



Bulkeley of the Sixth in Danger! Rookwood Junior's Heroic Deed!



The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}/₂

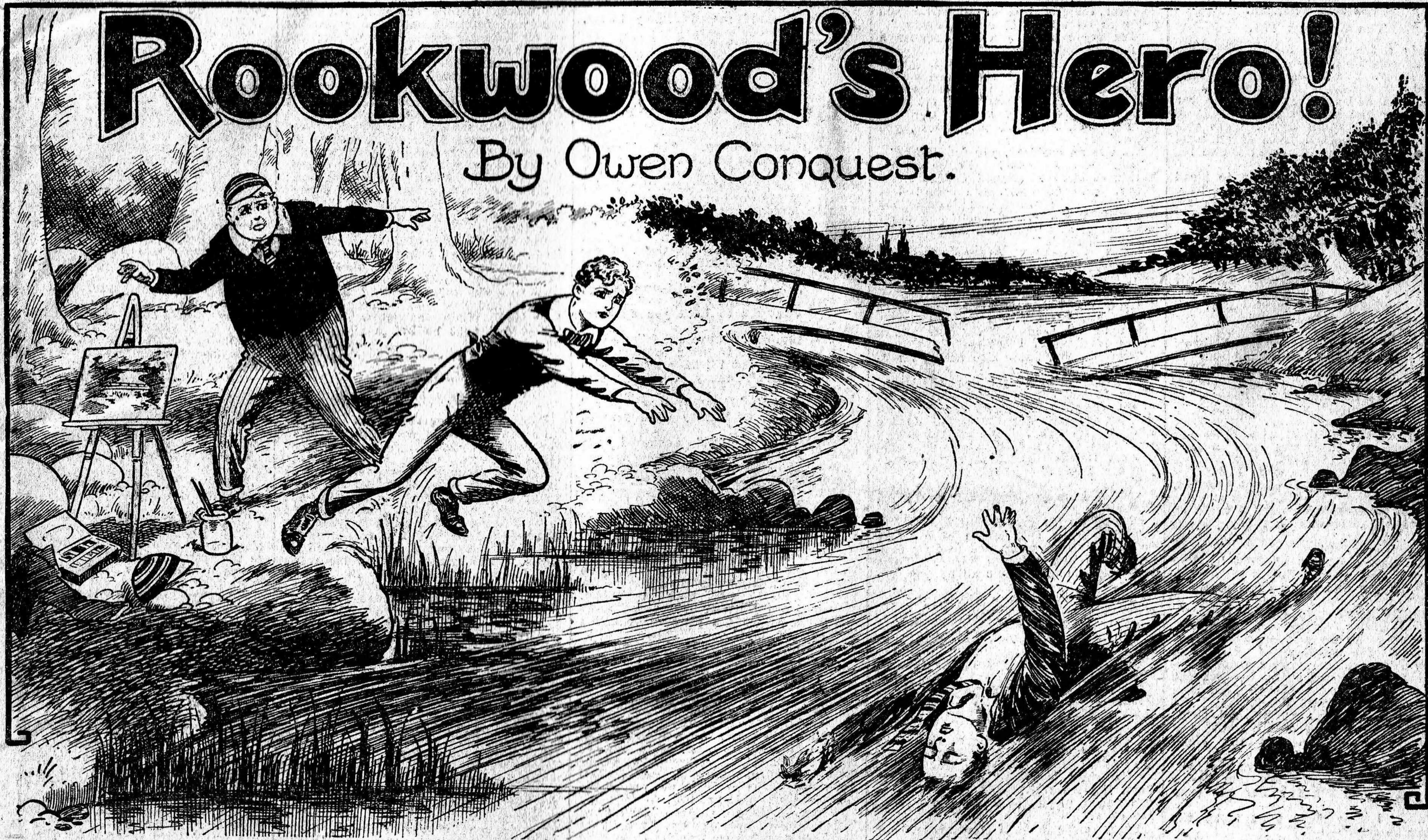
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 19th, 1919.]

Rookwood's Hero!

By Owen Conquest.



A LEAP TO THE RESCUE!

Tubby Muffin ran frantically along the bank. "Putty—Bulkeley—in the water—drowning!" he gasped. "Good heavens!" Putty pitched off his cap and jacket and plunged in, not stopping a second to think.

The 1st Chapter. Putty is Wanted!

"Silver!"
Bulkeley of the Sixth rapped out Jimmy Silver's name sharply.
Jimmy was going out with his bat under his arm, but he stopped at once and turned back. Rookwood Juniors were always ready to oblige old Bulkeley; and, moreover, Bulkeley's tone indicated that delay might be dangerous. So Jimmy Silver came along promptly.
"Yes, Bulkeley?"
Bulkeley was frowning.
"Has Grace, of your Form, gone out, do you know, Silver?"
"The new kid? I don't know."
"Well, I want him."
The voice of Arthur Edward Lovell came through the open doorway in loud and impatient tones:
"Are you coming, Jimmy? We're waiting."
"Wait a bit, then, old scout!" called back Jimmy.
Lovell's impatient face looked in at the doorway.
"You must stop to talk to some silly ass when a chap's waiting for you!" he said. "You—Oh, Bulkeley! I—I—ahem!"
Lovell promptly disappeared again.
"Do you want me to find Grace, Bulkeley?" asked Jimmy Silver hastily.
"Yes. Not if you're playing cricket, though," said Bulkeley, who was always considerate, even to fags. "Somebody else will do."
"Oh, that's all right—only practice,"

answered Jimmy Silver cheerily. "I'll look for him at once."
"Send him to my study," said Bulkeley. "Right-ho!"
Bulkeley went back to his study, still frowning. It was easy to guess that the vials of wrath were ready to be poured out on the devoted head of Teddy Grace, the new junior in the Fourth Form.
Jimmy Silver looked out on the steps, where Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for him.
"Seen Putty?" he asked.
"In his study, I think," said Raby.
"Right! You fellows run along; I'll come after you. Putty is in a row again."
"Bless him!" grunted Lovell.
The three juniors started for Little Side, while Jimmy Silver went up to the Fourth Form passage in search of Teddy Grace. It was a sunny spring afternoon and a half-holiday, and most of the fellows were naturally out of doors; but Putty of the Fourth was discovered in No. 2 Study.
The new junior seemed busy.
Teddy Grace dabbled in water-colours, and he was now occupied in giving some touches to a sketch.
"You're wanted, Putty," grunted Jimmy Silver at the door.
"Can't come."
"Bulkeley wants you."
"Bother Bulkeley!" answered Teddy Grace, without looking up.
"Fathead! You're to go at once. Is that a picture?" added Jimmy Silver, glancing at Putty's sketch.

"It's going to be," said Putty cheerfully. "Don't you recognise the scene?"
Jimmy Silver gazed at it attentively. Putty's art was rather of the impressionist order, and so it was not really easy to guess what the picture was intended to represent.
"Battle scene?" asked Jimmy.
"Ass!" answered Putty impolitely.
"Well, I suppose that's cannon smoke, isn't it?"
"Don't you know clouds when you see them?"
"Hem! Not when I see them looking like that!" said Jimmy, with a grin.
"Isn't that a big gun in the middle of the picture?"
"Don't you know a bridge when you see it?" snorted Putty.
"Oh, my hat!"
"It's the little bridge over the Croft Brook," explained Putty. "Of course, it's not finished yet. I'm going there again this afternoon."
"Better go and see Bulkeley first."
"Bother Bulkeley! What does he want?" asked Teddy Grace crossly.
"He wants you—and I fancy it's a case for the ashplant," chuckled Jimmy Silver. "Some more of your monkey tricks, I suppose."
"Well, he'll have to wait a bit."
Jimmy Silver shook his head.
"You're a new kid here, Putty," he remarked; "but you must have learned by this time that the captain of the school can't be kept waiting. You're going at once."
"Rats!"

"Otherwise I shall help you along. I've got a bat here—"
"Look here—"
"Like that!" continued Jimmy, bringing the bat into play.
"Ow!" roared Putty. "You silly ass—"
"And like that—and that—"
Putty of the Fourth dodged frantically as Jimmy Silver lunged with the bat. He had to dodge out of the study, and Jimmy cheerily drove him along to the stairs, still lunging.
"You silly chump!" roared Putty, turning on the staircase landing. "You howling idiot, I tell you—Yaroooh!"
"Have some more?"
"I'll—I'll—"
"You'll trot along," agreed Silver. "I'm wasting too much time on you now. There's another!"
"Yooop!"
Putty of the Fourth fled down the stairs. Jimmy Silver followed him, with his bat ready for action. The captain of the school was not to be kept waiting, even by the cheekiest junior at Rookwood.
Teddy Grace turned on the next landing, with a red and wrathful face.
"Look here, Jimmy Silver, you silly chump!"
"I'll keep it up as long as you do," answered Jimmy, lunging with the bat. "There's one—and there's another—and there—"
But the new junior had had enough; the bat was not to be argued with. He jumped back and fled down the lower staircase.

It was unfortunate for Tubby Muffin, the fattest junior on the Classical side of Rookwood, that he happened to be coming upstairs just then.
Putty came round the curve of the staircase at full speed, and met Tubby in full career. The collision was terrific. Tubby Muffin sat down, clutching at the banisters, and roaring. Putty reeled back from the shock and sprawled.
"Yaroooh!" roared Tubby. "What—what the thump— Oh! Ow!"
"Oh!" gasped Putty.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You—you—your thumping ass!" spluttered Tubby Muffin, scrambling up in great wrath. "You dangerous lunatic! You're always playing tricks. I'll jolly well teach you to biff me over on the stairs!"
Tubby Muffin was not usually a fighting-man, but he was roused to great wrath by the shock he had received. He fairly hurled himself upon the sprawling Putty, punching right and left.
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Go it, Tubby!"
"Ow-ow-ow! Gerroff!"
Thump thump, thump!
"There, you silly ass—there, you chump—biffing a fellow over on the staircase! Take that—and that!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Putty of the Fourth struggled wildly under the weight of the fat Classical. He was at a disadvantage, sprawling on his back on the stairs, with the fat Tubby scrambling over him. The yell

(Continued on next page.)

ROOKWOOD'S HERO!

(Continued from the previous page.)

of the unfortunate Putty woke the echoes of Rookwood.

Townsend of the Fourth looked up from below.

"You'd better chuck that!" he called out. "Bulkeley's coming!"

"Thump, thump!"

"Yoop! Help! Dragimoff!"

Jimmy Silver ran down and collared Tubby Muffin, jerking him away from his victim, as Bulkeley appeared on the scene.

"What's this thundering row about?" exclaimed the captain of Rookwood angrily.

"Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Putty, sitting up dazedly. "Oh, dear! Oh!"

"Biffed me over!" roared Tubby Muffin indignantly. "He's always playing tricks. Just like a monkey! Biffed me over! I'll biff him!"

"More of your pranks, I suppose, you young rascal!" growled Bulkeley, helping Putty to his feet by the collar.

"Ow! It was an accident—"

"Yes; I know your accidents, you young sweep! Come along!"

And the hapless Putty was marched off to Bulkeley's study, with the Rookwood captain's grasp upon his collar.

The 2nd Chapter.
The Straight Tip.

Teddy Grace gasped for breath as he put his collar straight in George Bulkeley's study. The captain of Rookwood regarded him with a frowning brow.

Since he had been at Rookwood the new junior had been in hot water more times than he could count. His predilection for practical jokes of all sorts and sizes had become too well known for his comfort.

It was quite useless for him to plead not guilty. Any other fellow could have an accident, and it was an accident; but an accident in Putty's case was put down at once to his "monkey-tricks."

So he did not even attempt to explain the disaster on the staircase. He waited meekly for Bulkeley to begin.

"Well, you young rascal?" said the prefect at last.

"Oh, Bulkeley!" murmured Putty. "You've been trespassing!"

"Eh?"

"As you're a new kid, you mayn't know that Sir Leicester Stuckey objects to fellows going over his ground," said Bulkeley. "You ought to know, however, that Stuckey Croft is out of bounds."

"Stuckey Croft!" repeated Putty. "I haven't been there—really, Bulkeley. I heard that some fellows went there the other day, and there was some trouble; but I wasn't one of them, really."

Bulkeley gave him a sharp look.

"Some fellows were asked there to tea, over the phone," he said. "It came out that Sir Leicester hadn't asked them, as they thought. It was somebody playing a trick."

"Was it, really?"

"It hasn't come out who did it. I've got my suspicions. Things like that didn't happen before you came to Rookwood."

"Oh, Bulkeley!"

"Sir Leicester Stuckey was very angry, and he's made no end of complaints," continued the captain of Rookwood. "Now he's complaining again about Rookwood fellows going about his grounds without permission. You've been seen there—along the Croft Brook."

"Oh!" said Putty. "That's all right, Bulkeley. There's a footpath across, you know. Anybody can use the plank bridge."

"So long as they don't leave the footpath," said Bulkeley. "But you do—or you did. And Sir Leicester has complained."

"Well, I may have gone along the stream to sketch—"

"You had better go along some other stream to sketch, then!" answered Bulkeley.

"But I've got to finish my picture!" urged Putty. "I'm painting a really good water-colour of the brook and the plank bridge—"

Bulkeley picked up his cane.

"I believe you knew the place was out of bounds," he said. "Anyway, you know it now. You're not to use that footpath again, and you're not to go anywhere near the Croft Brook. The Head's waxy with old Stuckey ringing him up to complain."

"But my picture—"

"What?"

"My picture isn't finished—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Bulkeley.

"Swish!"

"Ow!"

"That's a tip!" said Bulkeley grimly.

"Now, whether you go to Croft Brook to sketch or to play monkey-tricks I don't know. But I know that if you go there again, under any circumstances whatever, I shall take you to the Head for a flogging!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Keep that in mind," said Bulkeley sternly. "If you're ever found near the place again, you'll be flogged. That footpath is out of bounds for Rookwood fellows, owing to the trouble it's caused. Do you think you can remember that, or shall I give you another lick to impress it on your mind?"

"I—I think I can remember, Bulkeley!" gasped Putty.

"Mind you do. You're giving altogether too much trouble for a new kid!" growled Bulkeley. "I think you'll have sense enough to keep clear of the place now, though. I hope so, for your own sake. You can cut!"

Putty of the Fourth was glad enough to "cut."

He left Bulkeley's study, rubbing his

palm dolorously. As it happened, his intentions in visiting Sir Leicester Stuckey's property were quite harmless; but he was becoming a dog with a bad name, so to speak.

He returned to his study in a thoughtful mood.

Putty was a determined youth, not to say an optimistic one, and he was very keen on finishing his impressionist picture of the Croft Brook. He was conscious of good intentions, though he was not given the credit for them. And it really was selfish and inconsiderate of Sir Leicester Stuckey to wish to bar off a promising young artist from the scene of his artistic labours.

"I'm jolly well going, all the same!" murmured Putty, as he packed up his sketching materials. "Bulkeley's an ass—and old Stuckey is a beast. I'm going all the same—"

"I say, Putty—"

The fat face of his study-mate, Tubby Muffin, looked in at the door. His eyes lingered on Putty's satchel.

"Cut!" snapped Putty.

"Where are you going, all the same?" grinned the fat Classical.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Bulkeley's just gone out," said Tubby Muffin. "He's gone over to Abbeywood, I think—he's got a soldier relation in hospital there. I—I say—wharrer you going to do with that stump, Putty?"

"I'm going to give a fat boulder a thumping good licking!"

Tubby backed into the passage.

"I say, Putty, old chap, don't bear malice, you know!" he urged, from outside the doorway. "You biffed me over, and I thumped you, so it's fair and square. You shouldn't play tricks, you know!"

"It was an accident, you fat duffer!"

"Oh, yes, I know! You're always having accidents!" grinned Tubby. "But I say, don't be waxy, you know! I—I was jolly glad when you became my study-mate, Putty, old chap! I never went for you as Higgs did, did I?"

"You couldn't!"

