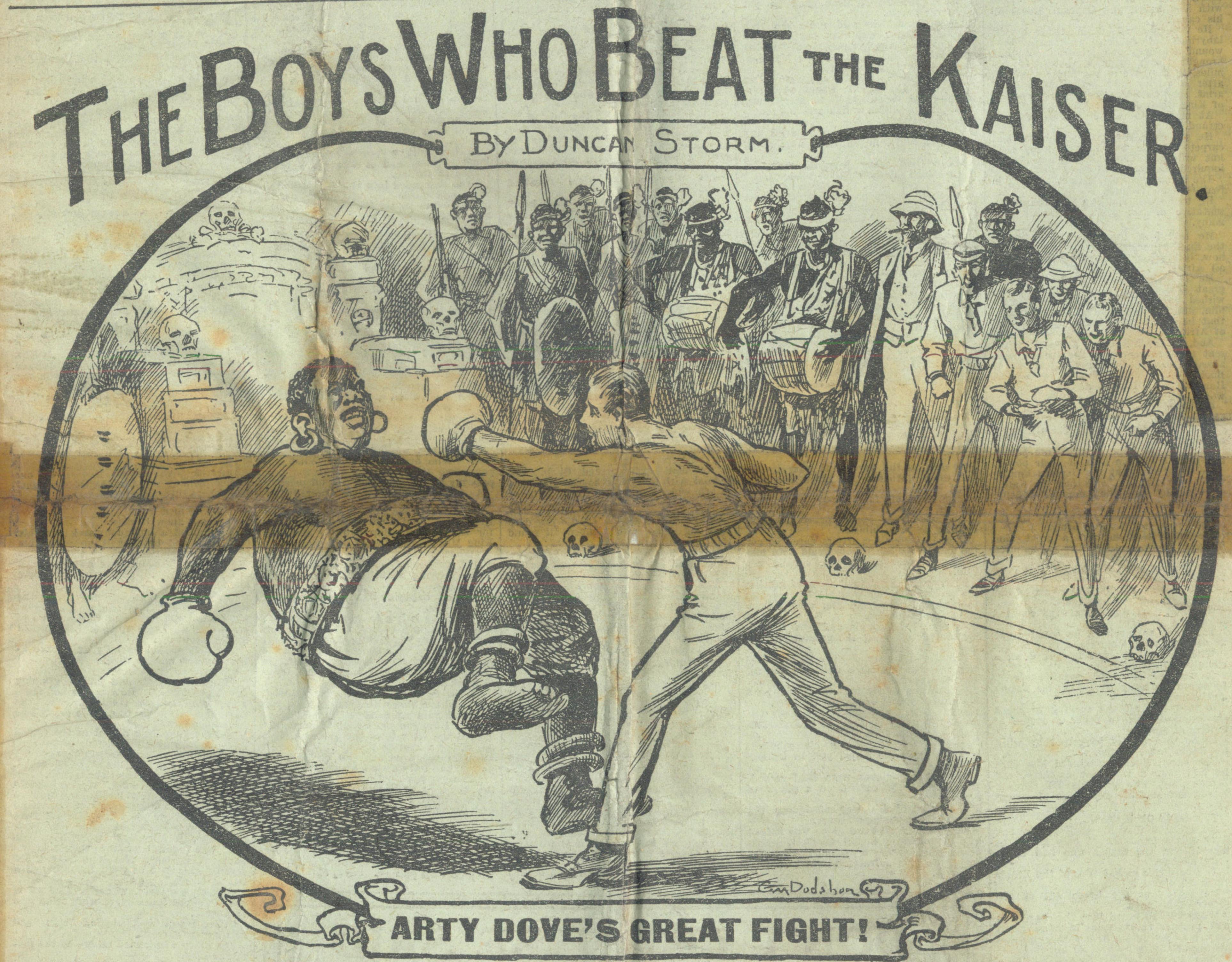
No. 910. Vol. XVIII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

Week Ending November 16th, 1918.



FOR NEW READERS.

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

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

CAPTAIN HANDYMAN and CY 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 crocodile.

In the last instalments Baron von Slyden and his fellow spies made strenuous efforts to secure the papers containing the secret of the Mahdi's treasure. But the boys of the Bombay I frightened than ever.

Castle defeated them, and they went away empty-handed.

Last week's instalment told how, after Baron von Slyden had made several attempts to obtain his revenge on the boys and failed, Arty Dove received a challenge to a fight from Obob el Mook, a native king. Arty accepted the challenge, and the party set out for Obob's stronghold.

(Read on from here.)

The Home of King Obob.

The nigger came to the surface, gasping and yelling, as the line of boats slid past him.

With a loop of rope Dick Dorrington lassoed him round his fat neck, and he was hauled into the whaler, gasping and sobbing from the fright of his sudden fall.

He looked round fearfully as he saw the strange company into which he had fallen.

fierce, green eyes, made him more lines of the swamp.

"Here, George, have a bit of fried fish and chips," said the friendly Skeleton, pushing a portion of the delicacy into the falen sentinel's hands. But King Obib's sentry was too

scared to eat fish and chips.

He cowered in the bottom of the whaler as the launch, with her string of towing boats shot up the long, dark canal between the reeds, greeted by the deep becoming of the wardrums and the braying of the conches.

And the truth dawned on Captain Handyman as he steered his flotilla towards the great rock, between markposts which showed the channel-grim mark-posts, each of which was crowned by a grinning human skull.

Von Slyden was there before them, and German rascality and intrigue were already at work against them.

The boys looked up in wonderment The laughing white boys scared at the strange fortress of rock that him, and Horace, gazing at him with loomed up out of the straight, flat

himself a perch that was as tough a nut to crack as any fortress of the world.

Surrounded by miles of reeds, through which the great current of the Upper Nile poured in a steady stream, he could look around him for twenty miles, and see no solid ground save that on which his village, or city of Booloo, was perched.

And in the dim, grey light of the cloudy night, Booloo looked a pretty formidable place as Captain Handyman, stopping the engines of the launch, brought his flotilla up close under the rocky walls of the city.

These rose almost in a precipice from the swamp, and the great beds of papyrus reeds came right under the shadow of the fortress, growing at the very base of the cliffs themselves.

As far as the boys could see, the Rock of Booloo was a miniature Gibraltar, rising some three hundred leet above the water.

King Obob El Mook had chosen for It was sparkling with lights now.

King Obob el Mook was evidently determined to let the expedition know that he was not to be caught napping, for the war-drums were banging away and the conches were roaring and braying as though the fortress was held by a thousand jackasses.

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Porkis. "It sounds as though there are a host of donkeys shut up there. What on ear h is that row, Tookum?"

Tookum el Koos was crouching in the bottom of the whaler, rubbing his rifle down with a bit of rag.

His eyes were sparkling at the prospect of a fight.

"Obob, um funky!" said Tookum. "Um makee war music to frighten Cappen Handyman!"

"If you call that music, Tookum, I call it the tune that the old cow died of," put in Dick Dorrington, as he oiled a clip of cartridges and slipped them into the magazine of his rifle.

(Continued on the next page.)

THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER

(Continued from the previous page.)

Royal war-canoe was in his way, as he wanted to get ashore from the stern of the whaler.

He put up his foot and shoved the bow ! of this, the flagship of the Booloo Royal | Navy, aside.

Now, in the ordinary course of things in Booloo, it was death to any unauthorised person who touched the Royal canoe.

It was King Obob's special canoe, and was held sacred save to its carefully chosen crew of native paddlers.

"S'pose you no touch dat ship, mister," said the king to Pongo, who was looking up curiously at the grim human skull which was the figurehead of the Royal flagship.

"That's all right, Sambo!" replied Pongo cheerfully. "The paint isn't wet. But what a dirty old barge it is!"

The roaring of the conches and the sound of the drums of Booloo had died away.

There was now a suspicious silence all over the rock.

The black king was looking doubtfully at his visitors.

There were too many of these white boys ashore for his liking.

"Too much boy," he said, pointing to them in turn. "Me fight Artee. Me no ! wan' to fight too many boy."

"That's all right, Uncle Bones!" said Dick Dorrington. "We're just coming along to see fair play." The king jumped back with a faint cry.

Oecil, the orang-outang, had shoved his or defences of stone. way through the crowd of boys, and was I holding out a friendly paw towards him. Obob had never seen an orang-outang before, and he backed away as the friendly Cecil held out his great hairy paw to be shaken.

"Him no Ingliz boy," he said. "Don't be afraid of him, Obob," said I Skeleton. "He won't bite. That's your

little Cousin Cecil!" stood in the mouth of the tunnel that as they passed. led to the stairs in the rock.

makee you all plenty 'fraid soon! You I in Africa, and the boys had an uneasy

Pongo found that the prow of the I too much plenty cheeky! You sabbee me

Having thus asserted the royal dignity, Obob led the way up the stairway in the rock, the boys following him one by one. Captain Handyman brought up the rear with Tookum el Koos.

Tookum had laid aside his leopard-skin, and was dressed in a suit of white drill. Otherwise the king might have recognised the great wrestler of Omdurman by the descriptions of him which had been

carried by the talk of the natives up the But Obob did not suspect that the quiet, tall negro who followed up the party with Captain Handyman was none

other than the great Tookum el Koos Nor did he dream that the man in the

blue dungaree suit, who was looking to the engine of the mysterious boat down below in his little harbour, was his arch enemy, Flint Pasha. Cy Sprague stayed below with the

launch.

which were snugly hidden away behind piles of boxes.

The boys looked about them curiously when they at last emerged from the stairway on to the rocky plateau of Booloo.

They found themselves in a huge village, or town, of reed huts, which I were whitened outside with a white clay. It was typical of these marsh niggers in his waistcloth. who had made their stronghold on the Rock of Booloo that they had never taken the trouble to build their houses

Even the palace was made of reeds, walled and thatched in great sheaves.

Savage-looking men, niggers, yellow men, and Arabs swarmed round them as they followed the king towards the great barnlike structure which he called his palace.

Most of these were armed with gaspipe guns and rocky old Sniders.

But they uttered no threats, though | fighting-ground. Obob edged away from Cecil till he | they looked sullenly enough at the boys They were about as evil a looking gang

"Me no 'fraid!" said he sullenly. "Me of rufflans as could be gathered together

feeling as they looked round at the lower-

ing faces of this silent mob. But the presence of their fat king kept the ruffians quelled, and stopped any show of enmity as he led the way to the

gates of the great barn. "Is this where we are going to have the mill, Obob?" asked Arty.

"Speak 'Ouse-House Parlyment," said Obob, pointing to the great barn with pride.

He was going to say some more, but a shout of laughter from the boys shut him

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Dick Dorrington. "What would they say at home if they knew we were bringing off a fight in the Houses of Parliament?"

"It wouldn't be the first time that had happened," said Captain Handyman, as he shoved Lal Tata, who was hanging back a bit, in at the door of the great building.

The boys looked round at the great earthen floor and the tall reed walls and towering roof of the Speak House or Palace.

At the far end was Obob's throne. On either side light was given to the place by two great braziers full of oil, which flared and sent up great volumes of black smoke, which were lost in the He was looking to the machine-guns, | roof, where bats were flying and cheeping

as they dodged the fumes. Before the throne, on a dirty satin cushion, lay the royal boxing-gloves; and, stalking towards these, Obob stripped himself of the glittering belt of diamonds, which he lay on the throne.

Then he took off his shoulder-cloths, which were of rich silk, and stood ready

Lifting the right-hand glove, he pulled it over his great fist. Then a nigger secured the left glove on the royal hand. At the other end of the hall Arty made ! himself ready.

Tookum el Koos slipped on his gloves for him, and made them fast.

"Hit the fat pig in the stomach," he whispered, "and beware of his right hand! The glove is loaded!" There was no ring in the great hall.

The floor within the space of a white line painted in clay on the foor was the At one end the niggers grouped around the edge of this white line to see their

master slay the white boy. But it was noticeable that they kept carefully clear of the boundary-line.

Obob had his own way of keeping clear ring for his fights.

Any nigger crowding over that white line was as good as a dead nigger. So there was no need for posts or rails. A breathless hush fell upon the great

hall as Arty stood ready with the gloves] He looked round wonderingly, for the

king was standing right up at the other end of the hall close by the throne. It was plain that they had queer

notions of boxing in Booloo. Arty slowly walked out, leady to meet the king in the centre of the space.

He thought that perhaps King Obob would like to shake hands British fashion before he started.

But King Obob was shaking no hands before fighting.

He waited till Arty had advanced a few steps up the hall.

Then, with a roar like a bull, he leaped off the bottom step of his throne, and came bounding down the length of the hall, swinging his enormous arms, in readiness to deliver that terrible, crashing blow from the loaded glove.

