

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d} 1^{1d} 2

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending June 22nd, 1918.]

GETTING EVEN WITH CARTHEW!

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

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The Unspeakable Carthew.

"Poor old Jimmy!" Lovell and Raby and Newcome spoke together in tones of deep commiseration.

And Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, replied:

"Wow-wow!"

Jimmy Silver was standing in the end study, wringing his hands.

His face expressed mingled anguish and wrath.

"Carthew is an awful rotter!" said Lovell.

"A regular Hun!" said Raby.

"A first-class brute!" added Newcome.

"Wow-wow!"

"Does it hurt?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell sympathetically, but perhaps not very tactfully.

"Wow! No," groaned Jimmy Silver. "Not at all! Wow! This is simply a new form of gymnastics. Yow-ow!"

"It's too bad," said Raby.

"We've got to make Carthew sit up, somehow."

"Oh, the rotter!" mumbled Jimmy Silver.

It was really a hard case.

Carthew, the bully of the Sixth, and the most intensely disliked prefect on the Classical side at Rookwood, had come down very heavy.

Jimmy Silver had undertaken to punish Carthew, the prefect having bullied Jimmy's cousin, Algy of the Third, in a way that Uncle James did not approve of.

Possibly Carthew did not care very much about Uncle James' approval.

Jimmy's method had been to arrange intacks in Carthew's arm-chair, and glue in his slippers and gum in his inkpot.

Unfortunately, Carthew had come into his study unexpectedly while Jimmy was thus engaged.

Though Jimmy was not exactly tearful, his feelings were expressed in emphatic ejaculations.

Carthew had given him six on each hand.

It was a punishment quite out of proportion to the offence—at least, from the point of view of the end study.

"Poor old Jimmy!" repeated the Co.

"Yow-ow-ow!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Never mind. Can't be helped. Yow-ow-ow! My blessed hands are on fire—wow! Let's get out."

"Come on, then, old chap," said Raby.

The Fistical Four went downstairs.

Jimmy felt that a walk in the pleasant summer sunshine would make him feel better.

But his luck was out.

Mark Carthew of the Sixth was standing in the doorway, chatting with Knowles of the Modern side.

The Classical prefect grinned at the sight of Jimmy's pained face.

"Fag!" he called out.

Apparently Carthew wanted a fag

—or more likely he had invented the want on the spot, for the purpose of worrying the captain of the Fourth a little more.

The Fistical Four passed on, affecting not to hear.

"Silver!" rapped out Carthew.

Jimmy had to stop then. A prefect was a prefect, even if he was a bully of the first water in addition.

"Yes, Carthew!" said Jimmy Silver between his teeth.

"Take this fiver to the school shop, and ask Sergeant Kettle if he can change it for me."

Carthew, with rather a flourish, drew the five-pound note out of his pocket-book, and tossed it to the junior with an air of carelessness.

The banknote fluttered to the floor. Jimmy Silver did not catch it.

Indeed, he was debating in his mind whether he should tell Carthew to go and eat coke, instead of taking his banknote to the tuckshop for him.

"You clumsy young ass!" exclaimed Carthew. "Do you want another taste of the cane, Silver? Pick that note up at once!"

Jimmy's eyes gleamed.

But Lovell hastily picked up the note and handed it to his chum.

He did not want to see Jimmy given further punishment; and the prefect was quite within his rights in calling on the services of a fag.

"We'll take it, Carthew," said Lovell. "Come on, Jimmy!"

The Fourth-Formers went out into the quad.

Jimmy Silver crumpled the banknote in his aching fingers.

"Jolly good mind to chuck it into the fountain," he grunted.

"Tain't much trouble to change it for the beast," said Newcome.

"I don't believe he cares twopence about having it changed; it's only to give me a job," growled Jimmy.

"Never mind. Come on!"

The Fistical Four walked to the school shop which Sergeant Kettle kept in the ground floor of the old clock-tower.

Jimmy threw the note on the counter.

"Can you change that for Carthew, sergeant?" he asked.

Mr. Kettle shook his head.

"Sorry, Master Silver; change is short," he said.

"Right you are," said Jimmy, taking up the note again.

He was not sorry to have to return it to Carthew unchanged.

The chums of the Fourth returned to the School House.

Knowles was strolling away to Mr. Manders' House, and Carthew had gone to his study.

Jimmy repaired there.

"Well, why haven't you changed it?" demanded Carthew in his most bullying tone, as Jimmy laid the banknote on the table.

"The sergeant's got no change."

"Most likely you've been too lazy to ask him," growled Carthew. "Is that it, you scowling young rascal?"



THE FORCED DEPARTURE OF JOEY HOOK!

"I asked him."

"I suppose you're telling lies!" snapped Carthew.

"You shouldn't judge others by yourself, Carthew!" retorted Jimmy Silver.

The prefect's eyes glinted.

It had been his intention to provoke the fag into a cheeky retort, and he had succeeded.

"Is that the way to talk to a prefect, Silver?"

"A prefect of your sort—yes," answered Jimmy Silver recklessly.

Carthew snatched up a cane.

"Hold out your hand!" he thundered.

"Don't you think I've had enough of that, Carthew?" said Jimmy Silver, between his teeth.

Carthew did not answer that question.

He caught the junior by the collar, and the cane came down across Jimmy's shoulders.

Jimmy Silver wrenched himself savagely away, and dodged out of the study.

He just escaped another lash as he went.

Carthew tossed the cane on the table and grinned.

"I fancy I shall bring that young cub to heel in the long run!" he murmured. "I'll take the cheek out of him, or I'll know the reason why."

But Jimmy Silver's feelings, as he scudded away from the Sixth-Form passage, could not have been expressed in words.

That afternoon, in the Fourth Form-room, Jimmy Silver was very thoughtful.

He was not thinking, however, of the valuable instruction he was receiving from Mr. Bootles.

He was thinking of Mark Carthew of the Sixth, and of ways and means for making the bully sorry for himself.

When classes were dismissed

Jimmy was looking a good deal more comforted, from which it might have been guessed that he had thought of a scheme of vengeance.

The 2nd Chapter.

Jimmy Has an Idea.

"Feel up to cricket, Jimmy?" asked Lovell, as the Fourth Form came out after lessons.

Jimmy shook his head.

"I couldn't hold a bat," he answered. "I've got something else on, too. Like to come for a walk?"

"Where?" asked Raby.

"Coombe. I've got to see a man," answered Jimmy Silver.

"You haven't said so before," said Lovell. "What blessed man have you got to see in the village?"

"Joey Jones, the potato merchant."

"But you don't want any spuds!" exclaimed Lovell. "We've got lots of spuds from our own allotment."

"Quite so. I want him to write a letter for me."

"Well, my hat! Why?"

"Because his handwriting is different from mine."

"Great pip!"

Jimmy Silver's chums stared at him, greatly mystified.

But they followed him as he started for the gates.

"Is it a wheeze?" asked Lovell at last, as they turned out into the road.

"Guessed that at last, old top? You must have been giving your intellect Swedish drill, or something," said Jimmy Silver affably.

"Oh, rats!" answered Lovell. "I don't see what you're at. I could write a letter for you, if you wanted it."

"Carthew would know your fist, if he went down to the office, and inquired after the letter."

"What office?" yelled Lovell.

"The local paper office."

"I say, this is getting serious," said Lovell, with a look of concern.

"Does it run in your family, Jimmy? Now I come to think of it, I've seen signs of insanity before."

"Bow-wow!" answered Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four walked down to the village.

Joey Jones was an old acquaintance of the Classical chums.

He was a man from the Front, discharged for wounds, and he had taken up potato-growing at Coombe.

The Fistical Four had sometimes gone down on half-holidays to lend him a hand with the digging.

He lived in a cottage outside the village, and he was resting in his little porch, after working in the fields, when the juniors came along.

Jimmy drew a crumpled sheet of paper from his pocket as he paused outside the garden gate, and glanced at it.

"I think that will do," he murmured.

"What on earth is it?" asked Newcome.

"Look and see, old chap."

Lovell & Co. looked at the scribbled paper.

It ran:

"FOUND!

£5 NOTE, No. 00010101. Owner can have same by applying to Mr. Carthew, Sixth Form, Rookwood School, near Coombe. Apply personally, not by letter."

The three juniors rubbed their eyes.

"D-d-d-do you mean to say that Carthew found that banknote and kept it?" ejaculated Lovell.

"Not at all."

"But—but this—"

"That's an advertisement for the 'Coombe Times,'" said Jimmy Silver calmly. "It goes in this week's paper."

(Continued on the next page.)



GETTING EVEN WITH CARTHEW!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"But the note's Carthew's, isn't it?"
"I suppose so. He's a rotter, but I don't suppose he's a thief."
"But—but that advertisement sounds as if the note's been found, and Carthew's keeping it for the owner to call," said Lovell, in bewilderment.
"Exactly."
"Nobody will call for it, if it's Carthew's."

