

Rookwood Juniors Scheme To End Masters' Strike!

NEW MASTERS BEHAVE DISGRACEFULLY — AND ARE SACKED!

Dr. Chisholm is Compelled to Give In!



The BOYS' FRIEND 1 1/2d

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending March 22nd, 1919.]

Jimmy Silver's Campaign! By Owen Conquest.



THE FAGS' CHAMPION!

The Dandy of the Fourth lashed out, and the bullying master staggered back and collapsed on the floor with a bump. The fags swarmed round, and Snooks up-ended an inkpot over the fallen master.

The 1st Chapter.

The Campaign Begins.

Jimmy Silver smiled as he came along to Hanson's study, in the Fifth Form passage at Rookwood.

There was a buzz of voices in that study, and the voices sounded rather excited.

"The cheeky ass!" That was Edward Hanson's voice, in tones that were almost sulphurous.

"Cheeky cad, you know, by Jove!" That remark came from Talboys, the "nut" of the Fifth.

Jimmy Silver looked in. Hanson and Talboys, Lumsden and Brown major, of the Fifth Form, were gathered in the study, in what appeared to be a council of war.

Jimmy Silver did not need telling that they were discussing Mr. Pumphrey, the new master of the Fifth Form.

Hanson was holding up his hand. "Caned me!" he said. "Me—head of the Fifth! The cad doesn't know that the Fifth Form ain't caned! I'm feeling it now! By gad, you know, I was jolly inclined to let him have my left! I'd have done it, only—"

Hanson paused. Evidently he had been strongly tempted to let the master of the Fifth have his left, only—

There was a very considerable "only." His glance fell on Jimmy Silver in the doorway, and he frowned.

"Cut off!" he said. "Fourth Form fags are barred here! Take your face away!"

Jimmy Silver did not cut off. Instead of that he walked into the study with a cheerful smile.

"I've got something to say to you chaps," he remarked.

The Fifth-Formers glared at him. Jimmy Silver's manner did not display the great respect that was due to the Fifth Form, who were seniors and great guns—in their own estimation, at least.

"Lookin' for a lickin'?" inquired Cecil Talboys.

Jimmy shook his head. "Business!" he explained. "I can see that you're not satisfied with your new Form-master."

"Rank outsider!" growled Hanson. "But it's no business of a blessed fag, that I can see!"

"That's where you're off-side, little one," answered Jimmy Silver affably. "It is my business. We've been holding a council of war in the Lower School—Fourth and Shell and Third—"

"Bother your fag councils of war!" "We're not satisfied with the new masters," continued Jimmy, unheeding.

"And we've made up our minds that they're not going to stay at Rookwood."

"Eh?" "They're a scrubby lot," said Jimmy, while the Fifth-Formers stared at him blankly.

"Not up to Rookwood form, any of them. The Head engaged them in a hurry, when the old staff walked off, and they're really not it. We've made up our minds that it won't do."

"Well, my hat!" said Hanson. "Of all the nerve—"

"Look how the matter stands," argued Jimmy Silver. "The Head dismissed Mr. Bootles because he had his back up. Bootles was really in the right all the time. The rest of the staff backed up Bootles—quite right, too—and went on strike in support. Now the whole lot are putting up in Coombe, and the Head has replaced them with this scratch mob. It's not good enough for Rookwood. Now, is it?"

"Cheeky young ass!" said Lumsden.

"We've had three new masters in the Fourth," went on Jimmy Silver. "Both turned out to be no good—simply N.G. They've gone. Now we're left to a prefect. Old Bulkeley has to waste his time in our Form-room, when he ought to be doing his own work—jolly bad prospect for his exam! It looks like a long job for him, too, for after what's happened already, the Head isn't likely to engage

another master without taking his time about it."

"Well?" "The new French master left, after a row with one of our new Form-masters. There's four of the new lot here now; and that's exactly four too many. My idea is to scoot them out, so that the Head will see that he's got to make it up with the old staff, and let them come back."

"Well, my word!" "We want Mr. Bootles back, you see; he's a really good chap, and we're not going to lose him," said Jimmy Silver.

"Same with you fellows; you'd like to have Mr. Greeley here again, instead of your new man."

"Of course we would! But—"

"Well, if the new man goes, there's a good chance of it. My scheme is, to lead him such a life that he'll be glad to go."

"Oh!" "For instance, we're beginning this afternoon," said Jimmy Silver. "It's close on time for classes. I advise you chaps to be a bit late for lessons."

"When we want advice from the Fourth Form," said Hanson, with crushing sarcasm, "we'll come and ask for it. Thanks all the same."

"Just as you like. Are you fond of tar?"

"Tar?" "And soot?" "Soot?" repeated Hanson. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that first man in the Fifth Form-room this afternoon will get a collection of soot and tar on his napper!" explained Jimmy Silver.

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Hanson. "Do you mean to say you've had the nerve to rig up a booby-trap in our Form-room?"

"Exactly!" "Well!" breathed Hanson.

"Better be a few minutes late, and let your merry Form-master arrive first," advised Jimmy Silver. "First come, first served, you know. Whoever gets that collection on his napper will want some cleaning afterwards. Ta-ta!"

Jimmy Silver sauntered out of the study with that, leaving the Fifth-Formers staring.

The captain of the Fourth strolled into the quadrangle, where his chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, were waiting for him.

"Told 'em?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, with a grin.

Jimmy Silver nodded. "What are they going to do?" "I fancy they're going to let dear old Pumphrey bag the prize-packet."

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Jimmy Silver's Campaign!

(Continued from the previous page.)

answered Jimmy. "They're wild about his caning them. He lacks respect for the noble Fifth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The man isn't really nice," said Raby. "It will serve him right. And he ought to go."

"He'll go all right, if we keep on the war-path," said Jimmy Silver confidently. "It's only a question of sticking to it. Hallo, there's Hansom!"

Hansom of the Fifth came out of the School House with his friends, with a smiling face.

The Fistical Four observed Hansom & Co. going round and speaking to other members of the Fifth, and they drew the conclusion that the Fifth were being warned to be late for lessons that afternoon.

Hansom, with all his loftiness, was evidently acting upon Jimmy Silver's sage advice.

"I think we'll be late for lessons, too," remarked Newcome. "Only a blessed prefect taking us, you know. I want to see Pumphrey catch it."

So did a good many other members of the Classical Fourth.

And so it happened that when George Bulkeley went into the Form-room for work that afternoon he found only five or six of the Fourth-Formers present.

The rest had taken French leave for the occasion.

The 2nd Chapter. Mr. Pumphrey Loses His Temper— And His Job!

Splash!

"Yoooop!"

"My hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "He's got it!"

The new master of the Fifth Form at Rookwood had "got it," unmistakably.

Mr. Pumphrey was a minute or two late for classes, and he came rather hurriedly to the Fifth Form-room, expecting to find all the Fifth there awaiting him.

He did not find the Fifth Form; he found something else.

As he shoved open the door, which was ajar, and strode in, the booby-trap above was set in action.

Mr. Pumphrey hardly knew what happened.

But he knew that something thick and sticky swamped over his head and face, accompanied by clouds of soot.

He staggered back into the passage, spluttering.

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Help! Yoooop!"

The Fistical Four, ensconced in a window-recess down the passage, watched him with friendly interest, keeping out of sight, however.

Not that Mr. Pumphrey could have seen them, or anything else; his vision was entirely obliterated by soot and tar.

He tottered in the passage, gasping and spluttering and howling, in a state of fury to which mere words could not have done justice.

From the end of the passage came a chuckle.

Hansom and most of the Fifth were there, waiting round the corner.

"Help! Yoooop! Yaroooh! Grooogh! Gug-gug-gug-gug-gug!" spluttered the Fifth Form-master. "Ow! Oh! Yah! Yoooop!"

He clutched desperately at the tar streaming over his face, and gouged it from his eyes and nose.

"Whatever is the matter?"

Dr. Chisholm came hurriedly from the direction of the Sixth Form-room, where he was taking the top Form of Rookwood that afternoon.

He blinked in amazement at the blackened figure staggering and gasping and gouging in the passage.

"What—what—what—who—how—who is that?" stammered the Head blankly.

"Yaroooh!"

"Who are you, sir?" thundered the Head. "What does this mean? How dare you enter Rookwood, you—unclean ruffian!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "He doesn't know him!"

"His own father wouldn't know him like that!" chuckled Lovell. "Keep out of sight, for goodness' sake!"

"Yaroooh! Gug-gug-ugug!" Dr. Chisholm!

"Who are you?" thundered the Head. "You unclean, dirty, unpleasant—"

"You old fool, I am Mr. Pumphrey!"

roared the unhappy master of the Fifth, too enraged to care what he was saying.

"Who the dickens do you think I am?"

"Wha-a-at!" Mr. Pumphrey! This language to me!" stammered the Head.

"I am the victim of an outrage!" roared Mr. Pumphrey. "Look at me! I am smothered with something—groogh—tar, I think! It is in my mouth—gug-gug-gug. Look at me! Some young ruffian—grooogh!"

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Pumphrey gouged away more tar and blinked at the Head, palpitating with wrath.

"It was a booby-trap!" he gasped. "It was set above the door! As I entered—groooh! No one is present in the Form-room. It is evidently a plot. I demand that the author of this outrage be flogged and expelled from the school, Dr. Chisholm!"

"I shall certainly punish the author of this outrage, Mr. Pumphrey," said the Head in icy tones. "But a few moments ago you used an expression to me—"

"Look at me!" hooted Mr. Pumphrey.

