



A Hot Time For Jimmy Silver and Co.

"Putty" Grace's Latest Little Joke!



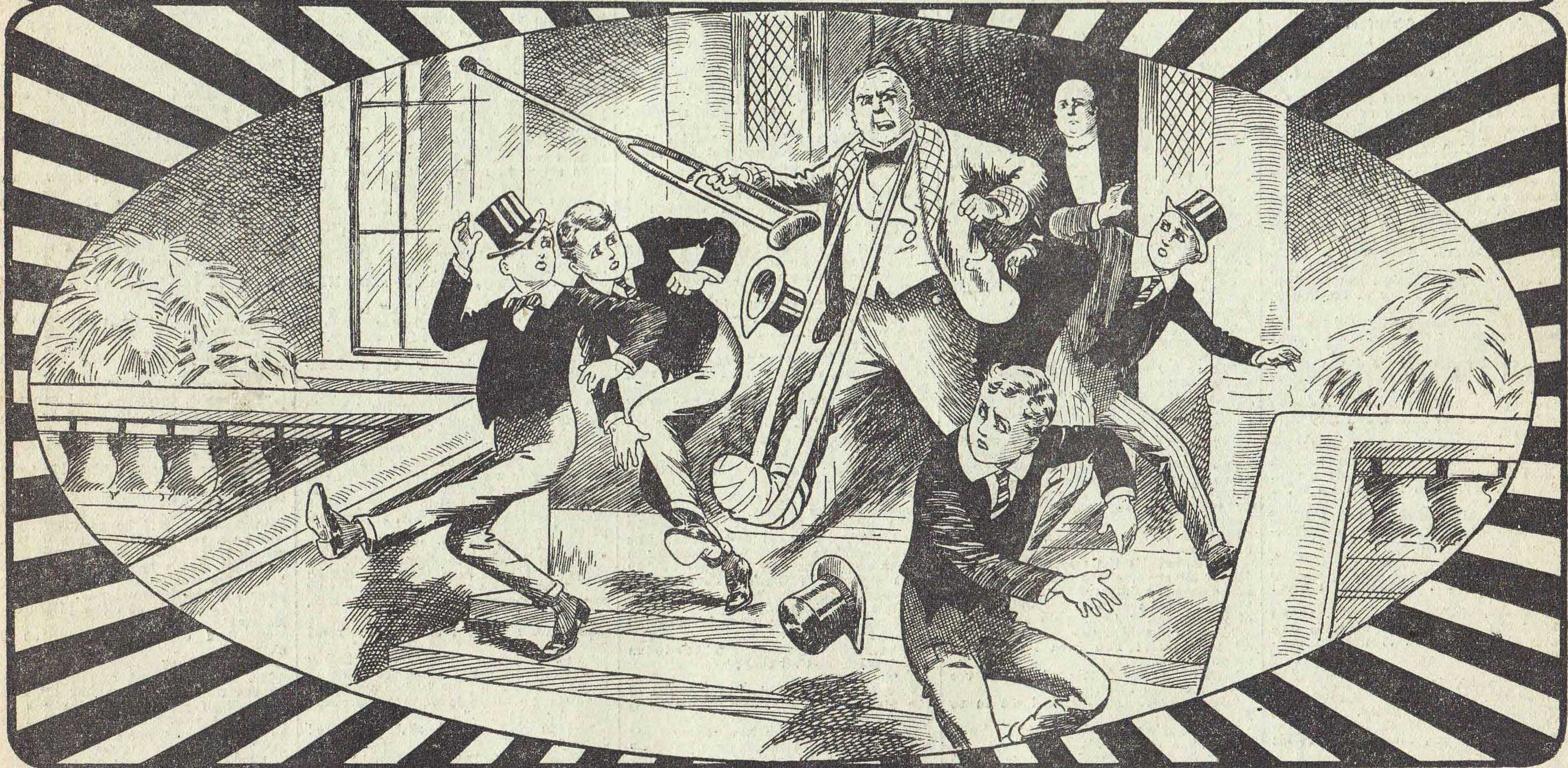
The BOYS' FRIEND 1^d/₂

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 12th, 1919.

SOLD AGAIN!



A WARM RECEPTION!

Helter skelter Jimmy Silver & Co. dashed out of the door, and behind them came Sir Leicester, raging, and whacking away with his crutch. "Run for it!" shrieked Lovell. "He's mad! Run for your lives!"

The 1st Chapter.

A Collision on the Line!

"Here he is!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell.

Teddy Grace of the Fourth looked round quickly.

The new junior at Rookwood was sauntering down to the gates, after lessons, when Arthur Edward's dulcet tones fell upon his ears.

"Stop!" called Jimmy Silver.

The new junior stopped. He gave the Fistical Four a nod and a cheery smile as they came towards him, but his look was very wary.

For the expressions of Jimmy Silver & Co. boded trouble.

Trouble was not a new experience, to Teddy Grace; indeed, he seemed to be born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, so to speak.

"Coming out for a run?" asked the new junior, as the Fistical Four came up.

"No!" grunted Lovell.

"We've been looking for you," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, now you've found me."

"Mind he doesn't dodge," said Raby.

Teddy Grace backed away a little.

Raby and Newcome moved round him, to cut him off from the gateway, while Jimmy Silver and Lovell were evidently prepared to collar him if he tried to bolt.

"Anything the matter?" asked Teddy mildly.

"Lots!" answered Jimmy Silver. "You haven't been at Rookwood long, Teddy Grace. We thought you were rather soft when you first came."

"I'm called Putty because I'm considered rather soft!" murmured the new junior meekly.

"But we know better now," continued the captain of the Fourth, unheeding.

"And the fact is, Grace, you have too much nerve for a new kid. And you're too funny."

"Much too funny!" concurred Newcome.

"We don't mind you playing your monkey-trick on the Modern chaps," said Jimmy Silver, "and you can pull Mr. Bootles' leg, or play tricks on Carthew of the Sixth, as much as you like. But when you begin on us, it's time the stopper was put on. See?"

"Oh!" murmured Putty of the Fourth.

"Tricks—on you! I really shouldn't have the nerve. Really important people, like you chaps, have to be treated with respect."

"None of your cheek!" roared Lovell.

Putty raised his eyebrows.

"But I'm only acknowledging your importance, old man," he said. "Isn't that what you want?"

"Don't waste any chin-wag on him!" growled Lovell. "Bump him! That's

what he's been asking for ever since he came."

"Wait a bit," said Jimmy Silver. "We had a pie in our study cupboard, Putty. We've just taken it out, and we've found that there's nothing but an old boot under the crust. We thought of you at once."

"Just one of your games!" said Raby.

Putty of the Fourth looked more wary than ever.

"So kind of you to think of me," he murmured. "I really take that as friendly, Silver."

"So we looked for you," continued Jimmy. "We've decided that you are too funny, Master Putty, and that you've got to be reduced to a proper state of seriousness."

"Thank you so much!"

"The best method we can think of is to give you a jolly good ragging. You understand?"

Teddy Grace piddled.

"I think I catch on!" he assented.

"I thought I'd explain first," said Jimmy. "Next time you can't resist being funny, you can select some other study. The end study is taboo to practical jokers. See?"

"I see."

"And now bump him!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell impatiently.

"I'm sorry, Putty," said Jimmy Silver,

"but you've got to have your lesson. I really hope it will do you good."

"That's very kind of you."

The soft answer is said to turn away wrath, but Putty's soft answers seemed to have the reverse effect upon the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

"Nail him!" snapped Lovell.

And he made a stride towards Teddy Grace.

That cheery youth made a sudden jump away at the same moment, in the direction of the gateway.

He collided with Raby and Newcome, who collared him at once; but the new junior slipped through their hands like an eel. Newcome staggered away, and George Raby sat down with a sudden bump.

And Putty of the Fourth was fleeing for the gates at top speed.

"Oh!" gasped Raby.

"After him!" roared Lovell.

The Fistical Four rushed in pursuit.

Putty's flight had been so sudden that he had gained a start, but Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed hotly after him.

Putty was quite as fleet of foot as the Fistical Four, however, and he kept his lead, and reached the gateway well ahead of his pursuers. He went through the old stone gateway like a deer.

But Teddy Grace's luck was out.

It was unfortunate for him that someone was about to enter the gates just

as he sped out with full steam on. It really was a thing that could not be foreseen, especially in the hurry of the moment.

A tall gentleman in a white hat and an eyeglass was just turning in at the gates, and Putty saw him—too late!

Crash!

Bump!

Right upon an ample white waistcoat the new junior crashed, a good deal like a battering-ram.

Jimmy Silver & Co. halted suddenly as they beheld that awful catastrophe.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" stammered Lovell.

"That's Sir Leicester Stuckey! Oh, crikey!"

"Hook it!" gasped Raby.

The Fistical Four "hooked it" at great speed.

Like the gentlemen in "Macbeth," they stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once.

In a moment almost they had melted away from view.

Putty of the Fourth would have been glad to melt away, too; but he had no chance.

He tottered dizzily from the shock upon the well-filled white waistcoat of Sir Leicester Stuckey, gasping for breath; what time Sir Leicester staggered back and sat down in the road.

Sir Leicester's white hat went in one.

(Continued on next page.)

SOLD AGAIN!

(Continued from the previous page.)

direction, his eyeglass in another, and the baronet himself sat in the road and spluttered.

"Oh! Ah! Grogh! By gad! Hoop! Yoop! Begad! Ow!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured the dismayed Putty. "I—I—I'm sorry, sir—"

"Yow-ow-woop!"

Teddy Grace recovered his breath, and dodged round the seated gentleman to flee. From the expression on Sir Leicester's face, he judged correctly that a prolonged interview with him would be of a painful nature.

But the baronet was active, for his years. As Teddy Grace dodged, Sir Leicester reached out with his walking-stick, and hooked him with the crook of the handle.

"Stop, you young rascal!" he panted. Teddy Grace had to stop, for his leg was hooked from under him—and he stopped on his hands and knees.

Sir Leicester Stuckey scrambled up, and gripped the junior by the back of the collar, jerking him to his feet. Still holding the unfortunate Putty in an iron grip, he collected up his hat and his eyeglass with the other hand. Putty wriggled painfully in his grasp.

"I—I'm really sorry, sir!" he gasped. "It was an accident—"

"Ow! Oh! Begad! Ooooooh!"

"I didn't see you, sir—"

"You should have seen me!" roared Sir Leicester.

"I—I—I—"

"Come with me, you young rascal! I shall take you to your headmaster!" thundered the baronet.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Putty. "I—I assure you, sir—"

"Come!"

And Putty of the Fourth was marched in at the gates with a grasp like a vice on his collar.

The 2nd Chapter.

Catching It!

"More trouble!" grinned Mornington, "Putty again!" chuckled Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

From all directions the Rookwood fellows looked on as Putty of the Fourth was marched across the quadrangle, with Sir Leicester Stuckey's grip on his collar.

Sir Leicester was well known at Rookwood, though Putty, as a new fellow, had never seen him before.

He was a governor of the school, and his place, Stucky Croft, was only a mile from Rookwood. He was a rather lofty gentleman, and was known to have a temper—indeed, disrespectful Rookwooders had described him as an old Hun. Certainly he looked rather Hunish as he marched Putty of the Fourth towards the School House.

Teddy Grace went quietly and meekly; there was nothing else to be done. But he was not feeling happy.

Sir Leicester did not heed the stares and grins on all sides as he progressed across the quad. The Rookwooders had never seen a Rookwood fellow marched along by the collar before, and they were interested.

"Putty's in for it, and no mistake!" remarked Mornington, as the baronet stalked into the house with his victim.

"What on earth has he been up to, I wonder?"

"Some of his tricks!" grunted Higgs of the Fourth. "He's always up to something. A licking will do him good."

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin. "He biffed into old Stuckey at the gates! I saw him! Knocked him over! He, he, he!"

"I—I say, sir," gasped Putty, as he entered the School House with his conductor—"I assure you it was an accident!"

"Nonsense!"

"On my word, sir—"

"Hold your tongue!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Putty.

"Bless my soul! What is this?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, whisking out of his study.

The master of the Fourth blinked at the baronet and the junior over his glasses in great surprise.

Sir Leicester halted.

"Is this boy in your Form, Mr. Bootles?" he demanded.

"Yes, certainly! What—what—"

"Then, sir, I hand him over to you for punishment! He has assaulted me, sir—assaulted a governor of the school!" roared Sir Leicester, in great wrath and indignation.

"Bless my soul! Grace, what—what—"

"It was an accident, sir!" faltered the unhappy Putty.

"It was not an accident!" thundered Sir Leicester. "The boy rushed at me, sir, like a mad bull—like a ferocious bull, sir! Look at my hat! Look at my waistcoat, sir! I have been rolled in the dust! I, sir, a governor of the school!"

And Sir Leicester spluttered.

"Pray come into my study, sir!" gasped Mr. Bootles, with a glance at the crowd of Rookwooders gathering round.

"Boy! Go into your master's study!"

Putty cast a longing look at the doorway on the quad, but there was no escape for him. He walked meekly into Mr. Bootles' study, followed by Sir Leicester, who had released his collar at last. Mr. Bootles whisked in after them in a state of great agitation. Mr. Bootles was a nervous little gentleman, and easily flustered; and he was very much flustered now by the wrath of so great a personage as Sir Leicester Stuckey.

Teddy Grace set his collar straight, and looked as meek as he could.

"Now, sir—" murmured Mr. Bootles.

The baronet pointed a podgy forefinger at Teddy Grace.

"That boy, sir, rushed at me and knocked me spinning—me, sir! I demand the most severe punishment for his insolence! The most condign punishment, sir!"

Mr. Bootles took up his cane. "Have you anything to say, Grace?" he asked.

"Yes, sir! I—"

"What does it matter what the boy says, sir?" snorted Sir Leicester. "I have told you what occurred!"

"Really, sir—"

"The boy will speak untruthfully. He has done so already!"

"That's not true!" exclaimed Putty indignantly.

"What—what!"

"I've told you the truth—it was an accident. I didn't see you before I biffed on you—I—I mean, before we collided."

"You should not have been rushing about at such a speed, Grace, as to collide with people you do not see!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles severely. "I shall certainly punish you—"

"I should think so!" exclaimed Sir Leicester. "Begad! I should think so, indeed!"

"But it was an accident, Mr. Bootles!" pleaded Putty.

"You should not have such accidents, Grace!"

"But, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!"

There was evidently nothing more to be said.

Swish, swish, swish!

With Sir Leicester looking on, purple with indignation, his white moustache bristling with wrath, Mr. Bootles laid on the cane with unusual energy.

Swish, swish, swish!

Putty of the Fourth had been caned before—not undeservedly—but he had never had anything like this.

Swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Even Sir Leicester Stuckey was satisfied with the infliction, as he testified by a deep grunt, which was to be taken as a sign of approval.

His angry face cleared a little as he left the Form-master's study and strode away to the Head's quarters.

Mr. Bootles laid down his cane. "You may go, Grace," he said quietly. "I warn you, my boy, not to play these foolish practical jokes—"

"Ow! But really, sir— Yow!"

"You must learn, Grace, to restrain your unruly sense of humour," said Mr. Bootles severely. "Yesterday my cane in the Form-room was split. I suspect you of this outrage, Grace."

"Oh, sir!"

"But this latest prank passes all bounds—an actual assault upon a governor of the school!"

"But I assure you, sir—"

"You may go."

"Yes, sir. But—"

"Leave my study, Grace!" snapped the master of the Fourth.

And Putty left it, rubbing his aching palms, and with a decidedly lugubrious expression on his face.

His unruly sense of humour, as Mr. Bootles called it, had landed him in trouble before, and was probably destined to do so again. Whenever a fellow found a boot in his pie, or gum in his inkpot, or ink in his slippers, he thought of Putty at once. Putty wasn't always guilty; it was a case of a dog with a bad name.

"Hallo, what's the matter with you?"

Jimmy Silver came into the School House and discovered Putty of the Fourth going through what looked like a weird series of gymnastics. "Got a pain anywhere?"

"Yow-ow!" said Putty dismally. "It's all your fault! I've been licked! Ow-ow-ow!"

"For biffing old Stuckey?" grinned the captain of the Fourth.

"Ow! Yes. He marched me in to Bootles. Ow!"

"Why didn't you dodge him?"

"Yow! I couldn't!"

"My dear chap, you're not so bright as you think you are!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "We dodged, and we thought you'd dodged."

"He hooked me with his walking-stick—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you silly ass?" hooted Putty. "I've been jolly well skinned—"

"Wasn't it funny—old Stuckey hooking you with a walking-stick?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Yow! No; it wasn't! Ow!"

"Ha, ha! That's the weakness of you merry humorists—you never see the humour when it's up against yourselves!" grinned Jimmy. "Think over it, old fellow, and you'll see that it's quite funny!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" was Putty's reply.

Possibly it was funny; but for the present, at least, the humour of it was quite lost on the humorist of the Fourth.

The 3rd Chapter.

Putty's Little Scheme.

"Whoop!"

"Putty again!" grinned Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was the following day, which happened to be Wednesday, a half-holiday at Rookwood. The Fistical Four were strolling in the quad after dinner, discussing what was to be done with the afternoon, when they heard that loud and lamentable howl under the old beeches.

It was Putty of the Fourth—evidently in trouble again! He was wriggling in the grasp of Knowles of the Modern Sixth, and the Modern prefect was laying on his ashplant with considerable vigour.