Jimmy Silver grinned.
"My dear man, there are a certain number of dishonest persons in existence," he answered. "It's sad, but true. Take that gang, for instance—Hook, the bookie, and his friends at the Bird-in-Hand. There are others. Even in this delightful countryside there are persons who are not above annexing other people's property. You ought to have found that out by the prices you've been charged for things."

"Yes; but—"
"Every chap who sees that advertisement will know that the banknote's to be had by applying personally. Ninety-nine in a hundred won't take any notice of it, of course. The hundredth will. See? This advertisement is enough to bring half the rogues in the county calling on Carthew and demanding his banknote. It will keep Carthew occupied a bit in his spare time, and he won't have so much time to waste on little us."

"Oh!" ejaculated Lovell. "It's a jape."
"Got that at last?" asked Jimmy Silver sarcastically.
"My hat! Why, a dozen people may come asking for that banknote!" exclaimed Raby. "I suppose there's as many rogues as that around this part."
"Shouldn't wonder. May be more. I think Carthew will be kept busy for a time," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.
"There'll be a terrific row when it comes out that somebody's shoved the ad in the paper!" gasped Newcome.
"That's why I'm not going to write the letter. Joey Jones' fist isn't known to anybody, and it won't hurt him. See? Carthew's a suspicious beast, but even he wouldn't think of suspecting the potato merchant of japing him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Wait for me," said Jimmy. "I'll only be a few minutes."
Jimmy Silver went up the path to the cottage.

It was sure that Mr. Jones would oblige him by copying out that letter, as there was evidently no harm in it. Lovell & Co. waited for him.
They were grinning rosy.
Exactly what results that advertisement in the local paper would have they could not guess, but it was pretty certain that the results would cause Carthew of the Sixth a considerable amount of surprise and disturbance.

Jimmy Silver rejoined them in a few minutes with an envelope in his hand containing the copy of the advertisement.
"We'll shove this in at the door of the 'Times' office," he said. "Anything in before six to-day comes out in the rag to-morrow. Carthew's not likely to see it; he never reads the local paper, of course. We've got to put in a bob-stamps will do. You can't trace stamps."
"Oh, my hat!" said Lovell.
A dozen stamps were purchased at the village post-office, and slipped into the envelope, which was then closed.

The Fistical Four strolled down the old High Street of Coombe, and the letter was duly dropped into the box at the door of the "Coombe Times" office.
Then the Classical chums walked homeward, smiling.
"That's a bit safer than gumming his inkpot or glueing his slippers," remarked Jimmy Silver, "and I fancy it will worry him a bit more, the beast!" Jimmy rubbed his hands. "The worst is, he won't know I did it. I can't very well tell him that."
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "Better not."

The Fistical Four were feeling far more cheerful when they reached Rookwood. Jimmy Silver especially was particularly chirpy, for he was anticipating the success of his scheme for getting even with Carthew.

The 3rd Chapter.

Tubby Muffin is "On."

The next day Jimmy Silver & Co. expected something to happen.
What would happen they did not know, but they were sure something would, and that it would not be agreeable to the unspeakable Carthew.

The affair of the advertisement was kept strictly dark.
All the four agreed that the less said about it the better.

When, after lessons that Friday, the chums of the Fourth came upon Tubby Muffin perusing a copy of the "Coombe Times," they were a little startled.
Tubby was sitting on one of the oaken benches in Little Quad blinking very earnestly over the local paper, and the Fistical Four exchanged glances as they observed him.

"Has that fat boulder got on to it?" muttered Jimmy Silver uneasily.
It was rather a worrying idea, for Tubby Muffin was a born chatterbox, and was certain not to keep the secret if he found it out.

Tubby had many surreptitious ways of finding out secrets.

"Hallo, what's in the paper, Tubby?" asked Jimmy, with a careless air, as he stopped with his chums.

Tubby looked up, startled. He had not heard the Fistical Four approaching.

To their surprise, he whipped the paper under his jacket at once.

"Eh?" he stammered. "N-n-nothing."
"That's the local rag, isn't it?" asked Lovell.

"Nunno."
"What?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy had seen the title "Coombe Times" in big letters on the paper.

"It's—it's the 'Daily Mail,'" said Tubby confusedly. "I—I'm reading up the—"

"Cricket reports?" asked Raby.

"Ye-es, that's it," said Tubby, in relief. "I—I was just reading up the cricket reports, Jimmy."

"In the 'Daily Mail'?" grinned Newcome.

Tubby stuttered.
"I—I meant to say this is the local paper!" he gasped.

"This week's?"
"Yes."

"There aren't any Rookwood reports in this week's."

"Oh, dear! I—I mean—I was reading up the Bagshot reports."

"Good! Let's see how old Pankley has been getting on in cricket," said Jimmy Silver, holding out his hand for the paper.

Tubby Muffin held his fat paw over it, as if fearing that it would be snatched away.

The Fistical Four stared at him.

They could not understand the fat Classical's evident confusion and alarm.

Even if he had been reading the precious advertisement there was no reason why he should tell whoppers about it, so far as they could see.

"Look here, what's the matter with you, Tubby?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"N-n-nothing. I—I say, I must go," said Muffin nervously. "I—I've got to see Carthew."

"Carthew?"
"Ye-es. I—I don't mind telling you

follow. I—I don't think you'd lay claim to my banknote," said Tubby, on consideration. "I wouldn't let Leggett or Gower see this; they might say it was theirs."

"Banknote!" repeated Jimmy dazedly.

"Yes; the five-pound note I lost the other day," said Tubby.

"My only hat!"
"Carthew's found it," rattled on Tubby.

"Isn't that lucky? I'd really given it up as gone, you know."

The chums of the Fourth fairly blinked.

It was evident that Tubby had seen the advertisement, and equally evident that he intended to lay claim to the fiver.

Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose hard.

He had said that the rogues of the vicinity would be after that banknote, but it had not occurred to him that there were rogues at Rookwood who would be after it, too.

Tubby Muffin, perhaps, was too stupid to realise that he was being a rogue, but it was clear that he was after Carthew's banknote.

"Well, my only sainted aunt!" murmured Lovell. "The—the awful fraud! You fat image, you haven't lost any fiver!"

"I haven't mentioned it before," said Muffin. "I didn't care to make a fuss about it. But as Carthew's found it, and advertised it, I'd better claim it. Don't you think so?"

"Great Scott!"

And with that Tubby Muffin trotted away.

"Better tell him it's spoof!" said Raby uneasily.

"And he'll babble it out to all Rookwood, and Carthew will soon know who put the advertisement in," said Newcome.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Can't tell him," he said. "If he's such an awful little rascal as to claim a banknote he knows isn't his, let him interview Carthew, and if he gets a licking it will do him good!"

The Fistical Four sauntered back into Big Quad.

Tubby Muffin, in the distance, vanished into the School House.

Probably he was anxious to put in his claim before someone else anticipated him.

Jimmy Silver & Co. joined Erroll and Morny and Oswald, who were heading for the cricket-field.

Leggett, of the Modern Fourth, called out to them.

"Seen that fat boulder Muffin, you chaps?"

"Yes; he's gone in," answered Jimmy Silver.

"He's got my paper," said Leggett.

"I've been looking for the little beast. Did you see whether he had it?"

"The local paper?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes; 'Coombe Times.'"

"Yes; he had it," said Jimmy, looking at Leggett. "Anything in it, Leggett?"

"Oh, yes!" said Leggett casually. "I got it to see about my advertisement of my white rabbits, you know, and I happened to come across quite a surprise. What do you think? Carthew of the Sixth has found the banknote I lost the other day, and he's advertising it in the local paper."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You'd rather have expected him to advertise it on the school-notice-board," remarked Leggett. "But I dare say he picked it up outside Rookwood, and doesn't guess that it belongs to a Rookwood chap. I must have dropped it going down to Coombe yesterday."

The Fistical Four were speechless.

This was the second Rookwood claimant of the banknote, which had never been lost or found.

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy at last. "You—you lost it, Leggett?"

"Yes; I'm not usually careless with money, but I did. I was reading the advertisement out to Peele, when that fat little beast came up, and he sneaked the paper when I laid it down. I want that paper to take with me to Carthew. Blessed if I know what Muffin wanted it for!"

"Perhaps he wanted to take it to Carthew, too!" suggested Lovell, with a grin.

The Modern junior started.

"Oh, my hat! He went in, did you say?"

And Leggett fairly bolted for the School House to recover that valuable paper.

"You don't think Muffin would claim Leggett's banknote, do you, Jimmy?" asked Erroll, with a puzzled look.

"Perhaps it's as much his as Leggett's," said Jimmy, with a chuckle.

"Quite as much, very likely!" chorried Lovell.

And the Fistical Four went on to the cricket, wondering how Tubby Muffin and Leggett would get on with Carthew of the Sixth.

The 4th Chapter.

Rival Claimants.

Mark Carthew was in his study when a tap came at the door, and the Sixth-Former snapped:

"Come in!"

Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, came in.

He was looking a little nervous, and he had the "Coombe Times" folded in his fat hand.

Carthew stared at him.

"What do you want, fat ribs?" he asked politely.

"Please I've come for the five-pound note, Carthew!"

