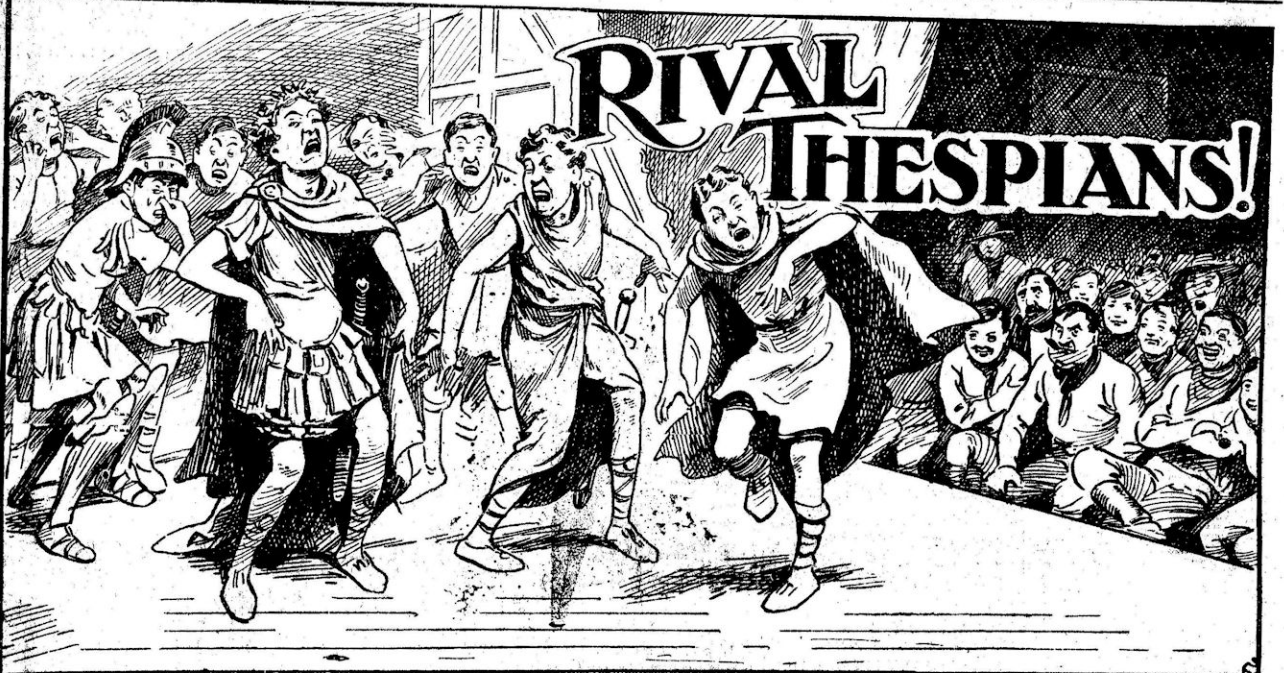


# The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

No. 1,006. Vol. XX. New Series ] THREE HALFPENCE. [Week Ending September 18th, 1920.



## ROUGH ON JULIUS CÆSAR!

Julius Cæsar & Co. seemed to have caught a cold all together. Julius was sneezing frantically; Mark Antony was sneezing; Cassius was sneezing; the crowd of Romans were sneezing; "Atchoo! - oooch - at - at - chooh!" "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience.



BY  
**MARTIN CLIFFORD**

### The 1st Chapter. Dicky Bird Looks In!

"Let me have about me men that are fat. Weak-headed men, and such as sneeze o' nights."

"Ass!" shouted Frank Richards.

"Isn't that his?"

"Look at your script, you duffer!"

"I guess it's a bit smudged," remarked Bob Lawless. "I think that's pretty near right if it isn't just the goods."

Frank Richards, stage-manager, general-manager, and coach to the Cedar Creek Thespians, gave a snort. The play selected was "Julius Cæsar." Frank Richards being rather keen on the immortal William. There was delivery copy of "Julius Cæsar" to be had in Frank's rather tattered volume of Shakespeare, and from that volume the schoolboy actors had copied out their parts. There had been "cuts," of course, Frank, like more ambitious boys, took the liberty of making improvements upon the great bard. Frank's task in transforming Canadian schoolboys into ancient Romans was not an easy one, and he had his moments of exasperation. He was having one now, as Bob Lawless spouted the lines belonging to Cæsar—with slight alterations,

due to defective memory and a smudgy copy.

"Try again, Bob," said Vere Beauclerc, with a smile.

Bob Lawless blinked at the smudgy sheet from an exercise-book in his hand.

"Give a galoot the office," he said.

"I can't make this out. What are the blessed lines, Frank? Keep your wool on, you know."

"It's enough to raise a nigger's wool to hear you!" granted Frank.

"Men that are fat—not fat."

"What the thump did Cæsar want fat men about him for?" demanded Bob.

"Chunky Todgers would have suited him."

"And 'sneez-headed men, and such as sneeze o' nights,'" said Frank.

"Not sneez-headed men, you thumpkin duffer! Go it again!"

Bob Lawless went it again.

"Let me have about me men that are fat. Sneez-headed men, and such as sneeze o' nights. You Cassius has a mean and mongrel look—"

"Lean and hungry look?"

shrieked Frank Richards.

"Oh, all serene—lean and hungry look!" said Bob amiably. "I don't

mind. Hadn't Cassius had his dinner, then?"

"Get on with your part, ass!"

"Right-ho!" Bob continued cheerfully.

"He drinks too much; such men are dangerous!"

"Thinks too much!" yelled the manager.

"Oh, is that it? Right-ho!" said Bob, still cheerful, though the manager looked like tearing his hair.

"Now, then, Beau, you're Mark Antony," said Frank, breathing hard.

"Get a bit nearer to it than Bob, if you can."

Vere Beauclerc came a good deal nearer to it than Bob, who really was not a born actor.

The rehearsal proceeded, more or less satisfactorily. Frank Richards had taken the part of Brutus for himself, and there was no doubt that Brutus' part was well done. Tom Lawrence, as Cassius, was quite good, though certainly his ruddy, chubby face hadn't a lean and hungry look. Chunky Todgers looked on rather morosely. Chunky had offered himself first as Brutus, then as Cassius, and then as the great Julius, but he had been relegated to the position of an Extra Conspirator. He complained

that his job seemed to be to look on while the other galoots were spouting. But nobody minded Chunky Todgers. While the rehearsal was proceeding, a rider drew in his horse at the school gates. It was Dicky Bird, of Hillcrest School. Dicky Bird hitched his horse at the gate and came into the playground. He was starting for the lumber schoolhouse when the spouting of the amateur actors attracted his attention, and he paused to look on, with a grin on his sunburnt face.

The presence of the Hillcrest fellow was soon noted, and it put the Cedar Creek Thespians on their mettle. They wanted Dicky Bird to see how excellently they could render Shakespeare. For the rivalry between the two schools in the Thompson Valley was very keen, and lately it had extended to the drama. In imitation of the Cedar Creek Thespians, Dicky Bird had started an amateur theatrical society at Hillcrest, upon which Frank Richards & Co. looked with lofty scorn.

They regarded it as a spurious imitation, while from the Hillcrest point of view it was the "genuine goods."

Cedar Creek had the advantage of being the public school of the section, and having ever so many more pupils than Hillcrest—a "public" school

in Canada, be it understood, being the national school. The school-room at Cedar Creek was a large apartment, used after school hours for public meetings in connection with local elections and other business, and some times for mission meetings and theatrical entertainments. This is customary in outlying settlements in Canada, where the schoolhouse forms a centre of local life, in the absence of other large buildings. The school-room was to be the theatre when the Cedar Creek Thespians gave their great performance of "Julius Cæsar"—date not yet fixed, but in the near future.

At Hillcrest, a small private school, there was no such accommodation, and, moreover, the smaller number of pupils gave Dicky Bird a much narrower range of selection of his players. Cedar Creek had the advantage in every way, besides being, as Frank Richards remarked, better actors. The Cedar Creek Thespians were prepared to dole out the feeble Hillcrest attempt at rivalry.

Even if Hillcrest could get audiences, there wasn't room for them in their limited space, while the Cedar Creek school-room could have accommodated half the town of Thompson. Dicky Bird, in spite of these

disadvantages, seemed to look on the... clapped his hands in applause when Vere Beauclerc delivered Mark Antony's celebrated oration to the mob.

"That's the real goods!" said Dicky Bird heartily. "I wouldn't mind giving you a place in my company, Cherub, if you belonged to Hillcrest."

"My dear chap, I wouldn't be found dead in your company," answered Beauclerc cheerily.

"So you chaps are doing 'Julius Caesar'?" said Dicky Bird. "I heard so from Todgers, but I guessed you'd find it rather above your weight."

"What are you chaps up to at Hillcrest?" asked Bob Lawless. "I guess you won't have the nerve to tackle Shakespeare."

Dicky Bird laughed. "I guess that's just what we're going to do," he answered.

"That you'd better come and see our show, and learn how to do it."

"Good idea!" said Frank Richards. "You're welcome to come, if you behave yourselves. Admission fifty cents."

"You've got the check to charge for admission!" ejaculated Dicky Bird.

All the proceeds go to the Mission Fund, explained Frank Richards.

"I guess the Mission Fund won't overflow its banks!" remarked Dicky Bird sarcastically.

"Not if it depends on folks paying to see you galoots make Shakespeare."

"Kick that Hillcrest bouncer out!" said Frank. "And let's get on with the rehearsal!"

Dicky Bird grinned and walked off towards the schoolhouse, and disappeared into the porch.

