



IN THIS ISSUE:

# "SHOTS I DO NOT LIKE!"

GRAND . . . . . FOOTBALL ARTICLE BY . . . R. G. WILLIAMSON, THE FAMOUS . . . . . INTERNATIONAL GOALKEEPER.



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

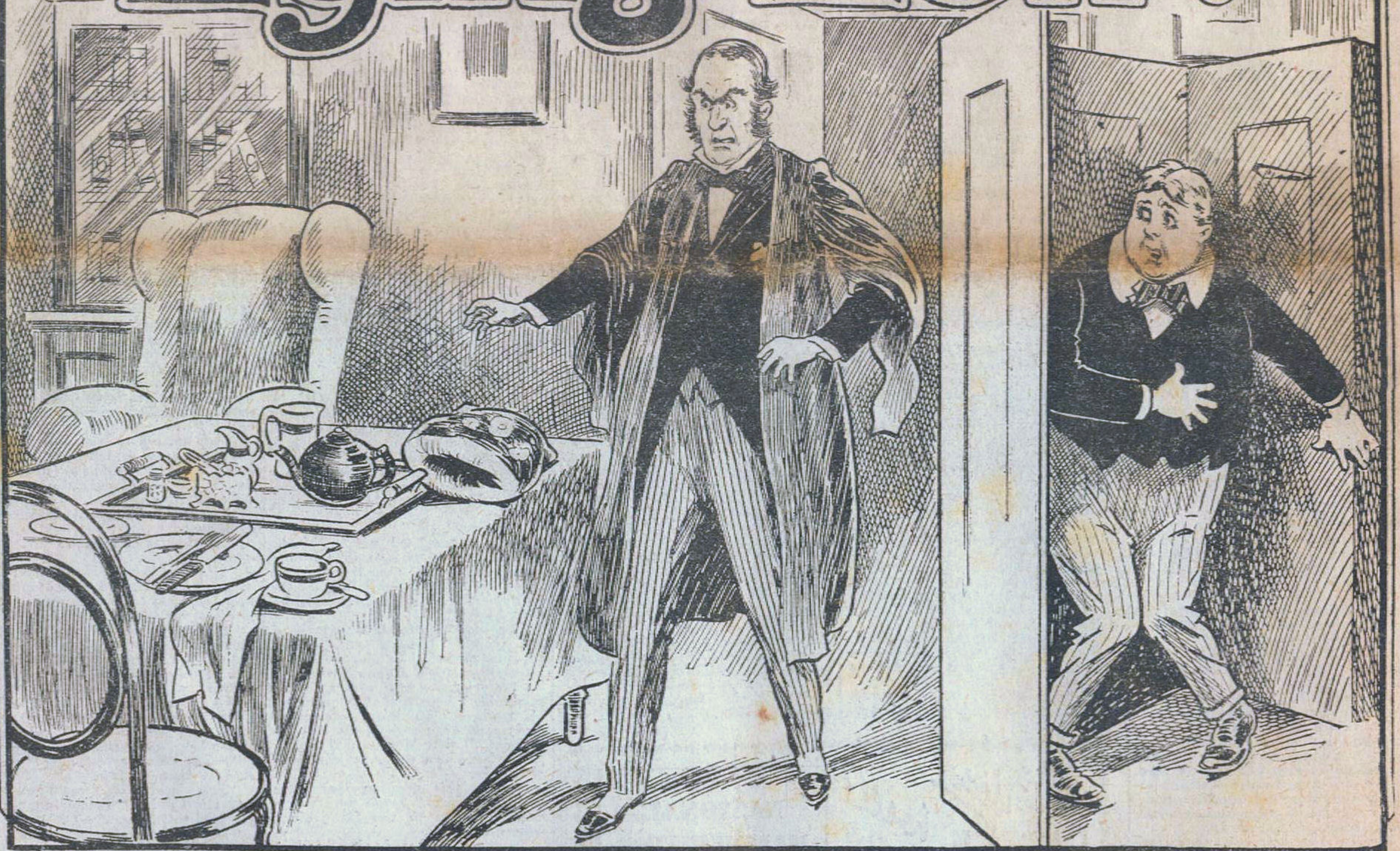
TWELVE PAGES!

No. 957. Vol. XIX. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending October 11th, 1919.

# Lying Low!



## CORNERED!

Tubby Muffin had just concealed his plump bulk behind the screen when Mr. Manders rustled in. "Bless my soul!" spluttered the master, as he surveyed the empty tray. Anger and amazement were mingled in his exclamation. "Some young rascal—some unprincipled person—has had the effrontery to consume my breakfast!" Tubby Muffin trembled so violently that the screen shook.

### The 1st Chapter.

#### Rough on Mr. Manders.

"Groo! Isn't it cold?"

"Perishing!"

"Talk about the Arctic regions!"

The rising-bell was clanging out its shrill summons to all Rookwood, and in the Fourth Form dormitory there were loud lamentations.

"That bell goes earlier and earlier every blessed morning!" grumbled Jimmy Silver. "We shall be getting up in the middle of the night soon!"

"Personally," said Arthur Edward Lovell, with a yawn, "I intend to take another forty winks!"

"Same here!" murmured Newcome drowsily.

The juniors seemed in no great hurry to be up and doing.

Mornington was the first fellow to get out of bed, but a cold gust of air caused Morn's teeth to chatter. Then, after a glance at the frosty window-panes, he promptly hopped back between the sheets.

"Not good enough!" he drawled. "It's positively freezin', by gad! I'm goin' to follow the illustrious

example of Lovell, an' take another forty winks!"

The last note of the rising-bell died away, but there was no sign of activity in the Fourth Form dormitory.

This wintry morning had dawned quite unexpectedly.

The autumn mornings had been chilly, but fairly tolerable. And now Jack Frost had suddenly got busy, and he was in evidence not only on the window-panes, but down in the quadrangle, where the puddles were glassy and frozen.

"Just like this beastly English

climate!" growled Conroy. "It changes without any warning. First we get a baking summer day, and then we're frozen to the marrow!"

And Van Ryn, in the next bed to Conroy, started singing something to the effect that it was nice to get up in the morning, but nicer to stay in bed.

For perhaps five minutes no one stirred.

Then came the sound of approaching footsteps, and Bulkeley of the Sixth looked in.

Bulkeley stared in astonishment at the two rows of occupied beds.

"Up you get!" he said tersely.

"Have mercy, Bulkeley!" groaned Kit Erroll.

"Yes, rather!" said Jimmy Silver. "Consider our frail and delicate constitutions, you know!"

"I'll consider the advisability of bringing my boot into play, in a minute!" growled Bulkeley. "I've had to turn out in the cold, and you kids can do the same. Tumble out, all of you!"

Most of the juniors showed signs of complying, and Bulkeley went on his way, apparently satisfied that his warning had taken root.





Continued from the previous page.

# LYING LOW!

With blue faces and shivering forms, the Fourth-Formers turned out.

By the time another five minutes had elapsed, the only fellow still in bed was Tubby Muffin.

Not only did the Falstaff of the Fourth remain in bed, but he almost shook the dormitory with his unmusical snore.

"Back up, Tubby!" said Jimmy Silver sharply.

"Snore!" "Better try the effect of a sponge!" murmured Mornington.

Jimmy Silver promptly armed himself with a soaking sponge, which he squeezed out over Tubby Muffin's slumbering form.

A cascade of water shot downwards, and the victim gave a yell which a Red Indian might have envied.

"Yaroooh! Gerraway, Silver, you beast!"

"Shake a leg, then!" said Jimmy Silver. "The breakfast-gong will sound in a minute, and Bootles will be on the warpath if you're late!"

"Bless Bootles!" "Bless him by all means. I was simply advising you for your own good, porpoise."

Jimmy Silver's advice, however, fell on stony ground.

Even the tempting prospect of steaming eggs-and-bacon could not drag Reginald Muffin from his bed. He was snug and warm, and he was hungry; but his hunger, he reflected, could be appeased later.

The captain of the Classical Fourth shrugged his shoulders, and continued his toilet.

Tubby Muffin mopped the water from his flabby face with a handkerchief, and settled down again.

"The silly ass!" growled Lovell. "He'll get it where the chicken got the chopper!"

"His blood be on his own head!" said Jimmy Silver. "If he chooses to ignore my good advice, he can stand the racket!"

One by one, the juniors quitted the dormitory.

Even Townsend and Topham, the dandies of the Fourth, who usually devoted a good deal of time to their toilet, were finished at last.

Tubby Muffin dropped into a doze. When he awoke again, and blinked round the dormitory, he saw that he was its sole occupant.

"My hat!" he muttered. "I suppose the beastly gong has sounded for brekker ages ago! Why couldn't the beasts have told me?"

The fat Fourth-Former heaved himself out of bed with an effort, and started to dress.

He had been hungry before he dozed; he was simply ravenous now. The terrible thought that he might miss breakfast caused him to hurry.

The fat junior scrambled through his ablutions. He had a wholesome dislike of soap and water at all times; and he used them very sparingly now. His wash was what the juniors would have termed a "cat's-lick."

Finally, with hair unbrushed, and bootlaces dangling, Tubby Muffin rushed downstairs.

He was puffing and blowing by the time he reached the Hall. And when he floundered inside, he found that the fellows had finished breakfast.

Tubby Muffin dropped into his place with a grunt.

"I say, you fellows, where's my brekker?"

"Lost, stolen, or strayed?" grinned Conroy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Mr. Bootles, at the head of the table, looked up sharply.

"Muffin, why are you so late?" "I—I was delayed, sir, in the dorm."

"Indeed! And what, pray, was the cause of the delay?"

"I—I was mugging up the Latin lesson, sir!"

Mr. Bootles stared. This statement, coming from Tubby Muffin, was extraordinary. It took more swallow-

ing than the leathery bacon had done. Tubby Muffin paid as little attention as possible to his lessons, even in the Form-room.

"You surprise me, Muffin!" said Mr. Bootles grimly. "I trust your explanation is correct, though I very much fear the reverse is the case."

