

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^d/₂

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE "PENNY POPULAR." WAR TIME PRICE

No. 891. Vol. XVIII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending July 6th, 1918.

THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. The Caravanners.

"Bosh!"
Thus Arthur Edward Lovell.
"My dear man—" murmured Jimmy Silver.
"Bosh!" repeated Lovell, still more emphatically.
Evidently Arthur Edward held strong opinions on the subject under discussion.
Raby and Newcome grinned and said nothing.

But they looked as if they agreed with Lovell.
"Now, look here—" began Jimmy Silver again.
Lovell sniffed.
"I said bosh, and I mean bosh!" he retorted. "Bosh, bosh! What do you think, Raby?"
"Oh, I leave it to Jimmy," said Raby philosophically. "Jimmy will have his way in the long run, anyhow."

"Bosh!"
"Give Jimmy his head," said Newcome.
To which Lovell replied once more: "Bosh!"
Lovell's vocabulary, that fine summer morning, seemed rather limited.
"Bosh," however, expressed his feelings.

The Fistical Four, of the Rookwood Fourth, were just finishing breakfast. But they were not breakfasting, as usual, in the dusky old, oak-panelled room at Rookwood School.
Rookwood School had broken up early for the summer holidays, owing to damage sustained in an air-raid.

The chums of the Classical Fourth were going caravanning, which they all agreed was a ripping idea, though there were some details which, apparently, they did not quite agree upon.
After visiting their homes, they had gathered once more at the Golden Lion Inn, in a Kentish village, where the journey was to begin.

The caravan was there, and the horse, and the tent, and the various appurtenances.
Jimmy Silver had arrived first, and inspected the property, and he was satisfied.

After breakfast they were to start, and then came up the question upon which Arthur Edward Lovell pronounced so emphatic an opinion.
Jimmy Silver smiled patiently.

In Rookwood, or out of Rookwood, he was still the tactful "Uncle James," whose word was law in the Fourth.

He opened his lips to reply, but Lovell did not give him time to speak.

"Bosh!" he said once more. "Rubbish! Piffle! Rot! It will spoil the whole thing! What the thump do we want with an elder person to look after us? Can't we look after ourselves?"

"We can," agreed Jimmy.

"First-rate," said Raby. "I must say I agree with Lovell there. Some dashed old dodderer interfering with us will spoil the fun."

"What do we want with a blessed elder person?" demanded Lovell.
"We don't want him," admitted Jimmy.

"Well, then, that settles it."
"Not quite."
"Oh, don't begin again, Jimmy!" implored Lovell. "Let's take that question as settled. Two in the van, and two in the tent; that's enough for us. Of course, we could squeeze another in the tent; but we don't want to."

"Give a chap a chance to speak," said Jimmy Silver beseechingly.
"You're like a gramophone that won't run down, Lovell. The pater said—"

"I don't want to rag your pater, Jimmy; but if he said we can't look after ourselves he's off-side, and you may as well tell him."
"The pater said—"

"Hullo! They're showing the van out into the road," said Raby, glancing out of the window.
"The pater said—"

"And there's the horse," said Newcome, following Raby's glance.
"Looks a bit of an old catsmeat specimen!"

"Did you expect to see a thoroughbred cavalry charger?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "He's a good horse, plenty of bone—"

"Lots!" agreed Raby.
"Precious little anything else," remarked Newcome.

"Oh, rats! Look here, the pater said—"

"Jimmy, old man, I respect you for admiring your pater, but there can be too much said, even on that subject," said Lovell. "I suggest you give your pater a rest."
"The pater said—"

"Oh, let him get it out, Lovell," said Raby resignedly. "You know Jimmy. He won't leave off wagging his chin till it's tired."
"The pater," pursued Jimmy Silver victoriously, "said that he could trust us anywhere, and was sure we shouldn't get into trouble; but it seemed somewhat more in accordance with the fitness of things for me to have an elder person with me on such a tour."

"Your pater talks like a picture-book, old man. I believe in letting paters run on," said Lovell generously. "It relieves their minds, and doesn't do any harm."
"I agreed with the pater," continued Jimmy Silver. "I felt that he would be more satisfied if I had an elder person with me. And he didn't care who it was. He knew I should find somebody suitable. And I've done it."

"You've found the rotter?" exclaimed Lovell.
"Yes."
"Where is he?"
"Here."
"In the Golden Lion?"



MARCHING ORDERS FOR JIMMY SILVER & CO.!

"Yes."
"Then I suppose we're bound to take him," growled Lovell. "Look here, Jimmy, you ought not to have sprung this on us. It will spoil the whole thing. Your pater didn't order you to, so there was no need. Br-r-r-r!"

"Well, I felt bound to concede the point," explained Jimmy Silver. "But the chap isn't a bad sort."
"What's he like?"
"Well, he's not very good-looking."

"Bother his looks! That doesn't matter."
"Perhaps you might consider him good-looking, though, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver musingly. "There's no telling."

"Blow his looks, good or otherwise. What's he like in other ways?"
"Well, he talks rather a lot."
"Oh dear!"
"He's awfully emphatic in delivering his opinions."
"Bless him!"
"And he hasn't very much sense, I'm afraid," admitted Jimmy Silver. "Oh, crumbs!" said Lovell. "Can he drive?"

"He thinks he can."
"Can he help put up a tent?"
"Well, I expect he would muck it up."
"Can he cook?"
"Rottenly!"
"Great pip! And that's the kind of howlin' frump you've planted on us for a caravan tour!" roared Lovell. "What's his name?"
"Arthur Edward Lovell!"
"Wha-a-at?"

Lovell stared open-mouthed at the captain of the Rookwood Fourth. Jimmy Silver smiled sweetly and gently.

"You see, you're older than I am, Lovell," he explained, softly as the cooing dove. "Only a few months, but that makes you an elder person, doesn't it? When the pater said I'd better have an elder person with me, I thought of you at once. You were coming, anyway, so it was all right." Lovell's face was a study.

Raby and Newcome burst into a roar of laughter.

It dawned upon all three that Jimmy Silver had been gently pulling Arthur Edward's leg.
"You—you—you—" stuttered Lovell at last.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you were describing an old frump!" roared Lovell. "You—you said he wasn't good-looking."
"I said you might consider he was. So you might. There's no accounting for tastes."
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Raby and Newcome.

"You—you—you funny idiot!" gasped Lovell. "Never mind. I suppose that's what you call a joke. So we're going on our own, after all?"
"We are—we is," agreed Jimmy Silver.

"That's all right, then, fathead! Let's go and see the van," said Lovell.

And the chums of Rookwood sauntered out into the road, to examine the caravan that was to bear them for days and nights through the leafy Kentish lanes.

The 2nd Chapter. The Caravan.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in great spirits that morning.

The weather was glorious, which was very cheering for caravanners. A downpour of rain would have been rather discouraging for the start.

But the sky was blue, dotted with fleecy clouds, and warm sunshine streamed down upon the green earth. And the fact that they were going "on their own" elated the four.

Mr. Silver had raised no objection to Jimmy and his chums going "on their own."
He had merely suggested that they might like to have an elder person to look after them.

But that was left to Jimmy to settle. And he had settled it—to his own satisfaction and that of his comrades.

Three other Rookwood fellows were going caravanning in the same

county that vacation—Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern side.

But they were taking Sergeant Kettle with them; and, though the sergeant was a splendid old character in his way, the juniors regarded him as something of a "cold douche" on a caravan tour.

They did not envy the three Tommies the "looking after" they would get from Mr. Kettle.

The Classical chums of Rookwood surveyed the van with great satisfaction.

It looked a large and roomy vehicle from without, though within it could hardly be called roomy.

It was very fresh-looking, with new paint that glistened in the sun, though how long that paint would remain fresh-looking was a question that was very soon to be answered.

A man was holding the horse close at hand, ready to put in.

The horse did look rather bony, but he looked strong; and Lovell's suggestion that things could be hung on him, if there wasn't room in the van, was an exaggeration.

"Ripping, isn't it?" said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, the van looks prime," said Lovell. "Let's see inside."
He jammed the steps in position, and mounted, and tried to open the door.

It remained fast, however.
"This blessed door's stuck!" called out Lovell.

"Can't be," answered Jimmy. "I left it unfastened when I looked in last evening. Use your head, old chap."
"I tell you it won't open."
"Bow-wow!"

"Nobby, isn't it?" said Jimmy, pointing to the neatly-curtained window. "Like a—like a West End flat, really—not much elbow-room, but very dainty."
"Topping!" said Raby heartily. "I dare say there'll be room for two in the van. Lucky Tubby Muffin isn't one of the two, though."

Jimmy laughed.
Tubby Muffin, of the Classical
(Continued on the next page.)



THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Fourth at Rookwood, had a circumference which was not at all suited to the confined space of a caravan.

The cheerful Tubby had informed Jimmy that he was "coming," but the opinion of the Fistical Four was that he wasn't coming.

And Jimmy, though he had received three affectionate letters while at home from Tubby—one each morning—had omitted to reply to them giving details of the arrangements.

Tubby, who was not a good walker, and was remarkably unhandy at everything, was not a desirable addition to a caravan-party, especially as he would have to be watched to see that he did not bolt all the provisions on the first day.

"Is the man going to put the horse in, or are we?" asked Newcome rather doubtfully.