"Whoop! Yoop! I didn't—I wasn't—" yelled Putty.

Whack, whack!

"That's for the gum in my slippers!" said Knowles. Whack! "That's for the oil in my ink-bottle!"

"I didn't—"

Whack, whack!

"And that's for being a cheeky young cad!"

"Yarooooh!"

"Here, hold on, Knowles!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Moderns can't cane Classical chaps. Put the brake on!"

Knowles scowled at the captain of the Fourth, and bestowed another sounding whack on Putty, as if to show that he could cane Classics, in spite of Jimmy Silver's opinion to the contrary.

Then he tucked the ashplant under his arm and strode away.

"Ow, ow!" gasped Putty. "The beast! I've a jolly good mind to go to Bulkeley! Ow!"

"Bulkeley would give you another licking for playing tricks on a prefect!" grinned Raby.

"I haven't!" roared Putty.

"Bow-wow!"

"It's all put down to me!" gasped the unhappy humorist. "I haven't been near Knowles' study. Some silly Modern duffer has been playing tricks on him, and he thinks—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. "That's what comes of being such a jolly funny merchant. You get the benefit of the doubt."

Putty glared indignantly at the Fistical Four as they yelled. Again he failed to see the humour of the situation.

"I'm getting fed up!" he growled. "You cackling asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly well make you all sit up somehow—"

"You can't, old bean!" chuckled Lovell. "Every time you let your giddy sense of humour get out of hand we shall know it was you, and you'll get it in the neck. And every time it isn't you, you'll get it, anyway. Serve you jolly well right, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four walked on, laughing. The woes of the humorist struck them as funny.

Putty wriggled painfully, and there was quite a thoughtful expression on his face as he moved away.

He was feeling very much injured.

But as he reflected the cloud left his face and a smile took its place.

The glimmer in his merry eyes showed that some new idea had come into his fertile brain, and that the trouble that had fallen upon him had not had much effect upon his cheery proclivities.

"By Jove!" he murmured. "What a wheeze! What a thumping wheeze! Bootles—and Knowles—and those silly asses—and old Stuckey! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Do you like being licked?" asked Tubby Muffin, joining him under the beeches. "You seem to be enjoying yourself, Putty."

"Just thinking of you, old bean!" answered Putty cheerfully. "I want a chat with you, Tubby. You know everything, don't you?"

"I fancy I know most things that go on in Rookwood, anyway," said Tubby, with pride.

"You always will, old fellow, so long as they make keyholes to doors," agreed Putty.

"Look here, you ass—"

"About old Stuckey," said Putty. "I hear that he's a governor of Rookwood, and lives near the school?"

"That's so. I know all about him," answered Tubby Muffin. "His place is called Stuckey Croft—off the Coombe Road. He's a jolly old Tartar, too! The Head doesn't really like him dropping in at the school the way he does; but he can't say so, as the old donkey is a governor. He, he, he!"

"Isn't he a nice man?"

"A regular Hun!" answered Tubby impressively.

"Doesn't he often ask the fellows to tea at his place, and all that?"

Tubby stared.

"No jolly fear! He's had Knowles of the Sixth there, I believe. Knowles is rather a sly chap, and he knows how to butter anybody. You have to pull old Stuckey's leg a lot to get on with him."

"Still, he'd be pleased if a fellow dropped in to tea. I should think."

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"I shouldn't like to be the fellow!" he answered.

"Why not?"

"Well, it would be cheek—and old Stuckey's about the last man in the world to stand cheek. If a fellow walked in there without being asked, he would go out on his neck, I should think. It's a fine place, too!" said Tubby. "I've seen it through the gates. Old Stuckey's no end wealthy—flunkeys, and all that, at Stuckey Croft. I'd go if he asked me."

"But he hasn't?"

"Nunno. He's not a nice man."

"But if a chap came in there in a friendly way—suppose I did, for example—to have tea with him—"

"Don't you be such a silly ass, Putty," said Tubby Muffin warningly. "He would lay a stick about you as likely as not!"

"Oh! Then I jolly well sha'n't honour him with my company!" said Putty, laughing.

And he strolled away to the gates. He passed Carthew of the Sixth in the gateway, and Carthew gave him a scowl.

Putty was not on good terms with the bully of the Sixth.

"Hallo, Carthew! Have you lost something?" asked Putty, stopping suddenly. Carthew stopped.

"Lost something? Not that I know of. What—"

"I think you have, though."

"If you've found something that belongs to me you can hand it over!" said the Sixth-Former, staring at him. "What is it?"

"I haven't found it—but I think you've lost it."

"What is it?"

"Your temper, old bean."

Carthew made a jump towards the Fourth-Former, who scuttled out into the road and fled.

Putty did not drop into a walk till he was at a safe distance. His cheery face wore a happy smile as he sauntered on to Coombe.

Arrived in the village, he entered Lamson's, the establishment that supplied most of the Rookwooders with bats and balls and other paraphernalia of outdoor games. Putty was not in search of a new cricket-bat, however. He politely requested permission to use the telephone.

Lamson's telephone was not infrequently used by Rookwood fellows, and Putty's polite request was at once acceded to.

He was shown into a stuffy little office at the back of the shop, and left to his own devices there.

He sat down at the instrument after seeing that the door into the shop was closed. He was very desirous that his little talk on the telephone should not be overheard.

Probably Mr. Lamson would not have been so obliging if he had known why, and to whom, the humorist of Rookwood wished to talk on the telephone. Fortunately he did not know.

Putty removed the receiver from the hook and called up the exchange. And the number he gave was the Head's number at Rookwood, and the voice in which he spoke was remarkably unlike his usual tones. He had assumed for the occasion a deep, bass voice, which was astonishingly like the gruff tones of Sir Leicester Stuckey, of Stuckey Croft.

The 4th Chapter.

Jimmy Silver & Co. are Pleased.

"Silver!"

"Hallo, Rawson?"

"You're wanted—Head's study."

Jimmy Silver did not look pleased.

The Fistical Four had decided upon an occupation for the afternoon. It was about time, as Jimmy suggested, that another number appeared of "Jimmy Silver's Journal." The paper shortage had slain that enterprising publication in the bloom of its youth, as it were; but Jimmy remarked that the paper shortage was getting easier now—and Raby remarked that that shortage would probably have disappeared entirely by the time the "Journal" was ready for press, however long it lasted!

"We can make a beginning, anyhow," Jimmy observed. And that decision had been come to, and the Fistical Four were about to repair to the end study, when Rawson came along with the message from the Head.

"Now, what the thump can the Head want?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "I've done nothing—simply nothing! If Putty has been up to some game, and the Head is putting it down to me—"

"Was he waxy, Rawson?" asked Newcome.

"No; he looks quite tame," answered Rawson. "But you'd better get off, Jimmy; the Head doesn't like waiting."

Jimmy nodded.

"We have to humour these head-masters!" he remarked.

"We do—we do!" grinned Lovell.

And Jimmy Silver made his way to Dr. Chisholm's study, with the kind thought of humouring his headmaster—which really was quite necessary.

He was relieved to find the Head apparently in a good humour. There was no reason why the Head shouldn't be in a good humour, for that matter; but a junior visiting his study was always prepared for the worst.

"Ah! I sent for you, Silver," said Dr. Chisholm, looking at Jimmy over his glasses. "I have received a message on the telephone—a somewhat gratifying message—concerning you and your friends, Silver."

"Indeed, sir," said Jimmy, in great astonishment.

"Yes, Silver. Sir Leicester Stuckey has rung me up, and asked me to speak to you. You and your friends appear to have made a rather favourable impression upon Sir Leicester."

"I—I'm glad of that, sir," stammered Jimmy.

Apparently Sir Leicester thought more of him than he did of Sir Leicester! It was rather surprising, as Jimmy had certainly not exchanged more than a dozen words with the great man while he had been a Rookwood fellow.

"Sir Leicester Stuckey would be pleased, Silver, if you and your friends—Lovell, Raby, and Newcome—would visit him at Stuckey Croft this afternoon."

"My hat!"

"Eh? What did you say, Silver?"

"N-n-nothing, sir," gasped Jimmy.

"You seem surprised, Silver. This is a very courteous action on the part of Sir Leicester. I am sure that you and your friends will accept the invitation."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Jimmy.

Whether he wanted to accept it or not, there was nothing else to be said. An invitation from a governor of the school was like an invitation from Royalty, and amounted to a command.

"Sir Leicester says he will be glad to entertain you to tea at half-past five precisely," said the Head. "You and your friends will take care to be punctual, Silver."

"Oh, certainly, sir."

"That is all, Silver. You may go."

Jimmy Silver left the Head's study in a state of great astonishment.

There was nothing surprising in the invitation in itself, but it was very surprising as coming from so crusty and Tartar an old gentleman

with the greatest of pleasure to bestow his fascinating society upon the wealthy gentleman. Apparently Sir Leicester did not know how fascinating his society was.

However, the slightest wish of the great man was a thing to be scrupulously observed; and Mr. Manders at once called to a fag, and sent his message to Knowles of the Sixth.

Knowles was in his study, with Frampton and Catesby, when the message reached him, by the medium of Tommy Dodd of the Fourth. Knowles smiled, and Catesby and Frampton gave him envious glances.

"Couldn't take a pal, I suppose?" asked Frampton, when Tommy Dodd was gone. Knowles laughed.

"I'm afraid not, without being told. Old Stuckey is a bit of an old corksucker as not to bite a fellow's head off. I have to treat him very carefully. He's worth keeping up, though; he's got pots of money, and the pater says he will be useful some day when I leave school. He talks awful rot, but I give him his head, and let him jaw!"

"Your deal, Knowles," said Catesby. Knowles looked at his watch.

"Lots of time before four," he remarked. "Time for another round or two, anyway."

And the game of banker went on in Knowles' study.

Another game was going on in another quarter. The telephone-bell rang in the prefects' room, in the School House—the Classical side—and Bulkeley, who was in the room, went to the instrument.

"Is that Carthew?" came a gruff voice on the wires.

"No—it's Bulkeley! Is Carthew wanted?"

"Oh, Bulkeley! Kindly ask Carthew whether he would care to come to tea at Stuckey Croft this afternoon."

"Certainly! Carthew!" Bulkeley called to Carthew of the Sixth, who was in the window talking to Neville. "Sir Leicester Stuckey is asking you to tea. You'd better come."

Carthew came like a shot.

His voice was as honey-sweet as he accepted the invitation.

"I shall expect you at four o'clock, then, Carthew!" came the deep, gruff voice on the wire.

"Certainly, sir—delighted, I'm sure—indeed—Hallo, he's rung off!"

Carthew gave the other seniors in the room a rather boastful look as he left the telephone. Whether it was a pleasure or not, it was a great distinction to be asked to tea by Sir Leicester Stuckey.

Carthew's satisfaction, like that of some other persons at Rookwood, would have been considerably diminished if he had seen the "baronet" at the other end of the wire.

Teddy Grace, with a sweet smile, rose from the stool in Lamson's office, and put the receiver back on the hook. He had finished telephoning for that afternoon.

With really noble self-denial, he had resisted the inclination to ask the Head himself to tea at Stuckey Croft—even Putty of the Fourth felt that that would be going a little too far.

He passed out through the shop, and thanked Mr. Lamson very sweetly; and sauntered down the village street with a smile upon his face, which showed that he was placidly at peace with himself and all the world. He was feeling quite grateful to the inventor of that wonderful instrument, the telephone.

The 6th Chapter.

Visitors for Sir Leicester.

Mark Carthew, the first on the list of Sir Leicester Stuckey's distinguished but unexpected guests, arrived in good time at Stuckey Croft. Carthew was looking very pleased with himself, and he was sporting his best tail-coat and his shiniest hat. He glanced at the extensive and well-kept grounds, as he came up to the magnificent portal, and was still more pleased. Sir Leicester Stuckey was undoubtedly an acquaintance worth cultivating, even if it did require no inconsiderable amount of buttering to keep him in a good humour.

He gave his name to the footman who admitted him, and was rather surprised that he did not seem to be expected. His name was taken in to Sir Leicester, who was in the library, and the footman returned with a lurking grin of impertinence upon his smooth face.

"Sir Leicester is sorry that he cannot see you, sir."

Carthew stared and reddened.

"Sir Leicester is expecting me," he exclaimed warmly. "My name is Carthew—Mark Carthew. Sir Leicester asked me to call at four o'clock."

"Sir Leicester's gout is bad to-day, sir, and he is not receiving anyone."

"There's some mistake," said Carthew. "Sir Leicester telephoned to me personally, asking me to call at four o'clock. Perhaps he has forgotten."

The footman gave him a doubtful look, but he returned to his master. A deep voice was heard from the open door of the library.

"Show him in!"

The voice did not sound agreeable, but Carthew was relieved. He had begun to feel very perplexed and uncomfortable. The footman showed him into the library, where Sir Leicester Stuckey sat by a huge fire, with one foot propped upon a cushioned stool. His red face was a little redder than usual, and his eyes had a far from hospitable glitter in them. Carthew, considerably abashed, approached him in some trepidation.

Sir Leicester fixed a glittering eye upon him.

"So—what is your name?"

"Carthew, Sir Leicester; you—you telephoned—"

"When did I telephone?"

"This afternoon, sir—"

"I did not telephone this afternoon!" snorted Sir Leicester. "I am not in a state to telephone this afternoon. Yowow!" That ejaculation, apparently, was

due to a twinge in Sir Leicester's gouty leg. "What do you mean, boy, by coming here with a statement that I telephoned to you, when I did nothing of the sort?"

"But—but—but—" stammered the bewildered Carthew. "You—you did—"

"What!"

"At least, I—I—I—"

"James!" roared Sir Leicester. James appeared.

"Show this young gentleman out, James! As for you, Carthew, or whatever your name is, I shall mention this to your headmaster. Yow! A schoolboy joke, I presume—a joke—yow!—on me!"

"Oh, no, no!" gasped Carthew. He would as soon have thought of joking with a tiger in the jungle as with Sir Leicester Stuckey. "I—I was rung up—"

"Show him out!"

"I assure you, Sir Leicester, I—I—"

"Show him out!" roared Sir Leicester. James touched Carthew on the elbow, and the prefect of Rookwood almost tottered out of the library. Sir Leicester gave a snort of angry contempt, followed by a yelp, as he caught another twinge from his leg.

The footman was grinning as he almost pushed the Rookwood prefect out of the door. Carthew wondered whether he was on his head or his heels as he almost limped away down the drive.

Sir Leicester Stuckey snorted, and snorted again. His temper was never good, and when the gout had the upper hand, it was worse than ever. He regretted that he had not laid his crutch about the Rookwooder who had disturbed his lofty repose that painful afternoon.

And when James—a little nervous himself—announced another visitor, at half-past four, Sir Leicester indulged in a snort that could be heard in the hall by Knowles of the Modern Sixth.

"Have I told you, James, that I cannot see anyone, or have I not?" he demanded.

"Master Knowles—"

Mr. Bootles gazed at him, transfixed. "I—I trust so!" he gasped. "I—I certainly trust so. I—I fail to understand you, Sir Leicester. You telephoned—"

"I did not telephone!"

"Bless my soul! You asked me—invited me—"

"I asked you nothing!"

"I—I—really, sir—really this reception—this conduct—really, Sir Leicester Stuckey—really—" babbled Mr. Bootles.

Sir Leicester pointed at him with a hand that trembled with wrath.

"You have lent yourself, Mr. Bootles, to a schoolboy prank. You are the third person to come here and insult me! I shall complain to Dr. Chisholm! By Jove, sir, you will see that I am not a man to be treated with insolence—not with impunity, Mr. Bootles—not with impunity!"

"I—I assure you, I—I—"

"I did not telephone to you, sir, and I had not the slightest desire to see you—not the slightest! Why should I have, by Jove? Mr. Bootles, you are an insolent knave!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Now I have told you what I think of your conduct, sir, leave my house, or, by Jove, I will have you thrown out of the door!"

Mr. Bootles backed away into the hall in alarm—the baronet's crutch looked quite dangerous. He really looked as if he would have used it as an offensive weapon if Mr. Bootles had been within reach.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "Upon my word! I—I—I have never—never— Bless my soul! Extraordinary! Outrageous! The unfortunate man must have been drinking! Bless my soul!"

Mr. Bootles was so overcome that James had to take him by the elbow and lead him out. He mopped his perspiring brow as he went down the drive. And he made up his mind that he would never, never accept an invitation again from Sir Leicester Stuckey, if he ever received one, which was doubtful.

good for a gouty leg; but Sir Leicester's temper had a will of its own, and was not to be denied. And Sir Leicester had reason to be wrathful. He could only conclude that he was being made the victim of a concerted practical joke; which, in the case of so important a person as himself, almost amounted to sacrilege.

It was in fear and trembling that James announced Mr. Bootles, when that gentleman arrived, chubby and cheerful, at five o'clock.

"Mr. Bootles, from Rookwood, Sir Leicester."

"Snort!"

"Have I not told you, James—"

"But Mr. Bootles, sir, says it is a special appointment—"

"Nonsense!"

"That you telephoned, Sir Leicester—"

"Telephoned!" shrieked Sir Leicester. He grasped his crutch and raised himself from his chair.

"Mr. Bootles! Telephoned—telephoned! Mr. Bootles!" he spluttered. "A—a master—a schoolmaster—entering into a schoolboy rag! Outrageous! Come here, Mr. Bootles!" roared Sir Leicester.

