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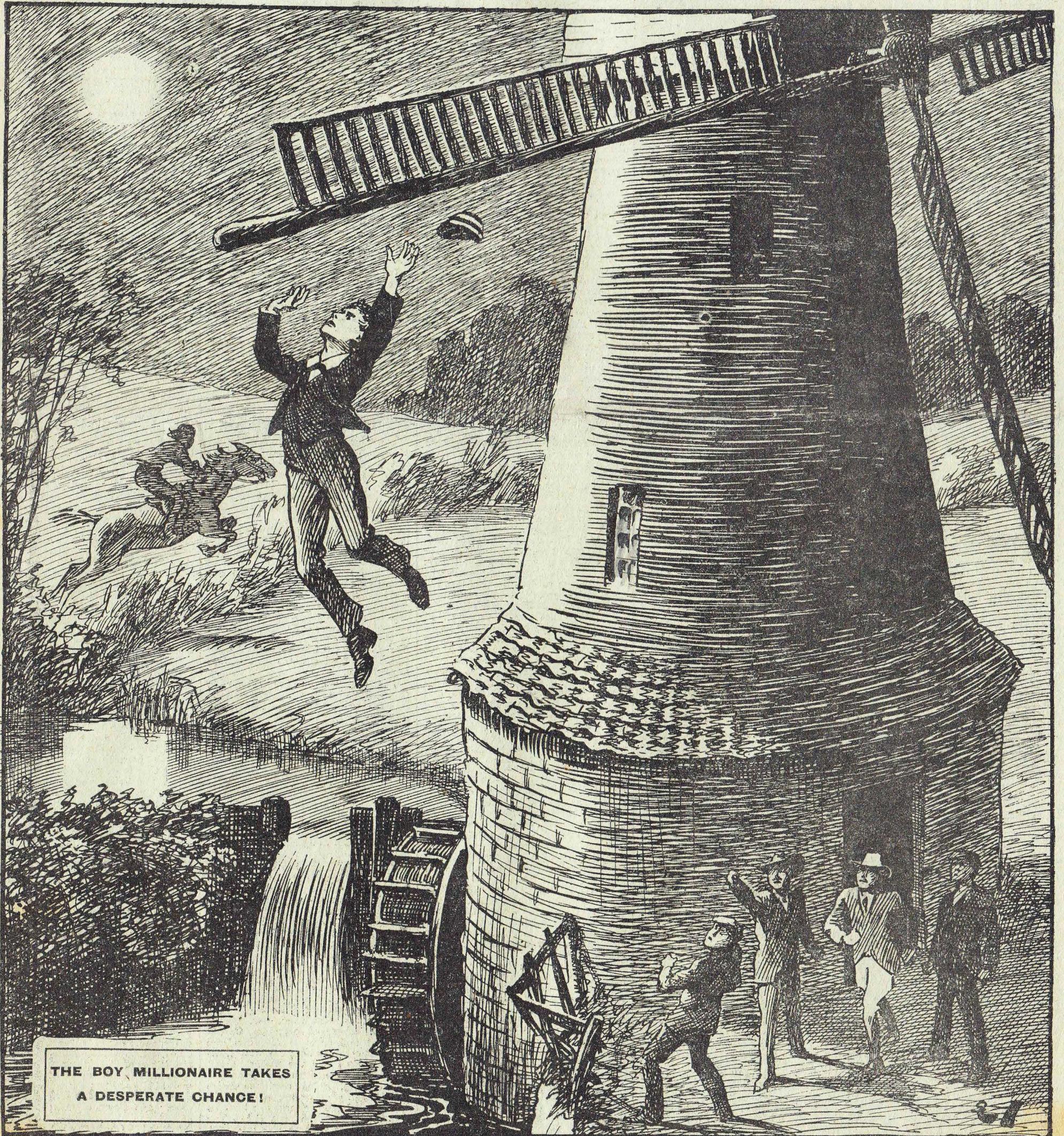
The BOYS' FRIEND 1½d

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THREE HALFPENCE.

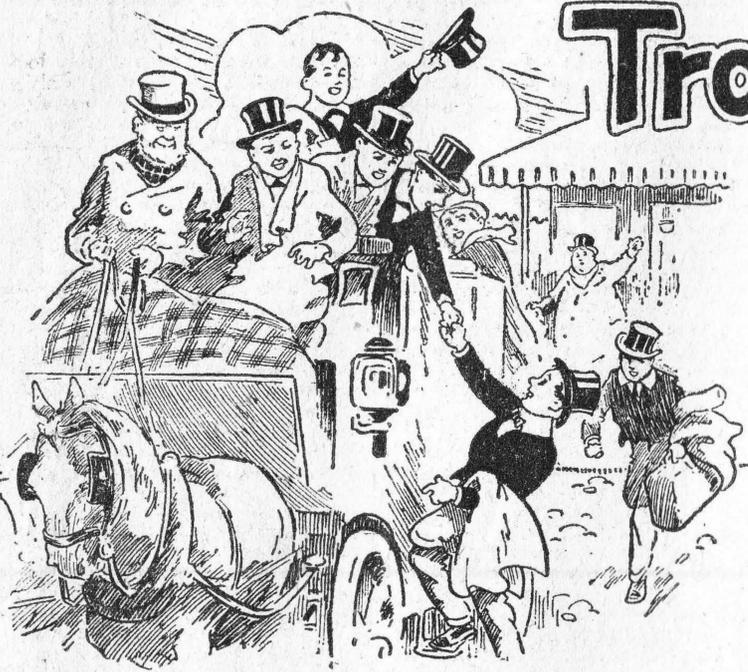
[Week Ending January 8th, 1921.

THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS! - BY - VICTOR NELSON.



THE BOY MILLIONAIRE TAKES
A DESPERATE CHANCE!

A SPLENDID, COMPLETE TALE OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD!



Trouble for Four!

A GRAND
JIMMY SILVER
YARN.

BY
OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Back to Rookwood!

"Latham Junction!"
"Here we are again!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Latham Junction!" sang the porter. "Change 'ere for Coombe and Rookwood!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. poured out of the train upon an already crowded platform.

Latham Junction was swarming with Rookwood fellows.

It was the opening day of the term at Rookwood School, and the Rookwooders were gathering from the four corners of the kingdom—and most of them gathered at Latham Junction, to take the local train to Coombe. One crowded "local" had already departed, but the platform and the refreshment-rooms still swarmed. There were shouts of greeting on all sides, as Jimmy Silver & Co. joined the throng.