But King Obob el Mook had never met] a skilful boxer before.

With open mouth and blazing eyes he raced down on Arty, endeavouring to terrify him by a terrible yell.

A roar went up from the nigger spectators as that terrible fist was slung up in readiness to descend on Arty's head like a steam-hammer.

And the roar ended in a gasp of astonishment.

The hand of King Obob descended, with a whistle, through the air. But Arty's head was not there to

receive it. With a quick duck and a sidestep he dodged aside, and, as King Obob roared past like an express locomovive, he was l lifted from his feet into the air by a

through the great hall like the Crack of Doom. And the gasp of astonishment increased to a yell of wonder.

punch from Arty's fist, which smacked !

The mighty King Obob was lifted off the rails, as it were, by Arty's punch.

He shot into the air, and then, describing a curve like a thrown brick, came to the earthen floor on the back of his royal neck, with a thump that shook the building to its foundations.

ing his eyes and lowering his woolly head on his great bull neck, just as though he were going to butt, like

Horace, the goat. The crowd of niggers at the far end of the great hall had given a deep groan when they saw their king, the redoubtable champion of the Upper Nile, sent flying in this fashion.

They had all expected a walk-over for

They had seen that deadly rush and the quick blow of the loaded glove come off so many times.

By rights Arty should now be lying on the ground with a fractured skull, with the great King Obob marching round him in a triumphant nigger cake-walk.

But the blow had missed, and there in the middle of the great hall stood Arty, his good-humoured smile playing on his broad face as he waited for the nigger king, always keeping a steady eye on the right-hand glove of his antagonist, of which Tookum el Koos had warned him.

At the far end of the hall, hidden in the shadows thrown by the huge oil cressets that lit the fighting-ground, there were other anxious watchers of the fight. Baron von Slyden and his companions had left their guest-hut, and, sheltering

behind the mob of niggers, watched the king's boy antagonist. Arty looked very small as he stood out there, waiting for the king.

It seemed impossible that he could prevail in this fight, where the odds were so much against him.

Beyond him were grouped his companions, who stood breathless and silent as King Obob crouched for another rush. The silence was only broken by Lal

Lal was very excited, and would not keep quiet.

"Hit his Majesty some jolly good kicks in the jaw, Artee!" exclaimed Lal, whose notions of boxing were always rather cloudy. "Be quiet, sir!" growled Skeleton.

"You'll put him off! Look out, Arty!" With a roar like an angry bull, King Obob leaped into the air, and ran at Arty, swinging that heavy right-hand glove ready for the fatal blow.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this amazing serial in next Monday's issue of the Boys' Friend. I should be glad if readers would write and let me King Obob staggered to his feet, roll- know what they think of this new story.) NAME OF THE PART O



HAMINE BUILDING

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of JIMMY SILVER & CO., the Chums of Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st chanter.

A Rough Reception. "What on earth's the game?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Shush!" "But what--"

"He'll hear you!" whispered Mornington. "Shush!" Jimmy Silver looked astonished.

The captain of the Fourth had been sauntering in the quad, his brows knitted in thought, when he caught sight of the little crowd in the gateway. Jimmy was thinking of his missing

chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome; he was seldom thinking of anything else. The mystery of the juniors' disappearance was as dark as ever. But the sight of Mornington and his

companions, evidently in ambush in the gateway, drew his attention. Mornington, Oswald, Van Ryn, and Conroy, all of the Classical Fourth, were there, and Conroy was peering cautiously

out into the road. Apparently the four juniors were waiting for somebody, and keeping in cover while he approached.

"Shush!" whispered Mornington. "We're waiting for Brown."

"Brown!" repeated Jimmy Silver, in surprise. "Do you mean Mr. Brown, the detective?"

"Exactly! We're going to give him a surprise." Conroy drew back his head quickly. "He's coming!" he murmured.

"Ready, you fellows!" "But what are you going to do with Mr. Brown?" asked the astonished Jimmy. "You'd better not jape him, Morny. He's bound to complain to the Head if you do. Most likely he's coming to see the Head, or Captain Lagden." Mornington gave a shrug.

"We're going to bash him by accident," he explained. "No law against rushing out of gates suddenly if we want to. If Brown happens to be in the way, he may get knocked over. So much the worse for Brown." "But--"

"It's like the fellow's cheek to hang round here," said Morny. "I don't care | neighbourhood, and his mission became whether he's a detective from Scotland Yard or not; it's like his cheek! He's Baumann has any connection with Rookwood now? Yet he's hanging about the

school."

"I suppose he knows his own business | there. best," suggested Jimmy Silver. "Rats! He thinks that Baumann is I not want to be called over the coals by

keeping up some connection with the the Head for ragging the podgy gentleschool, and he thinks he will get a clue to him here," said Mornington. "Like his | cheek! He don't knew Rookwood!"

Cswald warmly. "We've heard all about | a rush. that fellow Baumann; he's a regular waster, and a criminal! A Hun, by the name, too! He's been in prison for counterfeiting banknotes, and he's a deserter, from what I hear. And that howling ass, Brown, is hanging about Rookwood looking for him, just because the rotter was here when he was a boy!"

"Cheeky ass!" said Conroy. "Shush!" came from Mornington. There was a sound of footsteps in the road now.

The juniors were silent. Jimmy Silver said no more. He was not in much of a humour for japing, himself, the unknown fate of his chums weighed

too heavily upon his mind. But he quite sympathised with the views of Morny & Co.

Mr. Brown, the gentleman from Scotland Yard, had been some time in the neighbourhood, and it was well known that he was in search of Baumann, once a Rookwood fellow.

Why he should be looking for him in the neighbourhood of the school was a mystery, unless he supposed that Baumann had kept up some connection with Rook-

That thought naturally annoyed the

Rookwooders. Baumann had been a thorough rascal in his schooldays, and had been expelled from Rookwood many years before Jimmy Silver knew the school.

Since then he had gone utterly to the bad, and had seen the inside of a prison on more than one occasion. His latest exploit had been to desert from the Army, after committing a

robbery at his hospital. To suppose that anybody at Rookwood had any connection with such a character was an insult to the school.

It was bad enough to know that such a thorough rascal had ever been at Rookwood; and few fellows, in fact, had heard of him, until Mr. Brown arrived in the known.

Mr. Brown's pertinacity in keeping years ago. Isn't it like his thumping to pick up some clue to Baumann there; been electrified. cheek to suppose that that fellow and the idea of that exasperated the Rookwooders. Morny & Co. were going to impress upon

Mr. Brown's mind that he was not wanted It had to be by "accident"; they did

man from Scotland Yard. The footsteps came closer.

Jimmy Silver grinned a little as Morn-"I should jolly well say so!" said ington and his companions prepared for ! "Ready!" whispered Morny. The footsteps were quite close now.

A podgy figure appeared in view as Mr. Brown turned towards the gateway. Like an arrow from a bow, Mornington shot out into the road, his comrades at

his heels. They crashed into the unfortunate Mr. Brown just as the detective was turning

into the gateway. Morny's head, lowered, smote the podgy detective full on his ample chest, and Mr. Brown went staggering.

As he staggered, the other fellows

crashed into him. Bump! Mr. Brown, with a breathless yell, sat down on the cold, unsympathetic road. In a second the four juniors were sprawling over him.

The podgy gentleman disappeared under "Ha, ha, ha!" reared Jimmy Silver. Little could be seen of Mr. Brown as he sprawled on his back, the juniors rollling over him and almost squashing him. His hat flew off in one direction, and his | ing.

stick went in another. "Oh!" gasped Mornington. "We've run into somebody!" He sat up.

was apparently unaware of the fact. Mr. Brown was only too painfully aware of it, however. "Gug-gug-gug!" came from beneath

He was sitting on Mr. Brown's face, but

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Dear me! Am I sittin' on some-"Gug-gug-gug!"

Mornington.

The juniors scrambled up, gasping with laughter, excepting Morny, who seemed to be in no hurry. Ferhaps he found Mr. Brown's podgy

face a comfortable seat. "Groogh! Gig-gug!" came from the the old gentleman's brows. sufficeating Mr. Brown. "Morny, old chap-" gasped Jimmy

"Yarooooh!" yelled Mornington sud- the Head indicated by a gesture. after a chap who was at Rookwood fifteen | about the school looked as if he expected | denly, leaping into the air as if he had Oswald.

> "Oh! Yah! Oh! I'm bitten! Yaroooh!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

desperate expedient, and Mornington

seemed to be suffering. "Groogh!" spluttered Mr. Brown, "Oh! Ah! You young rascals! Ow! I'll-I'll-

"This is where we travel!" murmured Conroy; and the juniors scuttled down the road before Mr. Brown could get a good look at them. Jimmy Silver, suppressing his mirth,

came out of the gateway, and gave Mr. Brown a hand up. The fat gentleman staggered to his feet with Jimmy's assistance.

"Thank you, my boy!" he said gaspingly. "Oh, dear! I am quite out of breath! Who were those young rascals who ran into me?"

"Ahem!" murmured Jimmy. "Not hurt, "Yes, I am hurt!" snapped Mr. Brown. "Sorry!" grinned Jimmy. He kindly picked up Mr. Brown's hat

and stick and handed them to him. The podgy gentleman gripped the stick and glared along the road, as if inclined to pursue Morny & Co. and take summary vengeance; but the merry Rookwooders had vanished through a hedge by that time. With a grunt Mr. Brown walked in at

The 2nd Chapter. Mr. Brown Meets the Captain. Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood School, frowned slightly as Mr. Brown,

the gateway, leaving Jimmy Silver smil-

of Scotland Yard, was shown into his study. Mr. Brown was not persona grata

Every reminder of Baumann, who had brought disgrace on his old school, was intensely annoying to Dr. Chisholm, who had the honour and good name of Rookwood very much at heart. The Head had to admit that Mr. Brown

was doing his duty, but that did not make his presence any the more welcome. Mr. Brown saluted the Head civilly, apparently unaware of the contraction of [

"You must excuse me for troubling i you once more, Dr. Chishoim," said the podgy gentleman, as he took the seat

here!" said the Head tartly. "Pray, appearance of these juniors and the "What the thump-" exclaimed what is it now? You have already in- presence in the vicinity of the man you formed me of your object here. I am | are in search of?" quite assured that you have found no trace whatever of Baumann in connection with this school. It is preposterous to Mr. Brown sat up. | imagine that anyone here could have the He had got rid of Mornington by that I least knowledge of such a person!"

"Quite so, quite so!" said Mr. Brown soothingly. "But the fact remains that Baumann's activities have been traced in this neighbourhood. This vicinity is the centre of his operations. Forged currency notes, recognised as his work, have been traced at half a dozen towns within a ten-mile radius of Rookwood-that is, until a few days since."

"Ah! Then none of them have been traced lately?" "Not since I came here, sir."

The Head looked relieved.

"Evidently the man has become aware that he is sought in this vicinity, and has fled!" he exclaimed. "Or else he is lying low for the pre-sent," assented Mr. Brown.

"Really, Mr. Brown, it is more probable that he has taken himself off, surely?"

"That depends, sir. It is not so easy to dodge and turn as it was before the war," said Mr. Brown. "In these days every man leaves traces behind him, wherever he goes. For instance, he is registered. If he is of military age he is known to the military authorities. And he cannot even obtain food without coupons, and his name and address must be on his food-cards. If Baumann has found a secure hiding-place in this quarter, he is not likely to leave it if he can help it; it would be jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire!"

"But really-" "He is more likely to lie low and suspend his operations till the coast is clear," said Mr. Brown. "Doubtless he is active in the meantime in producing more counterfeit notes, to be passed later, when he is safer."

The Head made an impatient gesture. "I suppose it is possible," he said, evidently weary of the subject. "But what is your business with me now, sir?" "I have had some talk, at different

times, with some of the boys of this school while staying in the neighbourhood," said Mr. Brown. "I have also talked with the local police-inspector. It appears that three boys have disappeared from Rookwood." "I must remark, Mr. Brown, that that

matter does not come within your pro-Mr. Brown did not appear to be affected by that very plain snub.

"Quite so," he said. "It is, however, a very remarkable occurrence." "A very annoying occurrence!" said the Head. "The three juniors have run away from the school, and have been so unfeeling as to fail to notify even their parents of their whereabouts. It appears that they had some foolish idea of joining the Army, though under agea most absurd scheme, in which, of course, they must have been disappointed.

"That is known for certain?" asked Mr. Brown.

"It is the only possible explanation of their departure, sir, and therefore it may be taken as certain."

"You do not suspect foul play?" "Certainly not!" Mr. Brown pursed his plump lips.

"Really, sir," exclaimed the Head, in deep annoyance, "I trust you do not "Not at all, if your duty calls you assume any connection between the dis-"It is at least singular that their dis-

appearance should have taken place at this precise time, Dr. Chisholm." "As I have said, they left Rookwood

in pursuit of an absurd scheme."