Mr. Bootles heard that roar in the hall, and came to the doorway of the library, surprised by such a peculiar summons, but still chubby and smiling.

He stopped in the doorway, however. Sir Leicester's look was not exactly inviting.

"Mr. Bootles—"

"My dear Sir Leicester—"

"So I telephoned to you, too, did I?" roared Sir Leicester.

"Ye-es, certainly—"

"Are you not ashamed, sir, to lend yourself to such a ridiculous prank?"

"Eh?"

"At your age, sir, and in your position!" roared Sir Leicester. "Have you no sense of dignity—of propriety?"

The 7th Chapter.

Nice for the Fistical Four.

"Hallo! You fellows look in great form!"

Teddy Grace smiled cheerfully at the Fistical Four. The cheerful new junior was hanging about the lane, not far from the entrance to Stuckey Croft, when Jimmy Silver & Co. came along.

Certainly, the Fistical Four looked unusually spick and span. Their jackets were nicely brushed, their trousers nicely creased, their ties nicely tied, and they wore their best hats and their best smiles. It was a distinguished occasion, and the chums of the Fourth were doing justice to it.

"We're going to make a rather special call, you see," explained Jimmy.

"Dropping in to see Sir Leicester Stuckey, you know," remarked Lovell negligently.

"Not really?" exclaimed Putty.

"Yes; he rang us up this afternoon," said Raby carelessly.

"Lucky bargees!" said Putty enviously. "Could you take a pal in?"

"Not quite!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "By the way, you young sweep, have you been playing any tricks on Bootles?"

"Bootles?" repeated Putty.

"Yes; he passed us in the lane a few minutes ago looking jolly queer."

"I thought he looked rather queer when he passed me," said Putty demurely. "Perhaps he's feeling sorry for caning me yesterday."

"Fathead!" answered Jimmy, and he walked on with his chums; Teddy Grace glancing after them with a smile.

"Jolly decent place, this!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell, as the Fistical Four walked up the drive. "Shouldn't mind coming here sometimes. Tea on the lawn would be all right, wouldn't it?"

"Topping!" said Newcome.

"Old Stuckey can't be such a bad sort,"

"What is it, James? Is it some more of them?" came a gruff, ferocious voice, which made Jimmy Silver & Co. blink at one another.

"Yes, Sir Leicester!" gasped James. "Four young gentlemen from Rookwood—"

"Begad!"

"They—they say you telephoned, Sir Leicester—"

"Telephoned!"

It was a roar, in a voice like unto the voice of the bull of Bashan.

"Show them in! Telephoned! Begad! I'll give them telephone! Show them in!"

James made a sign to the amazed juniors, who entered the library.

Sir Leicester Stuckey was standing by the hearth, leaning on his crutch, his face purple.

"So—so you have come to—to see me?" he gasped, with a glare at the Fistical Four.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Jimmy Silver in dismay. "We—we—we've come to tea, sir—"

"You have come to tea! You—you have come to—to tea! I—I presume I telephoned—what?"

"Yes," answered Jimmy Silver. "You telephoned to Rookwood—"

"By gad!"

What happened next was like an earthquake to the astounded juniors.

Heedless of the twinges in his gouty leg, the angry gentleman strode towards them, grasping his crutch.

"Telephoned!" he spluttered. "Telephoned, by gad! T-t-ut-telephoned—"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Yooop!"

The juniors jumped right and left, with yells of astonishment and anguish, as Sir Leicester started in with the crutch.

Whack, whack! Biff!

"Yaroooop!"

"Help!"

"Run for it!" shrieked Lovell. "He's mad! Run for your lives!"

"Oh, crickey!"

Helter-skelter the juniors scattered into the hall. Behind them came Sir Leicester, raging, with brandished crutch.

"Telephoned! I'll give you telephone! By gad! Young rascals, sweeps, scoundrels, take that—and that! Telephoned! Take that!"

Whack, whack! Crash!

"Run for it!"

How the unfortunate juniors got out of the door they never knew. But they got out, and went down the drive as if they were on the cinder-path! Lovell's hat remained in the hall, Raby's on the doorstep, and Newcome's on the drive. But they did not stop for their hats. They would not have stopped for the treasures of Golconda.

They ran!

The lodgekeeper stared at them as they came whooping down the drive. They bolted frantically out into the road.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Lovell, pausing to gasp for breath at last. "What—what—what the thunder—"

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Yow-ow! I'm hurt!"

"Oh, dear!"

The chums of the Fourth had not enjoyed their visit to Stuckey Croft. But Teddy Grace, to judge by his look when they passed him again, was enjoying himself.

The mystery of the telephone remained a mystery. After a visit from Sir Leicester Stuckey the following day the Head made a stern inquiry. Nothing came to light—officially. But unofficially Jimmy Silver & Co. came to a conclusion on the subject which caused them to pay a visit to Putty's study, and without stopping to ask questions fall upon that youth and smite him hip and thigh. Which was some solace to the victims who had been sold again!

THE END.

(Another splendid complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Monday, entitled "Rookwood's Hero!" By Owen Conquest. Don't miss it!)

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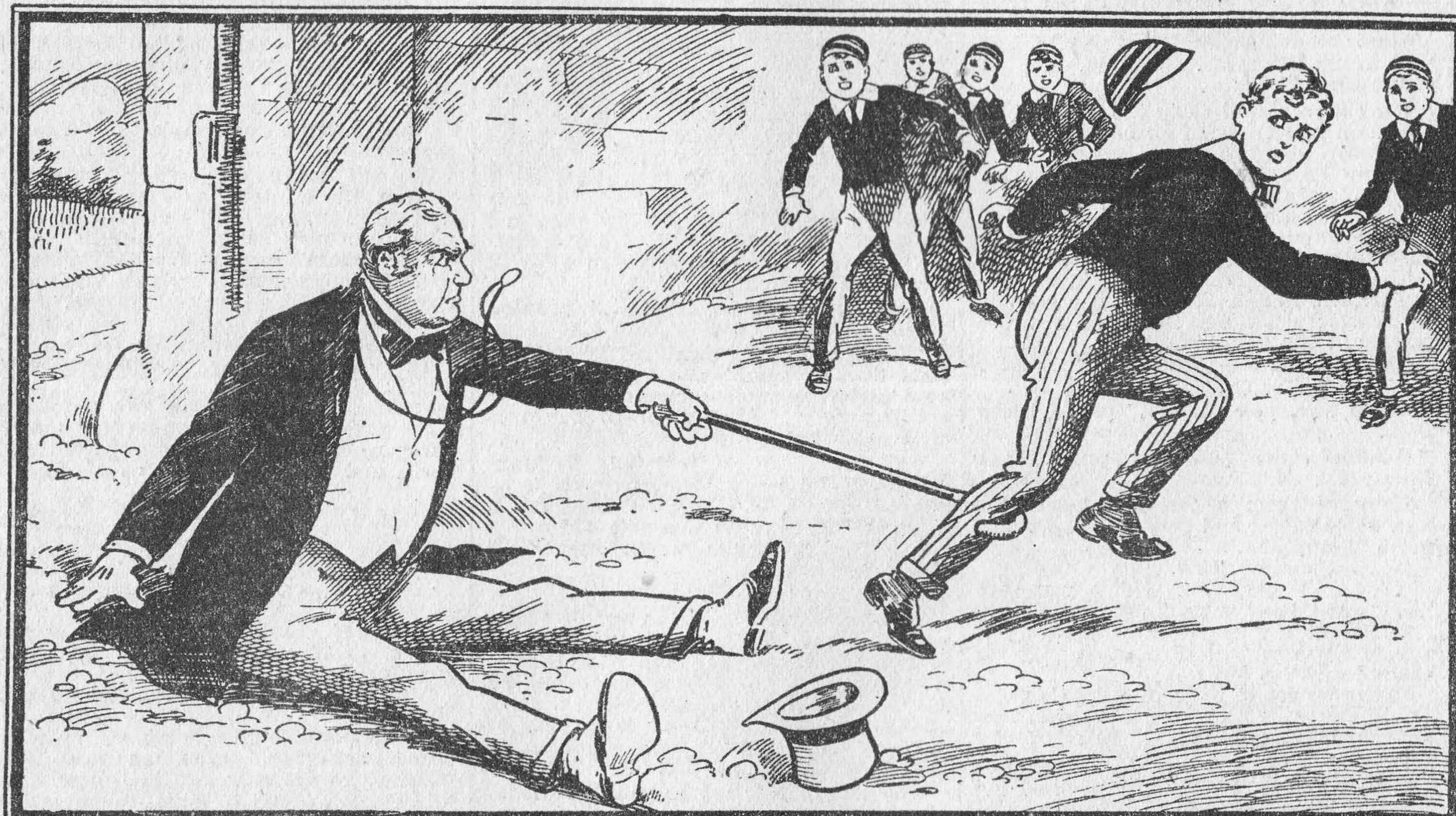
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PULLED UP! Teddy Grace dodged round the seated gentleman to flee, but Sir Leicester reached out with his walking-stick and hooked him with the crook of the handle. "Stop, you young rascal!" he panted. Teddy Grace had to stop, for his leg was hooked from under him!

"Another boy from Rookwood! What does he want?"

"Ahem! Master Knowles says you telephoned, Sir Leicester—"

Sir Leicester sat boldly upright, and yelped as his leg twinged.

"Telephoned!" he thundered.

"Ye-es, Sir Leicester—"

"Begad! Telephoned! Show the young rascal in!" gasped Sir Leicester. "This is a piece of concerted insolence—what they call, I believe, a rag! Begad, I'll rag them! Show the young scoundrel in!"

The young scoundrel was shown in.

Knowles of the Sixth advanced towards the baronet with an insinuating smile upon his face—but the smile became a little frozen as he saw Sir Leicester's purple face and the expression upon it.

"So I telephoned to you, did I?" thundered Sir Leicester.

Knowles jumped.

"Ye-es—certainly—"

"You young rascal!"

"Wha-a-at!" stammered Knowles.

"Telephoned! By gad! I shall certainly telephone to your headmaster, and report this insolence!"

Knowles blinked at him.

"But you—you asked me to tea," he stammered. "You—you telephoned to—"

"How dare you stand before me and utter such falsehoods, boy?" thundered Sir Leicester. "I am very well acquainted with your motive—I am aware of what you call a rag. A rag, by gad! James, turn this fellow out!"

"B-b-b-but—" spluttered Knowles, in blank bewilderment.

"Kick him out!" roared Sir Leicester. James took Knowles by the arm and led him away. He deposited Knowles, as it were, outside the great door, and closed it on him, leaving the unfortunate Rookwooder wondering whether he was dreaming. It was several minutes before Knowles recovered himself sufficiently to limp away.

Sir Leicester fumed and puffed in his chair. Excitement was decidedly not

went on Lovell. "It's really decent of him to pick us out and ask us to tea. Well, here we are!"

Jimmy Silver rang.

He observed a rather peculiar expression on the well-shaven face of James as that well-fed menial opened the door. James was possibly getting fed-up with visitors from Rookwood School.

"Sir Leicester is expecting us!" Jimmy Silver explained, as James showed a disposition not to open the door very wide.

"Sir Leicester cannot see anyone this afternoon," said James.

"He is expecting us. Take in our names!" answered Jimmy rather sharply.

"Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome."

"Sir Leicester has given instructions for no one to be admitted—"

"What rot!" said Lovell. "He must be expecting us, as he telephoned—"

James gave a start.

"Telephoned!" he repeated.

"Yes, to Rookwood!"

"If this is a joke, young gentlemen—"

"I don't see any joke!" said Jimmy Silver, surprised, and not pleased by the footman's manner. "Take in our names to Sir Leicester at once!"

"I'm afraid I cannot—"

"I tell you Sir Leicester telephoned to us to come at half-past five!" exclaimed Jimmy angrily. "Come on, you chaps!"

And as James showed no disposition to grant a passage the Fistical Four pushed him aside and entered. The man's conduct was really amazing, and they could not help suspecting that he was not quite sober.

"Now, show us in at once!" exclaimed Jimmy



GUNTEN'S GOLD-MINE!

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. In High Feather.

"Here's Gunten!" said Bob Lawless. Frank Richards & Co. were on their snowshoes, in the trail out of Thompson, within sight of the snowy roofs of the cabins. The chums of Cedar Creek School were early astray that morning. Dicky Bird and his friends had passed them, going to Hillcrest School; and the Co. were about to start for Cedar Creek when Kern Gunten came in sight. They stopped at once. Kern Gunten, once their schoolfellow at Cedar Creek, now of Hillcrest School, was an object of great interest to the three chums just then.

Gunten came tramping along through the snow from Thompson town, his eyes on the ground and his brow wrinkled in thought. A smile, played over his heavy face occasionally, making it clear that his thoughts, whatever they were, were of a pleasant nature. Frank Richards & Co. exchanged a smile.

"Gunten seems in high feather!" remarked Vere Beauclerc. "No wonder, when he's struck a valuable bonanza on the island in the creek!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "Gunten's dreaming dreams of millions of dollars. I guess he'll never see the dollars. But he doesn't know that yet." "Ha, ha, ha!"

The merry laugh of the Cedar Creek chums reached Kern Gunten's ears, and he looked up quickly. "Oh! You!" he said. "Little us!" smiled Frank Richards. "You seem quite cheery this morning, Gunten." "I've had some good luck," said Gunten airily. "Struck a gold-mine?" asked Bob. Gunten nodded. "You've hit it," he answered coolly. "You don't say so!" exclaimed Beauclerc. Gunten gave another nod, and eyed the chums of Cedar Creek in a rather lofty manner.

As the son of the richest storekeeper in Thompson, Kern Gunten was a little given to "swank"; but his swank had grown upon him since the chums had seen him last. His visions of wealth had got into his head, so to speak, and he already looked upon himself as a person of very considerable consequence. His nose, which was a little elevated by nature, was very much elevated now by conceit and self-satisfaction.

"Quite a bonanza!" he said, with assumed carelessness. "I don't know how many dollars to the ton it will work out at; I haven't had it assayed yet. But it's a rich strike. One of the biggest strikes ever made in the Thompson Valley, I reckon." "What luck! Where is it—if that's not a secret?" "No secret now; I've got the claim registered in proper style," grinned Gunten. "The Prime Minister of Canada couldn't take it away from me now. It's properly protected by law." "That's wise," said Bob Lawless solemnly. "I guess I'm not the antelope to let the grass grow under my feet," said the Swiss boastfully. "As soon as I'd made the strike, I moseyed along to the sheriff's office, and put in the claim. My father helped me through. It's all in order now."

"And where's the ten-strike?" "On the island in the creek." "Honest Injun?" asked Frank. "You bet! You fellows saw me there the other day, when you were skating. You remember?" "Yes; Dicky Bird and his crowd were with you." Gunten flushed slightly. "They hadn't anything to do with striking the bonanza," he said hastily. "I did that, quite on my lonesome." "Oh!" They went back to school, you know, while I moseyed down town to get the claim registered," remarked Gunten. "And they haven't a share in it?" "None at all." "Dicky Bird passed us here, ten minutes ago," said Bob Lawless, eyeing Gunten very curiously. "He seemed to think he had been frozen out." Gunten sneered. "Oh, he's been talking that rot to me!" he answered. "He thinks he has a claim to a share in my gold-mine, simply because he happened to be on the island at the time I made the strike." "It wasn't Bird who made the strike?" "Certainly not!" "He seemed to think it was," grinned Bob. "If he can prove that, he may be able

to upset my claim," sneered Gunten. "It would mean a lawsuit, with my poppa's money and influence on my side; and I don't calculate Dicky Bird's folk will take it on. The claim's mine in law, and I'm sticking on to it." "Ha, ha, ha!" "I don't see anything to cackle at, myself," said Gunten. "I dare say you're envious. I shall be rich. It's a tip-top strike—a regular ten-strike, and no mistake! In a few weeks' time, Bob Lawless, I should be able to buy up your father's ranch without missing the money."

And with that remark Kern Gunten tramped on, with his nose in the air. The Cedar Creek chums chuckled. "He doesn't know we know all about it," grinned Bob Lawless. "Blessed if I should ever have thought this, even of Gunten—dishing his own schoolfellows, and simply robbing them! I shouldn't be surprised if they lynch him at Hillcrest to-day. They ought to." "He is an awful rascal, and no mistake," said Frank Richards. "Hallo, here he comes again!"

The chums stared along the trail. Gunten had tramped on into the patch of timber near Hillcrest School House, and now he came speeding back, kicking up clouds of snow as he ran. The cause was soon apparent. Three fellows were on his track—Dicky Bird, Blumpy, and Fisher. The three had evidently lain in wait, in the timber, to catch the Swiss on his way to school; doubtless to argue out the matter of the island claim.

Gunten came tearing along, panting for breath, his face crimson with exertion. "Stop him, you galoots!" yelled Dicky Bird. Gunten came pounding past Frank Richards & Co.

He gave them a terrified, beseeching look as he came; and they made no movement to stop him. He sped past, panting. "You silly jays, why didn't you stop him?" roared Dicky Bird angrily. He did not wait for an answer, but rushed on in pursuit of Gunten, with his comrades at his heels. "Time we got to Cedar Creek," chuckled Bob Lawless. "I guess Gunten won't go to school this morning, if he's got any hoss-sense."