"What does that boy want here?" he said. "He must have come to see Miss Meadows. What's his game now?"

"Oh, never mind him!" said Frank. "Get on! We've got to chuck it soon."

And the rehearsal proceeded. Dicky Bird and all his works being dismissed from the minds of the Thespians.

The 2nd Chapter, Caught Napping!

"Hello!" said Dicky Bird. "What the—?" "Look at that!"

Frank Richards & Co. looked, with all their might, at the door.

It was Saturday, and the chums of Cedar Creek had ridden over to Thompson to pay a visit to Gunten's Store, the general emporium of the Thompson Valley.

As they came into the store several citizens were loitering round the stove, looking at a notice stuck on the wall.

The wall of Gunten's Store, behind the stove, was a sort of general advertising medium; notices of all kinds were pinned up there.

Various papers, in various hands, and with great varieties of spelling, announced that Buster Bill had a magnificent horse for sale, warranted sound in wind and limb; that a dance was to be given at MacGahan's Rooms; that the Thompson Press would be on sale one day later than usual that week, owing to an accident to a type-case; that a couple of lumbermen were wanted by Jim Smith at Cedar Creek; and so forth.

But the notice that was now attracting general attention was quite a different one—a very striking one.

It was neatly written, in a very legible hand—the hand of Richard Bird of Hillcrest School.

Frank Richards & Co. stared at it. For a moment or two they could hardly believe their eyes. It ran: "IN AID OF THE MISSION FUND."

Saturday next, a Performance will be given of "JULIUS CAESAR" (W. Shakespeare), by the HILLCREST HISTORIC SOCIETY, under the management of RICHARD BIRD, Esq., in the school-room, CEDAR CREEK.

and read it again, and then read it for a third time. Then he looked at his chums.

"Julius Caesar"—at Cedar Creek—in aid of the Mission Fund!" he said. "Why, that's us!"

"I guess so," exclaimed Bob Lawless cheerily. "That the thump does the chummy jay mean by this?"

"Must be some mistake, surely," said Beauclerc. "The Hillcrest chaps can't be giving their performance at our school."

"They jolly well won't be allowed to!" "No fear!"

"Our play—our idea—and our school!" said Beauclerc. "If it's genuine, it's too thick!"

"I guess so. Perhaps it's a lark," said Bob. "Let the blessed Hillcrest Historic Society show its nose at Cedar Creek, that's all. It will get it punished!"

"Yes, rather!" "I suppose Bird is pulling our leg with this rot," said Frank Richards, after a pause. "It can't be genuine. May as well take it down."

"I'll call that notice alone!" called out Mr. Gunten from the counter he was sitting on.

Frank looked round. "It's only a joke," he said. "There isn't going to be any performance at the store."

"Gummon! I've taken seats," answered the storekeeper. "You've taken seats for the Hillcrest show?"

"At Cedar Creek?" bawled Bob Lawless. "Sure!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Frank. "I've been on sale here in the store," said Old Man Gunten. "I'll sell you as many as you like—fifty cents each."

"Keep 'em to light your stove with!" exclaimed Frank Richards indignantly. "This is a spoof game. We're giving a performance of 'Julius Caesar' at Cedar Creek, in aid of the Mission Fund. We were going to fix it for Saturday week."

Mr. Gunten laughed. "I can't guess the other crowd have been first in the field," he remarked. "They'll get the audience. P'raps the folks'll come a second time to see your show—p'raps!"

And he laughed again. "Bird's mess gave an angry snort. If the Hillcrest performance came off as announced, and an audience turned up, it was not likely that the audience would turn up a second time to see a second performance of the same play by a second set of school-boys."

Dicky Bird had, in fact, cut the ground round under their feet. It was a lark, but not exactly in the way Frank Richards & Co. had supposed at first. The performance really was to be given—if Dicky Bird could give it.

"Oh, come on!" growled Frank, much irritated by the fat grin on Mr. Gunten's countenance.

The chums of Cedar Creek left the store without having made the purchases they had come for.

They were thinking now only of Dicky Bird's strategic move, and how it was to be countered.

"Let's ride over to the Bird shanty, and give him a jolly good hiding!" Bob Lawless suggested.

Frank shook his head. "That wouldn't stop him," he said. "It would do him good," argued Bob.

"It mightn't do us good," said Beauclerc, laughing. "We might get a hiding, in the enemies' country."

"Well, that's so; but—" "It will be all right," said Frank Richards, after some thought.

"Dicky Bird will have to get permission from Miss Meadows to use the school-room. The schoolmistress always has to be asked first to give her consent. We'll speak to Miss Meadows about it, and see that Bird doesn't score."

"That's a good idea," said Bob. "And the chums remounted their horses, and started at a gallop for Cedar Creek."

Four youths waded to them, as they rode out of Thompson. They were Dicky Bird, Blumpy, Fisher, and Watson, of Hillcrest. The quartette grinned as they waded their hands.

"Have you been to Gunten's Store?" bawled Blumpy. "Frank Richards checked his horse."

"Yes, you checky ass!" "Seen our notice?" queried Dicky Bird.

"Yes, and—" "You'll come to the performance, won't you? Only fifty cents admis-

sion; and it will be a lesson to you; you'll learn how to act from watching us. You need it, you know."

Frank Richards & Co. rode on, leaving the Hillcresters chortling, evidently greatly enjoying the joke on their rivals.

The chums arrived at Cedar Creek, and dismounted at the schoolhouse.

There was no school that day, and Miss Meadows was busy superintending household operations. She seemed surprised to see her three pupils on a Saturday.

However, she came out into the passage from the kitchen to speak to them. "What is it?" she asked.

"You explain, Franky," murmured Bob. "It's about a performance we're giving of a Shakespeare play, ma'am," said Frank. "We should like to have the school-room for next Saturday, if it isn't booked."

"Miss Meadows shook her head. "The room has been asked for next Saturday," she answered. "You can, I think, have it the following Saturday, if you wish."

Frank Richards felt an inward sinking. "Has Dicky Bird—" he began. "Yes, Bird has asked for the room," said Miss Meadows. "I understand that the Hillcrest boys are giving some performance in aid of a charity, and as the room was not engaged—"

"You haven't promised it to him?" exclaimed Bob, in dismay. "Oh dear!"

"There is no objection to the Hillcrest boys giving their performance here," said Miss Meadows. "Their own school-room is too small to accommodate a numerous audience."

"Yes; but—" "It is in aid of a very worthy object," said the Canadian school-

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mistress. "I hope many of my boys will be present."

"But—but—" stammered Frank. "When did you give Bird permission to have the room, Miss Meadows?"

"On Wednesday," "Oh! You—you couldn't cancel the arrangement?" "Certainly not."

Miss Meadows went back to the kitchen, where baking was in progress. The chums of Cedar Creek tapped out into the playground.

"Wednesday!" said Beauclerc. "That's the day we were rehearsing in the playground, and Dicky Bird came in."

"I wondered what he had come for," grunted Bob. "We know now! He knew about what we intended, and he came over to do us in the eye!"

"And we let him!" muttered Frank. "We might have guessed that."

"We're done now," said Bob gloomily. "Those pesky jays will get the audience, and the people won't come a second time for us. It will look as if we're imitating them, too, when all the time—"

Frank Richards knitted his brows. "The play hasn't come off yet, though," he said. "We've got a week to think it out. We're going to bottle up those bouncers somehow."

"How?" asked Bob. "That's what we've got to think out," said Frank determinedly.

And for the rest of that day Frank Richards & Co. were in a mood alternating between deep thoughtfulness and deeper wrath.

The 3rd Chapter. Frank Richards Thinks It Out!

Monday found all Cedar Creek in possession of the news of Dicky Bird's latest departure.

All the members of the Thespian Club were wrathful and indignant; and so were some of the schoolboys who were not Thespians.

Others were inclined to chuckle. Banker H. Honk guessed that Frank Richards & Co. had got it where they lived, and that Hillcrest had taken them by the shorts hairs. And he went on to certain other peevish things, till Bob Lawless put his head under the pump and stopped him.

It was agreed on all hands that Dicky Bird's conduct was the limit in cheek, and that Hillcrest had to be put down somehow—if possible it really was too bad.

The Hillcresters had heard of the Cedar Creek rehearsals of "Julius Caesar," and their intention of giving a performance in aid of the mission fund, and they had calmly begged that Hillcrest should, as if to add insult to injury, were going to give their precious performance in the Cedar Creek school-room.

The Thespians stood that, as Bob H. Honk had said, they might as well shut up shop altogether.

But how to stop it was a problem. Miss Meadows wasn't likely to enter into the question of the rivalry between the school-boys if anyone had ventured to explain the matter fully to her, which no one did.

The Thespians had to rely on themselves. Tom Lawrence suggested all Cedar Creek coming to the performance and kicking up a "thundering shindy."

That suggestion was vetoed nem-con. Mr. Peckover was coming from Hillcrest to see his boys perform, as well as some prominent citizens of Thompson Valley, including some of the players' fathers.

Miss Meadows was likely to be present. In such circumstances, anything like a "thundering shindy" was out of the question.

In fact, any attempt at a shindy was certain to be stamped out by the elders present, probably in a drastic way.

But to let Hillcrest go ahead was not to be thought of. Somehow or other, they had to be defeated.

Otherwise Cedar Creek felt that it would have a hard time of it, and leave its rivals to triumph.

Chunky Todgers, after much deep cogitation in his fat brain, turned up with a stunt. He suggested an alarm of fire as soon as the performance started.

Chunky was promptly set upon, and bidden to take his amazing stunt away and bury it.