"Your present condition, sir, does not excuse your lack of respect," said the Head. "You applied an expression to

me—an expression I do not care to repeat—"

"Look at me!" shrieked the new master. "You are wasting time, sir! I demand the instant punishment—"

"It is not for you to demand, Mr. Pumphrey, but to request, with due respect—"

"Rubbish—"

"Nonsense!" roared Mr. Pumphrey. "Do you think I am going to endure this? If you do not instantly flog the young scoundrel who treated me thus I will take the matter into my own hands!"

"Bless my soul!" The Head was pale with anger and indignation. "Mr. Pumphrey, I have had several serious faults to find with you already. But for the fact that, owing to—circumstances I was pressed for time, I should certainly never have engaged you as a master in this school! After your conduct, sir, it is quite impossible for you to remain here. The sooner you can leave Rookwood, Mr. Pumphrey, the better I shall be pleased."

"Twadiddle, sir—twadiddle!" hooted Mr. Pumphrey.

"Wha-a-at!"

"I demand the instant—"

"Mr. Pumphrey," thundered the Head, "you are dismissed!"

And with that the incensed old gentleman rustled back to the Sixth Form-room, greatly perturbed, leaving Mr. Pumphrey staring after him with his hands, and giving utterance to a stream of remarks not at all suitable for a Rookwood master.

Jimmy Silver & Co. scuttled away, almost suffocating with laughter.

The plot had worked better than the juniors had dared to hope.

The "blackleg" who had taken Mr. Greely's post was dismissed, and there was great satisfaction among the junior campaigners.

The 3rd Chapter.

Morny Takes a Hand.

Jimmy Silver & Co. came in rather late to lessons, and Bulkeley of the Sixth gave them a stern look.

It was no pleasure to Bulkeley to take the Fourth Form in the absence of a Form-master, and he found his hands full with those cheery youths.

"You are late!" snapped the prefect.

"Sorry, Bulkeley!" said Jimmy Silver meekly.

"Take fifty lines each!"

"Oh!"

"And go to your places!" growled the captain of Rookwood.

The juniors obeyed meekly.

As a prefect Bulkeley's word was law, but as a Form-master he found a good many difficulties to contend with.

However, lessons passed off quietly in the Fourth Form-room, the juniors taking a good deal of credit to themselves for not ragging "old Bulkeley."

The Fifth Form-room was deserted that afternoon.

The Fifth had gone in with the Sixth, by the Head's order; so the Head had had his hands full, too.

When the fellows came out of the Form-rooms the Fifth found themselves minus a Form-master.

Mr. Pumphrey had spent most of the afternoon in a bath-room, with soap and hot water galore, in a state of simmering fury.

But after the cleansing process Mr. Pumphrey calmed down a good deal, and reported him of the hot words he had uttered to the Head.

Repentance, however, came too late, as it so often does.

The Head refused even to see him, and the new master of the Fifth was under the necessity of packing his belongings and departing from Rookwood.

Quite a crowd of Rookwooders gathered to see him off.

Hansom of the Fifth clapped Jimmy Silver on the shoulder as the cab drove away to the station.

"Good for you, young 'un!" Hansom condescended to say. "Of course, you couldn't foresee that it would turn out so well. Fancy the silly ass slanging the Head! But it has turned out well, and we're obliged to you."

"My dear man, that's better than an O.B.E.," said Jimmy Silver gravely. "I feel that I haven't lived in vain, if you're obliged to me, Hansom."

Whereat Hansom sniffed and walked away.

The Fifth Form were without a master now, and it was arranged for them to work with the Sixth for the present, under charge of the Head.

That arrangement, the only possible one in the circumstances, was far from satisfactory, however.

But after his unhappy experience with hurriedly-engaged new masters, it was pretty certain that the Head would take his time in selecting a new man.

And ere long, if Jimmy Silver's campaign went on satisfactorily, the hapless Head was to have some more places to fill.

After lessons there was a consultation among some of the Classical Fourth—especially the Fistical Four, Mornington, and Conroy, the Australian, who were the chief leaders in the campaign.

Mornington went in search of his cousin, Mornington II., of the Second Form, and brought him to the end study, where Jimmy Silver & Co. had gathered to tea.

Mornington II.—otherwise "Erbert"—was not looking happy.

He was rubbing his hands in a rueful way as he came in.

"Had it again, 'Erbert?" asked Jimmy Silver.

The fag nodded.

"Mr. 'Ogg is a corker!" he said. "We don't like our noo master! The Third Form chaps rag their noo master, Mr. Mobsby; but our noo master rags us! He's a awful beast!"

"Like him to go?"

"Wot!" said 'Erbert feelingly. "I wish the 'Ead would let Mr. Wiggins come back. He was a good sort. That 'orrid Mr. 'Ogg is down on me!"

"What for?"

"He says as 'ow I drops my aitches," said 'Erbert. "Course I does; I ain't 'ad the eddication of the other fellers, owing to me bein' lost when I was a nipper. Mr. Wiggins made allowance for me, but Mr. 'Ogg don't! He's a reglar beast, he is!"

Valentine Mornington's brow darkened. There was a good deal of affection between Mornington of the Fourth, the fastidious dandy, and his little cousin in the Second Form, once a ragamuffin whom Morny had befriended without knowing his relationship.

"I'm not standin' this, you fellows," said Morny. "The cad's not goin' to rag my cousin. 'Erbert's worth a hundred of him."

"All serene," said Jimmy Silver. "We're on his track. Sit down and wire into these pilchards, 'Erbert. Lovell, old man, coffee for the distinguished guest."

'Erbert grinned and sat down to tea.

In spite of his sufferings in the Second Form-room, he had a good appetite, and he enjoyed tea in the end study.

There was considerable discussion over tea.

The somewhat harebrained scheme of Jimmy Silver & Co. was to make life not worth living to the new masters at Rookwood, and fortune seemed to be smiling on them, so far.

They had had unexpectedly complete success with the new master of the Fifth; that Form, like the Fourth, was now without a master.

Mr. 'Ogg, of the Second, was next on the list.

After he had been dealt with, it would be the turn of Mr. Snaggs, of the Shell, and Mr. Mobsby, of the Third.

'Erbert had to leave the end study at last for evening preparation in the Third Form-room, as the fags did their prep in the presence of their Form-master.

Morny's cousin went to the Form-room with a heavy heart.

The want of training in his earlier days placed him under many disadvantages, and Mr. 'Ogg made no allowance for the fact.

Mr. 'Ogg had a bitter tongue and a bad temper, and he was accustomed to holding up 'poor 'Erbert to ridicule before his class, which was little short of torture to the sensitive little fellow.

Owing to the long discussion in the end study, 'Erbert was a minute or two late in the Form-room, and he found Mr. 'Ogg there with the rest of the Second Form.

'Erbert slipped in quietly, hoping to reach his place without attracting the attention of the master, but the hope was vain.

"Mornington!"

"Yes, sir," faltered 'Erbert, turning round.

"You are late!" snapped Mr. 'Ogg.

"On'y a minute, sir," pleaded 'Erbert.

"What?"

"On'y a minute, sir."

"What do you mean by 'on'y'?" thundered Mr. 'Ogg. "Are you not aware that there is an 'l' in the word?"

Some of the Second grinned, and poor 'Erbert crimsoned.

"Yessir!" he gasped.

"Then why do you not pronounce it?" snapped Mr. 'Ogg.

"'Abit, I s'pose, sir."

"'Abit! Do you mean habit?"

"Yus!" gasped 'Erbert, his pronunciation getting worse and worse as he grew more flustered.

"Yus!" repeated Mr. 'Ogg. "Do you mean yes? If you mean yes, why do you not say yes? You are perfectly well able to pronounce the word if you choose, Mornington; I have heard you do so."

"It's you worritin' me, sir!" gasped 'Erbert, in despair. "I torked over so much better with Mr. Wiggins. He didn't worrit a bloke."

"Worrit! There is no such word as worrit in the English language."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Come here, Mornington," said Mr. 'Ogg, taking up his cane. "This is deliberate impertinence on your part. You are not content with being a vulgar little ragamuffin!"

"Mr. Wiggins never called me names, sir," said 'Erbert. "He was a gentleman, he was."

"What! Come here at once."

'Erbert looked obstinate.

"I been caned enough, sir," he said. "You give it to me five times to-day, and I've 'ad enough. My 'ands are swelled now."

Mr. 'Ogg stared at him.

"Will you obey me?" he thundered.

"I ain't goin' to be caned no more to-day, sir," said 'Erbert. "I tell you I've 'ad enough! Let a bloke alone!"

Mr. 'Ogg strode towards the fag, grasped him by the collar, and jerked him out into the middle of the Form-room.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

The cane rose and fell on 'Erbert's shoulders, and the fag's yells filled the Form-room.

The 4th Chapter.

Brought to Book!

"Oh, dear!" gasped 'Erbert.

Mr. 'Ogg, hardly knowing what had happened, sprawled on his back, blinking up in a dazed state.

Valentine Mornington stood with his fists clenched, looking down at him, his eyes blazing.

"You coward!" he exclaimed. "You brute! Touch my cousin again if you dare!"

Mr. 'Ogg sat up dizzily.

He blinked at Mornington of the Fourth as if he could hardly believe his eyes.

"Boy!" he gasped.

"Cad!" retorted Mornington.

"You—you dare—"

"Lay your paws on my cousin again, and you'll see that I dare!" answered Morny disdainfully. "You brute! You ought to be a prison warder, not a master in a school!"

Mr. 'Ogg staggered to his feet.

His red, dyspeptic face was crimson now.

He grasped his cane and started towards Valentine Mornington.

