NEW BARRING-OUT SERIES JUST STA

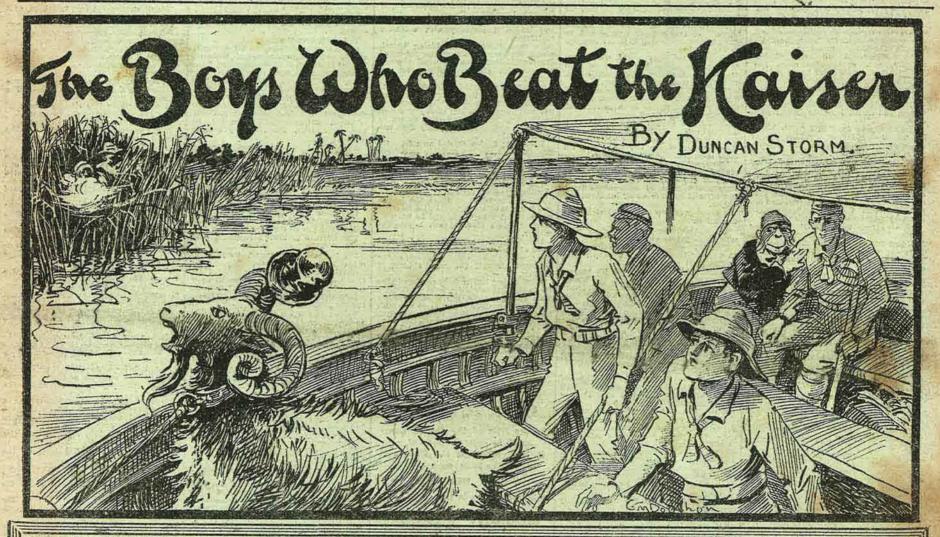
WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE

No. 907. Vol. XVIII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending October 26th, 1918.

"PENNY POPULAR." WAR TIME PRICE



THAT MISSED ITS MARK-BUT HIT HORACE'S

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 ecret of the whereabouts of the treasure are in the possession of

CAPTAIN HANDYMAN and CY SPRAGUE, 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

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

Last week the Germans endeavoured to obtain their revenue on the boys, but in spite of the cunning nature of their scheme the boys escaped serious hurt. Gits, the crocodile, however, suffered most; in fact, he seemed almost too bad to recover.

(Read on from here.)

Qus' Mixture !

Gus, the crocodile, was almost at his last gasp as Porkis, kneeling by the medicine-chest, fumbled amongst the many bottles, and filled up the measuring-glass with the stimulating and nauseous mixture which was either to kill or cure him.

One presented a sorry spectacle as he lay on his back with his stumpy little legs in the air, feebly waving them now and then to show that he was alive.

them now and then to show that he was alive.

Porky, with one eye on Gus as he lay in the circle of the electric lamp, and the other eye on the medicine-chest, rapidly filled his glass.

"Strychnine!" he muttered.

"That's the stuff to give 'em! Bucks up the action of the heart!"

"Don't give him much of that, or he'll crosk altogether!" exclaimed Dick Dorrington. "Shove in some of that essence of ginger! That'll make him wag his tail!"

"Right-ho!" replied Porkis.

And he measured out a dose of essence of ginger strong enough to scorch Gus from his neck to his tail.

"What about a little caster-oil" said Dick. "That can't do him any harm. You can give castor-oil to a baby."

"Right-ho!" said Dr. Porkis.

"Right-ho!" said Dr. Porkis.
"And a whack of senna!" put in Chip. "Senna is a very safe medi-

"Right-ho!" said Porkis, readily adding the sema to his mixture.
"Tincture of capsicum," said Arty, picking up one of the bottles. picking

"That'll make him fetch his breath.
And syrup of squills—they give that to pups when they have distemper. So it's sure to do poor old Gus a bit of good."

"That's the ticket!" assented Porkis readily. "Now we'll shove some of this stuff in from this bottle. I don't know what it is, but it's sure to be all right."

"Why, you silly ass," exclaimed Dick, "that's metal-polish for cleaning up the sterilising-trays of the instruments!"

"Never mind!" said Porkis cheerfully. "Let it go in!"
And in went the metal-polish to Gus' mixture.

Then Dr. Porkis, glass in hand, looked doubtfully at his patient.

"How are we going to give him the stuff?" he asked. "When you give a dog medicine you lift the corner of his lip, and pour the stuff in with a spoon. And if you are going to give a horse medicine you twist a string round his nose. But I've never given a crocodile medicine, and—look at his teeth!"

Gus, lying on his back with his lip slightly curled up and his jawe clenched, was showing a ridge of sharp teeth that might have scared a denpups when they have distemper. So it's sure to do poor old Gus a bit of good."

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But Arty was not to be dismayed.

"Hold him up, Pongo!" he said to Pongo Walker. "Take him under the arms and lift him, and I'll prise his mouth open with a tent-peg; and Porky can pour down the medicine."

Pongo did not much like the job.

Gus gave a convuisive struggte and a sang.

The other half of the tent-peg was enacthed from Arty's hand and swallowed, and, with a sudden leap and swallowed it, flopping about on the ground like a newly-caught fish.

Pongo picked himself up, rubbing the back of his head and his legs.

Gus, with his serrated tail, had given him a slash across the calves like the slash of a cartwhip.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Pocky.

"He's swallowed glass and all!"
Gus was ficking his tail now, and wriggling like an eel.

Whether it was the essence of ginger, or the strychnine, or the broken glass that was doing him so much good and making him so lively, the boys could not say.

But when Mr. Lal Tata came bustling up to see what was happening, Gus, whose eye was once more bright and sparkling, fixed it on the worthy Hindu.

"What do you do to that poor

worthy Hindu.

"What do you do to that poor croc'dile fellow, boys?" demanded Mr. Lal Tata.

"We are giving him some medicine, sir," replied Porky. "He was nearly croaking, poor chap!"

"You will kill poor croc'dile chap between you," said Lal, gazing down at Gus, who had grown suddenly quiet. "Look! Behold how quiet he is now!"

And Lal turned Cus over with him.

And Lal turned Gus over with his

Whether Gus resented being rolled over in this fashion, or whether the essence of ginger took a new and sudden hold on him, will never be known, but, with a rush and a vicious snap, he ran up Lat's leg, and tore away the leg of his pyjamas as though he were tearing tissue-paper.

(Continued on the next page.)

(Continued from the previous page.)

Lal danced about with a sudden how!

"Hi, boys! Take this cree'dile fellow aray!" he yelled. "He devours my organized the little plees of meat out of my legs. Take him away!"

Gas was hauled off by the laughing boys with a huge length of striped pyjama fiannel hanging from his ugly laws, which he rapidly devoared.

A fresh cricket-bag was brought, and fine was shoved into it unceremoniously, head first.

He flopped about in the bag for a while, and titen tay still.

Then the boys put him aside; and went to condule with the injured Skeleton, who was lying in the tent with his bandaged ankle.

The mysterious, strangling noose of metal, contracting with tremendous force, had crushed his ankle pretty severely, and he was badly bruised.

But Cy Sprague had bandaged him skilively, and, though the dawn was just breaking, he was able to sit up and fact an cuormons jam turnover, which predace, the cook, had brought him from the cookleuse.

"How is Gue?" were Skeleton's first words; and he bit a corner off the turnover, "Hic's going on fine!" said Porkle, beaming all over his face. "That stuff I mixed up for him is making him as frisky as a kitten. He took a leg out of old Lai's trousers like a bull-terrier going for a tramp!"

"Do you think he'd like a bit of turnover?" asked the kindty Skeleton. "He word away in the old cady, and I'll hand them round if you get it out."

"Now you're talking, old Boneypart," replied Scoper, starting off in question the stones. It's damson-lam, and it's full of stones. It's almson-lam, and it's full of stones. It's almson-lam, and it's full of stones. It's damson-lam, and it's full of stones. It's almson-lam, and it's full of stones. It's damson-lam, and it' How is tub! were sketeron's hiswords, and he bit a corner oil the turnover.

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"Do you think he'd like a bit of turnover?" asked the kindly Skaleton. "He
can have this bit, only mind you take
out the stones. It's damson-lam, and it's
full of stones. It's damson-lam, and it's
full of stones. It's damson-lam, and it's
full of stones. It's wallow them myself,
but they might not agree with Gus."

"Not agree with Gus!" exclaimed
Porkis. "Why, he's scoiled a whole
tent peg and the medicine-glass, and he's
anne the worse for it. That medicine i
gave him is putting whiskers on his
chin."

"Perbaps a bit of this turnover will

gave him is putting whiskers on his coin."

"Perhaps a bit of this turnover will take the taste of the medicine out of his month," said Skeleton. "Bring him here, and let's have a look at him."

The cricket-bag containing the erocodile was brought to the bedside of the invalid.

He offered Gus a corner of the huge turnover, which was eagerly enapped up. He fed Gus on tinned phenopple and bloater-parte, and Gus enapped up all these good things.

And as the sun rose in a great ball of five on the far side of the Nile everyone agreed that Gus was quite out of danger, and that Porky was the best crocodile dector in all Africa.

When Rogues Fall Out.

as breakfast was over the camp

was struck.
Captain Handyman declared that he had seen all that he ever wanted to see of the filt-conditioned village of El Katif. The events of the night had disturbed him, and he wanted to get away from the neighbourhood of Baron you Styden and his crew of German murderers.
Probably Captain Handyman, more than any of the party, realised the relentless character of the enemy they were up against.

less character of the enemy they were up aguinst.

At any rate, he frankly declared that he would be happier on the water than on the hand.

"Give me a ship of any sort," he said, "and I know where I am. But when it comes to camping down, with hippepedamuses walking off with the boys, and those German stueges shooting new sorts of murder into the camp—well, I get nervous. It's me for the breezy Nile again. I hate these woods and bushes, where you can't see anyone coming?"

Soon the motor-launch was made ready and the whalers taken in tow.

Skeletou was rigged up with a crutch made out of a broom, and was supported to the whaler by the sympathetic Cecil on one side and Pongo on the other.

He was made comfortable with cushions in the sternsheets of the whaler under a double sun-awing.

mble sun-awning.
Then the expedition pushed of once accompanied by the strains of

more, accompanied by the strains of Chips month-organ.

Captain Handyman scanned the banks of the wide river anxiously as he steered the launch, with its string of towing beats, well out in the wide current.

He had no fancy for being ambushed by Von Slyden and his gang of scoun-ticls.

beats, well out in the wide current.

He had no fancy for being ambushed by Von Slyden and his gang of scoundrels.

And, ready to hand whilst he steered, lay a magazine-rife carefully cleaned and oiled.

And as he steered Captain Hundyman contemplated a locked tin box which had been placed in the launch.

It contained the twelve nurderous weapons which had been used against them on the preceding night.

There were still heavy banks of mist on the river, which often obscured their view, and into every one of these log banks Captain Handyman steered his little flotilla.

He was not taking any chances with harmy von Styden, or of a chance shot from the banks.

But presently, as the sun gained power, the mist drew up like a curtain from the face of the broad river, and the sun began to beat down hereely on the double awnings of the boat.

There was room for everyone under the

whater.

A should went up when at last be un-carthed it.

The leather case and the topper were crushed as flat as a pancake!

"When!" gasped Pongo, holding it up to view, "They've ando a proper concertina of it now!"

Skeleton looked richally at his topper.

certina of it now?"

Skeleton looked ruchilly at his topper.
When on the previous night the whaler had run on the back of Walter, this hippo, and had been heaved up by that gigantic animal as he had made his way up the bank of the river, everything in the whaler had slid down towards the stern.

the whaler had slid down towards the stern.

Then Skeleton's treasured hat had been overwhelmed by a number of cases, each containing a thousand rounds of small-arm ammonition.

This stair was heavy.

No leather hatbox ever built would stand the weight of it, and Skeleton's prize hatbox and hat had been crushed as flat as a pancake.

Amidst shouts of laughter Skeleton racfully opened the flattened batbox and produced his treasured Sunday hat.

It was smeared with butter-scotch, which had melted and run out of its silver-paper wrappings, and it was dented and barbed.

A music-hall comedian would have given Skeleton money for finat hat for stage purposes, but as a trading article it was done in.

Skeleton pushed up the crown rucfully and tenderly.

"No chief will give me an depliant's task in the state of the state

Skeleton pushed up the crown ruefully and tenderly.

"No chief will give me an depliant's task or a diamond for that hat now," he said corrowfully. "I don't see what you chaps find to laugh about. Supposing you chaps had a hat which was as good as an ivory tusk or a big diamond? You wouldn't laugh if it was smashed ffat and gomed all over with stickjaw! I sha'n't be able to do any business with a chief, unless we can find one who is off his chump. Showe it on Herace! I was thinking of lending it to him."

Amidst shouts of laughter the battered topper was clapped on florace's lead.

Horace lay very solemuly in the bows of the whaler with the topper perched on his horis.

If did not try to cat it, for the boys had given him a good meal of tar packing-paper and a lot of old string, which they had routed out whilst clearing up the whaler.

Only the topper showed above the

only the topper showed above the gunwale of the whaler as the string of boats moved up the mighty river, which at this part had broadened to nearly a noile wide.

at this part had broadened to nearly a mile wide.

Now, Captain Handyman all the time had kept a very watchful eye on the left bank of the river, the side on which Yon Slyden and his gang had been encamped. As far as possible he kept over to the far shore. But the current was bringing down huge masses of sudd, the densely-growing weed which blocks the flow of the Upper Nile.

And to keep the propeller of the launch rec from this weed the captain had to navigate the river as though he were steering amongst lee-packs.

So on occasions he was obliged to approach to within a quarter of a mile of the bank he suspected.

His suspicious were not without foundation.

Burga you Slyden, having learned of

Biron von Siyden, having learned of the failure of his dastardly attempt on the lives of the British explorers, had been quick to act.

Leaving camp at the same time as the boats of the expedition had pushed off from the shore, he had set off on his swiftest camel, accompanied by Saleeb, the best marksman amongst his Askari followers, and, riding across-country where the river made a great bend, these two scoundrels, black and white, had

found no difficulty in getting ahead of the river-party. Now, snugly bidden in a clump of the tall, whispering papyrus reeds which lined the bank, they awaited the expedi-

Salgeb was grinning all over his ugly

He was a fine shot, and the baron had comised him a rich reward if he should second in picking off one of the river

succeed in picking off one of the river party.

The reward was nothing less than the riffe he shot with and five British pounds, to be paid in British gold.

Salesh looked on the riffe already as his property.

It was a fine Gorman Mauser, nearly new, with riffing as clean as eliver, and deadly accurate up to two thousand yards.

deadly accurate up to two thousand yards.

It seemed to Salceb that he was on the softest thing he had ever touched in his life.

All he had to do was to put a bullet through the head of one of these English boys, and he was pixele rich for life.

For an Askarl with a good rifle on his shoulder and five golden sovereigns in his pocket is a rich man according to the notions of his country.

So Saleeb, lying in the rushes by the great river, grinned till his ugly face split from ear to car.

He opened the magazine of the rifle, and loaded it carefully with well-oiled cartridges.

He opened the magazine of the rife, and loaded it carefully with well-oiled cartridges.

He blew through the shining barrel, whilst the baron, parting the sereen of the reeds, spied down the river through his powerful glasses, watching for his quarry.

"Ach!" he muttered to himself at last. "Here come the British pig-dogs! They shall not escape us now. Half a dozen of our goot German bullets shall put a stop to this expedition. They shall return to Khartum, and, once there, they shall not start again!"

Baron von Slyden carried no rifle. He intended to leave the shooting to Salegh. Like many Germans, he was shortsighted, as his pule-blue goggie eyes and gold-rimmed glasses showed.

The baron was quick enough at snapshooting at short distances.

But at the range at which the hunch and her tow of boats would pass he could not have hit a haystack, and he knew it. But Salegt's shooting was a different matter.

Salech was a great hunter, and a good

matter. Salech was a great hunter, and a good hand at buch fighting and hush assassinations. On this account he was one of the favoured amongst the baron's band of Askuris.

Askariz.

Many a time had he been employed thus to do the Raiser's dirty work in German East Africa, for the Overford of Germany has never been particular as to the tools he has used in building up his phantom German Empire.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE

is the title of the Grand Complete School Story of Billy Bunter and the Chums of the Remove, by

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COUSIN ETHEL'S CHAMPIONS

a top-hole School Story of Tom Merry & Co., the famous schoolboys, by your favourite author,

MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this week's

"GEM." War-Time Price,

There was absolute certainty in the pose f the savage as he lay there armed with he weapon of civilisation. Salech felt that he could not miss his ark.

Salech felt that he could not his magazine, and every one of those five shots should hit a mark.

By the time that little flotilla of boats was abreast of him he knew that five at least of the whites amongst the crews should be wounded or dead.

The launch was nearly three miles away when the baron first sighted her, rounding a wide bend of the broad river.

She came along slowly, embered by the stray weeds which dragged across the bows of the towing boats.

Across the water came the merry laughter of the boys.

The sound was audible at a great distance on that calm day, for the broad bosom of a river carries sound like a telephone.

The baron beard his own name mental.

telephone.

The baron heard his own name mentioned whilst the boats were yet a full mile away.

The boys were discussing their German opponents with all the freedom of boys. And it was Dick Dorrington's voice which floated to the cars of the baron, for Dick had a clear, high-pitched voice which travelled well.

"They must be as big a lot of rogues as their master the Kaiser!" Dick was saying.

saying.

The baron turned purple,
He did not like being called a rogue,
and to hear his august master, Wilhelm,
Elector of the Mark of Brandenburg, King
of Prussia, and Emperor of all the termans, ticked off as a rogue seemed to
his sars his aperilicae.

bis ears like sacrilege.

Baron von Slyden ground his teeth.

