

T/H
GRAND NEW CINEMA COMPETITION—BIG CASH PRIZES! (See p.272)

The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

No. 996. Vol. XX. New Series]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending July 10th, 1920.

THE GOLDEN TRAIL



BY
SIDNEY
DREW

KIDNAPPED!

Dick was barely thirty yards from the camp, and he had just turned the camel's head that way, when the sand around him heaved up in half a dozen places, and dusky figures arose like spectres out of the grave. He had no time to utter a cry; in fact, he scarcely saw them. A hand was pressed hard over his mouth, and he felt a choking clutch at his throat. His arms were forced against his sides, and in an instant he was pinioned—a prisoner!

(For Opening Chapters Turn to the Next Page.)

Archelos Tries Again.

Bennet Garvery turned on his heel and went into the hot and stuffy room, and at the sight of him, Sandy Noakes put away the pack of cards. The airman's cool confession of red murder had given Bennet a shock. He was tired and hungry. Torvey remained outside with Davri Archelos. Torvey was more callous than Garvery, and he was more startled than appalled.

"It's not the sort of thing I'd care to do myself, dear boy," he said, "but it may be useful. I could pot at a fellow if he was looking at me, but it don't seem cricket to bung a chap over with a gun from behind a tree. Rather awkward if they nabbed you."

"There is no law out there, there are no police, and no eye saw me," said Archelos. "This man was a danger, and the danger I have remove. The boy now is helpless. We need do him no harm. It was the man I fear, and those I fear I am wise to kill."

Archelos rolled himself a cigarette

and applied his boot to the camel's ribs. Grunting, the camel scrambled up and squeezed through a narrow passage between the houses.

"And now," went on Davri Archelos, "it will be well to find Peter the Dervish and show him the writing. Or is it that you will go to the well and search, for it is not easy to know when Peter the Dervish will return. For what I have done I deserve more than the share I agree to. I judge a man quickly and truly. This Darby would not be shaken off."

"Well, that's your affair," said Torvey. "The fact is, dear boy, that I must have a rest before I go looking for clues. I've been boiled and baked and shaken to bits and so has Garvery. Camel-riding is an art I haven't acquired. And besides this happy little thought of yours has given us a bit of leisure. Many thanks, old sport, though it is a trifle gruesome."

Bennet Garvery and Torvey were sound asleep when Tim Horridge and Sandy Noakes rode out of Siwah, each leading a spare camel. Jack Darby had not been successful in his search. He sat with his back against

the trunk of a palm smoking his pipe. He had been silent for quite a long time. At last he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and turned to Dick.

"Losing that paper was a bit of a disaster, Dick," he said. "It looks as if it will spoil the whole game for us."

"Never say die, Jack," said Dick. "If they took it out of my pocket as you think, it was a dirty piece of work, but we can't undo it. And this can't be the place, for where's the pillar? I remembered what my uncle had written word for word, and the broken pillar was one of the most important things. Where the eighth shadow falls at lark-rise, you know. There's no pillar here."

"Not a solitary sign of one, my son," answered Darby with a yawn. "I wish I had some fresh tobacco, for being soaked in the well and dried in the sun hasn't improved the flavour of this. That uncle of yours must have been a queer sort of chap, and up to the present moment you haven't a lot to thank him for."

"He sent us money after dad was killed, don't forget that," said Dick. "Cherry and I needed it, too, I can

tell you. Old lawyer Brayburn wouldn't answer my questions, but, of course, we knew the money came from Uncle Garvery, so he wasn't such a bad chap."

"Not until he invented this stunt perhaps," said Jack, with another prolonged yawn. "He wasn't giving you a fair chance against your cousin, and that is how it strikes me. Torvey must have put up some money, for I hardly fancy they'd have come out with only five hundred pounds. That chap Archelos would want paying well for the risks he was taking. I don't suppose there's a drain of petrol in Siwah. If he had run out of juice he'd have had to send all the way to the military camp at Denwallah for another supply. Aeroplaning in the desert is an expensive hobby and pretty risky. Are those two fellows in sight yet?"

"Not yet," said Dick. "There's nothing visible except sand and sky. Thank goodness, I feel better. I never cracked up like that before."

"The heat," said Jack Darby. "I've been soaked in it so long that I don't feel it. I wonder if Peter the Dervish ran into those chaps and told

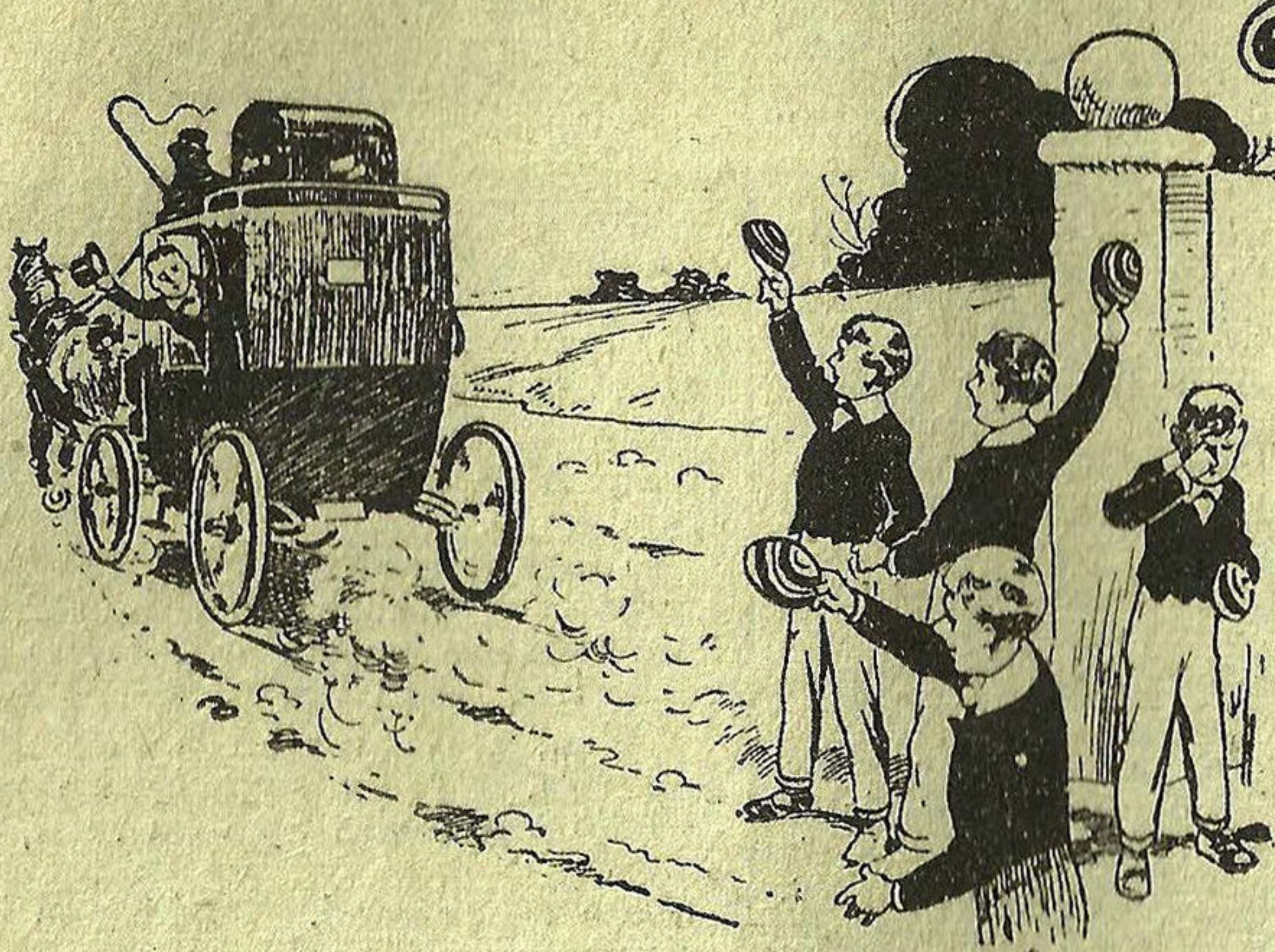
them something? There's just a ghost of a chance that Bennet hasn't got the paper. Their luggage was burned but it's a very outside chance. They'd have their money in their pockets and the paper, too."

Presently Tim Horridge and Noakes rode up and reported the arrival of Garvery and Torvey.

"I wanted Tim to bring the luggage and the other camel, sir," growled Sandy Noakes, "but he was too pig-headed. Everything will be pinched afore we get back, camel included, for that place is the real 'ome of the forty thieves. They'll loot the whole lot, the dirty sharks."

"I don't think they will," said Jack. "We'll not sleep in Siwah under a roof and be stifled, Dick, but camp out under the stars, where there's fresh air and no smells. I say Tim, did you see anybody come into the town, ani Arab on a camel for instance?"

"I saw a saddled camel, but I don't know where it came from, sir," said Tim, "but no chap that looked like an Arab. All the people I saw were too dirty, and most of the Arabs I've met was fairly clean. Funny chaps them



"Sacked!"

A LONG, COMPLETE STORY
OF
JIMMY SILVER & Co.,
AT
ROOKWOOD SCHOOL,
INTRODUCING
VALENTINE MORNINGTON.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Kept In!

"Sit down, Erroll!"
Mr. Bootles spoke rather sharply. He was sitting at his desk, with a thoughtful and moody brow, when Kit Erroll rose up in his place in the class.

Nobody was looking very cheerful that Saturday afternoon, in the Fourth Form-room at Rookwood.

The Classical Fourth were under detention. Outside, the summer sun streamed down in the quadrangle, and the rooks cawed cheerily in the thick foliage of the old beeches. From the distant cricket-ground, a shout was occasionally heard; very tantalising to the detained juniors in the dusky Form-room. As Mr. Bootles was in charge of the detained Form, he was, in point of fact, detained too; and he did not like giving up his half-holiday any more than his pupils did.

Moreover, many of the juniors were thinking about Mornington of the Fourth, shut up in the punishment-room, under sentence of expulsion from the school. That did not make them any more cheerful.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were working at their detention tasks, in a rather desultory way. Kit Erroll, usually one of the steadiest workers in the Fourth, had done hardly anything, so far. All his thoughts were with his chum in the punishment-room.

He rose to his feet at last, and Mr. Bootles' eye was on him at once, and he snapped, "Sit down!"

"Will you excuse me, sir—?" began Erroll, in a low voice.

"No, I will not!" interrupted Mr. Bootles, "The whole Form is detained until half-past four. Certainly I shall not excuse you. You may sit down."