The dandy of the Fourth faced him coolly, his hands clenched and his eyes gleaming.

The Second Form looked on breathlessly.

Such a scene was unheard-of at Rookwood before the strike of the masters.

"I—I will—" gasped Mr. 'Ogg.

"Come on, then!" retorted Mornington recklessly. "Keep back, 'Erbert!"

"Morny—" stammered the terrified fag.

"Keep back!"

Mr. 'Ogg was springing on the dandy of the Fourth, the cane lashing out.

Mornington caught the lash on his left arm, and winced with pain, but Mr. 'Ogg had time only for the one cut.

The next moment his right hand, clenched and as hard as iron, smote the new master full on the mouth, and Mr. 'Ogg staggered back.

Back he went stumbling, to lose his footing and collapse on the floor with a bump.

"Bravo!" gasped Snooks.

The Second Form were all on their feet now, wild with excitement.

Their Form-master had been knocked down before their eyes, and their fear of him was gone.

The fags came swarming out before the desks.

Three or four missiles smote Mr. 'Ogg as he gasped on the floor, and Snooks up-ended an inkpot over him.

There was a roar of rebellious voices in the Form-room, which was heard far beyond the portals of the Second.

The fallen master, inky and dazed and confused, struggled wildly among the mob of fags.

There was a sudden howl of warning from Jones minimus.

"Cave! The Head!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The fags scampered back to their seats. Mornington and 'Erbert were left alone in the middle of the room, with Mr. 'Ogg, inky and breathless, sprawling at their feet.

Dr. Chisholm swept in, with a face that was a study in itself.

Mr. 'Ogg sat up and blinked at him through the ink.

"What—what—what—" stammered the Head. "What does this mean, Mr. 'Ogg?"

"Groooh!"

"Answer me!"

"Gerrrooogh!"

"Mornington, what are you doing here?"

"I came in to protect my cousin, sir," answered Mornington quietly. "That brute was ill-using him."

"What! What, you dare to apply such an expression—"

"It's the truth, sir!"

"Mr. 'Ogg—"

"Wow-wow-wow! Groooh!" That was all Mr. 'Ogg could say, so far, till he got rid of some of the ink from his mouth.

"It's the truth, sir!" said 'Erbert, speaking up at once in defence of his champion. "I've been caned all day! Look at my 'ands! Mr. Wiggins wasn't always a-pitchin' into me like that bloke."

"Boy!"

"Praps I'm a vulgar little ragamuffin," said 'Erbert. "But Mr. Wiggins never called me any such names. He was a gentleman, he was."

"Do you mean to say, boy, that Mr. 'Ogg applied such expressions to you?" exclaimed the Head.

"Course he did, sir! And he's always a-doin' of it. Any of the coves 'ere will tell you. Look at my 'ands!"

"Mr. 'Ogg, kindly come to my study; and you also, Mornington, and your cousin. Boys, keep order here."

A dead silence fell on the fags as the Head left the Form-room, followed by the two Morningtons, Mr. 'Ogg limping and gasping in the rear.

The 5th Chapter.

Fed Up!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at work in the end study.

Although there was a great campaign going on prep had to be done—or, rather, the Fourth-Formers in the kindness of their hearts did prep so as not to worry "old Bulkeley" in class.

The Fistical Four were busy when Valentine Mornington strolled into the study with a cheery smile on his face.

"Finished already?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking up.

"Haven't started, dear boy."

"Time you did, then!" said Raby severely. "We've agreed to keep up prep, you know. Tain't Bulkeley's fault that the Head's a bit of a mule."

"Lots of time!" yawned Morny. "I've been busy, too. You can take 'Ogg's name off the list, Jimmy

"But what, Mr. Mobsby?"

"I beg to tender my resignation, sir," gasped Mr. Mobsby. "I have no complaint to make—none whatever! But—but I do not feel equal to dealing with the Third Form, sir. My experience here has been—been quite different from what I was accustomed to at—at the preparatory school when I was— In fact, I—I beg you to accept my resignation, sir."

"Really, Mr. Mobsby, if you have any complaint to make—"

"None at all, sir," gasped the little gentleman. "I am simply not equal to the task, and I confess the fact. I should be glad to be relieved of it at the earliest possible moment. That is all."

Dr. Chisholm compressed his lips.

"Very well, Mr. Mobsby. I may remark that I have had very serious doubts as to your ability to manage the Third Form; but, owing to circumstances— No matter. I accept your resignation, sir."

The Head remained in a very thoughtful mood after Mr. Mobsby had left his study.

Of all his new masters, only Mr. Snaggs of the Shell remained, and Rookwood School was almost without masters again. Really, there seemed no end to the troubles of a headmaster who had the firmness of a rock—or the obstinacy of a mule, whichever it was!

The 6th Chapter.

The Last on the List!

"The old sport looks no end bottled!" Adolphus Smythe, the ornament of the Shell, expressed himself thus as he smiled through the curling smoke of his cigarette.

Adolphus was given to expressing himself slangily.

He was referring in those irreverent terms to the Head of Rookwood.

Howard and Tracy major, also of the Shell, grinned over their cigarettes.

"Rookwood's comin' to somethin', I think," pursued Adolphus sagely. "All the new masters gone exceptin' the worm who's crawled into our quarters and calls himself master of the Shell! What I want to know is, when is he goin'?"

Man who scents himself like a chemist's shop an' parts his hair in the middle isn't any good for us."

"Dyes his hair, too!" said Tracy.

"Tints his eyebrows, I verily believe," said Howard.

"I believe in a chap taking care of his looks if he's good-lookin'." Howard glanced into the glass and smiled, as if quite satisfied with what he saw there. "But there's a limit, an' that smelly bounder Snaggs don't know it. Frightful outsider, dear boys!"

"Our man, Mooney, wasn't much of a nut," said Adolphus. "Still, he was a man. This creature, Snaggs, isn't a nut and isn't a man. What is he? A Snaggs! I can tell you, old dears, that I'm fed up on the Snaggs-bird, right up to the chin. He's the last of the new crowd, an' it's time he went. The Head knows it, too. When he came into the Form-room to-day he niffed the Snaggs' scent, and I saw him thunder."

"Horrid!" said his chum.

"He's lookin' worried," went on Adolphus. "Quite bottled, in fact. Bottled with the cork in, by Jove! Why doesn't he let the old gang come back? There they are, all hangin' up in Coombe, like a lot of moultin' fowls, you know, an' Rookwood goin' to the bow-wows. Why can't he give the scented Snaggs marchin' orders, an' take the old gang back, an' let us be merry an' bright again!"

There was a tap at the door, and Jimmy Silver came into the study.

He coughed as he caught the cigarette-smoke, which was rather a worry to his healthy lungs.

Jimmy of the Fourth was not quite so accustomed to that doggy atmosphere as Smythe & Co. of the Shell.

"His cough made the nuts of the Shell grin."

"Have a fag, young 'un?" smiled Adolphus.

"No, you silly ass!" was Jimmy Silver's polite refusal.

Adolphus raised his eyebrows.

"What charmin' maners they have in the Fourth!" he remarked. "Polished, you know. Quite Chesterfieldian, in fact! Oh, gad!"

"Put that rubbish away, you silly owls," said Jimmy Silver, coughing again. "What the blump do you want to turn your study into a dashed tap-room for? Have you fellows heard the news?"

"Anythin' fresh about the Latham races?" asked Tracy.

Jimmy Silver snorted.

"Both the Latham races! Are there races at Latham?"

"Are there?" repeated Adolphus Smythe, in utter disdain. "For goodness' sake, Silver, where have you been buryin' yourself?"

"I haven't come here to talk like a goat!" said Jimmy, with a grunt.

"There's some news. Bulkeley's been put in charge of the Second—"

"Bless Bulkeley, and bless the Second!"

"Neville's got the Third—"

"He's welcome to 'em!" yawned Adolphus.

"I fancy the prefects are getting a bit fed up with it," said Jimmy Silver. "But the joy of the thing is that the Fourth are going to take lessons with the Shell till a new master comes—which won't be just yet."

Smythe & Co. jumped.

"You fags—in our Form-room!" shouted Smythe. "What cheek! Why, we won't stand it!"

"I don't see that you've got much to stand," retorted Jimmy Silver. "It's us that will suffer—shut up with a gang of silly owls like the Shell!"

"Why, you cheeky fag—"

"We begin to-morrow," said Jimmy. "The Head's a bit at his wits' end, I think, to run the school without masters. Tubby Muffin heard him on the telephone to-day slangin' the agency for sending

him so much trash. Good masters can't be picked up like apples in an orchard. And there's another trouble brewing—the governors have got wind of it."

"By gad!" said Adolphus. "Time they did!"

"Morny's uncle, old Stacpoole, is on the governing board, you know. Morny says he never told him; but he's heard from his uncle, asking what's going on," said Jimmy. "Bet you the Head knows that the governors are beginning to get curious. I think he'll come round and let the staff come back in time, but we're going to help him make up his mind."

"Eh? How?"

"All the new gang have gone excepting Snaggs. Snaggs has got to follow them."

"By gad! I'd like to see it!"

The horrid bounder uses scent—strong scent—in the Form-room! He whiffs like a chemist's shop—pays a bob a gallon for it, I should guess. And look at his waistcoat! Jevver see one like it, you fellows?" said Adolphus, appealing to his chums.

"Never!" said Howard solemnly.

"Well, hardly ever!" grinned Tracy.

"And his watchchain!" said Jimmy Silver almost tearfully.

"Rolled gold, you know—thick as a cart-rop, or thicker—and it simply howls out that it's rolled gold. How's a feller of any taste to stand a Form-master like that? Give me Mooney!"

