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The BOYS' FRIEND 1^d/₂

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THREE HALFPENCE.

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THE SORROWS OF SERGEANT KETTLE!

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

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Late Hours.

"Oh dear!"
"Dry up!"
"I'm awfully tired!"
"Cheese it!"
"I say—"

"Shut up!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell ferociously.

And Tubby Muffin shut up, only emitting an occasional groan, to show how tired he was, and how hardly he considered that he was being used.

High over the woods and the Kenish lanes the round moon soared.

It was a beautiful night.

But the beauty of the night was lost upon the Rookwood caravanners.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were fatigued, and they wanted to stop and camp, but luck was not their way.

Raby was leading the horse, who was tired, too, and obstinately refused to proceed at more than a snail's pace.

Newcome gave the horse an occasional dispirited prod to buck him up.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell strode beside the van, and Tubby Muffin dragged on behind, groaning.

Tubby Muffin did not see why he should not sit on the van and ride.

The Fistical Four did see, however.

The horse was tired enough, without having Tubby's tremendous weight to pull up hill and down dale.

Caravanning was a joyful way of spending a holiday, but it has its downs as well as its ups, and Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, were experiencing some of the downs to begin with.

Having been shifted out of their camp at a late hour by an irate farmer, they had to take to the road again, and hitherto no favourable spot for a fresh camp had been sighted.

They passed sleeping villages and dark, silent farms, where dogs began to bark as the rumble of the wheels broke the silence of the night.

Jimmy Silver, who always looked on the bright side of things, declared that shortly they would find an ideal spot for camping.

His suggestion was to keep smiling. His comrades, however, seemed rather inclined to keep grunting.

"I say—" began Tubby Muffin dolefully.

Lovell turned on him.

"Will you shut up?" he demanded.

"I'm tired."

"Well, you can be tired without jawing. Give your lower jaw a rest."

"We'll camp soon, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver.

"I say—"

"Shut up!"

"Yes, but I say—"

"My hat! I'll pitch him into the ditch if he doesn't dry up!" exclaimed Lovell, in great exasperation.

"But I say," persisted Tubby, with a wary eye on Lovell.

"There's a field yonder that will do ripingly."

"Oh! Why couldn't you say so, then?" grunted Lovell.

"I was trying to—"

"Oh, ring off!"

Arthur Edward Lovell was not in a very reasonable mood just then.

"Halt!" said Jimmy Silver. Raby stopped the horse.

Jimmy looked over a gate by the roadside, which Tubby had spotted.

It led into a field, with a haystack at the further end.

"It would suit us," said Lovell. "Only it's too jolly late to ask leave of the owner."

"We don't want another blessed old Hun raging on our track," said Newcome dismally.

"Let's risk it," said Raby. "After all, they can't do more than turn us out in the morning."

Jimmy Silver did not reply.

He was staring across the field at a large object that loomed up dimly in the moonlight.

"You fellows see that?" he asked, pointing.

"Looks like a cart or something."

"It's another caravan."

"My hat! So it is!" exclaimed Lovell.

"I say, if one lot of caravanners can camp in this field, another lot can. Let's chance it."

"I wonder—" began Jimmy.

"Don't start wondering now, old chap. My legs are fit to drop off."

"I wonder!" repeated Jimmy thoughtfully.

"Tommy Dodd and those Modern worms are caravanning in this part, you know. That may be their outfit."

"Jolly queer to run on them, if it's so," said Lovell.

"Like their cheek to be camping there so jolly comfy, the Modern worms! Bless Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, and every other Tommy in the wide world! We're going to camp in this field!"

And Lovell opened the gate.

"Can't do better," agreed Jimmy Silver.

The horse was led in at the gate, and the caravan rumbled into the field.

Glad enough were the tired juniors to come to a halt.

As soon as the caravan stopped, Tubby Muffin plunged into it, rolled into one of the berths, and fell fast asleep.

The Fistical Four took the horse out of harness, to graze or sleep as he chose, and Robinson Crusoe laid down in the grass. The juniors had named the caravan horse Robinson Crusoe because he was monarch of all he surveyed.

The Co. looked at one another.

"What about the tent?" murmured Raby.

"Too jolly tired!" said Lovell, with a yawn.

"It's a warm night. Let's try rugs in the grass."

"Good egg!"

"There's another berth in the van," said Jimmy.

"You have it, Newcome, and we'll camp out with rugs."

"Right you are!"

Newcome was asleep in two minutes.