"But—!"
Mr. Bootles waved a commanding hand.

"That will do, Erroll."
"I wish to speak to the Head, sir," said Erroll, quietly.

Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his glasses.

"Indeed! And why, Erroll?"
"About—about Mornington, sir."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Bootles, but not unkindly this time. He was touched by the trouble and distress in Erroll's face, "You can have nothing to say to Dr. Chisholm on that subject; indeed, I am assured that he would not hear you. Sit down, my boy."

Erroll sat down without speaking again.

His face was deeply clouded.
Jimmy Silver gave him a sympathetic glance.

Jimmy guessed that Erroll had some idea of making an appeal to the Head, on behalf of his chum; but there was no doubt that Mr. Bootles was right; the Head would not have given him a hearing.

In the silence of the Form-room, the clock ticked away dully. There was a faint scratching of pens. The juniors yawned, and exchanged bored looks, and whispered occasionally. Mr. Bootles glanced at the clock about every five minutes. He was probably as anxious as the juniors to see it indicate half-past four.

Erroll was listening anxiously for the sound of wheels outside. Morny's guardian was to arrive that afternoon; and if he came while the Classical Fourth were in the Form-room, Erroll would not even be able to say good-bye to his best chum. Jimmy Silver, who guessed his thoughts, whispered consolation.

"It's all right, Erroll; old Staapoole can't get here yet. It was after two when the Head telephoned to him."

Erroll nodded.

"Silver," snapped Mr. Bootles, irritably.

"Hem! Yes, sir."
"You were talking!"
"W-w-w-was I, sir!"

"Were you not, Silver?" demanded Mr. Bootles.

"Ye-e-es, sir."
"If you talk again in class you will be detained until six o'clock."

"Oh!"
Jimmy Silver did not talk again.

And there was no more whispers. The Classical Fourth were fully "fed" with detention already; they did not want to risk any more.

At four o'clock Kit Erroll rose to his feet again.

"Mr. Bootles! Will you allow me—?" he began.

"I shall not allow you to go to the Head," said Mr. Bootles, "You will not leave the Form-room, Erroll. Sit down."

For a moment Erroll looked rebellious, and glanced towards the door, as if the thought was in his mind of walking out, in spite of the Form-master's prohibition.

Fortunately, he restrained that impulse.

He sat down again, but he did not work. Latin conjugations had no attraction for him just then, and he could not put his mind into deponent verbs.

The big hand of the clock crawled round slowly. Never had it seemed to crawl with such provoking slowness.

Mr. Bootles, as bored as the rest, walked to and fro, between his desk and the class, suppressing yawns.

It still wanted a few minutes to half-past four, when the master of the Fourth gave in.

"Dismiss!" he said.
There was a movement among the Classical Fourth, as sudden as if they had been electrified.

They jumped up, and filed past the Form-master's desk, laying their papers on the desk as they passed.

Mr. Bootles did not look at the papers.

Some of them, at least, would have merited further detention—and there had been enough detention that afternoon, Mr. Bootles thought.

He was glad to see the juniors march out of the Form-room. The moment they were outside, there was a buzz of voices.

"Oh, dear! Thank goodness!"
"Out at last! Yaw-aw-aw!"
"Hurray!"

There was a rush for the sunny quadrangle.

With a whoop, the released school-boys came swarming out into the open air and sunshine.

Kit Erroll remained in the passage; and Jimmy Silver stopped, to speak to him, ere he followed his chums.

"You're not going to the Head, old scout?" Jimmy asked.

"Yes," said Erroll quietly, "I can go now."

"It won't be any use, old chap."
"I'm going to try."

Erroll walked away in the direction of the Head's study. At the same time there was the long-expected sound of wheels outside. Tubby Muffin came breathlessly in.

"Old Staapoole's come!" he announced. "He's come for Morny! We're out in time to see him go."

Erroll hurried on, and tapped at the Head's door. He had barely time left to make his appeal—and useless as he felt that it must be, he was determined to make it. It was all he could do for his hapless chum.

The 2nd Chapter. No Pardon.

"Come in!"
Dr. Chisholm raised his eyebrows as Erroll of the Fourth entered his study.

"Well?" he said, laconically.

Erroll coloured and stammered. It was borne in upon his mind that he was guilty of colossal "cheek" in coming to that dreaded apartment, and tackling the stern-browed old gentleman who ruled the destinies of Rookwood. There was little that was promising in the Head's look. Indeed, Erroll could guess from his expression, that he was anxious for Sir Rupert Staapoole to arrive, and take away his troublesome nephew; his

only desire was to wash his hands of Valentine Mornington for ever.

"If-if-if you please, sir—" stammered Erroll hopelessly.

"Come, come, what is it?" asked the Head, testily, "Have you anything to say to me, my boy?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Erroll, "About—about Mornington, sir."

"Well?"

"He—he is going away, sir—"

"You are doubtless aware that Mornington is expelled from the school," answered the Head. "His guardian, I think, has just arrived. He will leave with Sir Rupert Staapoole. Mornington was, I believe, your study-mate in the Fourth Form—"

"Yes, sir; my best chum, sir."

"You will have an opportunity of saying good-bye to him, if you desire to do so," said the Head. "You may go, Erroll."

Erroll did not stir.

"May I—may I speak, sir?" he stammered. "I—I wanted to—to ask you if—if you could be lenient with Morny, sir—"

"What?"

The Head's voice was like a rumble of thunder.

Having come to a decision, the headmaster was not likely to change it at the request of a junior school-boy. The bare suggestion was astounding to him. His glance was quite terrifying as it fixed upon Erroll.

But Erroll stuck to his guns. It was his last chance of saying a word in defence of his chum, and he did not care if the Head's anger fell upon himself.

"Morny's my chum, sir," he faltered. "I—I don't know what it will be like when he's gone. If—if you could, sir—"

The distress in the schoolboy's face softened the Head a little. The vials of wrath, which had been on the point of pouring upon the junior's devoted head, were withheld. Dr. Chisholm's voice was unexpectedly kind as he answered the stammering appeal.

"I quite understand your feelings, Erroll, and, surprising as your present conduct is, I excuse you. I cannot, of course, make any change in my decision."

"Oh, sir—"

"You are aware of what Mornington has done," said the Head. "He absented himself from school against strict orders; and when he was sentenced to be flogged, he ran away and remained in hiding for several days, until he was found by a prefect. Even now he is defiant and unrepentant. If I allowed such conduct to pass, Erroll, there would be no discipline at all in the school. Mornington must leave to-day. Say no

more, my boy; I am sorry for you, but you are wasting my time. You may go!"

The Head's tone was final.

With a hopeless look, Kit Erroll quitted the study. In the passage outside he passed Sir Rupert Staapoole, who was being shown in by Tupper. The portly baronet was looking very flustered.

Erroll found Jimmy Silver waiting for him at the corner of the corridor. The captain of the Fourth was sympathetic, but not hopeful.

"Any go?" he asked.

Erroll shook his head.

"It wasn't to be expected, old son," said Jimmy. "I suppose Morny will be taken down to see his uncle now. You can speak to him when he's let out of the punishment-room."

Erroll nodded, and the two juniors went up the stairs together. Erroll tapped at the strong oaken door of the punishment-room.

"Hallo!" came a voice from within—a voice that was cool and flippant in tone.

It told that Valentine Mornington, at least, was undismayed by the turn affairs had taken.

"Morny, old chap—"

"That you, Erroll?"

"Yes. Your uncle's come!"

"The old bird hasn't lost any time," answered Mornington. "Dear old uncle! How anxious he must be to have me home!"

"I think the Head must have asked him to come down at once," said Erroll. "I—I—I wish you weren't going, Morny. I—I say, old chap—"

"Go it!"

"It's just possible that—that if you begged the Head—"

"Catch me beggin' anybody!" answered Mornington. "Not if I were goin' to execution, old bean; and goin' home with Sir Rupert ain't unlike that, either. The Head won't get any soft sawder out of me, I can tell him."

Erroll sighed.

There was no use in arguing with his obstinate and self-willed chum, as he had already learned.

"Here comes Bulkeley!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came up, with a big key in his hand. He glanced at the two juniors, but did not speak, as he unlocked the door of the punishment-room.

"Mornington!"

"Hallo, old top!" said Morny, as the prefect threw open the door.

"Glad to see you again, Bulkeley! I'm gettin' rather fed with solitude."

"You are to come to the Head. Your uncle is with him," said the captain of Rookwood curtly.

"Oh, I'll come!"

"Follow me," said Bulkeley.

Valentine Mornington came out of the punishment-room. His clothes were still dusty from his sojourn in the vaults during the days he had been in hiding. He nodded coolly to Jimmy Silver; but his expression changed a little at the sight of Erroll's distressed face.

"Don't worry, old top," he said, pressing Erroll's arm. "You're not goin' to see the last of me, you know."

"You're leaving Rookwood!" muttered Erroll.

"I mayn't go far."

"What?"

"Aren't you going home with your uncle, Morny?" asked Jimmy Silver, in surprise. "I thought he'd come to take you home."

"So does he; but I'm not goin', all

the same," said Mornington coolly. "My uncle is a bit of a bore, you know, and my Staapoole cousins are anythin' but entertainin'. Sir Rupert will not revel in the delights of my society so long as he thinks; and he will probably be jolly glad of it. All right, Bulkeley; I'm comin'!"

And Mornington followed the Rookwood captain, with his hands in his pockets, and a cool and confident smile upon his face.

The 3rd Chapter. Kindness Unrewarded.

Outside the School House, the station cab was waiting. Sir Rupert Staapoole had come down by train. Within a short distance of the cab a good many Rookwood juniors gathered. All the Fourth were anxious to have a last look at Valentine Mornington; and there were few who did not regret that he was going. Morny had his faults, and plenty of them; but upon the whole the Fourth were sympathetic, especially now that the "chopper" had come down so emphatically.

Mornington's stay in the Head's study was brief; there was little to be said there. Dr. Chisholm handed him over to his uncle officially, and that was all, and he hardly concealed his relief at having got Mornington off his hands. The scapegrace of Rookwood had proved a little too trying for Dr. Chisholm's taste.

Sir Rupert was in a state of ill-concealed annoyance and fluster; his position was not a gratifying one. He accepted the Head's relinquishment of his charge, for the simple reason that he had no choice in the matter. His manner to his nephew was grave and censorious, which was not to be wondered at, in the circumstances. Morny had probably given the worthy baronet more trouble than all Sir Rupert's four sons added together. A chirp from Tubby Muffin warned the little crowd outside the School House that the expelled junior was coming, with his portly and chagrined guardian.