"I—I assure you, sir—" "That will do, Muffin!"

"Ahem! Can—I have some breakfast, sir?"

"You should arrive in Hall at the allotted time, Muffin. Boys are not allowed to wander in at their leisure. You will forfeit your breakfast, and I trust it will be a lesson to you!"

"Oh crumbs!" Tubby Muffin looked the picture of despair.

How could he possibly survive until dinner-time?

The Fourth were grinning from one end of the table to the other. They had no sympathy to waste on the fat junior. Indeed, they considered it would do Tubby Muffin good to go without his breakfast for once.

Tubby blinked at his schoolfellows' plates. Like his own, they were empty.

"It's a beastly shame!" he muttered. "I'm wasting away already."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Shortly afterwards, the fellows filed out of Hall.

Tubby Muffin rolled disconsolately along the passage. He felt that the world was a very unpleasant place to live in. The idea of going through morning lessons on an empty stomach was appalling.

"Excuse me, Master Muffin!" One of the maids was coming along with a laden tray, and Tubby Muffin's huge bulk obstructed her progress.

The fat junior squeezed himself against the wall so that the girl might pass. He blinked curiously at the tray, which contained hot rolls and butter, eggs-and-bacon, marmalade, and coffee.

"I say, where are you taking that little lot?" inquired Tubby.

"It's for Mr. Manders," said the maid. "He's breakfasting in his study this morning."

And she passed on. Tubby Muffin's hungry eyes were riveted upon the girl and the tray until both vanished round a distant corner.

"Old Manders is a lucky dog!" he murmured. "That's the best of being a master. You can have your brekker when and where you like."

Instinctively Tubby Muffin followed in the wake of the maid. He dodged into an adjoining doorway as she emerged from Mr. Manders' study.

When her footsteps had died away Tubby came out to investigate.

The door of Mr. Manders' study was ajar, and an appetising odour of fried bacon was wafted out into the passage.

Peering cautiously into the study, Tubby Muffin saw that it was empty.

"Manders hasn't turned up yet," he said to himself. "Perhaps he's forgotten all about his brekker. I shouldn't wonder!"

Becoming bolder, the fat junior stepped into the study, closing the door after him.

The steaming breakfast looked even more inviting than when Tubby had first seen it.

The voice of the tempter whispered in his ear:

"Pile in! Wolf the whole lot while you've got the chance! The odds are that Manders will know nothing about it."

In the ordinary way Tubby Muffin would not have dreamed of raiding a master's study—for that was what it amounted to. But he was hungry—very hungry—and it was a shame to spoil good food by letting it get cold.

The fat junior drew a chair up to the table, planted his weight upon it, and got busy.

The hot rolls were delicious. They seemed to melt in his mouth. And the eggs-and-bacon were done to a turn.

"This is prime!" mumbled Tubby, with his mouth full.

He had been deprived of his breakfast in Hall. But what did that matter? Breakfast in Hall was a miserable affair by comparison with this. This was a feast of the gods.

Tubby Muffin disposed of the good things with amazing rapidity.

The tray had been cleared, and the fat junior was about to lean back in his chair, when the sound of approaching footsteps caused him to start up in alarm.

"Manders!" he muttered. There could be no doubt that the approaching person was Mr. Manders, the sour, unsportsmanlike master of the Rookwood Sixth.

Tubby Muffin's heart beat over-time.

He was fairly trapped, unless—

There were two ways by which he might possibly avoid detection. One was to plunge beneath the table; the other to hide behind the screen.

The latter seemed the better plan. Tubby Muffin had just concealed his plump bulk behind the screen when Mr. Manders rustled in.

"Bless my soul!"

Anger and amazement were mingled in the master's exclamation.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Tubby Muffin crouched in his place of concealment.

Mr. Manders surveyed the empty tray, and frowned. His frown deepened, and his anger speedily overcame his amazement.

"Some young rascal—some unprincipled person—has had the effrontery to come in here and consume my breakfast!" he fumed.

Tubby Muffin trembled so violently that the screen shook.

The fat junior was almost paralysed with funk. He knew that if he were caught he could expect no mercy from Mr. Manders. The latter would come down like a wolf on a fold. His wrath would be terrible. Tubby Muffin felt, in fact, that he would be unable to face it.

Mr. Manders paced to and fro in the study. He was muttering to himself during his peregrinations. Tubby Muffin distinctly caught the words "flogging," and "make a public example."

By this time the Fourth-Former was feeling decidedly uncomfortable. He wanted to sneeze very badly. He pressed his handkerchief over his nose and mouth, but in vain. That sneeze was determined to make itself heard.

When it did come, it came with startling energy.

"Atishum! Atishoo-oo-oo!" The fat was in the fire now with a vengeance!

Mr. Manders strode towards the screen, and Tubby Muffin, terrified by the expression on the master's face, bounded to his feet and scuttled out of the study.

For a moment Mr. Manders stood speechless. Then he strode to the door and shouted along the passage.

"Muffin! Come back—come back at once! Do you hear me?"

The only answer was the sound of scurrying feet—and they were not scurrying in the direction of Mr. Manders' study!

Tubby Muffin was scared out of his wits, and his one object in life at that moment was to put as much distance between himself and Mr. Manders as possible.

After the feast comes the reckoning; but Tubby had not waited for the reckoning.

### The 2nd Chapter. Missing!

Mr. Manders stood in the doorway, breathing hard.

Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man.

Tubby Muffin had exercised all the speed at his command, and he had fled down the passage as if a thousand furies were at his heels.

"The audacious young rascal!" snorted Mr. Manders. "He shall be punished most severely for this outrage!"

Mr. Manders was far too dignified to think of giving chase to the Fourth-Former. He was content to bide his time. Sooner or later Tubby Muffin would fall into his clutches; and when that happened Mr. Manders would not display the quality of mercy.

Meanwhile, the enraged master sent for the maid and ordered another breakfast to replace that which reposed inside Tubby Muffin.

In due course the bell rang for morning lessons.

Jimmy Silver & Co., who had been punting a football in the quad, flocked into the class-room. Mr. Bootles was a mild, good-tempered sort as a rule; but he expected punctuality from his pupils.

"Where is Muffin?" he asked, glancing at that junior's vacant place.

The juniors shook their heads. No one had seen Tubby Muffin since breakfast.

"Silver!" rapped out Mr. Bootles. "Do you not know where Muffin is?"

"I haven't the foggiest notion, sir!" said the captain of the Fourth.

An expression of annoyance came over the Form-master's face.

"Can anyone suggest where he is?" "The tuckshop's the most likely place, sir," said Lovell.

"Nonsense, Lovell! Sergeant Kettle would not think of serving a junior during school hours!"

"Silver!" said Mr. Bootles, after a pause. "Kindly go and bring Muffin to the Form-room if you can find him!"

"Very well, sir!"

Jimmy Silver did not anticipate either a long search or a difficult one. He expected to run the missing junior to earth in Study No. 2. On reaching that apartment, however, he drew blank.

"My hat!" muttered the captain of the Fourth. "Where can the silly ass have got to?"

Greatly puzzled, Jimmy Silver took up the search in real earnest. He might have been a sleuth-hound, by his methods. He looked into every study, and he examined the floor as he went. Tubby Muffin could usually be tracked down by means of a trail of crumbs.

But on this occasion there was nothing doing. There was not a single clue as to the fat junior's whereabouts.

Jimmy Silver made inquiries at the tuckshop, but Sergeant Kettle declared that he had not had the misfortune of seeing Tubby Muffin that morning.

The gym, the Cloisters, and the library were visited in turn, but with no result.

Jimmy Silver gave it up at last, and went back to the Form-room.

"No sign of Muffin, sir," he reported.

Mr. Bootles looked amazed.

"Have you searched everywhere, Silver?"

"Practically everywhere, sir."

"And there is no trace of the boy?"

"None whatever, sir."

There was a buzz from the class. The sudden disappearance of Tubby Muffin was startling, to say the least of it.

"Is it possible," said Mr. Bootles, at length, "that the foolish boy has run away from school?"

"I should hardly think so, sir," said Jimmy Silver.

"Muffin had nothing on his mind, sir," said Newcome.

But Newcome knew nothing of the little drama which had been enacted in Mr. Manders' study.

There was silence in the Form-room for some moments—the silence of sheer astonishment.

"Will you ascertain, Silver," said Mr. Bootles presently, "if Muffin's cap and coat are hanging up in his study?"

Jimmy Silver nodded, and quitted the Form-room for the second time.

He returned in a few moments, excited and breathless.

"Well, Silver?"

"Muffin's cap and coat are not there, sir."

Mr. Bootles compressed his lips. "In that case there can be little doubt that my surmise is correct. Muffin has run away from school."

"I can't believe it," murmured Kit Erroll. "He'd never have the nerve!"

"No jolly fear!"

"He's scoffing grub in some quiet corner," whispered Conroy.

"That's about it."

Mr. Bootles was debating what should be done, when the door of the Form-room opened, and everyone looked up expectantly.

But it was not Tubby Muffin who entered. It was Mr. Manders.

Mr. Bootles darted a questioning glance at his colleague. He did not like Mr. Manders. That gentleman had done little to win the affections of either masters or boys. And he had only himself to thank for his unpopularity.

"Ah, Bootles!" said Mr. Manders. "I looked in for the purpose of requesting Muffin to report to me after lessons."

"Muffin is not here," said Mr. Bootles shortly.

"Not here!"

"No. He has unaccountably disappeared."

"Bless my soul! Where is he?"

"I am not in the habit of repeating my observations, Mr. Manders. I have already stated that Muffin has disappeared. Beyond that, I know nothing."

The sour face of Mr. Manders became even more so.

"Muffin must be found at once," he said. "I wish to administer chastisement—"

Mr. Bootles stared.

"Has Muffin offended you, Mr. Manders?"

"Offended me! Oh, no! Not in the least!" said Mr. Manders, with crushing sarcasm. "He merely helped himself to my breakfast, and then had the audacity to run away from me, and to ignore me when I repeatedly called to him to come back!"

