

BOMBS ON ROOKWOOD! JIMMY SILVER & CO.'S PERIL!

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

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THREE HALFPENCE.

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THE HIDDEN HUN!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Jimmy Silver's Idea.

"Caravanning!" Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, made that remark after being silent for at least five minutes.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were watching him, and grinning.

Jimmy had been in deep thought, and his chums wondered what the outcome was going to be.

The Fistical Four were sitting in a row on the stile in Cocombe Lane, with the green fields and woods outspread before their gaze, bright under the summer sunshine, and Rookwood School rising in the distance behind the trees.

They were resting on their way back after a ramble on the heath.

"Caravanning!" repeated Jimmy Silver, with conviction.

"Eh?"

"Caravanning!"

"I was talking about cricket," said Lovell pointedly.

"I dare say," assented Jimmy Silver. "I was thinking about the vac."

"Bother the vac. That's a long way ahead yet."

"You have to take time by the forelock," said Jimmy Silver. "This vac won't be quite like the other vacs. You fellows may have heard that we are at war."

"Oh, don't be funny!" implored Raby.

"And things aren't quite what they used to be," pursued Jimmy Silver calmly. "We had an idea of my place for the vac—all of us together. Well, my pater's filled our place with wounded soldiers. It's turned into a regular hospital."

"More power to his elbow!" said Lovell heartily.

"Well, he ought to, of course," said Jimmy. "There's no end of room at the Priory, and it's quiet and healthy, and all that, and a good place for the Tommies. I quite agree with the pater; in fact, I've written and told him so."

"Which will buck him no end, I should think," remarked Newcome.

"Bow-wow! Well, it's barely possible that the patients mayn't enjoy the society of four fellows who make a thumping good deal of noise; in fact, the pater gives me a hint that I may as well spend next vac with a relation. Now, of course, that would be nice for the relation."

"Ha, ha!"

"But what about me?" said Jimmy. "And what about you chaps? It's settled that we stick together, isn't it? We've learned to tolerate one another with the minimum of rows. We hardly ever scrap."

"Fathead!"

"I'm not specially keen on a vac with the relation the pater's thinking of. I don't know whether the relation is keen on it. He ought to be,

but you never can tell. I can't spend the vac at Rookwood."

"My place is N.G.," remarked Lovell. "It's shut up since the pater went on war work in London. I'm jolly well not going to have a vac in a London hotel, if they'd have me, an' I don't believe they would."

"And I can't take a gang home," said Raby dismally. "The mater's at Lynton. I could go there, but I don't know what she'd say to a gang."

"What about you, Newcome?" asked Lovell.

Newcome shook his head. "Napoo!" he answered. "Pater in Egypt, mater managing a hospital, sister nursin', servants sacked to save expenses. I was dependin' on Jimmy. If Jimmy can't play up, I'll try to stick somebody else."

"Rats!" answered Jimmy Silver. "That's what I've been thinking about. That's why I said 'caravanning'."

"What the dickens has caravanning to do with it?" demanded Lovell.

"You know what a caravan is, I suppose?"

"Yes; sort of cart that gipsies go around in sellin' brooms an' things."

"As!" said Jimmy Silver wistfully. "I'm not proposing to spend the summer vac. selling brooms and things. Haven't you ever heard of people going caravanning in the summer?"

"Oh, caravanning!" said Lovell, apparently comprehending at last.

"Yes, ass, caravanning. That's the idea," said Jimmy. "Why shouldn't we four get hold of a caravan and go caravanning? You see the country, you know. You see life—still life, at any rate. There's excitement. You might camp in a field where there's a mad bull."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You do all your own cooking and washing-up," continued Jimmy. "That's a thing every man ought to learn—more useful than Latin and Greek, come to that. It's no end healthy. People who go caravanning swear by it. It doesn't cost such an awful lot either. You hire your caravan, fitted up, and pay so much, and so much more for breakages, and so on. You save up your money, you know, and foot the bill, and—there you are."

"Not a bad idea," agreed Lovell. "Could four of us pack into one van, though?"

"Depends on the size of the van," said Jimmy. "We could take a tent. Lots of caravanners do. Dash it all, we know how to camp out. We've done it before. And in a fine July and August—"

"Depends on the climate," grinned Lovell. "Sometimes the rain, it raineth every day."

"Well, even that has its good side. It teaches you patience and endurance and things, and fortitude, and so on."

"I can see you've made up your



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mind about it," said Lovell. "I think it's rather a good idea myself."

"Not at all bad," said Raby. "Some cousins of mine went caravanning last summer, and they said it was topping. All caravanners say that, though."

"And the question of provisions will be simpler than in peace times," remarked Newcome. "There won't be any."

"Well, that's an advantage, in its way, too," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Hallo! Here's somebody in a hurry."

There was a trampling of rapid footsteps in the field behind the juniors as they sat on the stile facing the road.

The Rookwood fellows glanced carelessly over their shoulders. A man was tearing across the field towards the stile, hatless, red-faced, and panting for breath.

Far in the distance moving figures could be seen among the hedges, and there was an indistinct sound of shouting.

Quite forgetting the important question of caravanning for the moment, the chums of Rookwood stared at the racing man.

He was a man of heavy build, with a fat, florid face, and glassy-looking pale-blue eyes that seemed to obtrude from his face.

"My hat!" exclaimed Lovell. "That's a German phiz!"

The man came dashing up to the stile.

Before the juniors could move he thrust them aside without a word, and bundled over the stile into the lane.

Taken by surprise, the juniors were pitched right and left by that sudden attack.

Jimmy Silver went stumbling on one side of the stile, Lovell on the other, and Raby and Newcome just clutched the top rail and held on.

The burly man fell on his hands and

knees in the road, but he was up again in a twinkling.

He darted across the road, plunged through the opposite hedge, and vanished across the dusky field.

Jimmy Silver scrambled to his feet. He was red with wrath.

"Collar him!" he gasped. "Where is he? Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Lovell. "I say, that fellow was a German!"

The shout across the meadows came louder now.

"Stop him!"

A man with a pitchfork in his hand came panting up.

"Has he passed you?" he exclaimed.

"He? Who?"

"Escaped German prisoner!"

"That's the way he went," said Jimmy Silver, pointing.

The man rushed on, and the Fistical Four followed him.

They were more than willing to lend a hand in recapturing a German prisoner, especially as he had bundled them off the stile so unceremoniously.

But the fugitive had vanished into the woods, and Jimmy Silver & Co. had seen no more of him by the time it was necessary to return to Rookwood for calling-over.

The 2nd Chapter. Tommy Dodd is Too Kind.

"Confound it!" mumbled old Mack.

The Rookwood porter's voice was not loud, but deep.

The moon had not yet risen, and it was very dark; and Mack had dropped his key, and his lantern was out, and he had no matches, and he was wrathful.

It was really Mack's own fault.

Among his many duties—too many, in Mack's opinion—was that of winding the great clock in the clock-tower on the Modern side.

There was no reason whatever why Mack shouldn't have performed that duty during the day.

Perhaps he had forgotten, or perhaps he had been lazy.

At all events, he had left it.

He clambered up the narrow stairs of the clock-tower with his lantern, and did his work, and came down and carefully locked after him the little door at the foot of the tower, and blew out his lantern—all in his slow and methodical manner.

Then a soft footstep and a looming shadow close by him in the dark made him jump, and he dropped the key.

It clanged somewhere on the ground in the gloom.

Whereupon old Mack said "Confound it!" most emphatically.

He blinked round him in the gloom with angry eyes.

"Young raskils!" said Mack, growing more emphatic. "Makin' a man jump! You oughter be indoors at this hower. Young raskils, you! Master Silver, I suppose. Your tricks an' dodges!"

There was no reply from the shadows.

Mack went on eloquently:

"P'raps it's you, Master Dodd, you young raskil! You come and pick up that there key for me arter makin' a man drop it. You 'ear me?"

If Tommy Dodd was there, and if he heard, he made no answer.

Mack waxed still more wrathful.

"You 'ear me?" he shouted. "I've dropped that there key. 'Ow's a man to find a key in the dark? You come and pick up that there key for me. You 'ear me? I'll report yer!"

Silence.

Mack gave an expressive grunt, and bent down his ancient limbs, and groped for the missing key.

But it was intensely dark, and he was not aware where it rolled when it slipped from his hand.

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Moreover, he had moved round in addressing the supposed junior who had made him jump, and was not sure exactly where he had dropped it.

He snorted as he rose. There was nothing for it but to tramp off to his lodge, and relight his lantern, and come back for the key.

Grunting angrily as he went, old Mack tramped away in the darkness.

There was a sound of lightly-running feet, and three shadowy forms loomed up near him, and stopped just in time to save a collision.

"Hallo! What on earth's that?" exclaimed the voice of Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Fourth. "Hallo, Mack!"

"Allo, Master Dodd!" growled Mack. "You look for that key!"

"Eh! What key?" asked Tommy Dodd. Mack blinked wrathfully at the three Modern juniors—the three Tommies of the Fourth.

Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, blinked back at him, in surprise.

"Lost a key, bedad?" asked Doyle. "Which you knows well enough I've lost a key," grunted Mack, "seeing as you made me jump, starting and worrying a man."

"Blessed if I knew you could jump, old bean!" said Tommy Cook. "I thought you'd given up athletics on your hundredth birthday."