"Well, I wouldn't, anyway. The fact is, I never liked a chap so much as I did you, Putty!"

"Bosh!"

"And I'll tell you what," continued Tubby confidentially, but keeping a wary eye upon his study-mate. "Now you've had a remittance, Putty—"

"How do you know I've had a remittance?"

"I happened to see you open the letter. What do you say to a real good spread in the study?" asked Tubby eagerly. "I'll do the shopping for you. I'll do the cooking. In fact, I'll do everything. All you've got to do is to stand the tin," said the fat Classical generously. "What do you say, Putty?"

"Rats!"

"What have you got in that satchel, Putty?"

"Sketching things, fathead!"

"I think it's jolly selfish of a fellow to take his tuck away and feed by himself!" said Tubby Muffin loftily. "There isn't any fun in a picnic all by yourself, Putty."

"I'm not going on a picnic, you fat cormorant!" growled Putty.

Tubby Muffin winked.

"I'll come with you, old chap!" he said.

"Do—and I'll roll you in the brook!" answered Putty.

"If you don't want my company, Teddy Grace—"

said Tubby in a very lofty tone.

"Well, I don't!"

"Ahem! He, he, he! I can take a joke with anybody," said Tubby Muffin. "He, he, he! Shall we start now, Putty?"

"I'm going to start," answered Putty. "and if I see you around I'll scalp you! It's not a picnic, and you can go and eat coke!"

Putty came out of the study, and Tubby Muffin dodged away. The new junior went downstairs, and Tubby followed him—at a cautious distance—into the quad. As Teddy Grace neared the gates he looked back, and found the fat Classical on his track.

As Putty of the Fourth was going out of bounds, with a flogging hanging over his head in case of discovery, he naturally had a strong objection to Tubby's company. Anything that happened within the knowledge of Tubby was pretty certain to become known far and wide.

Putty turned back, and charged towards the fat Classical with his satchel swinging in the air.

Tubby Muffin gave him one alarmed blink and fled.

"Stop!" roared Putty. "I'm going to scalp you! Come back, Muffin!"

Instead of coming back, Tubby Muffin put on speed, his fat little legs going like clockwork, in the direction of the cricket-field.

Putty of the Fourth chuckled, and went cheerily out of gates, satisfied that he was rid of the inquisitive Tubby for the afternoon. But that was a little mistake on his part.

The 3rd Chapter.
Tubby on the Track!

"I say, Jimmy!"

The Fistical Four were on the cricket-ground, with most of the Rookwood juniors, when Tubby Muffin arrived there breathlessly.

Cricket was beginning at Rookwood, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were giving their attention to practice. Jimmy Silver was watching Mornington at the wicket, with Tommy Dodd bowling, when the fat Classical jerked him by the sleeve.

"Don't bother, Tubby," said the captain of the Fourth, without looking round.

"But I say—"

"Busy!"

"Yes, but it's important, Jimmy," pleaded Tubby Muffin. "It's a matter you ought to take up, as captain of the Form."

"Oh, my hat! What is it?" asked Jimmy Silver impatiently, bestowing his attention upon Tubby Muffin at last.

"Suppose a fellow—"

"Well?"

"Say, a fellow's study-mate—"

"Buck up!"

"Suppose he had a remittance," said Tubby earnestly. "Suppose he spent it in tuck—"

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Suppose he went out to have a picnic all by himself," said Tubby, with the solemnity of an owl. It was evidently a very serious matter in the opinion of the fat Classical. "Well, suppose—"

"Cut off!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"But I haven't finished yet. Suppose he was going out of bounds, like a greedy rotter, you know, to have a picnic all by himself—"

"Dry up!"

"I say, Jimmy— Look here, it's up to you, you know," said Tubby Muffin, catching the captain of the Fourth by the sleeve again. "What I want is—"

"You want a thump, and you'll get it pretty soon if you don't leave off bothering!"

"I want you to come with me, Jimmy—"

"Eh! Where?"

"After Putty!"

"Blow Putty!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Cut off, and don't worry!"

"But he's got a feed—"

Jimmy Silver turned on the fat Classical, took him by his podgy shoulders, and sat him down in the grass with a bump.

"There! Now take a rest, and give me one," he said.

"Yarook!"

Jimmy turned away. The idea of leaving cricket, to pursue Putty in search of a supposed feed, was amusing; but it was also exasperating when the junior cricket captain was busy.

Tubby Muffin scrambled up, but he did not venture to tackle Jimmy Silver on that important subject again. He looked round, and finding Tommy Cook, of the Modern Fourth, at hand, approached him confidentially.

"I say, Cook, old chap," began Tubby. "I want you to back me up—"

"You want me to back you up?" repeated Cook.

"Yes, that's it. Suppose a fellow—"

"I haven't time to listen to your chin-wag, old chap, but I'll back you up with pleasure," said Tommy Cook. "Here goes!"

"Here, I say! Wharrer you at?" roared Tubby Muffin, as Tommy Cook grasped him.

"Backing you up!" answered the Modern Junior cheerily.

And he backed Tubby Muffin up—against the pavilion, with a crash.

"Ow! Yoop!" roared Tubby. "You Modern beast! Yarook!"

"Want any more backing up?" asked the humorous Modern.

"Yoop! No! Yah!"

Tommy Cook walked away, chuckling, leaving the unfortunate Tubby leaning on the pavilion, gasping for breath.

"Ow! Wow, wow!" mumbled Tubby. "I suppose I'd better try Higgs. Only he's such a beast; a chap never knows how to take him!"

The fat Classical looked round for Higgs of the Fourth. He found that burly youth looking on at the cricket, with a darkened brow. Higgs was a big and burly fellow, and could lick almost anybody in the Fourth, and he seemed to regard that as a reason for being allowed to shine at cricket. Jimmy Silver took quite a different view, and Higgs was not likely to become a member of the junior eleven unless he could play good cricket. Fortunately, Jimmy Silver was one of the fellows Higgs could not lick.

"I say, Higgs, old chap—"

murmured Tubby Muffin, approaching the bully of the Fourth with some trepidation. Alfred Higgs had a very uncertain temper and a heavy hand!

Higgs scowled at him.

"Nice for me, isn't it?" he said.

"Eh?"

"You know how I play cricket!" said Higgs warmly. "Silver thinks I can't! What does he know about cricket?"

"Nothing at all," said Tubby promptly. "I never saw such a thoroughly rotten cricketer as Jimmy Silver."

The soft answer did not turn away wrath, however.

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" snapped Higgs.

"C-c-c-certainly not," stammered Tubby. "I—I mean, he's a jolly good cricketer—best cricketer at Rookwood—"

"He's nothing of the sort, and you know it!"

"Of—of course he isn't. He's a silly ass!" gasped Tubby. "I quite agree with you, Higgs."

Tubby would certainly have been willing to agree with Higgs if he had only known what to agree to.

"You're a silly idiot, Muffin!"

"I—I know, I mean—"

"Silver's a fair cricketer. But he doesn't bat as I do."

"That he doesn't, Higgs, old chap. I heard Mornington say that he'd never seen a chap bat as you do."

Higgs snorted.

"If you're going to repeat Morny's silly cheek to me, Muffin—"

"Nunno! I mean—"

"I've got a late cut that's something rather special," said Higgs. "Silver can't see it."

"Oh, he's an ass!" said Tubby. "He can't see anything. He wouldn't give me a chance in the footer, you know."

"Thumping ass if he did."

"Ahem! I—I quite agree," mumbled Tubby. "You know all about it, Higgs. I've often been surprised at the amount you know. Now, speaking of Putty—"

"Who's speaking of Putty?"

"I—I am."

"Well, don't."

"Suppose Putty was going on a picnic, Higgs, old chap—suppose he had a lot of tuck in a satchel—"

"That reminds me," said Higgs, with a glare. "Who's been at my cake?"

"Your—your cake!" stammered Tubby.

"Yes, my cake! I told you what I'd give you if you touched my tuck again. Now I'll jolly well— Come back!"

roared Higgs.

But Tubby Muffin was fleeing for his life.

The fat Classical gave up the idea of getting recruits on the cricket-field. And he was smitten with a dread that Putty might already be engaged upon the picnic, and that he might be too late.

He rolled out of the school gates by himself, and took up the pursuit of the new junior unaided.

"After all the beast's out of bounds," murmured Tubby. "I know where he's gone—I know jolly well! And if he cuts up rusty, I might consider it my duty to mention to Bulkeley that the beast's been trespassing on old Stuckey's ground again. He, he, he!"

And, much encouraged by that thought, the fat Classical hurried along after Teddy Grace, who had long been out of sight.

He became very wary as he crossed a stile leading into the fields that lay along the Croft Brook.

There was a public footpath across the fields leading to the plank bridge over the brook. Anyone who wandered along the brook from the path was trespassing on Sir Leicester Stuckey's property; and there had been so many complaints on the subject that Dr. Chisholm had placed the footpath itself out of bounds for Rookwood juniors. The seniors were supposed to know how to behave with more circumspection than the smaller fry.

Tubby had need to be wary—for there was the possibility of meeting Sir Leicester or one of his keepers or a Rookwood prefect. It was likely enough that Bulkeley himself would come back from Abbeywood by way of the footpath across the brook—and the fat Classical knew what to expect if Bulkeley found him there.

But the thought of Putty's supposed feed drew Tubby Muffin on like a magnet.

Tubby was quite assured in his fat mind that Putty had retired to that secluded spot to enjoy a plentiful picnic all by himself, and Tubby was indignant at the bare idea. Wherever there was a spread Tubby felt that he had a right to be included.

The 4th Chapter.
In Deadly Peril!

Putty of the Fourth was at work.

For once, he was busy without being engaged upon practical jokes or "monkey-tricks" of any kind.

About a hundred yards from the plank bridge he was ensconced under the trees, busily daubing.

The greatest of impressionist pictures ever exhibited was not quite so thoroughly impressionist as Putty's work. Even the artist himself was a little puzzled at times to distinguish between his trees, his bridges, and his clouds. But he was enjoying the pursuit of his art, and, after all, that was the chief concern.

Putty had forgotten all about Sir Leicester Stuckey and Bulkeley and everybody else, like a true artist, in the midst of creative effort. He did not see or hear Tubby Muffin approaching.

He gave a jump, and dabbed a daub that was more impressionist than ever as the fat Classical suddenly tapped him on the shoulder.

"Oh! You ass!" gasped Putty.

"He, he, he!"

"You—you fat chump! What are you doing here?"

Tubby Muffin grinned.

"You're out of bounds, Putty!" he said, wagging an admonitory fat forefinger at Teddy Grace.

"So are you!" growled Putty.

"That doesn't matter so much—I'm not a tricky monkey, always getting into hot water!" grinned Tubby. "You're going to have a flogging if you're caught here. I heard Bulkeley say so."

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Where's the grub?"

"Eh! What grub?"

"The picnic."

"There isn't any picnic, you fat duffer!" shouted Putty, in great exasperation. "I've come here to paint."

Tubby Muffin knitted his brows sternly.

"Now look here, Putty," he said. "I'm willing to be friendly. I'm willing to join you in the picnic. I'm willing to go halves with you. I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

"Fathead!"

"It's no good trying to pull my leg," continued Tubby. "I'm pretty sharp. You have to get up very early in the morning to pull the wool over my eyes. I can tell you! It's no good telling me that you've come here to daub that silly rot—"

"That what?"

"Silly rot!" said the cheerful Tubby. "You've come here to have the feed all to yourself, and I think it's greedy—selfish, in fact. I hate selfishness. You wouldn't go out of bounds simply to play the goat with that silly daubing— Yaroooooh!"

The exasperated artist lost patience. Tubby Muffin suddenly found himself sitting in the grass, without any clear idea as to how he had got there.

"Wow—wow—wow!" gasped Tubby. "Why, you rotter, I've a jolly good mind to tell Bulkeley. I believe he's coming home this way, and I'll go and meet him, and—"

"Shut up!"

"He's coming to. He'll be all right in a minute. Oh, crumbs—and that means a flogging for me!" ejaculated Putty, as the precise situation dawned upon him.

"Serve you right!" retorted Tubby Muffin. "I'm as wet as anything, and you don't care if I catch—"

"Oh, dry up a minute! What the dickens am I going to do? I'm jolly well not going to be flogged, and Bulkeley's bound to report me—he always keeps his word—"

"Ow, ow! I'm soaked—"

Putty made up his mind swiftly.

Bulkeley was fast coming to himself; and as soon as his eyes opened they would rest on Putty—with direful results to that disobedient youth. Bulkeley, in regard to Putty, had been acting under the Head's instructions—and even the fact that Putty had dragged him out of the water would not excuse him for leaving his duty undone. It was possible that the prefect's gratitude might save Putty from the promised flogging—but it was not by any means certain—and the junior was naturally not disposed to take the risk.

Bulkeley did not need his care; and though Putty would not have left him alone, Tubby Muffin was there, and he could remain.

Putty decided at once. He clapped the grumbling Tubby on the shoulder.

"I'm going to cut off," he said hurriedly. "You stay with Bulkeley, Muffin—you're not booked for a flogging—"

"I'm wet!"

"Don't mention my name," went on Putty. "Bulkeley saw you, didn't he?"

"Yes—I say, I'm awfully wet—"

"Well, then, you can stay; and if you don't mention that I've been here, Tubby, I'll stand you a feed in the study this evening."

Tubby Muffin looked more attentive. He even forgot for a moment that he was wet.

"What sort of a feed?" he asked cautiously.

"Anything you like!" said Putty desperately, as the prefect stirred again. "If Bulkeley knows I've been here, I'm done for. It's a flogging from the Head."

"I know that. Will there be a cake?"

"Yes, yes!"

Putty grabbed up his sketching things in hot haste.

"And tarts?" called out Tubby.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"All right, then. I say, what about one of the sergeant's pies—"

But Putty of the Fourth was gone. He disappeared through the trees, with his belongings under his arms and in his hands; and did not stop to pack them till he had sprinted across a field, and escaped into a lane. After that, he took the road to Rookwood.

He was not feeling very cheerful now. He was soaked to the skin, and his impressionist picture was indefinitely postponed. He left a track of water behind him in the dusk, as he trotted along, for some distance.

Near Rookwood he stopped to make himself as presentable as he could before entering the school; he did not want his state to attract attention.

Fortunately, most of the fellows were still on the cricket-ground, and Putty was able to dodge into the House unnoticed.

He pitched his satchel into his study, and hurried up to the Fourth Form dormitory to change his clothes and dry himself.

His damp clothes were tucked away safely out of sight; and in a very short time Putty of the Fourth descended from the dormitory, looking as bright and clean as a new pin.

He sauntered cheerfully out of the School House, feeling none the worse for his adventure, but conscious that it behoved him to keep that adventure very carefully secret.

"Hallo! Where have you been this afternoon?" asked Higgs, meeting him in the quadrangle.

"Sketching, dear boy!"

"What rot!" said Higgs.

Putty smiled and walked on to the cricket-ground. Jimmy Silver greeted him with a frown.

"Hallo, slacker! Not much more light for practice!"

"Better late than never!" answered Putty cheerfully.

"Well, get your bat, and let us see what you can do," said the captain of the Fourth.

Tubby Muffin complied. He was very willing to be occupied at cricket when Bulkeley arrived, in case there should be any lingering suspicion in the prefect's mind that he had been on Sir Leicester Stuckey's land that afternoon.

Jimmy Silver took the ball, and Putty stood up cheerfully to the bowling of the Fourth Form's champion bowler, and it was some time before his sticks went down. Jimmy Silver condescended to give the new junior an approving look.

"Not bad!" he said.

"Not at all," agreed Putty. "Will you be wanting me for the junior eleven?"

Jimmy sniffed.

"I'm at your service if you do, you know," said Putty.

"The eleven isn't at your service, though," answered Jimmy. "You've got too much nerve for a new kid, Putty. I suppose you've been up to some of your tricks this afternoon."

"Tricks!" repeated Putty.