"Here they come, you fellows!" chirped Tubby. "Old Staapoole is looking as waxy as anything, and Morny don't care tuppence."

That was quite a correct description of uncle and nephew, as they emerged together from the House.

Sir Rupert walked directly to the cab, evidently anxious to get away as quickly as possible with his disgraced relative.

Mornington was not in such a hurry, however.

If he was in disgrace, he did not seem to feel it; his manner was quite cool and nonchalant.

His box had been placed on the cab, and his uncle had entered the vehicle, and Morny remained chatting with two of the juniors—Erroll of the Fourth, and Mornington secundus of the Second Form.

Sir Rupert put his head out irritably.

"Valentine!" he snapped.

"Yes," drawled Mornington.

"Kindly step into the cab at once!"

"Right-ho!"

"I am waiting for you," said Sir Rupert, with asperity.

"Good-bye, you fellows," said Mornington; "or perhaps I should say au revoir! Sorry I shan't be here to help you beat St. Jim's, Silver. Good-bye, Erroll, old fellow! Good-bye, 'Erbert!"

Erroll squeezed his chum's hand in silence. His heart was too full for words at that miserable moment. Little 'Erbert knuckled one eye.

Morny's face softened for a moment; but it was only for a moment. He waved his hand lightly, and stepped into the cab.

The driver set his vehicle in motion.

"Good-bye, Morny!"

"Good luck, old chap!"

A dozen fellows waved their hands as the cab rolled away down the gravel.

It passed out of the gateway, and disappeared. Some of the fellows followed as far as the gates, to watch it down the road.

"Well, he's gone!" said Jimmy Silver, as the cab rolled away towards Coombe.

"Poor old Morny!" said Raby.

"Jolly cool customer, though!" remarked Newcome. "I fancy his uncle's going to have his hands full with Morny at home. I think I'd rather be Morny than the uncle."

"Poor old Erroll seems cut up!"

"More than Morny does!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell drily. "There's plenty of light for cricket, Jimmy!"

"Yes, come on!" said Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy's face was thoughtful as he walked with his chums to the cricket-

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are these

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ground. He was sorry for Morny, though Morny did not seem very sorry for himself. He was sorry, too, that he had lost one of the best men in his cricket eleven.

Erroll did not come down to the cricket. He was shut up in his study, alone now. That the parting with his chum had made him unhappy all the Fourth knew. But Erroll was not a fellow to wear his heart upon his sleeve, and he preferred to be alone just then, shrinking even from sympathy. Two or three fellows spoke to him as he went to his study, and Erroll answered them quietly. He was glad when the door of Study No. 4 closed on him.

In Study No. 4 poor Erroll paced restlessly about, in a miserable and troubled frame of mind. That cheery study seemed lonely and desolate without his chum. Perhaps he was a little wounded, too, at the carelessness with which Mornington had parted with him. Morny, after all, had brought his fate upon himself by a long course of the most utter recklessness and defiance of authority. It almost looked as if he did not care whether he separated from his chum or not. If he was, as he had often said, "fed" with Rookwood, surely he might have controlled his restless discontent, for the sake of his friendship.

But Erroll would not reproach his chum, even in unspoken words. If a tinge of bitterness came into his mind, he drove it away.

What was it going to be like at Rookwood without Morny? He had other friends, plenty of them, but Morny was the only fellow he had really chummed with. Chumming with Morny had meant a great deal of patience and not a little self-sacrifice on his part. There was no other fellow at Rookwood who would have borne with Morny's trying temper as Erroll had done. It was possibly because his friendship had involved sacrifice that Erroll had been so loyal and unchanging in it.

Now Morny was gone! Erroll did not make friends hastily, and he could not forget a friend in a hurry. He felt that there were dreary days before him.

There was a tap at the door, and Erroll snatched up a book hastily. He did not want to be seen "moping."

It was Conroy of the Fourth who looked in.

"Coming to tea, kid?" asked the Australian junior cheerily. "We've got rather a special spread in No. 3."

Erroll smiled faintly. He understood the kindly motive of the invitation, but he shook his head. "Thanks, but I won't come!" he said. "Another time, old chap."

"Right you are!"

Conroy closed the door and walked on. Erroll resumed his restless roaming about the study. He looked occasionally from the window, where he could see Jimmy Silver & Co. at cricket in the distance. They did not seem to miss Morny. There was no reason why they should for that matter. Erroll wondered whether any fellow but himself would miss Morny?

The door opened again, this time without a tap. It was Reginald Muffin who rolled in, and, to Erroll's surprise, the fat Classical had a stack of dog-eared books under his arm.

Tubby Muffin landed his cargo on the table, gasped for breath, and blinked genially at the solitary occupant of No. 4.

"That's the first lot!" he announced.

"The first lot!" repeated Erroll. "Yes. I'm going to bring the rest now, and my banjo. If Jones minor comes along and says that Latin grammar is his, you tell him to go and eat coke. It's mine!"

"But I don't understand. What are you bringing your things here for?" asked Erroll, in astonishment.

Tubby smiled cordially. "My dear old chap, I'm coming here to stay," he explained.

"What?"

"I'm not going to leave you lonely, now Morny's gone," said Tubby. "You will want a study-mate, of course. I'm fed with Higgs and Putty Grace and Jones minor in No. 2. They don't place a proper value on a fellow."

"But—"

"Only this morning," continued Tubby, "Higgs was making a fuss about a cake. He said half his cake was gone. Suppose it was? You wouldn't make a fuss about a trifle like that, Erroll."

"Perhaps not. But—"

"I've told them I'm changing out," said Tubby. "Putty had the

cheek to say he was deeply obliged to me. Just as if he was glad I was going, you know. Cheek! That beast Higgs danced round the table as if he was delighted. Only putting it on, of course."

"But—"

"And what do you think Jones minor said?" asked Tubby, in accents of deep indignation. "He said they'd all come here presently and see what I'd taken away with me. As if I'd take anything that wasn't my own, you know. Mind that Latin grammar doesn't go while I'm out. Jones is sure to say it's his, because there's his initials on the fly-leaf. I shouldn't wonder if Higgs was to claim that dictionary, too. He's always making out that it's his. You'll remember?"

"Look here, Muffin—"

"We shall get on no end in this study," said Tubby. "Room for a fellow here. As you're not so hard up as those cads you won't always be making a fuss about grub, and so on. You'll find me rather more agreeable than Morny; not so beastly bad-tempered and cheeky, you know. Between ourselves, Morny was a bit of a blighter, wasn't he, old chap?"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Erroll angrily. "I—"

"Well, I won't say anything against Morny, as he's gone," said Tubby considerably. "Morny had his good points. When he used to have plenty of money he wasn't so bad. But you must own that since he came down in the world he's been awfully tart. Bitter, you know. I couldn't stand

"Is that what you call grateful?" he asked.

"Oh, rot!"

"If my company isn't desired," said Reginald Muffin, with a great deal of dignity, "I will retire."

"Do so, then," said Erroll.

"If you're joking—"

"I'm not!"

Tubby Muffin blinked at Morny's chum. The expression on Erroll's clouded face showed that he certainly was not joking. Amazing as it was, he was not yearning for Tubby Muffin's entrancing society. A frown came over the fat brow of Reginald Muffin, of the Classical Fourth.

"Very well!" he said, with dignity. "You don't want me to share this study with you—"

"No, I don't!"

"As you choose to be unfriendly, I shall certainly not force my friendship upon you!" said Reginald Muffin haughtily. "But I shall stay here, all the same!"

"What?"

"This study will suit me, and though you're rather a beast, you're not such a beast as Higgs. I'm staying."

Erroll gave the fat Classical one look. Then he strode towards him, and took Tubby's fat ear between a finger and thumb. Tubby Muffin gave a loud and prolonged squeak, as he was led into the passage by his ear.

"Yoo-wowowowow!"

"Now buzz off," said Erroll, "and don't come back! Here are your books!"

The dog-eared volumes bumped into

Morny was the supposed heir of the great Mornington property. Probably that great property was some set-off, as it were, against the trouble Morny gave his guardian.

The sum allowed from the estate had been ample to cover even Morny's extravagances, and the connection with the heir of a great property had been gratifying.

But all that had been changed when Mornington's lost cousin had been found, and Morny's great prospects had passed to little Erbert of the Second Form at Rookwood.

Instead of a wealthy heir, he was now a penniless burden upon his uncle, who could scarcely refuse the charge of him in his changed circumstances.

Sir Rupert, testy old gentleman as he was, had a strong sense of duty, and he had not wished to refuse the charge. But it was natural that he should be less patient with a penniless relative than with the heir of Mornington. Morny's freaks of temper were sternly repressed now in his uncle's house, and his Staapole cousins did not conceal their dislike of him. They remembered Morny's loftiness in former days, and they allowed him to see very plainly that they regarded him as an interloper. And as their dislike was repaid by sneering scorn, which they repaid in kind, Staapole Lodge was not a happy dwelling when the boys were there.

Indeed, Sir Rupert had been considering the advisability of letting Mornington remain at Rookwood

His uncle breathed hard. "Your cousins would be glad to see you if you behaved yourself as you should!" he answered. "You cannot expect them to welcome a boy who has been turned out of his school in disgrace, and has brought shame upon all connected with him! But I will speak plainly to you, Valentine. I refuse to have my house turned into a bear-garden! If you cannot keep from quarrelling with your cousins you—"

"My dear old uncle, I don't want to quarrel with them, I'm sure!" said Mornington airily. "If they'd be as civil as they used to be, I'm sure we should get on remarkably well."

Sir Rupert set his lips. Although he had a natural prejudice in favour of his own boys, he could not fail to be aware that they had suppressed their dislike of Mornington in his prosperous days. They had given it full rein since Valentine's change of fortune; and perhaps had tried to make up for lost time, in fact. Morny's remark touched his uncle on the raw.

"I repeat, that I will not allow quarrelling in my house!" he said. "You have been turned out of your school for your own fault; annoyed as I was with Dr. Chisholm's decision, I had to admit that he could have taken no other course. I would not endure a disrespectful and reckless young rascal under my roof, if I had not the misfortune to be his uncle!"

Mornington's eyes glittered. "I've always known that I was unwelcome, since I became poor!" he said bitterly, in a low voice. "I was welcome enough before that!"

"You are welcome now, if you behave yourself and keep your impertinent tongue in check!" said his uncle. "Because you cannot be relied upon to do so, I should be glad if there were any other means of disposing of you. I shall send you to school again as quickly as possible. Until then you will not be allowed to make trouble in the house. I shall not hesitate to deal with you as sternly as may be required— And if you grin in that impudent way while I am speaking, I will chastise you, sir, in this cab!" almost shouted Sir Rupert, his control of his temper getting perilously near the limit.