The train was waiting by the platform, and was already getting crowded. The Fistical Four were in a carriage, cheerily blocking up the doorway against three Modern juniors who wanted to come in.

"Dogs not admitted!" called out Lovell. "Keep those Modern cads out!"

"Rush the carriage!" shouted Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth indignantly. "Mop up those Classical cads!"

Bump!
In Putty Grace's powerful grasp, the fat and breathless Tubby was propelled into the three Moderns from behind. Tommy Dodd and Cook and Doyle staggered away as if they had been smitten by a battering-ram.

"Jump in, Tubby!"
"But I—"

"In you go!"
Putty of the Fourth bundled the fat Classical neck and crop into the carriage. He jumped in after him, just escaping the wrathful clutches of Tommy Dodd & Co.

"Rush 'em!" gasped Tommy Dodd. The three Moderns rushed, but the carriage doorway was blocked by Classics. Tommy Dodd & Co. sat on the platform, and almost disappeared among a crowd of fellows thronging along the train. Oswald and Morny and Erroll were allowed to enter, and then Rawson; and as there were now ten in a carriage intended for six, Jimmy closed the door. Even Classics were not to be admitted now.

Tommy Dodd & Co. scrambled up, shook their fists at the grinning faces at the window, and went along the train hunting for seats. Jimmy Silver sat with his hand on the door to keep guard.

"Let a fellow in!" bawled Flynn at the window.

"No room, old chap!"
"Open that door, you cheeky fag!" howled Hansom of the Fifth the next minute. "Do you hear me? Open that door!"

"Bow-wow!"
"I'll jolly well—"

Hansom tried to wrench the handle round. Jimmy held it inside, and grinned cheerfully. Arthur Edward Lovell reached through the window, and tapped Hansom's hat. He gave it rather a hard tap; and the Fifth-Former howled with wrath as the topper emitted a crunching sound.

"You—you—you—"

Hansom backed away, clutching at his damaged hat.

"Dear old Hansom!" said Jimmy Silver. "Still as Fifth-Formy as ever! Hallo, there's nobby old Car-

thew of the Sixth! He's scowling at us! Now, I wonder what dear old Carthew is scowling for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
There really was no cause for wonder; the previous term Jimmy Silver & Co. had been on the worst of terms with Carthew of the Sixth. But they had come back from the Christmas holidays in merry spirits, prepared to forgive even the bully of Rookwood. Carthew evidently wasn't in such a merry or forgiving mood. He scowled blackly at the grinning juniors.

Doors were slamming along the train now. Carthew stopped at the next carriage to Jimmy's, and Bulkeley of the Sixth put his head out.

"No room, Carthew! Sorry—there's nine in here—"

Carthew scowled again, and came to Jimmy's carriage. The train was on the point of starting. He dragged at the door.

"Let me in, you young cad!" he exclaimed. "You're holding the handle inside!"

"Right first time!" said Jimmy, with a nod.

"Will you let me in?"
"Ten in here," answered Jimmy. "What about the merry regulations of the railway? No room, old top!"

"Stand back there!" shouted a porter.

Carthew gritted his teeth and dragged savagely at the door. Jimmy held it fast inside.

"Will you let me in?" panted Carthew.

"Four standing already," said Jimmy. "Can't be done!"

Carthew released the door-handle. The window was down, and Carthew suddenly drove his fist through the opening, and landed his knuckles on Jimmy Silver's surprised nose.

"Ow!" gasped Jimmy.

"Why, you rotter!" howled Lovell. Without stopping to think, Arthur Edward Lovell let fly his fist through the open window, and caught Carthew fairly in the right eye.

Bump!
Carthew sat on the platform with a loud concussion.

"Stand clear, there!"
The guard was waving his flag.

The train began to move, as Mark Carthew staggered to his feet. His right eye was blinking painfully.

He seemed about to spring at the train, moving as it was, but a porter caught him and held him back.

Jimmy waved his hand from the window as the train rolled on.

The last the juniors saw of Carthew was the Sixth-Former standing on the platform, scowling like a Hun, caressing his damaged eye with one hand and shaking the other, clenched, in the air. Then he disappeared from sight.

The 2nd Chapter.

Knowles Wants to Know!

Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose tenderly, and applied his handkerchief to it. The angry Sixth-Former had hit hard, and there was a stream of crimson from Jimmy's nose.

He dabbed the crimson away with the handkerchief.

"The rotten bully!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell indignantly. "Fancy letting out at a chap like that! I'm jolly glad I landed him in the eye!"

"You did land him, and no mistake!" said Putty of the Fourth, with a chuckle. "I rather think Carthew will have a fancy eye to begin the term with!"

"Serve him jolly well right!"

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"I say, fancy a prefect turning up at Rookwood with a black eye! He, he, he! You'll get into a fearful row, Lovell!"

Lovell grunted.

He was not sorry that he had returned Carthew's angry blow; but he realised that there would be trouble in store. He had caught Carthew fairly in the eye, and it was only too probable that that eye would be black by the time the bully of the Sixth reached Rookwood. For a prefect of the Sixth Form to begin the term with a black eye was utterly



RETALIATION ON CARTHEW! "Oh!" gasped Jimmy, on his nose. "Why, you rotter!" howled Arthur Edward Lovell, and he let fly through the open window and caught Carthew fairly in the right eye.

unheard-of at Rookwood School, and Lovell could not help realising that the consequences might be serious.

"Well, he hit Jimmy first!" said Lovell, after a pause. "If he makes a row about his silly eye, Jimmy can show his silly nose!"

"I don't think my nose is going to be so bad as his silly eye will be," said Jimmy Silver, with a faint grin. "We're beginning the term with trouble—still, we've done that before."

"We have—we has!" grinned Raby.

"Here's Coombe!" said Jimmy Silver.

The train stopped in the little station. In one minute, the quiet platform of Coombe was swarming with schoolboys, and every echo of the station was awakened.

As Jimmy Silver & Co. alighted, a crowd of Sixth-Formers came down from the next carriage. Bulkeley,

the captain of Rookwood, was among them, and Neville, and Knowles, Frampton and Tresham of the Modern Sixth. Knowles turned towards the juniors.

Knowles was head of the Modern side at Rookwood School, but he was very chummy with Carthew of the Classical Sixth. Jimmy Silver guessed at once that he had witnessed Carthew's mishap on the platform at Latham.

"Stop a minute, you fags!" called out Knowles. "One of you knocked down Carthew at Latham. Which one was it?"

But Jimmy Silver & Co. were gone, and the Modern prefect had to postpone vengeance. The juniors came out of the station with a rush, and, after a lively tussle with a Modern crowd, secured seats in the brake and rolled away to Rookwood.