Carthew sat bolt upright in his chair. He was so astonished that he could only stare at Reginald Muffin for some moments.

As he knew nothing whatever about the advertisement in the "Coombe Times," naturally he did not know that he was supposed to have found a banknote and advertised for the owner.

"You've come for what?" he ejaculated at last.

"The five-pound note, Carthew, please."

"You've come here for a five-pound note?" repeated Carthew, still scarcely able to believe his ears.

"Yes, please!"

The Sixth-Former started to his feet.

"Are you potty, you young idiot?" he exclaimed.

"Nunno. I—I've called for the fiver," said Muffin, backing away in some alarm. He did not see why Carthew should be either surprised or angry. "I—I lost it, you know."

"You lost a fiver?"

"Ye-es."

"Well, you young idiot, do you think I'm a magician, to find the things you lose? If you've lost a fiver, go to your Form-master, and he will put a notice on the board."

"B-b-but you've found it, Carthew!" stammered Tubby Muffin, more surprised than the prefect.

"What?"

"You've got it, you know."

"I—I—I've got it!" repeated Carthew amazedly. "You idiotic little rascal, do you think I've got your fiver? What do you mean?"

"I—I say, you have, you know!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "You found it, you know!"

Carthew's eyes glittered.

He did not know about the advertisement, and Tubby did not know that he did not know, so a misunderstanding was inevitable.

He could only conclude from Muffin's words that the fat Classical supposed that he had found a lost fiver, and was keeping it.

That would have made a better-tempered fellow than Mark Carthew very angry.

He did not answer Tubby Muffin.

He picked up a cane, and came round the table.

Tubby, much alarmed, executed a strategic movement towards the door.

"So you've lost a banknote, and you think I've got it!" spluttered Carthew, crimson with wrath.

"I—I— Why, you— Look here! What's this mean, then?" stammered Muffin, holding up the paper.

Whack!

Carthew did not even look at the paper. He did not see any connection between that and Tubby's claim for a lost fiver.

He brought down the cane on Tubby, and the fat Classical gave a fiendish yell and bolted for the passage.

Whack!

The cane came down again on Tubby's fat shoulders as he escaped, and he fled down the passage, howling.

TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

If you are unable to obtain this publication regularly, please tell any newsagent to get it from:

Messageries HACHETTE et Cie, 111, Rue Reaumur, PARIS.

"Come back!" roared Carthew, glaring after him from the study doorway.

Tubby Muffin was not a very bright youth, but he was too bright to think of obeying that command.

He bolted round the nearest corner and vanished.

Carthew snorted, and turned back into his study.

He was angry, and with reason.

He knew that he was disliked among the juniors, and he had never supposed that they had a high opinion of him; but it was rather a shock to find a junior suspecting him of keeping a banknote he had found.

And why Muffin should suppose he had found one was a deep mystery.

The prefect returned to his chair, and picked up the pink paper he had been studying when Muffin interrupted him.

He was destined to be interrupted again.

"Come in!" he snapped, as there was a respectful tap at the door, and he slid the paper out of sight again.

It was Albert Leggett, of the Modern side, who entered this time.

Carthew gave him a glare.

Modern juniors had no business visiting Classical prefects.

"What the dickens do you want?" he rapped out. "Can't a man have a bit of quiet in his own study? Out with it, sharp!"

"Sorry to interrupt you, Carthew," said Leggett. "It's about the banknote."

Carthew jumped.

"The banknote!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, please, Carthew," said Leggett meekly. "It's mine."

"Yours!" stammered Carthew.

"Yes. I—I lost it," said the rogue of the Fourth, rather surprised by the excitement in Carthew's looks.

He did not see anything for the Classical prefect to get excited about.

Carthew picked up the cane, which had already seen so much service that day.

"You cheeky young rascal!" he exclaimed. "Is this a put-up job between you and Muffin?"

Then Leggett thought he understood the cause of the prefect's excitement.

"Oh, has Muffin been here?" he exclaimed. "The rotter! He's got my paper! Don't you believe him, Carthew. It's not his. He simply happened to hear me reading about it to Peele."

This was so much Greek to Carthew.

"I know it's not his, you young idiot," snapped Carthew. "It's mine, I suppose. What do you mean?"

"Yours?" ejaculated Leggett, in amazement. "But if you found it, Carthew—"

"Who said I found it?" roared Carthew.

"Why, you did!" said Leggett, more and more amazed. "You— Yaroooh! Here, keep off, you bully! Oh, my hat!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Carthew was irritated already by Tubby Muffin's extraordinary claim to his banknote.

The second claimant simply exasperated him.

If a fellow in the Sixth Form couldn't show a fiver without having that fiver claimed by cheeky juniors, it was time something was done, and Mark Carthew did it.

He collared Leggett, and laid the cane about him, and Leggett danced round him, yelling.

"Yah! Yaroooh! Stoppit! Help! Oh, crumbs! Oh, scissors!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"There!" panted Carthew, sending Leggett spinning out of the study when he had finished, which was not till his arm was fatigued. "There, you cheeky young scoundrel! Now come back and give me some more of your cheek!"

Leggett didn't!

He would sooner have gone into a lion's den, like a second Daniel, as into Mark Carthew's study just then.

He ran for his life.

The 5th Chapter.

Joey Hook Looks In.

"Look out, Peele! Look out, Gower!"

Peele and Gower, the black sheep of the Fourth, were chatting in the quadrangle when Tommy Dodd, of the Modern side, called out that warning.

Peele and Gower were discussing "geegees," and something's chance of winning somebody's race; but they left off that interesting discussion to stare at Tommy Dodd.

"What are you burblin' about?" asked Peele.

"Here comes a pal of yours!" grinned Tommy, jerking his thumb towards the school gates.

The two nuts of the Fourth glanced in that direction.

A stout gentleman with a red face and a spotted tie was coming in, looking very warm after his walk.

"By gad!" ejaculated Peele. "It's Hook!"

"Joey Hook!" stammered Gower.

The fat bookmaker was the cynosure of all eyes as he came in, and Peele and Gower looked quite pale.

They had certain surreptitious dealings with the bookmaker at the Bird-in-Hand public-house; but, of course, that was strictly under the rose.

"He—he can't be idiot enough to have come here to see us!" muttered Peele, terribly alarmed at the bare possibility.

"Mind, we don't know him!" whispered Gower hastily. "Here comes Bulkeley, too! Oh, my hat!"

The two alarmed nuts scuttled away among the beeches, anxious to avoid the glance of Mr. Hook.

Tommy Dodd chuckled.

On some occasions, with great secrecy, the nuts sought Mr. Hook's congenial society; but evidently they did not want to see him at Rookwood.

Bulkeley of the Sixth bore down on the bookmaker, with a grim brow.

Joey Hook was not the kind of visitor that was wanted at Rookwood, and George Bulkeley was prepared to see him off the premises if necessary.

Mr. Hook gave him an affable smile.

"Nice evenin', sir!" he remarked.

"What do you want here, my man?" asked the captain of Rookwood grimly.

"I've called on a little matter o' business," explained Mr. Hook. "Master Carthew is at 'ome, I 'ope?"

"Carthew!" murmured Jimmy Silver. The Fistical Four had joined the crowd gathering round. "Carthew, you fellows! Guess what he wants!"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome chuckled softly.

It was easy enough for the Co. to guess what Mr. Hook was after when he mentioned that name.

"You've called to see Carthew?" exclaimed Bulkeley, scarcely crediting his ears.

Bulkeley had his doubts about whether Mark Carthew was quite up to the right Rookwood level of conduct, but to find a bookmaker calling on him at the school was a "facer."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Hook calmly. "I've seen the advertisement. Master Carthew's found the banknote I lost to-day, and I've called for it."

"Oh!" said Bulkeley. "Is that it?"

"Why, what did you think it was?" asked Mr. Hook. "Nothin' in a professional way doin' 'ere, I suppose? He, he!"

"I suppose you can see Carthew, if that's what you want," said Bulkeley, rather perplexed.

"I 'ope so," said Mr. Hook emphatically. "Perhaps one of these young gents would be so kind as to show me where 'is quarters is."

"Certainly," said Jimmy Silver

"Ow could he when he don't know me? It's simply the matter of the fiver."

"What—what fiver?" stammered Carthew, wondering whether he was on his head or his heels.

"The fiver you found, sir," said Mr. Hook, also wondering.

"That I—I found?"

"Yes, sir! That's what I've called for."

Carthew stared at him dazedly.

"Please give the man his banknote, and let him go, Carthew!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles impatiently.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Carthew. "But—but I haven't a banknote, sir—I—I mean I haven't found one!"

"What—what?"

"I—I assure you, sir, that I have found no banknote," said Carthew dizzily. "I have a fiver, certainly, but it is my own."

"Oh, come," said Mr. Hook impatiently. "If you haven't found a five-pound note, for which the howner is to apply personally, what for did you say so, Master Carthew? Answer a man that!"

"I've never said so," gasped Carthew; "I certainly haven't!"

"There appears to be some mistake," said Mr. Bootles.

