

HORACE, THE GOAT, IS FUNNIER THAN EVER THIS WEEK! SEE BELOW.

# The BOYS' FRIEND 1<sup>d</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE "PENNY POPULAR."

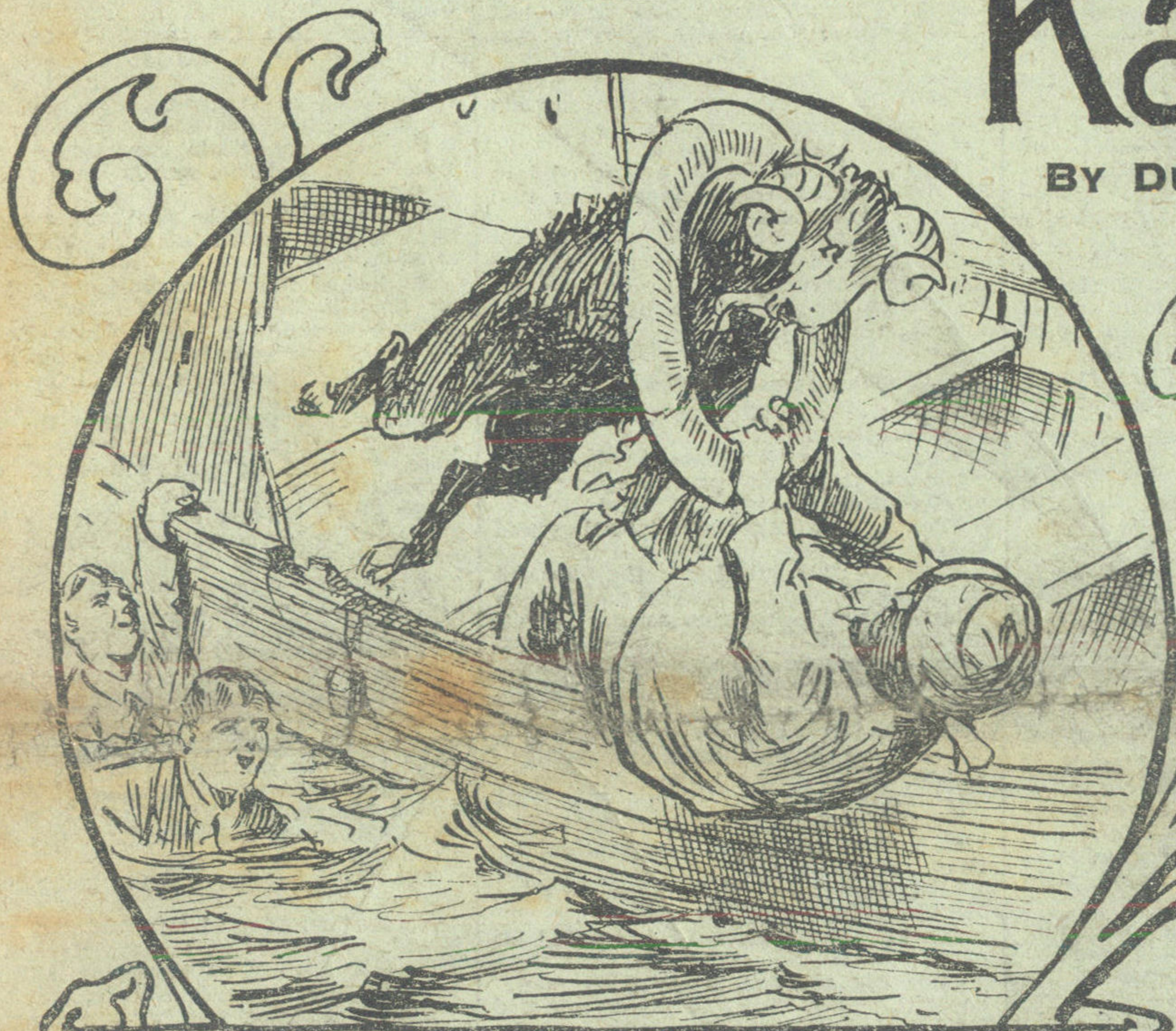
No. 914. Vol. XVIII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending December 14th, 1918.

## The Boys Who Beat the Kaiser

BY DUNCAN STORM.



HORACE'S LONG LEAP!



A WETTING FOR LAL TATA!



THE GREAT FEAST!



# THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER

(Continued from the previous page.)

But he cheered up wonderfully when Pongo handed him the knife. "Here you are, George!" said Pongo, displaying the knife. "Fasten on to this!"

And whilst the fat nigger cried and smiled at the same time, the boys hurried off after Horace.

They found the goat eagerly sniffing round the pots where the kous-kous was cooking for the coming feast.

Kous-kous is the staple food of Northern and Central Africa.

It is as near as possible like hot bill-stickers' paste, but there are millions of niggers who have lived on kous-kous all their lives, and ask for nothing better.

Horace was surrounded by little niggers, who pulled his tail and dug him in the ribs, and shoved him away so that they, too, could get a sniff at the kous-kous pots.

But Horace, for all his faults of temper, was always well behaved with children.

Though he would have butted a grown nigger who touched him into the middle

of next week, he allowed the little niggers to pull his ears and tumble over his back without a single "maw" of protest.

The feast took a long time to cook, and all the boys were ravenous before the big drum sounded to announce that all was ready.

Obob was seated on a pile of cushions under a huge red umbrella.

He had two niggers armed with feather fans to keep the flies off him.

Skeleton had been selected as the guest of honour.

He sat on the right hand of the king, and he, too, had a big nigger to hold a green silk umbrella over his head, and a couple of niggers with dusting brushes to keep the flies off him also.

The niggers and negresses gathered round the party, as they assembled for the feast.

It was a great occasion when King Obob el Mook condescended to dine in public, and the crowd gathered to see the wonder as though it were a dog-fight or the Lord Mayor's Show.

Obob el Mook was reported to be a wonderful trencherman, and this counted a lot with the niggers of Booloo.

They thought most of the fattest nigger and the biggest eater amongst them, and this was the king.

And they were very curious to see what sort of a show Skeleton would make at the feast.

Skeleton was so thin that much was expected of him.

The king started off by paying Skeleton the highest compliment of Oriental hospitality.

The first dish was a kid stuffed in rice and boiled with milk and dates.

With an ingratiating smile the king rolled up a lump of rice and kid and dates as big as a cricket-ball, and thrust it in Skeleton's mouth.

A laugh went round the boys.

And the niggers all lu-lued in chorus, so that Skeleton might understand that the honour the king had paid him was as good as making a knight of him.

Skeleton was not going to be outdone.

He got a double handful of kid and dates and rice, and shoved it in the king's mouth as though he were posting a parcel.

A roar of admiration went up from the crowd as the king swallowed it.

Then they went at it hammer and tongs, Obob fed Skeleton and Skeleton

fed Obob on beef, goat, chicken, kous-kous—in fact, everything that came to hand.

The crowd did not notice that for every mouthful Skeleton got from the king the king got a double handful from Skeleton, and the king was so delighted that he did not notice how Skeleton was loading him up.

His fat face beamed with smiles. He felt safe upon his throne now.

He had promised Captain Handyman that in future he would behave himself, and would no longer stop traders passing up and down the river.

He had promised Flint Pasha that he would receive an English officer at his Court who would teach him how to govern his people justly, and who would start schools for the niggers and a hospital for the sick.

All that Obob could say was: "Good ole Teleton!" every time he stuffed a dainty morsel in Skeleton's mouth.

To which Skeleton replied: "Good old Obob!" as he dabbed one of his double handfuls into the king's mouth.

Cries of wonderment went up when Skeleton stayed through every course. Apparently he had eaten as much as the king.

Really he had eaten a quarter of the amount which Obob had stowed away.

At last Obob could eat no more, and

Skeleton, with a wink at his chums, finished up a dish of sweetened rice.

"Teleton! Teleton!" roared the delighted niggers. "Behold the Boney One eateth like young elephants!"

Skeleton rose under the shade of his green umbrella, and bowed to the huge semi-circle of admiring niggers, whilst the negresses "Lu-lued!" and wondered amongst themselves why he had not got any fatter from the great feast.

"I call that a jolly good feed," said Skeleton, as he sat down again. "It is the first really square meal I have had since we started."

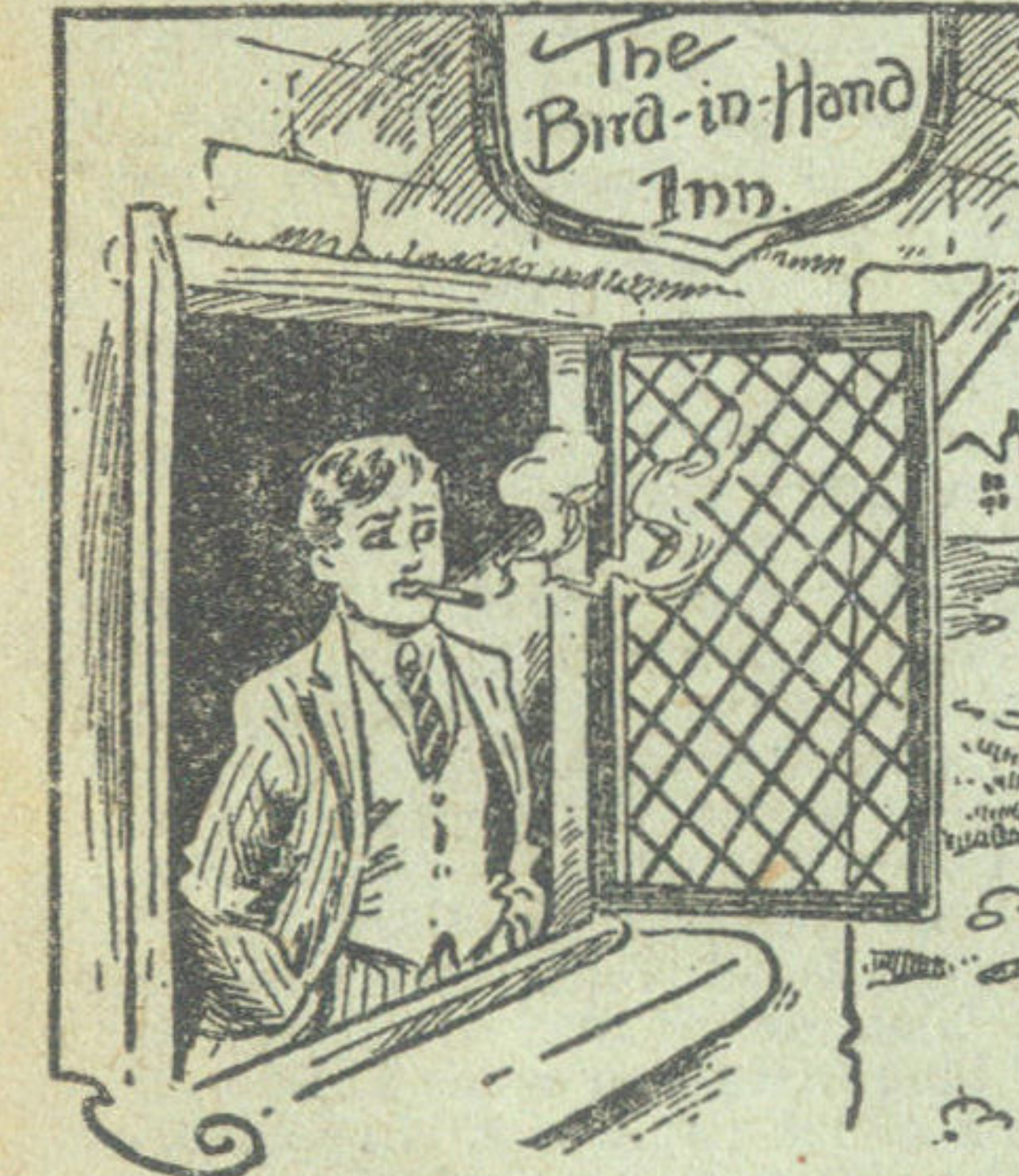
Then he turned to Obob, who, sitting on his cushions, was half asleep.

"I say, Obob," he said, "what time do we have tea?"

The question was never answered, for, from the look-out post by the flagstaff, came the deep, booming grumble of the great war drum of Booloo.

Then a yell went up from the mob, and everyone rushed to the rampart of the fortress.

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



# THE MYSTERY OF TOMMY DODD!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of JIMMY SILVER & CO., the Chums of Rookwood. By OWEN CONQUEST.

**The 1st Chapter.**  
**Jimmy Silver is Too Good.**

Jimmy Silver halted suddenly. He seemed transfixed.

His chums—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—stopped, too, in surprise.

They stared at Jimmy, but Jimmy was not looking at them; he was staring at the window of the building the juniors were passing.

That window seemed to fascinate the captain of the Rookwood Fourth.

The Fistical Four of Rookwood had just turned out of Coombe High Street into the lane, on their way back to the school from the village.