The quadrangle of the old school was already swarming with Rookwooders when they arrived there. Jimmy Silver & Co. joined the crowd. Sergeant Kettle's tuckshop, in the corner behind the beeches, was already open and doing a roaring trade. Tubby Muffin affectionately took Jimmy Silver's arm to lead him in that direction; but Jimmy shook it off, and the Fistical Four went into the School House.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, met them in the hall, with a nod and a kind smile. He glanced at Jimmy's nose.

"Have you had an accident, Silver?" he inquired.

"N-n-no, sir."

"What is the matter with your nose?"

"Ahem! It was punched, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles severely. "Have you been fighting on the first day of the term, Silver?"

"Not exactly, sir. I—I—"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Bootles. "A little—er—exuberance of spirits is excusable—ah—on the first day of

remain there and let the beefsteak do its beneficent work.

First day of the term was not a happy day for Carthew. He could not walk around with a beefsteak adhering to his eye—that was impossible. It was difficult even to occupy himself in getting his study to rights, with only one eye to see with and a painful ache in the other. The tramp of incessant feet and the buzz of incessant voices had an irritating effect on him. In the circumstances, Carthew might have been expected to repent of the hasty punch at Jimmy Silver's nose, which had brought so prompt and drastic a retaliation from Jimmy Silver's chum. But he was not in a repentant mood. He was thinking chiefly of vengeance on the Fistical Four.

He did not show himself in public that day at all—the Head understood that he had a slight cold. Carthew had debated in his mind whether to lay his wrongs and grievances before the Head. But the ridicule of a black eye deterred him—he did not care to walk into Dr. Chisholm's presence with that adornment. Moreover, if Arthur Edward Lovell was called up for judgment, the whole story was bound to be related; and there were many witnesses to his savage punch at Jimmy Silver's nose—moreover, there was the damaged nose as proof. For a junior to black a prefect's eye was certainly a most serious offence; but for a prefect to "bash" a junior's nose was a thing that required explanation.

So Carthew, like Brer Fox, lay low and said "nuffin'." But he thought—the more.

It was in the evening when Bulkeley of the Sixth dropped into the study to speak to him. He found Carthew stretched on a sofa, his eye still bound up, his other eye glittering.

"Still bad?" asked the Rookwood captain, with some sympathy.

"Yes!" snarled Carthew.

"Knowles said to-day, at Coombe, that you had been knocked down by a junior at Latham," said Bulkeley. "I didn't see it myself. Is it the case?"

"Yes," muttered Carthew, writhing. Having been knocked down by a junior was not an agreeable thing to own up to.

"That's a rather serious matter," said Bulkeley. "Was it Silver?"

"Why should you think it was Silver?" grunted Carthew.

"I noticed he looks as if he's been in the wars, that's all."

"It was Lovell."

"Have you reported it to the Head?"

"No."

"I'll take the matter in hand, if you like. It's rather too serious to be passed over."

"I don't want the Head dragged into it," muttered Carthew. "I can't show him this eye. I—I'd rather not. It's a matter you can deal with as a prefect. I leave it to you."

"I'll see Lovell at once," said Bulkeley.

"Good!"

The captain of Rookwood was very far from being on good terms with Carthew; but this was a question of discipline, and Bulkeley was prepared to take the matter up and deal out stern justice. He picked up Carthew's ashplant as he left the study, and Carthew's only visible eye glittered with satisfaction. That would be something for Lovell to be going on with, he considered—not that Carthew meant to let it end there. Arthur Edward Lovell was to suffer much more serious consequences than a licking from the head prefect of Rookwood, if Carthew could contrive it.

Ten minutes later, Bulkeley of the Sixth re-entered the study with a very grave face, and laid the ashplant on the table. Carthew's single eye glittered inquiry at him.

"Have you licked the young hound?"

"No," answered Bulkeley very quietly.

"No!" howled Carthew.

"It seems that you struck Silver, and then Lovell struck you," said Bulkeley. "You've damaged Silver's nose—it's swelling. Lovell ought not to have done it, of course. But you ought not—"

"Do you mean to say you've let that young cad off, because they've spun you a yarn among them?" exclaimed Carthew passionately.

Bulkeley looked at him.

"There seem to be plenty of witnesses," he said drily. "There were ten juniors in the carriage at the time. You struck Silver in the face and—"

"He was holding the door of the carriage."

The 3rd Chapter.

One Lovely Black Eye!

Carthew was making for the house-keeper's quarters. Mrs. Maloney held up her hands at the sight of his startling eye. But she provided beefsteak, and fastened it on for him. And Carthew went to his study, to

"Which was already crowded," said Bulkeley. "You acted like a ruffian, Carthew, and a brute! If the matter comes before the Head, it's likely to mean trouble for you; and the juniors demand to go before the Head if they're called to account. As a friend, I advise you to let the matter drop."

Without waiting for a reply, Bulkeley left the study, and Carthew shook a clenched fist after him.

He had already decided not to have the matter taken up officially. But unofficially it was going to be taken up; and as he lay on his sofa in the dusky study, Carthew schemed schemes of vengeance, his only solace in the painful circumstances. His friends on the Modern side—Knowles and Frampton—came in to supper, and they smiled at him. They received a black scowl in exchange for their smiles.

"Black?" asked Knowles.

"Yes."
"The beefsteak won't do it any good now. My only hat! Fancy going round Rookwood with a black eye!" said Knowles, with a whistle. "What have you done to the fag who coloured it for you?"
"Nothing, so far."

"What are you going to do?"
"Something—to-morrow. I want you fellows to help me."

And over supper, in Carthew's study, there was an interesting discussion concerning the fate of Arthur Edward Lovell on the morrow. Probably Arthur Edward Lovell would not have slept so soundly in the Fourth Form dormitory if he had known of it.

The 4th Chapter.

A Licking for Lovell!

"Fag!"
It was the following day, and the Fistical Four were sauntering in the quadrangle before dinner, when Carthew of the Sixth came along. The four juniors smiled as they looked at Carthew. His eye was very prominent.

That morning Carthew had been compelled to turn up in the Sixth Form room, and his eye—already celebrated at Rookwood—had dawned upon the Head. But Carthew did not lay a complaint. He had explained that he had "got a knock" during the rush for the train at Latcham Junction, and with that explanation Dr. Chisholm had been satisfied. Much as he would have liked to obtain a flogging for Lovell, Carthew could not venture to let all the circumstances come to the Head's knowledge. Jimmy Silver's nose was quite "blooming" that day, and ready to be produced in evidence against him. It was wiser to let the episode drop, and to take an unofficial vengeance, which Carthew intended to make more severe than a flogging by the Head.

