, for his chums on their way to school on Monday morning.

He gave them an eager look as they came up.

"How is he?" he asked.

"The popper?" asked Bob. "Same as usual, my tulip."

"I—I was speaking of the black horse!" stammered Beaulerc.

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

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thinking you'd like to try your hand at taming him—hey?"

"I'd like to try, certainly."

"Can't he be tamed?" asked Bob. "Billy Cook tried him yesterday, and he was glad to get out of the corral with a whole skin."

"He's awfully savage, Beau," said Frank Richards. "I'm afraid there's nothing for it but—but—"

Beaulerc knitted his brows.

"Is he to be shot?" he asked.

"I'm afraid there's nothing else to be done."

"Oh!" exclaimed Beaulerc.

"My dear old Cherub," said Bob Lawless. "It can't be helped. The brute had a vicious temper to begin with, then Poker Pete was cruel to the poor wretch, and then it's been free nearly a week, and grown quite wild. The popper won't have three hundred and fifty dollars shot, if he can help it, you can bet on that. But the brute can't be trusted an inch."

"He's been savaging another horse that was let into the corral, Beau," added Frank. "He's a regular demon."

Beaulerc nodded.

"I suppose Mr. Lawless knows best," he remarked, and he sighed.

"You bet!" agreed Bob.

Beaulerc did not speak again on the subject, but he was very thoughtful on the way to school; and he remained in thought all the day.

After school, when he walked home with his chums, he did not say good-bye as usual at the fork in the trail.

"Do you mind if I come home with you this evening, Bob?" he asked, colouring.

"Jolly glad, of course," said Bob, at once. Then he grinned. "You want to see the black gee-gee again before the execution—eh?"

"Ye-es!"

"Well, jump on behind me," said Bob. "Can't walk all the way, but my pony can carry double."

"Thanks!"

The three schoolboys arrived at the ranch together in the deep dusk.

Vere Beaulerc had a cordial welcome; the remittance-man's son was always welcome at the ranch.

His first question was on the subject of the black stallion.

Mr. Lawless shook his head seriously.

"I'm afraid there's only one way, my boy," he said. "The men have not even been able to get the saddle off him. He is quite vicious. But I shall give him another chance in the morning, before he is shot."

"The Cherub thinks he could ride him, dad," chortled Bob Lawless.

The rancher smiled.

"I'm afraid I couldn't permit you to try, Beaulerc," he said. "Your father would scarcely approve of it."

"I don't think he'd mind, sir," said Beaulerc eagerly. "He knows how I can handle horses. Oh, Mr. Lawless, if you'd let me try, I feel sure I could—"

He broke off, flushing hotly. "Don't think I'm a conceited ass, sir. It isn't that. But I lived among horses when I was a kid in England; I rode almost as soon as I could walk, and—"

"I couldn't let you try, my lad. I'm answerable for your safety while you are here," said the rancher.

"My pater wouldn't object, sir; I'm sure of that."

"I guess he would," smiled Mr. Lawless. "I certainly shouldn't allow Bob to go near him."

"Well, the Cherub's a better man with a gee than I am, popper," said Bob honestly. "I've seen him with the cattle sometimes; he's got a way with them. Still, I don't think he could ride the Demon."

"But—but it's worth trying, if you're thinking of having him killed, sir," urged Beaulerc. "Will you let me try, Mr. Lawless, if I get my father's permission?"

The rancher looked puzzled.

"Do you know it would very likely be your death?" he exclaimed.

"I am sure not, sir. Besides, I'm not afraid."

"No, but I'm afraid for you," said Mr. Lawless. "Your father could never agree."

"He knows how I can ride, sir. Will you let me, if I bring you his written permission? He has seen the horse several times."

Mr. Lawless pulled at his beard rather perplexedly.

"Well, I guess I can leave it to your father," he said.

"Good!" exclaimed Beaulerc joyfully. "Lend me your pony, Bob, and I'll get off to the shack at once."

