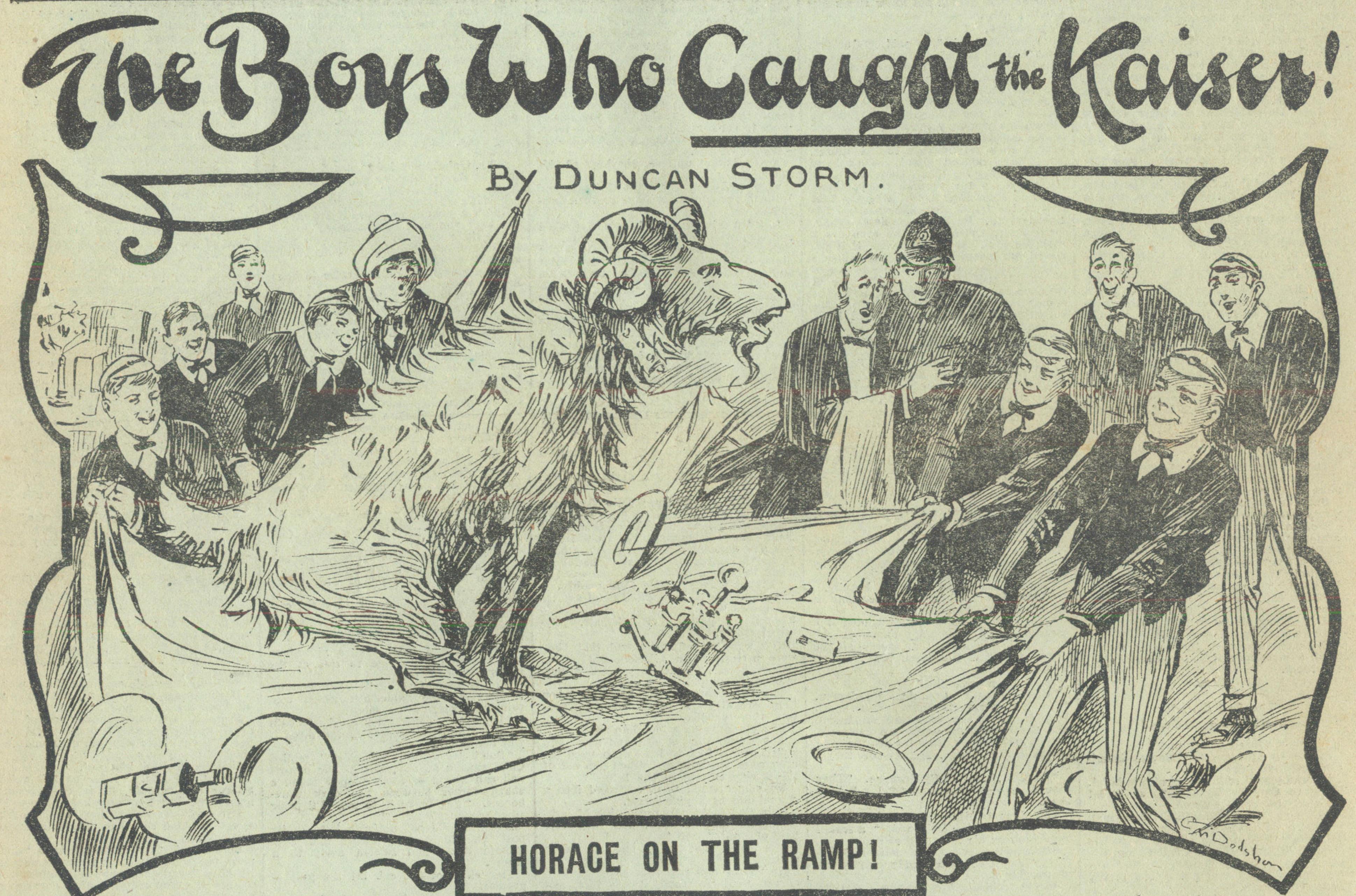


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No. 918. Vol. XIX. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending January 11th, 1919.



The 1st Chapter. Horace in a Merry Mood.

"Hold him!"

It was Dick Dorrington who uttered the exclamation, as he arrived at the steps of a large London hotel.

Dick was accompanied by his chums, Chip Prodgers, Tom and Fred Morton, Porkis, Arty Dove, Pongo Walker, and Skelington, who was more popularly known as Skeleton.

Lal Tata, the Hindu professor, and kitchen. Tookum el Koos, the native wrestler, were also with the party.

at the Hotel Splendide.

Life had been somewhat dull there, however, and they had obtained Captain Handyman's permission to take Horace, . the goat, for a walk,

Horace had behaved himself wonderfully well, and, apart from exhibiting a desire to attack the lions at the foot | put in the deep, oily voice of Mr. | of Nelson's Monument, he had been extremely quiet.

Horace, and had bought him half a dozen buns as a special treat.

But Horace had evidently not been for good, for when they arrived at the | in one swift blink of his green eye.

At Dick Dorrington's cry the boys I thrown well back.

dashed up the steps in quest of their

They caught sight of Horace leaping down a flight of stairs, and promptly followed in pursuit.

Two of the porters shouted to them to come back, but they took no notice. Even Lal Tata and Tookum el Koos refused to obey the command to stop.

Horace went down the stairs three at | him. a time, trotted along a dimly-lighted passage, and then darted into a room at the side, which happened to be a

Next moment there was a terrific crash, and the sound of falling crockery. After their triumphant quest for the The boys rushed to the door of the outside the lofty building, shouting that Mahdi's treasure they had returned to room, and found Horace leaping over an escaped tiger had broken into the him. London, and taken up their quarters | tables, and on to dressers and plate- | Hotel Splendide. racks, scattering crockery in all direc-

the pile increased in size.

"Collar him!" shouted Chip Prodgers. "Ha! Let me approach the scoundrel!" fessor of the expedition. "Stand aside, the building. The boys had been quite pleased with boys! I will tackle this Horace fellow! I will give him jolly good swipes with my umbrella!"

But Horace measured the distance taught the necessity for rewarding good | between himself and the threatening Lal

steps of the hotel he had suddenly | He had leaped up on to a dresser, where | tickled his left horn. leaped forward and darted through the he stood like a wild goat of the Hima-

"Maw!" he bleated defiantly. Then, hurling himself from the dresser,

he leaped upon Lal Tata. As Horace's massive head went down, Lal Tata smote at him blindly with his fat, loosely-rolled, white umbrella.

There was a crash and a thump, and Lal Tata shot up to the lofty ceiling of the kitchen, his umbrella flying with

Smash! Down came Lal Tata on the table, rolling his head into a large copper stewpan full of hot treacle syrup.

Not a cook or scullion was in sight. They were climbing up the fire-escapes

out of his hair. "Stop that goat fellow! of it, scattering cruets, knives, forks, the top with another tablecloth." The floor was strewn with broken | He has made murders of me. I am crockery, and at each kick Horace gave | bruised to death with great hurts. I am like jam roly-polys! I am done in!" "Here, what's all this?" rumbled a deep voice at the door of the kitchen.

A big policeman, summoned by the Chatterjee Lal Tata, the Hindu pro- excited hotel people, had marched into | hole.

knew how.

Chip had picked up a rolling-pin. He hurled it at Horace. But Horace's horned head tossed up

The rolling-pin flew off like a under the table. I man's helmet over his eyes.

At the same moment Horace, with a terrific charge, hit the constable in the belt, doubling him up like a jack-knife.

Then off he went. This time he smashed through the glass doors of the great dining-room, where the tables were ready laid for dinner. "Collar him!" gasped Dick Dorrington,

as the boys raced after their pet. "If we don't rope him up in a minute or two, he'll break up the whole hotel!" A Swiss waiter was busy laying the

table for a large dinner-party.

"Wow!" yelled Lal, wiping the syrup | under the table as Horace leaped on top | in one big bundle, and we'll tie it round silver flower-stands, and sauce-bottles right and left.

For a moment he stood surprised, wondering what had become of the waiter. Then he leaped off the table, and shot under it like a terrier diving at a rat-

The boys could see his tail wagging He was prepared to arrest Horace, if he | as he struck at the unhappy alien, who

yelled beneath the table. In another second the waiter was out and on the table.

In a further second Horace was on at the moment that the rolling-pin | the table again after the waiter.

laya mountains, his huge, curling horns | boomerang, and knocked the fat police- | When Horace was on top of the table the waiter was underneath.

When the frightened waiter was on the table Horace was grunting and scuffling beneath the mahogany, his great head thumping on the underside of the table, splitting the leaves apart, and setting the scattered knives and plates rattling and jumping as though they were alive.

The situation was really serious. The exhilarated Horace threatened to break up the whole hotel.

It was Pongo Walker who knew best how to outmanœuvre Horace. "Wait till old Horace gets on the He was a German-looking Swiss, and | table again, you chaps!" he cried. "Then it was plain from the moment that each of you take a corner of the table-

Horace broke into the great dining-room | cloth and snatch it off. Pull together that the goat did not like the look of | towards the window. Wrap him up. Never mind about the knives and forks The waiter gave a howl, and dodged and plates. Wrap 'em all up together The boys waited.

Horace leaped up on to the table, and the waiter leaped off.

Horace stood there.

His great head was dropped and his ears thrown forward, twitching as they listened for the whereabouts of the mysterious waiter. Horace was thoroughly enjoying him-

He had never chased a German-Swiss waiter in this fashion before.

He took no notice of the boys as they Then started a steeplechase over and gathered up the edges of the great tablecloth.

(Continued on next page.)

thin dribble.

wants a bath!"

gong for supper!"

commenced.

lay before them.

seen in the galley oven.

sounded along the main deck.

Gus reared up and tried to get out.

rolled over with a clatter.

But his stubby legs and groping claws

Every time he tried to climb up he

And at last, finding that there was no

escape from his new quarters, he lay still

whilst Pongo, turning on the tap, allowed

the water to trickle on his snout in a

Gus liked this. He would lie under a

"I suppose we ought to put up a notice

"Nobody will want a bath to-night,"

replied Pongo. "They will all be busy

after supper getting the ship ready for

sea as we go down the river. The pilot is

on board now, and There goes the

The deep rumbling of the supper-gong

The boys hurried down to the cosy

Through the brassbound portholes at

the stern they could see the river lights

sliding by, and a slow pulsation of en-

gines through the ship told them that

Their chase of the runaway Kaiser had

But Skeleton had no thought for the

He had taken the captain's chair at

the head of the table, and was eagerly

awaiting the great sea-pie which he had

negro wrestler, and Pieface, the Sou-

Kaiser, or for the great adventure that

saloon of their new ship, and hastily

seated themselves at the wide table.

the South Star was under way.

tap for hours if the water were allowed

on the door, 'Beware of the crocodile!'

or something of that sort," said Porkis.

could get no hold on the side of the bath.

THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER!

(Continued from the previous page.)

He strayed off into the spacious fo'c's'le head, where the crew were at their supper.

Like all sailors, they were quite ready to adopt a pet, and they fed Horace on Irish stew and straw bottle-wrappers. Horace ate everything they gave him.

Then he strolled off into the corners of the dark deck.

Here he found the bed of a sailor who had just come on board and who was not yet fixed up with his quarters.

The bed was a real old-fashioned to tickle his nose in this fashion. donkey's breakfast-of sacking stuffed with straw.

Horace ate the bed-sacking, straw, and all. Then he lay down in the dark corner ["Supposing somebody comes along and on the hard planks with the bed inside

In the meantime Gus had been hoisted on board, with the nosebag of the cabhorse secured about his jaws.

"What are we going to do with Gus?" asked Pongo, after dragging Gus round the deck of their new ship in the vain hope of finding him a berth.

"I've found a pitch for Gus," announced Porkis, who had been for a scout round. "There's a bath-room along here with a big bath in it. It has got high sides, and Gus won't be able to crawl out. We'll shove him in that, and turn on the tap for a little while to make him wet and comfy, and he'll be as happy as a dog with | two tails."

Gus was promptly dragged along to the bath-room in question.

It was a fine bath-room, with a big bath and a tiled floor.

It was nearly dark, as the electric-bulb in the ceiling needed renewal.

But there was light enough to allow the boys to attend to the disposal of their pet. Gus was lifted up on the side of the bath.

The nosebag was removed from his head, and before he had time to snap he was shoved into the deep enamelled trough of the bath.

It was an enormous pie, covered by a huge crown of gold crust.

As Skeleton cut it there issued a delicious aroma of the onion that is the making of a real sea-pie.

Skeleton's eyes and gladdened his heart.

everything that was in this wonderful at sea!"