There was a gasp from the class. "It's clear as daylight now," whispered Lovell. "Tubby's frightened to death of Manders, and he's scooted."

"That's so," agreed Newcome, sotto voce.

Mr. Bootles turned to his colleague.

"You may leave this matter in my hands," he said. "I will communicate the facts to Dr. Chisholm, and ascertain his wishes."

"Oh, very well!" snapped Mr. Manders.

And the master of the Sixth stalked out, evidently in a very bad temper.

Shortly afterwards Mr. Bootles went to make his report to the Head. He left the Fourth in a state of seething excitement.

"Fancy—Tubby bunking!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"That's just what I can't fancy!" said Kit Erroll. "Tubby hasn't the pluck of a tame mouse."

"But he's gone!"

"Absolutely!"

"Vanished off the face of the earth, by gad!" said Mornington.

"His cap and coat have vanished, too," said Lovell. "That's pretty conclusive evidence that he's bunked. He knew he could expect no mercy from a tyrant like Manders, so he ran away."

"He can't have got very far," remarked Raby.

"About as far as the bunshop in Coombe, I should say!" grinned Newcome.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wonder if they'll send out search-parties?" mused Jimmy Silver.

"Hope so," said Conroy. "I'd rather hunt for Tubby Muffin than for the meaning of some of these Latin words!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Jolly thoughtful of Tubby Muffin to run away," said Peele. "It means a holiday for us."

But Peele was unlucky.

*Can you write well?*

**NATIONAL HANDWRITING COMPETITION**

**1st PRIZE:**  
**100 Guineas**

**OVER 1000 OTHER PRIZES**

This is a competition for EVERYONE and everyone should enter. You may not think your handwriting good but it isn't the "copy book" style that will win, but the most practical, legible, and characteristic. No entrance fee. All particulars in

**HANDY STORIES** 2d

Out To-morrow.



When Mr. Bootles returned, the first thing he did was to detail a search-party. But Peele was not included. Neither were Lattrey nor Gower. Whereat there was a great deal of grumbling.

"I have arranged with Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Bootles, "that two search-parties shall be sent out. Bulkeley will conduct a search in one direction, and you, Silver, will be in charge of a junior party."

"Oh, good!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"You may take six boys with you," said Mr. Bootles.

And almost every fellow in the Form jumped eagerly to his feet.

The chosen six proved to be Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Mornington, Erroll, and Conroy.

"You will proceed in the direction of Coombe," said Mr. Bootles. "No effort must be spared to bring Muffin back to Rookwood. It will be advisable to make exhaustive inquiries of passers-by, and others. I trust the reckless and foolhardy boy will be found."

"Rely on us, sir!" said Jimmy Silver confidently.

And the members of the search-party, to the envy of their school-fellows, marched out of the Form-room.

They had never been so grateful to Tubby Muffin as at that moment.

"as boarded a train this morning," grunted the porter.

"How do you know," asked Lovell, "when you've been fast asleep and snoring all the time?"

The porter glared.

"The first train 'asn't gone yet!" he said.

"Oh!"

The juniors exchanged baffled glances.

Tubby Muffin had mysteriously disappeared from Rookwood, and he must have carefully covered up his tracks, for not a single clue was available.

"No go!" said Jimmy Silver, turning on his heel.

"We shall have to give it up," said Newcome.

"Looks like it!"

"We could advertise," said Conroy.

"How?"

"By getting some posters printed, and having them stuck up all over the village."

Jimmy Silver nodded thoughtfully.

"It may lead to a discovery," he said. "Come on!"

The juniors went along to the little office where the local paper was printed, and where printing of all sorts was undertaken.

Between them, they concocted the following poster:

The production of the posters was left in the hands of the printer, and the members of the search-party returned rather dolefully to Rookwood.

They did not like going back empty-handed. It was very humiliating to think that a stupid fellow like Tubby Muffin could outwit them so easily.

Curiously enough, Bulkeley's search-party returned at the same moment, from the opposite direction.

"Any luck, you kids?" inquired Bulkeley.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Muffin's vanished off the map!" he said. "We've asked questions till we're husky, but we've got no for-rader."

"Where on earth can the kid be?" exclaimed Bulkeley.

"Ask me another!"

Seniors and juniors passed through the quadrangle, and Jimmy Silver & Co. went along to the Form-room to make their report to Mr. Bootles.

The Form-master looked surprised as the juniors trooped in. He expected to see Tubby Muffin following behind, like Mary's little lamb.

"Do you mean to say, Silver," said Mr. Bootles, "that your search has proved fruitless?"

"That's so, sir!"

"Did you scour the village?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. promptly produced a football, and indulged in a rough-and-ready game in the quad until dinner-time.

The juniors ate very sparingly in Hall, for there were ample supplies waiting to be sampled in Jimmy Silver's study.

"Did you get everything in, Jimmy?" inquired Lovell.

"Yes, rather!"

"You didn't forget the rabbit-pie?" queried Raby.

"Of course not! My brain is a water-tight compartment—not a leaking tank, like yours!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think we'd better go along to the study," said Newcome, "and make sure that our Jimmy's done the needful!"

"Why, you—you doubting Thomas!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"The cupboard's simply stacked with good things! Can't you take my word for it?"

"Oh, all right," said Newcome, "don't get huffy. We'll go along to the footer!"

Footer happened to be the order of the day at Rookwood. Very shortly a big match was to be played between the Classical and Modern juniors; and Jimmy Silver & Co.

Then his expression suddenly changed, and he gave a startled gasp—a gasp which was echoed by the other occupants of the study.

For the cupboard was bare!

The shelves, which had been well stacked, were now barren of provisions.

All eyes were fixed upon Jimmy Silver.

"You—you said you'd laid in supplies!" hooted Newcome. "What do you call this?"

"Explain!" came in a chorus from the others.

Jimmy Silver rubbed his eyes, as if to make sure he was not dreaming.

"I—I—Blest if I can understand it!" he gasped.

"You've let us down, by gad!" said Mornington severely.

"I—I haven't! There was plenty of tuck here this morning. Somebody must have raided the cupboard!"

"Oh!"

"Modern cads, most likely!" said Lovell. "They've pranced off with the rabbit pie, and everything else besides."

"We'll go over in force, and tax them with it," said Raby.

But the mission proved futile.

Tommy Dodd & Co. flatly and finally denied having made a raid on Jimmy Silver's supplies.

"We know nothing about it," said Tommy Dodd. "Honest Injun!"

And when the leader of the Moderns spoke like that there was no doubting his word.

"What's to be done now?" said Kit Erroll.

"We must lay in a fresh stock, that's all!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"And if I find out who's been tampering with our grub, I—I'll burst him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Classical juniors retired from the scene, with the laughter of the Moderns ringing in their ears.

Another feed was duly arranged, but it could not compensate Jimmy Silver for the loss of the former one.

Diligent search was made that evening for the unknown raider, but nothing came to light. And Jimmy Silver & Co., when they at length retired to their dormitory, had to admit that they were completely baffled.

The 4th Chapter. Tubby Muffin Turns Up.

There was a vacant bed in the Fourth Form dormitory that night. Fresh search parties had been sent out in the afternoon, but although they had scoured the countryside, they had found no trace of Tubby Muffin. The fat junior had vanished as completely and mysteriously as if the earth had suddenly opened and swallowed him up.

The Head was thoroughly alarmed by this time, and so was Mr. Bootles.

Mr. Manders was not alarmed. He was furious. His quarry had slipped through his fingers. He badly wanted to castigate Tubby Muffin for having burgled his breakfast.

The arrangements for the castigation were complete so far as the cane and the executioner were concerned, but there was no victim!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were awake half the night. They expected at any moment to hear the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and to see Tubby Muffin brought in under escort. But they were disappointed.

Morning came, but not Tubby Muffin.

No information had come to hand as a result of the poster which had been displayed in the village. It was obvious that the missing junior could not be in hiding there.

The Head sent for Mr. Bootles before breakfast.

"Is there no news of Muffin, Mr. Bootles?"

The Form-master shook his head.

"Dear me! This is most bewildering!"

The Head stepped across to the telephone and rang up the local police-station.

A weary voice sounded over the wires.

"Who's that?"

"It is Dr. Chisholm speaking."

The voice became lively at once.

"Oh, yes, sir! Anything wrong up at the school?"

"I am considerably worried concerning the disappearance of one of my junior boys—Muffin by name."

"I see! Has he run away from school, sir?"

"I fear such is the case. Will you institute inquiries, and report any developments to me?"

"Very good, sir! It won't take us long to get on the track of young Crumpet—I mean Muffin."

The police-sergeant spoke with

**FOUND!** In searching for the football Kit Erroll had stumbled upon a far more important capture. The shrill voice of Tubby Muffin could be heard, raised in expostulation. "I won't go down! I refuse! Old Manders will get hold of me!" The fat Classical sat by the chimney, blue with cold.

LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED!

"WHEREAS Reginald Muffin, alias Tubby, has mysteriously disappeared from Rookwood School, leaving no clue as to his whereabouts,

A REWARD OF SIX DOUGH-NUTS

will be given to any person or persons who can supply such information as may lead to the capture of the missing porpoise.

"All communications should be addressed to James Silver, Fourth Form, Rookwood School."

"That hits it off, I think," said Lovell.

"There's only one drawback," remarked Mornington.

"What's that?" demanded Jimmy Silver warmly.

"The reward isn't tempting enough!"

"Rats!"

"A fellow's not goin' to take up an exhaustin' chase for the sake of baggin' six doughnuts," said Mornington.

"You can make it a hundred doughnuts if you like," growled Jimmy Silver, "on condition that you pay 'em!"

This suggestion, however, left Val Mornington cold.

"Absolutely, sir!" said Mornington.

"And nothing has been seen or heard of Muffin?"

The juniors shook their heads.

"Bless my soul! This is most extraordinary!" murmured Mr. Bootles.

"I knew this would happen," sneered Peele. "The wrong fellows were chosen for the job!"

"Hear, hear!" muttered Gower.

