

FOR THE SCAPEGRACE'S SAKE! | BUNNY'S MISADVENTURE! | THE STRANDED SCHOOLBOYS!

A Magnificent Tale of JIMMY SILVER & CO. | A Grand Story of BOB TRAVERS & CO. | A Splendid Yarn of FRANK RICHARDS & CO.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

By HERBERT BRITTON.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The BOYS' FRIEND I ^{1d}/₂

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

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The Boys Who Beat The Kaiser

AN AMAZING NEW STORY OF
"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY
CASTLE!"

.. BY ..
DUNCAN STORM.

FOR NEW READERS.

THE KAISER is determined to obtain possession of the Mahdi's huge treasure which is hidden in the heart of the continent of Africa, and, to do so, he employs three desperate Germans named BARON VON SLYDEN, CAPTAIN STOOM, and VON SNEEK.

The papers, however, containing the secret of the whereabouts of the treasure are in the possession of

CAPTAIN HANDYMAN and CY SPEAGUE, who decide to go in quest of the treasure, and to take with them the boys of the Bombay Castle, chief among whom are DICK DORRINGTON, CHIP, ARTY DOVE, SKELETON, PORKIS, and PONGO WALKER.

LAL TATA, a cheery Hindu, TOOKUM EL KOOS, a native wrestler, FLINT PASHA, a member of the Sudan Police, are also amongst the party, as well as the boys' pets, CECIL, the orang-outang, HORACE, the goat, and GUS, the crocodile.

In the last instalments Baron von Slyden and his fellow spies made strenuous efforts to secure the papers containing the secret of the Mahdi's treasure. But the boys of the Bombay Castle defeated them, and they went away empty-handed.

The baron refused to throw up the sponge, however, and when the boys of the Bombay Castle started on the expedition up the Nile the rascally Hun had concocted a dastardly scheme for getting his revenge.

(Read on from here.)

Horace Meets with an Accident.

It was a cheerful little crowd that gathered that evening in the last whaler of the string which towed behind the motor-launch.

The boys had selected this craft of all the others, because it was farthest away from the launch which Captain Handyman was steering, and farthest removed from the seat of discipline.

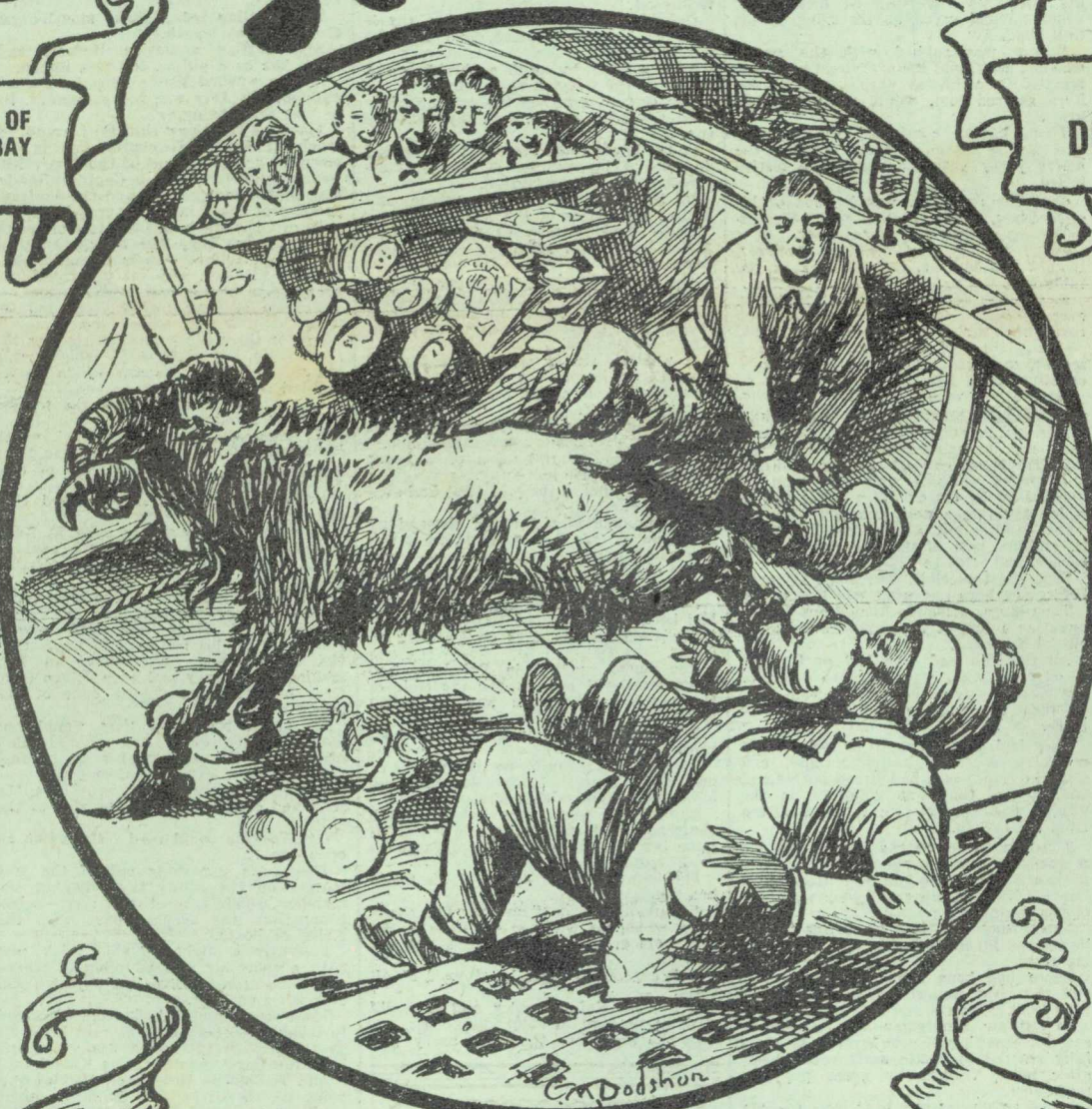
It was a good, roomy boat, and there was room for Horace, the goat, and for Gus, the crocodile, as well as Cecil, Pieface, and Tookum el Koos, the gigantic negro wrestler.

And, somehow or another, Mr. Lal Tata had found his way into this particular craft, where, seated on a box of ammunition, he lit up a very big cigar with a wide red band, his dark face wreathed in smiles.

"Now, boys," he said, "we are off on great adventures. I feel like some kids just let out of schools. We shall soon arrive in very wild countries and amongst savage peoples. In short, we are going to have some jolly good times!"

"I think, sir," said Skeleton, who was longing to get at his grub-sacks, "that we might start by having tea."

"Ha!" exclaimed Lal. "That is



HORACE, THE GOAT, HITS OUT!

some jolly good ideas! But how shall we get some teas out of this wilderness? The launch does not stop till we get to El Katif, and that will be late to-night. There are no tea-shops on the Upper Nile."

"I believe we passed Lyons' a few minutes ago," said Dick, with a twinkle in his eye, referring to the dismal howling of a stray hyena, which had risen from a marshy swamp by the river bank.

Lal chuckled. "Ha, Dick, my boy," he said, "I understand! That was some pun joke

you make. I do not think that you come out of this Lyons' shop if once you go into him. These Lyons fellows in these parts do not make tea for you; you make tea for the Lyons. I am very fond of pun jokes. I remember a verree good Chinese pun joke which I once heard."

The boys groaned. They had heard the story of this Chinese pun a dozen times, and it took half an hour to tell, and when Lal had told it none of them could see the joke.

"Look out, sir!" said Skeleton

hastily, as he rummaged in a box. "Here is the kettle and a teapot, and the buns are in that bag, and the bloater-paste, and the meat-paste, and the shrimp-paste, and the sardine-paste are in those pots. And here is the cake, and the marmalade, and the strawberry jam, and the pastry and the macaroons."

And Skeleton, diving into box after box, and sack after sack, produced like a conjuror such a feast as never had been seen on the Nile before.

It was more than a tea. It was a feast.

And soon Pieface was busy pumping up the primus stove ready to make the tea.

Lal forgot all about his Chinese joke as he squatted, with his arms full of parcels of grub, and the eyes of the niggers glistened as they saw the good things laid out on the plank table that was stretched from thwart to thwart.

Pieface did not understand much about the mysteries of the primus stove which was handed out to him.

Like most niggers he had handled oil-stoves, but never had he touched a blue-flame pressure-stove before.

But he was not going to confess his ignorance, and he pumped and pumped and pumped to produce the blue, roaring flame as he had seen the boys produce it.

Crouching in the bow of the boat to keep the guarded flame out of the slight draught of wind, Pieface tinkered at the sulky stove, whilst the boys laid the table, and Tookum el Koos looked on with wondering eyes at the deft opening of a tin of sardines by Pongo Walker.

Tookum, wise as he was, had never seen a box of sardines before, and he gave a shout of wonderment as the lid was laid back, showing the silvery fish in their bath of oil.

Tookum could not understand how so many fish had packed themselves into the box so neatly.

All he could say was that this was some great magic, and he begged that he might have the box when it was emptied out on a dish, by way of a charm to hang round his neck to keep away evil spirits.

The boys roared with laughter when Tookum received the empty tin as though it were a precious jewel, hanging it about his neck with the bunch of native charms which he wore to keep him protected from all witchcraft.

Tookum did not waste the oil that was left in the bottom of the tin. He was perfectly certain from the smell of it that it was magic oil, that was good against all diseases.

So he rubbed it over his massive limbs, till he shone like a bronze statue in his wrapping of leopard's-skin.

"Here, push up a bit, old Tookum!" said Arty Dove. "You smell like a fish shop. Away with you, you savage box of kippers and—crumbs!"

Arty broke off short. From the bow of the boat there was a dull thump, followed by a sheet of red flame and a cloud of black smoke.

(Continued on the next page.)



THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER.

(Continued from the previous page.)

In the midst of the flame and the smoke Pieface tumbled head over heels, whilst Horace kicked wildly, freeing himself of the bonds that secured his feet.

The foolish Pieface had tried to brighten up the sulky stove by swamping it with methylated spirit, with the result that it had blown up, sending a sheet of flaming oil over the fore part of the whaler.

Luckily for the boys, the little craft was built in sections, with stout, copper-lined bulkheads dividing her from thwart to thwart.

Otherwise the flaming oil would have run aft, and a nasty explosion might have taken place amongst the ammunition-boxes on which Lal was seated.

But the bulkhead confined the fire to the fore part of the boat, as Dick, with a yell of "Fire!" dipped a blanket over-side, and threw it over Horace and the struggling Pieface, who were mixed up in a terrible struggle.

The flame and the smoke had made Horace very angry.

He managed to struggle to his feet, and though the space was confined, he was butting fiercely at the howling Pieface.

Dick smothered the fire with the wet blanket.

It quickly put the flame out, but no wet blanket in the world was good enough to extinguish the wrath of Horace, who was badly singed by the explosion.

"Punk, punk, punk!" Under cover of the steaming blanket Horace was bumping the howling Pieface against the side of the boat in a series of short neck butts.

And every time Horace butted Pieface's woody head bumped against the planking of the boat like a sledge-hammer.

"Mars'r Arty! Mars'r Arty!" yelled Pieface. "You come quick! Take away dis too much debble goat!"

"Quick, Arty!" gasped Dick. "Pull Horace out of that, or he'll bust up the boat!"

"He'll bust up old Pieface if we don't watch it!" grunted Arty; and, leaning over the bulkhead, he got his powerful arms round Horace, and bodily lifted him, blanket and all, out of the arena.

Horace's temper was fairly roused now. He writhed and twisted in Arty's arms, endeavouring to get at his preserver.

Skeleton stood wide-eyed, grabbing his precious salmon-pots and cakes from the table, which threatened to be upset in the struggle, for although Horace was wrapped and hindered by the blanket he was putting up a fierce fight in the narrow space.

Sometimes Horace was on top, sometimes Arty was on top in this queer wrestling match.

Horace struck out with hoofs and horns, whilst Pieface, with the tail of his burning shirt blown round his neck, kept up a dismal howling.

Lal snatched up his white umbrella and struck blindly at Horace.

"Stick to him, Artee!" he yelled. "Stick to the rascal fellow! Hit him some big kicks! Make him shut up!"

Whack! Down came Lal's umbrella just as Arty came topmost, laying Horace in the bottom of the boat with a fine half-Nelson.

The umbrella split to ribands on Arty's back as he pinned Horace down.

"Keep your brolly out of it, sir! I've got him down now!" gasped Arty. "Tie the boxing-gloves on his hoofs, boys! They are as sharp as knives!"

And, sure enough, Horace's hoofs had split Arty's coat from collar to tail.

The boys hastily snatched up two pairs of boxing-gloves, and tied them on the hoofs of the angry Horace.

This encouraged Lal, who now saw that his old enemy was harmless.

The boys were almost helpless with laughter as Horace, lying on his back, feebly waved his gloved feet in the air.

"Now you hold him, Artee," said Lal, "and I will give him some jolly good whacks with my broken umbrellas. I will make the rascal fellow repent that he play so much goat!"

Lal leaped over to get a whack at Horace. But Horace, though he was down, was not yet beaten.

Plonk!

Out shot his gloved hoof, and Lal took a punch on the nose that sent him flying head over heels into a pot of strawberry-jam, wildly waving an umbrella that was all ribs and rags.

"Ai! Ai!" yelled Lal. "That goat shall be killed! He has kicked me great punches in the jaw!"

Arty forgot himself as he held Horace down. Arty, like all good boxers, had a great sense of fair play.

"Serves you right for hitting a man when he's down!" he snapped angrily.

Lal sat up in the bottom of the boat, squinting, and solemnly waving his tattered umbrella as a big dab of strawberry jam slowly trickled down his broad forehead.

"He is not a down man," he said. "He is a rascal goat. And you will write me hundred thousand lines impot, Mr. Artee, for improper address to your preceptor and master!"

"I can't," grinned Arty, recovering his temper. "Good old Horace has eaten all the impot paper!"

Horace had ceased to struggle now, and the atmosphere round the boat was filled with the smell of singed goat.

Arty lifted his pet to his feet, and Horace wobbled groggily on his legs as

his gloved feet slipped on the floor-boards of the boat.

All the fight was gone out of him now, and he bleated miserably. Never was there such a sorry-looking goat.

He was as black as a coal, and half the hair was singed off him.

His long, flowing beard was reduced to a grimy stubble.

Pieface was an equally sorry object. He crawled out of the bows of the boat, looking fearfully at the upset stove, as though he expected that every minute it would explode again.

All the wool was burned off his head, save one little tuft which he wore to guard against witchcraft.

"Too much plenty debble in dat stove! Too much plenty debble in dat goat!" he muttered, as he rubbed his bald head sorrowfully.

And he crawled out of the blistered fore-compartment, leaving the stove behind him.

"Pouf!" he muttered, sniffing the air. "Dat goat chap him smell too awful ob burning!"

"He don't smell half so bad as a singed nigger!" said Pongo. "Here, come out of the way, Pieface, and let me wrangle that stove! Why didn't you tell us that you hadn't used one of them before! You might have known that it would blow up!"