In addition to the pie there was an enormous ham, and tongue, and lobsters, and great silver pots of coffee and tea, which Tookum el Koos carried round in

"We are not going to be starved this voyage," said Skeleton, with great satisfaction, as he finished his third helping of pie. "Now I think I will take a shaving of that splendid ham, and a few slices of tongue, and a claw or two of the bath-room, and left the bath almost lobster to top up with. There's nothing | in darkness. like starting a voyage with a good tuck

At this moment Lal Tata rose to his

"Don't hurry away, Mr. Lal Tata," added Skeleton. "There is a beautiful raspberry-tart coming along soon, and it is no good going on deck to see things. The night is as black as pitch, and we are still in the river."

But Lal Tata shook his head. "I do not go on deck, Mr. Skeletons," he said. "My head is still sticksome with syrups by reason of that evil-tempered goat-fellow Horace, who made assaults on me at the hotel, and hit me kicks, so that I fell into stewpan. I feel like lumps of stickjaw. I am going to have jolly good baths. Then I am going to my bunk to read my new 'Tom Merry' book."

The boys laughed. They had forgotten that they had the steam to the water. Soon Tookum el Koos, the gigantic stowed Gus in the cabin bath-room.

They knew that Lal was never happier danese cook, both neatly dressed in than when he was comfortably stowed hotter. white, as befitted their new jobs on | up in a warm bed, with a good light, to board the ship, staggered in at the door- read his beloved library of stories of others were cold. way, carrying a pie which brightened British school life.

themselves to raspberry-tart and to Gus' thick hide.

"Old Lal is regular potty about those | school stories of his!" said Dick Dorrington. "He has brought two bix boxes There were layers of crust, light and on board, enough to last him for a dozen melting, and of kidney and oysters, and voyages. Now, finish up your nosebag, steak, and hard-boiled eggs, and Skele- | Skeleton, and we'll all go on deck to ton dipped industriously in its savoury | see the last of the lights of Old England. depths to see that everyone had a bit of To-morrow night we shall be miles out

> But Skeleton was not to be hurried. "Wait a bit, you chaps!" he replied. "I think I've got a corner for a bit of raspberry-tart."

> In the meantime, whilst the hungry Skeleton was discussing raspberry-tart, Lal Tata had wandered off to the dimlylighted bath-room.

> Now that the ship was under way the burned-out lamp in the ceiling gave but a dull red glow, which barely illuminated

Lal turned the cold water tap running hard as he prepared for his bath.

The bath was of an old-fashioned type of ship's bath, which, filled first with cold water, is warmed up by turning on a tap which sends a roaring blast of superheated steam through the bottom of the bath.

"Now," said Lal, as he fumbled in the gloom for the handle of the steam-valve -"now we shall not be long. I shall first have a jolly good hot wash; then I will go to my little bunks and read | books."

The steam turned on with a roar, and the water of the bath bubbled and sizzled.

There was a gobble and a gurgling in

the bath. But the unconscious Lal took no notice

of this, putting it down to the inrush of Gus was beginning to feel the hot rush

of steam in the bath as the water got Some parts of the bath were hot,

Lal went off, and the boys devoted was hot enough to sting even through

He slithered round in the bath, trying to escape these stinging patches. Gus liked hot water, but he did not want to be boiled alive.

"Now," said Lal to himself, "I should think that the bath is pretty hotsome. Before I take off my trousers I will try the water with my foots. Baths which are too hotsome are not good for healths."

He lifted his fat leg and dipped his foot into the bath. He felt something hard, like a piece of floating cork, and shoved it under with

his toe. This was Gus' head.

The South Star was now steaming rapidly down the widening river, her foghorn sounding at every bend as she ploughed through bank after bank of night-mist.

But the sound of her foghorn was drowned by a yell which issued from the bath-room and rang through the saloon

where the boys were seated. They leaped up from their chairs

Again the yell sounded from the bath-

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Chip. "What's that? It sounds like old Lal. He's

locked himself in the bath-room. But what's he kicking up that row for?" Porkis looked at Pongo, and Pongo

looked at Porkis, and their jaws dropped. "Silly old idiot's been and boiled up the bath!" said Porkis in a horrorstricken voice.

"Well, what about it?" asked Dick Dorrington impatiently.

"Nothing!" replied Pongo Walker. "Only we left Gus in the bath, and-" "And he hasn't got his nosebag on!" echoed Porkis.

And there was a rush of boys to the door of the bath-room as a third hideous yell from Lal rang through the ship. (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 Where the steam got a hold the water know what they think of this new story.)

AND THE PART OF TH A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of

JIMMY SILVER & CO., the Chums of Rookwood.

CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. The Watch That Went.

"Where's my watch?" Valentine Mornington, of the Classical Fourth, asked that question in the dormitory at Rookwood.

The Classical Fourth had turned out at the clang of the rising-bell-with one exception.

Tubby Mussin, the fattest and laziest fellow at Rookwood, was snatching a few extra minutes, at the risk of being late down-and the added risk of being bumped out of bed "on his neck" by Jimmy Silver or some other fellow of an energetic nature.

Mornington was looking annoyed as he held up his waistcoat, upon which a slim gold-chain glistened, to which a watch should have been attached but was not. Kit Erroll glanced round quickly as his

chum spoke. "Lost your watch, Morny?" he asked.

"No."

"Then what--"

"It's been taken off the chain." "Draw it mild!" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"It's been taken," repeated Mornington. "Don't look as tragic as the ghost of Hamlet's father; I'm not accusin' anybody of stealin' it. Some silly idiot has bagged it, for a joke, I suppose, and I want to know where it is. So I'm

addressin' everybody present-where's my watch?" "Blest if I know," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Or care much, if you come to that. You shouldn't leave gold

watches lying about." "I didn't leave it lying about! I left it on the chain in my waistcoat, after windin' it up last night. Some silly chump has got out of bed and pinched

it!" growled Mornington. Jimmy Silver glanced round the

dormitory. He was frowning.

Practical jokes with such valuable articles as gold-watches seemed quite 'past the limit" to Jimmy Silver. They were likely to give rise to disagreeable suspicions and surmises.

And Morny's gold watch was a very valuable one; a relio of the days when he had been the richest fellow at Rookwood, and had never denied himself any luxury, however expensive.

It was known in the Lower School that Morny's watch had cost twenty-five pounds, and it had often been admired. Most fellows would have been rather more careful with such a possession; but Morny, though no longer rich, was as

careless with his possessions as in his

old wealthy days. There was a general shaking of heads as Jimmy Silver looked inquiringly at | fat neck. his Form-fellows.

Apparently nobody was inclined to own up to "larking" with Morny's expensive watch.

"Look here, this is a fool joke, if it is a joke at all!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "As likely as not the Modern rotters will begin saying there's a thief on this side of Rookwood, if this gets talked about. The chap who's hidden Morny's watch had better own up."

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned f.evell. "Make every chap speak up, yes or no, before we go out of the dormitory," suggested Raby.

"Good!" assented Jimmy. "You stick at the door, Newcome, and see that | burbling jabberwock?" nobody goes out!"

"Right you are!" Arthur Newcome took up his position at the door, and the fellows who were ready to go down had to halt.

Then Jimmy Silver, as captain of the Fourth, proceeded to question the Classical juniors.

But every fellow answered at once with a clear and emphatic "No!" With most of the fellows, it was cer-

tain that if they said "No!" "No" it was, and there was no further room for doubt.

But Jimmy looked rather keenly at Lattrey and Peele and Gower and one or two of the others, whose word was not | Lovell, as a reasonable chap." always their bond. But he had to admit that they spoke

up readily enough. "You haven't asked Muffin yet," remarked Lovell, when Jimmy was and dodged. "through" with the Fourth-Formers.

"Tubby! Forgot him," said Jimmy. "Where is the fat bounder?" "In bed!"

"Have him out, then!" Arthur Edward Lovell strode towards i dorm, perhaps." Muffin's bed.

Tubby Muffin had been snoring steadily through the questioning process, and was apparently asleep. But as Lovell reached his bed he sat I

up suddenly, and yawned. "Hallo! Is it rising-bell?" he asked. "Out you go!" was Lovell's answer.

"Hold on-I mean, let go- Yah, you rotter!" roared Tubby, as he was bundled | money on his watch. out of bed, and rolled on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes. "Tubby!" called out Jimmy Silver.

"Yaroooh!"

"Have you seen Morny's watch?" "Yow-ow-ow!"

"Answer me, fathead!" "Yoooop!"

"I'll squeeze a wet sponge down his back!" said Oswald, taking one from his washstand. "That'll liven him up!"

Tubby Muffin bounded to his feet. "Yaroooh! Keep off, you Hun!" he roared.

He dodged round the bed as Dick Oswald came towards him, and ran into a move on, you lazy young beggars!" Jimmy Silver, who caught him by his

Jimmy. "Look here, Tubby--" "Leggo!" "Have you taken Morny's watch?"

"You're chook-chook-choking me!" spluttered Tubby Muffin.

"I'll chook-chook-choke you in earnest, if you don't answer!" howled Jimmy Silver. "We shall have a prefect after us soon. Somebody's taken Morny's watch away. Was it you?"

"If you think I'm a thief, Jimmy Silver-" spluttered Tubby indignantly. "I don't, you fat idiot! Somebody's hidden the watch somewhere for a fatheaded joke, I suppose. Was it you, you

"Catch me getting up in the night to play a joke!" grunted Tubby Muffin. "Most likely it was you, Jimmy!" "What!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Tubby blinked at him. "Well, you got up in the night to raid the Moderns once," he replied. "So you might have done it to hide Morny's

"You crass ass!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "You-you-" "Perhaps it was Lovell, though," said

Tubby Muffin thoughtfully. "Me!" roared Arthur Edward. "Well, you're ass enough," argued

Tubby. "Now, you'll admit that yourself, "Ha, ha, ha!" Arthur Edward Lovell made a stride

towards Tubby Muffin, who jerked himself away from the captain of the Fourth, "Keep him off!" he roared.

"Shut up, you howling ass!" growled Raby. "Look here, Jimmy, it looks as if it wasn't a chap in this dorm at all. One of the kids from the Third Form "I say," gasped Tubby-"I say, per-

haps it hasn't been bagged at all." "It's gone!" snapped Mornington. "Yes; but I dare say you've pawned

"P-pawned it!" hooted Mornington. And there was a chuckle in the dormitory at the idea of the dandy of the Fourth paying a visit to a pawnbroker's to raise

"Well, if you've pawned it, you know, you'd spin a yarn like this to keep it dark, wouldn't you?" said Tubby. "Looks like it to me. I must say." "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You-you fat idiot!" howled Mornington. "I'll jolly well burst you!" He made a rush at Tubby Muffin, who

bolted across a bed to escape, and caught his foot in a blanket, and rolled over, with a yell. "Yah! Help!" roared Tubby. "Help! Yooop! Help!"

The door opened, and Bulkeley of the

Sixth looked in. "Not down yet?" he rapped out. "Get "Yarooh! Help!" roared Tubby.

Bulkeley stared at the fat Classical on 1 "Stop, you fat duffer!" exclaimed the floor. There was no one near Tubby, and what he was yelling for help for was a I mystery to the captain of Rookwood.

"Muffin-" "Help! Fire! Keep him off!"

matter with you?" shouted Bulkeley. | letters, as follows: "There's nobody near you!"

Tubby Muffin sat up and blinked round him. Mornington was sedately finishing his toilet.

The other fellows were chortling. "Oh!" gasped Tubby. "I-I-I thought "You'd better think out what you'll

get if you're not down in five minutes!" grunted Bulkeley; and he left the dormi-Tubby Muffin contrived to be down in

five minutes. To do it in that short space of time he had to leave out most of his washing, but he made up his mind to that sacrifice cheerfully.

The 2nd Chapter.

The Moderns' Little Joke. Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern Fourth, rejeiced.

The state of the same of the s

They rejoiced greatly. It had seemed to Jimmy Silver judicious to say nothing about the queer happening in the Classical dormitory, and most of the fellows quite agreed with him; they did not want to give the Moderns a "handle" against them.

became fully aware of what had hap-Tubby Muffin was probably the culprit. Tubby never could keep his mouth

But during the morning the Moderns

closed-indeed, he never had any desire to keep it closed. It was, as Lovell remarked, always open either for eating or talking, two occupations that Tubby revelled in.

In the Fourth-Form room that morning Tommy Dodd & Co. showed that they knew all about it. That there was a thief in the Classical

Fourth the Moderns, of course, did not believe for a moment. But it suited them to assume that such was the case for the sake of pulling

the Classical leg. Finding himself next to Lovell in class, Tommy Dodd went through a motion of buttoning up his pockets.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave him a volcanie look. He understood what was implied.

"You Modern worm!" gasped Lovell. There came a whisper from Tommy Cook.

