Starting Shortly! "THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER!

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THE HAUNTED CARAVAN!

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

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. A Very Happy Meeting.

"I say, you fellows!" Jimmy Silver & Co. looked round

The Rookwood caravanners had halted on the long white road that wound over the Downs towards the

Robinson Crusoe, the horse, was cropping contentedly at the grass by the roadside.

Tubby Muffin was seated on a sloping shaft, industriously extracting the last fragment of the contents of a condensed milk-tin with a spoon, and transferring it to his capacious mouth, and the Fistical Four were discussing bread and cheese

The caravanners had been in luck. Lovell had found a farmhouse where cheese had been obtainable, and Raby had brought in a loaf which, although war-bread, was not quite so warlike as most war-bread.

Newcome had succeeded in purchasing a huge bundle of lettuces, and Jimmy Silver had bagged a big jug

So the Fistical Four were enjoying their lunch, with verdant fields stretching before their eyes to the deep blue of the Channel in the dis-

They heard a bicycle on the road, but did not heed it; bikes were many. They heard it stop, but still did not heed, the bread and cheese and lettuces engrossing all their attention.

But they started when a fat voice addressed them, a voice they knew. As the caravanners glanced round in

surprise they saw the cyclist.

He was a fat fellow, with a rotundity of figure that far outclassed that of Tubby Muffin.

A pair of big glasses adorned his fat little nose, and he blinked through them at the Rookwooders with much

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver.
"Fancy meeting you!" said the fat cyclist. "How do you do, old

"I've seen you before somewhere,"

remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. "Oh, really, you know-

"Lemme see," remarked Raby thoughtfully. "You're the butcher's boy, ain't you?"
"Oh, don't be funny, you know!

You remember Bunter of Greyfriars -Billy Bunter, you know, of the Remove?" said the fat junior. "I came to see you at Rookwood in the term. Fancy meeting you here!"

"Fancy!" yawned Lovell. Jimmy Silver & Co. did not look

enthusiastic. They remembered Billy Bunter of Greyfriars quite well.

In fact, they remembered him too well to feel any special satisfaction in meeting him again.

But Billy Bunter did not notice the absence of enthusiasm on the part of the Rookwood juniors. Possibly he

was determined not to notice it. "Caravanning?" he asked affably.

"How did you guess that?" asked

"Well, that thing is a caravan, isn't it?" asked Bunter, with a nod towards the van. "I say, you fellows, it's rather jolly caravanning, isn't

"Topping!" said Jimmy Silver. "We're staying at Beachcliff," said Bunter. "My people, you know. Having a tremendous time." "Glad to hear it!" yawned Jimmy

"I haven't had my lunch," observed

"Join us!" said Jimmy hospitably. Tubby Muffin looked alarmed.

His own performances at lunch were very creditable, but they were not a patch on what William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove could do.

But the Fistical Four, though they did not yearn for Bunter's society, were hospitable, and they made him

"Well, as you're so pressing, I will," said Bunter. "How jolly lucky that I should happen on you fellows here, wasn't it?'
"Awfully."

"I thought I knew you as I came along," said Bunter. "Jolly glad to see you again. I say, this is ripping cheese. I haven't tasted cheese for a week. All right; I'll help myself,

Jimmy, old chap."
"Do!" said Jimmy. Bunter did.

Tubby Muffin's fat face grew longer, though the other caravanners only smiled.

Tubby wasn't inhospitable, but wartime was war-time, and it was only too painfully clear that there wouldn't be any cheese for supper now.

Bunter took a camp-stool, which creaked under his weight.

He - blinked most affably at the Rookwooders as he started. It was a very fortunate meeting,

from Billy's point of view. "Bit rough caravanning in wartime, I should think," he remarked.

"Grub rather short sometimeswhat?"

"Sometimes," agreed Jimmy.

"I suppose you manage to pick up rationed stuff without food-cards at times, though?" said Bunter, with a fat wink.

"Certainly not!"

"Don't get a chance, eh?" "We're not looking for chances of

"Well, you must be a duffer, then!" said Bunter agreeably. "Got any butter?"

"Sorry-no." "All serene; I can rough it," said Bunter. "I'll finish the cheese, if

you don't mind." "Not at all," said Jimmy Silver politely.

There was a faint sound from Tubby Muffin, a peculiar sound between a sigh and a groan. Bunter blinked round at him.

"Got a pain?" he asked sympathetically.

"Nunno!" gasped Tubby. up with condensed milk," said Bun-"You can get me a couple of tins if you like. I like it."

"I'm afraid we've only one tin left," said Lovell, with studied polite-

"My dear chap, don't mention it! I'll manage with one.'

"I dare say one of you chaps will open it for me."

'C-c-certainly !" "There's a lot of sustenance in con-densed milk," Bunter confided to his hosts, as he started with a spoon. "I make it a point to get all I can. I say, you fellows, I'm really glad to see you again. How lucky that you stopped on this road for lunch!"
"Yes, wasn't it."

"Now, that's what I call a decent lunch for war-time, you know," said Bunter, when he had finished the tin. "It will keep me going till I get home to lunch at Beachcliff."

'I-I hope it will." "You should take some things in tins when you go caravanning," said Bunter. "They come in handypineapple and peaches, and things like

"We've got some," said Raby. "Good! I could do with a little

more, I admit." Raby, with a peculiar expression on his face, fetched a tin of pineapple out of the caravan, and placed it before

That cheery youth disposed of it in a very short space of time. "Any more like that?" he asked. "Yes; we've another."

"Trot it out, old nut. Don't mind me. I can put up with almost anything in war-time.'

Tubby Muffin's expression was almost heartrending as Bunter started on the second and only pineapple.

He finished it cheerfully. "Anything else you'd like, Bunter?" asked Lovell.

Tubby Muffin gave Lovell an almost homicidal look. "Oh, any old thing," said Bunter. "Anything in the way of chocolates. caravanners.

You should always take chocolates in ["I say, that's a good idea, finishing a caravan. They come in handy when he remarked.

grub runs short. "Is there any chocolate left, Tubby?" asked Jimmy Silver.

'Nunno!'

"Sorry, Bunter!"
"Oh, don't mench!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if you travel near my home when I'm at home you must camp in the park, and come up to the

mansion for your meals."
"Certainly!" said Lovell. "Where do you live?"

Bunter was afflicted with a sudden

"Which way are you going on from here?" he asked. "Down the road."

"Good! I'll come with you part of the way," said Bunter. "You'll be late for lunch if you

do," said Raby, with deep sarcasm. "Oh, that's all right! I dare say you've got a snack in the caravan if I get peckish. You fellows lift my bike on the van, and I'll take a snooze in-

side for a bit—see?"
"Oh!" Billy Bunter rolled into the cara-

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

But they did not speak.

Bunter's bike was lifted on the van, and the horse was put in, and the Rookwood caravanners resumed their route-Bunter snoozing in the van, and the Rookwooders feeling very pleased-perhaps-with that chance meeting which had bestowed upon them the entertaining company of the Owl of Greyfriars.

The 2nd Chapter. Nice for the Caravanners.

Billy Bunter blinked out of the van about an hour later.

Apparently his nap had done him good, for he looked very cheery and

'I say, you fellows!" he remarked. The Rookwood juniors were walking with the horse, and they did not

seem to hear Bunter. He jumped down, and joined the "You seem to do a lot of walking!"

aravanners generally do. "Well, I suppose so with a little van like that," agreed Bunter. "When I go caravanning I have a whacking big van."

"How nice!" murmured Jimmy

"I suppose that old crock couldn't pull the lot of you?" remarked Bunter, with a disparaging blink at Robinson Crusoe.

"He isn't exactly a crock," said Jimmy mildly.

"Well, perhaps not; but nothing like the caravan horses I'm used to," said Bunter. "We do it rather in style.' "Oh!"

This agreeable and genial conversation did not have the effect of making the Rookwooders chatty. They seemed to dry up somehow. But Billy Bunter did not mind. He

was quite able to keep up enough conversation for five. "I say, you fellows, I've been thinking," he remarked. "I'm a bit

fed up with Beachcliff. I'd like a change." "So would we!" murmured Raby.

"I suppose we shall pass a postoffice sooner or later?" Bunter re-

"Very likely." "Then I could send a telegram."

"The fact is, I'm thinking of joining you fellows for a few days," said Bunter kindly. "It would be a rather agreeable change."

'My hat!" "I'm not a particular chap," continued Bunter. "You'll find me able to rough it. All I really want is plenty to eat and comfortable sleeping-quarters and no work to do." "Really?"

"Yes, really, you know. I think I could give you till the end of the week," said Bunter thoughtfully. "After that I'm afraid I couldn't put off my social engagements any longer. But you can count on me till the end

of the week." (Continued on the next page.) -



"Oh!" gasped Lovell. "Of course, I shall stand my whack in the expenses," added Bunter. "You see that that would be essential. When I leave you I shall send you a postalorder for the full amount. I must insist upon that."

"Oh!" "As you fellows like walking, I should be able to ride all the time; that would suit all parties," remarked Bunter. "I say, wasn't it lucky I met you? You won't be going anywhere near Beachcliff, will you?" will you?"

"That's all right, then. Of course," said Bunter confidentially, "that wouldn't

"Wouldn't it?" "Well, not quite. We're in rather a nobby and exclusive circle there, and I should hardly care to be seen caravanning with a turnout like this. You don't mind my saying so, I'm sure."
"Oh, no," gasped Jimmy Silver, "not

'Not a bit," stuttered Lovell. "Go on, Bunter! You don't know how entertaining you are."

The caravanners walked on feeling quite dazed.

They had had some little experience of William George Bunter on his visits to Rookwood, whither he had come without troubling about the formality of an invitation.

But they had not known quite how colossal his nerve was. Now that they knew they were not

in the least inclined to stand it. The addition of Bunter to the happy party was not at all in their programme.