"Fag!" he called out. "You'll do, Lovell."

Lovell eyed him warily. He did not intend to place himself within Carthew's reach—so long as Carthew had that eye, at all events.

"What do you want?" he inquired, keeping his distance.

"Go over to Mr. Manders' House, and ask Knowles for the footer he's lending me. If he's out, it'll be on the table."

"Oh, all right!" said Lovell. "Leave it in the lobby for me," added Carthew, turning away. "Right-ho!" answered Lovell, quite cheerily.

He left his chums, and scudded away to Mr. Manders' House—the Modern side of Rookwood. He tapped at Knowles' door; and, as there was no reply from within, opened it. Knowles was not in the study, but there was a football in full view on the table.

"I suppose that's it," Lovell reflected. "I'd better take it."

He stepped into the passage. Lovell glanced round, to see Knowles and Frampton in the doorway.

"Hallo! What do you want here?" asked Knowles smoothly.

"Carthew sent me for a footer," said Lovell. "I suppose this is it."

Knowles and Frampton chuckled, and came into the study. Knowles closed the door, and put his back to it.

"Is this it?" demanded Lovell, staring at the Modern captain.

He began to realise that he was entrapped in the study.

"Sit down, dear boy," answered Knowles, with a smile.

"What am I to sit down for?"

"To wait, of course."

"Well, what am I to wait for?"

"I think Carthew's coming to see you," said Knowles, in the same smooth tone, and Frampton chuckled.

There was a tap on the door, and Knowles opened it wide enough to

admit Mark Carthew. Then he closed it again, and turned the key.

Lovell backed away.

"Look here—" he began hotly.

Carthew touched his darkened eye with his finger.

"You gave me this yesterday, Lovell," he said, between his teeth.

"I'll give you another to-day, to match it, if you put your paws on me!" retorted Lovell.

"We'll see about that. Collar him!"

Instantly Knowles and Frampton seized the junior, and pinned his arms to his sides.

Lovell struggled.

His struggles were not of much avail against two big Sixth-Formers. He was lifted on the table, face down.

"Now, then, Carthew!" smiled Knowles.

Carthew was ready. He picked up a cane belonging to Knowles, and advanced to the table. Lovell glared at him over his shoulder, hardly able to move in the powerful grasp of the two Modern seniors.

"You rotter!" he panted. "You coward! You—Oh!"

Whack!

The cane came down, loud and hard, and Lovell gave a yell of anguish. It came down again and again.

Lovell's yells rang through the study.

"Stop his row!" exclaimed Carthew savagely. "You'll have old Manders here, at this rate."

"Leave him to me," said Knowles.

He jerked Lovell's handkerchief from his pocket, and stuffed it into his mouth, open for another yell.

Lovell gurgled helplessly as the cane rose and fell again.

Whack, whack, whack!

Carthew did not spare the rod. Every twinge in his aching eye lent additional force to his arm.

Lovell could make no sound above a gurgle now. He wriggled and writhed in the grip of the two seniors, while Carthew lashed and lashed till his arm was tired. A flogging from the Head was a joke to a flogging from Carthew, as Lovell had discovered now; he had experience to guide him.

"Chuck it!" said Frampton at last, rather uneasily. "That will do, Carthew."

"Rot!" He hasn't had half enough yet!" snarled Carthew. "Hold the wriggling little beast!"

Knowles shook his head.

"Chuck it! You're going too far," he released the junior. "You can get down, you cheeky little rotter!"

Carthew reluctantly desisted. His arm was tired, but he had vigour enough to proceed with the castigation. Lovell rolled over feebly on the table, and jerked the handkerchief from his mouth. For some moments he could not speak. When he looked at the junior's face, even Carthew realised that he had had enough.

"Get out!" he said harshly.

Frampton helped the junior from the table. Poor Lovell had to cling to it for support for a few minutes.

"You've overdone it," grunted Frampton uneasily.

"Rot!" said Carthew callously. "Kick him out!"

He advanced towards the junior, and Lovell feebly retreated to the door. There he stopped, to fix his eyes upon the bully of the Sixth.

"You rotter!" he muttered huskily. "You coward! You coward!"

Carthew started at him, but Knowles interposed.

"Don't be a fool!" he muttered. "Get out, Lovell!" He opened the door. "Now, then, outside with you!"

Lovell limped out.

He was trying hard to restrain his tears. He shivered and shivered again as he limped away. He blinked in the sunshine of the quad as he came out of Mr. Manders' House.

"Lovell—what on earth—"

Jimmy Silver & Co. ran up to join their chum, and they stared at him blankly.

Lovell's face was white and set.

"What's happened?" exclaimed Raby blankly. "Lovell, old chap, what—"

Lovell did not speak; he could not. He moved away under the beeches, his chums accompanying him in silence. Lovell leaned on one of the leafless old trees to recover himself. It was quite a long time before he spoke.

"I've been through it!" he muttered thickly.

"I can see that," said Jimmy Silver very quietly. "Tell us what's happened, old fellow."

Lovell explained, in a husky voice broken by gasps, and Jimmy's eyes glittered as he listened.

"The rotters—it was a rotten trick!"

Lovell, you're coming to the Head—you're going to tell the Head this!"

Lovell did not move.

"Do you hear, you ass?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "You've got to tell the Head!"

"I'm not going to sneak," said Lovell. "Don't be an ass, Jimmy! Besides, what's the good? They'd have some yarn to spin. But—but—but I'll make Carthew sorry for this, somehow."

"And I'll help you, old son," said Putty of the Fourth, coming through the trees. "I heard what you said, Lovell, and it's high time Carthew had another lesson. The Rookwood Secret Society—"

"Bother the Rookwood Secret Society!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Bother your stunts, Putty! We're going for Carthew!"

"My dear chap, if you'll be guided by me—" said Putty.

"Well, we won't, ass! There's Carthew!" Jimmy Silver's eyes glittered as the bully of the Sixth came in sight, leaving Mr. Manders' house with a smile on his face. "Come on, you fellows!"

"You ass!" shouted Putty. "I tell you—"

"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver did not heed. "Uncle James" of Rookwood was celebrated for his coolness and his clear head. But he had quite forgotten his usual coolness now.

The sight of Carthew had the effect upon him of a red rag on a bull. He rushed straight towards the Classical prefect, and Raby and Newcome, equally excited and enraged, rushed after him. Lovell still leaned against the tree; he had no run in him at that moment. Putty Grace shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Looking for trouble!" he grunted. "Oh, my hat! And there's old Bootles looking on!"