Beaulerc rode away from the ranch in a few minutes.

An hour or so later he returned with a note from Mr. Beaulerc.

The rancher read it, and frowned thoughtfully. It was brief and to the point.

"Dear Mr. Lawless,—My son can ride any horse in Canada, and he has my full permission to try any horse on your ranch."

"Yours,  
"LASCELLES BEAULERC."

"By gad, that's plain enough," said Mr. Lawless. "Well, well, your father ought to know what risks you can take. I'll keep my word; you can make the attempt in the morning, my lad."

"Oh, thanks!" exclaimed Beaulerc, in delight.

Frank and Bob were not so delighted, however, as they marched Beau off to share their room for the night.

They were filled with dismal apprehensions for the morrow.

They were up early in the winter morning, Beaulerc in merrier spirits than his chums had ever seen him in before.

He was looking forward to the contest with the black stallion with the greatest confidence and satisfaction.

After breakfast the chums left the ranch-house and made for the corral, Mr. Lawless and Billy Cook accompanying them.

The rancher was looking thoughtful and troubled.

He had given his permission, but he was full of forebodings.

The look of the black stallion, viewed over the fence, was not promising, either.

He threw up his head, and his eyes gleamed at them, and the savage mouth opened with a flash of white teeth.

"Beau," exclaimed Frank Richards, "you—you can't—you shan't!"

"I can, old chap, and I'm going to," smiled Beaulerc.

"You'll be killed, you young idjit!" growled Billy Cook gruffly.

"Cherub, old man—" murmured Bob.

Beaulerc, unheeding, went to the gate of the corral.

Mr. Lawless called to him.

"Beaulerc, you're running a fearful risk!"

"I think not, sir," said the schoolboy confidently. "My father doesn't think so."

"I can't believe you can back that horse, my boy. But I shall keep my word. I shall keep my rifle handy, too."

The rancher had his gun in the hollow of his arm. "You're a brave lad, but reckless, I fear; but if you succeed in riding that horse, Beaulerc, he is yours. You'll be the only one in this section who can do it, and the horse will be yours."

"Oh, sir," gasped Beaulerc. "I—I—"

"You can't refuse," said the rancher, with a smile. "If you cannot ride him, he will be shot to-day. But I fear—"

"Beau, old man—" said Frank.

"Keep clear, you fellows!"

With a firm hand, the Cherub threw aside the bar at the gate, and then he strode into the corral.

The rest watched breathlessly, Mr. Lawless keeping his rifle handy.

The black horse started, and turned savagely at the schoolboy's footsteps.

Beaulerc threw the bar into position behind him.

He was shut up in the corral now, alone with the savage horse.

His chums scarcely breathed as he advanced upon the animal with a firm step and a steady eye.

There was a shrill neigh from the black stallion, and he made a sudden rush right upon the iron-nerved lad.

Beaulerc leaped aside, and caught at a trailing rope as he did so.

The horse was swung round on the lasso, so sharply that he came to his knees in the grass.

Before the animal could even move, Vere Beaulerc was in the saddle.

The horse leaped up as if electrified.

"Beau!" panted Frank.

The black stallion, in his surprise and rage, leaped several feet clear of the ground, coming down on his forefeet, his heels behind beating the air.

But the daring rider was not unseated. He lay back till his head was lashed by the tossing tail, and even at that terrible moment his feet found the dangling stirrups, and his hands caught the reins.

The next moment the horse was rearing on his hind legs, as if about to fall backwards, and Beaulerc's face was buried in the tossing mane.

And then followed such a struggle as the onlookers had seldom, or never, witnessed before.

The black horse reared round the corral, rearing, plunging, turning, careering, in frantic efforts to unseat his rider.

He scraped against the wall of the corral, but Beaulerc's leg was always out of the way; he rolled on his back in the grass, but Beaulerc was always off his back just in time, and in the saddle again the moment the horse "right