"Ach, you English dog! For that you shall pay! You shall not speak so freely of the All-Highest War Lord again! In two, t'ree, four, five minute you shall die!"

diel?

Again the boys volces sounded across the water, audible apart from the chugchug of the motor-laugeh.

"My word, Artyl" called out one volce, "I shall never forget the look on the face of that German sausage when you propped him in the jaw!"

Baron vou Slyden ground his teeth.

He knew that he was the German sausage referred to; and his teeth still ached from the blow of Arty's list.

The German is always scientific, even in murder.

The haron drew a range-inder from his

in murder.

The baron drew a range-inder from his pocket, and whispered the range to the Askari, who adjusted the sights of his ritle and waited for the launch to draw slightly across the river in order to avoid a large drift of the sudd, which lay across

"Got a face like a pig, hasn't he?" said nother voice.

the channel.

"Got a face like a pig, hasn't he?" said another voice.

This was arry, squatting on the floorboards of the last whaler; and over the still, shining water his rumbling voice came clear to the ears of the German lurking in the payyrus clamp.

The barop's finger was trembling as he pointed to the last boat of the string of whalers as a sign that Saleeh should direct his fire enthely of that boat.

There were the boys, and it was against these that the baron's anger was directed.

After all, it was this little crowd who had baulked him at every turn, and who had made him look a fool in the eyes of his followers.

These schoolboys had spoiled his plans, and if he allowed them to keep the upper hand would spoil the chances of gaining the Kaiser's favour.

The Kaiser would never forgive a man who allowed himself to be beaten by a pack of contemptible British schoolboys. Salesh nodded to show that he understood his master as intention.

He could have taken a very good snapshot at Captain Handyman's lead, and on this in would have fired.

But the haron's directing linger caused that to slift his ain to the last whaler.

In the bows of this craft a battered silk hat was bobbling up and down.

Baron von Slyden peeped through his range-linder again, and took the distance of the boats.

of the boats.

He whispered the range to his savage of the distance of the range to his savage of the distance of

ollower.
The Askari nodded. The range was even hundred and fifty yards.
But Selech's eyes were as good as any angefinder that the Germans could

invent.

He had already nicked his leaf-sight to the accurate distance.

His ugly, black face was cuddling the stock of the rifle as he drew his bead on that absurd topper that was bobbing up and down in the bows of the whaler.

Saleeh knew what a top-hat was, and, naturally enough, concluded that inside that hat there was a head.

He sighted low, so that he should hit that part of the last where there was most head.

The German's eyes cliftered as Saleeb's

most head,
The German's eyes glittered as Saleeb's black hand tightened on the small of the rifle-butt.
Now he was certain of his vengeance. Saleeb never missed.
And Saleeb did not miss this time. Crack went the rifle.
The top-hat shot up in the air, spun round, and fell into the river.
Haron von Slyden gave a grunt of triumph.
His eves were good enough to see the

His eyes were good enough to see the

His eyes were good enough to see the top-hat fly.

"Acht" he muttered. "So dere vos one English pig-dog der less in der vorld! Fire again, Salesh!"

But Salesh, ligg on his face, had taken his fingers from the trigger of the rifle.
His eyes were almost starting from his head as he peered through the cover of the reeds.

From the bows of the whaler there had popped up a head. It was the head which had worn the top-hat.

But it was no human head.

It was a horned head, and one of the horns was slightly chipped.

At that distance the head appeared to have the face of a man, with a long and white and venerable heard.

"Maw!" bleated the head, as though in derision of Saleeb's shot. Then it hobbed down again.

The baron gave an exclamation of anger.

derision of Saleeb's shot. Then it hobbed down again.

The baron gave an exclamation of anger.

He could see now that Saleeb had wasted his shot on Horace, the goat.

"Fire again—quick!" he muttered, for the launch had sheard off at his sound of the shot, and was heading towards the far bank of the river.

But Saleeb did not fire.

He was watching that ton-hat with fuscinated cyes as it floated down on the current.

Around it and under it came a swiri on the water.

Saleeb, Askari hunter as he was, knew well what that swirl betokened.

It was the ripple caused by the head of the one beast he would never shoot—the head of the Great One, the hippopotamus, god of the rivers.

And, sure enough, under the hat there case slowly a huge, flat portmantean-shape of a head, the head of a swimming hippo.

Slowly it lifted the hat from the water, right way up. And Saleeb's jaw dropped still lower, fill his black head appeared to fall almost fo halves.

"Fire!" snarled the baron. "Fire, or it will be too late!"

But Saleeb took no notice of the haron. With fascinated eyes he watched the hippo slowly swimming after the string of boats, with Skeletou's topper pitched jauntily on his enormous bead.

For his life Saleeb would not have fired monther shed.

He saw in the mysterious adventures of Skeleton's topper an onen and a warning.

It was plain to him that the string of boats warning and the firest one protected by the Green One.

of Skeleton's topper an owner warning.

It was plain to him that the string of boats was protected by the Great One. The hat was some mapic tailsman. Sakeb knew that he had put a bullet through that hat, as surely as he knew anything.

But all that had happened was that a vinerable devil with a white heard had showed his bead up and had shouted "Maw!" at him.

The magic hat had flown from the head into the river.

shoved his head up and had shouted "Maw," at him.

The magic hat had flown from the head into the river.

Then had come the Great One, who was swimming placedly after the boars with the magic hat on his mighty head, doubtless with the intention of restoring it to its rightful content.

Therefore, to Salech's superstitions mind, the boats were under the immediate protection of the Great One.

If he lired again he would fall under a curse of the most berrible character.

The crops on the little patch of ground, far away in East Africa, would parch and wither for lack of rain.

His cattle would die, for the Great One, largest of all animals, was master of the cattle.

And, worst of all, he would get the dread elephantiasis, which swells a man's leg up to the size of the leg of a hippopotamus.

So Salech lay still, although his German.

leg up to specific the potamus. So Safech lay still, although his German master began to storm at him.

"Fire, fool—pig—dolt!" exclaimed the haren.

And he gave the recumbent nigger a stir in the ribs with the toe of his boot in the real German fashion, as though that would improve his shooting.

Salech did not fire; but somebody clse

Captain Handyman had been on the

did.
Captain Handyman had been on the box-out.

He had not falled to notice amidst all the excitement a faint blue time of smokeless powder issuing from the puryus clump.

Quick as a flash he snatched up the rife that hy handy, and, taking a quick eight, fired.

It was lucky for the baron that the morning mists had slightly damped the shining barrel of that rife, causing it to throw an inch or two high.

Had a wisp of rag been miled through the rifling a nature or two before firing, that shot would have finished the career of that rascally pillar of the German Empire, Baron totto von Slyden.

As it was, there was a thud and a snack.

Von Slyden's pith belief twisted on his head, pulling off the glasses that he wore. They fell under his heavy feet, and, as he sum round under the impact of the blow, he trod on them with a serunch.

This little accident seemed to exasperate Baron von Slyden more than the apparent stubbonness of Salceb, which had robbed him of his prey.

All his native Prussian brutality came uppermost.

All his native Prussian brutality came uppermost.

His temper had to find a vent, and the vent was Salech.

Lifting his heavy boot, he gave Salech a heavy kiek in the ribs.

Now, Salech, though he feared his master, was an ugly-tempered fellow.

The Askart of East Africa, though he serves the German, does not serve him too willingly, and infinitely prefers a British master.

The kick in the ribs stirred up all the savagery in Salech.

He was a free warrior and a hunter, and he was not accustomed to being kicked in the ribs.

In a second he had leaped to his feet, and, throwing himself on the wonderstricken Von Slyden was a powerful man, thick-set and stumpy in build.

Salech was lean, and as wire as a rat.

It was a fairly equal match between

Salech was lean, and as were as a rat.

It was a fairly equal match between them, and what the one possessed in weight the other made up for by agility. In the whater the boys, at the crack of the shot and the spinning of the topper from Horace's head, had crouched down well on the waterline. They knew this was an ambeah, and they had seen a signal from Cy Sprague in the faunch to keep low.

So for a moment or two they lay on the bottom boards of the boat.

No second shot followed.

The only head that was shoved up in the boat was that of Horace, the goat, when he put his venerable face over the gunwale, and uttered his derisive "Maw" at the hidden assussin on the river bank.

But, for the life of him, Chip could not keep his head down.

Ho let as though he must have a look, even if he got a bullet through

river bank.

But, for the life of him, Chip could not keep his head down.

Ito felt as though he must have a look, even if he got a bullet through his head.

So, in disobedience to Cy Sprague's order, he cautiously lifted his head above the gunwale of the whaler and looked round.

"Crumbs!" he exclaimed, in such a fono that every head in the boat was thrust up above the shelter of the gunwale, "If it isn't old Waiter, the hippo we rode last night, swimming after us in a topper—Skeleton's topper!"

And, sure enough, swimming along in their wake, with his cunning little pig's cyes just above the water level, was none other than Walter himself—Walter with the battered topper perched jauntily over his left eye.

"Jiminy!" whispered Skeleton, in awed tones. "It's Walter right enough! And look at his cady! That's just the way the Dandy Fifth at my old school used to wear them!"

Walter came swimming slowly up in the wake of the boats, which were barely moving through the water now, so encumbered were their bows with the weed they had gathered up as they forged through the luge masses of floating and.

Now, whether Walter remembered the scent of the boys who had ridden astride on his back on the previous night, and, floding that they had done him no harm, had ceased to fear them, or whether, attracted by the floating topper, his curiosity had been aronsed by the slowly-moving string of boats, it is impossible to say.

But, with a pull and a sigh, Walter, his topper cocked cumningly over one fat eye, blew out a spout of water and

to say.

But, with a pull and a sigh, Walter, his topper cocked cumingly over one fat eye, blew out a spout of water and rose like a submarine discharging her ballast tanks, just a few inches from the water.

ballast tanks, just a few inches from the water.

The boys noticed that Walter took care to tome up under the lee of their boat, keeping her between him and the shore whence the shot had come.

Which shows that Watter, the hippo, had more under his hat than hair.

"Well, if that doesn't beat the band!" exclaimed Dick, shouting with laughter.

"The old rascal has brought the hat back to us, See if you can coax him close enough to grah it, Chip! That hat is going to be our mascot!"

"I expect he would like a damson turnover," sald Skeleton, as he raked under the cushions on which he was reclining. "Try him with this, Dick!"

And Skeleton handed out one of Picace's turnovers, which was as big as a coalplate.

"Come on, Walter!" sald Dick, leaning

face's turnovers, which was as big as a coalplate.

"Come on, Walter!" said Dick, leaning over the side of the whaler, holding out the dainty, "Come and try a damson iswbreaker!"

For a moment Walter besitated.

It is little eyes rolled artfully in his cnormous head, but the sight of the tempting turnover was too much for him.

Walter was no Zoo bippo spoiled by penny buns and monkey-nuts. He had never tasted turnover in his lite, and he wanted to try.

Slowly he heaved up his huge upper faw, exposing his rows of yellow tasks, and showing a cavernous pink mouth.

"Jiminy! What a mouth for a tart!" exclaimed Chip. "Coax him up a bit closer, Dick. I'll grab Skeleton's topper whilst you drop the turnover down his red tane. Fair exchange is no robbery. We get the hat, and Walter takes the cake!"

Wo get the hat, and Watter takes the cake!"

The exchange was rapidly effected.

Watter came closer and closer. Chip grabbed the battered hat, and the turn over was thrown into Walter's enormous mouth, which closed like a huge kitbag on the morsel.

Then, with a sigh and a puff of water, he sank below the surface of the river and was lost to sight, whilst Chip triumphantly held up the battered old topper, showing the perforations where the dastardly German bullet had passed through one side and out of the other.

"Good job your fat head was not in that, old Skeleton!" he cried.

Then Chip suddenly dropped the hat, and pointed to the huge bed of papyrus reed islaiere.

"Look!" he exclaimed. "There's the chap who dred!"

The tall reeds had waved and rustfed victously.

Then they parted.

chap who fired!"

The tail reeds had waved and rustical victously.

Then they parted.

The boys saw a white clad figure roll out into a bed of thick, black mud, which lay just under the surface of the water.

For a moment the figure disappeared. Then it popped up again, a pillar of black mud.

"It's Von Slyden, the scoundrel!" cried blick Dorrington.

The ligure was walst-deep in mud and water. It turned and strove to reach the reeds, but slipped back in the thick greasy ooze.

Von Slyden, hurled into the river by his black follower, tried to pull himself out by the one broken reed which lay near his grasp.

But the reed suapped, and he slipped back deeper into the sticky, black ooze, which stuck about his feet like paste.

Slowly he began to sink. The thick Nile mud was taking him.

He waved two black arms frantically, hurling lumps of mud right and left into the stream, and the boys heard his voice shout:

"Ach Himmelt I am sinking! Help, hiche!"

"Ach Himmelt I am sinking! Relp,

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

Published Every Monday

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of

FRANK RICHARDS & CO., the Chums of the School in the Backwoods.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

The 1st Chapter. Early Birds.

Early Birds.

Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, raised his bushy eyebrows in surprise.

The vanchman was standing at the door of his cabin, with a steaming pannikin of coffee in one hand and a huge chunk of corn-cake in the other.

The foreman was finishing his breakfast as the early sunrays came creeping up over the prairie.

Down the path from the ranch-house came a clatter of hoofs.

And Hilly Cook, lowering his pannikin from his hearded lips, ejaculated:

"By gosh!"

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless came trotting down the trail, and they drewrein to greet the surprised ranchman.

"Top of the morning, Billy!" called out Bob cheerity.

"You ain't off to school yet?" asked Billy Cook.

out Bob cheerity.

"You ain't off to school yet?" asked Billy Cook.

"Top of the morning, Billy!" called ont Bob cheerity.

"You ain't off to school yet?" asked Billy Cook.

"I guess so."

"Early birds, you know!" said Frank Richards, with a smile.

"It's a good two hours before your time," said the ranchman. "What little game are you up to now?"

And Billy Cook wagged his head at the two schoolboys.

"Nothing like being early, Billy, you know," said Bob Lawless, "We've got a new headmaster coming to-day, too."

"I heard about that," remarked the foreman. "I hear that Miss Meadows aim't any longer mistress of Cedar Creek."

"That's so."

"Fired by the trustees?" said Billy.

"Correct!"

"It's an all-fired shame!" said Billy.

"Cook emphatically, "Why, sira, that little she-critter, Miss Meadows, was the neatest filly that ever stepped in the Thompson Valley!"

The chuma of Cedar Creek laughed.

Billy Cook's admiration was genuine and well-founded. But they wondered how Miss Meadows would have liked to hear herself described as a "filly."

"It wasn't your popper's doing, Bob," went on Billy Cook. "I guess it was Mr. Grimm and Old Man Gunten that did the trick, and Mr. Lawless agin it."

"That's the case," said Bob. "My father stood up for Miss Meadows at the School Trustees' meeting, but he was outvoted."

"A gol-darned shame!" said Billy Cook.

"And if I was a younker at school, Boh, I guess I'd kick up a shindy. The puritiest little she-critter that ever did step in the Thompson Valley!" added the ranchman warmiy.

Bob Lawless smiled.

"Perhaps there's going to be a shindy, Billy," he answered. "Perhaps that's why we're going to school two hours early this morning. Mum's the word, though."

And, with a wave of the hand to the ranchman, the chums rode on towards the timber, lenving Billy Cook staring after them with a peculiar expression on his bearded face.

They had left the ranch-house before anyone else in the building was astir, and

on.

They had left the ranch-house before anyone else in the building was astir, and had brought their breakfast—a frugal one—in their pockets, to cat as they rode. The chuns had their own plans for that day, which, for excellent reasons, they did not want to explain to Mr. Lawless just yet.

just yet.

They munched cold beef and crackers as they trotted on in the fresh, clear air, and atopped at a spring for a draught of clear, cold water to wash it down.

In the invigorating atmosphere of British Columbia, and accustomed to out door life, the sturrdy schoolboys did not feel the need of tea or coffee or any other stimular.

feet the need of tex or coffee or any other stimulant.

They were all the better, from the point of view of health, without such inxuries, and so they did not miss their usual breakfast very much.

They rode on into the timber, where they found their chum Vero Beanclero waiting for them at the fork of the trail on his black horse.

The Cherub was also an early riser that morning.

The Cherub was also an early riser that morning.

"Hallo! Here we are again!" called out Bob cheerily. "Still feeling game to go on the war-path, Cherub?"

"You bet!" answered Reauclere.

"We shall find a good many of the fellows there," said Bob, as the three shums rode on together. "I guess they're all game. You haven't mentioned the matter to your popper?"

Beanclere smiled.

"Better not yet," he said, "My father is indignant at the way Miss Meadows has been treated, but I don't know what he'd think of the idea of a school on strike.



I don't think he'd disapprove, only he couldn't very well say that he approved in so many words."

"Correct!" said Bob. "Same with my popper. It's up to us to see that Miss Meadows gets justice. She'd he as mad as a hornet, I guess, if she knew we were backing her up like this; but that don't alter the case. Old Man Gunten isn't going to fire our schoolmisbress at his own sweet will."

"No fear!" said Frank Richards emphatically.

The trio rode at a gallop by the forest trail to Cedar Creek School.

The glimmering creek and the school-buildings came in sight at last.

The sun was higher now, but the hour was athle early, and at that hour, as a rule, there was no sign of life about Cedar Creek.

On this especial morning, however, there were a good many signs of life.

The school gates were not yet opened, but outside the gates seren or eight fellows were collected.

They had arrived carlier than Frank Richards & Co., having a shorter distance to cover to the &chool.

There was a shout us the three rode up and jumped off their horses.

"Hyer we are!" bellowed Eben Hacke.

"Waiting for you, old scouts!" grinned Chunky "Yodgers. "Here we are, as large as life, ready to scalp Old Man Gunten if he shows up!" said Hopkins, the Cockney of Cedar Creek. "We won't "ave 'im at no price, as sure as I'm 'Arold 'Opkins!"