"So I'm to go to school again?" said Mornington, with a dark look at his uncle.

"As quickly as I can get you off my hands, certainly!"

"Have you selected the school?"

"That is not easy. You cannot go to a school of the same standing as Rookwood. The headmaster would refuse to take in a boy expelled from another school. You must be prepared for a very considerable change, and you have yourself to thank for it!"

"I'm prepared for a change," said Mornington, with a curious smile. "I'd made up my mind about that already. You're not going to have such a reckless young rascal under your roof, uncle."

"What do you mean?" snapped the baronet. "I have nowhere else to place you till you go to school, or I should certainly not take you home with me."

"You're not going to take me home with you!"

"What?"

"I haven't left Rookwood for the pleasure of raggin' with my beloved cousins," said Mornington coolly. "I think you have told me about a dozen times, Uncle Rupert, that I am a burden on your hands."

"I have certainly reminded you of your position when you have annoyed me with your insolence!" snapped Sir Rupert. "You may thank yourself for it. I have tried to do my duty by you, but verily believe that so heartless and thankless a boy has never existed before!"

"I wonder!" said Mornington calmly.

Sir Rupert looked at him with knitted brows, and made a majestic gesture.

"That is enough!" he said. "Kindly be silent! I am trying hard to be patient with you!"

"But I'm not goin' to put your patience to the test any longer, dear old bean!" answered Mornington. "I'm not goin' home with you!"

"Hold your tongue, sir!"

"I'm not going to be a burden to you any longer," continued Mornington coolly. "I'm fed with that! I'm not goin' to stand my cousins any longer—I'm fed with them! I really don't think I could put up with their society any more, even to please you an' show my deep gratitude for favours rendered so gracefully!"

Sir Rupert stared speechlessly at his nephew.

Mornington smiled at him, apparently entertained by the mixture of feelings that struggled for expression in the old gentleman's face.



A DUTIFUL NEPHEW! "Come here at once, sir, I command you!" roared Sir Rupert Staapole. "Thanks! You look rather too hefty with that cane," answered Mornington, coolly. "Good-bye, uncle! I'm off!" The reckless junior waved his hand and started across the field, leaving his hapless guardian fairly dancing with rage on the wrong side of the ditch.

that. Still, he's gone, and I won't be down on him. I suppose you won't mind my having the armchair, Erroll? I'm accustomed to one."

"I'd better speak plainly, Muffin. I—"

"Quite so! I always do," said Tubby. "I'm to have it, what? That's right! I knew you weren't selfish, like those cads in my old study. You're looking a bit down in the mouth, Erroll. But I'll soon cheer you up. I knew you'd feel a bit lonely; that's why I'm coming here."

"I suppose you mean to be kind," said Erroll, looking at him. "But I—"

"That's it, exactly. I'm the kindest-hearted chap at Rookwood," said Muffin. "Kindest friend and noblest foe, you know, like the chap in the poem. That's me all over. Where shall I put these books, Erroll?"

"You had better take them back to your study," said Erroll impatiently. "If you mean to be kind I'm much obliged to you; but I don't want a study-mate."

"My dear chap, you're mistaken. You'll be lonely here. In fact, I've made up my mind to come."

"Then you'd better unmake it again," said Erroll. "To speak plainly, Muffin, I don't want you here."

Muffin blinked at him.

the passage, and the door of Study No. 4 closed with a slam. Tubby Muffin blinked at the door and blinked at the scattered books, with wrath in his fat brow, as he rubbed his crimson ear.

"Well, of all the ungrateful rotters!" gasped Tubby. "Of all the thankless beasts! It's just like Spoke-shave—I mean, Shakespeare—says, how sharper than a thingummy's tooth it is, to have a thankless what-d'ye-call-it?"

In breathless indignation Tubby gathered up his books. Then he bent his head to the keyhole, and howled a parting benediction.

"Yah! I won't come now! You can ask me on your bended knees, and I won't come! Yah!"

And the indignant Tubby rolled away.

The 4th Chapter. Uncle and Nephew.

Valentine Mornington glanced at his uncle with a suppressed smile as the station cab rolled away from Rookwood School.

If Morny was feeling the parting with his chum and the disgrace that had fallen upon him, his looks certainly did not show it.

His manner, naturally, was not pleasing to his uncle. Sir Rupert's face grew sterner and sterner.

Mornington had first come upon his hands as a ward at a time when

during the vacations, to prevent the incessant trouble when he came home on a holiday.

Instead of which, Morny had been turned out of Rookwood altogether, and was landed on his uncle's hands for good. Sir Rupert had now the happy task of finding a new school for him, and explaining to the headmaster thereof how and why Morny had left his old one.

Until the new school was decided on Mornington had to remain at home; and as Sir Rupert's sons were day boys at a school near his home, the prospect was appalling. Between anger and dismay the baronet was not in a good temper as the cab rolled him away from Rookwood with his hopeful nephew.

He was too angry to speak, and he knew of old that words were wasted on the scapegrace.

It was Mornington who broke the silence, looking at his uncle with a cool smile, which tempted Sir Rupert strongly to box his ears.

"We're going to Coombe now, I suppose, uncle?"

"Yes," said Sir Rupert curtly.

"What train are you takin', may I inquire?"

"Six-fifteen."

"My cousins are at home now, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"How glad they'll be to see me!" smiled Mornington.

"The world's wide enough for me to live somewhere without comin' into contact with the delightful Stacpoole family at all," went on Mornington. "I'm fed with bein' a poor relation, and bein' told of it! I'm goin' out into the wide, wicked world, uncle, to look for a nook where I can lay my weary head, all on my own."

"You—you young rascal!" spluttered the baronet, finding his voice. "Another word of such nonsense, and I will box your ears!"

Mornington rose to his feet. The old cab was crawling at a slow, walking pace along the leafy lane to Coombe. Mornington threw the door open and jumped out before his uncle could guess his intention.

He stumbled in the road, but recovered himself immediately, and waved his hand to the purple face glaring at him from the cab.

"Good-bye-ee!" he sang cheerily. "Stop!" roared Sir Rupert to the driver.

The cab stopped, and Sir Rupert jumped out.

"Valentine! Get in instantly!" he thundered.

"I'm not goin' home with you, thanks!"

"Do you hear me, sir?" thundered Sir Rupert.

"Yes, an' I've answered."

Then Sir Rupert Stacpoole, baronet and M.P., quite lost his temper, and behaved like quite a common person. He grasped his cane and rushed at his nephew, with the evident intention of giving him a terrific thrashing there and then.

Mornington made a spring back, and leaped into a gap in the hedge. He cleared the ditch. But Sir Rupert was rather too old for such performances. He stopped, brandishing his cane, almost inarticulate with wrath.

"You—you impudent young rascal! Come here at once! I will—will chastise you! I—I—I—" The portly old gentleman fairly spluttered. "I—I— Boy! Come here! Bless my soul! What have I ever done, to have this wretched boy inflicted upon me? Valentine! Come here at once, sir! I command you!"

"Thanks! You look rather too hefty with that cane!" answered Mornington coolly. "Good-bye, uncle! I'm off!"

"Boy! Come back!" roared Sir Rupert, as Mornington backed through the hedge into the field.

"Not this evenin'!"

"I—I forbid you to go!" shrieked Sir Rupert helplessly. "I—I—I forbid you—"

Mornington waved his hand, and started across the field, leaving his hapless guardian almost dancing on the wrong side of the ditch. Sir Rupert shouted, and shouted again; and Mornington vanished among the trees in the distance.

The baronet took off his hat and dabbed his perspiring brow with his handkerchief. Then he replaced his hat, a little sideways, in his agitation, giving his majestic countenance quite a rakish look.

What he was to do in the amazing circumstances was a mystery to Sir Rupert Stacpoole. Pursuit of the elusive schoolboy across the fields was evidently out of the question; and to go without him seemed almost as much out of the question; and returning to Rookwood was useless. It was quite certain that Mornington would not go back to the school.

Sir Rupert fumed and gasped and murmured emphatic words; while the stolid driver of the cab blinked at him and chewed a straw and waited his passenger's good pleasure.

It was suddenly borne in upon Sir Rupert's mind that his train was almost due, and that there was no other train from Coombe that evening. At that thought he hurried back to the cab.

"Drive on!" he gasped.

The cab rolled on towards Coombe. There was nothing else for it. The mutinous schoolboy had to be left to his own devices for the present, at least. Sir Rupert Stacpoole took his seat in the train in a really indescribable frame of mind.

The 5th Chapter. News of Morn!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were thinking a good deal about the expelled junior the next day, which was Sunday, and a day of leisure at Rookwood. The Fistical Four, in the kindness of their hearts, made it a point to bestow some of their valuable society upon Erroll. Their society, fortunately, was more welcome to the lonely junior than Tubby Muffin's.

After morning service the kind-hearted Co. bore down upon Erroll, and marched him off for the usual Sunday walk. Probably Erroll would have preferred to be alone with his sad thoughts; but, undoubtedly, he cheered up very much in the genial company of Jimmy Silver & Co.

But that day was a sad one to Kit Erroll. He could not help thinking of his absent chum, and wondering what he was doing at home. He knew the sour bitterness of Morn's home, and his endless disagreements with his cousins; and Erroll, faithful as he was to his friend, knew Morn too well to think that the Stacpoole cousins were wholly to blame. A fellow had to be very patient and very tactful to get on with Mornington at all. And the Stacpoole cousins probably saw no reason why they should exercise patience and tact towards a poor relation with a scornful smile and a bitter tongue.

However that might be, it was certain that Mornington could not be happy at home; and it did not cross Erroll's mind as yet that Morn had not gone home.

That was not known till the following day, and then it came as a surprise to the Rookwooders. The news was made known by Mr. Bootles when the Fourth came into their Form-room on Monday morning.

It was observed that Mr. Bootles looked somewhat disturbed; and, instead of proceeding to lessons as usual, he coughed several times. So the Fourth knew that something was coming, though they did not guess what it was.

"Erroll!" said Mr. Bootles at last.

"Yes, sir?"

"Have you heard or seen anything of Mornington since he was taken away from Rookwood on Saturday?"

Erroll looked astonished at the question.

"No, sir," he answered.

"He has not written to you?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Has any boy present seen Mornington?" asked Mr. Bootles, glancing over the class and scanning an array of astonished faces.

"No, sir!" said a dozen voices.

"Ah! Ahem!" said Mr. Bootles.