HE KIDNAPPING OF JIMMY SILVER!

I believe, Captain Lagden?"

is not an uncommon name."

"Not to my recollection."

"Or in England since?"

"You were in the Loamshire Regiment,

"Baumann was taken under the Military

Service Act, and served in the Loam-

shires. He was shot, I understand, in

leaving the lines in the direction of the

German trenches, very probably with the

intention of deserting. You did not hear

"I do not remember to have done so.

"It is an uncommon name in the

"Then you did not come in contact

"If he communicated with you--"

the hands of the police, instantly.

imagine that that would be my duty."

"I should place his communication in

"Quite so; but friendship for an old

"It would not stand between a British

officer and his duty, sir," said the cap-

tain stiffly. "Moreover, Baumann was

no friend of mine at school, as I have

whatever respecting the man?"

do so if it were in my power."

thoughtful wrinkle in his brow.

he drank almost at a draught.

Jimmy Silver glanced round.

the house towards the gates.

passed, and they capped him.

Jimmy?" he asked suddenly.

Lovell; but then-"

that time."

why.

Lagden.

don't trust him."

Mornington looked rather grim.

with a disappointed look.

"Then you can give me no information

"I am sorry, no. I should be glad to

"Then I can only apologise for having

troubled you," said Mr. Brown, rising

Mr. Brown took his leave, with a

Captain Lagden, left alone, breathed

He rose, and crossed to a cabinet, from

Apparently the captain felt the need of

which he took a bottle and a glass, and

half filled the glass with brandy, which

a powerful pick-me-up after his inter-

view with the gentleman from Scotland

The 3rd Chapter.

Jimmy Silver Makes Up His Mind.

"Hallo! The captain's about again!"

Jimmy was in the quad with Erroll

He gave the juniors a kindly nod as he

The captain disappeared out of the

"What do you think of that chap,

"Blest if I quite know," said Jimmy

Silver. "I didn't like him at first, and

Lovell was down on him. Afterwards he

was so kind in helping me search for

"He acted like a cad and a brute the

other day, when he pitched into Morny,"

said Kit Erroll quietly. "What did it

matter if Morny came into the ruins

while you were there with the captain?"

Silver. "Lagden has a rotten temper,

that's certain. But he's told Morny

since that he's sorry he lost his temper

"That doesn't alter what he did."

grunted Mornington. "I may as well say

out plain that I don't like him, and

A distrust of the captain was growing

There were many little circumstances

that tended to shake his faith in Basil

Jimmy Silver was silent.

"Nothing, that I can see," said Jimmy

and Mornington, after lessons, when Cap-

tain Lagden was seen coming down from

hard, a strange and harassed expression

British Army, I should think," remarked

of this while you were at the Front?"

Published

Every Monday

"Precisely."

the detective.

"Yes, possibly."

schoolmate might-

already told you."

"Not at all."

on his scarred face.

remarked Mornington.

Yard.



"Yet no news has been received of them?"

"Doubtless they will be heard of soon."

"But if not-" "I am assured of it!" said the Head in a tone of finality.

There was a pause. "If you have any business with me, I may have heard of it, but Baumann

Mr. Brown-" "Certainly, sir! To come to the point, I desire to call upon Captain Lagden, who, I understand, is engaged as football coach at this school."

"You are naturally at liberty to do so, at any time you please. There is no | with the man in Flanders?" necessity whatever for consulting me on the matter."

"Unfortunately, Captain Lagden has declined to see me, on the plea of illhealth."

"I am aware that the captain is troubled with his old wounds," said the Head. "He has asked to be excused from his duties for some days. If he is too unwell to see you, Mr. Brown, cannot help you." "It is very important for me to see

"Indeed!" "It appears," explained Mr. Brown, "that Captain Lagden, when at Rookwood, was the study-mate of Baumann, who on one occasion shut him up in the old abbey vaults. I should like to con-

him, however."

sult with him." "It is utterly impossible that he can know anything of Baumann."

"Really, sir-" "Captain Lagden is not a man likely to have acquaintance with such a character!" said the Head sharply. "He is a man of the most upright character, and has had a distinguished career at the Front, where he lost his right arm. Why should you imagine that he can know anything of Baumann?"

"As an old acquaintance and schoolmate-"

"I am certain that he has not seen Baumann since the latter left Rookwood, more than a decade ago!"

"Nevertheless, I should like to speak with him; and perhaps a word from you, sir, would induce him to grant me a few minutes," said the detective.

Dr. Chisholm controlled his impatience. "I will send him a message, asking him whether he feels well enough to-day to receive you," he said.

"Thank you; that is what I should ! Dr. Chisholm touched the bell, wrote a

short note, and handed it to Tupper, the page, when he came in. There was a grim silence in the Head's

study while Tupper was gone with the note. The page came back at last.

"Captain Lagden will be glad to see Mr. Brown in his room, if the gentleman will step there," was the message brought by Tupper. Mr. Brown rose.

"Kindly show this gentleman to Captain Lagden's room, Tupper." The detective bowed to the Head and

followed Tupper. Dr. Chisholm was left in a mood of

annoyed thoughtfulness. The detective's presence near the school troubled him and annoyed him, and he was a little surprised at Basil

Lagden's refusal to see the man. The captain was supposed to be troubled with his old wound, but he was well enough to lunch and dine with the Head and to walk in the garden, so there hardly seemed sufficient reason to refuse to see Mr. Brown on the score of ill-

health. The Head could not help suspecting that Lagden's motive had rather been a desire to avoid a disagreeable interview. which he felt that he could avoid no longer when the message came from the

Head personally. Mr. Brown followed Tupper to the captain's quarters, and was shown into the Oak Room, a handsome old panelled room in the oldest part of Rookwood, which was Lagden's sitting-room.

His bed-room adjoined. Captain Lagden was seated at a table, on which was spread a large map of the Western Front, with the position of the

line marked with little flags. He rose politely as the detective entered.

Mr. Brown's light, shifty eyes scanned his face, deeply scarred by wounds, which gave the captain a rather forbidding expression.

"Please sit down, Mr. Brown," said the eaptain. "I am sorry I have not been able to see you before; but, to be quite candid, I do not quite see why you wished to call upon me."

"You have doubtless heard from Dr. Chisholm of my mission here, Captain Lagden?"

"The Head has mentioned the matter to me."

"I am in search of Baumann, the forger and coiner, a former Rookwood boy." said Mr. Brown. "I have arrested him twice in the course of his criminal career, and hope to do so a third time." "I certainly wish you every success. The man appears to be a thorough

rascal, and has brought disgrace on his old school," said the captain. "You knew him very well when you

were a boy here, I believe?" "Very well indeed; he was my studymate."

"And friend?" "Not at all. I disliked the fellowmost Rookwooders did, I believe. was a rascal even in those days."

Mornington in the abbey ruins was the chief one.

Only a ruffian could have handled a boy as Lagden had handled Morny, and so far as Jimmy could see, Morny had done little or nothing to provoke the captain.

BOYS' FRIEND

It was as if the man's real nature had peeped out from behind the cover of smiling courtesy he adopted as a mask. The discovery had given Jimmy Silver

a shock. And there were other things-trifles, perhaps; but they had caused a vague and haunting suspicion to grow up in Jimmy's mind-a strange suspicion that

he hardly acknowledged to himself. Lovell had disliked the captain, and he had disappeared at night, when he had gone down to the captain's room with

man he disliked. Lovell's chums had traced him to the door of the Oak Room, but beyond that point there was no trace.

Raby had been the second to disappear, and he had last been heard of near the Oak Room.

Then had come Newcome's disappearance, and the last person who had spoken to him was Captain Lagden.

every way.

But he had made Jimmy promise not | chaps I should think he had a hand in to mention his suspicion of kidnapping it. in the school, persuading him that they would work together, and that it was better not to talk.

Jimmy had never been satisfied as to the reason for so much secrecy, but he had submitted to the captain's judgment.

Now that his opinion of the captain had changed, after the brutal beating of Mornington, Jimmy could not help feeling that perhaps all the kindness the captain had shown was so much camouflage.

Jimmy had wished to speak to Mr. Brown, the detective, and ask his advice concerning what had happened to his chums, and the captain had pointed out that the Head would be displeased, since he had not chosen to call in the detective's assistance himself.

It was true enough, and Jimmy had given way, but-

There was a "but." More and more it was borne in upon his mind that it was at the Oak Room, or near it, that his chums had mysteriously vanished, one by one, and within a few days of the captain's coming to Rookwood.

The suspicion, half formed in his mind, seemed absurd, ridiculous; but since he had formed a more correct opinion of the captain's true character, it was grow-

Yet what possible motive could Captain Lagden have for hurting any junior schoolboy of Rookwood?

but, then, the whole affair was utterly mysterious and inexplicable.

Mornington looked at Jimmy's sombre face with a slight smile, the captain of I reveries and had forgotten his companions.

"Penny for them!" said Morny suddenly.

Jimmy Silver started. "What? Eh?" he ejaculated.

Mornington grinned. "Working out somethin' in maths in your head?" he asked.

"N-no! I was thinking--" "About Lovell?"

"Yes." "I was going to make a suggestion," said Mornington. "What about that man Brown, Jimmy?"

"Brown?" repeated Jimmy Silver. "Yes: he's a detective, and he's playing the fool round here at present, looking for a man who's probably a hundred miles away. But suppose you ask him about what's happened to Lovell and the rest. He might be interested in it, as a detective, and take the matter

up in his own breast, he hardly knew | up. "I-I thought of that." "Well, why not speak to him? Easy I them well. enough to see him. And you didn't have a hand in bumping him over to-day, you The brutality he had shown towards | know," added Morny, with a grin.

"I-I can't-" "I don't see why not," said Erroll. "He's civil enough, and would give you a hearing. He might let in some light on the matter. I think it's a good idea | sir."

of Morny's, Jimmy." "The Head would be waxy. He's convinced that my pals have run away from school of their own accord.

"Needn't tell the Head," said Morny. "No, but-"

"But what?" asked Mornington curiously. "Out with it! You've got some other reason."

"Well, I've agreed not to speak to Mr. excuse me. We are going to do what we Brown about it," confessed Jimmy, at last. "Captain Lagden thought it inadvisable. But I think you're right, is a military camp and a recruiting-office Morny; and I'm going to tell Lagden a can of ink. to play a trick on the | that I've changed my mind."

"I don't see why Lagden should eare one way or the other," said Erroll, in surprise.

"He thought it would make the Head Rookwood immediately!"

"Pure kindness on his part?" said Mornington.

"I suppose so." "And we know how kind-hearted a man he is, from the way he pitched into me The captain had shown Jimmy every | the other day," said Morny. "Look here, sympathy, had discussed the mysterious Jimmy, I don't trust Captain Lagden. affair with him, and lent his help in I if it were possible to suspect him of having any reason for getting rid of the

Jimmy started.

"You, too!" he exclaimed. "Oh! So that idea's crossed your

mind!" said Morny. "It-it came into my head; but, of course, it's absurd," said Jimmy. "There were some things-"

"What things?" "I-I undertook not to mention them," said Jimmy, colouring. "The captain thought it best. But I'm going to see him to-day, and tell him I'm going my own way to work; and then if you fellows care to hear, I'll tell you all I know, from beginning to end,"

"I think that's a good idea," said Erroll. "Captain Lagden seems too jolly fond of keeping secrets about nothing It was from him, too, that the idea came that Lovell & Co. had gone off to enlist. If he could have any possible motive-" Erroll paused.

"But he hasn't," said Jimmy. "Why should he care whether Lovell was at Rookwood or anywhere else?"

"No; it's impossible. of course." Jimmy Silver walked away, his brows knitted in thought.

Impossible as it seemed that Lagden could be in any way responsible for the disappearance of his chums, in the total | communication. absence of any motive, Jimmy could not drive the haunting uneasiness from his

He had determined, at least, to tell the captain that he had decided to go his own way to work, and to take Morny and That was an unanswerable question; Erroll into his confidence, and then to seek the advice of Mr. Brown.

He felt that he was bound to tell the ment they had made. he thought best.

The decision he had come to relieved to Little Side to join in the football than he had shown of late days,

The 4th Chapter. Startling News!

Buzzzzzz! Dr. Chisholm turned from his desk, and took up the telephone-receiver, as the bell buzzed in his study.

"Hallo!" "Hallo?" A voice he did not know came over the wires. "Is that Rookwood School?"

"Yes; Dr. Chisholm is speaking."

"Oh! It is you, sir?" "Yes. What is wanted?"