The caravan rumbled on towards the cross-roads, and as they drew nearer. Arthur Edward Lovell tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"That's your way," he remarked. Bunter blinked at him.

That road leads down to Beacheliff, I think." 'I'll get your bike down, Bunter," said

"Don't trouble, old chap; I'm coming ith you," answered Bunter. "I can

with you," answered Bunter. send my people a wire."

"No need to send your people a wire." said Lovell. "The fact is, Bunter, we teel that you wouldn't be quite comfortable with a tum-out like this."

Don't worry; I can rough it." "We couldn't think of allowing you to rough it, for our sakes," said Lovell, with a shake of the head. "You see, we forget to bring a footman and a butler, and without them you couldn't possibly

"And some of the nobby and exclusive circle at Beachcliff might happen to spot added Raby. "Think how jou would feel then!"

'He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin. Tubby was feeling quite relieved now. He had been terrified at the idea of Bunter as a permanent addition to the party; it would have meant very short commons for Tubby.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Fistical Four through his big spectacles.

They were polite, but they were very

determined.

Even Jimmy Silver, who erred a little on the side of being easy-going, did not feel called upon to endure the infliction of Bunter's society. "I-I say, you fellows, if you're jok-ing-" began Bunter.

Not at all.

"The fact is, I'd like to caravan for a few days.' "Then the best thing you can do is to

"Then the best thing you can do is to get a whacking big caravan, and do it rather in style," said Newcome solemnly.

"Ahem! If you mean that you don't care for my company—" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"I'm afraid we do," said Lovell calmly.

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Good-bye."

"If these are Bookwood manners. I

"If these are Rookwood manners, I can't say I think much of them," said Bunter. "I shall certainly refuse to join a party where I am not welcome."
"All serene, then."
"And I shall not stay with you after

to-day, unless you ask me very civilly, I can assure you," said Bunter. "As I'm out for the day, I'll stick to you till to-night, under the—the circumstances. I think I'll sit down for a bit; I don't care much for walking."

And Billy Bunter clambered into the

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared after him. They had put it to Bunter as politely as they could, but they had put it unmistakably, and they had expected the fat junior of Greyfriars to take his bike and his departure.

Instead of which, he had enseonced himself in the caravan.
"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell at

last. "Of all the cheek-Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Let him stay till to-night," he said. He won't do any harm. Never mind his

silly gas.' "He doesn't mean to go at all!" ex-claimed Lovell wrathfully. "He means to stick to us like glue. You know how he planted himself on us at Rookwood that time.'

THE HAUNTED CARAVAN!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows. As a matter of fact, Lovell's suspicion

was in Jimmy Silver's mind, too. He knew that Billy Bunter was a sticker, and that he was as thick-skinned as a rhinoceros.

"If he doesn't clear this evening, we'll

put it plain," said Jimmy.
"We've put it plain."

"Then we'll put it plainer." Arthur Edward Lovell grunted, but he

acquiesced. He did not feel quite like bundling Bunter neck and crop out of the caravan, and it was manifest that the Owl was not to be got rid of by any gentler method.

The caravan rumbled on through the golden afternoon.

When it stopped Billy Bunter blinked out of the caravan.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had halted in a village street, outside a shop which was a grocer's and a post-office, and several

other things.
"Good!" said Bunter. "This is yery thoughtful of you, Silver. I can telephone from here.'

"Oh, you want to 'phone, do you?" said Lovell.

"Yes. Better than wiring, you know." Lovell gave the fat junior an expressive

There was no need for Bunter to 'phone or wire if he was going back to Beachcliff that day.

Evidently that was not his intention. "Doing some shopping here?" asked Bunter, as he rolled out of the van. Yes; things for supper," said Jimmy

Silver shortly.

"Right-ho! You can do your shopping while I telephone."

Jimmy Silver opened his lips, but closed them again. Bunter rolled into the post-

Lovell caught Jimmy's arm as he was about to enter the shop.

"Hold on!" he said. "Why?"

"We can do our shopping later," mur-mured Lovell. "Let's leave him telephoning!"

Jimmy chuckled. It was too good a chance to get rid of

Bunter to be missed. In a twinkling Bunter's bike was handed down and lodged against a tree

outside the village post-office. Then the caravanners marched on,

going at a good rate, and the village was left behind, with Billy Bunter in the telephone-box explaining to his pater at Beachcliff that he had fallen in with some Rookwood friends and was booked for a few days.

The 3rd Chapter. Bunter Sticks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Fistical Four laughed loud and long as they swung merrily along the Tubby Muffin chortled gleefully.

The village had been left behind.

How long Bunter would be occupied in the telephone-box they did not know, but when he came out they hoped to be far

An hour had passed, and they were quite comfortable in their minds, when there was the jingle of a bicycle on the toad behind them, and Lovell glanced back apprehensively.

"Bunter!" he ejaculated.

There he was!

He came up with a rush, in a cloud of dust, and jumped off his machine.

"Here we are again!" he said cheerily.

"You didn't tell me you were starting

so soon, Jimmy, old chap.' Jimmy Silver did not speak; he couldn't.

Lovell murmured something. "Did you do your shopping?" asked

Bunter. "Nunne."

"I say, you fellows, you oughtn't to take risks of being left without grub for supper," said Bunter anxiously. "I hope you haven't forgotten that you've got a "Oh, my hat!"

"I had quite a rush getting up with ou," said Bunter confidentially. "Lucky you," said Bunter confidentially. "Lucky I took the right road, wasn't it? I might have missed you.'

THE MOST AMAZING

"I had to inquire twice of people after

your caravan; no missing that," re-marked Bunter. "I say, you fellows, when are you going to have tea?"

"Nothing till supper." "And when's that?"

"At dark." "I say, I don't see how I can hold out till then!" exclaimed Bunter in dismay. I don't want to be exacting, of course, but I think I may as well say, out plain,

that I don't like missing meals.' Grunt! Bunter wheeled his bike on, with a grim expression on his fat face, but did not

make any further observations just then. Perhaps he read the danger-signals in the expressive face of Arthur Edward Lovell.

At the next village the caravanners stopped for such supplies as were to be had, and Bunter climbed into the van. He had had enough of walking.

The purchases were put in the van, and Lovell pulled away Bunter's bike, which was leaning against a wheel. "Here's your bike, Bunter!" he called

"Oh, shove it on the van somewhere!" answered Bunter.

"Rats! Bunter coughed. You can come and take it, or I'll leave it here!" said Lovell, who had apparently got to the end of his politeness.

All serene. Leave it there.' "Eh? Do you want to lose it?"
"Tain't mine!"

"What?" "I borrowed it of a chap in Beach-cliff," explained Bunter. "It's really his business, not mine. Do as you like with it, old chap." Lovell gasped.

He lifted the bike on the van, however, and the caravanners went on, Bunter keeping on the van.

He did not mean to risk being left behind again.

Under the westering sun the caravan-ners pursued their way, chatting cheerily as they went, and forgetting the presence of Bunter, who was taking another snooze in the van.

But they were reminded of his presence a little later.

"I say, you fellows-"
"Hallo!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "Are you going to stop for the Norman castle ruins?

"I didn't know there was a ruined Norman eastle in this quarter," said Jimmy Silver, with interest. "We'd like to see Where is it?"

Billy Bunter pointed to a footpath that opened in a wood beside the road.

"That's the way," he answered. "About a quarter of a mile. I'll tell you what, you fellows; if you like to see the place 'Il mind the van while you're gone. It's

an awfully interesting place."
"Not a bad idea," said Jimmy, looking at his chuns. "I'd like to see it, you chaps.

Lovell nodded.

His grim mood toward Billy Bunler His grim mood towards Billy Bunter relaxed a little. It really did seem a thoughtful suggestion on the part of the

"Wouldn't you like to come, too, Bunter?" asked Raby considerately.

"Oh, I've seen the place!" said Bunter carelessly. "Avfully interesting. It's the very spot where William the Con-

queror landed, you know."
"What!" yelled Newcome.
land about ten miles inland?"

"I—I mean, it's where he passed the night before the Battle of Waterloo!"

"The battle of what?"

"Of—of Majuba!" stuttered Bunter.

"The—the Battle of Majuba Hill, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The idea of William the Conqueror at the Battle of Majuba Hill tickled the Fistical Four.

"Sure you don't mean the Battle of the Somme?" inquired Lovell.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"
"Well, we'll see the place, anyway!"
said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Sure you
don't mind being left alone here, "Not at all, old chap! I'll look after

the van!" 'Right you are! Come on, Tubby!" Tubby Musin was not very enthusiastic.

He was not much fonder of walking than Billy Bunter was. But he rolled off the van and walked

away with the Fistical Four, by the foot-path through the woods, to visit the ruined Norman eastle.
Billy Bunter blinked after them, with

a sly, fat grin on his face. As soon as they were out of sight "Hal Bunter disappeared into the caravan, and mured.

from the van there proceeded a steady, incessant sound, which could only have been that of active jaws tirelessly champ-

Price

ing. Quite oblivious of Billy Bunter's occupation, Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled on cheerily through the pleasant-scented wood.

They had covered a good deal more than a quarter of a mile, and were still looking in vain for the ruined castle.

The footpath led them into another and another, deeper and deeper into the woods, but there was no sign of a Norman castle to be seen.

Arthur Edward Lovell halted at last. "Look here, that fat bounder said a quarter of a mile!" he exclaimed. "We've come jolly near a mile now! "We can't have missed it!" said Jimmy

Silver, perplexed. "I suppose the fathead was making a mistake. Hallo, here's a man! Let's ask

him, anyhow. A tired-looking labourer was tramping his homeward way by the footpath, and the juniors stopped him, and inquired for the ruined castle.

The countryman scratched his nose, and seemed puzzled. Never heerd of un!" was his answer.

"'Tain't in this part." "Is there a ruined castle at all, or any sort of ruins?" asked Jimmy Silver. Never heerd of un, heaster."