"We'll look for your key, if you like," said Tommy Dodd good-naturedly. "But I don't see how we made you jump, Mack, when you dropped your blessed key. Where did you drop it?"

"Houtside the clock-tower, as you knows werry well."

"We haven't been near there," said Doyle. "We've only just come out of Mr. Manders' House for a sprint round the quad."

"Then it was some huther young rip," said Mack ungraciously. "Master Silver, very like."

"Shouldn't wonder" grinned Tommy Dodd. "These Classical are capable of anything—even of making a respectable old gentleman of a hundred jump and lose his key."

"I ain't a hundred!" roared Mack. "You knows that, Master Dodd!"

"Only ninety-nine?" asked Tommy. "Short!"

"Well, we'll find the key, old scout," said Tommy. "It's up to a chap to help a man old enough to be his great-great-grandfather."

"Ave you got a match, Master Dodd?" asked Mack, in sulphurous tones. "No fear—matches are off!"

"I think I've got one," said Cook. "Wait a minute. If I can't find it, we'll light the lantern at Mack's nose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see what he wants a lantern for, with that nose, bedad!"

Old Mack breathed wrath as he listened to the pleasantry of the three merry Moderns, but he opened the lantern as Tommy Cook found a match and struck it.

The lantern was lighted, and Mack tramped back to the clock-tower, followed by the three juniors.

Although they enjoyed reducing Mack to a state of Hunnish ferocity by chipping him, the juniors were quite willing to help him in the search for the key, being as good-natured as they were humorous.

They arrived at the clock-tower, and all four proceeded to search for the lost key.

But there was no sign of it.

Old Mack flashed the light to and fro, close by the little oaken door, and for a radius of a dozen yards round it, and the sharp eyes of the juniors scanned every inch of the ground.

But the key was not to be seen.

It was certainly large enough to be seen, if it was there, being a large iron key at least four inches long, and it was not possible for them to miss it.

But it was not to be found.

"It isn't here, Mack," said Tommy Dodd, at last, when the search had lasted five minutes.

"I dropped it houtside that there door," said Mack. "I was startled when you— or somebody—came close to me in the dark, and made me jump."

"We didn't," said Tommy Dodd.

"Somebody did," answered Mack sourly; "and that's the only key to the clock-tower, too. If that key don't turn up I can't wind the clock again, and there'll be trouble for somebody, Master Dodd."

"Too bad!" said Tommy.

"Look 'ere, you 'and me over that key, and enough of your tricks!" growled Mack.

"How can I hand you the key when I haven't found it?" demanded Tommy Dodd, in surprise.

"Oh, bosh!" said Mack. "Whoever made me jump picked up that key while I was gone to get a light. Ain't that plain? Well, if it was you—"

"I've told you it wasn't," said Tommy Dodd. "You're a suspicious old hunk, Mack. If you can't take a fellow's word, you can go and eat coke! Come on, you chaps!"

The three Tommies departed, leaving Mack to his own devices.

Mack had another look round for the key, muttering and grumbling, and then

gave up the search and went back to his lodge.

The key was lost, and the only explanation was that the unknown person who had startled Mack had picked it up while he was gone.

And Mack, in spite of Tommy Dodd's assurance, had a strong suspicion that the Modern juniors were the culprits. Mack was not of a trusting disposition.

And Tommy Dodd's reward for his kind assistance was a determination on Mack's part to report him on the following morning.

The 3rd Chapter.

Chipped!

"You fellows heard?"

Tubby Muffin came up to the Fistical Four in the quad on the following day, after morning lessons, with great excitement in his plump face.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were discussing the pros and cons of the caravan idea for the vac, especially from a financial point of view; when the fat Classical interrupted them.

"One caravan will do," Jimmy was saying. "We can take a tent— Buzz off, Tubby, old man, you're too numerous!"

"Caravan!" repeated Tubby Muffin. "You fellows going caravanning?"

"Yes, in the vac."

"Good! I'll come!"

"What?"

"I'll come, like a bird!" said Tubby Muffin. "I'm awfully keen on caravanning. You'll want a fellow who knows how to manage—a chap with brains, you know—to take the lead."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Whack out the expenses, I suppose?" said Tubby. "That's fair! Of course, I should be willing to come simply as a guest."

The Fistical Four stared at Tubby. That fat youth had a great gift of coolness, which did not always make him popular with his Form-fellows.

"Couldn't be done!" said Raby. "We're going to have a horse, not a traction-engine, Tubby."

"Look here, you ass—"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"We're going caravanning, not motor-touring, Tubby," he explained. "Run away and play, old son!"

"But have you fellows heard the news?" asked Tubby, coming back to his mutton, so to speak, and leaving over the question of the caravanning.

"News from the Front?" asked Jimmy. "In the paper?"

"Nearer than that," said Tubby. "There's a German around here—a German prisoner escaped from somewhere, you know."

"Oh, that chap!" said Jimmy carelessly. "Oh, you've heard?" asked Tubby, rather disappointed. Tubby liked to be the earliest purveyor of news.

"My dear man, we've not only heard, we've seen!" answered Lovell, with a grin. "You're second in the field this time, my fat pippin. The man ran into us last evening in Coombe Lane."

"Oh!" said Tubby.

"But hasn't he been caught?" said Newcome.

Tubby brightened up again. At least he knew something that the Fistical Four did not know.

"No fear!" he answered. "He's being hunted for high and low. Man's been to the Head from the police-station, and I hear that some of the Sixth are going to help look for the Hun. His name's Hermann Brunn, and he's a big beast. He thumped one man who was after him, and hurt him. He will get something stiff for that when he's caught."

"Chance for the Rookwood Scouts," remarked Raby.

Tubby Muffin grinned.

"That's what Tommy Dodd said," he answered. "But the Head's up to that. All fellows below the Sixth Form are gaged this afternoon."

"What?"

"It's on the board in the Head's list," said Tubby. "You remember there was a German prisoner escaped once before round here, and the junior Scouts got after him. The Head don't mean to let that happen again."

"What rot!"

"He thinks the Hun might hurt us if we caught him," said Tubby. "I'd be after him like a shot but for that. I fancy I could handle him."

And Tubby Muffin puffed out his fat chest, with a very warlike look.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

The idea of the podgy Classical tackling the muscular ruffian they had met in Coombe Lane tickled them immensely.

Hermann Brunn would have been a good handful for Jimmy Silver & Co., all four of them.

"I don't see where the cackle comes in," grunted Muffin. "I fancy I could handle a Hun all right. I wish I had a chance!"

"You fat duffer!" chortled Lovell. "The man came on us, and pitched us off the stile. He's as strong as a horse!"

"He might pitch you off," answered Tubby. "He wouldn't have pitched me."

"What-at?"

"I should have gone for him, and knocked him out, Lovell!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I think you ought to have done it," said Tubby, shaking his head seriously. "He's a dangerous beast to be around loose, a regular ruffian, and he will be stealing grub, you know; and grub's

short. I should have laid him by the heels if I'd been in your place!"

And Tubby Muffin gave a lofty sniff and rolled away, leaving the Fistical Four glaring.

"Silly ass!" growled Lovell.

"I—I suppose we could have collared the brute if we hadn't been taken by surprise," said Jimmy Silver.

"But we were."

"Pity we mentioned it to that duffer," said Jimmy uneasily. "We shall get chipped about it now."

"We couldn't do anything but what we did."

"I know that, but—well, about the caravans?" said Jimmy. And the chums of the Fourth resumed the discussion Tubby Muffin had interrupted.

The 4th Chapter.

Tommy Dodd's Task.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were in the quadrangle when the Fistical Four came out after dinner.

They came up to the Classical chums with smiling faces.

"You don't show any marks," said Tommy Dodd, surveying them critically.

"You'll show some marks if you don't sheer off!" growled Lovell.

"Is it true that the Hun chucked you into the ditch?"

"No, it isn't!" roared Lovell.

"According to Muffin—"

"Bother Muffin!"

"Sure, he must be a broth of a boy, that Hun!" observed Tommy Doyle.

"Fancy taking the four of you together, and screwing you along the road!"

"He didn't!" shrieked Lovell.

"Well, Muffin says—"

"My hat! I'll spifficate Muffin!" exclaimed Lovell in great exasperation.

"The Hun simply rushed into us and bumped us off the stile. We didn't even know he was an escaped Hun then."

"Oh! And he didn't take all four of you by the necks—"

"No!" yelled Lovell.

"He didn't strew you about the lane?"

"No!"

"You didn't howl for mercy?"

The Fistical Four did not answer that question in words; they felt that it was a time for action, and they acted.

They rushed on the three Tommies and smote them hip and thigh.

There were loud yells as the three Moderns went tumbling right and left before that trenchant attack.

Whether the Fistical Four had been "strewn" by the Hun or not, there was no doubt that the three Tommies were strewn about the Rookwood quadrangle.

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked off, leaving "bumps" scattered themselves out.

Then to sort themselves out.

"My hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd, scrambling to his feet. "I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Hallo, Knowles!"

Tommy Dodd's breathless threats died away as Knowles, the head prefect of the Moderns, came up.

"You're wanted!" snapped Knowles. "Go into Mr. Manders' study, the three of you, and you'd better take the key with you."

"Key! What key?"

"Old Mack's key. He's reported you for taking it."