"Mind your pockets, you fellows!" And there was a subdued chuckle. Mr. Bootles glanced round, becoming

valued instruction. The chuckle died away. "You will kindly pay attention, my hair, as a just punishment.

severity.

of the Fourth were thinking of other matters as well as lessons. Mornington's missing watch was in of warning from the class. their thoughts, causing intense annoyance to the Classicals and great joy to

the Moderns, who realised that this was a quite unique opportunity for ragging | their old rivals. Mr. Bootles happened to step out of the Form-room to speak to Mr. Bohun, I

the master of the Third, in the corridor, and while he was out Tommy Dodd jumped up. He stepped coolly out before the Form

and took the chalk, and began to chalk on the blackboard. The juniors watched him curiously.

They supposed that Tommy was going But peace-restful, recuperating peaceto chalk a caricature on the board to how blessed is peace-" surprise Mr. Bootles when he came back. | Crash!

But they soon saw that that was not the intention of the merry Modern. What Tommy Dodd put on the black-"You silly young ass, what's the board was an inscription, in big capital

"BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS!"

Then he returned to his place with a

satisfied grin. The Modern juniors burst into a roar. A fat chuckle came from Tubby Muffin, but the rest of the Classicals looked

furious. "You Modern rotter!" roared Lovell. "What do you mean by that?"

"Can't you read?" answered Tommy Dodd. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beware of pickpockets!" howled Tommy Doyle. "Look afther yer watches, bedad!" Jimmy Silver jumped up, his face pink

with wrath. "You-you Modern rotter!" he exclaimed. "Rub that out at once!"

"Bow-wow!" "Rub it out, or I'll rub it out with your silly head!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Rats!"

"Collar him!" shouted Oswald. Most of the juniors were on their feet Jimmy Silver scrambled along the

desks to Tommy Dodd, who stood on the defensive, with an exasperating grin. "Will you rub that out?" demanded "Not to-day, old top!" answered

Tommy Dodd cheerfully. "Isn't it valuable advice to the public? Ain't there pickpockets about?" "No, you rotter; and you know it!"

"Ha, ha! Where's Morny's watch?"

"Not your bizney, you Modern worm! Rub that out at once!" Tommy Dodd laughed. He was not likely to take orders from a Classical fellow, even the captain of the Form.

His laugh was suddenly cut short as Jimmy Silver pounced upon him. "Now, you Modern rotter-" "Yah! You Classical ass-"

"Mop him up, Jimmy!" "Biff him, Tommy!" "Go it!"

yanked the Modern junior out before the There were shouts of encouragement on both sides.

Jimmy Silver, with a strenuous effort,

They nearly reached the blackboard, but there Tommy Dodd rallied and swept Jimmy back to the desks. But Jimmy Silver made another effort, and rushed the Modern on to the black-

aware that all the attention of the board, getting a firm grip on Tommy's Fourth was not being bestowed upon his collar. His intention was to rub out the offending inscription with Tommy Dodd's

boys!" said Mr. Bootles, with mild But there was likely to be a terrific struggle before the Modern leader's bead

Attention was paid, but certainly most | could be used as a duster. They bumped into the blackboard, and it reeled a little, and there was a shout

> "Look out! You'll have it over!" Tommy Dodd rallied again, but again Jimmy Silver rushed him on, and Tommy's nose, instead of his hair, came in contact with the board.

There was a flendish yell from the Modern. At that moment Mr. Bootles, in the passage, became aware of the fact that

something rather unusual was transpiring in the Form-room. "Peace," Mr. Bootles was saying, "is a beautiful thing. We have been through terrible times, Mr. Bohun-what, what?

(Continued from the previous page.) for a joke, Dodd. I shall cane you

The impact of a flying blackboard and easel on the floor of the Form-room interrupted Mr. Bootles.

It sounded a good deal more like war than peace.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "Ahem! There seems to be a disturbance of some sort in your room, Mr. Bootles," remarked the Third-form

master. Crash! Bump!

"Yaroooop!"

"Yah!" "Oh, my hat!"

"There—there does, certainly!" gasped Mr. Bootles; and he hurried back to the Form-room. A startling sight met his gaze.

The easel was over, and on the fallen blackboard Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd were struggling in deadly combat. Jimmy had the advantage, and his grip was like iron on Dodd's collar, and

Dodd's face was being used to wipe off the chalked inscription. It was a painful process for Tommy Dodd, as he testified by a succession of

howls. Cook and Doyle, naturally, rushed to their leader's aid; and equally naturally, Lovell and Raby and Newcome rushed to stop them.

A battle royal was starting round the fallen blackboard, when Mr. Bootles fortunately returned.

The Form-master's glasses almost fell off at the sight that met his eyes. He stood blinking in the doorway,

dumbfounded.

"Boys!" he gasped at last. "Cave!" yelled Towle.

"Oh, my hat! Bootles!" "Look out!" The combatants separated as if by

magic.

the blackboard and easel strewn on the easily identified anywhere. floor.

Dusty and crimson and dishevelled, they sat and blinked at the wrathful Formmaster.

The 3rd Chapter. The Talk of the School.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.

He could scarcely believe his eyes.

Certainly there were raggings between Classicals and Moderns often enough, but this was the first time that the Formroom had been used as a battle-ground. Mr. Bootles blinked at the blackboard, from which the chalked inscription had been rubbed-with Tommy Dodd's features, which were in an extremely soiled state in consequence.

Then he blinked at the class. "What does this mean?" he thundered. Dead silence.

"Silver! Dodd! Lovell! How dare you!" Silence.

"This-this riot-this outbreak of-of violence--- Bless my soul! I shall punish you all severely!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "Silver!" "Ye-es, sir?"

"How dare you!"

"Ahem!" "What was the cause of this uproar, Silver?"

"I-I-I-" "Explain at once!" roared Mr. Bootles wrathfully. "What was the cause of

this unexampled outbreak?" "The-the Moderns were cheeky rotters, sir," said Jimmy at last.

"Wha-at?" "Only Classical cheek, sir," said Tommy Dodd.

"Bless my soul!" None of the juniors felt inclined to mention the incident of the missing watch -with one exception.

That was Tubby Muffin. The fat Classical rose to his feet. "If you please, sir, I can explain,"

he said. "You may do so, Muffin!" snapped Mr. Bootles.

"Mornington's watch is missing, sir-"What?" "Shut up, you fat beast!" hissed Jimmy

Silver. "Silence! What have you to say, Billy Bunter in various positions. Muffin? What has Mornington's watch

to do with the matter?" "It's missing, sir. Morny missed it this morning in the dorm," said Tubby Muffin. "Some chap has put it some-

The Moderns think it's been where. stolen." "Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "This is very serious. Is it possible that you, Dodd, have brought an accusation of

theft against other boys?" Tommy Dodd crimsoned.

He gave Tubby Muffin a look that ought to have withered the fat Classical on the spot; but Tubby, not at all withered, sat down with a fat grin of satisfaction.

The matter which the other juniors did not want known to the masters was

"out" now. There was no possibility of keeping

it dark. "Nunno, sir!" gasped Tommy. "I-I never meant anything of the kind, sir.

it was only a joke." "You should not make such jokes, Dodd. So that is the cause of the up- about roar!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "You are to blame, Dodd."

"I_I_" "You should not say such things, even which deals with one of Gussy's several mysterious happens in this story, and

the unknown culprit to get clear of the serious.

"I am waiting!" boomed Mr. Bootles. "If you please, sir-" began Jimmy Silver.

Tommy Dodd returned to his place, The juniors looked daggers at Tubby Tubby had not meant to sneak about the Modern junior, certainly; but his uncalled-for statement had been the cause

of Tommy Dodd's punishment. "And now," said Mr. Bootles sternly, "I must hear the particulars of this matter, which should have been communicated to me earlier. Mornington. it appears that your watch is missing? another dormitory. "Yes, sir," said Mornington reluctantly.

"Was it a valuable watch?" "Yes, sir." "Kindly give me the particulars of the

severely for being the cause of this

disturbance. Come here!"

Swish, swish, swish!

squeezing his hands.

Mornington, with visible reluctance, explained; and Mr. Bootles' face grew more and more portentous as he listened. All the juniors were serious enough

now, Moderns as well as Classicals. Now that the matter was officially known, it was for the masters to deal with it, if not the Head himself.

That was quite enough to make the juniors grave. "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "Mornington, you have been very care-

less with your watch, considering its value. That, however, does not excuse the boy who has taken it. I command I that boy to stand up at once." No one stirred.

"Unless the watch is returned to Mornto conclude that it has been stolen! boomed Mr. Bootles.

The juniors looked very uncomfortable. for Morny's gold ticker was so well I We will now resume." known that a thief could not hope to ! dispose of it undetected.

They bolted back to their desks, leaving | in diamonds, and the watch could be | comfort.

Even if anyone in the Fourth was rascal enough, it was difficult to believe that anyone was stupid enough to take so easily recognised an article to keep. But Mr. Bootles was portentously

see why the practical joker should keep the watch so long, if he intended to return it at all. A practical joker who carried his joke

to the extent of starting suspicions of he met their grim looks. theft in the school was less a joker than a born idiot.

The affair was, in fact, a puzzle, and Mr. Bootles had reason for taking a serious view of it. There was a long silence in the Form-

room. Mr. Bootles, like Brutus, paused for a reply; but no reply came. Nobody in the Fourth seemed to have

anything to say. "In order to have this matter cleared up, and prevent unpleasant discussion, I will allow the foolish boy to pass unpunished," said Mr. Bootles, more mildly. "That is, if the watch is restored to its j owner at once."

The juniors looked at one another. It was a good offer, and a chance for affair, which was now becoming so

But there was no answer.

"Was it you, Silver?"

going to suggest that it may have been a chap from some other dormitory, sir." "That is very improbable, Silver," said Mr. Bootles drily. "A boy from another dormitory could scarcely have entered without awakening someone, especially as he would not know precisely where on the matter as a chance for "taking a to look for Mornington's clothes, and rise" out of the Classicals. would have to search for them in the dark. If he had struck a light, someone would certainly have awakened."

Jimmy was silent. Put like that, he realised that the affair could not be due to a raider from Jimmy Silver. "It was only a lark, as | as they gathered.

How was a fellow from the Third or the Shell to find Morny's waistcoat in the deep darkness without giving the alarm? Evidently it was one of the Classical Fourth who had relieved Morny of his watch, and the fellow was then present in the Form-room, listening to what was said on the subject, without giving a

Was it, after all, a thief? It certainly began to look like it, for a practical joker would scarcely have refused Mr. Bootles' offer to get clear of the affair by handing over the watch and owning up.

Yet no one spoke.

The joker, or thief, whichever he was, was there undoubtedly, but he was keeping his own counsel.

Mr. Bootles' plump face set more grimly.

"Very well," he said. "I am forced to ington immediately, I shall be compelled | conclude that Mornington's watch has been stolen. The thief, I need hardly say, will be expelled from the school when discovered. The matter closes here Nobody in the Fourth believed for a for the present. I shall discuss it in moment that the watch had been stolen. I the session of masters this evening, and That theory seemed to them absurd. I decide what measures are to be taken.

Lessons went on in the Form-room from that point, nearly every fellow in the Morny's monogram was on the case, room suffering from a sense of deep dis- speaking of born idiots reminded the the Fourth Form quarters.

The 4th Chapter. 'The Masters' Session.

Jimmy Silver's face was sombre when grave; and, indeed, it was difficult to I he came out with his chums after morning lessons.

"I say, I'm sorry, you chaps," said | never hear the end of it." Tommy. "Of-of course, I hadn't the faintest idea that the blessed watch had been stolen. I thought it was only a fool joke, and I was taking a rise out of

"Fathead!" grunted Lovell. "Bootles needn't have known anything about it, but for that fat idiot Muffin,' said Tommy Dodd. "You can't blame me for that; it was a Classical who gave the show away. If I'd known the watch had been stolen I'd never have said a word on the subject; it would be hitting below the belt."

"So you think it's been stolen, now?" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Ahem! Bootles thinks so."

"Bootles is an ass!" said Raby. "Well, I hope it hasn't been bagged," said Tommy, sincerely enough. "It's a disgrace to Rookwood if there's a thief in the school. But it certainly looks like it, and I'm sorry I said anything, as the matter turns out."

"All serene," said Jimmy Silver. "It can't be helped! It's all Muffin's fault "Eh? Oh, no, sir! But-but I was | that it came out."

Tommy Dodd nodded, and walked away towards Mr. Manders' House in a repentant mood.

Having taken it for granted that the loss of Morny's gold ticker was only a practical joke, Tommy Dodd had looked | doctor.