On the outskirts of Coombe was the Bird-in-Hand inn, lying well back from the road.

It was a place with a most unsavoury reputation, and taboo to Rookwood fellows.

But Jimmy Silver seemed to be interested in it all of a sudden.

"What are you stopping for?" demanded Lovell. "There's old Manders coming up the street. Don't let him see us hanging about here."

But Jimmy did not move or answer.

"Jimmy, you ass!"

"The utter idiot!" said Jimmy Silver at last.

"Eh? Who?"

"Tommy Dodd! Look!"

"What are you looking at?"

"That window—on the ground-floor." Lovell & Co. followed his gaze in wonder.

Then they all jumped.

At the open window, in front of the public-house, a youth was standing, with a cigarette between his lips, looking out into the street.

The Fistical Four were well aware that some Rookwood fellows occasionally dropped in at the Bird-in-Hand for a game of billiards—in strict secrecy, of course.

But they had never expected to see Tommy Dodd of the Fourth there.

The youth at the window glanced at the four juniors carefully.

He did not seem perturbed.

As they gazed at him in astonishment he blew out a little cloud of smoke.

"My only hat!" stuttered Lovell.

"Tommy Dodd!" murmured Raby. "In that den! I'd never have thought it of him!"

"And here's old Manders coming up the street!" muttered Newcome. "He will see him! Has Dodd gone off his chump?"

Jimmy Silver glanced over his shoulder.

The angular figure of Mr. Manders, the senior Modern master at Rookwood, could be seen in the distance, coming towards them from the village.

If Mr. Manders spotted one of his boys in a place like the Bird-in-Hand, it was certain that something like an earthquake would happen.

Jimmy compressed his lips.

Never for a moment had he suspected Tommy Dodd of "pub-haunting," like Peele and Gower, and the other nuts of the Fourth.

Tommy was a bright and healthy youth, and he seemed to live chiefly for outdoor games and for ragging the Classical juniors.

It was evident that his schoolfellows had been mistaken in him.

At least, that was the only conclusion the Fistical Four could come to.

"The utter idiot!" muttered Jimmy. "If he must play the goat, he needn't give himself away like that to any passer-by by smoking at the window! Why, the Head himself might pass!"

"Manders will spot him!" said Lovell.

"Serve him right, too! What's he doing there, playing the goat?"

Jimmy Silver waved his hand to the youth at the window.

Surprised and disgusted as he was by this unexpected discovery, Jimmy did not like the idea of Mr. Manders catching Dodd in the very act of disregarding the strictest rules of the school.

The boy at the window stared at him, as if not understanding.

"Look out, Jimmy!" muttered Lovell. "Manders has got his eye on you! He'll think you've got acquaintances in that den."

"I've got to warn that idiot!" said Jimmy. "This means a flogging—it might mean the boot for him!"

"Stop!" yelled Lovell.

But Jimmy Silver was already running towards the inn.

He reached the open window, breathless.

"Get out of sight, you fool!" he panted.

The boy with the cigarette looked down at him.

"Are you talkin' to me?" he asked.

"Yes, you ass! Manders is coming!"

"Eh?"

"Are you mad, Dodd?" shouted Jimmy in wrath and amazement.

"Hallo! You know my name, do you?" Jimmy Silver blinked at him.

That question made him doubt whether Tommy Dodd really was in his right senses.

"Know your name?" stuttered Jimmy. "Of course I know your name, as well as you know mine! Get out of sight, you dummy! I tell you Mr. Manders is coming along the street! When he gets past those trees he'll see you!"

"If you're not potty, perhaps you'll explain what you're talking about," said the boy in the window calmly.

"You silly idiot!"

"Oh, draw it mild! Do you want me to come out and mop you up?"

"Dodd!" A voice called from within the room. "Your shot, Duddy!"

"All serene, Joey!"

The youth turned back from the window and disappeared.

Jimmy ran back to the road.

Dodd was gone from the window now, and was safe from discovery by the Modern master, at all events.

Jimmy Silver was not so lucky.

"Come on!" he said hurriedly, as he rejoined his chums.

But the sharp, acid voice of Mr. Manders rapped out from behind.

"Stop! Stop at once!"

The Classical chums stopped reluctantly.

Mr. Manders came up, his thin, acid face more acid than ever now.

Mr. Manders did not like the cheery four, and he was under the impression now that he had caught them in grave dereliction of duty.

"Silver!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir."

"You have just spoken to someone in that public-house!"

"I—I—" stammered Jimmy.

"Do not deny it, Silver. I saw you go up to that window, though I did not see to whom you were speaking."

Jimmy flushed red.

"I wasn't going to deny it!" he answered hotly.

"Very well. You admit it?" said Mr. Manders.

"Yes," grunted the captain of the Fourth.

"Whom were you speaking with?"

"A—a chap."

"Someone you know in that place?" asked Mr. Manders grimly.

"A—a fellow I know, certainly," said

Jimmy. "I never expected to see him in a place like that, though."

"Then why did you speak to him?"

No answer.

"This is a very serious matter, Silver. If you were in my House I should deal with you very severely."

Jimmy was thankful that he was not in Mr. Manders' House.

"As it is," added Mr. Manders, "I shall report your conduct to your Form-master. Return to Rookwood at once!"

The Classical chums looked rebellious for a moment.

A Modern master had no right to interfere with Classics, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were sticklers for their rights.

But it was evidently more judicious to obey the command, and the Fistical Four turned and walked off to Rookwood.

Mr. Manders followed them, frowning.

"Buck up!" muttered Lovell. "Let's get out of sight of that blessed old gargyle, at any rate!"

The juniors hurried, leaving Mr. Manders behind.

Jimmy Silver was not looking happy as they approached the gates of Rookwood School.

He had rated in a good-natured way to do Tommy Dodd a good turn, and he seemed likely to have to pay dearly for it.

"What on earth will you say to Bootles when that old Hun reports you, Jimmy?" asked Newcome.

"Blest if I know!"

"It means trouble."

"I know it does," growled Jimmy.

"Bless Manders! Isn't it queer that his long nose is always where it is not wanted!"

"I—I suppose you can't explain about Tommy Dodd to Mr. Bootles," said Lovell hesitatingly.

"No. I can't give the silly idiot away, can I? It wouldn't do any good, either. Bootles wouldn't think it was my bizney to warn a silly blackguard that he was going to be spotted."

"I suppose he wouldn't," grinned Lovell. "You're in for it, Jimmy!"

"Say something else nice and cheerful!" grunted Jimmy.

And the Fistical Four went in at the gates in a troubled mood.

It was quite certain that the captain of the Fourth was booked for trouble, and perhaps Jimmy Silver wished that he had not been quite so good-natured.

"Not at Giles' farm, certainly!" said Jimmy Silver drily.

"We saw him at the Bird-in-Hand pub, smoking a cigarette at the window of the billiard-room!" snorted Lovell.

"Oh, don't be a funny ass!" said Cook. "Br-r-r!" grunted Lovell.

Mr. Manders came in sight behind; and the Fistical Four went on towards the School House, leaving the two Tommies staring.

Certainly, if Tommy Dodd had gone on the "razzle" that afternoon, he had deceived his chums on the subject.

Their belief was that he had gone to Giles' farm to purchase the harmless and necessary eggs.

Mr. Manders, instead of going to his own House, followed Jimmy Silver & Co. to the School House.

Apparently the report to their Form-master was to be made at once.

It was probably a gratifying task to the acid Mr. Manders, and he did not want to put it off.

"Silver!" he rapped out, as he followed them in.

"Yes, sir?"

"Follow me to Mr. Bootles' study!"

The Modern master whisked on ahead, and the juniors followed him into the presence of the master of the Fourth.

Mr. Bootles blinked at them over his spectacles.

He was not unaccustomed to receiving complaints from Mr. Manders, and he did not look specially agreeable as the Modern master whisked in.

"I have to report these boys—at least, Silver—for a very serious act!" said Mr. Manders pompously. "Silver, under my very eyes, was speaking to some acquaintance at a low public-house in the village, Mr. Bootles."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles.

"The other boys waited in the road while he did so," said Mr. Manders. "I leave the matter in your hands, Mr. Bootles."

"Thank you, Mr. Manders!"

Mr. Manders ought to have departed with that, but he did not.

He remained, as if loth to lose sight of his prey.

"Silver, what have you to say?" asked the mild little Form-master.

"I was doing no harm, sir."

"You spoke to some person in a—ah—ahem!—public-house?" asked Mr. Bootles, in his most magisterial manner.

"The place known as the Bird-in-Hand," put in Mr. Manders.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "This is very serious! You are well aware, Silver, that that exceedingly disreputable place is strictly out of bounds! To whom, pray, were you speaking?"

Jimmy Silver reddened and hesitated.

He could not mention Tommy Dodd. All the unwritten laws of the Lower School were against "sneaking."

Moreover, he had chipped in to save Tommy Dodd from punishment, not in order to wind up by giving him away.

Mr. Bootles' frown grew more severe as Jimmy failed to answer.

The Modern master broke in in acid tones.

"Doubtless some low acquaintance—probably a billiard-sharper!" he said bitterly. "It was at the window of the billiard-room. Silver appears to be on a familiar footing at the place."

"Is that the case, Silver?"

"Certainly not, sir!" answered Jimmy hotly.

"Yet you have an acquaintance there."

"No, sir. I—I saw a chap at the window, and spoke to him—a fellow I knew," said Jimmy, colouring again. "I was surprised to see him there. I never thought he was that kind of chap. That's all."

"Ah, this puts a different complexion on the matter!" said Mr. Bootles, his brow clearing. "You were simply going to advise the person to leave such a place, is that it, Silver?"

"Well, yes, sir; and I was going to tell him not to show himself off at the window, if he was ass enough to be there at all," confessed Jimmy.

Mr. Bootles coughed.

"You have acted injudiciously, Silver, but, I think, without bad intentions. You must be more careful!"

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Manders' thin lips set in a tight line.

He did not want the matter to end like this.

"Silver has not given the person's name," he interposed. "Unless he does so, Mr. Bootles, surely it is clear that he is not speaking the truth."

Jimmy crimsoned.

"I am speaking the truth!" he said.

"My Form-master knows that I am not a liar!"

"I am sure of that!" said Mr. Bootles. "But, please, give me the name of your acquaintance, Silver. It is scarcely judicious for you to keep up such acquaintances. In fact, I feel bound to forbid you to do so!"

Jimmy very nearly grinned at that.

Mr. Bootles did not know that he was forbidding the captain of the Fourth to keep up the acquaintance of a junior in his own Form at Rookwood.

"His name, boy?" snapped Mr. Manders.

Jimmy did not answer.

"Come, Silver," said Mr. Bootles gently. "You must give me the boy's name, and I must see that such an acquaintance is dropped. You must see that you cannot be allowed to keep up friendship with a person who frequents such a place as the Bird-in-Hand—a very low resort."

"Yes, sir; but—but—" Jimmy stammered.

"Well, Silver?"

Jimmy looked at his chums, and they looked at him.

The Fistical Four felt extremely uncomfortable; they certainly could not give the name.

"Silver refuses!" said Mr. Manders, with a curling lip. "He cannot reply! His statement is false!"

"It is not false!" said Jimmy.

"Don't contradict me, boy!"

"I will contradict anybody who says that I am a liar!" retorted Jimmy Silver. "Even the Head has no right to say that!"

Mr. Bootles' eyes glinted.

"Mr. Bootles, is this the language—" he began.

"Pray leave the matter to me, sir!" said Mr. Bootles, with some asperity. "As Silver is in my Form, this matter falls within my province."

Even Mr. Manders was not proof against a snub as plain as that, and, with a sniff, he quitted the study.

"Now, Silver," said Mr. Bootles, blinking at the junior very gravely. "I must have an answer. There is no reason why you cannot give the name of your acquaintance, if your statement is true."

"There is a reason, sir," muttered Jimmy, in great discomfort.

Mr. Bootles started a little, as a light dawned upon him.

"Is it possible, Silver, that it was a Rookwood boy?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"Oh!" said Mr. Bootles slowly. "I understand. This is more serious than I had supposed. Silver, I must ask you for a fuller explanation. I require the name of the boy!"

"It—it was a Modern, sir!" muttered Jimmy.

"It was a boy of Mr. Manders' House?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

"Yes."

"Then you must give his name, to be reported to Mr. Manders."

"I can't, sir!"

"Silver!"

"I can't, sir," repeated Jimmy doggedly. "If I gave the chap away nobody at Rookwood would speak to me again, and serve me right, too!"

"Ahem!"

Mr. Bootles hummed and hawed for a minute or two.

He was a sympathetic and kind-hearted gentleman, and he understood.

Jimmy Silver stood with a crimson face, and his chums had their eyes on the floor.

Mr. Bootles spoke at last.

"Silver, I must conclude that you were warning the boy you speak of that Mr. Manders was at hand. Is that the case?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy quietly.

"That was very wrong of you, Silver." No reply.