"Don't you know my voice, sir?" "I do not recognise it," said the Head. The voice on the wires was very faint,

and it was scarcely possible to recognise the tones even if the Head had known "I've caught a bit of a cold, sir," went

on the faint voice. "I'm Lovell of the I Fourth, sir."

"What!"

The Head nearly dropped the receiver in his astonishment. "Raby and Newcome are here with me,

"Bless my soul!"

"I hope you will excuse us, sir, for having left Rookwood without permis-

"Where are you speaking from, Lovell?"

"Lantham, sir." "What are you doing at Lantham?" "I-I'd rather not tell you, sir, if you'll

think is our duty, sir." "Lovell! I am well aware that there at Lantham," said the Head sternly. "I am not deceived as to your intentions." "Oh, sir!"

"I forbid you to carry them out, and I command you, all three, to return to

"You see, sir, we--" "I know it is your ridiculous intention to attempt to join the Army, and I forbid you to do anything of the kind."

"Oh, sir!" "You hear me, Lovell! You are to return to Rookwood at once! Do you

hear me?" snapped the Head. "We cannot, sir!" came back the faint voice. "We've been to various places, trying to enlist, but we've failed so far.

We think we shall have better luck here.'? "Nonsense!" "I've rung you up, sir, so that you can tell our people that we are well. I'm

afraid they have been anxious about us." "They have been very anxious, Lovell, and your conduct has been utterly unfeeling and reprehensible!"

"Oh, sir!" "It has been utterly heartless, Lovell! You have been absent for days, and have not written a line."

"We were afraid of being found, and taken back, sir, and we've made up our minds to join the Army somewhere." "I quite understand your motives,

Lovell; but I repeat that your conduct has been utterly heartless, and your punishment will be severe. You are to return to school immediately? Do you hear?"

No reply, but a whir on the telephone. "Lovell!" Silence!

"Lovell! Answer me!"

It was only too clear that the speaker at the other end had rung off, and the Head jammed the receiver on the hooks with an angry frown. He was glad that he had received the

It bore out what he had always believed was the explanation of the juniors'

disappearance, and it relieved his mind. But he was more angry with the missing juniors than before.

After a few minutes' reflection, he took up the receiver again, and called up the police-station at Lantham.

The inspector in charge listened to his captain so first, and to end the arrange- | explanation, and promised to do as he requested, which was to find three schools After that, he would be free to us as I boys who were about to present them-

selves at the local recruiting-office. Having taken that step, the Head had Jimmy's mind a little, and he went down | little doubt that he would see the three culprits brought back to Rookwood that practice with a much more cheerful face | evening; and he proceeded to despatch wires to their homes, assuring their parents of their safety.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, was then summoned to the study, and

informed of what had passed. "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "It is as we supposed then, sir."

"There is no doubt about 't," said the Head. "Kindly see that the school is informed, Mr. Bootles, so that all surmises upon the subject may be set at

"Immediately, sir!" Ten minutes later all Rookwood knew that Lovell & Co. had been heard from.

Tubby Muffin brought the news to the end study, where Jimmy Silver was sitting down to tea with Mornington and Erroll, who were a good deal in his study since his chums had gone.

Tubby's fat face was ablaze with excitement as he burst in. "Jimmy!" he gasped.

"Hallo! How did you know there was a cake here?" asked Mornington. Tubby Muffin disdained to reply to that question.

"Jimmy! They're found?" he spluttered. "What!" "Lovell - Raby - Newcome - found!"

trilled Tubby Muffin, greatly pleased at the sensation he was making in the end study. Jimmy Silver bounded to his feet.

To Tubby's surprise and indignation, Jimmy seized him by one fat shoulder, and shook him forcibly.

"Now what do you mean, you fat duffer?" he exclaimed.

"Yaroooh!" "Tell me what you mean, you fat chump!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Groogh! Stop sh-sh-shaking me!" gasped Tubby. "How can I speak when you're shook-shook-shaking me? Yooop!" "Only one of Tubby's yarns," growled

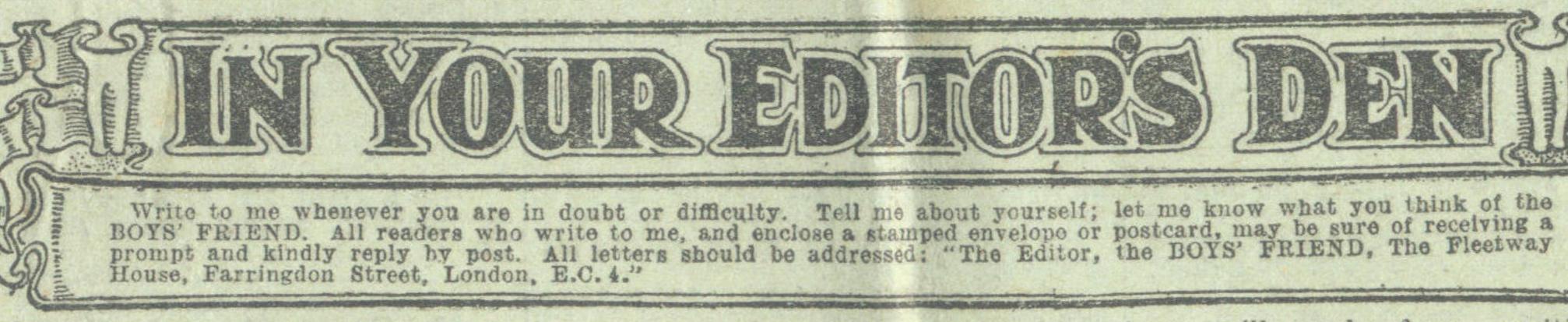
Mornington. "'Tain't!" yelled Tubby breathlessly. school serial you will learn how, much "They're at Lantham—they're trying to wedge into khaki, just as I said all along -and Lovell's telephoned to the Head to tell his people-and they're going to be brought back to-night! Mr. Bootles says

so-he's announced it! There!" "My hat!" ejaculated Mornington. Jimmy stood dumbfounded. His vague suspicions crumbled away at

that startling information. "I-I can't believe it!" he stammered. "It's official!" grinned Tubby. "Didn't I say so all along? I told you so, Jimmy.

You can't deny that I told you so!" "That's what makes it rather incredible," grinned Mornington.

"Rats!" snorted Tubby, and he rolled away to impart his sensational news to all other fellows who had not yet heard



"THE SECRET OF THE VAULTS!" By Owen Conquest.

Next Monday's magnificent story of the Rookwood chums concludes our short mystery series. That the series has been full of mysterious happenings I am sure you will all agree. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome have all disappeared in a very peculiar manner.

Readers of these grand stories are, of course, aware of what has happened to the chums, but practically every master and boy at the school is completely bewildered. Mornington has his suspicions, our next yarn. An amazing discovery is holding the fort. made, and a certain individual is brought to book. No doubt many of you have already guessed the identity of the kidnapper, but nevertheless you will all revel in "The Secret of the Vaults!"

"THE REBELS' SURRENDER!" By Martin Clifford.

There are some surprising happenings in

next Monday's fine story of Frank you will read of an exciting tussle Richards & Co., dealing with the barringout at Cedar Creek. Bob Lawless receives a note, stating that his father is dying, and is forced to take his departure.

Another note is brought to the juniors, stating that Miss Meadows has gone away from the district for good, and advising the juniors to give in. They do so, and Mr. Peckover takes charge of them. Mr. Peckover appears to be a very affable against his will, Jack Jackson was forced man, and the juniors are quite reconciled to have him as their master.

"THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER !" By Duncan Storm.

In next Monday's instalment of our amazing adventure serial, you will learn the result of the fight between Arty Dove and King Obob. You will read of Obob's cunning attempt to beat Arty, I

ground.

to have tea with Barker & Co., how Bunny, the duffer, made a fool of him-Then Bob Lawless returns, and makes | self at footer practice, how Jack Jackson

between Horace, the goat, and the native

followed.

king, and of the thrilling events which

"BARKER, THE BOUNDER!"

By Herbert Britton.

In the next instalment of our splendid

an amazing statement. I will not tell was chosen to play in a junior match, and you exactly what happens after this, how the bounder, determined to make except to mention that at the conclusion | Jackson's life a misery, made a statement of this yarn the siege is still in progress, that dashed Jack Jackson's hopes, in conand Morny does not let the matter rest in and that Frank Richards & Co. are still nection with the footer-match, to the

Jimmy Silver was left almost dumbfounded. If this was true— And could it be otherwise? He waited that evening in feverish anxiety.

That evening he had determined to see the captain and inform him of his intentions. But he was not thinking of the captain now.

After prep Jimmy Silver hurried downstairs to learn whether there was anything new. But if Lovell & Co. were coming, they had not yet come.

And Jimmy, in his anxiety, made his way to the Head's study.

The 5th Chapter. Black Suspicions!

Mr. Bootles was leaving the Head's study as Jimmy Silver arrived there.

The Form-master looked troubled and puzzled. He stopped, and glanced inquiringly at the captain of the Fourth. "What do you want here, Silver?" he

asked. "Is there any news, sir?"

"Only what has already been stated," said Mr. Bootles.

"But is it certain that my friends are at Lantham, sir?" asked Jimmy anxiously. "Undoubtedly, since Lovell telephoned to Dr. Chisholm from that town, Silver.' "But, sir, by this time-"

"You have no cause for anxiety, Silver," said the master of the Fourth kindly. "It is certainly very singular that the boys have not been found. Inquiries have been made at Lantham by the police, at the Head's request, but they have just telephoned that no trace has yet been found of Lovell, Raby, or Newcome." Jimmy breathed hard.

"If they'd been to the recruiting-office, BIT-"

"They would have been traced-certainly. But they had not been there, Silver. Doubtless after telephoning to the Head, Lovell realised that he had given a clue to his whereabouts, and they left Lantham immediately, before they could be looked for there. You may set your mind at rest, Silver; there is no cause whatever for anxiety."

And Mr. Bootles, with a kind nod, rustled away down the corridor. Jimmy remained where he was.

He had only half believed the startling news, and now, it appeared, Lovell & Co. had not been found at Lantham after

His half belief was dissolved on the spot. He summoned all his courage to beard

the lion in his den, as it were, and knocked at the Head's door. "Come in!"

Dr. Chisholm raised his eyebrows as the Fourth-Former entered.

Jimmy faltered a little as he approached his headmaster's writing-table. The doctor's look was not encouraging. "Well, Silver?" said the Head coldly.

"I-I came here, sir, to-to ask you-" "Kindly come to the point at once." "About Lovell, sir," stammered Jimmy. "They-they say that he telephoned from hantman -

"That is correct." "But he hasn't been found there, after all, sir."

The Head compressed his lips, and his eyes had a steely look. Jimmy could see how bitterly angry he was.

"The boys seem to have quitted Lanham to carry out their absurd intentions in some other quarter," said Dr. Chisholm. "That is all, Silver; there is no ground for anxiety. You may go." "But, sir-but-- Is it certain, sir, that it was Lovell who telephoned to | you?" "What?"

Jimmy backed away a pace. But he stuck to his guns.

"Anybody could telephone, sir," he stammered. "Is it certain that it was Lovell who spoke to you?"

The Head's frown became almost terrifying.

Jimmy, in his worry and anxiety, was rather over-stepping the line; it was not for a junior to catechise his headmaster. "I have already said that it was Lovell,

"But did you recognise his voice, sir?" persisted Jimmy, astonished at his own temerity, but keeping to the point. "I did not recognise Lovell's voice,

Silver, owing to the distance, but it was undoubtedly Lovell who was speaking to me. He gave his name." "But, sir, if Lovell has been kid-

napped---"What utter nonsense are you talking,

"If he has been kidnapped, sir-"

"Silver, you appear to be taking leave of your senses! I forbid you to make such a childish and ridiculous suggestion! Leave my study!" "But, sir-"

"Go!" thundered the Head.

There was nothing more for Jimmy Silver to say after that, and he retreated from the Head's study. But there was a glint in his eyes, and

his lips were set. He had learned what he wished to

learn. Lovell's voice had not been recognised on the telephone, and there was no proof

that it was Arthur Edward Lovell who had been speaking. Dr. Chisholm's preconceived belief had been so firmly fixed in his mind that he

had taken the matter for granted, and had no doubts; but Jimmy Silver was not in such an unsuspicious frame of mind. Mornington and Erroll were waiting for

him at the corner of the passage, and Jimmy stopped as he came up. "No news?" asked Erroll.

Jimmy gritted his teeth.

"I've found out that the Head did not recognise Lovell's voice on the telephone," he answered. "He took it for granted that it was Lovell who was speaking."

"You don't think it was?" "I know it was not!" said Jimmy, between his teeth. "I know that they never left Rookwood of their own accord without telling me a word. They wouldn't! I know it-I'm certain! They

would have let me know, at least; they'd know how anxious I've been. It wasn't Lovell who telephoned. Lovell's not at liberty to telephone."