"Ear, 'ear!" grinned Bob Lawless, in playful finitation of the Cockney.

"Back Sam isn't up yet," said Frank Richards, "We've got to get in!"

"Black Sam isn't up yet," said Tom Lawrence.

"I guess that makes no difference," said Bob. "I'l soon have the gate un-

"Black Sam isn't up yet," said Tom Lawrence.

"I guess that makes no difference," said Bob. "I'll soon have the gate unbarred."

Bob Lawless rode his horse close to the palisade, and stood on his saddle, and then drow himself to the top of the wall.

He swang himself actively over, and dropped into the school enclosure.

A minute more, and the bars of the gate were removed and the gate swang wide.

"Come in I" shouted Bob.

And the schoolboys crowded in, greatly excited.

They had met at that early hour at

excited.

They had met at that early hour at Gedar Creek School for an extraordinary purpose, and what the outcome would be no one could even guess.

But Frank Richards & Co., at least, were determined; and so long as they were in the lead the rest were pretty certain to follow.

to follow.

Most of the fellows, indeed, regarded the matter as something of a "lark," but it was a lark which would have its serious side.

The 2nd Chapter

The 2nd Chapter.

Codar Creek Means Business.

"Gentlemen and galoots—"
"Hear, liear!"
"Go it, Bob!"
Bob Lawless laid mounted upon a bench in the hig playground, and his comrades gathered round him.
In the distance the doors of Mr. Slimmey's and Mr. Shepherd's cahins went seen to open.

The two assistant masters of Cedar Creek, astounded by that early and noisy arrival of a crowd of schoolboys, were looking out to see what was the matter.

But the crowd did not heed them; all attention was fixed upon Bob Lawless.

"Gentlemen and galoots," continued Bob, "we've met here—"
"Ho stand up for our rights, as free

"To stand up for our rights, as free Canadian citizens—" Loud cheers:
"And to back up Miss Meadows, our respected schoolmistress, who has been fired by the trustees—"

"And to back up respected schoolmistress, who has been fired by the trustees—"
Groans for the trustees!
"Gentlemen, the matter's a simple one," went on Bob, waxing cloquent.
"Miss Mcadows is a lady we all respect.
She turned Kern Gunten out of the

school for gambling, and leading other fellows to gamble, after warning him more than once. Could she have done anything else?"

fellows to gamble, after warning him more than once. Could she have done anything else?"
"Correct!"
"Old Man Gunten is chairman of the School Trustees, and he got his mad up, and called a meeting. My popper voted for Miss Meadows; the other two, Old Man Gunten and his friend Grimm, outvoted him. They had the power to sack Miss, Meadows, and they did it. Miss Meadows is gone."
"Shame"

voted him. They had the power to sack Miss, Meadows, and they did it. Miss Meadows is gone."

"Sname!"

"To-day Old Man Gunten moseys in, to introduce our new headmaster in Miss Meadows' place," continued Bob. "Now, we're going to talk plain Canadian to Old Man Gunten."

"Hear, hear!"

"Trustee or no trustee, we don't take any notice of him."

"Noyer!"

"As for the new master, I don't know anything about him, except that his name's Peckover. But good, bad, or indifferent, he doesn't come here."

"Hurrah!"

"As he may be a good sort, we'll put it to him politely," said Bob. "But, in any case, he's not going to be allowed to take ou Miss Meadows' job."

"No fear!"

"We're standing up for Miss Meadows. She don't know it, and she mightn't like it; but there it is. And we're not going to give in till Old Man Gunten toes the line and lets Miss Meadows come back."

"Bravo!"

The roar of cheering woke every echo or Cedar Creek.

Black Sam, the stableman, was staring on from a distance, and Sally, the cook, was looking out of a window.

Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey were advancing towards the excited group, with surprise in their faces.

Both the assistant masters sympathised with the schoolmistress, and Mr. Slimmer, inteed, had sent in his own resignation to the Board.

They were indignant, and they understood the indignation of the Cedar Creek fellows, but this outbreak was rather startling to them.

"What is all this?" broke in Mr. Slimmer, "Lawless, why are you here so early this monning?"

Bob raised his hat respectfully to the young master.

"No harm intended, Mr. Slimmey," be said. "We're on the warpath. that's all."

oung master.
"No harm intended, Mr. Slimmey," he aid. "We're on the warpath. that's

all." "What can you possibly mean, Law-

all."
"What can you possibly mean, Law-less?"
"We're not going to allow a new Head to take Miss Meadows' place, air," said Frank Richards.
"Bless my soul."
Mr. Slimmey seemed too astonished to say more than that.
"My boys, you cannot act in a lawless manner," said Mr. Shepherd. "We can't think of allowin' it."
"Please understand us, sir," said Vere Beauclere, "We intend no disrespect to you or to Mr. Slimmey. But we won't consent to Miss Meadows being sent away. The whole school is with us in this, though we're not all here."
"Please don't interfere, sir," said Frank Richards, "We should be very sorry to have any dispute with you."
Mr. Shepherd coughed.
Frank expressed it very civilly, but his meaning was clear; the two masters would not be allowed to interfere, in any case.
Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey ex-

my case.
Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey
changed glauces, and, after a l
moments' justiation, walked away
mether.

gether.
"It is not our business, I think, Mr. Slimmey," remarked the Gentle Shep-

not likely to offer much support to the new headmaster when he arrived.

Meanwhile, several more fellows had arrived at Cedar Creek, and two of the girls, Molly Lawrence and Kate Dawson.

The crowd numbered sixteen or seventeen now.

The excitement was growing.

It was pretty certain that Mr. Peckover would put in an appearance well before the hour for lessons to commence, and the schoolboys were cager to see him, wondering a good deal what he was like.

There was a loud about from the fellows near the gate as the wheels of a buggwere heard on the trail.

"Here they come!" yelled Tom Lawrence.

"Here they come!" yelled Tom Lawrence.

There was a rush to the gate.
On the trail from Taompson a buggy appeared, with Old Man Gunten at the reins.
Beside him sat a tall, thin man, with a very square jaw and little keen eyes set very close together.
The schoolboys could guess that this was Mr. Peckover, and they did not like his looks.
Behind him in the buggy sat a heavy-reatured lad, with a grin on his face.
That was Kern Gunten. Old Man Gunten's son, who had been tunned out of the school for rascally conduct.
The buggy dashed up to the gates and stopped.

stopped.

Old Man Gunten and Mr. Peckover alighted, and Kern Gunten was about to follow their example, when he saw the crowd and the looks thoy gave him.

Immediately the grin died away from

his face.

He scented trouble, and he decided to remain in the buggy for the present.

Unheeding him, Mr. Gunten and the new master strode in at the gates.

The 3rd Chapter.

A Warm Reception!

Old Man Gunten glanced in surprise at the crowd of fellows inside the school

Old man of fellows inside the crowd of fellows inside the enclosure.

It was not yet the hour for the school to gather.

The fat, podgy Swiss storekeeper stared at the schoolboys, who returned his stare at the schoolboys, who returned his stare.

The fat, podgy Swiss storekeeper stared at the schoolboys, who returned his stare with interest.

They were not in the least awed by the self-important Mr. Gunten.

"Come here, Richards!" called out Mr. Gunten, recognising Frank.

Frank Richards approached.

"What are you boys doing here so early?" asked Mr. Gunten.

"Oh, we've come," said Frank vaguely.

"I can see you have come!" snapped Mr. Gunten. "As you are here, you may hold my horse."

Frank did not move.

"These are some of your boys, Mr. Peckover," said the storekeeper, turning from Frank.

The new master nodded.

from Frank.

The new master nodded.

The boys were all regarding him curiously, not at all favourably impressed by his tight jaw and the cold gleam in his eyes.

"Boys," said Mr. Cunten, "this is your new headmaster, Mr. Ephraim Peckover."

Boys, said air, dunien, whis is you new headmaster, durien, which were the sense of the sense of

Slimmey," remarked the General Stepherd.

"Not not all," said Mr. Slimmey decidedly, "It is a matter for Mr. Peekover to deal with when he arrives."

"He is welcome to deal with it."

And the two masters went back to their cabins.

The lack of intervention by the assistant-misters had an encouraging effect on the rebels.

Those two gentlemen, evidently, were not to be feared in any way, and were



Old Man Gunten's fat face was suffused with rage, and bis little eyes seemed to bulge from their podgy sockets as Bob spoke.

"Lawless!" he stuttered.

"Listen to me!" said Bob. "Mr. Peckover, I am sorry for your disappointment.
We mean no disresepet to you personally. But we have decided that Cedar Creek School shall have no head but Miss Meadows."

"Whn.ant?"

Miss Meadows."

"Whis-a-at?"

"Miss Meadows has been fired by a dirty trick," said Bob undauntedly, "Old Man Guuten knows all about it; he did it."

"Are you aware that Mr. Gunten is chairman of the Board of Trustees?" exclaimed Mr. Peckover.

"Xcp!"

"You must be out of your senses, boy!"

"I guess not. We're standing by Miss Meadows."

Mcadows."
"Boy!" thundered Mr. Gonten, purple with wrath. "Miss Mcadows is no longer headmistress of this school! She has been discharged. This gentleman is your now headmaster."
"Not at any price!"
"That is enough," said Mr. Peckover, his thin lips coming together in a tight line. "I am not the man to allow my authority to be disputed!"
"Listen to me, sir," said Bob. "We mean—"

He rushed to his chum's aid at once.
Mr. Peckover had certainly not expected that,
Frank grasped his right arm, and dragged it down so that the stick could not be used.
At the same money.

not be used.

At the same moment Vere Beauciere grasped the new master's other arm.

Mr. Peckover struggled foriously in their grip.

"Release me!" he thundered. "How dars you!"

"Release me!" he thundered. How dore you!"

But instead of releasing him the school-boys tightened their grip, and Bob Lawless grasped him, too.

Old Man Gunten stood rooted to the ground, staring as if he could not quite believe the evidence of his eyesight.

It seemed like a horrid dream to him as Mr. Peckover was whirfed off his feet, his stick torn away, and the new head-muster was sent spinning back into the playground.

Mr. Peckover staggered back helplessly half a dozen paces, and then collapsed, measuring his length on the ground.

He lay there gasping.

senses, and he made a spring towards the schoolboys. In an instant half a dozen pairs of hands were laid on the fat storekeeper, and he went spinning after the new master.

Crasi.!

He landed on his back, with all the breath knocked out of his podgy body.

Side by side the new headmaster and the trustee lay sprawling, gasping, and from the crowd of schooliboys round the porch came a breathless cheer:

"Hurrah!"

The 4th Chapter.

Nothing Doing.

Mr. Gunten sat up. He blinked like an owl at Frank Richards & Co. as he sat in the dust and

gasped.
The fat storekeeper was so surprised

THE SCHOOL ON STRIKE!

(Continued from the previous page.)

that he seemed hardly to know what had happened yet.

He staggered up at last, however, with bulging eyes and flaming face.

He realised that it was no horrid nightmare, but plain and sober fact, that he, great man as he was, had been collared and treated as if he were of no more account than any "hobo" who tramped the trails of the Thompson Valley.

He spluttered with wrath.

"By gad!" he gasped. "By gad! You young scoundrels! Oh, ah, oh!"

Bob Lawless pointed to the gates.

"There's your way, Mr. Gunten," he said.

"Rascat!"

"Same to you, old scout, and many of them!" answered Bob cheerily. "Better keep your hands off, Mr. Peckover," he added, for the schoolmaster seemed to be about to spring at him. "You'll get hurt if you don't." Mr. Peckover panted.
"The school seems to be in a state of mutiny, Mr. Gunten!" he said, between his teeth.
"By gad it seems so! The work of

"By gad, it seems so! The work of Miss Meadows, I reckon!" panted the

Miss Meadows 1 reckon!" panted the storekeeper.

"That's a lie!" struck in Bob Lawless.

"Miss Meadows knows nothing whatever about it. I don't even know where she is to-day. We're acting on our own, because we won't see Miss Meadows fired by a dirty trick.—Your dirty trick, Mr. Gunten! You're a bad egg, sir!"

"What!" spluttered the storekeeper.

"A had egg!" said Bob. "That's plam Canadian; if you can understand anything plainer than your own Swiss lingo! Miss Meadows turned your son out of the school for being a gambler and a rascal, and your precious new schoolmaster wouldn't let him come back, if he did his duty, even if we let him. But we won't let him, Mr. Gunten!"

"Good heavens!" stuttered Mr. Gunten. He blinked helplessly at the insurgents. After his experience at their hands he was not inclined, to try violence again, enraged as he was.

It was only too plain that Frank Richards & Co. were prepared to send him sprawling once more if he attempted it.

him sprawling once more if he attempted it.

The two men blinked at one another, evidently at a loss.

"As for you, Mr. Peckover," continued Bob, his eyes gleaming, "you're a hit too hefty with your stick, sir, and it won't work here! You're no good, sir, or you wouldn't let young Gunten come back after Miss Meadows booted him out! You're not the real white article, and I guess it looks as if you've worked it with your pardner. Old Man Gunten, to amen Miss Meadows job here. And that's a low-down trick, my man!"

Mr. Peckover seemed on the point of choking.

He made a stride towards the porch, but the grim looks of the schoolboys made him pause.

"Come on if you like," said Vere Beauclere. "It will be the worse for you, sir."

"Listen to me, sir." said Bob. "We mean.—"
"You have said enough. Lawless, if that is your name." Mr. Peckover's cold eyes gleamed. "Is shall puntsh you severely for your insolence to Mr. Gunten."
"I should say so, by gosh!" gasped the enraged storekeeper. "You have full authority from the Board, Mr. Peckover, to enforce discipline in this school."
"I shall not fail, gir."
Mr. Peckover had a stick under his arm.

"Boy," gasped Mr. Peckover, "I am our headmaster."
"Nothing of the kind."
"Rats!"
"Bosh!"

Mr. Peckover had a stick under his arm.

He let it slip down into his hand, and, with a sudden movement, he graspeil Bob Lawless by the collar, taking the francher's son by surprise, so quick and catlike was his movement.

The next moment Bob was spun round, and the stick rose and fell across his shoulders with sounding whacks.

Bob roared.

"Let go! By gum, let go, or it will be the worse for you!" he shouted.

Whack whack, whack!

"Back up!" shouted frank Richards.

He rushed to his chum's aid at once.

Mr. Peckover had certainly not expected that. It was a roar of repudiation from the Cedar Creek fellows, and it made it quite plain that they did not intend to acknow-ledge Epiraim Peckover as their head-master. ledge Epitraim Peckover as their head-master.
The schoolmaster turned to Mr. Gunten.
"This mutiny must be quelled, sir," he said.

"I guess so!" gasped Old Man Gunten.
"I reckon so, Mr. Peckover. You're empowered to take any measures you choose; you have my authority."
"There are assistant masters here, I believe, and servants."
"Sure!"

Call them, then, to our assistance, these young rascals shall soon be

"Call them, then, to our assistance, and these young rescals shall soon be reduced to order."

"Good!" said Mr. Gunten.

He gave the rebels of Cedar Creek a venomous look, and strode away to the cabins occupied by the assistant masters.

Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd were outside the cabins, looking on from a distance, and conversing in low tones.

They glanced rather grimly at the fatt gentleman as he came puffing op.

The two young men knew what he wanted, but they did not look as if Mr. Gunten would get what he wanted.

Neither did Mr. Gunten address them in the most tactful way; he was too furlous for that.

"What are you loafing here for?" he thundered, as he came up.

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Slimmey, blinking over the gold rims of his glasses at the irate storekeeper.

"Can't you see what's going on?"

"Perfectly well, Mr. Gunten."

"Isn't it your duty to keep your confounded boys in order?" roared Mr. Gunten. "Lay hold of something—sticks or anything—and come and help!"

Mr. Shepherd eyed him calmly.

"Mr. Shepherd eyed him calmly.

"Mr. Shepherd eyed him calmly.

"Mr. Shepherd eyed him calmly.

"Gr course I do. you pesky jay!"

"Help restore order, do you mean?" he asked.

"Of course I do, you pesky jay!"
The Gentle Shepherd smiled.
"You appear to allow yourself a very great freedom of language, sir," he said quietly. "As it happens, Mr. Slimmey has sent in his resignation, as a protest against Miss Meadows' unjust dismissal. I have decided, after consultation with him, to fellow his example. We are not, therefore, under Mr. Peckover's orders, or under yours, Mr. Gunten."

"Contound you!" burst out Mr. Gunten

furlously, "I believe you're in league with those young scoundrels!"

The Gentle Shepherd made a step towards him.

"Moderate your language, please!" he said sharply.

Address m

'Address me civilly, or—"
"Or what?" roared the storekeeper Or I will knock you down!" said Mr.

"Or I will knock you down!" said Mr. Shephord coolly.

"By gad, and so will I!" said Mr. Slimmey. "You cannot bully us, Mr. Gunten. You have caused this riot, by your shabby treatment of Miss Meadows, and you can deal with it yourself. I leave Cedar Creck this day."

"And I go with you," said Mr. Shepherd. "Come, Mr. Slimmey, let us pack and get away. We cannot remain while this is going ou, and countenance it, and certainly we cannot assist those who have dismissed our respected colleague."

Mr. Gunten, gasping with rage, raised

Mr. Conten, gasping with rage, raised is fat, elenched list.

The Gentle Shepherd looked him in the cyes and waited. But the fat fist dropped again and unclenched.

Mr. Shepherd smiled slightly, and went into his cabin.

"Yon're sacked!" roared Mr. Gunten.
"Do you hear? Sacked! Discharged!
Fired! Get out!"

He received no answer from masters, and he strode away w purple face.

Catching sight of Black Sam, who was staring at the crowd at the porch, he called to the negro.

"Come here, man!"