"Well, the long and the short of it is, that we're coming into the Shell Form-room to-morrow," said Jimmy Silver.

"We're going to make Rookwood too hot to hold Snaggs! Are you fellows with us?"

the new man was to be hoisted out of Rookwood.

On the following morning a very numerous class gathered in the Shell Form-room—Fourth and Shell combined—and Mr. Snaggs did not look exhilarated when he came in to take that swarming class.

Mr. Snaggs was a little gentleman, who made himself look a little taller by means of elevators in his dainty boots. That was not his only affectation, however—he dyed his hair, which was scanty, and he used abundant scent, and he walked and spoke in a mincing manner.

A "nutty" master Smythe & Co. could have welcomed, but Mr. Snaggs was only a pretended nut; he did not, as Adolphus complained, know the rules of the game at all.

Perhaps even the genuine brand of nuttiness would have been out of place in a middle-aged gentleman growing bald, however.

"Good-mornin', boys!" said Mr. Snaggs. "Good-mornin', sir!" said Adolphus solemnly. "I hope you find yourself well this mornin', sir."

"Thank you, my young friend, quite well," said Mr. Snaggs, delicately dabbing his nose with a scented handkerchief.

Adolphus gave a gasp, and sank back on his seat.

"Smythe, are you not well?" exclaimed Mr. Snaggs.

"Hold me!" moaned Adolphus.

Howard and Tracy held him.

"What is it, my boy—what is it?" exclaimed Mr. Snaggs, advancing towards the class.

lead in this way, and still more like Adolphus to put his foot in it.

But Adolphus Smythe had had enough of taking the lead now.

If anybody was to take the lead any more, it was not to be Adolphus.

He was more than willing to leave the glory—and the risk—to Jimmy Silver of the Fourth.

Lessons proceeded in rather a thundery atmosphere.

There was not much work done, however.

The class was far too numerous for one man to handle adequately, even if he had tried hard.

And Mr. Snaggs did not try hard.

He was a slacker, as well, as a "bounder," and he let the juniors do mainly as they liked.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not admire slackers, and they fully agreed with Smythe & Co. that the new master was "no good" for Rookwood.

He was not even "up" to his work, for Rawson of the Fourth, who was terrific in Classics, caught him "out" in Virgil, and Mr. Snaggs blundered hopelessly, amid growing merriment in his class, till he indemnified himself by caning Rawson severely, much to that painstaking youth's astonishment and wrath.

This was really too bad, and, apart from Jimmy Silver's campaign, it was felt in the Fourth that Rawson's wrongs had to be avenged.

"The fellow's only a blessed blackleg, anyhow," said Rawson wrathfully, when the juniors left the Form-room; "and he's an ignoramus, too. He had no right to take on the job! Goodness knows what the Head was thinking of!"

At dinner Mr. Snaggs was frowning.

After dinner he retired to his room. It was his custom to take a "nap" after lunch, in the belief that it was good for the complexion!

While he was taking his nap he did not hear a slight sound at the door of his room naturally.

But when his nap was over, and he was ready to go down, he made the startling discovery that the door would not open.

He pulled at the handle, in great amazement; but he pulled in vain.

He rang the bell at last, and a trim maid tapped at the door in a few minutes.

"Kindly open the door!" Mr. Snaggs called through the keyhole. "It appears to be fastened on the outside."

The maid blinked at the door.

"It does not seem to be fastened, sir," she answered. "Is the key inside?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps it is locked."

"It is not locked."

"Well, I can see no fastening, sir."

"Pooh! Nonsense! It must be fastened, as I cannot open it. Use your eyes!"

The maid had already used her eyes, in vain; and she now tossed her head.

"There is nothing here that I can see, sir!" she snapped.

"Don't be silly! Look!"

The maid flounced away, and confided to her friends below stairs that the master of the Shell was no gentleman, to speak to a lady in such a manner; and she remained resolutely deaf to further tinklings of the bell.

Mr. Snaggs chafed and fumed in his room.

He began hammering on the door at last.

Rookwood had gone into the Form-rooms by that time, and for some time the new master hammered in vain, but at last there was a rustle in the passage.

"What is this disturbance about?" came the Head's voice from outside. "Is that you, Mr. Snaggs?"

"Yes, sir; it is I!" hooted Mr. Snaggs.

"I am a prisoner in this room, sir! I have been fastened in!"

"Bless my soul! I see no sign—"

"The door will not open, sir!" roared Mr. Snaggs.

"Kindly refrain from raising your voice in addressing me, Mr. Snaggs!" snapped the Head. "I will look—"

He proceeded to examine the door.

It was not till after a long search that he discovered three or four screws, driven so deeply into the thick wood that the heads had almost disappeared.

"The door has been screwed!" said the Head faintly. "This is most—most extraordinary! Have you any idea who screwed your door, Mr. Snaggs?"

"As I cannot see through a door, sir, especially when I am asleep, I have not!" hooted Mr. Snaggs.

"I will send for the sergeant."

During the next half-hour Sergeant Kettle and a screwdriver were at work on Mr. Snaggs' door.

The Form-master was released at last, and he came downstairs an hour late for his class, flustered and furious.

He found the Fourth and the Shell in his Form-room, engaged in cheery conversation.

Mr. Snaggs glared at the juniors.

"Who screwed up the door of my room?" he thundered.

No reply.

"Unless the cubrit immediately comes forward," said Mr. Snaggs, his voice trembling with wrath, "I shall detain the whole class for two hours!"

Silence.

"Very well!" said Mr. Snaggs. "Very well indeed! We will proceed."

And they proceeded.

But Mr. Snaggs' troubles were only beginning.

As soon as he had occasion to use the cane—which was very soon, for his temper was at boiling-point—the cane split into two pieces at the first whack.

When he sat down on the high chair at his desk he sat in a sea of gum, which he did not feel for some time, but when he rose the chair rose with him.

Even when he was rid of his class his troubles did not cease, for when he re-

tired to his study for a rest, and set a match to the fire already laid, there was a crackling as if of musketry in the grate, and wood and coal showered on all sides.

It dawned upon Mr. Snaggs—rather late—that he had, inadvertently set light to a bundle of crackers.

Five times during that afternoon and evening was the Head disturbed by a raid from Mr. Snaggs, demanding his assistance in discovering and punishing the author of some fresh outrage.

When Mr. Snaggs bounced into the Head's study for the sixth time, later in the evening, Dr. Chisholm gave him a look like a basilisk.

Mr. Snaggs' face was flaming red!

"Good heavens, sir, what has happened?" exclaimed the Head.

Mr. Snaggs brandished a bottle in the air.

"Look at me!" he shrieked. "This bottle—my face! My face—this bottle! Ah, ha!" He spluttered with fury.

"What—what—"

"This bottle, sir, contained my complexion-wash!" hooted the unhappy nut.

"I—"

"Complexion-wash!" gasped the Head.

"Absurd! In a man of your years— Absurd! Kidneyous!"

"Someone has tampered with it!" yelled Mr. Snaggs. "I did not observe it in time. But someone has put red ink in it—red ink, sir! Look at my face! Red ink, sir!"

The Head pressed his hand to his brow.

"Mr. Snaggs," he said at last, "you are ridiculous! I am not surprised that you are persecuted. The boys cannot possibly retain the slightest respect for such a man. I must request you, sir, to resign your position here. You are not fit for Rookwood!"

"I should refuse to stay at Rookwood, sir, under any circumstances whatever!" howled Mr. Snaggs. "My complexion is ruined! My hair has had a narrow escape. I discovered just in time that my hair-restorer had been tampered with! I will not stay, sir, another day in this bear-garden!"

And Mr. Snaggs didn't.

The following day Rookwood School was once more without masters.

That morning Jimmy Silver cycled down to Coombe and visited the village inn, where the masters on "strike" had their quarters.

There he interviewed Mr. Bootles, late master of the Fourth.

And after Jimmy Silver had left Mr. Bootles held a consultation with the other masters.

And so it came to pass that, about the time the station cab was bearing Mr. Snaggs away, eight gentlemen walked in at the gates of Rookwood and proceeded to the School House.

An army of fellows watched them, for it was the staff returning.

And the army followed them in, right up the corridor to the Head's study, at which Mr. Bootles timidly tapped.

"Come in!"

Mr. Bootles threw open the door, and the eight gentlemen crowded, very quietly and respectfully, into the Head's study.

Dr. Chisholm rose to his feet in surprise—perhaps in relief—at the sight of them.

"Sir!" said Mr. Bootles. "Good-afternoon, sir!"

"Good—good-afternoon!" stammered the Head.

"Sir," said Mr. Greely, taking the lead, "we understand that you have had—h'm!—some difficulties—h'm!—with a new staff, and—h'm!—we have come, sir, to offer our services, in the hope that you, sir, will overlook any unpleasant occurrences in the past, sir, and, letting bygones be bygones, permit us to resume our duties at Rookwood School, sir."

"Mats—oui—yes—oh, 'certaintment!" murmured Monsieur Monceau.

"We regret exceedingly that there has been any trouble," said Mr. Mooney. "Most sincerely."

The Head's face relaxed.

The offer to return to duty came so opportunely to relieve him of his difficulties that he could not help welcoming it.

And the "strikers" were as tactful as could be wished. There was no loss of dignity in accepting the olive-branch extended in this manner.

"Gentlemen," said the Head at last, "I am glad that you have come here. I accept your offer. I will even say that there have doubtless been faults on both sides, which by mutual good-will we must endeavour to avoid in the future. Gentlemen, the past is forgotten!"