On Wednesday, when Frank and Bob rode home from the Lawson Ranch after school, they found Mr. Smiley of the mission, there. Mr. Smiley had dropped in to tea, and he was in an expansive mood.

Mr. Smiley was a good-natured, easy-going gentleman, with an exaggerated Oxford accent, which he cultivated with great assiduity, feeling that he was in danger of losing it during his residence in the wilds of British Columbia.

Mr. Smiley had been duly notified of the forthcoming performance of the Hillcrest Historic Society, which he heartily approved.

He mentioned it to Frank and Bob, and apparently expected them to be as keen of it as himself.

"Quite a good jiah!" said Mr. Smiley, with his beneficent smile. "A very good jiah indeed. Very thoughtful and meritorious of the youngslads—try! To doubt you are takin' part—what?"

"It's a Hillcrest stunt, sir," explained Bob. "We may be turning up as audience."

"Oh, yes, of course!" assented Mr. Smiley. "Very agreeable for you to witness the—ah—performance in your schoolhouse—what?"

"Oh, very!" said Bob. "Oh, I shall be present," said Mr. Smiley, beaming. "Mrs. Smiley desires to be present. I shall bring my little boys and girls—what? Yess."

If anything was needed to knock on the head the idea of a shindy, that did it. Nobody at Cedar Creek would have dreamed of a shindy in the august presence of Mr. and Mrs. Smiley of the mission, and of the Misses Smiley and the young Masters Smiley. Respect to the "cloth forbade anything of the kind."

Mr. Smiley prattled on pleasantly about the affair, and the thoughtful-ness of the boys, and then Richard Bird and the orphans youngslads, fully supposing that his youthful hearers fully agreed with him, but they didn't, quite! They were prepared to go to great lengths to baffle Richard Bird and his meritorious friends.

"We've got to think of some-

thing," Bob Lawless remarked, on the way to school the next day. "It's getting near Saturday, and Hillcrest have it all their way so far. We can't risk the pesky scallywags with their schoolhouse crowded with Smileys."

"No fear!" said Beauclerc, laughing. "But they've got to be stopped."

"Yes, rather!" "I wish it stopped in at Hillcrest," he told me, and found them rehearsing," said Bob gloomily. "They were spouting 'Julius Caesar' no end. Of course, their performance wouldn't be a match on ours, would it, Frank?"

"Not a patch," agreed Frank Richards. "Only they're first in the field, and they bag all the glory," said Bob.

"We shall look like a crowd of miserable snobs, standing along with the same play a week later. Of course, we could give a different play; but we've learned up this one and rehearsed it—"

"Not going to change it," said Frank. "But it's no good giving it after Dicky Bird's done it. Nobody would come. Besides, lots of people will spring fifty cents to help the mission fund, but they won't do twice."

"That's so," said Beauclerc. "The bouncers seem to have us in a cleft stick. What are you thinking of, Frank? I can see that they've got something in your brain-box."

"We can't do them from giving the show," said Frank. "I suppose the performance is a failure?"

"It won't be much of a success, anyhow, the way those Hillcrest kids are kicking up a shindy," said Bob. "Thompson Valley folk are a little over-critical. Any kind of a show goes down here—there's so few."

"I mean, suppose it was a rank failure—suppose they busted up in the first act, or the second act, or the third?"

"But they won't." "They may be made to," said Frank. "That's what we've got to work. All fair in love and war, you know. Hillcrest have bargined our idea."

"Quite a good jiah!" grinned Bob, in playful imitation of Mr. Smiley's remarkable accent.

Frank Richards laughed. "Yes; and as they've bagged our idea, we're entitled to muck up their performance, if we can, and get it back again. Then we'll give the real thing next Saturday. Most of the audience will want their money back if the performance stops in the first act, and the fifty cents will admit them to our show a week later. The mission won't suffer. We should be justified—"

"Oh, we're justified enough!" said Bob. "But how are we going to work the rifle? That's what beats me."

"That's what I've been thinking out," said Frank, with a smile. "It came into my head this morning. Now, on Saturday the Hillcrest bouncers are coming over early to rig up the stage in the school-room, and fix up the seats, and so on. I think it would be only good-natured for us to turn up and help them."

"What?" "The stage is going to be of pine-planks, raised a couple of feet from the floor, on trestles," said Frank. "The same stuff that's been used before lots of times for the same purpose. Well, when that stage is rigged up there will be room for a fellow to hide underneath it."

"Oh!" "It would be easy enough for a chap to slip in, and hide in a dark corner, without being noticed."

"Easy enough," said Bob, with a stare. "But I don't see that it would do any good."

"Lots of things you don't see, old chap," answered Frank Richards cheerily. "There are knot-holes in some of the planks."

"What the thump?" "All lessons to-day we've got to ride over to Thompson before going home," said Frank, changing the subject suddenly.

"What for?" "To call on Gunten's Store!"

"Bother Gunten's Store! What are we going to Gunten's Store for?" "To buy some pepper."

"Pepper?" said Bob dazedly. "What's it?" "What's the name of Christopher Columbus, do you want to buy pepper for?" howled Bob.

"To put in the garden-squirt I'm going to bring from the ranch and take under the stage with me."

"But I don't see—" began Bob. "Put it in words of one syllable

for him, Frank!" said Beaulieu, laughing.

Frank Richards explained more fully, and as soon as Bob understood, he, too, burst into a roar. The chums of Cedar Creek arrived at school that morning in the highest of spirits.

#### The 4th Chapter. Rough on Julius Cæsar!

Saturday dawned a sunny autumn day—though at Cedar Creek it was not called autumn, but the "fall." It was so early that morning Dicky Bird and a crowd of Hillcrest fellows were at Cedar Creek. They had plenty to do there.

The big school-room had to be arranged as an auditorium, and it was a good morning's work for the schoolboy players.

Trestles and planks had to be carried in, and formed into a stage at one end of the big room, fastened down with temporary screws. A curtain had to be fastened up and got into order to obey the pull of a cord. Behind the stage the green-room was partitioned off by the scenes. Canvas scenes, painted—more or less artistically—by Dicky Bird & Co., were tastefully arranged. Roman streets on the scenes bore a considerable resemblance to Main Street at Thompson, and the senate-house looked like a twin brother to the assembly room at Gunten's Store. But Thompson valley folk were not hyper-critical. Naturally, there were few citizens of Thompson who had seen Rome; and, naturally again, none at all who had seen Rome in the days of Julius Cæsar. Besides any deficiencies in the scenery were to be made up by the excellence of the acting—according to Richard Bird, at all events.

During the morning, the Hillcrest crowd were cheerily and busily at work.

The stage was finished with drapery at the front, and really looked quite nice! After that the Hillcresters departed for dinner, leaving the remainder of the preparations for the afternoon. Dicky Bird and Blumpy and Fisher stayed, however, Miss Meadows, who had been asked to dine with her.

Meanwhile Frank Richards & Co. were dining with Black Sam at the stable. When the Hillcrest crowd marched away, Bob Lawless came out to Black Sam's quarters to see how he returned to his chums with the news, that the coast was clear.

Frank Richards lost no time. While Dicky Bird and his two comrades were sitting up, on their best behaviour, at Miss Meadows' table, Frank slipped quietly into the school-room.

He scudded along to the stage, raised the drapery that covered the front of it, and stepped beneath.

It was nearly pitch dark under the stage-flooring, and Frank bumped his head several times as he crawled beneath the planks. He made his way slowly and painfully, on his hands and knees, to the further end, where he stopped to rest.

After a few minutes, as his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he found himself in a sort of twilight; there were six or seven rows of wooden planks, and a number of knot-holes of various sizes, that let in a faint light. Frank sat down to wait, with

his back to a trestle. Beside him he laid the big garden-squirt loaded with Mr. Gunten's best pepper, which was to be introduced into the Shakespearean performance later. He had a bottle of lemonade and some bread and cheese for his own refreshment, for his wait was to be a long one.

An hour or so later the Hillcrest fellows were at work in the school-room again.

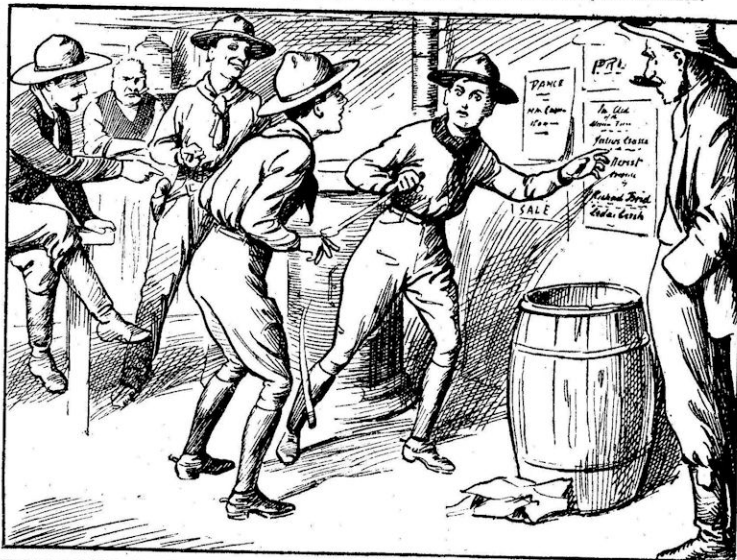
Forms were taken out to be used as seats, and all the chairs added that could be obtained. More and more

loud and long as they discussed it—and Frank Richards laughed silently as he heard them.

There was a surprise in store for Dicky Bird & Co., and the hour was at hand now.

