

**Jimmy Silver & Co.**  
Declare War  
On **Carthew!**

**Skull Island!**  
On the Track of the  
South Seas Treasure.



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

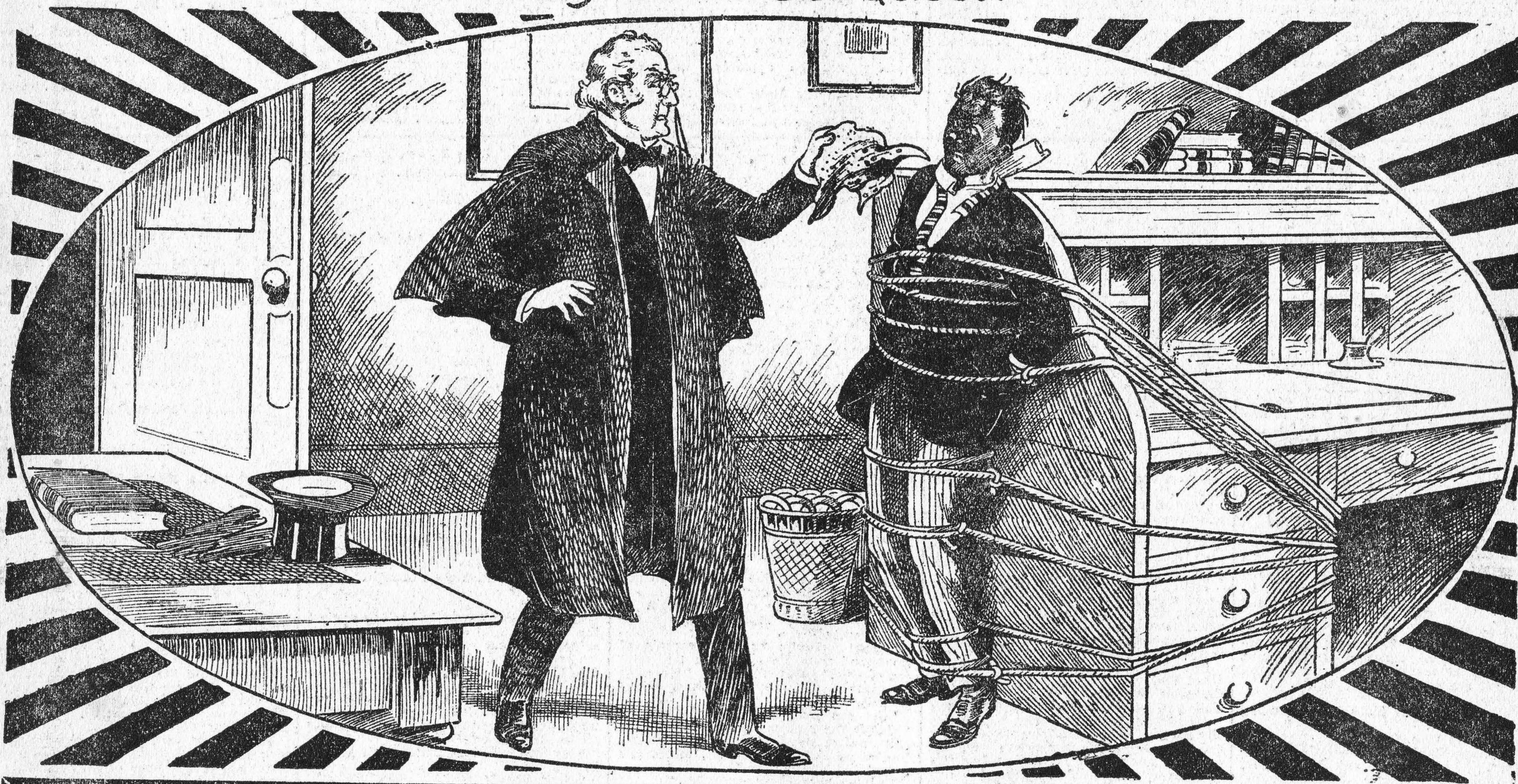
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending June 7th, 1919.