"The blessed old hunks!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd indignantly. "We haven't seen anything of the key, Knowles. We simply helped him to look for it last night when he lost it."

"You can tell Mr. Manders that," said Knowles drily.

The three Tommies dusted themselves—they needed it—and made their way to the Modern master's study.

Mr. Manders received them with a grim frown.

"Mack has reported you for taking the key of the clock-tower!" he said in his usual snappish tones. "Place it on my table, Dodd, and take—"

"I haven't got it, sir."

"One of you has it, I presume."

"We don't know anything about it, sir!" exclaimed Cook.

Tommy Dodd explained what had happened the previous evening, Mr. Manders listening, with a knitted brow.

"This is very extraordinary!" he snapped. "Mack has searched for the key in the daylight this morning, and cannot find it. Certainly it has been picked up by someone. Do you say that it was not you who startled Mack by suddenly appearing near him in the dark close by the clock-tower?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"It is possible, of course, that other boys were out of the house," said Mr. Manders. "I will inquire. For the present, you may go."

The three Tommies went, in a very ruffled humour.

"Catch me lending old Mack a hand again!" growled Tommy Dodd, when they were outside. "The blessed old hunks! I dare say he never saw anybody at all when he was frightened—it was the gin, I fancy."

"But where can the key be?" said Cook.

"Somebody's picked it up, I suppose."

"Then there must have been somebody there."

"Some Classical ass!" growled Tommy Dodd. "It's a trick on old Mack, that's all. Bother his silly old key!"

The three Moderns bothered Mack and his key heartily, but the matter did not rest there.

The key of the clock-tower was missing, and it had to be found.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were starting for

the cricket-ground, when they were called in by Bulkeley, to be questioned by Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth.

It was news to the Classics that the key was lost at all, and all of them disclaimed all knowledge of it.

Mr. Bootles proceeded to inquire whether any of them had been out of the house at nine o'clock the previous evening, and that, too, was disclaimed.

The Third and Second did not come under the inquiry, as their bed-time was nine o'clock, and they had, therefore, a clear alibi.

But it seemed to be established that all the Classical Fourth and Shell had been within doors, at the time old Mack lost his precious key.

They were dismissed at last.

Mr. Manders had been questioning the Modern juniors, and it came out pretty clearly that only the three Tommies had been out of doors on that occasion.

If any other fellow had been out, he kept the fact to himself.

Naturally, if some too-humorous junior had bagged the key to worry old Mack, he was not likely to admit the fact to Mr. Manders.

Suspicion rested upon the three Tommies.

But their denial was so earnest, that even the suspicious Mr. Manders could scarcely refuse to take their word.

"You had better look for the key," he said. "Make a thorough search, and do not come back to me without it."

With sulphurous feelings, the three Tommies gave up cricket for the afternoon, and started hunting round the clock-tower for the key.

Jimmy Silver & Co. spotted them at that unwelcome task when they came off Little Side after practice.

Tommy Dodd turned a red and wrathful face to them, as they came along, smiling.

"Hunting for the key?" grinned Lovell. "Yes, ass!"

"We'll help you if you like," said Jimmy Silver generously.

Tommy Dodd fanned himself with his straw hat.

It was a warm afternoon, and very sunny, and fagging about in the sun looking for a key that was not there, was warm and exasperating work.

"It's not much good," he said. "It's not here. Somebody's picked it up."

"Oh, you Moderns can't find anything," said Lovell. "Let's look!"

The Classical chums joined in the hunt. They went right round the clock-tower, scanning the ground within a radius of ten yards at least, and then made little excursions in various directions.

But it was clear that the key was not there.

"Give it up," suggested Jimmy Silver, at last.

"Can't!" growled Dodd. "Manders says we're not to come back without it. I believe the old fathead thinks we've got it all the time!"

"And you haven't?"

"No!" roared Tommy.

"It's jolly queer," said Jimmy Silver, knitting his brows. "The fellows know you've got this job on, and if a chap had bagged the key, surely he'd hand it over. An you sure old Mack dropped it at all?"

"Well, the old duffer says he did. He makes out that somebody was lurking close by here last night and startled him, and he dropped it."

"Perhaps it was too much gin-and-water, and he's got it in his pocket all the time—or he may have left it in the tower," said Jimmy. "I'll try the door, anyway."

Jimmy turned the handle of the little oaken door, and shook it.

The door did not open; it was evidently locked. But as Jimmy shook it, there came a sound from within, and he jumped.

"My hat! Somebody's in there!" he exclaimed.

The 5th Chapter.

Mysterious!

"What?"

"Rot!"

The juniors came hurrying up to the door, as Jimmy Silver uttered that surprised exclamation.

The captain of the Fourth stood staring at the door in astonishment.

The key of the clock-tower was lost, the door was locked, and yet Jimmy Silver had heard a sound within.

It was followed by dead silence, but he was sure that he had not been mistaken.

"Gone to sleep and started dreaming?" asked Tommy Dodd pleasantly.

"There's somebody in there," said Jimmy Silver.

"How could there be, fathead?"

"I don't know how there could—but there is," said Jimmy positively. "He moved when I shook the door—I suppose I startled him. I heard something metallic knock against something—a lamp, I should say. There's a lamp kept on the shelf inside."

"I know there's a dashed lantern there," said Tommy Dodd. "But a lantern can't move by itself, can it?"

"Well, I heard it," said Jimmy.

"Does this kind of thing run in your family, Silver?" inquired Tommy Cook.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Jimmy. "It's plain enough, now I think of it. The chap who bagged the key has gone in, and locked the door after him. That's all."

"Oh, that's likely enough," conceded Tommy Dodd.

And all the juniors admitted that.

There was a fine view, as far as the sea, to be obtained from the top of the tower, and fellows liked to climb to the top sometimes for that reason on a fine day, when they could persuade old Mack to lend them the key.

Evidently—to Jimmy's mind—the purloiner of the missing key had let himself into the tower, locking the door after him to prevent discovery.

Tommy Dodd thumped on the door.

He quite agreed with Jimmy's view now, that the purloiner of the key was inside, probably laughing at the efforts of the

perspiring Moderns to find the key outside.

"Thump, thump, thump!"

"Let us in, you worm!" roared Tommy Dodd.

"Open the dure, ye spalpeen!" b

fellows had answered to their names on the roll.

Who, then, was shut up in the clock-tower?

Tommy Dodd looked daggers at the captain of the Fourth as the fellows came out after roll-call.

"You shrieking ass!" he said wretchedly. "You didn't hear anybody in the tower, after all!"

"I did!" answered Jimmy Silver doggedly.

"Who was it, then?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "Every chap at Rookwood was in Hall to answer to his name."

Jimmy Silver shook his head in utter perplexity.

"Blessed if I understand it!" he said. "I heard somebody. He was ransacking the cupboard inside, and I heard him move the lantern."

"Rats!"

And with that emphatic rejoinder Tommy Dodd stalked away, to an unpleasant interview with Mr. Manders, who listened to his explanation that he had been unable to find the key, in chilling silence.

The Fistical Four went to the end study for prep, Jimmy Silver wearing a deep frown, indicative of perplexed thought.

The mystery of the clock-tower simply staggered him.

The 6th Chapter. The Hidden Hun!

"Give it a rest!" said Arthur Edward Lovell.

Jimmy Silver started.

The four chums were in the end study at prep—or, rather, three of them were at prep.

Jimmy Silver was idle for once, and his brows were knitted in thought.

"Give it a rest!" repeated Lovell.

"Prep now, or you'll get a ragging from Bootles in the merry mornin'. Lots of time to worry about the caravans."

"I wasn't thinking about the caravans," answered Jimmy.

"Oh, you weren't!" exclaimed Lovell.

"What's the row, then? What are you trying to look like a Chinese idol for?"

"Fathead! It's jolly queer," said Jimmy.

"You're right—if you're alluding to your face."

"Be serious, you ass!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Look here, Lovell! Who was in the clock-tower?"

"Nobody," answered Lovell. "You fancied you heard somebody."

"I heard somebody, as plain as I hear you now," said Jimmy Silver.

"Who ever it was must have had the key, and he's locked himself in."

"My dear man, be reasonable. If there was anybody in the clock-tower, you left him there when you came in; and yet everybody belonging to Rookwood answered call-over," said Lovell.

"That makes it look as if the chap in the tower doesn't belong to Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"A merry stranger dropped in to spend a day without any grub in the clock-tower!" roared Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, of all the potty ideas!" exclaimed Newcome, in wonder. "Who'd do such an idiotic thing?"

"Only one man that I can imagine," said Jimmy Silver.

"And who's that?"

"Hermann Brunn."

"What!" yelled three voices in unison.

"Well, I know it sounds rather thick," confessed Jimmy Silver, colouring a little.

"But look at it. I know there's somebody in the tower; and we know it's not a Rookwood chap. It's a stranger. What stranger could want to hide in the clock-tower all day without food? Only a man who had to keep out of sight to save his skin, of course. That man Brunn was near Rookwood when he was last seen. I've asked Bulkeley if he's caught, and he says no. He was out all the afternoon helping to hunt for him, you know. Suppose the man dodged in over the school wall, in the dark, to hide, when he was run pretty close—"

"Suppose!" grunted Lovell.