"Your help is wanted," said Mr. Gunten. "You know me, I suppose?"
"Me know Mass' Gunten," agreed Black'
Sam, showing his teeth in a grin.
"That gentleman, Mr. Peckover, is the new headmaster here. You are to assist him in dealing with those boys. Get a cart-whip."

Black Sam shook his head.

"Me 'bey Missy Meadows," he said.
'Missy Meadows gib me orders. No take
odders. If Missy Meadows no come back,

Mr. Gunten trembled from head to foot

with rage.

Even the black man of all work had raised his heel against him, and to be defied by a "nigger" was the last straw. His rage overflowed, and he raised his hand and struck at the negro's black face with all his force.

His blow did not reach the mark, however.

ever.

A black hand gripped his wrist, so hard that the fat man gave a yell of agony, and Sam's black face grinned at him.

"You white trash!" said Black Samcontemptaously. "Low white trash, Mass' Gunten! You vamoose!"

He swung the fat storekeeper round by the wrist, and sent him spinning away. Mr. Gunten staggered several paces, gasping, and Black Sam walked back stolidly to his own quarters.

From him, it was clear, there was no

From him, it was clear, there was no ssistance to be had.

Almost foaming by this time, Mr. Gunten returned to the new schoolmaster, who was waiting near the porch with a black brow.

who was waiting near the porch with a black brow.

"Well, sir?" snapped Mr. Peckover.

"The assistant masters refuse to help; they've resigned," choked Mr. Gunten.

"Even the nigger is checky. Good gad!"

Mr. Peckover set his lips.

What was to be done in that strange conjunction of circumstances was a mystery he could not solve at present.

His cold eyes were gleaming, and there was no doubt as to what he would have liked to do, but the power to do it was not in his hands.

The insurgent schoolboys had watched Mr. Gunten's progress with grimning faces, a good deal encouraged by his failure to obtain help.

Mr. Gunten turned to the boys at last.

Mr. Gunten turned to the boys at last. "You will be punished for this!" be casped.

Come and punish us!" jeered Chunky

"We're ready for you, you foreign trash!" roared Eben Hacke.

"Come on, Fatty!"

'Ha, ha, ba!"

"I order you to make way, and allow your schoolmaster to enter the house! spluttered Mr. Gunten. Rats!



"Go and chop chips!"

The storekeeper cleiched his hands.
"Do you know what will happen to
ou? If you persist in delying authority,
shall call on the sheriff for assist-

Call, and be blowed!" unswered Bob

"You will be turned out of the school, Lawless!"

"Well, I'm not turned out yet," said Bob coolly; "and there'll be some trouble first, Mr. Gunten."

"That's enough from you, Mr. Gunten," said Frank Richards. "You'd better go, and take your new schoolmaster with you!"

"Vamoose the ranch!" hooted Lawrence. Chunky Todgers came out of the door-var with a cushion in his hand, and it chizzed through the air.

There was a howl from Mr. Gunten as eaught him under his double-chin.

it caught him under ...

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now light out!" shouted Chunky.

"Nowll get some more if you stay there.
Old Man Gunten! You make us tired."

"Vamoose!" came in a threatening

Mr. Gunten and his companion hastily backed away. They did not want any more custions. And a jeering roat followed them from the crowd at the porch.

The 5th Chapter. "Fired !"

It was close upon school-time now, and more and more boys and girls were arriv

It was close upon school-line were arriving at Cedar Creek.

Most of them gathered round Frank Richards & Co. at the porch.

It was easy to see upon which side in the dispute their sympathies lay.

Even those who did not join in the revelt gave the rebels their moral support, as it were, and wished them well.

There was a buzz of excited talk, while Mr. Gunten and Mr. Peckover, at a distance, were consulting desperately as to what was to be done.

Outside the gates, Kern Gunten still sat in the buggy, feeling thankful that he had had the sagacity to remain there and not venture within the walls.

There was no question of classes that morning.

Nobody went into the school-room.

The unaccustomed holiday added to the general excitement, and perhaps to the general exertement, and perhaps to the general cheerfulness.

Frank Richards & Co. had laid it down as a law that no more lessons were to be done at Cedar Creek until Miss Meadows

Frank Richards & Co, had laid it down as a law that no more lessons were to be done at Cedar Creek until Miss Meadows came hack; and in that, at least, they had hearty and unanimous support. While the buzz of discussion went on Mr. Slepherd and Mr. Slimmey were seen to leave their cabins together with hags in their hands.

in their hands.

To stay there without interfering while
the school was on strike was not feasible;
and certainly they fild not intend to make
any attempt to get Mr. Gunten out of the
difficulty he had landed himself in.

It was his business and the new school-master's, not theirs; and, moreover, they were well aware that their interference would not have been tolerated by the insurgents.

insurgents.

Leaving their more bulky baggage to be sent for at a more convenient time, the two masters packed their bags, and now they departed, Mr. Gunten scowling and Frank Richards & Co. shouting a cordial good-bye.

"I guess this is a cinch?" remarked Bob Lawless. "What can the galoots do? This is where they come out at the little end of the horn?"

"How is it, point to co.12"

"How is it going to end?" murmured Molly Lawrence.

Molly Lawrence.

"It's going to end in Miss Meadows coming back, I reckon!" said Bob confidently. "Bon't you be afraid, Molly."

"Bnt—but——" murmured the girl.

"We're going to give Old Man Gunten our ultimatum—good word that!" chuckled Bob. "Come on, you chaps!"

Frank Richards & Co. marched to the spot where Mr. Gunten and Mr. Peckover were standing talking in low tones.

A cheering crowd followed them.

"Made up your mind yet, Mr. Gunten?" called out Bob.

The storekeeper scowled by way of reply.

The storekeeper scored by accepting reply.

"Is Miss Meadows coming back?" demanded Frank Richards,

"No!" roared the storekeeper,

"Then the school's on strike till she does come!" said Bob Lawless determinedly. "We won't have lessons, we won't allow lessons to be given, and we won't have your pesky new schoolmaster. So you can put that in your pipe and sinoke it, Mr. Gunten!"

The storekeeper clenched his podgy hands.

"Enough of this!" he said, in a gasping voice. "For the last time, will you receive your new master and submit to his authority?"

"No fear!"

There was no doubting the earnestness of that reply, which was yelled at Mr. Gunten by thirty voices.

"Then I shall leave Mr. Peckover here, and go at once for the sheriff!" said Mr. Gunten, in a choking voice.

"You can go for the sheriff, or for the governor-general if you like!" answered Bob. "But you won't leave Mr. Peckover here! We don't want him, and we won't have him! That's flat!"

"Mr. Peckover, kindly remain here till

"Mr. Peckover, kindly remain here till I return!" said Mr. Gunten, taking no heed of Bob. "Certainly, sir!" said Mr. Peckover, "You will lose no time?"

"Rely on me!"

Mr. Gunten walked away to the gates, where his son was waiting in the buggy. The new schoolmaster took a step towards Mr. Slinmey's cabin, with the intention of remaining there till Old Man Gunten returned with the necessary force to restore order.

to restore order.

But Bob Lawless meant business—and his followers meant it, too.

At a sign from Bob the schoolboys made a rush and surrounded the new marker.

made a rush and sur-master.

Mr. Peckover halted, his eyes glittering.

Mr. Peckover halted, his eyes glittering.

"Stand back!" he said, hetween his

teeth,
"Collar him in "
"Fire him out!"

The angry man struck out flercely on all sides as he was collared by the schoolboy

sides as he was considered strikers.

Two or three of them yelled, but Mr. Peckover's blows were soon stopped, as he was seized from every side.

He was whirled over in the grasp of meany hands, and was swept from the ground and carried bodily after Mr. Counten.

Gunten.

In a yelling crowd the schoolboys
rushed down to the gates, with Mr. Peckover struggling and wriggling in their
minist

midst.

Mr. Gunten spun round in the gateway, his eyes almost starting from his head at the sight of what was happening.

Without heeding the storekeeper, Frank Richards & Co. rushed Mr. Peckover up to the buggy, and tossed him bodily into it. Kern Gunten gave a loud howl as the schoolmaster crashed upon him, and they disappeared into the bottom of the buggy together.

"Good gad!" stuttered Mr. Gunten dazedly,

Bob Lawless and Frank Richards caught

Jump in !" rapped out Bob. What!"

Jump in, or will you be chucked intarp's the word!"

_I_J_

"Ob, chuck him in!" roared Chunky Todgers.

Todgers.

"Let me go! 1—I will get in!" gasped the storekeeper.

"Get a move on, then!"

The lat storekeeper scrambled wildly into the buggy.

The fat storckeeper scrambled wildly into the buggy.

Frank Richards took the horse's head, and led him round into the trail, while Mr. Gunten and his son and the school-master sorted themselves out in the vehicle, gasping and furious.

"Off 12 shouted Bob.

Frank gave the horse a light flick, and the animal, startled by the shouting, dashed away up the trail, the buggy rock-ing behind him.

Mr. Gunten made a grasp at the rela-Mr. Gunten made a grasp at the reins d controlled the horse, but he did not

stop.

The fat gentleman was glad enough to get away from the excited school, and Mr. Peckover had no desire whatever to remain there by himself—he had too much regard for his skin.

A roor from the Cedar Creek crowd followed the buggy as it spun away up the trail to Thompson.

The vehicle vanished from sight with a clatter of hoofs.

a ciatter of hoofs.

Mr. Gunten was gone, and his new schoolmaster with him; and Cedar Creek was left to itself.

"Well," said Bob Lawless, with a deep breath, "we're in for it now, you chaps!"

"I guess so!" said Chunky Todgers, "Who cares?"

"In for a penny, in for a pound!" said Frank Richards. "Old Man Gunten will bring the sheriff and his men. Are we going to give in?"

No fearl" "I guess we can't handle the sheriff as we did 0ld Man Gunten," said Tom Law-rence, with a whistle.
"I guess we're not giving in unless Miss Meadows comes back!" said Bob Lawiess.
"Hear, hear!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Cedar Creek is on strike, and the strike
goes on till we get justice!" continued
Bob. "No time to lose. The sheriff will
he along before the day's much older.
Every fellow that isn't ready for a fight
to a finish had better hop out while he's
got a chance. We're going to bar the gate
and hold the school against all comers."

"Bravo!"

"Bravo!"

"All the girls and all the kids had better go home," said Bob, in a businesslike way.

"There will be some hard knocks, most likely, and pretty faces mustn't get damaged. Every chap who stays after the gate is barred is in it to the finish, even if we wind up in the calabooze at Thompson!"

And Bob Lawless, like a good general,

And Bob Lawless, like a good general, put his plans into execution at once. The little scholars and the girls departed, accompanied by the few who did not care to keep on to the end.

Frank Richards & Co. and a score of other choice spirits remained, and they barred the gate and prepared for defence. Ere long, they knew, outraged authority would be there, with force to back it up; and it would be a grim struggle.

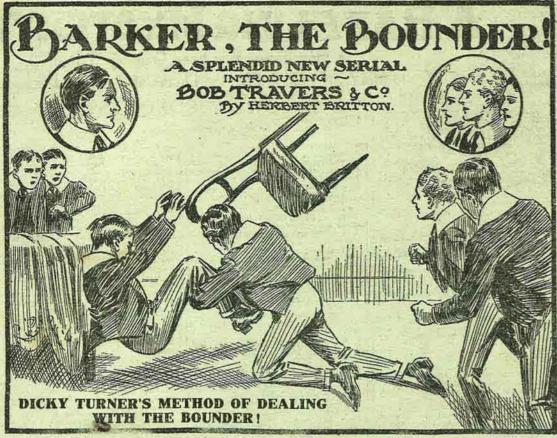
How the affair would end no one could foresee; but upon one point Frank Richards & Co. were grimly determined—there was to be no surrender, and until their beloved schoolmistress was reinstated the school would remain on strike.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE STRIKERS' TRIUMPH!"

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD DON'T MISS IT!



Published Every Monday

THE CHIEF CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY ARE:

BOB TRAVERS, DICKY TURNER JACK JACKSON, and BUNNY, the clums of Study No. 5.

MASON and HARRIS, the bullies of the Fourth, who share Study No. 2 the with

BARKER, the bounder.

MR. CHAMBERS, the moster of the Fourth Form.

JIMMY WREN & CO., the chums of the New House.

HMMY WHEN & CO., the third You House.

Last week's instalment described how Bob Travers met Burker, the bounder, at the station, how they discovered him to be an absolute rotter, how they tied him to a donkey, how he arrived at Redelyffe on the animal's back, how he insulted. Mr. Chambers, and how he received a good thrashing in consequence.

Read on fr in here;

Birds of a Feather.

"Rotten hole!"
That was the opinion of Barker, the bounder, as he emerged from Mr. Chambers' study with his hands tucked under his arms.

bers study with his hands tucked under his arms.

Mr. Chambers had laid it on pretty thick, causing the bounder to mutter savagely to himself as he strode towards the Fourth-Form passage.

He reached Study No. 2, and, without going through the ceremony of knocking, kicked the door open with his foot.

Mason and Harris, who occupied the study, immed to their feet at once as the new boy appeared on the threshold.

Barker gazed curiously round the room, and then smilled.

"Don't think much of this!" he muttered. "Dingy-looking hale to shove a that pinto. Not enough room to swing a cat round! I suppose you chaps belong here?"

"You suppose right!" said Mason cartie.

chap into. Not chough room to swing a cat round: I suppose you chaps belong here?"

"You suppose right!" said Mason curtly, "But I fail to see how it concerns you.

"You soon will!" said Barker disagreeably, "That old fossil of a Form-master has just told me I am to dig in here."

"Blessed sauce:" growled Mason, somewhat amnoyed.

"So I thought," said Barker cynically. "I consider the old buffer's got a confounded cheek to expect me to share a study with other chaps. I wanted a room to myself!"

"You want a jolly sight too much for a new kid!" exclaimed Mason. "If old Chambers says you're to share this study I suppose you must. I'll tell you this. though, if you come it too much you'll go out on your neek!"

"Oh, cut that I's said the bounder, with a sneer. "That game won't work with me, my son! In case you don't know, my name's Barker; and I'll tell you this—I make the best of friends, but the worst of onemics. It don't pay to be an enemy of Caell Barker. I've already made three memics here."

"Pretty good start!" said Mason, with "Pretty good start!" said Mason, with

"Pretty good start!" said Muson, with a snift.

"A folly bad start for that chap Travers and his pals," said Barker. They've had the cheek to key their hands on me, but they're going to suffer for it. I won't rest until I've compelled them to go down on their hands and knees and beg my pardon. They had the confounded impudence to set about me for playing a game of cards, and—"

"Serves you right!" said Mason.

"By gad!" exclaimed Barker. "You chaps good little Georgies, too? Well, I'm hanged! Haven't you got one sporting chap in this show at all? Ain't there one fellow with a bit of go in him?"

"Ahen!" "A lolly bad start for that chap Travers and his pals," said Barker. "They've had the check to lay their hands on me, but they're going to suffer for it. I won't rest until I've compelled them to go down on their hands and knees and beg my pardon. They had the confounded impudence to set about me for playing a game of cards, and—
"Serves you right!" said Mason.
"By gad!" exclaimed Mason. "Why not?"
"By gad!" exclaimed Mason. "Vou're not thinking of keeping him here, surely?"
"Why not?"
"You won't be allowed to," replied Mason. "Chaps in the Fourth aren't allowed to keep servant."
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"By gad!" exclaimed Mason. "By gad!" exclaimed Mason. "Fy ou chinking of keeping him here, surely?"
"By gad!" exclaimed Mason. "By gad!" exclaimed

type. I— By gad! What's this you've got here—a pack of cards? What do you keep them for?"

"To light the fire with!" responded Mason sareastically. "But you can put them back where you found them."

The bounder flung the pack of cards on to the table, and then grinned at the two builties of the Fourth.

"You chaps are awfully deep," he said, with a shake of the head. "If the truth's known, you're sporty boyees like myself, and always ready for a bit of fun—ch, what?"

"Well, we play sometimes, you know, said Mason. "Have to be careful, you know, Doesn't do to allow the masters and prefects to get on your track."

"I suppose not," agreed the bounder. "They don't understand that a "cliow needs a bit of sport occasionally. Ha, ha, ha! But I say, I reckon we ought to get on pretty well together. I like sporty chaps, and—and do you smoke?"

Harris and Mason coloured slightly.

"Sa-sometimes," replied Mason quietly. "That's ripping!" said Barker. "You'll suit me down to the ground, I can see that! Look here, I've had a pretty rotten day so far. Suppose we brighten things up. Let's have a game of banker, and—here you are; have a smoke."

The new boy held his cigarette-case before the two builies.

Mason and Harris had felt antagonistic towards the new boy at first, but having found out the type of fellow he was, they began to adopt a more friendly attitude.

They were just about to light their eigarettes when there came a tap on the door.

Next moment Merks, the school porter, entered the room.

They were just about to light their cigarettes when there came a tap on the door.

Next moment Merks, the school porter, entered the room.

"Which as I understand as there's a boy ere named Barker?" said Merks.

"By gad!" exclaimed the bounder tersely. "Which do you want with me?"

"Which as I wants nothing," replied the old porter. "But there's a gentleman down at the gates who wants to see you—name o' Bennett.

"Oh, he's turned up, then, the scoundrel!" exclaimed Barker. "It's a good job for him he has! You can send him up."

"H'm!" The old porter coughed and hesitated. "Which as the gentleman says as he particularly wanted to see you at the gates."

"Send him up, I tell you!" yelled the bounder. "What do you mean by arguing with me? Go and do as you're told, you'ld was not used to be spoken to like that, but all the same he said nothing. He strode disconsolately along the passage, whitst Barker closed the door of Study No. 2 with a bang.

"Friend of yours coming up?" asked Mason curiously.

"By gad! No." replied the bounder: "only my servant."