## School Versus Captain!

By Owen Conquest.



### IS IT CARTHEW?

Dr. Chisholm's gaze fastened in a fascinated way on the blackened face of the figure tied to his desk. Then, with a brow of thunder, the Head strode towards the unhappy Sixth-Former and dragged away the duster from his mouth. "Who are you?" he exclaimed, in great wrath. "Is it—**is it Carthew?** What does this mean?"

#### The 1st Chapter. The New Captain.

"RATS!!!"  
That expressive word, in large capital letters, emphasised by three big notes of exclamation, stared Carthew of the Sixth in the face.  
It was daubed in white paint on the dark oak of his study door.  
As Mark Carthew came up the Sixth Form passage, with his nose in the air and rather a strut in his walk, that inscription on his study door dawned upon him.  
Carthew of the Sixth had been feeling very pleased with himself. Nobody else at Rookwood was pleased with him; but that did not matter to Carthew. He had reached the goal of his ambition at last—he was head prefect and captain of Rookwood School.  
True, Rookwood did not want him. He had been imposed upon the school as captain by the autocratic will of the Head, in defiance of the rights of election and all the traditions of Rookwood. Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth Form had announced that they still regarded "old Bulkeley" as captain of the school, and didn't intend to take any notice of Carthew. But the new captain did not heed the attitude of the Fourth, even if he was aware of it.

The whole of the Sixth gave the new captain the "marble eye," but even that did not mar Carthew's satisfaction. He hoped that they would come round in time; but even if they didn't he was still captain of Rookwood!  
So his look was lofty and his face wore a smile as he lounged along the corridor, feeling a truly great man in his own eyes. And then that daubed inscription on his study door struck him.  
Carthew stopped and stared at it. Evidently it was a message from rebellious spirits in the Lower School, who wanted Carthew to understand what they thought of his captaincy.  
The head prefect looked round with a glittering eye.  
But there was no junior in sight of the captain, and only two seniors—Bulkeley, late captain, and Neville, his chum. Carthew then called to them:  
"You fellows seen this?"  
Neville looked round, and then, without answering, turned his back on Carthew. But George Bulkeley called back:  
"What is it, Carthew?"  
"This foolery on my door!" shouted Carthew.  
Bulkeley came a step or two along the passage and looked at the inscription. Then he smiled.  
"I hadn't noticed it before," he said. "You don't know who did it?"

"Naturally, I don't."  
"Perhaps you wouldn't tell me if you did!" growled Carthew.  
"Probably not," assented Bulkeley, unmoved. "As I am not a prefect now it is not my business to keep an eye on the juniors. I suppose it is the work of some junior."  
"I'll skin him!"  
Bulkeley turned away. Carthew eyed him angrily. Although he was captain now, and Bulkeley had fallen from his high estate, he still felt his old awe of the former captain of Rookwood. But that feeling only led Carthew to assert himself all the more.  
"Look here, Bulkeley!" he rapped out. "Well?"  
"I want the fag found who daubed that on my door!"  
"You had better find him, then."  
"I leave that to you," said Carthew. "I believe you know that I am head prefect now." You will take your directions from me."  
"Nothing of the kind, Carthew!"  
"Look here—"  
"I do not think you will find anyone to take your orders," said Bulkeley. "Even the fags will refuse to do so, I think. The fact is, Carthew, you have put yourself into a false position. You know very well that the Head has no right to appoint a captain of the school, and the

fellows will not acknowledge a captain appointed without an election. I, for one, certainly shall not."  
And with that Bulkeley rejoined Neville, and the chums of the Sixth walked away, without another glance at Carthew.  
The latter scowled blackly after them. His first attempt at the exercise of authority had not been much of a success.  
He scowled again at the daub on his door. The paint was still damp. Carthew shouted for a fag.  
"Fag!"  
His voice echoed along the corridor, but only the echo answered him.  
Certainly some of the juniors must have heard him, but if so they did not take the trouble to reply or to come.  
"Fag!" roared Carthew.  
Still no reply.  
Carthew strode away furiously towards the big staircase. On the staircase four juniors were chatting—Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, of the Classical Fourth. Carthew looked up at them.  
"Fag!" he shouted.  
The Fistical four went on chatting, as if afflicted with sudden deafness.  
"Silver!" yelled Carthew.  
Then Jimmy glanced down.  
"Hallo, old top!" he said.  
It was the first time on record that a