And Tubby Muffin, whose fat ear was at the door, scuttled off to inform Jimmy Silver & Co. that it was "all serene."

The "masters' strike" was over, and once more Rookwood School resumed the normal tenor of its way.

And all concerned were glad that the trouble was at an end, and for some time afterwards the extreme politeness of the Head and his staff to one another was quite entertaining to witness.

And in the end study satisfaction was great, for the Fictical Four, at least, agreed in attributing the happy reconciliation entirely to Jimmy Silver's campaign!

THE END.



THE NEW MASTER GETS IT! As Mr. Pumpnrey pushed open the door of the Fifth-Form class-room, he staggered back, spluttering. Something thick and sticky swamped over his head, accompanied by clouds of soot. "My hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "He's got it!"

Adolphus nodded at once.

He did not pull well with Jimmy, as a rule, but in this matter he saw eye to eye with the captain of the Fourth.

"We're your little men, Silver," he answered. "You think of somethin' for scarin' away the Snaggs-bird and we'll back you up to the last ditch—right up to the chin!"

"Rely on us," said Tracy; "and that applies to all the Shell. We're with you to the last shot in the merry locker."

"Done!" said Jimmy.

And he left Smythe's study, quite satisfied.

Mr. Snaggs was to take the Fourth with the Shell on the morrow, and with all the Fourth and the Shell against him, he was likely to have a troublesome time.

Adolphus smiled over his cigarette.

"That cheeky young ruffian, Silver, is just the man for this job," he told his chums. "I don't like him, an' I don't approve of him, and his taste in neckties is revolting, but he's the man to make the Snaggs-bird flutter. And more power to his giddy elbow!"

And that evening there was considerable discussion between the leaders of the Fourth and the Shell—with unusual harmony.

The Snaggs-bird, as Adolphus called him, was the last of the "new gang," and it was agreed that by a combined effort

"Take it away!" moaned Adolphus.

"What—what is it?"

"A—a—a dreadful smell, sir! I—I think there's somethin' wrong with the drains!" moaned Smythe.

"Bless my soul! I—"

"Oh! Excuse me, sir; it was only the scent on your handkerchief," said Smythe, recovering himself. "Very sorry, I'm sure, sir!"

And Adolphus grinned affably at the new master.

For a moment Mr. Snaggs stared at him as if transfixed.

Then he woke to sudden life.

He grabbed Adolphus by the collar, and yanked him out before the class.

"Yaroph!" roared Adolphus. "Oh, by gad! Yooph!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"There!" gasped Mr. Snaggs. "You will not be impertinent again, I think, Smythe."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The unfortunate Adolphus crawled back to his seat, quite certain that he would not be impertinent again.

His first attempt at ragging the new master was also his last.

The 7th Chapter.

The Feeding-up of Mr. Snaggs!



CHUNKY'S LATEST STUNT!

A Splendid Long Complete Story,
dealing with the Adventures of
FRANK RICHARDS & Co., the
Chums of the School in the
Backwoods.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

Very Affectionate.

"You fellows coming?" asked Chunky Todgers.

Lessons were over at Cedar Creek School, and the fellows were crowding into the playground, when Chunky addressed that question to Frank Richards & Co.

The three chums stopped on their way to the corral.

"Anything on, Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Anything on!" repeated Todgers in a tone of disdain. "Haven't you heard?"

The Co. smiled and shook their heads. They were never so well primed with the latest news as Chunky.

"There's a show on in Thompson," explained the fat schoolboy. "Nearly all the fellows are going, I believe. I'm going. And I specially want you fellows to come."

"What's the show—horse show?" asked Bob with some interest.

Chunky sniffed.

"Don't you ever think of anything but horses?" he inquired. "No; it isn't a horse show. It's an entertainment."

"Oh, good!" said Frank Richards. "We may as well go, you chaps. Entertainments aren't as thick as blackberries in the Thompson Valley."

Vere Beauclerc nodded assent.

"I guess I was thinking of giving Dicky Bird a look in," said Bob Lawless. "It's time we made those Hillcrest fellows remember that the old firm is still doing business. Still, if it's anything good—"

"It's a real cinch!" said Chunky. "You fellows simply must come. I shouldn't enjoy it myself if you were left out."

"Eh?"

"I shouldn't, really!" said Chunky.

"Chunky, old gopher, you'll grow a really nice boy if you keep on like this," said Bob, laughing. "Well, tell us what the show is, and we'll see whether we can make you happy."

"You chaps never hear the news. That's what comes of living at a pesky ranch out on the prairie," said Chunky Todgers. "Now, I come through Thompson every morning, and I know what's going on. There was a row at the Red Dog last night—"

"Never mind the row at the Red Dog. What's the show?"

"It's at Gunten's store—Old Man Gunten's public room, you know. Senor Jorge Escobedo—"

"A Greaser?"

"Well, a Mexican," admitted Chunky Todgers. "But he's giving a jolly good show. Gunten's room was crowded last night—seats a dollar each, too!"

"That's a lot of money for seeing a Greaser. What does he do?"

"He's the marvellous Mexican mesmerist!" said Chunky impressively.

"A mesmerist!" repeated Frank Richards.

"Mesmerises people, you know—or hypnotises them, whichever you like to call it. Calls a man out of the audience and puts the influence on him, and makes him do all sorts of things," said Chunky.

"Young Gunten saw it last night, and he says it's awfully queer to watch. The senor called up Injun Dick out of the audience and mesmerised him, and the Injun stood on his head, and started eating a cake of soap, thinking it was maple sugar, you know. It's really marvellous!"

"My hat!"

"The senor's got a big advertisement in the 'Thompson Press,' and bills upon all the dead walls in Thompson," said Chunky. "He's touring the North-West, and staying three days at Thompson. He had immense crowds to see him at New Westminster and Vancouver."

"How do you know?"

"He says so in the advertisement."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I guess he ought to know whether he had immense crowds to see him or not," said Chunky Todgers warmly.

"Certainly he ought!" said Beauclerc, with a smile. "We may as well go and see this chap, you fellows. If it's genuine it will be interesting, and if it isn't it will be amusing, anyhow."

"You simply must come!" said Chunky. "I'm going, and I'm determined you chaps sha'n't miss it! Lawrence is taking his sister, and Dawson's coming, and Hopkins, and Yen Chin. Most of them, in fact. You fellows don't want to be left out in the cold."

"All serene; we'll come," said Bob.

"We'll mosey along to Thompson together, then," said Chunky. "Mind, none of your galloping off and leaving me stranded!"

"Right ho!"

The Co. went for their horses, and Chunky Todgers accompanied them, and led out his fat little pony.

Chunky was a good-natured fellow, and very friendly with Frank Richards & Co.,

but his concern for them on this occasion surprised them a little.

It was kind of Chunky to wish them not to miss the show, but his evident anxiety on the point seemed a little unaccountable.

That anxiety was explained, however, as they trotted off together on the trail to Thompson town.

For the greater part of the journey Chunky Todgers was expatiating on the mesmerist's "show," and impressing upon his companions what a really good thing it was, and how remarkably cheap it was at a dollar admission.

As Thompson came in sight, with its naphtha lights flaring through the deepening dusk, Chunky came a little nearer to the real point.

"You fellows haven't forgotten your dust, I hope?" he inquired.

"Nope. We've got some dollars about us," answered Bob Lawless—"enough to pay for admission, anyhow."

"Got an extra dollar?"

"Eh?"

"You—you see," faltered Chunky, "my last dollar went in maple sugar before I knew about this show. I'm relying on you fellows to see me through."

Frank Richards & Co. looked at him and burst into a laugh.

Chunky's deep anxiety for their company that evening was explained at last.

"You fat fraud!" exclaimed Frank.

"Oh! I say, Richards, you know—"

"You pesky fat gopher!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "That's why you wouldn't enjoy it if we didn't come!"

"Well, I—I couldn't, could I?" said Chunky. "I couldn't enjoy it if I wasn't there, could I? And I couldn't be there unless you came."

"Now we know what our company's worth!" said Vere Beauclerc, laughing. "I think we'd better stand Chunky a dollar for his cheek."

"It's only a little over a quarter each if you share it out, you know," urged Chunky. "And I'll tell you what. I'll stand you free seats next time a Mexican mesmerist comes to Thompson."

"That's rather a safe offer," said Frank Richards. "But it's all right, you fat spoofer. We'll pay."

And Chunky's face was all fat smiles after that.

The 2nd Chapter.

Front Seats.

"Hallo! Hillcrest galoots!" said Bob Lawless.

The four Cedar Creek fellows had jumped off their horses outside Gunten's store in Thompson.

Innumerable horses were already tied to the posts there.

Apparently the senor's entertainment was drawing a "good house" among the citizens of Thompson.

Entertainments of any kind were rare in the frontier town on the border of the settlements, and whether the senor's show was good or bad it was pretty certain to be well patronised.

Indeed, Senor Escobedo was quite likely to do better in the outlying settlements than in big towns like New Westminster and Vancouver, where there were plenty of rival attractions.

Cattlemen, miners, and lumbermen were going in in goodly numbers, and among the crowd the schoolboys recognised Four Kings and Dry Billy Bowers, members of the estimable Red Dog crowd.

Injun Dick, the old Apache, was also going in, stalking along majestically, draped in his tattered blanket.

Three cheery-looking fellows had left their ponies tethered, and joined the

crowd going in, and the Co. recognised Dicky Bird, Blumpy, and Fisher of Hillcrest School.

Dicky Bird heard Bob Lawless' exclamation and glanced round, and grinned at the chums of Cedar Creek.