Pongo soon had the ill-used stove roaring merrily, whilst the other boys rubbed Horace and Pieface with oil where they had been singed, so that they could take no hurt from their adventure.

Then Skeleton, who was the best-natured chap in the world, produced a big bottle of violet-scented brillantine, which he had saved up for using on his own head.

Horace was rubbed with the sweet-smelling stuff, and Pieface's bald head was treated to a liberal dosing, which, the boys assured him, would make his hair grow.

Then, having comforted the warriors and healed them of their wounds, the merry party gathered round the festive board.

Gus, the crocodile, was let out of his crickit-bag, and regaled with bloater-paste sandwiches and cream buns.

Peace having been declared between Horace and Pieface, they both sat up to table with the rest.

It was the queerest tea-party that was ever brought together that gathered round Skeleton's festive board that night.

Ceeli, the orange-outang, grave and sedate, sat next to Horace, feeding him on all sorts of tibbits.

Horace was wonderful.

He refused nothing. He tucked into bloater-paste, tinned salmon, sardines, cake, and macaroons.

He tried iced currant-cake, cream-buns, and potted shrimps with jam, and he finished up by eating every paper bag in which the things were wrapped.

But Horace got a bit too thick when he grabbed hold of the tablecloth by the corner, and tried to eat that as well.

Half the tablecloth was down his neck before the boys saw what was happening.

Then it was solemnly hauled out of him again as a sort of rope and stowed away out of his reach.

All this fun had been lost on Captain Handyman, who, seated by the wheel of the launch, steered her up the wide river between the tall, whispering banks of reeds.

They had a long way to go before they could reach their camping-ground, and Captain Handyman had heard nothing of the rumpus that was going on in the whaler that was towing farthest astern from the launch.

The Coughdrop, as the boys called the motor-launch, was a noisy craft, and the noise of the struggle had been drowned to Captain Handyman's ears by the thudding of the engine.

Furthermore, he had his hands full as he steered his little flotilla up the darkening river.

There had been rains in the interior, and the river was rising, bringing down with it ugly trunks and snags of trees.

So Captain Handyman had no eyes or ears for anything but the river as he carefully steered his little craft round bend after bend, fringed by great papyrus-reeds.

Great islands of the sudd—the tangled weed that chokes the upper Nile—came floating down the stream, and it was busy work dodging these so that the propeller of the launch should not get fouled in their tangle.

But there were others who had ears for Captain Handyman.

As the great yellow moon rose thirty-two ruffians, mounted on camel-back, headed towards El Katif, the first stopping-place of the expedition.

These followed a track that lay inland a mile beyond the marshes, their tall camels making no sound as they strode through the soft sand.

But across the silent country, to the ears of this watchful gang of the Kaiser's murderers, came clearly the chug-chug of the launch as she steadily breasted the stream.

Von Stoom, who rode by the side of Cassim, the spy, grinned in the shadow of his caftan as he heard this sound.

"Ach!" he muttered. "We are in good time. To-morrow we shall make these proud Englander boys squeal for mercy! And there shall be no mercy for those who

dare the wrath of der Supreme War Lord!"

Cassim said nothing. Hunched on his camel, his quick-trained ears—the ears of a horn eavesdropper and spy—had caught the sound of the launch's engines.

And he licked his thin, cruel lips as he thought of the vengeance that the morrow was to bring him on the hated British who had ruined him in his foul trade of slaver.

Horace to the Rescue.

As the column of camels dogged the expedition, passing over the sandy tracks which ran round the borders of the river swamps, two figures, mounted on swift camels, raced rapidly over the track leading from Khartoum.

These men were dressed in the guise of desert Arabs, their faces swathed against the sand, and their turbans covered by great hoods that gave them the appearance of cowed monks.

There was no doubt as to the quality of the camels they were riding.

These were powerful brutes of the finest desert breed, and they travelled with the quick, sliding step of the true racing camel.

Kaiser Wilhelm never spares money where there is dirty work to be done, and his gang of spies and assassins in the Sudan were equipped with all that money could buy.

A desert Arab could have told by their seat in the tall saddles that these men were not Arabs, but white men.

The camel-riders must ride from childhood to acquire the true desert seat, which will hold a man in his saddle awake or sleep.

And these two men rode like cavalymen with the German cavalry seat.

Yet Baron von Slyden and Von Sneek were well disguised, and none amongst the crowd of loafers and spies gathered about the gates of Khartoum had noticed them as they had passed out of the city after sunset.

Although Baron von Slyden had entrusted the dirty work of murder to Captain von Stoom, he had found that he could not rest without taking a hand in it himself.

One of the disadvantages of a spy is that he is never trusted, and that he never trusts.

"Set a thief to catch a thief" is the motto of the German spy system.

The servant watches the master. The master watches the servant. Spy watches spy.

So the baron could not rest when he had despatched his column of Askari murderers after the expedition.

He had his doubts of Von Stoom, and he had his doubts of the Askaris.

These fighting men of German East Africa have never sat down easily under German rule.

Their bias has always been towards the British, and even under military discipline they take their orders in English from their German officers, refusing to understand the German.

It was this feeling of doubt which had caused the Baron von Slyden to order Von Sneek to tie the saddle for the long night ride to El Katif.

He meant to see with his own eyes that the Kaiser's dirty work was carried out.

And he had no intention of allowing Von Stoom to give him away.

Von Sneek hated the job. But he hated the ride worse.

The lurching of the camel churned up his stomach. He was afraid of what was going to happen.

Von Sneek, though he was a cunning and clever spy, was no man of action.

He hated bloodshed and killing. He had been trained in the Kaiser's own Intelligence Department to do his work on paper.

Von Sneek, seated in Potsdam, had often murdered men in the far ends of the earth by telegram and by secret messages.

But he had never seen the results of his work.

Now he was going to see the results of one of the Kaiser's many telegrams, and his heart quailed within him.

Though the night was hot his teeth chattered, and cold chills ran down his spine beneath the many wrappings of his Arab costume.

The baron took no notice of his weak-hearted confederate.

He urged his camel on over the sandy track which lay white in the light of the rising moon, and his mind held but one thought.

This expedition must be stopped at all costs.

It was the Kaiser's order, and he would stick at nothing to fulfil that order.

In the meantime the little party who

were travelling by the river little dreamed that the Kaiser's spies were already on their track.

As the moon rose they settled themselves down for a jolly night in the whaler.

They had made Pieface and Tookum and the other niggers in the boat happy with tins of salmon.

There is nothing that niggers love better than tinned salmon, and Skeleton was easily the most popular person in the expedition when he handed these dainties round.

Chip produced his mouth-organ, and looked away to the admiration of everyone.

Horace, the goat, was very quiet. He crouched at the bottom of the boat, chewing quietly at one of the india-rubber waterproof sheets which were used for covering the stones.

The sheet was a tough proposition, for it was six feet long and three feet wide.

But Horace was not to be daunted. He pegged away steadily at the rubber-covered canvas, and before the boys grew suspicious at his good behaviour, he had chewed up and swallowed a good three feet of canvas and rubber.

It was Arty Dove who discovered the theft of this queer chewing-gum.

With a cry of dismay, he pulled away the rubber sheet which Horace was chewing solemnly in the shadow of the bows.

Horace grunted as Arty held up the sheet.

"Pon my word, Horace!" exclaimed Arty, looking ruefully at the tattered sheet. "You are a nut! I believe you'd eat a fire-hose if you got hold of it! Here, you old ruffian, if you must eat something, eat those!"

And he threw Horace a pair of wicket-keeping gloves and pads which had been ruined by sun and water.

Horace grunted again, and his eyes blinked green in the moonlight as he lifted his great horned head, nibbling daintily at the pad which most attracted him.

And as the boys laughed at this queer taste in food they little dreamed how much they would owe to Horace and his wonderful appetite before many hours had passed.

The tootling of Chip's mouth-organ died away at length.

Arty settled alongside Horace, and, using him as a pillow, fell fast asleep.

Horace smelled like a singed horsehair cushion, but Arty was not particular, for he was very sleepy.

The boys knew now that they would not reach El Katif till nearly two in the morning, as the current of the Upper Nile was running faster than Captain Handyman had bargained for, and the constant dodging of snags in the river delayed the pace of the launch and her tow of boats.

One by one they fell asleep, and the niggers all followed their example, save Tookum el Kooos, who sat up straight in the boat, a savage and warlike figure.

Tookum el Kooos rarely slept, and tonight he was very wide awake.

Two or three birds had flown across the river from the right bank—small sand-pipers and other birds which never lighted at night.

This was quite enough for the trained senses of Tookum el Kooos.

He knew that the sandy track which lay at the back of the marshes was being traversed that night by a body of men who were heading for El Katif.

None of the caravans ever used that river track.

Harmless traders always gave El Katif a wide berth, and followed the caravan route which lay several miles farther inland.

The birds which crossed the river piped cries of alarm.

Tookum el Kooos was still savage enough in all his instincts to know that the birds would not behave in this fashion unless they had been driven from their nesting-places at the edge of the sandy track.

He knew, too, that they would not move in this fashion from their clutches of eggs for the passing of a single way-farer or for a few foot-passengers.

In this case they would crouch in the sand and coarse grass by the side of the track.

But Tookum could read Nature like an open book.

There was something out of the way moving on the sandy track behind the marshes which fringed the river—something that was keeping pace with the string of boats.

Presently a flight of wild duck rose with a splashing and whirring of wings, and came driving across the sky at a full fifty miles an hour.

These were marsh-duck, unaccustomed to being disturbed, save at rare intervals by the British sportsmen who came out for a few days' shooting from Khartoum.

And Tookum el Kooos knew that at this point of the river the favourite night feeding-grounds of the duck were in a corner of the marshes, close by which the track ran.

He lifted his head, and scented the air like a wild animal.

A slight breeze was setting from the east, and Tookum el Kooos scented the trail of camels.

Like a true savage he used his nose first. Then his ears came into play.

Far away across the marshes his quick ear caught the sound of the faint jingle of metal.

For two years of his life Tookum, following an important trail for the British Government, had been obliged to play the part of a blind man.

In any moment of those two terrible years, living with his life in his hands amongst the spies of the Mahdi, Tookum had been discovered to possess sight, would have lost, not only his eyes, but his life as well.

The relentless Mahdi would have first put out his eyes, and then would have tortured and executed him.

And in those two years Tookum's ears had done the work of his eyes.

They had taught him to distinguish every sound of the market-place and the highway.

Tookum had learned to judge by the very tread of a camel its breed and birthplace, whether it had come from near or far, the weight of its load, and the nature of its rider.

He knew now that the jingle of metal which he heard across the marshes was the jingle of native iron.

It had a more sonorous ring than the imported metal of Europe.

It was the jingle of the rings on the hobbles by which camels are secured.

The ordinary hack camel of the caravan routes needs no hobbles.

He never strays far from camp when he is relieved from his burden for the night. He needs no slanger to teach him the peril of wild beasts, and he will not stray far even in search of pasture.

But the sleeker breeds of racing camels are less manageable, and Tookum was quick to realise that a considerable body of men, well mounted, were passing along the fringe of the marsh inshore, heading for the same point as the boats of the expedition.

He drew from the inside of his leopard-skin a long and slender dervish knife.

It was a knife such as money could not buy in all the Sudan, for it was made from the blade of a true Damascus sword.

And, sharpening this terrible weapon on the palm of his great hand, the negro giant sat in the moonlight, vowing to himself that Heart Bitter, as he called his blade, should take many a life before any hurt should come to his young white masters.

Presently the launch, rounding bend after bend in the mysterious wide current of the moonlit river, passed out of the marsh belt and into a strange and wild-looking country.

Here the river passed by flat, clayey lands that were cast up into hundreds of queer-looking tent-like erections, which looked more like tents or human habitations than what they were—the work of countless insects.

In the white light of the moon there was something uncanny in this strange patch of country, riddled and worked up by millions upon millions of ants into conical and kin-shaped mounds.

Tookum eyed this strange land with indifference.

A few hundreds of anthills were no novel sight to him.

But presently Skeleton, struggling in his dream of the almond-rock prison, woke up with a start and a kick, which landed Arty in the neck.

Arty woke up with a start and a grunt, and, striking out with his fist, punched Horace in the nose.

Horace bleated and kicked out with a hind hoof, which, luckily, was still encased in a boxing-glove, for it descended with a bang upon Mr. Lal Tata's shiny black head.

Lal sat up in the bottom of the boat with a jerk like a jack-in-the-box.

"Who hit me kicks in the neck?" he demanded. "Some of you boys play foot-tricks with your master when he makes himself some repose. You shall write me ten million lines each!"

Dick Dorrington sat up and rubbed his eyes with his knuckles.

"It wasn't us, sir!" he said. "It was old Horace kicked out. I expect the bloater-paste and the muffins disagreed with him, and made him dream nightmares and—Crumbs! Look! Is that a real nightmare on the bank there?"

And Dick pointed to the grotesque outlines of the anthills which rose on both banks of the white river.

"They look like a great camp of tents," said Arty, sitting up on the gunwale of the whaler.

"They are anthills," said Mr. Lal Tata. "In yonder quaintsome pics the industrious ant has his habitations. It is he who builds these most wonderful structures. Perhaps it was from the ant peoples that the old kings of Egypt got their ideas for the building of mighty pyramids."

"It looks more like a map of the moon than anything else," remarked Tom Morton. "But look yonder up the river. There are a few houses amongst the anthills. That must be El Katif!"

Tom was not wrong in his conjecture. The motor-launch sheered in towards the bank where the few miserable hovels, rising in a patch of cultivated ground, stood by the riverside.

Captain Handyman slowed his engines, but still kept enough way on so that the last whaler, being cast off, should run in towards the bank, and land by a small sloping bank, which appeared to be the only landing-place for this miserable village.

"Stand by to slip there," he called out, "and take an oar and give her a sheer into the bank, Dick. I'll leave you with enough way on for that."

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered Dick Dorrington, with seamanlike alacrity. And, stepping to the stern of the boat, he stood ready with the steering-oar, ready to give the whaler a sheer in towards the bank when the tow-ropes was cast off.

"Slip!" exclaimed Captain Handyman from the launch.

The tow-ropes slipped, and the No. 4 whaler, running on her own with the impetus of her towage, sheered in towards the dark bank, sending a ripple from either side of her sharp bows as she plunged towards the shadowy bank.

Dick, standing in the stern, strained his eyes, peering into the gloom which lay under the high sloping banks.

Handling a whaler with a steering oar was a novelty to him. But he brought her in towards the bank cleverly enough, dodging some huge, rounded, water-worn stones which peeped up above the oily, swirling current of the river.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Chip, as the whaler slid between two of these huge obstructions. "They look just like the backs of hippopotamuses!"

"Hippos your great-aunt!" replied Arty contemptuously. "Why, I'll bet that

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there isn't a hippopotamus within five hundred—"

All of a sudden Arty's remarks were cut short by a huge puff of water which seemed to burst from right under the bows of the whaler.

"Wow!" he yelled. "Look out, boys! The whaler's trying to walk up the bank!" And sure enough the whaler suddenly heaved up on end, as though she were trying to climb out of the river on her own account.