But now that the matter turned out to be serious, he wished he had let it alone. But repentance came too late, as I the thief in the Classical Fourth. it generally does.

far as he was concerned. That idiot much good, though. Where the thump is Morny's watch?"

"Looks as if it's been stolen," said Lovell. "If a chap hid it for a joke, why should he keep it up all this time, I especially after Bootles' offer? I'm afraid there's a thief in the Classical Fourth, Jimmy."

"But who?" said Jimmy.

The Co. shook their heads. Certainly there were black sheep in the Form-Peele and Gower and Lattrey, for instance; but it was hard to believe that

one of them was a thief. Between "playing the goat" and stealing there was a very wide distinction, and it was impossible to think of any fellow in the Fourth as being capable of theft.

Lattrey, perhaps, was a possible object of suspicion, but it was certain that if so cunning a fellow as Lattrey stole anything, it would not be an article so easily identified as Morny's watch.

For the thief to keep the watch as a possession was to ask for detection. To sell it would be difficult, if not im-

possible; and sold, it would be traced with perfect ease if the police were called in. Only a born idiot could have committed | idiot who bagged Morny's watch."

chums of Tubby Muffin.

tainly was not a thief. The matter was, in fact, an utter mystery, and the Fistical Four felt themselves quite at sea.

"But it's going to be jolly serious!" Most of the Fourth were looking grave. | groaned Lovell. "Bootles is going to jaw Tommy Dodd came up to the Fistical | it over at the masters' session this even-Four in the quad, his face rather red as | ing. They'll all take it for granted there's a thief in the Form. We shall

The juniors went in to dinner in a dismal mood. Up to lesson-time that afternoon Jimmy

Silver hoped that the purloiner of the watch would think better of it, and allow it to be found. But nothing of the kind happened, and

the Fourth went into lessons with the watch still missing, and the mystery as deep as ever. There was portentous gravity in Mr.

Bootles' face that afternoon. No reference was made to the theft, but it was pretty clear that that was uppermost in the Form-master's mind.

After lessons there was endless dis-

cussion of the subject among the Fourth-Formers on the Classical side.

The Moderns, of course, were not concerned in the matter, as they had their sleeping quarters in Mr. Manders' House. After tea there was the session of masters, in the Masters' Room in the School House.

Masters' session was a regular institution at Rookwood.

At stated intervals the staff met to discuss school matters, the Head sometimes coming to the meetings, though more often not; for his assistants discussed matters much more at their ease in the absence of the awe-inspiring

On the present occasion there was a matter of unusual interest for the masters to discuss; and that was the measures to be taken for the detection of

A number of the juniors lingered near "No good grousing at Dodd," said the Masters' Room, watching the masters From their serious looks, it was clear

Muffin ought to be scragged for talking | that they had been already apprised of to Bootles. Scragging him won't do the topic to be introduced by Mr. Bootles at the meeting.

Mr. Bootles came along with Mr. Bohun, looking very distressed. Mr. Wiggins, the master of the Second,

was preternaturally grave. Mr. Bull, the mathematics master, had

his brows knitted. Mr. Mooney, of the Shell, gave the juniors a severe glance as he passed them, as if he was trying to pick out the thief among them, as Arthur Edward

Lovell muttered in furious tones. Then came Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, with Monsieur Monceau, the

French master. The junior caught the word "voleur" on Mossoo's lips as the two masters passed.

Mr. Manders, the science-master, came last, with a look on his acid face that Lovell likened to a gargoyle. The door of the Masters' Room closed,

but a murmur of voices could be heard from within. "They're at it!" growled Lovell.

"Rotten!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "All Rookwood's going to ring with it," said Conroy. "My hat! I'd like to be within hitting distance of the silly

such a theft, as Lovell remarked, and Jimmy Silver & Co. went up glumly to The honour of their Form was con-Tubby was ass enough for anything, cerned in the discussion now going on in

but on the other hand, though he was the Masters' Room, and they felt it a young rascal in some respects, he cer- keenly. As they passed Morning as study they heard the voice of Tubby Muffin.

"You'd better take my tip, Morny, old man." "Oh, dry up!" came Morny's reply. "You want to get your watch back,

don't you?" "Buzz off!" "If you're hard up, Erroll can lend you the money," suggested Tubby Muffin. "In fact, I dare say the Fourth would be willing to make a whip-round for it, as there's such a fuss being made."

"Will you clear off, you silly young ass?" demanded Mornington. "Kick him out for me, Erroll." "Certainly!"

"Here, I say, hands off! Why, you rotter, when I'm trying to do you a good turn!" howled Tubby. A fat form came whirling through the

study doorway, and Jimmy Silver grinned as he caught it by the hair. "Yarooh!" roared Muffin.

"Steady on, steam-roller!" said Jimmy. "Yow-ow! Leggo my hair!"

Tubby Muffin jerked his head away, and rubbed it. "Look here, Jimmy," he began, "I've just been pointing out to Morny-"

"Bow-wow!" "But it's jolly important, and I think you ought to speak to Morny--" Mornington II., of the Second Form,

came along the passage. He put his head into No. 4. "You're wanted, Morny," he said to his

cousin. "Masters' Room." Mornington grunted as he rose to his "More jaw about that dashed watch, I suppose," he groaned. "All right,

Erbert, you can tell em I'm coming,

and tell 'em to go and boil their heads!" The fag grinned. He was not likely to take that message

back to the severe assembly in the masters' room. Mornington made a grimace to the Fistical Four as he came out of the study. "I'm goin' through it," he said. "I.

wish I'd never said a word about the watch now! I'd rather lose it than have all this bother." "I've offered to show you how to get

your watch back, Morny-" began Tubby Muffin.

"Oh, ring off!" Mornington walked away with his cousin, and the Fistical Four went on to

the end study. Tubby Muffin blinked after Morny, and then blinked into No. 4.

"I say, Erroll-" he started. "Clear off, for goodness' sake!" said Erroll. "Can't you see when a fellow's fed up, Tubby?"

"But Morny's watch-" "Oh, bother! Buzz off, or you'll get this cushion!" exclaimed Erroll, in ex-

asperation. Tubby Muffin promptly retreated from the doorway. He gave a discontented grunt, and after

some moments' reflection followed Jimmy

The 5th Chapter.

Too Clever by Half. "Jimmy!"

Silver & Co. to the end study.

clamation as Tubby Muffin's fat face appeared in his doorway. Jimmy was in a harassed mood, and the infliction of Tubby's company and Tubby's conversation was the last

Jimmy Silver uttered an impatient ex-

straw. "Jimmy, old nut-"

TELL CONTINUES OF THE PARTY OF

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.O. 4."

JANUARY 24th!

Every reader of the Boxs' FRIEND mus make a note of the above date, for or this day the "Penny Popular" will presented with the issue of the "Penny reappear. On the cover of next Monday's issue of the Boys' FRIEND you will find

a reproduction of A MAGNIFICENT PLATE

of Billy Bunter, which will be GIVEN FREE with the "Penny Pop" on January 24th. It will be a plate the like of which has never before been given away with a hoys' paper, and it will show the famous FOR NEXT MONDAY.

This particular number of the "Penny Popular" will be bound to prove a tremendous attraction to readers of the Boys' FRIEND. Many readers have written me asking me to publish stories dealing of THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE with the arrival of Jimmy Silver at Rookwood. The requirements of these readers will be met in the "Penny Popular" on January 24th, for in this number there

will appear a splendid story entitled "THE RIVALS OF ROOKWOOD! By Owen Conquest,

arrived at the school. The second story in this grand number | Lal Tata's leg there is great excitement.

Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars

and will be entitled

"BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL-ORDER!" By Frank Richards.

This is a tale that will send you into roars

of laughter. And the same can be said "D'ARCY'S DELUSION!" By Martin Clifford,

love affairs. The mention of Gussy reminds me that I have another special thing he did not do. The culprit does attraction for you. This consists of not admit his guilt; in fact, he is not another magnificent plate, which will be Popular" dated February 1st. This plate will show Gussy in various positions, and -- Well, more about this next week. Don't forget to order your copy of the "Penny Popular" in advance, and to tell all your chums about this splendid news.

Well, my chums, what do you think of the opening instalment of our amazing

I new adventure serial, entitled KAISER!"

By Duncan Storm?

If you have not laughed again and again over Horace's funny antics, then I shall be very much surprised. But it will be Gus, the crocodile's, turn to amuse you which will describe how Jimmy Silver next Monday. Gus is an amusing little chap, and when he fastens his teeth on will deal with the adventures of Harry | Certainly, it is not very pleasant for Lal. But although you will sympathise with him, you will not be able to stop laugh-

"JIMMY SILVER'S SENTENCE!" By Owen Conquest.

ing when you read about this incident.

The title of next Monday's splendid tale of the Rookwood chums suggests that Jimmy Silver is in trouble. Well, I do not think I shall be giving away a secret when I say that he is. Something very

Jimmy Silver gets the blame for someeven known. I wonder whether you will be able to guess the name of the fellow? If you do, write and let me know. I shall be very pleased to hear from readers who are clever enough to pick out the guilty

party. Our next grand long complete tale of Frank Richards & Co. will be entitled

"THE HERO OF HILLCREST!" By Martin Clifford. Who is the hero of Hillcrest? Dicky

Bird, Blumpy, Fisher-- No, my chums, it is Gunten-Kern Gunten, who was expelled from Cedar Creek in disgrace. Can you imagine Gunten a hero? Of course you can't! But he is treated as one in next Monday's story, and--- There is a surprise awaiting you at the end of this story—a surprise that will be bound to please all of you.

"BARKER, THE BOUNDER!" By Herbert Britton.

In next Monday's instalment of our grand school serial there are amazing developments. The revolt of the footer team leads to exciting events. Does Bob Travers knuckle under to the rebels, or does he deal with the matter with a strong hand? For an answer to these questions you must read our next instalment.

"For goodness' sake, Tubby, buzz off!" said the captain of the Fourth. "Give a fellow a rest!"

"If you call that polite, Jimmy Silver

"Well, it's politer than my boot, which you'll get if you don't give me a rest!" growled Jimmy.

"With mine to follow!" said Lovell. "Well, if you don't care for the good | name of the Form, I suppose it's no good talking to you," said Tubby Muffin loftily. "Some fellows think of such things. I do! I don't like the Classical Fourth being the talk of the school. Fellows are saying we've got a thief in the Form. I think the matter ought to be cleared up."

"Can you clear it up, fathead?" snapped Raby.

"I think so." "Oh, don't talk rot!" said Newcome.

"I can make a suggestion-" "Make it, and then ring off!" said Jimmy Silver. "And cut it short,

"I suppose that's what you call grateful?" said Tubby Muffin sarcastically. "Well, here's my suggestion. When I things are lost, what do you think is the best way of finding them again?"

"Looking for them, I suppose." "Better than that! The proper thing," said Tubby impressively, "is to offer a reward."

Jimmy stared at him, "A reward!" he repeated. .

"That's it!" said Tubby, with a nod. "I've suggested it to Mornington, as it's his watch that's lost; but he won't listen to me. I suppose he's hard up-though I mentioned that he could borrow the money of Erroll. The watch was worth twenty-five quid. Well, Morny ought to offer at least five to the fellow who finds it. Don't you think so?"

Jimmy Silver did not answer. He was looking very fixedly at the fat, self-satisfied face of Reginald Muffin.

But Lovell broke in angrily. "You fat idiot! Why should Morny spring five quid? He would have to pay it to the fellow who bagged the watch; nobody else would know where to find it. "Well, anybody might find it," said Muffin. "Suppose a reward was offered, I everybody would begin hunting for it. Sooner or later it would turn up. See? It would pay Morny to spring five quid to recover a twenty-five-pound watch. Cheap, I call it!"

"Oh, you're an ass!" "I'm not talking to you, Lovell! You ! haven't much sense, you know. What do I you think, Jimmy Silver? Will you put it plain to Morny?"

" No in "Of course, you could offer a reward yourself," suggested Tubby Muffin. "As captain of the Fourth, it's up to you to look after the honour of the Form. You could raise a subscription in the Form. It's worth five quid to clear the fellows of suspicion of stealing a watch. Think of the honour of the Form."

Jimmy Silver was silent, and his gaze, i fixed on Tubby's fat face, was growing more penetrating.

Mussin, absorbed by his own valuable ideas, did not notice it. He blinked round appealingly at

Jimmy's chums. "I say, what do you think of the idea, Raby?"

"Rotten!" "Newcome, old chap, you're a chap with some sense," said Muffin. "Don't you think a reward ought to be offered?"

"No, I den't!" Tubby Muffin gave a snort of impatience.