"Mack was startled by somebody—he didn't see whom. The man might have been lurking in the dark, trying to find a hiding-place, or just simply waiting till it was safe to make a break. Mack dropped the key. He'd hear that, of course—it's a heavy key. Well, a chap being hunted can't pick and choose, and it was the chance of a thousand for him. He bagged the key, let himself into the clock-tower, and locked the door after him."

"Phew!"

"It might easily have happened like that," persisted Jimmy Silver. "It's the only way of accounting. There was somebody in the tower, and not a Rookwood chap, and only that Hun prisoner would be likely to lock himself in there without food. He couldn't venture to leave in the daylight, of course. If he's there, he's waiting for to-night to make a break. That's how I figure it out. And it seems to me the only way of accounting for what's happened."

"Draw it mild, old scout!"

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet.

"If you think I was mistaken in hearing somebody in the tower, where's the key?" he said. "If a Rookwood chap took it for a lark, he wouldn't keep it all this time, now there's a row about it."

"That's odd, I admit. Where are you going?"

"I'm going to Bulkeley," said Jimmy Silver. "I don't say the Hun's there, but he may be, and I'll see what Bulkeley thinks."

"He'll think you're an ass!"

"Oh, rats!"

Jimmy Silver left the end study, and his chums, after some hesitation, followed him.

The four presented themselves in Bulkeley's study.

The captain of Rookwood was talking cricket with Neville when they arrived.

"Well, what is it, Silver?" asked Bulkeley.

Jimmy Silver explained, his chums remaining silent, and watching Bulkeley's face to see how he received it.

Bulkeley stared blankly at Jimmy Silver as he listened, and Neville grinned.

Bulkeley did not grin, however.

Apparently, he saw a bare possibility that Jimmy Silver had made a valuable discovery.

"You're quite certain you heard someone in the tower, Silver?" was George Bulkeley's first question.

"Quite certain, Bulkeley!"

"And the door's locked?"

"Yes."

"Surely you don't think, Bulkeley—"

began Neville.

"It's barely possible," answered Bulkeley.

"Anyway, if there's somebody in the tower he's a trespasser here, and he will have to be cleared out. I don't quite see why he should be bothering with the lantern there."

"I thought of that," said Jimmy diffidently. "If he's the Hun he must be awfully hungry, and having spotted that cupboard he might look in it, in case there was any grub there."

"It's possible."

Bulkeley crossed to his window and threw back the blind.

Outside bright moonlight streamed on the Rookwood quadrangle.

He could see the clock-tower in the distance standing black against the sky.

"If he's there he won't try to bunk till the moon sets, Bulkeley," said Jimmy Silver. "He would be spotted."

Bulkeley nodded.

"Come along, Neville!" he said.

"You think—"

"I think it's possible."

The two Sixth-Formers left the study. Jimmy Silver gave his chums a lofty look.

"Well?" he said.

"Bulkeley thinks there may be something in it," admitted Lovell. "Let's get along after them."

"You bet!"

The juniors followed the two prefects into the quad and across to the clock-tower on the Modern side.

Bulkeley tried the door. It was locked.

He listened, but there was no sound from within.

The captain of Rookwood remained for some moments in thought, the juniors watching him curiously.

Then he took a little electric-lamp from his pocket, placed the bulb close to the keyhole, and suddenly turned on the light.

Across the dark room inside a sudden flash of white light shot, though it could not be seen from outside.

And from the silent tower, plain to the cars without, came a sudden startled, gasping ejaculation.

"Ach!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Neville.

"He—he's there!" stuttered Lovell.

Bulkeley shut off the light.

The sudden flash into the darkness of the tower had startled the man within into betraying himself, as Bulkeley had expected it would, if he was there.

Along with the muttered ejaculation came a shuffling sound as the man moved quickly.

"He's there!" said Bulkeley grimly.

"Silver, cut off and tell Mr. Bootles at once! Neville, go and get all the Sixth you can muster! I'll wait here in case he makes a break."

"I'll wait with you," answered Neville.

"Lovell can fetch the fellows."

"Right! Cut off, Lovell!"

Jimmy Silver and Lovell broke into a run.

There was no time for talk.

Now that the hidden Hun knew that he was discovered, as he undoubtedly did, help was wanted.

Bulkeley and Neville, Raby and Newcome, remained on guard. But the two juniors were not long gone, and when they returned they brought half Rookwood with them.

The news spread like wildfire that the escaped Hun had hidden himself in the Rookwood clock-tower.

Seniors and juniors crowded to the spot. They swarmed round the clock-tower, and there was no chance of the Hun getting away if he should venture out.

Mr. Bootles arrived, very excited and fussy.

"What, what?" he exclaimed. "Bulkeley, this is—is extraordinary—amazing! You—you are sure—"

"Look!" yelled Lovell.

He pointed upward.

On the roof of the clock-tower a burly figure appeared, black against the moonlit sky.

"The Hun!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Look out!"

"Bless my soul!"

Bulkeley dragged Mr. Bootles back, and the crowd surged away.

For the right arm of the cornered ruffian was raised, and a stone was in it—a heavy stone the ruffian had taken, evidently, to use as a weapon.

It crashed on the ground as the crowd surged back.

Mr. Bootles gasped.

If the stone had struck him it would have dashed out his brains.

The desperate ruffian in the tower was reckless now.

"Good heavens!" panted Mr. Bootles.

"The—the wretch! The ruffian! Boys, keep back out of reach! He may end other missiles! Keep back!"

"We don't need tellin' that!" grinned Mornington.

The crowd surged farther back.

On the platform high above the German was brandishing a savage fist.

His harsh voice rang out.

"Come! Come, then! Dirty Englanders! Hermann Brunn will not be taken alive! Ach! I spit upon you!"

"Bulkeley"—Mr. Bootles' voice was very agitated—"keep watch at a distance while I telephone for the police!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Bootles whisked away to the School House, and in frantic haste rang up the

police-station at Coombe, and then the military camp at Latcham.

Meanwhile, the Rookwood crowd, keeping out of the reach of missiles, watched round the tower, to cut off the escape of the cornered Hun.

The 7th Chapter. Under the Gothas.

"Here they come!"

There was a steady tramp in the old quadrangle.

A cheer broke from the Rookwood crowd as the familiar khaki came into sight in the moonlight.

Six men in khaki and a sergeant had arrived, with the village policeman from Coombe.

The German was still in view on the tower, shaking his fist at intervals, and howling out guttural German curses.

The big, bronzed sergeant glanced up at him grimly.

"We'll give you something to stop all that, my beauty!" he muttered, as a stone whizzed past him and crashed on the ground.

An axe was soon at work on the locked door.

The Rookwood fellows looked on breathlessly.

It was past bedtime for the juniors, but no one thought of that.

The man in the tower was desperate.

He had injured one of the sentinels in escaping, and punishment was certain, and it could easily be seen that he meant to resist.

There would be a fierce fight on the narrow stair when the soldiers had forced an entrance, that was certain.

The ruffian was brandishing a bludgeon,

planes could be clearly heard now, and the booming of the guns was increasing in intensity.

But the blows still fell on the oaken door of the clock-tower.

Air-raid or no air-raid, the men in khaki had their duty to do, and the buzzing of the Gothas and the booming of the guns made no difference to them.

Jimmy Silver & Co., back in the end study, turned out the light, and looked from the window.

"They're coming this way!" muttered Raby.

"They'll pass over Rookwood," said Jimmy. "Keep smiling; they've passed over before."

"Lucky the moon's clouded."

Lovell caught Jimmy Silver's arm.

"Look!" he breathed.

From the top of the clock-tower across the quad a bright beam of light shot up skyward.

It wavered and died.

Jimmy caught his breath.

"The Hun!" he ejaculated.

The juniors watched, spellbound.

From the distance they could not see the man on the tower, but they knew that Hermann Brunn had lighted the lantern, and was waving it at the sky.

He had heard the droning of the Gothas, and knew that his countrymen were at hand—the assassins of the sky.

And in his desperation he was signalling—flashing the light skyward to draw the bombs of the air-raiders, careless if his own life was spent, in his desire to bring death and destruction upon the hated Englanders!

Crack!

A rifle rang out in the shadowy quadrangle. Jimmy panted.



The right arm of the cornered ruffian was raised, and a stone was in it—a heavy stone that the man had evidently taken to use as a weapon. Next moment the stone was sent hurtling to the ground.

a portion of the rail torn from the staircase, and howling out threats.

Loud and incessant the blows on the oaken door resounded across the quad.

"My hat! This is goin' to be excitin', Jimmy!" breathed Lovell, as the men in khaki fixed their bayonets.

Jimmy Silver did not reply. He was listening.

"What's the row, Jimmy?"

"Can't you hear?" muttered Jimmy Silver. "There it is again! Listen!"

"Only that row at the door."

"Listen!"

From the distance, as if from the heart of the clouds now veiling the moon, came a low, monotonous, buzzing sound.

"Aeroplanes!" said Lovell.

"Gothas!" said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Jimmy!"

"I've heard them before, so have you! I'll bet you—"

Boom!

As if to corroborate Jimmy's words, there came the sudden, deep report of a gun in the distance.

Boom! Boom!

"It's an air-raid!" yelled Smythe of the Shell, and he bolted for the School House.

"Indoors at once!" shouted Bulkeley. The voices of masters and prefects were heard on all sides.