Mr. Bootles had stepped out of the School House for a pleasant little walk in the wintry sunshine before his lunch. And his eyes almost bulged through his spectacles at the startling scene that met them—nothing less than a Sixth Form prefect rolling on the ground, with three infuriated juniors scrambling over him, and punching away as if they mistook Carthew of the Sixth for a punch-ball!

The 5th Chapter.

Asking for it!

"Punch him!"
"Slog him!"
"Smash him!"

It seemed to Mark Carthew that an earthquake had happened. That the end study would be "wrathy" over the punishment of Lovell, he was well aware; but that three juniors would rush him down in the quad, in full sight of the masters' windows, had never even occurred to his mind. But that's what had happened.

Rushed off his feet by the charge of the infuriated trio, Carthew came on the ground with a crash, with the three juniors on him, hammering.

They did not seem to mind where their blows fell, so long as they landed on Carthew.

The surprised and enraged prefect struggled furiously, hitting out in return, blindly. There was a rush from all quarters to stare at the astounding scene, and a roar of voices.

"Hammer him!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"Give the brute socks!" panted Raby.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Mornington. "Are you fellows potty? Here comes Bootles—"

"Smash him!"

"The Head may see you from his window—"

"Punch the beast!"

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Yow!" yelled Carthew. "Draggemoff! Help! Yooop! Oh, my hat! You young villains! Oh, oh! Ow!"

"Hammer the cad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Bootles came up with a rush and a rustle, through the gathering crowd of juniors. His spectacles slid down his nose in his excitement.

"Boys! Silver! Raby! Boys! Newcome! Desist—desist at once! Upon my word—What—what? Do you hear me?"

Like the celebrated dying gladiator of old, they heard him, but they heeded not! They continued to punch Carthew of the Sixth, oblivious, for once, to the voice of their Form-master.

"Separate them!" gasped Mr. Bootles faintly.

Hanson of the Fifth seized Jimmy Silver, and dragged him off the Sixth-Formers, and Raby and Newcome were collared and dragged off. Carthew lay spluttering on the ground, hardly knowing where he was, or what had happened. He was

torn and rumpled and dusty and dishevelled, and panting for breath.

"Bless my soul!" stuttered Mr. Bootles. "It—it's Carthew, a—a prefect! Silver, you—you young rascal—what, what? Bless my soul! Unheard of—unparalleled!"

"He asked for it, sir!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Bootles jumped.

"What? You dare to say that Carthew asked you to treat him in that ruffianly manner?"

"I—I mean—"

There was a chuckle in the crowd. Mr. Bootles had not quite caught the meaning of Jimmy Silver's expression.

"I am sure that Carthew did nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "Carthew, speak! Did you ask—"

"Grooogh!"

"Did you ask Silver—"

"Yurgggghh!"

"Do not make those absurd noises, Carthew. Answer my question at once! Did you ask Silver—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Bootles. "Boys, how dare you laugh! Carthew, I demand to know whether you asked Silver—"

"No!" spluttered Carthew, recovering his voice at last. "Grooogh! No, of course not! Oooooooh!"

"I thought not! I was sure not! Silver, how dare you state that Carthew asked you to treat him in this unheard-of manner?"

"I—I—I meant—"

"That was what you said, Silver, whatever you may have meant. You will answer for this unparalleled outbreak before the Head! I shall take you to Dr. Chisholm at once! I am surprised—shocked—astonished! Carthew, kindly get up at once, and follow me to the Head! Silver, Raby, Newcome, follow me!"

"Follow on, follow on!" chanted Mornington, in a subdued voice, and there was a fresh outburst of chuckling.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. did not feel like chuckling, as they followed the Form-master towards the School House. They realised only too clearly that they were "in for it." Their wrath had carried them away, and, having called the tune in such an extraordinary manner, they now had to pay the piper. Arthur Edward Lovell joined them on their way to the School House.

"You're not wanted, old chap!" muttered Jimmy Silver.

"I'm going in with you," said Lovell. "I've got something to say about this, if the Head chips in."

Mr. Bootles, still in a state of great fluster and indignation, whisked into the School House, and whisked away to the Head's study, with the culprits at his heels. Dr. Chisholm was about to leave his study to go to lunch, when the Form-master arrived. The severe old gentleman glanced at Mr. Bootles' red and flustered face, with disapproval. The Head seldom displayed any emotion himself, and he did not approve of it in others.

"Dr. Chisholm—" spluttered Mr. Bootles breathlessly.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Bootles," said the Head icily. "Kindly step into my study, and tell me what is the matter." He glanced along the passage, at a number of curious juniors who were bringing up the rear; and those juniors melted away like snow in a tropical sun.

Mr. Bootles whisked into the study, and Carthew followed him in—getting another disapproving glance from the Head. Certainly he looked very ruffled and dusty, and his black eye did not improve his beauty, and the effect of it was now reinforced by a red and swollen nose.

"Well?" said the Head.

Mr. Bootles—calming himself under the Head's cold eye—explained, still a little breathlessly. A prefect of the Sixth had been suddenly attacked and assaulted in the open quadrangle, under Mr. Bootles' own eyes—Silver and Raby and Newcome were the culprits.

"And now," said the Head, taking up his cane. "It appears that you three Fourth-Form boys have assaulted a prefect in the quadrangle! You are no doubt perfectly well aware of the consequences?"

"If you please, sir—"

"What have you to say, Silver? Be brief!" snapped the Head. Dr. Chisholm was very keen on discipline; but at this moment he was also thinking of his lunch.

"Carthew's a beastly bully, sir—"

began Jimmy.

"Confine yourself to the matter in hand, Silver. If you can assert that Carthew provoked this attack upon him—"

"He pitched into Lovell, sir—"

"What?"

"He got him into Mr. Manders' House, and—"

spluttered Raby.

The Head made a gesture to him to be silent, and turned to Carthew.

"What is this, Carthew?" he asked.

"I caned Lovell in Mr. Manders' House, sir," said Carthew glibly. "I sent him there to fetch a football, and he checked Knowles—a Modern prefect. Knowles asked me to deal with him—being very particular, sir; about not interfering with Classical juniors."

Jimmy Silver & Co. simply blinked at Carthew as he made this statement. It took their breath away.

"Why, you rotter—" burst out Jimmy Silver furiously, forgetting the august presence in which he stood in his angry indignation.

"Silence, Silver!" thundered the Head.

"But, sir—" panted Newcome.