"Now, if we had undertaken the search—"

"Muffin would have been run to earth in next to no time!" said Lattrey.

"Precisely!"

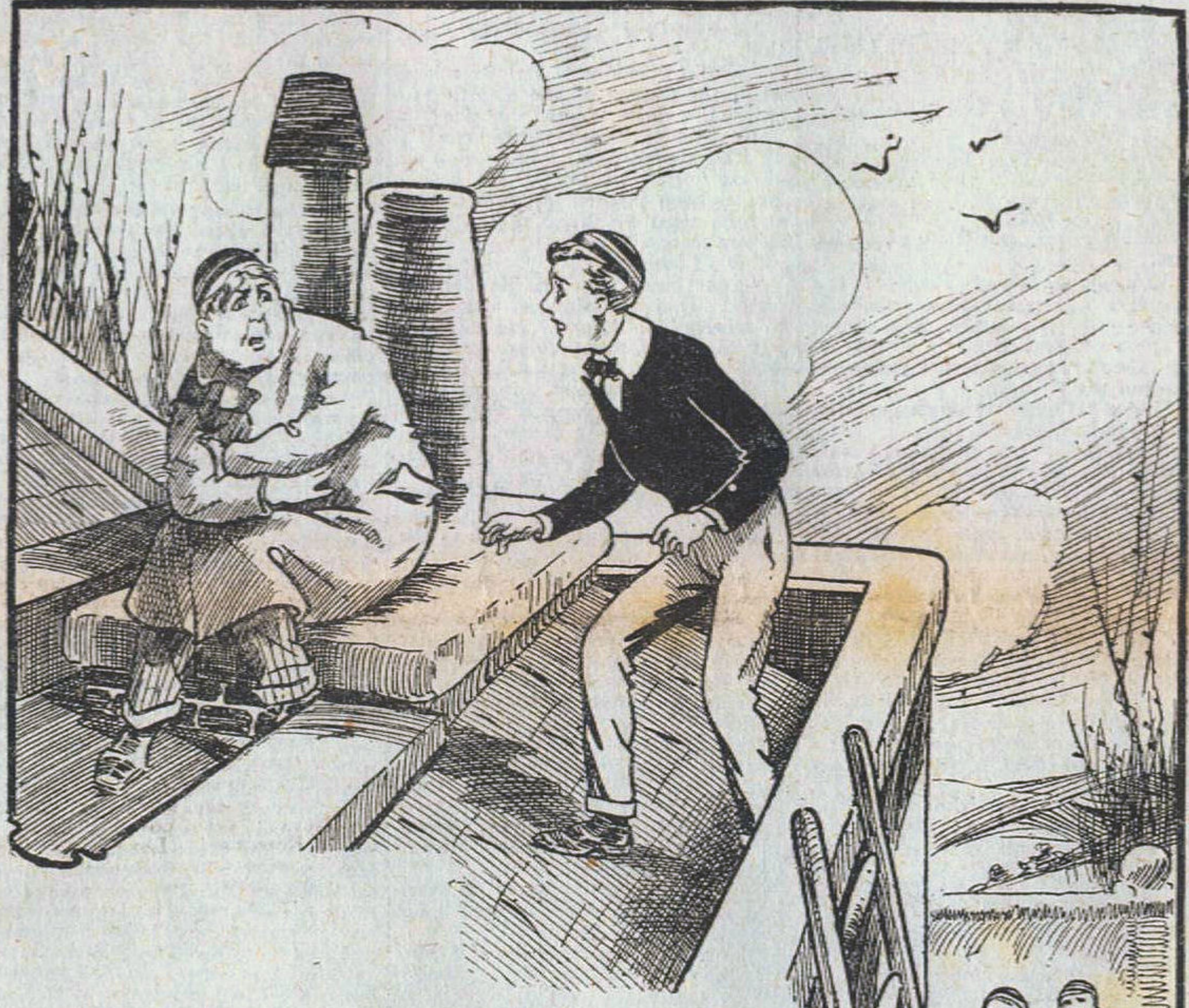
Mr. Bootles stroked his chin in perplexity.

"Very well, my boys," said the Form-master, at length. "I can see that you have done your best. Other methods will have to be adopted. You may go to your seats."

Jimmy Silver & Co. sat scowling at the desks during the tail-end of morning lessons.

They soon remembered, however, that it was to be a half-holiday, and that a high tea was to be given in Jimmy Silver's study. These things took the edge off their disappointment at not finding Tubby Muffin.

When morning lessons were over, a sigh of relief ran round the Form-room.



The 3rd Chapter. Some Person Unknown.

"Mind you don't get up to any larks!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth shook a reproving forefinger at Jimmy Silver & Co. as the two search-parties, senior and junior, parted company in the gateway of Rookwood.

"We never lark, Bulkeley," said Mornington, "when we have some-thing' thrillin' an' excitin' to occupy our little minds."

"Hear, hear!" said Conroy.

"We're going on the track of Tubby Muffin, and we're not going to rest till we find him!"

"He's coming back to Rookwood under escort," said Jimmy Silver.

"Our escort, you mean!" said Bulkeley, with a smile.

"Rats!"

The juniors headed for the village of Coombe, and the seniors moved off in the opposite direction.

"Mustn't let the Sixth score over us," remarked Lovell.

"No, rather not!"

"Tubby Muffin's big enough to be seen," said Mornington, "an' it's quite on the cards that we shall spot him."

Jimmy Silver & Co. launched inquiries as they went.

"I say, have you seen a human barrel of lard?" asked Newcome, of the driver of a market cart.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The driver asked for further particulars, and then shook his head. He had seen no one, he said, answering to the description of Reginald Muffin.

Another man—a hungry-looking wayside tramp—said he had not seen Muffin, but would be glad to sample half a dozen.

"We're not in the habit of carryin' hot muffins about with us," said Mornington.

"If you want work," chimed in Jimmy Silver, "apply to the squire at Coombe Manor."

The tramp gave a shudder.

"Bless yer 'cart," he said. "I don't want work—unless it's a three-hour day, with two hours off for grub!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors passed on into Coombe. They visited the bun-shop first, of course, but Tubby Muffin had not been there.

None of the tradespeople seemed to have seen the missing junior.

"Better try the railway-station," suggested Lovell. "If he's gone by train, someone is sure to have seen him!"

The little station at Coombe was deserted save for a porter who sat crouched before a blazing fire in the waiting-room.

The porter's head was nodding, and he was on the point of dozing off when Jimmy Silver bellowed in his ear.

"Hi!"

The man started up so suddenly that his chair tilted backwards. It bore its human freight with it, and the porter alighted with a painful thud on the floor of the waiting-room.

"Acrobatics while you wait!" murmured Kit Erroll.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Slowly the porter picked himself up. "Woddyer want?" he growled.

Jimmy Silver put the now familiar question regarding Tubby Muffin; but he put it in vain.

"Which nobody from Rookwood



confidence. He anticipated no difficulty whatever in catching the runaway.

"I am much obliged to you!" said the Head.

And he rang off.

"We shall not be long now!" he said, his face brightening.

But Mr. Bootles did not share the Head's faith in the abilities of the local police.

"Where search-parties have failed, I do not anticipate that the police will succeed," he said.

"That remains to be seen," said Dr. Chisholm. "We must hope for the best."

Mr. Bootles nodded, and went in to breakfast.

The familiar figure of Tubby Muffin was absent from the table. Most of the juniors did not mind this in the least. The absence of the Fourth's champion eater meant a bigger supply of food all round.

"It's a treat to be without our tame porpoise!" remarked Lovell.

"All the same, he must be found," said Jimmy Silver.

"My hat, yes!"

All Rookwood was interested by this time in the fat junior's disappearance.

Hansom, of the Fifth, who rather fancied himself as an amateur detective, had followed a number of imaginary clues. Needless to state, Hansom's deductions ended precisely where they had begun.

Breakfast over, Jimmy Silver & Co. decided on a further bout of footer practice.

Time did not permit of the juniors going down to the football ground, so they played up against the wall of the gym.

A goal was chalked on the wall, and the game proved very absorbing—except to the goalkeeper, who happened to be Conroy.

The Colonial junior was bombarded with shots from close range, and whenever he missed the ball with his hands, it struck some other part of his anatomy, causing him to hurl expletives at the marksmen.

"Steady on, you fellows! You're not having cocoanut shies, you know!"

"My dear chap," said Mornington, "you should stop the ball with your hands, not your chivvy!"

"I should like to see you stop a hot drive from six yards out!" growled Conroy.

"I'd take it on with pleasure," said Morny. "but I'm afraid of soilin' my togs!"

"Br-r-r!"

The game waxed fast and furious.

Conroy was for ever listing out shots, or being bowled over by them.

And then Kit Erroll took a flying kick, and the ball was ballooned high over the wall and out of sight.

The juniors waited anxiously for it to bounce down again. But it never came.

"It's stuck between the roof of the gym, and the roof of the main building," said Jimmy Silver.

Kit Erroll nodded.

"I'm awfully sorry—" he began.

"Bless your sorrow! You booted the ball up there, now you can jolly-well go and get it!"

"Hear, hear!"

Kit Erroll scanned the towering wall.

"How the merry dickens am I going to climb that?" he exclaimed.

"Get a ladder, fathead!" said Lovell.

"Oh, all right!" grunted Erroll. And he sped away to secure a ladder.

He returned in a few moments, and the ladder was propped against the wall.

With the agility of a monkey, Kit Erroll started to climb.

"Keep your eyes open, in case there are any beaks or prefects on the prowl!" he called down.

"That's all right!" sang out Jimmy Silver. "Go ahead!"

Kit Erroll continued to climb.

When he reached the top and clambered over the flat, narrow space situated between the two roofs, the juniors down below heard him give a sudden shout.

"What's up?" shouted Jimmy Silver.

All eyes were turned upwards.

Presently the excited face of Kit Erroll peeped down.

"I've found him!"

"What?"

"Found whom?" exclaimed Lovell.

"I've found Tubby Muffin!"

"My only aunt!"

There was great excitement down below, as well as up above.