"Servant!" gasped Mason in bewilderment.

"Yes," replied Barker. "He's a dodder-he old chump, without a lu'porth of

"Servant: gaspen Mason in bewider-ment.

"Yes," replied Barker. "He's a dodder-ling old chump, without a ha'porth of sense in him. I'd sack him, but it's such a job to get fresh servants in these times. Never mind; he'll come in use-ful."

He stood in the doorway, hesitating.

"Come inside, you danderheaded fool." said Barker, taking a sent at the table, and commencing to shuffle the cards.

"You're just in time to join us in a game of cards. Sit down, you tellows!"

"Master Cecil—" began Bennett fatteringly.

game of cards. Sit down, you iellows!"

"Master Cecil—" began Bennett falteringly.

"Shut up, and do as you're told!"
snapped the bounder. "I've just had about enough trouble with you for one day, If you don't improve I'll jolly well sack you on the spot!"

"I was going to suggest—"

"St down, I tell you!" snapped Barker. "Now, then, you fellows, let's cut for bank. Highest card takes the bank."

Mason and Harris cut, and then Barker sold out the cards to the man.

"Cut, you finds" he exclusived.

Bennett held back.

"Master Cecil," he said pleadingly, "I do wish you would listen to reason. I'm sure they won't allow me to stay here with you. Why not let me go while—

"Not likely!" said the bounder. "I'm hanged it I'll let you go after all the trouble you've caused me to-day!"

"Better let him clear," advised Mason.

"It the masters spot him—

"Hang the biessed masters!" cried Barker. "I've paid my lees to come to this rotton hole, and I'm jolly well going to have my own way! If anybody starts dictating to me there'll be trouble. Come on, Remett: cut these cards! Got any money to play with?"

"A f frew sidnings," faltered Bennett miserably.

"Oh, hang: you're always running short."

money to play with?"

"A fillew stiffings," faltered Bemett miscrably,

"Oh, hang; you're always running short of money!" growled the bounder, feeling in his pocket for his notebook. "Here you are. Take this ten-bob note, and don't worry me for any more money for a week!"

Bemutt took the note and table a halo

k!" nett took the note and sat at the a helpless, disconsolate expression

Bennett took the note and sat at the table, a helpless, disconsolate expression on his face.

Mason and Harris were not looking very cheerful. They considered themselves the most "sporty" fellows at Readylfe, but even they did not come up to the reckless

most "sporty" lellows at Readylfe, but even they did not come up to the reckless new boy.

"My bank," said Barker, shulling the cards once again. "Come on, you tellows. Plank down your cash! You, too, Bennett; you're not going to slide out of this!"

Mason and Harris carried out the new boy's bidding, and the game started.

Barker soon lost the bank, and from that moment he seemed to be dogged with misfortune.

His money went into the pockets of the two bullies, whose manner hecame decidedly more cheerful at the success they were achieving.

"You're having a run of bad luck, old man." said Mason consolingly.
"By gad!" drawled Burker. "That doesn't worry me. What's a few paltry tools? Plenty more money where that lot came from. Here you are; change that quid note for me!" He flung a Treasury note for a pound towards Mason. "Now give me a light. I can't play without smoking."

Mason handed a hox of matches to the bounder, and the latter lighted a cigarette.

"I say, hadn't we better open the window a bit?" suggested Harris norvously.

"What the dickens for?" demanded

norvously, "What the dickens for?" demanded Barker. "It ain't any too warm in here

ow."
"But—but supposing a master should a master should be a master sh

come along, and and "Blow the blessed masters!" snapped the bounder. They can't kill us!"
"N-n-no," faltered Harris. "But it means a good whacking, you know."
"By gad!" exclaimed the bounder. "What's that matter? No good being frightened of a whacking. You'll never enjoy yourself if you are. Hang it all.

there's nothing in being caned.

there's nothing in being caned. It's soon over, and—"
"You've got some nerve for a young-ster!" said Mason.
"Ha, ha!" chuckled the bounder.
"There ain't much I runk. What do you say, Bennett?"
Bennett smiled in a sickly manner.
"I'm alraid there isn't, Master Cecil." he said quietly. "But I do wish you wouldn't be so reckless! Your father

"Hang the guy'nor!" growled Barker.
"What's it matter to him? I bet he's been a gay dog in his time, so why shouldn't I cujoy myself? Come on, you chaps! I'll put ten bob on this pack!"

"I't-ten bob!" stuttered Harris, who was in charge of the bank.
"Isn't that enough for you?" said Barker. "All right; I'll make it a quid."
The bounder flung a pound note on to the table in a reckless manner.

"A q-q-quid!" faltered Harris. "I—I

"A q-q-quid?" lattered Harris. "1—1"
"By gad! What's the matter now?"
said the bounder.
There was 2 good deal the matter. The
door of the study was suddenly flung
open, and in strode Bob Travers & Co.
They pulled up just inside the room
as the smell of cigarette-smoke assailed
their nostrils.
"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Travers
wrathfully. "What—"
"Who the dickens asked you to come
in?" said the bounder, giving the chums
a disdainful look. "Fine manners you've
got, barging in where you're not
wanted!"
"By Jove! I'll give you mauners, you

got, barging in where you're not wanted?"

"By Jove! I'll give you manners, you cad!" roared Dicky Turner angrily, "Let me get at him! I'll slaughter him! I'll.

Dicky paused, for the bounder had suddenly caught up a chair, and was wielding it over his head.

It's face was red with temper, and he giared ferredy at Dicky.

"Don't you dare to touch me!" exclaimed Barker. "Move a step, and I'll have no mercy on you!"

"Put that chair down, you rotter!"

"I sha'n't! 1—"

Crash!

Crash! Dicky Turner did not hesitate.
He made a quick dive for the bounder's legs, and next instant they both fell to the floor with a clatter.
The chair shot out of Barker's bands, and the latter turned on Dicky with his lists.

lists.

But Dicky was in a desperate mood, and he had very little difficulty in holding the bounder captive.

"Collar those other cads!" exclaimed bicky wrathfully. "We'll teach them to turn their study into a blessed taprount?"

"No need to any will be set with the case of the cas

room!"

"No need to get will, you fellows "said Harris, backing away from Bob and Jack Jackson, "We were only playing for fun, and — Ow! Yow! Youop!"

Harris protests availed him little, he was collared by Jack Jackson, and rolled to the floor.

Bob took charge of Mason, and soon the three "sports" were helidess prisoners.

"What shall we do with the rotters.

"What shall we do with the rotters.
Bob?" asked Dicky Turner. "Better duck 'em in the fountain, I think."

"Good idea!" replied Bob, with a grin.
"Don't you dare to—" began the bounder.

"Don't you dark who bounder." Shut up, you ead!" snapped Dicky. "Shut up, you ead!" snapped Dicky. "We've had enough of your threats. You were going to hand us over to the police, but you haven't done so."
"I'll—"" won't." declared Dicky.

police, but you haven't done so."

"Til—"
"No, you won't," declared Dicky.
"Kim up, you rotter! I guess we'll
damp your enthustasm for card-playing,
my pippin! You want teaching that
fellows at Redelyffe aren't allowed to
gamble, and we're the fellows to teach
you! This way to the fountain!"
Taking the bounder by the seruff of the
nock, Dicky forced him out of the study.
Barker protested loudly, but there was
nobody to come to his assistance.
Tive minutes later he landed with a
splash in the fountain. Then there were
two more splashes as Mason and Harris
followed him unwillingly into the cold
and unsympathetic water.
Three more miserable and dejected
juniors it would have been hard to find
than the three nuts as they appeared
above the surface of the water.

But Bob Travers & Co, had no time to
waste over the bounder and his friends.
Chuckling to themselves, they returned
to the House, leaving Barker & Co, to
scramble out of the water as best they
could.

The Bounder's Mistake.

"I'll smash them for this!"
Barker ground out the words as he changed his clothes in the Fourth Forn formitory.
"Better be careful!" advised Mason

"Better be careful: naviged glumly.
"Careful be hanged!" raved the bounder. "I'm not going to take this lying down! By gad! I'll give them socks! They'll jolly well wish they hadn't touched me before I've finished with them. What's the number of their study?"

"What the dickens—" began Mason.
The bounder made an impatient

The bounder made an impatient gesture.

"Don't start arguing!" he snapped.

"You look don't know how to get your own back on cads like that! Where do they hang out?

"In number five," said Mason.

"Good!" Barker brushed bis hair carelessly, and they strode towards the door of the Fourth Form dormiter, "I suppose it isn't a had-looking rom?"

"Pretty decent, but—"

"Ifa, ha, ha!" chuckled the bounder.
"It won't look very pretty when I've done with it! I'll smash every single bit of furniture they be got! I'll wreck the blessed show! It doesn't pay to meddle with Cecil Barker, I can tell you that!"

Mason looked surprised.
"I say, you'd better go cast," he advised. "If the masters get to hear of it, there il be the very dickens to pay! It'll mean the sack for a cert,"
"By gad?" exclaimed the bounder, "Do you think I'm straid of the such? There are pleasy of other schools in the country. I'm not so very keen on staying in this rotten hole! You chaps haven't got half enough go in you for my liking. Eather too much fink about you."

liking. Rather too much fank about you."

Mason's face flushed with anger, and he gripped his fists tight.

"Look here," he said, "I've stood a good deal from you already, but I won't put up with much more! Mention the word tunk again, and I'll send you flying!"

"Oh, come off that!" said the new bey, with a sneer. "That caper doesn't work with me. It wouldn't pay you to lay your hands on me!"

"Why, I—"

"If you touched me, I should go straight to the Head and tell him that you've heen playing cards for money," said Barker, with a mocking grin.

"You were playing cards yourself!"

"What of it."

"The Head would have to know, the?

The bounder burst into a bitter laugh.

The bounder burst into a bitter length.
"My dear chap, you must take me for a noodle," be said disparagingly. "I'm not a fank! I shouldnit mind the Head knowing. He can't kill me."
"He could joily well give you the

"He could jolly well give you the sack!"

"What of his" said Barker sneeringly.
"That wouldn't hurt me. I guess I should rather enjoy the experience of being given the order of the boot. At any rate, I should have an opportunity of telling the Head what I thought of him. I rather like having a go at these old buffers, you know!"

Mason gasped.

"By gad" he exclaimed. "You've got some check."

"My dear chap, you've got to have it nowadays, said Barker. "It's check that carries you through, you know. Some of you wouldn't have the check to smash up another chap's study."

"I—I don't know," said Mason haltingly.

"No, you wouldn't!" said the bounder. "But I have, my dear chap, and I'm going to make a good job of it, too! Their blessed furniture won't be worth twopence when I've finished with it! Tata! See you presently."

In another moment Barker had disappeared from the dornitory.

He went down two flights of stairs, and entered a dimly-lighted passage.

He gazed up at the numbers on the doors of the studies, and in a moment was outside "Number Five."

The hounder placed his car to the kcyhole, and listened.

Not a sound came from the kcyhole, and listened.

Not a sound came from within, and without auther heast from the grate, and using it as a weapon for destroying the farmiture.

But all of a sudden his eyes became riveted on the table.

The room was in dusbess, and, not knowing where to find the swinch, barkes struck a match, with the intention of picking up the poker from the grate, and using it as a weapon for destroying the farmiture.

But all of a sudden his eyes became riveted on the table.

There in the centre stood a bettle, wrapped in bind tissue paper.

His curiosity aroused, the bounder grabbed hold of the bottle, and tore off its paper wrapping.

Next instant he untered a low gasp.

"Whisky" he muttered. "By gad! These cads have been drinking whisky, and preferifing all the while that they regood little Georgies! This is a treat! I've got them in the hollow of my hand now, and, by gad, won't I make

"If you've kicked him out-

"It you've kicked him out..." he began.

"We didn't exactly kick him out," said Bob coolly. "But we had to persuade him that he couldn't stay here."

"You cads!" shouted the bounder.

"You'll fetch him back at once?"

"We jolly well won't!" declared Dicky Turner firmly.

"All right," said Barker. "You've only got yourselves to blane if I give you away.

"Eh!" exhained Bob Travers, in bewilderment.

"I thought that would make you look up," said Barker, with a cynical air. "Perhaps you've forgotten what you left on the table of your study."

"Left on the table!" gasped Bob. "Only a few pens and paper, and—and heen doing in our study?

"That's my business," said Barker. "I should say it's rather unfortunate for you that I happened to look in when I did!"

"Why—"

"I wonder what the Head would say if he knew that fellows in the Fourthsuch good little fellows, too—were in the habit of drinking whisky?" said the bounder slowly.

"My hat!" exclaimed Dicky Turner,

"Of course."

"He may come back!" suggested Captain Lagden.
"I don't believe he went away."

"But if he has not gone away, he must be at Rookwood still!" exclaimed the captain. "In that case, where is he?"

"It beats me," said Jimmy Silver. "I can't understand it at aii!" "Unless he's been kidnapped," said

for it."

"What nonsense!"

The juniors made no reply to that.

They entered the School House, leaving Capcain Lagden standing by the steps, rubbing his chin thoughtfully with his left hand.

"I don't believe he cares a twopenny rap about poor old Lovel!!" growled traby, as they went down the big corridor towards the Head's study. "It's partly his fault this has happened too; though I suppose he doesn't know that,"

"I suppose we shall have to tell the Head?" said Jimmy Silver uneasily.

"Now Lovell's gone, we can't keep it dark that he went down from the dorm to play a trick on Lagden."

"Hetter tell everything. I think," said Newrome. "It can't hurt Lovell now, and we can't very well keep anything dark."

Jimmy tapped at the Head's door.

and we can't very well keep anything dark.

Jimmy tapped at the Head's door.

Dr. Chisholm's deep voice bade lime enter, and the chums of the Fourth entered the Head's study.

Rahy.
The captain started.
"Kidnapped!" he repeated.
"That's the only way I for it."
"What nonsense!"
"Ba unions made no reply

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of

JIMMY SILVER & CO., the Chums at Rookwood School,

By OWEN CONOUEST.

meer.
What are you driving at, you ead?"
exclaimed hotly. "Out with it-

gaick!"
"Certainly!" grinned the bounder. And
he brought the bottle of whisky from behind his back, and held it out before the
Juniors. "Ever seen that before?"

Dicky was too astounded to speak at

Dicky was too astounded to speak at that moment.

"Very strange that I should find this on the table of your study, wasn't it?" sneered Barker. "Of course, you quite forgot when you left it there that I might hop in, and—"

"You had!" roared Dicky Turner. "If you dare to say another word—"

"Not so much noise, you kids!"
The crowd of juniors looked round at once, to find Foster, a prefect in the Sixth, standing behind them.

Boster was not a popular senior with the juniors; he was far too bad tempered and tritable to win favour with them, and, moreover, strong rumours had floated through the school recently that foster's habits were not all they might be.

"Showe that bettle away Barker you

"Shove that bottle away, Barker, you "Shove that bottle away, Barker, you rotter!" muttered one indignant Fourth-Former, in a whisper, but he did not speak so low that Foster did not hear. "Hailo! What have you got there?" demanded the prefect. "Ohly a 1s, the of whisky," replied the bounder, with an indifferent air. "Whisky!" exclaimed the prefect, in surprise, "Wh-where the dickens did you find that?" "The cad swears he found it in our

gurprise. "Wh-where the dickens did you find that?"

"The cad swears he found it in our study," said Bob Travers "He's lying, and—

"I'm not lying, I tell you!" shouted the bounder. "I found it on the table of Study No. 5, in the Fourth Form passage.

"I suppose you know it's against the rules to bring whisky into the school?" said Foster severely, fixing his eyes on Bob Travers & Co.

"I suppose you know we're not in the habit of doing anything of the kind!" snapped Dicky Turner angrily.

Foster gave Dicky a wrathful look, and then he turned to Barker.

"You must have made a mistake," he said. "Possibly—"

"I haven't made a mistake!" snapped Barker. "If you won't take my word. I'll take you to the blessed study, and show you exactly where Pround it!"

"Perhaps that would be advisable," said the senior.

Barker was the first to mount the

was the first to mount the

Barker was the first to mount the stairs.

He raced up them two at a time in an excited state of mind.

Foster and the crowd of juniors followed at his heels.

When he reached the second floor landing, the bounder, to the amazement of the juniors, and to the consternation of the prefect, strode quickly along the passage.

passage.
"Come back, you duffer!" exclaimed one of the Fourth-Formers. "That's the

"Come back, you duffer!" exclaimed one of the Fourth-Formers. "That's the prefects' passage."

Barker took no notice of the remark, but rushed on, and threw open the door of a stady on which the numeral "V." had been painted.

It was dark within the study; but one of the Fourth-Formers dashed in and switched on the light.

Next instant the juniors poured in, with smiles on their faces.

But there was no smile on Foster's face. He was looking grim and angry, and the colour had shot to his face.

"You little beast!" he raved. "What do you mean by coming to my study? The Fourth Form studies are upstairs."

"Upstairs!" gasped the bounder. "But but in his is where I found the whisky. It was on the table there."

He placed the bottle right in the centre of the table.

Foster's face was a picture. He tried to speak, but the words choked in his throat.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laugh-d Dicky Turner."

This beats the giddy band! That cad

throat.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Dicky Turner.

"This beats the giddy band! That cad
came to the wrong passage, and he's
uabled old Foster's whieky!"

"Ha, la, ha!" roared Bob Travers.

"We aren't suspected any longer, Foster,
are we?

"Stop laughing, you little beasts!"
reared Foster. "Get out of my study,
every one of you!"

"Stop laughing, you little beasts!" roared Foster. "Get out of my study, every one of you!"

"But about that whisky—" began bleky Turner.

"Get out. I tell yon!" exclaimed the prefect. "By gad! Where's my cane!" Foster picked up a cane from the bookcase, and lashed out viciously at the igniors.

The crowd of Fourth-Formers turned tail at once, and shot out of the study.