Before six o'clock the audience was tramping in.

Reserved seats were kept for distinguished spectators like the Smiley family and Mr. Gunten and the parents of the young Shakespearean actor. Smiling Hillcresters, in clean collars, showed them to their places.



**FORESTALLED!** Frank Richards & Co. stared at the nicely written notice, written in Dicky Bird's hand. It was to the effect that "The Hillcrest Historic Society would give a performance of 'Julius Cæsar' in the Cedar Creek school-room on Saturday next, etc."

seats were made of planks stretched on trestles, till the school-room was transformed into an auditorium capable of seating a very numerous audience.

Then Dicky Bird & Co. rested from their conversation came to Frank Richards' ears, as well as many chuckles.

They picnicked for tea in the green-room in a very satisfied frame of mind, utterly unconscious of what was beneath their feet. A good deal of their conversation came to Frank Richards' ears, as well as many chuckles.

Dicky Bird & Co. were looking forward to the great Shakespearean performance, they were going to give, but they enjoyed still more the "rise" they had taken out of Cedar Creek. It seemed to the cheery Dicky Bird the stunt of the season to bag the Cedar Creek scheme and to bag the Cedar Creek school-room to carry it out in, with the Cedar Creek fellows able to do nothing but look on and glower. The Hillcrest fellows laughed

Mr. Peckover came in with Miss Meadows. Mr. Slimmy and Mr. Shepherd both came. A crowd from Thompson Town gradually filled the seats. In the outlying valley any kind of entertainment was welcome, and this special entertainment was for a good object that deserved support.

Dicky Bird surveyed the accumulating audience through a slit in the curtain with much satisfaction. The doorkeepers were taking innumerable half-dollars.

Meanwhile the green-room was very busy.

The Hillcrest Historic Society was quite ready when six o'clock struck.

The curtain rolled back upon "Scene: Rome. A street."

The performance started with a swing.

Still the audience was added to—quite a large number of Cedar Creek fellows coming in to stand at the back. Bob Lawless and Vere Beau-

clerc were among them, though Frank Richards was not to be seen. Most of the Cedar Creek fellows were grinning in spite of the seriousness of the play. They seemed to be anticipating something, but there was nothing like a "shindy." In fact, the Cedar Creek crowd was quite exemplary in its behaviour.

Soon came the scene in which Julius Cæsar, passing on the stage, calls the attention of Mark Antony to Cassius and his lean and hungry look. And as Dicky Bird declaimed:

Miss Meadows stared, Mr. Peckover blinked. Mr. Smiley looked amazed. From the stage floated a faint odour of pepper. Fortunately the audience were not near enough to catch the full flavour.

Dicky Bird rubbed his eyes and nose.

"What is it?" he gasped, forgetting all about Julius Cæsar. "Some silly fellow's snoring has upset some pepper—oooh!"

"Atchooo!"

"Oooooo—er—cooh!"

"Bai Jove!" said Mr. Smiley. "I mean, bless my soul! This is—ah—really very extraordinary!"

"Ooooooh!"

There was a rush of the actors who were in the green-room on to the stage. In the green-room the pepper was thicker; it came up in a cloud through a knot-hole below, and the whole company were sneezing as if they desired to sneeze their heads off. The auditorium rang with terrific sneezes.

Some of the audience were catching it now, as sneezes rang far and wide. Mr. Peckover was sneezing. Mr. Smiley jammed a handkerchief over his nose resolutely, but the sneeze burst forth all the same. Mrs. Smiley sneezed hastily, and hurried off her flock of little Smileys, and they began to sneeze as they went. It was a volcanic eruption of sneezing.

On the stage the Historic Society almost wept.

Julius Cæsar was quite forgotten now.

The performance abruptly stopped. Dicky Bird & Co., sneezing frantically, fled from the stage, amid yells of laughter from the Cedar Creek crowd, who, well at the back, were out of range of the pepper. Dicky Bird shook a frantic fist at Bob Lawless as he passed him on his way to the refreshing open air.

"You've done this somehow!" he howled. "It's a trick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Is it as bad as bagging our play, and our school-room to play it in?"

Dicky Bird did not reply. He rushed on to the playground, sneezing. As the last of the audience cleared off a figure crawled out from under the stage, also sneezing.

"Good for you, Franky!" chortled Bob Lawless. "Hallo! What's the monkey doing, old son?"

"Atchoo-atchoo-choooooop!" was all Frank Richards could say.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Hillcrest Historic Society had not scored a success. Two-thirds of the audience, of less than demanded their money back, and had to go. And on Monday a notice was up in Gunten's Store that a performance of Julius Cæsar would be given in the Cedar Creek school-room on Saturday next. The Cedar Creek Thespians, admission fifty cents, in aid of the mission fund, and there was a footnote to it, "No pepper this time." Whereat Dicky Bird & Co. viewed the direst vengeance upon the Thespians and all their works.

THE END.

(Another splendid title of Frank Richards & Co. in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

A SPLENDID TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.!



Parred Chums!

A FINE YARN OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD. By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The Last Day at Rookwood!

"I've got to go to-morrow!" "Leaving Rookwood?" "Yes," muttered Lovell. Jimmy Silver and Lovell gathered in the end study in the Fourth Form passage. Tea was on the table, but it was hardly touched. The Fistical Four of Rookwood had, as a rule, healthy, youthful appetites; but just now they had other things than tea to think about. Jimmy Silver was sitting on the edge of the table, with a deeply worried look on his face. Raby and Newcome had an arm each of the armchair, and they looked worried, too. Arthur Edward Lovell was moving restlessly about the study, seemingly unable to keep at rest. His hands were driven deep into his pockets, and there was a wrinkle in his brow. "But—!" said Raby helplessly. "But—" mumbled Newcome. "I've got to go," said Lovell, trying to speak steadily. "It's all up with me here. You know my father came down this afternoon un-expectedly, while the Head was ragging us over that affair with the man at the bungalow. He told me—he's been keeping it back, but it's had to come out at last—we're ruined. "Ruined!" repeated Jimmy Silver. "All the money's gone," said Lovell miserably. "My father's been robbed. His solicitor, Pilkington, has bolted with nearly all he had—and other people's, too, as well as my father's. He can't be found; and—and the police have given him up now, father says. He's supposed to have got safe out of the country. And—and I'm done for here. I—I can't quite get used to the idea yet. "What awful luck!" muttered Jimmy.

"A friend of the pater is going to give me a start in an office in the City," said Lovell. "You!" said Jimmy. His glance dwelt with almost tender compassion upon his troubled chum. He could not imagine Arthur Edward Lovell in an office in the City. Poor Lovell had his gifts; he was a good cricketer, and he was good at football, and he barely contrived to keep his end in class. His Latin verses, certainly, were not much better than Tubby Muffin's, and his French made Monseigneur Monseigneur wring his hands. Lovell—starting in the City! Truly, he would be like the cartoonist in among the brass pots. Whatever gifts he had were not of the kind required for the City. Lovell flushed a little. He was well enough aware of his shortcomings. "Fancy me on a high stool, trying to keep books—and—!" he muttered. "I'm no good—I know I'm no good. It ain't in my line, is it? I can keep a straight bat, and I can tell 'em how many forms of the definite article there are in Greek!" He laughed. "I don't think my governor in the City will be satisfied with that much. "Poor old chap!" murmured Newcome.

"Can't something be done?" said Raby. "What about your young brother, Teddy of the Third? Is he going, too?" Lovell shook his head. "No; it can't be managed about him—the pater hopes that one of my uncles will come to the rescue for Teddy, and keep him at Rookwood. He's not to know. I'm telling you fellows in confidence, of course. The

pater is anxious to keep it all away from my young brother as long as possible. No need to worry that poor kid. The pater didn't really want me to tell anybody; but he's let me tell you chaps. I couldn't clear off without a word, could I?" "I should jolly well think not," said Jimmy Silver warmly. "But look here, Lovell—" "Something ought to be done," said Raby. "Something—something!" muttered Newcome, rather vaguely. "You've got friends to stand by you, old chap." "Nothing you fellows can do. I know you would; but there's nothing, unless you could find that beast who's bolted with the pater's money," said Lovell, with a faint smile. "But your fees are paid for this term," said Jimmy.

"The Head's agreed to let that stand over for my young brother next term." "Oh!" "You—you see," muttered Lovell uncomfortably. "It's—it's rather important about poor old Teddy—he's too young to be bothered with any thing of this kind, if it can be helped." "You're not exactly a Methuselah yourself!" growled Raby. "I can stand it better than Teddy. You fellows will be jolly careful not to say a word!" said Lovell anxiously. "Oh, of course!" But look here," said Jimmy Silver. "You can't leave Rookwood, Lovell. I'll speak to the Head about it." "What about?" "About your fees. I know he would play up—you know my pater, and he likes you, and—"

"Can't be done, old scout!" said Lovell. "You're awfully good, Jimmy, and I know your pater's a brick; but I'm not sticking anybody for money. And—and besides, my place is at home now. There's my sisters—they'll have to be provided for somehow. I've got to work at something—somehow. I've got to get well off somehow!" "Poor old chap!" murmured Jimmy.

His heart ached for his chum at that moment. "I may get on in business," said Lovell, after a pause. "People do, you know. I may become quite successful, you know, and marry the governor's daughter when I grow up, like that chap—what was his name?" "Dick Whittington," said Raby. "That's it! He started lower down, you know, and he became Lord Mayor of London," said Lovell hopefully. "I—I dare say he may have been a cleverer chap than I am."