Higher and higher rose her bow till it pointed almost towards the sky. There was an avalanche of boys and cases and bundles towards her stern.

Arty was pitched headforemost on top of Horace, who kicked and struggled fiercely as three or four hundredweight of biscuit and ammunition tins poured down on him.

Lal came down to the stern of the heaved-up whaler on the avalanche of tins just in time to receive a punch on the nose from Horace's gloved hind-foot good enough to make him see stars and pink stripes.

"Al! Al!" he yelled. "The great stones get up out of the river to crush us!"

The whaler was within an ace of capsizing as she slid back.

One of the great stones had apparently heaved up under her keel, which had run on it with a soft grating sound.

The boys, clinging to the gunwale, managed to right her as she slid, and up from under her bows rose a huge shape, which grunted and snorted, and clambered up the sloping bank, disappeared with a puffing and blowing over the ridge.

At the same moment there was a splash in the water outside.

Horace, struggling out of the mess of boxes and bundles in the stern of the whaler, had tumbled overboard.

He swam ashore, and stumbled up the clayey bank, the boxing-gloves that were tied to his hoofs hindering him sadly.

The boys called to him. But Horace had had enough boating for the day, and was not stopping for any more.

They saw his grim head and horns and shaggy, singed shape for a moment against the stars. Then he, too, disappeared over the ridge of the river-bank.

"It was a hippo after all!" said Arty ruefully. "What a funk he must have been in when we ran plump on his back! No wonder he heaved up out of his mud-bath and scooted! Shove her inshore, Dick, and let us see where he has gone to. I've never seen a hippo out of the Zoo before!"

Dick showed the steering-oar down in the mud which lay amongst the great stones scattered inshore.

It was easy to see now why Dick had failed to see the hippo, which had stowed himself among these, hiding till he had a chance of getting ashore and ravaging the fields of the villagers of El Katif.

The whaler nosed against the shore as the sharp bow took the mud.

There was a rush of boys over the bows, and Mr. Lal Tata, who was sprawling on his back on the floor of the boat under a pile of biscuit-tins and gun-cases, shouted to them not to be rash.

"Beware of hippopotamus, boys!" yelled Lal. "He is very dangerous chaps when he gets cross. Do not venture into darksome places. He will catch you bendlings!"

But the boys took no notice of Lal's cry. Laughing and shouting, they scrambled up the slippery bank of clay.

"It's all right, sir!" shouted Arty. "We are just going to have a squirt at the hippo!"

He swung himself over the edge of the bank. Then he took a step or two forward.

Beyond the edge of the bank there was a small open space.

This was backed by a thicket of great bamboos, which swung and rattled lightly in the night breeze.

"Now, I wonder which way old hippo went?" exclaimed Arty, as he advanced towards the dark shadow of the bamboo thicket.

The hippopotamus did not leave him long in doubt.

There was a crash amongst the canes, and out of the shadow of the bamboos shot a huge shape like a tank, which charged at express speed at the shadowy little group of white-clad boys.

"Look out, boys! Hop it!" cried Chip.

There was a rush for the bank. A charging hippopotamus is no joke.

It was Arty who was out of luck.

As he turned to run a lump of greasy Nile clay, which stuck to the sole of his rubber shoe, slipped him up, and threw him as though he were on skates.

He fell face downwards before the huge shape, which thundered over the hard ground towards him with a vicious grunt and a gnashing of tusks.

The boys stood for a second at the edge of the bank in horror.

It seemed as though it were all up with Arty.

He would be trampled to death before they could do anything.

But out of the darkness came the plip of busted boxing-gloves.

A white shape leaped through the night in huge bounds.

It was Horace, the goat!

His head was down and his tail was up, and he rushed for the fat, armoured sides of the hippo like a destroyer ramming a battleship.

Bang!

It sounded just like the punch of a giant's boxing-glove as Horace's head of bone and horns charged into the stomach of the angry hippopotamus!

(Another magnificent long instalment of this amazing serial in next Monday's issue of THE BOYS' FRIEND. I should be glad if readers would write and let me know what they think of this new story.)

THE STRANDED SCHOOLBOYS!

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of
FRANK RICHARDS & CO.,
the Chums of the School in
the Backwoods.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD**

The 1st Chapter. Roped In.

"I guess those galoots are looking for trouble!"

Bob Lawless knitted his brows as he spoke.

The chums of Cedar Creek School were camped by the bank of a rushing stream high up in the rocky Cascade Mountains.

Yen Chin, the Chinese, was tending the camp-fire, and Chunky Todgers was busily engaged in cooking antelope-steaks.

Frank Richards and Bob and Vere Beauclerc were standing by the bank, watching the swift rush of the waters that rippled and glistened in the sunshine.

On their left, at a distance of two hundred yards, there was an abrupt fall in the stream where the waters dashed over rugged rocks to a lower level.

The roar of the falling waters awoke incessant echoes in the pine-forests that clothed the hills.

On the right of the three chums the stream ran broad and smooth towards the falls, but the current was swift and strong, and driftwood whirled past them at a rapid rate.

Bob Lawless, looking up the stream, fixed his eyes upon a birch-bark canoe that had come into sight.

There were two paddlers in the canoe, and little could be seen of them so far but their broad Stetson hats.

The chums of Cedar Creek were rather surprised to see the canoe in that lonely recess of the North-Western mountains.

The canoe came on, and apparently the occupants were unaware of the falls that lay so near ahead.

"The silly jays!" said Bob Lawless. "They must be tenderfeet, and no mistake. They'll be over the falls if they don't look spry!"

"Better call out to them," said Vere Beauclerc.

"They won't hear at this distance."

Frank Richards watched the canoe and its occupants as it came nearer and became clearer to the view.

He expected to see men in it—trappers or miners belonging to the locality; but he soon discerned that the pair were boys.

"Two blessed kids!" said Bob. "What on earth are they doing up here in the mountains?"

Frank smiled.

"Same as us, perhaps—on holiday," he remarked.

"Tain't safe for kids to come to this section on holiday," said Bob. "We can look after ourselves, but those two jays can't. They'll be over the falls, and that's sudden death. Can't they hear the water, the jays?"

Bob put his hands to his mouth, and shouted with all the force of his lungs.

"Hallo, there! Look out!"

Frank Richards and Beauclerc added their voices.

For some moments they did not seem to be heard.

Then one of the canoers looked up and stared towards them.

As he raised his head the three chums caught sight of his face under the broad hat, and they recognised him.

"Gunter!" exclaimed Frank.

"By gum! And the other galoot's Keller!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

There was no mistake about it. The two canoers were Gunten and Keller, their schoolfellows at Cedar Creek.

Frank Richards & Co. were on the worst of terms with the two Swiss at Cedar Creek School; but they did not think of that now.

They thought only of the danger of the canoe.

"Gunter!" shouted Bob, in stentorian tones. "You duffer! Look out! Can't you see you're heading for the falls?"

Bob's powerful voice sounded through the roar of the waterfall.

Kern Gunten started up.

A cigarette dropped from his lips.

The cad of Cedar Creek had been smoking and talking to his companion as he idly paddled on the mountain stream, oblivious of the danger ahead.

It now burst on him suddenly.

Standing in the canoe, he stared ahead to where the line of dancing foam marked the rocks over which the stream poured and thundered.

His sallow face became white.

Keller, observing the peril at the same time, sat like one stunned, the paddle idle in his hand.

A skillful canoer, with a nerve of iron, might have shot the fall with success, though the attempt would have been fraught with terrible peril; but neither Gunten nor Keller was of that sort.

Both of them were utterly unnerved by the sudden and fearful danger that had suddenly burst on them.

"Help!"

That was Gunten's reply to Bob Lawless' shout of warning.



Gunter and Keller held frantically on to the rope, the only link between them and safety, and the canoe whirled from under their feet.

The canoe was moving faster now, coming on rapidly towards the spot where the three chums stood; but it was too far out in the stream for them to think of reaching it when it came abreast.

To venture into the water was madness, for the current would have whirled away the strongest swimmer in a second.

Frank Richards & Co. stood in dismay. They could not help the unfortunate canoers, and the latter evidently could not help themselves.

The canoe rushed on.

"The rope!" panted Bob at last. "There's a chance! Get my lasso, Franky; and for goodness' sake, buck up!"

Without stopping to speak, Frank Richards ran back to the camp, where Chunky Todgers was still cooking in placid contentment.

Bob Lawless shouted again to the canoers:

"Gunter!"

"Help!" came the reply.

"Look out, Gunten! I'm going to heave my lasso when you come abreast. Catch it, and make it fast to the canoe, and we'll try to pull you in! Savvy?"

"Help!"

Gunter was so terrified by the danger he had recklessly run into that it was doubtful if he understood.

But it was the only chance of saving the canoers.

The two Swiss began paddling again, making a desperate attempt to reach the bank where Bob and Beauclerc stood.

But they struggled with the rapid current in vain.

The canoe whirled on.

The paddle slipped from Keller's hand, torn away by the fierce water from his nerveless grasp.

"Oh, the jay!" muttered Bob.

"Franky—"

"Here you are, Bob!"

Frank Richards dashed up breathlessly with the lasso.

The rancher's son grasped it.

The canoe was almost abreast of the schoolboys now, but a good twenty yards out on the turbid stream.

"Watch out, Gunten!" shouted Bob.

The Swiss made a sign that he understood.

With a steady hand, though his face was pale, Bob Lawless made the cast, and the rope uncoiled through the air towards the whirling canoe.

Bob was a master of the lasso, and the cast was unerring.

The looped rope dropped fairly into the whirling canoe.

Gunter made a clutch at it, and Keller at the same moment, and both of them obtained a grasp on the rope.

If they had been quick and active—and cool—they could have secured the rope to the canoe, and the fellows ashore could have pulled them in.

But they were not cool.

They held frantically on to the rope, the only link between them and safety, and the canoe whirled on from under their feet.

Frank and Bob and Beauclerc were holding on to the lasso with both hands, and it tautened.

As the canoe was swept onward Gunten and Keller crashed into the water.

For a moment they disappeared from sight.

But the pull on the rope told that they were still holding on; and in a moment their heads appeared on the surface.

"Hold on!" muttered Bob.

The three chums held fast, and drew on the rope.

The lives of the two Swiss depended now on their keeping hold of the rope, and they were clinging to it like cats.

The rushing current drove them on towards the falls, but the rope held, with the result that they swung in towards the bank lower down the stream.

Frank Richards & Co., still pulling in the rope, moved along the bank, and in a few minutes more Gunten and Keller were dragged out of the water, drenched, dripping, and almost fainting.

As they rolled, exhausted, on the rocky bank, the canoe disappeared over the falls lower down, to be dashed into a hundred pieces on the rocks far below.

The 2nd Chapter. Unpleasant Guests.

"That was a close call, I guess," gasped Bob Lawless.

Kern Gunten sat up dazedly.

"Safe now, Gunten," said Frank.

"Oh!" gasped the Swiss, shuddering.

Keller groaned. He was dazed, and still quivering with terror.

"All O.K. now," said Bob Lawless. "You've had a jolly narrow escape, I guess."

"Where's the canoe?" panted Gunten, as he staggered to his feet.

"Over the falls."

Gunter shivered.

But for Bob Lawless and his rope the two Swiss would have been over the falls with the canoe, and lying lifeless under the foam on the cruel rocks.

"All's well that ends well," said Frank Richards comfortingly. "You chaps had better peel. This sun will dry your clobber pretty soon. We'll get you some blankets."

"Thanks!" muttered Gunten.

"You've dropped in just in time for dinner," grinned Bob.

Gunter and Keller accompanied the three chums from the bank to the camp.

"I—I say, I believe you fellows have saved our lives," muttered Keller.

Bob laughed.

"Not much doubt about that, I guess," he said. "You're welcome. Get your duds off, and get into some blankets before you catch cold."

That advice was too good not to be taken.

Gunter and Keller stripped, and rubbed themselves dry, and then sat down wrapped in blankets while their clothes dried.

"Dinner's ready!" announced Chunky Todgers.

"You'll join us, of course, you two?" said Bob.

"You bet!" answered Gunten. "We've lost all our truck in the canoe. I guess there'll be no getting any of it back."

"I guess not, unless you dive under the waterfall for it."

"Then we're stranded."

"Looks like it," agreed Bob. "We can stand you grub-stakes, though, till you get fixed."

Gunter looked at him very curiously.

Bob Lawless seemed to have forgotten entirely that the Swiss was his enemy at school, and to be thinking only of good-natured hospitality.

That was not Gunten's way at all, and he could not understand it—if he had cared to understand it.

The schoolboy explorers sat down to an ample dinner round the camp-fire, and the two Swiss joined them.

Both of them looked glum.

All their "truck" had gone over the falls, and they were left in the mountains with nothing but their clothes.

It was not a pleasant situation, and the fact that they were dependent on the hospitality of Frank Richards & Co. did not make it any more pleasant.

"What are you fellows doing up here?" asked Bob Lawless while the meal was going on. "I never expected to see you in the Cascade Mountains."

"We came up North-West for our holiday, same as you did," answered Gunten. "We were doing it in a canoe, though."

"Good idea—if you knew how to handle a canoe," said Bob, with a smile. "A bit risky otherwise."

"I've done a lot of canoeing," growled Gunten. "This country is new to me, of course. I guess we're stumped now. Grub, and clothes, and tent, and rifles—all gone over the falls. It's rotten luck."

"I guess you were lucky not to go over with them."

"I know that, but that doesn't make it any better," grunted the Swiss. "I wondered whether we should fall in with your crowd up here. I never reckoned it would be like this, hang it!"

"Well, you can get to Last Chance Camp, and home from there," said Bob. "Or, if you've got the dust, you can get a new canoe there, and buy fresh truck."

"I'm not short of money," said Gunten arrogantly.

"Then you're fixed all right. It only

means a tramp to Last Chance. You can buy anything you want there, if you've got the dust."

"How far is it?"

"About twenty miles" following this valley and the lower trail.

"Twenty miles on foot, in this kind of country! Oh, gum!"

"I wish we had hosses to lend you," said Bob. "But we've only got our own gees and the pack-mule. But we'll fix you up with grub, anyhow, and give you your bearings. Stay here till tomorrow, and start at dawn, and you'll land in Last Chance by dark."

"Twenty miles in a day, in this country!" said Gunten. "That's rather too big an order for me."

"Blest if I see what you'll do, then, unless you roll down the mountain."

Gunter grunted, and was silent.

Dinner finished, Chunky Todgers rolled himself under a tree, to take a nap, as was his custom.

Gunter and Keller changed from the blankets into their clothes, which had dried now, between the sun and the fire.

Gunter turned a cigarette-case out of his pocket, and muttered a curse as he found the contents soaked with water.

"You galoots got anything to smoke?" he asked.

"No!" answered Frank Richards curtly.

Gunter sneered.

"Still keeping up the high-faluting game in the mountains?" he asked.

"What for? Miss Meadows can't spot you here, I guess."

"Oh, rats!"

"If you'd been looking after your canoe, instead of smoking, your truck mightn't have gone over the fall," said Bob Lawless.

"Thanks! When I want a sermon I'll ask for one, Lawless."