"There ain't any mistake," said Mr. Hook obstinately. "I know I've walked 'ere in a 'ot sun for that banknote what I lost, and what Master Carthew found. I'll be obliged to Master Carthew for 'anding it over."

"Carthew, have you found a banknote or not?"

"Certainly not!" gasped Carthew.

"It is most extraordinary! This man declares that you have advertised the banknote in the local paper, for the owner to call for it here."

Carthew almost tottered.

"Is that the fact, Carthew?"

"No!" howled Carthew. "Certainly not! I've done nothing of the kind. Why should I, when I haven't found a banknote at all?"

Mr. Joey Hook began to look ugly.

"If you haven't found a banknote, what did you advertise that there banknote for?" he demanded.

"I didn't!" yelled Carthew.

"You did!" roared Mr. Hook.

"I tell you I didn't!"

"And I tell you I read the advertisement with my hown heyes!" shouted Mr. Hook, sprinkling his aspirates freely as he grew more excited. "And that there paper is in the bar of the Bird-in-'And at this 'ere moment. Name and address given—Carthew, Rookwood School. If you've changed your mind, sir, and want to keep that there note, it's too late. You 'and it hover!"

"I didn't!" shrieked Carthew.

"This—is this most extraordinary!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "If you did not insert such an advertisement, Carthew—"

"I did not!"

"I saw it!" roared Mr. Hook. "Read it with my hown heyes. I says to the potman, says I, 'I'm on this!' says I. I—I means, I says to the potman, 'That must be the note I lost the huther day,' says I. And I comes 'ere, a long walk in 'ot weather, for that there note."

Mr. Hook's bull voice could be heard the length of the Sixth Form corridor.

Seniors as well as juniors were gathering there, in wonder.

Carthew panted for breath.

He could only suppose that Joey Hook was intoxicated, and had mixed up the address given in some advertisement with his.

"It's a mistake, Mr. Hook," he stutered. "Quite a mistake! I certainly never put any advertisement into the paper. I have not found any banknote."

"You—you see, there is some mistake, Mr. Hook," urged the Fourth Form master. "Pray retire now."

"Ave I come 'ere for nothing, then?" roared Mr. Hook. "I tell you, sir, I ain't going to be diddled!"

"Bless my soul! Pray—"

"Hain't I read that 'advertisment with my hown heyes?" bellowed Mr. Hook. "Now Master Carthew says as 'ow he never put it in. He's going to keep that there banknote what he's found, hay? Not on 'is life!"

"Mr. Bootles," muttered Carthew, "the man's drunk! He's mixed up my name with some other in the paper. You see—"

"I see. It is clear. I—"

"Wot are you mutterin' about?" demanded Mr. Hook. "I tell you I ain't going to be diddled! I don't want a row. I'm a respectable man. But I've 'ad a long walk 'ere in 'ot weather. And I says, says I—"

The door opened, and Bulkeley of the Sixth looked in, with Neville behind him.

"Can we be of use, Mr. Bootles?" asked the captain of Rookwood quietly.

"If—if you can persuade that—that man to go quietly, Bulkeley!" gasped the flustered Form-master.

"I think I can, sir."

Bulkeley gripped one of Mr. Hook's arms, and Neville gripped the other.

"This way!" said Bulkeley.

"I says, says I—"

"This way!"

Between the two big prefects, Mr. Hook was walked out of the study, helpless as a baby.

He wriggled furiously, but the iron grasp on his arms did not relax.

His feet hardly touched the floor as he was borne along.

Mr. Bootles mopped his perspiring brow.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "What a—what a very distressing occurrence! Oh, dear! Bless my soul!"

"Let a man alone!" came Mr. Hook's booming voice from without. "Let a man alone, and be blown to yer! Hain't I 'ad a long walk in 'ot weather? Don't you say I'm drunk, young man! I'll 'ave you up for libel! As for that young swindlin' 'ound Carthew, I could say some things about 'im if I liked!"

Carthew trembled.

Knowles looked quite sickly.

The two unhappy blades of the Sixth would have given a great deal for Mr. Hook to be stricken dumb at that moment.

"Let a man go!" roared Mr. Hook, as he was propelled out of doors. "Let Carthew stand up to a man and face 'im! That's wot I say. He's got my fiver! He's made bets with me, he 'as!"

Carthew set his pale lips hard.

"Take no notice of the man's wicked falsehoods, Carthew," said Mr. Bootles. "No one will heed such libellous statements."

Carthew was not so sure of that.

There were fellows at Rookwood who knew that Mr. Hook's enraged statements were not libellous, at least.

"Let a man alone!" Joey Hook's bull-voice was growing fainter in the distance now, as the two prefects propelled him to the gates, followed by a cheering mob of juniors. "I want to see the 'Ead! I want to tell 'im some things about that there Carthew! He's been at the Bird-in-'And, he has, playing billiards with the boys—bettin' on geeges, too! That's the kind of 'ound he is! I'm goin' to see your 'eadmaster, I says!"

"Not this time, dear boy," grinned Neville.

Bulkeley's face was dark and grim.

He had a suspicion that Mr. Hook's furious accusations had some truth in them, but that did not make him any the more merciful to the bookmaker.

They reached the gates, and Mr. Hook went spinning into the road.

He sat down there with a bump and a yell.

"Yow-woop! Oh, you young villains! I'm a-comin' in! I'm goin' to see the 'Ead! I'm goin' to tell 'im about that young rip!"

"I give you one minute to clear," said

The merchant was a burly, square-jawed man, roughly dressed, with a stick under his arm.

He wore a bowler hat on one side of his head, and had a dog at his heels.

He looked like one of the roughest class of frequenters of racecourses, as doubtless he was.

His argument with Mack was growing warm.

Finally he pushed the old porter aside, and strode in.

"Hallo, it's another merry visitor!" said Jimmy Silver.

Lovell burst into a chuckle.

"My hat! I wonder if it's another man to see Carthew?" he exclaimed.

Smack!

Lovell staggered and yelled as Carthew smote him.

Carthew's temper was not good that day.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Lovell. "You—you rotten bully, Carthew! What did you do that for?"

Carthew only replied with a glare.

He had done it because he was ill-tempered, and wanted to wreak his wrath upon somebody.

It really was unnecessary for him to explain.

Lovell clenched his fists, but Jimmy Silver caught him by the arm.

Hammering a prefect was too risky an enterprise.

"Go easy, old chap!" whispered Jimmy.

"I—I—I'll—" spluttered Lovell furiously.

"Keep smiling! There's trouble coming along for Carthew," murmured Jimmy.

"Listen to that merchant."

The man with the stick under his arm was striding towards the house.

The juniors heard him speak to Smythe of the Shell.

"You Master Carthew?"

Evidently it was Carthew he wanted.

Carthew heard him, too, and he hurriedly retired to his study.

thew's door, and opened it, as there was no reply.

Carthew gave him a savage look.

"This gentleman to see you, Carthew," said Jimmy serenely. And he stood aside politely for Mr. Hichens to enter.

The racy-looking gentleman tramped heavily in.

Carthew kept the table between him and his visitor; he did not like his looks.

The Head was hovering in the corridor, frowning, and Jimmy Silver had left the study door open.

"Master Carthew, hay?" said Mr. Hichens.

"That's my name. What do you want here?"

"I've called for the banknote."

Carthew breathed hard.

"Are you mad?" he exclaimed shrilly. "What banknote? Has everybody gone mad?"

The man stared at him.

"The banknote you found, sir," he said. "I'm speakin' plain enough, ain't I? The fipun note wot you advertised in the 'Coombe Times.' Lookin' at that there paper hover my breakfast this morning, sir, I saw your advertisement, so I comes along."

"I have not advertised any note! You must be mad or drunk!" shouted Carthew, exasperated. "Great Scott! How many silly idiots are coming here talking about a banknote, I wonder?"

Mr. Hichens looked ugly.

"I don't foller you," he said. "Ere's the paper, and 'ere's the advertisement, and I'm the man wot that banknote belongs to."

He extracted a copy of the "Coombe Times" from his pocket, considerably stained with fragments of Mr. Hichens' last meal.

"I tell you I did not put any advertisement in that paper!" raved Carthew. "It's a mistake, or else you are drunk. Get out of my study!"

"Carthew!" The Head was looking in

awake or dreaming, extracted his fiver from his pocket-book and handed it to Dr. Chisholm.

"The number is that given in the advertisement," said the Head, glancing at it. "This—this gentleman has the number, too. The banknote is evidently his property, Carthew."

Carthew jumped.

"It's not, sir! It's mine! It's my own banknote, sir!"

"Then why did you advertise it as found by you?"

"I did not, sir!" gasped Carthew. "I—I can't understand how that got into the paper. I never put it there."

"Carthew!"

"It—it's true, sir!" groaned Carthew, realising how very "thin" that story sounded, even while he told it, and even though it happened to be true. "I—I've never seen that advertisement before, sir! I know nothing about it!"

"Do you mean to say, Carthew, that someone has inserted this advertisement in your name, without your knowledge or permission?" said the Head coldly.

"I—I suppose so, sir."

There was a snort from Mr. Hichens.