captain of Rookwood had been addressed as "old top" by a junior in the Fourth Form. But it was also the first time that a fellow like Carthew had been captain of the school.  
"You look rather excited, little one!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell, with a grin.  
Carthew gasped.  
"I want a fag!" he howled. "Come down at once, Silver!"  
"Eh?"  
"Come to my study at once!"  
"What?"  
"Will you come at once?"  
"Which?"  
Carthew's face was a study in itself as Jimmy replied with that series of interrogations.  
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell.  
"You—you—you—" gasped Carthew. "Do you know you're talking to a prefect, Silver?"  
"The prefects are on strike, aren't they?" smiled Jimmy Silver. "If you're not backing up the rest, Carthew, you're a blackleg! Blacklegs don't count."  
"You—you—" stuttered Carthew.  
"Run away and play!" suggested Raby. That was too much for Carthew. He charged up the stairs at the Fistical Four.  
He expected them to break into flight, (Continued on next page.)











CLEARED!

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

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter. Good News for Gunten.

Richards! Frank Richards did not answer. It was a sunny spring afternoon, and lessons were proceeding in Cedar Creek School. Frank Richards was absent from his usual place in Miss Meadows' class. He had come away from the gates of the backwoods school with a white face and an almost tottering step. He was dismissed for the afternoon—dismissed in disgrace, with worse disgrace to follow. He saw nothing as he moved blindly out upon the grassy trail. Richards! His name was called again, but still he did not heed. Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy of Hillcrest School, was lounging against a tree near the gates, with a cigarette between his thick lips. His eyes fell upon Frank Richards at once, as the English schoolboy came out, with a glitter in them. He threw the cigarette into the bracken and stepped out into the trail towards Frank. It was not till he called a third time that Frank Richards heeded him. Then he stopped, a look of angry dislike coming over his face at the sight of Gunten. His old enemy was the last person Frank Richards wished to see at that moment. But Gunten's manner was quite genial—in fact, friendly. Anything the matter? he asked. Yes! muttered Frank. You're looking rather bad. And you're out of school, said Gunten, with a curious look. Lawless and Beauclerc at lessons? Yes. And you're out? So are you, it seems! snapped Frank. You ought to be at Hillcrest! Gunten smiled. Ive got a holiday, he said. Mr. Peckover goes rather easy with me, you know. I happened to be strolling this way, and I sighted you coming out. Has anything happened at Cedar Creek this afternoon? Yes. You've been fighting; your face looks a bit damaged, remarked Gunten. Frank nodded. You're not sent home for fighting? exclaimed Gunten. No. But you're sent home? Yes. Frank Richards' answers were in monosyllables. Going home on foot? smiled Gunten. You've forgotten your horse. Frank started. I—I— Yes; I forgot! he muttered. Don't bother me, Gunten! I don't want to talk to you! You look awfully upset, said Kern Gunten. Tell me what's happened. I don't care to tell you. I don't see that you need to be unfriendly, said Gunten. Im not thinking of the rows we've had, and you neednt, Richards. If you're in trouble at school I guess Im sorry! Frank Richards looked at him dully. He was thinking of the late scene in the Cedar Creek school-room; of Miss Meadows' stern brow, and the scornful murmur of the class; of his own chums' averted looks. Even Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc seemed to have lost their faith in him. At that moment of terrible loneliness, almost of despair, there was something of comfort in the unexpected friendliness of the Swiss, much as he disliked the cad of Hillcrest. I used to be at Cedar Creek with you, continued Gunten. We had plenty of rows; but that dont matter. You've pitched into me for playing cards with Yen Chin, the Chinese. Never mind that. I guess Im not a galoot to bear malice. Im real sorry if you're in trouble! If you mean that, it's very good of you, said Frank. My own pals have turned on me now. So bad as that? Yes! groaned Frank. Perhaps I could help you out, suggested Gunten. Sit down on this log; you look worn out. Spin me the yarn, anyhow, and perhaps I can help you through. Frank Richards sat down on the log silently. He was still feeling stunned by the scene he had been through, and cut to the heart by the averted looks of his chums. Nobody at Cedar Creek believed in him; he was condemned by the school. It would be strange enough if his old enemy, Kern Gunten, was the one to bring him comfort at that moment of utter misery. He felt a glow of something like gratitude towards the Swiss, which was very new to him. Ill tell you, he said. You cant help me. Nobody can help me. I—I