There really was not much doubt on that point; but Lovell's chums would have told him so for words. "Why not?" said Jimmy Silver, as healthily as he could. "Perhaps some day you'll be knighted by the King as Lord Mayor of London. 'Hem! Sir Arthur Lovell—'" "Sounds all right," said Newcome. Lovell grimaced. "That's a long way off," he said. "I think I'll go and pack my boxes as the first step towards becoming Sir Arthur Lovell, Lord Mayor of London."

"We'll come and help!" said Jimmy. And the chums of the Fourth left the end study together, in the most dolorous mood they had ever experienced in their young lives.

The 2nd Chapter. Under the Shadow!

Putty Grace of the Fourth dropped into the end study later in the evening, at the time usually supposed to be devoted to prep. There was a bright and cheerful grin upon the

humorous countenance of Putty of the Fourth. No prep was going on in the end study. Lovell had nose to do, and his chums were not in a humour for it. They had decided to "chance it" with Mr. Bootles in the morning. Their untasted tea had been turned into supper, and they were disposing of it tranquilly when Putty's cheery face dawned upon them in the doorway. Putty did not observe the despondency that reigned in the study at first. His own spirits were always buoyant, and they seemed to be unusually buoyant now. "Hallo! You chaps done prep?" he asked. "No, we didn't," exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Well, I've got it rather short, too," said Putty. "I've been thinking of a stunt."

No reply. The Fistical Four were not in a mood for stunts just then; prep would have been quite as welcome. But Putty, full of his own ideas, ran on, unheeding the silence. "That fellow in black—Lasker's his name, I think—who lives at the bungalow on Coombe Heath," said Putty. "He came up to the school to-day and got you fellows a liking for trespassing in his silly garden."

"That fellow in black—Lasker's his name, I think—who lives at the bungalow on Coombe Heath," said Putty. "He came up to the school to-day and got you fellows a liking for trespassing in his silly garden." "Bother him!" growled Jimmy. "It was like his cheek, wasn't it?" said Putty. "You didn't know a new chap had taken the bungalow when he came into the garden after Smithers. He had into you with a stick, and then came and got you a caning from the Head; spectral beast, I call him. Now there's a notice on the board, putting all that part of the beach out of bounds, as far as the cross-roads. That's a short cut to Latchem barred to us. Don't you fellows think it's time for reprisals?" "Grunt!" "You don't seem jolly enthusiastic about it," said Putty, with a stare. "I expected to find you keen to get down on the war-path."

"Oh, bother the man!" "Well, look here. That rotter is a rotter, you know—spiteful as a Prussian Hun. He's some sort of a recluse, or misanthrope, you know. He's so jolly malicious, just to make sure that no chap will ever go near his place. Don't you think so?" "Very likely." "Looks like it," said Raby, a little interested at last. "He came down so heavy because he doesn't want to be disturbed, I should say. Some sort of a beastly brute—like some dashed old Diogenes—and don't like schoolboys kicking up a row near his show. Like his cheek!" "Exactly. Now, my idea is to

punish him for his cheek," said Putty. "I've thought of a stunt." "Take it away and bury it!" "Don't you want to make Lasker sit up?" demanded Putty. "Bother Lasker," said Jimmy Silver. "We're not thinking about Lasker, old chap. Lovell's leaving to-morrow." "Oh!" ejaculated Putty. "Lovell leaving! Is that why you're sitting around like a set of mouling owls?" "Fateh!" "I'm sorry, though," said Putty, sincerely enough. "What the thump are you leaving for, Lovell, early in the term, too?" "Oh, I'm going home!" "If I suppose so, if you're leaving. I didn't think you were running away to be a pirate," said Putty. "But why?" "The pater says so."

"Going to another school?" "No." Lovell flushed uncomfortably, and Putty, after a rather curious glance at him, dropped the subject. He was not inquisitive, and he could see that Arthur Edward did not want to explain. "Well, I suppose you don't want to be bothered with my cheery old stunts just now," he said. "Ta-ta!" and Putty left the study.

True enough, the Fistical Four were not giving much thought to Mr. Lasker of Heath Bungalow, much as that unpleasant gentleman had annoyed them. The departure of Lovell had somewhat occupied their minds to the exclusion of all other considerations. They did not "show up" in the Common-room that evening. Lovell wished to avoid the fellows as much as possible in order to keep off the subject of his sudden departure; it was impossible to explain the circumstances, and he was a bad hand at keeping a secret.

By the time the Classical Fourth went to their dormitory, it was pretty generally known that Lovell was going in the morning. Several fellows asked him questions, rather out of friendliness than curiosity; but Lovell's replies were curt and vague. Tubby Muffin was the only inquisitive one; and to Tubby's queries Lovell did not vouchsafe a reply at all.

In the gloom that reigned among the Fistical Four was visible to all eyes. "Keep smiling!" was Jimmy Silver's favourite maxim; but this was an occasion when it was simply impossible to smile. Jimmy and Raby and Newcome could hardly imagine what it was going to be like at Rookwood without Lovell.

Many and many a time there had been the same kind of a low study, but now that the time had come to part, the chums of the Fourth realised with dismal clearness the strength of the bond of friendship that had grown up in that celebrated apartment.

Lovell had his faults and his weaknesses; but his chums would have preferred to see the most perfect character at Rookwood take his departure with a good grace; and that they always would be while life lasted. The three were quite clear on that point. "Hallo! We're breaking bounds!" Raby remarked suddenly.

He pointed towards the low, one-story building near the footpath they were following. Unconsciously, their footsteps had led them by the lonely bungalow where the man in black had made their acquaintance. The footpath was a public one; but since the trouble between Mr. Lasker and the Rookwooders, the Head had placed it out of bounds for all junior boys at Rookwood. "Bother!" said Jimmy, crossly. "We're not turning back now, we're going on through the wood home."

"Yes, rather!" The juniors glanced curiously at the lonely house as they passed. Mr. Lasker was a rather mysterious tenant; and even now the bungalow did not look as if it was occupied. There was no smoke from the chimney, which might be accounted for by the warmth of the weather. But the garden looked as neglected as of old; not a weed had been displaced, and the gaps in the fence were unrepaired. The paint on doors and windows was old and cracked, and had not been retouched. All the windows but one were covered by blinds, and the one that was not covered had a screen standing just within, which shut off all view of the apartment inside. Probably Mr. Lasker was some misanthropic recluse, who did not love the society of his fellow-men; yet, even so, he was certainly a man who should care for so solitary a life. Certainly he had shown a strong objection to having his solitude broken by

"Good-bye, old fellow!" "You'll write?" "And we'll see you in the vac, old scout."

"Don't forget to write." "You—you—" Lovell faltered. "Say, Jimmy, you—" "Yes, old fellow."

"You've a right to keep a bit of an eye on Teddy sometimes—after I'm gone. He—he's rather a young ass, you know," stammered Lovell. "I know you don't care for him much."

"I will!" said Jimmy. "He's rather a cheeky little scamp, I know, and he—he's liable to run himself into trouble. I've never been able to look after him as much as I wanted. You—you might speak to him sometimes, and—and just see that he doesn't lapid himself in trouble—as far as you can, you know."

"Stand back there!" The train was moving. A last hand-shake through the window, and the juniors stepped back as the train glided on its way. Arthur Edward Lovell's pale face was seen for a minute longer, and the chums waved their hands to him, and then the train disappeared down the line.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood watching the train. It was almost impossible to realise that Lovell was gone—gone for good from old Rookwood and from the end study.

In dismal mood they left the station. The train came into the sunny village street slowly. "Oh, it's rotten!" muttered Raby. "Poor old Lovell! And—and there's nothing a fellow can do!"

Jimmy could get near that lawyer chap who bolted. Jimmy Silver, clenching his hand. "How I'd like to give him just one—" "Wouldn't I just!" said Newcome. "I'm not going back to Rookwood yet!" growled Jimmy. "Boodles has given us leave anyhow—gone for stand classes this morning. Let's go for a stroll."

"Boodles will expect us for second lesson, won't he?" "I don't care for second lesson!" "Oh, all right!" The chums turned into the path to the beach. They felt a little cheered as they came out on the wide beach, with its rich, coarse drimmer on the seaward, and the keen breeze from the distant sea. They talked in a desultory way as they strolled, and their talk ran on poor Lovell and his doings. That topic was likely to be an unending one in the end study.

What a good chap he was, that was the burden of their remarks. Raby and Newcome recalled, with deep compassion, the "daps" they had played on him, and the "japs" they had played on Rookwood, and Jimmy Silver remembered more than one hasty word he would have been glad now to recall, but, after all, they had been very good pals; and that they always would be while life lasted. The three were quite clear on that point. "Hallo! We're breaking bounds!" Raby remarked suddenly.

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schoolboys. The vindictive bitterness with which he had pursued the Rookwooders for their inadvertent trespass on his domain showed that he was determined to risk a repetition of it. "Queue beggars!" Jimmy Silver remarked. "I've got an idea that he knows Lovell's pater, and doesn't like him. You remember he was at Rookwood, complaining to the Head, when Mr. Muffin arrived, and he dodged him. It struck me at the time."

"Same here!" said Newcome. "The Head noticed it, too, I think. I asked Lovell, and he said he'd never heard his father speak of anybody named Lasker."

"There's the Johnny, I think," said Raby. A figure came in sight over the ragged rhododendron and laurels in the neglected garden. It was a man dressed in black, with a black pointed beard and a foreign look. Undoubtedly it was Mr. Lasker, and the chums of Rookwood had their fingers crossed, conscious that they were out of bounds, though not within Mr. Lasker's dominions. The man in black was passing in the garden, apparently to the air, but not coming outside his own fence.