"A most extraordinary thing," said the Head. "The unknown person must have known the number of your banknote, Carthew, since it is given here. Carthew, I am sorry to say that it appears to me that the note is not yours."

"Sir!"

"Having found it, you advertised it for the owner to claim," said the Head sternly. "A proper proceeding. Is it possible, Carthew, that since then you have entertained the dishonest project of keeping the note for yourself?"

Carthew stutered.

"I—I—I—"

"Changed 'is mind, sir," said Mr. Hichens, with a nod. "Thought of keepin' it for 'isself. Dishonest, I call it! Not wot a man would expect of a young gentleman at a school like this 'ere, I do say!"

The Head winced.

"Carthew, I am shocked, disgusted! I—"

"Believe me, sir," stutered Carthew, "I—I never found the note, I never advertised it, I never—"

"I cannot believe any such nonsense, Carthew! Give the gentleman his banknote at once!" commanded the Head.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Give it to him immediately!" thundered the Head.

"But I—I—I— It's mine!" shrieked Carthew.

"You will obey me, Carthew, or you will leave Rookwood School by the next train!" thundered the Head.

Carthew, with a face that was simply extraordinary in expression, handed the five-pound note to Mr. Hichens.

That gentleman slipped it into his pocket, with great satisfaction.

"Thank you, sir!" he said. "Much obliged. Mornin' to you, sir! Hi, Teaser!"

And Mr. Hichens, with the terrier still at his heels, withdrew.

He lost no time in getting clear of Rookwood.

Probably he was anxious to get to a safe distance, having a stolen banknote in his possession.

"I shall have to consider what action to take in this matter, Carthew," said the Head sternly. "I doubt whether I can allow you to remain at Rookwood after this."

"I—I swear, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

The Head swept from the study.

Carthew of the Sixth collapsed into a chair, gasping. He felt completely overcome.

He was under suspicion of having attempted to steal his own fiver. And he had lost the fiver!

The bully of the Sixth was paying for his many sins, with interest.

A dozen fellows had heard what passed in Carthew's study, and there was a buzz of excitement on the subject at Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. extended a wardance of triumph in the end study.

That celebrated study had certainly "got its own back" on the bully of the Sixth.

As Lovell remarked, Carthew had been fined five pounds for assault and battery; that was what it amounted to.

And the Fistical Four agreed that it was just.

Carthew, of course, was able to prove his ownership of the note. A letter home brought a reply, with the number of the note in it, which he showed to the Head, Dr. Chisholm, very tartly, had to admit that the banknote was Carthew's, and it followed that the advertisement had been put in the "Coombe Times" by some practical joker.

The Head advised Carthew to give the police a description of Mr. Hichens, and he did so; but the racing gentleman and his terrier and the banknote had vanished together, and were not to be found.

Three or four more applicants for the banknote, who dropped in during the next few days, were turned away from the gates.

Carthew paid a special visit to the "Coombe Times" to learn who had inserted that advertisement, but he came bootless home.

And that week, unfortunately, his temper was very bad, and Jimmy Silver & Co. had the benefit of a good deal of it.

But they did not mind, for there was no doubt that they had got even with Carthew!



The cane came down on Tubby Muffin's fat shoulder as he escaped from the prefect, and he fled down the passage, howling.

Bulkeley quietly. "After that I shall begin using my boots."

He drew back his foot.

Mr. Hook scrambled up. The minute was enough for him.

He gave up all desire of seeing the Head, and bolted like a rabbit.

Bulkeley watched him out of sight, frowning.

The captain of Rookwood strode back to the School House with Neville, without a glance at the chortling juniors.

Jimmy Silver's face was happy and serene.

"Carthew licked me yesterday, dear old beans," he remarked. "I think we've licked Carthew to-day—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put your money on the end study!" chuckled Lovell.

And they roared.

The 7th Chapter.

The Successful Claimant!

"Hallo, who's that merchant, I wonder?" remarked Algy Silver of the Third Form. "Looks a bit of a corker—what?"

Morning lessons were over on Saturday. The fellows were coming out of the Form-rooms when the "merchant" was seen at the gates, engaged in a warm argument with old Mack, the porter.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stopped to look.

Carthew of the Sixth was on the steps, looking pale and worried.

Carthew had quite forgotten to bully anybody since Mr. Hook's visit; he had other matters to occupy his mind.

He glanced carelessly towards the "merchant" in the distance.

What the man could want he could not imagine, but he knew he did not want to see that rough customer.

"Nunno!" stammered Adolphus Smythe, backing away from the stranger. "Not at all, I assure you."

"Well, I've called to see Master Carthew," said the rough-looking merchant testily. "Where is he? Take me to him. I got no time to waste. Tell 'im that Bill 'ichens wants to see 'im."

"Oh, gad!" gasped Adolphus.

Jimmy Silver ran up.

"This way, sir!" he called out joyfully.

Jimmy was quite prepared to show anybody to Carthew's study.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Hichens. "I've called for my banknote what Master Carthew's found."

"I thought so," grinned Jimmy. "Follow me—this way! Oh, crumbs! The—The Head!"

Jimmy Silver was piloting Bill Hichens into the House when Dr. Chisholm loomed up in the doorway.

The Head had seen the sporting-looking gentleman from his study window.

"What is this?" demanded the Head, with a grim look at Mr. Hichens.

The man touched his hat civilly.

"Master Carthew 'ere has found a banknote belonging to me, sir," he said. "I've called for it. Advertisement in this 'ere paper. Number 00010101. Fipun note, sir!"

"Oh!" said the Head. "You may take this gentleman to Carthew's study."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

Jimmy led the way, and tapped at Car-

at the door with a severe frown.

"Kindly control your voice, Carthew! What does this mean? Yesterday, I understand, there was an unseemly disturbance over this matter. If you have a banknote belonging to this man, hand it to him at once, and let him go."

"I—I haven't, sir," stammered Carthew. "I don't understand it at all; it simply beats me hollow."

"Look at that there, sir," said Hichens, handing the paper to the Head.

His dirty thumb pointed out the advertisement.

Dr. Chisholm, with a deepening frown, read:

"FOUND!—£5 note, No. 00010101. Owner can have same by applying to M. Carthew, Sixth Form, Rookwood School, near Coombe. Apply personally, not by letter."

"That seems perfectly clear, Carthew," said the Head, handing the paper to the prefect in turn. "Your conduct appears to me inexplicable, Carthew."

Carthew's eyes almost started from his head as he read the advertisement.

He could scarcely believe his eyes.

The paragraph danced before his astounded gaze.

"That there's my banknote," said Mr. Hichens. "No. 00010101. I got the number 'ere on a bit of paper, sir."

"Have you a banknote with that number, Carthew?"

"I—I have a banknote, sir," articulated Carthew. "I—I have not noted the number."

"Show it to me!" snapped the Head. Carthew, wondering whether he was

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE HIDDEN HUN!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!



LORD TODGERS!

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. Chunky the Romantic!

It was such a deep sigh that it sounded like the air escaping from a pair of bellows; and Frank Richards sat up in the grass and stared at him. It was a hot day in the Canadian summer, and Frank Richards & Co. were taking it easy on the bank of the creek while they waited for the bell for afternoon lessons. Bob Lawless was sitting at the foot of a tree, leaning lazily back, staring idly across the shining creek. Frank and Vere Beauclerc lay on their backs in the rich grass, looking at the sky. Wide and blue, dotted with fleecy white clouds, it was pleasant to look upon, stretching far away to the summits of the Rockies in the distance. Chunky Todgers had been reading. Chunky was a fat youth, with an enormous appetite, and an inordinate fancy for maple sugar. But he was also a romantic youth. He favoured the novel in his taste for reading, and he devoured the productions of the Chicago libraries that found their way as far north as the Thompson valley. The circulating library in Thompson had no more devoted adherent than Chunky Todgers. Chunky had reached the end of his book, and he looked up and gave that huge sigh which drew the attention of the other Cedar Creek fellows.

disguise will march into Cedar Creek, perhaps, and claim you as the long-lost son of the Lord High Marquis of Thingummy, and you'll walk off to your castle—perhaps!" "Perhaps!" grinned Frank Richards. "I shouldn't be surprised," said Bob gravely. "Chunky has a rather aristocratic cut, hasn't he?" "Do you think so, Bob?" gasped Chunky, greatly flattered. "Sure! Sort of lofty!" said Bob. "Noble, in fact!" "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Frank and Beauclerc, delighted by the expression on Chunky's podgy face. Todgers snorted, as he realised that Bob was pulling his leg. "Well, it wouldn't be so jolly surprising as you may think," he retorted. "Young Cholmondeley de Vere was working on a ranch when he first found that he was son and heir of Lord Cholmondeley de Plantagenet. The ranchers had always noticed his aristocratic ways, and had done the rough work for him, from instinctive respect for noble blood." "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob. "More likely to let some of his noble blood out at his nose, I guess, if he put on side on a ranch!" "Oh, you're a blessed Philistine," said Chunky. "You never read novels, and you don't know anything about marquises and their ways." And Chunky opened his novel again at the place where the youthful de Vere was first recognised by the Marquis of Plantagenet, and his little round eyes were glued upon the fascinating page again. "Chuck that rot into the creek!" said Bob. "Er-r-r!" Bob Lawless rose and stretched his sturdy limbs. "Nuff slacking," he said. "Let's go and split some logs for Mr. Shepherd, you fellows. We said we would." "Right-ho!" said Frank. And he rose from the grass, Beauclerc following his example. The three chums walked away through the sunshine towards Cedar Creek School. Chunky Todgers, with his back against the tree on the edge of the wood, and his legs drawn up, his novel resting on his knees, devoured for the fifth or sixth time the adventures of Cholmondeley de Vere, and wished deeply and sadly that, somehow, such great fortune would come his way, and that he would "turn out" to be the Marquis of Todgers.