Gunten and his pursuers vanished among the snowy cabins of Thompson, and Frank Richards & Co. started for Cedar Creek, chuckling merrily. Gunten had "bagged" the claim on the island and left his schoolfellows out—a cunning stroke of rascality which surprised the Co. even in Kern Gunten; for the Hillcresters had been gold-seeking in company, and it was actually Dicky Bird who had struck the claim. It seemed likely that the cunning Swiss, though he had made his position secure in law, would have to pay for his rascality in ways unrecognised by the law, if Dicky Bird & Co. could get hold of him!

Indeed, it seemed improbable that Gunten would be able to venture to school at all, under the circumstances. The schoolfellows he had swindled were not to be appeased, naturally. And the cream of the joke—from the Co.'s point of view—was that the claim on the island was not a gold-mine at all, but a "salted" claim prepared by the humorous Bob for a joke on the Hillcrest fellows.

If Kern Gunten could have known that, he would not have been dreaming those dreams of great wealth. But he did not know it—yet!

The 2nd Chapter. Not Wanted!

"You fellows heard about Gunten?" Chunky Todgers asked that question

breathlessly, as Frank Richards & Co. arrived at Cedar Creek School.

Chunky Todgers was full of news. "My dear kid, we know all about it," said Frank Richards, laughing. "Gunten is going to be a millionaire—perhaps." "Perhaps!" chorused Bob Lawless. "I say, it's right enough," said Chunky Todgers. "It's the talk of Thompson. There's been a big strike made on the island in the creek. It's odd, too, because I've explored that pesky island, and never found anything. Lots of galoots have. Gunten had all the luck." "He's welcome to it!" "Well, I don't know; it's rotten for that pesky Swiss to bag such a bonanza," said Chunky. "And the other Hillcrest fellows say he's diddled them. They say they were all hunting for the claim together, and Bird hit on it, and Gunten sneaked away early to put in his word with the registrar, while the others were pegging out the claim."

"I guess that was low-down, even for Gunten, if it's true!" remarked Lawrence. "I guess it's true enough!" said Bob. "Well, the gold-mine is Gunten's by law," said Chunky Todgers. "Galoot who registers the claim is the man. Of course, the others could go to law about it, if their people would take it up. But Gunten's got his father on his side, and he's rich; he could afford to get a first-rate lawyer. I calculate Gunten will nail the claim all right." "He ought to be lynched!" growled Eben Hacke.

"He will be, jolly nearly, if Dicky Bird gets hold of him!" said Bob. "We've just seen the galoots chasing him back to Thompson. They seem to be quite wild about it."

"No wonder!" ejaculated Todgers. "Why, I—I'd wring his Swiss neck if he played a trick like that on me! It's a thing a Digger Injun wouldn't do!" "But is the claim worth anything?" asked Lawrence.

Bob closed one eye. "Gunten thinks it is, or he wouldn't have swindled the other chaps out of their whack," he answered. "But what Gunten don't know about gold-mines would fill the public library at Vancouver. I don't really reckon Gunten is going to be wealthy enough to buy British Columbia out, look, stock, and barrel." The bell was ringing, and the Cedar Creek fellows went in to lessons.

There was an interruption to lessons that morning. While Miss Meadows was busy with her class there came a knock at the school-room door, and, to the surprise of all Cedar Creek, it opened to give admission to Mr. Gunten, storekeeper and postmaster of Thompson.

The fat gentleman strode in, with Kern Gunten, looking very uneasy, at his heels. Miss Meadows looked at them. "Old Man Gunten!" murmured Bob Lawless. "What's this game, I wonder? He can't be going to ask Miss Meadows to take Gunten back." "Silence in class, please!" said Miss Meadows severely. "Mr. Gunten, may I inquire—"

"Good-morning, madam!" said Mr. Gunten, with great politeness. "Good-morning! But—" "Some time ago, madam," pursued Mr. Gunten, "there was a certain disagreement, and my son left this school. You refused to take him back."

"Well, sir?" said Miss Meadows coldly. "Madam, some time has elapsed since then, and my son's conduct since that date has been exemplary—quite exemplary. He is prepared to apologise to you, madam, and promise complete amendment. Under these circumstances, Miss Meadows, I trust you will accept him once more as a pupil."

The Canadian schoolmistress looked perplexed.

"But is not your son a pupil of Mr. Peckover, at Hillcrest?" she asked. Mr. Gunten coughed.

"I am not satisfied with Hillcrest," he said. "Madam, I should take it as a very great favour if you would receive my boy back into Cedar Creek. Considering the time that has elapsed since his fault—"

Miss Meadows' face hardened. "Does that mean, Mr. Gunten, that your son has been sent away from Hillcrest, as he was sent away from here?" she exclaimed.

"Certainly not, madam! I am taking him away."

"For no reason?" "The fact is, he does not get on with the other boys, for some reason," said Mr. Gunten. "There is a set against him. For the lad's sake, Miss Meadows, I hope you will give him a chance here, even for a few weeks."

The schoolmistress hesitated. It was a considerable "climb-down" for the fat and pompous storekeeper to come to Cedar Creek and make that humble request, and Miss Meadows was inclined to be lenient. Bob Lawless gave his chums a grim look.

He knew that Mr. Gunten must be well aware why his son was not safe at Hillcrest among the schoolfellows he had swindled; and Bob did not mean to see Miss Meadows deceived and an unscrupulous young rascal "planted" on Cedar Creek School. Cedar Creek had had enough of Kern Gunten in the past.

Bob Lawless jumped up. "Miss Meadows—" he began. "You sit down, Lawless!" "Mr. Gunten hasn't told you why his son is in trouble at Hillcrest, Miss Meadows," said Bob firmly. "Really, Lawless—"

"Ask him, ma'am, whether it isn't because Kern Gunten has swindled half a dozen of the chaps," said Bob. Miss Meadows started, and Kern Gunten gave the rancher's son a bitter look. Old Man Gunten frowned portentously.

"Miss Meadows, kindly take no notice of that insolent boy!" he said. "I trust that you—"

"I will make an inquiry into the matter, Mr. Gunten," said Miss Meadows decidedly. "That is all I can say now." "My son may as well remain here—" "He cannot remain for the present, until I am acquainted with all the circumstances of his leaving Hillcrest."

"Really, madam—" "That is my last word, Mr. Gunten!" The fat storekeeper coloured with anger; but he yielded the point. It was no use to argue further, as he could see. He gave a snort and marched out of the school-room, with Kern Gunten at his heels, and the door closed on them.

The 3rd Chapter. Light on the Subject.

"Cheek!" growled Bob Lawless, as the Cedar Creek fellows came out after morning lessons. "Neck, and no mistake!" agreed Frank Richards. "I suppose Gunten must go to some school or other," remarked Beauclerc. "But there are only two in this section, and Gunten seems to have made both of them too hot for him. Old Man Gunten will be driven to sending him away to a boarding-school. Still, this trouble at Hillcrest will blow over—when the fellows there find out the facts."

Bob Lawless laughed. "I guess we may as well mosey along to Hillcrest and see them," he said. "We'll tell Dicky Bird as a secret, and let Gunten run on with sticking to the claim and getting a mining man to come and test it. We don't want to deprive him of his pleasant surprise when he finds out what it's worth."

"Ha, ha, ha!" And the chums buckled on their snowshoes and started down the frozen trail for Hillcrest. The Co. considered that the little joke had gone far enough, so far as Dicky Bird was concerned; and they were anxious, too, not to run any risk of the obnoxious Swiss being planted in Cedar Creek again.

There was a buzz of voices in the playground when they reached Hillcrest School and looked in at the open gate. Dicky Bird & Co. were there, with most of the other Hillcrest fellows; evidently discussing the iniquities of Kern Gunten. The Hillcrest fellows took Dicky's word as to the facts; besides, there were five other fellows who had been in the gold-seeking party, and they all backed up Dicky's statements.

Kern Gunten was condemned on all sides; and he had made himself a pariah in his school, universally despised and scorned.

"He hasn't come this morning," Dicky Bird was saying, as Frank Richards & Co. arrived. "But that won't do him any good. He's diddled us over the claim, but he's not going to enjoy it quietly. Hallo, you Cedar Creek galoots, take your faces away."

Bob Lawless held up his hand. "Truce, old scout!" he said. "We've come for a little pow-wow with you, Dicky."

"Br-r-r!" said Dicky Bird. "We've got news—about the claim." "Oh!" said Dicky Bird, showing some interest. "You can pile in. Of course, if we dispute Gunten's ownership, you fellows are witnesses. You were there and saw us. I don't know whether we can do it, though."

"Mosey along with us a minute, and you'll hear," said Bob. Dicky Bird and Fisher and Blumpy came out on the trail. They regarded the chums of Cedar Creek curiously.

The Cedar Creek trio were grinning. They could not help it. Considering what they knew, this storm over the island claim was comic enough. "I guess I'm going to surprise you, Dicky," began Bob Lawless. "You see, we spotted you gold-prospecting on the island the other day—before you knew it. And we knew you were going to strike it the next day—"

"What rot! You couldn't know it!" "But we did!" chuckled Bob. "You see, we made the gold-mine all ready for you to strike."

"What!" "A dollar's worth of bronze-powder and a squirt!" explained Bob Lawless. Dicky Bird looked at him.

"Wha-a-at!" he stammered. "Bronze-powder!" murmured Fisher. "Catch on?" asked Bob cheerily. "Haven't you ever heard of a salted claim, Dicky?" "A—a—a salted claim!" stuttered Dicky Bird.

"Yep!" "Why, you—you—you—" "We moseyed along to the island overnight, and salted the rock, all ready for you!" said Bob. "We reckoned you'd make a ten-strike, you know. Of course, we never dreamed about Gunten stealing a march on you, and registering the claim in his own name. That was really too rich!"

And Bob roared. "Oh, gum!" exclaimed Dicky Bird, staring blankly at the rancher's son. "You mean to say you planted a salted rock there for us—" "Correct!" "And there's no gold there at all!" yelled Dicky Bird. "Nary a speck! My dear jay, that island's been prospected a hundred times, and if there was any gold there, it would have been found before this."

The Hillcrest fellows looked at one another. That lucky strike, so easily made, was explained now; the ten-strike and its wonderful wealth was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream. "I—I—I say, is that straight goods, though?" asked Fisher. "Honest Injun!" said Frank Richards. "You can mosey along to the island, and hack off a chip of the golden quartz," suggested Bob. "Take it to any mining man and ask him what it's worth to the ounce."

Dicky Bird nodded. He did not doubt now; indeed, Bob Lawless' explanation enlightened him as to many little circumstances connected with that lucky strike on the island in the creek.

He gave Bob Lawless a very peculiar look. "That is what you call a joke, I suppose?" he remarked. "The joke of the season, old scout," answered Bob. "But the cream of the joke is Gunten bagging the claim. There will be a surprise for that pilgrim when he brings his expert along to test it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Dicky Bird and his comrades burst into a roar. "We ought to scrag you for playing such a trick on us!" said Dicky Bird. "I guess I've a good mind—" "Go ahead!"

"Well, I reckon we'll let you off," said Dicky Bird magnanimously. "I'm jolly glad there's nothing in the claim, as Gunten has jumped it. We were going to take a crowd to Gunten's store and mob him, after lessons. He doesn't dare to show up at school." "Well, you needn't mob him," said Bob Lawless, laughing. "He will feel pretty sick when he finds out what he's robbed you of!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Dicky Bird's eyes glistened. "We'll go to the store, all the same," he said. "I reckon I've got a stunt, too. We'll offer Gunten terms, and let him buy us off cheap." "Oh, Jerusalem!" "You fellows come, too," said Dicky Bird eagerly. "We'll all drop in at the store after lessons, and see him. He'll think we've come to lynch him, and then we'll make terms—easy terms—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "And he can keep the claim!" grinned Dicky Bird. "After all, he's welcome to it. If we want a heap of rocks, we can pick 'em up anywhere." "Ha, ha!" The rivals of Cedar Creek and Hillcrest separated on the best of terms, for once. Frank Richards & Co. slid homeward to Cedar Creek in merry spirits. After lessons they were to meet Dicky Bird and his comrades at Gunten's store in Thompson. And they were looking forward with happy anticipation to that collective call upon the schoolboy claim-jumper.



ONE OF THE BEST SCHOOL TALES WRITTEN.
"TWO OF A KIND!"
 A Story of the Chums of St. Jims.
 By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
 IN THIS WEDNESDAY'S ISSUE OF "THE GEM."



The 4th Chapter. Cheap!

Kern Gunten compressed his thick lips. The Swiss was in charge of the store when the dusk was falling on Thompson. As there was no school for him that day, the storekeeper's son had been making himself useful at home; not very willingly.

Gunten's early satisfaction over his clever stroke of business had given place to mixed feelings.

He had no scruples about the trick he had played on his schoolfellows; and his legal hold on the island claim seemed secure enough against all that his rivals could do. But there were other considerations that he had not thought of at first.

Certainly he could not go back to Hillcrest School while Dicky Bird & Co. were in such a mood as at present. Even Mr. Peckover, the headmaster, could not possibly have protected him against the schoolboys he had so unscrupulously swindled.

Cedar Creek School was closed to him; there was little doubt that after Miss Meadows had made the "inquiry," she would refuse to take Gunten back on any terms.

If the gold-mine panned out well, as Gunten expected, there was no reason why he should not be sent to an expensive boarding-school south; but at present he had to remain at home.

Remaining home meant working either in the house or in the store or the wood-yard; and Gunten did not like work.

Moreover, though he was not ashamed of his action, he felt the contempt it had brought upon him. It was not pleasant to be hooted out of his school as a common swindler; and the story was spreading in Thompson, too, and Gunten had heard many unpleasant remarks on the subject among the customers at the store.

He was not wholly without fear that the sheriff might take the matter in hand, and that the registration of the claim might possibly be rescinded; though, in that case, if the claim turned out a valuable one, there would be legal action, supported by his father's wealth; for Old Man Gunten was certainly no more scrupulous than his son.

With those thoughts in his mind, Gunten was not quite happy; and he felt still less satisfied, as there was a tramp of feet in the doorway, and a crowd of schoolboys poured in.

Gunten compressed his lips as he recognised Dicky Bird & Co., with Frank Richards and his friends in their company.

He guessed at once that the heroes of the rival schools had made common cause against him.

The Swiss made a movement to leave the store, intending to call his father to deal with these unwelcome customers. Dicky Bird shouted to him.

"Hold on, Gunten!"

The Swiss gave him a savage look.

"If you've come here to kick up a row, Bird, you'll get fired out, on your neck!" he said.

"I've come for a friendly talk, my boy!"

"Just a little chat, old scout!" said Bob Lawless. "Dicky's going to make an arrangement with you about the claim."

"We're all witnesses!" said Frank Richards.

"There's no arrangement to be made," said Gunten sullenly. "The claim's mine, and that settles it!"

"I don't reckon you'll get all Thompson to believe your version of the yarn, Gunten," said Blumpy, shaking his head.

"I guess I've got the claim registered."

"That can be disputed, too," said Dicky Bird. "But suppose we agree to let you have the claim without dispute, Gunten?"

"Will you?"

"Well, we don't want to be kicking up a shindy," said Dick Bird placably. "And you don't want to keep away from school because you're afraid of getting lynched, I guess."

"I'm willing to make friends," said Gunten, eyeing him. "I don't want to cut up rusty, I'm sure. In fact, I don't mind agreeing to let you chaps have something when the mine's working; but it's understood that it's a present, and you can't make a claim."

"Well, a bird in hand's worth two in the bush," remarked Dicky Bird reflectively. "When do you expect the mine will start?"

"Some time yet, of course. The expert's going down to-morrow to test it. Father's paying his fee," said Gunten. "A lot depends on his report."

"Oh, by gum!" murmured Bob Lawless. He wondered how Old Man Gunten would like paying the expert gentleman's fee—when he received the report!

It was a just punishment on the storekeeper for backing up his son's dishonesty.

"But it may be some time before the mine gets going," said Dicky Bird gravely.

"Some weeks very likely."

"You don't want to stay away from school all that time."

Gunten scowled.

"No, I don't; but I'm not coming there to be ill-used. I'm willing to make friends, if you come to that; and I'll treat you well if the mine pans out as I expect. That's more than some fellows would do after the way you've chinwagged me."

"Well, the mine seems to be yours legally, whatever may be said about it morally," said Dicky Bird. "We don't want to keep up this trouble. What's it worth to you for us to withdraw our claim to it?"

"Not much," said Gunten cautiously.

"Will you come to the office and register the mine afresh in all our names?"

"None!"

"You'd rather we went to the sheriff and entered a protest against the registration, with these fellows as witnesses?"

"It wouldn't do you any good," said Gunten unasily.

"I guess it would show you up to all the valley for what you are, whether it did us any good or not," said Dicky Bird. "But we've come here to make terms if you choose. If you don't, say so, and we'll mosey along to see the sheriff."

Gunten hesitated.

It was certainly worth something to buy off the hostility of the fellows he had tricked, and to save himself from being pointed out in the streets as a common swindler.

But though he fully believed that he had robbed Dicky Bird & Co. of their shares in a valuable gold-mine, which would doubtless pan out tens of thousands of dollars, the meanness of his nature was uppermost, and he was inclined to drive a hard bargain.

"Oh, come on!" said Frank Richards, as Gunten hesitated. "Come along to the sheriff's! We're your witnesses."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Gunten.

"Well, get a move on, quick!" said Dicky Bird impatiently. "We haven't come here to waste time or to jaw with you till the registrar closes his office!"

"Wait a minute or two while I speak to my father," said Gunten.