Jimmy Silver, George Raby, and Arthur Edward Lovell took rugs and coats out of the van, and disposed themselves in the thick, rich grass.



SERGEANT KETTLE IN HIS SUNDAY BEST!

Lovell and Raby closed their eyes at once.

But Jimmy sat up on his rug, looking across the moonlit field at the other caravan.

He was tired, but he was wondering whether that caravan belonged to Tommy Dodd & Co., the chums of the Modern side at Rookwood.

He nudged Lovell as that youth was settling into balmy slumber.

"Lovell, old chap."

"Yaw-aw! Wharrer marrer!" Lovell sat up.

"Don't say the beastly farmer is coming after us!" he gasped.

"I was thinking—"

"Is it the farmer?"

"No; it's nobody. But—"

"Go to sleep, then, fathead!" snorted Lovell, settling down again.

"Can't you let a chap snooze?"

"I was thinking—"

"Br-r-r-r! You can't think, or you'd think it was time to go to sleep. Dry up, there's a good chap!"

"I was thinking if that's the Modern caravan—"

"Blow the Moderns!"

Lovell dozed again. He was awakened by another dig in the ribs.

"Groogh! Wharrer marrer?"

"I say, Lovell, if that's the Modern van, Tommy Dodd & Co. are fast asleep, and they don't know we're here."

"Shurrup!"

"What a chance to jape the Modern bounders!" urged Jimmy Silver.

"You frabjous bandersnatch!" said Lovell, in sulphurous tones.

"Are you thinking of japing at this time of the night, when we're all dog-tired? You dangerous maniac, go to sleep!"

"But, I say—"

"You say another word, and I'll brain you with a tent-peg!" shrieked Lovell.

And he closed his eyes, and snored resolutely.

Jimmy Silver grinned, and rose to his feet.

At Rookwood Lovell was one of the keenest on the rivalry between Classi-

cal and Modern, and always ready for a "rag," with Tommy Dodd & Co. as the victims.

But he was too sleepy now to care a brass farthing for Tommy Dodd or the whole Modern side, and japes did not appeal to him.

But Jimmy Silver was made of sterner stuff.

Leaving his comrades fast asleep, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth crossed the field, to scout around the other caravan, with many humorous plans in his head, if the caravanning party should turn out to be the Rookwood Moderns.

The 2nd Chapter.

Jimmy Silver Gets Busy.

The camp was silent as Jimmy Silver approached it in the glimmering moonlight. Only a steady crop-crop came from a horse tethered somewhere near.

Near the caravan was a tent, and as Jimmy Silver drew nearer he heard a sound that mingled with the crop-cropping of the feeding horse.

It was a low bass, rumbling sound, which rather surprised Jimmy for a moment, and made him glance up at the moonlit sky, thinking of German air-raiders.

But the sound came from the tent, and he grinned as it dawned upon him what it was.

"The merry old sergeant," he murmured, "snoring!"

He was aware that Mr. Kettle, the school sergeant, was with the Modern trio, his duty being to "look after" them on the tour.

And Jimmy recognised that powerful bass snore now; he had heard it before, at Rookwood School.

He was pretty certain that it was Sergeant Kettle who was sleeping in the tent.

But he had to make sure, and he approached the caravan.

Door and window stood wide open, to let in the air on the warm summer's night.

Jimmy listened.

Only the sound of deep breathing came from within.

The occupants of the van, whoever they were, were fast asleep, as was natural at that hour.

Jimmy stopped, and detached a stone from the earth, and tossed it into the van, keeping back out of sight by one of the big wheels.

There was a startled exclamation in the van.

"Hallo! What's that?"

Jimmy grinned silently. It was the voice of Tommy Dodd, of the Rookwood Modern Fourth, and all his doubts were set at rest now. It was undoubtedly the Modern party the Classical caravanners had come upon.

"What's that, I say?" repeated Tommy Dodd.

"Bedad, and what's the matter wid ye?" came Tommy Doyle's sleepy voice.

"Is it an air-raid, begorra?"

"Something woke me up."

"Go to sleep again, then!" This time it was Tommy Cook's voice.

"No need to wake us up, too, fat-head!"

"Something hit me on the nose!"

"How could it, ass?"

"Well, it did!"

"Faith, it's dhraming ye are!" said Doyle.

"Go to slape, and dhrame about something else!"

"I tell you something hit me on the nose!" exclaimed Tommy Doyle excitedly.

"If one of you fellows is playing tricks—"

"Oh, go to sleep!"