"Hallo! You kids coming to see the wonderful Greaser?" he called out.

"Sure!" answered Bob.

Dicky Bird reached out playfully and flattened Chunky Todgers' hat over his fat face, and there was a roar from Todgers.

"Yah! Oh! Wharrer that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump those bounders over!" exclaimed Frank Richards, and the chums of Cedar Creek made a rush.

Dicky Bird & Co. disappeared into the crowd, laughing.

The three chums followed them in, separated from them by a throng.

A loud and wrathful voice was heard behind.

"Yah! Don't leave me out here, you dummies! I haven't got a dollar!"

"We've left Chunky out," grinned Bob, moving back.

But it was close on the hour for the entertainment now, and the crowd was thickening.

It was impossible to get back to Chunky.

The Co. were pushed on by the incoming crowd, into the room adjoining the "Public Hall," as Old Man Gunten called it—in reality, a large lumber-built apartment attached to the store, fitted up with wooden benches and a raised platform that answered for a stage.

At the inner door Kern Gunten, the storekeeper's son, stood taking the admission fee, and just inside the long room was Big Dave, the sheriff's man, with a gun under his arm.

Gunten was there to take the money, and Big Dave was there to argue with any galoot who wanted to come in without paying; and he had thoughtfully brought his gun.

"Three!" said Bob Lawless, as the chums came up to the door—greeted with a scowl by Kern Gunten, who did not like the cheery Co.

"Pass in!" snapped Gunten, taking the dollars.

"Chunky Todgers is coming along," said Bob. "He's left his bank-account at home on the grand piano, so we want you to pass him in, Gunten. I'll pay for him now."

"Can't be done! Pass in!"

"Why can't it be done?" exclaimed Bob angrily. "Look here—"

"Pass in!" grinned Gunten, glad of any opportunity for annoying his former schoolfellows at Cedar Creek.

"I guess—"

"Let a galoot pass!" roared Four Kings, of the Red Dog, shoving forward.

"This hyer isn't a meeting at the mission for chewing the rag, I guess! Get along and give a man room!"

And the Co. were shoved on.

"Dollar, please," said Kern Gunten, rather nervously, as the big ruffian towered over him.

Four Kings gave the storekeeper's son a scowl instead of a dollar.

"I guess I go in free," he said.

"Nope."

"I guess your popper passes me in as a friend, young Gunten."

"Can't be done," said Gunten. "This isn't popper's show; he's only let the room to the senor."

"Then I guess the senor passes me in," said Four Kings, in his most bullying manner. "If he don't like it, you refer him to me. Why, gol-darn you, I've eaten Mexicans for breakfast in the morning before now!"

"I guess—"

"Nuff said; I'm goin' in!"

And Four Kings swung Gunten aside, and strode on through the doorway into the hall.

He came to a sudden stop, with the muzzle of Big Dave's shotgun jammed against his brawny chest.

Big Dave grinned at him over the gun.

"You ain't paid yet!" he remarked.

"Take that shooter away!" roared Four Kings.

"Pay up!"

"I guess I ain't paying."

"Get out, then!"

"I reckon not."

"This hyer gun," said Big Dave, "is liable to go off. If you're still standing in front of it a minute from now, Four Kings, I guess I hope you've selected your tombstone, and made your arrangements with the undertaker."

Four Kings turned to Gunten and dropped a dollar into his hand, and Big Dave lowered the gun.

The ruffian went in without another word.

The hall was filling fast now.

There was a scramble for front seats; all seats being the same price, and some of them a good distance from the stage.

There was standing room at the back for late comers.

Dicky Bird & Co. had got in early, and they were adorning the centre of the front bench, with great satisfaction to themselves.

Frank Richards and his comrades ran into the second row.

"I guess we're not leaving front seats to Hillcrest gophers," murmured Bob.

"This is where they pay for squashing Chunky's Stetson."

"You bet!" grinned Frank.

"All's fair in war!" said Beauclerc, laughing. "Come on!"

Dicky Bird glanced round at them.

"Jever get left?" he chuckled. "All right for you. Cedar Creek always takes a back seat, you know. Why—what—yah—yaroooh!"

Three pairs of hands were laid upon three pairs of shoulders from behind, and before the Hillcrest fellows knew what was happening, they were "yanked" back over the seats, with their heels in the air.

"Yah!"

"Yoop!"

"Help!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Dicky Bird & Co. went rolling helplessly on the floor between the benches.

While they rolled and gasped, Frank Richards & Co. whipped over the front seats and sat down.

Three grinning faces were turned on the discomfited Hillcresters as they scrambled up.

"Come out of our seats!" roared Dicky Bird.

"I guess we'll scalp you!" shrieked Blumpy.

Bob Lawless waved his hand at them soothingly.

"Hillcrest always takes a back seat!" he answered. "All right for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the Hillcrest trio were not soothed.

They made a jump at the heroes of Cedar Creek.

But the Co. were on their guard.

They faced round, and met the attack manfully, amid howls of protest from other occupants of the seats.

Grown-up members of the audience did not seem, somehow, to appreciate this exuberance of boyish spirits.

"Shut up, there!"

"Quiet!"

"Sit down!"

Mr. Gunten, who was acting as a steward in the hall, hurried to the spot.

"Sit down at once!" he commanded.

"Bird—Blumpy—Fisher—do you want me to report you to your headmaster?"

"I guess—" gasped Dicky.

"Sit down at once!"

"Yes, sit down," said Bob Lawless soothingly. "Fancy these Hillcrest chaps kicking up a shindy in a public hall, you fellows! What manners!"

"Awful!" said Frank.

"I'm surprised at you galoots," continued Bob. "Is this the sort of manners you learn at Hillcrest?"

"Why, you—you—you—" stammered Dicky Bird.

"Slush! I'm ashamed of you!" said Bob severely.

Dicky Bird & Co. looked at Bob as if they could eat him, but they sat down in the second row.

Cedar Creek had won that little tussle.

Dicky Bird did not care to explain to Old Man Gunten how the matter really

stood; he preferred to rely upon himself to "get level" some other time.

Frank Richards & Co. triumphantly occupied the front seats, greatly contented at having scored over their old rivals.

As the hubbub died away, a plaintive voice was heard in the distance from the direction of the door.

"I'm going in, Gunten, you beast! Hasn't Bob paid for me, you pesky coyote? Look here, I'm going in!"

The 3rd Chapter.

Gunten Asks For It!

Frank Richards rose to his feet and looked back over the fast-filling hall.

He could not see Chunky Todgers through the crowd, but the voice of the fat schoolboy was heard again in tones of wrath and indignation:

"I'm going in, you foreign trash! Yah!"

"Poor old Chunky's got left!" said Frank. "That cad Gunten won't let him in without paying!"

"One of us will have to go," said Beauclerc.

"H'm!"

Dicky Bird & Co., just behind, were watchful now.

If a front seat was vacated for the sake of Chunky Todgers, it was pretty certain that it would not be found empty when the owner returned.

The Co. exchanged glances, and their rivals grinned at them.

Frank Richards made up his mind.

"I'll go!" he said. "Keep my seat if you can, Bob."

And Frank hurried away along the benches, and pushed his way back along the hall to the door.

The moment the bench was empty Dicky Bird's leg came over it from behind.

Bob Lawless promptly sat on the leg and pinned it to the bench with his weight, and there was a howl from Dicky.

"Yow! Gernup!"

"Not this evening!" chuckled Bob. "Some other evening."

"Ow!" howled Dicky.

But to land on Dicky's leg Bob had to move along, and Fisher dived between him and Beauclerc, and landed there.

"All O.K., Dicky!" yelled Fisher. "I'm here!"

And he sat tight.

"I guess you can have your silly leg," growled Bob Lawless; and he allowed Dicky Bird to draw that somewhat cramped limb away. "Now, look here, Fisher—"

"Bosh!" said Fisher.

"I'm keeping that place—"

"I'm keeping it, you mean!" retorted Fisher cheerily. "There'll be a shindy if you try to shift me, I guess."

"Bother you!" growled Bob. "Look here, Dicky, you keep a place in that row for Frank, then—"

"Too late!" grinned Dicky Bird, as Injun Dick dropped into the vacant place. "It's gone!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

There was no help for it. Frank Richards' place was gone.

Keeping seats vacant in Gunten's hall was not an easy task.

Already the benches were filled, and the space at the back was filling.

Frank Richards, meanwhile, found his way to the door, and through the doorway he sighted Chunky Todgers in the outer room, fat and flustered and furious.

Kern Gunten had grimly refused him admission, as Chunky had no cash to hand over, giving more attention to his old malice against the Cedar Creek fellows than to the interests of his employer.

"This way, Chunky!" called out Frank, waving his hand.

Todgers' fat face brightened up.

"I'm coming!"

"Pay first!" snapped Kern Gunten.

"Here's the dollar, Gunten!" called out Frank.

But the Swiss had his back to him, and kept it to him. He did not choose to hear Frank.

"Let me in!" roared Chunky Todgers indignantly. "There's Frank with the dollar, Gunten, you beast!"

"Pay up!" answered Gunten.

"Frank's going to pay."

"Pay up, or vamoose!"

"Gunten!" shouted Frank through the doorway.

Gunten was still deaf, and he was pushing Chunky Todgers back.

Frank's eyes glittered.

He could not leave the hall without being charged for readmission, but he stopped in the doorway and reached out with

arm and led him up the hall, but there were no seats to be had.

Bob Lawless made a hopeless gesture to him as he looked over the rows.

"Sold again!" called out Dicky Bird. Frank laughed good-humouredly.