dont even know how it's happened. I—I— He broke off. Go ahead, old scout! Whom have you been fighting with? Tom Lawrence. I reckoned he was a friend of yours! said Gunten, with a very curious look at Frank's stricken face. You've always seemed chummy with him and his sister Molly. Frank Richards winced. Its about Molly! he gasped. You havent quarrelled with her? No, no! But—but, Frank stammered, she's had a letter—an insulting letter—and its in my handwriting! I cant understand it. I didnt know what was the matter at first. She wouldnt speak to me. Then her brother rowed with me, and we fought. I couldnt make out what was the reason. Then it all came out before Miss Meadows, and the letter was produced. In your fist? Yes. Then you wrote it? No! gasped Frank. It was a rotten letter—insulting. It—it was signed with my initials, and written in my hand. I never wrote it! It—it said that she was always bothering me, and wouldnt give me any peace, and that I was fed up, and all that—horrid stuff that no decent chap would write to a girl, even if she was bold and forward. And, of course, Molly isnt. Some awful cad wrote the letter, and put my initials to it. And in your fist? grinned Gunten. Yes. But if it was in your fist you must have written it! That's what they all think! groaned Frank. It fairly knocked me over. I suppose it was a forgery. Miss Meadows has sent me home for the day. I—I cant go home. How can I explain to my uncle and Mrs. Lawless? I—I cant go! But—but I dont think Miss Meadows will let me go to the school again. I—I dont know what will happen now. Frank Richards let his face fall into his hands.

Gunten rose from the log. The sneering grin was still on his hard face, and Frank Richards started as he saw it. It dawned upon him that Gunten's sympathy had been a pretence to lead him on to tell his story. Dont they believe you? grinned Gunten. I should say not! I guess your yarn wants some believing, Frank Richards. Frank started as if he had been stung. You—you—he began. You dont believe? Not a word! answered Gunten contemptuously. Not a syllable! I guess Im not jay enough to believe you! You cad! exclaimed Frank savagely, starting to his feet. Leave me alone, then! I was a fool to speak to you, knowing what you are! A fool, right enough, if you thought I should swallow such a yarn! sneered Gunten. You wrote the letter right enough, and you've got what you deserve! And if you're kicked out of Cedar Creek, serve you right! Crash! Frank Richards' face was crimson with anger, and he struck out at the Swiss with clenched fist, straight from the shoulder. Gunten gave a yell as he rolled in the grass. Now keep your distance! muttered Frank savagely. He turned away, with a moody brow. Kern Gunten scrambled to his feet. He did not follow Frank. He was dabbing his nose as he plunged into the timber and disappeared.

The 2nd Chapter. Loyal Chums!

Bob! Bob Lawless started. Lessons were over at Cedar Creek, and Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc were riding away together on the timber trail—Bob leading Frank's horse, which he had found still in the corral at the school. In the shadowy timber his name was called, and he looked round, to see Frank