The Rookwood crowd were shepherded indoors in record time.

Overhead, the buzzing of the German

Faintly now the booming of the guns came to their ears.

And then suddenly, terribly, a frightful explosion filled every recess of the vaults with echoing sound.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

"A bomb!" muttered Jimmy Silver. Crash!

It was half an hour later that the Rookwood fellows were released from the confinement of the vaults.

But it was a changed Rookwood they looked upon when they emerged at last.

The venomous hatred of the Hun in the tower had done its work.

The light had been seen, and the Hun raiders, appraised that buildings lay below, had hurled the missiles of destruction, with deadly effect.

Two bombs had fallen on Rookwood, and two great gashes were torn in the ground close by the school building.

Windows and doors had been blown in; here and there walls had collapsed, and ceilings had given away.

The class-rooms were a mass of wreckage, and the dormitories looked as if a cyclone had passed.

Had the school been in bed it would have been a massacre.

As it was, no lives had been lost, but the school was disastrously damaged.

And over it all the full moon shone through feecy clouds, calm and radiant.

Jimmy Silver gritted his teeth as he looked round at the desolate scene.

"The rotters!" he muttered. "Oh, the Hun rotters!"

The raiders had long been gone.

The booming of the guns had died away.

Jimmy Silver & Co. hurried towards the clock-tower.

It had escaped with slight damage.

But the Hun was gone—and the soldiers.

The juniors learned afterwards that the ruffian had been seized a few minutes after the bombs had fallen, and secured after a struggle, and the men in khaki had taken him away with handcuffs on his wrists.

"That's one good thing!" remarked Lovell. "But—my hat! What's the game now? We shall have to camp out to-night."

And that was what happened.

Fortunately, it was a warm summer's night, and the Rookwood fellows rather enjoyed the camping-out in the quad.

None was allowed in the buildings in case of further falling of ceilings.

And when the morning sun rose over Rookwood, it shone upon a scene such as had never been witnessed at the old school before.

Rookwood broke up that day.

There was nothing else to be done.

It was certain to be weeks before the school life could be resumed, after the damage sustained in the Hun raid, but the Rookwood fellows heard the news with remarkable equanimity.

Nobody seemed to have any objection to beginning the summer vacation a few weeks ahead of the usual time.

Disastrous as the air-raid had been, there were compensations, as several of the fellows remarked.

Jimmy Silver looked very cheerful over it.

"This only shows you," he told his chums, "what a thing it is to have your Uncle James to make plans for you. Didn't I tell you it was a good wheeze to take time by the forelock? Now we know what we're going to do."

"I suppose you foresaw that air-raid!" remarked Lovell, with gentle sarcasm.

Jimmy Silver coughed. Even Uncle James could not lay claim to so much foresight as that!

"Well, no," admitted Jimmy. "Still, it's just as well that we know what we're going to do. And that's caravanning. And I dare say our people will be just as pleased to know that we're not going to bother them for the extra weeks. Hallo, Tommy Dodd! Going home?"

The three Tommies came up to say good-bye.

"Well, we're going home," said Tommy Dodd. "But not for long. You fellows have been talking about caravanning this vac."

"That's our game."

"Ours, too!" grinned Tommy Dodd. "Curious you should have hit on the same idea."

"You mean you got the idea from us?" snorted Lovell.

"Well, anyhow, we're caravanning," said Tommy Dodd. "Our people are sure to agree; they ain't prepared for us to be planked down on them before the regular vac. It is a treat they may not jump at. If we meet you on the road we'll show you how to caravan."

"Rats!"

"We're going to do Kent and Sussex," said Tommy Cook.

"Same here," replied Jimmy Silver. "If we meet you on the road we'll give you some tips."

"Classical fathead!"

"Modern ass!"

And with that exchange of compliments the rivals of Rookwood parted. But they were to meet again—as rivals of the road!

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!



THE HAUNTED MINE!

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. Injun Dick in Luck.

"Outside!"

Kern Gunten rapped out the words. Frank Richards & Co. glanced round. The chums of Cedar Creek had ridden over to Gunten's Store at Thompson to make some purchases. Gunten's Store being the great emporium in that section of the Thompson Valley.

It was Saturday, and lessons were off, and Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy of Cedar Creek, was serving in the store.

Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc each had purchases to make, and they kept Gunten quite busy for a time.

At school they did not pull well with Gunten, but in the store the Swiss schoolboy's instincts were aroused, and he was all agreeable smiles.

Frank Richards & Co. would have preferred to be served by his father, as a matter of fact, for they more than suspected Gunten of putting on extra cents on the price of goods wherever it was possible.

Possibly he bestowed that distinction upon them because they were his school-fellows at Cedar Creek.

At all events he did it.

The purchases were finished at last, and Frank and his chums were getting their goods together when a new customer came in.

It was then that Gunten rapped out "Outside!" in sharp tones.

"By gum! It's Injun Dick!" said Bob Lawless.

Injun Dick it was, the copper-faced old Apache, who generally adorned with his person the post outside the Red Dog Saloon, draped in his tattered blanket.

With great dignity, wearing his old blanket with as much pride as if it were an ermine robe, Injun Dick stalked into the store.

There was still a great deal of dignity about the old Redskin, low as he had fallen through the unwise use of the white man's fire-water.

Gunten pointed to the door. "Outside!" he repeated. "No hoboes wanted hyer, Injun Dick! Vamoose the ranch! If you're after broken meat, ask the cook at the back door. Now, then, sharp's the word!"

Frank Richards frowned.

Gunten had the right, or at least the power, to speak as he liked in his father's store, but it jarred upon Frank to hear him slang the old Redskin in that way.

Injun Dick was a loafer, and a "soaker" undoubtedly, but he had been a great chief of his tribe in far-off days.

The Apache drew himself up, and stared at Kern Gunten with black, scintillating eyes.

He was evidently offended.

"You hear me?" continued Gunten. "You travel off, Injun Dick, before I call the bulldog to you!"

"Oh, go easy with the old chap, Gunten!" murmured Bob Lawless uneasily.

Gunten gave a sneering laugh.

"No good going easy with a boozy hobo," he said. "I guess we've had enough goods lifted through that kind of galoot nosing into the store."

"Injun come buy!" said the Apache loftily.

Gunten laughed again.

"You can't buy fire-water here. Get round to the bar, if you've got the dust," he said. "Not that I believe you have, you old fraud!"

"Injun plenty dust."

"Oh, come off!" said Gunten.

"Ugh! Look!"

Injun Dick's dusky hand groped under his blanket, and he tossed something upon the bench in front of him that landed with a concussion.

In the sunlight shining in at the store windows the little object on the counter gleamed and glittered.

Kern Gunten stared at it as Injun Dick folded his arms with a lofty manner.

The chums of Cedar Creek stared, too. For the object the Apache had hurled upon the store counter was a gold nugget!

"Gold!" ejaculated Bob Lawless.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" said Gunten.

He picked up the nugget.

It was half the size of an egg, and not pure gold, but three-quarters of its bulk was certainly of the precious yellow metal.

Gunten knew enough about metals to know that.

"By gum, that's the real goods!" he remarked. "I guess that works out plenty ounces to the ton, that does. Where did you get it, Injun Dick?" Gunten's manner was much more respectful now. The nugget was worth at least fifty dollars, and possibly more might

come where that came from. "You've struck a lode in the hills—hay?"

Injun Dick nodded.

"Injun find," he replied.

"Near Thompson?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Three days' journey," said the Apache. "Up in the hills?" asked Gunten.

"Wah! Yes."

"You want to sell this?" the store-keeper's son asked, eyeing the nugget.

"I'll take it to my popper, if you like."

"Injun come buy," said Injun Dick, with dignity. "New blanket, husky new boots, same as white chief, tip-top fixings, you bet!"

"Take a seat," answered Gunten quite civilly.

With much dignity the Apache sat down on a stool handed him by the polite Gunten.

He was a person to be treated with civility now.

Frank Richards & Co. were looking over a new lot of books that had come up from the railway with the store-wagon, and while they were so engaged Injun Dick's wants were supplied.

Old Man Gunten came into the store, and he was as civil to the Indian as his son was.

He priced the nugget at forty dollars, a price to which Injun Dick assented with a single nod of the head.

The Swiss was swindling him out of at least ten dollars, if not twenty; but the Apache did not even think of baggling.

When Injun Dick was "down to bed-rock" he was glad to accept a stray drink from anybody, but when he was in funds he was a chief once again, and he would not haggle with a storekeeper.

Mr. Gompers Gunten had no comprehension whatever of the Indian's pride, but it suited him very well, from his storekeeping point of view, and he was civil, not to say oily, to the once-despised outcast.

Injun Dick spent thirty dollars in the store.

The remainder he was probably keeping for a "tear" at the Red Dog.

He was provided with a new blanket of gorgeous design, and boots like a white chief, and other articles, prominent among them being a fiery fancy waistcoat that outrivalled the rainbow in brilliancy.

The startling colours of that waistcoat caught Injun Dick's barbaric eye, and pleased him so evidently, that Mr. Gunten immediately clapped a dollar extra on the price, without stopping to think.

Frank Richards & Co. left the store with their purchases, and fastened the packages on their saddles.

They left Injun Dick still spending his money with the Guntens, father and son bowing and smiling round him like the most accomplished shopwalkers in Chicago.