They had no desire to argue with such a weapon.

They had no desire to argue with such a weapon.

Barker endeavoured to pass out with the others, but the Sivth-Former clutched him by the shoulder, and drazged him back.

"Come here, you little beast!" raved Foster, as he fung the bounder across the study. "I want to have a talk with you."

You."
Next instant the door of the prefect's study closed with a bary, and a little later cries of pain and misery came

study closed with a born, and a little later cries of pain and misery came from the room.

Barker was coing through it for the mistake he had made: but the chortling funiors in the passage could not bring themselves to feel sorry for him.

They fold that he thoroughly deserved his punishment.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this splendid new serial in next Mon-day's issue of the Boys' FRIFED. I should be glad if readers would write and let me know what they think of this new story.)



not interfere!" exclaimed the Head sternly.

"Nothing of the sort, sir! I am quite certain that he never intended to leave Rookwood! He went down for quite a different thing."

"You knew why he went?"

"Yes, sir."

"And his reason?"

"It—it was a jape," faltered Jimmy Silver.

A what? Oh, a practical joke! Is that

"And after you showed that you didn't want to be considered as a relation, he said nothing more about it." The one-armed gentleman set his lips for a moment.
But his voice was quite agreeable as he it?"
"Yes, sir."
"Do you mean to say that Lovell left
the dormitory in the middle of the night
for some folly in connection with your
disputes with the Modern juniors?" the
Hend exclaimed.
"It wasn't that, sir. It was—was—
was—" went on:
"You have no idea what has become of
Lorell, then?"
"None at all."
"I suppose you are anxious about
him?"

"Well?"
"Captain Lagden, sir." said Jimmy at

"Captain Lagden, sir," said Jimmy at last.

"Captain Lagden!" repeated the Head in angry amazement. "Lovell intended to play some trick on Captain Lagden?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Lovell.

"Who is Captain Lagden?"

"Captain Lagden," said the Head grimly,
"is a gentleman who was once at Rookwood School, and had a distinguished record when a schoolboy here. He has since distinguished himself at the Front, where he lost his arm in battle. He has accepted the post of football coach to the school. That honourable gentleman, sir, is the person upon whom according to this boy, your son intended to play some trick in the dead of the night."

Mr. Lovell looked distressed.

"Lovell wasn't to blame, sir," exclatimed Jimmy Silver, quick in defence of tirs chum. "He was only going to ink the captain."

"Ink him!" repeated the Head in a

his chum. "He was only going to ink the captain." "Ink him!" repeated the Head in a

itis chum. "He was only going to ink the captain."

"Tuk him!" repeated the Head in a terrifying voice.

"Yes," gasped Jimmy.

"And for what?" thundered the Head.

"What flimsy excuse, Silver, had Lovell for planning to perpetrate such a trick?"

"It was Captain Lagden's fauit!" said Raby sturdily.

"Silence, Raby! I am questioning Silver! Explain the matter at once, Silver, if there is the remotest excuse to be offered for Lovell's conduct!"

Jimmy flushed a little; his own anger was rising.

Lovell's disappearance, and the possibility that he was in trouble or danger, made the Head's anger seem quite out of place to Lovell's chuma, at least.

"Please tell us all, Silver," said Mr. Lovell gently.

"I will, sir, certainly! Yesterday afternoon we went exploring in the old abbey yoults, and Captain Lagden's to the Head. Of course, it was wrong, as the vaults are out of bounds; but we thought it wasn't Captain Lagden's business to interfere. Lovell told him so, and he was caned for speaking plainly to Lagden."

"He was caned for gross impertinence to Captain Lagden's business to interfere. Lovell told him so, and he was caned for speaking plainly to Lagden."

"He was caned for gross impertinence to Captain Lagden's business to interfere. Lovell told him so, and he was caned for speaking plainly to Lagden."

"Ha that all?"

"That is all, sir."

"And for that reason Lovell left the dormitory in the night to visit Captain Lagden's quarters and play a trick on him!"

"Se os, sir."

"As Lovell is not here I will not pursue that matter" said the

him?"
"Ye-es, sir."
"As Lovell is not here I will not pursue that matter," said the Head, after a pause. "My present object is to discover what has become of the boy. Did he return to the dormitory?"
"No, sir."
"Bid you remain awako?"

what has become of the boy. Did he return to the dormitory?"
"No. sir."
"I fell asleep after a time. When I woke up I called to him, and thought he had come back and turned in as he didn't answer. When I woke in the morning I found his bed empty."
"Is that all you know?"
"That is all, sir."
"It tells us very little," said Mr. Lovell, with a sigh. "You are certain, Silver, that my son was actually intending to play this trick on Captain Lagden, and that it was not his intention to leave the house?"

play this trick on Captain Lagden, and that it was not his intention to leave the house?"

"Absolutely certain, Mr. Lovel!!"

"Then why did he not return to the dormitoty?"

"I can't guess, sir."

"The matter is clear enough to me," said the Head harshly, "It appears to me probable that Lovell, finding Silver awake, satisfied him with that story, while his real intention was to leave the school, for masons of his own, which I do not pretend to understand."

"I'm sure not, sir!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Do you imagine, Silver, that Lovell disappeared somewhere between the Fourth Form dormitory and the Oak Room—Captain Lagden's room?"

"I-I can't make it out, sir."

"A window was found open this morning, Mr. Lovell, which could only have been opened from the inside. Does not that make the matter clear?"

"It certainly appears to do so," said Mr. Lovell, "Yet if my son has run away from school, why has he not returned to his hume?"

"Probably he is aware that you would send him back to Rookwood to receive the punishment he has merited," said the Head drily. "I have no doubt—no doubt whatever—that you will hear from him shortly."

"I sincerely hope so?" said the old gentleman, with a sigh.

"But, sir—" began Jimmy Silver.

"Bux you anything to suggest, Silver?"

"Lovell wasn't felly dressed when he left the dorm, sir!" said Jimmy. "He left his collar and tie, and his waistcoat. I've found his cap, too. If he was going to leave the school, would he do it without a collar on, and bareheaded?"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "It really looks as if the boy was a little out of his senses when he left. I suppose. Mr. Lovell, that you have never observed any—any tendency to—to irresponsible conduct in your son?"

"Most decidedly not, sir!" answered Mr. Lovell tartly.

The Head reas utterness is

conduct in your son?"

"Most decidedly not, sir;" answered Mr.
Lovell tartly.

The Head gave utterance to a sound
which, in any icss exalted personage, must
have been described as a grunt.

It was evident that the whole affair
angered and exasperated him.

To his mind it represented itself chiefly
as a disagreeable interruption of the calm
and even tenor of his way.

"Perhaps Captain Lagden could let in
some light upon the matter," said Mr.
Lovell, after a panso. "My son may have
carried out his intention of visiting his
quarters, and in that case Captain Lagden
will be the last person to have seen him."

"Captain Lagden would certainly have
mentioned the matter to me," said the
Head impatient! However, I will send
for him. Silver, andly find Captain Lagden, and request him to step here. You
boys may remain for the present."

"Yes, sir."

Jimmy Silver left the study, and there
was a grim silence while he was gone,
broken only by the Head drumming impatiently upon his desk.

The 3rd Chapter. Dark Doubts.

Captain Lagden entered the study in a few minus. followed by Jimmy Silver, Jimmy haw found him outside the School House.

Jimmy have found him outcome.

House.

"Pray excuse me for troubling you, Lagden," said the Head.

"I am always at your service, sir."

The captain did not appear to observe Mr. Lovell's presence.

Jimmy Silver & Co. could see that he had no desire to claim the relationship of which Arthur Edward Lovell had snoken.

of which Arthur Edward Lovell bad spoken.

But the Head proceeded to introduce him to the visitor, a caremony indispensable under the circumstances.

Mr. Lovell then shook hands with the captain very warmly, regarding him with some interest.

"Is is a great pleasure to me to meet you, Captain Lagden," he said. "Although we have never met, we are, I believe, distantly connected."

"Your son said something of the kind. Mr. Lovell, when I arrived here," said the captain drily. "The connection, if it exists, is very distant, I believe."

"Oh, decidedly distant!" said Mr. Lovell, chilled by the captain's manner. And he sat down again, without making any further reference to that matter.

Captain Lagden looked inquiringly at the Head.

Dr. Chisholm had been about to make some polite remark on the subject of the relationship which had transpired, but the captain's dry manner cheeked it.

It was clear enough that Basil Lagden did not want his distant connection with the Lovelts to ripen into acquaintance.

"Please sit down, Lagden!" said the Head. "I am afraid you will be surprised by what I am going to say. You heard of the disappearance of Mr. Lovell's son last night?"

"It appears, according to Silver, that Lovell bitterly resented what he was pleased to consider your interference with him yesterday."

"I am sorry," said the captain. "Knowing from my old experience here, of the dangers of the abbey vaults, I felt bound to see that the reckless boy did not risk themselves in such a place."

"Quite so) you acted quite rightly, and I thank you for it!" said the Head. "The boy Lovell took a different view; and it seems that he meditated playing some disrespectful trick upon you."

"Indeed!"

"Silver informs me that Lovell left the dormitory last night, to vlait your room, and that you may have seen something of him. Did he come to the Oak Room?"

"Eaptain Lagden shook his head.

"I am sure not." he said. "Certainly I am a very sound sieteper; but if he came I was quite unaware of it."

"He did not, at all events, play t

"Nolling."
The old gentleman looked disappointed.
"That is all, Captain Lagden," said the
Head. "I am sure you will excuse us for
having troubled you."

The set Chapter.

Published Every Wonday

"Silver!"

"Ves, Bulkeley!"

"Yes, Bulkeley!"

Jimmy Silver did not answer in his
usual checry tones. His face was darkly
overenst,

His chums, Raby and Newcome, were
locking as glum as Jimmy Silver himself.

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood
School, looked at them rather curiously

"The serms up.

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood School, looked at them rather curiously as he came up.

"You're wanted, Silver," he said. "Raby and Newcome, too. Head's study."

The three clums of the Fourth looked eager for a moment.

"News of Lovell?" they asked, all speaking together.

Bulkeley shook his head.

"No. Lovell's father is with the Head, that's all. I think you're going to be asked 'about young Lovell, and you'd better tell the Head all you know about it. I suppose you know it's a serious matter for a fellow to run away from school," added Bulkeley rather grimly.

"Lovell hasn't run away from Bookwood, Bulkeley, said Jimmy Silver.

"Eh! You know he's gone."

"He hasn't run away," said Jimmy firmly, "I don't know what's become of him, Bulkeley, but I'm certain he never lett Ecokwood of his own accord. Why should he?"

"I don't know why he should," said the Sixth-Formier, "But it's pretty clear

left Ecokwood of his own according to should he?"

"I don't know why he should," said the Sixth-Forner. "But it's pretty clear that he has, and as you three are his chums, it's probable that you know something about it. I fancy the Head thinks so. You'd better not keep anything back."

"We've nothing to keep back," said Rahy.

"We've nothing to keep back," said Raby.
"Well, cut along!"
Jimmy Silver & Co. moved off towards the School House glumly.
Athar Edward Lovell was their best chum, and his disappearance from the school troubled them greatly, as well as amazed them.
What had become of Lovell was a mystery, and the only explanation seemed to be that he had run away from school; but that his chums did not believe for a moment.
They could, however, offer no after-

They could, however, offer no after-native theory, for they were quite at The mystery of his disappearance simply

The mystery of his dissipation.

beat them.

"Hallo, there's Lagden!" muttered Raby, as a thick-set man, with the right sleeve of his coat hanging empty by his side, came along the path.

Captain Lagden paused as he saw the three juniors.

sleeve of his coat hanging empty by his side, came along the path.

Captain Lagden paused as he saw the three juniors.

"What's this I hear about a boy having left the school last night," he asked—"a boy named Lovell."

The chums did not answer him. They did not like Captain Lagden, though they had been prepared to like him very much when he came to Rookwood as football coach, partly on account of his record at the Front, and partly because he was a distant connection of their chum, Arthur Edward Lovell.

But the captain had fallen in their estem since then, and they could not forget that Lovell, the missing junior, had owed a severe punishment to the captain's interference.

forget that the control of the capean owed a severe punishment to the capean interference.

"Has anything been heard of him?" asked the captain.

"No!" said Jimmy curtly.

"It seems that he got out of a window last night, from what I hear."

"He didn't!" snapped Raby.

The captain looked at Raby fixedly, his scarred face taking on a peculiarly intent expression.

"He did not?" he repeated.

"No!"

"No!"
"You know what has become of him,

"You know what has become of him, then?"
"No. I don't."
"Isn't it pretty clear that he has run away from school?"
"We don't believe that."
"The captain smiled, though, perhaps owing to the scars that disfigured his face, his smile was not a very pleasant one.

ous.

"But if the Ind has not run away, what has become of him?" he asked.

"Nobody knows."

"You do not suppose he has vanished into thin air?" asked the captain banter-

ingty,

"We don't know what's become of
him," said Jimmy Silver gruffly, "But
there's ao reason why he should run
away from school. He wouldn't have
done such a thing; and, anyway, he
wouldn't have kept it secret from us.
Come on, you fellows; the Head wants
tast"

Come on, you fellows; the Head wants us!"

The Fourth-Formers walked on, and the captain, changing his direction, walked with them towards the House.

"I am very sorry this has happened," he said, "You probably know that Lovell claimed some sort of a distant relationship with me."

"He didn't claim it; he merely mentioned the fact," said Jimmy Silver.

The 2nd Chapter. Before the Head.

Before the Head.

Dr. Chisholm was looking very grave and stern.

A glance at his severe face was sufficient to show that he took a very serious view of the strange occurrence, and that he laid the blame upon the absent junior.

Mr. Lovell, who was with the Head, was looking pale and gistressed.

The disappearance of Arthur Edward had brought him to Rookwood, but he had no explanation to suggest of his son having vanished from the school.

That the boy had run away he did not believe, especially as he had not been heard of at home, and if he had run away, where else could he go?

That explanation, which was sufficient for the Head, was not sufficient for Mr. Lovell, but he had no other to suggest.

"You sent for us, siri" said Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Lovell gave the juniors a kind nod.

"Yon sent for us, said Silver.

Mr. Lovell gave the juniors a kind nod. He was well acquainted with the three.

"I sent for you, Silver," answered the Httd. "I desire to question you, in the presence of Mr. Lovell. You three boys, I understand, were on terms of close friendship with Lovell."

"Yes, sir."

"Did he aver speak to you in a way to

"Yes, sir,"
Did he ever speak to you in a way to
suggest that he contemplated leaving the
school?"

"Never, sir."
"Had you any idea that he intended to

"Had you any
do so?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then his departure came as a surprise
to you?" asked the Head, scanning the
faces of the three juniors intently,

"A very great surprise and shock, sir."

The Head pursed his lips.

"You have no knowledge where he is
gone?"

**all."

"You have no knowledge where he is gone?"

"None at all."

"Did you miss him before the morning? He appears to have left the dormitory some time during the night."

Jinmy Silver & Co. looked at one another, and hesitated. Dr. Chisholm knitted his brows as he noted it.

"Come, I see you know something of the matter!" he exclaimed sharply. "You will have the goodness to tell me all you know. You are surely aware, too, that Mr. Lovell is exceedingly anxious about his son."

"I am sure you will give us any assistance in your power, my boys," said Mr. Lovelt kindly.

"Certainly we will!" said Jimmy Silver.
"We know nothing whatever about what has become of noor Lovell. I happen to know at what time he left the dormitory, that is all."

"Proceed!" said the Head.
"I woke up about two in the morning and heard him," said Jimmy Silver.

"You were aware, then, that he was going to leave Rookwood, and you did

Not at all, sir," said the captain. And left the study.

7. Chisholm glanced at the juniors.

You have nothing more to tell me?" asked.

nsked.

No. sir."

You maintain that you know nothing Lovell's intention of leaving the pol?"

school?"
"Nothing at all, sir."
"Very well; you may go."
dinny Silver & Co. left the study with downcast faces.
A crowd of the Classical Fourth met them at the end of the passage—Mornington. Erroll, Conroy, Oswaid, and half a dozen more.

dozen more.

"Any news?" they asked, all together, Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"I suppose Lovel!'s pater's cut up!" marked Mornington.

"He looks it!" said Raby.
"But what the thump's become of Lovel!?" exclaimed Oswald.
Jimmy Silver shook his head again, hopelessly; he save that problem up.

"Why should he run away?" said Townsend, the mut of the Fourth. "Has he been backin gee-gees, and got Jimmy gave Townsend.

he heen backin gee-gees, and got landed?"
Linumy gave Townsend an angry look.
"Lovell wasn't your sort!" he snapped.
"Nothing of the kind."
"Looks as if the chap went off his rocker!" remarked Peele. "That's the only way of accountin' for it!"

"That's it!" chimed in Gower. "He's gone potty, and gone wanderin'."

"Rot!" growled Jimmy Silver.
But, as a matter of fact, that surmise worried the three chums a little.
"If Lovell had defiberately left Rookwood, batless and partly dressed, certainly he could not have been quite in his right senses.

And if he had not left Rookwood, where was he?

Was it possible that he had gone, as Gower expressed it, "potty," and that he was windering somewhere at that very moment, incapable of taking care of himself?

It was an unnerving thought.

was windering somewhere at that very moment, incapable of taking care of blurgel?

It was an immersing thought.

A little later the station cab bore Mr. Lovell away, and Jimmy's heart was heavy as he said good by a to Lovell's father, and noted how distressed and harassed has looked.

Mr. Lovell had had no choice about assenting to the Head's belief that his son had run away from school; and his intention now was to have inquiries made for the missing boy.

Jimmy Silver, R.dry, and Newcome watched the cab roll away from the pates, and then they went to their study to tea.

A surprise awaited them when they entered the end study.

It was not empty.