"You know this part?" "I've lived 'ere, man and boy, for seventy year," answered the old gentle-man. "If there was a ruin about 'ere, I'd man. "If there was a ruin about have heerd of un. But I ain't."

And he plodded on. The Rookwood juniors looked at one another.

Lovell breathed hard. "That unutterable fat idiot was pulling our leg!" he exclaimed. "He's sent us on a wild-goose chase."

'He couldn't be such an idiot!" said Jimmy aghast. "It may be the Greyfriars brand of humour. I'll squash him!"

"I suppose he's made a mistake. He's idiot enough," said Jimmy. "Let's get back, anyway. After all, it was a nice

"Oh, blow the walk!" "I'm tired!" said Tubby Muffin plaintively. "Oh, dear, bother the old castle, and there isn't a castle at all, either!

"Br-r-r-r!" said Lovell. The juniors walked back along the footpaths, and reached the road at last. The carayan stood where they had left

It, and as Bunter was not to be seen, he was apparently inside.

From the van, as they approached it, came a deep, resonant sound—the sound of a powerful snore.

Billy Bunter was apparently asleep. Lovell looked into the van.

Bunter lay fast asleep, snoring as if for a wager. There was a smear of jam on his fat face, which was very shiny. And there were the remnants of a feast to be seen-only the remnants.

The parcels of the late purchases made by the caravanners had been opened, and their contents were now the contents of their contents were now the contents of Billy Bunter's capacious inside.

And that was not all. The caravan larder had been cleared, and several empty tins showed that Bunter had "done himself" not wisely

but too well. Lovell's face become fixed, and simply terrific in expression, as he looked. He could scarcely believe his eyes. "What on earth's the matter, Lovell?"

called out Jimmy Silver, quite alarmed by the expression on Arthur Edward's Lovell could not speak; he pointed. The caravanners peered into the van.

There was a wail of anguish from Tubby "Yow-ow ow! The awful beast! He's scoffed the grub!"

That dismal howl awakened the Owl of Greyfriars. He sat up, set his spectacles straight on his fat, little nose, and blinked at the

caravanners genially.

The 4th Chapter. Bunter is Indignant.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at Bunter

speechlessly. They understood now why the Owl of the Remove had sent them on a wildgoose chase in search of a non-existent

Norman castle. While they were gone he had "scoffed

the total provision supply.

The larder was in the same state as Mrs. Hubbard's celebrated cupboard.

Bunter blinked at them, grinning, but with a lurking uneasiness in his fat face. 'Hallo, you fellows, got back?" he mur-

STORY FOR BOYS EVER WRITTEN! STARTS IN THE "BOYS' FRIEND" TWO WEEKS' TIME!

"You fat villain!" gasped Lovell, finding his voice.
"You Hun!" wailed Tubby Muffin.

You horrid Prussian! "I say, you fellows, you don't mind my

having a snack while you were gone, did you?" murmured Bunter. "I generally have tea about this time." You-you've had tea?"

"Yes. There wasn't quite enough for me, but I don't mind. I can rough it with anybody! 'Oh, crumbs!"

There had been supper for six, break-fast for six, and other supplies, and the whole amount had been not quite enough for Billy Bunter's tea! The marvel was where he had put it.

Evidently he had put it somewhere, and it was not surprising that he looked shiny and apoplectic, and breathed with some difficulty.

"After all, he's a guest, in a way," murmured Jimmy Silver. "Don't kill him. Get his bike down, and let him

"I say, you fellows, we may as well get on a bit farther before supper," said Bunter. "I sha'n't be hungry for an hour

"I shouldn't think you'd ever be hungry again!" gasped Raby. "I suppose you've got something for supper?" added Bunter anxiously.

.We had," said Jimmy. "We haven't

now! "Oh, my hat!" said Bunter, in dismay. "Something will have to be done, then." "Look here, I'm not going to stand this, Jimmy Silver!" roared Lovell. "The fat beast spoofed us into going away while he raided the grub. I'm going to slaughter him!'

"Oh, really, Lovell--" "There wasn't a Norman castle, and you know there wasn't!" shouted Lovell.

Bunter grinned feebly.
"D-d-didn't you find it?" he muttered. "You know we didn't, as it wasn't

"I-I think I-I made a mistake," murmured Bunter. "Now I come to think of it, it-it's in a different part of the country.' "You were pulling our leg, you fat

Now you're going to be scalped!" Lovell collared the Owl of Greyfriars, and bumped him out into the road. Billy Bunter gave a yell of wrath and

indignation. 'Yarooh! Leggo! Help! Murder! Fire! "Get on your bike, and buzz!" roared "I'm going to kick you till you Lovell.

do! Like that!" "Yaroooh!" "And like that!"

"Yooop! Help!" Jimmy Silver rushed at his excited chum, and dragged him back. "Hold on, Lovell!"

"I'm going to slaughter him!" raved Lovell. "Yarooh! Keep him off!" roared Bunter. "Look here if this is what you

call-yow-ow !-hospitality-Bunter staggered to his feet, keeping a wary eye on Arthur Edward Lovell, who was being restrained with difficulty.

wild way you fellows with difficulty. "I say, you fellows—"
"Get off!" snapped Raby.
"I'm going!" said Bunter, with dignity.

I decline to remain in your company any longer than is absolutely unavoidable! I may say that I despise you! After pressing me to join youwhat? "I told you plainly that I wasn't accustomed to travelling with a turnout of this sort!" said Bunter. "I mentioned that it would be awkward for me, if any of my nobby friends saw me with such a

show. I may as well say plainly, too, that I don't think much of Rookwood manners! Not quite up to the Greyfriars' standard, I can assure you!" "Oh, my hat!"

"Lemme get at him, Jimmy, you idiot!" roared Lovell.
"I've been treated with discourtesy!" said Bunter warmly. "I'm sorry now I let you over-persuade me into coming with you. Unluckily, it's too late for me to leave you, you know; I can't get home in the dark. I shall leave you after breakfast to-morrow morning."

"Look here—" gasped Newcome.

Bunter waved a fat band

Bunter waved a fat hand.
"It's no good, Newcome; it's too late now! I'm going!" I tell you-"Too late! I refuse to remain after

breakfast to-morrow morning!" said Bunter firmly "You fat owl!" yelled Newcome. "I was going to say-"You needn't say anything. I decline to

have anything more to do with you! If it wasn't so late, I'd go at once!" said "You'll go now, late or not, or I'll squash you!" shouted Lovell.
"Easy does it!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "I dare say the blind owl can't

get home in the dark, Lovell. "Let him go to Jericho, then." "There's no lamps on my bike," said Bunter. "It's against the law to ride without lights. Some fellows are not particular about breaking the law in wartime. I happen to have some seruples!"

Lovell almost choked. Jimmy Silver burst into a laugh. "Keep smiling!" he said. "After all, we knew Bunter, and we ought to have kicked him out when he joined us. He's got to stay with us till morning.'

time. I happen to have some scruples!"

"Quite against my will, I assure you!" snorted Bunter. "I'm not accustomed to such company!" "Let him stay, and be blowed!" growled Lovell. "But bear this in mind,

Bunter. You're starting in the morning as soon as the sun's up. and I'm going to start kicking you as soon as it's time for you to start!" Bunter sniffed.

But there was no mistaking the deadly earnestness of Arthur Edward Lovell. He meant every word he said.

"I decline to keep up this conversa-tion," said Bunter, with dignity. "These are not the manners I'm used to."

And with that he climbed back into

The caravanners moved on. The sun was setting, and twilight reigned, and it was necessary to look for a camping-place.

There was little hope of getting fresh

supplies for supper. They had the happy prospect of going

supperless to bed, and starting in the morning minus breakfast.

Their feelings towards William George Bunter of Greyfriars were positively Hunnish. But they were not more Hunnish than Bunter's feelings towards them.

The 5th Chapter. Mysterious!

"This will do," said Jimmy Silver at

It was dark now, and stars were twinkling in the sky.

A stretch of open grass by the roadside offered a camping-place, and the caravanners were tired, and ready to

They were hungry, too, but for that there was no remedy.

Bunter had cleared out the caravan larder almost to the last crumb. Jimmy Silver led Robinson Crusoe from the road, and the caravan bumped on

the grass. Billy Bunter blinked out of the van, his eyes gleaming behind his big spec-

The ventriloquist of Greyfriars had a little scheme all ready for discomfiting

the Rookwood caravanners. "Going to stop here, Silver?" he called

"Yes," snapped Jimmy.

"Got anything for supper?"

"Hadn't you better keep on, then?"
"Rats!"

"May come to a village, you know, or a farmhouse, and get something for supper," urged Bunter anxiously.

"Oh, dry up!"

"If you call that civil, Silver-" "Rats!

Even Jimmy Silver's patience was worn out, the fact that he was very hungry probably having something to do with

The van bumped on over the grass, and stopped not far from the road. Round the grass patch nothing was to be seen but trees and bushes.

From the shadows a deep, gruff voice suddenly proceeded.

"Now, then, you gipsy vagabonds, get out of this!"

Jimmy Silver started, and looked round. 'Hallo, who's that?"

"I'll show you who I am if I have to come to you!' came the gruff reply. "You're on private land. Get off, or I'll fetch the police!"

'Oh, what rotten luck!" groaned Lovell. "Look here, why can't we camp here?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver warmly. "Come "Come

out and show yourself, anyway."
"I've warned you!" was the gruff "Who are you?" demanded Lovell.

There was no answer; the man apparently was gone. Billy Bunter drew his head back into the van, grinning. The caravanners looked at one another.
"Let's stop here," said Lovell indigantly. "We're doing no harm. Why

nantly. "We're doing no harm. Why can't the man show himself if the place belongs to him?" Better get off," said Raby uneasily.

"He may be gone for the police. I sup-pose this is private land, as he says." Some rotten land-hog!" grunted Lovell.

"Well, we're not out to solve the land question," grinned Raby. "Let's get off before there's a row. Can't argue with bobbies.'