"You will see yourself, Silver, that you must be punished for doing such a thing. You have prevented Mr. Manders from enforcing discipline in his own House. I shall cane you, Silver."

Jimmy rubbed his hands in painful anticipation.

The Form-master rose to his feet and selected a cane.

He said nothing more about the name of the "pub-haunter."

Perhaps he knew that Jimmy would not utter the name under any circumstances, and did not wish to be forced to inflict severe punishment with no result.

The cane swished thrice.

Then the four juniors left the study, Jimmy rubbing his hands.

## The 2nd Chapter. Called Over the Coals.

"Seen Tommy?"

Two Modern juniors asked that question together as the Classical chums came in at the gates.

They were Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle of the Modern Fourth.

They were waiting at the gates for Tommy Dodd rather impatiently, as it was tea-time.

"Yes, we've seen him!" grunted Lovell.

"Did he have the eggs?" asked Doyle.

"The what?"

"Eggs! I suppose you know what eggs are?" said Doyle, surprised by Lovell's surprise. "You learn that much on the Classical side, don't you?"

"Well, he didn't have any eggs when we saw him," said Lovell. "He wasn't at a place where you buy eggs, that's a cert."

"Oh, the gossoon!" said Doyle. "Sure he was going to bring in the eggs for tea! Chap said they could be got, new laid and cheap, at Giles' farm, and Tommy went out on his bike to bag them. Where did you see him?"



# THE MYSTERY OF TOMMY DODD!

(Continued from the previous page.)

## The 3rd Chapter.

### Tommy Dodd Loses His Temper.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did some thinking over tea in the end study. Mornington and Erroll came in to tea with them, and the matter was confided to the two.

They were surprised at the news about Tommy Dodd, and rather inclined to be incredulous.

"If you actually saw him, of course he—," said Erroll slowly.

"We did—all four of us!" said Raby. "I suppose that settles it; but it's jolly queer. I never thought Tommy Dodd would go playing the giddy goat, like Pele and Gower and Towner, or Smythe of the Shell."

"Well, he does!" grunted Lovell. "Sure you haven't made a mistake, though?" said Valentine Mornington. "I'd have bet two to one on Dodd as a straight 'un."

"How could we make a mistake?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "I spoke to him at the window, and he answered me. I saw him as plain as I see you, and somebody inside called to him by name."

"By gad, that looks like a clincher!" admitted Mornington. "It beats me! You say he was smokin'?"

"Yes." "It's dashed queer! Perhaps you fellows remember that I used to go on the randan sometimes, before Erroll reformed me."

"Nothing to brag of," grunted Lovell. "I'm not braggin', dear boy; I'm statin' a fact," answered Mornington calmly. "Well, at that time I used to smoke, and I found it fairly ruined my wind, for cricket and footer. That was one reason why I chucked it, to stick to the absolute facts. Well, I saw Tommy Dodd to-day at footer. He was makin' the runnin' in fine style. Nothin' wrong with his wind."

"That was before we saw him, then." "Yaas; but if the chap smokes, he smokes. The way he was runnin' to-day between the posts didn't look like a fellow who smokes."

"There's something in that," said Erroll.

"But we saw him, I tell you!" "Well, if you saw him, of course that settles it!" said Erroll. "But it's jolly queer."

"You'll hear more of it, I fancy," remarked Mornington. "Bootles is bound to tell Manders that one of his bright specimens has been seen at that delectable resort. Mandy will be wild, and he will want to know the kid's name. Mandy doesn't allow for a fellow's sense of honour. He will go to the Head."

"That's just what I was thinking," said Jimmy Silver. "Of course, I can't give Dodd's name."

"Not if the Head orders you?" "I can't!"

"Bit of a twist, arguin' with the Head," said Mornington. "It's up to Tommy Dodd to own up."

"That would see me clear, of course; but he won't do it."

"He ought to. I'd put it to him plain, if I were you. After all, he's a decent chap, even if he has made a bad break for once. He won't want to see you flogged for refusin' to answer the Head, if it comes to that."

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows in troubled thought.

After Mornington and Erroll had gone he made up his mind.

"It won't do any harm to see the chap," he said. "I'll cut across to Manders' House and see Tommy Dodd, you fellows."

"Tell him we'll smash him if he doesn't do the right thing!" snorted Lovell.

"I don't think that would make him do it," said Jimmy. "I don't think I shall ask him, either. I'll simply tell him how the matter stands, and leave it to his sense of honour. He's always played the game up to now, so far as I know."

Jimmy Silver left the end study and made his way to the Modern side.

Three cheery voices could be heard in Tommy Dodd's study when Jimmy approached the door of that apartment.

The three Tommies were at tea, and they looked very cheerful as Jimmy opened the door and glanced in upon them.

"Trot in!" said Tommy Dodd heartily. "Heard of the eggs—what?"

"The eggs?" repeated Jimmy.

"Look!" said the Modern junior, with an air of pride. "I bagged a dozen at Giles' farm. New-laid! Cheap! Giles is a Briton! I'll tell you what, Silver. If you'll own up that Modern side is top side of Rookwood I'll stand you four of them, free, gratis, and for nothing!"

Jimmy Silver simply stared at him.

To judge by Tommy's manner, he had completely forgotten the meeting at the Bird-in-Hand.

"Anything up?" asked Tommy, struck by his look.

"Yes."

"And you've come here for advice from your Uncle Thomas? Sit down and get it off your chest, dear boy. You don't mind if I go on with my feed, do you? I've had a bike-ride, and I'm famished!" Jimmy Silver did not sit down.

The Modern junior's manner puzzled him, and angered him a little.

It looked like bravado on Tommy Dodd's part.

"It's about Manders," said Jimmy Silver abruptly.

"Manders been ragging you?" asked Tommy sympathetically. "Never mind; he's always ragging us, and we bear it. When I'm an Old Boy I'm coming back to give Manders a hiding!"

"Look here, Dodd, it's a serious matter. Manders saw me speaking to you at the window of the Bird-in-Hand

this afternoon, though he didn't see you. He took me to Bootles, and Bootles got it out of me that I was speaking to a Modern chap, warning him that Manders was coming. I haven't mentioned your name, and I don't intend to. But I think Manders will go nosing into the thing, and put it to the Head to make me give the name. I sha'n't do it, but if—"

Jimmy Silver paused. He had not finished, but the extraordinary expression on Tommy Dodd's face fairly made him stop.

Tommy was blinking at him with such utter amazement that Jimmy almost doubted whether he had only dreamed that he had seen the Modern junior on that unfortunate occasion.

"Are you potty?" gasped Tommy Dodd at last.

"Eh?"

"Sure, the silly gossoons said something of the sort to us when they came in!" said Tommy Doyle disdainfully. "I took it as a silly joke."

Jimmy's eyes flashed.

"You don't deny that you were at the Bird-in-Hand this afternoon, Dodd, when I saw you there?" he exclaimed.

"Deny it!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd hotly. "I should jolly well say I do deny it! If you're not gone potty, what on earth do you mean, Jimmy Silver?"

"You—do you deny it?" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"Of course I do!"

"You say you weren't there?"

"How could I be there when I was at Giles' farm buying eggs?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "Do you think I'm the kind of fellow to go there, anyway?"

"I never thought so till now," answered Jimmy.

"Then you do think so now?"

"Of course I do, as I saw you there."

"That's not true."

"What?"

"You seem to be making some idiotic mistake," said Tommy Dodd, more quietly.

"You've seen some fellow you took for me, I suppose."

"I saw you!"

"Fathead!"

"You've changed your clothes since you came in," said Jimmy, noting Tommy Dodd's Etons. "You were wearing a lounge-jacket there."

"Sure he hasn't changed his clothes, you gossoun," said Doyle. "We met Tommy at the gate, and he came straight to the study."

"Then he changed them before leaving the Bird-in-Hand. I suppose he keeps clothes there, then," said Jimmy Silver contemptuously. "It isn't just a foot trick he's played, queer, he's in the habit of going to the place."

Tommy Dodd rose to his feet.

"I've already said that I wasn't there, Silver," he said. "You may have made a mistake, taking another fellow for me."

"Have you got a twin brother at that pub?" asked Jimmy Silver sarcastically.

"Of course I haven't, ass!"

"Then it was you."

"It was not me, if you saw anybody at all!" shouted Tommy Dodd.

"It was you!"

"Then I'm a liar?" shouted Tommy.

"Yes, you are," answered Jimmy Silver

at once; "and about the most barefaced one I've ever come across."

Tommy Dodd whipped round the table.

"Put up your hands, you Classical cad!" he shouted. "Keep away, you fellows; leave him to me!"

Jimmy Silver put up his hands willingly enough.

It was clear now that Tommy Dodd did not intend to get him out of the scrape he had landed in.

The Modern junior's line was apparently to deny the whole occurrence, through thick and thin.

Naturally enough, that made Jimmy Silver angry.

Tommy Dodd was angry, too; whether he was lying or not, there was no doubt that his anger was genuine enough.

Cook and Doyle hastily dragged the table out of the way as the two juniors closed in strife.

There was a tramping of feet, and a gasping of breath and the sound of heavy blows in Tommy Dodd's study.

It was as fierce a fight as had ever taken place in the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

## The 4th Chapter. A Difficult Position.

"Stop that row, you young sweeps!" Knowles of the Sixth hurled open the study door and glared in.

The Modern prefect was "waxy," not without cause.

Dodd and Jimmy, in their excitement, were not aware that they were making a terrific din.

Fist fights were not supposed to take place in junior studies at Rookwood.

Knowles was head prefect on the Modern side, and there his word was law, but for once his command passed unheeded.

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd had closed, and they were pommeling one another furiously, both giving much more attention to attack than to defence.

Knowles stared at them.

"Do you hear me?" he roared.

"Stop it, ye silly spalpeens!" gasped Tommy Doyle. "Can't ye hear Knowles?"

"Tommy," shouted Cook, "chuck it, you ass! Stop it, Silver, you cad!"

But the fight went on.

Cecil Knowles strode into the study, with a black brow, and grasped both the combatants by the collars.

With a powerful wrench he dragged them apart.

"Stop it!" he thundered.

"Oh!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver jerked his collar away from Knowles and stood panting.

Both the juniors were very dishevelled, both crimson and breathless, and both being with anger.

"You're wrong, you Classical!" exclaimed Knowles. "I warn you for this: You seem to be the ass of it, Silver. I suppose you came here for a row."

"Let me go for the cad!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "He accuses me—"

"Shut up, you idiot!" snapped Jimmy Silver.

Angry and resentful as he was, Jimmy did not want the matter blurted out before a prefect.

That meant that Tommy Dodd's delinquency would come to light with a vengeance.

But the Modern junior did not heed.

"He accuses me of pub-haunting, and lying about it!" panted Tommy Dodd. "He says he saw me at the Bird-in-Hand this afternoon."

"What!" ejaculated Knowles.

If rumour in the lower Forms spoke truth, Cecil Knowles himself was not quite a stranger in the delectable precincts of the Bird-in-Hand.

But if Knowles allowed himself relaxations of that kind, he certainly did not believe in allowing anything of the kind to juniors.

He was the stern, severe prefect at once.

"He says he saw me there!" howled Tommy. "It's a lie!"

"Do you say so, Silver?" Jimmy did not answer.

Tommy Dodd had betrayed himself out of sheer bravado so far as Jimmy Silver could see, but Jimmy did not want to confirm it.

"He daren't say it again!" shouted Tommy. "He said it before; these fellows heard him! He knows it's a lie!" Jimmy's eyes blazed.

"If you want me to speak out, Dodd—," he exclaimed.

"I want you to own up that you lied," snorted Tommy. "You dare not repeat before Knowles what you said to me."

"If you put it like that, I'm bound to speak out," said Jimmy. "I did see you at the window of the Bird-in-Hand billiard-room this afternoon. You were standing there smoking a cigarette, and I warned you that Manders was coming."

"My hat!" exclaimed Knowles, in astonishment.

"It's a loie intirely!" exclaimed Doyle hotly. "Tommy went to Giles' farm for eggs, Knowles."

"And there's the eggs on the table!" exclaimed Cook.

"I've no doubt he went to the farm afterwards, as he intended to tell lies about where he'd been," said Jimmy Silver scornfully.

"Come with me to Mr. Manders, both of you!" said Knowles sharply. "One of you is lying, that's plain enough."

"It's that Classical cad!"

"It's that Modern worm!"

"Shut up, and come along!" snapped Knowles.

He strode from the study, and Jimmy and Dodd, exchanging glares of mutual scorn and defiance, followed him to Mr. Manders' quarters.

Mr. Manders fixed a grim look on Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Bootles was in the study with him, and the Form-master had just informed him of what he had learned from the Classical junior.

The information did not please Mr. Manders; he was not at all willing to find that the real delinquent was in his own House.

"Well, Knowles, why have you brought these matters to me?" he asked snarlingly. The prefect explained.

Mr. Manders set his lips tightly.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "Then it was Dodd whose name Silver refused to give me."