Captain Lagden was seated in the armchair, smoking a cigarette, and he smilled genially at the surprised juniors as they stopped and looked at him.

The 4th Chapter.

The 4th Chapter.

A Friend in Need.

Jinney Silver & Co. waited for the captain to speak.

He removed the charette with his left hand, and the action drow their attention to the crapty sleeve on his other side, and unconsciously they softened a fittle.

In spite of their vague dislike of the man, they remembered what he must have been through, and they tried to feel cordisi.

"Surprised to see me here—what?" asked the captain, with a smile.

"Yes, a fittle," said Jinney.

"Exense me walking in. I came here to speak to you, and decaded to wais." and the captain. "If you're going to have tea, don't mind me. I'm atraid, my boys, that I've got on the wrong side of you, somehow, since I came here. I'm sorry for that?"

The juniors felt more cordial. There was a frankness in the captain. "You biamed me for reporting you. Now, when I was a boy at Rookwood, I was lost in those vanits once, and might have died there; and when I found young fellows like you taking the risk, I was disturbed—perhaps angry. It was no business of mine, as you told me, but I was thinking of your safety. Do me the credit to believe that."

"Of course, sir," said Jinmy Silver, quite disarmed now. "We've heard from

bolieve that,"
"Of course, sir," said Jimmy Silver,
quite disarmed now, "We've heard from
the sergeant how you were shut up in the
vaults once, sir, by a chap named
Baumann."

Is Baumann still remembere asked the captain, looking at hi

"Sergeant Kettle remembers him, and I suppose the Head does," said Jimmy. Of course, that was years and years before our time here." "Well, it's a fact. That follow Baumann shut me in the vaults, and I was lost there a day and a night," said the captain. "It was an experience I haven't forgotten yet. I was alarmed for you when I saw you venturing into such a place. That's why I chipped in. I'm sorry it seems to have made you dislike nice."

e."

"Oh, no, sir!" said Jimmy, "It's all git. We were rather ratty at the time, mat's all."

"All serrne, sir!" said Newcome.

"Never mind it!" said Raby.

The three juntors were quite cordial w.

The three jumors were quite cordination.

There was no reason why so lofty a personage as Captain Lagden should take the trouble to explain himself to them, so far as they could see, unless it was from sheer good-nature and right feeling; and they gave him the credit accordingly, "And," resumed the captain, "the fact is, I was rather hard hit out there in Flanders, and wounds like mine leave their sears behind—they trouble a man occasionally, and don't improve his temper. It's rotten; but there it is. If I spoke sharply yesterday, forget all

out it. Put it down to the Huns, who

"We're sorry, sir," said Jicimy frankly,
"We ought to have thought of that. I'm
sure Lovell would say the same, if he
were here."

"The poor lad!" said the captain softly. "I could have kicked myself for having spoken sharply to him when I heard what had happened this morning. As fine a lad as any in Rookwood!"

The Fourth-Formers were quite won. "H-if you haven't had your ten yet, sin—" said Jinmy dilidently.

The captain smiled.
"Ten in the study?" he said. "Begad, quite like old fimes, when I was a youngster here like yourselves. Do you know that this was my study?"

"Was it?" said Jinmy, greatly interested.

"Yes. Baumann was my study-mate,

Interested.

"Yes. Baumann was my study-mate, not that we were friends. I had rather a prejudice against people of German descent even in those days, though we never drenned of war then. You can give me a cup of tea, if you like. I'd help you, begad, if I had my fin to help you with!"

Good feeling was quite established by this time.

The chums of the Fourth prepared tea, while Captain Lagden smoked eigarettes in the armetair.

He joined them at the table, when tea was ready, in the most genial way.

"Now, about Loveil!" he said presently.

"I know you three youngsters are worried about him."

"Naturally, sir."

"Quite so, I find there is a general impression that he must have been lightheaded, and wandered away without being accountable. Do you think so," admitted Jinmy rejuccantly.

"But you don't?"

"No. We know him too well for that."

The captain started.
"Surely you don't think he's hiding mewhere about the school?" he ex-

The captain started.

"Surely you don't think he's biding somewhere about the school?" he exclaimed.

"No, no! Rut—"

"Not hiding—hidden!" said Raby quietly.

"Come," said the captain, laughing, "this is steeper than ever! Where could he be hidden?"

"I know it sounds wild," said Jimmy, "But—but we simply don't know what's happened, and so we must think that anything may have happened. There are no end of nooks and crannles about Rookwood—the old elock-tower and the school vaults, and the vaults under the above, If—If—"

He did not finish.

At the back of his mind and the minds of his chums larked an almost nameless tear that Lovell had fallen into some terrible danger in the dark hours of the night, and that perhaps it was a lifeless body that was hidden in some deep and dark recess.

The juniors would not admit that terrible thought into their minds in so many words, but it birked at the back of their thoughts, so to speak, and gave its colouring to their surmises upon the subject.

"What do you think of doing, then?"

colouring to their surmises upon the subject.

"What do you think of doing, then?" asked the captain.

"Scarphing for him," said Jimmy Silver.
"About Rookwood?"

"Yes."

"The vaults are out of bounds. I am afraid," said the captain, "that I have in a mamer forced your confidence, for I cannot help guessing now that you intend to explore the abbey vaults again. But you must not do so without permission; and, if you like, I will ask your headmaster's permission for you. I am sure he will grant it if I offer to accompany you in searching the vaults."

"Thank you very much," said Jimmy gratefully. "We meant to do it, but it would have meant a row if we'd been

Not at all. I see you have a lantern, let's start." let's start." And the one-armed gentleman and the ree jumors started for the abbey

The 5th Chapter.

Three on the Track!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were late beginning their prep that evening.

They came in to it tired and dusty.

In company with the captain they had spent long hours in the old vaults under the abbey, searching.

It was with little hope that they had begun the search, if any, and what faint hope there was had now died away.

In those long hours they had explored every recess of the abbey vaults, and they had found nothing.

They had scarcely expected to find anything, but it was a disappointment, all the same.

they had found nothing.

They had searcely expected to find anything, but it was a disappointment, all the same.

The hope had been vague, and now they could not help admitting to themselves that it was pretty clear that Lovell had left Reokwood.

Yet the total absence of any motive their chum could have had for doing so perplexed them, and left them in much the same state of mind as they were in at first.

The captain had been patient and tireless, and they were feeling very grateful to him for the trouble be had taken.

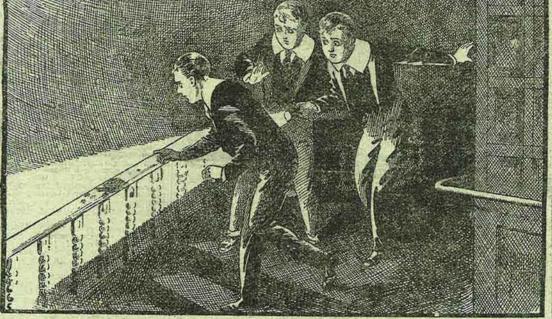
They could not help feeling that he placed no faith whatever in the wild sarmise that had led them on, and that he had taken so much trouble to gratify them simply because he sympathised with them in their worry over the loss of their chum.

It was, at least, kind of him, and it made them feel that their earlier impression of him had been unjust.

It was to punish the captain that poor Lovell had left the dormitory in the night, and here was the captain spending hours helping to hunt for him.

The three chums worked at their prepin a desultory fashion that evening.

They could not put their minds into



"Look here!" muttered Raby. Jimmy Silver flashed the light on the handrall, revealing a dry

"What is your theory, then?" asked the captain. "What has become of him?"
"It's too deep for me, sir."
"You can't think of saything that can be done?"
"Oh, yes, rather!" said Jimmy at once.
"We're going to find him somehow."
"Leaving Rookwood to look for him, do you mean?"
"No; we can't leave the school."

you mean?"
"No; we can't leave the school."
"But where are you going to look for him, then?" asked the captain, with an air of perplexity. "Let me hear what you think. I have a good deal of time on my hands here, as you know; and if there is anything I can do to help, I shall spare no trouble to help the poor lad."

on my hands here, as you know; and if there is anything I can do to help, I shall spare no trouble to help the poor lad."

"Well, we can't think what's happened, sir," said Jimmy slowly. "But we don't believe Lovell was light-headed, or anything of that kind. If he was gone partly dressed, and without even his cap. Yet he's gone. The only explanation is that he was taken away by force."

"Kidapped?"

"Yes," said Jimmy.

"Who should kidona him?"

"I don't know. But it's the only explanation. He may have run into a burglar when he went down last night, for all we know, or—or anything may have happened. It beats us, I admit that. But—"

"It wouldn't be easy for a kidnapper—admitting that theory—to get the boy out of the school," remarked the captain. "The gates were locked. Lifting a boy over the school wall into the road, when anybody might have passed—my dear lad, it sounds steep, doesn't it?"

"It sounds impossible," said Raby.

"Then what do you surnise, Silver:" Jimmy hesitated.

He had no hesitation in couliding to the captain, so far as that, went, but the vague idea at the back of his mind seemed so wild that he herdly cared to put it into words.

"I see you have some idea," said Captain Lagden, lighting a fresh eigarette as he linished his tea.

en there. If you could get us per-

seen there. If you could get us per-mission—"
"Quite easily," said the captain, rising;
"and I am very glad to be of service to
you, dear boys. I hope our little dis-agreement of yesterday is quite Jorgotten

Oh, quite, sir," said the three together

at once:

"Good! By the way," added the captain thoughtfully, "if I may offer you a word of advice—"Yes, please."

"Well, I should not talk too much of this queer theory that Lovell may still be somewhere about Rookwood. It will be somewhere about comment, and may lead to a lot of excitement, and I fear that your headmaster would be annoyed."

annoyed."

"We weren't thinking of telling anybody, sit," said Jimmy, with a nod. "It sounds a bit too steep to talk about, really. The fellows would lamph at the idea."

"It such that the follows wome many really. The follows wome really. The follows to Dr. Chisholm at once, and you'll find me in the quadrangle in ten minutes' time," said the captain. "Thank you, sir."

Captain Lagden left the study.

The three juniors looked at one mother.

Tally rood fellow," said Jimmy another.

The three juniors looked at one another.

"He's a jolly good fellow," said Jimmy Silver. "We were a bit rough on him, I think, you chape."

"One of the best," said Newcome heartily, "And he'll be jolly useful, helping us to look for Loveli."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Raby.

The three chums were feeling in hetter spirts when they went out to join the captain in the quadrangle.

Captain Lagden greeted them with a smile and a nod.

"I've spoken to the Head," he said.
"I've spoken to the Head," he said.
"I'm afraid he is a little annoyed by the suggestion that Lovell may be still somewhere about Rookwood, but he has consented to let the vaults be searched, on condition that I accompany you. I am read,"

"We're ever so much obliged, sir."

on coady."

am ready."

"We're ever so much obliged, sir,"

said Jimmy gratefully.

their work, and, indeed, that day Mr. Bootles had had to be very forhearing with them. The mystery of Lovell's fate haunted them, and was never absent from their minds.

It was understood that Mr. Lovell was to telephone to the school at once, if he received news of his son, but no news-had come as yet.

come as yet.

Fellows of the Fourth dropped in to chat over the mystery with Lovell's chums. Even Smythe of the Shell came along to express his sympathy.

But it was a sad evening to the three. They left their prep unfinished, and after their callers had gone they sat round the table discussing the matter wearily.

Raby had been silent for some time wearily.

Raby had been silent for some time while Jimmy and Newcome were speaking. But he broke in suddenly:

"There's one thing we haven't thought of, you fellows."

"What's that, kid?" asked Jimmy.

"Lovell went down last night to ink the captain in his room. He told you so when you woke up."

"That's p."

the captain in his room. He told you so when you woke up."

"That's so."

"He must have had the ink with him," said Raby—"in fact, I remember seeing him put something under his bed last night, and I suppose it must have been what he had ready for Lagden."

"Very likely."

"Well, he took it down with him," said Raby. "What happened after that nobody knows. The open window looks as if he went out; but—but it may mean that semebody had come in—some burgar, perhaps—and Lovell nuct him. Well, if old Lovell was collared, isn't it jolly likely that he spitt the ink he was carrying? It was a can I saw him shove under his bed; and if he dropped that can there would be no end of a much. What about looking for traces of it all the way from the dorm to the Oak Room—Lagden's room?"

room?"

"The maids would have seen it and cleared it up," said Newcome.

"H'm! Yes," admitted Raby. - But

some sign might be left, all the same, And if we find a trace of it we'll question them downstairs."

"Well, it's something to do, anyway," said Jimmy Silver. "I'll get my flash-lamp; there's no lights in the upper passages now since the order about saving gas, you know. There'll be nobody about up there, and we may as well do some scouting."

The hope, however faint, of finding some trace of their chum after his departure from the dormitory excited Jimmy Silver & Co. a little.

Jimmy part his electric flash-lamp in his pocket, and they left the study.

It wanted yet half an hour or more to bed-time, and there was no one on the upper staircases, which were in darkness.

From the dormitory corridor two or three passages and several steps led to the somewhat secluded corner of the hullding where the Oak Room was situated, in which Captain Lagden had taken up his quarters. Starting from the dornitory to the three inniors went along the well-swept passage, where they did not expect to discover any traces.

They began a keen scrutiny, however, as they turned into a little, winding passage leading to an old oaken staircase, seldom used, and seldom visited by the broom of the housemaid.

It was one of the eldest parts of the ancient, rambling building.

Jimmy Silver kept the light on the stairs as they descended the oaken staircase, where Lovell must have passed the previous night on his way to Captain Lagden's room.

"Look here!" muttered Raby.

Jimmy flashed the flash on the handrail beside the narrow stairs.

A dry smudge of ink showed there.

It had vetted the dust and dried there, and it was evidently left by an inky hand, which had caught at the rail for guidance in the darkness.

Their hearts throbbed as they looked at it.

For the stain was not old; that was evident at a giance. And they knew thad the had been made by their chum not twenty-four hours carlier.

"He got some of the link on his hand, of ourse!" muttered Raby.

Will great excitement now the funlors pressed on.

Their hearts throbbed as they looked

With great excitement now the Juniors pressed on.

They scanned the stairs, the rail, and the wall for further traces, and at the bottom of the little stair they found a smudge on the wall.

Quietly, but with heating hearts, they turned into the lower passage, which led into the wide corridor where the Gale Room was situated.

Near the end of the passage a close of ink was found close to the wall—a thick clot that was not quite dry.

Thence they turned into the big corridor, upon which seven or eight rooms opened.

One of the doors belonged to the cap-

Thence they turned into the big corridor, upon which seven or eight rooms opened.

One of the doors belonged to the captain's room.

The others, as the juniors knew, were unoccupied. There were a good many rooms in the old School House that had no tenants.

The corridor was unlighted, and there was no light under the door of Captain Lagden's room.

As far as this Lovell had evidently cone the previous night. Whatever had happened to him had happened closs to Captain Lagden's quarters.

And this much proved that he had not left the House of his own accord. For why should he have come so far if his intention was merely to go down and let himself out by the hall window—which he could have done easily by the main stallease?

With heating hearts the three innores.

staircase; With heating hearts the three juniors moved on down the corridor towards the door of the Oak Room-the captain's itting-room.
Jimmy Silver flashed the light over the

door.
Then he attered a faint exclamation:
"Look!"
It was easy to imagine how Lovell.
carrying the csn of ink in the dark, had
stained his hands with the liquid, and
with the wet ink on his hands he had
naturally left traces behind him.
The door-handle was brightly polished.
If there had been any inky trace upon
it, it had been cleaned on by the housemaid.

If there had been any linky trace upon it, it had been cleaned off by the house-maid.

But on the oaken door itself, near the handle, was a slight smudge of black link. On the dark old oak it was almost imperceptible, and it was no wonder that it had escaped the housemand's eye.

It would have escaped Jiminy Silver's eyes, too, but for the fact that he was looking for it with the keenness of a hawk.

eyes, too, but for the fact that he was looking for it with the keemess of a hawk.

The light of the flash-lamp gleamed on the shudge on the oak, and the jumiors caught their breath as they looked at it.

Lovell, the previous night, had plainly come as far as the captain's room, and had turned the handle of the door.

That much they knew now as certainly as if they had watched him.

"He was here!" muttered Jimmy, under his breath.

"He had to pass through this room to get to the captain's bed-room, where lagden was," whispered Raby. "The bed-room has no door on the corridor, you know. Lovell had to go through the sitting-room—this room."

"And he came as far as this door!" muttered Newcome.

The juniors stood still.

On that very spot where they were standing Lovel must have stood the previous night in the darkness; and there, whatever happened to him must have happened—there, with his hand on the captain's door.

"Thiess—" muttered Raby.

whatever there, were happened—there, were captain's door, muttered Raby.

"Enless what?"

"Can be have gone in ?"

"He couldn't without waking up the couldn't without waking up the couldn't without waking up the bed-toom farther than have

Lagden, "Lagden was in the hed-room farther on," said Newcome. "Lovell might have (Continued on next page.)



cone into the sitting-room without awakening him. But—but nothing could have happened to him there."

"Nothing."

"I—III like to go on," said Raby.

"Would the captain mind, do you think?
We could tell him what we've done so far."

"We could tell him what we've done co far."

"Lovell may have come as far as this, and gone back."

"Why should he, without doing what he came to do? And we know he didn't do it," answered Raby. "He came to this door; we know that now. And he went into the room—unless he was stopped on this very spot. Who could have stopped bim? What could have happened?"

The juniors glanced round them in the darkness uneasily.

"It—it's uncanny!" muttered Newcome.

"We ought to tell Captain Lagden this." said Jimmy Silver, after some thought. "He's been helping us in the search, and we trust him. He may be able to make some suggestion. I'm sure he'd like to know what we've found out so far."

"Thete's not in his room," said Jimmy. "There's no light. We can't go into his quarters without his permission. Let's go and look for him."