"Oh, we'd better do it!" answered Jimmy. "Better get into the habit. You only have to back him into place, and—fasten the traces and buckles and things, and—there you are, you know! Quite simple."

"I tell you this dashed door won't open!" roared Lovell.

"Oh, open it, old chap!" said Newcome. "We want to see in the van."

"It won't open!"

"Let me do it," said Jimmy resignedly.

Lovell snorted and made room for Jimmy Silver, who tried his hand on the door.

To his surprise it did not open.

"Well?" snorted Lovell.

"My hat! It's got stuck!" said Jimmy in surprise. "It can't be bolted. There's nobody in the van, surely."

"My hat! Might be some tramp got in to sleep while it was in the yard last night!" grinned Raby.

"Oh, rot! It's got jammed a bit. The van isn't standing quite even," said Jimmy. "Never mind it now. Let's get the horse in."

"I shouldn't wonder if there's somebody inside," grunted Lovell. "It looks like it to me."

"Well, if there is let him stick there!" said Jimmy. "We'll rout him out later on, and give him a long walk back!"

"Oh, good! That will serve him right!"

And the four juniors gave their attention to the horse.

The stableman relinquished that animal to them, touching his hat; and the juniors proceeded to back him into position.

The horse seemed to have some slight objection to backing, however.

He set his front feet firmly on the ground, and they did not budge an inch, and the backing process only caused him to rear on his hind legs.

"Obstinate beast!" growled Lovell.

"What's the matter with him?"

"Wants a jolly good licking, I should say!" gasped Raby. "Here, let the man do it, and we'll watch him. I dare say there's a way of doing these things."

"Shove him in, my man!" said Jimmy Silver.

The stableman grinned and shoved him in and buckled the harness.

For some reason the horse obeyed the stableman. Perhaps he knew what he would get if he didn't.

By the time the horse was harnessed quite a little crowd had gathered round to watch the start.

The Rookwooders were the cynosure of all eyes.

They felt a little uncomfortable at being brought so prominently into the lime-light, but they affected to take no notice of the stares that were fixed upon them.

"Where's the tent?" asked Lovell suddenly.

"Packed inside."

"And the grub?"

"Inside."

"What about meat-tickets?" asked Lovell, that thought occurring to him rather late.

"We've got some to start with," answered Jimmy. "But there won't be much meat on this journey. Lots of vegetables."

"My hat! Are we going to be vegetarians?"

"I shouldn't wonder if everybody's a vegetarian before the War's over," answered Jimmy Silver. "I dare say it wouldn't be a bad thing, either. Dash it all, we only get meat twice a week now, anyhow, so we shall only be missing it twice—shan't we? Lots of spuds!"

"Oh, spuds!"

"And we can buy fresh vegetables at all the villages, and may be able to bag cheese, too, and milk. Does anybody want better prog than that?" asked Jimmy Silver rather warmly. "We shall make lots of stews."

"Stews without any meat?" said Lovell.

"Why not? If a stew's made well you hardly notice whether there's any meat in it or not. After all, meat-eating was always rather more or less of a fad. Caravanners can't afford to be faddy."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If you'd rather trot off home and spend the vac chumming with your meat-ticket, Lovell—"

"Don't be an ass, old scout!" said Lovell. "I'm not grumbling, am I?"

"Well, you sound as if you are. There's lots of eggs in the van!" added Jimmy Silver consolingly.

"Oh, good!" said Lovell, comforted.

"Of course, you don't need any meat if

you can get eggs. They're better, in fact."

"Much better!" agreed Raby and Newcome together.

Like true caravanners, the juniors were determined to look on the bright side of things.

If there was another side it was judicious to ignore it, and treat it as if it did not exist.

That way lay cheerfulness and contentment.

"Well, the geegee's fixed up," said Raby. "If you're sure everything's in the van, Jimmy—"

"I went over everything specially last evening before you fellows arrived," said Jimmy.

"Then let's start. We shall have half Kent round us soon if we stick here much longer."

"We ought to get that door open first," muttered Lovell. "It may be stuck tight, and we may need tools."

"Better get off!" urged Raby.

The crowd of villagers was thickening round the caravan, and the four chums were coming in for an amount of attention that was rather disconcerting.

One old lady actually asked Lovell if he had brooms to sell, and an old fellow was heard to declare that "them gipsies" ought to be arrested, and that he knew now what had become of his fowls.

It was evidently high time to start.

Jimmy Silver had settled the bill at the inn, and he gave the stableman his tip and went to the horse's head.

"Who's going to drive?" asked Lovell.

"You can if you like, old top. I'll lead the horse while you do it, in case of accidents."

"You silly ass!"

"Oh, come on!"

Jimmy Silver started the horse.

Lovell took the reins, and Raby and Newcome walked with Jimmy.

The caravan, with a bump and a clatter, was set in motion.

And as it rumbled on the rough road there came a sudden crash from within the vehicle.

"Oh, Jehoshaphat!" ejaculated Lovell. "That's the eggs!"

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a loud guffaw from the watching villagers.

And the voice of the old inhabitant who had missed his fowls was heard inquiring:

"Where did them young gipsies get them eggs? The police ought to be told about this ere!"

With crimson faces the caravanners pushed on.

They were quite anxious to get out of the village and away on the long white road that stretched ahead.

The 3rd Chapter. On the Road.

Jolt!

Rumble!

Arthur Edward Lovell was driving, and he found the horse extremely easy to manage, probably because Jimmy Silver was leading him.

Three of the juniors were walking.

A number of the onlookers followed the van to the outskirts of the village, but after that the caravanners were left to themselves, for which relief they were very thankful.

A long white road lay before them, bordered on one side by green, dusky woods, and on the other side by verdant fields.

The sun shone brightly, and the surroundings were so pleasant that their spirits naturally rose.

There was a good deal of dust on the road, and a motor-car or two passed them, and a few cyclists, but the cars were few.

As Jimmy Silver remarked, there was something to be said for caravanning in war-time.

The incessant peace-time motor-cars were conspicuous by their absence, and they did not have to march in a cloud of dust and petrol-scent.

"All the same, we won't stick to the high-road long," added Jimmy, as a military motor-car rushed by, shaving the caravan by about an inch. "We turn off at the cross-roads, about three miles."

"Got a map?" asked Raby.

Jimmy sniffed.

"Do you think I should start caravanning without a map?" he inquired.

"My dear chap, there's no telling what you would do!" answered Raby affably.

"As soon as we get off the high-road we'll stop and get this van open," said Lovell. "I'm rather anxious about it."

"Oh, that's all right!"

"That's all very well. But suppose the door won't come open?" said Lovell.

"What are we going to do for grub at lunch-time?"

That was a serious question, and Jimmy Silver agreed.

The keen, fresh air was making the juniors think of lunch already.

The caravan rumbled on.

Jimmy Silver ceased to lead the horse, and sauntered on beside it, but in a minute or two he found himself sauntering ahead.

The horse had stopped.

"Come on, Lovell!" he called out.

"You're driving, ain't you, Lovell?" inquired Newcome.

Lovell's answer was a snort.

He certainly was driving, but the horse

did not seem to be aware of it, for he had stopped, and seemed a fixture.

Lovell cracked his whip furiously.

"Gee-up!" he roared. "Get on, you critter! Go it, good old boss! Get a move on, you bony beast! Yah! Gee-up!"

"Gee-up!" echoed the rest encouragingly.

Possibly the horse realised that he had only youngsters to deal with, and had already spotted the fact that there was no "elder" person in the party.

Certainly he seemed to be under the impression that he could do as he liked.

Lovell jerked the reins, and tugged at them, and slacked them, and cracked the whip, and shouted, and roared.

The horse moved on at a snail's pace, jerking the van slowly behind him, while he cropped contentedly at the grass on the wrong side of the road.

Sometimes he raised his head, in a bored sort of way, as Lovell put his strength into his tugging, but always his muzzle went down to the grass again.

"The beast!" panted Lovell, crimson with his exertions. "The rotten brute! The obstinate Hun! I'll jolly well make him go!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Lovell did not like whipping a horse, but he was at the end of his patience now, and he laid it on.

The result was startling.

The horse threw up his head and started at a run, and then broke into a gallop.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome jumped out of the way in time, and the caravan thundered away down the road.

"Stop him!" yelled Jimmy.

"Pull in, you ass!" shrieked Newcome. Lovell did not answer. He was trying to pull the horse in, and he needed all his wits.

Bony as he was, the caravan-horse was decidedly a powerful animal, and it was barely possible that Arthur Edward Lovell was not a first-class driver.

The caravan jolted and thumped along at a great rate, with Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome in frantic pursuit.

"Whoa!" panted Lovell. "Oh, you rotten beast! Whoa!"

But the horse was warming to his work now, and he thundered on.

There was an ominous clattering inside the van.

The crockery was suffering.

Unfortunately, the horse kept on the wrong side of the road, and resisted Lovell's efforts not only to stop him, but to pull him across.

Zip, zip!

A motor-car, driven by a man in khaki, came in sight ahead.

SAVE YOUR MONEY AND HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

Buy a
War Savings Certificate
now for 15s. 6d. and get
back £1 in Five Years' time

PARTICULARS AT
ANY POST-OFFICE.