Bob's eyes gleamed, but he made no rejoinder.

The Swiss was a guest in the camp, and Bob resolved to bear with him as patiently as he could till he took his departure.

"You fellows staying in this spot long?" Gunten asked, after a long pause.

"We were going on to-day," answered Bob; "but if you're staying over the night we'll stay."

"Look here," said Gunten, "we'll join you in your trip, if you like."

"Oh!" said Bob.

"We can get horses from somewhere," said Gunten. "In fact, you could lend me a mount to ride down to Last Chance and buy a couple of gees. I've got the money. I could sell them again in the Thompson Valley when I get home. I guess I've had enough of canoeing. What do you say?"

Frank Richards & Co. looked rather uncomfortable.

They did not want the company of Gunten and Keller, whom they did not like, and who, they knew, disliked them intensely.

They were sorry for Gunten's disaster, but that was really no reason why the two Swiss should plant themselves on the party in this way.

"Well?" said Gunten.

"I guess we'll ask you to excuse us, Gunten," said Bob candidly. "We don't pull together, you know, and it would only end in a row sooner or later. We'll help you all we can, but we can't travel together."

"Dash it all, Gunten, we're always rowing at school," said Frank Richards. "You don't want our company."

"Any port in a storm," said Gunten, with a sneer.

"Well, if you put it on that footing, you can hardly expect us to agree," said Bob Lawless tartly.

"No w



THE STRANDED SCHOOLBOYS!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Don't mend your manners, Gunten, I'll give you a black eye to carry away with you."

"Get a move on, then!" said Gunten contemptuously.

Chunky sat up.

"I guess I will, if you want it," he exclaimed.

"Well, why don't you?" sneered the Swiss.

Chunky Todgers jumped up in great wrath.

"Chuck it, Chunky!" said Bob. "You're not going to fight Gunten. There's not going to be any fighting here."

"Look here, Bob—"

"Go to sleep, old chap. If Gunten fights anybody, it's going to be me!" said Bob.

"Oh, all right!" yawned Chunky Todgers. "Give him one in the eye for me, Bob. I don't mind."

And Chunky curled up on a bearskin again.

Bob Lawless turned to the Swiss.

"Now, you'd better draw in your horns, Gunten," said Bob very quietly. "I don't want to row with you, as you're a guest here, in a way, but if you're spoiling for a fight I'm ready to oblige you."

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.

Evidently he was not spoiling for a fight with Bob Lawless.

Gunten and Keller moved away again, scowling together.

The 3rd Chapter. Stranded!

The holiday-party from Cedar Creek remained camped in the upland valley that afternoon, on account of the two unexpected guests.

It had been Frank Richards & Co.'s intention to move on westward, but it was left now till the morning to "pull up stakes."

When the night fell on the valley the party gathered round the camp-fire, fed with branches and pine-cones, and glowing merrily.

At supper Gunten and Keller seemed to throw off their resentful mood, and they became a good deal more agreeable.

Kern Gunten chatted away quite pleasantly, and gave the schoolboy explorers the impression that he was not so ill-tempered and thankless a fellow as he had appeared.

Night lay dark on the mountains, and through the gloom came the sound of the falling waters from the cascade near at hand.

Close by the camp the horses and the pack-mule were tethered on the trail-ropes, and lying at rest.

Bob Lawless rose from his seat on a log at last.

"Time to turn in!" he remarked.

"My watch first!" said Frank Richards. Kern Gunten gave them a sharp look.

"You keep watch at night?" he asked.

"You bet!" answered Bob.

"But surely there's no danger here?"

"Can't be too careful in the hills. There are a good many horse-thieves in this section. This isn't the Thompson Valley, you know. We're in the North-West now."

Gunten's brow clouded for a moment.

"Well, I guess it's just as well to be careful," he agreed. "You take it in turns, I suppose?"

"Correct!"

"We'll take our turns, then, while we're with you."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bob good-naturedly. "You fellows get a good sleep. You've a long walk before you to-morrow. We can keep watch."

"But we'd rather stand our share!" said Keller anxiously. "We don't want to sleep while you fellows are staying awake. It's not fair!"

Bob Lawless hesitated.

"I suppose you can trust us to keep awake?" said Gunten rather disagreeably.

"Look here, Keller and I will keep one watch together, if you like. Dash it all, we're simply not going to snooze all the time while you chaps do sentry-go!"

"Well, if you like, of course," said Bob.

"It's only fair," said Gunten.

"Right you are, then!"

"Which watch will you take, then?" asked Frank Richards.

"Well, suppose you call us at midnight," said Gunten. "Then we'll take a couple of hours."

"You'd really do better to get a good rest before your tramp to-morrow," said Vere Beauclerc.

"What rot! You're going on the trail to-morrow. I suppose we don't need any more rest than you do."

Beauclerc smiled without replying.

In point of fact, the two Swiss were not by any means so fit as the Canadian schoolboys, and were not equal to roughing it as they did.

But Gunten was allowed to have his way.

Yen Chin eyed him rather curiously while he was speaking, with a peculiar gleam in his almond eyes.

Neither Yen Chin nor Chunky Todgers shared in keeping watch, as a rule.

The three chums preferred to rely upon themselves; and Chunky, at least, could never be depended on to keep awake.

Frank Richards took first watch, and the rest of the party rolled themselves in their blankets and stretched themselves on the ground, with their feet to the fire. They were asleep in a very few minutes. Frank, sitting on a boulder close by the

camp, with his rifle on his knees, remained on the watch. At the approach of midnight, however, he rose, and shook Gunten by the shoulder.

"The Swiss started up.

"Your turn," said Frank. "But if you'd rather stick to your blankets, Gunten, I'll call Bob."

"I guess not," said Gunten, rising and stretching himself, with a yawn. "Fair's fair, you know. Come on, Keller!"

He shook his companion, and Keller rose.

Frank Richards was glad enough to roll himself in his blanket and sleep, and in a few minutes his eyes were soundly sealed.

Gunten and Keller sat on a log near at hand, wide awake, and certainly watchful, but their watchfulness, curiously enough, was directed towards the sleeping schoolboys.

They spoke occasionally in low whispers. Kern Gunten rose to his feet at last.

"All O.K., Keller!" he whispered, almost inaudibly.

Keller caught him by the arm.

"Let up!" he breathed.

"What's the trouble?"

"The Chinese's awake!" breathed Keller. "He's watching us!"

Kern Gunten drew a quick breath.

He glanced towards Yen Chin, who was rolled in a blanket within a few yards, half seen in the flicker of the dying camp-fire.

The little Celestial was motionless. Gunten listened intently.

"He's asleep, like the rest, Keller," he whispered at last.

Keller's grip tightened on his companion's arm.

"I tell you he's awake!" he muttered. "I caught the freight on his face for a second, and his eyes were open. He don't trust us, Gunten, and he's watching, sure."

Gunten gritted his teeth hard.

The little Chinese's face was hidden in shadow, and Gunten fixed his eyes upon the spot, waiting for the next leap of the dying flame.

It came, and for a moment Yen Chin's face was visible.

The eyes were closed, as if in slumber. Gunten breathed with relief.

"He's fast asleep," he whispered. "You were mistaken, Keller. He's as safe as the rest. Why shouldn't he be?"

"He's a suspicious little hound. I saw him watching you when you were proposing to take watch."

"It's all O.K., I tell you. Come on!"

"I guess—"

"I tell you it's all right!" muttered Gunten impatiently. "We want to get a good start before they wake. Come on!"

Keller yielded to his companion, and rose from the log.

With noiseless footsteps the two Swiss backed away from the fire in the direction of the staked-out horses.

The fire died down again, and all was gloom.

Then Yen Chin, the Chinese, moved, and his almond eyes opened very wide indeed. His head was slightly raised, and he peered through the darkness.

Dark as it was now round the camp, he could see that Gunten and Keller were no longer seated on the log.

His eyes glittered, and he sat up quietly. From the direction of the horses there came a sound of movement and the snort of a horse.

Yen Chin rose on his knees and moved quietly towards Frank Richards and shook him gently by the shoulder.

"Flanky!" he whispered.

Frank Richards' eyes opened.

Yen Chin placed a finger on his mouth before he could speak, and Frank gazed up at him in the gloom, amazed.

"No talk!" murmured Yen Chin. "Baddee foleign tlash; keepee watchee, Guntee and Kellee go takee way hossee, Oh, yes!"

Frank Richards started violently.

He threw off the Celestial's hand, and sat up, throwing aside his blanket.

Such treachery seemed incredible, even on the part of Gunten and Keller, rogues as he knew them to be.

"Flanky, listen!" muttered the Chinese. Frank listened.

The fire had died down more darkly, and he could see little but the vague shape of the pine-trees and the great rocks.

But from the direction of the tethered horses sounds came faintly.

The horses were being loosened from the tether.

Frank Richards sprang to his feet, his eyes gleaming with anger and indignation. As he did so Keller came back towards the camp.

He was heading for the saddles and bridles, which were heaped near the fire. His intention was plain enough.

The trail-ropes had been unfastened, and Gunten had the horses in hand; but bridles and a couple of saddles were wanted by the young rascals.

Frank Richards kicked the fire, and a gust of flame shot up from the embers, lighting up the camp.

Keller started back with a cry.

"You rascal!" shouted Frank. "What are you doing?"

He ran angrily towards the Swiss.

Keller, with a gasping cry, ran back into the darkness, calling:

"Look out, Gunten!"

In the blaze of the revived fire Gunten was visible for a moment, holding the trail-ropes in a bunch, with the five horses attached.

But the flame died down, and the darkness swallowed him again.

Frank ran on in the gloom, close behind Keller.

He overtook the gasping Swiss, and seized him by the shoulder.

"You rotten cad!" he panted.

Keller turned on him desperately, his hand clutching up a loose rock.

Crash!

Frank Richards gave a cry as the rock crashed on his chest, sending him spinning backwards.

He fell heavily to the earth.

Bob and Beauclerc, and even Chunky Todgers, were wide awake now, and on their feet, calling out to know what was the matter.

As Frank Richards fell Keller ran on and joined his comrade.

"Vamoose!" he panted.

Gunten was already running, leading the five horses after him; and Keller ran with him.

There was no time then to think of saddles or bridles.

Bob Lawless uttered a shout as he heard the trampling of hoofs from the darkness.

"The hosses! They're loose!"

"Where's Frank?"

"Flanky he!" called out Yen Chin.

The little Chinese was on his knees by Frank Richards' side. "Flanky hurt!"

"What?"

Bob and Beauclerc rushed to the spot, almost stumbling over them in the gloom.

Frank staggered to his feet, panting.

"They've taken the horses!" he gasped.

"Gunten and Keller! Keller knocked me over with a rock!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Down the valley, hidden from sight, the ringing hoofs could be heard, receding farther every moment.

Bob Lawless gave a yell of wrath.

"Halt, you coyotes!" he roared.

"Gunten, bring those hosses back, or I'll fire after you!"

He had his rifle in his hand, and he threw it to his shoulder as he called.

There was no reply save the jingling of hoofs on the rocks.

Crash!

Bob Lawless was as good as his word. He fired high, however, though it was the thought of the horses, rather than the two rascally Swiss, that made him do so.

The report of the rifle rang among the rocks with a thousand echoes.

"Come on!" muttered Bob.

He rushed in pursuit, guided by the sound of the hoofs, with Beauclerc and Chunky Todgers at his heels, breathing wrath and vengeance.

Frank Richards followed more slowly. He was aching and breathless from the heavy blow he had received.

But the trampling hoofs receded farther and farther.

The chums could guess that Keller and Gunten were mounted now, and on foot they had no chance against the horses.

It was risky enough to ride unbridled horses in the darkness, but the way down the valley lay clear for some miles, as Gunten had observed during the day.

Farther on there was a rocky descent, where it would be necessary to dismount. But there the Swiss would be far out of reach.

Bob Lawless halted at last.

"No go!" he said abruptly. "We can't overtake them on foot. Let's get back to camp!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek, in a furious mood, returned to the camp-fire.

The 4th Chapter. Neck or Nothing!

There was no more sleep for Frank Richards & Co. that night.

They replenished the fire, and sat down by it to discuss the situation.

Gunten and Keller had taken away the horses of the whole party, leaving only the pack-mule, a useful animal enough, but useless for pursuing the amateur horse-thieves.

"The sneaking coyotes!" said Bob Lawless between his teeth. "I guess Gunten had this in his mind all the time when he was proposing to take his turn at keeping watch."

"We oughtn't to have trusted him," said Beauclerc.

"Well, who'd have thought of a treacherous trick like this?"

Yen Chin grinned.

"Me tinkee," he said. "No trustee Omttee. Me watchee, wakee Flanky. Oh, yes, Chinese vellee clevee ole lasca!"

Bob grinned.

"We're stranded," he went on. "Of course, those galoos don't mean to steal the hosses. Even Gunten would draw a line at that, I reckon. They've borrowed them, and left us stranded. They didn't want to walk to Last Chance to-morrow; and they did want to play us a rotten trick. I guess they'll leave the critters at Last Chance for us—if they get there! Like a silly jay, I told Gunten all about the trails, and how to get there, bother him!"

Bob gritted his teeth. "Fancy playing a trick like this on us, after we yanked them out of the river, and saved their worthless skins!"

"Guntee velly bad fellee!" said Yen Chin. "And me no tinkee gettee back hossee."

"You young ass, Gunten wouldn't dare to steal them!" said Beauclerc.

"No gettee back, allec samee. When Guntee done with hossee, turnee loose, me tinkee. Oh, yes!"

"My hat!" murmured Frank Richards. Bob Lawless nodded.

That Gunten would attempt to sell the horses, like a professional horse-thief, was not probable. He was none too honest, but he had the consequences to fear.

But it was only too probable that he would turn the animals loose to wander, perhaps intending to explain later that they had got loose by accident.

In that case, he would only have to answer for a practical joke; but the effect would be the same for the chums, who would be stranded in the mountains without their horses—to say nothing of their value.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Beauclerc at last. "Gunten's rotter enough for anything. I'm afraid he don't mean us to see the hosses again."

Bob Lawless was thinking hard.

He did not speak for some time, and his chums were silent.

"I guess it's so," said Bob, at length.

"We've got to get the hosses back, or make up our minds to it. We can't run them down, and there's no trail on the rocks. We've got to head them off."

"Head them off!" repeated Frank.

"Sure! They're bound to make for Last Chance. It's the only settlement in this part of the mountains, and they're lost otherwise. They've got no grub, and only the clothes they stand up in. When they get to the end of this valley they'll have to go slow in the dark; it's a dangerous trail. Last Chance Camp is five hundred feet lower down than this valley. I guess we can head them off, but we shall have to wait for morning."

"But—"

"The camp's twenty miles," said Bob.

"That's by the trails. But in a straight line three miles would take us into the trail a bit out of the camp. Only it means climbing down through rough mountain, through the pine forest, with your neck to pay for it if you make a slip. You fellows game?"

"Phew!" said Frank.

"It's that, or lose the hosses," said Bob.

"We're game," said Beauclerc quietly, and Frank Richards nodded.

The three chums were grave enough as they made their preparations for the adventure.