The 2nd Chapter. Dry Billy in Luck!

Dry Billy Bowers was tired that afternoon. He lay in the deep green thicket and rested, a good deal like an animal curled up in its lair. It was very pleasant in the deep, scented wood, with the green boughs sheltering him from the sun, and glimpses of the creek showing through the foliage on the bushes. Mr. William Bowers was tired, and he was resting; but he was not wholly at ease, for he was thirsty. Thirst was Mr. Bowers' constant companion in his travels. It was his worst enemy, for it had caused most of his misfortunes; and his best friend, for it was at the root of all his pleasures. True, there was the limpid creek at hand; but it was not that kind of fluid that was required to quench Dry Billy's thirst. Mr. Bowers had had an exciting morning. He was a "hobo from over the line," and such a character was likely to find a warm welcome in a hard-working section of the Canadian West like the Thompson Valley. Perhaps Mr. Bowers' exploits as a hobo, or tramp, had made it judicious

for him to cross the border into Canada for a time. On desperate occasions, when he was very thirsty, Dry Billy had worked. But such occasions were rare. His course on his travels, wheresoever his footsteps led him, was generally marked by chickens missing from their roosts, clothes missing from the line, or implements from the farm buildings, occasionally a horse from its grazing-patch. Naturally, Mr. Bowers often had to break fresh country when he started on his summer excursions. He might have been remembered on his old ground. Mr. Bowers had had good and bad luck in his time, but of all the inhospitable sections he had ever struck, the Thompson Valley was the worst. He had wandered into Cedar Camp, and not a single drink had come his way to quench his worst enemy and his best friend. A lumberman's heavy boot had finally helped him out of Cedar Camp, and Mr. Bowers had dismally hoofed it on to Thompson. Now he lay and rested in the green wood. Mr. Bowers was roused from his doze by the sound of voices near at hand. He pricked up his ears, and listened, wondering whether he could "strike" the speakers for a "quarter." A grin overspread his fat, whiskery, copper-coloured face as he heard the conversation of Frank Richards & Co. and Chunky Todgers. Mr. Bowers was amused. He had a sense of humour, and Chunky's lofty aspirations tickled him. He heard the receding footsteps of the three schoolboys and heard Chunky Todgers turning page after page as he followed the thrilling adventures of Cholmondeley de Vere. Mr. Bowers' grin increased in size. He winked at the trees. Necessity is the parent of invention, and Mr. Bowers was so thirsty that his brain worked at unaccustomed speed. It was really a brain-wave that smote Dry Billy, and caused him to grin and wink and chuckle noiselessly. After that long, dry season he thought he saw fire-water ahead. It depended on Chunky Todgers, on the extent of his obtuseness, and the depth of his gullibility. At all events, Mr. Bowers reflected, it was worth trying. If it did not turn out a bonanza, it would cost him nothing. Mr. Bowers had had some experience in earlier days of the stage, having "walked on" as extra gentleman in barnstorming companies of the West. Therefore, he knew as much about mysterious marquises, and their manners and customs, as any novel-reader did. After thinking it out, Mr. Bowers rose silently to his feet. He peered through the foliage at the fat schoolboy sitting under the tree, his eager eyes on the novel. Chunky sighed again as he looked. Poor Chunky was thinking that he, Todgers of Todgers' Farm, would never have the glorious fate of young Cholmondeley de Vere. No tall and noble-featured marquis would clasp him to his breast, while he exclaimed, in agitated tones: "My long-lost son! Those features—these documents! Come to my arms!" Some fellows had all the luck, Chunky reflected bitterly. Mr. Bowers winked over Chunky's head and withdrew, and by a circuitous route left the wood, and came out into the path by the creek some little distance from Chunky. Then, as if coming from Cedar Camp, he approached the schoolboy. Chunky Todgers glanced up at the sound of footsteps.

He frowned a little at the sight of the ragged, dusty tramp, with his copper complexion, beery features, and tattered hat. Chunky might long to be a marquis, in his idle moments, but he had all the healthy Canadian contempt for the slacker who would not work, all the same. But Mr. William Bowers was not deterred by his frown. He approached Chunky, treading softly. "Cut it out!" said Chunky, before Dry Billy could speak. "Not a cent! Go and ask for a job—there's lots going at Thompson." "Hist!" Chunky dropped his novel in astonishment. He had expected a request for financial assistance from the dusty gentleman, and instead of that the dusty one placed his finger on his lips and whispered; "Hist!" "Wha-at!" stammered Chunky. "Hist!" "Oh, crumbs!" Mr. Bowers, like Moses of old, looked this way and that way. Chunky watched him in astonishment and some alarm. "We must not be observed," whispered Mr. Bowers, in a thrilling voice, quite feeling that he was a "walking gentleman" again for once on the histrionic boards. "Wha-a-at?" "Hist!" "Look here, what the thunder are you driving at?" demanded Chunky, wondering whether the man was mad. "I can remain but a moment," said Mr. Bowers, in a hushed tone. "You needn't," said Chunky. "I don't like tramps, and the sooner you sheer off the better." "Hist! I am in disguise." "Wha-a-at?" "Hush! Speak lower, or my life may be in danger." "Wha-at?" "From your wicked uncle," whispered Mr. Bowers. Chunky Todgers sat dumb.

The 3rd Chapter. Glorious News!

Chunky Todgers found his voice at last. "What are you driving at?" he gasped. "Do you mean my Uncle George? Let him hear you calling him names, that's all, you blessed hobo!" "Do you not understand?" panted Mr. Bowers excitedly. "I am here to seek you, I have long sought you, in disguise and danger. If your uncle—your wicked uncle I mean—should discover you, your life would pay the forfeit!" "My word!" gasped Chunky. "You know not the secret of your name!" "My word!" gasped Chunky. "You know not the secret of your birth," breathed Mr. Bowers. Chunky palpitated. He had not the faintest idea that Mr. Bowers had overheard his conversation with Frank Richards & Co., and the man was a total stranger to him. Chunky was getting, both excited and interested. Was it possible— The bare possibility dazzled him. "The—the secret of my birth!" stammered Chunky. "What have you always believed your name to be?" asked Mr. Bowers. "Todgers." "Ha, ha! Have you the look of a Todgers—have you the cut of a Todgers? Did not some secret feeling within your breast warn you that your name was not Todgers—that if the truth were known you came of an ancient and noble race?" "Yes!" gasped Chunky. "I—I've often thought—" "That brow—those flashing eyes!" exclaimed Mr. Bowers, gazing in awed admiration at Chunky. "That face! Those features! The heir of Monteaigle is no longer lost!" "Mum-mum-Monteaigle!" stammered Chunky. "Lord Reginald de Monteaigle," said Mr. Bowers. "That is your rightful name—and title, and son and heir of the Marquis of—of Monteaigle Towers." "Oh, crumbs!" gasped Chunky. "Noble youth!" exclaimed Mr. Bowers. "Step into the wood! We may be observed! Your wicked uncle is on the track." "Oh, crumbs!" Chunky fairly jumped into the wood after Mr. Bowers. Certainly he did not want to be spotted by his wicked uncle, if that gentleman was anything like the wicked uncle of Cholmondeley de Vere in the novel. "But—but—" he gasped. "Listen!" breathed Mr. Bowers. "I can remain but a few moments, or both our lives may be sacrificed. You are the heir of the Marquis of Monteaigle, who has wept for years for his missing heir. In the dead of night—" "Oh!" "In the dead of night a child was placed in the arms of Mr. Todgers, with a purse of gold—" "Wa-a-was it?"

The 4th Chapter. His Lordship.