"If I find pepper in my teapot, or mustard in my cake, I shall come along to your study and bring a stump!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Hallo, Algy, what's the row?"

Jimmy's cousin, Algy of the Third, had just arrived, at full speed, breathless with excitement.

"Guess!" he gasped.

"No time—get it off your chest!"

"Tubby Muffin—"

Putty spluttered Algy Silver.

"What about him?" asked Teddy Grace quickly. "Has the silly ass been chattering—I mean—"

"Oh, it's true!" said Algy. "I wouldn't have believed it, but Bulkeley said so himself. Come on—they're just going

in! I came to tell you, Jimmy! Fancy—Tubby Muffin—that fat chump! Come on!"

And Algy cut off again.

"But what's happened?" roared Jimmy Silver, in surprise.

But the fog was gone—evidently bursting with the surprising news, whatever it was. And Jimmy Silver, in great wonder, followed him—and so did Teddy Grace.

The 6th Chapter.
Borrowed Glory.

George Bulkeley opened his eyes, with a gasping breath.

He gazed round him dazedly, and started as he saw Tubby Muffin squeezing the water out of his clothes.

"What—what's happened?" muttered Bulkeley faintly.

"I'm wet!"

"Wet all over!" growled Tubby.

Bulkeley sat up in the grass, still dazed, and put his hand to his head. There was a bump, where he had struck the plank, and he was feeling sick and dizzy.

"I—I remember now!" he muttered. "I—I must have been stunned, I think. Oh, my head! But—but I fell in the water. My hat! Did you pull me out, Muffin?"

Bulkeley was looking round him; there was no one in sight but the fat Classical. Tubby, who was squeezing the water out of his jacket, blinked at him.

"I yanked you out by the collar," he answered.

"Well, my hat!"

Tubby Muffin's statement was quite correct; he had dragged Bulkeley out by the collar after Teddy Grace had brought him into the rushes.



THE MODEST HERO! "I'm awfully wet, sir!" said Tubby importantly. "Soaked to the skin, sir! But I don't mind. I've saved Bulkeley's life—haven't I, Bulkeley?"

But as there was no one else on the spot, George Bulkeley naturally supposed that Tubby had done more than that. He knew he must have floated downstream after falling into the water.

"Where did you get me out, Tubby?" he asked.

"Just here."

"The water's deep here," said Bulkeley, with a look of blank wonder at the fat Classical.

"And jolly wet, too!" grunted Tubby.

"I never knew you were such a swimmer, Muffin."

"Such a—a what?" exclaimed Tubby, staring at the captain of Rookwood in his turn. "Oh! I—I see! Just so—quite so. Oh, I'm simply a splendid swimmer, Bulkeley! First-rate, in fact!"

Tubby was under strict injunctions not to mention that Teddy Grace had been there, and the feed in the study depended on it, so Tubby had to be very careful to keep his compact. But it dawned upon him that Bulkeley must be aware that someone had gone into the stream for him, at a very great risk. A glimmer came into Tubby's round eyes. For the first time it came into his mind that here was glory to be reaped—cheap.

Glory did not often come Tubby's way. He was distinguished for his gargantuan appetite, for his marvellous scent for a feed, and for his uncommon powers as a borrower of cash. But these distinctions could not exactly be called glorious. And here was glory—going cheap, as it were—to be had for the asking!

Almost unconsciously Tubby began to swell.

His fat conscience was satisfied with the plea that he was bound to keep Putty's secret, after promising to do so. His promise suddenly assumed an unaccustomed sacredness in Tubby's eyes.

He simply couldn't go back on Putty, who trusted him! And if the alternative was to let Bulkeley believe that he—Reginald Muffin—had performed an action of great valour, what was Tubby to do?

After all, he would have done it if Putty hadn't—or, at least, he would have if he could have—so it came to the same thing, really—or, at least, Tubby tried to believe that it did.

George Bulkeley was silent for some minutes, getting his breath and rubbing his head. He was not much hurt, and he was recovering fast. More than anything else, he felt utter amazement that it was Tubby Muffin who was his rescuer.

For he knew that only a hefty swimmer, and a plucky one to boot, could have got him out of the water; and Tubby certainly was not famous for either quality.

Tubby, growing more important in his looks every moment, finished squeezing his jacket, and put it on. He was already reflecting how much Bulkeley's gratitude would be worth to him.

When this got out it would make some fellows feel small, Tubby reflected—fellows who called him a fat grampus, and a fat frog, and things like that, and never believed that he could do anything but demolish great quantities of tuck.

Bulkeley's voice interrupted these pleasant reflections. The prefect had risen to his feet, and was regarding the fat junior thoughtfully.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Muffin!"

"Not at all, Bulkeley! Don't mention it!" said the fat Classical, in quite an airy way. "Jolly glad I happened to be on the spot, that's all. Right chap in the right place—what?"

"You must have had some trouble with me in the water," said Bulkeley. "I was quite unconscious, till I came to just now."

"Well, it was a bit of trouble," confessed Tubby Muffin. "You're rather heavy, you know."

"It beats me!" said the captain of Rookwood. "I—I mean, I'm very deeply

obliged to you. I should never have thought—ahem! You ran a great deal of risk coming into deep water for me."

"Never stopped to think of it!" said the cheerful Tubby. "Just tackled the job, you know, and put it through. Efficiency, you know. That's me all over."

Bulkeley smiled.

"It was plucky!" he said.

"Well, as you make a point of it, Bulkeley, I admit it was plucky," said Tubby Muffin modestly. "I'm not the chap to brag, I hope. Still, it was plucky. The Muffins are a plucky family. All through the war, you know, there have been Muffins right at the front. As for me, personally, I don't mind mentioning to you, Bulkeley, that I'm as brave as a lion."

And Tubby Muffin swelled, till he really seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"Better get in and get these wet things off," said Bulkeley. "We may catch cold. Better run."

"Right you are, Bulkeley! I say, you're not going to report me for being out of bounds, are you?" asked the fat Classical anxiously.

"Under the circumstances, I think I can undertake to let you off for that," said Bulkeley, with a smile. "But you mustn't do it again."

"Tisn't as if I was a bounder always playing tricks, like Putty, for instance, is it?" said Tubby, with a grin.

"No," said Bulkeley, with a nod. "Quite different. But what did you come here for, Muffin?"

"I—I thought there was a picnic, and there wasn't," said Tubby.

Bulkeley laughed. Tubby's presence by the Croft Brook was fully explained. The captain of Rookwood was crossing the field with long, rapid strides, and Tubby Muffin kept at a trot to keep pace with him. He was soon gasping for breath, but Bulkeley would not let him slacken down. It was necessary to keep warm till the wet clothes could be changed.

They arrived at Rookwood in quite a warm glow.

Mr. Bootles met them as they came in at the gates, and he stopped and looked at Bulkeley quickly.

"What has happened?" he exclaimed. "You look—"

"An accident, sir," said Bulkeley. "The plank on the Croft Brook went, and I tumbled in."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "But Muffin—"

"I'm awfully wet, sir!" put in Tubby importantly. "Soaked to the skin, sir! But I don't mind. I've saved Bulkeley's life—haven't I, Bulkeley?"

"It's true, sir," said the Rookwood captain, as Mr. Bootles blinked at the fat Classical over his glasses in great astonishment, and several fellows gathered round curiously. "I knocked my head on the plank, I think, and lost my senses. Muffin must have gone into deep water for me, and how he got me out goodness only knows. He's much better than anybody ever thought."

"Bless my soul!" said the amazed Mr. Bootles. "Muffin, I am very pleased with you. I should never have dreamed—ahem!"

"It was my pluck, sir," said Tubby cheerfully.

"What?"

"Pluck, sir! I've got no end of pluck. Ask Bulkeley. He knows."

"Ahem! You had better go in and change your clothes at once."

Bulkeley strode on, and Tubby Muffin trotted after him, leaving the Fourth Form-master blinking. If it had been Jimmy Silver, or Lovell, or Tommy Dodd, Mr. Bootles would not have been surprised; but the idea of Tubby Muffin as a hero needed getting used to.

There was a buzz of surprise among the Rookwood fellows who had heard what was said. The news spread on all sides. Bulkeley and Tubby Muffin had disappeared into the House when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived from the cricket-field.

But they soon learned the news. And the brief and emphatic comment of Jimmy Silver was:

"Rats!"

The 7th Chapter.
Official!

"Tubby Muffin!"

"He's saved Bulkeley's life!"

"Rats!"

"Bulkeley says so!"

"Then he's dreaming!"

"If Bulkeley thinks so, it's time he woke up!" said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically. "What do you think, Putty?"

Putty of the Fourth had quite a dazed look. The news that there had been an heroic rescue, and that Tubby Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, was the heroic rescuer, simply flabbergasted Teddy Grace. As for the credit that might have been reaped from his exploit, the scamp of Rookwood had not given that a thought; but still less had he surmised that Tubby Muffin would lay claim to that same credit.

"I think it's rot!" gasped Putty. "I'm jolly sure Tubby never went into the water for Bulkeley."

"I'll believe it if I hear Bulkeley say so," said Jimmy Silver.

Mornington came down the stairs.

"Tubby says—"

"Where is the fat spoofer?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"He's in the dorm, changing. He's wet right enough," said Mornington. "Wet and muddy. So was Bulkeley. The fat bounder says he rescued Bulkeley at the risk of his life—owing to his tremendous pluck—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's modest about it!" grinned Lovell. "Well, that's what he determined," said Mornington, laughing. "Gammon, of course."

"Spoo!" agreed Jimmy Silver. "Let's ask Bulkeley."

"Yes, rather!"

Quite a crowd of fellows went along to Bulkeley's room. The door was locked. Bulkeley was towelling himself dry. Jimmy Silver knocked.

"You at home, Bulkeley?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"You've been in the water?"

"Yes."

"There's a yarn that Tubby Muffin fetched you out," said Jimmy, through the door. "Nothing in it, of course?"

"It's true, Silver."

"Eh?"

"Quite true."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Muffin fetched me out of deep water, risking his life to do it," said Bulkeley, from within. "Never mind his swank—he did it! Now cut off!"

Jimmy Silver almost tottered away from Bulkeley's door. The news was nearly too much for him.

"It—it's true!" babbled Jimmy. "Tubby—Tubby Muffin did it! He did it! Oh, my only hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"The fat bounder—he didn't!" exclaimed Putty indignantly.

"Bosh! If Bulkeley says so, it is so," said Jimmy Silver; "and that settles it. You fellows, we haven't done Tubby justice. There's more in Tubby than meets the eye."

"And there's plenty of him that meets the eye, too!" remarked Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tubby Muffin!" said Jimmy. "Tubby—a giddy hero! Who'd have thought it? Let's go and see him, and hear all about it. Tubby Muffin—my hat!"

And nearly all the Fourth Form marched up to the dormitory to interview Tubby Muffin—Rookwood's Hero!

THE END.

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

THE SCAPEGRACE OF REDCLYFFE.

(Continued from page 8.)

He searched the study thoroughly, and when he took his departure he was holding a small box, containing several cigars. He arrived at Study No. 5 just as Dicky came along, with his hands tucked under his armpits.

He glared fiercely at Jack as he sank down in the easy-chair.

"All through you, you cad!" he growled. "If you hadn't—"

"All through you, you mean!" said Jack firmly. "You should have taken my word!"

Dicky's lips curved in a sneer.

"Your word!" he muttered, between his teeth. "And what's that worth? You're an untruthful young rascal! You—"

Dicky paused as he caught sight of the box of cigars in Jack's hand. "What the dickens have you got there?" he added quickly.

In a nonchalant manner Jack opened the box, thus revealing a row of cigars, bearing red bands.

"You cad!" burst out Dicky. "What—"

"Now, don't get your rag out!" said Jack coolly. "I want you to inspect these cigars!"

"What—"

"Look at them, fathead!" said Jack. "You, too, Travers and Jackson. You might tell me whether that cigar I pulled out of my pocket was like these?"

The three juniors stared hard at the box of cigars.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Bob Travers. "The bands are exactly the same, and—"

"—and— Yes, the words are the same, too!"

Jack Turner grinned with satisfaction.

"Perhaps you'll believe me, then, if I tell you I found this box in Study No. 1," he said calmly. "You might also feel inclined to believe that the cigar I picked up in the passage was dropped by Drake & Co. In fact—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Travers. "I remember now. Jack did stop for something when we were going up to the dormitory. I called after him to hurry up, and—"

"So you did," said Jackson reflectively.

Dicky Turner gasped. He was beginning to see that he had misjudged his opponent.

"It's jolly funny—"

"Very funny!" said Jack, with a bitter smile. "In fact, there's something extremely humorous about being accused of being a cad. Of course, if you still think that cigar belonged to me, and that I intended to smoke it—"

"I don't!" said Dicky, jumping to his feet. The earnest expression on his brother's face had convinced him at last. "I can see you're telling the truth this time. But—"

Dicky paused, and, darting forward, he dragged the door open. The figure of a junior sprawled into the room.

"Wilson, by gum!"

"You cad!" exclaimed Dicky Turner, dragging the junior to his feet. "You were listening at the keyhole!"

"I wasn't!" shrieked Wilson, struggling to break free. "I was just— Ow! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

The cad of the Fourth uttered a piercing shriek as Dicky Turner planted his boot in the middle of his back, propelling him into the passage.

Dicky closed the door with a slam and returned to the easy-chair.

During the rest of that day complete harmony reigned in Study No. 5.

Jack turned up at footer-practice, and Dicky felt that his brother was determined to run straight at last. But Dicky little dreamed of the developments that were to take place in the near future.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this splendid serial in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. Don't miss next week's Special Easter Holiday Number!)

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TOO MUCH OF A JOKE!

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter. Extraordinary!

Tramp, tramp!
Clatter!
Lessons were proceeding at Cedar Creek School when that sudden tramping and clattering of hoofs was heard in the playground without.

"Whoa!" came a deep voice from outside, audible to everybody in the big lumber school-room.

"Visitors!" murmured Bob Lawless, with a grin.

And Chunky Todgers murmured:
"Good! I can do with a rest!"

But Miss Meadows apparently was not expecting visitors, and she took no heed of the tramping under the windows.

"Anybody at home?" came the deep voice from outside. "Hi! Show up! Hi, there!"

Then Miss Meadows frowned.

A minute later the school-room door opened, and Black Sally put in a shining, ebony face with a surprised expression on it.

Miss Meadows glanced at her impatiently.

"Gentleman to see Mass' Richards!" said Black Sally.

"What?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

Frank Richards looked up in astonishment. He was certainly not expecting a call during lessons from a gentleman with a string of jingling horses.

Miss Meadows glanced at him.

"Richards! What does this mean? You cannot see anyone during lessons, as you know very well!"

"I don't know what it means, ma'am," answered Frank. "I wasn't expecting anyone, of course."

"Tell the gentleman that Richards cannot see anyone till twelve o'clock, when the class is dismissed."

"Yes, missy."

Black Sally withdrew and the door closed.

"What the dickens does that mean, Frank?" whispered Vere Beauclerc.

Frank shook his head.

He hadn't the faintest idea what it meant.

Miss Meadows resumed the lesson; but it was interrupted again in a couple of minutes.

The school-room door flew open, and a powerful-looking individual in huge boots and a Stetson hat tramped in.

He stared round the astonished school-room, and touched his big hat to Miss Meadows.

"Skuse me, marm—" he began.

"But I do not excuse you, sir!" said Miss Meadows sharply. "You are interrupting the work here!"

"Sorry, marm, but I've come all the way from Thompson with three horses for Mister Richards to see."

"What?"

"Purty critters, every one of them!" said the big man. "Where's Mister Richards? P'raps you'll let him step out a minute, marm, to look at the critters?"

Frank Richards could only stare.

All eyes in the class were turned upon him.

The horse-dealer was scanning the class, apparently trying to pick out "Mister Richards" from among the rest.

"Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

Frank stood up.

"This man says he has brought horses for you to see!" said Miss Meadows. "You know perfectly well, Richards, that you should not make such arrangements for lesson-time!"