Bolt upright in it sat a military gentleman, with a white moustache and a brown face and stern brows.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver, panting along behind the van.

Lovell made a frantic effort to drag the horse to the left.

He succeeded at last, to the extent that the caravan was dragged across the road, blocking it nearly from side to side.

There was a loud and incessant booting from the car, warning the caravanners to clear the road.

Fortunately, the khaki-driver knew his business, or there might have been a catastrophe.

The car slowed down in time, and stopped.

Up like a ramrod rose the military gentleman, with his white moustache bristling.

He jammed an eyeglass into his eye, and fixed the unhappy caravanner with a deadly glare.

"What, what?" he ejaculated. "Clear the road! Begad! Take that dashed thing out of the way, begad! What, what?"

"I'm trying to!" howled Lovell. "Can't you see I'm trying to?"

"What, what?"

The car was buzzing as if about to burst.

Lovell pulled furiously at the horse, but the obstinate animal, perhaps scared by the car, refused to budge.

The caravan lay diagonally across the road, and the car could not pass without knocking off the rear wheels in its progress.

"Will you clear the road?" roared the stiff gentleman. "Begad! Are you aware, young man, that you are stoppin' a Government car on important business—what, what?"

"Oh, rats!" yelled Lovell, who was in no humour to be talked to. "Shut up a minute while I manage this dashed horse!"

The military gentleman's face became purple.

"Begad!" he gasped. "Begad! Impertinent young scoundrel! Drive on, Johnson!"

If Johnson had driven on just then the car would have had to pass through the caravan.

Fortunately Jimmy Silver came panting up at that moment, and he seized the horse's head and dragged him on.

The caravan rumbled to its own side of the road, and the car got into motion again, and buzzed past.

The stiff gentleman sat down again stiffly, with thunder in his face, as his car sped by the caravan at last.

He seemed still to be lost in a state of outraged astonishment and wrath at having been addressed like a common mortal.

"I think I'll lead the horse now!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"No need. I can drive him."

"What?"

"Do you think I can't drive?" roared Lovell heatedly.

"Well, my only hat!" exclaimed Jimmy. "Yes, old man, I do think you can't drive. And I've had enough of blocking up the road and putting old military gents into epileptic fits. Kim on, boss!"

And Jimmy led.

The 4th Chapter.

Tubby Muffin Makes Terms.

The caravanners were glad when they turned out of the high-road into a green country lane.

It was safer there, as Newcome remarked, if Lovell started driving again.

Lovell sniffed.

"I can manage horses," he said. "The beast would have gone all right if Jimmy hadn't been leading him at first. That's what did it."

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy.

"Well, we've been jolly lucky," said Raby. "We've come three miles safely, with Lovell driving nearly all the time."

"Look here, you ass—"

"Shush!" said Jimmy Silver pacifically.

"Don't let's begin ragging. Let's get the van open now we've stopped."

The horse was contentedly cropping at the side of the lane, and the juniors were able to turn their attention to the door of the caravan.

Jimmy Silver tried it in vain.

Somehow or other the door was blocked, and certainly it would not open.

"Blessed if I understand it!" growled Jimmy. "It seems to be locked. But how the thump can it be locked?"

"We shall want tools to open it," said Lovell. "Have we got any tools?"

"Yes."

"In the van, of course!"

"Well, of all the asses—"

"Ought we to have the tools strung outside the van?" demanded Jimmy Silver warmly. "Of course they're inside! Look here, we shall have to burst in the window. Newcome can crawl in. He's the thinnest—"

Jimmy Silver was suddenly interrupted by a voice inside the van.

"Oh, my hat!"

There was evidently someone within the caravan!

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Jimmy. "Then—then there is some dashed tramp in the van after all, and he's locked us out!"

"The cheeky cad!" exclaimed Lovell wrathfully.

"Hold on, though!" said Newcome. "I think I know that voice!"

"How can you know it, fathead? It's some tramp!"

"It sounded to me like Muffin's voice."

"Muffin?" shouted Jimmy Silver.

He knocked on the door.

"Who's in there? Answer, you rotter!"

"I say, Jimmy!" came from within.

And the Fistical Four shouted in surprised and wrathful chorus:

"Tubby Muffin!"

There was no doubt now. It was the voice of Tubby Muffin, the fat Classical of Rookwood.

Lovell kicked at the door.

"Let us in, you fat villain! Have you locked this door?"

"Of course I have, old chap!"

"I'll old chap you!" gasped Lovell.

"You wait till I get near enough to wallop you, you fat boulder! I'll burst you!"

"Then you jolly well won't get in!" answered the invisible Tubby.

"How did you get in there, you fat villain?" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"I told you I was coming, didn't I, Jimmy?" said Tubby Muffin, in an injured tone. "I wasn't going to desert you this vac, you know. I telegraphed to your pater as you didn't answer my letters, and he wired back where I could find you."

"You—you fat rotter!" roared Jimmy.

"You must have wired as if you were one of the party, then!"

"Well, I am one of the party, ain't I?"

"You—you—"

"I got to the place late last night," continued Tubby. "The Golden Lion was closed, and I thought I wouldn't wake you up, Jimmy; and as the van was in the yard I got into it to sleep. Don't worry about me. I slept all right."

"Worry about you!" gasped Jimmy.

"I was quite all right," said Tubby reassuringly. "And I've had some brekker. I found the biscuits and the lunch tongue."

"He's wolfed our biscuits!"

"He's scoffed our lunch!"

"We'll spicicate him!"

"Oh, I say, you know!" came Tubby Muffin's voice in

Tubby, on second thoughts, was glad to take on the cleaning operations, as he could do it in the van.

He did not want to walk, especially after a meal.

The horse was induced to leave the grass, not without difficulty, and the van rolled on along the leafy lane.

The Fistical Four walked on with the horse, hoofing it cheerily, while Tubby Muffin busied himself in the van.

Tubby's idea of making himself useful was to put his head out of the van every few minutes and ask Jimmy Silver where the things were.

He could not find a pail or a cloth or a brush or a broom, or, in fact, anything by his own exertions, and after Jimmy Silver had replied to five or six questions he picked up a thick turf from the roadside.

Tubby's fat face came out once more. "I say, Jimmy!" he squeaked.

"Hallo!"

"Where's the tea-cloth, if I'm to wash these things? Yaroooooh!"

Tubby Muffin disappeared into the van as the turf whizzed through the air and smote him on his plump chest.

There was a roar of amazement and wrath from the fat Classical.

"Yarooooh! Groogh! Oh, ah, yah! Wharrer you do that for, Jimmy Silver, you mad idiot?"

"Go on asking questions, old scout!" answered Jimmy cheerily. "I've got another clod for you if you do!"

"Groogh! You — you — Look here —"

"Use your head, old chap! This isn't a slacker's procession."

Tubby Muffin snorted with wrath. But after that he used his head, and did not ask any more questions.

When the answer to a question came in the form of a whizzing clod, Tubby found that he could find things by looking for them.

"Get down when you've finished!" Lovell called out several times. "You're too big a load for the geegee."

Tubby hung out his jobs as long as possible.

He was debating in his mind whether to start scrubbing out the caravan, in fact, rather than alight, when Lovell came in for him at last.

Lovell helped him out, and after that Tubby Muffin walked with the rest, with a very injured expression on his fat face.

"I can't keep up this pace, you chaps!" he expostulated.

"Don't, then!" answered Lovell. "But I can't be left behind, can I?" howled Tubby.

"I don't see why not."

"Br-r-r-r!" growled Tubby Muffin. And he found that he could keep the pace quite well.

Jimmy Silver consulted his map once Jimmy Silver consulted his map once or twice as the caravanners marched on.

He had fixed on a village for camping for the night, where there was a handy field, and "grub" could be purchased at a farm if required.

But the pace was not quite up to anticipations, and the juniors found themselves a little tired later in the afternoon.

It was their first day on the road, and they were not yet hardened to it.

And the sight of a beautiful spot for camping decided them not to push on to their intended destination.

The caravan was following a deep lane, between lines of great trees that shaded the road, with rich cornlands stretching away on either side.

The wheat gave place to pasture, and then the beautiful spot was sighted—a green field, with a shining rivulet crossing it at the bottom, and a clump of great trees near the stream, and a wide gate in the fence.

The eyes of the caravanners rested on that ideal spot, and they exchanged glances.

"That's a ripping place!" said Raby. "Just what we want!" remarked Lovell.

"No good over-doing it on the first day," Newcome remarked in a careless sort of way. "After all, we've got to light a camp-fire, and all that."

"Let's stop!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "I'm tired, you know—jolly tired."

Jimmy Silver, without answering, surveyed the field.

Certainly they were not likely to find a more suitable spot farther on.

And true caravanners never mapped out their proceedings with exactitude. It was more in the spirit of caravanning to follow the fortune of the road.

"We couldn't do better!" urged Lovell. "Right!" agreed Jimmy. "But we've got to get permission. That's not public land. That's an enclosed field."

"Well, we can ask," said Lovell. "Let's ask that farmer chap."

A man in a velvet coat and gaiters was sitting on the gate of the field, smoking a cigarette, and glancing rather curiously at the caravanners.

He was a young man, and looked like a sporting farmer, and the juniors rather liked his looks.

Jimmy Silver left the van, which had halted in the road, and crossed the belt of grass to the gate where the young man was sitting.