"I don't see the need. It's not his mine."

"I won't keep you long."

"Oh, all right! Hustle, then!"

Gunten disappeared into the parlour behind the store-counter.

Dicky Bird & Co. kept up grave countenances. They were quite aware that several glances were cast at them round that parlour door as Old Man Gunten listened to his son's explanation.

The Swiss schoolboy came back into the store at last.

"I guess I'm willing to do the right thing," he said.

"Go ahead!"

"I'm ready to stand you five dollars each," said Gunten.

There was a howl at once.

"Five dollars!"

"For our whack in a gold-mine!"

"This isn't a joking matter, Gunten!"

influence you, really, but in your place I should accept Gunten's offer."

"I guess so," said Bob Lawless, with a nod.

"That's hoss-sense!" said Gunten approvingly. "Why, the mine may turn out to be worthless, for all you know."

"We've seen the gold, and so have you," answered Dicky Bird.

"Still, there's chances—"

"Make it ten dollars."

"Five's the figure!" answered Gunten. "And I want your written paper in exchange for that, too!"

Dicky Bird cast another look round.

"I leave it to you chaps," he said.

"Oh, take the offer!" said Blumpy. "We can't work a mine, anyhow; and, as Frank says, our folks haven't the capital to take it up. It means getting up machinery by railway, and all that. Let's take the money and give Gunten the paper he wants."

"That's my idea," said Watson.

"Done, then!" said Dicky Bird, in a grudging tone. "You're a pretty hard driver in a bargain, Gunten."

"Here's pen and paper," was Gunten's answer.

"What do you want me to write?" asked Dicky Bird, taking up the pen.

"A plain statement that you fellows resign all claim to the pegged-out mine on the island in Cedar Creek, signed by the lot of you, one after another," said Gunten.

"All right!"

Dicky Bird wrote to Kern Gunten's dictation, and the Hillcrest fellows signed the paper one after another.

Gunten watched them with glistening eyes.

"Now you chaps as witnesses," he said, looking at the chums of Cedar Creek.

"I'm willing," said Bob.

And Bob Lawless, Frank Richards, and Vere Beauclerc signed their names as witnesses to the paper of renunciation.

"Cash!" said Blumpy.

having secured the services of a mining man well known in the Thompson Valley for the purpose.

What the mining man would say when he found that he had been brought miles to look at a "salted" rock the schoolboys wondered, and they wondered, too, what Old Man Gunten would say. It was certain to be something very emphatic.

They intended to run down to Thompson to get the news from Kern Gunten; it was sure to be interesting news.

They were in good time, and they met the Swiss on his way home from Hillcrest for dinner at the store.

"Hallo, Gunten!" called out Bob Lawless. "All O.K. at school?"

"Certainly," answered Gunten, with a lofty look. "Why not? The fact is, the fellows have got too much sense to quarrel with a chap who's going to be as rich as anybody in the Thompson Valley."

"Oh!"

"Keller's been grousing," said Gunten, with a shrug of the shoulders. "He reckons he ought to have something; but I don't see it. Friendship doesn't mean whacking out a gold-mine."

"I guess not," agreed Bob. "You won't forget your old friends at Cedar Creek when you're rolling in money, Gunten?"

Gunten sneered.

"I sha'n't forget what you said to Miss Meadows when I came with my father yesterday," he answered. "And you needn't be so jolly friendly, Bob Lawless. I know what it's for, and I know what it's worth."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

"You grow nicer and nicer, Gunten," said Bob Lawless admiringly. "Have you heard the report of the mining expert yet?"

"Nope; I've been at school all morning. I want to hear it, though, and I can't waste time on you galoots."

And with that polite remark Kern Gunten sped on towards Thompson.

of the richest gold-mine between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, Frank.

Frank Richards chuckled.

"And he's had to pay the expert, too," grinned Bob. "Must have been a good few dollars. That's the penalty of being a swindler. Honesty is the best policy, after all."

"Here comes Gunten!" murmured Vere Beauclerc.

The parlour door opened, and the Swiss schoolboy came back into the store.

His face was pale, his lips trembling with fury. His eyes blazed as he looked at Frank Richards & Co., and he shook a furious fist at them.

"This is your work!" he hissed.

"What is?" asked Bob Lawless innocently.

Gunten panted.

"You know it was a salted mine on the island!" he shrieked.

"Salted!"

"The mining expert says it's salted, and there's no gold on the island at all," hissed Gunten.

"My word!"

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"Hardly worth your while swindling Dicky Bird and the rest, was it?" asked Frank Richards.

"You knew it!" snarled Gunten. "Don't deny it, you rotters!"

"My dear chap, we don't mean to deny it," chuckled Bob. "We salted the rock as a joke on the Hillcrest chaps. We never guessed that you'd steal a march on them and rob them of the mine. Ha, ha!"

Gunten shook his fist at them furiously.

"They've robbed me!" he howled. "I've paid them five dollars each to give up their claim on a mine that isn't worth a red cent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the store.

Dry Billy Bowers was fairly doubled up before the store, howling with mirth. Even Injun Dick, the Apache, who was warming himself there, grinned.

All Thompson knew of the gold-mine on the island in the creek by this time, and the foul play Gunten had been accused of; and this ending to Gunten's golden dream struck everyone as funny—except Gunten.

He was writhing with rage and malice and disappointed avarice.

"Next time you're going to jump a claim, Gunten, make sure there's something in it worth jumping," said Beauclerc, laughing.

"Hang you! You—you—I'm thirty dollars out of pocket!" wailed Gunten.

"It's me that's been swindled!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're not the first galoot who's gone for wool and come back shorn," said Bob Lawless consolingly.

"Hang you!"

There was a step in the doorway, and Dicky Bird, of Hillcrest, walked cheerily into the store.

He nodded to the Cedar Creek fellows, and smiled at Gunten.

"Heard the mining man's report yet?" he asked.

"Hang you!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The mine's worthless!" howled Gunten. "There's nothing in it. Those silly jays salted it for a silly fool joke!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Found that out, have you?" roared Dicky Bird. "They told us yesterday, old scout."

Gunten looked at him with an expression that the fabled Gorgon might have envied.

He realised now that the Hillcrest chums had known the facts when they had come to bargain with him in the store the previous day, and he had paid over hard dollars for their claim to a share in the "mine."

He could not speak; he could only stutter with fury as he glared at the cheery Dicky Bird.

That youth drew out a buckskin bag from his coat, and the greedy eyes of the Swiss fastened upon it at once. He recognised the bag.

Dicky, with a laugh, tossed it on the store counter, and there was a metallic clang as it landed there.

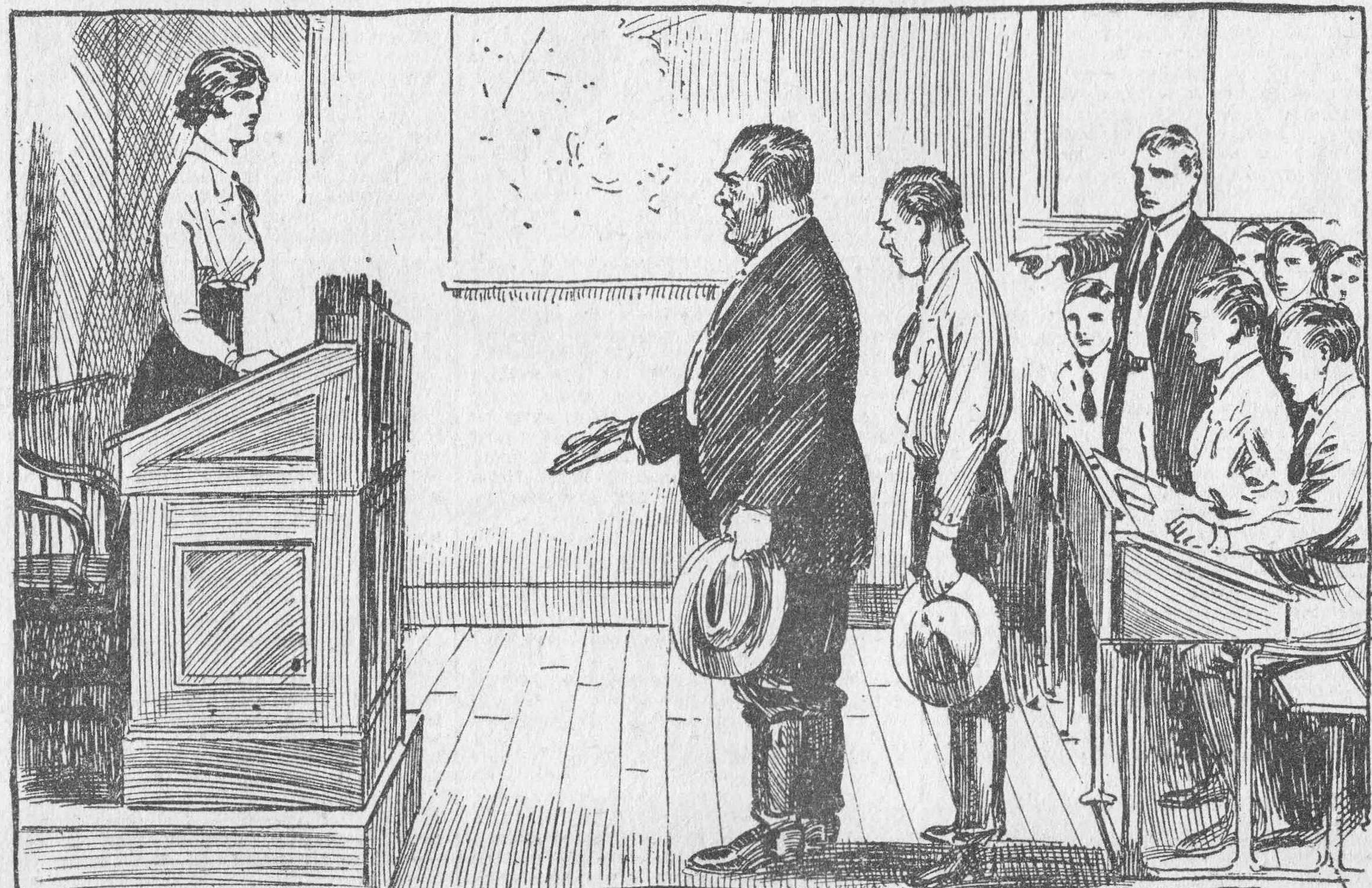
"There's your dollars, Gunten," he said.

"The—the dollars!" gasped Gunten.

"Ha, ha! We were only stuffing you, you silly jay!" roared Dicky Bird. "You are the only swindler at Hillcrest, old man. Count out your dollars, and see if they're right."

With a trembling hand Kern Gunten clutched the buckskin bag. The dollars were all there, and he gasped with relief. His gold-mine had vanished into the region of dreams, but his own money was safe, and that was a consolation.

Dicky Bird, grinning, walked out of the store with Frank Richards & Co., and Gunten had the pleasure of hearing their merry laughter as they went.



"I trust, Miss Meadows, that you will accept my son as a pupil once more," said Gunten. "I am not satisfied with Hillcrest—there is a set against him there." Bob Lawless jumped up. "Ask him, ma'am, whether it isn't because Kern Gunten has swindled half a dozen of the chaps there!" he cried.

"I'm not joking," said Kern Gunten.

"You mean five hundred?" suggested Frank Richards.

"I mean five dollars!"

"And you expect to make thousands out of the mine—our mine!" exclaimed Dicky Bird indignantly.

"Well, there are lots of chances in gold-mining," said Gunten. "We—I mean, I made a good strike. But we're not experts. I'm taking the chances."

"Something in that, Dicky," said Bob Lawless gravely.

"Yep. But five dollars—five measly dollars!" said Dicky Bird, in disgust.

"Take it or leave it!" said Gunten.

"My poppa's willing to advance me that much to settle the trouble with you; but not a cent more—not a continental red cent. That's a cinch!"

"Five dollars!" repeated Dicky Bird, looking at his companions.

Gunten grinned as he thought he detected the signs of yielding.

"And you galoots will have to sign a paper, witnessed, giving up all claim on the mine," he said. "That's a condition."

"No need to sign a paper; our word's good enough, I guess," answered Fisher.

"I'll have your names in black and white as well, if you don't mind," said Gunten, with a laugh.

"We can't let it go for five dollars," said Dicky Bird. "What would you advise, Frank Richards?"

Frank assumed a very thoughtful look.

"Well, as Gunten says, he's taking the chances," he remarked.

"That's so!" assented Gunten eagerly.

"Then the mine will want capital to develop, I suppose," continued Frank.

"Old Man Gunten has got the capital, and you fellows haven't. Your people mightn't be willing to put cash into a gold-mining proposition. And I don't see how you could sell the mine, with an ownership dispute hanging on to it. I don't want to

Kern Gunten went into the parlour again, and came out with a buckskin bag in his hand.

From the bag he counted out thirty dollars—five each to the six Hillcrest fellows.

Then the signed paper was handed to him.

"Anything for us, Gunten?" asked Bob Lawless, with a grin.

"None!" snapped Gunten.

"Then we may as well mosey along," said Bob. "Good-night, Gunty! I hope you'll become Premier of Canada when you're a millionaire."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the schoolboys crowded out of the store, laughing, leaving Kern Gunten very well contented.

He knew that Dicky Bird & Co. would keep to the bond, and that he had nothing to fear in returning to Hillcrest School; and that was a great relief to his mind.

He would not have felt quite so contented, perhaps, if he had heard the remarks exchanged among the merry Canadian schoolboys as they went down Main Street.

Fortunately for his peace of mind he did not hear them.

And the next morning Kern Gunten started for school, and he found the Hillcrest fellows quite urbane when he met them, though they smiled to an extent that perplexed him.

"Follow your leader," said Bob Lawless, with a chuckle. "Gunten's going to get a shock, and we're going to see him get it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek slid along the snowy trail after Kern Gunten. The Swiss lost no time.

He knew that his father and the mining man must have returned from the claim on the island before this, and he was anxious to hear what the expert had reported.

He had no doubts as to the richness of the mine; the only question in his mind was whether it was worth thousands or millions of dollars.

Gunten's golden dreams were growing more and more golden.

That was natural, as his title to the mine was undisputed now. It was his, and his only, with all the wealth that was in it!

He seemed to be walking on air as he went into the store in Main Street.

Frank Richards & Co. left their snowshoes outside and sauntered into the store.

They wanted to see the denouement, for they knew what sort of a report the mining man must have given to Old Man Gunten.

Gunten had disappeared into the back parlour, and from that apartment there came the sound of excited and angry voices.

There were several customers in the store, and they were glancing towards the parlour door in astonishment and some amusement.

"I guess," remarked Dry Billy, as he rested his tattered boots on the stove—"I reckon Old Man Gunten has got 'em! I reckon that old gent is on the war-path to-day."

"Sounds like it," murmured Bob Lawless. "Not as if he's father of the owner

of the richest gold-mine between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, Frank.

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Gunten—still a schoolboy, and not a wealthy mine-owner—turned up at Hillcrest the next day, to be received with great merriment. He bore the derisive chaff of the Hillcrest fellows as best he could. It was likely to be a long time before either Hillcrest or Cedar Creek forgot Gunten's gold-mine.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"TOO MUCH OF A JOKE!"
By OWEN CONQUEST.
DON'T MISS IT!

THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER!

A SPLENDID NEW
ADVENTURE SERIAL

— BY —

DUNCAN STORM.

FOR NEW READERS.

The astounding news that the KAISER has escaped in a super-U-boat reaches CY SPRAGUE, the famous American detective, and

CAPTAIN HANDYMAN, who resolves to go in search of the arch-villain and bring him to justice.

They leave the London docks in a vessel called the South Star, taking with them a merry band of boys, chief amongst whom are DICK DORRINGTON, CHIP PRODGERS, ARTY DOVE, SKELETON, PORKIS, and PONGO WALKER.

LAL TATA, a cheery Hindu, and TOOKUM EL KOOS, a native wrestler, are also amongst the party, as well as the boys' pets, CECIL, the orang-utang, HORACE, the goat, and GUS, the crocodile.

It has already been described how Captain Handyman discovered a large submarine base belonging to the Kaiser, and blew it up. The Kaiser, however, had got away on a super-U-boat.

Later the boys captured Baron von Slyden, one of the Kaiser's agents. Captain Handyman told the boys to take Slyden in hand, and they dressed him in Etons and forced him to do ordinary school work with them. An expedition to the Peak of Teneriffe is organised, but on the mountain the boys fall into the hands of a rascally Spanish brigand, known as the Terror of Teneriffe. He is just explaining what he will do to them, when Dick Dorrington shouts: "Go for him, boys!" Dick tells the Terror, a second brigand is dealt with by Horace, the goat, and Cecil, the orang-utang, seizes a third in his terrible grip.

(Read on from here.)

The Wrecked Toboggan.

Whilst it lasted, the fight between the boys and the bandits was a very pretty little scrap.

Its duration was but two minutes. Two of the bandits escaped, leaping over the piled rocks of the gorge like goats, eager to put half the island between themselves and these terrible English boys and their equally terrible companions.

They had seen their chief, the Terror, go down under that tremendous lick on the point of the jaw from Art's massive fist. And that was enough for them.

The Terror was now lying on the floor of the cave, flopping slightly now and then like a fresh-caught fish, but otherwise showing no signs of life.

The bandit, who had taken Horace's massive head straight in the stomach, was leaning up against the wall of the cave in a pale and collapsed condition.