"Dodd denies it, sir," said Knowles, at once. "It was Dodd who told me Silver accused him. Silver tried to keep him from speaking, but Dodd insisted upon having it out. It looks as if Silver has invented the story."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Bootles.

"Not at all," snapped Mr. Manders. "That is my own impression exactly."

"Really, Mr. Manders—"

"Really, Mr. Bootles—"

Knowles left the study. The two masters looked at one another very sharply, but they restrained their acrimony.

Both were in a state of great annoyance, but they felt that a dispute in the presence of junior boys would not do.

"Now, Silver," ground out Mr. Manders, "you accuse Dodd of having been present in the public-house billiard-room this afternoon?"

"I don't accuse him," answered Jimmy steadily. "I never meant to give his name, even if the Head flogged me for refusing. Dodd brought it all out himself, and so I'm bound to speak out. I did see him there, and spoke to him there."

"You deny it, Dodd?"

"Every word, sir," answered Tommy instantly.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Bootles, in great perplexity.

Both the juniors looked so indignant that it was difficult to decide between the two, but it was very evident that both could not be stating the facts.

"Where were you this afternoon, Dodd?" asked Mr. Manders, as kindly as he could speak.

He was quite on Tommy Dodd's side.

"I biked over to Giles' farm for eggs, sir."

"Did you go anywhere near the Bird-in-Hand?"

"Not within half a mile of it, sir."

"That settles the matter to my mind," said Mr. Manders acidly. "Silver has sought to throw this imputation upon Dodd, in order to cover up his own disgraceful connections."

"That's not true," said Jimmy Silver.

"Silence, sir!" thundered the Modern master.

"Kindly be more careful how you speak, Silver," murmured Mr. Bootles. "Dodd, could you prove, if necessary, that you were at Giles' farm?"

"Mr. Giles would tell you so, sir, and so would Mrs. Giles."

"What do you say to that, Silver?"

"I suppose Dodd went there, sir, after I'd seen him, or before."

"How long were you absent, Dodd?"

"I think about two hours, sir. I stayed about the farm a bit; these was no hurry to get back," answered Dodd.

"And you are positive, Silver, that you saw Dodd at the place you mention?"

"Quite, sir."

"Dear me! It is really a most difficult matter to decide," said the Form-master. "What is your opinion, Mr. Manders?"

"I have already stated it, sir, and I do not depart from it one iota," answered Mr. Manders. "Silver is guilty of falsehood."

"I cannot think so."

"Then you judge Dodd to be guilty?"

"That follows," answered Mr. Bootles quickly.

"Dodd has my support," said Mr. Manders. "I will defend him against this unjust imputation in the presence of the Head."

"Thank you, sir," said Tommy Dodd. "Not at all, Dodd. You are under your Housemaster's protection," said Mr. Manders. "As for that wicked and unscrupulous boy—"

"Mr. Bootles, am I to listen to that?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver passionately. "I have told the truth, because Dodd forced me to."

"I believe you, Silver," said Mr. Bootles. "Come with me. Mr. Manders, it is clear that we differ on this matter, and it had better be left to Dr. Chisholm to judge."

"I agree with you, Mr. Bootles."

"Very well. Come with me, Silver."

And Mr. Bootles whisked away, followed by the Classical junior, who exchanged a final glance of defiance with the Modern as he went.

## The 5th Chapter. Not Proven.

The Lower School was in a buzz of excitement that evening.

The affair of Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver was on every tongue.

Every fellow knew that there had been quite a scene in the Head's study, with Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd face to face, and Mr. Bootles and Mr. Manders present.

There had been no decision.

Between the two juniors it was difficult for the Headmaster to decide.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome had been called in to support Jimmy Silver, and they had corroborated his statement.

That was evidence enough for the Classical side.

But the Head had telephoned to Giles' farm, and obtained Mr. Giles' evidence that Tommy Dodd assuredly had been there that afternoon, and had been about the farm for some time at least.

True, Tommy could have squeezed the time for a visit to the Bird-in-Hand as well; but, in that case, he must have cycled very fast to cover the distance in the time he had left.

Then it came out that Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, while out that afternoon, had passed Dodd on the road, and he bore witness that when he saw him Dodd was pedalling along in a leisurely way.

Altogether, the whole affair was very perplexing.

That the Fistical Four were speaking falsely was incredible.

Moreover, there was the self-evident fact that they had not wanted the story to be known at all, and gave their evidence before the Head very reluctantly.

If they were wrong it was because they were mistaken—honestly mistaken, as even Tommy Dodd had to admit when he was cool.

There hardly seemed room for a mistake, and the weight of evidence was against Tommy Dodd; but the Head did not find him guilty.

# IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

## FOR NEXT MONDAY!

### "PARDONED BY THE FOURTH!"

By Owen Conquest.

I fully expect that many of my readers have been puzzled by the curious happenings in this week's tale of the Rookwood chums. Jimmy Silver & Co.—and even Bulkeley, the captain of the school, for that matter—are convinced that they have seen Tommy Dodd at the Bird-in-Hand. Tommy Dodd has denied the accusation, and the matter remains unsettled.

Next Monday, however, the mystery will be explained to you. Tommy Dodd finds himself under a cloud. Such epithets as "pub-haunter" are hurled at his head, and he is barred by practically the whole of the Fourth Form.

Ever since the Rookwood stories commenced Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle have been the staunchest of chums to Tommy Dodd, but in our next story you will read of the strained feelings which creep in between the Modern Co. Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle are anxious to remain loyal to their chum, but even they find themselves agreeing with the opinions of the rest of the Form.

The prefects take the matter up seriously, and— Well, I will not tell you what happens after this. A pleasant surprise occurs, one that will, I am confident, appeal to every one of you. On no account must you fail to read this story; it is full of excitement.

### "RIVAL SCHOOLS!"

By Martin Clifford.

A few months ago I thought that it was absolutely impossible for the tales

of Frank Richards & Co. to improve in quality. The Barring-Out yarns were, without doubt, better than any that had appeared before, and I am sure you will agree with me that the new series, which will deal with Dicky Bird and his chums at the rival school exceed the Barring-Out stories in excellence.

Personally, I like Dicky Bird very much, and I am confident you will do the same when you have read next week's story, in which he makes his appearance.

When Frank Richards & Co. reach Hillcrest, the new school, and find a board outside, bearing the following inscription: "Hillcrest! Private School for the Sons of Gentlemen!" they are very indignant. They resolve immediately to make an alteration in the inscription.

They do so, but the task is not carried through without a little excitement. Something happens that will amuse you immensely. After this there is some rare fun. Dicky Bird and his chums play their part, and although they play it well, it can hardly be said that the chums of Cedar Creek are satisfied. In fact, their first encounter with the juniors of the rival school can hardly be described as a pleasant one for them.

Nevertheless, the rivalry between Frank Richards & Co. and Dicky Bird & Co. is by no means a bitter one. That there is rivalry there is no doubt, but this rivalry is going to supply you with many interesting stories, and I am sure, therefore, that you will be pleased.

### "THE BOYS WHO BEAT THE KAISER!"

By Duncan Storm.

Our amazing adventure serial goes merrily on its way, and you are bound to be delighted with next Monday's instalment. You will enjoy reading about a cricket match in which King Obob takes

part. Obob is most anxious to join in the game, but his knowledge of cricket is extremely vague. In fact, when his stumps are knocked in all directions, he does not realise that he is out. Then



benefit of the doubt—such doubt as there was.

The matter ended, therefore, in a sort of verdict of "Not proven," which was unsatisfactory to all parties concerned.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were glad enough that Tommy had escaped the "chopper," so far as that went.

They would have been very sorry to have been instrumental in getting him flogged.

But it was not pleasant to be set down as either false witnesses or reckless accusers.

Naturally, the Moderns backed Tommy as one man.

The Classics were equally assured that Jimmy Silver was in the right.

There was endless arguing on the subject, and a good many scraps.

By the next day a new bitterness had crept into the old rivalry between Classical and Modern in the Lower School.

The Classics had already nicknamed Mr. Manders' House the "Pig and Whistle."

They would call out in the quad to ask Tommy for a hundred up, or the odds on Swindler's Pride for the Mug's Handicap.

Which naturally made the Moderns rage furiously.

How the dispute was to be settled at all was not clear.

Meanwhile, Tommy Dodd was dubbed a pub-hunter by the Classical side; and, on the Modern side, the Fistical Four were openly denounced as false witnesses.

"This is what comes of being an ass," Arthur Edward Lovell told his chums.

"If you hadn't warned the cad that Manders was coming that time, Jimmy, all this wouldn't have happened."

"Tell me something I don't know!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Those Moderns want a hiding," said Raby.

"There isn't a chap in Manders' house who isn't calling us liars. Even the seniors are taking it up. Knowles said to me to-day that all four of us ought to be sacked for making up such a yarn about a chap."

"Frampton called me Judas this morning," said Newcome, breathing hard through his nose.

Jimmy Silver set his teeth.

"It was Dodd's own fault it all came out," he said savagely. "I refused to give his name, as you know. I warned him, too. But he insisted on bringing it all out—and I couldn't say I'd been lying, could I? I had to back up my own words. He knows it's the truth."

"There he comes!" growled Lovell.

The Fistical Four were talking in the quadrangle, after lessons, when Tommy Dodd came down towards the gates.

He gave them a grim look as he passed them, and went out.

"Off to the pub again, I suppose," said Raby.

"He ought to be jolly well stopped," said Lovell, frowning. "A prefect ought to go and catch him there."

"Oh, bother him!" said Jimmy. "Let's go and get some footer!"

The Fistical Four went to Little Side, where they found Cook and Doyle and a number of other Moderns.

There were dark looks exchanged at once.

"Keep away from those loiers!" said Tommy Doyle, loud enough for the Classical chums to hear.

Lovell flashed out at once.

"Your pal's gone pub-hunting again!" he shouted.

"It's a loie!" said Tommy Doyle.

"Tommy Dodd's gone for his new footer boots at Lamson's."

"And a game of billiards thrown in, too!"

"Do you want yere face pushed in, Lovell?"

"Yes, if you can push it in, you Modern cad!"

"Howly mother ov Moses, and I'll show ye intirely!" roared Doyle, and he made a rush at Lovell.

There would have been a fight in another moment, but Bulkeley of the Sixth strode on the scene.

"Stop that at once!" he said, frowning.

"He says Tommy's gone to the pub!" howled Doyle, in indignant wrath.

"Two to one he has, too!" retorted Lovell.

"Silence, both of you!" exclaimed Bulkeley. "Has Dodd gone out, Doyle?"

"Yes; he's gone for his footer boots."

"Why should you think he has gone to the public-house, Lovell?" demanded the captain of Rookwood.

"Because he was there yesterday!" snapped Lovell.

"It's a loie!"

"Silence, Doyle! Lovell, you had better not make such remarks, whatever you may think," said Bulkeley. "I feel sure that you must have been mistaken yesterday, and seen some other person you mistook for Dodd."

"No jolly fear!"

"Well, let the subject drop, at any rate. If there's any more rowing about it, I'll get you gated for a couple of half-holidays, as a lesson."

After that the ragging ceased, but Classics and Moderns gave one another warlike looks.

When Jimmy Silver & Co. came in after football practice they met Tubby Muffin in the doorway.

The fat Classical was grinning.

"I've spotted him, Jimmy!" he announced. "And two or three fellows looked round."

"Eh! What's that?" asked Jimmy, not very good-humouredly.

"I've spotted that Modern cad!" grinned Tubby. "I'm a witness!"

"What's that?" chimed in Dick Oswald.

"Whom have you spotted, Tubby?"

"Tommy Dodd, at the Bird-in-Hand!" chortled Tubby.

There was a buzz at once, and the Classical juniors gathered round Tubby, who swelled with importance.

"Where did you see him?" exclaimed Conroy.

"I was down in Coombe after lessons,"

explained Tubby, with another chortle.

"So I thought to myself, if he was there yesterday, he might be there to-day, so I went down the lane beside the pub, you know, to look for him. And there he was, sitting on the veranda at the back."

"Dodd was?" exclaimed Van Ryn.

"Tommy Dodd, as large as life!" grinned Tubby Muffin. "He was smoking cigarettes and drinking lemonade, and there was a whisky-bottle on the table."

"Great Scott!"

"And he was playing cards with Joey Hook, the bookie," added Tubby Muffin.

"I wasn't six yards from him. He looked round suddenly, and saw me, and pitched something at me, and I cleared."

"Well, that settles it, if it wanted settlin'!" remarked Mornington.

"Shall I go to Bootles, Jimmy?" asked Tubby.

"No, you young ass! Of course not!"

"But Dodd says you've been lying about him."

"Let him!" said Jimmy. "You don't want to have a hand in getting a chap sacked from Rookwood. Keep a still tongue, Tubby."

"That's right enough," said Oswald.

"But we shall know what to think of the cad now, anyway!"