after what you've done, Frank Richards? You're my cousin, but Im ashamed of you! You're not fit for a white man to speak to! Frank! muttered Beauclerc sadly. You think I did it, then? said Frank. All Cedar Creek knows what you did! retorted Bob. You've insulted Molly Lawrence, the nicest girl in the school. Miss Meadows has given me a letter to take to my father. I guess she doesnt want you to go back to Cedar Creek. And no wonder! Frank drew his horse aside. You can ride on, he said bitterly. If you dont believe in me, I dont want ever to see either of you again! No. You're coming home, I suppose? Where are you going, then? Anywhere—I dont care much! said Frank. I suppose my uncle will believe the same as you do, Bob. If he does, Ill never sleep another night under his roof! It was in your fist. It was a forgery. What? shouted Bob. Vere Beauclerc uttered a cry. Frank, I believe you, old chap—I believe you! I couldnt believe—I take your word that you never wrote it! Bob stared at his cousin blankly. A forgery! he repeated. You mean that some galoot imitated your handwriting, and wrote the letter? I mean that thats the only way it could have happened, as I never wrote it, and never even saw it till Miss Meadows had it in the schoolroom, said Frank Richards steadily. Oh, gum! gasped Bob. His face was a study for a moment or two. Do you believe me now? asked Frank. But—but why should any galoot play such an awful trick? gasped Bob. And—and who's so hefty with his pen that he can imitate your fist like that, Frank? I dont know! I only know that thats what must have happened. I believe you, Frank, repeated Vere Beauclerc. I felt all the time that you couldnt have done anything so base, though I couldnt understand— And Bob believes you, too. Dont be an ass, Bob! Bob Lawless nodded. I guess I take your word, Frank! he said. Frank Richards' face brightened. The whole school had condemned him; but it was something, at least, if his two chums kept their faith in him. Come on, Frank, get on your horse! Frank vaulted into the saddle. The three chums rode down the timber trail together. I guess I was a jay not to have thought of that! Bob Lawless said, after a long silence. I guess you've got it, Franky. Some mean galoot has got a

enough to act like that. I was a fool not to think of it before—especially when I found him waiting outside Cedar Creek this afternoon! You found whom? Kern Gunten. Wasnt he at school? He had a holiday—you know how his headmaster favours him, owing to his father having money invested in Hillcrest School, said Frank. He was outside Cedar Creek when I came out. He said he came along by chance. Im quite sure that he was curious to see how his scheme had worked, and came along for that reason. He described his meeting with Gunten and how it ended, his chums listening in grave silence. I—I guess it may have been Gunten, said Bob slowly. I know Gunten's hefty with his pen. He keeps books for his popper, at the store in Thompson, and does some of the post-office accounts. But—but— Who else could it have been? said Frank. That's so. But look here, Frank, there's no proof. Gunten's a bad lot, and we all know it; but forgery— It could have been no one else, said Frank Richards, with conviction. He hates us all three, and he wouldnt stop at much against us. He's played this trick on me; but it might have been either of you two. Bob knitted his brows. How did he get a copy of your fist, Frank? he asked. He couldnt have done it without that. Frank was silent. He used to be at Cedar Creek, remarked Beauclerc. He saw Frank's hand often enough then. He left before Christmas, answered Bob. It cant be supposed that he had planned all this then, and kept some of Frank's exercises and things as a copy, on purpose. I guess thats no good! Frank shook his head. Whoever forged that letter must have had a good copy in front of him all the time, said Bob. And not a few words, either—he's got every trick of the writing to a T. I guess I dont see how it could have been Gunten, Frank! I cant think of anybody else who could have done it. That's not enough to accuse him on. I know—I know. The chums rode on in silence. Beauclerc left the cousins at the fork of the trail, and Frank and Bob rode on to the Lawless Ranch together. Frank's face was troubled and clouded as the ranch came in sight. He had a miserable ordeal before him. What view his uncle was likely to take he did not know, and he winced at the thought of contempt and scorn in the honest face of the Canadian rancher. If Mr. Lawless did not place faith in him he was determined to leave the ranch at once. He would not remain where he was doubted and despised. His heart was heavy as he alighted at the ranch, and he did not even bear the cheery greeting of Billy Cook, the ranch foreman, who was passing on the trail. Give your father Miss Meadows' letter at once, Bob! he muttered, as they went into the house. For goodness' sake, get it over as soon as possible! I guess you can depend on the poppa, Frank, answered Bob. You come in and pitch your yarn first, and then Ill hand him the letter. That seemed good advice, and Frank Richards resolved to act upon it. A few minutes later he was relating the story to his uncle and aunt, with downcast face and flushed cheeks, helped out by emphatic interjections from his cousin. To his great relief, Mrs. Lawless was all sympathy; the good lady did not doubt his explanation for a moment. Rancher Lawless was grim and silent. Give me Miss Meadows' letter, Bob, he said at last. Frank Richards waited with beating heart while his uncle read the schoolmistress' letter. Mr. Lawless spoke at last. I believe you, Frank, he said quietly. I will ride over and see Miss Meadows in the morning. This will want looking into. For a few days, anyhow, you'd better stay away from school. I guess I can keep you busy about the ranch. You cant show up at Cedar Creek again till this is explained—and I guess it will be looked into till the truth is found. Keep a stiff upper lip, my boy; you've got friends to stand by you. Frank's eyelids were wet. He could not speak; his heart was too full for words.