In searching for the football, Kit Erroll had stumbled upon a far more important capture.

The shrill voice of Tubby Muffin could be heard, raised in expostulation.

"I won't go down! I refuse! Old Manders will get hold of me, and then—"

The voice trailed off in dismay as Kit Erroll urged the fat junior to descend the ladder.

Tubby Muffin came down gingerly, and Erroll followed.

"You silly fat porpoise!" said Jimmy Silver. "You'll get it in the neck for this!"

"You'll be simply slaughtered!"

Tubby Muffin, who looked blue with cold, alighted at the foot of the ladder.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he stammered feebly.

"Talk about luck!" said Kit Erroll, who had forgotten to bring down the football in his excitement. "Tubby's been hiding in the flat space between the roofs. He took his cap and coat up with him, and he's been having a beanfeast, to judge by the amount of crumbs up there!"

"Our feed!" hooted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver scanned the roof.

"How on earth did he get up there?" he exclaimed.

"By a ladder, of course!" said Kit Erroll. "And he pulled the ladder up after him!"

"My hat!"

"Then—then he hasn't been away from Rookwood at all?" gasped Newcome.

"Doesn't look like it, does it?"

The juniors stared at Tubby Muffin. He looked the picture of misery. He was snuffling and snivelling.

"I—I say, I feel ill!" he groaned.

"I don't wonder!" said Mornington. "If you've scoffed that rabbit-pie, and goodness knows what besides, you must be thoroughly bilious, by gad!"

"I don't mean that," said Tubby Muffin. "I—I'm soaked, you know."

"Soaked!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"What do you mean?"

"It rained in the night, and there was nothing to shelter me. I came down once, and tried to find a sheet of tarpaulin or something, but I had no luck. I was soaked to the skin, and I feel awful!"

Jimmy Silver stepped forward, and felt Tubby Muffin's clothing.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "You're wet through! You mad idiot! You've been fairly asking for a dose of pneumonia!"

"Ow!"

The conversation had reached this stage, when there was a rustle of gowns, and Mr. Bootles and Mr. Manders came up. Their eyes were nearly bulging out of their heads as they surveyed Tubby Muffin.

"What—what does this mean?" gasped Mr. Bootles.

Jimmy Silver explained the situation.

"Muffin," snapped Mr. Manders, when the captain of the Fourth had finished, "you will come with me!"

Mr. Bootles promptly intervened.

"The wretched boy will do nothing of the sort!" he said. "He is ill! He has been exposed to the elements, and he must be taken to the sanatorium at once!"

"But I insist—"

"Your insistence, Mr. Manders, is futile! This boy is not in a fit state to receive punishment. He must be put to bed without delay, and the doctor must be summoned."

Mr. Manders almost tore his hair, which would have been a pity, as he had none too much to spare.

"You—you dare to cross my wishes, Bootles?" he snarled.

"In an urgent case like this, yes!" said Mr. Bootles. "Silver, Lovell, Mornington, pray assist Muffin to the sanatorium at once!"

The juniors thus addressed promptly obeyed.

Tubby Muffin was taken to the sanatorium, and it was soon obvious that he was not shamming. His temperature was high, and the doctor, when he came, stated that the fat junior had contracted a bad chill.

Dr. Chisholm was duly informed of what had transpired, and he was very lenient towards Tubby Muffin. He considered that the junior's illness constituted an adequate punishment.

"I will punish Muffin later!" snapped Mr. Manders.

The Head, who happened to overhear this remark, turned round upon the master of the Sixth.

"Kindly do nothing of the sort, Mr. Manders!" he said quietly. "Muffin has behaved very foolishly, but he is paying the penalty. I must ask you

not to take any action against him on his recovery!"

Mr. Manders scowled, and muttered something under his breath. But the Head's word was law, and he would be unable to exact vengeance for the stolen breakfast.

Skilled nursing soon pulled Tubby Muffin through, and in a few days he was able to sit up and take lots of nourishment. His rash escapade was

over, and he was preserved from the vials of Mr. Manders' wrath.

And Rookwood chuckled for many days afterwards over the exciting events which had arisen in connection with The Vanished Schoolboy!

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Monday, entitled "Rookwood to the Rescue!")

### SELBORNE.

The Village of Gilbert White.  
By CLIVE FENN.

There are, I believe, a few—not many—readers of the BOYS' FRIEND who despise anything to do with Nature. They deem it soft. I believe that is the term; but, anyway, it is as inaccurate as that the best margarine was the favourite scrape of the late William Rufus. Well, I hope those fellows will skip this short article. Contrariwise, I know that there are many enthusiastic supporters of the old Green 'Un who ask for a bit more about birds and butterflies and bugs, and they will not mind glancing at a few words about the old home of Gilbert White, the famous student of bird life who lived at Selborne in the long ago. I expect a good many supporters of this paper have read his letters, and appreciate the character of the wise and splendid man who left a work behind him which will be a classic and a book to be appealed to for ever.

He was writing in the days when George the Third was occupying the Throne of this country, in the times before the first Great French Revolution changed the face of all Europe, in those years when the Court of France at Versailles was the most brilliant place in the world. But a whole crowd of things which were happening round about in the countries which lay beyond the "county of Southamptonshire," as Gilbert White called it, had no special interest for him. He was studying birds, and he would spend hours in the little summer-house under the centuries-old beech-tree in his garden, taking notes, and finding out things which, but for him, might have had to wait for another hundred years.

Selborne is a little bit of a village, and has changed very slightly since the time of Gilbert White. Such cannot be said of the house itself, the old parsonage, where Gilbert White lived. I have frequently stayed at this house. It has been enlarged, but in the days when my friend owned it the place was still in many respects homely, and you could see exactly how it looked in the past. There were the low-pitched rooms, the old-fashioned kitchen, the quaint little casement-windowed corner where the creepers had things all their own way, and if you rose early of a summer morning there was plenty in the scene to make you fancy you had stepped back into those old times of George the Third, and when they were still

busy tripping the dainty minuet at Versailles, and not dreaming of any such things as revolutions, etc.


There was the narrow little red brick path between two spreading lawns. This path led down to the giant beech near the hanger. The hanger is a miniature forest on the slopes of the steep hill which close in the house that side. On the left is a cedar which is certainly the most magnificent specimen of its kind I ever saw. It was worth while looking round in the dawn-time, when the birds are tuning-up. You have to choose an early summer morning for that pleasure. It is such a concert as you never get any other way, and it is all free. Bird life has not been driven away from this sanctuary. Of course, you get the challenging, clarion cuckoo-call; but Hampshire is prolific in birds, and, luckily, Hampshire remains unspoiled by builders.

You can like Selborne because of its memories, because of what old Gilbert White said concerning the raven and the partridge and the weasel and the black-winged stilt, but Selborne as it is to-day has a myriad features which charm. The village is tiny, and it is difficult to get to, for Alton is miles distant, and East Tisted is a station which does not boast of many trains, but that does not matter.

Selborne is a fragment of Old England, the real Old England which Alken depicted, and Turner loved, and George Morland. It is in many details as far away as in the days of Gilbert White. Water is pumped and not laid on! The village cricket-team meets rival teams on the excellent ground lent by the present owner of the old house. By the way, the front of the house is flush on the High Street, if you can call it that, and just over the way is a butcher's shop which always reminds me of a picture out of "Pilgrim's Progress."

The Lith is a hill walk which is a mass of flowers, and the Plestor—the open space in front of the picturesque church—is just as of old. The church is interesting, too, to those who like ancient buildings and their history.

I was looking the other day at an old print of the house where Gilbert White lived, and it was interesting to note that the little terrace where the wagtails made themselves at home, and where my friend and I sat and watched one afternoon, has not been altered in the least. Naturally, new days bring sweeping alterations. That is inevitable. But, in the main, the old features are still existent. As to the famous hanger, let's hope nothing will ever alter that. Such a spot as can never be forgotten with its strange beauty and its wealth of bird life.



# Football

by Prominent Players.

THIS WEEK:

## "SHOTS I DO NOT LIKE!"

By R. G. WILLIAMSON.

Broadly speaking, the shots I do not like are those which I am unable to stop, and which find their way to the net! That is perfectly natural, and yet, in a manner of speaking, it is not quite true, for I have known the day when I was beaten by a shot which in the ordinary way I should have put down as the sort I like. Most people make mistakes sometimes, however, and the worst of it is that one mistake on the part of a goalkeeper may mean the absolute defeat of his side.

In this respect the man "between the sticks" is in a position different from that of any other player on the field. If the half-back lets a forward through, the full-back is there to stop him; and if the full-back makes a blunder it is always on the cards that the goalkeeper may be in a position to redeem the mistake by dashing out and saving an awkward situation.

But if the goalkeeper misses one which he ought to have stopped, there is no hope. All he can do is to turn round, pick the ball out of the net,

and feel as little displeased with himself as may be.

However, the subject I am supposed to be tackling is that of shots I do not like, and there are three or four kinds which come under the head of shots which are particularly difficult to deal with. In the first place, there is that shot which no goalkeeper likes—taken from the penalty-kick spot.

I sometimes think there ought to be a new rule in football which shall decree that the player who gives away a penalty kick should also be the man to stand between the posts to try and stop a player from scoring from that kick. It wouldn't work, of course; but I certainly get that feeling when I stand there facing a man with the ball on the spot only twelve yards away. I feel as though the chances are about a hundred to one against my being able to do anything except pick the ball out of the net, and I can assure you it is distinctly not pleasant to feel that you have no sort of sporting chance with a shot.

Another sort of shot which I do not

like is that which comes through the legs of a crowd of players into the goal. It often springs from a corner-kick which has been only partially cleared, and the ball is crashed back by one of the players who happens to be waiting on the edge of the crowd surging around the goal.

The chief difficulty for the goalkeeper over this kind of effort arises from the fact that he seldom sees it in time to make preparations for its coming. It is on him, and sometimes past him, before he gets half a chance to deal with it. I always ask my full-backs to give me plenty of room, for that is the first essential towards saving a shot—to be able to see it coming.