The man in the gaiters removed the cigarette from his mouth, and nodded genially to the Rookwood junior.

"Caravanning—eh?" he asked. "That's it," said Jimmy Silver. "We're thinking of camping now. Any objection to our camping in this field?"

The other looked thoughtful.

"I suppose you wouldn't set fire to the trees?" he remarked.

"No," said Jimmy, laughing. "Or burn up half the pasture?"

"Of course not. We should be jolly careful not to do any damage if you let us camp here," said Jimmy. "We're willing to pay—"

The young man waved his hand, as if disclaiming the idea.

"I shan't charge you anything," he said. "So long as you don't do any real damage I've no objection to your camp-

ing here, I'm sure. So far as I'm concerned, you're very welcome."

"Thanks very much!" said Jimmy. "Oh, don't mention it!"

And, with a smile and a nod, the young man slipped from the gate, and whistled to a dog, and strolled away down the lane.

Jimmy Silver opened the gate, and Tubby Muffin was stationed to hold it wide open, while the horse was led in.

The horse did not seem quite to understand, and he backed, instead of going forward; but four juniors clung to him, and persuaded him at last that it was his business to go through the gate.

When that was borne in upon the equine mind the horse appeared to be under the delusion that it was necessary to pass through the gateway at a gallop, and he did.

"Look out!" yelled Lovell. "Oh, my hat!"

The caravan rocked through the gateway after the horse, fortunately just escaping a crash.

Tubby Muffin jumped away in alarm, letting go the gate, which swung to when the caravan was nearly clear of the posts.

Then there was a crash, as the gate collided with a hind-wheel, and the caravan ground its way, leaving the unfortunate gate in a serious condition.

"You silly fat duffer!" roared Lovell. "Why didn't you hold the gate?"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Tubby. "Do you think I was going to be run over? Both the gate, and bother you!"

The horses slowed down in the field, and began cropping the rich pasture with evident enjoyment.

The juniors surveyed the gate in dismay.

It hung by one hinge, and one bar had been reduced to matchwood.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver had brought out the big iron pot, and arranged the three sticks that were to support it over the fire, gipsy fashion.

Water was to be had in plenty, and there were ample potatoes.

While Lovell tended the fire, his comrades peeled potatoes in great numbers, and put them in the pot.

"Can you put cabbage in stews?" Raby asked, rather doubtfully.

"Certainly!" answered Jimmy Silver, with assurance.

He was not sure, but it would never have done for a leader to admit that he wasn't sure.

"So the cabbage went in. "And turnips," added Jimmy. "Carrots, too. May as well slice up the carrots," he added thoughtfully. "Put some salt in, and pepper, and—"

"Mustard?"

"No, leave the mustard out!" said Jimmy, with the same assurance of manner. "Plenty of salt, though."

"I say, it won't be much good without any meat in it, you chaps," said Tubby Muffin, rather dismally.

"There isn't any meat, ass!"

"We might put in some fat bacon," said Jimmy, taking up a knife in a thoughtful way. "If Muffin doesn't object—"

"Eh? Of course, I don't!" exclaimed Tubby eagerly. "It's a ripping idea! I didn't know you'd got any bacon. Where is it?"

"Come on, then!" said Jimmy, flourishing the knife.

"Eh?"

"I've never killed a pig before, but I dare say I can manage—"

"You silly ass!" yelled Tubby, jumping back in alarm, as he realised that he was the bacon alluded to. "You—you—you fathead—"

The caravanners forgot the obstinate potatoes for the moment, and fixed their eyes upon the farmer as he strode up with a certain anticipation of trouble, though they could not guess why yet.

The 6th Chapter.

Marching Orders!

"Dang my buttons!" That was the farmer's first remark.

He strode up to the camp, his face purple with wrath, breathless with haste and fury; though why he should be in a fury was a mystery to the Rookwood caravanners.

"Good evening!" ventured Jimmy Silver, wondering whether the crusty old fellow was a relation of the good-natured young man who had given them permission to camp in the field.

The crusty gentleman did not return the greeting.

He appeared to be about to choke for some moments, and the Rookwooders watched him in surprise and alarm; but at last he found his voice.

"You young vagabones!" he roared. "What?"

"Get off my land!" roared the farmer. "Wha-a-a?"

"I'll have the lot of you arrested! By hokey! You gang of gipsy vagabones!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver warmly. "We've had permission to camp in this field. I don't know who you are—"

"I'm Farmer Judkins, as you know very well, and this is my field!" roared the angry gentleman. "Permission, hay? Who gave you permission? I never did!"

"A—a—a man did!" gasped Jimmy, with a very queer feeling inside. "A—a young man who was—was sitting on the gate, gave us permission—"



Tubby Muffin disappeared into the van, as the turf whizzed through the air and smote him on his plump chest. "Yaroooooh!" he roared.

"That will have to be paid for!" said Raby at last.

"Well, we can pay for it!" said Jimmy Silver. "I don't think that sporting chap will cut up rusty; he looked good-tempered. I think Muffin ought to be slaughtered!"

"I like that!" said Tubby indignantly. "Why didn't you lead the horse through properly? You shouldn't have let him go!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

The Rookwooders followed the caravan, and came up with it, and the horse was led on towards the stream at the farther end of the field.

Then he was at last taken out, and tethered, with a long rope, to a peg, which enabled him to crop the grass in a large radius, and also to drink from the stream if he felt so disposed.

Under the trees near the water the caravanners prepared to camp.

Tubby Muffin wanted to start at once on the tinned salmon and sardines and the war-bread, of which there was a good supply; but he was persuaded not to, Lovell's boot being the chief argument used.

"You fellows gather wood for the fire," said Jimmy Silver. "Get as much as you can, while I get the things out of the van."

"Right you are!"

Four juniors started in search of firewood, of which there was plenty to be gathered under the trees and in the adjoining thicket, and they returned with their arms full.

Lovell built the fire in quite a workmanlike manner.

There was an old newspaper, and it was torn up, dry twigs added, and then a match, and as it blazed up firewood was carefully fed to it—small pieces at first, and then larger ones.

The camp-fire was soon flaring away merrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I don't see how I can eat stew without any meat in it!" said Tubby Muffin sulkily.

"Don't eat any, then, old nut," said Jimmy Silver.

"What am I going to eat, then?" roared Tubby.

"Is that a conundrum?"

"Well, I suppose I can manage with the tinned things."

"Let me catch you managing with them!" growled Lovell. "I'll manage to stick you headfirst into the water if I do!"

"Look here—"

"Shurrup!"

It is said that a watched pot is long in boiling, and certainly that gipsy pot seemed a terrible long time to the hungry juniors.

It boiled at last, and Jimmy Silver jabbed a fork into a potato; but it was still quite hard.

The cabbage seemed to get cooked first; and after a time the hungry party, throwing ceremony to the winds, fished out floating fragments of cabbage, and ate them with chunks of war-bread.

"Never had war-bread tasted so delightful as it did that summer evening, after a long day in the open air."

"Bless those spuds!" growled Lovell. "Will they never get done?"

"Ought to have cut them up small, perhaps?" said Newcome.

"Oh, they'll get done in time!" said Jimmy Silver. "Keep smiling!"

"I—I say!" ejaculated Tubby Muffin. "That—that chap looks rather ill-tempered, don't he? I—I wonder what he wants?"

The juniors looked round.

A big, broad-shouldered farmer, with a cart-whip in his hand, was striding into the field, and the expression on his face certainly indicated that he was very ill-tempered indeed.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lovell, in dismay.

The wrath of the farmer opened the eyes of the caravanners a little, and the dreadful suspicion came to them that the good-natured young man at the gate was not the owner of the field at all, and had been pulling their leg.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "Don't tell me any lies!" roared Mr. Judkins. "Who could give you permission excepting me, I'd like to know, when it's my land?"

"But—but your son, perhaps—"

stammered Jimmy.

"I haven't any son!" snorted Mr. Judkins. "Don't you tell me any more lies! You get off my land before I have you arrested! The last lot of gipsies by here stole my goat. Off you go!"

"But—but we're not gipsies!"

"I don't care whether you are or not! Get off my land before I lay my whip about you!" roared Mr. Judkins.

He flourished the cart-whip in the air as he spoke, as if about to use it.

The unhappy caravanners looked at one another in dismay.

Night was falling now, and the landscape was enshrouded in deep dusk.

The camp-fire, leaping up red against the shadows, looked very homely and comfortable, and a delicious scent came from the stewpot.

And they were hungry.

To be ordered off their camping-ground at that moment was a terrible blow.

But the farmer was evidently in earnest.

As a matter of fact, he had some cause for wrath, not being responsible for the practical joker who had given the caravanners permission to camp in the field.

"Look here, Mr. Judkins!" said Jimmy Silver, at last. "We'll pay for the use of the field till the morning, if you'll let us stay."

"You'll pay for the damage to my gate,

and you won't stay another minute!" snorted Mr. Judkins. "Now then, off you go! Pack up and get out!"

"But—but—but—"

"Look here—"

"Bill!" roared the farmer. "Harry! Mike! Come 'ere, and bring the bull-terrier!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Newcome. There was no help for it.

The juniors were feeling greatly inclined to handle the inhospitable Mr. Judkins, but it was evident that they could not handle Bill and Mike and Harry and the bull-terrier.