"But I haven't, ma'am!" exclaimed Frank Richards, in bewilderment. "I haven't asked anybody to bring horses here for me to see!"

"Oh, come off!" exclaimed the horse-dealer. "Are you Mister Richards?"

"Yes; but—"

"Step out and look at the critters, then! There's three of them, and they're all first-class."

"But—"

"I guess, Mister Richards, I'm the man to come to for horse-flesh—Bocus Bill, that's me! And, being in Thompson this morning with horses to sell, I've moseyed along to show you the critters."

"But—"

"Sorry to interrupt lessons, marm, but I didn't know the young feller would be at lessons, of course. I came right hyer, as stated. Mister Richards, you step out and look at them."

"But I don't want to buy a horse!" exclaimed Frank.

"What! You don't want to buy a horse?"

"Certainly not!"

Bocus Bill stared blankly at Frank Richards, evidently surprised.

For some reason or other, which was a mystery to Frank, the horse-dealer had believed that he wanted to buy a horse, that was clear.

"Will you kindly leave the school-room at once?" said Miss Meadows.

Bocus Bill grunted.

"I guess I've humped it hyer from Thompson to sell that young feller a hoss!" he answered.

"You hear what he says—"

"I hear, marm, not being deaf!" answered the horse-dealer warmly. "But wot about the time it's took me to hustle here from Thompson? If the boy has changed his mind that's his business, not mine!"

"I haven't changed my mind!" shouted Frank.

"Then you want to buy a horse?"

"No, I don't! I've never intended to buy a horse!"

"You ain't never intended to buy a hoss?" roared Bocus Bill, in great wrath.

"No!"

The big man glared at him, and the whip under his arm slid down into his hand. He looked as if he meant to use it.

"Little joke of yours, I s'pose—hey?" he demanded.

"I don't know what you mean!"

"I calculate you know what I mean well enough, young feller-me-lad!" said Bocus Bill darkly. "Hyer, I've moseyed all the way from Thompson, and there's my hosses cavortin' outside ready to be looked at. Now you say you don't want to buy a horse! Well, that gets my goat, and no mistake!"

"There seems to be some mistake," said Miss Meadows quietly. "But you hear what Richards says—"

"I hear wot he says!" roared Bocus Bill. "And now let him hear what I says! Hyer's me, and there's my hosses, ready for a trade. Good critters, every one of them, and the price reasonable. If the young gent chooses to come and look at them and do business, well and good. If not—"

"Kindly—"

"If not," roared Bocus Bill, "saving your presence, marm, I'm going to lay this hyer whip round him as a warning not to waste a busy man's time with his little jokes."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank.

"Now then!" shouted the horse-dealer, striding towards the class. "Do you want to buy a horse, Mister Richards?"

"No!" howled Frank.

"Then here's for your hide!"

Frank Richards stared at the man blankly.

Beauclerc and Bob Lawless jumped up to stand by their chum. He needed it if the big horse-dealer got at him with his whip.

But Miss Meadows ran between.

Bocus Bill stopped.

He was a rough fellow, and was very angry, but he evidently did not wish to use rough measures with the school-mistress.

"Look hyer, marm—" he began angrily.

"Stand back!"

"I'm going to lay my whip round that young jay for bringing me hyer all the way from Thompson for nothing!" roared the horse-dealer.

"There is some mistake—"

"Nary mistake! I suppose the kid knew whether he wanted to buy a horse or not! And hyer's me, and there's my critters!"

Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd had drawn near, ready to interfere if Miss Meadows required protection.

But Bocus Bill plainly did not intend

to hurt the "school-marm." It was Frank Richards he wanted to get at, and that he could not do with the Canadian girl in the way.

"You will not be allowed to touch Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows indignantly. "Leave the school-room at once!"

Bocus Bill gave Frank a glare over Miss Meadows' shoulders.

"You young raskil!" he exclaimed. "I guess I'd have hid you if it wasn't for your school-marm! All right, missus, I'm goin'."

And with an angry snort Bocus Bill tramped out of the school-room.

He paused at the door to shake his whip menacingly at Frank Richards, and then disappeared.

The tramping of the horses was heard again in the playground.

Bocus Bill was departing from Cedar Creek with his string of unsold "critters."

The 2nd Chapter.

Rough on Richards!

There was a murmur in the school-room.

Every eye was fixed on Frank Richards, who stood with a red and bewildered face.

Why Bocus Bill should have supposed he wanted to buy a horse, and should have taken the trouble to bring a string of "critters" to Cedar Creek for him to choose from, was a matter of deep perplexity to Frank.

His first suspicion was that the man was the worse for drink; but that was clearly not the case. Bocus Bill was sober enough, and he was very earnest and very indignant.

Richards' voice was very quiet but very stern.

"Yes, ma'am?" stammered Frank.

"What does this mean?"

"I—I don't know."

"You did not ask the man to call here with his horses?"

"No. I've never seen the man before, that I remember."

"It is very singular," said Miss Meadows, eyeing him sharply. "I cannot understand how such a mistake could arise."

"I cannot either, ma'am," said Frank. "But I never wanted to buy a horse. My uncle gave me a pony when I came to Canada, and I don't want two."

"Very well; you may sit down, Richards."

Frank sat down, in great bewilderment. Miss Meadows accepted his word; but she looked a little suspicious, as was natural in the circumstances.

Silence was restored in the class, and the lesson was resumed, though Frank Richards received more attention than the school-mistress for some time.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

There was a sudden sound of hoofbeats in the playground about an hour after Bocus Bill's departure.

Frank Richards started, and Miss Meadows compressed her lips.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Here he comes back again, I guess!"

"Bother him!" muttered Frank.

The tramping hoofs stopped outside the School House door.

There was a breathless pause in the school-room.

Black Sally's surprised face appeared in the doorway.

"Well, what is it?" rapped out Miss Meadows, in whose cheeks there showed a spot of red, indicative of rising temper.

"Gentleman to see Mass' Richards—"

There was a buzz in the class.

"Is it the same man?" asked Miss Meadows.

"No, missy. This Mass' Barker of Cedar Camp," answered Black Sally.

"Here he comes!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

A tall, angular man, with a "lantern" jaw and a goatee beard, appeared behind the negress in the doorway.

He raised his hat to Miss Meadows.

"I calculate I've looked in at the wrong moment, ma'am," he said politely.

"You certainly have, Mr. Barker!" replied Miss Meadows tartly.

"There wasn't any hour specified, you see. Perhaps you'll let Richards step out a minute to look at the horses, seeing that I've brought them from Cedar Camp."

"Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows angrily. "This passes all patience!"

Frank wondered whether he was dreaming.

The visit of Bocus Bill from Thompson was inexplicable, and here was another man from Cedar Camp with horses to sell.

"Franky, you jay!" murmured Chunky Todgers. "You shouldn't play tricks like this in lesson-time! You'll get scalped!"

"I—I haven't!" stammered Frank.

"What's the galoot come for, then?"

"Goodness knows!"

Chunky Todgers closed one eye sceptically. It was clear that the fat youth believed that this invasion of horse-dealers was some stunt planned by Frank to interrupt lessons.

It was pretty clear, too, that Miss Meadows shared that opinion now.

Her eyes, usually kind, glittered now as they were fixed on the unfortunate schoolboy.

"Well, Richards," she said, "will you tell me now that you did not ask Mr. Barker to call?"

"I—I certainly did not!" gasped Frank.

"I haven't the remotest intention of buying a horse!"

At that statement the agreeable expression faded at once from the angular face of Mr. Barker of Cedar Camp.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"I don't want to buy a horse!" shouted Frank.

"Why, you haven't seen the critters yet!"

"I mean what I say! I—"

"I guess you can't tell whether you want the critter or not till you've seen it," said Mr. Barker, "unless you mean to imply that I ain't the galoot you can do business with."

"I don't mean that. I mean—"

"Your school-marm will let you step out and see the horses. If you've got anything agin' my horses, you'll only have to say so. I'm a reasonable man. But if you mean that my horses ain't any good, no how—"

"I—I don't!" gasped Frank. "I mean that I'm not thinking of buying any horse at all!"

"That won't do!" said Mr. Barker, with a disagreeable look. "I'm open to do a trade, and I've brought the critters here from Cedar Camp according. If they don't suit you, tell me what you want, and we may be able to do business."

"I don't want any horse at all!" yelled Frank, beginning to lose his temper. "What the hump have you brought them here for? I don't want to see them, and I won't!"

"You won't even step out and look at my horses?" roared Mr. Barker.

"No, I won't!"

"Well, I swear!"

"Mr. Barker—" began the worried school-mistress.

"Marm," interrupted Mr. Barker, "I guess I've been made a fool of. In your presence, marm, I won't treat that cheeky young rip as he deserves; but I leave it to you, marm, to see that he's punished for wasting a man's morning. I've brought four horses here for him to pick from, and now he tells me he never meant to buy a horse at all. Is that straight goods, marm?"

"Did Richards actually say that he wished to buy a horse?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Certainly he did!"

"I didn't!" roared Frank Richards.

"Mr. Barker's statement is explicit, Richards. I can only conclude that you have been playing a foolish and inconsiderate trick!" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"But I—I haven't! I—" stammered Frank.

"You may rest assured, Mr. Barker, that Richards will be punished for having wasted your time in this manner."

"Very well, marm, I leave it in your hands," said Mr. Barker. "Sorry to have interrupted, marm."

And Mr. Barker, with an angry and disdainful glare at Frank Richards, tramped out of the school-room.

He was jingling away with his horses in a few minutes.

Miss Meadows took a cane from her desk.

"Richards! Come here!"

Frank Richards went slowly out before the class.

His cheeks were burning.

It was impossible for Miss Meadows to doubt the plain statement made by Mr. Barker, and it followed that she could not credit Frank's denial.

Her eyes were fixed sternly on Frank's crimson, troubled face.

"Richards, it is clear to me that you have played a foolish trick," she said. "I presume that your object was to interrupt lessons here. You have wasted the time of two men who have come a considerable distance, in the belief that you wished to purchase their horses. I have no alternative, Richards, but to punish you severely."

"I—I haven't—"

"You do not deny Mr. Barker's statement?" exclaimed the school-mistress angrily.

"Yes, I do," answered Frank. "I never asked him, or anybody else, to sell me a horse."

"You can hardly expect me to believe, Richards, that Mr. Barker has brought his horses here from Cedar Camp and made a false statement for no reason whatever."

Frank Richards was silent.

There was simply nothing to say to that; and Frank almost wondered whether, in a moment of mental aberration, he might have asked the horse-dealers to bring their "critters" to Cedar Creek.

"Hold out your hand, Richards!"

"But—but, Miss Meadows—"

"That will do! Hold out your hand at once!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

It was but seldom that Miss Meadows administered severe punishment; but she felt that this was an occasion for it, and for once she did not spare the rod.

Frank Richards was squeezing his hands dismally as he went back to his place.

During the remainder of morning lessons he was chiefly occupied in rubbing his hands and wondering whether any more horse-dealers would arrive at the school with a string of "critters" to sell.

Fortunately there were none, and morning lessons finished without further interruption.

The 3rd Chapter.

A Little Hasty.

"Frank, you ass—"

"Franky, you jay!"

Vere Beauclerc and Bob Lawless spoke simultaneously as the Cedar Creek fellows came out of the lumber school after morning lessons.

"Of all the duffers!" said Chunky Todgers. "What did you expect, Richards, after playing a trick like that?"

"Peskierst silly stunt I ever heard of!" remarked Eben Hake.

"Vellee funnee!" murmured Yen Chin.

"Vellee funnee jokee, and vellee funnee Flanky getee stickee! Oh, yes!"

Frank looked round at his grinning schoolfellows.

He was not in a pleasant mood.

"You silly asses!" he said hotly. "I don't know what it means, any more than you do!"

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!" murmured Tom Lawrence.

"If you can't take my word—" began Frank angrily.

"Go easy!" murmured Bob Lawless soothingly. "If you say you don't know what it means—seriously—"

"Well, I do!" snapped Frank.

"Then why did Bocus Bill bring his horses here?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"And why did Mr. Barker come here from Cedar Camp?"

"I don't know, I tell you!"

"You never asked either of them about buying a horse?" inquired Vere Beauclerc.

"Never!"

"Mr. Barker said you did," remarked Dawson.

"He's making some idiotic mistake," answered Frank. "I don't blame Miss Meadows for believing him. He seemed to think he was telling the truth. But he wasn't, all the same. It's some sort of a trick—somebody must have been using my name without my knowledge."

"Phew!"

"Anyhow, I don't know anything about it!" growled Frank. "It's a trick—perhaps a stunt of some of the Hillcrest fellows. I don't know."

"Well, I suppose that's possible," said Bob thoughtfully. "But I don't see how Bird could play that game. He wouldn't tell lies, and I don't see how he could have used your name without doing that."

"More likely Kern Gunten than Dieky Bird," remarked Beauclerc. "He wouldn't mind a lie or two. And he's ratty about that spoof gold-mine bizney, too."

"Well, if you're telling the frozen truth, Richards, it's hard nuts on you," said Eben Hake. "I'm sorry for you if any more horse-dealers come along here with a string of critters. Miss Meadows will get mad as a hornet."

Frank Richards and his chums strolled

THE BEST OF THE BUNCH!

When you're feeling dull and "down,"
When the whole world seems to frown,
When you seek your cares to drown—
Read the "FRIEND"!

When misfortunes on you swoop,
When you feel you're "in the soup,"
Never let your spirits droop—
Read the "FRIEND"!

When you're floored by fickle Fate,
When she gives you overweight,
Never chant a "Hymn of Hate"—
Read the "FRIEND"!

When your camera goes on strike,
When you smash your only bike,
When you miss the stunts you like—
Read the "FRIEND"!

When you're absolutely sick
Of the deeds of Deadwood Dick,
Turn to Silver—he's a brick!
Read the "FRIEND"!

When you've muffed an open goal,
When you're voted "up the Pole,"
When you're fed-up, heart and soul—
Read the "FRIEND"!

"When you travel by the train
Stick to ANSWERS might and main."
Yes! But when you're home again—
Read the "FRIEND"!

Martin Clifford, Duncan Storm,
Shower adventures in a swarm!
Owen Conquest is in form!
Read the "FRIEND"!

Let your Easter holidays
Be sublime and jolly days:
Down with melancholy days!
Read the "FRIEND"!

Boys of Britain, keen and clever,
Rally round with strong endeavour!
Buy the best—and buy it ever!
Read the "FRIEND"!

in the playground discussing the remarkable happenings of the morning. They were interrupted by a yell from Chunky Todgers:

"Ha, ha! You're wanted, Richards!" Frank looked round. "Dicky Bird!" he exclaimed. "Now we'll see whether it's a Hillcrest stunt!" murmured Bob Lawless.

Dicky Bird, of Hillcrest School, was trotting in at the gates, mounted on his pony and leading a spare pony.

It was so remarkable for Dicky to pay a visit to Cedar Creek, leading a spare steed, that the Cedar Creek fellows jumped to the conclusion at once that he had a horse to sell, and there was a general shout for Frank Richards.

Dicky Bird nodded cheerily to Frank Richards & Co., seemingly surprised by the laughter round him.

"I reckoned I'd trot over, Richards," he remarked. "Anybody else got in first? I couldn't miss lessons, of course."

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Yes, there's been two before you, Dicky! But it's all right; Richards hasn't bought a horse yet!"

"Good!" said Dicky Bird. "My poppa has this pony to sell, Richards, and as you want one, I've trotted him over for you to see."

Frank Richards looked at him grimly. He had no doubt now that the whole affair was a Hillcrest stunt, of which he had been the victim.

"So you've come to sell me a horse?" he asked.

"Yep; if you want to buy one," answered Bird. "You can look at it, anyhow, and make an offer for me to tell poppa. It's a good pony."

"You're rather funny merchants at Hillcrest," remarked Frank. "I dare say this is a funny stunt, Bird; but you should have been funny from a distance. It would really have been better for you, old scout!"