A third bandit, who had hit up against Dick Dorrington, and who had received a blow on his nose that caused him to see green stars and pink streaks, was sitting on the floor of the cave holding his head in both hands, wondering what sort of earthquake had hit him.

But the attention of the boys was centred on Cecil, who had pinned the fourth man, and who, with blazing eyes and snarling mouth, was doing his best to throttle him with his great paws.

In the ordinary course of things, the orang, brought up amongst human beings since he had been big enough to feed from a baby's bottle, was the mildest-mannered chap in the world. The boys could always do anything with Cecil, and they had almost forgotten that he was dangerous when roused.

And Cecil was roused now at seeing his chums attacked in this fashion.

"Look out, you chaps!" called Dick, the first to see the danger. "Old Cecil is doing that chap in!"

The man's eyes were rolling wildly in his head, full of terror and entreaty. His face was blue-black, and the veins stood up in great knots on his temples as he strove in vain to twist out of Cecil's grip and to loosen the stranglehold of the orang's great paws.

"Let go, Cecil!" ordered Dick. Cecil gave a low growl as Dick, seizing his enormous, hairy wrists, struggled with him.

"Hi, Pongo! Quick!" urged Dick. "You can manage Cecil! I can't! He's got his shirt out this time!"

Pongo pushed through the boys. Pongo did not struggle with Cecil. He put his hand in his pocket and produced a bar of chocolate, which he shoved in Cecil's grinning teeth.

Cecil loved chocolate. He scrunched up the bar of chocolate in a style that nearly made his Spanish captive faint. But he was not going to let pleasure interfere with business, and he still retained his stranglehold on the bandit.

Then the artful Pongo slipped a whole packet of chocolate into Cecil's teeth, wrapping, silver paper, and all.

"Here you are, Cecil," said he calmly. "You let Uncle Pongo hold this chap whilst you get that chocolate out of the paper."

Cecil immediately let go as Pongo grabbed the bandit about the throat. The chocolate in the paper was too much for



A CRASH COMING! "Stop engines!" yelled Lal. "The machine he runs away with us!" There was no stopping the toboggan now. "Get out of the way, Horace!" yelled Skeleton. The goat made a last despairing effort to outpace the flying toboggan.

his curiosity, and he knew that his enemy was quite safe with Pongo.

And, indeed, this was the case, for no sooner had Cecil released his hold on the half-strangled bandit than he fell forward into Pongo's arms in a dead faint.

Pongo laid his man down on the floor of the cave, whilst Dick and Chip devoted themselves to roping up the Terror of Teneriffe before he should recover from Art's soothing-syrup.

When he at last came to himself he stared round wildly. His hands were securely bound behind him, and a turn of the boys' climbing-rope was round his neck.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "Where am I? What is this that has happened?"

Arty grinned. "You are our prisoner now, Alfonso!" said he. "If there are any ears to be cut off we are going to do the cutting this time. And what has happened to you is that you have had a thump on the jaw which put you to sleep!"

The Terror of Teneriffe groaned. "It's no good making a song about it, Terror!" said Arty cheerfully. "Two of your crush have escaped, and the other three are prisoners. One has been half strangled by Cecil of the clutchin' hand. The other has had his proboscis dislocated. And that gentleman, leaning up against the wall trying to be sick, has had one from Horace. Now, as soon as your pal has recovered, we will rope you all up and convey you as prisoners to our camp!"

The Terror said nothing. He was fed-up. To think that he, the one famous bandit that the Island of Teneriffe had known for the last hundred years, should have been nobbled and captured by a few English schoolboys! It gave him a pain in the stomach.

The fainting bandit was restored with wine, for the boys picked up the evil-smelling goat-skin, and turning on the wooden tap, allowed its contents to splash over his face till he was restored.

Then he was roped up with his companions. Four of the boys picked up the blunderbusses of the band, and formed themselves into a prisoners' escort, marching their captives off through the moonlight.

They retraced their steps over the patches of snow, when they had climbed out of the rocky gorge, for they wanted to approach the sleeping camp quietly.

But Mr. Lal Tata had awakened in his tent, and heard their feet crunching over the frozen snow.

"Ha, you boys!" he called. "What do you do out of camp? You shall all do me tremendous impots for this! Where have you been? What have you been doing?"

The boys came to a standstill before his tent, and Lal shoved his head out into the moonlight. He was wearing his turban for a nightcap, and it was tipped rakishly over his left eye.

He gave a gasp of astonishment when he saw the four dejected bandits standing there with their hands tied behind them and the climbing-rope looped about their necks like a chain-gang of slaves.

"If you please, sir," said Porkis, "we couldn't get to sleep because Horace had nightmare. So we went out and captured some bandits."

"What foolscapness is this?" demanded Mr. Lal Tata, unable to believe his eyes. "There are no bandits in Teneriffe!"

"There aren't now, sir," put in Dick Dorrington. "We've broken up the band! This gentleman with the rope round his neck is Terror of Teneriffe. Half an hour ago he had us prisoners, and was going to cut off our ears!"

"Then we turned upon him and smote him, sir," put in Pongo; "and we prevailed against the murdering hooligan! And he is one the Kaiser's paid hands!"

Lal nearly jumped out of his tent. "How do you make yourself aware of this?" he asked.

"Because he told us so himself," replied Pongo Walker, with a grin. "He thought he had got us safe, and was just going to lead us out to execution when we turned upon him and we smote him. We

got up against him, and Horace and Cecil lent a hand—and here we are!"

"Maw!" bleated Horace, as though corroborating Pongo's recital of their adventure.

Captain Handyman, from his tent, had heard what was going on. He turned out, wrapped in his blankets, and surveyed the discomfited emissaries of the Kaiser.

"Well done, boys!" said he, surveying the depressed Terror. "We need not be bothered with this pal of Kaiser Bill's. He is wanted by the local police for a stabbing job which will keep him safe in gaol for the next three years. So we'll say nothing of his attempt on you. We'll just keep him and hand him over, and claim the reward that is out for him. Now, I'll hand him over to the Kroo boys to watch for the rest of the night, and you chaps had better get into your tent and have a few hours' rest."

At the captain's call, the Kroo boys turned out and took over their little string of bandits, carrying them away to their shelter, where Quashy stood guard over them with a loaded shotgun, amusing himself by making nasty little signs indicating cut-throats, and descriptive chokings suggestive of hanging.

But the boys did not feel like turning in in that dark tent of theirs again. They made up a good roaring fire of brush, and, hauling out their blankets, camped round it in the dry, frosty air till a paling in the eastern sky told them that the sun was coming up.

A red line like a red-hot wire spread along the edge of the wonderful cloud-sea that lay at their feet. It stretched and stretched. Then it finally broke into a glorious ball of flame which made their sleepy eyes blink.

Behind them, in this wonderful sunrise, the towering snow-crested Peak turned to a pink-red heat, as though it were aflame. The flat sea of cloud broke up as the sun gathered the cloud into misty veils. Then the chill of the night went off, and soon the boys felt the sunshine striking hot on their faces.

The Kroo boys turned out, and were soon busy with preparations for breakfast. Only one of them stood fast, and this was Quashy, who stood guard over their prisoners.

Quashy was thoroughly enjoying himself. There is nothing that makes a nigger laugh so much as the thought that someone is going to be hanged. And Quashy, leaning on his shotgun, laughed till the tears ran down his black cheeks.

"Bress ma soul, Mr. Terror!" said he. "You an' your pal, be shuah you make a good breakfast! Soon you will get a rope necktie, an' you will dance on notings!"

"Shut up, Quashy!" said Pongo, strolling up with his hands in his pockets to view their prisoners. "Don't tease the patients!"

Breakfast was soon ready. Cocoa, coffee, biscuits, and fried bacon were handed round, and the Terror of Teneriffe with his hooligan followers probably made a better meal than they had tasted since they had taken to the mountains.

Skeleton, who was always hospitable, even to his enemies, made them fancy sandwiches of meat-paste, and took them great hunks of bread-and-butter thickly spread with marmalade.

Three of the ruffians looked gratefully at him. But the Terror only scowled, snatching his slice of bread-and-marmalade rudely from Skeleton's hand.

The Terror was not yet reconciled to the fact that the seven thousand pounds in German money which had been as good as in his hand a few hours ago had melted into thin air, and that all he had to look forward to was three years' imprisonment in the gaol at Tacaronte.

The Terror of Teneriffe was not the first person to rue the fact that he had had dealings with his Imperial Majesty the Kaiser.

And before breakfast was over, a little group of men came marching through a wisp of cloud that was drifting across the hill slope.

They carried rifles, and they wore

queer-shaped, square hats that marked them as the dreaded Guardia Civil, the Spanish Military Police.

They marched up to the campfire, and the sergeant in charge, addressing himself politely to Captain Handyman, asked him if he had seen any "paisanos," or countrymen, knocking about on these upper slopes of the Peak.

"We have come up to guard you and the young Ingles senores, capitan!" said the sergeant. "There is at liberty on these slopes a bandit of the most dangerous—a cut windpipe—a son of the devil. His name is Juan Cabrera, and he calls himself the Terror of Teneriffe. It was feared by the authorities of Santa Cruz that this terrible fellow might fall upon you and your party. Therefore we started after you in great haste, but you travelled so fast that we were unable to overtake you last night!"

Captain Handyman's eyes twinkled. "That's all right, sergeant!" said he. "If you want the Terror, you'll find him round the corner of the big canvas tent yonder, scoffing bread-and-marmalade. My boys went out and captured him last night!"

The sergeant of the Guardia Civil rolled his eyes, and nearly dropped his rifle in astonishment.

"Yes," said the captain easily; "the young rascals were running loose over the mountain in the moonlight, and they spotted his campfire. He turned a bit saucy on them, so they pinched him!"

The sergeant would not believe this story till he had seen the prisoners. Then his eyes rolled respectfully on the boys who had accomplished in a night what he and his armed police had been striving to compass for the past three months.

"Come along and make yourselves comfortable, sergeant!" said Captain Handyman hospitably. "Your man is safe enough under guard. Shall we make you a pot of tea?"

The sergeant shook his head. The Spaniard only takes tea as a medicine. If he gets paiss inside, he goes to a chemist, gets a small pinch of tea, boils it in water, and takes doses out of a spoon.

But he and his men appreciated the bacon and eggs and the marmalade and the raspberry-jam, which the boys hospitably handed out to them, and Skeleton was greatly interested in the sergeant, who had never tasted raspberry-jam in his life before.

He insisted on presenting the sergeant with a pot for his own use, and greatly delighted, the military police departed after breakfast down the mountain, carrying their prisoners with them.

Then the camp was struck, and away the party started for the Peak, the mules and donkeys scrambling up the eternal slopes, till at last they came to the edge of a cliff, at the foot of which, stretching away to the foot of the inner cone a mile away, lay a yellow, flat plain, which looked intensely hot and barren.

The sun was well up now, and was beating down on the patches of snow, reflecting a scorching heat back from this white surface which baked and cracked the boys' faces in a most alarming fashion.

Porkis turned the colour of a freshly-boiled beetroot, whilst Skeleton's great beak of a nose began to colour up as though it were painted a post-office red.

They had come as far as they were able to bring the mules and donkeys. The rest of their journey must be performed on foot.

Cy Sprague pointed out to them how the cliff on which they were standing was the lip of the old enormous crater of this extinct volcano, whilst the great snow-covered cone which rose above them for another three thousand feet had been forced up from the centre of this crater by some more recent eruption.

Lunch was packed up. The animals were left in charge of the six Kroo boys, and the party, carrying ropes and alpenstocks for the climb, descended by a break in the cliff on to the yellow plain, which turned out to be a mile of broken pumice-stone, the froth of the last eruption.

There was enough pumice-stone in sight

to fill all the chemists' shops in the world, and it seemed pretty well red-hot as the boys marched across it in single file.

Each boy carried, in addition to his load, a plank of a toboggan, which Skeleton had constructed on the ship. It was an ingenious toboggan, for, by means of nicely-turned screws and bolts which he had coaxed out of the engine-room staff of the South Star, it could be put together in the space of a few minutes.

It was a heavy toboggan, too, for each plank of it was made from a fine piece of teak.

It would take six fellows, and Skeleton looked forward to tobogganing on an island where, in the valleys below, sugarcane and coffee-trees and oranges and lemons were growing in profusion.

But, as they toiled over the red-hot pumice with the sun beating down in a flood of heat, the boys began to wish Skeleton and his toboggan at Jericho.

"Look here, Skeleton!" said Dick, as he toiled along under one of the runners of the toboggan. "What's the good of hauling this silly thing up to the roof of the world? I'm going to chuck it away!"

"I think it is most foolsome thing to climb up high mountains!" puffed Mr. Lal Tata. "We could have obtained splendid views of the Peak of Teneriffe from the ship, and we could have bought picture-postcards. When we shall get to the top we shall observe nothing but clouds and sea. I call it most rotten-some funs!"

"Be a sport, Dick!" urged Skeleton. "Be matey! It's only three thousand feet now to the top of the cone. And think how jolly handy the toboggan will be for coming down!"

Dick grunted. They were nearly across the sea of pumice now, and were reaching the foot of the snow-slopes of the cone, which stretched up unbroken against the brilliant blue sky, save where here and there a mass of rocks stood up, savage and black, through the white, winding sheet of dazzling snow.

Horace was toddling on far ahead. They could see him, a little speck in the distance, hopping up the snow-slopes.

The boys panted and puffed in the rarefied atmosphere. They were now over nine thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The glare of the snow was blinding as they trudged on, and Captain Handyman insisted on their putting on the smoked-glass spectacles which he had provided for them.

"I'm not going to have you all laid up with snow-blindness!" said he. "And you'll be pretty sorry for yourselves if you find yourselves to-morrow with your heads in a sling."

The climbing of the cone was fairly easy. Only once did they have to use their climbing-ropes, and then Cecil came in very useful as they were confronted by an ugly wall of rock that cropped out of the snow-banks. Cecil, with the rope tied round his waist, went up the wall of rocks like a bluebottle, assisting to haul his companions up one after the other.

The seat of Cecil's swell Eton trousers was entirely gone now. The patent-leather shoes of which he was so proud had dropped off his feet in tatters. But the mountain air appeared to agree with the orang, and he was in the highest spirits.

The boys got him to carry most of the toboggan on his back, and he hopped up the dazzling snow-slopes in front of them, trying to overhaul Horace, till he was hundreds of yards ahead.

The rest of their journey was just sheer plunging up the crusted slopes of the thick snow, and at noon the boys raised a cheer.

Horace and Cecil had come to a standstill on the little platform at the head of the towering Peak of Teneriffe. They were 12,180 feet above the level of the sea!

To celebrate the occasion, Porkis promptly gave Horace a snowball to eat. Horace bolted it greedily, coughed, and feeling the North Pole in his stomach, promptly butted the waggish Porky off the top of the Peak.

This started the idea of snowballing, and the party was divided into two forces, one to hold the extreme point of the Peak and the other to attack it.

Mr. Lal Tata took charge of the defence.

"Now, you see, you boys!" he cried triumphantly. "You will never carry these positions against us. Horace and I will be too much for you!"

A well-directed snowball of heavy calibre from Dick Dorrington wiped out Lal's face with a splash, and sent his turban flying. Another ball caught him between the ear and the neck.

But the defenders rallied, and drove the attacking party back down the slope. "Never mind about Lal!" said Dick, who was leading the attack. "If you want to take the Peak, sock Horace and make him mad. He'll soon clear the top. Horace hates old Lal!"

This ruse was promptly adopted. The attacking party crept up to close range, and were received with a heavy volley of good, hard, nutty snowballs which had a bit of tooth in them, for the sun-baked snow bound up like a brick.

Mr. Lal Tata was beaming. "Ha, ha, boys!" he shouted, intoxicated by the exhilarating mountain air. "You are beaten! We are kings of castles! You shall not evict us from our mountain fastness!"

But the attacking party held their fire, and instead of going for the defenders, centred all their fire on Horace. Slish!

A good juicy ball smacked on Horace's ugly dial, square between the horns, filling his evil, green eyes with snow.

"Maw!" bleated Horace defiantly. "Maw-waw-fool!" he coughed, as a snowball hit his mouth, choking him with snow.

Then Horace danced angrily. A snowball took him behind the ear. He looked round suspiciously at Lal, who was danc-

THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER



By DUNCAN STORM.



(Continued from the previous page.)

ing like a madman on the top of the Peak as he encouraged the defenders.

Cosh! This last shot was well planted in Horace's left ear; and the attackers, getting the range, simply smothered Horace with balls which hit his head one after the other and burst in showers of snow. Plug! Cosh! Slesh! Plug! Biff!

Then Horace lowered his head and lost his temper. He saw Lal dancing in front of him, yelling exultantly like a madman.

And this nettled Horace. He did not like Lal at the best of times, and he suspected that Lal was encouraging the boys on to attack him.

He lowered his head, took as long a run as the small platform of the top of the Peak of Teneriffe would allow, and, with a single bound, he was off, hitting Lal in the seat of his baggy Indian pants like a battering-ram.

Lal yelled as he shot out from the top of the mountain in a fifty-foot stride.

He hit the slope below and plunged through it in a cloud of snow; but before he could stop, Horace, hurling himself down the slope, was on him.

The boys gave a horrified gasp as they saw Lal boosted again, flying down the slope in tremendous leaps, with Horace after him.

And every time Lal hit the snow Horace was there to give him another boost downhill.