"By gad, we shall!" grinned Townsend, the blade of the Fourth, to his cronies.

"What a nerve—playin' cards on the veranda with Hook, Topsy!"

"It beats me!" muttered Topham.

"He's certainly never been there when we've been there, Towny."

"Shush!"

"All serene! But it's queer," said Topham.

"We'll jolly well ask Hook about it when we—"

"We're jolly well not goin' there again in a hurry!" said Townsend sagely.

"The Bird-in-Hand is a bit too much in the public eye at present, my son. Smythe says he's goin' to give it a wide berth for a bit. He thinks a prefect may be nosin' round there lookin' for Tommy Dodd any minute."

serious mistake or Dodd is a thorough young rascal."

Knowles shrugged his shoulders.

"My opinion is that Silver and his friends are lying," he said. "It's some more of the Classical-Modern rivalry, but hittin' below the belt this time."

"I can't think so. But I've thought of a way of settling it," said the Rookwood captain.

"The affair can't be left where it is—it's causing no end of bad blood in the school. It's a half-holiday to-day, and if young Dodd is in the habit of going to that den to gamble, he's likely enough to go there this afternoon."

"Well?"

"I was going to suggest that we should go together, and make sure," said Bulkeley.

"If he goes there, we can catch him in the act, and make an end of the matter."

"And if he doesn't?"

"That will leave us where we are, of course. But it's up to the prefects to take some trouble to settle the wretched affair; in fact, the Head has asked me to do what I can to find out the truth."

"Mr. Manders has said the same to me," said Knowles, with a nod.

"Well, the only way I can think of is to keep an eye on the place," said Bulkeley.

"Will you come?"

"No," said Knowles coolly. "I won't come, thanks!"

Bulkeley flushed.

"Isn't it a prefect's duty to keep an eye on a junior suspected of going wrong?" he demanded.

"But I don't suspect Dodd," answered Knowles. "I believe that Silver has invented the story from the beginnin' to the end."

"If you come with me it will make the matter more satisfactory, as Dodd is in your House."

"I don't care to."

"Very well; I'll go alone," said Bulkeley.

And he went.

Knowles strolled away to Big Side. He was very pleased to have administered a

Tommy Dodd was to be marched back to Rookwood by the scruff of the neck, and straight into the presence of the Head, that was Bulkeley's intention.

But as he came striding up to the window, the boy within caught sight of him, and disappeared from view in a moment.

When Bulkeley reached the window he found Mr. Hook leaning on the sill, gazing out over his cigar with a placid face.

"Afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Hook affably.

Bulkeley gave him a disdainful look.

"Dodd!" he called out.

"Anybody you know 'ere?" asked Mr. Hook, still affable.

"I want that boy!" said Bulkeley sharply. "He is to come back to Rookwood with me at once!"

"What boy?" asked Mr. Hook innocently.

"Dodd!"

"Don't know the name, sir."

"I saw the boy standing here and speaking to you a minute ago," said Bulkeley, controlling his temper.

"Oh, that 'ere? That was Joe, the pot-boy," said Mr. Hook calmly.

"It was Dodd."

"Not—er—tall, sir; quite a mistake. Never 'eard that name."

Mr. Hook grinned, and blew out a cloud of smoke into Bulkeley's face.

The Rookwood captain clenched his hands.

But he restrained himself, and strode round to the entrance of the house.

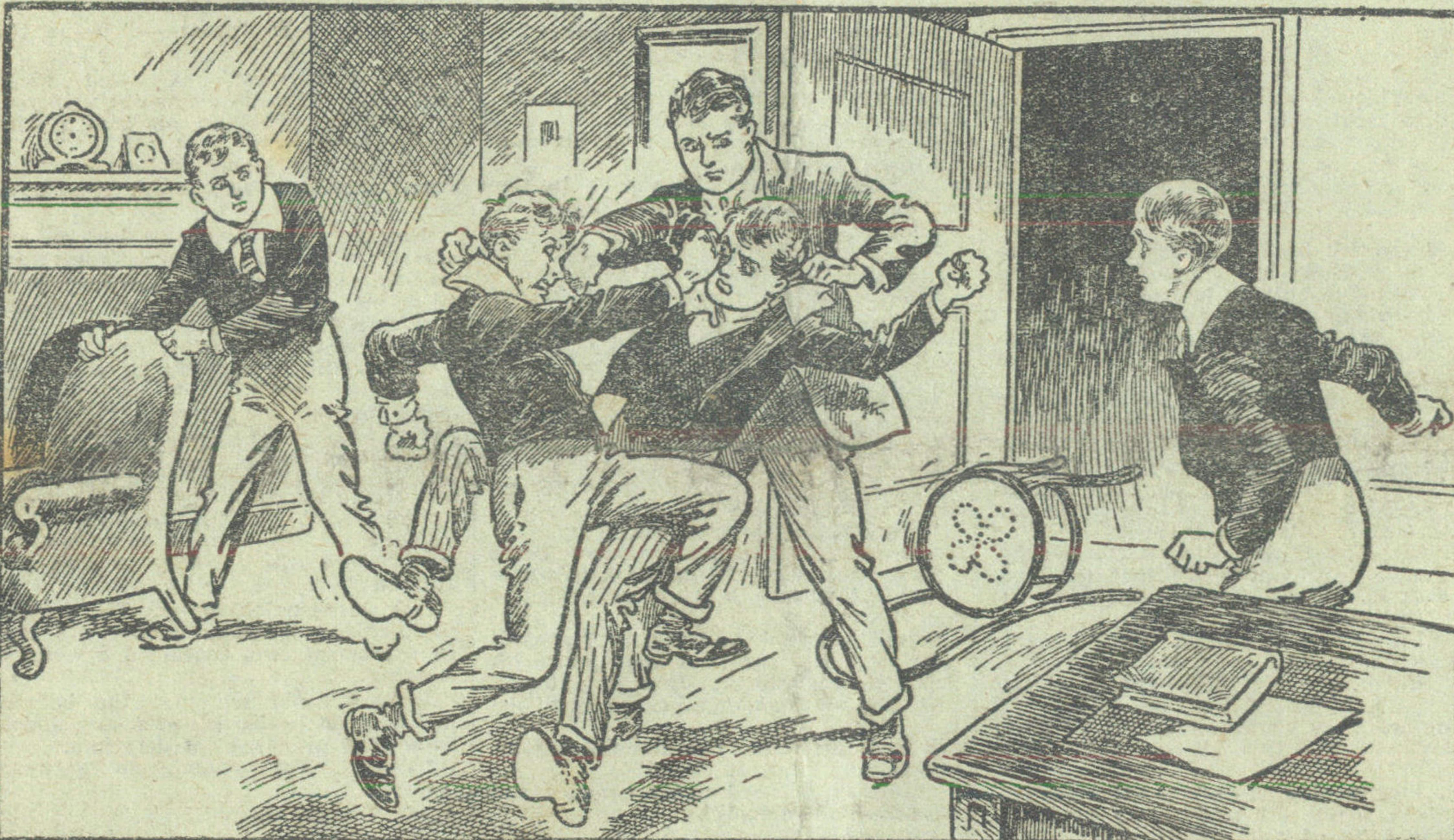
There the fat landlord met him in the doorway.

That the man had received the "tip" from Mr. Hook Bulkeley could guess by his leering look.

"Anythin' wanted, sir?" the man asked, with mocking civility.

"There is a boy named Dodd in this house, who belongs to Rookwood School," said Bulkeley. "I have to take him away."

"No feller belonging to Rookwood School is 'ere, sir."



JIMMY SILVER v. TOMMY DODD! KNOWLES BUTTS IN!

"Well, that's only sensible," agreed Topham.

"But—Dodd must be a howlin' ass. No harm in havin' a little flutter, but what's the good of askin' for trouble?"

Townsend shrugged his shoulders.

Even the fellows who were not shocked at Tommy Dodd's surprising new departure were amazed at his utter lack of common-sense in showing off, as it were, the folly he was engaged in.

It was not long before Tubby Muffin's story spread to the Modern side.

But it did not find much credence there.

Tommy Dodd denied it point-blank—as the Classics fully expected he would.

His chums took his word without question, and agreed that Tubby had been put up to it by Classical plotters.

But some of the Modern fellows looked rather queerly at Tommy Dodd afterwards—they knew very well that Jimmy Silver was not the fellow to put anybody up to making false statements.

Tommy Dodd was rather under a cloud on his own side of Rookwood now.

The 6th Chapter. Caught in the Act!

On Saturday afternoon Bulkeley of the Sixth crossed over to Mr. Manders' House with a thoughtful frown on his brow.

He proceeded to Knowles' study, and found the Modern prefect there.

Knowles met him with a look of cold surprise.

But Bulkeley smiled good-naturedly as he entered the room.

"Have you some time to spare this afternoon, Knowles?" he asked.

"I'm goin' to play footer. But what is it?"

"About that affair of Silver and Dodd."

"Silver hasn't been flogged yet?" asked Knowles sarcastically.

"I don't think he deserves to be, Knowles. Either he is making a very

snub to Bulkeley; but, to do Knowles justice, he believed that Tommy Dodd was quite innocent. His dislike of Jimmy Silver & Co. made him ready to believe any ill of those lively young gentlemen.

Bulkeley was not looking happy as he walked down the lane towards Coombe.

He was giving up an afternoon when he would have preferred to be on the footer-ground, and the task he had set himself was a distasteful one.

But he had his duty to do.

The affair could not remain where it was.

It was causing intense bitterness among the juniors, and the Head expected that the prefects would be able to get at the truth and clear up the affair.

It was as much Knowles' duty as Bulkeley's, but the Modern prefect had calmly washed his hands of it.

Bulkeley glanced at the Bird-in-Hand as he came in sight of the place. He had intended to take a seat somewhere in the fields, with a book, and keep an eye on the place.

As it happened, that was not necessary. For, even as he glanced at the inn, he caught sight of a man and a boy at the window of the billiard-room.

Bulkeley stopped, and stared.

The boy was not in Etons, certainly. He was wearing a rather elegant lounge-jacket of light grey.

But in every other respect he was Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth.

He had his hands in his pockets, and a cigarette between his lips, as he stood by the open window, chatting with Mr. Joey Hook, bookmaker and sharper.

"My only hat!" muttered Bulkeley, in great astonishment.

The utter recklessness of the junior astonished him.

After the sensation made at Rookwood, and after his strenuous denials, the junior was standing by the window in full view of the road, though he must have known that anybody from Rookwood might pass at any moment.

Bulkeley knitted his brows, and strode directly towards the inn.

"I saw him at the window,"

"You're dreaming, sir."

"Will you tell him I am here and waiting for him?"

"Ow can I when there ain't sich a person on the premises?"

Bulkeley's eyes gleamed.

He turned away.

It came into his mind that while he was kept in talk there Tommy Dodd was probably cutting across the fields at top speed for Rookwood, with the intention of establishing an "alibi" there.

With a grim brow Bulkeley strode away towards the school.

He strode fast enough, but he was well aware that if Dodd had fled across the fields he was at the school before this.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in the quad when he came in, and he stopped to speak to them.

"Has Dodd come in, Silver?" he called out.

"Haven't seen him, Bulkeley," answered Jimmy Silver. "Not since dinner, anyway."

"I am sorry, Silver, that I doubted your statement about Dodd," said the Rookwood captain. "I have just discovered him myself at the public-house."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy.

Bulkeley walked on towards Mr. Manders' House, leaving the Fistical Four with very serious faces.

"All up with him now," said Lovell, with a whistle. "Well, I must say it serves him right. It's a fair catch."

Jimmy Silver looked worried.

"I'm sorry," he muttered. "It's rotten! I can't understand what's taken possession of Dodd. He used to be decent enough."

"Or we thought so," said Raby drily.

"I feel rather to blame in the matter," muttered Jimmy. "Still, I couldn't help it coming out, could I? Dodd dragged it all out himself."

"Of course he did—sheer cheek!" said Lovell. "Well, the chopper will come down now, and no mistake, and those Modern cads will have to own up!"

Bulkeley went into Mr. Manders' House, and met Knowles in the hall.

Knowles gave him a sarcastic look.

"Hallo, you're back early!" he said. "Made any discoveries?"

"Yes."

"Good!" Knowles closed one eye at his chum Frampton. "You ought to be a detective, Bulkeley."

"Never mind that. Have you seen Dodd?"

"Yes; he's fagging in my study. Do you want him?"

"I want to take him to the Head."

"What on earth for?" exclaimed Knowles.

"I found him at the public-house."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Knowles. "Is that a joke?"

"It's hardly a matter for joking," said Bulkeley, with a frown. "It means expulsion for Dodd."

"I hardly think so," yawned Knowles. "Dash it all, Bulkeley, if you're serious, this is too thick. I can understand a fellow, even a prefect, backing up his own House, but this won't do. Think again."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Bulkeley angrily. "But never mind what you mean; it's Dodd I want."

He strode on to Knowles' study.

The Modern prefect followed him there with a sardonic grin on his face.