The 3rd Chapter. Dark Days.

Awful about that galoot Richards, isnt it? Chunky Todgers made that remark when Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc arrived at Cedar Creek School the next day. Chunky's face was very serious. Who'd have thought of his turning out like that? continued Chunky. Like what? growled Bob. Like hes done! said Todgers. Im surprised at him! Hes not coming back to school, I suppose? I see hes not with you. Bob gave a snort. Hes coming back right enough as soon as this rotten affair is cleared up, he said. Frank never wrote that letter, you fat jay, and it's going to be proved somehow. Chunky Todgers whistled. I reckon it was in his fist, he said. It was a forgery! Oh, come off! said Chunky Todgers incredulously. That's how it is, Chunky, said Beauclerc quietly. By gum! said Chunky, his eyes glistening. I see! Its a plot! Just like you read in novels—what? Oh, bother your novels! growled Bob. He was in no mood just then to listen to the romantic Chunky on that topic. I guess its just like the forged letter



CAUGHT IN THE ACT! "Yen Chin! You young rascal!" exclaimed Bob Lawless in angry tones. The Chinese was bending over Bob's desk, going through it with his slim, deft fingers.

It was seldom that the plucky schoolboy gave way like this, but at this moment he felt utterly overcome and hopeless. He felt shackled by the chain of circumstances, and in despair of ever being able to prove his innocence. His own handwriting was a testimony against him that could not be contested. If the letter was a forgery—as undoubtedly it was—what fellow could he accuse of it? There was no one at Cedar Creek whose name he could mention. His face buried in his hands, Frank did not see Gunten's look—the grin of malicious, malevolent satisfaction upon the heavy features of the Hillcrest fellow. He looked up at last. That's how it is, he said. Im done for at Cedar Creek. I dont know what to do. Even my own chums dont believe me.

Richards. He pulled in his horse at once, and Beauclerc followed his example. The two schoolboys were looking grave and moody. Frank Richards came out into the trail from the trees as they stopped. You havent been home? asked Bob awkwardly. No. Ive brought your horse along. Frank took his horse. He held the animal, and looked at his two chums with a miserable and bitter look. So you're down on me, like the rest of the school! he exclaimed. Bob Lawless shifted uneasily in his saddle and Beauclerc coloured. You—like all the rest! repeated Frank. Hang it all! Bob burst out angrily. Do you expect a galoot to stand by you,

copy of your fist, and imitated it, and written that letter to Molly. But—but who? There isnt a chap at Cedar Creek that would do it. I dont think so, said Beauclerc. But then, nobody outside the school could get hold of Frank's handwriting to copy, said Bob, in perplexity. It was Frank's fist to the last crossing of a T! Frank set his teeth. It was done by an enemy, he said. Somebody who wanted to get me into disgrace. As soon as Molly got that letter it was certain that it would make her down on me—and it would be noticed, and it was all bound to come out, just as it has done. I guess so! But— Its got me into disgrace with the Lawrences, and Miss Meadows, and everybody at the school! said Frank bitterly. There's only one fellow who hates me