"Blest if I ever saw such asses!" he exclaimed. "It really looks to me as if you don't want Morny's watch to be found at all. I call that selfish. Why, 1 thought he'd jump at the idea, rather than have the watch lost, and everybody saying there's a thief in the Form!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Lovell. "Well, there's going to be a shindy!" said Muffin angrily. "Mornington's gone before the masters now; they're asking him questions about it. It means a big inquiry, with the Head mixed up in it. I wonder you want the Fourth to be the talk of the school, Jimmy. Smythe of the Shell spoke of our dorm as the Thieves' Kitchen to-day."

"You're a silly chump!" exclaimed Lovell. "Suppose a reward was offered? That wouldn't make the watch turn up!" "I think it would."

"Only the chap who hid it knows where to find it," said Jimmy Silver, speaking at the state of the state of

"Oh, it might turn up!" said Tubby. with a fat smile. "I'd start looking for it at once if there was a reward. You fellows know how jolly clever I am."

"Br-r-r-r-r!" grunted Lovell. "Hallo! Here comes Morny!" said Lovell, glancing out of the study door-

way. "He looks worried." Mornington glanced in at the end study. "Been through it?" asked Jimmy.

"You bet! A blessed set of solemn old owls, all jawing at a fellow!" growled Mornington.

The Fistical Four grinned at that desscription of a masters' session. It might have surprised that august

assembly if they had heard it. "I've had to jaw it all over again from

the beginning," went on Mornington. "They've decided there's a thief in the Form."

"I told you so!" grinned Tubby Muffin. "You fat owl! You seem to be glad of it!" exclaimed Mornington wrathfully. "Oh, no! Nunno! Oh, no!" stammered Tubby. "N-n-not at all!"

"They dismissed me, an' I left 'em chow-wowing over it," said the dandy of the Fourth. "I believe they're going to | watch!" went on Mornington, much to have all the Form up for examination. What silly ass was it invented masters' sessions? I say, let's scrag that fat villain for giving the show away to

Bootles!" Tubby Muffin backed away. "I-I say, it will be all right if the watch is found!" he stammered.

"It's not found," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, it could be if a reward was | his grip tightened, to the accompaniment offered," said Tubby Muffin persuasively. "It would buck the fellows no end, you know. I'm sure of it!"

"Quite sure?" asked Jimmy, eyeing "I really feel that I could answer for it!" said Tubby Muffin eagerly. "Make it a reward of five quid, and I'll set to

Mornington's glance met Jimmy's. The same thought was in both minds at that moment.

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"Well, let's think this over," he said. "How would you make the offer of a reward, Tubby?"

Tubby's fat face beamed. "Put up a notice on the board," he

said. "Might as well simply tell the fellows, if you're going to do it at all, which I think is rot!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell.

promptly.

"Why not?" asked Jimmy very quietly. "You'd be able to go back on it if it wasn't in writing." "What?"

"I-I-I mean-don't fly out at a fellow!" spluttered Muffin. "I mean, it would be more businesslike to have it in writing. I'm a businesslike chap. You take my advice, Jimmy, and put a notice | sion of sorrowful indignation as he | Jimmy Silver. on the board offering five pounds reward for the finding of Morny's watch."

"Do you think that would produce my watch?" asked Mornington.

"Sure of it!" "Because the offer of a reward would start fellows hunting for it?" asked

Lovell, staring blankly at Reginald Muffin. Raby and Newcome were staring, too. There was an atmosphere of grim suspicion in the end study, of which Tubby

Muffin was blissfully unconscious.

"That's it," said Tubby. "And where are they to hunt for it?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Fellows have been looking for it already, but they haven't! had any luck."

of a dismal yell from Reginald Muffin. "Lock the door, Jimmy!" Click!

Tubby Muffin, in utter dismay, blinked round at the chums of the Fourth. He was fairly caught.

> The 6th Chapter. Too Tricky.

The Fistical Four surrounded him, with action. grim looks.

As yet Tubby Muffin really did not know why he was suspected. He was sublimely unconscious of the

fact that he had given himself hopelessly It did not occur to his fat mind that

there was no reason why he should be was more astonishing still. so eager for a reward to be offered, the watch.

If he knew where to find it, it was because he had hidden it; it was a case of "those who hide can find."

Silver & Co., but not in the least so to | meaning of the silence. Reginald Muffin's obtuse brain. In fact, he was working up an expres-

blinked at the incensed juniors. "I'm surprised at this, Jimmy Silver!"

he said at last. idiot?" asked Lovell. "You might have expected it when you let your silly chin

"Of course, I don't know anything about Morny's watch. How could I. when I was fast asleep all night?" "What have you done with it?" asked

Mornington roughly. "Nothing! I haven't seen it! In fact, I'm not at all sure that you ever had a gold watch at all, Mornington!" "Oh, my hat!"

Tubby, with dignity, "I'll go! I've not lighted under it."

Mr. Bootles, so that the masters would take it up."

"Ahem! I didn't!" "You didn't tell Mr. Bootles in class this morning?" howled Jimmy.

"Why, the whole Form heard you!"

shrieked Newcome. Tubby shook his head obstinately. "Fellows make mistakes," he said.

"You've made a mistake. Very likely Mornington released Tubby's fat ear | Morny told Bootles. Or Jimmy Silver. at last, and the fat Classical rubbed it It might have been Lattrey. He's a bit ruefully, and blinked at the five juniors. of a sneak. Not me! I'd scorn the

"Oh, crumbs!" said Jimmy Silver, almost overcome.

The chums of the Fourth fairly blinked at Tubby Muffin.

That he should tell such astounding whoppers was surprising, but that he should expect anyone to believe them

Tubby Muffin had not a good memory; "That wouldn't do!" said Tubby unless he expected to finger that reward which the proverb declares is needful for himself, because he knew where to find | the class of persons to which Tubby belonged.

The astounded silence in the study was broken by Tubby.

Apparently he regarded the matter as That was obvious enough to Jimmy | settled satisfactorily, quite mistaking the

"Now, about the reward?" he said. "The-the-the reward?" articulated

"Yes," said Tubby briskly. "I'm willing to overlook this unpleasantness if you fellows do the proper thing. Is a "Surprised that you're caught, you fat | reward going to be offered for finding | Morny's watch?" "Oh, dear!"

"You're wasting time, Jimmy. Are you going to make it five pounds re-

"No!" gasped Jimmy. "Well, say four! What do you say to

"No! Not fourpence!" "Not a merry brown!" said Morning-

"Well, it's your look-out," said Tubby. "If you'll unlock that door," said I "Your watch may be spoiled if a fire's



THE COMBAT

Oh, a really elever chap, you know, | been treated in a friendly way in this !

want to brag, but you fellows will admit | speak to me again." that if there's a chap in the Fourth with real brains I'm that chap!"

"You couldn't find the watch, though," said Mornington, shaking his head. "Bet you I could!" said Tubby at once. I

"Where would you look for it?" "Where it's hidden! I-I mean, inin any place where it's likely to be hidden, you know. A chap may have stuck ! it up a chimney. I don't say he did. But he might. Well, I should look till I

found it.' "Why haven't you done so already, then?" asked Raby.

"The labourer's worthy of his hire, isn't he? Chap's time is worth something.

Besides-" "Besides what?"

"Oh, nothing! Now, you draw up that paper and sign it, Morny." "And leave the rest to you?" asked

Mornington. "Well, yes."

"In fact, you guarantee to find the watch, before Bootles calls the Head into ! the matter, if I offer five pounds reward?" asked Mornington,

"Yes." "Then we can't do better-" began Mornington, looking significantly at Jimmy Silver, who rose to his feet. "Of course you can't!" agreed the de-

lighted Tubby. "Than collar this fat scoundrel, and make him own up where he's hidden my Tubby's astonishment and dismay.

Tubby Muffin jumped. Then as the juniors advanced on him he made a frantic rush for the passage. Mornington's finger and thumb on his fat ear swung him round.

"Yarooh!" roared Tubby. "Leggo!" "I'll let go when you've handed over ! "Oh, no! Certainly not!" my watch!" said Mornington grimly; and

study. I decline to remain any longer in "Like you-what?" asked Mornington. | your quarters, Jimmy Silver. Until "Like me," agreed Tubby. "I don't | you've apologised I'll thank you not to

"Hand over the watch, you spooling rotter!" roared Lovell.

"I decline to argue the matter with comes of the watch?" you, Lovell! This is an insult to my personal honour!" said Tubby very loftily. "I must say that I regard this study with contempt! I really must say that much."

"You didn't bag Morny's watch last i night?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Certainly not!" "With the idea of having a rumpus kicked up about it, so that we should be awfully keen to have it found, and "Oh, come now!" said Tubby warmly. | you didn't think you'd be able to spoot ! us into offering a reward for it?"

"Not at all! Naturally, I thought ! you'd offer a reward, rather than have the Fourth set down as a lot of thieves," said Tubby reproachfully.

"You thought that before you took the watch?"

"Yes," said Tubby unguardedly.

"And then you took it?" "No. I didn't!" "You've just admitted that you did!"

yelled Raby. "Nothing of the kind, Raby! I never said anything of the sort! What I meant to say was, that Smythe of the Shell is waiting for me, and I'll thank

you to unlock that door, Jimmy Silver!" "Never mind the door at present," said Jimmy, laughing in spite of himself. "You bagged Morny's watch in the dorm last night, Tubby."

"Never even dreamed of such a thing. Jimmy! I'm afraid it's your guilty conscience that's making you suspect me," said Tubby, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, my hat! Then you started to talk | find it." about the affair, though we agreed to i keep it dark. You thought a reward might be offered if the matter was made thoroughly unpleasant."

"And then you brought it all out to

"I don't say it will, but it might. Frinstance, suppose a fellow hid it in a chimney?" said Tubby. "I'm only putting a case, of course. He might have, for he might not. Well, if a fire's l lighted under that chimney, what be-

"My only hat!" gasped Lovell. "So ! yon've hidden it in a chimney!"

"Certainly not!" "B-b-but you said--"

"I said I was putting a case. And I mystery was a mystery no longer. mind," said Tubby impressively, "if the damaged. We haven't got central heating, like the Moderns in Manders' Honse. and fires may be started in the dormitory any time."

"In-in-in the dormitory!" stuttered Jimmy Silver.

"It's your look-out and Morny's," said Tubby fatuously. "Don't blame me if the watch gets spoiled, that's all." "That chap," said Arthur Edward

Lovell, in measured tones, "ought to be in a home for idiots, or some place of that sort. He's wasted at Rookwood." There was a tap on the door.

"Jimmy's wanted!" called out Oswald. from the passage. The door was unlocked, and opened. Dick Oswald grinned at the captain of

the Fourth. "The great pow-wow's over," he said. "All the Classical Fourth have got to trot into the Masters' Room to be jawed at, and you're to see that they all turn up, Jimmy. I've just had it from

Jimmy laughed. "Thank goodness it won't be necessary," he said.

Bootles."

"Watch not found?" exclaimed Oswald. "No: but Tubby's just told us where to

Tubby Muffin stared. "Eh! What! I haven't!" he yelled. "Nothing of the kind! I haven't the faintest idea where the watch is." "Not in the dormitory chimney?" grinned Lovell.

Tubby gave a jump. "How did you know?" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I-I mean, it's not there!" howled Tubby, in alarm. "I was simply putting a case-merely a figure of speech, you know. What I mean to say really was---Yarooooop!"

Lovell grasped the fat Classical by the collar, and sat him down forcibly on the study carpet, and Tubby's remarks ended in a howl.

Then the juniors hurried up to the Classical Fourth dormitory.

They gathered round the chimney, and Jimmy Silver flashed the light of his electric flash-lamp up into the darkness above.

It was a roomy old chimney, and there was plenty of space for his head and shoulders.

As he turned the light round, a gleam of gold in an interstice of the bricks caught his eyes.

A moment more, and he drew back from the chimney, and held up Mornington's gold ticker.

"Here it is!" he said. "Good!" grinned Lovell. "Hallo, and here's Tubby!"

Tubby Muffin rolled breathlessly in. "H-h-have you found it?" he stuttered.

"Where was it?" "In the chimney, where you hid it last night, you fat villain!" hooted Raby. "Oh, draw it mild, Raby! If you found it in the chimney it's pretty clear that

you hid it there. "What!" shricked Raby. "Those who hide can find, you know," said Tubby, with a shake of the head. "I

must say I'm shocked at you, Raby! I must say that, at least." "You-you-you must say that, at least!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Slaughter him, somebody, while I go to the Masters' Room!" Jimmy Silver departed, watch in hand. and wild and weird sounds of woe followed him from the Fourth-Form dormitory.