"Has—has anything happened to Mornington, sir?" asked Erroll anxiously. "Isn't he at home, sir?"

Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his glasses.

"No, Erroll; it appears—hem!—that Mornington is not at home," he replied. "Sir Rupert Stacpoole has communicated with the Head—hem!—and informed him that—hem!—Mornington left him on the way to Coombe Station on Saturday. What the boy's object was in taking to flight in that disrespectful and extraordinary manner is not known. It appears that he has not—hem!—returned home since. If any boy present is acquainted with Mornington's intentions, whatever they may be, he is in duty bound to tell me what he knows, so that I may—hem!—communicate such information to the headmaster."

The juniors were all silent; nobody had any information to offer. Certainly no one there had any knowledge of Mornington's intentions.

"It is presumed," continued Mr. Bootles, "that Mornington may—hem!—linger in the—vicinity of the school, and open communications—hem!—with boys with whom he is intimate here. In that case—hem!—information must be given at once to me, so that the reckless youth may be—hem!—found and restored to his—his guardian's arms—hem!"

Still the juniors were silent. It was quite evident to the Form-master that no junior in his class had heard anything of Mornington. They all looked too amazed. He, therefore, changed the subject to the first of the morning's lessons.

But it was with difficulty that the Fourth-Formers could keep their minds upon lessons that morning.

The startling news they had received was uppermost in their minds.

Mornington had not gone home—Morn had run away from his guardian, and was supposed to be lingering somewhere near Rookwood! Evidently the Rookwooders had not, as they had supposed, seen the last of the scapegrace of the school.

What Mornington's intentions might be was a very interesting question—much more interesting than Latin prose or geography!

Did he mean to "show up" at Rookwood again? That was a question of almost breathless interest. What would the Head say if he did? If Morn had money in his pockets, there was nothing to prevent him from taking up his quarters at Coombe, if he liked—and why shouldn't he drop in to have a chat with old pals, if the spirit moved him to do so? Would the Head "collar" him and send him home? But could he, now that Morn didn't belong to Rookwood, and the Head had no authority over him in any way whatever?

Mr. Bootles was very tart in temper that morning, as he had ample reason to be. He had never, or hardly ever, had such an absent-minded class to handle. There were incessant whispers among the juniors, and every whisper was on the topic of Morn. Mornington had always been an unruly influence in the Fourth Form, and that unruly influence did not seem to have departed with Mornington.

When the Fourth, to their great relief, were dismissed at last, they

streamed out of the Form-room in a buzz of discussion, and the name of Mornington was heard on all sides. And it was not only in the Fourth that the absent junior was discussed; the Third and the Second and the Shell discussed him, too, and he was even talked of in the Fifth, even in the high and mighty Sixth. If the Head had hoped, by expelling Mornington, to be done with him for good, it was clear that the Head was going to be disappointed. Never had the schoolboy mutineer been so much in the thoughts of Rookwooders generally as he was now.

"Good old Morn!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, with a chuckle. "Isn't it just like his nerve? Isn't it?"

"Ho surely won't come back here," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "The Head would be no end waxy—"

"Morn wouldn't mind."

"I suppose he wouldn't," confessed Jimmy. "It would be just like Morn to drop in, just to exasperate the Head. Hallo, Tubby! What's up now?"

Tubby Muffin came panting up from the direction of the gates, his round eyes shining with excitement.

"Morn!" he gasped.

"What about Morn?"

"He—he—he—he's here!" spluttered Tubby.

"Here!" yelled the Fistical Four in chorus.

"Yes—at the gates—"

"Great Scott!"

There was a rush to the gates on all sides.

The 6th Chapter. A Friendly Call!

"Morn!"

"Here he is!"

"My only hat! It's Morn!"

It was Morn! The expelled junior was standing in the road, looking in at the open gates with a smile. Old Mack, the porter, was blinking at him, evidently undecided whether it was his duty to collar Mornington or not. Old Mack had had many and varied experiences since he had been in charge of the school gates; but he never remembered to have seen an expelled junior saunter up to the school, with his hands in his pockets, and an amused smile on his face.

There was already a crowd of juniors at the gates when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived. Valentine Mornington nodded coolly to the Fistical Four.

"Hallo, old tops!" he said.

"You—you here, Morn!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"As large as life, old bean!"

"But your uncle—"

"The dear old gentleman is probably weepin' bitter tears for me now," said Mornington. "You must have noticed by his looks how sorry he would feel at partin' with me. My cousins at home have probably gone into mournin'. We're an affectionate family—very!"

Some of the juniors laughed. Erroll came scudding down to the gates. Mornington gave him a grin.

"Morn, why aren't you at home?"

"Fed, dear boy! As the song says, 'There's no place like home, when there's nowhere else to go!' You seem surprised to see me! Bless your little hearts, you'll see a lot of me around here!"

"What are you doing around here, then?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Lookin' for a job."

"You looking for a job!" howled Lovell.

"A chap must live," explained Mornington. "Having relieved my beloved uncle of the unpleasant task of lookin' after my moral an' material well-bein', I've got to kick for myself. Naturally, I prefer to get a job in this dear old familiar spot. It will be so pleasant to see you fellows sometimes, when I'm trottin' along with a basket on my arm—"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Of course, I sha'n't expect you to know me," said Morn coolly. "I can see Muffin turnin' up his nose at me already—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've hopes," continued Morn, "of gettin' a job with Mr. Bunce, the grocer. I've never mixed sand with sugar but I can learn, I hope. If you fellows could give me a few orders, it might help me bag the berth. Can I induce you, Silver, to take a pound of our well-known and justly-celebrated four-shilling tea?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out! Here's Bootles!" squeaked Tubby Muffin.

Mr. Bootles came hastily into the gateway. His eyes almost started through his spectacles as he looked at Mornington. That youth touched his cap respectfully.

"Good-morning, sir! I hope you're well!"

"Mornington!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"Ah! Hem! I will—ahem!—take charge of you, Mornington, and—ahem!—send you home—"

"You won't, sir," answered Mornington coolly. "You've no authority to do anything of the kind, and I certainly shouldn't allow it. You've no more right to interfere with me than with the butcher-boy!"

"What!"

"You see, I'm not in your class now, old bean!" explained Mornington.

"Wha-at! Wha-a-at did you—you call me, Mornington?"

"Old bean!" said Mornington affably. "I might say, dear old bean! I was always very attached to you, sir, though you sometimes annoyed me, the way you bark in class."

"Wha-at!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Mornington, you—you utterly disrespectful young rascal!" spluttered Mr. Bootles.

Mornington stepped back into the road.

"Ta-ta, you fellows!" he said. "I must be goin', if I'm to get a job to-day. Good-bye, Bootles, old son!"

Mr. Bootles gasped. Morn's last remark had quite taken away his breath. He stood with his mouth open, like a fish out of water, gazing speechlessly after Valentine Mornington, as that cheerful youth sauntered down the road.

"B-b-b-bless my soul!" stuttered Mr. Bootles at last, and he almost tottered away.

"Well," said Jimmy Silver, with a deep breath, "here's a go!"

And indubitably it was a most extraordinary "go!"

THE END.

(Another grand story of Rookwood next Monday, entitled: "From School to Shop" by Owen Conquest. Don't miss it!)

HEALTH AND EXERCISE.

(Continued from page 267.)

acting as attacker becomes the defender. This is so in every exercise. Each bout finished, half a dozen deep breaths should be taken; then begin again.

After these preliminaries we'll be ready to start next week with the first exercise.

The Growth of Muscle.

Has it ever occurred to you to inquire why it is that exercise causes your muscles to increase in size and in strength? Well, it is an inquiry that is worth while, because to know the reason is to be able to understand the why and the wherefore of so many of the directions, trivial some of them seem, which accompany instructions in physical training. If you are ignorant of the process by which your muscles develop, it may seem to you that such direction, for instance, as to think of the actual muscle you happen to be exercising, or to breathe deeply, is a needless sort of advice, because you can't see what purpose it fulfils.

Muscle is nothing more than a bundle of fibres or fine strings which possess the faculty of stretching and

contracting. Every time you move a muscle it goes through these actions. The muscles are nourished by the blood, and the more they are used, the more blood is brought to them. It is this continual feeding of fresh blood to the muscles which is made necessary by their exercise which causes them to increase in size.

Now it will be clear that the more nourishment there is contained in the blood, the more food will be carried to the muscles if they are regularly and thoroughly exercised, and the bigger they will become. But if the blood is poor, it cannot take much food to the muscles. Hence the necessity for the blood being kept in a good condition.

This condition depends partly upon the food we eat, partly upon the air we breathe. If we eat a lot of stuff that hasn't much nourishment in it, the blood becomes poor. If we were, for instance, to eat nothing but meat, no vegetables, no fruit, the blood would become poor, thick, and without much of the nourishment that the muscles require.

Fresh air has much to do with keeping the blood rich. In really fresh air there is a great deal of the gas called oxygen, and without any oxygen at all it would be impossible to live. We should be suffocated. If doors and windows are never opened, all the oxygen gets used up

and replaced by carbonic acid gas, which is a deadly poison. Hence the direction to exercise in the open air whenever possible, or if in a room, to have a window open. When exercising, we use up a lot more air than when sitting still, and if the extra air we take in has in it the poisonous carbonic acid gas instead of the life-giving oxygen, we should be just carrying to the muscles a great deal

of poison, with the result that good health would be out of the question.

Footwork is perhaps the greatest stumbling block of the novice. It is much more difficult to acquire than mere power of hitting; and it is perhaps the most important part of a boxer's education. I should think mighty little of any so-called instructor who did not impress upon his



An Exercise with the Medicine-ball.

pupils the important fact that they must learn to use their feet before their fists. A bad style more often than not is the direct result of not having learned this truth.

The Boxing Novice.

One sees many boxers in the ring who evidently have never troubled to learn the necessity of keeping the left foot pointing directly forward; with them the left toes will persist in pointing across, inwards. Now, no boxer's footwork can possibly be good when he does that kind of thing. Yet it is a fault that may be over-

come by practice outside the ring. Practise at home for five or ten minutes every day in trying to get that left foot straight. Put up your hands, move about the room, jump in, advance, retreat, making imaginary blows at the same time if you like, but with your mind fixed on the necessity of preventing that left foot from going across. Such diligent practice will result in the correct placing of the foot becoming a habit.

Later, as you become more proficient, you'll find that similar practice will enable you to master the difficulties of side stepping, slipping, etc. But if you are going to leave learning footwork to the time when you're actually boxing, you'll find there are so many things you have to think of that you ought to be doing together that you'll have difficulty in thinking of them all at once.