I never mind how hard a man shoots, provided he is a fair distance out and I can get a decent view of the ball, because it is a fact that among the saves which generally bring quite a lot of applause for the goalkeeper is the one which comes at a terrific pace about body high. This is about the easiest type of shot to save of all, for if the goalkeeper should fail to grasp it truly, there is still his body to keep the ball from going into the net.

I confess that I am not in love with the high dropping shot which has to be cleared somehow with a crowd of players doing their best to prevent the clearance. To attempt to keep one eye on the opposing forwards and one on the ball is not easy, and under such circumstances the goalkeeper who doesn't keep his head is lost. Even if he does keep his head he may be lost, for one of the hustling forwards may brush him off the ball just as he is in the act of saying.

When the ball is dry and the ground hard, the goalkeeper has a much easier time of it than he has when the ground is soft and the ball slippery. And, talking of a greasy ball reminds me of an incident which happened years ago in a cup-tie, when I allowed myself to be beaten by a shot which I certainly ought to have saved.

We—that is, Middlesbrough—were playing Manchester City on a slippery ground, and that very fine outside-

R. G. WILLIAMSON.



Middlesbrough's Famous Goalkeeper.

right, Meredith, took a corner-kick, which he placed with quite remarkable accuracy. Through the air it came, dropping just in front of the post. I really ought to have caught the ball in my arms and thrown it

away, but in a weak moment I thought I would be clever.

So I applied one of my fists, meaning to give the ball a terrific blow, forgetting that it was about as slippery as an eel. It shot off my fist and backwards into the net, and thereby we lost a goal which I ought never to have allowed.

Incidentally, in that little story you have a golden rule for all goalkeepers. It is this: Never fist at the ball when there is time to catch it.

The former way of dealing with a shot may be more spectacular, and if it comes off will bring forth quite a lot of applause; but the other way is much more sensible and much safer. And, as I explained at the outset, safety must be the first consideration in the mind of the good goalkeeper, because one mistake will be fatal.

A cross wind, or the sun shining full in the eyes, increases the difficulties of the goalkeeper's position; and I confess that I don't like dealing with a cross shot from the wings which may be curling all over the place in the wind. Apart from this, of the two sorts of shots, I prefer, generally speaking, the high ones to the low ones. It is much easier to fling out the arms than the legs, and to save a shot by throwing yourself full length demands absolute accuracy of timing on the goalkeeper's part.

I like goalkeeping though, all the same. Between the posts a man is all on his own, and so long as he does what he is put there to do—that is, stop all the shots he can—there is no necessity for him to worry about the other fellows; whereas the forward, must be part of a machine.

R. G. WILLIAMSON.





# A BABE IN THE WOOD!

A Grand, Complete Story of  
**FRANK RICHARDS & Co.,**  
the Chums of the School in the  
Backwoods.

BY...  
**MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

### The 1st Chapter.

#### Algernon's Baggage.

"School to-morrow, Franky!" remarked Bob Lawless.  
Frank Richards nodded.  
The two chums had come out of the ranch-house after dinner at the Lawless Ranch. There was an autumn mist on the plains, and the distant summits of the Rocky Mountains were shrouded from view.  
"I guess," continued Bob, "that we'll ride over and see the Cherub this afternoon. I want to see how that cousin of his is getting on."  
"I'm on!" said Frank, with a smile.  
And the cousins went for their horses.  
At Cedar Creek, the other fellows were already back at school; but Miss Meadows had given a few days' leave to Frank Richards & Co., to allow them to meet Vere Beauclerc's cousin on his arrival in British Columbia.  
The Co. had brought him from the railroad town, up the Thompson Valley, and landed him at Mr. Beauclerc's cabin. And both Frank and Bob were very curious to know how he was getting on there.  
For the Honourable Algernon Beauclerc was most decidedly a fish out of water in the Canadian West. A youth who looked as if he had just stepped out of a Bond Street tailor's was likely to have some startling experiences in the Thompson Valley, the chums considered. It was true that the Honourable Algy considered himself very wide awake indeed, and rather prided himself upon being "all there." But it was also true that he was as green as grass; in fact, what Bob Lawless described as a jay from Jaysville.  
Exactly how such a youth would be getting on in the frontier cabin was quite an interesting question. It was probable that Vere Beauclerc and his father, the remittance-man, had their hands full with their guest.  
Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin trotted cheerily away across the plain towards Cedar Camp, on the outskirts of which was the Beauclerc clearing. As they came in sight of the Cedar Camp trail, the post-wagon from the south came into view.  
"Hallo! They've got a load on to-day!" remarked Frank Richards, as he glanced at the wagon.  
Bob Lawless burst into a chuckle.  
"It's the tenderfoot's baggage!" he exclaimed.  
"The what?"  
"Algy's truck!" said Bob. "We left it at Kamloops, you remember, for his tutor man to come on with it. And there they are!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Frank Richards could not help laughing.  
The baggage piled in the post-wagon was imposing to view. There were trunks, there were portmanteaux, there were bags and cases and hat-boxes. The "truck" made quite a little hill in the wagon.  
Seated beside the driver was a bony gentleman whom they recognised as Mr. Toots, the tutor of the hopeful Algernon, who had brought his charge out to Canada.  
The chums rode into the trail, and trotted on beside the wagon, which was heading for the cabin by the creek. They raised their Stetson hats in polite greeting to Mr. Toots.  
That gentleman acknowledged the salute, with a very unhappy look. The bumping and jolting of the post-wagon on the rough trail had not been enjoyed by the tutor. The trail was marked only by the ruts of wheels and hoof-prints of horses and cattle; and the wagon traversed it in a succession of jumps and jerks. And at every jump and jerk, poor Mr. Toots jumped and jerked in his seat, and he probably had more aches and pains than he could count in his hapless bones by that time. The post-driver seemed rather amused by his expres-

sion and his occasional ejaculations; and Frank and Bob, though sympathetic, could not help smiling.  
"You've got a cargo on board this time, Hank!" called out Bob Lawless to the driver.  
"Search me!" said Hank.  
Which implied an expressive affirmative.  
"All for the Beauclercs' shack?"  
"Correct! Is Old Man Beauclerc starting a store, young Lawless?" inquired Hank.  
"Ha, ha! I think that's his nephew's truck," answered Bob.  
"Merely schoolboy's outfit, Hank."  
"Waal, search me!" said the driver, more emphatically than before.  
"Are we very far from our destination now?" inquired Mr. Toots, in a feeble voice.  
"Nope!" said Hank. "Another mile, sir. You'll live through it, if you hang on careful."  
Mr. Toots suppressed a groan. He was rather doubtful whether he would

"Where's Algernon?" asked Bob, with a grin.  
"He's not down yet."  
"Not down?"  
"Well, not up," said Beauclerc, with a smile.  
"Not up at three in the afternoon!" roared Bob Lawless.  
"He was tired after his journey," explained Beauclerc. "He's had breakfast and lunch in bed."  
"Great gophers!"  
"This is a new country to him," said Beauclerc. "He's not used to two days' ride on end, you know. I'm afraid he's a bit disappointed with Canada, too. He seems to have expected cabs and country mansions."  
"Poor old Algy!" said Frank Richards.  
"He's very anxious about his baggage, and I'm glad it's arrived," said Beauclerc. "I—I don't know where it's going to be put, though."  
"Lend a hand with this truck!" said Hank.  
"Certainly!"

beds in it. One of the beds was made; but the other was occupied by the Honourable Algernon Beauclerc, the younger son of Lord St. Austells.  
Algernon was sitting up in bed, with a lugubrious expression upon his tired face.  
The room was well furnished for a cabin in the Thompson Valley; but certainly it must have presented a striking contrast to what the Honourable Algy was accustomed to at home.  
"Oh, it's you, Toots!" said Algernon.  
"Yes, my dear boy."  
"How are you feeling now, Algy?" asked Beauclerc.  
"Rotten!"  
"Oh!"  
"Tired!"  
"You'll get over that."  
"I don't believe I shall."  
"You'll feel as right as rain to-morrow," said Beauclerc encouragingly.  
"Rot!"  
Beauclerc coughed.  
Algernon groped round, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye. He blinked at Beauclerc and the tutor.  
"Don't think me an ungracious rotter, Vere," he said. "I'm no end grateful for your hospitality, and all that."  
"We'll try to make you comfortable," said Vere.  
"Yaas, I've no doubt you will."  
Algernon's tone implied that he did not think Beauclerc would succeed, however.  
Vere Beauclerc left his cousin and the tutor together, and descended to rejoin his chums.  
"Shut the door, Toots, will you?" said Algernon.  
"It is shut, Algernon."  
"Sit down, if you can find anything to sit on."  
Mr. Toots sat down.  
"Nice hole this, ain't it?" said Algernon dismally.

can't have that. I can't be a cad! But how can I black my own boots, Toots?"  
Mr. Toots gave a hopeless shrug of the shoulders. He seemed to find that problem too much for him, so he gave it up.  
"What the governor was thinkin' of," groaned Algernon. "I can't imagine! Can you, Toots?"  
Mr. Toots coughed.  
"Lord St. Austells considered that a drastic change would be beneficial to you," he remarked. "He thought that you would learn a great deal by roughing it a little."  
"A little!" gasped Algernon. "I don't mind roughing it a little. I have roughed it in my time. I travelled second-class once. But this isn't roughing it a little, Toots. This will kill me!"  
"I hope not, Master Algernon," murmured Mr. Toots.  
"I'm comin' back with you, Toots."  
Mr. Toots shook his head.  
"His lordship's instructions—" he began.  
"Rats!"  
"Master Algernon!"  
"Jever hear of such an unnatural parent!" groaned Algernon. "It's worse than the babes in the wood. I'm a babe in the wood, that's what I am—only worse! I'm comin' home again."  
"Impossible, Master Algernon!"  
"Are you stickin' here, Toots?"  
"No. I am staying at the hotel in Cedar Camp till I have recovered from my dreadful journey. Then I am going back to Kamloops, to take the train."  
"I'm comin' with you."  
"Impossible!"  
"Look here—"  
"I will leave you now, Master Algernon," said Mr. Toots, rising. "I must not risk darkness setting in before I reach my hotel. I tremble to think of what might happen in that case."  
"Don't leave me, Toots."  
"I must, Master Algernon."  
"Look here, Toots, old chap—"  
But Mr. Toots seemed deaf. He quitted the room, and the door closed after him.  
"You're a rotter, Toots!" roared Algernon.  
Mr. Toots was deaf even to that.  
"Oh, my hat!" groaned Algernon. "What am I goin' to do? That's what I want to know. What the merry thump am I goin' to do?"  
And as there was no answer to be found to that question, Algernon laid his weary head on the pillow, and groaned again.