Jimmy Silver nodded. "Better!" he agreed.

Lovell grunted, but he assented. The horse was led into the road again, and the caravan rumbled on. A fat chuckle was heard from within the vehicle. "That fat Greyfriars beast thinks it's

funny!" muttered Lovell, breathing hard through his nose. "Oh, never mind him!"

The tired caravanners marched on. Tubby Muffin was in the van with Bunter now, but the Fistical Four were

The road ran on between dark woods, and there was no camping-place to be

found for several weary miles.
"I think this will do," Jimmy Silver said at last. It was a cross-roads, with a signpost

standing in the centre, surrounded by a wide patch of grass. The caravan was turned from the road

upon the grass-patch. There was plenty of room for it, and it was out of the way of traffic.

It was not an ideal camping-place, by

any means, but the caravanners were too tired to care much about that. Moreover, there was no need to light

a fire, as there was no supper. They had nothing to do but to turn in. Bunter's big spectacles glimmered from

"I say, you fellows, ain't you going

on?" he asked.
"No!"

"Suppose that bobby comes along?" "It wasn't a bobby; and I don't care a rap whether he comes back or not!" hooted Lovell. "I don't think you'd better stop here,

Lovell. You see 'You can think what you like, you fat toad! We're stopping!"

"Oh, really, Lovell-"

Lovell dragged out the tent, and the juniors began to set it up beside the

Billy Bunter watched them morosely. He would gladly have kept the caravan going all night in the faint hope of getting fresh supplies for supper.

Marvellous to relate, Bunter was get-ting hungry again. But the caravanners were evidently resolved to halt there for "I say, you fellows, I suppose you don't want me to sleep in the tent?" said Bunter, as he watched the juniors at work. "This van isn't up to much, but I can manage with it."

"You needn't sleep at all, for all I care!" snapped Lovell. "Well, I'm staying in the van."

"Stay, and be blowed!" "Move on, there, you vagabonds!" came a gruff voice from the shadows.

Lovell glared round in great exaspera-

"There's that chap again!" he exclaimed. "By gad, if I could get near enough to hit him—"

"It must be some blessed tramp having a lark with us," said Jimmy Silver, in perplexity. "If it was a bobby he'd show himself."

"Bobby or not, I'll give him a prize nose if he comes near enough!" said

Lovell, between his teeth. "Are you going to move on?" de-manded the gruff voice.

"No!" yelled Lovell.
"Then I'll run you in!"

"Come and do it!" The owner of the gruff voice did not accept that invitation. He was heard no more, and the tent was erected.

Tubby Muffin had already turned in, in one of the two bunks in the caravan, the other being left for Billy Bunter. But the Owl of Greyfriars seemed in

no hurry to retire. He watched the Fistical Four through his big spectacles till the tent was finished, and they were ready to go to bed.

"By Jove, I shall sleep like a top tonight, supper or no supper," yawned Jimmy Silver. "We'd better be up early, before folks begin to pass by. You can go to bed in the van, Bunter."

'What about supper?" "There isn't any supper, you owl! You've scoffed all the grub, haven't you?" "If you call this hospitality, Jimmy SilverLovell sat up suddenly in his blankets.

'What's that?" he exclaimed. "A blessed dog nosing about outside," yawned Jimmy Silver. "Let him nose! He can't get in here."

"Shoo!" shouted Lovell. "Get away, you beast! Shoooooo!"

A deep growl outside answered him. It was followed by a bark, and then another bark and a growl, and then growling went on incessantly.

Lovell jumped up.

"I can't sleep with that thumping row going on!" he exclaimed.

"Drive him off!" murmured Raby

sleepily. Lovell grasped his pillow, cautiously peered out of the tent. Arthur Edward was always kind to animals, but just then he wanted to give that dog a terrific "cosh" with the

But there was no dog to be seen. The brute's gone!" growled Lovell.

"Oh, my hat! There he is again!"

Lovell dashed out of the tent. The growling was going on in the deep gloom, and it seemed to recede towards the caravan, and Lovell followed it up, with the pillow ready.

Grurrgh!

"He's under the van!" called out Bunter's voice. "I say, you fellows, you might drive that dog off. How's a fellow to sleep?

"I'm driving him off, you fat fool!" snorted Lovell.

Greenere! Lovell peered under the van, where the dog had apparently taken refuge. It was dark there, too dark to see anything but the faint outline of the wheels.

"Shoo! Gerraway! Shoo!" Gurrirrghr!

"My hat! I'll simply smash the east!" gasped Lovell. "Where's some-

"Jimmy Silver!" shouted Lovell. "Hallo!"

"Bring your flash-lamp here. I-I'm afraid I've hurt the poor beast!" stammered Lovell. 'Oh, dear!"

Jimmy Silver emerged from the tent, with his electric lamp in his hand, followed by Raby and Newcome.

Lovell's face was troubled. "I-I didn't really mean to hurt him," he faltered. "I just shoved under the van with the stick to clear him off. I—I must have hit him somewhere. Listen to him!"

Jimmy Silver's face was very grave as he heard that low, miserable whine under

Bunter's glasses glimmered down accusingly.

"You've knocked his eye out, Lovel!!" he said. "You've hurt him badly! It's too bad! This will have to be reported to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I'm sorry, but it's

Lovell hurled his pillow, and Bunter broke off with a yell.

"I can't hear him now," said Jimmy Silver, flashing his light under the van. Blest if I can see him, either! Where is he, Lovell?"

"Blest if I know! He's there somewhere."

"Well, where?"

The juniors stared under the van as the electric light showed up every dark recess, and showed it to be vacant.

There was no dog to be seen. Lovell rubbed his eyes.

"Is the blessed place haunted?" he mut-

A gruff voice came from the darkness. "Shut off that light, you young rascal! Are you trying to signal to Zeppelins?"

Jimmy Silver spun round. There was no one to be seen. Jimmy shut off the light.

"Who is it-where is he what the thump does it mean?" exclaimed Raby.



Lovell's face became fixed, and simply terrific in expression, as he caught sight of Billy Bunter. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Oh, dry up!" Jimmy Silver & Co. went into the tent. As the tent-flap fell into place the gruff voice was heard just outside.

'Here they are, officer! Pull the tent down, and take the whole gang into custody!

The 6th Chapter. Haunted!

"My hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. He tore open the tent-flap again. Lovell grasped a pillow and rushed out, breathing wrath.

"Where are you, you rotter?" roared Lovell, staring about him.
"Show yourself, you beast!" hooted Newcome.

But there was nobody to be seen. Billy Bunter blinked out of the caravan. "I say, you fellows, what's the row?"

he asked. "Did you see anybody here?" asked

Raby. "Eh? No."

"There's somebody hanging about." "Hadn't you better move on?" suggested Bunter. "We may come to a place where we can get some grub—"
"Shut up!" shrieked Lovell. "If you

say another word about grub, I'll come and pillow you!"

Jimmy Silver blinked round him into

the darkness in utter perplexity. Unless the caravanners were being worried by some tramp with a misplaced sense of humour, Jimmy could not understand it at all. Well, the fellow's gone," he said at

last. "Let's get to bed." "Don't I wish I could catch him!" murmured Lovell. "I'd give a term's pocket-money to give him one good cosh!"

But the desired "cosh" could not be given, and the caravanners went into the tent again. They turned in, and Jimmy Silver blew

out the candle.

thing I can poke him with? Oh, thunder! I'll smash him! Lovell snorted and threw down his

"There's a stick in the van, Bunter; chuck it out!" he called out.
"Certainly!" purred Bunter.

"Buck up, lazybones!" "Here you are!" Whiz!

Yaroooh!" roared Lovell, as he caught the stick-with his head. "You clumsy idiot! What are you bunging it at me

"You told me to chuck it out." Lovell grasped the stick and rushed towards the van. Bunter promptly

backed out of sight. The growling under the caravan had ceased for some moments, but it recommenced now, and Lovell turned his attention to the unseen dog again.

He leaned down by the wheels and thrust the stick savagely under the van. "There, you beast! There, you brute!" he gasped, as he prodded away fiercely into the darkness.

The growling ceased, and there was a low whine, as of deep anguish. Lovell suddenly ceased to prod.

Whine! That sound of pain smote Lovell's conscience, and his wrath evaporated at

He had not really meant to hurt the dog, but the agonised whine seemed to show that he had hurt it very much indeed.

"Oh, I say, you brute!" exclaimed Bunter from above. "You've knocked his eye out, very likely."

"Shut up!" panted Lovell.

"Listen to the poor animal!" said

Bunter, with virtuous indignation. "Oh, dear!" Lovell dropped the stick and peered under the van. "Good doggie! Good old doggie! Poor old doggie!"

The whine, faint and agonised, an-

"Blest if I don't think we're haunted!" Jimmy Silver shook his head.

The whole affair puzzled him utterly. "I can't make it out," he said. must be somebody having a lark with us,

somehow. I'm going to bed. The Fistical Four, with a curiously uncanny feeling, returned to the tent. Barely had they turned in when a deep growl was heard outside.

Gurrrrh! "That dog again!" shrieked Lovell.

"Oh, let him rip!" growled Jimmy
Silver. "I'm going to sleep."

"He doesn't seem to be hurt now."
"Oh, bother him!" The growling continued, but the Fistical

Four did not heed it, and it ceased at But it was close on midnight when the Rookwood caravanners were safe at last in the arms of Morpheus.

The 7th Chapter. Light at Last!

"Wake up!" Bright and early in the morning, Jimmy Silver shouted into the caravan. Tubby Muffin yawned, and Billy Bunter snored on.

It had been late before Jimmy Silver & Co. slept the previous night, but they were up early enough in the sunny summer morning.

They were conscious of an aching void within, and they wanted to get on the road and scout for breakfast. Tubby Muffin woke up hungry, too, and

he turned out of the van. But Bunter was still sleeping when the tent was struck and Robinson Crusoe harnessed.