Apparently his chums were carrying out his instructions. Jimmy hurried to the Masters' Room, where he found a circle of more or less bald heads gathered in awfully serious

confabulation. Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his glasses. "All the Classical Fourth are required, Silver," he said. "Did you not under-

"The watch has been found, sir," said Jimmy meekly, holding it up. "Bless my soul!" "And who was the thief, Silver?" demanded Mr. Manders sourly.

"N-n-nobody, sir! The watch was hidden in the dormitory chimney, andand we found it there." Mr. Bootles drew a breath of relief. "Then it was only a foolish practical joke, after all," he said. "I am very

glad to hear it." "The practical joke, if such it was, should be severely punished!" snapped Mr. Manders. "Were you the person concerned, Silver?"

"Nunno, sir!" "Can you give us the person's name?" asked Mr. Bull.

"Nobody has admitted hiding the watch, sir," said Jimmy, which was strictly true. Tubby Muffin certainly hadn't admitted it, and was never likely to. "We-we thought from the first that it had been hidden somewhere by some silly joking idiot-I-I mean, a practical joker, and-and-"

"Well, well, the matter has ended satisfactorily," said Mr. Bootles. "I am glad it is no worse. I shall certainly make endeavours to discover the foolish practical joker, and punish him as he deserves! You may go, Silver!"

And Jimmy Silver went gladly. The masters' session then proceeded to the more important business, which had been postponed by the time they had spent on the dormitory mystery, and once more there was a murmur of august voices and a wagging of bald heads.

But the further proceedings of the masters in conncil had no interest for the junior portion of Rookwood School. Jimmy Silver looked for his chums, and found them in the Common-room, where he handed the famous gold ticker to

Valentine Mornington. Morny, with considerable satisfaction, attached it to his chain.

The watch had been recovered, and the All the Fourth were glad to learn that watch isn't found soon it may be it was not a case of theft, but nothing more than one of Tubby Muffin's weird devices for raising the wind.

But their wrath against the fat schemer knew no bounds. It was generally agreed that it was necessary for Tubby to have a lesson. Tubby did not see the necessity, and

kept carefully out of the way of his incensed Form-fellows that evening. But at bed-time he could keep out of the way no longer, and then the wrath of the Classical Fourth was visited upon

his devoted head. By the time Tubby Mulin crawled into hed he was feeling as if he had been through a succession of air-raids and earthquakes, which was certainly no

more than he deserved. For some time after lights out, Tubby Muffin's voice was raised in woeful complaint, till a number of missiles from various parts of the dormitory added to his sufferings, but silenced his vocal ex-

pression of them. After that Tubby Muffin suffered in

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT 1

BARKER, THE BOUNDER!

Published

Every Wonday

(Continued from the previous page.)

and, walking to the centre of the Once more Barker had nipped in in the field, he tossed with Pankley, the Bag- nick of time. shot captain, for choice of ends.

his back to the sun. Pheep!

A moment or so later the referee's whistle rang out, and the game started. Immediately there was a roar of derisive cheering from the fellows who lined the ropes.

"Go it, the babes!"

"Don't kick the ball too hard, you'll break your toes!"

Pankley collared the ball at the commencement, and ran it down field. He had little difficulty in dodging the halves, but suddenly Barker came tear-

ing across the field, and cleared with a hefty kick. "By gad!" exclaimed Mason. "That

was pretty neat. I'd no idea that rotter could play." "Look!" cried Appleby. "Pankley's

got it again! He'll score this time! It's a goal for- My hat! The bounder's cleared again!"

The ball sailed through the air to mid-Pankley won, and decided to play with | field, where Bob Travers was standing.

but it was not long ere he was robbed. The Bagshot forwards gained possession of the ball, and raced down the field I with it.

They made easy progress, and had very little difficulty in shouldering off the Redclyffe halves.

Barker made a determined effort to beat back the attack, but Pankley slipped the ball to Potter in the nick of as the first. time, and, racing on, the latter scored with a neat, low shot.

Goal! There came a roar from the Bagshot supporters, and also from Mason & Co. "That's number one," remarked Mason. "I wonder how long they'll be getting the other nine?"

Number two was not long in coming, however.

This time it was Pankley himself who scored—a shot that gave the goalkeeper no chance whatever.

Again Mason & Co. cheered exultantly. Bob Travers and Jackson and Turner, | tripped Pankley in the penalty area. and even Barker, did their utmost to lessen the margin of goals, but success did not come their way.

Matthews of the Third played up well, and the others did their best, but they were not up to the standard of the strong Bagshot fellows.

Small wonder, therefore, that before Bob fastened on to the ball quickly, the interval Pankley & Co. increased their score to five to nil!

At half-time there was a roar of gloating chuckles from Mason & Co.

The match was turning out as they had hoped, and already Mason had visions of seeing himself captain of the junior eleven.

Pheep! The second half commenced very much

The Bagshot forwards raced towards | ten to nil. the Redclyffe goal, and only by a superhuman effort did Barker clear.

by his play. Had it not been for his stout defence ! Bagshot must have scored at least

twenty goals by now. He was playing splendidly, and in the ordinary way would have been well worth his place in the eleven.

was added, and a few minutes later came up before the bully.

one of the fags, losing his temper, From the resultant kick Pankley had little difficulty in scoring, thus increasing the score to seven goals to nil.

"I reckon Bagshot ought to give the babes one for luck!" remarked Mason. "It'll prevent 'em from shedding tears if they do. It's a jolly shame to make the kids stick to it like this!"

The "kids," however, had no objection to sticking to it.

They were trying their very hardest, but they could not make up in skill what they lacked in weight. The Bagshot fellows were considerably

heavier, and it was this that helped them to make such a heavy score, Two more goals were added, and just

I on time Potter, after running half the length of the field, raised the score to The whistle blew, and, thoroughly tired out, the Redelyffe team trooped off the

The bounder had astonished everybody field, beaten, but by no means discouraged. Mason & Co. chuckled with delight.

"The prams are outside, you kids," remarked Mason to the fags. "The nurses will be coming along presently." "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knock off, Mason, you utter cad!" It was not long before another goal | cried Bob Travers vehemently, as he

"Hallo, Travers! Sorry you got whacked!" said Mason exultantly. "It's a pity--- Here, come back! We want to say a few words to you!"

Bob Travers stopped. "Well, what do you want?" he asked

impatiently. Mason turned to his supporters.

"You fellows have seen the result of this match," he said. "I think you all agree with me that Travers has been guilty of letting down the Form?" "He has."

"It's agreed, then, that we refuse to acknowledge Travers as captain of the team from this day, and that we elect a new captain to take his place?"

"What-ho!"

"D'you hear that, Travers?" said Mason gloatingly. "We're fed up with you, and we're going to elect a new

"Oh, rats!" growled Bob.

And with that he made his way to the school.

(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.)

SCHOOLBOY'S TREACHERY

A Splendid Long Complete Story of

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

By MARTIN GLIFFORD

ist Chapter. Dicky Bird on the War-Path.

"Stop a mimute, Richards!" Chunky Todgers rolled after Frank Richards & Co., as they came out of the lumber schoolhouse at Cedar Creek after morning lessons.

Frank glanced round.

"What's wanted, Chunky?" "I've got a message for you," said Chunky. "I met Gunten on the trail this morning, coming to school."

"Oh, bother Gunten!" "Come along!" said Bob Lawless. "Never mind Gunten! We're going to play leap-frog to keep ourselves warm till dinner. Tuck in your tuppenny, Chunky!"

"But Gunten said--" "Bless Gunten! We don't want to know what Gunten said. You're an ass,

Chunky, to talk to that galoot!" "I didn't talk to him-he talked to me," answered Chunky; "and he gave me a message for Frank Richards." "Only some cheek, most likely," said | play."

Vere Beauclerc. Frank looked rather impatient.

He did not want to hear anything from Kern Gunten, the Swiss fellow who had been turned out of Cedar Creek School, and who had always been on ill terms with the Co. Gunten was at Hillcrest now-the new

school along the Thompson trail—and Frank desired to see and hear nothing more of him.

But Chunky Todgers was evidently full of news, so Frank good-naturedly gave him a hearing. "Well, pile in, and cut it short,

Chunky," he said. "I like that!" said Chunky warmly. "I jolly well won't tell you now, but you'll

be jolly surprised when Dicky Bird comes along and kicks up a shindy, if I don't tell you!" "Dicky Bird?" repeated Frank.

"That Hillcrest chap," said Chunky. "He's coming over here to-day to wallop]

you, Richards." Frank flushed a little. "Did Gunten tell you that?" he asked.

"I guess so. Gunten says that Bird is awfully mad about the trick you fellows played on his headmaster, old Peckover, and-"

"What rot!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Dicky Bird doesn't like old Peckover any more than we do."

"Well, he couldn't like him," agreed Chunky Todgers. "Nobody could. But | tempered-looking fellow, with merry eyes he thinks it's up against his school, you and an almost perpetual smile. know, and Gunten says he's going to wipe it out by thrashing Richards."

"Perhaps the thrashing may work out the other way round," remarked Frank. "I don't want to row with Bird, but he ! ean try it if he likes."

"Perhaps it's only Gunten's rot," suggested Beauclerc. "He's tried before to of Hillcrest at that moment. stir up trouble between us and the Hillcrest chaps."

"Correct!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "More likely than not. Don't get your said nothing of the sort."

Frank Richards nodded. On second thoughts he considered that I very probable indeed; he did not trust ! Kern Gunten an inch.



THE ROAD-AGENTS AT WORK!

"Well, that's the message," said ! Chunky Todgers; "and I guess that if on?" Dicky Bird comes over here swanking, we'll collar him, and ride him home on a rall. That will take some of the cheek out of him."

"No fear!" answered Frank promptly. "If he comes over here to fight me, he can have his way, and we'll give him fair

"You're an ass, Chunky; Gunten has been stuffing you. Now then, let's get going; we don't want to freeze while Chunky is | bit, to cool you down!" exercising his lower jaw."

"Right you are!" said Frank cheerily. It was a cold, sharp day, and the wind from the distant Rocky Mountains was

keen and searching. Some of the Cedar Creek fellows were already playing leap-frog, and Frank Richards & Co. joined them.

They were soon going strong, and in the excitement of the game they forgot all about Chunky's message from the

But they were to be reminded of it before long. About a quarter of an hour later Bob

Lawless, glancing towards the gates, uttered a sudden exclamation. "Hallo! Here's that Hillcrest galoot!"

Frank Richards was about to make a run, but he stopped and looked round. Dicky Bird, of Hillcrest School, had just entered the gates.

He looked round the school enclosure, and came directly towards the crowd of schoolboys.

The leap-frog went on, but Frank Richards and his chums did not join in it They waited for Dicky Bird to come up,

watching him curiously. Dicky Bird was generally a very good- and found three fellows awaiting them But he was not looking good-tempered

His face was dark and angry, his brows knitted, and his eyes gleaming under them.

If ever a fellow looked as if he were "hunting for trouble," it was Dicky Bird

The three chums did not speak as he came up; but their doubts on the subject of Gunten's message had vanished now. For once in a way it appeared that rag out, Franky; very likely Dicky Bird | Kern Gunten had been speaking the

frozen truth. Dicky Bird strode up to the group, and his eyes glittered at Frank Richards, whom he singled out at once.

"I've come for you, Richards!" he said. I circle, the fight began.

"Thanks!" answered Frank. "Anything

"I dare say you know why I've come." "Well, I think I can guess," assented Frank. "I don't quite see why you should look for trouble with me, though."

"I've come to give you a hiding." Frank shrugged his shoulders. "Go ahead!" he answered.

"By gum!" exclaimed Bob Lawless "Ten to one he won't come!" said Bob. | angrily. "You cheeky jay, I've a jolly good mind to run you down to the creek, and put your head under the ice for a

"Not a bad idea," sald Beauclerc. Dicky Bird looked at them grimly.

"I've come here alone," he said. "I depended on getting fair play here, so I wouldn't bring a crowd and make a shindy of it. I've left my friends outside. But they'll come in fast enough if I don't get fair play!"

"Oh, ring off!" snapped Bob. "You'll get plenty of fair play. I dare say Frank can knock some of the impudence out of

"I'll try!" remarked Frank.

"Well, will you come along into the timber?" said Dicky Bird. "I suppose we can't fight here under Miss Meadows' windows. Perhaps you'd like your schoolmistress to come out and stop us, though."

"That's a caddish thing to say," said Frank quietly, though his eyes gleamed. "I'll come where you like."

"Come on, then!" With that Dicky Bird turned and strode away to the gates. Frank Richards & Co. followed him at

once, and Chunky Todgers joined in. Two or three more of the Cedar Creek fellows followed on their track.

They entered the timber by the creek, under the trees-Fisher and Watson and Blumpy, of Hillcrest.