Tommy Dodd was in the study, kneeling at the fire and making toast.

He turned a ruddy face round at the sound of footsteps.

"Nearly ready, Knowles—Hallo, Bulkeley!"

He rose to his feet, toasting-fork in hand.

"You will follow me to the Head, Dodd," said Bulkeley sternly.

"Certainly, if you like," said Tommy Dodd, with a look of wonder. "Is anything up, Bulkeley?"

"Hold on," said Knowles grimly. "Let's have this out. Are you going to tell the Head, Bulkeley, that you've seen Dodd at the Bird-in-Hand this afternoon?"

"Naturally."

"What!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

"Don't be afraid, young 'un," said Knowles. "I'll stand by you, and see justice done. I'll come to the Head, too, and back you up."

"Back him up!" repeated Bulkeley. "You know nothing about the matter, Knowles, as you were not with me."

"I know that Dodd hasn't been out of gates this afternoon," said Knowles coolly. "I know that this is a put-up job to disgrace the Modern side, and I mean to see fair play. I can tell you that, George Bulkeley."

Bulkeley's face flamed.

"Dodd, do you deny having been out of gates this afternoon?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, rather!" answered the junior.

"You uphold him in denying it, Knowles?"

"Certainly!"



# BARKER, THE BOUNDER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"What's the matter," asked Bob—"a puncture?"

Barker chuckled.

"By gad! No," he answered. "I thought we might have a drink before going back to the school. I'm jolly thirsty, and—"

"All right," said Bob. "But—but why didn't you stop at the tuckshop? We've passed it."

"Oh, hang the tuckshop!" said Barker, with a sneer. "I'm going in here."

And the bouncer pointed in the direction of the Plough and Harrow.

"Well, you can go alone!" snapped Bob indignantly. "I'm not going in the rotten hole. You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself to suggest such a thing. If a master or prefect spotted you, it would mean the sack for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the bouncer. "You know the old saying, 'What the eye doesn't see, the heart—'"

"Rot!" snapped Bob. "If you had any decency in you you wouldn't dream of going in the rotten hole!"

"You won't come, then?"

"Certainly not!"

"Well, Jackson and I will go without you, that's all!" said Barker coolly.

"Jackson won't go with you!" declared Bob firmly.

"I think he will," said the bouncer, and he gave Jack Jackson that threatening look which the latter knew he dare not defy. "Come along, Jackson, old fellow!"

Jack Jackson hung back.

"You'd better come!" said Barker, growing impatient.

"I—I—" faltered the helpless junior.

"Don't go, Jackson!" urged Bob Travers. "Come along to Redclyffe with me and leave the rotter to his own devices!"

"It won't pay him to!" said Barker gloatingly. "If he refuses to come, I may be compelled to tell the Head about his goings-on recently, and it's quite possible that the old buffer will—"

"You cad!" exclaimed Jack Jackson,

red with suppressed anger. "You utter cad!"

"Are you coming?" asked Barker.

Jack Jackson gave Bob Travers a helpless look. Then, without saying a word, he turned round, and followed Barker towards the Plough and Harrow.

Bob gasped with amazement for a few moments.

Then, jumping on to his machine once more, he made tracks for Redclyffe. He had had quite enough of the bouncer's company for one afternoon.

Barker chuckled heartily as he entered the inn, and walked up to the bar, behind which stood a fat, coarse, dissipated man.

"Whisky for me," he said. "What are you going to have, Jackson?"

"Nothing!" snapped Jack Jackson, in a ringing voice.

"Bosh!" said Barker, with a shake of the head. "You must have something, old fellow!"

"Don't 'old fellow' me!" said Jack Jackson. "You're a low-down cad for making me come in here! If only I could—"

"You can't, old chap!" said the bouncer, with a triumphant air. "I should advise you to unclench those hands of yours, because if you dare to

touch me— Ha, ha, ha!" I guessed you'd think better of it!"

Jack Jackson unclenched his hands mechanically, and sank down into a chair in absolute despair.

The bouncer laughed triumphantly, and spoke in a whisper to the man behind the bar.

For a quarter of an hour he remained in conversation with the publican.

Then he signed to Jack Jackson to leave the place.

Jack was only too pleased to take his departure, but as soon as he was outside he turned on the bouncer, his eyes gleaming.

"You cad! You brute!" he cried vehemently. "Do you realise what you've done for me? Don't you see that Travers will believe that yarn was true about the whisky, and that he'll have nothing more to do with me?"

The bouncer made a gesture.

"What of it?" he said carelessly.

"You're not beholden to Travers for anything. You've got me to chum up with."

"You!" exclaimed Jack Jackson. "I despise you for the cad you are! I hate you! And remember this, if I ever get the chance to make you suffer for the rotten way you've treated me, I'll—I'll have no mercy on you! I'll get you ex-

pellied from the school in disgrace, and then—"

"Better be careful you aren't expelled first!" said the bouncer sneeringly. "If the fellows hear much more about your drinking habits and pub-haunting—"

"Oh, you cad!" groaned Jack Jackson miserably. "Get out of my sight! Get away from me! I shall do you an injury if you stay here any longer!"

"H'm!" muttered the bouncer. "If that's how you feel perhaps I'd better go! Good-bye, old fellow! I'll see you presently when you're in a better mood!"

Next instant the bouncer had jumped on his bicycle, and was pedalling in the direction of Redclyffe.

A moment later Jack Jackson followed, his mind full of anxious and troubled thoughts.

He dreaded returning to the school, to be insulted and shunned by his Form fellows.

Bob Travers had stood by him so far. But surely the good-natured Bob could not remain staunch to him after what had happened that afternoon.

(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 know what they think of this new story.)

# THE STUNT OF THE SEASON!

A Splendid Long Complete Story of FRANK RICHARDS & CO., the Chums of the School in the Backwoods. By MARTIN CLIFFORD

## The 1st Chapter.

"For the Sons of Gentlemen!"

"Hallo, Gunten!"

Bob Lawless called out cheerily.

Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin were sauntering along Main Street in Thompson, when they caught sight of Kern Gunten.

Gunten was about to enter the office of the "Thompson Press," but he stopped and looked round as his name was called.

His brows knitted at sight of the two cheery chums of Cedar Creek School.

But the two schoolboys nodded genially.

There had been a good deal of trouble between them and Kern Gunten, before the Swiss was turned out of Cedar Creek School, but they did not bear malice for what was past.

Gunten did, however, to judge by his look.

"Hallo!" he said sulkily. "What are you doing in Thompson?"

"Shopping," said Bob. "We're coming along to your popper's store for some skates. You don't seem very glad to see us," added Bob, with humorous reproach. "You have all the luck; you're not at school, while we have to grind every day with Miss Meadows."

"I guess I'm going to school again," said Gunten.

"Coming back to Cedar Creek?" asked Frank Richards.

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.

"I wouldn't be found dead at Cedar Creek," he answered disdainfully. "No National schools on my plate, thanks!"

"But there isn't any other school in this part," said Bob, in surprise. "You're not going to the boarding-school at New Westminster, are you?"

"Nix. There's going to be a new school in Thompson," explained Gunten loftily. "Something a cut above Cedar Creek."

"I guess it will be a topper, then," said Bob, with a good-humoured laugh. "We reckon Cedar Creek takes the cake, for a backwoods school."

Gunten was smiling now, in a sour way.

He was evidently glad of the chance meeting, which gave him an opportunity of imparting his news, which he expected to have a withering effect upon his former schoolfellows.

"It's a private school," he explained, with a lofty manner which made the chums of Cedar Creek grin. "Mr. Peckover's starting it here."

"Peckover!" ejaculated Frank Richards. The chums remembered the name well enough.

Mr. Peckover was the gentleman who had nearly succeeded in annexing Miss Meadows' post of Head of Cedar Creek.

"So Peckover's still in Thompson?" said Frank.

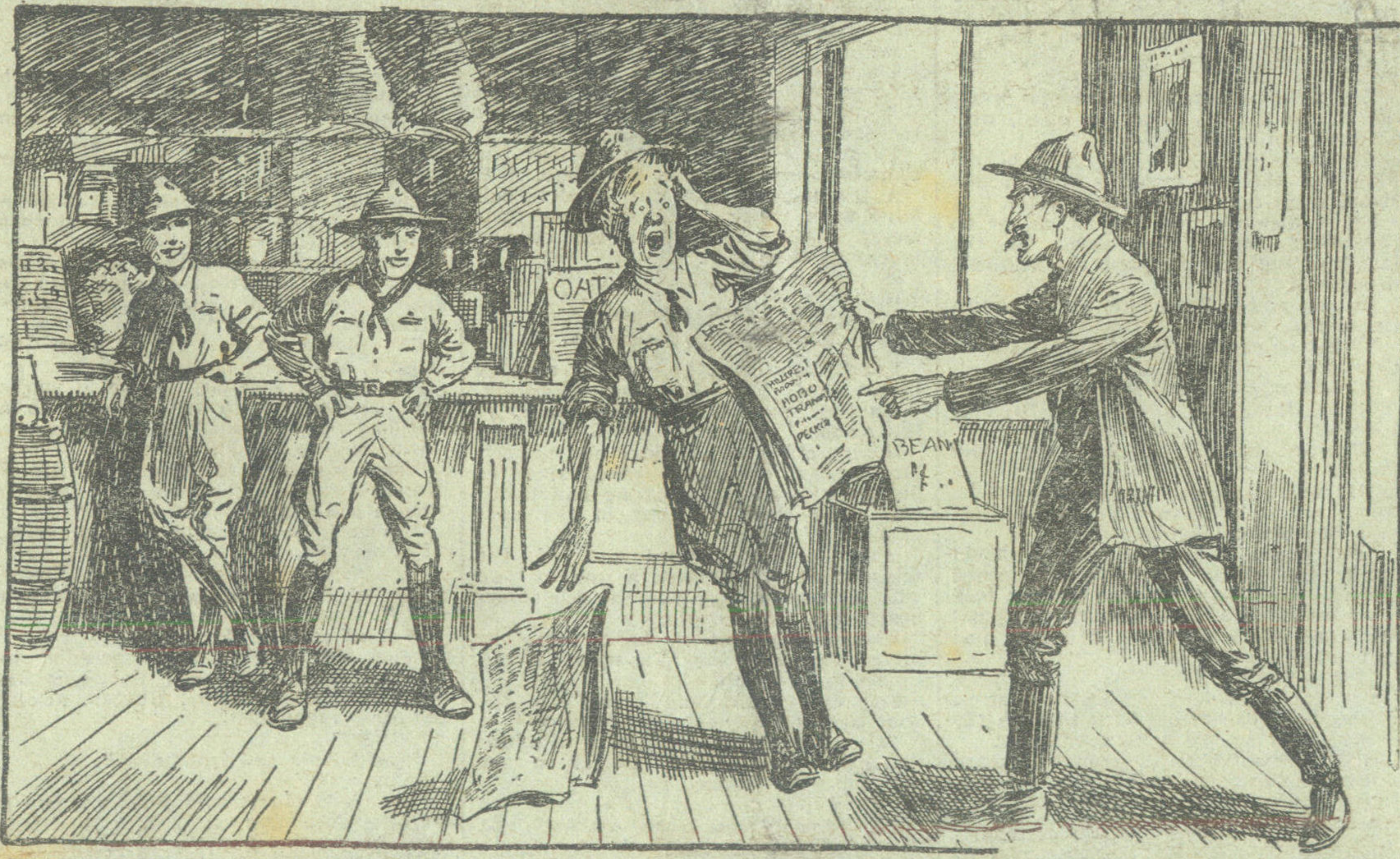
"I guess so. I'm taking his advertisement into the office now," said Gunten. "You'll see it in the 'Press' this week."

He drew an unsealed envelope from his pocket, and opened it, taking a card therefrom.

Bob and Frank looked rather curiously at the card, as he held it up for inspection.

Mr. Peckover's advertisement, addressed to the citizens of Thompson and the inhabitants of the section generally, was written there.

It made the chums open their eyes,



## A SURPRISE FOR KERN GUNTEN!

It ran: "HILLCREST, HIGH-CLASS PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR THE SONS OF GENTLEMEN. E. PECKOVER, HEADMASTER. MODERATE FEES."

"Great gophers!" said Bob Lawless, in astonishment. "That is rather highfalutin for the Thompson Valley, isn't it?"

"I dare say common fellows would think so," answered Gunten, elevating his nose a little.

"Common fellows!" repeated Bob.

"Yep! National School galoots, frinstance," said Gunten coolly. "Peckover's Private School will be very select."

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank Richards.

"And I may as well give you the tip that you will not be wanted there," grinned Gunten. "You've got on the wrong side of Mr. Peckover."

Bob chuckled.

"I guess we shall stick to Cedar Creek," he replied. "I wish you luck at your high-class private school, old scout! Are you the only pupil so far?"