Lovell yanked Bunter's bike down, and stuck it against the sign-post. "Now that fat bounder's coming out!" he said. "Bunter! Bunter!" "I say, you fellows, you can start!" came a sleepy voice from within the van.

I'm not accustomed to getting up as

early as this. Don't mind me! I can

sleep while the van's moving!"
"You may be able to, but you're jolly well not going to!" answered Lovell. give you two minutes to get out. Then I'm coming in for you!'

Oh, really, Lovell-"Time's going!" said Lovell grimly. Lovell's voice showed that he meant business, and Billy Bunter turned out. He looked very discontented.

"I say, you fellows, what about break-fast?" he asked. "You've got our breakfast under your waistcoat!" growled Lovell. "There's your bike."

"I can't start without breakfast!" hooted Bunter. Lovell shrugged his shoulders.
"Suit yourself!" he answered. "You

can take root here if you like. We're going, anyhow!" "I say, you fellows, I'd better come on with you, till you get some grub," said Bunter. "I know you ain't hospitable—I don't expect common decency

from fellows like you, but—"
"Come up!" said Lovell, addressing the horse.

"Am I coming with you for brekker?" hooted Bunter.

"No!"

"Well, of all the rotters-" "Good-bye!"

"Look here, Silver, let Bunter come with us, and don't be a pig!"

Jimmy Silver spun round towards Raby. What's that, Raby?" he exclaimed. "What's what?" asked Raby. "If you want Bunter-

'I don't want Bunter!"

"Then what do you mean by calling me a pig?" demanded Jimmy Silver wrathfully. Who called you a pig?" "You did."

"I suppose I know your voice!" snorted Jimmy Silver. "And I jolly well think "I tell you I didn't speak!" shouted

"I didn't! I heard somebody-"

"And I tell you you did!" "You howling ass, I didn't!" exclaimed

"Oh, don't be an ass, I heard you!" said Newcome warmly.

"So did I," said Tubby Muffin.

"You didn't!" yelled Raby. "I didn't!

You silly asses, are you all potty? I never said a word!" Raby turned away to the horse, and as he did so his voice went on: "You're a set of liars!" Jimmy Silver jumped after him, and caught him by the collar.
"Hallo! Leggo"

"Are you out of your senses?" shouted Jimmy angrily. "Liars, by Jove!"

"Do you mean to say I said that?" hooted Raby. "It was somebody else. I heard it, but I didn't speak." "I didn't! Lovell, perhaps—"
Arthur Edward Lovell uttered a sudden

"Eh! What have you got?" demanded Jimmy Silver gruffly.

Lovell rushed at Bunter. He grasped

the fat junior of Greyfriars by the collar and shook him forcibly.

"Bunter!" he roared.
"Yarooh! Leggo! It wasn't— I
didn't— Yarooh—" "I've got it now!" raved Lovell. "That chap speaking last night, and never show ing himself, and the dog, and the rest of It's Bunter!"

"Bunter Yaroooh!" "Don't you remember?" howled Lovell. "He played tricks at Rookwood once.

The beast is a ventriloquist!' 'Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, a light breaking upon his mind.
"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Bunter, as Lovell shook him like a fat jelly. "Leggo! Don't you shake me, you b-b-beast—Yow! If you make my glasses fall off—yoop—and they get bib—bib—broken—

yaroop!-you'll have to pay for them! Yow-ow-woop!" Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Bunter all the time!" exclaimed Raby.

"Of course! I'd forgotten—"

"So had I!" said Jimmy Silver. "I remember now! The fat beast was going to make us quarrel before he left us, if he could!'

Squash him!"

"Bump him!" "Slaughter him!" "Yarooh! I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter. "Can't you take a j-j-joke? I-I was only doing it to—to amuse you, you know! Yarooh! Leggo! Look here-

Oh, my hat! Yooop! Bump! Billy Bunter descended upon the earth with a heavy concussior.

Then he was rolled over in the grass, till there was no breath left in his fat carcase, and he was left sprawling and spluttering. The caravan swung out into the road, and Billy Bunter sat up in the grass.

groped for his glasses, and jammed them on his nose, and blinked after the caravan in speechless wrath. By the time he had recovered breath sufficiently to limp to his bike the Rook-

wood caravan was out of sight.
"I don't think we shall see Bunter again!" smiled Jimmy Silver, as the caravanners sat down to breakfast at a wayside inn. And Jimmy was right! Even Billy Bunter did not feel inclined

to join the Rookwood party again, and

Jimmy Silver & Co. cheerfully reconciled

themselves to the loss of his fascinating THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

THE CARAVANNERS' GUEST!

By OWEN CONQUEST DON'T MISS IT!



THE CLAIM ROBBER!

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. Under Suspicion.

"What's on?"

Bob Lawless asked that question. Frank Richards & Co. had just arrived at school, and as they joined the group of Cedar Creek fellows in the playground there was a sudden silence.

Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy, had been speaking, and several other fellows, too. A discussion was going on, when the

three chums came up.

But the arrival of Frank and Bob and Vere Beauclerc had the effect of a cold

"What's on?" repeated Bob, looking at the group in surprised inquiry. "You were chewing the rag pretty lively a minute ago."
"Ahem!" grunted Chunky Todgers.

Gunten grinned sarcastically. I guess I'll tell you, if you like," he

"It's all rot!" said Tom Lawrence. "I don't believe a word of it! Richards ought to be told, though."

"Little me?" said Frank Richards, with a smile. "Well, go ahead!"
"Cut in, Gunten!" said Eben Hacke.
"I don't say I believe it myself, exactly," said Gunten cautiously. "But the galoot is coming here, that's a cert!"
"What galoot?" asked Bob.

"Four Kings, of Thompson." Frank Richards started. He had reason to remember that peculiar name.

"Four Kings!" he exclaimed. "Oh, you know the man?" grinned

"I've met him once," answered Frank Richards. "He's a thorough rascal!" "That's a cinch," remarked Chunky Todgers. "He's a bad man, and the

sheriff has had an eye on him for a long time. He'll be ridden on a rail out of town one of these days."

"The sooner the better!" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc. "You say that he is coming here, Gunten?"

"Correct!" "To see Frank?"

"That's it."

"Well, let him come," said Frank Richards quietly. "But I don't see how you know anything about it, Gunten unless that rufflan is an acquaintance of

"Oh, I see the fellow about Thompson, of course!" said Gunten carelessly. "He was starting on the trail when I came to school this morning. I passed him, as he was on foot. He spoke to me, that's all. He told me he was coming here to show

"The rotten mugwump!" growled Bob Lawless.

"He says you're the chap who's been lifting gold from the claims at night, and he knows it," continued Gunten. "He says he caught you at it. He's going to give you away all round."

Frank Richards' cheeks reddened. Very curious glances were thrown at him by the Cedar Creek fellows.

It was easy to see that few, if any, believed the allegation; but it was odd, to say the least, that Four Kings should come to the school with such a story if there was no foundation at all for it.

The unknown claim-robber was a subject of much discussion in the section, but no one had thought of suspecting that a schoolboy of Cedar Creek was the guilty

"He says that you called on him at the Red Dog, in Thompson, to buy him off," went on Gunten. "He wouldn't touch your money."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" ejaculated Bob Law-less. "He says that, does he?" "You went to the Red Dog yesterday,

Richards," remarked Chunky Todgers. "That's so," assented Frank. He looked round at the curious schoolhoy, his colour deepening. "I'll tell you fellows how the matter stands. This man Four Kings, as he calls himself, wrote to me here. You saw Injun Dick bring me his letters. I showed you one of them, Lawrence. I went to the Red Dog to see what his game was. He wanted to get money out of

"What for?" grinned Gunten. "He's

got no claim on you, unless-"He thought I was the claim-robber," said Frank quietly. "He was prowling round the creek one night, he explained to me, and he caught a boy there who was robbing the claims. He couldn't see him clearly in the dark, but the fellow told him that he belonged to this school, and gave him my name. Of course, he gave a false name."

"Isn't that rather a steep yarn?" said (Gunten.

"I don't think so. If Four Kings hadn't been a fool, he wouldn't have supposed that the thief would give him his own

"Why should he pick on your name especially?" sneered Gunten. Frank Richards looked steadily at the

"I think he picked on my name because) he's an enemy of mine," he answered

quietly. "I can't think of any other reason. The thief must have been a fellow who knew me and my name, and had a grudge against me. You are the only fellow here who answers to that description, Gunten."

Published

Every Monday

"What?" "Don't I speak plainly?" said Frank coolly. "That's what I suspect. I suspect that you are the claim-robber, Gunten, and that you gave my name when you were cought." you were caught."

Gunten's face was almost livid. There was no mistaking Frank Richards'

There was a buzz among the Cedar

Creek fellows. Bob Lawless grinned. He rather liked

plain speaking himself. "You-you dare to accuse me?" panted

Gunten at last.

"I'm not accusing you," said Frank. "I think it's very probable. I shouldn't have spoken my suspicions if you hadn't taken this line, Gunten. But you're trying to throw suspicion on me, and so I feel entitled to speak out, though, of course, I haven't any proof. But one thing's certain—if the claim-robber was a Cedar Creek fellow at all, it was you!"

"Straight from the shoulder, by gum!" chuckled Bob.

chuckled Bob.

Kern Gunten elenched his hands hard.
He had been "out" to make as much capital as he could out of this story against the English schoolboy, but he certainly had not expected the tables to be turned in this way.

"It's a lie!" said the Swiss thickly.
"You know it's a lie, Richards!"

"Nothing of the sort! Someone gave my name instead of his own, and you're the fellow likeliest to do it," said Frank. "It's just one of your rotten tricks, in

Some of the Cedar Creek fellows

Kern Gunten's face was quite entertaining at that moment.