Mornington whistled softly. "You think-" he began.

"Suppose some villain has kidnapped them!" muttered Jimmy. "It's the only explanation. Well, then, it would pay him to make people believe they'd run away from school to try to join up." "Captain Lagden seems to have been

the first to suggest that!" said Valentine Mornington, in a significant tone. "I know!" "And now this telephone message, sup-

posed to come from Lovell, confirms it," said Mornington. Jimmy gave him a startled look.

"And," continued Mornington quietly, in a low voice, "the telephone call comes when Captain Lagden is out of gates."

"Morny!"

"The first time he's been out of gates since that detective fellow was hanging round the school."

"Mornington!" "And the Head didn't recognise the voice on the 'phone! I'd like to ask him whether it sounded anything like Lagden's," said Mornington deliberately.

Jimmy Silver caught his breath. "Morny!" he muttered. "There's no motive-no possible motive-"

"I know; that's what beats me! But if there were a motive-"

"But there isn't-there isn't!" "Not so far as we can see," said Mornington coolly. "But there's no motive for anybody to have made away with the fellows, so far as we can see, and yet you believe they've been made away

Jimmy Silver was quite pale. "It can't be!" he muttered. "I-I--" He clenched his hands. "But I'm going to find out! I'm going to speak to the detective to-morrow, and ask his advicetell him all, and ask him what he thinks. I'm going to Captain Lagden now to tell him what I'm going to do." Jimmy Silver strode away.

His mind was made up. Mornington glanced at his chums as the Jimmy Silver sat down.

Captain Lagden rose, and paced the room before him, his cigar in the fingers of his left hand.

THE BOYS' FRIEND

The empty sleeve of his coat, on the other side, hung loose.

Jimmy could never see that empty sleeve without a feeling of kindness for the man who had lost his arm in the struggle on the Western Front; and he was for the moment ashamed of the dark doubts that had forced themselves into his mind.

Indeed, in the actual presence of the captain, those doubts seemed almost fantastically absurd.

Even the savage temper the captain had displayed on some occasions, when he was off his guard, could be explained by the trouble his old wounds gave him, preying on his nervous system.

His manner now was all kindness. "Well, my boy, it appears that there is news of your friends at last!" he remarked, glancing at Jimmy Silver's face.

"You have heard of it, sir?" "Mr. Bootles told me all about it." The captain smiled. "You remember, Silver, I hinted that my belief was something like this-that the young scamps had run strange smile on his scarred face. away to try to enlist. You did not agree with me."

"No," said Jimmy. "But you are convinced now?" said the captain, with a laugh.

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "What? Not yet?" exclaimed the cap-

tain. "I think you are probably the only person in Rookwood who doubts it now, Silver." "Perhaps. But-"

"But has not your missing friend actually telephoned to your headmaster?" exclaimed the captain. "Yes: but__" "Well, then, surely that places the

matter beyond the shadow of a doubt?" said Captain Lagden, pausing in his walk, and fixing his eyes very curiously on the junior's face. "I do not believe that it was Lovell who

telephoned, sir," said Jimmy Silver quietly. Captain Lagden started.

"My friends?" repeated Jimmy. "They are waiting for you in the passage, are they not?"

"Oh, no!" "The last time you called to see me your friends waited for you in the passage," said the captain, with a smile. "I should not like to keep them waiting while we talk. However, if they are not there, never mind. Your idea of the kidnapper-granting there is one-having telephoned in Lovell's name is certainly ingenious. It is quite possible-in fact, on reflection, Silver, I agree with you."

The captain smiled as he spoke, but the smile was so strange that Jimmy felt a return of the strange uneasiness that had seized upon him.

Half unconsciously he wished that his friends had come up the stairs with him, as on the previous occasion.

As a matter of fact, they were waiting for him at the end of the corridor, by the dark window; but Jimmy was not aware of the fact.

The captain, who was standing, was between Jimmy Silver and the door, as the junior sat by the fire.

He went on speaking, with the same

"You are a very keen lad, Silver-as keen as I supposed you to be at first acquaintance. For instance, the way you traced Lovell's movements on the night he disappeared was sharp indeed. You traced him to the very door of this room."

"Yes," said Jimmy. "And then your suggestion that the legend of a secret passage might be well founded, and that it might exist behind the old panels of this room—that quite startled me."

"Did it, sir?" "Oh, quite! I am sure that if you had spoken as freely, say to Mr. Brown, the plump gentleman from Scotland Yard, he

would have been very interested." "I am thinking of doing so, Captain Lagden," said Jimmy, getting it out at

The Fourth-Former was feeling a growing desire for the interview to end; the Oak Room seemed to be stifling him. "But our agreement?" said the cap-

The juniors crashed into the unfortunate Mr. Brown, just as the detective was turning into the gateway.

captain of the Fourth disappeared up the staircase.

"You remember our little scheme, Kit

"What do you mean, Morny?"

"Don't you remember we arranged to keep a watch on Jimmy Silver in case anything happened to him like his chums?" Erroll smiled.

"Morny, old man, he's gone to see Captain Lagden in the Oak Room. Nothing can happen to him there."

"I'm going to wait for him on the staircase," said Mornington calmly. "I've said that I'm going to keep him under my eye, and I'm goin' to do it, my infant. You please yourself."

"I'll come with you, of course, Morny." "Waste of time, if you like; but there's nothin' like bein' thorough, you know,"

said Mornington, with a grin. The two chums went up the big staircase, and stopped at a landing window, whence they could see the door of the

Oak Room. They were just in time to see Jimmy Silver enter at that door and close it after

The 6th Chapter. Face to Face!

Captain Lagden was smoking a cigar in the Oak Room, and he had a book on his knee, which he tossed aside as Jimmy Silver knocked and entered.

His scarred face had a genial smile as he nodded to the junior. "I am glad to see you, Silver," he said. "Close the door, my boy, and come to the

Jimmy came in, his face clearing unconsciously.

Strange, vague, and dark suspicions had found lodgment in his mind, but they faded at the captain's genial manner and kind smile. But his purpose remained unchanged.

The captain's help in his search for his missing chums had been useless, and Jimmy Silver was inflexibly resolved to go his own way; and it only remained to i tell Captain Lagden so. "Sit down, Silver!"

the Head-" "I know the Head thinks so."

"But surely he should know?" "He did not recognise Lovell's voice on the telephone."

"And how do you know that, Silver?"

"I asked him." "By gad! You have a good deal of nerve for a junior in the Fourth Form!" said the captain, smiling. "When I was a junior here I should scarcely have ventured to question my headmaster."

Jimmy Silver coloured. "I was too anxious to think of that, sir," he answered.

"But if it was not Lovell who telephoned, why should anyone else do so and use his name, Silver?"

Jimmy drew a deep breath. "I believe they've been kidnapped, sir -Lovell and Raby and Newcome. I've told you so. Well, then, in that case, it was the kidnapper who telephoned, to lead us all on a false scent." "By gad!"

"It's possible, at least," said Jimmy. Captain Lagden nodded slowly, his eyes gleaming a little. "It is possible, I suppose," he said.

"You do not appear to be led on a false scent very easily, Silver." Jimmy looked quickly at the captain. It seemed to him that there was a peculiar tone of irony in the man's voice

as he spoke. He met Lagden's eyes, and the glint in them startled him a little. Jimmy felt his heart beating.

Why he could hardly say, but a feeling of uneasiness came over him, almost amounting to fear. Yet what was there to fear?

Even granting the wild supposition that the captain was no friend, but an enemy, what had a sturdy, strong-limbed junior to fear from a man who had only one arm?

At that thought Jimmy smiled. "We must talk this over, Silver," said the captain genially. "You know that I am heart and soul with you in probing this curious affair to the bottom. By the

by, call your friends in."

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "But I tain, with a smile. "Did we not arrange to keep our suspicions dark, and to work ourselves at searching for your friends?"

"It has led to nothing, sir." "That is true," said the captain, with a nod. "Don't think me ungrateful, sir," said

Jimmy, a little remorsefully. "You have been very kind. But I think it would be wise of me to ask Mr. Brown's advice. He is an experienced detective, and he may be able to advise me." "You have made up your mind to this,

"I-I think so, sir." "So you are here to tell me before carrying out your intention?" said the captain, laughing.

Silver?"

"I-I thought I ought to do so, sir, after what we had arranged." "Quite so; which means that you have not confided to Mr. Brown so far?" "I told you I would not, sir," said

Jimmy quietly. "And you are a fellow of your word. But now you intend to seek Mr. Brown's advice?"

"I think I ought to." "Undoubtedly it is the wisest step you could take, under the circumstances," said the captain musingly. "It would have been wise to take it before, as a matter of fact." "But you said--"

"Certainly, it was I who prevented you," assented the captain. "But as the matter stands now, I certainly advise you to confide the whole affair to Mr. Brown at the earliest opportunity." Again there was a strange inflection

of mockery in the captain's tone that made Jimmy start. "I-I'm glad you agree with me, sir," he said, and he rose from his chair.

"Undoubtedly." Captain Lagden moved carelessly towards the door, and bent over the handle. There was a sharp click. Jimmy Silver gave a jump.

Captain Lagden had locked the door. Jimmy Silver started forward, his heart beating almost to suffocation. The captain turned back, a smile hovering on his lips.

"I will show you my discovery, my

lad," he said. "I have locked the door in case anyone should enter." "Your-your discovery?" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"You remember your suggestion that the secret passage might exist in this very room, behind one of these old panels?"

"I have found it," said the captain, with a smile. "You may see it before you go, Silver, and you are at liberty

to add that to the other circumstances you will confide to Mr. Brown." "Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy breathlessly. Again he was ashamed of his suspicion, and of the vague fear that had thrilled him, when he heard the key turn in the

Captain Lagden stepped to the dark oak panels of the wall, and felt over them with his hand, the junior watching him intently.

Click! It was a faint, almost inaudible sound, as the captain's finger touched a hidden spring, and one of the great panels flew back into the wall.

A dark orifice was disclosed, at the bottom of which the light from the room glimmered upon a narow stone stair. "Look!" said the captain.

Jimmy Silver breathlessly approached the opening. "Let us explore it together, my boy,"

said the captain, with a note in his voice that struck Jimmy Silver strangely, almost eerily.

The junior spun round from the open-His suspicions had been banished, so

far as his mind went; but instinct is stronger than reason. Not for worlds would Jimmy Silver at that moment have ventured into those dark, tomb-like depths with Basil Lag-

den alone. The captain's eyes met his, gleaming. For a moment they looked at one another, black suspicion and fear growing in the junior's face, mocking malice in the other's.

It was as if a mask had dropped from the face of Basil Lagden, so terrible and threatening was his look. Jimmy did not speak. He could not, but his heart was sick within him, for

at that moment he knew all. He knew-he read in that terrible face as plainly as if words had been spoken-he knew, he felt, that it was by this hidden door that his entrapped chums had vanished from human sightthat the hand that had dragged them from the light of day was the hand of the man before him.

The silence was terrible while it lasted. That moment seemed an age long to Jimmy Silver, while he fought with the fear that was gathering in his heart, and nerved himself to meet his dangerfor he knew his danger now.

He moved—it was to make a spring for the door. But even as he sprang the captain's hand closed on his shoulder, and swung him back.

"Not so fast!" Basil Lagden's voice was low, hissing through his lips, and his eyes burned at the junior. "Not so fast, my boys"

"Let me go!" panted Jimmy. The captain laughed—a low, soft laugh -as his grasp closed more savagely on the junior's shoulder. Hardly knowing what he did, Jimmy

Silver struck at him, and strove to wrench himself free. It was man against boy, but the man was one-armed, and Jimmy Silver was strong and courageous.

He fought for his liberty, panting. But as he closed with the captain, a shudder of horror ran through him as a second arm was thrown about him, en-

closing him in a deadly grasp. The surprise, the horror of it, of feeling himself grasped with two arms by a man he had believed one-armed, almost

overcame the junior. The empty sleeve was still hanging, but from under the coat had come that sound arm, strong and sinewy, and the almost fainting junior understood that the empty sleeve was a cheat, a lie, and that he was in a powerful grasp from which there was no escape.

His lips opened for a cry; but a strong hand was clapped over his mouth, choking it back ere it could be uttered. He was as an infant in the muscular grasp of the ruffian; helpless, though he

still struggled to resist.

Still struggling, he was dragged from the floor and borne through the secret opening in the panelled wall. The oaken panel closed; the wall pre-

sented the same appearance as before. But it had closed on Jimmy Silver of the Fourth Form, borne away helpless into the tomb-like depths that hid his kidnapped chums-in the merciless grasp of the kidnapper.