But they did not hesitate.

As soon as the first rays of dawn gleamed down on the mountains they started.

Bob Lawless was the guide; his unerring instinct in woodcraft was the only guide they had.

Gunten and Keller, with the horses, were certain to follow the path Bob had explained to them, to get to the camp.

Horses could not have gone down the step hillside directly. It was dangerous enough on foot. But it was possible.

From the high uplands where the schoolboys had camped the descent, in a direct line, was rough and precipitous, by sloping cliffs and yawning crevices, shadowed by scrubby pine.

The three chums plunged into the pine-wood, and the descent commenced, Bob Lawless leading the way.

In places the descent was so steep that they had to cling to rocks and to thickets, to avoid rolling down; and in other places they forced their way through tangled thickets, with scratched hands and torn clothes.

But they kept on steadily as the sun rose higher in the sky.

They were able to look down into the lower valley at last, where the trail lay to the camp, worn by countless hoofs.

By that trail Gunten was bound to pass if he was heading for Last Chance.

"I guess we're well ahead of the thieves," said Bob breathlessly. "With the hosses they had fifteen miles to cover, to get as far as the trail yonder. And I calculate they wouldn't ride fast in the dark and not knowing the country. More likely they waited for daylight once they were safe out of our reach."

"More likely," agreed Frank.

The three chums clambered on, and forced their way through the last thicket of spruce, and reached the open trail through the valley.

There they sat down to rest.

They were very nearly exhausted by the rough clamber down the mountain-side, and glad of a chance of getting their breath.

The sun rose higher on the hills, as they sat and watched the trail.

It was two hours before they heard a jingling of horses' hoofs.

As Bob had surmised, the amateur horse-thieves had detoured their ride till daylight, after once putting a good distance between themselves and Frank Richards & Co.

Bob Lawless rose, and drew his comrades into the cover of a lump of pines.

"I guess it's our galoos!" he said.

The chums of Cedar Creek watched the trail between the trees. The jingling hoofs came nearer, and they recognised Gunten and Keller.

As the two riders came abreast of the trees Frank Richards & Co. rushed out into the trail.

Before Gunten and Keller even knew what was happening they were seized and dragged from the ponies' backs.

Bump, bump!

With loud yells the two Swiss landed on the ground.

They sat up dazedly, hardly believing their eyes as they saw the three chums standing over them.

"You!" stammered Keller.

"You!" gasped Gunten. "How did you get here?"

"I guess we got ahead of you, you pesky coyote!" roared Bob Lawless.

"Take the ponies, Cherub. Where are the other hosses, Gunten?"

"They—they got loose—"

"You turned them loose, you mean," said Bob. "I guess we shall have a hunt for them. But you're going through it first."

He took one of the trail-ropes, and coiled it grimly.

Gunten and Keller watched him apprehensively, and as Bob stepped towards them they made a sudden rush to escape. Frank and Beauclerc coiled them promptly.

"Stick 'em on the trail!" said Bob.

The two Swiss, quivering with apprehension, was flung face down on the trail, and held there. Then Bob Lawless got to work with the trail-ropes.

Gunten and Keller yelled wildly, as the coiled rope descended upon them in turns.

Bob Lawless was impartial. He gave them equal punishment, and he laid it on till his stout arm was aching.

By that time, however, Gunten and Keller were aching a good deal more than Bob's arm, and their wild yells had died away into gasping and groaning.

"I guess that will do!" panted Bob at last. "You'd better think twice before you start hoss-stealing again, you pesky coyotes! Now light out, before I give you some more!"

Gunten and Keller staggered to their feet.

As Bob made a threatening gesture with the trail-ropes they started, and went limping away down the trail, still groaning.

With all their cunning the two young rascals had not escaped the walk to the camp, after all.

"Now I guess we've got to round up the other hosses," said Bob Lawless. "I reckon we shall find them on the trail somewhere. You'll have to ride double with the Cherub, Franky. I'm the heaviest."

The three schoolboys mounted the two ponies, and started in the direction whence Gunten and Keller had come.

Yen Chin's pony and Chunky's little fat steed were sighted a short distance up the trail, and soon rounded in.

Gunten had brought them a good distance from the camp in the hills before letting them loose; but in that he had unconsciously played into the hands of the Cedar Creek fellows.

But Beauclerc's black horse, Demon, was not to be seen.

Till noon the three chums hunted for him, but without success, and at last they took their way up the mountain paths to the camp.

"I guess we'll find the critter later, Cherub," said Bob comfortingly.

Chunky Todgers came to meet them as they drew near the camp at last.

"Got the other critters?" asked Chunky. "Oh, good! Demon's come back!"

"Come back!" exclaimed Beauclerc. "Yes; he trotted in on his own," grinned Chunky. "Got a lot of sense, that hoss. There he is, Cherub."

There was a whinny, and the black horse came trotting up to greet his master.

Beauclerc's face was very bright as he fondled his horse.

"Good old gee!" said Bob Lawless. "No wonder we couldn't find him on the trails when he'd come home on his own accord. You ought to have thought of that, Cherub."

"I ought!" agreed Beauclerc, with a laugh.

"Dinner's ready," said Chunky. "I thought I'd get it ready. I've had mine, but I'll have another with you chaps, just to keep you company, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. enjoyed that dinner.

They felt that they had earned it. And two young rascals, limping wearily on the trail to Last Chance, still smarting from Bob's trail-ropes, were very far from enjoying themselves.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

THE SCHOOLBOY GOLD-SEKERS!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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BUNNY'S MISADVENTURE!

A Splendid New Story, introducing
**BOB TRAVERS & CO., the Chums of
Redclyffe School.**

By **HERBERT BRITTON.**

The 1st Chapter.

The Schoolboy Gardeners.

"Wire in, you fellows!"
Thus Bob Travers, the captain of the Fourth Form at Redclyffe School.

A crowd of juniors were congregated on the school allotments, armed with spades and forks.

Some months back the Redclyffians had spent many busy hours in planting potatoes.

The time had now arrived, however, for them to be dug up and stored during the winter.

Hence the reason why the juniors were now gathered on the school allotments, with their sleeves turned up, ready for work.

The Fourth Form had a piece of ground all to themselves.

Speculation as to the result of their efforts had been very rife since the sowing of the potatoes, and the Fourth-Formers were particularly anxious to turn over the ground.

Bob Travers' order to "wire in" was obeyed with alacrity.

Enthusiasm was at a high pitch, and it was not long before hundreds of potatoes were lying in heaps on the ground, ready to be carried off to their storing-place.

"My hat!" exclaimed Dicky Turner, as he straightened his back and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "I never expected such a crop as this!"

"Neither did I," agreed Bob Travers. "We sha'n't starve while we've got that lot. I guess Kaiser Bill would tear his hair if he saw us now. Starve us out! Why, the Huns couldn't do it in a million years!"

"No fear!" said Dicky. "We'd eat spuds morning, noon, and night rather than give the Germans best!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bob. "There isn't much likelihood of that happening, old son. I guess the Fourth Form have done their bit to whack the Hun. The fellows are sticking it well."

Dicky Turner cast his eyes round the allotments, and nodded in approval.

"Hear, hear!" he said. "But I say, Bob, that cad Wilson is slacking a bit. Better give him a shout."

"Wilson?" said Bob quietly, looking over the group of amateur gardeners.

"Oh, I see him! Wilson!" he called out, in a loud voice.

The cad of the Fourth was leaning idly on his spade some twenty to thirty yards away.

His brows were knitted in a disagreeable frown, and his eyes were fixed on a small village boy who was walking slowly along the lane leading to the school gates.

Whether Wilson heard Bob's shout or not, he made no reply.

"I'll soon wake him up!" declared Dicky Turner, picking up a potato and hurling it through the air.

Biff!

The potato landed full in the cad's chest, causing him to utter an exclamation and stagger backwards.

Bob Travers and his chums burst into a roar of laughter.

Wilson glared at them malevolently.

"Don't slack, Wilson!" said Bob Travers. "There's a lot to be done yet!"

"Rot!" growled the cad disdainfully. "I reckon it's disgraceful that we should be compelled to do menial work of this sort!"

"Don't be such a rotter!" exclaimed Dicky Turner wrathfully. "Do your bit to whack the Hun!"

"Don't talk piffle!" exclaimed Wilson disagreeably. "It's a bit too thick! We pay to come to the school, and then have to work like blessed niggers! The Head ought to be sacked for it! Why the dickens couldn't he pay some labourers to do the job?"

"For the simple reason that most of the labourers are in the Army," cried Dicky Turner, "and fighting for chaps like you! Wire in, you cad, or I'll biff another spud at you!"

"I shall please myself what I do!" said Wilson defiantly. "You— Hallo! What does old Merks want?"

The school porter was ambling slowly towards the allotments, followed by the village youngster whom Wilson had watched so intently strolling along the lane.

"Cheer-ho, Merks!" sang out Dicky Turner, with a wave of the hand. "Collar a fork, and dig up a few spuds!"

Wilson which suddenly came over Wilson's face as he took the note and read its contents.

"They were somewhat surprised, but they would have been more surprised could they have read the message which the cad had just received.

For this is how it ran:

"Dere Mister Wilson,—I'm very sorry, but Pink Eye as lost. I didn't think it would appen for one moment, but it as, and I must ask you to pay up to-night. Please meet me to-night outside the skool gates at eleven. You owe me twenty-two bob.—Yours truly BILL DOSHER.

"P.S.—Please tell bearer if I can expect you."

As Wilson read the note for a third time the colour gradually slipped away from his face.

"I opes as it ain't bad news, Master Wilson?" muttered the old porter, in sympathy.

"I—I—" faltered the cad. "No; it's nothing much." He turned to the village youngster. "Tell him 'all right,'" he added, at the same time crumpling the letter up in his hand.

The villager moved off, and the old porter turned in the direction of Bob Travers & Co.

Wilson remained, with one hand on the handle of his spade, gazing vacantly in front of him.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Jack Jackson. "Wilson looks pretty sick, doesn't he? Surely he hasn't received bad news!"

"Well, he appears to be a bit scared," said Bob Travers. "I'll go and ask him. I— My hat! He'll be knocked over in a minute if he's not careful. Look out, Wilson, you duffer!"

But Bob's warning came a little too late.

Wilson's thoughts had been dwelling on the message from William Doshier, a bookmaker with a shady reputation, and a frequenter of the Plough and Harrow, a respectable inn in the village.

Thus the cad did not observe that several of the schoolboy gardeners were working towards him.

Neither did he see that the juniors' intentions were to collide with him and send him sprawling on the ground as a punishment for slacking.

Wilson uttered a startled ejaculation as two juniors collided with him, and, losing his balance, he staggered with outstretched hands to the soft earth.

At the same moment several spadeful of earth were hurled in his direction, and as he sprawled on the ground they landed on his right hand, completely hiding it from view.

In falling Wilson had released his hold on the note from William Doshier, and it became buried in the earth.

The cad was about to scramble up and search for the note when, with a smile on his face, Bob Travers strode up.

"Let me give you a hand," he said in a friendly voice. "I hope that note you received didn't contain bad news?"

"It's no concern of yours if it did!" growled the cad. "Besides, I shouldn't come to you for sympathy! I'm hanged if I'm going to do any more rotten digging after this!"

"Don't be a rotter!" said Bob. "Pile in for the sake of the Form!"

"Hang the Form!" said Wilson, moving away from the juniors. "I refuse to touch a spade again! You can do what you like! You can complain to the Head for all I care! But even he won't make me dig up a lot of rotten potatoes if I don't want to!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Dicky hotly. "Let's pile into the cad and make him stick it!"

"No; let him go," said Bob Travers.

"But—"

"He's probably upset by the note he's just had," said Bob sympathetically. "It may have contained bad news, you know."

"Oh, it's just like you, Bob!" said Dicky, with a hopeless gesture. "You're a jolly sight too sympathetic! Why—"

"Better wire in with the digging, Dicky!" interposed Bob, with a grin. "We've wasted a bit too much time, and—"

"Hallo! What's up with that ass, Bunny?"

Bunny, the duffer of the Fourth, was kneeling on the ground, grovelling in the earth with both hands.

The juniors roared with laughter as they saw him.

"What's the matter, Bunny, you ass?" exclaimed Dicky Turner. "Can't you find the spuds?"

Bunny looked round. There was a very serious look on his round face.

"I am not trying to find the potatoes," he said simply. "I am looking for a sovereign."

"Sovereign!" exclaimed Dicky in amazement. "What—"

"It was a sovereign my papa gave me to keep for luck," he said. "I've always carried it in my waistcoat-pocket, for fear of losing it. And now—"

"Now you've lost it!" said Dicky Turner, with a grin. "Perhaps it's gone

off to exchange itself for a War Savings Certificate."

"Really, my dear Turner," said Bunny innocently, "I fail to see how you deduce that. The sovereign must have fallen out of my pocket whilst I was digging, and

"Artful little beggar!" said Dicky Turner, endeavouring to look serious, but failing in the attempt. "Fancy it doing that, you know!"

"Oh, come away, Dicky!" urged Bob Travers. "Leave Bunny to look for his quid. We shall never get all these spuds dug up if we don't hurry up!"

"Oh, all right!" said Dicky; and he recommenced digging operations.

Right up till dusk the juniors continued their task, and the result of their efforts was one that they had every reason to be proud of.

Piles and piles of potatoes were carried to the storehouse, and at length, weary after their labours, they made tracks for their studies in order to do their preparation.

The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Chambers' Capture.

"I can't find it!"
Bunny made the remark as he entered Study No. 5.

Bob Travers, Turner, and Jackson were

had seen resting on the mantelshelf earlier that evening.

With stealthy movements Bunny next wended his way in the direction of the lower passage.

To shift back the catch of a window and open the latter was the work of an instant, and a little later Bunny was out in the quadrangle, and scudding towards the school allotments.

After flashing the light of the electric torch about for a few minutes the duffer at last located the spot where he thought he had lost his lucky sovereign.

Then Bunny started once again a diligent search for the coin, quite unaware of the fact that he was not the only junior missing from the Fourth Form dormitory that night.

Wilson, the cad of the Fourth, departed about a quarter of an hour after the duffer, but he had no intention of journeying to the allotments.

He climbed over the wall at the side of the school, and was soon pacing up and down outside the school gates.

It was very dark, and Wilson could not see distinctly more than a yard or so in front of him.

Nevertheless, as he heard the sound of footsteps, and caught sight of a dim figure in the gloom, he guessed that Mr. William Doshier was approaching him.

The rascally bookmaker strode up, and gave a grunt as he observed the junior.

"Oh, you've come, ave yer?" he growled. "I'm sorry about that there hoss, but—"

"So am I!" interrupted Wilson. "You told me it was bound to win!"

"I didn't," snapped Mr. Doshier. "I said it ought to win. And so it ought to 'ave done. 'Ow was I to know that the blessed bit o' catsmeat 'ad gone lame? Confound it! I've lost a nice bit o' money over it, too! Where's that thirty bob—eh?"