"Silence! You may go, Carthew—you may tell Knowles that he acted very judiciously in calling you into the matter. I shall deal with these three juniors."

"Very well, sir!" said Carthew, and he left the study; and was very careful not to grin till the door had closed on him.

In the study, Dr. Chisholm selected his stoutest cane—a proceeding that Jimmy Silver & Co. watched with dismay. They knew that they were in for it; the attack on Carthew, though quite justifiable in their own eyes, had placed them hopelessly in the wrong in the eyes of their headmaster. Even kind little Mr. Bootles was stern and unrelenting at that moment.

"I shall punish this outbreak of hoodliganism very severely," said the Head in his grimmest voice. "You first, Silver!"

"B-b-but, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!"

For several minutes after that the silence was broken only by the steady swishing of a cane and sundry gasps and groans.

Probably before the Head was "through," Jimmy Silver & Co. wished they had been a little less hasty in taking vengeance upon Carthew of the Sixth.

Three unhappy juniors limped out of the study at last, with their hands tucked under their arms, and their faces the image of dismal woe.

At the corner of the corridor Lovell met them.

"You've had it—"

"Ow!"

"Bad?"

"Wow-wow-wow!"

It was only too clear that Lovell's chums had "had it bad." Questions on the subject were really superfluous.

The 6th Chapter.

Putty Has His Way!

Jimmy Silver & Co. ate little dinner that day.

Their appetites, healthy as a rule, had been taken away by the happenings in the Head's study.

Dr. Chisholm had felt it his duty not to spare the rod; and he had done his duty with a conscientiousness that earned him no admiration whatever from the victims.

They were feeling better—though still very sore and savage—after prep. Then Putty looked in.

Jimmy Silver gave him a faint grin.

"You can trot in," he said.

"Look here—"

"If it's another of your stunts," said Lovell, "take it away and bury it! This study is fed with your stunts!"

"And how does it get on without 'em?" demanded Putty indignantly. "You mop up Carthew in the quad—almost under the Head's windows—and you get scalped. I just saw Carthew with Knowles and Frampton, and they were grinning together like a set of Cheshire cats—"

"The beasts!"

"You can't back up against prefects," said Putty sagely. "Only one way—the Rookwood Secret Society. That's the stunt!"

Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful. The events of that hapless day had proved that Putty of the Fourth was right.

"Shut the door!" said Jimmy, after a pause. "We'll have a pow-wow on this, and talk it over. Carthew's got to go through it—that's settled. Not a word outside this study, though!"

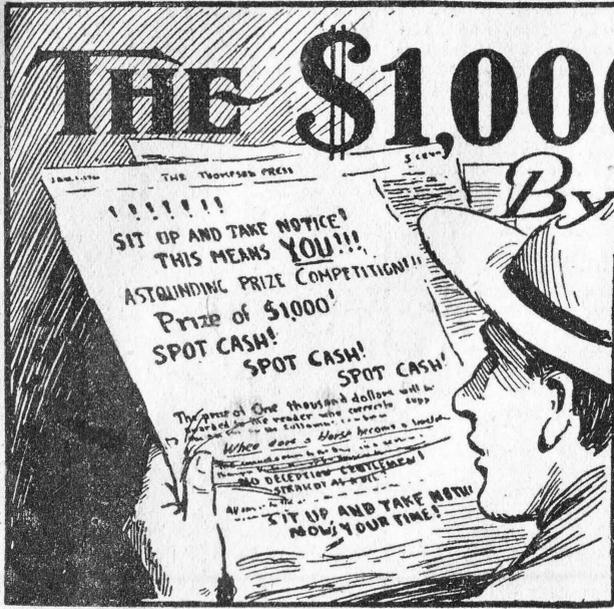
"Not a word!" said Putty.

And in the interval between prep and bed-time, the Fistical Four and Putty of the Fourth held a council of war together in the end study; and the result of that discussion was destined to startle Rookwood.

THE END.

(Be sure you read next week's grand, complete Rookwood yarn, entitled "Rough Justice." Order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND to-day!)

An Amusing, Complete Story of FRANK RICHARDS & CO.



THE \$1,000 PRIZE! By Martin Clifford A TALE OF THE CHUMS OF CEDAR CREEK. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

A Short Cut to Wealth!

"A thousand dollars!" "Eh?" "A thousand dollars!" repeated Chunky Todgers. "And I guess I shall be the chap that ropes it in!" "You're going to rope in a thousand dollars!" ejaculated Frank Richards. "Well, of course, it's not absolutely certain!" said Chunky. "Not what you'd call a dead sure cinch. But I think I've got the healthiest chance of any fellow at Cedar Creek, anyhow. You see, it requires brains—" "Then where do you come in?" asked Bob Lawless. "If there's a brainier fellow than me at Cedar Creek, I'd like to see him, I guess," said Chunky Todgers disdainfully. "Look at me, then, old chap. No charge." "But who's handing out a thousand dollars, and what for?" asked Vere Beauclerc. "That's a big sum." "About two hundred pounds in real money," remarked Frank Richards. "But how—why—when—and where?" Expound, Chunky!" "You haven't seen the 'Thompson Press' this week?" asked Chunky. "Not yet." "Well, it's in that prize competition, you know. Mr. Penrose is offering a thousand dollars to the winner." "What!" yelled Frank Richards & Co., in chorus. They could not help being astonished. They knew Mr. Penrose well; Frank Richards knew him rather too well, in fact. For Frank supplied a short story weekly for the Thompson paper, and on several occasions he experienced extreme difficulty in extracting from Mr. Penrose the ten dollars due on that weekly story. There were several tens in arrears, as a matter of fact, at the present time, and Mr. Penrose, at the last meeting between author and editor, had put the matter off very airily. He had had a run of bad luck in the poker-room at the Occidental; to say nothing of a run on the fire-water in the bar-room. When the editorial gentleman had a run of bad luck at poker, his staff had a run of bad luck on pay-day. So it was startling news that the enterprising editor was offering a thousand dollars as a prize. Frank Richards strongly suspected that the "Thompson Press," and its printing outfit, and its office, with the editor himself thrown in, would not fetch a thousand dollars at market prices. It was, therefore, an interesting question, where that tremendous prize was to come from, if it was won. Chunky Todgers was not thinking of that, however. He was thinking of the wealth he hoped to annex. As the prize competition required brains, Chunky considered that his chance of success was very healthy. "Penrose—offering a thousand dollar prize!" said Beauclerc. "It must be a spoof!" "It's in the paper," said Todgers. "Must be some kind of a catch, I guess," said Bob Lawless. "Penrose couldn't raise it to save his life." "Well, the circulation may go up, you know," said Chunky. "I suppose it's done for advertisement." "I guess it won't go up to that extent." "Well, that's what he's offering," said Chunky Todgers. "I guess it's