"I don't quite see—"

"I'll make you see!" answered Frank. He made a rush at Dicky Bird, grasped him by the leg, and had him out of the saddle in a twinkling.

Dicky Bird roared as he came down: "Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "Roll him in the snow!"

"Collar him!"

"Yaroooh! Help! Wharrer marrer? Groogh!" spluttered Dicky Bird.

Half a dozen hands were laid on the Hillcrest fellow, and he was rushed along, struggling unavailingly.

Inside the school fence there was a thick bank of snow, left from the late fall, which had not yet melted.

Dicky Bird, struggling and spluttering, was pitched bodily into it.

He almost disappeared in the snow, amid yells of laughter from the Cedar Creek fellows.

As he struggled in the snow the laughing schoolboys heaped it on him, and Dicky Bird plunged blindly amid a whirl of flakes.

"Let up!" he howled. "Yaroooh! Oh, crumbs! What's the row? Let up! Let up! I'm smum-smum-smothered! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul! What is the matter here?" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey, the junior master, hurrying to the spot.

"Only a Hillcrest jay, sir!" said Bob Lawless cheerily. "He came here to be funny, so we're giving him some fun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrghhh!" came from Dicky Bird, as he sat up in the snow, gasping and spluttering. "Let up! What have I done, you silly idiots? Oh, dear!"

"Stop this at once!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

The grinning schoolboys were willing to stop; even Frank Richards thought that the Hillcrester had had enough.

Mr. Slimmey gave Bird a hand to help him out of the snow-bank, and the unfortunate youth wriggled out, spluttering.

"Now, Bird—" began Mr. Slimmey.

"I guess they're all gone mad!" gasped Dicky Bird. "I came here to sell Frank Richards a horse—"

"What?" shouted Mr. Slimmey.

"And—googh!—and they—yow-ow-ow—"

"You shouldn't be so funny, Dicky!" said Bob Lawless, chuckling.

"You silly jay!" roared Dicky Bird wrathfully. "What is there funny about selling a horse? If Richards don't want to buy a horse he can say so, I suppose?"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimmey.

"This is very odd! Did Richards say he wished to purchase a horse, Bird?"

"Of course he did!" gasped Dicky Bird.

"I guess I shouldn't trot the critter here for nothing, should I?"

"I never said anything of the kind!" shouted Frank Richards.

"You did!" yelled Dicky Bird.

"I didn't!"

"I tell you you did!"

Frank Richards stared at him.

It dawned upon him that this was not a "stunt," so far as the unfortunate Dicky Bird was concerned; he had come in all seriousness to sell Frank Richards a horse, as Bocus Bill and Mr. Barker had come.

The Cedar Creek fellows had been, in fact, a little hasty in dealing with poor Dicky.

Mr. Slimmey looked sternly at Frank.

"Richards!" he said. "You must explain this."

"I don't understand it at all, sir!" stammered Frank. "I certainly never told Bird I wanted to buy a horse, unless I was sleep-walking when I did it."

"Bird, Richards told you—"

"Not me personally, of course," said Dicky Bird. "I saw the notice he put up in Gunten's Store at Thompson."

"What?" howled Frank.

"Perhaps you were sleep-walking when you did that!" booted Dicky Bird, gougling snow out of his hair and his ears.

"I—I never did!" gasped Frank.

"If there's a notice up in the store, I never knew it—and I had nothing to do with it."

"Gammon!"

"It's true, you silly ass!" howled Frank. "I understand now. I suppose it's a joke of Gunten's—the cheeky rotter! What are you cackling at, Bob, you chump?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. And even the grave Mr. Slimmey grinned.

The 4th Chapter. Called to Account.

Frank Richards did not join in the general chortle.

He was exasperated.

All was clear now as to the mysterious visits of the horse-dealers.

It was not surprising that Bocus Bill and Mr. Barker had supposed that Frank Richards wanted to buy a horse, if there was such a notice up in the store at Thompson.

It was common enough for a notice to be put up in the store by any man who had something to sell or wanted to buy some article. If a citizen of Thompson wanted a fiddle, or wanted to sell a sleigh, he would notify the fact to his fellow-townsmen by means of a notice stuck up by the stove at Gunten's Store.

If Frank Richards had, indeed, wished to buy a horse, it was quite probable that he would have called at the store with such a notice, to be pinned up near the big stove and read by all Thompson.

Such a notice was undoubtedly there, though Frank Richards knew nothing of his name being appended to it.

"It's Gunten, of course!" he muttered to the chuckling Bob. "Dicky Bird took it for genuine, so it's not his stunt."

Bob Lawless nodded.

"I guess it's quite bright for Gunten," he said. "What a stunt! Why, if that paper stays there, Franky, you'll have all the horse-dealers in the valley calling on you one after another."

"And leading strings of horses for you to select from!" chuckled Vere Beauclere.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is evidently a foolish joke!" said Mr. Slimmey, smiling. "You had better call at the store as soon as possible, Richards, and have the notice taken down, as it is not genuine."

Bob. "But think how much worse it would have been if Bocus Bill had got at you with that big whip!"

"Br-r-r-r!" was Frank's reply.

But he recovered his good-humour during the ride, and was no longer in a slaughterous mood when the chums trotted into Main Street at Thompson.

Outside Gunten's Store a string of horses were tied to a post, and Bob uttered an exclamation as he saw them.

"Here's one of the dealers, by gum!" he exclaimed. "Franky, had you better go in? If it's Bocus Bill—"

"I'm going in," answered Frank.

"We ought to have brought a gun!" chuckled Bob.

The chums dismounted and tethered their horses, and walked into the store.

Kern Gunten was there, sitting on the counter, being home for dinner from Hillcrest School.

He was talking to a powerfully-built man, whom the chums recognised at once as Bocus Bill.

The horse-dealer had a big whip tucked under his arm, and the tone of his voice as he spoke showed that he was in a wrathful mood.

"Moseying around all morning!" he was saying. "Wasting time! Turning up his nose at my critters, by Jerusalem, without even looking at them! If it hadn't been for the schoolmarm, I'd have larp-raped him. You believe me!"

"Like his cheek, I guess!" said Gunten. "He doesn't seem to know his own mind."

"By gum, I'll larp him to know his own mind, when I come across him!" said Bocus Bill emphatically. "Moseying around with a string of hosses all the morning—"

Gunten started as he caught sight of the Cedar Creek chums coming in.

Bocus Bill followed his glance; and a thunderous expression came upon his bronzed face at the sight of Frank Richards.

He strode towards the three schoolboys, letting the big whip slide down into his hand.

"By thunder!" he exclaimed. "So here you are!"

put up that notice, you see, Mr. Bocus Bill."

"Oh, come off!" answered the horse-dealer. "Own up that you did it, for a fool joke, to waste people's time!"

"But I did not!"

"I guess it's your name, ain't it?"

"It's my name, but not my writing!"

"I guess I don't know nothing about that; but I know I'm going to take it out of your hide, or else sell you a horse!" declared Bocus Bill.

"You're going to do neither," answered Frank Richards quietly. "Keep that whip away, please. I've come here to see the fellow who put up that notice in my name—you, Kern Gunten!"

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.

"What a yarn!" he said.

"Do you deny it?" exclaimed Frank hotly.

The Swiss cast a rather uneasy glance at Bocus Bill.

He did not care about admitting the facts in the presence of that truculent gentleman; the big whip looked too dangerous.

"I guess I don't know anything about it," he answered.

"Did you see me put up the notice, then?" asked Frank disdainfully.

"I found it there, and supposed you had put it up," said Gunten. "I often had notices put up, without seeing it done."

"Look here, that chicken won't fight," said Bocus Bill. "You can't get out of a hiding so easy as that, young feller-melad! Moseying around all morning, by gum! You're going to get it, hot!"

And he strode at Frank, grasping the whip.

The next moment he stumbled over Bob Lawless' foot, and as he staggered he was grasped by two pairs of hands, and went down on the floor with a terrific crash.

"Yaroooh! Let up!" he roared.

"Sit on him!" gasped Bob.

Bocus Bill struggled furiously.

But he was downed, and Frank Richards ran to the aid of his chums. Burly as the horse-dealer was, the three sturdy schoolboys were too much for him, and he was pinned to the floor.

The 5th Chapter. Right at Last!

"Yow!"

"Easy does it," said Billy Cook soothingly. "Let's hear what's the row, Mr. Gunten."

"You—you—you—" spluttered the storekeeper.

"Yes, yes; that's all right," said the ranchman. "Never mind letting off steam now. What's the row, Bob Lawless?"

"Look at that notice by the stove," answered Bob. "This galoot wants to pitch into Franky, for fooling him about buying a horse."

"I'm going to skin him!" roared Bocus Bill.

The ranchman glanced at the paper.

"Waal, what did Frank put that up for, if he don't want to buy a horse?" he inquired.

"I didn't!" gasped Frank. "Somebody put it up in my name, to start silly idiots bringing me horses to sell!"

"Gammon!" bellowed Bocus Bill. "I'm goin'—"

"Tain't Frank's handwriting," commented Billy Cook, inspecting the paper closely. "You know anything about this, Mr. Gunten?"

Mr. Gunten snorted.

"Eh? Yes. My son put that there," he answered. "He was asked to do so by Richards, I suppose."

Kern Gunten's jaw dropped.

He made a retrograde movement towards the back room, but Billy Cook strode forward and caught him by the collar.

"Not so fast," remarked the big cattle-man. "We'll hear what you've got to say first about this hyer."

"Let me go!" panted Gunten.

"Put it up, did he?" howled Bocus Bill.

"Young Gunten put that paper up, did he, boss?"

"Yes!" snapped Mr. Gunten, quite unaware of the fact that he was giving away the falsehoods Gunten had uttered a few minutes before. "I suppose Richards asked him to."

"I never asked him," shouted Frank; "and he's just denied that he even saw it put up! He said he found it there, and supposed I'd put it up."

Mr. Gunten glanced at his son, puzzled, as the Swiss schoolboy wriggled in Billy Cook's strong grasp.

"What does this mean, Kern?" he asked.

"I—I—I—" stammered Gunten.

"What does it matter, anyway?" went on the storekeeper.

There was a roar from Bocus Bill. The chums of Cedar Creek released the horse-dealer now; his wrath was no longer directed against Frank Richards.

"Matter!" he roared. "It matters this hyer, Old Man Gunten—that I've been moseying around all morning with hosses to sell, wasting time, and nearly hiding young Richards for nothing! That's what it matters!"

"What nonsense! Why did you put up the paper, Kern, if Richards did not ask you?" exclaimed the storekeeper angrily.

"It—it was only a joke on Richards!" gasped Gunten, realising that further falsehoods were useless. "Only a joke—"

"You young fool!" snapped the storekeeper. "What do you play such jokes for? However, there is no harm done."

Short from Bocus Bill!

"No harm done! Hyer's a man moseying around all the morning with a string of critters to sell, wasting time, and nearly hiding the wrong galoot for playing him tricks! No harm done! I reckon there's going to be some harm done, boss, and I'm going to do it!"

And he grabbed up his whip and started towards Kern Gunten.

Billy Cook released the Swiss school-boy.

"Vamoose!" he said briefly. Gunten did not need telling to "vamoose."

He jumped away as Billy Cook released him, and dashed for the parlour door; but the horse-dealer headed him off, and his whip curled round Gunten's legs.

Lash, lash, lash!

"Yaroooh!"

There was a fearful howl from the Swiss.

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Gunten.

"I guess not!" answered Bocus Bill, and he lashed away, Gunten dodging wildly round the store to escape.

Lash, lash!

Kern Gunten hopped, and dodged, and yelled, and leaped, and ran. He seemed to be performing weird gymnastics in his frantic efforts to escape the lashes of the long whip.

The thrashing had come home to the right party at last; and it was being well laid on.

"I guess you won't fool a galoot again in a hurry!" grunted Bocus Bill. "Take that! I guess you'll think twice next time! Take that!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"And that—and that!" Kern Gunten made a wild break for the doorway. The yelling crowd opened for him to pass, and he sped into the street. Bocus Bill dashed on his track, the long whip still lashing; and Gunten's wild yells and the horse-dealer's heavy footsteps died away up Main Street. Bob Lawless wiped his eyes.

THE END.

(Another splendid complete tale of the School in the Backwoods next week, entitled "Wanted—A Poet!" by Martin Clifford. Don't miss the Special Easter issue of the BOYS' FRIEND, out on Saturday, April 19th. Usual price.)



ROUGH ON DICKY BIRD! Frank Richards made a rush at Dicky Bird, grasped him by the leg, and had him out of the saddle in a twinkling. Dicky Bird roared as he came down: "Yooop!"

"I will, sir," said Frank.

Mr. Slimmey walked away, still smiling. Dicky Bird was grinning now, in spite of the snow.

"I suppose it's a joke on you, Richards," he said. "But you can't blame a galoot for thinking you wanted a horse, when it's there in black and white. I guess you might have let me explain before you bundled me into the snow, though."

"You can reckon that we take that back," said Bob, laughing.

Dicky Bird grinned.

"Give a chap time to speak, next time," he said. "I've brought that blessed pony over here for nothing, anyhow. Sure you don't want to buy a pony, Richards?"

"Quite, thanks!" said Frank. "What I specially want just now is to see Kern Gunten."

He hurried away to the corral for his horse.

His chums led out their steeds at the same time, for a ride to Thompson.

It was necessary to get the notice taken down as quickly as possible, if Frank was not to receive visitors that afternoon, with strings of horses for sale. Dicky Bird was still cleaning off snow when the three chums rode out at the school gates.

"Don't quite slaughter Gunten, Franky," said Bob Lawless, as they rode swiftly along the trail to Thompson.

"It's rather a good joke, in a way."

"It's got me a licking from Miss Meadows!" growled Frank.

"Never mind; Slimmey will tell her, and she will know that you didn't deserve it."

"That doesn't make my hands feel any better, fathead!"

"Nope; I suppose it doesn't," admitted

Gunten grinned. He had looked alarmed for a moment, and had made a step towards the parlour door; but now he stayed. It looked as if Frank Richards had walked into trouble, and Gunten was prepared to enjoy it.

"You young varmint!" roared Bocus Bill, shaking his whip at Frank. "You don't want to buy a horse—eh?"

"No!" said Frank.

"You want a lambasting—eh?"

"Thanks, no!"

"Look at that!" roared the angry horse-dealer, pointing with his whip at a paper pinned up near the stove. "You put that up, and then you say you don't want to buy a horse, arter a man moseying around all morning!"

Frank Richards looked at the paper. It ran, in large, scrawling letters:

WANTED TO BUY!

A GOOD HORSE.

Price no object, for a good animal.

Call on Frank Richards, Cedar Creek School, any time.

That was the announcement that had brought Bocus Bill to Cedar Creek, and after him Mr. Barker and Dicky Bird.

The paper was not in Frank Richards' handwriting; but that, of course, made no difference, as his "list" was not known in Thompson.

"You see that there!" booted Bocus Bill.

"I see it," answered Frank.

"What does it mean, if you don't want to buy a horse?" demanded the dealer, taking a firm grasp on his big whip.

"That's what I've come here to find out," answered Frank Richards. "I never

Gunten looked on, breathless. The affair was taking a turn he did not like.

"Let up!" bellowed Bocus Bill. "My eye! Oh, gum! I'll hide you all round! Let up, I keep on telling yer!"

"You're safer there, old scout!" answered Bob Lawless. "Don't wriggle so much, or I shall sit on your head!"

"By thunder, I'll—I'll—"

"Pin him!"

"Yoop! By thunder! I guess I'll scalp you!" roared Bocus Bill.

A crowd was gathering in the doorway of the store, much entertained by the scene within.

From the back room, Old Man Gunten came striding into the store, his fat face red with wrath.

"What does this mean?" he shouted.

"How dare you kick up a shindy in my store? You young rascals! Stop this at once!"