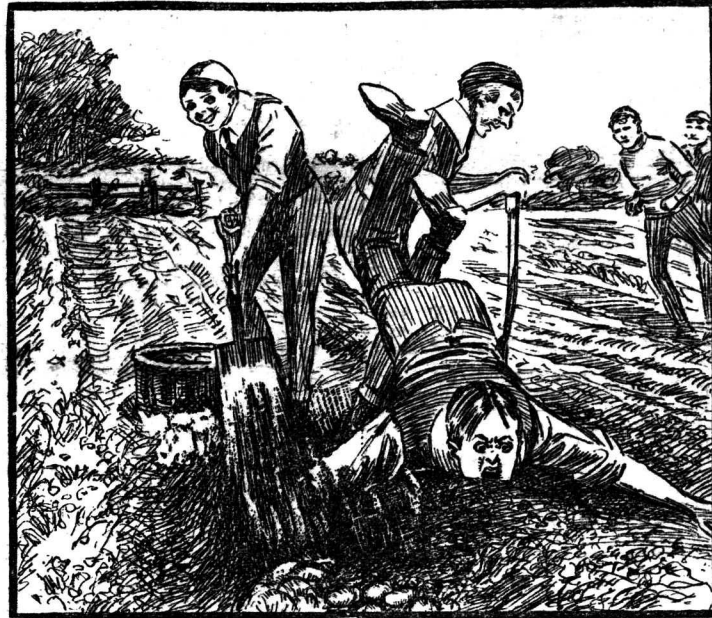
"Twenty-two!" corrected Wilson. "You said twenty-two in your letter."

"What do I care what I said in the letter!" growled Doshier. "I say thirty now, and it's thirty bob I'm going to 'ave! Now, and it over!"

"I—I can't!" faltered Wilson. "I've only got twenty-two shillings, and—"

"Well, give me that!" snapped the bookmaker. "I'll get on with that. You can pay me the other eight bob in a day or two."

Wilson obeyed the command.



The cad lost his balance, and several spadeful of earth were hurled in his direction. As he sprawled to the ground, the earth smothered his right hand, completely hiding it from view.

working away hard at their prep, and they looked up at the duffer's statement.

"Can't find what?" asked Dicky Turner.

"My sovereign!" said the duffer, with a sigh. "I have searched the ground most carefully, but my efforts remain unrewarded."

"Well, I should chuck it, if I were you!" said Dicky humorously. "These sovereigns have got a nasty habit of hiding away from you."

"I was wondering whether any of you have an electric-torch which you could lend me," remarked Bunny, "so that I can continue my search."

"What!" exclaimed Bob Travers. "You want to go on searching to-night?"

"That is my desire."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bob. "You take my advice, my son, and get on with your prep. Old Chambers will come down on you like a thousand of bricks if you don't get it done!"

"Surely he will excuse me if he knows I've been searching for my lucky sovereign!" said Bunny.

"I bet you he won't!" declared Bob Travers. "You don't know Chambers as well as we do. Leave the elusive quidlet till the morning, and start on your prep."

"Very well," said the duffer; and he sat down at the table.

But Bunny had no intention of leaving the search until the morning.

The duffer went to bed with the rest of the School House juniors, but, although he feigned to sleep, he did not actually do so.

Half-past ten tolled out from the clock in the old tower.

A moment or two later Bunny had left his bed and donned his clothes.

Then he quietly left the dormitory, and made tracks for Study No. 5.

There he commanded an electric-torch belonging to Bob Travers, which he

ments in the direction of the School House, and what astonished Mr. Chambers still more was the fact that the junior—he was sure it was a junior—was flashing an electric torch in front of him.

With the stealth of a Redskin Mr. Chambers crept towards the unknown figure.

The latter, quite unaware that he was being followed, walked towards the open window on the lower passage, and was just about to pass through, when Mr. Chambers darted forward, and laid a restraining hand on the junior's shoulder.

"Boy!" he exclaimed sternly. "Give me that torch this instant!"

He grabbed the electric-torch out of the junior's hand, and turned its light in the direction of the latter's face.

"Bunny," he growled out, "what is the meaning of this escapade?"

The duffer gazed nervously at the master's angry countenance.

"Escapade, sir?" he faltered. "I—"

"Yes, escapade, you disgraceful boy!" snapped the master sternly. "What were you doing outside the gates? Tell me the truth this instant!"

"I was not outside the gates," said Bunny slowly. "I have been to the allotments in order to search for my lucky sovereign, and—"

"How dare you lie to me!" thundered Mr. Chambers. "I distinctly heard you talking to some low-down ruffian outside the gates. He demanded money from you. I heard him distinctly."

"But, my dear sir—"

"Enough!" snapped the master, with a wave of the hand. "I will not listen to another word! You cannot escape your punishment by telling lies. I shall report your behaviour to Dr. Hamlin in the morning, and I shall make it my business to see that you are soundly flogged. Return to your dormitory at once!"

Bunny climbed through the window, and walked up to the Fourth Form dormitory in a somewhat bewildered state of mind.

The duffer was astounded at the master's suggestion that he had been talking to a low-down ruffian outside the gates.

But how was Bunny to guess that he had been mistaken for Wilson, the cad of the Fourth?

The 3rd Chapter.

Jack Jackson's Find.

"What's up with Bunny?"
Bob Travers asked the question the next morning when the Fourth-Formers were dressing.

There was a very anxious look on the duffer's face as he put on his clothes, and his eyes had a rather tired expression in them.

"Still worrying over that giddy sovereign, Bunny?" asked Dicky Turner, with a smile.

Bunny turned round, and gave the chums a sorrowful look.

"I must admit that the loss of my lucky sovereign causes me considerable anxiety," said the duffer quietly. "But something happened last night that has made me wonder whether Mr. Chambers is quite right in his mind."

"Eh?" ejaculated the juniors.

"Feeling rather concerned about my lucky coin, I left the dormitory rather late last night, and continued my search," explained Bunny.

"What!" exclaimed Dicky Turner, in surprise. "D'you mean to say you broke bounds just to look for that mouldy quidlet?"

"Really, my dear Turner," said Bunny, with an injured air, "I was most anxious to regain possession of my coin; but, alas for my hopes, I did not find it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the juniors.

"I returned to the School House thoroughly disappointed," went on Bunny. "And I was just climbing through the window when Mr. Chambers clutched hold of me, and accused me of talking to a low-down ruffian outside the gates. He said that he distinctly heard the man demand money from me."

"Phew!" gasped Dicky Turner. "You've been dreaming!"

"I certainly have not!" declared the duffer firmly. "Have you ever observed signs of insanity in Mr. Chambers before?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No."

"Then it's all very strange!" said Bunny, with a sigh. "I do not know what to say to the Head when—"

"Better not say anything at all," broke in Dicky Turner.

"But I shall have to say something in my defence," said the duffer. "Mr. Chambers said that he would take me before Dr. Hamlin this morning, and insist upon my being flogged!"

"Oh, scissors!" exclaimed Dicky, dumb-founded. "You must have been dreaming, Bunny!"

"But I haven't!" insisted the duffer. "Well, we'll wait and see," said Dicky. "I wouldn't mind betting you my top-hat to a stick of chocolate that nothing happens! You'll find Chambers as nice as pie to you this morning when you get down."

Bunny smiled faintly, but it was evident by the expression on his face that he had very little hope in this direction.

The juniors went on dressing, and at length left the dormitory with the intention of digging up a few more potatoes before breakfast.

They continued to discuss Bunny's surprising statement as they walked towards the allotments, and the only opinion that they could arrive at was that the duffer had been dreaming.

Dicky Turner was firmly convinced that this was so, and, forgetting all about Bunny's trouble, he started digging with great enthusiasm.

But Bob was not quite convinced, and as he dug he gave a good deal of thought to the matter.

Supposing Bunny had not been dreaming? Supposing—
Bob's surmises were brought to an

(Continued in col. 1 of next page.)

BUNNY'S MISADVENTURE!

By HERBERT BRITTON.

(Continued from the previous page.)

abrupt conclusion by a sudden exclamation from Jack Jackson.

"Great Scott!"

"What's the matter, old son?" asked Bob, turning round.

Jack Jackson was holding a piece of dirty paper in his hand, and gazing at it intently.

"This is jolly funny," he said. "I was digging just here, and suddenly came across this note. It's addressed to Wilson, and— Here, have a look at it, Bob!"

Bob took the note, and read it carefully.

"This is the letter Wilson received yesterday afternoon," he said. "He must have dropped it when those fellows barged into him and knocked him over. But— I've got it!"

"Oh?"

"I can see it all now, old beans!" said Bob excitedly. "This note was written by that bookmaker Johnny. It's pretty evident that Wilson had dealings with him, and that he left the dormitory last night to visit the man."

"Oh!"

"It was Wilson whom old Chambers heard jawing outside the gates," went on Bob fervently. "That accounts for him accusing Bunny."

"Then Bunny wasn't dreaming, after all," said Dicky Turner.

"Of course not," said Bob. "But he'll get a jolly good whacking if we don't huck up, and get this note into the hands of the Head."

"Come on," said Bob, dropping his spade. "I'm going to see the Head at once!"

And Bob darted off, followed by his chums.

They entered the Hall, and found a group of juniors standing there.

"Bunny!" exclaimed Bob Travers breathlessly. "Anybody seen Bunny?"

"He's been taken to the Head by old Chambers," explained Mason, the bully of the Fourth. "That yarn he spun was true, after all."

Bob Travers did not wait to hear any more. He darted off to the Head's study, and arrived outside the door, breathing heavily.

He tapped at the door, and entered. There were three occupants in the room—the Head, Mr. Chambers, and Bunny.

Dr. Hamlin gave Bob a grim look as he walked in.

"Travers!" he said sternly. "How dare you interrupt me when—"

"I'm sorry, sir!" faltered Bob. "But— but I thought I ought to show you this note."

He handed the piece of dirty paper to the Head. Dr. Hamlin looked at the note, and a very serious frown came over his face.

"Where did you find this, Travers?" he asked.

"In the allotments, sir," said Bob.

"We were digging up the potatoes just now when we came across it."

"H'm!" The Head turned to Mr. Chambers, and handed him the note.

"Read that, Chambers," he said. "I think this lets a little light in on this peculiar affair."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Chambers. "I can see it all now, Dr. Hamlin. It was not this boy I heard talking in the lane, after all, but Wilson of the Fourth."

"That is my opinion," said the Head. "You may go, Travers. I am glad you brought this note to my attention. It has prevented my punishing this boy for an act he did not commit. You may go, too, Bunny. I do not think I shall want to see you again. You will, however, do two hundred lines for leaving your dormitory after lights out. Please be careful not to offend in this direction again!"

And Bunny went, accompanied by Bob Travers.

"You can thank your lucky stars that we found that note, Bunny!" said Bob Travers, as soon as they were in the Fourth Form passage, and had been joined by Dicky Turner and Jack Jackson. "If you take my advice, you will stop searching for that quietest, in case it lands you into more trouble."

"But there is no need to continue the search," remarked Bunny simply.

"Oh?"

"I have found the sovereign," explained the duffer. "It was not lost, after all. I quite forgot that I changed my waistcoat before I left the house yesterday afternoon."

"Well, I'm blown!" gasped Bob.

"Then you hadn't got it with you?"

"No; it was in the waistcoat I left in the dormitory," said Bunny. "I was very glad, because it was a lucky sovereign."

Dicky Turner broke into a laugh.

"Let's hope you remain lucky, then," he said. "For of all the burbling asses for getting into trouble, you take the giddy bunshop! You don't seem to have been out of trouble since you've been here. I guess you wouldn't like a flogging like Wilson's going to get!"

And a little later on, Bunny had to confess that he would not, for, after being completely bowled out by the Head, Wilson was given the soundest flogging he had ever had. Nevertheless, it could not be said that he did not deserve the punishment.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.**"REPAYING THE RAIDERS!"**

By HERBERT BRITTON.

DON'T MISS IT!

For the SCAPEGRACE'S SAKE!

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. By Owen Conguest

**The 1st Chapter.
Jimmy Silver is Wrathful.**

"Five to one against!"

"That's it, Algy!"

"It sounds ripping."

"It is ripping, old nut!"

Jimmy Silver jumped.

The captain of the Rookwood Fourth could not see the speakers, as the bulk of a tent partly interposed.

But he knew the voices—those of his young cousin, Algy Silver of the Third Form, and Bertie de Vere, also of the Third.

Jimmy Silver halted, and seemed to be rooted to the ground.

The voices had ceased for the moment, and all was silent among the tents, save for the distant clinking of hammers, where the workmen were busy on the school buildings, repairing the damage done in the air-raid.

Rookwood School had been under canvas for a week or two, and, it being a half-holiday that day, Jimmy Silver was looking for his fag cousin in the section of the school camp devoted to the Third.

His chums—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—had agreed that Algy should come with them up the river that afternoon, nobly consenting to be bothered with Jimmy's cousin for once in a way.

So Jimmy had come for Algy, and this was how he had found him!

"Five to one against!" De Vere was speaking again. "Don't let it slip, Algy! I'm having a quid on it!"

"But—"

"Nothin' doin' this afternoon. Come along with me an' see Joey Hook. He'll fix it for us."

"But—"

"My dear man, you're not a billy-goat! Leave off buttin'!"

"But—"

"There you go again!"

"Count me out, Bertie," said Algy Silver at last. "I promised my Cousin Jimmy that I wouldn't play that game again, and I won't!"

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

He was glad to hear that, at all events. The graceless young scamp of the Third had his good points, and a regard for his word was one of them.

It suddenly occurred to Jimmy Silver that he was listening, and he started forward to come in sight of the speakers.

Algy Silver was seated on a box outside a tent, and Bertie de Vere was lounging with his hands in his pockets.

There was a cynical grin on De Vere's face. Jimmy Silver felt strongly inclined to take him by the scruff of the neck as he saw it.

Bertie de Vere, in spite of his high-sounding name, was probably as dingy a young rascal as could have been found in the three kingdoms.

He affected an elegance, personally, that was rather remarkable in the Third Form, modelling himself apparently on the lines of Smythe of the Shell.

Algy Silver had been very chummy once with the elegant Bertie, but Jimmy had hoped, and believed, that that was at an end.

Neither of the fags observed Jimmy coming round the tent, and Bertie de Vere went on speaking, oblivious of the fact that his words were falling upon a third pair of ears.

"Are you jokin', Algy?"

"No."

"What does your blessed cousin matter? He's your cousin, I suppose, not your kind uncle, isn't he?"

"Well, you see—"

"My dear old bean, life's too short to be as solemn as Jimmy Silver! Make the best of it while it lasts!" said De Vere, with quite the air of a man of the world.

"And I tell you Pink Pippin is a corker—a real corker—and you'll bag a fiver! You see what the man says about it in the paper."

Algy glanced at a pink paper that was open on his knees.

Evidently he had been consulting that honourable journal for information on the subject of Pink Pippin and his chances in a race.

"Yes," said Algy. "But—"

"Oh, come along with me, and let Uncle James take care of himself, old bird!" said Bertie. "Jimmy Silver can go and eat coke!" He— Ow—ah—yah—groogh!"

The elegant Bertie's remarks were suddenly cut short by a grip like iron fastening on the back of his neck.