Bob Lawless indulged in a snort.

"That poor old Injun is getting skinned," he remarked. "They wouldn't skin him so close as that in the Red Dog, I guess. Those Guntens are trash!"

Frank and Beauclerc nodded assent; they had no doubt on that point.

As the chums mounted their horses Injun Dick came out of the store.

Still in his tattered old blanket, he stalked away towards his shack down the street, and Kern Gunten was following him, laden with bundles and packets.

The chums grinned as they rode away. Injun Dick was a great man that day, and evidently a man whom the Guntens delighted to honour—so long as his "dust" lasted.

The 2nd Chapter. The Haunted Mine.

"Bailey's bonanza is for sale!"

Chunky Todgers made that announcement in the play-ground at Cedar Creek School.

Todgers generally had all the local news.

"The Haunted Mine for sale!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

"Yep!"

"Who's selling it?" inquired Vere Beauclerc.

"Sheriff," said Chunky Todgers. "Now Bailey ain't been heard of for five years, the mine's going to be sold—if they can find a buyer." Chunky grinned. "I guess that buyer will want trailing down, some."

"I guess so," agreed Bob Lawless, laughing.

"You bet!" chimed in Eben Haeke. "The sheriff will have to sell that mine to a tenderfoot, if it sells at all."

"I guess it won't go," said Tom Lawrence. "Nobody wants to put his spondulicks in a haunted mine."

Frank Richards was looking curious. He had been some time at the Lawless

Ranch, and Cedar Creek School, now, but there were still many items in local history and topography that he had not heard of.

Bailey's Bonanza, otherwise the Haunted Mine, was one of them.

"Haunted!" repeated Frank. Lawrence laughed.

"Well, they say it's haunted," he said. "Old Bill Bailey is supposed to haunt it. He used to work at it for years, and he disappeared at last. Whether he's alive or dead, nobody knows."

"I guess he's gone under," said Chunky Todgers. "It's five years since he's been seen at Thompson."

"Is the mine worked now?" asked Frank.

"Nope. It's played out."

"But who says it's haunted?"

"Lots of folk," said Bob Lawless, laughing. "I dare say they've heard the wind yowling in the old adit, and took it for ghosts shrieking. I don't reckon anybody's actually seen the ghost."

"Euchre Dick has!" exclaimed Todgers. Bob snuffed.

"Euchre Dick was rolling home three sheets in the wind," he answered. "I guess Euchre Dick might have seen anything, from sea-serpents to ghosts and spooks."

"Where is the mine, Bob?" asked Frank Richards, as he strolled away towards the schoolhouse with his chums.

"In the gulch outside Thompson," answered Bob. "I remember going over it last year. Like to see it, Franky?"

"I was just thinking so," said Frank. "I've never been over a gold-mine, and a haunted mine into the bargain is rather attractive."

"There isn't much of it," explained Bob. "Bill Bailey drove a tunnel into the hill—what miners call an adit, you know—and he picked up some gold, but not enough to pay him grub-stakes on his work, I've heard. You know what an adit is, Franky?"

"Ye-es," said Frank doubtfully.

"It's driven into the side of the hill horizontally," explained Bob. "Different from a shaft, you see, which goes downwards."

"I see. And Bailey's mine is an adit?"

"That's it—a long tunnel right into the hill, with a few little baby tunnels where he tried his luck to touch the lode. Bailey believed there was a tremendous lode, but he never found it. Some say that he drowned himself in the creek through disappointment."

"Poor chap!" said Frank.

"Well, another yarn is that he's taken

to stock-raising down in Saskatchewan," said Bob, laughing. "Anyway, he's vanished; and there's a yarn that his spook haunts the mine. Now the mine's going to be sold it's time for his ghost to show himself and raise objections—if he ever shows himself at all."

"I'd like to see the place," said Frank. "We'll ride over after lessons, then," said Bob. "It's only a few miles out of Thompson, and as there's an early moon to-night, popper won't be waxy if we're a piece late. What do you say, Cherub?"

"Count me in," answered Beauclerc.

"Good!" said Frank. "I say, Bob, is there any gold left in the mine?"

Bob shook his head.

"Might be a nugget or two here and there," he answered. "But old Bailey was awfully down on his uppers before he quit, and I guess he squeezed out of that mine all he could. Nobody's taken it up since he quit, though some galoots have had a go at it for a few days, and given it up in disgust." Bob chuckled. "No good looking for gold, Franky—nothing in that line, I guess."

Frank laughed, and the schoolboys went in to lessons.

But Frank Richards was thinking a good deal about the haunted mine while he was receiving instruction from Miss Meadows.

The story that the deserted mine was haunted interested him, naturally, and gave a spice of adventure to the forthcoming visit to the spot.

And he felt a compassionate interest in the history of the unknown and vanished Bill Bailey.

The unfortunate man had given his mine the name of "Bailey's Bonanza," evidently in the touching belief that it was to produce great wealth.

Instead of doing so it had kept its owner at a hard grind for years, and failed at last even to keep him in "grub-stakes."

Then Bill Bailey had disappeared, and the mine had become derelict.

Poor Bailey was only one of the many thousands who had pursued a golden phantom, instead of relying for fortune upon the slower, but much surer, method of tilling the earth.

Frank wondered what had become of the man—whether he had really drowned himself in the creek, or taken to stock-raising in Saskatchewan—or whether he was still pursuing the golden phantom in another locality.

He felt a sense of compassion for the man he had never seen, and never would see.

Miss Meadows' voice interrupted his reflections.

"Richards!"

Frank started.

"Yes, ma'am!" he stammered.

"I have spoken to you twice."

"I—I am sorry, ma'am. I—I didn't hear," stammered Frank, his face crimsoning.

Miss Meadows gave him a sharp look.

"Very well, Richards, please give me your attention," she said severely.

"Yes, Miss Meadows."

And Frank dismissed the unfortunate Bill Bailey and his Bonanza from his mind for the remainder of afternoon lessons.

When school was dismissed at Cedar Creek, Frank Richards & Co. led their horses out of the corral, and mounted in the Thompson trail.

Instead of taking the home trail as usual they trotted off towards Thompson.

Kern Gunten and his friend Keller passed them at a gallop on the same trail, their homes being in Thompson.

The two Swiss disappeared ahead, as the three chums trotted on.

"How far is it, Bob?" Frank asked.

"We turn off on the hill trail just before Thompson," answered Bob. "Then it's a couple of miles."

"Lots of time, then," said Frank.

"Lots!" said Bob cheerily.

A quarter of an hour later they came in sight of Gunten and Keller again.

They had dismounted, and their horses stood cropping the grass in the trail. Gunten and Keller were kneeling by the trail, beside what looked like a body.

The three chums stared at them as they rode up.

"What the dickens are they up to?" exclaimed Beauclerc. "Looks like a man in a faint! He's not moving."

"My word!" murmured Bob. "Gunten playing the Good Samaritan! I guess I never expected to see that!"

"It's Injun Dick!" exclaimed Frank Richards, as he caught a clearer view of the man lying motionless in the grass under the shadow of the larches.

The three chums rode up, and halted, and looked down at the Indian lying in the grass, and the two Swiss by his side.

And a glance then was sufficient to show them that Gunten was not "playing the Good Samaritan."

The 3rd Chapter. The Good Samaritans.

Injun Dick was evidently unconscious. His eyes were closed, and his coppery face was quite insensible, and his breath was jerky.

But he was not in a faint, as Beauclerc had supposed.

It was the white man's fire-water that was the cause of the Apache's unconsciousness.

Gunten looked up.

"Hallo, you galoots! This chap's as drunk as anything!" he grinned. "We're decorating him a bit. Looks a picture, doesn't he?"

The chums could not help laughing.

Gunten had not stopped on his way home with the intention of lending aid to the hapless Redskin; his intentions were quite different.

He had taken coloured crayons from his pocket, and was ornamenting the unconscious face with streaks of colour.

Injun Dick's coppery complexion was disappearing under stripes of blue, green, and white.

"Rather a surprise for him when he wakes up!" chuckled Keller.

"I say, it's too bad!" said Frank Richards.

"What rot!"

The Indian stirred and grunted, and Gunten drew back for a moment.

But there was no chance of Injun Dick awakening.

The "tanglefoot" at the Red Dog was too potent in its effects, and Injun Dick had evidently indulged in it not wisely, but too well.

The Redskin was dressed in the new garb he had purchased at Gunten's store a couple of days before, but the handsome new blanket and the gorgeous waistcoat were sadly stained with spirits and mud and grease now.

The gutters of Thompson town were no respecters of fine raiment.

"Oh, he's safe enough, Kern," said Keller. "Give him some more. Lend me your knife, and I'll get on with his mop."

"Here you are."

Frank Richards started.

"What are you going to do?" he exclaimed.

"Cut his hair," grinned Gunten. "We'll send him home as bald as a Chinaman."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Keller. "He will be surprised when he wakes up."

Frank Richards slid from his horse.

Keller had taken a handful of the Indian's thick, matted hair, and was sawing at it with a clasp-knife.

"You're jolly well not going to do anything of the kind!" exclaimed Frank angrily.

Keller stared at him.

"Why shouldn't I?" he demanded.

"Because it's a rotten trick," answered Frank hotly. "Let the poor chap's hair alone!"

"Rot!"