all square. I should be sorry for Penrose if somebody won the prize and he couldn't pony up. They may do those things in the East, but it wouldn't be safe in Thompson. He would get lynched!" "Jolly risky, anyway," said Frank. "I'm afraid Penrose must have been going it at the Red Dog when he thought of this stunt. Let's see the paper." Chunky Todgers extracted a folded and crumpled copy of the "Thompson Press" from under his jacket. It was not an imposing journal to look at. Mr. Penrose had no rivals in his business in the Thompson Valley; there was not room for two local papers in the section. Indeed, the circulation of the "Press" sometimes dipped to a figure that made Mr. Penrose frown very thoughtfully, and forced him to comfort himself with an extra "nip" at the Red Dog. But for Frank Richards' contributions, in fact, the paper would probably have gone "under" altogether. But Frank's story rallied the rising generation round it; every youth in the valley read the paper. Even at that early age Frank experienced a foretaste of the popularity his work achieved later in a wider sphere. Often and often Mr. Penrose congratulated himself upon having secured the schoolboy author for his paper; and he made no secret of the popularity of Frank's contributions. He was, in fact, a great deal more generous with commendation than with cash. The paper was not large, and the printing left something to be desired. Mr. Penrose was his own printer, as well as editor and contributor; and he sometimes set up his paper after an evening at the Occidental, so that little errors would creep in. And he seldom drew proofs; he was gifted by Nature with a powerful repugnance to anything in the shape of work. What he handed out to the public was good enough for five cents, in Mr. Penrose's opinion; in fact, too good. He did not always hand it out to time. Sometimes there were difficulties about the paper supply, owing to Mr. Penrose neglecting to settle an account, and sometimes after a prolonged "bender," Mr. Penrose was not in condition to get his paper out. However, it generally turned up sooner or later. Every now and then Mr. Penrose developed some advertising "stunt" to buck up his circulation, borrowing any wheeze that struck his fancy from the New York and Chicago papers, which arrived in the Thompson Valley a week old. Apparently, Mr. Penrose was now engaged upon a new advertising stunt of unusual magnitude. Frank Richards & Co. looked at the paper with great interest. Of the twelve pages, six were filled with local advertisements, two with Frank Richards' story, and the rest with Mr. Penrose's editorial lucubrations, or copy borrowed recklessly from the American papers. But in this special number nearly a page was devoted to a startling announcement: "!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" "SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE! THIS MEANS YOU!!! ASTOUNDING PRIZE COMPETITION!!! PRIZE OF ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS! SPOT CASH! SPOT CASH!! SPOT CASH!!!"

The Prize of One Thousand Dollars will be awarded to the Reader who correctly supplies the answer to the following Conundrum:

WHEN DOES A HORSE BECOME A BUILDING???

In case of more than one correct answer being received, the Prize of One Thousand Dollars will be awarded to the first-opened correct solution.

The Correct answer is deposited in a sealed envelope in the Thompson Bank. It will be opened in the presence of the prize-winner and any Citizen who cares to be present. No deception, Gentlemen! Straight as a Die! All answers must be received at the Office by Next Saturday, accompanied by Three Coupons cut from this Number!

SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE! NOW'S YOUR TIME!"

"My only hat!" said Frank

course; but it's worth three coupons at five cents each. Besides, it's a rather hefty puzzle. I guess a lot of galoots wouldn't puzzle it out!" said Todgers. "F'rinstance, what do you chaps think is the answer?"

Bob yawned. "Blessed if I know! When does a horse become a building? He never does, that I know of!"

"That's where the difficulty comes in!" said Chunky triumphantly. "It needs brains, you know. That's where I get a chance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Well, what's your answer?" asked Frank.

Chunky closed one eye knowingly. "That's telling, I guess!" he answered.

"Why, you fat boulder, you just asked us what we thought the answer was!"

Todgers chuckled. "No harm in getting your opinion," he said. "I'm keeping my answer dark. I'm wise, you know!"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Frank. "Hallo, there's the bell! Come along!"

"I've got an idea, though—" said Chunky.

"Keep it till after lessons. But I guess—"

Frank Richards & Co. walked off to the schoolhouse, and left Chunky to guess. Lessons had to be considered, even before Mr. Penrose's new and astounding prize competition.

The 2nd Chapter.

Frank Richards is Wanted!

Miss Meadows found an unusual amount of whispering going on in her class that morning at Cedar Creek.

Chunky Todgers was not the only fellow who had seen the startling announcement in the Thompson paper.

The thought of bagging such a sum as a thousand dollars was dazzling, and at Cedar Creek, at least, Mr. Penrose's new stunt had made a sensation.

Fellows whispered to one another in class, asking one another's opinion as to when and how a horse could become a building?

The puzzle was really puzzling, for, as far as any Cedar Creek fellow could see, it was quite impossible for a horse to become a building. Yet there was an answer, sealed up in the Thompson Bank, ready to be opened

"Well, I really guess-it's a cinch," said Chunky. "But I want to make it a sure thing. My idea is to send in a dozen answers—see?"

"Well, go ahead and do it, while we skate!"

"But every answer has to have three coupons, and they cost five cents each," said Chunky. "I shall want about ten dollars!"

"Oh!"

"My idea is to form a sort of syndicate," said Chunky.

"A—a—a syndicate!"

"That's it! We crowd in all the answers we can think of, and make sure of roping in the prize. You fellows supply the money, and I supply the brains. Savvy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I'm not joking—"

"You are, old scout!" said Bob Lawless, with a chuckle. "You see, you couldn't keep your part of the bargain—"

"Owing to a total absence of assets," grinned Frank.

"Oh, don't be funny!" urged Todgers. "It's worth putting up twenty dollars or so, to rope in a thousand. You've got some money in the bank, Richards—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Of course, you fellows will have a whack in the prize—"

"If any!"

"We're practically certain to bag it, if we shove in about a hundred answers," urged Chunky. "I shall set my brains to work, you know—all you fellows have got to do is to supply the cash. And—and I'll stand you fifty dollars each out of the prize."

"You're too generous, old chap!" said Beauclerc.

"Well, I mean to be generous! Is it a go?"

"Not quite!" said Frank. "Come on, you fellows; we sha'n't get any skating before dinner if we wait for Chunky to wind up."

"Make it ten dollars, then!" exclaimed Chunky. "I guess I could make pretty certain of it with that."