The black figure stopped suddenly, and the dark, sharp face of the bungalong tenor peered at the juniors over the fence.

His eyes glittered at the sight of them. Evidently he recognised the three juniors at a glance as easily as they recognised him.

They hurried on. The glance he had given them was angry and savage, and they would willingly have "chipped him as they passed, in return for his insolence, but they wisely forbore. That small satisfaction was not worth another caning from the Head.

"Savage-looking beast!" remarked Raby, as they went on into the wood, and the head was left behind. "I'd like to make him sit up, if only because he got poor old Lovell a caning the day before he had to clear out of Rookwood."

"Putty was talking about a stunt," said Newcome.

"Oh, bother Putty and his stunts!" said Jimmy Silver. "I don't feel equal to stunts just at present."

And his comrades felt the same, indeed they wondered whether they would ever recover their old cheery, careless spirit now that their chum was gone.

The 4th Chapter.

The Grief of Tubby Muffin

"You fellows have been taking it easy. Thus Reginald Muffin, as Jimmy Silver & Co. came back into the school gates after morning lessons were over at Rookwood.

Muffin looked, and felt, rather injured. The fat youth had been in hot water with Mr. Bootles that morning, as he often was, chiefly owing to laziness. Tubby certainly was obtuse, and Mr. Bootles was lenient with him on that account; but when he added laziness to obtuseness, the Form-master not unreasonably lost patience. So Tubby had been hauled over the coals, which annoyed Tubby most of all. Tubby would have been perfectly willing to see Lovell off at the station instead of grinding at Latin conjugations and Greek declensions; indeed, Tubby would have been given his worst enemy off anywhere than have done any work of any kind. Tubby felt that he was an injured party.

"Nice for some fellows!" pursued Muffin, in a tone of cynical moroseness. "Some fellows get a nice walk in the morning, and some fellows have to stick to rotten dead languages, and it's quite fair play—I don't think."

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not look as if they had been enjoying their walk; but they did not object that. His thoughts were exclusively bestowed upon his own injuries.

"Ass!" grunted Jimmy. They walked on into the quad, and Tubby trotted with them. He was by no means finished with his grievances.

"Suppose I'd taken a morning off," he said, "Bootles would have raised Cain! You know he would! I call it favouritism!"

"Oh, he's rotten!" demanded Tubby. "I'd have seen Lovell off! After all, he was a pal of mine, too! The fact is, Lovell liked me better than he did you fellows!"

"I'm sorry he's gone," said Tubby

"—really sorry! I feel these things, you know, being a more sensitive chap than you fellows! He was rather rude last evening when I asked him to lend me a bob; but I forgive him!"

"It's all very well calling a fellow names, Jimmy Silver, but—"

Mr. Bootles appeared in the doorway, as the chums came into the School House, and Tubby broke off.

Mr. Bootles gave the Co. a benignant look. He could see in their troubled faces how much they felt the loss of their chum. They were not fellows to wear their hearts upon their sleeves; but they simply could not help looking "down" when they felt so very down.

"You—hem!—saw Lovell off, what?" said Mr. Bootles.

"You did not—hem!—return in time for the next lesson," remarked Mr. Bootles.

Jimmy coloured. No doubt you have been delayed, however," added the little gentleman kindly.

"We—could have got back for second lesson, sir," said Jimmy Silver honestly. "But—but we were feeling so rotten, sir! You see—"

"I understand, my dear boy. I excuse you," said Mr. Bootles. And he passed on.

"Good old sort!" murmured Newcome, when the Form-master was out of hearing. Snort from Tubby Muffin.

"Some fellows have all the luck!" he said bitterly. "Some fellows get

not help in her trouble; his sisters probably drowned, and wailed. What a homecoming for poor old Lovell! It was difficult, with such thoughts in their minds, to take an interest in "his, haec, or hoc," or in "ho, he, ho." And the kind-hearted Mr. Bootles, who had been by himself at some much earlier stage in his career, took pity on them.

"Hem! Silver, Raby, Newcome—"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Jimmy Silver, in dismal expectation of a lecture.

"You—hem—may take your books into the quadrangle, you three boys," said Mr. Bootles.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" Gladly enough, and very grateful to Mr. Bootles, the three juniors left the Form-room.

They took their books with them, though those books were not likely to be much pored over that afternoon. Mr. Bootles knew that; he was, in fact, letting them off after-noon lessons in a tactful way.

Tubby Muffin fairly glared after the three as they went. If Tubby had felt the morning's affair unjust to his estimable self, he was simply overwhelmed by this.

The other fellows did not seem to mind. Even Peele had lost his usual snarl on this occasion.

But Tubby sat in suppressed indignation. Jimmy and Raby and Newcome were left off because Lovell was gone. He was their chum, and they missed

"What? What are you crying for?"

"My—my grief, sir—"

"Your what?"

"Grief, sir—my fearful grief—"

"Are you out of your senses, Muffin?"

"Nunno, sir—not at all, sir! I—I'm stricken with grief, sir! It's awful! Boo-hoo!"

"What can you possibly mean, Muffin?" exclaimed the astonished Form-master. "Have you had some bad news from your home?"

"Oh, no, sir!" wailed Tubby Muffin, knocking his round eyes industriously. "My dear old pal, sir—"

Was Lovell a friend of yours, Muffin?"

"My very best pal, sir. We loved each other like brothers," groaned Muffin. "He—ho cried at leaving me, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That sudden howl of merriment was simply irresistible. The whole Classical Fourth joined in it. The idea of anybody crying at parting with Tubby Muffin was too much for them.

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles angrily. "Muffin—"

"Boo-hoo!"

"Bo!"

"I—I—can't help it, sir!" wept Tubby. "Mum-my heart is breaking, sir! I—I'm so grief-stricken, sir! C—can't I take my books into the quad, sir?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.



**TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED!** The juniors had had enough of the "prosecution," and scudded off down the weedy path. The man in black was still in pursuit, stick in hand and his whiskered face white with rage.

into their Form-master's good graces! Some fellows are above that! Yahi!"

Jimmy looked at him. "Do you want your silly head banged on the doorpost, Muffin?" he inquired.

Tubby Muffin jumped back.

"Eh? No—nunno—"

"Then you'd better sheer off!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, kick him!" growled Raby.

"Yah!"

Reginald Muffin sheered off without waiting to be kicked.

He carried his grievances with him morosely. He confided to Valentine Mornington that some fellows were favoured, and some fellows weren't, and asked Mornington if it wasn't a shame, to which Morny replied not in words, but in actions, applying his boot to Tubby's portly person with grace and force, so that Tubby sought no further sympathy from him. But at dinner Tubby was still looking grieved and injured, though it was noticeable that his appetite had not suffered.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not bother their heads about Tubby and his grievances; they had trouble enough of their own to think about. They tried to look as cheerful as usual, but even Jimmy himself could not "keep smiling."

In the Form-room that afternoon the three juniors felt inexpressibly bored and worried with lessons. They simply could not put their thoughts into their work. They thought of poor old Lovell, at home by this time, and under what conditions! A troubled and anxious father, probably in a tart temper; a troubled mother whom he could

him, and for that reason they were shown this undue favour, as Tubby regarded it. Indignation as Tubby felt was natural, but it was of no service. Mr. Bootles did not even know that he was indignant, and certainly Reginald Muffin would not have ventured to tell him.

But, as he suppressed his outraged feelings, a new idea came into Tubby's fat mind, and he smiled.

If three fellows were so down-hearted over Lovell's departure that Mr. Bootles let them off lessons, surely it was up to him to display similar consideration to a fourth. Tubby was prepared to feel and show any amount of grief to escape from the Form-room that sunny afternoon.

And so it was borne in upon Tubby Muffin's mind that he had been very attached to Lovell, and that his grief simply incapacitated him from work. The Fourth Form was suddenly startled by an extraordinary sound from Reginald Muffin.

"Boo-hoo!"

Mr. Bootles jumped. Every neck in the Classical Fourth moved as if by the same spring, and every eye was fixed on Muffin.

That fat youth had bowed his head over his desk, and was weeping loudly.

"Boo-hoo!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles, in astonishment. "Muffin! What are you making that extraordinary noise for? How dare you, sir, make that ridiculous noise in the class-room!"

"I—I—I'm only c-crying, sir!" gasped Muffin.

He understood now the cause of that sudden accession of grief on the part of Reginald Muffin.

"I—I think I could bear it better out-of-doors, sir," mumbled Tubby. "Oh! Boo-hoo! Hoochoo!"

He rose to his feet. If there was anything like justice to be had at Rookwood, Tubby felt that he was sure of an afternoon off now.

But justice, from Muffin's point of view, was not a commodity to be had so easily.

Instead of saying "Go at once, my poor dear boy!" Mr. Bootles only stepped to his desk, picked up a cane, and said:

"Come here, Muffin!"

Muffin's weeping stopped suddenly. He eyed the cane with great uneasiness.

"C—can't I g—go out, sir?" he stammered.

"You may not, Muffin! You may come here!"

"Oh, lor!"

Muffin came out before the class very reluctantly. "You absurd and unscrupulous boy!" said Mr. Bootles severely. "I believe you are capable of almost any deception in order to avoid the easiest of tasks. Hold out your hand, Muffin!"

"I—I— Ow—I—"

"Your hand, sir!" thundered Mr. Bootles.

"Oh dear!"

"Swish!"

"Yaroo!"

"Now go back to your place, Muffin! And if there is any more absurdity on your part this after-

noon I shall send you in to the Head!"