"Look here, Keller—"

With a laugh, Keller sawed away with the knife, and a thick strand of black hair dropped in the grass.

The next moment Frank Richards caught him by the collar, and dragged him back from the insensible Redskin.

Keller rolled on his back in the trail with an angry yell.

"Let go, you fool!" he shouted.

"You'll let the man alone," answered Frank.

"I guess so," chimed in Bob Lawless. "Painting his face is one thing, but cutting a man's hair off is quite another. Let him be!"

Keller rose to his feet, savage and sullen.

Frank Richards stood between him and the Indian with his fists clenched, and Keller tossed the knife back to Gunten.

Gunten caught it up with a fierce look.

"Mind your own business, Richards!" he shouted. "I'm going to shave the

Injun till he's not got a hair left on his cabeza, so I tell you."

"You're not!" answered Frank Richards coolly.

"Who'll stop me?" yelled Gunten.

"I will!"

"And I guess I will, if Franky don't!" added Bob Lawless. "Don't be such a rotten brute, Gunten. The man's not harmed you."

"Let him alone," said Vere Beauclerc, slipping from his horse.

Gunten gritted his teeth.

"Oh, get on your way!" he snapped. "I'll let his topknot alone, then. Get off, and don't worry."

"Can't trust you," answered Frank. "You'd do it after we were gone. You two can get off."

"Look here—"

"Nuff said!" interrupted Bob Lawless. "Can't trust a coyote like you, Gunten. Get on your gee and vamoose the ranch."

"I guess I won't!"

"Guess again!" grinned Bob. "If you're still there in another minute, you'll have a prize nose to carry home with you."

Keller was already climbing on his horse.

Kern Gunten hesitated a moment or two, and then, with a muttered exclamation of anger, he jumped on his pony, and rode up the trail after Keller.

The three chums remained with the unconscious Indian.

Bob Lawless gave his English cousin a rather whimsical look.

"Well, we've cleared off those coyotes," he remarked. "Too rotten to cut off the poor chap's topknot. Injuns feel that a lot. Better hang around a little in case they come back."

Frank Richards reflected.

"Can we leave him here?" he asked.

"Why not?"

"Well, suppose we take him home?" suggested Frank.

"Oh, my word!" said Bob. "You want to do the Good Samaritan business, hay? I'll bet you Injun Dick has slept off the tanglefoot many a time under the green-wood tree."

"It must be jolly bad for him," said Frank.

"I reckon so."

"Well, we can ride over to the Haunted Mine any day," said Frank. "Let's take the poor chap home. After all, he's not so much to blame for this; they ought not to sell the fire-water to Indians."

Bob Lawless nodded.

"You agreeable, Cherub?" he asked.

"Certainly," answered Beauclerc. "Then it's a cinch."

It was not exactly a pleasant task, handling the Redskin, who reeked with rum and whisky, and weighed a good weight.

But the chums of Cedar Creek made up their minds to it.

Their own excursion could take place easily enough on the following day, and certainly it would have been bad for Injun Dick to lie there when the heavy evening dews came on, though doubtless he had been through such experiences before.

He was placed on Vere Beauclerc's horse, the most powerful of the three,



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THE HAUNTED MINE!



(Continued from the previous page.)

and the Cherub mounted behind him to hold him there. Frank and Bob rode, one on either side, to lend a hand. Thus they rode at a leisurely pace up the trail to Thompson, which they reached at last in the red sunset. A good many eyes were turned upon them as they rode up the street with the unfortunate Apache. It was not quite an agreeable experience, and their cheeks were red by the time they reached Injun Dick's shack. Bob Lawless jumped down and opened the door of the hut, and Injun Dick was carried in and laid upon the heap of straw and rags that served him as a bed. Frank Richards placed a bundle of the rags under his head, to serve him as a pillow, compassionately. The Redskin was still quite insensible when they left the shack. "Too late for the Haunted Mine now," said Bob Lawless, as they rode away. "Never mind, to-morrow's just as good. Injun Dick will never know that we've done him a good turn." "That doesn't matter, so long as we've done it," remarked Frank. "Correct!" grinned Bob. And the chums of Cedar Creek rode homeward, quite satisfied with the way they had spent their time.

The 4th Chapter. Haunted!

"Now for Bailey's Bonanza!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, when Cedar Creek School was dismissed on the following day. "I guess I'll come with you galoots," said Chunky Todgers. "Come on, then, Chunky." "What about the ghost?" grinned Bob Lawless. "Suppose we meet a grisly spook, Chunky, with hoof, horns, and tail?" "Rats to that!" answered Todgers. "I've thought a lot of times of lookin' into the old mine, and seein' if there was any gold left. Only—only—" "Only you were afraid of the ghost!" roared Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Not exactly afraid of the ghost," said Chunky cautiously. "Of course, a galoot don't believe in ghosts. But I guess I'd rather not go alone. Might—might meet a grizzly bear, you know." "Not likely," said Bob. "I guess it's the ghost you don't like, Chunky. But I'll eat all the ghosts we meet." Chunky Todgers climbed on his fat little pony, and the four schoolboys rode away together. They passed within sight of Thompson, and turned into the hill trail. From this point the ground was rougher and more broken, and they trotted on at a leisurely speed. Chunky Todgers was looking quite anticipative. "I guess I shouldn't wonder if there was dust left in the place, you fellows," he remarked more than once. "Enchre Dick thought so when he went to look." "And did he find any?" asked Frank Richards. "Nope; he found the ghost." "Ha, ha, ha!" "I guess he saw something," said Todgers—"and heard something, too. And Enchre Dick isn't the only galoot that's been scared away from Bailey's Bonanza. I guess there's a dozen men in town could tell you the place is haunted." "That's so," assented Bob Lawless. "I've heard Dave Dunn say so, and he's a tough man. I've heard Gunten's bar-keeper say so, too; he's been there on spec. But I reckon the ghost won't scare us off." "No fear!" said Beauclerc. "Here we are!" said Bob a few minutes later. The riders halted in the gulch. Frank Richards looked round him with interest. It was a solitary spot, in the lower foothills of the Thompson range, and there were many signs around of abandoned mine-workings. The old tunnel of the Bonanza mine opened direct into the hillside, and dark and gloomy enough it looked. Outside lay rough rock and sand in misshapen heaps, where it had been pitched by the miner, some of it blasted with giant powder, and some hewn away with the pick. Frank Richards & Co. tethered their horses, and advanced on foot to the old adit. The hoof-strokes of the four horses had rung loudly on the rocky earth, and echoed far away down the gulch, but now there was deep silence, broken only by the sigh of the wind in the pine-trees. The sun was deep down in the west, and long shadows of the pines lay across the gulch. Perhaps it was the solitude of the spot, and perhaps the remembrance that the deserted mine was supposed to be haunted; at all events, the schoolboys became very silent as they approached the tunnel, and they were conscious of a slightly eerie feeling.

They halted in the opening, and stared about them. "Hark!" exclaimed Bob suddenly, in suppressed tones. From the black depths of the tunnel there came a strange wailing sound, as of a cry of anguish. The schoolboys started, and looked quickly at one another, their faces growing suddenly pale. "Wha-a-t's that?" muttered Frank, taking a step backward. Chunky Todgers gave a howl. "I—I s-s-say, it's the g-g-ghost!" he stammered. "I—I say, let's gerroff! Come on! Hook it!" "Hush!" Chunky Todgers was already clattering away noisily on the rocks, but Bob Lawless grasped his shoulder and stopped him, and there was silence again. The schoolboys listened intently; Chunky with his mouth wide open and his eyes dilated. But no sound came from the black tunnel. "It—it was the wind," said Bob Lawless, at last, though his lips were trembling a little as he spoke. "How could it be the wind?" mumbled Chunky. "The wind don't blow at the end of a tunnel, you jay! It wasn't the wind!" "There's other adits further in," said Bob. "Old Bailey struck off right and left looking for the lode, so the men say. There may be another outlet along the hill, and in that case, the wind would blow through." "Of course!" said Frank, in relief.

"We're not coming!" he called out. "You can vamoose if you like, you gopher! We're going into the mine!" "It's haunted!" yelled Chunky. "Come away while you're safe!" "Go and chop chips!" Bob looked at his chums. "We're not going to be scared away," he said resolutely. "I guess there isn't such a thing as a ghost in Canada, and if there is he can't frighten a Canadian. I'm going in!" "I'm with you, Bob!" "Same here," said Beauclerc quietly. "It can't be the wind; and what it is, I'm blessed if I can guess. Could it be somebody playing ghost?" Bob knitted his brows. "It might be," he said. "But—but—what's he doing here, if that's so? Nobody knew we were coming here. We saw nobody on the trail, or in the gulch when we arrived. It's miles from the nearest cabin. How could there be anybody here?" "It doesn't seem likely," admitted Beauclerc. "Somebody exploring, same as we are," suggested Frank. "Might be here by chance, same as us." "It's possible—it would be a dashed long coincidence, wouldn't it? That—that horrible howl is what other galoots have heard here," said Bob. "That's how Dave Dunn described it—and Frisco Bill, too. The same somebody must have happened to be here when they came." "That's rather steep," said Frank. "Then what on earth does it mean?" exclaimed Beauclerc. "It's the ghost!" howled Chunky Todgers. "Look here, don't you leave me here alone, you jays!" "You can ride off home if you like," answered Bob. "I can't do without you—I don't know the way." "Then come with us." "Yow-ow! The ghost—!" "Oh, rot!" Bob Lawless detached the lantern he had at his belt, and lighted it. "He did not believe in the ghost, but he preferred to have a light when he entered the old mine again. Chunky Todgers rejoined the three.