"Can't be did, Mr. Gunten," answered Bob Lawless. "The galoot's on the war-path, and we've got to hold him!"

"Let up!" yelled Bocus Bill. "Yaroooh! Gerroff my head! I'll limb yer!"

"Stop this shindy at once!" shouted the storekeeper angrily. "Kern, fetch me my stick to lay round these young rascals!"

"Yep!"

Gunten rushed into the back room, and returned with a big stick, which he lashed to his father. A burly ranchman detached himself from the grinning crowd in the doorway and strolled into the store. It was Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch.

"Go easy, boss!" said the ranchman, pushing the fat storekeeper back.

"Let me pass—"

"Go easy, I tell you!" answered Billy Cook. And he gave Old Man Gunten another shove, perhaps harder than he intended, and the fat Swiss sat down with a heavy bump and a howl.

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 is organised to the Peak of Teneriffe, where sundry adventures befell the party. Skeleton brings them down the snow-covered slopes of the Peak at terrific speed on a toboggan, which turns a flying somersault at the bottom. The whole party is flung out into the deep snow, from which they painfully extricate themselves—except Lal Tata. The cheery Hindu has completely disappeared!

(Read on from here.)

The Last of the Bandits.

There was no doubt about it. Mr. Lal Tata had disappeared into that vast moraine of soggy, half-melted snow as though he had fallen through into the bowels of the earth.

In vain the boys shouted. They received no answer, save from echoes of the Peak.

The Kroo boys came running up. "Bress ma soul!" said Maintop, laughing, as niggers always will laugh, at a smash or a street accident or a dog-fight. "We did t'ink dat you young gen'l'mens go to glory dat time!"

"One of us has gone!" replied Pongo ruefully. "We can't find Mr. Lal Tata anywhere. He went up all right with the sledge, and we saw him flying through the air, like a black angel without any planes. But he hit the ice-cream; he just vanished, like a puff of smoke."

"Specs he am tumble down one ob dese holes!" said Maintop, pointing to the numerous potholes in the snow-bank, that twisted down through the snow like so many huge rabbit-runs.

"Look!" replied Maintop suddenly.

"Mister Goat him smell Mr. Lal Tata!" And, sure enough, old Horace was beginning to cast backwards and forwards like a fox-terrier after a rat, snuffing and switching his tail to and fro as he edged from pothole to pothole that bored down into the blue ice which underlay the snow.

At last Horace stopped at a pothole which drove down like a deep mine-shaft into the heart of the hill.

He lifted his head and bleated. "Maw!" bleated Horace, as much as to say, "I've found him!"

And Horace was beginning to paw, about to descend into the hole, when Maintop seized him and roped one of their climbing-ropes about his chest, making it fast with many cunning sailor-knots.

"No, mistah goat!" said he. "You do not go down into dat hole until we tie string to you to pull you out again, or you get los', like Moses in de bulrushes!"

There was no doubt that Horace had scented the missing Lal. Away he went, crawling down the deeply-sloping tunnel into the snow and ice, keeping his feet in a most astonishing manner, and giving a bleat at intervals, as though he were calling to Lal.

The boys standing round the hole paid the rope out. It was a fine climbing-rope of good pliable manila, with a core of steel wire, good enough to hold a couple of tons.

Bit by bit it disappeared in the hole. Down below Horace was working like a ferret in a rabbit-run, for out of the shaft by which he had descended branched all sorts of byways, caused by the erratic melting of the snow.

It was a regular labyrinth of passages, but Horace never took the wrong turning.

Up above, the boys paid out the rope, till a hundred feet had gone down the shaft. Then Maintop spiced on a hundred feet more. This, too, started to pay out into the hole, till it seemed to the boys watching that it would never stop.

"Crikey!" groaned Porkis. "Poor old Lal has sure slid through to Australia!" But presently the rope stopped.



A HAMMER-BLOW! The man who had burst out of the flames ran like a Malay running amok. He was mad with terror and rage. Arty ducked, and there was a crack as a left-hander, with the force of a pile-driver behind it, caught the brigand on the jaw.

They put their ears to the mouth of the tunnel, and, floating up, faint as the sound of a distant phonograph, they heard Horace's distant bleat, accompanied by a shout from Lal.

Then the rope slackened and jerked three times, a sure sign that Lal was now at the other end of it.

The boys gave a cheer, and started to haul the rope home. Bit by bit they pulled it up, not tightening it too much, and foot by foot the rope came home, till at last there were only fifty feet of it in the tunnel.

"Are you there, sir?" shouted Chip.

And Lal's voice rose out of the tunnel. "Keep little pull on the rope, boys!" said he. "This splendid goat has found me lost in tombs of ice. He is some St. Bernard goat! We ascend. Excelsior!"

"Maw!" echoed Horace.

The boys cheered again and hauled on the rope.

Presently Horace's head came into sight. Lal was hanging round his neck like a half-drowned sailor. And there he clung till both were hauled out into the open, and Horace, getting fed-up with Lal's embrace, shook him off and gave him a friendly butt, as much as to say, "There you are, my lad, you are safe now!"

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked the boys in chorus.

Lal, who seemed bewildered by his adventure, rubbed his head, and then examined the seat of his baggy trousers, which was torn to ribands.

"No, boys!" said he. "I don't think I have sustained mortal injuries. But I have severely worn out pants sliding down those vast tunnels. I fell into this hole, and before I could utter 'Jack Robinsons' I had descended with immense speed into interior of ice caverns. When I recovered senses I attempted to find my way out. But that place below is like underground Tubes at Piccadilly Circus, and most bewildering. I was lost like 'Infants in the Forest.' What you call him—'Kids in the Timber'?"

"Babies in the Wood,' you mean, sir!" said Chip.

"Oh, ah, yes! I was lost like 'Babies in Woods,' and I was beginning to bewail my great loss, and never expecting to see sunshine again, when this magnificent goat-fellow came crawling through icc-passage, and attracted my attention by eating my turban. Then I clung to his necks, an' together we ascended to upper worlds once more."

"You said that Horace ought to be spifflicated half an hour ago, sir!" said Pongo, rather reproachfully.

"I take it back!" said Lal promptly. "Horace is some splendid fellow. He shall have medal of Royal Humane Societies. The sped arrow and the spoken word can never be recalled, says the wise Sultan Saadi. But when we get off this terrible mountain I shall give great treats to Horace. I will buy him huge bananas and all the latest six-bob novels to eat!"

Horace seemed to understand that Lal had made friends with him at last, for as they made their way across the great sea of pumice and lava that lay at the foot of the cone of the Peak, Horace trotted behind Lal like Mary's little lamb.

They found the mules and donkeys waiting for them, browsing patiently on the tips of the broom, and it was not long before the party which had descended the Peak on foot came hurrying across the pumice, full of anxiety to learn the result of that terrific toboggan slide.

"All safe?" shouted Captain Handyman, as soon as they were within ear-shot.

"All safe, sir!" yelled Pongo. The captain came hurrying up.

"Pon my word," said he, "fools go sliding where angels fear to tread. I thought that it was kingdom come for your crew when you got side-tracked on to that slope! You could do that a

dozen times and break your necks every time. But all's well that ends well. Get to your donkeys, lads; we must get a bit farther down the mountain before the sun sets!"

But before the expedition could start Mr. Lal Tata had to be fixed up with a kilt, which was constructed very simply by cutting the bottom out of a gunny sack and tying it round his waist.

It was a glorious afternoon as the mules and donkeys carefully picked their way down the mountain, and they reached a camping-ground for the night, which looked far more promising than that which they had pitched the previous night on the very threshold of the Terror of Teneriffe.

They had no thought of the Terror to-night, for he was safely in gaol at Orotava.

They were still, however, close up by the snowline, and amongst the stones and broom, of which they cut a large stack for their fires.

It was not till after supper, when they were sitting round their camp-fires, looking at the stars, that Skeleton made the grand discovery that they could get a grand display of bonfires or fireworks by lighting up the clumps of resinous broom on this lonely hillside.

In this dry and rarefied atmosphere the bushes were like tinder. He touched one small bush off with a match, and it went fine, flaring like a firework, and going up in a puff of flame.

Lal watched this proceeding with interest. He was sitting cross-legged by the fire smoking his hubble-bubble pipe, but he scrambled to his feet.

"Ha, boys!" he exclaimed. "These are splendid conflagrations. See me! I will light up this great bush, and you will see some bonfires!"

He snatched an ember of the burning brushwood from the camp-fire and approached a huge clump of broom a couple of hundred yards from the tent.

Little did Lal dream that hidden in the heart of that great clump of broom lay the two escaped members of the band of Juan Cabrera, the Terror of Teneriffe!

These two desperadoes, who had depended for their sustenance on the Terror, knew very well that they would be starved out if they were left on the mountain alone.

They had watched the little party from afar as it had descended the mountain. Now, hidden in the depths of the dense thicket, they were biding their time, hungry for robbery and revenge.

The smell of the cooking from the camp had drifted down to them on the fresh wind that was blowing to-night, and they lay there and cursed these English who had driven them out of their snug stronghold.

Each ruffian had his knife in his sash and his bell-mouthed blunderbuss by his side.

Not that they intended to use their blunderbusses. When the camp was sound asleep they intended to rush it. A slash through a tent-wall, a stab or two in the dark, and a stampeding of the provision-mules was their programme. If they could get hold of any money, so much the better.

There was nothing to give them away as they lay in that great thicket of broom. At that elevation the only birds were a few tiny canaries—not of the yellow sort that we know in England, but little green birds as tame as a robin.

Nor did Mr. Lal Tata dream as he marched towards the clump of broom that Horace, who had slid out of camp like a shadow, had picked up the trail of the two malefactors, and silently, like a sleuthhound, was worming his way through the thick growth.

Lal was followed by the boys.

"Now, you behold me, boys! I will make you some jolly flare-ups!" said Lal.

"I am the show-how mans!"

But Lal's torch of broom flickered and went out before he could reach the border of the clump and show how it was done.

He blew and blew till his black face

turned plum colour and his eyes started from his head, but the sulky broom would not burst into flame.

"My torch is wash-out, boys!" said he. "And matches—they will not burn in this wind!"

"That's all right, sir," said Dick Dorrington. "I have got the real thing here. Here you are, Arty! Stand up and open your coat and make a wind-screen."

And Dick produced from his pocket a ship's portfire or flare, fitting a fusee in the touch-paper.

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" said Pongo approvingly. "When the people down town see this flare they will think that the old volcano has started in business again!"

Dick's match scratched on the box as Arty, opening his jacket, protected him from the wind.

The match sputtered and caught, and the fusee began to flutter and fizz. Then the touch-paper caught, and soon the brilliant white magnesium flare lit the mountain-side with its blinding light.

"Now you see your old bush go!" cried Dick; and he hurled the dazzling flare high in the air.

The boys, with blinking eyes, saw it describe a great arc, falling into the centre of the great clump of broom, where it caught and glowed, dropping red fire from its brilliant white star.

The Kroo boys clapped their hands, yelling with delight, and started to dance round the great clump of bushes as a small flame showed around the white star. Then from the middle of the clump of bushes there rose a crashing and a thumping, punctuated by wild yells.

At the same moment the huge clump of bushes caught with a rush and a roar of red flame, which shot up thirty feet in the air in one blinding, roaring sheet which coiled and twisted and licked in the strong night wind, sending up clouds of sparks for two hundred feet.

"Crikey!" exclaimed Porkis, as the yells increased and Horace's angry bleating could be heard in the midst of the clump. "There are men in there, and Horace is at it again!"

"We've done it this time!" groaned Dick, taking off his muffer and winking it about his mouth. "I wonder what you get for roasting a Spaniard alive? And poor old Horace, too!"

"It was some silly, foolsome thing to do!" said Mr. Lal Tata, who had apparently quite forgotten that it was he, who had suggested making "great conflagrations."

The Kroo boys were yelling madly now as they danced round the clump.

"Mistah Dick! Mistah Dick!" yelled Maintop. "Dere am mens in de burnin' bush! Dey will be roast like pork-chop!"

"I know they will!" replied Dick irritably. "I'd go in and get 'em out if we could find 'em. But there's a hundred yards of the stuff alight!"

He had run round to the lee of the fire. There was little smoke rolling from the fierce furnace, but the air above him was alive with millions of flying fragments, which covered him with a rain of sparks and white ash.

Arty Dove had followed him round.

Behind them Lal was dancing like a Calcutta Highlander in his kilt of sacking, wringing his hands and slapping himself all over as the sparks showered on him.

"Oh, crikeys!" he groaned. "We have done it! We have put lids on! We shall be brought up for manslauhters. We shall be put into quods for many years! And I do not wish to stay on these rotten islands!"

Arty had pulled off his coat and had muffed his mouth. It seemed to him that the yells and crashes in the burning bushes were growing nearer.

But there was no need for him or Dick to rush into the fire.

"Look out!" yelled Dick.

Arty saw in front of him a huge, gaunt figure leaping through the flames with blackened face and glaring eyes.

The figure burst through the brush and made straight at him.

"Cave, Arty! He's got a knife!"

screamed Dick. The man who had burst out of the flames ran like a Malay running amok. He was mad with terror and rage.

Up went his knife as he raced at Arty. Lal clasped his hands and cut a double-shuffle in an agony of apprehension.

"Ho, jiminy!" he gasped. "This bad man has intents to inflict grievous bodily hurts! Sock him, Artee!"

Arty ducked as the maddened bandit's knife swung high.

There was a crack and a smash as Arty's left-hander, with the force of a pile-driver behind it, caught the ruffian on the jaw.

A man with a knife was never the equal of a boy who knows how to use his fists.

The singed and smouldering follower of the Terror of Teneriffe just turned head over heels in the air, and fell with a crash to the ground, whilst his knife fell tinkling amongst the rocks.

A moment later and there was another burst in the flames. The second malefactor, singed out of his lurking-place, burst through the bushes in a shower of sparks.

He, too, had a knife in his hand and murder in his eye. But he never got a chance, for on his heels came flying Horace, black and horrible against the flames, his coat singed and smouldering, and his eyes gleaming like emeralds.

Biff!

Horace caught the bandit fair astern. He shot up into the air as though he were doing a high jump, and the knife flew from his hand, narrowly missing Lal.

Biff!

Horace caught him again as he descended, and sent him flying up against the stars, shedding sparks like a burst squib.

And when he came down there was no more run in him.

He rushed forward to Dick's feet, and, throwing himself on the ground, embraced the boy about the ankles, begging in profuse Spanish to be delivered from this wild beast.

"Get away, Horace!" shouted Dick; and Horace backed off, lowering his head, pawing the ground, and smelling like a burned blanket.

The boys threw themselves upon him and slapped out the sparks that were burning in his coat. Then the two bandits were hoisted to their feet, dazed and stunned.

"Why," exclaimed Dick, when he recognised them, "it's the rest of the Terror's gang! Make them fast, boys, and run them in!"

Neither of the bandits was much burned. Their clothes and beards were singed, but they were more frightened than hurt. They made no resistance as the boys bound them and led them into camp, and they ate like starving men when the Kroo boys served them with a good supper.

They had not dared to go near their cave since the previous night for fear that it was watched by the police, so they were simply starving.

They were apparently quite astonished when the boys did not set to work to torture them. And when Captain Handyman gave them a handful of Canary Island cigars they were quite overwhelmed.

As well as looking after their prisoners, the boys looked after Horace, whose coat and beard were singed till he smelled like a burned bolster. They started by rubbing him over with tinned butter. Then Skeleton contributed from his stock a bottle of hair-restorer.

But they would not allow Horace to share their tent with them to-night. They had had quite enough of Horace and his nightmares. So he was tied up amongst the mules and the donkeys, where he slept tranquilly, snoring now and then as he dreamed that he was being roasted alive in a furnace of red flames.

Everybody was dead-beat, and the boys slept like the dead that night as they lay huddled up in their tent.

But they were up again with the dawn, fresh as larks, and directly after breakfast they mounted their donkeys and mules, surrounded their two prisoners, and trekked down, down, down, till they found themselves once more amongst the hot valleys and the orange-orchards of the lower levels.