The trio were looking grim. "Oh, here you are!" said Fisher. "Get your jackets off!" Dicky Bird threw his jacket off, and

pushed back his shirtsleeves. Frank Richards followed his example. Frank was angry now, and he was quite

ready for a determined "scrap." The resentment of the Hillcrest fellows on the subject of a "stunt" played on their headmaster seemed to him unreasonable; and Dicky Bird's manner was disagreeable enough.

"Ready?" asked Bird. "Quite!"

"Then come on!" And, in the midst of an interested

The 2nd Chapter. The Fight!

"Go it, Franky!" Frank Richards faced his adversary with calm coolness, though his eyes were gleaming.

He was as angry now as Dicky Bird, though with a good deal more reason, as I he looked at it.

But he did not allow his wrath to affect his coolness. Dicky Bird led the attack, and he

came on hard, and in a few minutes he showed that he knew a good deal about boxing. He was a good deal more burly in build

than Frank Richards, heavier and perhaps stronger; but Frank was fit all through, and he was very quick and nimble on his feet. He gave ground a little at first, and Fisher & Co. grinned as they saw him

attack. But they ceased to grin all of a sudden, as Dicky Bird, taken in by a clever feint, rushed in, and was stopped by a sudden and terrific drive on the chest. There was plenty of weight behind that drive, and it toppled the Hillcrest cham-

Bump! Dicky Bird sat down, gasping. "Well hit!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

pion fairly over.

"Bravo, Franky!" Frank Richards stepped back to give his opponent plenty of time to rise.

There were no rounds in the fight; but Frank was not a fellow to take advantage of an enemy. Dicky Bird staggered to his feet.

He had apparently started with the belief that it was a simple matter to administer a "hiding" to the slim English schoolboy; but it had dawned upon him now that that was a mistake.

He came on again, breathing rather hard, and much more cautiously. The Cedar Creek fellows looked on with keen interest. Frank did not look wholly a match

for his muscular adversary; but he was more scientific, and quicker in his movements, and his pluck was unlimited. He had to stand up to some severe

punishment for some minutes, but he broke away, and stalled Dicky Bird off successfully, and it was the Hillcrest fellow who went down again.

him over, and he was slower to rise. Frank Richards stood panting a little. He dabbed at his nose with his hand-

and the handkerchief came away very

Dicky Bird blinked up at him, with a new respect in his expression. He rose slowly to his feet, Frank standing back.

'You're a good plucked 'un, Richards," he said. "I guess I shouldn't have thought it of you, considering."

"I don't see why not," answered Frank. "What the dickens do you mean?" "I mean, considering that you're a

swanking rotter-" "That's enough! Come on!"

"I'm ready!" The fight was harder and faster from

that point. Frank Richards had a good deal more punishment to take; but it was casy for the onlookers to see that he was getting the upper hand now.

signs of severe damage on both sides, but the adversaries hardly seemed to feel Both were fighting hard; but superior skill was telling, as strength was spent.

As bare knuckles were used, there were

Dicky Bird was driven back and back till he was driven through the ring, the onlookers grinning and making room for

He brought up against a tree, when he could go no farther, and he defended himself-desperately, without being able to recover ground. But he was evidently failing.

His breath came in short, quick gasps, and his defence was growing fatigued and feeble. But his pluck was boundless, and there was no sign of surrender. Both his eyes were blinking painfully,

and his nose was streaming red, but ne still fought on undauntedly. Frank Richards dropped his hands at last, stepping back.

"That's enough!" he said. "You're done, Dicky Bird, and you may as well own up to it."

"I'm not done!" gasped Dicky. "I'll lick you yet! Come on!" And as Frank Richards did not come on, Dicky Bird rushed to the attack,

though unsteadily and breathlessly. It was of little use. Frank's hands came up again like lightning, and his fists beat a tattoo upon the Hillcrest fellow's face, regard-

less of his feeble defence. There was a bump as Dicky Bird went down at last.

He lay gasping. Frank stood back, dabbing his heated face with his handkerchief.

Dicky Bird made an effort to rise, but he sank back again. He was "done' now beyond denial. Fisher stepped forward to help him up, and Bird stood unsteadily, leaning on his

chum. His head was swimming, and he had to cling to Fisher-for support. . "Licked!" said Chunky Todgers trium-

driven round the ring by Bird's heavy phantly. "Dry up, Chunky!" said Frank: "Well, he is licked, isn't he?" de-

manded Chunky. "Shut up, I tell you!" "Yes, I guess I'm licked," said Dicky Bird bitterly. "You're a better man than I thought, Richards. You've done me this time, but I'll try you again another

time." "Just as you like," said Frank. "Now you can go swanking as much as you like," said Dicky savagely.

Frank looked at him steadily. "That's the second time you've said that," he remarked. "I don't quite see what you're getting at, Dicky Bird. I don't see what you've come and picked a quarrel with me at all for." "You know well enough," gasped

Dicky Bird. "Ow!" "What does it matter to you if we japed your headmaster the other day? You don't like the man."

"What's that got to do with It?" growled Dicky Bird. "You can go for Peckover as much as you like, for all I care."

"But I thought-" "Then what have you come over here at all for, if it's not that?" exclaimed

Bob Lawless. "Richards knows!" groaned Dicky Bird, mopping his nose. "I'm blest if I know," said Frank.

"Gunten told Todgers this morning you were coming over on the warpath, be-This time it was an upper-cut, landing | cause of the trick we played on Pecklike a hammer on his chin, that rolled over. That's all I know." Dicky blinked at him painfully.

"I don't understand that," he said. "I came over to wallop you-ow!-because kerchief as he waited for Dicky Bird, you told Gunten I was afraid of you, and

Published

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was dodging you. It was a thumping lie, and you know it."

Frank started.

"Because I told Gunten-" he began. "Oh, you silly chump! I haven't told Gunten anything. I never speak to the rotter!"

"Wha-a-at?" So Gunten told you I had been swanking and bragging, and you were silly ass enough to believe him?" exclaimed Frank hotly. "You chump! Hadn't you sense enough to see that Gunten was

pulling your leg?" "Oh!" exclaimed Dicky Bird. "Youyou didn't say-"

"Of course I didn't, you fathead! Why should I? Haven't you known Gunten long enough to know that he's a lying worm?" "Oh!" said Dicky Bird.

He blinked doubtfully at Frank Richards.

Fisher whistled.

"I guess Gunten is rather a liar," remarked Watson. "But-but I-I never thought---"

"You don't seem to grow much brains at Hillcrest," said Bob Lawless scornfully. "If you had any hoss-sense, you'd known that Frank wouldn't talk in that strain. Gunten was putting you up to come over here and fight Franky, because he's afraid to come himself, the coyote." "Oh!" said Dicky again, blankly. "1-

I've been taken in."

Frank smiled faintly. "Of course you have," he said; "and we've had this scrap for nothing. You might have explained before we started."

"I-I thought-" Frank held out his hand, smiling.

"Give me your fist," he said. "We're both pretty well licked, and honours for Gunten and scalp him."

Dicky Bird shook hands with the Cedar Creek fellow in a very shamefaced way.

sorry." "All serene!"

The late adversaries put on their jackets, both of them feeling very spent and sore.

The Hillcrest fellows moved away through the timber, Dicky Bird grunting dismally as he went.

Do I look very bad, you fellows?' asked Frank, rubbing his face.

"You look a picture, I guess," said Bob Lawless. "You'd better come and bathe your face before Miss Meadows sees it."

Frank Richards did the best he could for his damaged face, but it was certainly a "picture" when he had done all that was possible, and there was no hope of the damage escaping Miss Meadows' observation.

His nose was swollen and red, and one of his eyes had a dark shade round it. As matters had turned out, it was no comfort to him to know that his adversary's state was a good deal worse.

All his wrath was centred upon Kern Gunten, who had wreaked his malice in this

cunning way, keeping safe out of the combat himself. And Frank Richards was determined that the cunning Swiss should pay the piper at

The 3rd Chapter. In Disgrace.

"Richards!" Miss Meadows' voice was very severe as she caught sight of Frank's face at the if he saw him. dinner-table.

"Yes, Miss Meadows?" mumbled Frank. "What have you done to your face?"

"Nothing, ma'am!"

the very earliest opportunity.

"What! You have a black eye, Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "I-I believe I have, ma'am. But-but

I didn't do it," explained Frank. Some of the fellows along the table

grinned; but Miss Meadows frowned. "I did not suppose you had given yourself a black eye, Richards. You have been

fighting!" "Ye-e-es, Miss Meadows!" "I did not know you were a quarrelsome

boy, Richards." "Oh, Miss Meadows!"

"And with which of your schoolfellows have you been fighting?" "None at all, ma'am. A-a chap out-

side the school. It-it was all a mistake," stammered Frank. "We're really good friends, only there was-was a sort of misunderstanding."

"You should not allow a misunderstanding to go to that length, Richards. You are not in a state to appear in class."

" Oh!"

"You will be sent home this afternoon," added Miss Meadows sternly, "and you will not return to school, Richards, until your appearance is less likely to reflect discredit on Cedar Creek."

Frank Richards sat crimson and dumb. The blame of the misunderstanding rested rather upon Dicky Bird than upon himself. He had had no choice in the matter; but he could not very well explain all that to the schoolmistress.

He said nothing. But he was feeling extremely uncom-

(Continued from the previous page.)

his injuries-during dinner, and he was glad when the meal was over, and he escaped from Miss Meadows' severe

He went out into the playground with his chums, who were sympathetic.

Missing lessons was certainly not a misfortune in itself, but to be sent home because his appearance reflected discredit on the school was a punishment Frank felt more than he would have felt a caning.

"It's rotten, old chap!" said Bob, with great sympathy. "I reekon, though, Dicky Bird will get ragged to death by old Peckover when he shows up at Hill- belt of spruce-thickets. crest with two black eyes."

growled Frank. "What am I going to | into the trail, either towards the camp | vidual's observation, evidently, while the Frank. say to your pater, Bob?"

"Tell him the facts, old chap, and he won't blame you," said Bob comfortingly. "Feel very bad?"

"Ow! Yes! I don't want to mooch about by myself at the ranch nursing a dashed black eye," said Frank disconsolately.

"Feel up to another scrap to-day?" asked Bob.

"Fathead! No! I've had enough scrapping for one day!"

"But Gunten wouldn't put up much of a scrap. He's a good deal of a funk," said Bob. "It ought to be a consolation to you to lick him."

"Oh, Gunten!" exclaimed Frank. "I It was to settle accounts with Kern | cool. feel up to a scrap if it's Gunten. Yes, Gunten. rather!" Bob chuckled.

"Well, then, you needn't waste the afternoon. Look for Gunten."

"But he'll be at school! I can't march into Peckover's class-room and punch his

nose, ass!" "To-day's Wednesday," answered Bob. "When Gunten was at Cedar Creek he

used to be excused lessons on Wednesdays to drive the post-waggon. It will be the same at Hillcrest. This afternoon Gunten will be taking the post-waggon out of Cedar Camp on the southern

Frank's eyes gleamed. are divided. I'm not going to fight you he exclaimed. "I'll jolly well be on the again, Dicky Bird; but I'm going to look | trail when Gunten comes out of camp, Bob! I want to reward him for this nose and this eye! The awful rotter!"

"I reckoned it would console you!" "I-I was taken in," he mumbled. "I'm | chuckled Bob. "I wish I could come with you. But you could handle two or three Guntens on your own." "You bet!"

Frank Richards brightened up considerably.

naturally wrathy, and he felt, too, that i was in sight. the Swiss ought not to go unpunished after his treacherous trick.

Beauclerc, with a smile. "Gunten won't give me much trouble. I | The wintry sun glinted on a steel shouldn't like another tussle with Dicky | barrel.

Bird again yet awhile." Frank remained with his chums till the bell rang for afternoon classes. Then, as the Cedar Creek fellows went

into the school-room, Frank fetched out his horse. There had been no snow for some days,

but there was still a powdering of white on the trails.

Frank Richards mounted, and trotted away through the timber.

- When he reached the fork of the trail, instead of keeping on towards the Lawless Ranch as usual, he turned at the fork, and rode on in the direction of Cedar

This brought him within sight of Vere Beauclerc's home, the little shack by the creek where the Cherub lived with his father, the remittance-man.

Frank glanced towards the shack, which stood back from the trail, as he trotted by, with a salute ready for Mr. Beauclerc

A horseman had just dismounted outside the little wooden building, and was looking in at the doorway.

The man's back was turned to Frank Richards, but he knew him well enough. It was Poker Pete, the "sport" of Thompson.