Overhead was the solid rock, thicker and thicker as they advanced into the hill. On either side, too, were shadowy openings, where cross-adits had been driven by the miner in his determined endeavours to find the lode which he had been sure existed. Bob flashed the light into each opening as it was passed, but the lantern did not penetrate far. Keeping their eyes well about them the schoolboys tramped on up the tunnel, till a wall of rock rose ahead of them and barred further progress. They had reached the termination of the old adit. Bob flashed the light over the rock. Here and there was a gleam of quartz, and sparkles came from the rough, chipped fragments of rock that lay about their feet. The chums of Cedar Creek had come there to explore the mine, and to look for traces of gold, if such there were, but as a matter of fact their thoughts were now fixed far more upon the wailing they had heard, and their ears were on the strain. "Well, Chunky, here's the place for nuggets!" said Frank Richards, with a rather faint smile. Chunky gasped. "Bother the nuggets! I'd rather be outside!" he muttered. Frank looked back the way they had come. Far in the distance was a pin-point of daylight, marking the place where the adit opened on the hillside. As Frank looked the little patch of daylight was suddenly blotted out. He started, and caught Bob's arm. "Bob!" he breathed. "What the thunder—" Bob Lawless broke off. His heart was thumping. Something or somebody was between the schoolboys and the opening of the tunnel, blocking up their way to the open air. For a moment they stood in heavy silence. Their eyes were fixed on the spot where the daylight should have been, and a

means, if we meet a hundred dashed ghosts! Oh, crumbs!" Bob broke off as a loud, long wail rang through the tunnels of the mine. The sound did not cease as before; it rose and swelled, till the hollow of the mine was full of hideous, echoing wailing. The schoolboys stood close together, with blanched faces, listening. "Look!" panted Frank. He pointed towards the distant opening. Once again the daylight had been blotted out as something passed. Bob Lawless, with a fierce exclamation, rushed along the tunnel, the light flashing before him. But the shadow passed again, and the daylight was seen. He halted. "What—what is it?" he muttered. "Come here, you fellows! Stick to me, as I've got the light." Frank Richards ran to join him, and as he did so from the blackness behind a light touch fell upon his neck. It was a cold touch, as of an icy finger. He spun round, with a startled cry, his hands flying out instinctively in defence. But they swept only the empty air. "Cherub! D-d-did you touch me?" panted Frank. "No. Where are you, Frank?" "Good heavens! Did you, Chunky?" "No. It's the ghost!" yelled Chunky. And he tore away for the opening, heedless of everything but of escaping from the gloomy depths. Stumbling over the loose rocks, and yelling with terror at every stumble, Chunky pounded on to the opening of the adit. Bob Lawless rejoined his chums, and the light, gleaming on Frank's face, showed it pale and startled. "Frank, what happened?" "Something touched me"—Frank shuddered—"just as—as Chunky said. I—I don't know what it was." Bob flashed the light round in a circle. To the startled and excited imaginations of the schoolboys the surrounding gloom was full of phantom hands stretching out to them. There was nothing to be seen save the gleaming rocks and the black openings of the cross-adits. Silence, as of the tomb, had descended on them. They could almost hear their hearts beating as they looked and listened. Suddenly, close at hand, there was a wild, echoing yell that rang eerily in the tunnels of the mine. It startled the three, and with one accord they ran for the exit. Without stopping to think, they ran and stumbled along, till they reached the daylight, and stumbled breathless out of the mine. In the dim twilight of the gulch they stood panting. The sun was below the hills now, and the gulch darkening rapidly. All three faces were pale and tense. From the depths of the mine came an echoing wail, and then all was still. Chunky Todgers was frantically untethering the horses. "Come away!" he yelled. "You silly jays, come away! I'm going!" And Chunky threw himself upon his pony and started. Frank Richards & Co. exchanged a glance, and then went to their horses. They had had enough of the haunted mine. The three chums mounted and rode after Chunky Todgers, and soon overtook him. In silence they rode through the gathering darkness, but their thoughts were busy. Chunky left them on the Thompson trail to go to his home, still shaking in his saddle like a fat jelly. The three chums rode homeward together. Bob Lawless broke a long silence at last. "I guess it's a trick!" he muttered. "It—it isn't a ghost, you fellows." "N-no," said Frank. Beauclerc shook his head. "And—and we're going to try again," said Bob. "We'll jolly well find out what it is, and who it is!" And Bob's chums assented, not for the moment with enthusiasm, however. For the time the mystery of the haunted mine remained a mystery.



Frank Richards caught Keller by the collar and dragged him back from the insensible Redskin. "Get up, you fool!" he exclaimed.

And Beauclerc nodded. "There ain't another outlet," said Chunky Todgers. "I've never heard tell of one, at any rate." "There might be one without you hearing of it, fathead!" "I—I say, d-d-don't you think it was the ghost?" faltered Chunky. "Nope, you jay!" grunted Bob. He spoke very gruffly, perhaps because he was feeling a secret uneasiness in his own breast. The sound they heard was very strange and eerie, even if it was produced by the wind wailing in the old tunnels that penetrated the rocky hillside. "You—you're going in?" stammered Chunky, with a longing look towards the tethered horses. "We came here to go in, I guess," said Bob, with a look at his chums. "We're going in!" said Vere Beauclerc firmly. "There's nothing to be afraid of, and if there was, we'd go in all the same." "Good man!" said Frank. "Let's get going." The three tramped into the tunnel, and Chunky Todgers followed nervously. From the black depths came a weird, prolonged wail, so close and so startling, that the chums of Cedar Creek jumped back into the daylight, as if moved by the same spring, and Chunky Todgers, with a yelp of affright, dashed away towards the horses.

The 5th Chapter. The Ghost of the Mine!

Frank Richards & Co., outside the old mine, stood rooted to the ground, as it were. They did not lack nerve, but their faces were pale now. What did that strange, ghostly wail in the depths of the old mine mean? "Come on!" shouted Chunky Todgers, looking back from the spot where the horses were tethered. Bob Lawless set his teeth.

All his desire to explore the old mine had evaporated, but still less did he desire to be left alone in the lengthening shadows in the gulch. "I—I say—" he murmured. "Shut up!" growled Bob. "The—the ghost—" "Punch his silly head, Franky," said Bob Lawless, busy with the lantern. Chunky Todgers dodged. "I—I say, I'm not scared!" he stammered. "I—I'll come in with you fellows, you know. I—I'm as brave as a lion, really." "As brave as a gopher, you mean!" grunted Bob. "Dry up!" Chunky Todgers dried up, casting uneasy looks into the dark and gloomy opening of Bill Bailey's bonanza. He was quite convinced, by this time, that the quiet spirit of Mr. Bailey was haunting the scene of his earthly labours and disappointments. And though Frank Richards & Co. discarded that idea, they were at a loss to account for the strange wailing in the gloomy tunnel. The lantern was burning now, and Bob cast the light before him into the tunnel and stepped in boldly. In his other hand he grasped his riding-whip, ready for use as a weapon if it was needed. That was instinctive on Bob's part, for it did not seem probable that any earthly enemy was to be met with in the mine tunnel. Bob Lawless led the way with a firm step, his comrades following him in, and Chunky Todgers bringing up the rear. Chunky's eyes wandered about him, rolling with uneasiness, and he gasped at every clink of a loose stone under the tramping boots. The floor of the tunnel was level, but very rough and broken, and the explorers had to pick their way. On either side rose the walls of the adit, rough and chipped from the pick, gleaming here and there as they caught the lantern-light.

creepy sensation ran through their limbs as they watched. The obstruction suddenly disappeared, and the point of daylight was visible again. But not a sound came to their ears. "It—it's somebody!" muttered Bob. There was a groan from Chunky Todgers. "The—the gh-ghost!" "It's somebody playing a trick!" muttered Beauclerc, setting his lips. "Come on! Let's see who it is!" "Come on, then!" said Bob desperately. Flashing the lantern before him, he ran back towards the opening, his companions with him. There was a sudden yell of terror from Chunky Todgers, who was labouring behind. "Yah! Oh! Help!" shrieked Chunky. "Chunky! What—" "Help! He's got me! Help!" The three raced back. Chunky Todgers was squirming on the ground, close by the opening of one of the shadowy cross-adits. But he was alone. There was nothing near him but the broken rocks. Frank Richards caught him by the shoulder and dragged him up. "Chunky, you ass—" "It—it touched me!" yelled Todgers. "What did?" shouted Bob angrily. "It! The ghost!" stammered Chunky. "It—it touched me on the back! I felt it touch me! Oh, dear! Let's get out!" "You funky ass, it's your silly fancy!" exclaimed Frank; but his glance wandered round him uneasily. "It isn't! It wasn't!" panted Chunky. "It touched me!" "There's nothing here to touch you, Chunky!" said Beauclerc soothingly. "You brushed against the rock, most likely." "I tell you it did!" Bob Lawless set his teeth. "Cut for it, Chunky!" he said. "We're staying. I'm going to find out what this

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