He spun round, in surprise and rage, to find himself looking into the angry face of Jimmy Silver.

"Leggo!" he spluttered.

Jimmy Silver, with a black brow, shook

the young rascal savagely, a good deal like a terrier shaking a rat.

Bertie's teeth chattered together, and he uttered dismal howls.

Algy Silver started to his feet.

"Let him alone, Jimmy!" he exclaimed.

"Shake, shake, shake!"

"Leggo!" shrieked Bertie. "I'll hack your shins! Groogh! Let me alone, you bully! Gurrgh! Yow-ow!"

"Shake, shake!"

Having shaken the young scamp till his arm ached, Jimmy Silver pitched him into the grass.

Bertie sat down with a heavy bump.

Then the captain of the Fourth turned to his cousin.

"Algy, you young scamp—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Algy.

"I thought you'd done with that shady little scoundrel!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Groogh!" came from the shady little scoundrel gasping in the grass.

"Well, so I have!" said Algy. "This is the first time I've spoken to the chap this term, an' I don't know that I wanted to, either."

"Groogh!"

"Well, that's good!" said Jimmy. "He's a shocking little beast, Algy!"

"My dear old Jimmy, I know that better than you do," answered Algy calmly. "Don't you be alarmed about me. Think I can't take care of myself?"

"Well, I hope you can, Algy. Where did you get that pink paper?"

"Borrowed it, dear boy."

"What for?"

Algy grinned.

"What do you think?" he asked cheerfully. "It wasn't to brush the flies off, nor yet to send to the camp's library. Think it over, Jimmy, and it'll dawn on you that I borrowed it to read."

Jimmy knitted his brows.

"I suppose that means that you're hankering after playing the goat, as you did last term?" he snapped.

"Is that firstly?" asked Algy.

"What?"

"Get on with the seventh and lastly, old bean, and then give a chap a rest."

Jimmy Silver breathed hard.

His Third-Form cousin took a delight in pulling the leg of Uncle James, and Jimmy was greatly inclined to give him a second edition of what he had just given the cheery Bertie.

But he realised that such drastic measures were more likely to drive the wilful fag into rotten ways than to keep him out of them.

Algy had evidently dallied with temptation, but it was plain at the same time that his former chum had nothing like the hold over him that he once had.

Jimmy Silver controlled his temper.

"Give me the paper, kid!" he said, as calmly as he could.

"But it's not mine!"

"I'll give it back to the chap you borrowed it of. Who was it?"

"Chap in your Form!" grinned Algy.

"You're not all giddy angels in the Fourth, you know."

"What's his name?" asked Jimmy between his teeth.

"Well, suppose I said it was Mornington?" said Algy calmly.

"I shouldn't believe it! Mornny's chucked that kind of thing, and he'd never have led a fag into it at any time!"

"What about Lattrey?"

"Lattrey! Oh, Lattrey! Then it was Lattrey!" Jimmy Silver clenched his hands hard. "Lattrey, was it?"

"Jimmy, old man, you're too funny to live!" grinned his cousin. "If I said it was Lattrey, you'd go and hammer the chap. As it happens, it wasn't! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who was it?" shouted Jimmy, exasperated.

"I'll give you a name, if you like."

"Give it, then!"

"But I sha'n't give you the right name," said Algy, with provoking coolness. "I'll say it was Towny, or Topham, or Peele, or Gower, or Oswald, or Conroy, or Van Ryn—anything you like— Here, hands off, you rotter!"

Jimmy Silver's patience was at an end. Algy's pleasantry was interrupted by the Fourth-Former striding at him, grasping him forcibly, and taking the paper away with a wrench.

"Give me my paper!" roared Algy furiously.

The captain of the Fourth shoved the pink paper into the inside-pocket of his jacket.

"That stays there!" he said. "And as soon as I find out the owner, I'll hammer him pink and yellow."

"You interferin' cad!" howled Algy.

"Give it to me!"

"Give it to him, you rotter!" exclaimed De Vere, getting on his feet at last.

"Let's tackle the cad together, Algy, and take it away from him!"

A back-hander from Jimmy Silver sent De Vere spinning, and he sprawled over a tent-rope and measured his length on the ground again.

Jimmy had no ceremony to waste on the rascal of the Third.

"You bullyin' rotter!" panted Algy Silver.

Jimmy calmed himself.

He had come there to take Algy with him on a pleasant little excursion for the afternoon, and this was rather a bad beginning.

"I looked in for you, Algy," he said.

"We're going up the river—"

"Go, and be blown! Give me my paper first."

"We want you to come with us."

"You can want!"

"Come along, kid," said Jimmy peacefully. "It's ripping up the river. You can row, if you like."

"Give me my paper!"

"You can't have it, Algy! You know you'd get into trouble if you were seen with it. Anybody might have heard you talking, too, just as I did. Suppose your Form-master had heard you."

"Will you give me my paper?" yelled Algy.

"No, I won't!"

"I'd take it from you if I was big enough!" exclaimed Algy passionately.

"You're a rotten bully, Jimmy! Go and eat coke! And I'll tell you what! I'm going to see Joey Hook this afternoon at the Bird-in-Hand, and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it! That's all you get by your meddlin' and bullyin'!"

Algy Silver walked away, and Bertie de Vere, with a black look at Jimmy, followed him.

Jimmy Silver stood staring after them.

If they had gone towards the gates Jimmy would have taken that to mean that Algy's threat was seriously meant, and he would have gone after his cousin fast enough. But the two fags strolled into Little Quad.

Jimmy Silver, breathing hard, made his way down to the river, where his chums were waiting for him.

The 2nd Chapter.**Looking for the Culprit.**

"Oh, here you are!" said Lovell.

"At last!" remarked Raby.

"We've been waiting!" said Newcome, in a casual sort of way.

The three chums were lounging on the landing-raft, near the boat they were to launch as soon as their leader rejoined them.

They wore expressions of long-suffering patience.

"Sorry to have kept you," grunted Jimmy.

"Well, all right now," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Isn't the kid coming?"

"N-no."

"Never mind; we'll bask in his fascinating company another day. Lend a hand with this boat."

Jimmy Silver did not move, and the cloud deepened on his face.

He was aware that his Cousin Algy had a rather exasperating effect upon his chums and they could not be expected to "stand" him as Jimmy did.

"The fact is—" said Jimmy, hesitating.

"Lend a hand."

"I'm not going on the river, after all."

Lovell assumed an expression of martyrdom.

"Something up with dear Algy?" he asked, with deep sarcasm.

"Yes," said Jimmy gruffly.

"Does the dear child want dry-nursin' this afternoon?"

"I'm not asking you to dry-nurse him, anyhow!" snapped Jimmy. "You can get out in the boat. I've got something else to see to. That's all."

"You're not in a good temper, Jimmy," remarked Newcome mildly.

"Bosh!"

That reply certainly sounded as if Newcome's remark was justified.

Jimmy Silver turned away.

He wanted to go up the river that sunny afternoon, and he did not want to be bothered with Algy and his affairs; but a sense of duty governed him—and perhaps, naturally, his temper suffered a little in consequence.

Moreover, his chums were so thoroughly "fed up" on the subject of Algy that Jimmy felt a great repugnance to explaining.

But as he was marching huffily off the raft he was suddenly stopped by a boat-hook hooking on his collar from behind.

"Yooop!" he stuttered. "What the—who—Yah! Take that thing away, Lovell, you thumping idiot!"

Lovell grinned.

"Beloved uncle, it mustn't let its little temper rise!" he added chidingly. "Is it wise, is it judicious, for Uncle James to show a ratty temper before the youths who model themselves upon him? Think of the effect upon us!"

"Look here—"

"Easy does it, old man. Cheer up, and tell your old pals all about it," said Lovell, taking away the boat-hook. "We won't go on the river. We'll come along and listen to your avuncular wories."

Newcome and Raby chuckled.

"Shush!" said Lovell, as Jimmy was about to speak. "Don't say a word until you're in a sweeter temper, Uncle James. I'm sure you don't know what a guy you look with that scowl on your chivy. If Pege were here with his camera, I'd ask him to take a snap of you, and keep it as a warning to you in the future."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"I'm not ratty—" he began.

"Appearances are deceptive, then," commented Lovell. "You look it."

"Well, I didn't mean to be," said Jimmy, colouring.

"That's better. Keep smiling your own merry maxin'."

Jimmy Silver smiled faintly.

"Hurrah!" ejaculated Lovell. "Now we're getting on. I say, Conroy, looking for a boat?"

"All out!" replied the Australian junior, who had come on the raft with Pons and Van Ryn. "Just our luck."

"You can have ours. We're not going out, after all," said Raby. "Take it before it's bagged, old kid."

"Sure?" asked Conroy.

"Quite!" said Newcome. "We're going to spend a merry afternoon helping Jimmy Silver in his avuncular duties."

"Oh, my hat!" said the Corstalk.

Jimmy Silver & Co. left the raft, and the Colonial Co. ran the boat out merrily. Jimmy Silver was looking worried again.

"I don't want to spoil the afternoon for you chaps," he began restively.

"Then don't look like a parboiled Hun!" said Lovell.

"The fact is—"

"

"Lent it to him against his will?" asked Lovell sweetly. "The virtuous Algy was shocked, but took it all the same? What?"

"He's a silly young ass!" said Jimmy, flushing. "But after he got into a row last time, he promised me. Well, that sneaking little cad De Vere is trying to get him to play the goat again, but Algy shut him up. I heard him. But—but— Well, I suppose you'll admit that Fourth Form cads oughtn't to lend a kid in the Third a racing paper to mug over?"

"Admitted! Who's the guilty party?" asked Lovell. "Let's find him, and strew the hungry churchyard with his bones."

"I don't know," confessed Jimmy. "Algy wouldn't give me the fellow's name. I want to find him."

"And slay him?"

"I'm going to thrash him!" said Jimmy grimly. "I've had trouble enough with Algy, without a cad trying to make it worse!"

"He shall die the death!" said Lovell, who seemed to be in a humorous mood that afternoon. "Let's hunt him up! We'll call on every chap in the Fourth, one after another, and ask him whether he's guilty. Hallo, Rawson!"

Tom Rawson, the scholarship junior, was under the trees, with a Greek book on his knee, deep in study.

He glanced up as the Fistical Four came by, and Lovell hailed him.

"Hallo!" said Lovell. "Are you guilty, Rawson?"

"Eh?" ejaculated Rawson.

"You silly ass! Dry up!" roared Jimmy Silver. "It's all right, Rawson! Only Lovell going potty!"

"Come to think of it, Rawson wouldn't be likely to lend anybody literature that wasn't in Greek or Sanskrit, or something of the kind," observed Lovell. "We shall have to look farther."

Raby and Newcome chortled, and Jimmy Silver frowned, as the Fistical Four walked on, leaving Rawson staring.

The 3rd Chapter. Punishing Peele.

"There's not many fellows in the Fourth who have racing papers." Thus Jimmy Silver, with a wrinkle of thought in his brow.

"There wouldn't be any if the Head got on their track," grinned Lovell. "But I know a few—Towmy and Toppo, and Peele and Gower, anyhow."

"Townsend or Topham wouldn't get mixed up with fags," said Newcome. "Too jolly swanky!"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"That narrows it down," he said. "It might be Lattrey; but I believe Lattrey is going straight. Peele or Gower, in my opinion."

"Most likely," agreed Lovell. "And by the same token, both the cheery youths are up against you, Jimmy; and so they'd be likely to lend your cousin a hand in going to the giddy bow-wows if they could."

"I'm going to ask them," said Jimmy. "Know where they are?"

"I believe Peele's taking his new camera out for a walk this afternoon," said Raby. "I heard him saying so."

"We'll find him in gates," said Lovell. "He's going to take pictures of Rookwood under canvas, I remember now, to keep as a souvenir. Rather a harmless occupation for a chap like Peele."

"Come on, then!"

The Fistical Four proceeded to look round the school encampment for Peele of the Fourth.

It did not take long to find him, as it happened.

Peele had a good many shady tastes, being one of the blackest sheep in the school; but he also had a taste for photography, which kept him out of mischief on a good many occasions.

The chums of the Fourth found him with his new camera, getting a view of the school under canvas, his chum Gower helping him.

The experience of being under canvas was a new and rather exciting one to Rookwood School, and a good many fellows had asked Peele for copies of his picture when he had taken it.

The photograph would be a valued souvenir when normal conditions were restored at the old school.

"Don't get in the light, you fellows!" bawled Peele, as the Fistical Four came up.

"Looking for you," answered Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, all right! Half-a-crown each," said Peele.

"What?"

"Half-cabinet size, you know. Enlargements will be five bob."

"What on earth are you talking about?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver irritably.

Peele stared.

"Haven't you come about the photos?" he asked.

"Rats! No!"

"Then don't bother!"

"So you're sellin' 'em, Peele?" asked Raby, with a grin.

"They're worth the money, I suppose," answered Peele. "I'm not asking the fellows to buy them, am I? Why shouldn't I sell them?"

"Why shouldn't you?" agreed Raby.

Cyril Peele was evidently out to turn an honest penny by his hobby.

That was rather commendable, for he frequently tried to turn a dishonest penny by much less reputable means.

"Never mind the dashed photographs!" said Jimmy Silver. "I want to ask you a question, Peele."

"I wish you'd leave it till I've finished!" grunted Peele. "I'm busy, and the light's good just now."

Jimmy Silver did not heed. He drew the pink racing paper from his pocket.

"Is that yours?" he asked.

Peele glanced at it.

"Yes. Did that young ass send it back by you?" he said. "I thought he was keeping it dark."

He held out his hand for the racing paper.

Jimmy Silver put it deliberately back into his inside pocket.

"I'm going to burn that paper," he said quietly.

"Like your blessed cheek to burn a paper that don't belong to you!" said Peele angrily.

"And I'm going to thrash you for lending it to my cousin!"

Cyril Peele started back.

"Look here, Silver—"

"Take your jacket off!" said Jimmy. "I'm not going to fight you, you fool! I'm busy!"

"I'll keep you busy in another way for a few minutes," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "You can keep your shady tricks for yourself and your friends, Peele, and leave my cousin alone!"

"I fancy your cousin's about as shady as anybody at Rookwood!" sneered Peele. "I lent him the paper because he wanted it."

"You won't do it again in a hurry!" said Jimmy Silver. "Will you put up your hands, Peele?"

"No, I won't!"

"Look here—"

"You shut up, Gower!" said the captain of the Fourth. "If you're spoiling for trouble, I dare say Lovell will oblige you!"

"With pleasure!" said Lovell. "Are you on, Gower?"

"Oh, rats!" growled Gower, backing away a little.

Apparently Cuthbert Gower was not on.

Jimmy Silver advanced on Peele, with his hands up, and his face very grim.

He had had trouble with the black sheep of the Fourth before, but Jimmy was not quarrelsome, and he generally avoided Peele, and had little or nothing to do with him.

But he had to deal with him now.

Like the prophet of old, Jimmy felt that he did well to be angry.

Algy Silver had been trouble enough to his cousin in the Fourth, without Cyril Peele chipping in to make matters worse.

If Algy was determined to "play the

Fourth dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"Getting on with the photos?" asked Gower.