"Not at all. Keller's leaving Cedar Creek, to come with me, and a good many names are down already. Cedar Creek's a good distance out, and most of the Thompson fellows will come to Peckover's school, especially as the winter's just on. I guess Peckover will make a good thing of it," said Gunten. "Of course, all the superior families will send their sons."

"Gunten, old man, you're a funnier jay than I thought," said Bob. "And I reckon that advertisement won't cut much ice in Thompson. Mr. Peckover doesn't know this section yet."

"I expected you to be jealous!" answered Gunten.

"My hat!"

"You were going to the store, I think you said?"

"Correct!"

"Well, you'd better go," said Gunten. "Don't take it amiss, but the fact is, I don't care to be seen speaking to you."

"Wha-a-at?"

"At our school we bar your lot," said Gunten. "I'm afraid Mr. Peckover would be mad if he saw one of his pupils talking to a fellow from a National School."

Bob Lawless stared speechlessly at Gunten.

Such sublime cheek from the son of the Swiss storekeeper, who had been turned out of Cedar Creek for rascally conduct, took his breath away.

Gunten was evidently enjoying the situation.

He was much given to "swank," his father being the richest man in Thompson, though certainly not the best-reputed.

Now there was an opportunity for swank, and Kern Gunten was making the most of it.

"Well, search me!" Bob ejaculated, at last.

Gunten stepped back towards the entrance of Mr. Penrose's newspaper office.

"Vamoose!" he said. "You'll oblige me by not speaking to me the next time we meet."

"Great Scott!"

"I don't want to be snobbish, but there's a line to be drawn, you know, and I draw it at Cedar Creek seum!" said Gunten.

With that, he stepped into the office and swung the door behind him.

Bob Lawless made a stride after him, but Frank caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, Bob," he said, laughing. "Don't mind his silly gas."

"Scum!" repeated Bob breathlessly. "Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Words failed the rancher's son.

"Never mind," said Frank cheerily. "Let him rip!"

"Look here—"

"You can't kick up a shindy in Mr. Penrose's office," said Frank Richards soothingly. "What does it matter, anyway? Let's go along to the store and get our skates, or we shall be late for afternoon school."

Bob Lawless nodded assent, though his sunburnt face was still flushed with wrath.

The chums went along Main Street to Gunten's Store, which was the general emporium of Thompson.

There the frown was banished from Bob's good-humoured face as they selected their skates from Mr. Gunten's ample stock.

As they left the store Bob was grinning.

"I've got it, Franky," he remarked.

"The skates?" asked Frank. "I know you have."

"Blow the skates! I mean, I've got a stunt," said Bob. "I guess I know how to work the raffle, and make Peckover sit up. We're coming back to Thompson after lessons to-day, Franky, to visit the 'Press' office."

"But—"

"Come on, or we shall be late."

The chums returned to their horses, which were hitched outside the Thompson Hotel, and rode away to Cedar Creek.

Bob Lawless chuckled several times en route, but he did not impart to his comrade the subject of his meditations.

He was evidently thinking out the details of the scheme he had formed which was to make Mr. Ephraim Peckover "sit up."

Apparently Gunten's insolence was to be visited upon the head of Mr. Peckover, so far as Frank Richards could see.

Bob was in great good-humour by the time they arrived at Cedar Creek.

Vere Beaulerc met them in the gateway.

"Just in time!" he said. "The bell's gone!"

"Right-ho, old scout!"

The chums put their horses in the corral, and hurried to the schoolroom just in time for afternoon lessons with Miss Meadows.

## The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Peckover Cuts Up Rusty.

Miss Meadows' eye rested upon Bob Lawless several times that afternoon with a rather severe expression.

At intervals during lessons Bob's face broke into a broad grin, which certainly was not caused by anything humorous in the lessons themselves.

Arithmetic, geography, and Early Canadian history certainly were not subjects provocative of merriment.

Frank Richards guessed that his chum was thinking of the "stunt" he had mentioned in Thompson; but Miss Meadows, naturally, was not aware of that.

Probably she would not have approved of it if she had been aware.

When Bob, under the influence of his reflections, broke into a sudden chuckle, all eyes in the class turned on him, and Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd glanced round from their quarters.

"Lawless!" rapped out Miss Meadows. Bob, recalled to himself by the schoolmistress's voice, coloured.

"Yes, ma'am!" he stammered.

"You appear to find something excessively entertaining in fractions. Will you explain what it is?"

"Oh! I—I—" stammered Bob.

"Well?"

"I—I—I— Oh, no, certainly not, Miss Meadows!" said the unfortunate Bob. "I—I was thinking—"

"About your lessons?"

"Nunno!" gasped Bob.

"You will be detained one hour after lessons, Lawless!" said the schoolmistress. "Perhaps that will have the effect of making you serious in class!"

Bob's face became serious enough at that.

In fact, it was the picture of dismay.

"Oh, Miss Meadows!" he gasped.

"That will do!"

Bob Lawless did not grin or chuckle again during the afternoon.

He devoted his attention to his work in a sedulous way that was evidently intended to disarm wrath.

When the hour of dismissal came, and the Cedar Creek fellows filed out of the big school-room, Bob fixed an imploring glance upon Miss Meadows.

The schoolmistress did not seem to see it.

"I shall now set you a task, Lawless."

she said. "You will not leave the school-room for one hour."

"I—I say, Miss Meadows," stammered Bob. "I—I've got to ride over to Thompson before I go home."

Miss Meadows paused.

"Is it important?" she asked, relenting.

"I guess so, ma'am!"

"Very well, you may go," said Miss Meadows.

Bob jumped up like a jack-in-the-box.

"Thank you, Miss Meadows!" he gasped. And he bolted from the school-room as if afraid that the schoolmistress might change her mind.

Frank Richards and Vere Beaulerc were waiting for him in the playground, most of the boys and girls having started for home already.

"Hallo, you're out!" said Beaulerc.

"Awfully narrow escape!" said Bob. "Miss Meadows is a brick—a real brick! She let me off because I've got important business in Thompson."

"Did you tell her what it was?" asked Frank, with a smile.

"Ha, ha! Nope! Come on; let's get out the gees, and vamoose! There's no time to lose!"

"But what's up?" asked Beaulerc, as he followed his chum to the corral.

"A stunt, my son—a gilt-edged, ten-strike stunt!" answered Bob. "We've got to get to Thompson before Mr. Penrose starts for the back-parlour of Gunten's store."

"You're going to the Press office?" asked Beaulerc, puzzled.

"Yes; come on!"

In a few minutes the three chums were riding up the Thompson trail at a good rate; Bob Lawless in high spirits and his chums considerably puzzled.

"Keller wasn't at school to-day," Beaulerc remarked, as they trotted through the gathering shadows under the timber.

"He's left," said Bob. "He's going to the new school, with Gunten—the high-class school for the sons of gentlemen."

"Eh?"

Bob Lawless explained, and Beaulerc laughed a little.

"But what's the stunt, Bob?" Frank Richards inquired.

"A ten-strike. I tell you! Hop along; and you'll see," was Bob's answer.

"We've got to catch Penrose on his native heath, so push on that gee of yours!"

The winter dusk was deepening on the trail through the timber as the chums rode rapidly towards Thompson.

As they came near the town, riding abreast, Bob Lawless dragged suddenly at his reins.

"Look out, there's some jay in the trail!" he exclaimed.

The schoolboys reined in just in time.

A man in "store-clothes" and a bowler-hat was walking in the trail, and in the deepening shadows it was difficult to see him.

But for Bob Lawless' keen sight he might have been ridden down.

At the clatter suddenly behind him the pedestrian turned, and, dusky as it was, the schoolboys recognised Mr. Ephraim Peckover.

The schoolmaster jumped back, with a gasp of alarm, at the sight of three tossing horses' heads.

"Yooop!" he spluttered.

"All serene!" called out Bob Lawless. "You shouldn't walk in the middle of the trail after dark, Mr. Peckover. It's not safe."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

Mr. Peckover, jumping away in nervous alarm, had caught his foot in a trailing root, and pitched over.

His hat went in one direction and his stick in another, and the schoolmaster sprawled in the trail.

Frank jumped down at once.

Mr. Peckover was a very unpleasant gentleman, with a cat-like temper, and the chums had had their rubs with him; but they were always ready to lend a hand to anyone who needed it.

Frank bent over the sprawling man to help him to rise.

"I hope you're not hurt, sir," he said, as he helped Mr. Peckover into a sitting posture.

Mr. Peckover's reply was startling.

His thin, acid face was inflamed with rage; and in reply to Frank Richards he struck out savagely at the schoolboy's face.

The unexpected blow caught Frank on the nose, and he staggered backwards with a yell, and sat down.

"Take that!" gasped Mr. Peckover.

"Oh!"

The schoolmaster scrambled up, and glared round for his stick.

He caught it up, and brought it down





THE STUNT OF THE SEASON!

(Continued from the previous page.)

with a sounding lash on Frank Richards' shoulders, as Frank was struggling to his feet.

"You young rascal!" he panted. "You tried to ride me down! Take that, and that, and that!"

"Yaroor!" Oh, my hat!" Bob Lawless pressed his horse close to the angry man, and reached out with his boot, catching Mr. Peckover suddenly in the ribs.

The schoolmaster sat down again with surprising suddenness.

Frank Richards wrenched the stick away from him, and for a moment he was on the point of laying it about Mr. Peckover himself.

But respect for that gentleman's age, if not for himself, restrained Frank, and he tossed the stick into the timber instead.

"Keep off!" Mr. Peckover was yelling. "I'll have you prosecuted, you young ruffian! Oh! Ow! Yoop!"

"You old donkey, you're not hurt!" said Frank contemptuously. "But I warn you that if you're so handy with your stick again you'll get hurt!"

"Oh! Ow! Oh!" "By gum, I've a good mind to take my trail-rope to him!" exclaimed Bob Lawless furiously. "The blessed old hunks

"All serene, Bob, leave him alone!" Frank Richards was hurt; but he controlled his wrath, and climbed into the saddle again.

The schoolboys rode on, leaving Mr. Peckover sitting in the trail, gasping and shaking a bony fist after them.

"Nice man!" said Beauclerc. "I don't envy Gunten his new headmaster."

"Same here!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Did he hurt you, Franky?"

"Ow! Yes."

"We'll go back and scalp him, if you like."

"I don't like," said Frank. "I don't want to pitch into a man old enough to be my father. But he is a rotten-tempered beast, and no mistake! I'd like to make him sit up."

"He's going to," said Bob. "Now, then, here we are!"

The three riders clattered into Main Street, and stopped outside the office of the "Thompson Press."

The horses were hitched to a post outside the shanty, and Bob Lawless led the way in, followed by his perplexed chums.

The 3rd Chapter.

In the Editorial Office.

Frank Richards & Co. found Mr. Penrose at work.

The editor, proprietor, and printer of the local newspaper was in his shirt-sleeves at his bench.

There was a black pipe stuck in the corner of his mouth, and his red nose glowed over the type he was setting.

He glanced carelessly round as the schoolboys came in, nodded, and went on with his work.

"Busy?" asked Bob Lawless genially.

"Yep!"

"Working late?"

"Nope!"

"Printing it all to-night, eh?"

"Nix!"

"I see," remarked Bob. "Pulling off the copies to-morrow?"

"Correct!"

Mr. Penrose's replies were laconic. He did not move his eyes from his work as he spoke.

The chums of Cedar Creek watched him with some interest.

His pipe was out, but he did not trouble to relight it.

He worked rapidly.

A single lamp shed a light over the hand-press, the case of type, and the bench where the enterprising newspaperman laboured.

Mr. Penrose appeared to be totally oblivious of his visitors as his active hands worked.

He finished the type-setting at last, under the curious eyes of the Cedar Creek fellows.

Then he began to pull proofs.

He blinked over them with a bloodshot but accurate eye.

Bob Lawless glanced at the proof-sheets as Mr. Penrose's inky fingers scattered them on the bench.

On the advertisement page of the "Press" appeared the striking notice inserted by Mr. Peckover, offering a high-class private school to the sons of gentlemen at moderate fees.

Bob's eye glistened as he singled it out.

Mr. Penrose had apparently received good payment for that notice, for he had displayed it very nicely.

Unheeded by the busy printer, the schoolboys moved away towards the door at a sign from Bob Lawless.

There, Bob sunk his voice and whispered:

"You fellows vamoose, and wait for me with the horses behind the Chinese laundry down street."

"But you—"

"Hush! I'm staying here."

"What?"

"Not a word."

"But-b-but—"

"Keep it up to Penrose that I'm gone with you."

"My only hat!" said Frank, mystified, while Beauclerc could only stare blankly.

They realised that this extraordinary move was some part of Bob's hitherto unexplained "stunt." Puzzled as they were, they backed up their chum loyally.

It was easy enough for Bob Lawless to slip into the dark lumber-room, which adjoined the office, unnoticed by Mr. Penrose, who had his back to them.

While the printer was blinking over the proof-sheets, Bob backed silently through the doorway, and disappeared into the darkness of the inner room.