The boys cheered and shouted with laughter as Horace pursued their flying preceptor.

And not till Lal was a good seven hundred feet below his lunch did Horace leave him, leaping back over the snow-slopes as pleased with himself as a goat with two tails.

"You've done it now, Horace!" exclaimed Skeleton reproachfully, as Horace reached the top of the mountain again. "You'll get yourself into trouble!"

The boys ate their lunch and watched Mr. Lal Tata, toiling up painfully from the lower elevation to which Horace had chased him. There was no view from the great pinnacle to which they had climbed—just a sea of clouds stretching away to the blue horizon of the sea and hiding all the Canary Islands from their sight. But they agreed that it was worth climbing up to the summit of the mountain-side by Horace.

Lal was pretty sulky when he reached the summit. He scowled at Horace, who had seated himself tranquilly in the snow, and was greedily devouring all the sandwich-papers within reach.

"That goat ought to be spificated!" said Lal gloomily. "He is most unfit for human societies. He will presently be the cause of great accident."

"Well, he's not coming on this toboggan!" said Skeleton, who was busy screwing his portable toboggan together and slapping down the nuts on the bolts with a spanner. "We are going to show some of you chaps how to go home quick."

"Mind you don't show 'em how to take a short cut to the cemetery!" put in Captain Handyman. "You are all right if you keep on the left-hand side of yonder rocks. You are all wrong if you get on the right-hand side!"

And he pointed to a cluster of great rocks that broke through the snow about a mile down the slope.

"Right you are, sir!" said Skeleton, as he placed his completed toboggan on the ridge of the slope. "Now, you chaps, who's coming down the ice with me? I can take four of you—and Cecil."

"I'll go!" said Pongo. "Cecil will be frightened without me."

"Are you coming, sir?" Skeleton politely asked Lal.

Lal hesitated. He did not like the look of that tremendous snow-slope, which stretched away at a sharp angle for a matter of three miles to the edge of the pumice-stone sea.

"Ha, you will be very careful, Skeletons!" said he. "I am not funkome, but I do not wish to break my spinal columns by silly assomeness!"

"That's all right, sir," said Skeleton reassuringly. "We want a bit of weight behind to make her travel. If you will nip in there behind Pongo, and Cecil comes next to me, we shall be all Sir Garnet-ho!"

Lal climbed on to the sledge. Horace, the goat, seeing that things were getting ready for a start, and having eaten all the sandwich-papers that were left, was hopping off down the slope, leading the party. Chip and Porkis crowded on to the back of the toboggan to make up the crew. Skeleton twisted the steering-cords round his wrists.

"Now we are all ready!" said he. "When I give the word to push off, just shove her off with your feet, and she will soon get under way. And you are going to have the time of your lives, you chaps. You will be the first chaps who can say that they have tobogganed down the slopes of the Peak of Teneriffe. Push off!"

Away the toboggan went with her shouting, merry crew.

Cecil was a bit nervous when she started, and chattered and hung tight with his great paws to Skeleton's shoulders.

"Ha, be very carefulsome, Skeletons!" warned Mr. Lal Tata from the centre of the toboggan. "Keep well to left of those rocks."

"Trust me, sir!" said Skeleton. "I am very experienced in tobogganin'. We used to do a lot of tobogganin' in the brick-field behind my house at home."

"This is not brick-fields!" called Mr. Lal Tata, as the toboggan struck a harder patch of snow and started to gather speed. "This is jolly steep mountain. This is more stiff than roofs of houses!"

There was no doubt now about the slope of the famous Pico de Teneriffe. They had travelled beyond the slight bulge of the cone, and the toboggan was fizzing over the great snow-field like a fast motor-car.

Horace had gained half a mile on them as he pegged down the slope, heading in a bee-line towards the spot where, thousands of feet below, the string of mules and donkeys were waiting with the Kroo boys for their descent of the mountain.

He heard the cheers of the toboggan crew, and he turned round and looked at them for a moment, sniffing the crisp, clear air contemptuously.

All that Horace saw was a speck travelling rapidly down the mountain-side in his direction.

He trotted on.

He trotted a bit faster as the cheers neared him. Skeleton, very cleverly, was steering the toboggan over Horace's trail. He knew that Horace would have picked out a good line of country.

So he traced Horace's little footsteps through the snow as the toboggan swung down the mighty slopes.

"Now she's going!" he shouted triumphantly.

His voice was lost on the wind that whistled past the ears of the shouting crew. They were all shouting but Lal. He was hanging on like grim death about Pongo's waistline.

The toboggan was now doing forty miles per hour, and the snow-slope was fizzing away from under her like a tablecloth whipped from a table.

Horace was beginning to misdoubt the intention of the toboggan.

He was travelling down the mountain in great leaps a few hundred yards ahead of them.

Boosh!

The toboggan hit a small projection of ice-covered lava rock that dropped through the snow.

It shot ten feet into the air, and Lal closed his eyes as they planed through space.

"Swish!" Down it came again, right side up, travelling with increased impetus, shaking Lal's stomach into his throat.

"Stop engines!" yelled Lal. "The machine he runs away with us!"

But there was no stopping the toboggan now. It charged down on Horace, who was legging it like a Derby winner down the icy track.

Skeleton seemed hypnotised by Horace's back view.

He could not steer the toboggan round the flying goat.

"Get out of the way, Horace!" he yelled.

Horace made one despairing effort to outpace the flying toboggan.

But it got him with a rush, hurling him high in the air, where he turned a dozen somersaults at high speed, then tumbled right into the crew, falling between Lal and Porkis.

The toboggan took a sudden swerve. Instead of going to the left of the rocks indicated, it switched off to the right and started down into a steep field of snow, where the thawed surface had hardened into what was practically a sheet of ice laid up on end with the pitch of a house-roof.

"Now we sha'n't be long!" yelled Skeleton, as the toboggan flew down the tremendous ice-slope at terrific speed.

There were nearly two miles of it to fly over, and there was no need to worry about a track, for the great, smooth slope lay blue and cold in the shadow of the great Peak for acres in extent.

The Kroo boys, far away over the pumice-field, were running about like wild ants with excitement.

They saw a dot flying down the side of the mountain, flying with the speed of an express train, towards the great mounds of snow which, having slid from

the slope in the form of an avalanche earlier in the season, were laid up at the foot of the slope in a big, melting, rolling switchback.

Horace, settled on the sledge, was very good. He did not kick or struggle. He sat as one paralysed, jammed between Lal's back and Porkis.

His fore-hoofs were sticking out over Lal's shoulders. Horace had never travelled so fast in his life. The wind of the flying toboggan roared past his ears, and his beard flew back over his shoulder, tickling Porkis' nose, which was frozen now with the speed of their descent.

"Ho!" Lal groaned. "This puts lid on all things! This is limits! Soon we shall be bumped and smashed into ten thousand pieces! We are done in! Ho, Death, where is thy sting?"

If the toboggan had been clocked it would have been discovered that the last mile of that terrific ice-slope was covered in fifty-three seconds.

Then Lal closed his eyes. They were at the bottom of the slope, and before them were huge undulations of snow hundreds of feet in height.

Up they shot over the first of these switchbacks, just missing a huge three-cornered black rock which had been brought down by the avalanche from the mountain-side.

Down they ripped again into a deep valley. Before them was the last hill of snow, an almost precipitous ascent of some three hundred feet.

"Hang on, boys!" yelled Skeleton, taking a good hold of his steering-ropes. "This will take the wind out of her! This is where we stop!"

The toboggan tore up the slope, which ended abruptly in a last broken tumble of slushy, melting snow.

To the top of the slope it went. Then its road failed it. It leaped clear into the air twenty feet, like a porpoise jumping out of the top of a wave.

The Kroo boys yelled.

They were racing full speed across the sea of pumice that fringed the snow.

They saw Lal and Horace fly high with the toboggan, turning head over heels like acrobats. They saw the rest of the boys shooting through the air right and left.

Then slosh they all came down, like a handful of pebbles hurled together, the melting snow splashing up where they hit it, and disappeared in its depths.

Chip was the first to come climbing out of the hole he had punched into the snow when he had fallen.

Chip, being a light-weight, had only buried himself about five feet deep.

He crawled out of his hole and looked around.

Close alongside him was a tunnel-like cavity, from which sounded an angry beat.

"Maw!" remarked Horace. His horned head popped up out of the cavity as he looked around him in great astonishment.

Then Porkis crawled out of the snow where he had fallen.

"Hallo, Chip!" exclaimed Porky, rubbing the back of his head and fetching out great gobs of half-melted snow from the neck of his shirt. "Anyone killed?"

Skeleton's legs were kicking from a snowdrift, and they pulled him out. Skeleton sat up and puffed.

"I told you chaps I'd bring you down the mountain in record time!" said he proudly. "If the snow had only lasted down to the sea we should be on board the ship by now! Why, where's old Cecil?"

Cecil, spluttering and coughing, was grabbing at the edge of a crevasse in the slush field with his eager paws. Slowly he pulled himself out and sat in the sea of slush, shivering.

Cecil had fairly done in his Eton-suit this time. Only one trouser-leg was left. He had lost his school straw-yard, with its gay riband, and his collar was twisted up like a piece of dirty newspaper.

The Kroo boys, yelling and waving, were getting close to them now. They were carrying coils of rope as they came staggering up the foothills of slushy snow.

Skeleton pointed to the toboggan proudly.

It lay where it had fallen, its shining steel-shod runners gleaming like silver in the sun.

"I call that a jolly good sledge!" said he. "That's real ship-work—good, sound teakwood, and fine, strong steel and copper bolts. I bet there's not many toboggans that would have come down where we've come down without getting smashed to firewood. That last bit was a fair corker!" pursued Skeleton. "Pon my word, when she took off from the top of that hill of snow I really didn't know where we were going! It's a good job that we fell soft. Supposing we had hit anything hard! We should have been smashed up like a pot of bloater-paste! You could have spread us on bread-and-butter!"

"That's all right!" said Chip. "But where's Pongo and Lal?"

Pongo answered the question. There was a heaving up of a pile of snow that the sun's rays had shaped like an Esquimaux igloo, and Pongo Walker broke through the crust.

"Crikey!" he exclaimed. "I thought I'd gone through to Australia! I tumbled right through into a snow cavern. This heap is hollow. The snow has melted away from underneath, and the water runs down and drains away through the pumice. Are we all here?"

"Yes!" said Porky, looking round. "We are all here, except old Lal. Now, where has old Lal got to?"

"Let's give him a hail!" said Pongo. "I had an idea that I saw him flying through the air, close alongside Horace, when the toboggan started aviating. But goodness knows where he came down! Lal weighs a lot, you know. He'd carry farther than Horace."

"Let's give him a shout!" echoed Chip. "He must be somewhere about in the snow. We can't track him, because there are so many pot-holes in the stuff."

Then, putting his hands to his mouth, he shouted:

"Mis-ter Lal Ta-ta! Where—are—yer!"

But no answer came from the tangled chaos of snow.

He had disappeared somewhere through the crust, as though he had been spirited away by fairies.

"That's a liker!" said Porky. "Old Lal must have tumbled through the snow to Australia, or somewhere. Give him another shout!"

The boys shouted.

But no answer came from Lal. Only a mocking echo from the great slope above, which mockingly answered back:

"Mis-ter Lal Ta-ta! Where—are—yer?"

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

THE SCAPEGRACE OF REDCLYFFE!

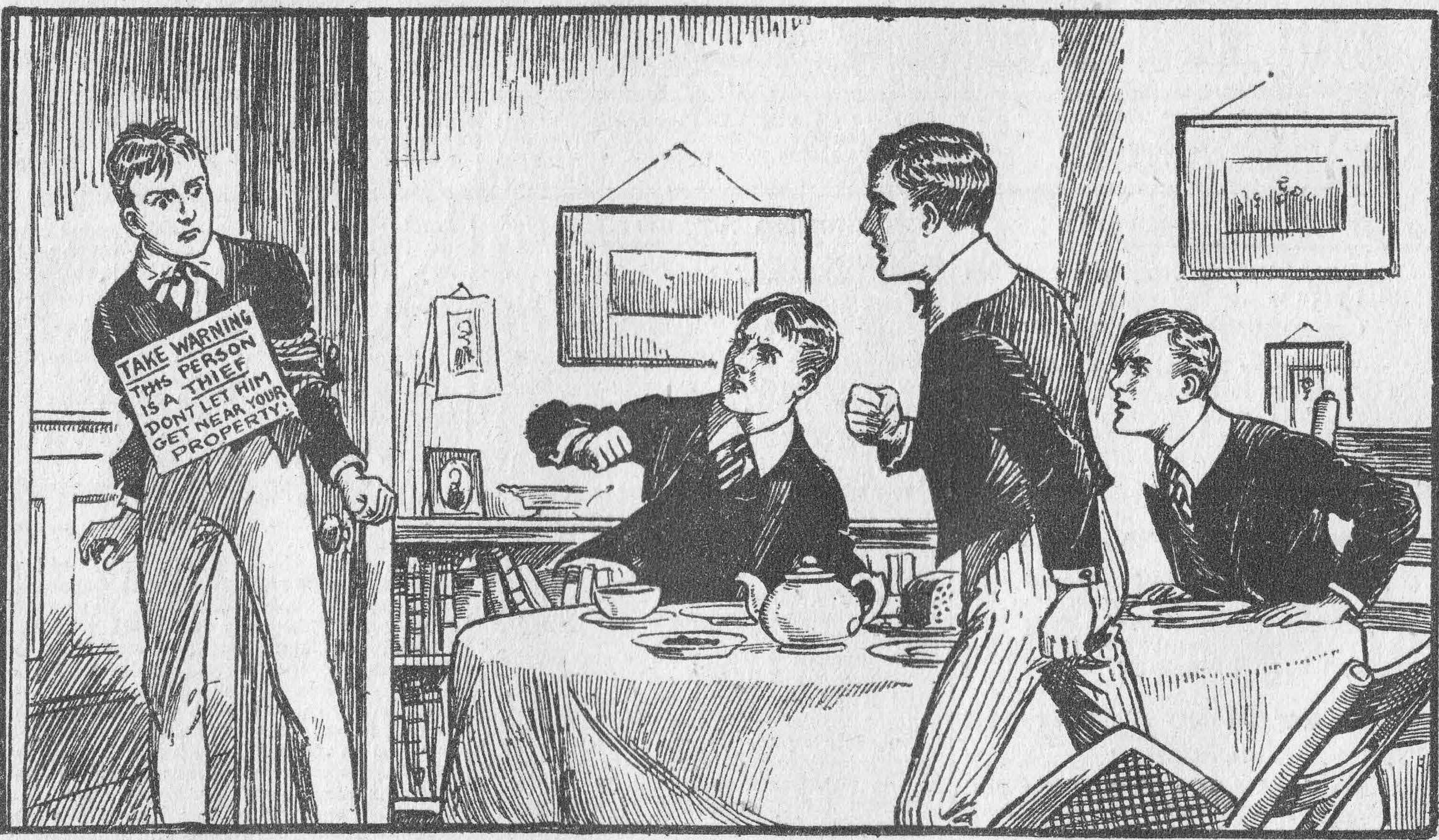
A GRAND NEW SCHOOL SERIAL. BY HERBERT BRITTON.

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with a stormy interview between Jack Turner and his father, in which the latter informs Jack that he is removing him from Beechcroft School at the request of the headmaster, who stigmatises Jack as "undesirable." Realising that his son is a hardened young scapegrace, Mr. Turner decides to send him to Redclyffe, in the hope that he may be steadied by the good influence of his twin brother, Dicky—a boy of the right sort. Dicky Turner does not much appreciate this arrangement, as he does not get on well with Jack, but promises his father to do his best.

Jack begins badly at Redclyffe by using his feet, contrary to all the laws of fair-play, in a fight with a boy named Drake. His Form-master allots Jack to Study No. 5, which is shared by his brother Dicky, Bob Travers, and Jack Jackson. The two latter refuse to admit him at first, and the scapegrace, after some bitter words with his brother, marches off indignantly to find other quarters.

(Read on from here.)



MORE TROUBLE FOR THE SCAPEGRACE! Dicky Turner glared fiercely at his scapegrace brother. "You bouncer!" he exclaimed. "What have you been doing now?"

No Luck for the Scapegrace.

Tap! Jack Turner tapped lightly on the door of Study No. 4—the apartment shared by Appley and Hawkins.

"Come in, fathead!" sang out Appley cheerily.

The new boy opened the door and looked in, to find the two Fourth-Formers sitting at the tea-table.

Appley and Hawkins frowned portentously.

Neither of them was at all pleased to see the new boy, as their looks suggested. But Jack Turner appeared to be quite unconscious of the fact that his entry was meeting with disapproval.

"You chaps look awfully comfortable!" he remarked, with a glance round the well-furnished study.

"Go hon!" said Appley.

"And only two of you, too," said the new boy.

"Quite sufficient!" said Hawkins bluntly.

"Ahem! Quite so," said Jack Turner, stepping into the study. "But I presume you've no objection to my sharing the room with you?"

"Eh?" Appley rose to his feet quickly and glared at the presumptuous new boy.

Jack Turner leaned against the easy-chair.

"I like the appearance of this study," he remarked. "And I like the look of you chaps, too. I reckon we ought to get on pretty well together."

"There's something wrong with your reckoner," said Hawkins, who had also jumped to his feet.

"I—I—I—" faltered the new boy, taken aback by the warlike expressions on the others' faces.