"Hold on, though! He may be in his bed-room, Let's knock."

"Right!"

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door of the Oak Room.

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door of the Oak Room.

Oak Room.

There was no response from within.

Jimmy knocked again, and as there was no reply he turned the handle of the door to open it and glance into the sitting-

room.

From the open door he could have seen whether there was a light under the communication door of the captain's bed-

room.
But, to his surprise, the door did not open to his touch.
"My lat! It's locked!"

The 6th Chapter. Mysterious !

"Locked!" repeated Raby and Newcome, in a breath.

"Locked!" repeated Raby and Newcome, in a breath.

"Locked!" sald Jimmy.

The three junion stared at the door, and at one mother, in surprise. Why the captain should lock the door of his sliting room was not easy to guess.

He could not have retired for the night at that early hour, and even had he done so there was no reason why he should lock the door of the outer room, even if he locked the hed-room door.

If he was absent from his quarters, it was still more inexplicable why he should lock his door on leaving and take away the ker. It was impossible that he could suppose there were thieves in the school. The latter theory, indeed, was inadmissible, for Jimmy Silver, turning the light on the keyhole, discerned the key there inside the room.

It had been turned, but the end of the key was quite easy to see. The door was locked on the inside, proof that Captain lagden was in his cuarters.

"He's there!" said Jimmy.

"Blessed if I know what he's locked the door for!" said Newcome. "Even if he'd gone to bod, a soldier lan't likely to be nervous. What the dickens should he lock the door for!"

"There's no light in this room," said Jimmy. "He must be in the bed-room. Shall we knock again?"

"May as well."

"Mack! Jimmy Silver gave quite a sounding knock upon the dark oaken panels.

"blay as well."

Knock!

Jimmy Silver gave quite a sounding knock upon the dark oaken panels.

It was more than load enough to be heard in the inner room.

The captain should certainly have heard it, unless he was gone to bed and fast asleep, which was scarcely possible before nine o clock in the evening.

But here came no answer, and the juniors waited in vain for any sound of tootsteps in the Oak Room.

They looked at one another in astonishment.

ment. "He can't be deaf all of a sudden," said

"He can't be deaf all of a sudden," said
Raby.

"May have fallen asleep."

"Hold on," said Jimmy, "I'll see
whether there's a light in the bed-room."

He put his lamp into his pocket, and
hurried along the corridor to the big bay
window at the end.

From there the window of the captain's
bed-room could be seen, and It would be
easy to see whether there was a light in
the room.

Jimmy Silver looked out of the big
window, and in the starlight he could see
the balcony outside the Oak Room, with
the French-windows; and, farther on, the
window of the captain's bed-room.

All was dark.

There was not a glimmer of light to be
seen at either window.

Greatly puzzled, Jimmy Silver returned
to his chums.
"Blessed if I understand it!" he said.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Published Every Monday

Head, you know, at seven, and it nots

dark early now." At seven, and it gets dark early now." Said Newcome. "He can't be ill, I suppose? His old wound, you know—to may have fainted, or something."

thing."

Jimmy Silver looked concerned.

The state of affairs was so carious that some such supposition seemed to be the only possible explanation.

"It's possible," be said. "I can't help feeling uneasy, and if he should be ill—locked in there—"

"Botter speak to somebody," said Raby.

"Better speak to somebody," said Raby,
"We'll speak to Mr. Bootles," said Jimmy Silver decidedly. "If he's ill, he can't be left. He may have fainted on the floor. Come on!"

The three juniors left the door of the Cak Room, and hurried down the corridor towards the lower staircase.

But Raby paused.
"Held on." he said. "One of us had better stay. If he's in a fit or something he may call out."

Jimmy nodded.
"Yes, you cut back," he said. "If you hear him, call out through the keyhole, and tell him we're gone for Bootles. There's no doubt that there's something wrong with him."

Raby returned to the door of the Oak

wong with him."

Raby returned to the door of the Oak Room, while his chums ran downstairs to find Mr. Bootles.

Raby waited in the unlighted passage, outside the door, listening painfully for any sound from within which might indicate that the captain was there in the throes of some seizure.

All his former dislike of the captain, founded chiefly upon Lovell's unituely trouble with him, had vanished long ago; he was anxious and concerned for the one-armed man.

He realised that the terrible injuries the captain had received must have left their trace upon him, though he had recovered, and it was quite possible that the unhappy man lay helpless in a seigure.

Suddenly, to his surprise, there was a

seisure.
Suddenly, to his surprise, there was a tootstep within,
A glimmer of light came from the key-licite.

Raby rubbed his eyes.
The gas in the room had been lighted; there was no electric light in that part of Rookwood.

of Rockwood.

Raby, amost dazed, heard someone moving about in the room, and a low, tuneful sound from within someone humaning a careless tune.

'That certainly did not sound like

liness.
He tapped at the door.
"Hallor" came from within,

that?"
The key clicked, and the door opened.
Framed in the light, Captain Ligder stood there, presenting his usual aspect and startled junior startled himself.

The 7th Chapter.

What Has Happened?

"Mr. Bootles!"
Jimmy Silver and Arthur Newcome spoke together, breathlessly.
In their hurry they had entered the Form-master's study without knecking; and Mr. Bootles, laying down his book, blinked at them severely over his spectacles.

spectacles.

"Silver! Newcome!" rumbled Mr. Bootles. "What does this mean?"

"If you please, sir—"

"Are you not aware, Silver and Newcome, that you should knock at a Formmaster's door before entering?" demanded Mr. Bootles majestically.

"Yes, sir. But—"

"If you are aware of it, Silver and Newcome, you appear to have forgotten

it," said Mr. Bootles. "This is very careless, and most reprehensible."

"Sorry, sir-very sorry. But—"

"The fact is, sir—"

"I am glad that you are sorry," said Mr. Bootles stillip. "I am glad to see that you are aware, Silver and Newcome, that you have acted in a way that is nothing short of disrespectful. Now, if you have anything to say to me, you may say it," added Mr. Bootles.

Jimmy Silver was almost gusping with impatience, He could not venture to interrupt his Form-master, but never had Mr. Bootles' long-winded stateliness seemed so out of place.

"It you please, sir, we came in a hurry—"That is no excuse for disrespectful

"That is no excuse for disrespectful carelessness, Silver," said Mr. Bootles, in his ponderous manner. "However, you may proceed."
"Wo're airsid Captain Lagden is ill,

What?

"What?"

Mr. Bootles blinked at them in surprise.
"That's it, sir," said Newcome, breathlessly, "We've been to his room to speak
to him, sir—"
"And the door was locked on the
inslde, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "There
was no light in either room, and he
didn't answer our knock."
"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles,
"As—aa I believe he still suffers from
his oid wounds, sir, we thought he might
be ill, in a fit or something," said
Jimmy Silver. "We thought we'd better
tell you, sir."

Jumy Silver. "We thought we'd better tell you, sir."

Mr. Bootles rose to his feet.
"Quite so," he assented. "You have done rightly, my boys. You are sure there was no light in the rooms?"
"I looked at both windows, sir, from the corridor."



"And you knocked loudir enough to be heard in the inner room?"
"Quite, str!"
"The captain may merely have fallen asteen in his chnir," said Mr. Bootles.
"I don't see how it can be so, sir," said liminy. "It must have begin dark when he went up, after dining with the Head, and he would have lighted the gas. So if he fell asteen in his chair the gas would be still burning.
"That is were true, and your scale of

unlighted.—"
"My flash-lamp, sir!" said the captain
of the Fourth, holding it out.
"Thank you, Silver; that will do," said
Mr. Beotles, taking the lamp, "You may
acompany me, my boys."

Three Hairpene.

The master of the Fourth left his study with a look of concern upon his kind face, and the two juniors followed him upstairs.

In a few minutes they reached the door of the Oak Room, but to the surprise of Jimmy Silver and Newcome, Kaby was no longer there.

"What are you looking for?" asked Mr. Bootles, as the two juniors stared up and down the passage in surprise.

"We left kaby here, sir!" said Jimmy Silver. "He was to listen if Captain Isaging called out."

"Apparently he did not trouble to wait," said Mr. Bootles drily. "Why, bless my soul, there is a light in the room, Silver! What nonsense have you been telling me?"

Jimmy Silver stared at the dim streak of light which he now observed under the door.

"Oh!" he said.

of light which he does the door.

"Oh!" he said.

Mr. Bootles made a gesture of irritation. It was plain that he now believed that he had been brought upstairs on a fool's errand.

He raised his hand and tapped at the door of the Oak Room.

"Come in!" called out a cheery voice within.

within.

Mr. Bootles opened the door,
Captain Lagden was scated at the table
in the oak-panelled sitting-room, with a
large may spread out before him, upon
which he was engaged in pinning little

large map spread out before him, upon which he was engaged in pinning little flags.

Evidently the captain was entertaining inteself by marking the progress of the British troops on the Flanders front, a very natural occupation for a man who had been through the fighting.

He rose to his feet, with a look of surprise, as he saw Mr. Bootles, with the two startled juniors behind him.

"Pray come in, Mr. Bootles:" he said cordinily, "Take a seat, my dear sir, You are interested in my map, perhapst he added, with a smile.

"Very much so, Captain Lagden," replied the Forn-master. "But i came up here—I apologise for disturbing you—on account of what these two boys told me. They faceled you were ill."

"Ill!" exclaimed the captain.

He clanced past the Forn-master at the two juniors in the doorway.

Jimmy and Newcome coloured.

It was only too evident that Basil Lagden was not ill, and that their alarm had been groundless.

"You thought I was Ill, my boya?" said the captain, with a good-natured smile.

"What put that idea into your heads, may I ask?"

"We—we thought—" stammered Jimmy. "We—we came here to speak to you, sit, but couldn't make you hegat, and there was no light in either room."

"You must be mistaken about that. Silver!" snapped Mr. Bootles.

"No, no; the boy is quite right!" said the captain, smilling. "I cet very tired when I came up after dinner, and declege to hake me hear, for I certainly did not hear them."

Jimmy and Newcome looked—and felt—very sheepish.

Jimmy and Newcome looked—and felt—rery sheepish.

That simple explanation, which accounted for everything, made them realise how they had put their foot in it; and they were coneclous, too, that Mr. Bootlea was very irritated.

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy.

"I suppose that is why Master Raby was standing outside my door!" said the captain, laughing. "I came back into this room when I woke up and lighted the gas, and heard souecone knocking, and when I opened the door your young friend was standing there, staring at me."

me."
"How absurd!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.
"I fear that I spoke rather sharply to
Raby," said the captain. "Finding him
there, with apparently nothing to say,
I could not help suspecting that he had
come here to play some trick, such as-

Master Lovell intended to play upon me

"Ob, no!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.
"Nothing of the sort, sir! We only thought you were ill, and we were a bit starmed."

"I am very much obliged to you, then," said Captain Lagden, still emiling. "If I ever fall iff, I shall know that my young friends wilk leel concerned about me. Come, come; don't look so troubled, my lads! I understand. You found the door locked, and you could not make me hear. That is it, I suppose? Locking my door is an old habit, learned in billets in Flanders, where you never know what may happen in the night."

"We—we're sorry, sir!" stammered Newcomes.

know what may happen in the night."

"We-we're sorry, sir!" stammered
Newtoms.

"Not at all, my boy. I am much
obliged to you. Will you tell Raby that
I am sorry I spoke to him sharply and
sent him away? I did not understand."

"Certainly, sir!"

"You will excuse these boys, Mr.
Bootles, I am sure. They meant well, as
you see," said the captain.

"They have acted very absurdly, and
disturbed you," said Mr. Bootles, "However, nothing more shall be said about
the matter. Good-night, Captain Lagdon!"

"Good-night, Mr. Bootles; and goodnight to you, my lads!" said the captain
kindly, "Don't forget to tell Raby I am
sorry I was a little abrupt with him
when I found him at my door."

"Yes, sir! Good-night!" said the
juniors.

"Go to your dermitory!" said Mr.

"Go to your dermitory!" said Mr.

ingas to you, my lads; said the captain kindly. "Don't forget to tell Raby I am sorry I was a little abrupt with him when I found him at my door."

"Yes, sir! Good-night!" said the juniors.

"Go to your dormitory!" said Mr. Bootles as they left the Oak Room. "It's your bettime. And kindly do not not in such a ridiculous manner agaln."

Air, Bootles went downstairs, and Minny Silver and Newcone hurried away by the little caken staircase to the dormitory passage, where they me the Classical Fourth coming up to bed.

There was no opportunity that night to explain to the captain why they had wanted to speak to him, and the story of the holy finger-prints that had led them to his room.

That could be done on the morrow.

"Hallo, here you chaps are!" said Mornington. "Where did you vanish to? Bulkeley was asking where you very, you bounders! It's bedtime."

"Well, here we are." said Jimmy.

The chums went into the Fourth-Form dormitory with the reat, looking about them for Riby,
Reby was not in the dormitory, however, neither was he with the crowd of juniors that poured in.

"Seen Raby, anybody?" called out Jimmy Silver.

"Not since I was in your study," said Mornington.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came in,
"Now, then, turn in!" he said. "All heep?" He glanced over the crowd of juniors. "Hallo, Raby's not here!"

"Het hasn't come up yet," said Bulkeley, frowing. "Sive minutes!"

Bulkeley iest the dormitory, and the juniors turned in, rather puzzled by George Raby's fallure to put in an appatrance.

They was ope empty bed in the room when the captain of Rookwood came back to turn out the light." said Bulkeley.

"The young rascal! Do you know where he is, Silver!"

Leaving the light still burning, Bulkeley hardy account. "I don't know."

"By gaid! I'll warm him!"

Leaving the light still burning, Bulkeley hardy account. "I don't know."

"By and! I'll warm him!"

Leaving the light still burning, Bulkeley harded and.

The immutes passed, and Raby did not cove up, and Bulkeley did not return.

The dormitory door opened at last

plexed face.
"Silver," he said quietly, "do you know where Raby is?"
"No, sir."

Or you, Newcome?"
No. sir," said Newcome, his face

paling.
"You have not seen him since Captain Lagden sent him away from his room?" asked Mr. Bootles.
"Ho, sir!" said the two juniors together, and their voices were husky now. A nameless dread was tugging at their breats.

hearts.
"I will put your light out," said Mr.
Bootles in a low voice. "Go to sleep,

"But Raby, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, starting up in bed.
"It is very strange, Silver, but there can be nothing to be alarmed about," said Mr. Bootles. "You are forbidden to leave the dormitory, any of you."

"But, sir—"
"Raby cannot be found!"
Mr. Bootles retired, leaving the dormitory la darkness, and Jimmy Silver with a chill at his heart. Booules ny boys But

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE VANISHING OF NEWCOME!"

By OWEN CONQUEST. DON'T MISS IT!

would be still burning.

"That is very true; and very acute of you, Silver, to think of it," said Mr. Bootles approyingly.

"Besides, sir, if he was only asleep, our knocking at the door would certainly have woke him up."

norsing at the content of the conten

now what you think of the may be sure of recoiving a S FRIEND, The Fleotway HIP? Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' PEREND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or posteard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply are the letter should be addressed: "The Addor, the BOYS' FRYEND, The Fleetway Rouse, Farturedop Street, Lendon, Milletter should be addressed: "The Addor, the BOYS' FRYEND, The Fleetway Rouse, Farturedop Street, Lendon, Milletter should be addressed: "The Address of the BOYS' FRYEND, The Fleetway Rouse, Farturedop Street, Lendon, Milletter should be addressed: "The Address of the BOYS' FRYEND, The Fleetway Rouse, Farturedop Street, Lendon, Milletter and Millette

FOR NEXT MONDAY!

"THE VANISHING OF NEW-COME!

By Owen Conquest.

whether there's a light in the bed-room."

He put his lamp into his pocket, and hurried along the corridor to the big bay window at the end.

From there the window of the captain's bed-room could be seen, and it would be easy to see whether there was a light in the room.

Jimmy Silver looked out of the big window, and in the starlight he could see the balcony outside the Oak Room, with the French-windows; and, farther on, the window of the captain's bed-room.

All was dark.

There was not a glimmer of light to be seen at either window.

Greatly puzzled, Jimmy Silver returned to his chums.

"Blessed if I understand it!" he said.

"There's no light. If the captain's there he must be there, as this door is locked on the inside."

"Right! What the thump is he in the dark for? He may have fallen asleep in his chair, but it must have been dark when he came up. He dines with the starlight when the said as the large of the story; it is full of excitement from beginning to end.

"THE STRIKERS' TRIUMPH!" By Martin Clifford.

The barring-out at the school in the backwoods is in full swing in next Monday's spiendid story. Frank Richards and his chums refuse to give in until their schoolmistress is reinstated. Needless to say, Old Man Gunten is in a furious rage, and in spite of the fact that he gains the assistance of the sheriff and some of his men, the schoolboy strikers are in no way perturbed.

They have made a resolve, and they mean to carry on the barring-out until their demands are acceded to. How they hold the fort against those who attempt to gain an admittance makes most interesting reading, and I am confident, therefore, that this story will make a strong appeal to you.

By Duncan Storm. This week's instalment of our amazing adventure serial concludes with Baron von Siyüen in a perilous position. I do not think I shall be spoiling your interest in the story if I tell you that he is

"THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER!"

In next Monday's grand instalment of our new school serial you will read of how Bob Travers & Co. received an invitation to tea, how they were detained for an offence of Barker's, how they took French leave, how the bounder plotted to get them into further trouble, and of the ultimate result.

rescued by Captain Handyman. But the haron, Hun that he is, refuses to reward good for good. He is filled with the desire to obtain his revenge on the boys of the Bombay Castle. He is mad with rage and disappointment, and I feel sure that you will have no sympathy for him when you read of the further predicament in which he becomes involved.

"BARKER, THE BOUNDER !" By Herbert Britton.

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