Tommy Dodd grunted, and laid his head on the pillow again.

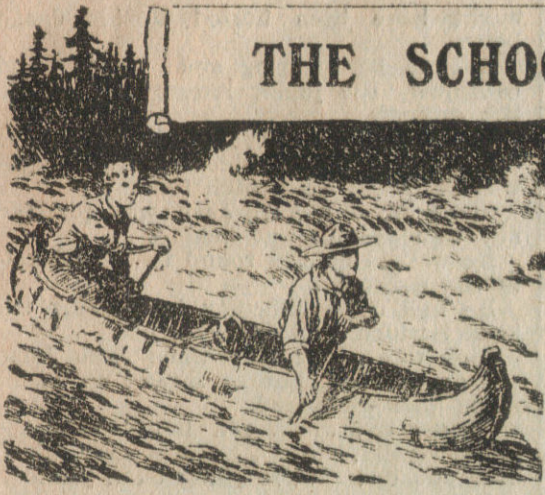
The voice died away, and soon the silence was broken only by deep breathing.

Jimmy Silver did not move for some time.

But, as soon as he was sure that the Modern juniors were asleep again, he crept to the door of the van, and peered in.

(Continued on the next page.)

THE SCHOOLBOY ACTORS!



(Continued from the previous page.)

"We're doing 'Julius Caesar,' sir!" gurgled Frank Richards, with tears rolling down his cheeks. "Only a play, Mr. Shepherd! Beau is Julius Caesar, and we're assassinating him in the Capitol." "Oh!" gasped Mr. Shepherd. Beaulere sat up and roared. He did not want to be disrespectful to Mr. Shepherd, but he could not help it. The other fellows were yelling. The new master rose to his feet, his face crimson. He, too, understood at last, and realised that he had put his foot in it once more. He walked away very quickly, leaving Frank Richards & Co. almost in convulsions. When he met the Co. in class the next morning Mr. Shepherd was still looking rather pink.

The 4th Chapter. Gunten is Humorous!

"Dress rehearsal after dinner!" said Frank Richards on Friday. "Right you are!" Kern Gunten, who heard the remark, looked round. "You're bagging the corral again, I suppose?" he said. Frank Richards nodded. "Yes; if you want to sneak off somewhere to play poker, Gunten, you can sneak off somewhere else. The corral's booked." Gunten gave a sniff, and said no more. Immediately after dinner, Frank Richards & Co. repaired to the old corral near the school. This was a secluded spot, and

colour about the costumes, and they were very pleasing to the eye. The schoolboys stripped off their more prosaic everyday garments in the cabin, and donned togas and hoods and sandals. They grinned at one another a good deal during the process of transformation from Canadian schoolboys into ancient Romans. The window was darkened as a head appeared there, and Frank Richards glanced round, and saw Kern Gunten looking in, and grinning. "Buzz off!" he snapped. "Mayn't a galoot look on?" jeered Gunten. "By gum, you look a precious set of circus performers!" "Vamoose!" roared Bob Lawless. He picked up a property Roman sword, and Gunten vanished from the window, chuckling. The dressing was finished at last, and the crowd of Romans, in their togas, moved out into the old corral. In a corner of the corral grew a big tree, and under its wide-spreading branches the schoolboys started the rehearsal of the third act. Frank Richards was a hard-working and exacting manager; but he was very well satisfied with the progress of his company. The senate-house scene was voted a great success, and even Chunky Todgers' oration in the Forum went very well. While the rehearsal was going on under the big tree, Kern Gunten's keen and cunning face looked in at the window of the old cabin again—the Swiss being careful to keep the cabin between him and the actors. Gunten's eyes gleamed as he looked in. About the cabin were thrown the clothes the schoolboys had discarded when they put on the Roman costumes, with a dozen pairs of boots, and as many hats. Gunten chuckled softly. He turned from the window, and made a sign to Keller, who was waiting at a distance; and his comrade came up quietly, keeping, like Gunten, the cabin between him and the party rehearsing under the tree. "All safe?" asked Keller. "You bet! You stand here and take