Moreover, as the farm-hands came across the field one of them was carrying a rake and another a pitchfork, apparently in case there should be trouble.

"See them off my land!" shouted Mr. Judkins. "Chuck their rubbish after them! See them off! And you, my lad, you'll pay for the damage to that gate, or I'll keep you 'ere and give you into custody."

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Jimmy Silver, his temper rising. "How much do you want for your rotten old gate?"

"You'll pay ten shillings, and you'll get out! Put that horse in, men, and take that van into the road! Look into the van, and see if anything's been stolen and hidden in there!"

"You silly old dummy!" shouted Lovell, in great wrath. "Do you think we're thieves?"

Mr. Judkins grasped his whip, and Lovell caught up a half-burnt log from the camp-fire.

The irate gentleman held his hand. "Get out!" he repeated. "Get off my land! Out you go, you gang of young rascals! I'll have no gipsies on my land! I desay you belong to the same gang that stole my goat! Out you go!"

The farm-hands were already putting the horse in the traces, grinning the while.

With heavy hearts the caravanners packed their belongings back into the van, the stewpot being lifted in bodily with the stew.

A good deal of it was spilled as the caravan was set in motion again and lurched away towards the gate.

Jimmy Silver handed the farmer a ten-shilling note.

It was only reasonable to pay for the damaged gate; and Mr. Judkins received it with a snort, and a repeated injunction to get out.

The caravan rumbled into the road in the gathering darkness.

Inside the van Tubby Muffin was bolting boiled potatoes, finding great comfort therein.

The farmer stood frowning and his men grinning as the unhappy caravanners took up their route again, and moved off into the gloom.

For a little while Jimmy Silver & Co. did not speak.

Lovell was the first to break the silence.

"Well, my hat!" was what he said. "Where the thump are we going to camp at this hour?" murmured Newcome.

"Let's get out the potatoes, and tuck in, anyway," said Raby. "I can't hold out much longer."

He stepped into the van, and then there was a sound of roaring and scuffling.

Tubby Muffin's voice was heard, raised in anguish.

Raby jumped down. "Well, where's the spuds?" asked Lovell.

"Muffin's bolted all that were left!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" came from the van, in anguished accents. "You beast, you've busted my nose, and blacked my eye, and—and— Ow-ow-ow-wow!"

"Oh, dear!" said Jimmy Silver. "I—I wish we could meet that chap who gave us permission to camp in that old boulder's field! I only wish— My hat!"

Even as Jimmy was speaking, the young man in the velvet coat and the gaiters came in sight, strolling along and whistling, with his dog at his heels.

He stopped as he saw the caravan, and smiled genially.

"Hallo! Didn't you camp, after all?" he queried pleasantly.

The juniors did not answer.

With one accord they rushed upon that pleasant young man, and smote him hip and thigh.

There was a yell from the victim, as he sat down under the rush, and he struggled frantically in the grasp of the Fistical Four.

But his struggles did not avail him.

He had been too funny at their expense, and they did not spare him.

By the time they had finished with him the agreeable young man had had a severe lesson on the subject of joking with caravanners.

He was bumped and rolled and pommelled and ragged, and finally pitched into the ditch beside the road, and swamped into black mud.

"That'll do!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Gug-gug-gug-gug!" came from the darkness of the ditch.

"Gee-up!" chortled Lovell.

The caravan rolled on, and from behind the caravanners came weird and woeeful sounds from a hapless practical joker struggling out of a ditch.

Greatly comforted, Jimmy Silver & Co. tramped on beside the caravan in the summer night, once more in cheerful spirits.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE SORROWS OF
SERGEANT KETTLE!"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!



BAILEY'S BONANZA!

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. Catching Gunten!

'Here come the funks!' Frank Richards & Co. looked round quickly. Frank and his chums, Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, had just arrived at Cedar Creek School. As they dismounted from their horses that jeering exclamation fell on their ears. It was Kern Gunten, the Swiss, who spoke. Gunten was standing in the gateway, grinning, and several other fellows with him were grinning, too. 'How's your cold feet?' chuckled Eben Hacke. 'Ha, ha, ha!' Frank Richards & Co. flushed, and they came towards Gunten with somewhat grim looks. 'Are you calling us funks, Gunten?' asked Bob Lawless. The Swiss laughed again. 'I guess we've heard the yarn,' he answered. 'We've had it from Chunky Todgers. He's told us how you vamoosed from the ghost in the Haunted Mine.' 'Oh!' exclaimed Frank. 'I-I say—' stammered Chunky Todgers, who was in the crowd at the gate of the lumber school. 'I didn't say you were funks! I bolted just the same as you did; and I'm as brave as a lion!' 'As brave as a jack-rabbit!' roared Hacke. 'Ha, ha, ha!' 'What a picture it must have been,' chortled Gunten. 'I can just fancy it—the wind blew in the old mine, and they thought it was a ghost, and vamoosed the ranch. Ha, ha, ha!' The chums of Cedar Creek were crimson. They could not deny the imputation. They were not funks, certainly, but, equally certainly, they had cleared out of the Bailey Bonanza Mine in remarkably quick time, when they were exploring the old tunnel the previous evening. It was evident that their old enemy, Gunten, intended to make the most of that unfortunate occurrence. 'We—we just ran, that's all!' protested Chunky Todgers. 'It was awful, you chaps. The ghost was groaning—' 'Ha, ha, ha!' 'And a ghostly finger touched me on the neck—' 'Pile it on!' exclaimed Hacke, doubled up with mirth. 'Make it thicker, Chunky. Go it!' 'It's true!' shouted Chunky wrathfully. 'That's true enough,' said Frank Richards quietly. 'I don't believe in ghosts, of course. But there was something jolly queer in the old mine. There was something that touched us in the dark—' 'You brushed against a snag,' said Tom Lawrence, laughing. 'It wasn't that! I don't know what it was, unless it was somebody playing ghost in the old mine,' said Frank. 'It startled us.' 'Scared you, you mean?' grinned Gunten. 'Well, perhaps we were a bit scared,' confessed Frank. 'It was horribly uncanny. But we're jolly well going there again to see what it was, and if you call us funks, Gunten, you'll get into trouble!' The Swiss shrugged his shoulders. 'What do you call it yourself, then?' he sneered. 'You thought you heard some sound, and you thought something touched you, and you got afraid of the dark, and scuttled. I guess that's cold feet!' Frank Richards clenched his hand. But Bob Lawless drew his chum back. 'Leave the galoot to me,' he said. 'Now, Gunten, my buck, you say we had cold feet because we lit out. Wouldn't you have done it?' 'I'm not a funk,' answered Gunten disdainfully. 'I wouldn't run from a sound in the dark.' 'That's what you say,' said Bob. 'Well, we ran, and we own it—though we're going back, and I reckon we won't run next time. But as you wouldn't run, Gunten, and you're pleased to call us funks, you can explore the old mine this evening yourself, with some of us there to see whether you run or not.' Gunten started a little. 'I guess I've no time to waste on it,' he answered. 'You mean you're afraid,' said Bob contemptuously. 'Well, if you're afraid, you can keep your mouth closed about other fellows.' 'Funk!' roared Hacke. Gunten bit his lip. 'I'm not afraid,' he exclaimed. 'But—'

'But—but—' chuckled Tom Lawrence. 'He's not afraid, but he's full of butts. We'll come along and see how brave you are, Gunten.' 'It's too much trouble for nothing!' growled Gunten. 'But it isn't for nothing!' struck in Dick Dawson. 'You've called these chaps funks, and it's up to you. And if you don't agree—' 'If you don't agree, Gunten, we'll ride you on a rail,' said Bob Lawless determinedly. 'You shoot off your mouth too much, my pippin!' 'You bet!' exclaimed Chunky Todgers. 'Ride him on a rail, and stick white feathers on him if he won't go!' 'I guess we will!' said Bob. Gunten backed away a pace. He had fairly landed himself, in his keenness to score over the chums of the lumber school. He could not refuse the challenge, without confessing that he was afraid to venture into the haunted mine. There were mocking laughs on all sides now. Bob Lawless had quite succeeded in turning the laugh against the Swiss. 'Funk!' yelled Chunky Todgers. 'Yah!' 'Cold feet!' howled Eben Hacke. 'Get a rail, somebody!' chuckled Tom Lawrence. Gunten drew a quick breath. 'I'll show you whether I'm afraid!' he exclaimed, at last. 'I'll go! You—you fellows can come and watch me if you like.' 'Done!' said Vere Beauclerc. 'After lessons to-day?' 'Yes!' said Gunten desperately. 'I guess we'll all come,' said Lawrence, and I reckon we'll see Gunten bolting out of the tunnel like a jack-rabbit.' 'Ha, ha, ha!' The school bell rang, and the Cedar Creek fellows trooped into the school-room. Gunten wore a troubled look during morning lessons. It had been simply impossible for him to refuse the challenge he had provoked, without writing himself down as a coward, not to mention the painful process of being ridden on a rail. But he was looking forward to his task with considerable apprehension. But there was no escape for Gunten; his school-fellows intended to hold him to the compact. Miss Meadows had reason to be severe with Gunten several times that day. His thoughts wandered from his lessons a good deal. When lessons were over, and the Cedar Creek School was dismissed, quite a crowd of fellows gathered round the Swiss. Seven or eight of the Cedar Creek boys mounted to ride to Bailey's Bonanza and see Gunten go through it. Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc were in the party, and they kept a sharp watch on Gunten. They were quite prepared for the Swiss to bolt if he could. The trail lay past the town of Thompson, where Gunten's home was, and when Thompson came in sight, Gunten drew rein. 'Come on!' chuckled Bob Lawless. 'I-I guess I ought to be getting home,' muttered Gunten. 'I-I forgot that—that there's a lot of truck to be taken to Injun Dick's shack, and I've got to take it.' 'Injun Dick still in funds?' said Bob. 'He must have struck a bonanza somewhere in the hills. The Apache can wait, Gunten—you're coming with us, now.' 'Look here—' Bob Lawless took hold of Gunten's rein, and led on his horse. The Swiss scowled savagely, but he gave in, and the party of schoolboys rode on into the foot-hills.