Chunky Todgers was a little late for lessons. All the Cedar Creek boys and girls were in their places in the big school-room when Todgers arrived breathless. There were three classes at work in the big school-room, presided over by Miss Meadows, Mr. Shepherd, and Mr. Slimmey. Chunky belonged to Miss Meadows' class, and the school-mistress gave him a severe look as he came in. "You are late, Todgers!" she exclaimed. Chunky Todgers was about to say "Sorry, ma'am!" when he remembered that he was the son of a marquis. That made a great difference. Cedar Creek School appeared inexpressibly commonplace in his eyes in comparison with Monteaigle Towers. Chunky was swelling already, like the frog in the fable. He gave Miss Meadows a lofty look. "Did you address me, madam?" he asked. "What?" "I regret that I am somewhat late," said Chunky in a stately way. Half unconsciously he imitated the

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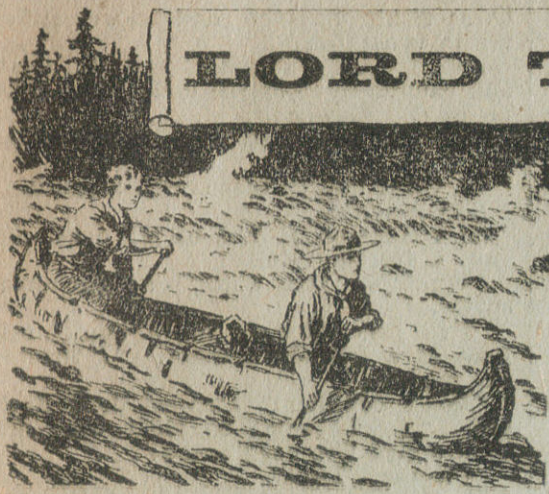
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LORD TODGERS!



(Continued from the previous page.)

accent of Mr. Shepherd, the new master at the lumber school, whose accent was a never-ending joy to the Cedar Creek fellows.

Chunky Todgers had chuckled over it as much as anyone, but now that he was the son of a marquis it was a different matter. He thought it a good idea to cultivate that accent, ready for the time when he was presented to the old nobleman at Monteaule Towers.

Mr. Shepherd himself glanced round as Chunky spoke in a high-pitched and drawing tone.

"Todgers!" exclaimed Miss Meadows in astonishment.

"I was lingerin' in the wood, madam," said Chunky, deliberately dropping his final "g," as Mr. Shepherd did with his.

"Go to your place at once, Todgers!" said Miss Meadows, very much puzzled.

"With pleasuah, madam!" Miss Meadows started, thinking that Chunky was imitating Mr. Shepherd's weird accent from a spirit of mockery.

But she allowed the incident to pass, and the fat schoolboy sat down in his place, to meet the surprised stare of Frank Richards & Co.

"What's the matter with you, Chunky?" asked Frank in a whisper, as soon as Miss Meadows' attention was engaged elsewhere.

"Nothin'." "What?" "Nothin' at all, dear boy!" Frank almost collapsed.

"You silly chump!" whispered Bob Lawless. "What are you making fun of the Gentle Shepherd for?"

"I am not makin' fun of anyone, Lawless. Please don't grasp my arm in that rough mannah!" said Chunky.

"Silence in class, please!" rapped out Miss Meadows severely.

Bob Lawless was silent from sheer amazement.

Many of the fellows mimicked Mr. Shepherd's accent for fun, but Chunky's imitation was doing it in deadly earnest.

What was the matter with him Bob could not guess.

Many glances were turned on Chunky Todgers that afternoon.

He was not his usual self.

He generally lounged in his seat, and Miss Meadows had often told him to sit up straighter, but now he sat bolt upright, upheld doubtless by the consciousness of the noble blood that flowed in his veins.

He kept his fat chin well up, and when he looked round it was with a lofty glance. In fact, Chunky's expression was growing supercilious.

The sense of his immense superiority was turning his head a little.

The more he thought of it the more puffed up poor Chunky became, till he seemed likely to strike the stars with his sublime head.

Vere Beauclerc was related to a titled family in England, but he, Chunky, was actually heir to a great title.

He was Lord Reginald in his own right! It was an intoxicating thought.

Chunky was a good fellow at heart, but his head was not quite so good as his heart.

He was falling a victim to an uncontrollable desire to "swank."

When afternoon lessons were over Chunky walked out of the school-room as if he were treading on air.

Tom Lawrence clapped him on the shoulder in the playground.

"What's the matter, Chunky?" he inquired.

Todgers gave him a stony stare.

"Unhand me, please!" he said.

"Wha-at?" stuttered Lawrence.

"Unhand me! I object to this familiarity of mannah!"

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Lawrence, dumb-founded.

"Mad as a hatter!" said Bob Lawless in wonder.

"Pray do not be impertinent, Lawless!" "Impertinent!" yelled Bob.

"Yaas." "Yaas!" repeated Bob dazedly.

"Oh, yaas! I object to impertinence and familiarity! You fellows must learn to keep your distance, begad!"

"Begad!" murmured Frank Richards.

"He must be potty!" said Vere Beauclerc, in wonder. "Or is this a joke, Chunky?"

"Pray do not address me as Chunky!" answered the fat youth. "My name is Reginald!"

"What?" yelled Bob. "Your name's Joe, you silly jay! Blessed if he hasn't forgotten his own name now!"

"My name," said Chunky, with stately dignity, "is Reginald! Hitherto—" "Where did you pick up that word?" gasped Bob.

"Ha, ha!" roared Frank. "In the novel, of course. People use those words in novels."

"Your whatter?" gasped Frank Richards.

"My wicked uncle—" "Better let your Uncle George hear you saying that!" exclaimed Lawrence.

"I am not referring to my Uncle George. George Todgers is not really my uncle at all, as it turns out."

"He's wandering in his mind," said Hopkins.

"I'm not wandering in my mind," said Chunky calmly. "I am statin' the facts revealed to me. You common fellows—"

"Wha-at?" "You common fellahs don't know how to treat a fellah of noble birth! You may be surprised to hear that I am goin' to England shortly."

"What for?" "To be restored to my rightful parent—my long-lost father!"

"Eh! Your father's in Canada, isn't he?" yelled Bob. "He was yesterday, anyway."

"My father is at Monteaule Towers," answered Chunky. "Mr. Todgers was a faithful old retainer—" "Great Scott!"

"Mad!" said Eben Hacke. "Some of us had better see him home, I reckon! He may want tying up if he gets worse!"

"Bah!" With that ejaculation of disdainful scorn Chunky Todgers walked away—or, rather, strutted.

And the podgy schoolboy looked so

"Over-eating?" asked Frank. "No!" yelled Todgers. "My wicked uncle's after me!"

"My hat!" Bob Lawless let go his horse, and took Chunky Todgers by the collar, and shook him forcibly.

"Look here, you dotty zopher!" he exclaimed. "If you're not mad, tell us what you mean! Sharp now!"

"Ow! Yow!" "Will you explain yourself, you silly jay?"

"Groogh! Leggo! Look here, I'll tell you fellows!" gasped Chunky. "I rely on your keepin' the dread secret."

"Don't give us novel language, you fat-head! Tell us what you mean in plain Canadian!" howled Bob.

"I—I've found out the secret of my birth!"

"There wasn't any secret about it, you chump! You're registered at Thompson, like every other kid born in this section."

"That's only what's supposed," said Chunky mysteriously. "In the dead of night a child was placed in the hands of Mr. Todgers."

"What?" "He was bidden to take the boy to Canada, and bring him up as his own son."

"Great Christopher Columbus!" "My rightful father is the Marquis of Monteaule Towers!"

"Which?" "And I," said Chunky impressively—"I am Lord Reginald de Monteaule."

"Lord Reginald de Monteaule!" moaned Bob Lawless.

"Yep—I mean yaas. The man who searched for me recognised me by my likeness to the portraits of the ancient knights of Monteaule that hang in the castle of my noble race!"

Frank Richards & Co. stared at Chunky dumb-founded.

For a moment the heir of Monteaule thought that they were properly impressed. But that was a mistake; he had only taken their breath away.

A yell of laughter from the three apprised him of the fact that they were

The chums of Cedar Creek yelled, while Chunky blinked at them in great indignation and wrath.

"Look here, it's as straight as a string!" he protested. "How could the man know anythin' about me, if it wasn't straight?"

"Perhaps he's heard that you're a silly novel-reading idiot!" answered Bob. "He's some spoofer who's found out what a born fool you are, Chunky!"

"But we'll make it a trade," chuckled Bob. "You say you're going to meet the man, with a horse and ten dollars."

"That's it."

"Well, we'll come with you," said Bob. "If he's genuine, and you're a real nobleman, Chunky, you shall have my horse and all the dollars we've got in our rags. If he's a hobo and a hoss-thief, we'll give him a taste of the trail-rope. Is it a cinch?"

"I'd rather take the horse and the money."

"Not for Joseph!" answered Bob emphatically.

"Well, I agree, then," said Chunky. "He told me to keep the dread secret—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, I can trust you fellows. Come on," said Chunky, making up his mind. "He's waiting for me already."

And the four rode off together to keep the appointment with the seeker of long-lost sons, three of them chortling all the way.

The 6th Chapter. Dry Billy Remains Dry.

Mr. William Bowers was waiting. He was reclining, not to say sprawling, in the grass at the foot of a tree, while he waited for his dupe to appear. Mr. Bowers was in a happy mood.

A dollar's worth of fire-water had not quite quenched his thirst, but it had given him a happy glow, and he had a cheery anticipation of more to come.

Two horses would sell for a good price down the valley at a safe distance, and any dollars Chunky brought along with him would come in useful, too.



"I guess— Yarooooh!" roared Mr. Bowers, as the trail-rope curled round him. "I say—I guess— yoop!—stoppit! Let up! Yah!"

supremely absurd as he strutted that a yell of irresistible laughter followed him.