Accuracy of hitting may be greatly improved by home practice. Stick a bit of white paper on the wall—take care that it is a solid brick wall; accidents are best avoided—about the height of an opponent's mouth, take position, and shoot out your gloved hands, trying to land on that bit of paper every time. Don't hit hard; there's no need. It is accuracy, not force, of hitting you're learning.

(Another "Health and Exercise" article next week.)



The HIDDEN HUNDRED!

A Splendid, Long, Complete
Story of
FRANK RICHARDS & Co,
of
CEDAR CREEK SCHOOL.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

The 1st Chapter.

A Startling Invasion.

Miss Meadows looked surprised. So did her class. Morning lessons were in full swing at Cedar Creek School, and Miss Meadows' pupils were receiving valuable instruction as to the extent, population, and productions of British Columbia, the Canadian province in which Cedar Creek was situated. The big door of the school-room opened suddenly.

A pilgrim in a blue shirt, leather crackers, and big boots, and Stetson hat looked in. Some of the schoolboys recognised him as Buster Bill, of the town of Thompson.

What business Buster Bill had in the school-room of Cedar Creek during morning lessons was a mystery to them. It was also a mystery to Miss Ethel Meadows—a mystery which she desired to elucidate on the spot. She fixed a severe glance upon the Buster.

"What is it?" Miss Meadows exclaimed sharply.

Buster Bill touched his hat. "No offence, marm," he said. "I 'pose I'm the first. I came off from Thompson airy."

"The first?" repeated Miss Meadows, puzzled.

"Sure! You don't mind me a-look-in' round?"

"Looking round?"

"Yep!"

"Please leave the school-room at once!" said Miss Meadows, wondering whether the Buster had been sampling the fire-water at the Red Dog thus early in the day.

"Skuse me, marm, I guess I'd like to look round first," said Buster Bill apologetically.

"Nonsense! Please retire at once. No one is allowed here during lessons."

Buster Bill looked disappointed.

"Waal, if you reely object, marm—"

"Certainly I do!"

"Course, I ain't buckin' agin what a lady says," remarked the Buster.

"No gentleman would, marm. I'll jest mosy out, then, and start somewhere else. P'raps it's in the playground, arter all."

And, touching his big Stetson hat again, Buster Bill retired from the school-room, and closed the door after him.

He left the schoolboys and girls staring.

"Upon my word!" murmured Miss Meadows.

The Canadian schoolmistress was as surprised as her pupils. However, the lesson was resumed.

Lessons at Cedar Creek, however, were fated to be interrupted again that eventful morning.

The Cedar Creek fellows were still in the dark as to the whole extent, population, and resources of British Columbia, when the door was reopened.

It was not Buster Bill this time. It was Injun Dick, the old Apache loafer of Thompson, in his tattered blanket.

"Well, really!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, in great annoyance.

"What do you want?"

The Redskin ducked his head to the schoolmistress.

"Injun come look!" he said.

"Missy let Injun look round, you bet."

"Certainly not. Leave this room at once."

"Injun come—"

"Go!"

Injun Dick looked rebellious for a moment, but he finally retired, and closed the door after him.

"What on earth is this game, Bob?" whispered Frank Richards to Bob Lawless in wonder.

"Ask me another," said Bob, shaking his head. "Unless they're full up to the chin, I can't guess."

"They didn't look tipsy," remarked Vere Beauclerc. "Something's on, but I'm blessed if I can imagine what it is."

"Silence in the class, please!" snapped Miss Meadows.

The schoolmistress stepped to the window and looked out with a knitted

brow. Buster Bill could be seen roaming about the playground, but he was not alone. Three or four more fellows were in the playground, evidently engaged in a search.

What they were searching for was a deep mystery. Glancing in the direction of the gates, Miss Meadows caught sight of two or three more coming in.

"Extraordinary!" she murmured. She stepped to the door.

Injun Dick was in the passage, scanning it minutely in every corner. From the kitchen came the voice of Black Dinah, the cook, in tones of emphatic expostulation.

"You trabbel off, you white trash. You no come in my kitchen."

"Skuse me, old lady," came a rough voice in reply, "ain't meaning any harm, my black beauty. Jest looking round."

"You trabbel!" screamed Black Dinah.

"I guess— Oh!"

A red-bearded pilgrim came scudding out of the kitchen in a great hurry, followed by Dinah brandishing a frying-pan.

Miss Meadows gazed in amazement, as the red-bearded pilgrim escaped into the playground, and Dinah returned triumphant to her quarters.

"Extraordinary!" repeated Miss Meadows.

It really was extraordinary.

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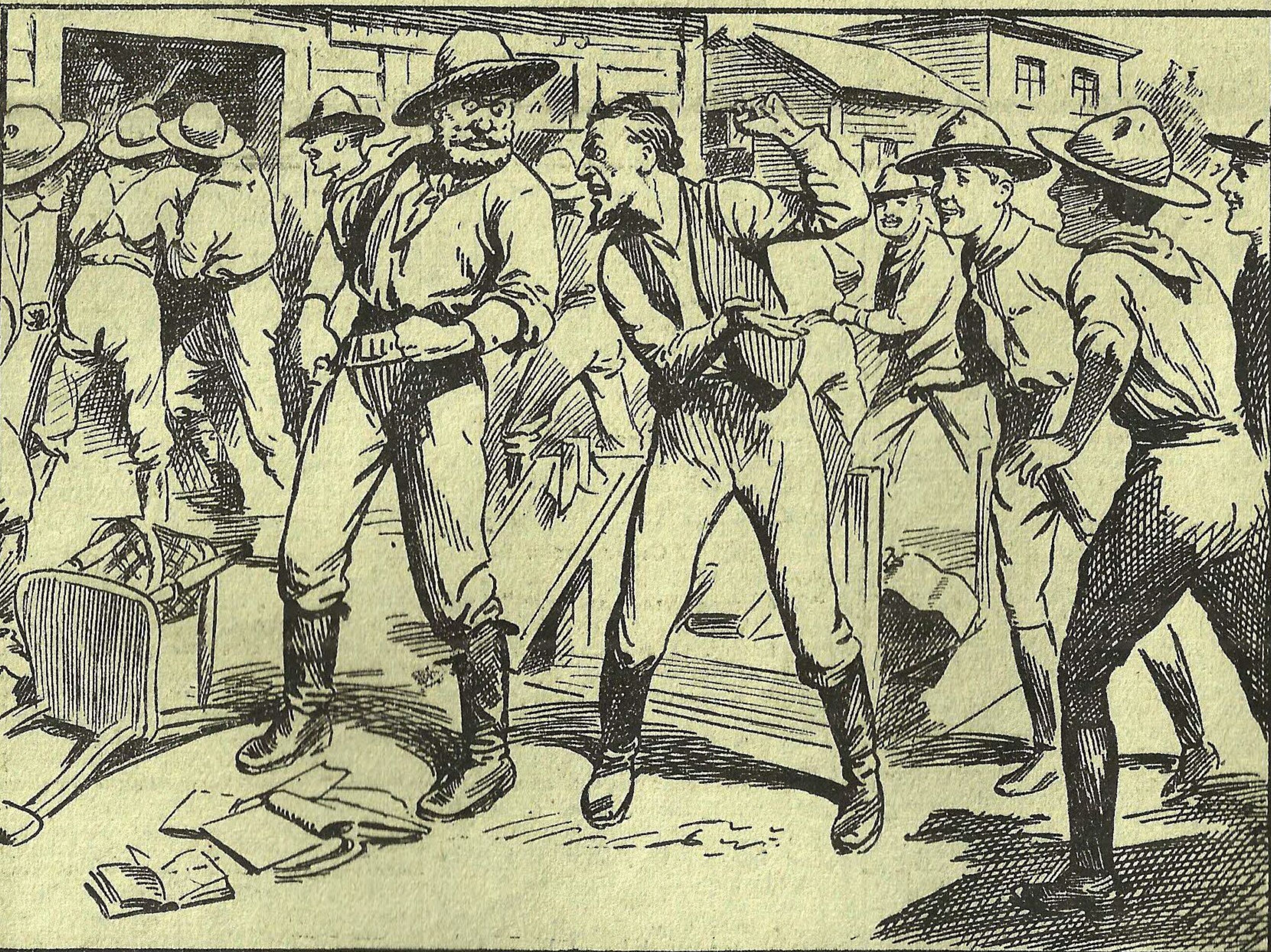
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A THOROUGH SEARCH!

Outside the office of the "Thompson Press" there was a crowd—and inside there evidently was a crowd also. Loud voices proceeded from the little building, and several articles of furniture were strewn on the sidewalk. Buster Bill followed Mr. Penrose out of his office. "You sheer off!" he roared. "Stopping us! I guess not! No, siree!" Mr. Penrose wrung his hands frantically. "I can't have my office turned inside out!" he shrieked. "I guess you can! 'Cause why? We're arter that 'undred-dollar bill!" bellowed Buster Bill.

just in time for lessons, Chunky had not had time to look at it till now. Now, apparently, it was something in Mr. Penrose's paper that caused the fat youth to utter that startled ejaculation.

Chunky's round eyes opened wide, and he stared into his paper with the keenest interest. Frank Richards & Co., who had heard him exclaim, looked round at him.

"Hullo, what's the news, Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless.

"News!" repeated Chunky vaguely.

"Anything in the paper?"

"Oh, advertisements, you know," answered Chunky Todgers. And the fat youth closed his paper rather hurriedly and walked quickly away with it, leaving the chums of Cedar Creek staring.

"What the thump is he keeping dark?" said Frank Richards, in

perplexity. "There's something in the paper he doesn't want us to see."

"Oh, bother him!" said Bob. "Where are those pilgrims who came moseying round the school this morning?"

"Gone, I think," said Beauclerc. "Most of them, anyhow; they've gone home to their dinners, I should think."

"We want to know what they wanted," said Bob. "Let's look."

The playground seemed clear of the curious party of searchers now. Doubtless most of them had gone home to Thompson for refreshments, or had wandered further afield. But the chums, as they crossed the playground, caught sight of one of them—a Chinese laundryman of Thompson, who was raking in the wood-pile. They hurried up to him.

"Hullo, Sing Hi!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, playfully jerking the Celestial by his pigtail. "What are you looking for?"

The Chinese jumped.

"Ow! You lettee go!" he exclaimed, jerking away his pigtail. "Me lookee for banknote—oh, yes!"

"You're looking in our wood-pile for a banknote!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

"Allee light. Hunded-dollee notee."

"What on earth makes you think there's a hundred-dollar note there?" howled Bob Lawless. "If there is, by gum, we'll look too!"