Half-past nine! Mornington and Erroll were still waiting by the landing window. "Bed-time, Morny," said Erroll at last. "We've got to get to the dorm."

"Jimmy's not come." "He'll come to the dorig." Mornington reluctantly nodded assent, and the two juniors hurried to the dormitory of the Classical Fourth. There they expected Jimmy Silver to follow.

But Jimmy Silver did not come. And that night the whisper ran through Rookwood that another junior had disappeared—that Jimmy Silver was not to be found.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

THE SECRET OF THE VAULTS! BY OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS 1T1

BARKER, THE BOUNDER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

defied him to do his worst. But he could | the bell for dinner. Don't let me detain not. His father's position had to come | you any longer. I shall expect you to before anything, and rather than imperil | call for me at five o'clock. You won't this he would prefer to do the bounder's forget, will you?"

bidding. Dicky Turner say if he turned up for tea in Study No. 5 with the bounder of the Fourth?

"I'm waiting!" drawled Barker at length. "You're a jolly long while in issuing that invitation!"

"Mayn't I come?" asked the bounder. | Dicky gave it up as a bad job, and right!" he added, as Jack Jackson nodded | thing up " with Jack Jackson. his head. "I thought you'd think better i There certainly was, but what exactly of it. Now, before you go, let me give | was the matter with their chum neither you a word of warning. I don't want to Dicky nor Bob could guess.

"Oh, you rotter!" cried Jack Jackson. "What wouldn't I give to thrash you! Dicky were more puzzled than ever. I'd like to-"

thrashed the cynical Barker, to have | "don't excite yourself! Hallo! That's

Jack Jackson did not reply. He turned But what would Bob Travers and on his heel and strode out of the study.

At dinner Jack was quiet and morose. Bob Travers endeavoured to engage him in conversation, without success.

Dicky Turner passed a remark about the forthcoming footer match with Bagshot, but whether Jack Jackson heard it or not he did not heed.

"Say 'Yes,' there's a good chap! That's | remarked to Bob that there was "some-

be hard on you, but if you breathe a All through that afternoon Jack Jackword about this letter to your pals, or son remained in the same mood.

to your father-well, you won't blame | More than once he was called to me if I carry out my threat, will you?" | account during afternoon lessons by Mr. Chambers for inattention; and Bob and you here!"

Something was worrying Jackson, Bob | is not the way to talk to a guest!" "My dear chap," drawled the bounder, I Travers felt confident of that. And I "A g-g-guest." stuttred Dicky Turner.

directly lessons were over he questioned | "Hasn't Jackson told you?" asked his chum on the matter.

speak to Bob. He wanted to tell Bob | sider!" that Barker was coming to tea that afternoon.

of his chum's langer, and there was no better buzz off before-" doubt that Bob would have been angry at such a statement.

Jack knew that the bounder would carry out his threat if he showed any signs of helplessly. So it happened that a little before five,

when Dicky and Bob were preparing tea in Study No. 1, Jack Jackson marched off in quest of the bounder.

Dicky and Bob were astonished at his behaviour, but they were more astounded when, a little later, the door of the study opened, and in walked Jack Jackson, followed by Barker.

There was a gloating, self-satisfied expression on the bounder's face, but Jack Jackson was flushed and ill at ease.

"What the dickens do you want, Barker?" demanded Didy Turner angrily. "Your place is outside! We don't want | Turner firmly, "we don't want any more

"My dear chap," dravled Barker, "that I tea?"

Barker, with an air of surprise. "He's But Jack Jackson volunteered no reply. | been kind enough to give me an invita-More than once he opened his mouth to | tion to tea. Jolly kind of him, I con-

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Dicky Turner. "Jackson's done nothing of the But he was arraid to. He was afraid | kind! He wouldn't be such a fool! You'd

"I say, Jackson," said Barker, "you might explain things. You ought to have But the ordeal had to be gone through. | told these fellows, you know."

"I-I-I-" faltered Jack Jackson "Surely you haven't been fool enough

to ask this cad to tea, Jackson, old son?" asked Bob Travers, noticing the bewildered expression on his chum's face. "Y-y-yes, I---"

"You burbling chump!" exclaimed Dicky Turner hotly. "You must be mad to do such a thing! Better tell the cad to hop it. We don't want him here!" "But Jackson does, don't you, old

chap?" asked the bounder. Jack Jackson did not reply. He gazed helplessly first at his chums, and then at

the bounder. "Look here, Jackson," said Dicky

of this rot! Have you asked Barker to "Y-y-yes."

"My hat!" exclaimed Dicky. "This is know what they think of this new story.)

the giddy limit! Aren't you going to tell him to buzz off?" "N-n-no."

"You want him to stay?"

"Y-y-yes." "That's enough!" said Dicky Turner, sanding towards the door. "I'm not going to sit down to tea with that rotter! I'm going to grub in Hall!

Coming, Bob?" Bob Travers hesitated. He was rather amazed at Jack Jackson's strange behaviour.

But next instant Dicky Turner clutched him by the arm and dragged him out of

the study. At the same moment Bunny, the duffer of the Fourth, rose from his seat and moved towards the door.

"Dear me!" he muttered. "I could not think of remaining in this study! I am not at all eager to have my meals with fellows who gamble and drink! I will have my tea in Hall, too!"

Bunny disappeared down the passage, and Jack Jackson remained alone with the bounder.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this splendid new serial in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. I should be glad if readers would write and let me

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of

FRANK RICHARDS & CO., Dealing with the Barring-Out at the School in the Backwoods.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

The 1st Chapter.

Still Holding Out.

"Miss Meadows!"

"By gum!" There was a buzz of excited voices in the lumber choolhouse at Cedar Creek. tress, had dismounted from her pony at

arm, she walked towards the schoolhouse | Miss Meadows Frank Richards & Co. crowded at the windows.

Miss Meadows' face was very grave. It was evident that me knew of the peculiar state of affairs ruling at Cedar Creek.

Frank Richards glanced rather dubiously at his nums-Bob Lawless and

Vere Beauclorc. The lumber school was "on strike" as a protest against the dismissal of Miss Meadows, but it was very doubtful whether the Canadian girl would approve of her cause being championed in that

In fact, it was pretty certain that she ! would not.

towards the schoolhouse, could not be construed as approved or satisfied. "I say, this is too bad!" said Bob | blow to the schoolmistress.

to rag us!" "I guess it's going to be a jaw!" remarked Chunky Todgers. "And we can't answer Miss Meadows as | "Hear, hear!"

as we did Mr. Gunten," said Vere Beauclerc with a smile. "No fear!"

Richards & Co. at the window nearest the barricaded door of the schoolhouse, and she stopped under the window. The schoolboys saluted her politely. "Good-morning, Miss Meadows!"

"So glad to see you again, ma'am!" "Very kind of you to give us a look-in, Miss Meadows." Apparently the schoolboys of Cedar I

Creek were trying the efficacy of the "soft answer" in turning away wrath. But the schoolmistress' face did not

relax. She eyed the rebels of Cedar Creek very sternly.

"Richards!" "Yes, ma'am?"

"What does all this mean?"

"Ahem!"

"I have been informed by Mr. Gunten of the state of affairs here," said Miss Meadows. "It is shocking, Richards!"

"It appears that the whole school is in revolt!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. interest you appear to take in my affairs. started here twenty strong, but some of "Mr. Gunten, the chairman of the board of trustees, has been driven act lawlessly in my name."

away--" "Ahem!" "Mr. Peckover, the new headmaster, appointed by the board, has been turned | mistress to be sent away. That's the out, and refused admittance to the point."

school." "Ahem!"



"I say, you're joking, you beast!" gasped Chunky Todgers as Yen Chin picked up a carving knife. "Keep him off! Yarooh!"

"Ahem!" "Richards, Lawless, I hope this will cease at once!" said the Canadian schoolmistress.

"The-the fact is, ma'am-" began Frank Richards-"the fact is, we're on strike at Cedar Creek." "Absurd!"

"It's on your account, ma'am." "That is very wrong of you."

"The fact is, we mean business!" said Bob Lawless resolutely. "Old Man Gunten had no right to dismiss our schoolmistress to put in a friend of his own, especially a pesky coyote like that galoot Peckover!"

Certainly her expression, as she came | Miss Meadows coloured a little. Her sudden and unjust dismissal from her post at Cedar Creek had been a bitter

Lawless, with a comical expression of dismay. "We're standing up for Miss not yours," she said.

Meadows, and she looks as if suc's come ours, too, ma'am!" said Bob. "We don't want to lose you, you know. And it wasn't fair play. And we stand up for fair play at Cedar Creek."

"We won't have the new man, Peckover, at any price!" said Bob quietly. | we've got the best of it so far. Old | "We won't let Old Man Gunten run the | Man Gunten put the sheriff on to us, but | touch us here." Miss Meadows caught sight of Frank | school on his own. We're keeping up the | the sherif did't cut any ice with us, strike till our schoolmistress comes back. | ma'am. Then he old fox-" If you've come now to take your place here as headmistress, Miss Meadows. you've only to say the word, and the

strike's over this minute!" "I-I have not! It is not that," said Miss Meadows hastily. "But Mr. Gunten called on me and asked me to use my influence to restore order here." "Cheeky old rascal!" exclaimed Frank

Richards indignantly. "Richards!" "Well, so he is, ma'am! He has no you to chip in. Like his cheek!" right to ask you to interfere, after dis-

missing you. It's like his nerve!" "I should jolly well think so!" exclaimed Beauclerc warmly. "Let his new headmaster restore order, if he wouldn't stay on the board of trustees can!"

"I guess he can't work the oracle," | Red log crowd on us." grinned Eben Hacke. "No takee any!" remarked Yen Chin.

"My dear boys," said Miss Meadows, "I | "You parents--" -I am very grateful to you for the But I cannot allow this. You must not

Richards. "We're acting in our own name. We won't allow our school-

"This state of affairs is very distress- | trouble, and he's leaving it to Old Man ing to me." "And all this has been done in my | "Not so distressing as it is to Old Man | Miss Meadows sighed.

the gates, and, with the rein over herf name, Mr. Gunten tells me!" exclaimed f Gunten, making said Bob. "He'll come | "Then you will not cease this?" she round in the log run, and do the right asked. thing, I guess.

> the right the, Lawless-" "Then we lep on strike!"

"Yes, rathe" "This camb continue," said Miss Meadows. "Intreat you, my boys, to cease these loceedings at once and out. admit Mr. Pecover to authority here." "Do you tell is as our schoolmistress,

ma'am?" askedFrank. "I cannot do hat, as I am no longer ! your schoolmists, Richards."

"Then we're ot bound to obey you, ma'am; and i can't be done. But there's an eas way of settling the matter. Tell Ir. Gunten that if you little as he looked after the graceful form come back as headmistress of Cedar of the Canadian schoolmistress, dis-Creek order wilbe restored at once, and | appearing on the Thompson trail. there won't be ny more trouble."

Miss Meadowsmiled slightly. "I cannot giv Mr. Gunten that mes-

sage, Richards.

"Very well, m'am; the strike goes on." "But, my dar boys," said the distressed schoolistress, "you are laying up for yourseles severe punishment!"

"I guess no!" said Bob confidently. "We've been ere some days now, and

"Lawless!" "I mein, the old galoot brought the Red Dog gang along from Thompson, and they tried it on," said Bob. "Fancy that for a school trustee! They tried to smoke is out like badgers; but the cowboys came along from the ranch, and guess they won't come back a smile. egain, either Now, Old Man Gunten is at the end of his tether, and he's asked

"I mess it shows he's weakening," remarked Chunky Todgers. "He's afraid of the anthorities hearing what's on here, and inquiring into the matter. He | did we'd hold out all the same." long if they knew about his setting the

"I suess not!" said Bob. "But-but-" said Miss Meadows.

"There's the rub!" said Bob. "We the chaps' fathers have humped along and talled off some of us. But there's "But we're not, ma'am," said Frank still a dozen here, and we'll hold Cedar Creek against all comers!"

"Your father, Lawless-" "My poppa won't interfere, Miss Meadows Old Man Gunten started the Gunten to end it."

"But if heloes not do what you call | Gunten sees reason." "Then I have wasted my time coming

here," said Miss Meadows. "Sorry, ma'am," said Frank Richards respectfully. "But we feel that we're window, however. in the right, and we're bound to hold

Miss Meadows said no more. With a clouded face she turned away and mounted her pony, and rode out of the gates of Cedar Creek.

> The 2nd Chapter. Chunky is Too Hungry!

Frank Richards wrinkled his brows a

"All serene, Franky," said Bob Lawless. "It was a thundering cheek of old Gunten to ask Miss Meadows to chip in after sacking her for nothing. I wonder she consented."

not giving in!"