"Who told you to come to this study?" demanded Appley.

"Nobody; I—"

"Chambers didn't send you here?"

"No; he told me I was to share Study No. 5."

"Well, you'd better go there then," said Appley abruptly. "No. 5 is next door."

"I've been there," said Jack Turner. "But I couldn't think of remaining there. The chaps are absolute rotters! They wanted to chuck me out, until they discovered I was Dicky Turner's brother, and then—"

"T-T-Turner's brother?" stammered Appley, in astonishment.

"Yes."

"I'm sorry for Dicky!" grunted Appley.

"What did you say?" asked the new boy.

"Oh—er—nothing!" faltered Appley. "But I say, you'd better go in with your brother, you know."

Jack Turner sniffed disdainfully.

"No, thanks!" he said. "The less I see of him, the better I shall like it! I've got no use for him or his pals! They're a lot of stuck-up prigs, and—"

"They're not!" said Hawkins, at once. He was very loyal to Bob Travers & Co.

The new boy grinned in a sickly manner.

"You don't know them," he said. "But all the same, we don't want to chew the rag over that gang. If you don't mind, I'll sit down and have tea."

"But we do mind!" said Appley firmly.

"Eh?"

"If you're booked for Study No. 5, you'd better go there!" said Appley brusquely.

"Haven't I told you I don't want to mix with those rotters?" demanded Jack Turner.

"Well, you're not going to mix with us, old bean!" said Appley, with emphasis.

"What the dickens—"

"We're not at all keen on having young cads with us!" said Appley plainly.

"Young c-c-cads?" stuttered the new boy, in surprise.

"I believe that was what I said!" exclaimed Appleby, in an outspoken manner. "You're a young cad, and—"

"Look here—"

"We've got no use in this study for chaps who can't fight fairly!" said Appleby. "A fellow who can't fight without using his feet is an absolute rotter!"

Jack Turner's eyes blazed with indignation.

"If you mean to suggest that I'm a rotter—" he began.

"I do," replied Appleby, "and that's why I refuse to allow you to remain in this study. You can buzz off as soon as you like!"

"I won't!"

"Eh?"

"I'm here, and I'm jolly well going to stay here!" said Jack Turner deliberately.

"You refuse to go?"

"Of course I do!"

"Oh, good!" said Appleby, nodding to his chum. "You've made up your mind not to hop it?"

"Yes."

"Well, we've decided that you shall!" said Appleby, and, reaching down, he picked up a pair of tongs from the fender. "Now then, buzz off!"

"I—I—I—"

Jack Turner backed away.

Hawkins picked up the poker, and the two juniors, well-armed, advanced towards the obstinate new fellow.

"Better hop quietly," advised Hawkins, swinging his poker in the air.

"Look here," said Jack Turner, backing towards the door. "I don't see what you fellows want to kick up a fuss like this for!"

"Hop it!" said Hawkins. And he prodded the new boy in the ribs with his poker.

"Ow! You rotter!" exclaimed Jack Turner. "I—I— Ow! Yarooooogh!"

"Buzz off!"

"I—I— Ow-w-w-w-w!"

"Bunk!"

"Ow! You beasts! You— Groooooogh!"

Appleby pulled the door open and pointed to it with the pair of tongs.

"Better hop it while you've got the chance!" he said. "If you stay another second—"

"Oh, you cads!" roared the new boy. "I'll make you suffer for this! I'll— Ow! Stoppit! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Hawkins lunged at the new boy.

The latter staggered through the doorway, and landed with a bump on the hard and unsympathetic passage.

Next moment the door was shut with a bang, leaving Jack Turner muttering threats of vengeance in the passage.

He scrambled to his feet, and, after bestowing a hefty kick on the panels of the door, he slouched on down the passage.

Jack Turner was in an extremely bad temper.

His quest for a study had met with failure.

Moreover, he was feeling very hungry and in need of his tea.

He stopped before Study No. 2, and, without troubling to knock, threw open the door.

Mason and Wilson were just about to clear the table.

Mason glared fiercely at the new boy.

"Hop it!" he said curtly.

"I—I say—"

"Clear off!" exclaimed Mason belligerently, picking up a cushion from the easy-chair.

"But I—I want to— Ow! Yow! Yarooooogh!"

Mason had hurled the cushion with unerring aim.

It caught Jack full on the face, sending him backwards.

Wilson rushed forward and shut the door, just as the new boy was about to re-enter the room.

Jack made a rush at the door, and hurled it open.

"Look here, you cads—" he began.

"Hallo! You again?" said Mason, grabbing a Latin dictionary from the bookcase.

"I'm coming in here," said the new boy. "I haven't had any tea, and—"

"That's your own look-out!"

"But—"

Biff!

Mason hurled the Latin dictionary swiftly through the air.

Jack Turner saw it coming, and shot quickly out into the passage to avoid being hit.

He was about to enter the study again, however, when, to his chagrin, he heard the sound of the key being turned in the lock.

Thud—thump—thud!

Jack Turner kicked and thumped on the door, but the only answer he received came in the form of hilarious chuckles from the occupants.

He was certainly not wanted in Study No. 2.

He gave the door one last savage kick, and then, determined not to be outdone, he passed on to Study No. 1.

Jack poked his head round the door, and, to his amazement, he found the room empty.

But his face lightened up as he gazed at the table, which was laid all ready for tea.

There were a host of good things ready to be eaten. There was a large plum-cake, several kinds of jam, a tin of sardines, plenty of biscuits and bread-and-butter, and some stewed peaches and apricots.

Jack's mouth watered at sight of the spread.

Without hesitation he sat down at the table and commenced eating.

The fact that he was eating food which did not belong to him did not worry him in the slightest.

After receiving such cool receptions in the other studies, it was a relief

to him to have gained admittance to Study No. 1.

He started on bread-and-butter, then partook of some peaches and apricots. Next he decided to sample the plum-cake. He was just preparing to cut himself a slice when the door of the study opened, to reveal four well-dressed juniors on the threshold.

Jack Turner recognised them immediately as the four nuts who had tied him to the trolley.

"Come in, you fellows!" he said affably. "I hope you didn't mind my starting tea without you!"

"By gad!" drawled Drake, stepping into the study. "What colossal cheek!"

"Cheek!" said Drury. "It's worse than that!" He advanced towards the boy.

"Who told you to come in here?" he demanded.

"Now, don't get ratty!" said Jack Turner. "There's no need for you to be like the other chaps here. They're all a lot of cads, and—"

"Just about your mark, I should think," said Drake meaningly.

"Oh, I say!" said Jack Turner. "I'm awfully sorry for kicking you this afternoon. I lost my temper, you know. But I was wild with you for fastening me to that trolley."

"It served you jolly well right!" said Drury unsympathetically.

"I—I—I— Well, I suppose it did!" said Jack, in an endeavour to ingratiate himself in the eyes of the nuts. "But look here, can't we let bygones be bygones, and—"

"By gad!"

"I'm perfectly willing to forget what's happened, so that we can be friends."

"What!"

"You'll find me a jolly decent chap to get on with when you know me," went on Jack Turner. "I smoke, and—"

"Blessed cheek!" exclaimed Spooner.

"I play cards—"

"Eh?"

"I don't mind having a quid on a horse occasionally, and—"

"You cheeky cad!" exclaimed Drury.

"What the dickens do you want acquainting us with your habits for?"

"I—I—I— faltered Jack, taken aback. Then he added quickly: "I was only just proving to you that I'm one of your sort!"

"Our s-s-s-sort!" stuttered Drury.

"Yes," said Jack. "I know you chaps are sporty. You like a smoke occasionally, and— Here, what's the game?"

Drury had suddenly stepped forward and gripped Jack by the arm.

"I'm just going to show you the way to the door," said Drury calmly.

"You—you—"

"You're far too sporty for us!" said Drury blandly. "We don't mind an occasional smoke, but we don't help ourselves to other fellows' grub."

"Look here—"

"Are you going quietly, or have we got to put you out?" demanded Drury. "This is not a home for thieves, and—"

"Th-th-th-thieves!" stuttered Jack Turner.

"Well, a chap who helps himself to somebody else's grub is a thief, isn't he?" remarked Drury. "As we bar thieves in this study, it stands to reason we don't want you here. You can hop it as soon as you like!"

"I—I—I—"

"Dwuwuy, old boy," said Drake languidly, "hadn't we better warn the other fellows against this young repobate?"

Drury looked at his chum questioningly.

"I'm afraid I don't catch on!" he said.

"Well, he's proved himself to be a thief, hasn't he?" said Drake.

"I'm not a thief!" exclaimed Jack Turner indignantly. "I only—"

"Be quiet, deah boy!" said Drake reprovingly. "It's bad mannahs to intewwupt a gentleman when he's speaking. As I was sayin', Dwuwuy, old boy, we ought to warn the other fellahs against this chap."

"Well, I'm hanged if I'm going to chase round all the studies to—"

"No need," said Drake, with a grin. "There's a much easier way of doin' it than that."

"How—"

"Listen!"

Drake placed his mouth to Drury's ear, and imparted his scheme to his chum in a whisper that was not audible to Jack Turner.

Drury walked quickly across the room. Jack kept his eyes fixed on the dandy, and when he saw the latter pick up a long rope from the corner of the study, he uttered an ejaculation.

"What the dickens—"

"Collar him, you fellows!" exclaimed Drury, and Spooner and Slade promptly obeyed the order.

Drake had found a large piece of white cardboard, and was soon busy pencilling words on it in large capitals.

Drury stepped towards Jack Turner with the length of rope.

"You cads!" shouted Jack Turner, struggling in the grasp of the other dandies. "Let me go! Let me—"

"You're going all right!" chuckled Drury, tying Jack's wrists together. "In fact, you're going very quickly. Ha, ha! Buck up with that card, Drake!"

"Sha'n't be a minute, deah boy!"

Having tied Jack's wrists together, Drury proceeded to fasten the unfortunate junior's arms to his sides.

Jack struggled and kicked, and yelled at the top of his voice.

But the nuts were in a relentless mood, and his chance of making an escape was absolutely hopeless.

"I'm ready, deah boy!" remarked Drake, holding out the card.

The other dandies roared with laughter when they saw the words that were inscribed on it.

"That's topping!" said Drury approvingly. "Hand it over!"

The card was passed to Drury, who pinned it to Jack Turner's chest.

"Now," said Drury, wagging a finger at the captive junior, "this is to teach you not to be so cheeky, and to leave other fellows' grub alone. Out with him, you fellows!"

Jack Turner was hustled towards the open doorway.

Then the four elegant nuts planted their elegant boots in the middle of the new boy's back, and he was sent spinning into the passage.

The door of Study No. 1 closed with a bang, and Jack Turner was left alone in his misery.

Truly his quest for a study had proved a failure—a most dismal failure, in fact.

Jack Turner's Find.

"Ow! Groogh!"

"What the merry dickens—" exclaimed Dicky Turner, jumping up from his chair in Study No. 5.

"Ow! The rotters! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Sounds as though somebody's been through it," remarked Bob Travers, as there came another dismal howl from outside the study.

"If that's my young brother—" began Dicky Turner, frowning seriously.

He did not have time to finish his remark, for next moment the door of the study opened to reveal Jack Turner on the threshold.

His arms were tied to his sides, and Dicky glared as he caught sight of the card on his brother's chest.

For these were the words that Drake had scrawled in large capitals:

"TAKE WARNING!

THIS PERSON IS A THIEF!

DON'T LET HIM GET NEAR YOUR PROPERTY!"

Bob Travers and Jackson were grinning.

They guessed that the new boy had fallen foul of some fellows in the Fourth, who had japed him in consequence.

Dicky, however, was glaring fiercely at his scapegrace brother.

"You bouncer!" he exclaimed. "What have you been doing now? What—"

"Cut me loose, you feathad!" shouted his brother. "Can't you see I'm tied up?"

"I've a jolly good mind to leave you like it," said Dicky disgruntledly.

"You've made a jolly nice beginning here."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Jack, with a sneer. "I wish I'd never come to the place. Every fellow I come across is a rotter, and—"

"You—you—you—" Dicky was almost beside himself with rage and annoyance. He had just about had enough of his brother for one day.

Bob Travers picked up a knife from the table and handed it to Dicky.

"Here you are, Dicky, old son!" he said. "Better cut him free. He'll get the cramp in his arms soon if you don't buck up."

"Serves him right all he gets!" grunted Dicky.

"Oh, does it!" said Jack disagreeably. "I'd like to know how you'd care to be tied up like this."

"It's your own fault!" growled Dicky, as he cut the ropes that bound his brother's arms.

"M-m-m-my fault?"

"If you've been thieving other people's property, you must expect to suffer for it," said Dicky.

"I—I jolly well haven't!"

"Look at this!"

Dicky took the card from his brother's chest and placed it on the table.

Jack read the words which had been inscribed by the dandy.

His eyes fairly dilated in anger and astonishment.

"The rotters!" he exclaimed angrily. "I'll smash them for this! I'll— Leggo my arm!"

"No fear!" said Dicky, holding his brother in a firm grasp. "You've got into enough trouble for one day. I'm not going to allow you to get into any more."

"I tell you I'm going to smash those rotters!" said Jack, breathing hard.

"And I tell you you're going to remain here," said Dicky determinedly. He forced his brother into a chair. "If I let you go," he added, "you'll only disgrace yourself still more."

"D-d-d-disgrace myself!" stuttered Jack.

"Well, to judge by that bit of cardboard, it looks as though you've been doing so," said Dicky.

"That's all rot!"

"Well, who's responsible for the scrawl?"

Jack Turner leaned back in his chair and sniffed.

"Some silly ass who can't pronounce his 'r's," he replied carelessly. "He's a blessed fop, like the rest of his pals."

Dicky frowned thoughtfully.

"I didn't know we had any fops here," he remarked.

"I expect they're those new chaps I told you about," suggested Bob Travers.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dicky. "Were they those chaps who tied you to the trolley?"

"They were," replied Jack sharply.

"H'm!" Dicky thought for a moment. "Now, look here, Jack," he added firmly, "those fellows were a lot of cads to tie you to the trolley."

"I know they were, and yet—"

"But you were a cad to start kicking when fighting the chap you tipped off the trolley," said Dicky, with emphasis.

"If you're going to give me a sermon—" began Jack indignantly.

"I'm not," said Dicky. "I'm merely trying to thrash this matter out. Those new fellows had no right to fasten you to the trolley; all the same, you were at fault in fighting with your feet. Now, I want to find out who's to blame for this."

Dicky pointed to the piece of cardboard.

"If you think I'm to blame—" began Jack.

"Well, why did they tie you up and stick that card on you?"

"Merely because I tucked in to their grub," explained Jack. "There was nobody in the room, so I helped myself and—"

"Helped yourself?"

"Yes; I was jolly hungry," said Jack.

"I didn't think they'd object, but when I suggested that I shared their study they piled on me and tied me up."

Dicky smiled bitterly.

"Well, I can't say I blame them," he said. "You'll get handled worse if you don't mend your ways."

"M-m-my ways?"

"Yes," said Dicky. "You've behaved like a cad ever since we left home this morning. What do you think the pater would say if he knew how you'd been acting? You promised him to turn over a new leaf—"

"And I intend to keep the promise!" broke in Jack hotly. He appeared to resent the suggestion that he had broken his word.

Dicky sniffed disdainfully.

"Well, you certainly won't do so if you go on as you've started," he said.

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here—"

"I say, Dicky, old son," exclaimed Bob Travers, "what about some tea for Jack? He must be jolly hungry after—after—"

"He doesn't deserve to have any tea!" growled Dicky.

"And, what's more, I don't want any—at any rate, in this study!" said Jack.

"Oh, that's all piffle!" said Bob Travers, in an earnest endeavour to pour oil on the troubled waters. "I'll soon make you a hot cup of tea!"

"It's no good trying to soft-soap me—" began Jack resentfully.

"I—I—I—" faltered Dicky, his patience almost at its last gasp.

He moved quickly towards the door. "I'll be back in a few minutes, you fellows," he said. "I'm just going to pay Jimmy Wren & Co. a visit."

Next moment Dicky had disappeared down the passage.

There was no doubt he had done the wisest thing in leaving the study.

Had he remained he would surely have had a bitter quarrel with his brother.

Dicky had realised this, and to prevent such an occurrence he had taken his departure.

Moreover, he knew that Bob Travers would raise no objection to having Jack left in his charge—knew, too, that Bob would be able to handle his brother in a more tactful manner.

The plan certainly worked very well.

Bob Travers and Jack handled the young scapegrace in a most diplomatic manner.

They kept up a cheerful flow of conversation, and when bed-time arrived a remarkable change had taken place in Jack Turner.

The sulky, rebellious expression had vanished from his face, and he was looking bright and happy.

"Come along, old son!" said Bob, as he led the way out of the study. "We—"

Bob broke off abruptly, for just as he opened the door several figures flashed by, bearing a large hamper.

"Looks like a dormitory feed!" remarked Bob with a grin. "I reckon we shall have to be in this."

"What-ho!" said Jackson.

Jack Turner did not say anything.

His attention had been drawn towards a large cheroot lying in the centre of the passage.

He picked it up and gazed at it critically.

"Come along, Jack!" sang out Bob Travers.

"Coming!" replied Jack; and, slipping the cheroot into his pocket, he moved along the passage.

There was a very pleasant smile on the scapegrace's face as he mounted the stairs to the Fourth Form dorm