"As for this fellow Four Kings," went on Frank. "He is a scoundrel! He wanted to get money out of me to keep wanted to get money out of me to keep it dark, believing that I was the chap he had caught lifting dust from the claims. When I found out what he wanted I answered him plain enough. And then he tried to rob us in the Red Dog, and there would have been bad trouble if Injun Dick hadn't chipped in and taken his revolver away. He's no business to come here. If he thinks I am the claim-robber,

he should go to the sheriff about it."
"I guess so," agreed Lawrence.

"If he comes here, it will be to stick me for money, if he can," said Frank. "He will get a plain answer, too. Let him come if he likes."

"Talk of angels!" grinned Hopkins. " 'Ere he comes!"

A burly man had appeared in the gate-way, and the schoolboys recognised at once Four Kings, the loafer of Thompson. He strode straight towards the group. Frank Richards and his chums eyed him

The ruffian fixed his eyes on Frank with a threatening stare.

calmly as he came up.

"I guess you're my mutton!" he announced. "I guess I've moseyed along to see you, Mister Frank Richards. This hyer is your last chance to pony up the fifty dollars you owe me!"



GET ONE OF THESE CARDS. If you haven't one of these War Savings Cards, get one to-day from any

post-office. Each card is divided up into thirty-one spaces. Whenever you have 6d. to spare, you just buy a stamp at the post-office and fix it on one of the spaces. As soon as all the spaces are filled up you can take the card to a post-office and exchange it for a 15s. 6d. War Savings Certificate.

In five years' time that certificate will ' be worth £1.

This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

The 2nd Chapter. Frank Richards' Answer.

There was a dead silence when Four

Kings had spoken.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclere drew nearer to their chum, in anticipation of trouble.

The other fellows looked on, wondering what was going to happen.

Frank Richards set his lips hard.

The ruffian did with the fellow he had

story, that Frank was the fellow he had caught on the claims at night.

But that was no justification for his attempt to obtain money from the schoolboy. His duty was to make his statement to the sheriff of Thompson.

"I guess you'd better pay up," continued Four Kings. "Mind, I'm hyer on cold business. I'm going to the school-marm. Arter that, I guess I'm going to mosey round to Sheriff Henderson. Now, what's the verdict, hay?

"You want an answer to that?" asked

"Co-rect."

"Here it is, then!" Frank rushed forward as he spoke, and

struck out. The blow caught Four Kings on the point of his bristly chin, and he went backwards like a sack of coal. Crash!

There was a roar of rage from the ruffian as he went down on his back.

His hand flew to his belt, evidently for a weapon, but he had no chance of deaving it.

drawing it. Bob Lawless was too quick for him, and his heavy boot clumped on the rascal's wrist in time.

A revolver went whirling through the air, and Four Kings uttered a howl of

The next moment Frank Richards' knee was on the ruffian's chest. Bob Lawless grasped his wrists, and held them fast.

Four Kings struggled, but in vain. "Get a trail-rope, Cherub!" shouted

"What-ho!"

Beauclerc ran up with the trail-rope.
With the excited crowd of schoolboys
with the excited crowd of schoolboys
buzzing round him, Four Kings had his
hands bound securely together.
He kicked out furiously but Bob

He kicked out furiously, but Bob stamped on his legs without mercy, and he soon gave that up.

"Now, you brute," said Frank Richards, you could be sent to the calabooze for drawing a weapon here! Chuck that pistol into the creek, Chunky!"
"You bet!" grinned Chunky Todgers.

"Now you're going to be cleared out," continued Frank Richards. "You've tried to get money out of me, and you claim bave information about the claimrobber. You're going to the sheriff." Four Kings panted.

"Trot out the horses, Bob!"

"I-I say, Frank-"
"I'm going to take him to Sheriff Henderson," said Frank Richards resolutely. "He's accusing me of robbing the claims. He can make that accusation again before the sheriff. You fellows can come if you like.' 'Oh, we'll come; but the bell goes

in a minute. "Can't be helped."
"Oh, all O.K.," said Bob. "Then we'd better get off before Miss Meadows sees

this beauty. Beauclere was already leading the

horses out of the corral.

"Come along!" said Frank, dragging on the rope that bound Four Kings' wrists together.

"I guess I'll have your life for this!"

yelled Four Kings. "Will you come?" "You'll be dragged, then."

The two schoolbovs put force on the rope, and the ruffian was yanked along

into the gateway. The excited crowd followed. Kern Gunten was looking on with a sneering grin. But he did not venture

to interfere. Beauclere had the horses outside the gates, and Frank Richards fastened the loose end of the trail-rope to the saddle of his pony.

Then he mounted. Four Kings yelled furiously as the pony started.

As he refused to rise to his feet and walk, he was dragged bodily along on the rough trail in a series of bumps. Naturally, he very soon had enough

He jumped to his feet and ran after the rider, to keep pace with the pony, panting with rage.

His face was inflamed with fury, and if his hands had been free just then, and he had had a weapon, there was no doubt that Four Kings would have earned a noose upon the spot. Fortunately, he was not able to do

any damage. Miss Meadows had come out of the schoolhouse, but the three chums were gone before she could reach the spot. Tom Lawrence explained the matter | mat

to the schoolmistress, and the Cedar Creek fellows went in to morning lessons

in a state of great excitement.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards & Co. were trotting along the Thompson trail, Four Kings following at the end of the trail-

Half-way to Thompson the ruffian was panting breathlessly.

The strong fire-water of the Red Dog did not conduce to physical fitness, and Four Kings was feeling the strain of the

And as they drew nearer and nearer to the sheriff's residence the ruffian's fury gave place more and more to uneasi-

He had no proof against Frank in the matter of the claim robbing, for his word was quite worthless, and his attempt at blackmail showed that his interest in the matter was only a rascally one.

Sheriff Henderson was, in fact, the very last man in the Thompson Valley whom Four Kings was desirous of meet-

whom Four Kings was desirous of meeting.

"Let up, gents!" he gasped at last, as he trotted wearily after the horses.

"Give a galoot a chance."

"Oh, keep it up," said Bob Lawless, glancing back. "This will do you good."

"I guess I don't want to go to any old sheriff," gasped Four Kings.

"It's too late to think of that," answered Frank Richards. "You've accused me of claim-robbing, and you've got to stick to it."

stick to it."

"I—I guess I made a mistake,"
mumbled the ruffian. "I never seed
you in the dark that night. I took it as

it was you, seeing as the galoot gave your name. How was I to know?" "That's no excuse for extorting money,

you scoundrel!" "I calculate I was hard up. I've had bad luck with the keerds, gents. Look hyer, you let up on a pilgrim, and I'll take it all back.'

Evidently Frank Richards' determina-tion to take him to the sheriff had caused doubts to enter the ruffian's mind.

That certainly was not a step that a guilty party would be likely to take. Frank did not answer him, and the ruffian lumbered on wearily after the trotting horses The town of Thompson came in sight

at last. Then Four Kings made another appeal.

"Let up, sir!" he gasped. "I take it back, and I pollygize! A galoot can't do no more than that."

Frank Richards hesitated, but he shook his bood.

his head.

"You tried to rob us at the Red Dog," he said. "You drew a weapon at the school. You're a dangerous ruffian, and you ought to be shut up where you harm."

can't do any harm."
"The calabooze for you, old man," said

Bob Lawless. Four Kings greaned.

"Don't be hard on a galeot, gents," he pleaded. "I own up I made a mislate in the dark. That young galeot gave me your name. I see new as he was lying. I guess I got the wrong antelope by the tail. Let up! I'll clear out of the section, if you like I'll go over the line. thought?"

Honest!"

Frank Richards slackened rein.
The ruffian had angered him, but his complete surrender disarmed the good-

natured schoolboy.

Four Kings had evidently come to his senses, and was convinced now that the unknown claim-robber had fooled him by

using a borrowed name.

And he had many little accounts to answer for, if once he was placed in the hands of the sheriff on a serious charge.

Frank looked at his chum. "Oh, let him go through with it," said Bob. "The sheriff will be glad of a chance of nailing him. We don't want his sort loose in this section.

Frank halted. "Let's give him a chance," he said. "If he clears out of Canada, that's

"I'll light out!" gasped Four Kings.

good enough. "Oh, all right," said Bob. "You're a soft-hearted duffer, Frank. But let the brute go, if you like." And Vere Beau-

clerc nodded assent. Frank Richards gave the panting russian a stern look. "You'll clear out of this section, over

the line?" he asked. "Mind, we shall look for you to-morrow, and if you're still in Thompson

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we go to the sheriff and make a charge against you," said Frank.
"I guess I'll vamoose instanter," said the ruffian. "I ain't no hog. I know

when I've had enough.' "You can clear, then!" said Frank con-

temptuously.
He untied the trail-rope, and the ruffian stood free. The run after the horses had exhausted him, and he staggered away in the direc-

tion of Thompson. Frank Richards & Co. wheeled their

horses, and rode back to the lumber They arrived there an hour late for

lessons. Miss Meadows quietly told them to go to their places, and nothing more was said just then, but after lessons the schoolmistress called the chums into her

study, and Frank had to give an explanation of the whole affair.

He did so quite candidly.

"I am sorry you let the man go," said
Miss Meadows quietly. "I do not believe
one word against you, Richards, but I
am afraid some suspicion will cling until
the claim-robber is caught. However, it

cannot be helped now. You may go."
Frank Richards looked very thoughtful as he left the schoolmistress.

He soon found that Miss Meadows was right.

A crowd of fellows wanted to know. what had been done with Four Kings; and when Frank explained that he had been allowed to escape there was a mock-

ing laugh from Kern Gunten. The Swiss did his best to spread the impression that Frank had allowed Four Kings to go free because he feared to take him to the sheriff, and, although he did not quite succeed, there was a linger-

ing doubt in a good many minds. Frank Richards for once was under a cloud at the backwoods school, and he was very silent and thoughtful for the remainder of that day.

> The 3rd Chapter. Three on the Track!

"Penny for 'em, Franky!" said Bob Lawless, when the three chums were leaving Cedar Creek School after lessons.
"I've been thinking—" began Frank Richards, as they trotted down the traff into the timber.