Tubby Muffin went back to his place disillusioned. Evidently there was no such thing as justice at Rookwood for Reginald Muffin. He did not weep over Lovell's departure any more. His grief had vanished as suddenly as it had arisen. What grief Tubby felt now was entirely for himself and his smarting pain, and that was enough for him.

The 5th Chapter.

For Lovell's Sake.

"It's chiefly on Lovell's account," urged Putty of the Fourth.

"Oh, bother!" said Jimmy Silver. It was Saturday afternoon, and Putty of the Fourth had run down the Fistical 'Three in the quad. The three were discussing—not very brightly—what was to be done with

the schoolyard. A half-holiday without old Lovell did not seem quite like a half-holiday somehow. Putty of the Fourth was grinning genially as he kept up, and it was clear that he had the Rookwood scapegrace had a stunt in his fertile mind.

"The rotter!" Putty was referring to the tenant of Heath Bungalong. "The awful dad got poor old Lovell a licking the day before he left. We really owe it to Lovell to make him sit up."

"I'd like to," said Raby. "But you—"

"Isn't he a malicious beast, anyhow?" demanded Putty.

"Right on the wicked there."

"Well, instead of mooching about the quad, looking as if you were just going to the undertaker's to order your own funerals, come along with me and make him sit up."

"What's the game?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Remember the bungalong's out of bounds and the Head's very waxy about it. And that dad would come up and report us at once."

"He won't have the chance, of course. I'm not going out to hunt for a kicking from the Head."

"Well, what's the programme?" yawned Newcome. "I'd like to give him one for Lovell's sake, and generally."

"Good!" said Putty. "Besides, it will cheer you up, you know, to see your minds occupied, and you can't occupy them better than by making that ruffian sit up."

"Well, go ahead!"

Putty of the Fourth proceeded to explain, and the Co. listened without much interest at first. But their interest awakened as Putty continued to expatiate upon his wonderful wheeze, and they were grinning before he had finished.

"You see, it will make him sit up no end," said Putty. "He's a merry manthropo or something. He likes solitude. I shouldn't wonder if he's got some crime on his conscience. He looks like a fellow who knew he has his whiskers dyed—"

"No doubt about that."

"Well, come on, then," said Putty brightly. "We may as well take Morny and Conroy. The more the merrier."

"Right-ho!"

Ten minutes later the party left the gates of Rookwood, some of them carrying bags.

They were six fellows in the party, Conroy and Mornington having joined up as requested.

The juniors strolled carelessly away till they reached the wood, where it bordered Coombe Lane, and then they set to work among the trees, rich now in their autumn softness.

There the bags were opened, and the contents turned out; the contents being six suits of exceedingly old clothes, the oldest the juniors had been able to muster for their purpose.

Changing clothes, in the recess under the trees, was the work of a very few minutes.

Then mud was scraped up from the pool in the wood, and faces were liberally rubbed with it, and the juniors ruffled their hair, and put on old caps without the school ladre.

They did not look much like Rookwood fellows now. Indeed, they looked as dirty and disreputable as a set of young tramps as could have been found within the borders of the county.

Their own clothes were packed in the bag and concealed in a thicket, to be left till called for, as Putty expressed it.

"My hat! You fellows look a lovely set of scarecrows," remarked Putty, surveying his comrades with a muddy grin.

"Same to you!" said Mornington, laughing. "Hallo! Somebody's coming!"

There was a rustle in the thickets. "Not a word!" muttered Putty. "Mind your voices don't give you away if it's a Rookwood chap."

A fat form came through the thickets. It was Tubby Muffin. Tubby was blinking round him, evidently in search of something, and he gave a jump at the sight of the half-dozen young tramps.

"Wotcher want 'ere, nar then?" demanded Putty of the Fourth, in a husky voice. "N-no offence!" stammered Tubby, in alarm. "I—was looking for you, so, fellows. You haven't seen half a dozen fellows, I suppose, with some bags? They—they were going picnicking. I think, and—and, they forgot to ask me. I mean—"

"I—was looking for them. No offence, you know. They were going to leave me out of the picnic—I mean— Here, you keep off!" howled Tubby, in alarm, as one of the young ruffians made a rush at him. "Nab 'im!" "Down 'im!"

"Strike me pink! Arter 'im!" "Tubby Muffin fled for his life. He was looking for picnickers, with a view to sharing a picnic, and he had fallen among thieves, like the gentleman in the parable; or, at least, he supposed he had. Never had Reginald Muffin exerted himself as he did during the next few minutes.

He was screeching by bramble and briar, and screaming with perspiration when he rolled out into Coombe Lane again, and there he did not venture to stop. As fast as his tubby legs could carry him Reginald Muffin sprinted for Rookwood. And the half-dozen juniors, chuckling, took their path through the wood, towards the health and the lonely bungalow.

The 6th Chapter. Many Callers!

Knock! A dirty-looking youth, in shabby clothes, stained with mud, knocked at the door of Heath Bungalow. There was hardly a sign of life about the place.

A stranger passing it would certainly have supposed it to be unoccupied. The knock at the door echoed through the low building, as through an empty house. And the echo was all that followed. No one came to the door. It did not open. Knock, knock, knock, and no answer.

Five minutes passed, and during those minutes there was an active solo performance on the door-knocker. A window near the door opened at last. A dark, angry, bearded face looked out. The man in black had been roused at last.

"What do you want?" he shouted. "Oh, you're at 'ome, sir?" said the visitor. "I've been a-knockin' 'ere for ever so long 'arf a week!" "What do you want?" "Please, I've brought the noo dye for your whiskers!" "What?" "Yes, noo dye for your whiskers, sir."

The man in black glared from the window, as if transfixed. The muddy youth nodded to him cheerfully. "I'm a-waitin', sir," he said. "I 'ose it's 'igh time you 'ad the noo dye, sir; that there's comin' off."

"I—I—" stammered the astonished and enraged occupant of the bungalow. "I—I—" "Yes, sir, been waiting for the noo dye?" "How dare you come here? Go away at once!" spluttered the gentleman in black.

"I'm a-waitin' for you to open the door, sir." The man in black disappeared from the window, and hurried footsteps were heard approaching the door. Then the muddy youth wisely put the length of the weedy garden-path between him and the door, and waited outside the gate. The door flew open, and the enraged tenant of the bungalow appeared with a big stick in his hand.

"Good-bye, old bird!" called out the muddy youth. "Keep your wool on, and mind the step!" And he scudded off. The man in black made a step out after him, but, doubtless, he realised that he could never overtake the practical joker on the open heath. He retraced into the house again, and slammed the door.

A quarter of an hour later another stranger stopped at the bungalow, and knocked at the door. This time the tenant looked out of the window at once.

"What is it?" he asked harshly. "The noo dye for your 'air, sir." "What?" "The noo dye— Oh, my hat!"

The second caller fled without finishing his speech as the man in black, stick in hand, leaping from the window, stuck in flying. The stick brandished behind him as he fled, and he just escaped it as he fled, and he just escaped it to the foot-path outside. "Oh crickey!" he gasped, in quite a different voice from that he had used at the door.

He ran his hardest, and the man in black, after brandishing the stick fiercely over the gate, returned to the house. Door and window were closed, and the bungalow resumed its silent and deserted appearance. But not for long. A third muddy youth came looting along the foot-path, entered the gate, and knocked at the door.

The door opened, and the tenant appeared, stick in hand. Evidently he had been waiting. "Now—" he began. "Skuse me, sir," said the stranger civilly. "Does Mr. Jones live 'ere?" "No!" "You're sure of that there, sir?" "Certainly!"

"The door shut in the inquirer's face. Knock, knock! The door opened again, and the tenant glared at the stranger. "Skuse me, sir! Can you tell me where Mr. Jones do live?" asked the youth innocently. "No, I cannot."

"Stranger 'ere yourself, maybe, sir?" "Mind your own business!" "Slart, knock, knock!" The door flew open once more, and the man in black flew out. He had no further doubt that this apparently innocuous inquirer was in league with the previous practical joker.

"Ere, 'old on!" howled the hapless youth, as the gentleman in black collared him. "Wotcher playin' at?" "Whack, whack, whack!" "Oh crickey! Yarcocoooh!" "You impudent young rascal!"

He painted the tenant of the bungalow. "I will teach you to come playing tricks here! Take that, and that, and that!" "Whack, whack, whack!" "Oh crumbs! Rescue!" roared the victim, struggling vainly to release himself from Mr. Lasker's savage grip.

If Mr. Lasker had ever heard Putty Grace speak before—which fortunately he hadn't—he would have recognised the voice of the scapegrace of Rookwood. He did not know that he was dealing with a Rookwooder at all. He supposed it was some mischievous village boy, and he intended to give that mischievous village boy a lesson.

"Rescue!" bawled Putty. There was a rush of feet on the heath outside the garden. Putty, having unfortunately fallen into the hands of the Aynalokie, had rather disarranged the scheme. But his comrades could hear his yell for help unmoved. Jimmy Silver threw open the garden gate, and five muddy, shabby youths rushed up the path.

"Pile in!" yelled Jimmy Silver. "Oh! Ah, ah! Oh!" spluttered the man in black as he was collared and wrenched away from his victim. Putty staggered away, gasping for breath. "Rag the rotter!" he panted. "Ow, ow! Oh! I'm hurt! Rag him! Ow-wow!"

The gentleman in black with the dyed whiskers struggled furiously in the grasp of the excited juniors. They rushed him back into the house, and rolled him on the floor of the narrow hall. He yelled as he rolled, uttering savage execrations that rather startled the ears of the Rookwooders.