"It shows he's at the end of his tether," said Beauclerc. "He simply must

"And the authorities will be down on him sooner or later," said Hacke. "This can't go on much longer without a lot of

Frank Richards nodded. "We're holding out!" he said. "Yes, rather!"

"But when the authorities get wind of i it they may be down on us instead of on the Rel Dog gang were glad to light | Old Man Gunten," remarked Frank, with | "Well, let 'em! If they send a super-

> intendent along, and he cuts up rusty, we'll give him what we gave Peckover." "Hear, hear!" "They won't call the mounted police

> out for us!" grinned Bob. "But if they "Bravo!"

"Dinner-time!" remarked Chunky Todgers, and he led the way to the diningreem. The rebels of Cedar Creek were cheery

enough as they assembled for dinner. They had had an exciting time, but so far they had succeeded in holding the fort, and they did not doubt their ability

to continue to do so. The schoolboy garrison had had a narrow escape when Old Man Gunten called in the Red Dog crowd to deal with them, but they had survived it.

And the fact that the Swiss storekeeper had been driven to ask Miss Meadows' assistance showed that he was getting desperate.

For three or four days now the revolt had continued. The garrison had been reduced in

number, for the reason that some of the boys' parents had taken a serious view of the matter, and had ridden over to the school to call their sons out of the barricaded schoolhouse.

But Frank Richards & Co. were still there, and they had enough supporters to enable them to bid defiance to Gunten.

There was strong feeling in the section on the subject of Miss Meadows' dismissal, and some of the boys' fathers took the same view as Rancher Lawless, that Old Man Gunten had started the trouble, and could end it without any assistance from them.

For two or three days now the rebels had been left alone, Mr. Gunten perhaps hoping that they would get tired of the adventure, and disperse of their own accord. But they were not getting tired of it

striking was ever so much better than lessons, and really there was something te be said from that point of view.

Chunky Todgers indeed, averred that

by any means.

There was one cloud on the horizon, however. As many of the Cedar Creek scholars took their midday meal at the school there was a good supply of provisions on hand, which had been very fortunate for the schoolboy rebels, but feeding the garrison all day long had made a very

serious inroad upon the supply. And Chunky Todgers, whose appetite was of gargantuan proportions, had made some terrific raids upon the supplies, till a severe application of Bob's trail-rope

had warned him off. The schoolhoys turned out after dinner to take exercise in the playground. Doors and windows of the schoolhouse were still securely barricaded, but one I window was left open for egress and

"Can't be done, ma'am, till Old Man | A sentry was posted at the gate to give warning in case of the approach of the enemy, in which case the rebels were to

retreat into their stronghold at suce. Chunky Todgers did not leave by the He waited till the rest of the garrison were out of doors, and then he scudded

into the kitchen where the provisions were kept. Chunky did not mean to "play it lowdown" on his comrades, by any means;

he really did not stop to think. All he thought of was that he was still hungry, and that there were some eatables within his reach.

That was enough for Chunky; and, throwing all other considerations to the winds, he proceeded to "scoff" the supplies in the larder.

Fortunately, Bob Lawless had his suspicions. Chunky was devouring stale bread, the last of the butter, and making huge in-"That old galoot's mean enough for roads upon the final cheese, when Bob anything," said Chunky Todgers. "We're | Lawless came back with a trail-rope in his

He did not stop to speak. The coiled rope descended upon come round in the long run. He can't | Chunky's fat person with a terrific swish, and Chunky jumped with a wild yell. "Yah! Grooogh! Grooooch!"

> gone the wrong way, Chunky's mouth being a little too full. Swish, swish! "You greedy gopher!" roared Bob Law-

In the sudden shock the cheese had

less, as he laid on the trail-rope. "Take that-and that-and that!" "Gerrrooogh!" spluttered Chunky.

'Yococh! Stoppit! I'm chook-chookchoking! Yaaaaauuuch!". Swish, swish! "Groogh-hooh-yooogh!"

Spluttering wildly, Chunky Todgers bolted for his life, with Bob behind, still making rapid play with the rope. Chunky went head-first out of the open window, and landed on his fat hands

and knees, roaring. "Hallo! What's the row?" called out Frank Richards. "Scoffing the grub!" shouted Bob.

"Collar him! I want to give him some more!" He clambered out of the window, but Chunky was up before he could be collared, and streaking across the play-

ground. "After him!" "Rope him!" velled Eben Hacke,

"Ha, ha. ha!" Chunky ran like a hare, in spite of the weight he had to carry, with all the

garrison of the lumber school whooping in persuit. The unfortunate giutton dodged round



the outbuildings and the wood-pile; and

then round the schoolhouse, with the

Mr. Slimmey's cabin, where he was

At last he clambered on the roof of

Bob Lawless shook a wrathful fist up

"I-I say, Bob-" spluttered Chunky.

"You come down again, and I'll make

And Chunky remained there, and it was

not till dusk that he ventured back into

the schoolhouse, when the garrison were

And that evening Chunky Todgers had

no supper as a warning to him, and his

sufferings, as he watched the other

fellows at supper, were so acute, that he

almost resolved to "light out" for home

at the risk of having to work on the farm

The 3rd Chapter.

Caught!

fellows were playing leap-frog by lamp-

It was after supper, and most of the

Chunky Todgers sat on a form, with

Chunky was not feeling i-cliner to join

He had eaten only enough for two or

three that day, and consequently he was

But his comrades were inexerable, and

Like Rachel of old, he mourned for that

Chunky Todgers was in the depths of

which was lost, and could not be com-

forted-not that anybody wanted to

on all sides for the sufferings of the

the situation, which was their business as

leaders; and Frank and Beaucierc agreed

with Bob that something had to be done.

grub must give out, and very likely he's

counting on that," went on Bob. "The

fact is, we can't live without grub. I've

"Same here!" said Frank, laughing,

boot him out!" said Hob decidedly.

"If Chunky gets at the grub again we'll

but that won't undo what he's done

already, the fat jay! But apart from

Chunky spreading himself, it wouldn't

"Wells what's the programme?" asked

"When a fortress is running out of

provisions it has to be provisioned," said

Bob oracularly. "We've got some dust,

anyway. The question is, how to spend it

"What's the answer to that question,

"It's got to be did!" said Bob. "Look

"We couldn't go to Thompson," said

here, we're free to come and go as we

like. Suppose two of us clear off now it's

Beauclerc. "Old Man Gunten would very

likely spot us, and we might be collared.

"Thompson isn't the only town in the

valley," he answered. "Of course, we

shall have to hoof it, as our horses are

not here now. We had to send them

home to the ranch to be fed. But we

can hoof it. A few miles won't hurt us.

We can get down to Cedar Camp, buy the

Richards thoughtfully. "It's risky, but-

well, something's got to be done, or we

"Nope!" said Bob. "One of us will

"All serene!" said Frank: "I-I sup-

Bob Lawless and Beauclerc proceeded

There was a collection of cash, to be

have to stay here in command. The

Cherub will come with me, Franky, and

pose it's not likely that Old Man Gunten

"We've got to chance that, I guess."

to make their preparations for the

expended in the store at Cedar Camp;

and the chums took two large haversacks

to convey the provisions to the school

They dropped quietly from the window

myriad stars spangling the deep blue of

Frank Richards went with them as far

Outside the gates the rough trail to i

Thompson lay shadowy under the trees,

and no sound was to be heard from the

a watch might be kept on the school.

"I don't see why not," said Frank

grub, and carry it back before dawn."

shall be starved out in the long run."

"We three had better go."

will be up to such a move."

on grub, and get the grub here."

got a good appetite myself,"

have lasted much longer."

Frank whistled.

old chap?" he asked.

dark, and try it on?"

Bob Lawless nodded.

"That's the point."

you can stay here."

expedition.

the sky.

timber.

as the gates.

when purchased.

to the playground.

He lives there."

4 I'ulin.

"I guess Old Man Gunten knows the

There was a plentiful lack of sympathy

Frank Richards & Co. were discussing

Missing supper was the last straw.

a lugubrious look that might have melted

done!"

while the school remained shut.

"Something's got to

light in the big school-room.

remarked Bob Lawless.

a heart of stone.

feeling famished.

comfort him.

Falstaff of Cedar Creek.

In the game.

an example of you!" roared Bob.

chase close at his heels.

"I-I say-"

all indoors again.

"Rats!"

at him.

allowed to rest, palpitating.

THE SIEGE AT CEDAR CREEK!

Published

Every Monday

(Continued from the previous page.)

to be too busy in his store at Thompson to have any time for lingering about Cedar Creek; but Mr. Peckover, the new master, was without occupation so far, groundless after all. and the rough crowd who had helped Mr. Gunten before might be still in his pay. | the vicinity of the lumber school himself True, the cowboys from the Lawless Ranch had cleared off the Red Dog crowd

and taught them a severe lesson. Still, Frank could not quite believe that Old Man Gunten was taking the present state of affairs "lying down."

He looked up and down the trail suspiciously, and listened; but there was no

sign of danger. "All O.K., Franky!" said Bob reassuringly. "We'll mosey off now, and you get back to the schoolhouse and keep

watch for us to-night." "Right-ho!" answered Frank. Bob Lawless and Beauclerc disappeared into the shadows of the trail, Frank

standing at the gates to watch them till the last glimpse of his friends was lost. For a dozen yards or so the two schoolboys went along the trail towards Thompson, where they had to turn off to take

a shorter cut through the forest in the direction of Cedar Camp. It was dark under the trees, and they slowed down where the trail forked, looking well about them.

A rustle in the thickets started Bob Lawless, and he stopped suddenly. As he did so there was a rush of feet. "Look out, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob.

But there was little time to look out. Three burly, shadowy figures loomed up in the darkness, and the two schoolboys were seized by as many pairs of hands. They struggled fiercely with their halfseen assailants.

a guess we've got this lot, anyway!" It was the hoarse, husky voice of Four Kings, the leader of the Red Dog crowd. bhow a glim, Dick!"

Euchre Dick turned on a dark lantern. It revealed the two breathless schoolboys in the powerful grasp of Four Kings and Dave Dunn.

There was no one else to be seen. Apparently, the three members of the Red Dog crowd were there without their comrades,

"Lawless-Bob Lawless!" grinned Four Kings, "I know you, my buck! And young Beauclerc-the remittance-man's son-my? Well, you're roped in!"

"Let'us go!" panted Bob. Four Kings chuckled. "I guiss not!" he answered. "I reckon Old Man Gunten's paying us for this hyer

job, and he'll be dancing when he sees that velve got you, the ringleaders of the whole crowd! Any more of you out of doors-hay? Bob gritted his teeth.

The two boys were helpless in the powerful hands of the ruffians; and Bob dreaded that Frank Richards, alone at the gare, might be caught defenceless.

"You hear me, youp?" growled Four Kings, shaking the rancher's son roughly. dire there may more of you out?" Bob's reply was a yell of warning to Brank Richards, who, as he guessed, was still at the gates a dozen yards away. Look out, Franky! Don't come this

way; get back to the schoolhouse!" Boh's voice rang sharply through the

It reached the ears of Frank Richards. Frank had been looking after his chums on the daik trail, still somewhat uneasy in his mind; but he had been about to turn back to the schoolhouse, when he caught the glimmer of Euchre Dick's lantern under the trees.

The sudden light startled him, and he ran out of the gates, and then Bob's yell of warning fell upon his ears.

Beauclere shouted, too: "Cut it, Frank; cut it!" Four Kings rapped out an oath.

"That's another of them out, then!" he exclaimed. "Mosey after him, Euchre Dick! Rope him in!"

Euchre Dick set down the lantern and ran up the trail to the school gates. If he could have reached Frank Richards he had no doubt of adding him

to the "bag" of prisoners. Frank heard his heavy footsteps and

ran back into the school enclosure. His first impulse had been to rush to the aid of his chums; but second thoughts were wiser.

He dashed back to the lumber school at top speed.

After him came Euchre Dick, stumbling in the darkness and muttering oaths. Frank reached the open window, where

Hacke and Yen Chin and several other fellows were waiting for him. "Quick!" he panted. "What's the trouble?"

"They've got Bob and Beau; and there's one after me! Help-quick!" Frank Richards had no time for more. Euchre Dick had reached him.

He spun round as he felt the ruffian's grasp upon his shoulder. "Help!" he panted.

The next moment he was fighting fiercely with the ruffian.

But out of the window, with a jump, came Eben Hacke, and he fastened on Euchre Dick at once; and after him came a crowd, all piling desperately on the The night was fine and clear, with a | ruffian.

Only one fellow remained in the lumber schoolhouse.

That was Chunky Todgers.

Chunky Todgers was no funk, and he felt the impulse to take his part in the fray. But another impulse was stronger still, and instead of dashing after his comrades the worthy Chunky dashed away to the kitchen.