Frank gave his horse a touch, and rode on faster. He did not want to see Mr. Beauclerc

in the presence of Poker Pete; and there was a shade on his brow as he rode on. It seemed clear, from Poker Pete's visit to the shack, that the remittance-man

was falling into bad company again. It was no business of Frank's, of course; but he felt keenly for his chum, who had been sorely troubled in the past by the

recklessness of the remittance-man. Frank dismissed the matter from his mind, however, and broke into a gallop as he left the timber behind and came out on the open plain on the south side

of Cedar Camp. He halted when the chimneys of the camp were in sight in the distance across | But he was soon undeceived on that the plain.

The grassland was marked by the trail that ran southwards from the camp towards Silver Creek, and beyond that the railway—many a long mile distant—towards the American border.

Here and there by the trail clumps of trees grew, and in one of the clumps Frank Richards came to a halt and his head, carried away by the bullet. jumped off his horse.

Leaving the animal to crop the herbage | "You'll get the next one through your under the trees, Frank posted himself on cabeza if you don't put up your paws, the edge of the clump and watched the you fool!" exclaimed the horseman

trail. That afternoon, sooner or later, the fortable-apart from the discomfort of | post-waggon would leave Cedar Camp, | then.

driven by Kern Gunten, who was the sen of the postmaster at Thompson.

Frank knew that he was in time for it; in fact, that he had a considerable time to wait. But as it was possible that Gunten might be earlier than usual, he had taken no chances and lost no time. As it turned out, he had a long wait

before him. He moved to and fro under the trees to keep himself warm while he waited and watched the trail.

There was nothing to be seen on the wide plain save the nodding tops of the trees, and in the distance an occasional steer wandering from the Lawless Ranch. Frank became more attentive as he heard a distant sound of hoof-strokes, and his glance turned quickly towards the distant. Cedar Camp.

But the post-waggon was not coming. Two horsemen appeared in view some distance up the trail, emerging from a

Frank glanced at them carelessly, ex-"I'd rather be ragged than sent home!" | pecting to see them turn from the plain or towards him.

To his surprise they rode into a clump | the post-waggon. of timber close beside the trail, and did not appear again. He watched the clump for some

minutes. It was about a hundred yards from the trees which concealed himself, in the direction of Cedar Camp. If the horsemen had emerged he could

not have failed to see them. But they did not emerge. A quarter of an hour passed, and there

was no sign of them. Frank was more and more astonished. of the trees, and, still in cover, Frank He himself had an object in keeping | climbed into the saddle. under cover by the trail and watching.

But what game were the two horsemen playing? The same game as his own, evidently.

But what could their object be? He could not suppose that they, too, had a personal quarrel with the driver of the post-waggon.

Yet, if they were not watching for the post-waggon, what could their object possibly be in concealing themselves in the timber beside the trail?

Frank Richards' thoughts were interrupted by a sound of hoofs and the rumble of the post-waggon in the distance.

"My hat! I never thought of that!" | trail towards the camp and saw the big | stopped the post-waggon. vehicle come into sight.

Two horses were drawing the waggon at a trot, and Kern Gunten sat in the driver's-seat, the reins in his hands. The Swiss was alone, and whistling

carelessly as he drove on his horses. Frank watched, his heart beating, forgetful now of the purpose with which he had come there. He was wondering whether the two

horsemen in the further clump would His feelings towards Gunten were | "show up" now that the post-waggon He had not long to wait now. As the post-waggon came almost

"You feel equal to it, Frank?" asked | abreast of the clump of timber there was a sudden sound of brushing branches, "Oh, yes!" said Frank, smiling, too. | and two riders darted out into the trail.

The challenge rang sharply on the keen air, and it reached Frank Richards' ears a hundred yards along the trail. Kern Gunten started violently, and drew in his horses.

> The 4th Chapter. The Road-Agents.

Frank Richards caught his breath. There could be no doubt now. One of the unknown riders had a revolver in his hand, which was bearing

upon the astonished Swiss schoolboy in the post-waggon. The other had gone to the horses' heads, and was holding them in. It was evidently a robbery that was

intended, and Frank knew there was likely to be a good quantity of "dust' on the post-waggon on its way from Thompson down to Kamloops.

Amazing as it was in the law-abiding Thompson Valley, there was no further doubt; the two men were "road-agents," and they intended to plunder the postwaggon.

If Frank had needed more proof it was there, in the fact that both men now had their faces hidden, each of them wearing a strip of canvas tied over his face in the way of a mask, with slits cut for the eyes and mouth.

That was proof enough that they were thieves. The man with the pistol rode closer to the waggon, still keeping his weapon

aimed at Kern Gunten. It was hardly necessary, for the Swiss was certainly not likely to offer resistance to armed marauders.

"Put up your paws!" Gunten stared at the men from the driver's seat. "What stunt's this?" he asked.

His look implied that he suspected the two horsemen of being practical jokers, attempting to "take a rise" out of him. point.

The trigger began to rise. "Put up your paws, you fool!" growled the horseman.

"I guess-" Crack! There was a loud yell of alarm from Gunten as his hat went spinning from

His face was deadly white now.

menacingly. Gunten's hands went up fast enough but their relief did not equal that of

He realised at last that the masked riders were in deadly carnest, and that been touch and go. it was a robbery that was intended.

"Keep them up!" snapped the ruffian. "I-I guess so!" stammered Gunten. "Keep that shooter away! I guess I'm not giving trouble."

"You'd better not!"

"I-I say-" "Stow your chinwag! Get out on the trail!" grunted the horseman. "Sharp!" Gunten descended from the waggon, a matter of some difficulty with his hands clasped over his head, but he dared not lower them.

He-stumbled into the trail, and almost fell, but pulled himself up, and stood with his knees knocking together.

It was pretty plain that the roadagents had no interference to fear from Kern Gunten.

"Get along, yonder!" Gunten obeyed the gesture, and

was holding the horses. He was to be kept under that indiman with the revolver "went through"

The latter clambered off his horse into the waggon, returning the pistol to his

He drew a knife, and bent down by the pile of sacks containing letters and packets. Gunten watched him dumbly.

Frank Richards, from the distance, was watching, too. He had called softly to his horse, and the animal joined him under the edge

His heart was thumping, but he was

He had his riding-whip, and he re-

solved to intervene in the rascally robbery that was proceeding on the In a tussle with two road-agents, of

thinking of that. But a sudden charge, when they believed themselves alone and unobserved, would flurry them, and if they believed that there were other foes at hand, it was likely enough that they would be scared

from their prey. Frank was thinking of the hard-working miners of the upper valley, whose dust, the fruit of hard toil, was in the grasp His heart beat as he looked along the of the conscienceless rascals who had

by while the robbery proceeded; and this section," answered Frank. there was no help at hand.

It was a risky trick he intended to | English schoolboy curiously. "My word! play, but in the excitement of the You've got an eye there; Richards! moment he hardly thought of the risk. He drew a deep breath, and set his

teeth, as he moved out of the timber into the trail. A touch of the whip, and his horse broke into a gallop.

At top speed, Frank Richards swept up the trail towards the halted waggon, shouting at the top of his voice: "Come on! Here they are! Billy Cook, this way! Don't let them get away!"

The 5th Chapter. By Luck and Pluck !

"Come on! This way!" yelled Frank, as he charged up the trail. The man in the waggon jumped up, with a curse on his lips.

Frank Richards, tearing up the trail at

a frantic gallop, was on the scene in a moment. The man at the horses' heads turned in his saddle, but before he could raise a hand, Frank was upon him, and the heavy butt of his riding-whip swept through the

air, and struck the ruffian full in the There was a fearful yell as the horseman tumbled out of his saddle and landed in the tough grass.

The man in the waggon had caught at his revolver for a second, but he did not draw it again. With one bound he was out of the

"Come on!" roared Frank.

vehicle, and in the saddle of the horse waiting by the wheels. Scarcely had he touched the saddle

when the horse was in motion, galloping off the trail into the prairie. He had not given one glance at his comrade, who had fallen under Frank's riding-whip butt; his only thought was for his own safety at the sudden attack. So swift were his movements that

the plain when the rider vanished in the grass at full career. "This way!" shouted Frank again, with all the strength of his lungs. "Don't let

them get away! Shoot! Shoot!" The fallen man scrambled up, half blinded by the blow he had received

across the face. He threw himself across his horse, and drove it out into the plain, setting it in furious motion before his leg was fairly

over the saddle. The trick had succeeded like a charm. Both the rascals had the impression that a party had come upon them, and that only hard riding could save them. They were not likely to suspect, even

if they had had time to think, that a

schoolboy had charged them "on his own" without help at hand. As the two rascals vanished on the grassland, Frank shouted again and again, his voice ringing over the prairie. Bending low over their horses, spurring

as if for their lives, the two road agents vanished from sight. Frank halted, breathless, in the trail. Kern Gunten was staring blankly.

The sudden turn of events had dumbfounded him. "Good luck!" gasped Frank. The two road-agents were probably feeling relieved at getting clean away;

Frank Richards'.

The trick had succeeded, but it had

"Thank goodness they're gone!" he duffer, get aboard and get a move on."

"Gunten, you moon-struck "Frank Richards!" stuttered Gunten.

"Yes. Get going, you duster!"

"Where are the others?" "What others?"

"Isn't there anybody with you?" yelled Gunten, in astonishment. Frank laughed breathlessly.

"No; it was a trick. I was trying to

scare them off. I've succeeded, too!" "Great gophers!" gasped Kern Gunten. He stared round him, as if more willing to believe his eyes than his ears, but the trail was deserted, and he had to believe. "Well, carry me home to die!" ejacu-

lated Gunten. "Of all the nerve-" "Get the waggon going, you ass!" exclaimed Frank. "They may come back." "I guess I-I-I'm kind of rattled!" stumbled along to where the other rascal | gasped Gunten. "Give a chap time to get his breath."

> "There's no time to waste!" exclaimed He jumped into the waggon, and gathered up the reins.

> "Now get in, if you don't want to be stranded!" he called out. He was already setting the postwaggon in motion, and Kern Gunten

hastily clambered in behind. Frank called to his horse, which trotted after the vehicle as it rolled along the

trail. Gunten sat on the post-sacks, gasping

for breath. The sacks had been sliced by the knife of the road-agent, but he had not had time to lift any of the contents when the alarm had put him to such sudden flight. Frank Richards, in the driver's seat, heedless of Gunten, cracked his whip and urged the horses to a gallop.

He was anxious to get the post-waggon in safety, for it was possible that the robbers might observe the true state of course, he had no chance. He was not affairs from a distance and return for their plunder.

The post-waggon rumbled and jolted on at a great speed behind the two galleping horses, with Frank's steed following behind. "Well, this beats Banagher!" said Kern Gunten, recovering himself at last.

cut the waggen, Richards.' "No doubt about that." "Some rustlers from over the border, I

"I guess those galoots were going to clean

He felt that he could not stand idly | "They seem to know their way about

"That's so, too." Gunten eyed the

What are you doing out of school?" Frank knitted his brows as he remem-

bered what had brought him to the Cedar Camp trail. "I was sent home for fighting," he said. "And I came along here to wait for you, Gunten, and give you a thumping licking for telling lies to Dicky Bird, and making him come over and row with

Gunten backed away in the waggon. "Oh, you needn't be alarmed!" exclaimed Frank contemptuously. "I'm not going to touch you now."

"I-I guess-" faltered Gunten. "Oh, dry up!" Frank Richards gave the Swiss no further attention. After what had happened, he did not

feel inclined to carry out his purpose; his wrath had evaporated now. He drove on in silence, while Gunten sat biting his lip:

Silver Creek was in sight when Frank relinquished the reins to Gunten. "Safe now!" he said. Gunten nodded, and took the reins.

Frank jumped out on the trail without stopping the waggon, and mounted his Gunten slowed down, and turned his

head. "I-I say, Richards, you're a good plucked one," he said shamefacedly. "I -I guess I'm sorry I spun Dicky Bird that yarn. Look here, I'll tell him I was

only chewing the rag!" "All serene!" said Frank. The waggon rumbled on, and Frank Richards rode away across the plain, heading for the Lawless Ranch.

The afternoon was growing old now; and instead of going on to the ranch, Frank followed the timber trail, to meet Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc coming away from school. Frank's first shouts were still echoing on He passed the shack by the creek once

> Beauclerc there, neither was any smoke rising from the chimney. Apparently the remittance-man was absent. Frank trotted on along the trail under

> the big, leafless boughs, in a very satisfied

more, but there was no sign of Mr.

He had not carried out his purpose, for which he was not sorry now that he was calmer; but he was glad that he had waylaid the post-waggon that afternoon. There were some hard-toiling miners up the valley who would be glad of it, too,

when they heard what had happened. And he had some exciting news for his Frank's eye was still painful, but his

heart was light. He reached the fork of the trail, and caught sight of his chums ahead in the dusk of the forest, and spurred on cheerily to meet them on the trail.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!