The 2nd Chapter. Gunten Has Enough. Bailey's Bonanza looked dark and gloomy when the bunch of riders stopped in the lonely gulch in the Thompson foot-hills. The black tunnel opened in the hillside, yawning dark and grim and extremely uninviting. 'There you are, Gunten,' grinned Chunky Todgers. 'Mind you don't run when you feel a touch behind you in the dark.' Gunten shivered. 'I-I guess I forgot to bring a lantern,' he muttered. 'I've got one,' answered Bob Lawless. Gunten gritted his teeth. There was no help for it, and he took the lantern, and advanced with slow and hesitating steps towards the opening in the adit. The schoolboys stood in a group by the horses and watched him. They were not laughing now, however. There was something so gloomy in the black tunnel and in the evil reputation of the place that it had a sobering effect upon their spirits. Gunten entered the mouth of the horizontal tunnel, or adit. The tunnel had been driven deep into the hillside by Bailey, the original owner of the bonanza, the unfortunate miner whose restless phantom was supposed to haunt the old mine-workings. Through the tunnel and the cross-adits the wind whistled in stormy weather with strange and eerie sounds. There was doubtless another opening to the mine-workings among the rocky recesses of the hillside. Gunten hesitated long in the mouth of the tunnel, but he went on at last, his lantern gleaming before him, into the eerie darkness. 'Waal, he's gone in,' said Eben Hacke. 'I guess I shouldn't specially care about goin' in there alone.' 'I guess Gunten don't care for it,' said Bob Lawless. The schoolboys watched the tunnel with interest, wondering how long Gunten would remain within. They could see the glimmer of the lantern for some little distance, and then it disappeared. The wind was keen on the hills, and it swept through the gulch, moaning in the branches of the pines. As always when the wind was high there was a moaning in the depths of the tunnel. Suddenly there was a sound of hurried footsteps. 'Here he comes!' shouted Todgers. Kern Gunten reappeared at the mouth of the tunnel. His face was white, and his eyes almost starting from his head. His hands were empty. Evidently he had dropped the lantern. He was running frantically. He came out of the tunnel at furious speed, and ran into the gulch, panting and throbbing. Frank Richards caught him by the arm, or he would have fallen as he reached the group of schoolboys. Gunten hung on to him heavily, almost sobbing for breath. The Cedar Creek fellows looked at him, wondering, and they cast uneasy glances towards the opening of the mine, half-expecting to see some grisly form appear. But there was nothing. 'What did you see?' exclaimed Chunky Todgers. Gunten gasped. 'Where's the lantern?' demanded Bob. 'I-I guess I dropped it. It went out.' Gunten shuddered. 'I-I heard—I heard him! I heard it!' His voice quavered away. 'You heard the wind in the tunnel,' said Lawrence. 'I-I'm going. I wouldn't go in there'

again for the biggest bonanza in British Columbia!' said Gunten, shivering. 'I—I'm going!' He clambered on his horse as he spoke. 'Who's the funk now?' chortled Chunky Todgers. Gunten did not reply to that. 'Look here, Gunten,' said Bob Lawless. 'We're going in, now we're here. Come along with us!' 'I won't!' howled Gunten. 'Then you'll take back what you said about our being funks, or we'll yank you in, whether you like it or not!' said Bob grimly. Gunten gritted his teeth. 'Hang you, I'll take it back, then! Hang you!' And he cut his horse with the whip and dashed away. The rest of the party followed him, excepting Frank, Bob, and Beauclerc. They were there to explore the mine again, and they meant to do it. 'Sure you won't try it again, Chunky?' called out Bob Lawless. Chunky Todgers did not reply, and he did not look back. He had had quite enough of Bill Bailey's bonanza and Bill Bailey's ghost. Bob looked at his chums as the hoof-beats died away down the gulch. 'We're going in?' he asked. 'Yes,' said Beauclerc quietly; and Frank Richards nodded. 'That jay has dropped my lantern,' said Bob. 'I've got matches, though, and we can find it, I guess. Look here, it's as plain as Mount Hooker that it was somebody playing the ghost when we came here last night. If the galoot's still there we're going to nail him, and give him a taste of the trail-ropes for a lesson.' 'What-ho!' said Frank. 'Come on!' The three chums approached the opening of the tunnel. From the black depths of the mine came a faint moaning sound. 'It's the wind,' said Beauclerc. 'That isn't like the howl we heard before.' 'We'll chance it, anyway.' Bob Lawless struck a match, and the trio entered the mine. Keeping close together, they pressed on, Bob striking match after match, and scanning the rough, rocky floor of the tunnel for the lost lantern. He stumbled on it at last, a dozen yards from the opening. Gunten had not penetrated far into the tunnel when his fears overcame him. Frank Richards picked up the lantern, and Bob put the match to the wick. The chums were glad enough to have the light. They pressed on to the end of the tunnel, Bob Lawless flashing the light to and fro. From the cross-adits came the moaning of the wind, with a strange, eerie sound, which made them shiver in spite of themselves. But that was all. Their startling experiences of the previous evening were not repeated. 'I guess the ghost has gone on strike,' remarked Bob Lawless. 'And if it was a practical joker he don't happen to be here now.' 'That's it!' agreed Frank. Having explored the main tunnel, the schoolboys retraced their steps, and explored the cross-adits in turn. Two or three of the cross-tunnels they found opened out on the hillside, and they came on daylight several times. In one of them, however, which ended in a wall of solid rock, Bob Lawless came to a sudden halt, with an exclamation. He placed the lantern close to the rocky wall, and examined it intently. There was a yellow gleam from the uneven surface. 'Gold!' he said. 'Bob!' 'Not a bonanza,' said Bob, laughing, 'but there's gold in paying quantities, I reckon. And it's been worked.' 'The mine hasn't been worked for years,' said Beauclerc—'not since Bill Bailey drowned himself in the creek.' Bob pointed to the rock. 'That rock's been worked within a few days,' he answered. 'Somebody has been sneaking in and working it, and getting small quantities of gold—enough to pay his grub-stakes, I reckon. Look at that; you can see it's a fresh cutting.' Frank Richards nodded. 'By gum, it looks like it!' he said. 'That lets in some light, Bob. Somebody has been working the mine, and playing ghost to keep off outsiders!' 'That's how I figure it out,' said Bob. 'I—Hark!' A low moaning sound came from the darkness behind, and the chums looked round quickly. Darkness met their gaze. 'Only—only the wind!' muttered Frank. 'That's what scared Gunten,' said Bob. 'But we're done here. Let's get out. We're coming again, though. We're going to talk to that galoot who gave us a scare yesterday, when we catch him at the game.'