Frank had had a lurking suspicion that He was soon quite as busy indoors as Old Man Gunten, certainly, was likely | Frank Richards & Co. were without.

The 4th Chapter. A Narrow Escape.

Four Kings grinned at Bob Lawless and Beauclerc in the light of the lantern glimmering in the green, damp grass.

The two schoolboys were securely held by the ruffians, and Four Kings was fastening Bob's wrists with a rope, in spite of his resistance.

Bob was almost pale with rage. Frank Richards' misgivings had not been

Old Man Gunten was not likely to haunt -he was too busy elsewhere-but he had retained the services of Four Kings & Co. for that purpose.

It had not been difficult for him to foresee that sooner or later some of the garrison would venture outside the school fence; and the three ruffians had been posted to watch.

Bob and Beauderc had fairly walked into their hands. But it was too late to think of that nov. They were prismers.

"Take it smiling!" grinned Four Kings. "You've had a rin for your money, you know. You was ound to get downed in the long run. I wess we're earning Old Dunn went spinning. Man Gunten's dclars easy, as it turns out. My eye! H will lay into you with a rope when we tee you along!"

Bob Lawless brethed hard. "You'll be hider and sent off home!" grinned Four King. "I guess this is the end of a school trike for you, young Lawless; and I recon the others will soon cave in without yu. You was the head of it all. Yank tht other young rascal hyer, Dave, and I'lrope him to Lawless." Beauclerc resiste fiercely; but the ruf-

proceeded to tie hir to Bob Lawless. When the two shoolboys were roped together Four King stepped out into the trail and stared towrds the school.

fians were too strug for him, and they

"Time Euchre Di; was hyer with the other varmint," he auttered. "I reckon I'll see what he's doig. You keep an eye on those critters, Dre." "You bet!"

Four Kings tramed up the trail towards the school. Euchre Dick, as amatter of fact, had

caught Frank Richais; but he had made the painful discover that he had caught a Tartar. The swarm of CedaCreek fellows piling

on him were too meh for the ruffian, sinewy as he was. He rolled over of the ground, with

Frank still in his grap; but five or six fellows had hold of hi, and he was soon helpless under their bight. Frank dragged himsf free. "Hold him!" he paled.

"I guess we've got im!" gasped Eben "Me gotee!" chuckli Yen Chin, "You

lendee me knifee, and e killee!" "Yoop!" roared Eurre Dick. "Keep that heathen off! I we in! Let up, gents! I give in, honest lujun!" "Hold him, some of you!" gasped Frank.

"The rest come with me We've got to help Bob and Beau out of this!" "I'll sit on him," said Eben Hacke.

"Hook if !" Hacke and Yen Chil and mother fellow planted themselves on theme Dick, pin- 1 pasoner.

ning him to the ground. The rest followed FrankRichards. Frank, full of anxiety folks chums, led the way at a run for the stes.

If Bob and the Cherub ere placed in Old Man Gunten's hands h knew that a heavy punishment awaited hem, and they would be prevented fron rejoining the garrison of Cedar Creek.

That was not to be, iffrank Richards could help it. Frank was dashing to be gates in so

great a hurry that hedid not see a shadowy figure before hi till he rushed

into it at full speed in the gateway. There was a gasping owl from Four Kings:

"Euchre Dick, you jay-" For a moment the ruffit supposed that it was his confederate whhad rushed into him in the dark. He wasoon undeceived.

"Back up!" panted Fmk Richards. He grasped the ruffic, and, in the sudden surprise of the stack, bore him backwards.

Four Kings stumbled, ad almost fell. He recovered, however and his fierce grasp closed on Frank, wo would have fared badly but for the pmpt assistance

of his followers. But the odds were on h side, as Four Kings soon found.

From the shadows five or six active fellows swarmed on the rufflan as he grasped Frank, and he vas dragged to the ground with a crash.

His head smote the ground with a heavy concussion, and he utteed a howl of anguish.

As he lay dazed Frank's knee was planted on his chest. "Pile on him!" panted Frank.

But his followers did not need lelling. Four Kings was down, and they realised that it was judicious to keep hin there, and they were swarming on him.

Three or four knees were plantel on the ruffian, and his wrists were grasted and firmly held.

Four Kings struggled in vain unler the swarm. Frank Richards rose, breathless.

The struggle had been brief, and Four

Your Editor is a ways glad to hear from you, and to learn your opinion THE BOYS' FRIEND. Kings was held down helpless by Frank's comrades.

Frank was thinking of his chums in the

"Keep him safe!" he panted. "We've got him!"

Frank tore off his belt, and buckled it on the wrists of the ruffian securely, and Lawless. Four Kings was a helpless prisoner. Leaving him writhing on the ground,

pouring out a string of oaths, Frank Richards dashed out of gates with his comrades. The lantern was glimmering in the wood,

and from the distance they could see Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclere, tied together, with Dave Dunn keeping guard over them. Dunn had stepped out into the trail,

staring through the shadows towards the school, and wondering what was happening there.

Frank Richards & Co. came up with a At the sight of six or seven shadowy forms rushing on him the rushian sprang

back in alarm. "Oh, Jerusalem!" he gasped. Crash!

Frank hurled himself at the ruffian, and "Good man!" roared Bob Lawless.

Frank ran to him, dragging out his knife as he did so. In a moment the sharp blade was sawing through the cords that fastened Vere

Beauclerc and the rancher's son. But there was nothing to fear from Dave Dunn. He had picked himself up and fled. Even for Old Man Gunten's dollars he was not prepared to deal with the whole !

Cedar Creek crowd. His heavy footsteps died away in the timber in the direction of the distant town of Thompson. Dave Dunn had had enough.

"Good man!" said Bob, as his hands came free. "I guessed we were gone coons, Franky. Good man!" Beauclerc picked up the lantern.

"Let's get back," he said. "We shi'n't get to Cedar Camp to-night, Bob." "I guess not. Come on!"

The schoolboys ran back in a crowd towards Cedar Creek. It was evident that the expedition had | fat Chunkee! You tinkee nicee labbit to be given up for that night at least, stew," said Yen Chin.

now that they knew a watch was being kept on the school. A dim form loomed up in the trail-hat on yourself." of Four Kings, with his hands fastened in front of him by Frank Richards' belt.

Bob Lawless stopped. creek and duck him!"

perately through the thickets. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Well, he! the better."

won't find it a nice walk home with his hands tied. Let him go." The rebels of Cedar Creek hurried back bit of cake, Chunky." to the school.

It was possible that the enemy had "I say, old chapsress again.

Eben Hacke and his companions were still to it." sitting on Euchee Dick, Keeping hime

The rullian was pleading to be released. and his position was far from comfortable. with Hacke's bony person planted on his | "You can go to bed, Chunky! Try to legs, and the Chinee sitting on his face. "Hallo! You've got back, you jays!"

exclaimed Hacke. "All O. K.! What are we goin' to do with this rustler?" "Kick him out!" answered Frank

Richards. "You lender me knife, and me killee!" suggested Yen Chin.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Euchre Dick was allowed to rise, and six or seven boots impressed upon him that it would be wise to depart at once;

and he departed at a run. Frank Richards & Co. clambered in at the window again, glad to find themselves | less night.

safe within walls once more. Bob Lawless closed the shutter and barred it.

"All O. K. now!" he said. "I reckon Old Man Gunten came very near scoring this time. But a miss is as good as a mile." "Thank goodness it's no worse!" same Frank Richards. "If we three had been taken away---"

"I guess we could have run the show hyer without you!" remarked Eben Hacke. Frank smiled, but did not argue the

But the Co., at least, were of the opinion that if they had been taken the resistance of the rest of the garrison would have "petered out" before long.

"Are we all here?" asked Vere Beau-"I'll call the roll," said Bob.

The names were called over at once, and all answered excepting Chunky Todgers.

"My hat! Chunky's still outside!" exclaimed Frank, in alarm. "I guess I didn't see him," said Hacke.

" More likely--" Bob Lawless gave a yell. "He's after the grub again!" And he rushed away in great wrath to

Chunky Todgers was there!

the kitchen.

The 5th Chapter. Awful for Chunky! Chunky was enjoying himself!

Never since the siege of Cedar Creek had started had Chunky Todgers revelled; at work on the Todgers' farm. in such plenty. He was not thinking any harm-in fact,

he was not thinking at all; he was simply feeding. And his feed was a record one.

He had done wonders already, but although the cargo he had taken aboard was extensive, he was still "going it," with a happy smile on his fat face, when his wrathful comrades burst into the kitchen.

Then Chunky ceased suddenly, and he remained transfixed, as it were, with his fork half-way to his mouth. He realised that after the feast came

the reckoning. "You-you-you-" stuttered Bob

"I-I say, I-I was bound to have my supper, you know!" stammered Chunky. "Have-have you brought the

grub, Bob, old chap?" "No, you fat villain!" "Hadn't-hadn't you better go for it

at once?" "I-I-I'll scalp you!" shrieked Bob. Why, you've cleared out nearly every-

thing we had left!" "Lynch him!" roared Eben Hacke.

"Squash him!" Chunky jumped up in alarm.

"I-I-I-I say!" he stuttered. "I-I was hungry, you know. I-I- Yarooh! Hands off, you jays! Oh, crumbs!" The schoolboy rebels surrounded Chunky

with grim looks. He had lost no time; and the diminished provisions of Cedar Creek had almost reached vanishing point.

"What are we going to do with him?" gasped Frank Richards.

"Lynch him!" "Jump on him!"

"Killee fat Chunkee!" Bob Lawless raised his hand.

"Hold on! There's only one thing can be done. Chunky's scoffed all the grub, or nearly all. We can't get in supplies, and we can't starve. I thought it would come to this, anyhow. Chunky's got to

"He's fat," said Bob. "He will last us a week at least."

"You-you rotter, I know you're only joking!" howled Chunky. "But who's going to polish him off?" asked Frank Richards gravely, catching Bob's idea at once. "I don't care for the

"Me killee!" "Good! Yen Chin can do the trick," said Beauclerc. "He's a heathen, and he won't mind."

"No mindee-me killee and cookee nicey "Done!" said Eben Hacke. "I'm sorry

for this, Chunky, but you've brought it "I-I say, you're joking, you beast!" gasped Chunky, his fat face growing almost

green. He gave a wild howl as Yen Chin "We'll give that critter a lesson!" he | picked up a carving-knife, with a bloodexclaimed. "We'll run him down to the thirsty look. "Keep him off! Yaroooh!" "Not yet, Yen Chin," said Bob. "We Four Kings made a desperate rush into | don't want him till to-morrow. You can the timber, and went tramping de have what's left of the grub if you like, Chunky. The fatter you are to-morrow "Yaroooh!"

"Yes, go it!" said Frank. "Here's a

"I-I-I'm not hungry!" wailed Chunky. reinforcements in the neighbourhood, and "I'm sorry!" said Bob. "It's your own they were anxious to be inside their forth fault, Chunky. It might have come to it, anyhow; but we'd have put it off as They reached the schoolhouse, where long as possible. Now you've driven us

bob, old chap-I say, Franky--" "Can you suggest anything else for breakfast?" asked Bob. "I-I say--"

stomach, another fellow standing on his | sleep, or you may get feverish, and that will make you tough." "Yaroooh!" Chunky Todgers almost staggered to his

mattress. He stole several glances at the schoolboys when they were turning in, but every face was grim and relentless.

There was no sleep for Chunky Todgers that night. In the middle of the night Chunky crept to the window, but he found Frank Richards on guard there, and rolled back

to his mattress with a groan. Chunky paid for all his sins that sleep-When morning dawned upon Cedar Creek School, and the rebels turned out

Chunky sought the faces of his comrades with agonised looks. Yen Chin went into the kitchen, where he was soon heard sharpening a knife.

Chunky's heart. "Bob, old fellow-" he moaned. "Ready, Chunky?"

"I-I know you're only joking!" "Go into the kitchen, Chunky," said Frank sadly. "I don't want to see it done. You ready, Yen Chin?" "Me leady! Killee velly quickee.

Where Chunkee?" "Yarooh! I-I say-" "Let him have a trot round the play" ground first," said Bob considerately. "Keep an eye on him, though."

Chunky Todgers gasped. Once he was out in the playground he was not likely to be rounded up again.

He could scarcely believe his good luck as he dropped from the window. "Come back!" roared Bob Lawless, as Chunky streaked for the gates. But Chunky did not heed; he was running for his life.

"I can pot him from the window." Chunky Todgers vanished out of gates. There was a roar of laughter in the lumber school, but Chunky, streaking for home, did not hear it. The garrison of Cedar Creek had lost one of its members, and while Frank Richards & Co. held the fort at Cedar Creek, Chunky was sadly

"Bring me a gun, Franky!" roated Bob.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD. DON'T MISS IT!

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