"My dear chap, you've been looking like

a moulting crow all day!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "Are you worrying about Gunten's rotten yarns?"
"I was thinking of knocking these

yarns on the head, and perhaps Gunten, too!" said Frank.

"I was thinking of that," said Beauclerc quietly. "The claim-robber has got to be found, Frank."

"That's it," said Frank. "Look here, you fellows. There's no doubt that Four Kings actually found a kid about my age and size at the claims the other night, who gave him my name. I can't help suspecting Gunten. It was just one of his tricks. Who else would have thought of giving my name? Only a fellow who

had a grudge against me, and Gunten's the only enemy I've ever had."
"True, O chief!" said Bob.
"True, U chier!" said Bob.

"As Gunten lives at Thompson, it's easy enough for him to sneak out to the creeks at night," continued Frank. "We know he's a gambling rotter, and often gets hard-up through losing his money. Then there's the way he's making the most of this yarn against me-partly from dislike, I dare say. But I can't help thinking that he feels it safer to have suspicion fixed on somebody. And he didn't look innocent when I spoke out to him; he looked like a fellow found

"Correct!"

"Well, I don't say it's Gunten, but I think very likely it is," said Frank. 'But Gunten or not, the rotter's got to be found, or this yarn will cling to me. We're going to find him if we can."

"My idea exactly," said Vere Beauclerc. "How are you going to work the riffle, though?" asked Bob thoughtfully. live a thumping long way from the creeks, at the ranch. It won't be easy

to keep a watch on the claims. "That's the only way, though." Bob whistled.

'But that isn't all," said Frank. Three of us could keep watch, but the claims go a long way along the creeks, and we couldn't watch a tench part of the ground the robber might come to. But we suspect Gunten—at least, I do!"
"Same here! Cut on!" "Well, my idea is to watch Gunten's

place in Thompson, and see whether he sneaks out at night," said Frank. "We can't watch all the claims, but if Gunten gets out at night to go there, we can watch him, and eatch him at it. I think that's justifiable, in the circumstances."
"I guess so!" Bob Lawless nodde Bob Lawless nodded.

"But the claim-robber isn't at work every night; not more than once or twice in the week. It looks as if it may be a "That's so; but there hasn't been a

robbery at the claims for nearly a week now," said Frank. "That's a long interval, and it looks as if the thief has had a scare—and he has, of course, from Four Kings having collared him that Well, Gunten knows now that Four Kings has been cleared out of Thompson, and that will make him feet easy in his mind again, if it's Gunten.
Well, then, if it's Gunten, he's jolly
likely to try again to-night!"
Bob nodded.

"That's so; he'll know the coast is clear, so far as that spying bulldozer is concerned," he remarked.

"There's another reason, too," added Frank. "Gunten was playing poker in the old corral to-day, and he lost money. If he makes good his losses by robbing the placers, he will be at it rgain soon."

"Likely enough." "But if we don't spot him one night we may another," said Frank. "I'm ready to watch for a week to catch him at it. He's tried to throw it on me, and it's up



to us to put the guilt where it belongs.

I don't know what your pater will say about our going out at night, that's all, Bob. Uncle will have to know, I suppose."

"I can fix that," said Beauclerc. "My father's away at Kamloops, and I'm alone at the shack now. Stay with me

"Good man!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.
"That's a cinch! Look here, I'll cut

home and tell popper that we're staying the night at Beau's shack. No need to

worry him with details. And I'll get my

lasso, in case we come on the claim-

Frank Richards rode home with Vere

Beauclerc's home—the little wooden

shack by the creek-was deserted now.

The remittance-man was away, and was

Few fellows would have cared to sleep

alone in the lonely shack, surrounded by

whispering woods. But Vere Beauclerc

did not mind. He was not troubled with

But he was glad to have his chums

with him, all the same, and it was certain

that Mr. Lawless would heartily approve

of Frank and Bob keeping him company

supper ready at the shack by the time Bob came trotting back from the ranch.

He had brought a bag with him and his lasso, as well as permission from Mr.

Lawless for the two boys to remain at the

"We'll turn in early, and get some sleep," said Bob, as they sat down to

supper. "We can get two or three hours' snooze before it's necessary to get a

move on. We don't want to nod off in

don't catch Gunten to-night, we've got

to try again. If he spotted us nodding in class he might smell a rat."

After supper the chums turned into the bunks, and it was eleven o'clock when

Bob Lawless rose and called his com-

Outside there was a glimmer of moonlight above the trees, and the creek glistened as it murmured by the reedy

The three horses were saddled, and the

chums mounted, and rode away in the

They came out of the woods into the trail that ran from Cedar Camp to the

A few minutes later a tramping figure

"Four Kings," said Beauciere quietly.
"By gum, so it is!"

The chums halted as they came up with

Four Kings was tramping towards

He scowled savagely at the sight of the

'So you're off, my pippin!" said Bob

"I guess I'm lighting out!" growled

"Well, I'm glad to see you're going,"

Four Kings gritted his teeth, and

The schoolboys rode on till the build-

Then they dismounted, and the horses

"Shanks' pony now," said Bob. It was close on midnight when the

chums entered the sleeping town of

There was still a glare of naphtha lights

They gave the Red Dog a wide berth,

Gunten's Store was closed long ago, and

Behind the store there were several out-

Among them lay a path which led from

If Gunten came out it was certain, of

buildings-stables, sheds, and store-

the back of the store to the waste land

course, that he would not venture by way

of the street in the front, where he might meet a belated pedestrian or a

by the back way, stealing along in the shadow of the out-buildings.

In an open shed, where a cart was up-ended, the three chums stopped to watch

They were in complete shadow, and from where they stood they could see

every possible way of leaving the store

"I guess this is where we hang on," murmured Bob Lawless. "You galoots can squat down if you like, and I'll keep

But his chums were too keen for that,

and all three of them remained watching

If he came he would come cautiously

roysterer reeling home to his cabin.

both the store and the house were dark.

Bob Lawless led the way to the rear of

from the Red Dog saloon, and a distant echo of a drinking chorus came to their

tramped on, and the shadows of the distance swallowed up the sullen ruffian.

ings of Thompson were visible in the dis-

Four Kings, eyeing them with lowering brows. "Comin' to look for me-hey?"

"Somebody on the trail," remarked

loomed up in the dim light ahead.

them, his back to the town.

"No fear!" agreed Frank. "If we

Beauclere and Frank Richards had

likely to be absent for some days.

Beauclerc, while Bob galloped on to the

"Good!" said Frank.

And so it was arranged.

while his father was away.

class to-morrow, you know.'

They turned out at once.

direction of Thompson.

robber.'

shack.

panions.

banks.

town.

Bob.

the ruffian.

Lawless.

tance.

Thompson.

however.

the store.

the path.

from the rear.

outside the town.

houses.

three schoolboys.

said Frank Richards.

were tethered in a thicket.

THE CLAIM ROBBER!

Published

Every Monday

(Continued from the previous page.)

from the shed and listening for the sound of footsteps.

> The 4th Chapter. Caught!

"Hark!" Bob Lawless whispered the word under his breath.

It was just one o'clock now. The lights were out in the Red Dog now, away across the main street of Thompson, and only occasionally came an echo from the street of the footsteps of

some belated citizen tramping home. It was a sound closer at hand that had caught Bob's keen ear.

Frank Richards and Beauclerc did not speak; they breathed hard, listening intently.

There was a faint footfall close at hand. From the deep darkness of the shed ney watched the moonlight without, and their eyes gleamed as a dark figure flitted by.

Dim as the light was they recognised Kern Gunten.

He passed within six yards of the hidden schoolboys, and tramped on quietly and cautiously.

Had not the chums suspected Gunten before they would have suspected him now, so stealthy were his movements, and the glances he threw to right and left as he stole on.

"Follow on!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Keep in cover! He's bound to look

"Right-ho!" breathed Frank. Silently the chums stepped from the shed and followed on Kern Gunten's

above as the clouds sailed slowly from under the moon. The light strengthened.

It glimmered on the shallow creek, and on the beds of sand exposed by the wooden dams built out into the stream. Many of the cradles, mostly built of osiers from the woods, were full of "dirt," as the miners called the auriferous sand

from the bed of the creek. With long and laborious toil the pandirt had been gathered up for the golden grains to be washed out in the cradles. All was as it had been left by the

placer-miners when they knocked off work at sundown.

Faintly from the creek came the creaking of the cradle where the gold-thief was at work, reaping the fruit of the labour of others.

The chums watched till the figure of the claim-robber was clear to their view in the strengthening light. Gunten had his back to them, standing

ankle-deep in wet sand as he worked the cradle.

Bob Lawless grasped his lasso. He was almost near enough for a cast. Signing to his comrades to remain where they were, Bob tiptoed towards the creek, lariat in hand.

He made no sound, but if he had done so the creaking of the cradle was sufficient to drown it.

Frank and Beauclerc watched him breathlessly.

They caught their breath as his right arm rose for the cast of the noosed rope. Whiz!

Gunten heard the sound as he bent at his nefarious occupation, and he sprang round, with a panting exclamation of

As he did so the noose descended upon him.

Before he knew what was happening the loop was over his shoulders, and Bob Lawless was dragging it taut.

It tightened round Gunten, pinning his arms to his sides, and holding him a helpless prisoner. He made a terrific, desperate wrench at | what they'll think!"

panted Gunten. "Take me to the sheriff, if you like—not to the miners!"

Bob Lawless nodded. "I guess that's so," he agreed. reckon they'd drown you in the creek like a mangy dog if they got their hands on you, Gunten. You can come along and see the sheriff."

"Let me loose!" "No fear!" grinned Bob. "You mosey along with us, my pippin, just as you are —mud and sand and all. When you start

telling lies you can explain how you got wet and sandy all over. Come on!" Gunten quavered miserably as he followed the chums, the lasso still pinning his

arms to his side. He was glad, however, to get farther away from the miners' cabins by the

It was only too possible that his life would have been in peril if he had been handed over to the hard-working placerminers whom he had robbed.