It was fit for fat, and he took the loss of his seat philosophically.

"We shall have to stand, Chunky," he said.

"Get back there!" called out Old Man Gunten. "Order! Standing room at the back only!"

And Frank Richards and Chunky Todgers had to go back to the extreme rear of the lumber hall and stand.

"Never mind," said Chunky; "we're here, anyhow. If you like, Franky, I'll get on your shoulders when it begins; then I shall see better."

Frank laughed, and did not adopt that suggestion.

The audience were all in now, and the crowd was thick, and the two schoolboys were backing against the wall.

But Big Dave and Gunten having now left their posts, Frank looked into the outer room, and captured a couple of stools to stand upon.

Standing on the stools with their backs to the wall, Frank and Chunky had a good view over the heads of the others, just in time to see the swartly senior arrive on the stage for the commencement of the "show."

The 4th Chapter. Under the 'Fluence!

Senior Jorge Escobedo was a short, thick-set Mexican, with a swartly complexion and sharp black eyes, and a little waxed black moustache.

He was dressed in store-clothes, with an expanse of white shirt-front, upon which glittered a big diamond which must have been worth a thousand dollars if it was worth anything, which was doubtful.

"Billed" shirts were very uncommon in the Thompson Valley, and the senior contrasted very strongly with his roughly-clad audience.

Indeed, Four Kings remarked to a neighbour that he would have put a bullet through the "billed" shirt if he hadn't left his "gun" at home.

Quite unconscious of what he owed to the ruffian having left his gun at home, the senior advanced to the edge of the platform and addressed the audience in Spanish.

He said only a few words, which were quite enough, as certainly not more than two or three people present understood Spanish.

Then the performance began. Mesmerism, apparently, was only one of the senior's many gifts.

He was a juggler and conjurer as well, and he began with juggling.

The unsophisticated Thompson folk looked on with great admiration as the senior kept six balls in the air at a time, and when he added a revolver to the six balls, and kept them all spinning, there was loud applause.

"I say, Frank," murmured Chunky Todgers, "that's jolly clever, isn't it? I think I could do that."

Frank Richards laughed. Chunky was a romantic youth, with a strong imagination.

He could not read a novel without fancying himself in the character of Lord Cholmondeley de Vere, and lamenting that he bore the ancient and honourable, but somewhat commonplace, name of Todgers.

Indeed, he had sometimes debated seriously in his fat mind whether he wasn't possibly the long-lost son of a missing marquis.

But missing marquises and derelict dukes were quite banished from Chunky's mind now, as he watched the Mexican conjurer, his eyes and mouth both wide open.

Frank grinned as he looked at his companion's fat face.

He did not need telling that the imaginative Chunky was picturing himself in the role of a juggler, conjurer, and mesmerist.

"I guess I could do it," murmured Chunky, "with a little practice, you know. I say, I could give an entertainment at Cedar Creek—Miss Meadows in the chair, you know—and we could ask the Hillcrest fellows, and make 'em green with envy. What do you think, Franky?"

"I think you'd better learn to do the trick first," said Frank, laughing. "You might let the balls land on Miss Meadows' head."

"Oh, I'm a jolly clever chap!" said Chunky confidentially. "I ought to be able to beat a pesky Greaser, I guess. I'm going to try."

The senior was standing on his head now, on a cushion, and keeping several balls in the air with his feet.

The Thompson Valley had never seen the like before, and there were thunders of applause, even Four Kings clapping his huge hands in great admiration.

The juggling over, several members of the audience were invited on the stage to help in the conjuring.

Mr. Gunten called to them. The store-keeper was at hand to act as interpreter, the senior's English being too broken for much use.

"I say, I'm going, Frank!" exclaimed Chunky.

But Chunky Todgers was too far in the rear.

Bob Lawless and Dicky Bird went on the stage, with Four Kings and Big Dave. The senior was undoubtedly a clever conjurer.

He drew yards and yards of ribbon from Four King's neck, much to the amazement of the Red Dog loafer.

He produced white mice from Bob Lawless' sleeve, and an alarm-clock in full action from the inside pocket of the astonished Dicky Bird.

Chunky Todgers was all eyes. "I guess that's jolly clever, Franky," he said. "Of course, I guess I could do it. Fancy pulling ribbons out of Mr. Slimmey's neck at Cedar Creek."

"Better try somebody else's neck," said Frank, with a laugh. "Slimmey mightn't like it."

"Look!" gasped Chunky. "Bob's just found Dicky Bird's watch in his pocket. And look—Big Dave's got a rabbit in his hat, and he never knew it!"

The conjuring having finished, amid rounds of applause, there was a stir of more than usual interest in the audience.

The "piece de resistance" of the senior's show was the hypnotism, and that was the next turn.

Old Man Gunten, who undoubtedly had a financial "stake" in the senior's show, came to the edge of the platform and addressed the people in front, with an expansive smile.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Senior Escobedo will now give an exhibition of his marvellous mesmeric powers. A member of the audience is invited to step on the stage and submit himself to the weird influence."

There was no hurry to take that offer. The previous evening Injun Dick, the Apache, had submitted to the magic "fluence," and his experiences had been entertaining to watch, certainly, but could not have been pleasant to go through.

"Not on my plate!" Four Kings remarked emphatically. "Why, that pilgrim could make a galoot blow his own brains out, I calculate!"

"He made the Injun eat soap," said Boss-Eye, of the Red Dog. "I reckon he ain't going to make me eat any soap."

That seemed to be the general opinion. The senior smiled, and spoke to Mr. Gunten in a mingling of Spanish and English.

Old Man Gunten shook his head. "Not for me!" he answered.

"Go it, Old Man Gunten!" called out several voices.

"Gentlemen, none in mine!" answered Mr. Gunten. "But if any member of the audience cares—'Hallo!"

Chunky Todgers was shoving his way

"Well, they are a pair of no-account loafers, Injun Dick and Bowers," admitted Chunky. "Still, I think it's all right. Let's see."

"We'll see," agreed Frank. All eyes were on the stage now. Dry Billy Bowers—who was quite sober for once—faced the senior somewhat in the attitude of Ajax defying the lightning.

He looked as if he was determined that the mesmerist should not put the "influence" on him, howsoever hard he strove to do so.

He winked at some friends in the audience, as if to assure them that he was going to be the rock upon which the mesmerist would split.

There were encouraging murmurs from his conferees of the Red Dog. "Stick it out, Billy!"

"Don't you give in!" "Silence, please!" said Mr. Gunten. And there was a hush.

Senior Jorge Escobedo sat Bowers down in a chair, the loafer still wearing an expression of the strongest determination. He grinned as the senior began to make mystic passes before his red-rimmed eyes.

But the grin died away at last. Dry Billy wore a puzzled and perplexed look, as if he felt himself falling under a weird influence he could not resist.

His coppery face settled into repose at last, with a sleepy look, and his eyelids drooped.

If Dry Billy was playing a part, he was certainly playing it very well, which was perhaps accounted for by the fact that he had been a "walking gentleman" in a Chicago theatre in his earlier days, before an exclusive devotion to fire-water turned him into a "hobo."

The silence was breathless in the lumber-hall as Billy Bowers sank into sweet slumber.

Chunky Todgers squeezed Frank's arm. "Genuine—eh?" he whispered.

Frank Richards did not reply. He had come in contact with Mr.

music, but his heavy boots stamped up and down the stage with great vigour. Tramp, tramp, tramp! he went to the strains of the fiddle.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Go it, Billy!" "Haw, haw, haw!"

"He doesn't know what he's doing, of course!" gasped Chunky Todgers. "He thinks that chair is a lady! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Does he?" murmured Frank. The dance stopped.

Senior Escobedo presented Billy Bowers with a riding-whip, assuring him in broken English that it was a pipe.

Dry Billy solemnly put it to his mouth, struck a match on his leather trousers, and essayed to light the riding-whip.

He puffed at it with an appearance of great enjoyment, amid shouts of laughter. After that he bit into a cake of soap which was presented to him as a chunk of maple sugar. He crawled across the stage in the belief that he was a lizard. He barked ferociously when the senior told him that he was a mastiff.

When the senior told him he was a mustang he galloped the length of the hall and back again, amid great excitement; and when he was told he was a cat he curled up on the stage and purred.

"Isn't it wonderful, Franky?" gasped Chunky Todgers, whose round eyes were so wide open that they almost looked as if they would never shut again.

"Marvellous!" assented Frank. "Hallo, he's waking up!" said Chunky.

"You see, he makes those passes backwards to wake him up. I know how he does it, both ways. Look here!"

Chunky waved his fat hands at Frank Richards, at the same time fixing a stern and intent gaze at him.

"What on earth are you up to?" exclaimed Frank.

"Don't you feel it coming on?" asked Chunky anxiously. "Eh? What?"

"The 'fluence.'" "Ha, ha! No!" "P'raps you ain't a good subject, or

Dicky blinked at him. "What's the game?" he asked. Chunky did not reply.

He was concentrating his gaze upon the eyes of the amazed Dicky, as if he would bore a hole in him with it.

"Are you gone dotty?" asked Bird, when this had gone on for a minute or two, without a word from the fat schoolboy.

Still Chunky did not answer. He raised his fat hands and waved them slowly to and fro in front of Dicky's astounded face.

It did not even occur to Dicky Bird that the hopeful Chunky was attempting to put the "fluence" on.

He could only wonder whether the fat youth had taken leave of his senses. "Todgers, you jay!" ejaculated Dicky Bird.

"Silence!" hissed Chunky. "Wha-a-at?" "Close your eyes!"