Mr. Penrose did not look round.

Frank and Beauclerc exchanged a glance, and tramped out of the office, calling out good-night to Mr. Penrose as they went.

"Good-night!" replied Mr. Penrose, without turning his head.

The two schoolboys unhitched their horses, and mounted them, riding away and leading Bob's steed with them.

They passed round the Chinese laundry further down the street, and halted on the waste land behind the building.

There they had to wait for the mysterious Bob.

Ten minutes later Mr. Penrose came out of his shanty, otherwise office, with his coat and hat on.

He hurriedly locked the door behind him, put the key into his pocket, and strode away for the Cinnamon Hotel.

Frank Richards was keeping an eye on the street, round the corner of the laundry, and he witnessed the editorial departure.

He returned to Beauclerc, who was with the horses.

"What on earth is Bob up to, Cherub?" he asked.

Vere Beauclerc shook his head.

"Some lark," he answered. "Blest if I know!"

"Penrose has locked him in," said Frank.

"He was bound to. I wonder what he would say if he knew Bob was inside?" said Beauclerc, laughing.

"He would boot him out, I should think. But he doesn't know he's locked him in. Look here, Cherub, will you look after the geegees, while I scout round and see what Bob's up to? I don't feel quite easy about this."

"Right you are!"

Leaving Beauclerc with the horses, Frank Richards hurried back through the dusky street to the newspaper office.

He tapped softly on the door, and heard a hurried movement within.

"All serene, Bob!" he whispered through the keyhole.

There was an exclamation of relief within.

"You, Frank?"

"Yes."

"You gopher! I thought it was Penrose back. All right!"

"What are you up to, Bob?"

"No time for chinwag, Franky; I want to get out of this as soon as I can. Wait for me."

"Look here, Bob, you ass, I want to know what you're up to!" said Frank.

"You will have to open the window to get out so open it now."

"Oh, all right!"

The shutter opened within; there was no glass in the window. Bob's grinning face showed in the gloom inside.

"Hop in!" he said tersely. "Anybody might pass and spot you there. They'd think we were burgling Penrose's shanty."

Frank Richards climbed in, and Bob replaced the shutter after him.

Then he lighted the lamp.

Frank watched him in wonder, not unmixed with alarm, as he stood at Mr. Penrose's bench, and examined the type so recently "set up" by the industrious journalist-compositor.

"Bob, you're not going to play tricks on Mr. Penrose?" exclaimed Frank.

"My dear man, I love old Penrose like a man and a brother," answered Bob.

"This is a little joke on Peckover and the cheery old school for the sons of gentlemen. Watch me."

Frank Richards watched him breathlessly.

Bob had found the forme containing the advertisements of the "Press," and was picking out some of the type set up in Mr. Peckover's notice to the public.

Then he began to select type from the cases.

"Bob, you're altering the advertisement!" exclaimed Frank.

"Correct!"

"But—but what for?"

"To make it read a bit differently, old son," Bob chuckled explosively. "You see, this stunt came into my head as soon as I saw the 'ad' in Gunten's list. I thought it out at the store, and I reckoned it would be a cinch. I know Mr. Penrose's habits, you see. He always sets up the paper on Tuesday, and prints it on Wednesday, and it goes forth to dazzle the Thompson Valley on Wednesday afternoon."

Frank Richards laughed.

"You see, he's printed the proofs, and corrected them—pulled the proofs, he calls it," said Bob. "You saw him messing over the type afterwards; well, he was correcting it then—rectifying the errors in the proof sheets, you know. Now there's nothing left but to print off the copies—a good morning's work for him to-morrow."

"Well?"

"He won't look at the type again; that part of his job's done," explained Bob. "Naturally, he won't suspect that any galoot was in his office overnight, making an alteration or two."

"Ha, ha! I suppose not."

"He'll just print the thing as it stands," said Bob, "and in one respect it will stand a bit differently from the way he left it. I'm improving Mr. Peckover's advertisement for him. It won't take me long."

Bob's hands worked quickly.

When he had finished he inked the type as he had seen Mr. Penrose do, but he did not venture to use the press, for fear of leaving traces behind.

He pressed a sheet of paper over the typed advertisement, rolled a roller over it, and thus obtained an impression clear enough to be read.

He held it up for Frank's inspection.

In Bob Lawless' version, Mr. Peckover's advertisement was a good deal altered, and Frank Richards gasped as he looked at it.

"Bob!"

"I guess that is a cinch," said Bob, crumming the paper into his pocket.

"Ten thousand to one, Franky, Penrose won't think of looking at the type again before he prints off the paper. Why should he? And the advertisement will come out like that!"

"Bob, you swine!"

"I guess there will be chortling in Thompson," grinned Bob. "Now it's time we were off. I shouldn't like Mr. Penrose to meet us here, if he happened to come back for anything. Get a move on."

Bob extinguished the lamp.

The two schoolboys dropped from the window into the darkness without, and Bob closed the shutters carefully, to let the catch fall into position.

Then they hurried away round the Chinese laundry to join Beauclerc.

A few minutes later the three schoolboys were riding for home, and their merry chuckles floated on the evening breeze as they rode.

The 4th Chapter.

With Improvements.

Frank Richards & Co. were in class at Cedar Creek the following afternoon, when they heard Mr. Penrose ride up to the school.

Having officiated as editor and printer, Mr. Penrose was now engaged upon his duties as newsagent, and he had called with Miss Meadows' copy of the local paper.

Miss Meadows stepped out of the school-room, to exchange a word or two with the caller, and then the schoolboys heard him ride away again.

Miss Meadows came back into the school-room with the "Thompson Press" folded in her hand.

The eyes of Frank Richards & Co. were fixed upon that paper at once.

To their disappointment, Miss Meadows did not open it, but laid it on her desk till after lessons.

During lessons their eyes wandered many times to the schoolmistress' desk, where the paper reposed.

They were very anxious to see Mr. Peckover's advertisement, as improved by Bob Lawless, unknown to the printer.

But they had to contain their curiosity for the present.

When the school was dismissed Miss Meadows went to her study, momentarily forgetful of the newspaper on the desk, or perhaps not sufficiently interested in the local news to attend to it at once.

As soon as her study door had closed Bob Lawless scudded back into the school-room, and captured the paper.

He joined his chums in the porch, paper in hand.

"Simply had to borrow it," he said. "Miss Meadows won't mind—I hope, anyhow. Gather round, galoots!"

He opened the paper hurriedly.

"Any news?" asked Tom Lawrence.

"Yep; don't you know that Peckover is opening a new school in Thompson for superior persons?"

Lawrence laughed.

"Yes; he's taken Hillcrest," he said. "Anything about it in the paper?"

"You bet; a tip-top advertisement of the new school."

"Oh! Let's see it."

The opening of the new school at Thompson was, naturally, a matter of some interest to the Cedar Creek fellows, and a good many of them gathered round to look at Mr. Peckover's notice to the public of the Thompson Valley.

Bob Lawless held it up for view.

"Feast your eyes!" he said. "What price that?"

There was a general yell.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Great gophers!"

"Phew!"

Mr. Peckover's advertisement was, indeed, extraordinary in its latest form, as amended by Bob Lawless. It ran now:

"HILLCREST. HAPPY REFUGE FOR HOBOES, TRAMPS, AND RAGAMUFFINS! E. PECKOVER, A.S.S., HEAD-WARDER! TANGLEFOOT ON TAP! ALL DRINKS MUST BE CONSUMED ON THE PREMISES!"

"Great jumping Jerusalem!" yelled Eben Hacke. "What's the man mean by that? Refuge for hoboies! I thought it was going to be a school!"

"Tanglefoot on tap!" gasped Chunky Todgers. "Why, the man must be mad!"

"All—all—all drinks consumed on the premises!" stuttered Frank Richards.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"E. Peckover—head-warder! Oh, dear!"

"What does it mean?"

"Penrose must have been squiffy when he set that up!" exclaimed Tom Lawrence. "Peckover can't have meant to word it like that."

"He can't, can he?" said Bob gravely.

"I wonder how it happened?"

"I wonder?" chuckled Frank.

Miss Meadows came out of her study, and glanced out through the porch at the chuckling crowd of schoolboys.

Bob Lawless hurried towards her with the paper.

"I—I just looked at the paper, Miss Meadows," he murmured. "I hope you will excuse me."

He handed the paper to the schoolmistress, open at the advertisement page.

Miss Meadows was about to reply when she caught sight of the extraordinary advertisement, which Bob held well in her view.

She gave a sudden start.

As she took the paper her eyes became glued on the astounding notice.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed. "What—what—"

"Extraordinary, ain't it, ma'am?" said Bob, with great gravity. "We heard that Mr. Peckover was going to open a school in Thompson—a high-class school—but it seems that he's opening a home for tramps."

"Bless my soul!" said Miss Meadows. Bob Lawless' face was beaming as he rejoined his chums.

"Miss Meadows doesn't know what to make of it," he remarked. "I reckon there's a good many galoots at Thompson in the same boat by this time. It's rather rough on Gunten's high-class school, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess we're going home through Thompson this afternoon," added Bob. "I want to see Kern Gunten's face when he sees that ad."

In merry spirits the chums of Cedar Creek trotted away to Thompson.

The local paper was on sale at Gunten's store, and they dropped in at that emporium to purchase a copy.

Kern Gunten was minding the store, his father being otherwise engaged, and he gave the chums of Cedar Creek a supercilious look.

Bob picked up a "Press" from the counter, and threw down a coin.

"Change for a dollar, Gunten, if you're not too haughty to sell a paper to a National School chap," he remarked.

Gunten gave him his change.

"Rather a tiptop advertisement here of Mr. Peckover's," observed Bob, as he opened the paper. "Seen it yet?"

"Haven't looked," said Gunten curtly. "I'm busy here."

"It's worth looking at, really. You're going to Peckover's show, I think you said?"

"I am!" said Gunten loftily.

"Just the place for you, according to the advertisement!" said Bob heartily.

"You'll be happy there, Gunten, among the other ragamuffins."

"What?"

"And hoboies and tramps—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"But remember," said Bob, wagging a warning forefinger at him, "all drinks must be consumed on the premises."

"What do you mean?" yelled Gunten.

He snatched the paper from Bob's hand, and stared at the advertisement.

His jaw dropped, and he blinked at the sheet as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"H-h-happy refuge for hoboies and tramps!" he babbled. "Wha-a-at does it mean?"

"Means what it says, I guess, if you're a specimen, old seout."

"This isn't the advertisement I took in to the office!" howled Gunten. "Penrose must have been drunk when he printed this!"

"Hallo! Here's the cheery Peckover!"

Gunten was still staring at the paper blankly when Mr. Ephraim Peckover strode into the store.

The schoolmaster had a copy of the "Thompson Press" clutched in his hand.

His face was aflame, and his eyes were sparkling, as he strode towards Kern Gunten and flourished the paper at him.

Bob Lawless gave a joyous chuckle.

"We're just in time for the circus!" he murmured.

Mr. Peckover, stuttering with wrath, almost jammed the paper on Gunten's nose, and the Swiss schoolboy jumped back in alarm.

"Rascal!" thundered Mr. Peckover.

"What?" gasped Gunten.

"You young villain!"

"I—I—I— Wharrer you mean? I—"

spattered Gunten, quite taken aback by this unexpected attack.

"Look at this!" shrieked Mr. Peckover. "Look at it, you young scoundrel! Is this the advertisement I gave you to take to the newspaper office?"

"Nunno! I—"

"You have dared to play such a practical joke on me, your schoolmaster!" raved the infuriated man. "You altered this—"

"I didn't!" shrieked the hapless Gunten, as Mr. Peckover grasped him by the collar, and dragged him out into the middle of the store. "Yaroor! Leggo! I never knew—I didn't—I wasn't—I— Yarooooop!"

Gunten yelled frantically, as the enraged schoolmaster cuffed him right and left.

Cuff, cuff, cuff! Thump, thump, thump!

Kern Gunten's yells rang through the store, and customers gathered round in amazement at the startling scene.

The 5th Chapter.

Exciting!

"Help! Yoop! Yaroor!"

"Thump, thump!"

"Draggimoff! Yoop! Help! Bob Lawless—Frank Richards—help me!" raved Gunten.

The chums of Cedar Creek were laughing almost too much to help, but they were not proof against Gunten's appeal.

He howled to his old rivals for help,

and they ran to help him. Mr. Peckover was really being a little too emphatic.

Three pairs of hands were laid upon Ephraim Peckover, and he was yanked away from the breathless Gunten.

"Easy does it, Pecky!" grinned Bob Lawless.

Mr. Gompers Gunten had rushed into the store, attracted by the uproar. His fat face was amazed.

"What does this mean?" he gasped.

"Let me go, you young rascals! Look at that advertisement, Mr. Gunten!" hooted the schoolmaster. "Look at it! Is that the advertisement I drew up in your parlour, and which your son took to the office? The young rascal has altered it!"

"I haven't!" yelled Gunten. "Keep him