"Hang the photos!"

Peele sat down by a tent and mopped his nose, which was streaming red.

Gower shrugged his shoulders and walked away, leaving his chum to growl and mumble by himself.

But Peele was not left alone long. There was a footstep, and a cheery voice hailed him:

"Great pip! What a chivvy! You ought to take a photo of that, Peele, only I'm dashed if I don't think it would crack the camera!"

Peele looked up and fixed a deadly look upon Algy Silver of the Third.

The 4th Chapter. Cyril Peele's Scheme.

Algy of the Third grinned at the Fourth-Former.

He evidently found something entertaining in the battered look of the Fourth-Former's nut.

"My hat! You do look a wreck!" he said. "I can guess who's been hammerin' you. My Cousin Jimmy—what?"

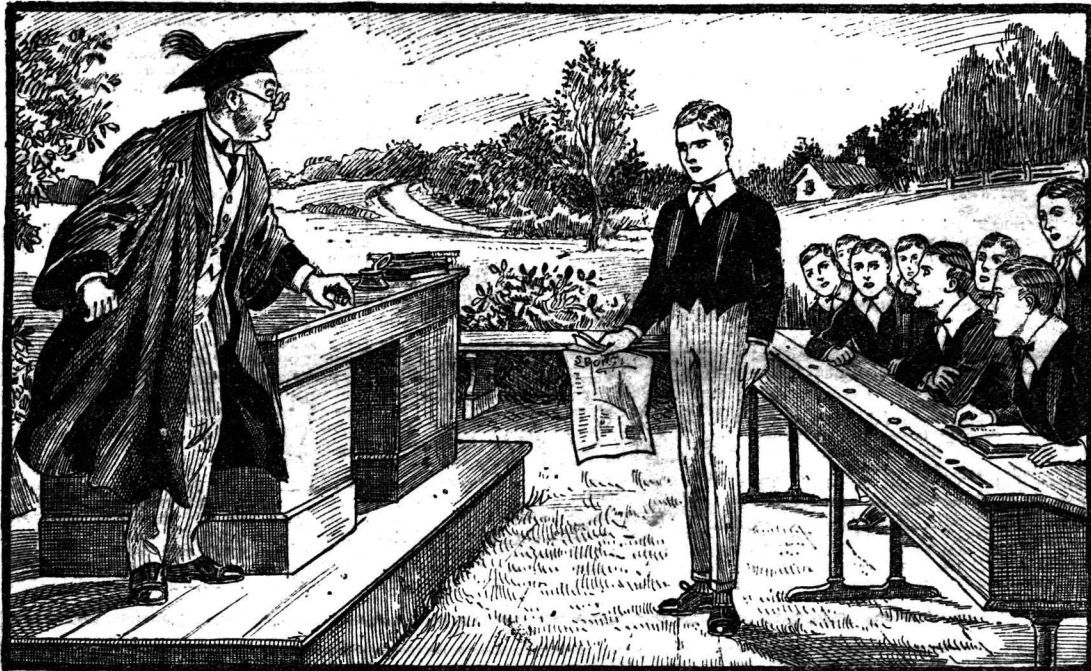
"Yes," muttered Peele.

"Sorry!" said Algy airily. "The inter-ferin' ass collared that paper you lent me, and I came to mention that it's lost. I don't suppose Jimmy will give it up. I never gave him your name, though. I wouldn't! You needn't scowl at me, Peele. It's not my fault Jimmy chips into my bizney."

Peele did not answer.

He rose slowly to his feet, a deadly glimmer in his eyes.

"Jimmy's such a serious old judge," went on Algy, not observing the Fourth-Former's expression. "He's so jolly easily shocked, you know. He fairly got his wool off because he heard me talkin' geegees with De Vere. I say, I'm sorry about the paper. I'm goin' on the spree this afternoon, just to show Jimmy that I'm not goin' to be dictated to."



"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles, as Jimmy Silver held out the racing paper. "I—I am astounded, Silver—shocked and astounded!"

goat," at least he was going to get no help from the blackguard of the Fourth, if Jimmy could prevent it.

Peele backed away as Jimmy advanced.

He did not want to face the knuckles of the captain of the Fourth; he preferred less vigorous methods of expressing his dislike.

But he had no choice this time.

He set down his camera as Jimmy's knuckles tapped on his nose and put up his hands at last.

"Come on, then, you rotter!" he said between his teeth.

Jimmy Silver came on fast enough.

The next five minutes were an experience that Cyril Peele never wanted to go through again.

He put up a fight, but he was too much of a slacker to be of much use in the fistical line, and he lacked the courage to stand up to a ding-dong hammering.

Lovell & Co. looked on, grinning, and Gower with a scowling face, as Peele was knocked right and left.

He went down with a crash at last, and stayed there.

He lay panting on the ground, looking up at Jimmy Silver with eyes that glittered like a snake's.

"Is that enough for you?" snapped Jimmy.

"Hang you! Yes!"

"Oh, get a move on!" said Lovell encouragingly. "You're not half licked yet, Peele."

"Hang you!"

"Let it go at that," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You're not a match for me, Peele, and I wouldn't have touched you if you'd let me keep my hands off you. But you'll let my young cousin alone."

"Hang your cousin, and you, too!" panted Peele. "Do you think I want that sneakin' fag hangin' round me? He can go to the dogs without any help from me! If you want him this afternoon look for him at the Bird-in-Hand!"

Jimmy made no reply to that.

He walked away with his chums with a moody brow, and Gower gave Cyril Peele a hand up. The unhappy nut of the

"Are you?" muttered Peele.

"Well, I've a good mind to, anyway," said Algy. "De Vere's keen on it. Suppose you come along with us, Peele?"

"I've had a warnin' from your Cousin Jimmy to leave you alone!" said Peele between his teeth.

Algy laughed.

"Is he goin' to hammer you again if you pal with me?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Like his cheek! I suppose you're not funky enough to take any notice?" grunted Algy.

"Yes, I'm goin' to take notice," said Peele. "I'm not goin' to fight your precious cousin every day, Algy Silver. I don't want a scrubby little cad of a fag hangin' round about me, either."

"What!"

"I've had enough of your cousin, and you, too," said Peele, "and here's a warnin' to you to keep your distance!"

"Here, I say—Yah! Oh!" roared Algy, as Cyril Peele rushed at him, hitting out right and left.

"Yah! Stoppit! Oh! Ah!" yelled Algy.

But Peele did not stop it.

The fag was no match for him, slacker as he was, and Peele had it all his own way in the fight that followed.

It was a great solace to Peele to give Jimmy Silver's cousin what Jimmy had given him, and since Jimmy had ordered him to have nothing to do with Algy, Jimmy could scarcely take up the cudgels again because he had ended his acquaintance with the fag in this drastic way.

Algy put up a stout resistance, but he was thoroughly licked by the time Peele was done with him.

Then Peele picked up his camera and walked away, leaving the fag of the Third gasping in the grass.

Algy Silver sat up dazedly, feeling his nose.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "Oh, my only aunt! Oh, dear! Groooogh!"

"Hallo, Algy! Been havin' a merry time!"

Bertie de Vere came up with a grin.

He had been watching the scene from a distance, with great amusement.

"Ow, ow, ow!" was Algy's reply. "Why didn't you come up and lend me a hand, you rotter! Ow, ow!"

"What on earth did Peele go for you for?" asked De Vere. "I thought you were no end pals."

"Yow! Ow, ow! Jimmy licked him for lendin' me that pink paper," groaned Algy. "The cad's taken it out of me! Oh! Yow!"

"I'd like to have a cousin like that—I don't think!" sneered De Vere. "More fool you for lettin' him meddle with you! I wouldn't!"

Algy Silver staggered to his feet.

"That puts the lid on," he said. "I'm fed up now. It's all Jimmy's fault. Why can't he let a chap alone?"

"Meddin', cheeky ass!" said De Vere. "Well, I'll show him!" muttered Algy.

"Let's get somewhere and bathe my nose, and then I'm ready to come along with you, Bertie. I'll show him!"

"Good man!" said Bertie approvingly. "And the two fags hurried away together. They passed Peele in the distance, and Algy scowled at him."

When the two fags, a little later, started up the road to Coombe, Peele looked after them, with a curious expression on his face.

"Guess where those young rascals are goin', Gower?" he said to his companion.

"Easy enough to guess," said Gower, shrugging his shoulders. "Thinkin' of tellin' Jimmy Silver?"

"Not at all! I'm goin' to take photographs," said Peele. "Come along!"

"Where?"

"Coombe," said Peele.

"Nothin' to photograph there, is there?" asked Gower in surprise.

"I think it's very likely," answered Peele. "Jimmy Silver makes out that his precious young cousin is as good as gold when he's let alone by naughty fellows like me. We'll see. You know Joey Hook meets his friends in the arbour in the Bird-in-Hand garden for a little game sometimes. I fancy that's where we shall

Lessons were not to be interrupted on that account. Tubby could have stood no end of rainy weather just then.

"Horribly fine!" agreed Arthur Edward Lovell, with a grin. "Atrociously, in fact! But you're getting a nice brown complexion, Tubby."

"I'm afraid of losing my complexion," said Tubby Muffin plaintively. "I believe I'm going to get freckles. Freckles spoil a chap's good looks, don't you think so, Lovell?"

"Not at all. But if they did, it needn't worry you, old chap."

"Yah!" was Tubby's reply to that.

The Fourth Form took their places as Mr. Bootles bore down on the class, his spectacles glimmering in the sunshine.

Mr. Bootles' chubby face was not so good-tempered as usual that morning; in fact, it was quite stern.

Mornington whispered that the old bird was beaky that morning; and certainly Mr. Bootles looked a little beaky.

"Somebody's in for it," murmured Lovell. "Has the Bootles bird got on to Peele and his little games? Think so, Peele?"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Peele.

"Boys!" said Mr. Bootles, in a deep voice, much more solemn than his usual squeaky tones. "I have to refer to a matter of some seriousness. I trust, my boys, for the honour of the Form, that there is no foundation for the information I have received."

The Fourth were silent and expectant.

Somebody, evidently, was booked for trouble, and it looked as if a "sneak" had been at work.

"I have received information in a very peculiar way," went on Mr. Bootles, listened to most attentively by his class. "Someone slipped a paper under my tent last night. The paper is written in capital letters, and affords no clue to the writer. I trust that it is only a practical joke, certainly in very bad taste. But I must investigate the matter."

"You're jolly long-winded, sir!" murmured Mornington.

"Eh! Did someone speak?"

Dead silence.

"I will read out this paper," said Mr. Bootles. "Listen to me, my boys!"

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!" murmured Mornington. And there was a chuckle.

"Silence!" rapped Mr. Bootles.

And he proceeded to read out the mysterious missive:

"Sir,—I am sorry to say that a member of your Form is in the habit of purchasing and perusing racing papers. I feel it my duty to tell you so. The junior alluded to carries racing papers about with him."

Jimmy Silver gave a sudden start.

The racing paper he had taken from Algy, and shown to Peele, was still folded in the inside pocket of his jacket.

Jimmy had intended to burn it, which was certainly the best way of disposing of it, and but for the fact that Rookwood School was under canvas, he would have done so, the previous evening, undoubtedly, in the fireplace at the end study.

As it was, the matter had slipped his mind, being left for a favourable opportunity. After his ramble on the heath he had forgotten all about it.

Mr. Bootles' words brought it back into his mind with a jump.

He gave Peele a furious look.

There was no doubt in his mind that Peele had pushed that note under the flap of the Form-master's tent, in the hope, at least, that Jimmy still had the tell-tale pink paper in his possession.

But there was surprise and consternation in Cyril Peele's face as Jimmy looked at him.

"By gad!" Jimmy heard him murmur. "Peele was not the guilty party in this instance."

A moment's reflection, too, convinced Jimmy that it was so, for Peele, much as he would have liked to see Jimmy landed in trouble with the powers, would scarcely have taken the risk of being given away as the real owner of the paper.

Who had done it, then?

Jimmy felt a sickening feeling at his heart. Was it Algy? He knew that the fag was exasperated by his interference, as he called it.

Mr. Bootles was blinking at the class over his glasses, with a very stern expression.

There was a minute of silence.

"Has any boy here any confession to make?" asked the Form-master at last.

There was a dead silence.

"Very well! Each of you will come before me, and turn out your pockets," said Mr. Bootles. "I trust—in fact, I am sure—that there is nothing in this. But the fact must be placed beyond doubt."

Jimmy Silver's face crimsoned.

The folded paper in his pocket seemed to be burning a hole there.

His chums gave him alarmed looks.

"You—haven't got it about you, you ass?" muttered Lovell.

"Yes," breathed Jimmy.

"Oh!"

Jimmy Silver stepped out before the class. It was useless to wait for the general turning out of pockets.

"Well, Silver?" said Mr. Bootles.

"Why, what—what is that?"

His startled eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as Jimmy Silver, with a crimson face, held out the racing paper.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles. "I—I am astounded, Silver—shocked and astounded! You!"

"Let me explain, sir," said Jimmy.

"If you have any explanation to make I will hear it, Silver," said the master of the Fourth majestically.

"That paper isn't mine, sir," said Jimmy steadily.

"You had it in your possession."

"I took it from a fag yesterday, sir. I was going to burn it, but I haven't had a chance. I'd forgotten it was in my pocket."

"If that statement is correct, Silver, the case is altered," said Mr. Bootles. "You did quite right to take such a paper

The 5th Chapter. Rough on Jimmy.

"Beastly fine morning!" grunted Tubby Muffin.

It was the following morning, and the Rookwooders had turned up as usual for lessons alfresco, to an accompaniment of a distant clinking and hammering from the school buildings.

Tubby Muffin glanced anxiously at the sky as he came along.

But there was no sign of the rain that the fat Classical yearned for.



FOR THE SCAPEGRACE'S SAKE!

(Continued from the previous page.)

from a younger boy, if you found him in possession of it. Who was the boy? Silence. "Do you hear me, Silver?" "Ye-es, sir."

The 6th Chapter. Put to the Test.

Lovell & Co. were very restive in class that morning. But it was not till the Fourth Form was dismissed that they could utter the remarks that were bubbling up within them.

"You've got him in a cleft stick," said Gower, with a nod. "This morning showed that he'd go any length for that young rascal to save his skin."

such a place, and engaged in such an occupation. To hammer Peele and make him give up the negative was not feasible; it was more likely to make him show it to Mr. Bootles or the Head.

hand, and I'm goin' to make you squirm for it. I'll give you that photograph and the negative on one condition. If you don't agree, I'll take fifty copies of it, and scatter 'em over Rookwood."

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does not throw up the sponge, however. He concocts a more ingenious scheme still, and is confident of meeting with success. But does he? For the answer to this question you must not fail to read our next magnificent story of Jimmy Silver & Co.

the Kaiser. This plate will be a really splendid picture, executed in excellent style by Mr. G. M. Dodshon, and it will be a plate you will be able to frame and hang up on the walls of the best room in your house.

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet. His face was deadly white, save where the red mark of the blow glowed on the skin. Lovell came up almost stupefied. "Jimmy! You—you—" He stammered. "I'll fetch the cad back for you—"