Richards & Co. to work out, as best they could, the toughest problem that the Thespian Club had ever had to deal with. The 5th Chapter. Surprising the School. "Bring me to Octavius!" concluded Chunky Todgers. The school bell was ringing as Mark Antony wound up. "My hat! We've run it rather close!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "Only just time to change before we get in! Get a move on!" The rehearsal of the third act had been a great success. All the Thespians agreed that the costumes lent reality to the scene, and, indeed, the more enthusiastic members felt as if they really were ancient Romans. But the clang of the iron bell at the lumber school summoned them back to everyday life, and they rushed into the cabin to change back to modern life again. And then there was a chorus of dismayed exclamations. "Where's our clothes?" "Great gophers!" The Romans stared into the empty cabin in astonishment and dismay. It was quite empty, save for an odd boot or two lying about. Frank Richards blinked round him. "Who on earth—?" he ejaculated. "One of you duffers been larking?" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Somebody's been larking!" growled Dawson. "Where's our clothes gone?" "Somebody's been 'ere!" said Hopkins. "Perhaps—perhaps the things are outside!" exclaimed Franky. He ran out of the cabin again with two or three others. But there was no sign of the clothes outside. It was evident that the garments had been taken clean away. Outside the cabin the dozen schoolboys gathered in blank dismay. "It's a rotten practical joke!" said Vere Beaulere. "I guess so. But where's the joker, and where's our truck!" groaned Bob Lawless. "My hat!" said Frank. Utter dismay fell upon the Thespians.

Frank Richards nodded. "Can't be helped," he said. "C-c-come on! Oh, my hat, what awful asses we shall look!" And the unhappy Thespians started at last. In a body they came out of the corral and started for the lumber-school. As they came in at the school gates Caesar, Antony, Brutus, & Co. all seemed to be trying to hide behind one another. Black Sally, the cook, was crossing the school ground with a pail when they came in. Black Sally gave them one look and shrieked, and the pail went with a clatter to the ground. "It—it—it's only us, Sally!" called out Frank Richards. "Golly!" gasped Black Sally, her black face a picture of astonishment. "Golly! Dat Mass! Frank? Oh, golly!" "Golly!" mumbled Bob Lawless hopelessly. "Golly isn't the word! Miss Meadows will snatch us bald-headed for this! Oh, dear!" The unhappy Romans marched in at the porch, but they paused in the passage outside the school-room door. It required a great deal of nerve to enter the crowded school-room in the garb of ancient Rome. As they hesitated outside the open doorway, Miss Meadows' voice came to them from within in very severe tones. "Twelve boys are absent! This is extraordinary! Gunten, do you know where the others are?" "No, Miss Meadows," answered Gunten's smooth voice. "I haven't seen them since dinner." "Have you seen them, Keller?" "No, Miss Meadows." "This is very serious. We must commence without them, but I shall punish them very severely for this." Miss Meadows' voice was very stern, and it made the miserable Thespians look at one another hopelessly. "Better get in!" said Bob desperately. "Here goes!" And he marched as boldly as possible into the school-room, with the others at his heels. "Oh, here they are!" exclaimed Miss Meadows at the sound of many footsteps, and she turned to look sternly at the newcomers. Then her expression changed, and she gasped, "Why—why—who—how



With crimson faces, and their eyes fixed on the floor, Julius Cæsar & Co. came up the middle of the big schoolroom. Next moment there was a roar of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

eminently suitable for rehearsals; and the weather was so fine and clear that a rehearsal in the open air was no disadvantage. The "props" were in the old cabin, packed there in readiness, and the altering and cutting and sewing had been done. There was not time for a full rehearsal before afternoon lessons, and the Thespians were going to rehearse the senate-house scene in full dress, chiefly to make sure that the costumes were all right. "We shall have time to do the third act if we don't waste any," Frank Richards remarked. "We can do the fourth after lessons, the fifth to-morrow. One Saturday we must have a grand rehearsal of the whole thing, with all the characters present. And after that—" "After that the terrific performance!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Well, Franky, I really think we shall get through the performance without having things thrown at us—unless they have rocks at Mark Antony." "You silly jay!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "Mark Antony's the best of the bunch! Just hear me do the oration as we go along—" "Mercy!" Chunky Todgers snorted. Every time he rehearsed that oration he was more and more pleased with it, which, according to some other members of the company, showed how easily satisfied he was. There were no feminine characters in the third act, which Tom Lawrence rather ungalantly declared was an advantage. At all events, it enabled all the rehearsals to use the old cabin in the corral as a dressing-room. All the "props" that were required had been conveyed there during the week, and were locked up in a big chest. Frank Richards opened the chest, and the costumes were handed out. There was plenty of brightness and