The Chinaman blinked at him.

"No knowee?" he asked.

"Eh? We don't know anything about a hundred-dollar note, sure."

"Then me no tellee," said the Chinaman calmly. "You walkee way, and lettee me loonee."

"But what are you up to?" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"No savvy."

"What makes you think there's a hundred-dollar note there?" demanded Frank Richards.

"No savvy."

"You benighted heathen—"

"No savvy."

The Chinaman grinned, and evidently did not intend to explain. He went on raking in the wood-pile, the chums watching him in astonishment.

"Hullo, there's Buster Bill again," exclaimed Frank suddenly.

The Buster had not gone home to dinner. He loomed up into view again, making for the lumber school-house. Leaving the Chinaman raking among the firewood, Frank Richards & Co. hurried towards the Buster. They were in time to hear him speak to Miss Meadows in the school porch.

"You don't object, marm, if I looks round the school-room now that you ain't busy there—eh?"

"It is absurd; but you may look if you like," said Miss Meadows crossly.

"Thanky, marm!"

Buster Bill marched into the school-room, and Miss Meadows disappeared into her own quarters. The schoolboys followed the Buster in.

Buster Bill stared round at them and pointed a big, knuckly forefinger to the door.

"You git!" he said tersely. "You ain't wanted around hyer."

"Bless your cheek!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "I suppose we can come into our own school-room, if we like."

The Buster shook his head.

"You keep off!" he answered. "I guess I'm looking hyer for that there hundred-dollar note."

"What hundred-dollar note?" shrieked Bob Lawless.

"Hain't you heard?"

"Nope."

"Then you won't hear from me," answered Buster Bill. "There's enough galoots on this hyer lay already. You vamoose the ranch."

"But—"

"Git is the word!" roared Buster Bill, dragging a big Colt revolver from his belt. "You git—sharp! Absquatulate, afore this hyer shootin' iron goes off! You hear me yawp?"

The schoolboys backed out into the passage rather quickly. Buster Bill's revolver was looking at them, and if it went off, it was liable to have serious results.

"What the thump does it mean?" said Frank Richards blankly.

"Hullo, Injun Dick's still here! Let's ask the Redskin."

Injun Dick had loped into the house, and was looking round him and peering into the kitchen. Frank jerked at his tattered blanket.

"What are you looking for, Injun Dick?" he asked.

The old Apache regarded him gravely.

"Injun look for hundred dollars, you bet," he answered. "Injun thirsty."

"But what makes you think there's a hundred dollars—here?"

Mr. Slimmey came back in a few minutes. The schoolboys exerted their sense of hearing to the utmost; they wanted to know what the strange affair meant. But they caught only a few words, such as "Hundred-dollar note," and "Thompson Press," and "Absurd!"

"Ridiculous!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Shall I—ahem!—turn them out, Miss Meadows?" asked Mr. Slimmey.

He did not state how he was going to turn out a dozen or fifteen big-limbed fellows, any one of whom could have made mincemeat of poor Mr. Slimmey.

Miss Meadows shook her head.

She was too kind-hearted to set Mr. Slimmey such a task as that.

"So long as they do not enter the school-room, never mind," she said.

"Very well."

Mr. Slimmey returned to his class. Frank Richards & Co. exchanged looks of wonder.

Lessons proceeded; and all through lessons they could hear heavy footsteps and voices in the playground. Buster Bill and his rivals were still busily engaged in their mysterious search. And Frank Richards & Co. were eager for school to be dismissed so that they could learn what was the meaning of this most mysterious happening.

The 2nd Chapter.

Mysterious!

"Great gophers!"

That sudden startled exclamation came from Chunky Todgers.

As Frank Richards & Co. came out of the lumber-school Chunky Todgers had settled down on a bench near the porch.

He took from his pocket a copy of the "Thompson Press," the local paper, of which Mr. Penrose was the editor and proprietor. The "Thompson Press" for that week was published that morning, and Chunky had bought his copy on the way to school on his fat pony. But, arriving only

perplexity. "There's something in the paper he doesn't want us to see."

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The old Apache regarded him gravely.

"Injun look for hundred dollars, you bet," he answered. "Injun thirsty."

"But what makes you think there's a hundred dollars—here?"

"Little chief no savvy?"
"No."
"Injun no talk. Me want hundred dollars. Injun bully boy with a glass eye," said the Redskin gravely.
And he jerked himself away from Frank, evidently not intending to let the Cedar Creek fellows into the secret.

Frank Richards & Co. went out into the playground again, in great perplexity.

They were further puzzled by the sight of Chunky Todgers, who was dragging loose a pile of logs under the school wall near Mr. Slimmey's cabin, and peering among them with eager eyes. Evidently Chunky had "got on" to the mysterious game, whatever it was, and was joining in the search. The chums watched him for some minutes in silence.

"Chunky knows," said Beauclerc at last.

"He'll tell us," said Bob. "If he doesn't, we'll scalp him. Chunky!"

Chunky Todgers looked round in alarm, as the three chums ran up. His fat face was flushed and conscious.

"Oh! You—you fellows—" he stammered.

"What are you looking for?"

"N-n-nothing."

"You're heaving that pile of logs around for nothing?" shouted Bob.

"Ye-e-ep."

"Not looking for a hundred-dollar note?" asked Frank sarcastically.

Todgers started.

"You—you know, then?" he stammered.

"We know a lot of silly idiots are here looking for a hundred-dollar note!" answered Frank.

"Now you're searching, too. Tell us what it is all about."

"Oh, n-n-nothing, you know!"

"What on earth are you keeping it dark for?"

"I—I tell you it's nothing!" stammered Chunky. "Here, you fellows, sheer off, and let a chap alone!"

Beauclerc uttered a sudden exclamation.

"The newspaper!"

"What about the newspaper, Cherub?"

"It's something in the newspaper—that's why Chunky wouldn't show it to us," said Beauclerc.

"Why, the fat coyote!" exclaimed Bob wrathfully. "Keeping us out of it, whatever it is. Hand over that paper, Chunky!"

"I—I—I've lost it!" gasped Todgers.

"Why, there it is sticking out of your pocket."

"I—I mean—gimme my paper!" yelled Chunky Todgers, as Bob jerked it out of his pocket.

"Sit on him!" said Bob, and Frank and Beauclerc collared the excited Chunky, while Bob Lawless opened the latest number of the "Thompson Press."

And then Bob ejaculated, as Chunky had done before him.

"Great gophers!"

The 3rd Chapter.

Mr. Penrose's New Stunt.

"Penrose's latest stunt!" grinned Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards & Co. looked at the well-displayed advertisement on the middle page of the "Thompson Press."

Evidently it was that which had caught Chunky Todgers' eyes when he opened his paper after morning school, and had started him joining in the search with the Thompson pilgrims.

Sooner or later, certainly, Frank Richards & Co. must have seen it, for Frank was a regular subscriber to the "Thompson Press."

In that valuable periodical appeared Frank's series of stories, under the title of "St. Kit's Fellows," which Frank's friends declared was the only part of Mr. Penrose's paper that was worth reading.

In which, probably, they were not far wrong, the rest of the paper being filled with advertisements, and Mr. Penrose's editorial remarks, and amateur poetry, in the style of "Sunset on the Rockies," or "When I See Thee at Eventide."

Mr. Penrose freely admitted that Frank Richards' contributions helped on his circulation handsomely. There was no doubt that his circulation needed it. But Mr. Penrose was not at a loss for other stunts to induce the citizens of Thompson to shell out five cents a time for his paper.

He had a sale and exchange column, and he had a matrimonial column, and sometimes he had a competition.

When a fresh batch of New York or Chicago papers came up from the railway, Mr. Penrose was accustomed to look over them for stunts. Any stunt that seemed to him likely to catch on he adopted. He had tried charades, and he had tried missing words. His

latest stunt was something more surprising.

"ANYBODY WANT A HUNDRED DOLLARS?"

That was in big type to catch the eye. And it was quite certain that there were plenty of galoots in the Thompson Valley who wanted a hundred dollars.

The notice proceeded:

"THE HIDDEN HUNDRED!"

"Every week, till further notice, the Editor of the 'Thompson Press' will HIDE a 100-DOLLAR BILL in a safe place in the Thompson Valley.

"A CLUE WILL BE GIVEN!"

"The Editor will indicate a spot within a hundred yards of where the Hundred is Hidden.

"THIS WEEK"

"The 100-DOLLAR BILL is hidden within a hundred yards of Cedar Creek School House.

WATCH OUT!

"If you want a Hundred Dollars, now's your time! THIS IS A CINCH!"

"So that's it!" said Frank Richards, laughing. "It's that blessed rot that's brought half Thompson mooching round the school this morning!"

"It's a good advertisement, anyway!" said Beauclerc, laughing. "People will hear of the existence of his paper, whether they buy it or not."

"Lots will buy it, of course, to read up the particulars, and to see the result, too!" said Frank. "It's really very bright of Penrose. But it's rather rough on Cedar Creek. We shall have an army here by the afternoon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you fellows oughtn't to chip in!" said Chunky Todgers warmly. "That's my paper, you know."

"I shall have my copy this afternoon," said Frank. "But I don't think I shall worry about Penrose's hundred-dollar note. Within a hundred yards of Cedar Creek School-house is a big order."

"Well, it's bound to be somewhere!" said Chunky Todgers. "Under something, you know, or stuck in something, or something, you know. I guess I'm going in for it, some."

And Chunky resumed his search, much relieved when the chums walked away and left him the stack of logs all to himself.

In ordinary circumstances nothing would have induced the fat Chunky to shift one of those logs, if he could possibly have helped it. Now he shifted them by the dozen, with the perspiration pouring down his fat face.

Chunky came in to dinner breathing stertorously, and unsuccessful. For once the fat youth was glad when dinner was over. And instead of resting on a bench to digest his dinner in comfort, Master Todgers recommenced at once his search for the hundred-dollar note.

When the bell rang for afternoon classes Todgers came in very reluctantly. The story of the "Thompson Press" competition had spread by that time, and fifty Cedar Creek boys and girls had been joining in the search, at least. But the hidden hundred remained hidden.

The playground was not by any means deserted when the school went in.

The galoots from Thompson, having had their dinner, had returned to the charge with reinforcements.

Miss Meadows made no objection to their searching the precincts of the school for the hundred-dollar note. Objections would not, in fact, have been of much use. Two or three score of rough fellows were not likely to pay much heed to objections.

She insisted only that they should keep out of the house, assuring the eager seekers of easy wealth that Mr. Penrose certainly had not been in the house, and could not have hidden the banknote inside the building.