With Gunten slinking in the rear, the chums of Cedar Creek drew nearer to the town.

Frank Richards was looking very bright

now. The dastardly suspicion Gunten had attempted to throw upon him was done with now; the guilt was coming home to roost on the right shoulders.

But Kern Gunten, as he slunk after his captors, was overwhelmed with despair. He was at the end of his tether.

The 5th Chapter. Gunten Wakes Amends.

Kern Gunten gasped out Frank's name as they reached the outskirts of Thomp-

Much as the wretched Swiss had injured him, Frank could not help feeling a little compassion as he looked at his

white, terrified face.

"Let me off, Richards!" muttered
Gunten. "For mercy's sake, don't take
me to the sheriff. Think of my people—

"Richards!"

son. Frank glanced back at him.

Had not the chums suspected Gunten before, they would have suspected him now, so stealthy were his movements and the glances he threw to right and left as he stole on.

till the latter were left behind, and then took advantage of trees and bushes to

cover their movements.
Once or twice Gunten disappeared from sight, but they knew he was making for the creek, and it was easy to pick up the track again.

Near the creek there was a bunch of miners' shacks, and Gunten made a wide detour to avoid them.

Bob dragged his comrades into the shadow of a cabin as Gunten stopped and looked round him.

The claim-robber did not suspect that he was followed, but he was cautious, and probably in a state of nerves.

But the three chums were not likely to let the rascal spot them. Gunten moved on again, and disap-

Frank Richards drew a deep breath. "There's no doubt about it now," he said in a low voice. "He's gone straight to the placer claims. Bob.

peared into the shadows.

"Straight as a string!" murmured Bob, preparing his lasso for a cast, and seeing that it was in perfect order. that galoot is going to have the surprise of his life. Come on, and not a sound!"

The moon had disappeared behind a

cloud, and darkness lay upon the scene. As the chums crept on in the gloom, close now to the mining creek, a faint sound came to their ears from ahead.

It was the jarring of a cradle. The gold-thief was evidently at work. Bob Lawless' hand tightened on his lasso as they crept closer on to the creek

in the dark. Their hearts were beating with excitement now.

Close by the bank, they were within a short distance of the claim-robber, but the darkness hid him from sight. As soon as the moon emerged from the

bank of clouds they would see him. He was near enough for them to hear his movements.

With tense feelings they waited for the

A dim, silvery glimmer came from

They kept in the cover of the buildings | the rope, and Bob dragged on it harder, and Gunten went sprawling over in the wet sand.

'Caught!" shouted Bob.

Frank and Vere Beauclerc ran forward. From the bank the three chums looked down upon the wet sand, where Gunten lay sprawling helplessly in the grip of the lasso. He was covered from head to foot with

sand and mud, and panting with fear.

As yet he did not know who his captors were, and he was in deadly fear for his

Some, at least, of the placer-miners would not have hesitated to drive a bullet through the gold-thief if they had caught him at his work.
"Our game!" grinned Frank Richards.

Gunten ceased to struggle with the rope, and looked up at the trio on the bank, recognising Frank Richards' voice, and then the chums themselves.

"You!" he panted. "Frank Richards!"
"We've caught the claim-robber!" chuckled Bob.

Gunten staggered to his feet. "Don't try to unloosen that rope, Gunten!" called out Bob. "I'll have you over if you do before you can say 'no sugar in mine'!"

"It—it's you, Lawless?" "I guess so. Come out of the creek, you pesky rotter!" said Bob. "I'm going

to walk you along to the cabins. placer-men will be glad to see you." Gunten panted as he clambered up the

His face was white with terror. "You-you won't give me up?" he

"Won't we!" grinned Bob. "I reckon that's what we're here for, you thief! You're going to get your deserts now! Bring him along, you fellows!" Gunten fell on his knees.

"Lawless," he muttered hoarsely, "stop! They'll murder me—you know

they will!"
"What do you deserve?" said Frank. "You don't want to see murder done!"

"It's too late now," said Frank. "You've tried to make the fellows at Cedar Creek believe that I was the claimrobber. Gunten. You've got to take the consequences of what you've done!" "I'll take back all I said!" exclaimed

Gunten eagerly. "I'll clear you at Cedar Creek, Richards! I-I never meant to mix you up in it. But when that brute Four Kings collared me that night I dared not give my own name. Your name came into

my head, and I gave it."

"Possibly. But since then you've done your best to make all Cedar Creek believe that I was the claim-robber," said Frank. "And there's only one way of undoing that, and that's showing up the real thief. I'm sorry, Gunten, for your people's sake; but you should have thought of that before you became a thief!"

"I'll undo what I've done! I'll-I'll own up at the school!" panted Gunten. "I-I don't mind that so much; only don't take me to the sheriff. I'll tell all Cedar Creek the truth, if you like. They won't give me away!"

Frank Richards hesitated, and glanced at his chums.

Vere Beauclere did not speak; but Bob Lawless gave utterance to an angry growl. "Rot!" he exclaimed. "Pesky rot! The galoot's tackling you, Franky, beeause he knows you're a soft-hearted duffer; and you're the fellow he's tried to injure. He's going to the sheriff!"
"But—I say, Bob—"

"Can't you see he's lying?" exclaimed Bob impatiently. "He'll say anything now; but if we let him loose he will deny it all to-morrow. We've got to nail him down while we've got proof." "I suppose that's so," admitted Frank.

"We can't trust you, Gunten. I'd let you off if I could, but you're too false."
"I swear it!" panted Gunten. "Look
here, Richards! Take me to the school as I am-you needn't even let me loose. I'll stand that—I'll stand anything. It's not long to daylight now. Take me as I am to Cedar Creek, and tell the fellows everything when they come to school!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Bob Law-

"He's no right to ask anything of the kind," said Vere Beauclerc. "But-but there's his people, Bob. They would feel this. I don't think Gunten will try claimrobbing again, so far as that goes. He's rascal enough, but he han't courage enough-after this!"

"I swear I won't!" groaned Gunten. "I'm sorry I ever thought of it! I'd been losing money at cards, or I'd never have done it! I'll never go near the claims

again! Bob Lawless hesitated.

"I guess it means a night out for us," he said. "No reason why we should take so much trouble over a rotten thief!"

"Richards-" began Gunten. "Oh, let Franky alone!" exclaimed Bob sharply. "He's a soft duffer, and he's going to let you off, if I let him. Look here, Gunten, we'll do it-you're not worth it-but we'll do it. But if you try to hedge at the school you go straight to Sheriff Henderson. If you don't own up to the whole story without beating about the bush. I'll yank you right away to the sheriff without giving you another chance. Savvy?"

"I mean business!" faltered Gunten. "Mind you keep to that, then!"

Gunten almost sobbed with relief as the chums turned from the road into Thomp-

The disgrace and shame at the school he could face, so long as he escaped the worse fate of being taken by the strong arm of the law and punished as he deserved.

"You cut off and get the hosses, Franky," said Bob. "I'll keep this pilgrim in charge, and I'll take care he don't get

Bob and Beauclerc walked along the trail towards Cedar Creek with the captured claim-robber, while Frank went for the horses.

He overtook them an hour later, riding his own pony and leading the other two. Then the chums kept on towards Cedar

There was a glimmer of dawn in the sky when they reached the school, but no sign of life yet about the place. They had a long wait before them ere

the earliest scholars arrived at Cedar Creek. They halted a hundred yards from the

gates, in the timber. Gunten was still securely confined by the lasso.

The wretched rogue of the lumber school threw himself wearily at the foot of a tree to rest. Bob took another turn of the lasso

round him, and knotted it. He did not mean to give the cunning Swiss the hair's-breadth of a chance for

Then the chums threw themselves in the grass, to rest in the growing warmth of

the rising sun.

Frank Richards sat up, rubbing his eyes, as there was a clatter of hoofs on the Tom Lawrence and his sister Molly came

in sight, riding towards the school, with Chunky Todgers and Keller and Dick Dawson.

Frank Richards & Co. jumped up, and Gunten struggled to his feet, his face

The riders halted in astonishment at the sight of the strange group. "What the thunder's this game?" ex-

claimed Lawrence. "Wait a bit!" grinned Bob. "Gunten's got a yarn to tell as soon as there's

enough to hear it. Take a little rest." In great curiosity the schoolboys dismounted, and soon there was a good crowd on the spot, as more and more of the scholars of Cedar Creek came along the trail.

As soon as the gathering numbered fifteen or sixteen-all in a state of great amazement-Bob Lawless judged that it was time for the climax.

He gave the lasso a jerk. "Go ahead, Gunten!" he said. "And remember that, at the first lie, straight you go to the sheriff!"

But the rogue of Cedar Creek was not thinking of lying now, and he faltered out his confession. He did not look up once.

"By gum," said Tom Lawrence, in utter disgust, "so Gunten's the gold-thief! And he was trying to make us think—" "He tried to make us think it was Frank!" exclaimed Molly Lawrence, her

eyes flashing. "He ought to be sent to prison!" "I guess so!" said Chunky Todgers

emphatically. Gunten gave the chums a haggard look. Bob untied the lasso, and the Swiss stood

"You can vamoose!" said Bob contemptuously. Without a word more Kern Gunten

tramped up the trail for home. Even the thick-skinned Swiss felt that he could not face his schoolfellows at Cedar Creek that day.

Frank Richards received a good many congratulations that day. No one had really believed anything

against him, but his friends were very glad when the matter was put beyond the shadow of a doubt.

As for Gunten, he found some pretext

for remaining away from school for the last few days before the holidays, hoping, perhaps, that when Cedar Creek gathered again after the vacation the matter would have been forgotten.

But before the holidays ended Frank Richards & Co. were destined to see the rogue of the lumber school again.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY:

"Frank Richards & Co.'s Holiday!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD. DON'T MISS IT!