The trio left the cross-adit and followed the main tunnel to the open air. Bob Lawless extinguished the lantern as they came out into the daylight. He was looking very thoughtful as they mounted their horses to ride home. 'The jay that's been working that mine has no right to,' he said. 'It's claimed by a relation of old Bailey's, and it's up for sale in Thompson now. He ought to be stopped. Anyhow, we're going to give him a lesson about playing ghost and scaring folks.' With a clatter of hoofs they rode out of the gulch. The 3rd Chapter. Bob Lawless is Suspicious. 'Injun Dick!' Bob Lawless uttered that exclamation as the chums of Cedar Creek rode out of the lonely gulch towards the Thompson trail. Ahead of them, and coming towards them, was a well-known figure, draped in a tattered blanket. It was Ka-noon-ka, the Apache, known in the Thompson Valley as 'Injun Dick.' When the chums had last seen him Injun Dick had been in a state of prosperity. He had purchased a new blanket and leggings at Gunten's store, and other finery, and the saloon-keepers of Thompson had been kept quite busy by his insatiable demands for the white man's fire-water. Evidently the white man's fire-water had banished Injun Dick's short-lived prosperity, for the Redskins was once more in his tattered old blanket, which looked as if it might have been picked out of a dust-heap. He was tramping into the gulch when the schoolboys came upon him, and he lifted his head and stared at them for a moment, with a gleam in his black eyes. 'Hallo, Injun Dick!' said Bob Lawless cheerily, slackening rein. 'Wah!' said the Redskins gravely. 'I hear you've been painting the town red,' said Bob, with a shake of the head. Injun Dick grinned faintly. 'Ka-noon-ka great fire-water chief!' he said proudly. 'Wah! Injun Dick bully boy with a glass eye!' The chums of Cedar Creek grinned. The Apache had picked up the white man's language in the mining-camps and the ranches, and it was curious to hear the slang of the frontier pronounced with deep and solemn gravity. 'Why don't you let the fire-water alone, old scout?' said Bob Lawless seriously. 'Heap bad for Redskins, you know.' Injun Dick shook his head. 'Heap good!' he replied. 'Many moons ago Ka-noon-ka great chief of Apaches; many young men follow Ka-noon-ka to battle. White men come—the young men fall like leaves of the forest. Now white man's lodges cover the hunting-fields of the Apache. No room for Apache on Colorado River.' The Indian's dark face quivered for a moment. 'Many moons—many moons ago, Ka-noon-ka lose his hunting-grounds, his young braves, his scalps, and his wigwams. Now Injun Dick bad lot. God-darned old Red, I guess! All come back when drink white man's fire-water.' The Redskins tramped on. 'Poor old chap!' muttered Frank Richards, glancing after the tall figure of the Redskins striding on, draped in the tattered blanket. The chums rode on in silence. Bob Lawless' brow was knitted in thought. 'By gum!' he exclaimed suddenly. 'Hallo!' said Frank. 'What's up now?' 'What was that old whisky-skin doing in the gulch?' said Bob. Frank Richards stared. 'Blessed if I know!' he answered. 'What does it matter? Looking for game, perhaps.' 'He hadn't a gun with him, Franky. I—I wonder— He wasn't far from Bill Bailey's Bonanza when we met him.' 'I suppose he's not going ghost-hunting,' said Vere Beauclerc, with a smile. 'I guess not! He might be going ghost-playing, if any galoot came along to look at the mine while he's there,' said Bob Lawless coolly. 'My hat!' 'He's been in great funds, on and off, for some time,' said Bob. 'It's pretty plain he's made a strike somewhere in the hills. You remember we saw him in Gunten's store one day, splashing out dust. I begin to smell a mouse.' 'By Jove!' said Frank Richards, with a deep breath. 'You think—' 'Well, I guess it looks jolly likely!' said Bob. 'And there he was, talking to us so solemnly, and very likely it was he who was scaring us yesterday—dabbing at us in the dark with his paw, the old villain!' Frank whistled. 'He must have been laughing in his sleeve when he met us just now, if that's the case,' he said. 'I guess he was!' growled Bob Lawless. 'But I guess we'll make him laugh another way, if we catch him in the mine! The old rascal would be put in the calaboose if it was known that he was lifting gold from Bill Bailey's Bonanza. We won't give him away to the sheriff, but we'll jolly well put a stop to his tricks, if that's his game!' And Bob's chums agreed. The 4th Chapter. Gunten is Not Pleased. Frank Richards & Co. grinned at the sight of Kern Gunten the next day at the lumber school. Gunten's adventure in the old mine, and his ignominious flight from the moanings of the wind in the abandoned workings, was the joke of Cedar Creek now. The Swiss greeted the Co. with a black scowl when they joined him in the playground after morning lessons. 'Don't give me any of your chin-

IMPORTANT!

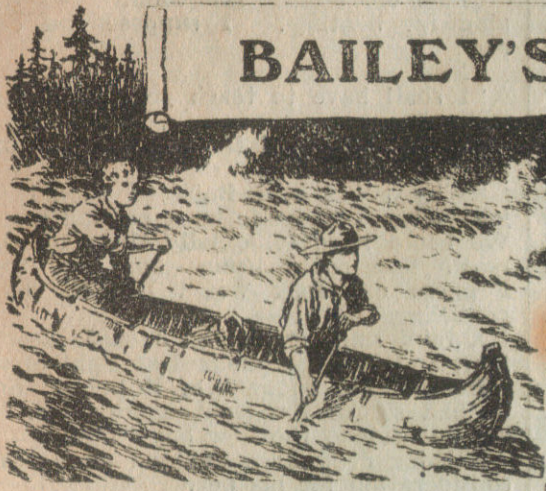
The Paper Controller has prohibited the return of any unsold papers by newsagents. This means that newsagents are only ordering those copies of the BOYS' FRIEND for which they have a certain sale. You must, therefore, place a regular order with your newsagent, otherwise you will be unable to obtain a copy of your favourite paper.

FILL UP THIS FORM, AND HAND IT TO YOUR NEWSAGENT AT ONCE!

[ORDER FORM.]

To Mr. Newsagent. Please reserve me each week, until further notice, a copy of the BOYS' FRIEND. Name Address

BAILEY'S BONANZA!



(Continued from the previous page.)

wag!" he exclaimed savagely. "I guess I've had enough of chewing the rag over what happened last night! Cut it out!"

"I wasn't going to rub it in!" said Bob Lawless, laughing. "You bunked, the same as we did, though you had less to bunk for, really. But never mind that. Did you see anything of Injun Dick last evening?"

Gunten started, surprised at the unexpected question.

"Yep," he answered. "He came into the store late last night."

"In funds again?" asked Bob.

"He had a nugget to sell," answered Gunten. "Goodness knows where he got it; but there hasn't been any complaint of robberies on the claims, so I suppose he's made a strike somewhere, and he's keeping it dark. Popper bought the nugget, and Injun Dick loped off to the Red Dog for fire-water. He was picked up in the street this morning, dead broke again, and covered with mud. I guess it's time that Redskin was fired out of the town!"

"No reason why he shouldn't stake out a claim if he's made a strike," remarked Bob Lawless.

"I reckon he don't keep enough dust to pay the fee. He goes on a bender the minute he's in funds," said Gunten.

"Or perhaps he's made a strike on somebody else's claim," said Bob.

"Likely enough."

"Hallo, Gunten!" Chunky Todgers came up, grinning a fat grin. "Got over it, old scout? I say, you ought to go in for foot-racing! The way you came out of the bonanza tunnel yesterday was a record!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I hear that you're not talking so much about funks now," went on Chunky, with great enjoyment.

Gunten gritted his teeth, and made a sudden clutch at Chunky.

"The fat youth yelled as Gunten's grip closed on his ear."

"Yow-ow! Leggo! Drag him off, Bob!"

Bob Lawless, laughing, caught Gunten by the shoulders, and spun him away.

The Swiss spun round, and sat on the ground.

He gave the rancher's son a deadly look as he scrambled up.

"Hands off!" said Bob. "You were free enough with your chin-wag yesterday, and now it's your turn!"

Gunten scowled, and strode away.

"Cheeky jay!" said Chunky indignantly. "He called me a funk yesterday, the blessed foreign trash!" And Chunky raised his voice, and yelled truculently after the Swiss: "Yah! Funk! Cold feet! Yah!"

Gunten did not look round.

The Swiss had had a good deal of chipping to stand from the Cedar Creek fellows over his unfortunate exhibition at the Bonanza Mine, and his face was sullen and lowering during lessons that day.

His glance, when it rested on Frank Richards & Co. in the school-room, was not pleasant.

He attributed his discomfort to them, though he might more justly have attributed it to himself.

After lessons he followed the chums into the playground.

"I hear that you're going to the haunted mine again," he said.

"Correct?" answered Bob.

"To-day?"

"Yes, we're going there now. Like to come?" grinned Bob.

"Nope!"

Gunten mounted his horse, and rode away at a gallop.

He was out of sight by the time Frank Richards & Co. started up the trail.

The three rode at a leisurely pace, and it was some time later when they entered the gulch in the foothills.

From the blackness ahead a strange white figure loomed up, eerily, uncannily, with waving arms.

The 5th Chapter. The Ghost Hunters.

"G-g-g-good heavens!" muttered Frank Richards, as he stumbled out of the mine tunnel. "You—you fellows saw that?"

The three exchanged dismayed glances. Bob Lawless set his lips.

"It's a trick!" he exclaimed fiercely. "A trick, that's all! It's somebody playing ghost—Injun Dick, or somebody else! Come on!"

"You—you're going in again?" muttered Frank.

"Hang it, yes! And I'm going to heave a rock at that chap, and teach him a wrinkle about playing ghost!" exclaimed Bob savagely.

He caught up a chunk of rock from the ground, and turned back to the mine.

Frank and Beauclerc followed his example.

Gripping the stones in their hands, they crept into the tunnel again.

From the blackness the white, ghostly figure loomed ahead.

It was eerie, uncanny, and, in spite of their belief that it was a trick, the sight made the blood rush to their hearts.

But they did not hesitate.

"Look out, whoever you are!" called

he rode here ahead of us, to set up this gold-darned scarecrow to give us a scare!"

"And he succeeded," said Frank, with a rather rueful laugh. "No wonder it didn't yell when it got the stones!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter of the three chums, reassured now, rang along the old rocky tunnel, echoing in the black depths.

It was followed by another sound.

From somewhere in the old workings there came a shrill, ear-piercing cry, as of a tortured spirit.

Bob Lawless jumped.

"You hear that?" he exclaimed. "It's the ghost again, at his old tricks! He won't scare us out this time!"

"No fear!" muttered Frank.

The schoolboys peered uneasily into the gloom about them, into which the lantern cast a beam of yellow light.

The ghost, or the unknown who was playing ghost, was undoubtedly in the old mine, and they guessed that he had heard their laughter re-echoing down the adits, and so had been warned of their presence.

Yet, sure as they were that it was trickery, that hideous cry sent a thrill of creepy horror through their veins.

It was repeated as they stood listening with beating hearts.