them as I pass them out of the window," whispered Gunten. Gunten squeezed himself in through the window, Keller's grinning face watching him from outside. With swift hands the Swiss collected up the clothes left there by the Thespians, made them into bundles, and passed them out to Keller. Laden with bundles, Keller hurried away, and returned in a few minutes for more. In ten minutes the cabin was cleared of the clothes belonging to the amateur theatrical society. The boots were next handed out, and conveyed away, and after them the hats. The cabin was left quite bare. Then Gunten squeezed himself through the window again, and dropped quietly outside. From the other side of the cabin came the fat voice of Chunky Todgers: "For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab, Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms, Quite vanquished him; then burst his mighty heart!" "They're still going it," grinned Keller. "They'll go it till the bell rings!" chuckled Gunten. "And then how they'll turn up to classes without their duds they can work out for themselves." "Ha, ha, ha!" Laden with the last of the boots and the hats, Gunten and Keller crept softly away, leaving the old corral by a gap in the broken palisade. Outside, on the ground, lay the clothes piled by Keller. For the next ten minutes the two Swiss were very busy carrying them to a safer spot farther off, where they were hidden in the thickets. Then, with grinning faces, the two young rascals strolled away to the lumber school, reaching it as the bell began to ring for afternoon classes, and leaving Frank

The Roman costumes had given reality to the rehearsal, and the amateur actors were very pleased with them; but those light and airy garments were not suitable for the lumber school. Their cheeks crimsoned at the thought of the merriment that would greet them if they turned up at Cedar Creek, in broad daylight, habited as Cæsar, Mark Antony, Brutus, & Co. But Miss Meadows was a stickler for punctuality, and already the school bell had ceased to clang. Cedar Creek had gone in to lessons now, excepting the unhappy cast of "Julius Cæsar." "Wh-ah on earth are we going to do?" ejaculated Lawrence. "We—we—we can't go in like this!" "Miss Meadows will be mad if we don't go," said Dawson. "We're late already." "We—we—we can't!" "But we've got to go some time," said Bob. "We—we—we can't stay here all the afternoon and the evening, too. We've got to make a move, Frank!" "Oh, my hat! I wish I had that practical joker here!" gasped Frank. "It was Gunten, of course—I'm sure it was Gunten. He was watching us." "I'd rather have the clothes here!" groaned Bob. The schoolboys made another desperate search for the missing garments, inside and outside the corral, but there was not a trace of them. It was borne in upon their minds that there was nothing to be done but to return to the lumber school as they were. What Miss Meadows would say, when they presented themselves in the school-room as ancient Romans, instead of modern Canadians, they could not even guess. But it had to be done. They were late already, and it was evidently impossible to wait there the whole afternoon, hoping that their clothes would turn up. "We—we'd better go," said Beaulere at last.

Words failed her. With crimson faces, and their eyes fixed on the floor, Julius Cæsar & Co. came up the middle of the big school-room. Mr. Shepherd rubbed his eyes. Mr. Slimmey blinked over his glasses like a man petrified. Miss Meadows was rooted to the floor. Then a roar of Homeric laughter sounded through the school-room. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!" It was in vain that Miss Meadows made frantic gestures for silence and called for it. Her voice was drowned in the roar of merriment that rang and echoed through Cedar Creek. Boys and girls were almost weeping with mirth as they stared at the unhappy crowd of ancient Romans. "Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!" Frank Richards & Co. stood sheepishly before Miss Meadows, their eyes on the floor. At that moment they fervently wished that the floor would open and swallow them up. But the floor didn't, and they had to face the really terrific look that the school-mistress fixed upon them. "What—what—what—?" Miss Meadows fairly stuttered. "What—what— Silence! There is nothing—nothing whatever to laugh at! Silence, I say! Richards—Lawless—what does this mean—this—this ridiculous masquerade?" "Ha, ha, ha!" "If—if you please, ma'am," mumbled Frank Richards. "If—if you please, we—we were rehearsing, and some beast colored our clobber—I mean, clothes." "Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence! I will cane the next boy or girl who laughs! Richards, this is—is—is unheard of! I—" "We couldn't help it, ma'am!" groaned Bob Lawless. "Our truck's been pinched, and—and we had to come in. We—we couldn't find our clothes!" "Leave the school-room at once!" gasped Miss Meadows. "You—you should not have come here like that. Go—go into the dining-room, and—and I will send some of the boys to look for your clothes! Bless my soul! Leave the school-room at once!" Frank Richards & Co. were only too glad to leave. And in spite of Miss Meadows' wrath a fresh yell of laughter followed them as they went. The Thespians had to wait some time before their clothes were found and brought in, and it happened to be Gunten and Keller who found them. Frank Richards & Co. did not feel grateful. They had a shrewd suspicion that those who hid could find. When they took their places at last in the school-room all Cedar Creek was on the broad grin, and even Miss Meadows' severe face was twitching a little. The Thespian Society of Cedar Creek decided to postpone the great performance of Shakespeare's masterpiece, after due consideration. After what had happened it was probable that the audience would have taken it as a comedy instead of a tragedy. But though Gunten declared that he knew nothing of the matter, the Co. found some slight satisfaction in pommelling him on suspicion. THE END.