The schoolmistress privately made up her mind to speak very plainly to Mr. Penrose on the subject. She did not approve of advertising stunts that brought a crowd of miners, cattle-men, and loafers to Cedar Creek. Neither did she like the excitement that reigned in her class, and militated very considerably against lessons.

Most of the school thought a good deal more of the hundred-dollar note

than of lessons; and Chunky Todgers even went to the length of requesting an extra holiday, so as not to be left behind in the search. Chunky rose up in his place rather nervously, but very determinedly, and held up a fat hand to draw Miss Meadows' attention.

Miss Meadows looked at him.

"If you please, ma'am," stammered Todgers, "can I—can we—I mean—"

"What?"

"C-c-can we have a holiday this afternoon, ma'am?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"To—to look for the hidden hundred, ma'am!" said Chunky eagerly.

"You see, ma'am—"

"Sit down, Todgers!"

"Yes, ma'am; but some of those galoots may rope in the hundred dollars while we're wasting time at lessons—"

"Todgers!"

"We—we'd like an extra holiday, ma'am—"

"Silence!"

"Yes; but—but—"

"If you say another word, Todgers, I shall detain you for two hours after lessons!" said Miss Meadows severely.

"Oh!"

Chunky Todgers collapsed into his seat.

He did not say another word. The bare thought of being detained for two hours, while everybody else was hunting for the hundred-dollar note, made him feel quite faint.

Never had lessons seemed so long to the Cedar Creek fellows as they seemed that afternoon.

It was not a case, by any means, of "linked sweetness long drawn out." The afternoon seemed to drag its slow length along like a wounded snake.

But everything comes to an end at last, and so did that tiresome afternoon. The school was released at last, and all Cedar Creek rushed out, with a whoop, to participate in the search for the hidden hundred.

The 4th Chapter.

Mr. Slimmey's Luck.

Frank Richards & Co. left a crowd still at the school when they led out their horses and rode homeward.

Some of the fellows intended to hang about till dark, when the hunt would have to be given up, though it was likely to cause painful explanations with their fathers when they arrived home late.

When Frank and Bob arrived home, one of the first things they saw was Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch, with a copy of the "Thompson Press" in his hands, studying the hundred-dollar announcement.

"Hallo! You after the dollars, too, Billy?" asked Bob, laughing.

"The ranchman looked up.

"I guess this is a cinch!" he said. "Some of the cattlemen have been asking for leave to-day. I reckon they were after this. I calculate I'll hump along to Cedar Creek to-morrow."

"The more the merrier!" said Frank Richards. "There's been an army to-day. I suppose there'll be a host to-morrow."

Frank Richards was right on that point.

On the morrow morning Billy Cook, having obtained leave from Mr. Lawless, rode up the trail to the school with the chums of Cedar Creek.

The backwoods school was quite populous when they arrived.

Inside and outside the walls were galoots searching for the hidden hundred, Buster Bill and Injun Dick among them. They must have turned out at daylight to get to Cedar Creek School so early.

Morning lessons at the backwoods school were somewhat disturbed by the sounds from outside, especially when there was an occasional scuffle between rival searchers.

Mr. Penrose's stunt was working like a charm, so far as advertisement went; but it did not conduce to the quiet pursuit of knowledge at the backwoods school.

At midday Black Sam brought Miss Meadows' horse round, and the schoolmistress rode away to Thompson to interview Mr. Penrose.

She found that gentleman in a happy and expansive mood.

Before Miss Meadows could speak, the editor of the "Thompson Press" informed her that the week's edition of the "Press" was sold out.

"Every copy gone, ma'am," said Mr. Penrose. "They fairly rushed for it. The last copy went an hour ago. I'm getting out an extra edition. This is selling more copies than I sold when I printed the news of the capture of Five-Hundred-Dollar Jones! Honest!"

"Will you have the kindness to leave my school out of such affairs on future occasions?" demanded Miss Meadows.

Mr. Penrose smiled.

"My dear ma'am, do you not see the idea? A school is a centre; news spreads from it to all quarters. Every boy and girl will grow excited on the subject, and tell his or her parents. Copies of the 'Press' will be called for from every corner of the valley and—"

"And what of the school work interrupted by this absurdity?" demanded Miss Meadows.

"This what?"

"Absurdity! The school work—the lessons—"

"By gosh," said Mr. Penrose, "I'm afraid I never thought about that! My mistake! Of course, I quite see your point—quite! Next week I shall certainly choose some other locality. Besides, the stunt would not do in the same locality twice. I'm using your school only once, Miss Meadows. The next hundred-dollar bill shall be hidden at Cedar Camp, and spread the glad news of the 'Thompson Press' in that direction. I hope you haven't been given any trouble—"

"But I have."

"I'm sorry! May I make a suggestion? Give your school a holiday until the hundred-dollar bill is found then—"

"What?"

"Let them all join in the search," said Mr. Penrose generously. "I'm sure they'd enjoy themselves."

"Nonsense!"

"Eh?"

"Nonsense!" repeated Miss Meadows.

And she returned to her horse. Mr. Penrose blinked after her, thinking that Miss Meadows' temper was more tart than he had ever supposed. On this subject the schoolmistress was not able to see eye to eye with the enterprising editor.

That afternoon there was much restiveness at Cedar Creek.

Undoubtedly Mr. Penrose's stunt was not doing the school any good, whatever might be its effect on the circulation of his paper.

That afternoon, among other disturbances, there were sounds of clambering boots on the timber roof of the schoolhouse.

The dollar-hunters had extended their search in that direction, as it had failed on terra firma.

Miss Meadows compressed her lips, but made no remark. It could not be helped. It was useless to think of arguing with the eager dollar-hunters.

When the schoolboys were free at last they came out into a crowded playground.

There were two or three groups of pilgrims eating bully-beef and corn-cakes, and refreshing themselves from flasks and bottles, having brought their provisions with them to save time.

The number was larger than ever, and Buster Bill was still to the fore.

The Cedar Creek fellows were not allowed to join in, however, Miss Meadows commanding them to leave for their homes at once, much to their disappointment.

But the other dollar-hunters remained, and the search went on while the sun set towards the far Pacific; and that evening Miss Meadows was more cross than she had ever been seen before.

She even spoke sharply to Mr. Slimmey, who was deeply sympathetic, and that poor gentleman walked away to his cabin with a heavy heart. Mr. Slimmey, who adored Miss Meadows, was feeling extremely angry with the enterprising editor of Thompson, and was even debating in his mind whether it was his duty—and feasible—to pay a visit to the "Press" office and kick Mr. Penrose.

He was pacing to and fro, thinking thus, in the dusk, when his attention was caught by a fluttering slip of paper alighted at his feet.

He stooped and picked it up.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Slimmey.

It was the hundred-dollar bill! Possibly its hiding-place had been disturbed by the eager seekers, and the wind had found it and blown it away.

At all events, there it was, in Mr. Slimmey's hand, and the young master stood staring at it quite a long time, with busy thoughts in his brain.

The 5th Chapter.

Turning the Tables.

Early the next morning there was a crowd at the gates of Cedar Creek. Buster Bill was the first to arrive, but there were dozens close behind.

A surprise awaited them.

The gates were closed, and on the large letters—a very surprising notice. It ran:

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"THE HIDDEN HUNDRED!"

"The 100-DOLLAR BILL has been found. The finder has hidden it again in Mr. Penrose's premises in Main Street, Thompson. Whoever finds it again is welcome to keep it."

"PAUL SLIMMEY."

"Well, by gosh!" ejaculated Buster Bill.

There was a chorus of surprised exclamations from the Thompson pilgrims arrived and arriving.

Buster Bill lingered long enough to read the notice, and to digest it, as it were, and then he turned round and started back to Thompson.

After him went the crowd.

More and more pilgrims came along the trail, but the returning seekers did not enlighten them. They wanted to be the first in the field at Mr. Penrose's office, where the hundred-dollar bill was hidden anew.

Frank Richards & Co. arrived at school, and read the notice, with great glee.

"But he hasn't kept it!" said Chunky Todgers. "He's an awful jay. He might have given it to me if he didn't want it. What the thump did he want to hide it again for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless. "It's tit for tat on Penrose. Penrose is going to have a crowd now turning his show inside out."

The chums found Mr. Slimmey with a smiling face when they came in to school.

Miss Meadows was smiling, too. Evidently she had learned of the peculiar device by which her faithful adorer was punishing Mr. Penrose for his over-zealous enterprise.

There was no disturbance at Cedar Creek School that morning. As fast as the dollar-hunters arrived they read the notice on the gate and turned back.

The morning passed in blissful quiet. It was probably far otherwise at Mr. Penrose's office in the town.

After morning lessons Frank Richards & Co. saddled their horses, and rode away for Thompson.

They were very anxious to learn how the dollar-hunt was getting on.

Main Street, Thompson, was unusually lively.

Outside the office of the "Thompson Press" there was a crowd, and inside there evidently was a crowd also.

Loud voices proceeded from the little building, and several articles of furniture were strewn on the sidewalk.

As the chums of Cedar Creek dismounted, Mr. Penrose, with a crimson and furious face, came out of his office, Buster Bill following him out with a levelled "gun."

"You sheer off!" roared Buster Bill. "Stopping us! I guess not! No, siree!"

Mr. Penrose waved his hands frantically.

"I can't have my office turned inside out!" he shrieked.

"I guess you can! 'Cause why? We're arter that bill."

"I've got to set up my paper!" roared Mr. Penrose. "You're upsetting my types. You're—"

"You can chew the rag as much as you like, but don't you come in ag'in!" said Buster Bill.

And the Buster went back into the crowded office to resume the dollar-hunt.

"Hallo! You're getting some of your advertising stunt yourself, Mr. Penrose!" remarked Bob Lawless. "We've had a lot of this at Cedar Creek."

The hapless editor cast a haggard glance at them.

"They're wrecking the place!" he moaned. "They've taken my hand-press to pieces to see if the bill's inside!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Penrose gave it up at last, and walked away dejectedly to the Occidental to comfort himself with the cup that cheers and likewise inebriates. And when Frank Richards & Co. rode away, half an hour later, Buster Bill & Co. were still going strong.

Buster Bill was the lucky finder. Unfortunately, he did not find the hundred-dollar bill until Mr. Penrose's office was in a state of disorder and disrepair that was simply shocking to look upon.

Frank Richards & Co. were keen to see the next number of the "Thompson Press." It came out nearly a week late, and when it appeared it contained a brief announcement that the new "stunt" was discontinued. The hundred-dollar bill that had been twice found was the first and last Hidden Hundred.

THE END.