Bob Lawless' grip closed on the coiled trail-rope he held in one hand.

That trail-rope was for the ghost, if he found him; and there was no doubt that Bob would lay it on well.

Silence followed the cry, save for the moaning of the mountain wind in the hollows of the old adits.

"Come on!" said Bob, through his closed teeth. "It's a trick, and we're going to nail the galoot."

They went on, the lantern-light flashing to and fro as they went.

Again that eerie cry came echoing through the adits, and they rushed in the direction whence it came; but they found only solid rock.

Again and again it came, and each time, as they searched, they were baffled.

Bob Lawless groped on the floor for a loose rock.

"Stop here a minute!" he whispered.

He rose with a jagged stone in his hand. The three waited in tense silence.

It did indeed settle it.

There were traces of fresh chipping on the rock, and at their feet lay a pick and an extinguished lantern.

The unknown gold-seeker had evidently been at work in the adit when the sounds in the tunnel warned him of the approach of explorers.

He had thrown down his tools, extinguished the lantern, and resorted to the old trickery to frighten away the newcomers.

Certainly phantoms, even if they existed, could not be supposed to use a gold-miner's pick, or to require the light of a lantern.

Frank Richards picked up the latter article and lit it.

The wick was still warm.

"I guess that'll be useful to us!" grinned Bob Lawless. "The galoot plays his game well, but he won't convince us, after this, that he's a gold-darned spook."

"Hark!"

Echoing down the adit came the hideous yell of the "ghost."

The schoolboys ran back towards the main tunnel, the light flashing before them.

Whiz, whiz!

Crash!

The lanterns went crashing to the floor, struck out of their hands by whizzing chunks of rock.

The light was instantly extinguished.

Darkness descended like a blanket on the three chums in the adit.

"Come on!" shouted Bob. "Ghosts don't heave rocks, I guess! Come on! We're close on the galoot!"

He rushed on, his chums after him, excited and angry.

There was a howl from Bob Lawless as he stumbled over a loose boulder and rolled on the ground.

"Look out!" he gasped. "He's close! I touched him!"

Frank Richards, groping in the darkness, felt his hands come in contact with a human form, and he grasped it instantly.

"I've got him!" he shouted.

As he spoke, he bore the figure to the ground with a crash, sprawling across him in the darkness.



"Look out, whoever you are!" called out Bob Lawless, as he caught sight of the ghostly figure. "I'm going to heave a rock!"

out Bob Lawless. "I'm going to heave a rock!"

The ghostly figure did not move.

Bob Lawless kept his word.

His hand went up, and the heavy stone flew through the air.

It struck the ghostly figure, and there was a faint sound.

But the figure did not fall, and there was no cry, no exclamation. Yet the blow had been a terrible one.

Bob Lawless caught his breath.

No living thing could have received that missile in dead silence, and he knew it. What did it mean?

"Heave your rocks!" he muttered, in a strained whisper.

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc obeyed, and the two heavy stones whizzed through the air.

Crash!

The figure fell, still without a cry.

It lay extended on the floor of the tunnel, glimmering white in the gloom.

"What—what—what is it?" muttered Beauclerc.

"I'm going to see!" said Bob Lawless, setting his teeth.

Keeping the lantern-light before him, Bob strode on determinedly, his chums at his heels.

They reached the ghostly figure extended on the floor.

Through the darkness the yell came ringing through the tunnel.

Bob's hand swept through the air, and the stone whizzed in the direction of the cry.

Crash!

They heard it strike the rock and roll noisily to the floor of the tunnel.

"Missed, by gum!" growled Bob Lawless.

But even as he spoke there was a chill at his heart.

Had he missed, or had the stone passed through a bodiless phantom?

In the darkness, amid those spectral sounds, it seemed quite possible.

Silence followed, and they tramped on determinedly, keeping their eyes well about them.

The rocky wall at the end of the tunnel stopped them.

"The galoot's dodged in the side adits," muttered Bob. "I guess we're going to find him, if we keep it up all night. He won't play ghost so lively after I've laid this trail-rope round his carcass!"

"Let's look in the adit where we found the new working," muttered Beauclerc.

"Good idea, Cherub!"

Bob Lawless led the way, and they turned into the cross-adit they had explored the previous evening, where the signs had been visible of fresh working at the auriferous rock.

There was a strange scent in the adit, as they progressed, which they recognised in a moment or two.

"Oil!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "There's been oil burning here!"

Bob Lawless chuckled softly.

A wild howl came from underneath him.

He did not heed it.

"Lend a hand, Beau!" he shouted. "I've got him!"

"Groogh! Oh! Ah!"

"I'm coming!" panted Beauclerc.

"Keep still, you rotter!" shouted Frank, as his prisoner struggled frantically.

"I've got you! I—"

"Leggo!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Leggo!" It was Bob Lawless' voice.

"Leggo, you mad gopher! Yow-ow-ow!"

The 6th Chapter. The Last of the Ghost.

Frank Richards released his prisoner as suddenly as if he had become red-hot.

Bob Lawless sat up breathlessly.

"Groogh! Oh! You jay, wharrer you up to?" he shrieked.

"Oh, my hat! Was it you, Bob?" gasped Frank.

"You howling jay, whom do you think it was?" spluttered Bob Lawless.

"I—I thought it was the ghost!"

"Groogh! You nearly busted my nose on the ground!" groaned Bob. "Oh, Jerusalem! Ow!"

He staggered to his feet.

"Sorry!" gasped Frank. "You said he was close—"

"So he was—I touched him." Bob set his teeth. "We'll have the rotter yet! He can't dodge us for keeps!"

In the intense darkness the chums groped their way out of the adit into the main tunnel.

Far in the distance, a speck of daylight appeared, at the end of the tunnel, and even as they sighted it, it was blotted out by a dark shadow.

aiming low so as to take effect on the legs of the figure in the darkness.

He did not want to injure the man who was playing ghost, exasperated as he was.

A sudden, terrific yell rang through the tunnel.

Bob's missile had got home at last.

Bob laughed breathlessly.

"Keno!" he exclaimed jubilantly. "I guess that was a bull's eye!"

The yell that rang through the old mine was not like the ghostly cries they had heard; it was evidently human.

The "ghost" had caught the whizzing rock with his legs, and the yell showed that they were legs of flesh and bone.

"Come on!" panted Beauclerc.

The three chums rushed on down the tunnel.

They were close behind the fugitive, as he reached the opening on the hillside.

Bob Lawless, ahead of his chums, caught at a tattered blanket that floated behind the running man.

"Stop!" he shouted. "We've got you, Injun Dick!"

"It's Injun Dick!" exclaimed Frank Richards breathlessly.

"You bet!"

It was the Apache, as they saw when the running man halted and whirled round on them, in the light that streamed into the opening of the adit.

For a moment, there was ferocity in the coppery face of the Indian.

Just for an instant Injun Dick was once more Ka-noon-ka, the chief of the Apaches, the savage scalp-hunter of olden days.

But he remembered himself, and the look passed, and his copper features took on their customary stolid expression.

"Young white chief let go 'Injun's blanket," he said, with dignity.

Bob Lawless released him.

"We've caught you!" he panted. "You've been playing ghost!"

"No can savvy!"

"You've been working the mine, and taking away gold," said Vere Beauclerc.

Injun Dick shook his head.

"Injun no can!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards, in astonishment. "Do you mean to say that you're not the man we were chasing in the tunnel?"

"Injun no know tunnel. Injun walk on mountains," said the great Red chief, with dignity. "Injun stop here to rest—Ka-noon-ka no longer strong young brave. Hear something and run. I have spoken!"

The three chums grinned.

Injun Dick's denials did not convey conviction.

"So you haven't been working the mine?" grinned Bob Lawless. "You haven't got her; the nuggets you've been selling at Gunten's store?"

"No can understand."

"I guess the sheriff would soon make you understand, and shove you in the calaboose to let it sink into your mind," answered Bob Lawless. "This mine is for sale, and you've no right to take an ounce of dust out of it. You know that, you old fibber! You've left your pick in the adit, too, and I guess that could be identified!"

Injun Dick started. He had forgotten the pick and lantern left behind in the mine.

"Oh, that hits you, does it?" grinned Bob.

"Injun Dick honest Injun," said the Apache. "Injun Dick make mistake. The young white chief speaks with the speech of truth. Injun Dick take little gold."

"Little or not, it doesn't belong to you!" said Bob. "You've got to drop it, Injun Dick! Do you see this trail-rope? I've got that to lay round the galoot who was playing ghost. Look here, we'll let you off the trail-rope if you'll quit Thompson, and go on your travels till the mine's sold. Is that a trade?"

Injun Dick hesitated, with a wary eye on the trail-rope.

"Is it a trade?" repeated Bob.

The Redskin nodded.

"The words of the young white brave are words of wisdom," he said. "Young brave a bully boy with a glass eye. Injun Dick vamoose the ranch."

"Mind, I shall keep an eye open," said Bob. "If you don't quit, and stay away till after the sale, you'll be juggled! You savvy?"

"Injun Dick absquatulate, I guess. No like calaboose," said the noble Red man simply.

"Come back and get your pick and lantern, then!"

Injun Dick shook his head.

"No want. Not mine!"

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE SCHOOLBOY ACTORS!"
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
DON'T MISS IT!