### The 3rd Chapter.

#### French Leave.

Frank Richards and his chums were busy now with the Honourable Algernon's baggage.  
Piece by piece it was carried into the cabin, and the trunks and portmanteaux were stacked wherever there was room for them.  
Mr. Beauclerc came in from the fields while they were so engaged. The remittance-man stared at the baggage, but made no remark upon it. He greeted Mr. Toots when the latter came downstairs, Mr. Toots eyeing him with some curiosity. He was aware that the remittance-man was brother to Lord St. Austells, but certainly the roughly-clad, muddy-booted man did not look much like a member of the nobility just then. Mr. Toots politely declined the hospitality of the cabin; he was anxious to get to his hotel. And Mr. Beauclerc walked with him to Cedar Camp, Mr. Toots being sublimely ignorant of his bearings. In those unaccustomed surroundings the tutor hardly knew his right hand from his left, which was also the state of the hapless Algernon.  
"Isn't it about time Algernon came down?" grinned Frank Richards, when the remittance-man and Mr. Toots disappeared down the trail together.  
"I suppose so," said Beauclerc, with a rather embarrassed smile. "He's doing as he likes to-day. It's school for all of us to-morrow, you know. Algy's a bit of an ass, of course."  
"He'll pull round," said Frank. "Oh, yes; I'm sure he will! He's not a bad chap, by any means."  
"I wish we had him at the ranch," said Bob Lawless, laughing. "I'd get no end of fun out of Algy."  
"The poor chap isn't in much of a humour for fun, I fancy."  
"You remember when you first came to Canada, Franky? I made you turn up at Cedar Creek in Etous and a silk topper. Ha, ha! The galoots nearly had fits!"  
Frank Richards laughed.  
"Yes, you ass," he answered. "But Beau isn't going to play tricks



**ALGY HITS OUT!** "Help!" yelled Algernon. "Oh, shet your yaup-trap, and hand out the greenbacks!" growled Dry Billy. For answer Algernon struck out with his fist at the dirty face above him, and Mr. Bowers gave a howl as his red nose caught the blow. "Help!" shrieked Algy. "We're coming!" came an answering voice over the dusky plains.

live through it, if the journey was much prolonged.  
"I guess it's rather lucky we meseyed along, Franky!" murmured Bob Lawless. "They'll want a hand with all that truck when it arrives."  
"Where the thump will it all be put?" asked Frank.  
Bob chuckled.  
"Ask me another, old chap. Mr. Beauclerc's got a nobby new cabin built, where the old shack used to stand, so there's more room—but I guess his cabin won't hold that lot. Perhaps they'll stack it up in the timber."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The wagon rolled and jolied on, leaving the direct trail to cut across the prairie towards the creek. As a rule, passengers alighted on the trail, and baggage was handed down there, and carried if it had to go farther. But Hank's present cargo could not be carried, and the post-driver was making an exception in its favour.  
The cabin on the clearing by the creek came in sight.  
Vere Beauclerc stepped out at the doorway, as the post-wagon rumbled up. He smiled and nodded to his chums as they jumped from their horses.  
"Glad to see you, you fellows," he said. "My hat! That looks rather a lot of baggage!"

Beauclerc helped Mr. Toots to alight, and then the schoolboys lent their aid to the post-driver in landing the baggage.  
It was rather a long task.  
When the "truck" was landed, it made an imposing pile outside the cabin. Mr. Beauclerc, who was away at work down the clearing, was not there to aid, but Frank Richards & Co. piled in with hearty goodwill, and the truck was all stacked outside the cabin at last.  
"I guess I'm glad to get rid of that, and the horses, too!" grunted Hank, as he climbed back into his seat.  
"You coming on to the camp, sir?"  
Mr. Toots shook his head, and Hank drove away with the jolting wagon. The tutor blinked at Vere Beauclerc.  
"I must see Algernon before I leave," he said.  
"Come in, sir!" answered Beauclerc.  
And the tutor followed him to the Honourable Algernon's quarters.

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### Awful for Algernon!

Vere Beauclerc tapped at his cousin's door.  
"Come in!" yawned a tired voice.  
The Cherub opened the door, and ushered Mr. Toots into the room.  
It was a little room, with two camp-

"Your relatives seem very hospitable," said Mr. Toots.  
"Hospital enough," he answered. "Vere is a really decent chap, and his father ain't a bad sort, I believe. But I'm not going to stay here, Toots."  
"My dear boy—"  
Algernon sat upright, and transfixed the tutor with his eyeglass.  
"Can I stay here?" he demanded. "The pater must have been fairly off his rocker to think of sendin' me here. He ought to have known better. It's a practical joke on the pater's part, that's what it must be. He can't intend to strand me here."  
"I think—"  
"You've really got instructions to take me back with you, haven't you, Toots?" said Algernon beseechingly.  
"Not at all."  
"The pater can't know what it's like. Do you know, there isn't a bell in this room?" groaned Algernon. "And if there was a bell, there's nobody to answer it. I shall have to brush my own clothes if I stay here!"  
"Bless my soul!"  
"And my boots!" said Algernon, in a thrilling whisper of woe. "I shall have to black my own boots, Toots!"  
"Good heavens!"  
"If they're done for me, Vere will have to do them," said Algernon. "I





## A BABE IN THE WOOD!

(Continued from  
the previous page.)

—pinned to the pine top of the table.

Beauclerc started as he saw it.

"My hat!"

"Hallo! Somebody been in and left a message!" said Bob.

Beauclerc picked up the paper, and held it up for his chums to see, with a troubled brow.

It was scribbled on in pencil; and the message ran:

"Dear Uncle and Cousin,—Please don't think me ungrateful for your hospitality, but I have decided to go home. Good-bye.  
"ALGERNON BEAUCLERC."

"Gone!" ejaculated Frank Richards.

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

Beauclerc ran quickly up the stairs. He came down again in a minute. The room above was empty.

He looked at his chums with a startled face.

"He's gone!" he said almost helplessly. "Cleared off while we were out riding. My father hasn't come back yet—what on earth am I to do?"

"Blessed if I wouldn't let the silly gopher go!" growled Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards looked very serious. "I can't let him go, of course," said Beauclerc. "Father will be distressed if he sees this. Oh, the young ass! He's in father's charge now, now his tutor's gone; his father's trusted him to us."

"He may land himself into bad trouble, wandering out on the prairie by himself," said Frank Richards, with knitted brows. "He can't even have a horse. You had no spare horse here?"

"No."

"Then he's gone on foot!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Has the utter idiot started trying to walk to the railway? Oh, gum! He will be lost on the plains as soon as night sets in."

Beauclerc compressed his lips.

"He's got to be found and brought back," he said. "There are plenty of rough characters in this section that he might fall in with, and— He broke off. "I'm going to look for him."

"We're coming with you," said Frank. "Very likely Bob can pick up the young duffer's trail. What a silly trick, speaking off like that when no one was about."

"He knew that he would not be allowed to go, as he is here by his father's orders," said Beauclerc. "He's got to be found. Anything may happen to him—even if he didn't lose his way and die of hunger on the plains. The awful young duffer! Come on."

The chums of Cedar Creek hurried out for their horses.

The sun had almost disappeared, but the moon was rising over the mountains, and there was light enough for Bob Lawless' keen eyes to pick up the trail left by Algernon's nobby riding-boots.

Evidently he had started on foot, for the tracks of his boots were found leading away towards the post-trail.

But the hapless Algernon had not even been able to find his way to the post-trail, for his track wandered off to the prairie before the trail was reached.

"Can you pick it up, Bob?" asked Frank Richards, as the raucher's son stopped, scanning the ground carefully.

"Yep! We shall have to walk our horses for a bit. We've struck a stony patch. But we'll run the young gopher down!"

And Frank Richards &amp; Co. followed on the track of the elusive Algernon, as fast as the faint track and the dim light would allow.

The 4th Chapter.  
Algy Finds Trouble.

"My luck's in!" Dry Billy Bowers made that remark.

Mr. William Bowers was tramping across the grassy plain, under the moonlight, in the direction of Cedar Camp. Mr. Bowers looked very worn, as he generally did. He had been at Silver Creek looking for work. He had been looking for it, apparently, in a chicken-run belonging to a citizen of Silver Creek, who had found him there, and, being of a distrustful turn of mind, had imagined that Mr. Bowers was looking for chickens. With the aid of a heavy boot and a riding-whip, the Silver

Creek citizen had helped Mr. Bowers to depart, and the hapless "hobo" was on his way to Thompson with several severe aches in his bony person, and in a very pessimistic frame of mind.

And then he came suddenly upon the Honourable Algernon.

Dry Billy had never seen the Honourable Algernon before; and he could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw him now.

It was the eyeglass gleaming in the moonlight that caught Mr. Bowers' attention at first and made him jump. Billy Bowers had seen monocles before, certainly; but not in the Thompson Valley of British Columbia. Algernon had stopped.

He had tramped some miles, and he was fatigued; and he had not the faintest idea of the direction he should take. The dim prairie on all sides of him loomed vaguely, almost terrifyingly. The boundless space had an oppressing effect on him. Mr. Bowers was glad to see him, but Algernon was more glad still to see Mr. Bowers. He would have been glad to see a Red Indian just then, to break the oppressive silence and solitude.