"Hook it!" gasped Raby. "About time we did!" grinned Mornington, his eyes dashed with haze. "It's quite gone according to programme." Jimmy Silver caught Putty by the arm. "Come on!"

The juniors scudded away down the weedy path to the gate. Forth from the bungalow came the man in black in pursuit, his stick in his hand again. His whiskered face was white with rage. "Put it on!" gasped Conroy. "He's after us!"

The juniors ran for the wood. They could have handled the man in black easily enough, but the danger was that he would discover

that they were Rookwooders at close quarters, and that was a possibility they did not care to contemplate. They knew the view the Herk of Rookwood was likely to take of Putty's humorous stunt.

They ran into the trees breathlessly, with the pursuer close behind. Conroy caught a lash of the stick over his shoulders, and yelled. Then it caught Mornington on the head, and Morny staggered. He was hurt.

Mornington spun round on his pursuer, his eyes glittering. The infuriated man was coming on with uplifted stick, evidently careless of the damage he did in his rage. Morny dodged the stick, ran in, and hit out from the shoulder.

His knuckles caught Mr. Lasker on his forehead, and the bungalow tenant went to grass with a bump and a yell. "Hook it!" panted Putty. The juniors vanished into the trees. They were far beyond the reach of pursuit when the bungalow tenant staggered to his feet, nursing his chin. They were still running when he started back to the bungalow.

They stopped at the end of the glade where the bugs had been left. "Safe now!" gasped Jimmy Silver, throwing himself into the grass to rest. "My hat! What an afternoon!" "Oh dear!" groaned Putty. "I've got a lump on my napper!" mumbled Mornington. "Still, I gave him one as good. Ow!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" "There was not one of the half dozen that had not suffered severely from the stick. It was some time before the juniors felt energy enough to throw off their clothes and wash their faces in the pool.

"We shall have to be jolly careful to keep this dark!" Jimmy Silver remarked. "If the Head knew—" "Fhev!" all round!" said Mornington. "But the Head won't know. Lasker never knew us from Adam. Ow, my napper!"

"What a jape!" groaned Newcome. "Putty, you ass—" "It was a jolly good jape!" said Putty dolorously. "If he hadn't caught me at the door—" "He never caught me!" growled Raby.

"My me!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're an ass, Putty; and if this gets out, it means a flogging all round. The rotter would call it a case of assault, though we only meant to keep him hopping round in front of the door for the afternoon. Oh dear! Let's get in!"

The juniors, restored to their proper persons and their usual cleanliness, made their way through the wood to the house. They tramped home to Rookwood, not quite satisfied with the results of the rag. Certainly, they had made the man in black "sit up"; but after getting to lose quarters, the man in black had made them sit up very seriously indeed.

"Never mind," said Putty when they reached the school. "Another time!" "What?" "I'll think out another stunt—" "Oh, bump him!" said Newcome. And as Putty of the Fourth sat down forcibly in the gateway, it was thought it was a happy line.

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Jimmy Silver & Co. felt a little uneasy the following day. There was something like fear mingled with their dislike of the bungalow tenant, and they wondered whether, after all, he might guess their identity. But nothing was heard that day from the man in black, and on Monday they felt easier in their minds. On Monday, too, came a letter from Arthur Edward Lovell—a letter the chums were glad to receive, though it was not a happy letter.

Lovell was facing his new difficulties with courage and constancy, but it was easy to see that they weighed heavily upon him; and his chums, too, would have stopped at little to help him, if it were not for the fact that that was the bitterest of all. Yet, little as Jimmy Silver & Co. guessed it then, it was from his chums at Rookwood that help was to come for Lovell, when the clouds, dark as they looked, were to roll by at last.

THE END.

Be sure you read next week's tale of JIMMY SILVER & Co., entitled: PUTTY GRACE TO THE RESCUE! By OWEN CONQUEST.

Make a point of ordering your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND well in advance.

HEALTH & EXERCISE

Conducted by PERCY LONGHURST. (If you are in need of any advice concerning health and general fitness write to "The Health Editor," THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Questions will be answered by Mr. Longhurst. Seize this opportunity of securing first-rate information and advice FREE.)

A Good Pair of Arms. No lad cares about being the owner of a pair of skinny, poorly-developed arms, and although big muscles on the limbs aren't of such great importance as a fine development of the waist and abdominal muscles, it is just as well to try to get a pair of arms that one isn't ashamed of being seen.

The trouble is that most fellows, having perhaps seen the abnormal development of a professional strong man or champion weight-lifter, are carried away by the belief that, to be strong, it is only the arm muscles that count, and particularly the biceps. The result is they get keen on big biceps, and conclude that these are the best exercise for bringing about the desired development.

Not a bit. Weight-lifting is no suitable exercise for growing lads. Besides, weight-lifter's muscles are not the ideal muscles. They're too hard, too knotty, too bunched. The best kind of muscle—that which lasts longest, is quickest in action, has the greatest endurance—is the long, sleek muscle that is the effort made, not the weight shifted, that counts. Resistance exercises are also good. More about these later.

Exercise 1.—Arms by sides. Without allowing elbows to come forward, bend arms so the hands approach the shoulders. This is for the biceps. The return movement is of straightening the arms; if performed strongly, develops the triceps.

Exercise 2.—Arms by sides, but thumb uppermost. Movements as in No. 1. Exercise 3.—Arms bent, hands brought back level with shoulder. If bar is used, the weight is on the shoulders. Push arms upwards with strong effort, lifting shoulders well. This develops the triceps, the shoulder muscles as well.

Exercise 4.—Bend at waist (one arm at a time), bend at elbow away from body, and not to be moved. Hand almost touching floor. Bend arm upwards at elbow.

Exercise 5.—Arms horizontal and in line with shoulders. Bend at elbow until the knuckles almost touch the shoulder. Straighten vigorously. Movements to be done daily and repeated twenty or more times, or until muscles ache.

Massage muscles with finger-tips after exercise, gently pinching and squeezing. Knock Knees. The cause of the trouble is either some deficiency in the earthy matter which goes to the composition of the bone, or a want of muscular development on the outside of the thighs. Ankle weakness also helps by allowing the knees to fall inwards, and this is sometimes aggravated by the habit of sitting with the feet well apart and the knees close together.

Taken in hand, however, during youth, knock-knees may be cured by means of suitable exercises, though the process is apt to be a somewhat lengthy one, and the surgeon must be consulted in severe cases. Exercises with vigour and determination, as well as perform them with daily regularity, at least twice a day, more often if it can be arranged.

To strengthen weak ankles—rising on the toes, feet-twisting from side to side, and bending the foot backwards and forwards at the ankle. For the knees themselves the following special exercises are most useful:

Exercise 1.—Sit on the forward edge of an ordinary wooden chair, the feet close together, heels the same. Now, pressing the heels firmly together, turn out the toes as far as possible, and hold firm on the floor. This movement will bring the knees well apart. Hold the position a couple of seconds, return to original position, and repeat until a slight pain is felt in the muscles affected.

This exercise may be very considerably strengthened by pressing inwards the outside of the knees with the hands as the toes are turned outwards.

Exercise 2.—Stand erect, heels firmly pressed together, calves and inner side of knees touching. With-

out allowing the position of the heels to alter, turn out the toes vigorously. Hold position some seconds, and repeat movement until the muscles ache.

Exercise 3.—Sit on chair as in Exercise 1, hands on outside of knees. Against the inward pressure of the hands force the knees outwards to the fullest extent, without moving the feet. Repeat until muscles ache.

This exercise has the effect of developing the outer thigh muscles, the action of which is to hold the knees apart.

Ju-Jitsu Training (continued). The muscles of the back are rightly considered of great importance by the Japanese trainers, and I will now describe one of the finest of the several exercises specially designed for the hardening and development of the back muscles. It does not leave a single muscle between the neck and the base of the spine unexercised. As before, the co-operation of two pupils is required, one to act as attacker, the other to defend.

Stand facing your opponent, and—you being the attacker at the moment—interlace your fingers, and place your hands thus clasped around the back of the other fellow's head, the outer edge of your hands resting upon



A Fine Ju-Jitsu Exercise.

the back of his neck. For this to be done, the defender voluntarily assumes a stooping position. But directly the pressure is applied, then he commences to resist. The feet should be well apart, and you will probably find it more convenient to have one foot well advanced.

The pressure you will apply upon the back of the victim's head is both forwards and downwards, and you will gradually allow one knee to bend lower and lower until it is resting upon the floor. By this time the head of the victim will have been forced as close to the floor as it can go without his being hurt.

This stage having been reached, it is well to pause for a few seconds before going on to the next. When both are ready, the defender from the last position begins slowly to force his head upwards against the downward pressure you continue to apply (but you must be careful not to make this so abrupt as to prevent part of the victim altogether from rising, until, at last, he is standing erect once more.)

Take a spell of deep breathing, and go through the whole performance again, places being changed.

A word of warning is necessary. Only those who have already gone through the earlier exercises, or who are exceptionally healthy and well-developed, should attempt this feat. It is a most strenuous one, and it should be stopped immediately upon one of those engaged becoming badly in want of wind. Of course, the force of the effort made, both by attacker and defender, is easily to be regulated. Against weak defender you exert only such force as to prevent part of the victim from rising, until, at last, he is standing erect once more. In fact, in this, as in all these ju-jitsu exercises, it is not difficult to make the effort used wholly in proportion to the strength of those engaged.

It is, even then, this being an actual contest, there is a tendency for the weaker of the pair to put out too much force, to exert himself too greatly, with possible disagreeable consequences.

(Another splendid Health and Exercise article in next Monday's issue.)