"Kik-kik-close my eyes?" stuttered Bird. Fisher and Blumpy came out and joined him.

They stared at Chunky Todgers. "What's the matter with him?" asked Blumpy.

"I'm afraid the young ass has been sampling Gunten's whisky," said Dicky Bird. "You know what an idiot he is. I say, if you chaps don't mind, we'll see him home."

"The silly jay!" exclaimed Fisher. Chunky's magic motions came to a sudden stop as Dicky Bird grasped his fat arm.

"Come on," said Dicky. "Leggo!"

"Where's your loss? We'll see you safe," said Dicky Bird soothingly. "Don't wriggle, you young ass; you're not going to be hurt. Here, hold him, Fisher!"

Fisher caught Chunky's other arm. "Leggo!" roared Chunky, struggling furiously. "Why, I'll mop up the street with you! I'll—I'll—Yarooooh!"

"Hush! You'll get a crowd round!" "Leggo! Yaroooh! I'll—"

"For goodness' sake get him away!" gasped Blumpy. "Why, he may get run in if the sheriff's man sees him in this state! Here's his pony—shove him on!"

"Yooop!" roared Chunky Todgers, as he was heaved bodily on the back of the pony. "Yaroooh! Help! Bob Lawless—Franky—Yarooooh!"

Frank Richards & Co. were coming out for their horses, and, fortunately, they heard Chunky's roar.

"Hallo, there's the fat tulp in trouble!" exclaimed Bob. "Hurry, hurry, hurry! galoots have roped him in! Go for 'em!"

Cedar Creek rushed to the rescue. "Hold on!" shouted Dicky Bird. "We're looking after him! He's drunk!"

"What?" howled Frank. "He's been at the whisky—he's quite out of his senses—"

"I haven't!" yelled Chunky Todgers. "I'm not drunk! Yarooooh! Make 'em lemme go! Oh! Yow-ow!"

Chunky rolled off his pony again, catching Dicky Bird round the neck, and bringing that youth to the ground with a crash.

Chunky fell uppermost, and his weight told. There was a suffocated howl from Dicky Bird.

"Yoop! Draggimoff! I'm squashed! Ow!"

Frank Richards & Co. seized their fat schoolfellow, and dragged him off the unfortunate Dicky.

"Keep 'em off!" roared Chunky. "Yah! Hillcrest rotters! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Dicky Bird staggered up.

"Bother him?" he gasped. "You can look after him, or let him be taken to the calaboose—bother him! Ow!"

And the Hillcrest chums rode away, Dicky Bird still gasping painfully.

Frank Richards & Co. looked sternly at Chunky, who was breathless and furious.

"The silly jays!" he gasped. "Fancy thinking I'd been drinking—ow! I was only putting the 'fluence' on!"

"You were whatting?" yelled Frank. "Putting the 'fluence' on Dicky Bird," gasped Chunky. "I was going—ow!—to make him eat a cake of—ow!—soap."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "He didn't get under the fluence," said Chunky. "Perhaps I haven't got it quite right yet. I can tell you fellows, I'm going to make Hillcrest sit up when I've got it right. I'm going to mesmerise 'em—I'm going to mesmerise old Peck-over himself!"

The chums of Cedar Creek shrieked. Chunky's picture of himself as a mesmerist, mesmerising the headmaster of Hillcrest, was too much for them.

"You can cackle!" howled Chunky indignantly.

"Thanks, we will! Ha, ha, ha!" "You jolly well wait!" said Chunky disdainfully. "You'll see what you'd see!"

And with that statement—which was really incontrovertible—Chunky clambered on his fat pony and rode away.

Bob Lawless wiped his eyes. "I guess Chunky will be the death of me!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Frank Richards & Co. laughed loud and long as they trotted away on the trail for home.



CHUNKY THE MESMERIST! Chunky concentrated his gaze on the amazed Dicky, raised his fat hands and waved them slowly to and fro. "What's the game?" asked Dicky. "Silence!" hissed Chunky.

towards the stage, in great excitement. "I'm on!" he gasped.

Old Man Gunten glanced at the senior, who shook his head.

At the same time, Dry Billy Bowers, the thirstiest man in the Thompson Valley, rose to his feet.

"I guess I'm your antelope, mister!" he called out.

"I'm first!" exclaimed Chunky, reaching the platform. "I'm the chap, Mr. Gunten! You give me a chance."

"Get back, Todgers!" "But I've come here to be mesmerised!" shouted Chunky indignantly.

"Schoolboys ain't allowed," said Mr. Gunten, after another glance at the senior, whose swartly face was a little uneasy. "You clear off, my boy. This way, Mr. Bowers."

And Chunky, much to his disappointment, had to beat a retreat.

His fat face was clouded as he rejoined Frank Richards, who was looking rather thoughtful.

"Isn't it a shame?" exclaimed Chunky breathlessly. "I was going through it, you know. I want to be a mesmerist."

Frank shook his head. "The man's a jolly good juggler," he said. "I've got my doubts about the mesmerism."

"He mesmerised Injun Dick last night."

"Injun Dick would do anything for a couple of dollars," answered Frank drily. "Well, he's going to mesmerise Dry Billy now."

"Billy Bowers would do anything for two cents." "Chunky's eyes opened. "Do you think it isn't genuine?" he asked.

Bowers before, and was acquainted with his extremely tricky nature, and his belief in the magic powers of hypnotism was very slight indeed.

Without being unduly suspicious, he could not help thinking that the senior could easily have arranged this little scene in advance for a fee of a few dollars to the obliging Bowers.

"Oh, look!" gasped Chunky. At a commanding gesture from the senior, Dry Billy rose to his feet, his eyes still closed.

He moved like a man in a dream. Frank Richards glanced at Injun Dick, the senior's "subject" of the previous evening.

He was not surprised to see a stolid grin on the Redskin's dark face, while all the rest of the audience were gazing spellbound at Billy Bowers.

If it was all trickery, the Redskin, of course, was aware of it, and his slow grin strengthened Frank's suspicion.

There was no doubt, however, that there was a great appearance of reality about the mesmeric trance.

"You will dance!" said the senior, breaking into English. "Zot is one senorita wit' who you dance."

Bowers' eyes opened, and he saw the senior pointing to the chair he had risen from.

Apparently taking the hypnotist's word for it that the chair was a young lady, Dry Billy advanced solemnly to the chair, bowed to it, and put his hand through the arm.

The senior picked up a fiddle, and began to play, and Dry Billy Bowers began to dance, with the chair for a partner.

"Oh, gum!" gasped Chunky Todgers. Frank Richards laughed, and there was a roar of merriment from the audience.

Whether the "influence" was genuine or not, there was no doubt that Dry Billy cut a most ridiculous figure.

He did not keep much time with the

LETTERS IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

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

FOR NEXT MONDAY!

The special feature of next week's BOYS' FRIEND is the opening of a grand new school serial, entitled:

"THE SCAPEGRACE OF RED-CLYFFE!"

By Herbert Britton.

You will be introduced for the first time to Jack Turner, twin brother of Dick Turner, of Redclyffe. The great difference of character and temperament between the twins endows this story with a special interest, which I am sure will be appreciated by all my readers. Jack meets trouble even before he arrives at the school, and, in consequence, he makes his first entry into Redclyffe life under very peculiar conditions. You will derive great entertainment and amusement from "THE SCAPEGRACE OF REDCLYFFE!"

The interest of next week's Rookwood story centres round the arrival of a new boy at that famous school. The method of his arrival, and, indeed, the whole character of the new junior, is unusual, to say the least of it. I am confident that

"PUTTY OF THE FOURTH!"

By Owen Conquest,

will appeal to all my readers as being unusually interesting and amusing, even for a Rookwood story. "Putty" has come to stay, too, and my readers can confidently look for further "star turns"

from this amazing new junior in the near future.

The title of next week's long, complete tale of Frank Richards & Co. is

"TODGERS THE TERRIBLE!"

By Martin Clifford.

Chunky Todgers is quite "mesmerism-mad," and his reckless use of his supposed magical powers leads to the most astounding scenes. Even Miss Meadows herself, the headmistress of the school in the backwoods, does not escape the experiments of the amateur mesmerist; but, needless to say, these particular experiments do not turn out a complete success for Master Chunky!

The next instalment of

"THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER!"

By Dunoan Storm,

deals principally with the lighter side of the adventures of the sea-going chums. An expedition to the Peak of Teneriffe is almost wrecked by a runaway waggonette; while Horace, the goat, creates a diversion of his own by engaging in a terrific combat with Alonzo the Terrible, a local billy with a great reputation as a fighter. My readers will find this a most amusing instalment.

THE LATE LEWIS R. HIGGINS.

With much regret I have to announce the death of Lewis R. Higgins, a valued colleague and friend who for many years

was associated with the Amalgamated Press, and of late years had been a member of the staff of the companion papers. Mr. Higgins fell a victim to the influenza scourge.

A brilliant artist and a clever writer, Lewis R. Higgins had a sense of humour which never failed him in all his varied professional career. During all the dark days of the war his cheery optimism and hopefulness made him welcome everywhere. His health never permitted him to enter the Army, though he made many attempts to do so.

It is safe to say that Lewis R. Higgins has left a gap in the world of topical art difficult to fill. All those who had the privilege of knowing him will think with regret of the cheery individuality of a man who had the gift of making the best of things, and who possessed as well something of that buoyant spirit of perpetual youthfulness which acts as a tonic on all. I shall not enlarge upon the versatility, the good humour, the geniality, and charm of the good fellow who has gone away. These characteristics are well known by his friends, who gaze with sadness at his empty chair.

Your Editor