They rode into Orotava at noon, and handed over the two captured bandits to the astonished gaoler of the prison.

Women screamed and caught up their children and ran into their houses. Fat Spaniards dropped their cigarettes and stared and then cheered as the boys rode along the dusty streets of the little town escorting the two dreaded ruffians, whose feet were tied under their saddle-girths so that they should not escape.

And when they had delivered their captives at the gaol they received quite an ovation.

Horace was made much of by the inhabitants, who wreathed his horns with flowers and hung garlands of stephanotis round his neck, which he promptly ate up. For the story of Horace's share in capturing the last of the bandits of the Peak had lost nothing in the telling.

And when the wagonettes were brought out for the return journey across the island the grateful inhabitants surrounded them, bearing huge baskets of fresh and dried figs, raisins, oranges, bananas, and lemons and limes, till the delighted Skeleton looked as though he were sitting in the middle of a fruiterer's shop.

Then off they went, Skeleton and Cecil tucking into the luscious blue figs and the oranges and dates as though they were both entered for a competition.

It was dusk when they arrived at Santa Cruz, and the lights of the ships in the roadstead were twinkling when they rowed aboard the South Star.

And no sooner were they aboard than the anchor was weighed, the engines started their rhythmic beat, and they were off, shaping a course southwards for the Cape de Verde Islands, eight hundred and twenty miles away.

THE BOYS WHO CAUGHT THE KAISER



By DUNCAN STORM.

(Continued from the previous page.)

A Song from the Baron!

The boys watched the lights of Santa Cruz die away astern.

The supper-bell was ringing and they were now safe away from the land. So their first thought was to look up Baron Otto von Slyden, the Kaiser's pet, who, all the time they had been careering over the Island of Teneriffe, had been locked in his prison cabin, industriously writing at the tremendous impot which Lal had set him.

"Hallo, Von Slyden!" called Dick. "You can come out of quod now! We have left port, and are going to have supper!"

"I don't want no soppers!" mumbled the sulky German. "I don't want to eat my soppers with you English pig-dogs!"

"Oh, Fritz, you mustn't say those things!" laughed Dick. "And you mustn't sulk over your food, either. We don't starve our prisoners, you know, Von Slyden!"

Baron von Slyden looked down in desperation at the Eton suit he was wearing, and out of which he was bursting at every button.

"Take me out of dese fool clothes!" he growled. "I do not want to look like one of those English schoolboys!"

"What's the matter with your Etons?" asked Pongo. "They are all right. Lots of better chaps than you have worn Etons!"

"But I am a man! I am not a boy!" growled the desperate spy of the Kaiser, pointing to the huge white collar, over which his fat neck bulged like a huge sausage.

"But you aren't a man. You're a Hun, and the captain has put you into our school to be educated. So come along and have your supper, and don't put on any of your German frills!" answered Pongo.

Von Slyden scowled. But he was hungry, and a German can't stand being hungry. And he was sick of being penned up in that little cabin right up in the eyes of the ship and next to the paint-shop, which distilled all sorts of odours of turpentine and oils.

"I come!" said he gruffly. "I will eat soppers!"

"Trust you for that!" replied Pongo, as they escorted their prisoner along the dark deck.

The South Star was steaming without lights now, every port and every escape of light were carefully shuttered, for Captain Handyman had his suspicions that the Kaiser and his crew of miscreants were still hanging round on the line of the trade routes which close in on the Canary Islands from the south, the north, and the west.

And Von Slyden, too, seemed to have a notion that his master might be in the neighbourhood, for his eyes turned on the dark sea, which rolled calm and oily under the shadow of huge masses of cloud that

ful look at the glass of salt water, which stood ready in the fiddles of the saloon table for anyone who did not feel up to contributing to the programme.

But, greatly to the surprise of everyone, Von Slyden marched over to the piano and seated himself at the keys.

As soon as his great, powerful hands touched these the boys realised that there was one thing that the Kaiser's spy could do. He could play the piano.

The chords crashed out under the powerful, skilled touch. Baron von Slyden had played and sung many a time to the late Kaiser on his Royal yacht, the Hohenzollern.

He had played and sung his way into the Royal favour, and, by his playing and singing, had kept his end up against the Ballins and the Von Eulenbergs and the rest of the crowd of fawning courtiers who were leading the Kaiser to his downfall.

The boys listened in silence as he crashed out Lissauer's terrible "Hymn of Hate," to the strains of which Germany had flung herself at the throat of England.

They listened to every verse intently. They could not understand all the German words, but they heard at the end of each verse the curse of hate called down on England.

"It was a magnificent performance, and when the last chords crashed and died away Von Slyden twisted round on the music-stool and eyed them, snarling like a dog.

"Ach!" he exclaimed. "Dot vos der stuff to sing you English pig boys! We Germans, we hate! We hate you still! We shall always hate! And one day we will have our revenge!"

Arty had risen from his seat.

"Thank you very much, baron!" said he politely. "Your 'Hymn of Hate' is a very fine song, and it is a pity you wasted it on us. You should have sung it to yourself instead. You have sung it so nicely that we want to hear you sing 'Rule, Britannia!' You know how it goes," added Arty, closing a fist the size of a small leg of mutton—"Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves. Britons never, never, never will be slaves!"

Baron von Slyden snarled. He knew the song well enough. He had sung it amidst great applause on the Kaiser's yacht the last time before the war that the British Fleet had visited Kiel Harbour. The Kaiser had been there in his uniform of a British admiral, and had applauded as loudly as anyone, whilst all the time he had been plotting for the sinking of the British Fleet and its mercantile marine.

"I will not sing 'Rule, Britannia!'" he snarled.

"If you don't, you will drink that glass of water, and you'll take a punch on the nose as well!" replied Arty politely.

"We've listened to your song slanging England, and you sang it so nicely that we want to hear you sing a song that praises England."

The German glared at Arty as though he would murder him.

But Arty took the glass of water from the table, and brought his great fist up close to the baron's nose.

For a moment it was a conflict of wills. But the baron had felt the weight of Arty's fist more than once already, and had no inclination for another taste of that redoubtable weapon.

He suddenly swung himself round on the music-stool and banged out the opening of "Rule, Britannia!"

Nah Poo had called the crew to see

this wonderful sight. The watch on deck came crowding to the door of the saloon. The watch below, catching the buzz of what was going on, turned out of their bunks in the fo'c's'le-head and came running aft to hear the show.

And the chorus nearly lifted the saloon skylight. Even Nah Poo yelled it in his squeaky Chinese tenor:

"Blitons nebbber, nebbber, nebbber will be slave! Hip, hip, hooray!"

Everybody cheered Von Slyden when he had finished and had risen from the piano.

But his fat German face was white as a sheet with impotent rage, and the hate that was in his eyes as they ranged round the circle of laughing faces was far more intense than anything that had ever been written into the famous "Hymn of Hate."

"Now I go to bed!" he growled.

Nobody stopped him.

They all felt that they had played up their uncouth German schoolfellow enough for that night.

The concert proceeded for another half-hour. Then the boys went out on deck.

It was an ominous sort of night, as black as pitch. The decks were absolutely dark, for not a light was allowed to show there.

All that they could see was a faint gleam of phosphorescence as the bow-wave of the South Star turned over in the oily sea.

The air was close and hot, and everything pointed to a sharp thunderstorm during the night.

"Phew!" exclaimed Porkis, who always felt the heat. "It's as black as the inside of a cupboard and as hot as the inside of a gas-oven. I was thinking of getting up a pillow-fight to-night. But I don't think we will. It is too pie-hot!"

Dick nodded as he gazed out into the darkness.

"I vote we turn in," said he. "There's nothing doing on the deck. With the deck-lights out we shall break our necks if we try any games! Look up, you chaps, you can't even see the foremast or the funnel!"

It was as Dick said. Everything was blotted out by the intense darkness. It was a typical night in this part of the sea when the wind blows from the east, bringing with it the fine dust of the African desert, which hangs in the air like a London fog for five or six hundred miles seaward from the coast of Africa.

The boys went to the bath-rooms, and allowed the sprays of the needle-baths to swish over their skins before they put on their pyjamas for the night.

But the sea-water was sticky and warm as milk, and brought them no refreshment.

Chip dried himself down.

"Wow!" he said. "I'll be all over prickly-heat to-morrow! I wonder whether Von Slyden had a tub before he turned in? I don't believe those big German swells are too fond of washing. He has hardly had a bath since we captured him!"

"Perhaps he hasn't turned in at all!" said Dick. "Somehow, I don't like the notion of Von Slyden being loose on the ship at all! We are a bit too trustful with these flatheads!"

"What can he do?" asked Chip.

"Goodness knows!" replied Dick. "He might try to wreck the engines, or tamper with the steering-gear or the compasses! I sha'n't forget the look in the brute's

eyes to-night when we made him sing 'Rule, Britannia!' He looked fairly dangerous!"

"If I'd had my way I'd have made him sing 'Tipperary' and 'God Save the King' into the bargain!" said Chip. "But whilst you are drying yourself off, Dick, I'll take a peep into his cabin, and make certain that he has hit the hay!"

He slipped off along the alleyways to the spot where Von Slyden's cabin was situated, and in a few seconds he was back.

"He's been in his cabin," said he, "and he has laid down outside his bed. But he's gone out again. I expect he's knocking about somewhere on deck in the dark."

"Then I think we'll go and have a look round the deck to find out what he is up to!" replied Dick, slipping on his pyjama jacket.

Barefoot, both the boys slipped silently up the companion to the deck.

They skirmished silently along the promenade-deck, and ran softly up the steps to the boat-deck.

They searched this from end to end. But there were no signs of the missing German.

"I wonder if the beggar has dropped overboard!" whispered Chip, as they dodged amongst the raffle of planks and spare spars and tanks that filled up the boat-deck.

"Not him!" replied Dick, with contempt. "He hasn't got the pluck! Hallo!"

With the exclamation he grabbed Chip's arm.

They were close to the stern-end of the boat-deck now.

On the polished paint-work on the other side of the after well-deck Dick's sharp eye had caught just the tiniest reflection of a glimmer of light.

He leaned over the end of the boat-deck and looked down into the darkness of the deserted well-deck.

Dick's eyes in the dark were good, and he could distinguish a crouching figure, wrapped in a cloak, right in the corner of the well-deck.

Then there was just the tiniest glimmer of a flashing light in the darkness below them.

Dick realised in a flash that it was Von Slyden. In the corner where he was crouching, a fairlead, or small hole for a hawser, was punched through the steel wall of the bulwark.

Crouching against this, with a small electric-torch hidden under his cloak, the Kaiser's spy was flashing call-signals through the fairlead.

He could only be using a small electric-torch, but on such a pitch-black night, at that elevation above the sea, its flash must be visible for several miles.

Without a word Dick turned. Close by the spot where the boys were standing, looking down, was a ship's bucket of black grease and soft-soap, used for oiling the blocks of the boat-falls.

Dick snatched it up and waited for the next glimmer of light under that treacherous cloak.

Then, swash! Down went the bucket, landing with a soft plop on the head of their treacherous passenger!

(Another magnificent long instalment of this amazing adventure serial in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. Don't miss the Special Easter Holiday issue, out on Saturday, April 19th. Usual price.)

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 Beecheroff 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 Dick, Bob Travers, and Jack Jackson. This leads to trouble at first, but Bob Travers smooths things over, and by bedtime Jack is beginning to feel a good deal happier. (Read on from here.) The Dormitory Feed. "Time you kids were in bed!" It was Harcourt, the captain of Redclyffe, who spoke.



A FEED ON THEIR OWN! The dandies of the Fourth placed pillows on the floor, and piled into the good things. They did not err on the side of hospitality. None of the other juniors had been invited!

He had entered the Fourth-Form dormitory to see lights out, and had found very few of the juniors in bed. But the grim look on his face caused the Fourth-Formers to hasten their movements. "Sha'n't be a minute!" sang out Dicky Turner cheerily. "We—I say, Harcourt, you might leave that light alone." "I can't stay here while you kids fool about," said Harcourt. "You've had plenty of time to get into bed. You'll

have to finish undressing without a light." "I say, Harcourt—" "But the genial captain had no desire to hear what Dicky Turner had to say. He turned out the light and left the dormitory. "My hat!" exclaimed Dicky Turner. "Harcourt's not so obliging as he used to be." "Nowhere near," agreed Bob Travers.

"I say, put on the light, somebody!" came in Drake's languid voice. "How the mewy dickens can I see to finish undressing in the dark?" "Better get into bed as you are, unless you care to sleep on the floor," said Dicky unsympathetically. "By gad!" drawled Drake loftily. "I don't know who it is, speaking, but I'd twouble him not to speak to me in that disrespectful mannaah." "Go hon!" said Dicky, dropping his

boots to the floor with a bang. "I didn't know you were so particular, Adolphus." "My name isn't Adolphus. It—" "Well, Claudius, then! It's just as silly." "You cheeky boundah!" exclaimed Drake indignantly. "I've a jolly good mind to punch your nose for—" "Oh, go to sleep!" growled Dicky, jumping into bed. "I'm going to—" "Go and eat coke!" "Look here, you— Ow! Yow! Ya-roooooogh!" A felt slipper, aimed through the darkness by Dicky Turner, caught the dandy on the side of the head. He was standing on one foot at the moment, consequently his balance was upset, and he fell to the floor. The result of Dicky Turner's chance-shot was apparent to the rest of the Fourth-Formers, and they broke into a laugh. Drake rose to his feet, breathing wrath and fury. "By gad!" he exclaimed. "Who threw that slippah at me?" "Get into bed, Drake, you fathead!" said Drury. "You don't want to bring a master or prefect here." "I'm going to punch that fellah's nose! I—" "Be quiet, you silly chump!" said Drury. "You'll upset everything if you kick up a row! Don't forget what we arranged—" "By gad!" said Drake. "All right, deah boy! I'd almost forgotten. But I'll tackle that insulting boundah in the morning." "Oh, rats!" growled Dicky Turner; and he fell back on his pillow. For several moments there was complete silence in the dormitory. Bob Travers' bed was next to Dicky's, and at length he reached across and gripped his chum's arm. "Don't go to sleep, Dicky!" he said. "Eh? What—" "There's a hamper knocking around somewhere!" said Bob. "Hamper?" gasped Dicky. "I didn't know—" "We saw it being brought up to the dormitory," explained Bob. "Now then, you fellows, where's that hamper?" "Hamper!" exclaimed several other juniors. "Who's got a hamper?" "Somebody has," said Bob Travers. "Unless he's going to make a hog of himself, he'd better trot it out, so that we can all join in the feed."

With the exception of four fellows, the juniors were all sitting up in bed, eagerly anticipating a splendid feed.

"Have you got the hamper, Appleby?" sang out Dicky Turner.

"No," replied Appleby. "I thought you—"

"Well, I haven't got it," said Dicky Turner, stepping out of bed. "All the same, I'm not going to be left out of the feed."

Dicky lighted a candle and placed it on a washstand.

Then he turned round, to find no fewer than sixteen juniors gazing at him incredulously.

Four juniors—Drake & Co.—were lying down; apparently they were not interested in the matter of the hamper.

But all the same, there was no sign of the hamper being brought to light.

"Look here, Bob," said Dicky Turner, "you must have made a mistake!"

"I tell you I saw a hamper being brought up here!" said Bob Travers.

"Jackson saw it, too!"

"Oh, rather!" said Jackson.

"Well, where the dickens—"

Dicky broke off.

He was staring with wide-open eyes in the direction of Drake's bed.

"What's the matter?"

"My hat!" exclaimed Dicky Turner, starting forward. "Here's the giddy hamper!"

He raised the coverlet of Drake's bed, and was just about to grab the hamper, which was hidden underneath, when the dandy sat up.

"Leave that hampah alone!" exclaimed Drake.

"Yes; that's nothing to do with you!" chimed in Drury, sitting up quickly.