The 5th Chapter. The Dread Secret!

Frank Richards and his chums had taken out their horses to ride home when Chunky Todgers bore down upon them.

Chunky, in his new-found greatness, had treated the chums with lofty superciliousness, like the rest.

But it had dawned upon his somewhat obtuse brain that he was in want of aid.

As yet he was not the recognised heir of the noble line of Monteaule, and before that could take place he had to get to Kamloops, where the disguised Mr. Bowers had plenty of money in the bank and there was protection from the wiles of the wicked Lord Horace.

To do that he had to borrow a horse, and, if possible, some money.

Certainly, he ought to have found no difficulty in raising a loan on the strength of his splendid prospects.

But he knew that he was more likely to find doubting Thomases than believers among the Cedar Creek fellows.

He selected Frank Richards & Co. as the most likely to accede to his demands.

"Hold on, you chaps!" he exclaimed. "Vamoose!" answered Bob Lawless, with a chuckle. "I object to this familiar mannah, Todgers! Don't start callin' me a chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I—I didn't mean to—to be down on you chaps," said Chunky. "Of course, there's a difference in social station. But I still look upon you as friends—humble friends, I might say."

"Humble friends!" repeated Frank Richards dazedly.

"You silly, fat, conceited, potty lump of train-grease!" shouted Bob Lawless wrathfully. "What do you mean?"

"I—I say, will you lend me ten dollars?" "No."

"And your horse?" "My horse? I guess not!"

"I—I must have a horse and some cash!" said Chunky earnestly. "My life's in danger!"

not impressed with the importance of the dread secret.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, carry me home to die!" yelled Bob Lawless. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you silly jays—" exclaimed Chunky indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "The man's searchin' for me. He knew me at once—" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's in disguise, too!" exclaimed Chunky. "And I'm goin' to meet him this evenin'—now, in fact—to go to Kamloops, where I shall be safe from Lord Horace—"

"Lord which?" "Lord Horace—my wicked uncle."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Look here, you rotters, 'tain't a laughing matter, when a chap's in danger of being laid out by his wicked uncle!"

exclaimed Chunky. "I want you to lend me a horse and some money, so that I can go to Kamloops."

"You fat idiot!" gasped Bob. "Who's been pulling your silly leg?"

"It's honest injun, I tell you!" said Chunky, almost tearfully. "He knew me at once. He's in disguise, too."

"Who is?" shrieked Frank Richards. "The man who found me. He's been attacked by Lord Horace's what-do-you-call-ums— Chunky hesitated. "Something or other—myrmidons, that's the word!"

"Ha, ha! That's a word used in novels, too!" grinned Bob.

"He was robbed, and so he's disguised himself as a hobo," said Chunky. "But he's got lots of money in the bank at Kamloops."

"How do you know?" "He said so."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Look here, will you lend me a horse and ten dollars?" demanded Chunky angrily.

"Ha, ha! No jolly fear!" yelled Bob Lawless. "Not to give to a hobo!"

"He's not really a hobo—he's in disguise, because Lord Horace is after him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As for Chunky's feelings when he saw Mr. Bowers ride away with the horses, leaving him stranded, Dry Billy did not bother about that.

He was accustomed to thinking only of William Bowers.

The vagrant raised himself on his elbow as he heard the sound of horses being led through the wood.

He grinned complacently, and winked into space.

The jingling of horses came nearer, and the vagrant jumped up.

But he did not look pleased when four fellows, leading their horses, came through the thickets.

He had expected to see only Chunky Todgers, and at a glance he could see that the other three were not to be fooled like poor Chunky.

He cast a quick glance behind him, as if meditating flight.

But they were close upon him at once. "Here I am!" announced Chunky Todgers.

"And—and hyer I am!" faltered Mr. Bowers.

Frank Richards & Co. scanned him keenly.

If he was only "disguised" as a tramp, Mr. Bowers was certainly a past-master in the art of disguises, for he looked the part to the very life.

"These chaps are goin' to lend me a horse and some money," said Chunky Todgers. "They wanted to see you first, to see that it was all square."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Bowers. Bob Lawless grinned.

"Only just to see that it's square, my man," he remarked. "So you're the galoot that's going to save Chunky from his wicked uncle?"

"Ye-es!" stammered Mr. Bowers. "Lord Horace—hey?"

"Ye-es."

"And you recognised Chunky by his likeness to the portraits in Monteaule Towers?" yelled Frank Richards. Mr. Bowers cast a hurried look round. But the three had gathered round him, and there was no escape.

the coiled trail-rope in Bob Lawless' hand.

He had an instinctive feeling that he was going to feel the weight of that trail-rope shortly.

The fickle goddess Fortune was not standing his friend, after all, and once more he wished that his straying footsteps had not led him into the Thompson Valley.

"Has this galoot had any money from you already, Chunky?" asked Bob.

"Only a dollar, to get some grub for the journey," answered Todgers.

"Oh! Where's the grub?" asked Bob. "The—the grub!" stammered Dry Billy.

"Yep! Where is it?" "Let's see it," said Vere Beauclerc, laughing.

"I—I guess—" Mr. Bowers stammered and stopped.

If Chunky had come there alone with the horses, Mr. Bowers' intention had been to pitch him into the bushes and take possession of them.

That was not practicable now; it was only too clear that the game was up.

"Well," said Frank Richards, "you're not going to Kamloops without any grub, I suppose? Where is it?"

"Haven't you got it?" exclaimed Chunky.

"Nunno!" stuttered Dry Billy. "Then where's the dollar?" demanded Bob Lawless. "You spoofing, swindling hobo, hand Chunky his dollar at once! That's worth a good bit more to him than Monteaule Towers and the portraits of his ancestors."

"I can guess where the dollar's gone," grinned Frank Richards. "Chunky will have to go to the Red Dog after that."

"I—I say—" began Chunky.

"You silly ass, can't you see that the man's a spoofer?" exclaimed Frank. "He don't dare to keep up the silly rot with us."

Mr. Bowers grinned feebly, with one eye on the trail-rope.

"Young gent, I own up!" he exclaimed. "I guess it was a leetle joke on Mister Todgers. No harm done. I heard him talking to you this afternoon, and that put it into my head. I guess this lets me out."

Chunky Todgers' face was a study. "Then—then—it's not true!" he howled.

Mr. Bowers chuckled; he could not help it.

"You said you knew me by my likeness to my ancestors at Monteaule Towers!" yelled Chunky.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You rotter!" roared Chunky, shaking a fat fist at Mr. Bowers' grinning face. "You hobo! You rascal! Gimme back my dollar!"

"You awful rascal!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "You were going to steal the horses, if Chunky had come here alone. That was your game!"

"Gents," murmured Mr. Bowers, "a man must live. I'm lookin' for work. I've been lookin' for it years on end. I've had jobs on the stage, and I've had jobs on the railway, and I've had jobs on the ranches, but I always got the boot—I'm an unfortunate man."

"A beastly waster, you mean!" grunted Bob Lawless.

"Luck's been agin me," said Dry Billy pathetically. "I've always been thirsty. Drink's been my enemy. Young gentlemen, if you could stand a man a few dollars to help him on his way—"

"I'll stand you a taste of this trail-rope, as a warning not to start as a horse-thief in this section!" answered Bob Lawless.

"I guess— Yarooooh!" roared Mr. Bowers, as the trail-rope curled round him. "I say—I guess— yoop!—stoppit! Let up! Oh, let up! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Give it to him!" yelled the wrathful Chunky. "Give it to the beast, Bob! He's swindled me out of a dollar! Give it to him!"

Bob Lawless was giving it to him. The unhappy Mr. Bowers hopped and danced and jumped as the trail-rope played round his tattered legs, and made a rush to escape.

His foot caught in a trailing root, and he went over in the grass.

He roared and wriggled as the rope rose and fell upon him there.

"Let up!" he roared. "Oh, jumping gophers! Oh, Jerusalem! Don't I keep on telling you it was only a joke? Only taking a rise out of that born idiot! Yarooooh!"

Whack! Whack! Whack! Mr. Bowers squirmed away, and gained his feet at last, and ran for his life.

He fled through the bushes, gasping and yelling, and his crashing footsteps died away in the distance.

"Now we'll get off home," said Frank, laughing. "You won't want to go to Kamloops now, Chunky. You can leave Monteaule Towers to take care of itself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky Todgers, a sadder if not a wiser youth, climbed on his fat pony and went his way, and Frank Richards & Co. rode homeward chuckling.

The next day all Cedar Creek was yelling over Chunky's adventures, and the fat youth was addressed as "Lord Todgers" on all hands.

Chunky gave up his new accent, and ceased dropping his final "g's."

Once more he was plain Joe Todgers, but to his schoolfellows, at least, he was, for a long time after that, Lord Todgers or Marquis Chunky.

And Mr. William Bowers, tattered and forlorn, was tramping away down the Thompson Valley, still thirsty!

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY. "THE HAUNTED MINE!"

By MARTIN OLIFFORD. DON'T MISS IT!