house scene from the third act of "Julius Cæsar." Vere Beaulere was there as Cæsar, and Frank Richards as Brutus, and Bob as Cassius. Dawson was Casca, and Hopkins was Metellus Cimber. And all the conspirators were armed with table-knives, which had been polished but not sharpened, and looked quite dangerous, though they would not have cut into cheese without some pushing. The scene went quite strong. The actors were well up in their parts, and Vere Beaulere made quite an imposing Cæsar. But though Bob Lawless had forgotten Mr. Shepherd, the Gentle Shepherd had not forgotten him. The new master noted the fact that Frank Richards & Co. did not leave after lessons as usual, and after a time he strolled out of his cabin, to take a glance at the retired corner whither the schoolboys had retired. He was quite uneasy in his mind. He had heard of brawls in the backwoods in which knives were used, and though certainly he had never heard of a case of knifing at Cedar Creek, he would not have been greatly surprised. Mr. Shepherd had an enormous amount to learn about Canada—and a great deal to unlearn! He started a little as he saw the group of schoolboys in the distant corner, surrounding Beaulere with very serious looks. And even as he glanced at them, Dick Dawson's shining blade was flashed at Beaulere, who staggered. Mr. Shepherd had never even heard of the Thespians of Cedar Creek, so naturally he did not know that it was only Casca stabbing Cæsar. He stood rooted to the ground with horror, as Beaulere staggered artistically, and caught Dawson by the arm as if to stop a second stab. Bob Lawless stabbed him at the same moment, and then Hopkins, and then, last of all, Frank Richards. "Et tu, Brute!" groaned Cæsar, as the dearly-loved Brutus stabbed; but the horrified master was too far off to hear him. Beaulere sank to the ground. He moved for a moment or two, and then stretched out still. Over him were brandished the fatal weapons. Pale with horror, Mr. Shepherd dashed towards the group. "Stop!" he shrieked. "Wretched boys, stop! Hold your hands!" The conspirators spun round in amazement. The speeches that were about to be delivered over Cæsar were never delivered. The amateur actors stared at Mr. Shepherd instead, blankly. The new master dashed up breathlessly. With a swing of his arm, he sent Frank and Bob staggering back, and the other fellows jumped out of his way. Mr. Shepherd threw himself upon his knees beside the still form of Vere Beaulere. "Good heavens," he panted, "you have killed him!" "K-k-kick-killed him!" stuttered Bob Lawless. "Wretched boy!" "Wh-a-a-at?" "My poor lad!" Mr. Shepherd raised Beaulere's head, and Vere's eyes opened wide in utter amazement. "Ah, he lives! He lives! Thank Heaven he lives! Stand back, you reckless young ruffians! Touch him again at your peril!" "My hey!" gasped Hopkins. "Is he off his rocker?" "My poor boy, you are hurt!" "Eh? I'm not hurt, sir," gasped Beaulere. "What?" Frank Richards burst into a yell. He understood now that the new master had taken the scene seriously, and that discovery was too much for him. He yelled almost hysterically. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless, as he, too, understood. "Oh, by gum! Ha, ha, ha! This is too rich!" Mr. Shepherd looked up at them in horrified amazement. "Do you dare to laugh in the presence of your victim?" he thundered. "Are you lost to all sense of humanity?" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, sir!" gasped Frank. "You see—ha, ha!—we—we—ha, ha!—oh, dear!" And Frank Richards went off into another yell, quite unable to explain for the moment. To Mr. Shepherd's surprise, the dying youth on the ground joined in the yell of laughter. The new master could scarcely believe his eyes or his ears. "Beaulere!" he gasped. "You—you are hurt—" "Not at all, sir," gurgled Beaulere. "It's only—ha, ha!—it's only—ha, ha, ha!" "Only a—ha, ha, ha!" yelled Dawson. "Only a—ha, ha!—play, sir!" "What?"

NEXT MONDAY. "IN MERCILESS HANDS!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD. DON'T MISS IT!