Dicky Turner started back.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he exclaimed.

"Isn't it going to be a dormitory feed?"

"It certainly isn't!" said Drury decidedly.

"What have you brought the hamper up here for?" demanded Dicky.

"For a feed."

"Well, that's all right!" said Dicky.

"We'll help you lay the things out, and—"

"You won't!"

"But—"

"I brought that hampah to enthrall my special friends," said Drake. "If you'll be good enough to buzz off—"

"Look here, you conceited puppy!" said Dicky belligerently. "Do you mean to say you're not going to ask the rest of the fellows to join in the feed?"

"Why should I?"

"Because it's the general custom."

Drake sniffed disdainfully.

"Then I reckon we shall have to depart from the usual custom," he said, "for I'm hanged if I'm goin' to ask a lot of inky-fags to my feed! What do you say, Dwuwuy, deah boy?"

"I'm with you there, old boy!" said Drury. "I strongly disapprove of having a crowd to the feast."

"Look here, you bounders—" began Dicky wrathfully.

"Come into bed, Dicky!" sang out Bob Travers.

"I'm hanged if I will!" said Dicky.

"It's always been a regular thing for a dormitory feed to be shared by the Form. Why should these chaps—"

"Oh, let them get on with it!" said Bob.

"I'm going to sleep."

"So am I," said Jackson, dropping his head on to the pillow of his bed. "I'm not going to take part in a feed uninvited."

"Hear, hear!" chorused several other juniors.

Dicky gave the dandies a savage look.

"All right, you bounders!" he said, shaking his fist at Drake & Co. "You'll be made to toe the line for this. We don't stand that sort of nonsense here!"

"What uttah wot!" sneered Drake.

"Well, you wait and see!" said Dicky Turner.

And with that the angry Dicky made tracks for his bed, and dived between the sheets.

Five minutes later there came whisperings from the beds occupied by the dandies, together with the sound of movements.

Most of the other juniors had fallen asleep, and were quite unaware of Drake & Co.'s actions.

The dandies placed pillows on the floor of the dormitory.

Then Drake brought the hamper to light, and handed out the good things.

There was a large plum-cake, cream-buns, jam-tarts, meringues, sausage-rolls by the dozen, and a host of other articles.

Had the whole Form been invited there would certainly have been enough food to go round.

But the dandies had not erred on the side of hospitality, and, in consequence, they had more than sufficient food to supply their wants.

"By gad, these are topping meringues!" remarked Spooner.

"The plum-cake is ripping, old boy!" said Slade. "I guess I'll have a bit more."

"Do, deah boy," said Drake. "Have as much as you want. Here are the chewoots when you're ready for a smoke."

"Cheroots!" said Slade, with a glance towards the beds of the sleeping juniors.

"Oh, nevah mind about those fellahs," said Drake carelessly. "They can't hurt us."

"Don't forget there are only four of us," said Slade. "If they were to pile on us—"

"Don't be such a silly ass!" said Drake. "I expect the boundahs are asleep. Be sporty, deah boy, and light up!"

Slade evidently decided to be "sporty," for he took a cheroot and lighted it.

The others very soon followed suit, and it was not long before the air was full of smoke.

"Splendid smokes, these—what?" remarked Spooner.

"Yaas, I thought you'd like them," said Drake airily. "I like a smoke now and again, you know, and—"

The dandy broke off abruptly as there came the sound of a movement from one of the beds.

Next moment Dicky Turner's voice rang out:

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "There's a fire somewhere! Wake up, you fellows!"

Several fellows sat up in bed and sniffed the air.

A moment later there was a regular chorus of sniffs.

The light was still burning on the washstand, and as Bob Travers turned his gaze in that direction he uttered an exclamation.

"Great Scott!" he cried. "It isn't a fire!"

"What!"

"Those bounders are smoking!" said Bob wrathfully. "Look at 'em!"

"By Jove!"

"Come on, you fellows!" sang out Bob Travers, jumping out of bed. "We're not going to stand this sort of thing! Collar the cads!"

Next moment the indignant Fourth-Formers stepped out of their beds and rushed in a body towards the feasters.

Even Jack Turner turned out.

Drake & Co. were taken completely by surprise.

"Don't you dare to touch— Ow! Yow! Gwoooooogh!" spluttered Drake, as he was grasped by Bob Travers.

"Ow! Leggo! Yarooooogh!" mumbled Drury, falling flat on the floor under the weight of two determined Fourth-Formers.

Spooner and Slade also uttered frantic shrieks as they were collared and sat upon by angry juniors.

The dandies were in a hopeless position; struggle as they would they could not break free.

They were all reclining on their backs, with two or more fellows sitting on their chests.

"You cads!" exclaimed Bob Travers. "Now I know why you didn't ask us to the feed."

"Ow! We didn't want you! Yow-ow-ow-ow!" spluttered Drake.

"No; you knew we'd object to making cads of ourselves," said Bob Travers fiercely. "Apparently you've no objection to acting like rotters."

"That's no business of yours!" snapped Drake.

"You're mistaken, old nut," said Bob Travers. "It is our business. We're not going to allow you to disgrace yourselves; neither are we going to let you disgrace the Form. What do you think the fellows in the other Forms will say if they—"

"Don't talk uttah wot!" said Drake, with a sniff.

"It isn't rot," said Bob Travers. "I'm afraid you don't regard this as a serious matter."

"I wedge it as awful cheek on your part to interfere like this."

"You aren't sorry for behaving like cads?"

"Certainly not. I—"

"You'll do the same thing again if you get the chance?"

"Oh, wathah!"

"Let's bump the rotters!" sang out Dicky Turner.

"Hold on!" said Bob Travers, a grim expression coming over his face. "Bumping isn't bad enough for these rotters. Get some soot from the chimney, Dicky. You can leave Drury to Appleby and Hawkins."

"Right-ho!" said Dicky, jumping to his feet.

"Mix the soot with water," said Bob Travers. "You can mix a little soap with it if you like, and some of the jam from these tarts. Lift your head up,

Drake; you're squashing all the tarts to bits."

"Ow! Leave my head alone, you boundah!"

"On second thoughts, I think I will," said Bob, with a chuckle. "It's just a little too jammy for my liking."

"By gad, I'll make you suffer for this!" groaned Drake. "I'll give you a thund'rin' good hidin'. I'll—"

"Tut, tut!" said Bob Travers reprovingly. "The dear boy is in rather a bad temper. I'm afraid we shall have to cool his head a bit. Buck up with that mixture, Dicky!"

"Coming!" sang out Dicky, and he stepped forward with a bowl of liquid, the sight of which caused Drake's eyes to dilate.

"If you dare to pour that muck ovah me—" began the dandy.

"Well, are you sorry for behaving like a cad?" asked Bob Travers, whilst Dicky Turner stood over the dandy with the bowl of mixture held in a threatening position.

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Drake defiantly.

"You won't say you're sorry, then?"

"No."

"Dicky, old son, you might cool this young man's head," said Bob Travers, with a wink at his chum. "It's far too hot, and—"

"Certainly," said Dicky obligingly.

"You wottahs! Don't you— Ow! Yow-ow-ow-ow! Yooooooop!"

A stream of black liquid dropped into Drake's mouth, causing him to splutter frantically.

"Now the others," said Bob Travers.

"You cads!" roared Drury, as the bowl of sooty mixture was held over his upturned face. "I'll smash you for this! I'll—"

"Say you're sorry!"

"I won't!" said Drury. "I— Yarooooogh! Ow-w-w-w!"

The Fourth-Formers roared with laughter at the discomfiture of Drake and Drury. But they roared still more when Spooner and Slade were also treated in a like manner.

"Let them get up," said Bob Travers at length.

The Fourth-Formers rose from the chests of the dandies, leaving the latter in sprawling positions on the floor. The faces of Drake & Co. were black and uncomely, and their appearance brought loud chortles from the Fourth-Formers.

"Let this be a lesson to you, you cads!" said Bob Travers remonstratively.

"You'll get it in the neck every time you behave like shady bounders. If you wish to avoid trouble with the masters, you'll clear up this muck before you get into bed! It might be advisable to scrub your dirty faces, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled the Fourth-Formers.

And the dismal dandies clambered to their feet and strode slowly towards the washstands.

For some little time afterwards the air was filled with groans and moans from the unfortunate nuts.

But the rest of the Form did not mind. They were quite satisfied with the manner in which they had punished Drake & Co., and spoiled the feed to which they had not been invited.

An Unfortunate Mistake.

"You backed us up jolly well last night!" said Dicky Turner, clapping his brother on the shoulder.

The twins, together with Bob Travers and Jackson, were standing at the foot of the School House steps, waiting for the bell to ring for morning lessons.

Jack Turner grinned cheerfully.

He appeared to be in quite a happy mood that morning; the sulky, rebellious expression that had been so prominent on

his face the previous afternoon was conspicuous by its absence.

"I was glad to have a go at those cads for the way they handled me!" he said. "They're a lot of bounders—"

"No doubt about that," agreed Dicky. "But you see what we do with chaps who smoke and play cards—"

Dicky paused as he saw the colour rise to his brother's cheeks.

He saw at once that his remark had been a tactless one.

"If you mean that as a hint to me!" said Jack hotly.

"I—I— Oh, no, of course not!" faltered Dicky. "Nothing of the kind. But I say, Jack, old son, you're coming down to footer practice this afternoon, aren't you?"

"Well, I had thought of doing so," said Jack, staring hard at his brother.

"But if you're going to hint that I smoke, and—"

"Fathead!" snapped Dicky. "I didn't—"

"I promised the pater I'd chuck all that sort of thing," broke in Jack, "and I intend to keep my promise! I've not smoked since I've been here—"

"Good!"

"And I've not played cards."

"That's splendid!" said Dicky, quite amazed at the change in his brother.

There was no doubt that Jack Turner had benefited from the chat he had had with Bob Travers and Jackson the previous evening.

Jack was a weak-willed, easily-led type of fellow, and Bob Travers' tactful manner had made a deep impression on the new boy.

In fact, Jack had taken quite a liking to Bob Travers, and would have preferred his company to anybody's at that moment.

He was not yet feeling amiable towards his brother; he had not forgotten the strong manner in which Dicky had spoken to him when he had returned from his adventure in the dandies' study.

"Well, I'm glad you're satisfied for once in a way!" he said, somewhat sarcastically.

"Now look here, you silly duffer—" began Dicky, but he broke off abruptly.

Jack Turner had drawn his handkerchief from his trousers pocket, and at the same moment a cigar fell to the ground.

Jack started; he had completely forgotten having placed the cigar in his pocket.

Dicky glared savagely, first at the cigar on the ground and then at his brother.

"You—you—" he blurted out.

"Now, don't lose your temper!" said Jack, with a pleasant grin. "I can soon—"

"Oh, you cad!" exclaimed Dicky wrathfully. "You've just told me you've chucked smoking, and—"

"So I have, but—"

"You untruthful bounder!" roared Dicky. "You've been telling me a lot of lies!"

"I tell you—" began Jack hotly. The grin had vanished from his face now, and he was looking deadly serious. "Look here," he added quickly, as Dicky advanced towards him. "If you dare to touch me— Ow!"

Dicky gripped his brother by the shoulder and shook him fiercely.

"I've a jolly good mind to give you a thrashing!" he said, between his teeth.

"I—I—I—"

"You're as big a bounder as ever you were!" roared Dicky, glaring at his brother. "You've not given up smoking, you—"

"I tell you I have!"

"What was that cigar doing in your pocket?" demanded Dicky. "Answer me that! Oh, hang!" Dicky pushed his brother away from him. "You can't answer, except by telling a lot of lies!"

When did you intend to smoke that beastly thing?"

There was a sullen, rebellious expression on Jack's face, and it looked as though he were preparing to throw himself on his brother.

"I wasn't going to smoke it," he said. "I'd quite forgotten it was in my pocket."

"More lies!" said Dicky, with a sneer. Jack started forward.

"Look here," he said, with emphasis. "don't you think I'm capable of telling the truth?"

"It doesn't seem as though—"

"Would you believe me if I told you I picked this cigar up from the Fourth Form passage last night?"

"Eh?"

"I found this cigar on the floor when I left the study to go up to the dormitory," said Jack. "I put it in my pocket, with the intention of burning it to-day."

Dicky sniffed disdainfully.

"A jolly good yarn!" he said.

"You don't believe me?"

"I should be a fool if I did!" said Dicky. "I know you a jolly sight better than that. You're a cad, and—"

"Draw it mild, Dicky!" said Bob Travers, who was not at all pleased to see the brothers on bad terms again.

"So he is a cad!" declared Dicky. "He—"

"Hallo, here comes Chambers!"

Dicky had suddenly caught sight of the Fourth Form-master in the doorway.

He bent down and picked up the cigar which had dropped from Jack's pocket.

Dicky firmly believed that his brother intended to smoke the cigar. All the same, he did not wish Mr. Chambers to have his suspicions aroused.

He grabbed the cigar in the hope of being able to hide it before Mr. Chambers approached.

But he was just a fraction of a second too late.

The Fourth Form-master's beady eyes fixed themselves on him.

"Turner!" rapped out Mr. Chambers. Dicky looked round whilst in the action of slipping the cigar into his pocket.

"V-y-y-es, sir!" he faltered.

"What have you in your pocket?" rapped out Mr. Chambers.

"In—in my pocket, sir?"

"Yes, you have just placed something in your pocket," said the Fourth Form-master, coming quickly down the School House steps. "I demand to know what it is!"

Dicky Turner did not move. He gazed somewhat sheepishly at the angry master.

"Turner!" Mr. Chambers' voice rose to a roar. "Obey me this instant! Turn out your pocket!"

Very slowly Dicky withdrew his handkerchief from his pocket, and held it out before him.

Mr. Chambers made a gesture.

"I was not referring to that—er— article!" he said. "You picked something up from the ground, and I order you to produce it!"

"S-s-something from the ground!" stammered Dicky awkwardly.

"Yes," said the Form-master. "It looked to me very much like a cigar."

Mr. Chambers paused, and stepped quickly forward.

He had caught sight of one end of a cigar protruding from Dicky's pocket.

Then, to the amazement of the juniors, he made a clutch at Dicky's pocket, and when he withdrew his hand, he was holding the tell-tale cigar.

"Disgraceful!" he muttered, glancing first at the cigar and then at Dicky. "I presume you intended to smoke this!"

"I did not."

"Does it belong to you?"

"No, sir!" Dicky's voice rang loud and clear.

"Then to whom does this cigar belong?" exclaimed Mr. Chambers, glaring at the other juniors.

Neither of the three replied.

Bob Travers and Jackson remained quiet; they did not wish to give Jack away, and certainly they did not want to act the part of informers.

Jack could have cleared Dicky from all suspicion had he chose, but apparently he did not choose, for he remained silent.

Mr. Chambers questioned each of the juniors in turn as to the ownership of the cigar, and as neither of them claimed it, he turned to Dicky.

"As you were so eager to hide this article," he said, "I conclude that it belongs to you!"

Clang!

The bell for morning lessons rang out at that moment.

"You will come to my study directly after morning lessons," said Mr. Chambers sternly. "I intend to punish you most severely for your disgraceful behaviour!"

With that the Form-master turned on his heel and strode into the House.

Without speaking, the juniors followed, in very disconsolate moods.

Dicky glanced savagely at his brother on more than one occasion. He felt that Jack was entirely to blame for the trouble he was in, and during morning lessons he managed to whisper to him that it was "all your fault."

Jack merely elevated his nose and got on with his work. Apparently he had very little sympathy for his brother.

When lessons were over, Dicky followed Mr. Chambers to his study, and Bob Travers and Jackson wended their way to Study No. 5.

Jack Turner went downstairs and strode about the Hall.

He waited until Drake & Co. came sauntering downstairs. Then he went up to the Fourth Form passage and entered Study No. 1, which was shared by the dandies.

It was not exactly an honourable thing to search a study belonging to other fellows, but Jack did not think about that.

(Continued on page 3, col. 5.)

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