"William, my boy!" murmured Mr. Bowers. "Your luck's in! It ain't a dream. If you'd been samplin' the tanglefoot at Silver Creek, I should reckon this was snakes in a new variety. But it ain't. This yer dude has stepped out of his band-box jest to oblige you, William."

Thus apostrophising himself, the loafer advanced towards the Honourable Algernon.

"Evenin', sir," said Dry Billy affably.

"Good-evening," said Algernon. "Stranger in these hyer parts, sir?"

"Yes," gasped Algernon. "I—I—I think I've lost my way."

Mr. Bowers grinned. He did not need telling that. His only wonder was, how the elegant Algy came to be there at all. Such "critters" did not grow in the Thompson valley; Mr. Bowers knew that.

"P'raps I can help you, sir," he suggested.

"You're very kind," said Algernon. "I hope you can. I want to get to Kamloops, to take the train for the east."

"K-k-kamloops!" stammered Dry Billy. "That's donkeys' miles from hyer."

"I suppose it is," sighed Algernon. "I know it was a thunderin' long ride up here from the railway. Can't I get a coach, or a trap, or somethin' to take me there, somewhere?"

"I'd give you a lift myself, sir, but I've left my carriage an' pair at home," said Dry Billy.

Algernon gave him a suspicious look. Mr. Bowers' appearance was not reassuring. He was sober, for once in a way, but there was a strong smell of late drinks about him. His coppery, stubby, unscrupulous face had a rather unpleasant effect upon the Cherub's cousin. Algernon backed away a little.

"But I guess I can get you a lift, sir," said Dry Billy. "Course, you'd have to pay for it."

"I could do that!" said Algernon.

"P'raps a buggy would serve your turn, sir," suggested Mr. Bowers amicably. "P'raps you'd like to hire a buggy for, say, fifty dollars, to drive you down to the railroad."

"I'd be jolly glad. Look here, you show me where I can get a vehicle and I'll stand you somethin' for your trouble."

"Tell you what, sir," said Mr. Bowers. "You take a rest hyer, sir, under this hyer tree and I'll fetch the buggy to take you on."

Algernon's face brightened up.

"By gad! That's a jolly good idea!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Bowers held out a dirty hand. "Fifty dollars for the buggy, and say five for me!" he suggested.

"How does that strike you?"

Algernon Beauclerc was green. But a much deeper shade of green than Algernon's would have been required to make him trust Dry Billy Bowers with fifty dollars.

"I'll pay the man when he brings the trap," he said.

"I guess I'll bring it myself, sir."

"Then I'll pay you after the drive."

"I guess I'll have to put the money down for the buggy when I hire it in Cedar Camp," said Mr. Bowers persuasively.

Algernon shook his head.

"Are we far here from Cedar Camp?" he asked.

"Jest a few miles."

"Well, you guide me there, and I'll give you your five dollars, and I can hire some vehicle there myself."

Mr. Bowers' agreeable smile faded a little. He had hoped to extract a handsome "stake" from the dandy

tenderfoot by means of the use of his tongue only. But he was quite prepared to use other methods if his tongue did not prove efficacious. Mr. Bowers was thinking of the flowing fire-water at the Red Dog Saloon in Thompson, and he was not likely to stick at trifles. He was too dry for that.

"Can't you trust me, young feller-me-lad?" he demanded, in a very gruff tone, and his eyebrows knitted threateningly.

Algernon backed away another pace.

"Look here—" he began.

"Kin you trust me or kin you not?" roared Mr. Bowers, following him up.

"Well, no, I can't, if you want it plain," answered Algernon; "and I know I'm jolly well not goin' to anyhow. So now you know!"

Dry Billy blinked at him. Algy's answer showed that he was not wanting in courage, whatever might be said for his intelligence. Persuasion had failed Mr. Bowers, and bullying seemed to fail, too. But Dry Billy had still other resources.

He raised a horny fist, and brandished it under the Honourable Algernon's aristocratic nose.

"Hand it over!" he said. "Pony up! And be spry!"

"Eh—what?"

"I'm letting you off," said Mr. Bowers, "at fifty dollars. Not a cent less. Pony up, if you know when you're healthy!"

"Confound your cheek!" exclaimed Algy hotly. "Why the dickens should I give you fifty dollars?"

"Because I'll mash you into a pesky jelly if you don't!" answered Mr. Bowers darkly. "Got that?"

Algernon clenched his hands. There was a thrill at his heart, as he backed further away from the ruffian's threatening face. It was borne in upon his mind that he would have done better to remain in the cabin on the Beauclercs' clearing, in spite of the fact that there was no bell in his room and no footman to answer it. He realised that he had run into danger, and if he had been less fatigued he would probably have thrown his loftiness to the winds, and taken to his heels. But he knew there was no chance of escape by flight.

The loafer watched him savagely, assuming as ferocious an expression as he could. Dry Billy was not an ill-natured man in his own way, and he would have preferred not to "handle" his victim.

But Algernon was not to be frightened by black looks into handing over his money.

"Are you going to pony up?" demanded Dry Billy.

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Algernon undauntedly.

"What?"

"I won't give you a cent!"

"Then I guess I'm goin' to make catsmeat of you, you pesky dude!" roared Mr. Bowers. "And hyer goes to start!"

He rushed right at Algernon.

To his surprise, the dandified tenderfoot stood up to his rush, and hit out, straight from the shoulder. Flight being impossible, Algernon was making a fight for it, and he had plenty of pluck. And there was a good deal of strength behind that drive. It caught Mr. Bowers by surprise, and sent him staggering backwards.

"Yoooooogh!" spluttered the astonished ruffian.

Crash, crash!

Algernon followed up the attack with right and left. His hope was to knock out the ruffian for long enough to enable him to make his escape. There was a heavy bump as Mr. William Bowers landed on his back in his grass.

Then Algernon scuttled.

But the loafer was up in a twinkling, and, rushing after him, his hard face inflamed with rage.

Before Algernon had taken a dozen steps Dry Billy's grasp was on his shoulder, and he was swung round.

"Now, then!" panted Mr. Bowers. Algernon struck out desperately, but Dry Billy was not taken by surprise this time. Unheeding the blows, he threw himself upon Algernon, and bore him to the ground in a powerful grip.

"Help!" shrieked Algy.

The cry came instinctively to his lips, and it rang through the dusk of the prairie. Dry Billy grinned savagely. It was not likely that a cry for help would be heard on the lonely plain.

He planted a knee on Algernon's chest, and pinned him down on the rough ground.

"Help!" yelled Algernon.

"Oh, shut your yap-trap!" growled Dry Billy. "There ain't nobody to hear, 'cept it's the gophers."

Now then, turn out your greenbacks!"

Instead of turning out his cash, Algernon struck up at the brutal face above him, and Mr. Bowers gave a howl as his red nose caught the blow.

The next moment blows were raining on the hapless Algy.

He struggled and squirmed and yelled frantically, dazed by the shower of furious blows. His nose was streaming red, his senses swimming.

"Oh—oh, help!" he shrieked.

"Now then, you pesky dude, p'raps you'll—"

"Help!"

To Algy's joy and Mr. Bowers' astonishment an answering call came back through the dusk of the plains.

"We're coming!"

The Fifth Chapter.  
Algernon Gives In

Frank Richards &amp; Co., following the dimly-marked track in the moonlight, had heard the despairing cries of Algernon from the distance. And as soon as they heard them they understood.

"That's Algy!" exclaimed Beauclerc, stopping and listening.

"Hurry up!" exclaimed Frank. The horses fairly raced through the grass.

"Help, help!"

"We're coming!"

The schoolboys urged on their horses.

Dry Billy Bowers, with a muttered curse, leaped up from his victim. His bleared eyes stared through the dimness towards the shadowy figures that loomed up. He cursed again.

In his rage and disappointment the ruffian bestowed a kick on the prostrate figure at his feet, and then darted away into the gloom. Algy sat up dazedly.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Bob, dragging at his horse.

Dry Billy Bowers had vanished into the high grass as the three riders drew rein round Algernon. They jumped from the saddle.

"Algy!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"Oh! Oh! Oh, you!" gasped Algernon. "I—I—I've been attacked! I've been nearly killed! Oh!"

"You're bleeding!" muttered Beauclerc. "Are you—"

"It's my nose. That beast hammered me on the ground!" groaned Algernon. "Ow! I feel bad! Ow!"

"Poor old chap! Who was it, do you know?"

"A hulking ruffian, with a whisky face!" groaned Algernon. "He wanted to rob me, and I wasn't havin' it. Ow!"

Bob Lawless whistled.

"So you put up a fight?" he said. "Ow! Yes."

"Blessed if I thought—" Bob Lawless checked himself, realising that it would not be polite to the Cherub's cousin to state what he would have expected the Honourable Algernon to do under such circumstances.

"Get on my horse, old chap!" said Vere Beauclerc hastily. "We'll soon get you home."

Algernon hesitated one moment, but only one. The thought of the Beauclercs' cabin, from which he had fled, was like the thought of a haven of rest and safety, after his wanderings on the prairie and his encounter with Mr. William Bowers.

"I—I—I'll come!" he stammered. Beauclerc helped him on to the black horse.

"You—you found my note?" stammered Algernon.

"I've got it in my pocket. No need for my father to see it; it would only distress him," said Beauclerc quietly.

"That is, if you'll give me your word not to play the fool like this again, Algy! My father's responsible for you."

Algernon groaned.

"I—I won't hook it again!" he mumbled. "I—I suppose I've got to make the best of it! Ow!"

"You'll find it all right if you do that!" said Frank Richards.

Algernon grunted. He did not feel so sure of that. But he said no more, as the schoolboys started for home. Near the clearing the chums separated, Beauclerc taking his cousin on to the cabin, and Frank and Bob riding for the ranch.

"A queer customer, that tenderfoot, and no mistake!" remarked Bob.

"Yes, rather!" assented Frank. "But he's got pluck, anyhow," said Bob Lawless sagely. "I reckon he'll pull round in time."

And Frank Richards could only hope that his chum was right. He could not help wondering what was likely to happen to the Honourable Algernon when he made his first appearance at Cedar Creek School.