"Ass!" said Frank. "If we're going to spend ten dollars on the silly thing, why shouldn't we send in answers ourselves, and bag the prize?"

"Oh, you couldn't! You see, you haven't the brains!" explained Chunky. "Without my assistance,



ALL HANDS TO THE BENCH! Having set the chums of Cedar Creek to work, Mr. Penrose was able to relax his own efforts. The arrival of the three chums had been a windfall for the hard-worked editor, publisher, and printer of the "Thompson Press"!

Richards. And he whistled. That imposing announcement impressed him.

"Looks square, doesn't it?" said Chunky Todgers eagerly. "If the answer's sealed up at the bank, and anybody can see it opened, that's fair and square; no catch in that. No altering the thing at the last minute to spoof prize-winners, you know."

"Looks square!" said Bob. "Oh, it's square enough!" said Todgers. "It simply needs brains to find the correct answer. I guess I can do that."

"I shouldn't wonder if a hundred galoots get the right answer," said Bob. "In that case, it goes to the first opened!"

"Well, that's a matter of luck, of

and revealed in the presence of the lucky winner.

Frank Richards wondered whether the thousand dollars was in the bank also; on that point he had very strong doubts.

When morning lessons were over, Chunky Todgers joined the Co. at once as they came out into the playground. Frank Richards & Co. had taken out their skates to go on the creek, which was frozen hard. But Chunky insisted upon being heard.

"Never mind skating now," he said. "You can skate any time this winter. About that thousand dollars, you know—"

"No need for us to worry about that," said Frank, laughing. "That's a cert for you, isn't it?"

you wouldn't have a look-in. No good blinking facts, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. beat a retreat, leaving Chunky Todgers to waste his sweetness on the desert air. They weren't in the least inclined to finance Chunky's intellectual powers.

"It's all rot!" said Bob Lawless as he sat on the bank to put his skates on by the frozen creek. "There's some catch in it. Penrose couldn't raise such a sum if it was won!"

Frank Richards nodded.

"That's how it seems to me," he said. "But I don't quite catch on, all the same. It's risky to play a trick like that in the Thompson Valley. Suppose some fellow like Buster Bill won the prize and didn't

get it? He would go round asking for it with a revolver!"

"Penrose must have been imbibing at the Red Dog when he thought of this stunt," answered Bob. "Anyhow, I don't believe he's got a thousand dollars. If he has, why don't he square you the thirty he owes you?"

"I think I'll ask him when I see him again," said Frank, laughing.

When the chums of Cedar Creek came in to dinner, Yen Chin, the Chinese, called to Frank Richards.

"Mr. Penrose gives me message for you, Richards!"

"Oh! What's the message?" asked Frank.

"You call at office artee school today. Mr. Penrose say hum vellee important."

"Right-ho, kid!"

"That looks like squaring," said Bob. "Perhaps Penrose has come into a fortune!"

"We'll see this evening," said Frank. "We'll ride over to Thompson after lessons. It's about time the editor squared his staff!"

The chums of Cedar Creek chuckled. Frank Richards was all the "staff" Mr. Penrose possessed; everything else on the paper was done by Mr. Penrose himself, from scribbling out the editorial column, and scissoring columns from other papers, to setting up the type and printing the paper on the hand-press in his office.

There was natural history in class that afternoon; and Miss Meadows had selected as her subject that noble and intelligent animal—the horse! She found her pupils very interested and attentive so long as that lesson lasted. Perhaps they hoped to pick up some enlightenment on the subject of the puzzle competition. But though Miss Meadows went quite exhaustively into the subject of equine quadrupeds, she shed no light on the perplexing problem of when and how a horse became a building. On that point there was no assistance to be found in all the range of known natural history.

After school, many of the Cedar Creek fellows did not seem in a hurry to depart. Many of them hung about the playground, with copies of the "Thompson Press" in their hands, and deep, thoughtful wrinkles in their brows. They consulted with one another very seriously. Frank Richards had never seen so many copies of the "Press" at once at the school; evidently the sale was going up on the strength of the thousand-dollar competition. That part of Mr. Penrose's object was being achieved at least.

The chums of Cedar Creek dodged Chunky Todgers, and led out their horses from the corral. Chunky howled after them as they rode away, and they caught the word "syndicate," and chuckled.

As they rode on to Thompson, there was a patter of hoofs behind, and they looked back to behold Chunky Todgers in hot pursuit, on his fat little pony. He waved to them to stop.

"Put it on!" said Frank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop, you beasts!" howled Chunky, from the distance.

Frank Richards & Co. rode on at a good speed, and Chunky tailed off on his fat pony. He was very anxious for another interview; but the anxiety was all on Chunky's side. His great scheme of a syndicate, in which he was to supply the brains, while Frank Richards & Co. supplied the dollars, did not recommend itself to them.

When the Co. turned into Main Street, at Thompson, the hapless Chunky was out of sight. They rode on to Mr. Penrose's office, and dismounted at the door.

As they passed Gunten's Store, they saw a group of gentlemen coming over several numbers of the "Thompson Press," and they caught the words "a thousand dollars!" They passed a dozen or more people in Main Street with copies of the paper in their hands. Outside Mr. Penrose's office nine or ten citizens were lounging, smoking and discussing the thousand-dollar competition. Among them was Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch. Billy Cook nodded and grinned to the schoolboys as they dismounted.

"You in it, too?" he asked.

"There ain't any papers available yet. I'm waitin' for some, I guess."

"Sold out?" asked Frank.

"Correct! Every paper's sold off, and now there's a new lot coming on," said the ranchman. "I guess Mr. Penrose will be doing a lively trade."

"He will need to, if he's going to raise a thousand dollars to hand out to the prize-winner," said Beauclerc.

"Yep! I guess I'm going to have half a dozen tries," said Billy Cook.

"If I get that thousand, I reckon it will see me through a bender down at Kamloops."

"If!" murmured Frank.

"Well, every galoot has a chance, and the more you put in the more your chances," argued the ranchman.

"You feel sure Penrose has the cash?" asked Bob.

Billy Cook started. That appeared to be a new thought to the ranchman's simple mind.

"He couldn't offer it as a prize, if he hadn't, could he?" he asked, with a stare.

"Well, he oughtn't to," said Bob, with a grin. "But he might, you know."

Billy Cook wrinkled his brow thoughtfully.

"If it's a catch, I'm sorry for him," he said. "I guess he'll be rooted out of his office and lynched, if he don't pay up. I guess all the valley will want to know the name and address of that prize-winner, and mosey along to see him about it, too! Some! If there ain't a galoot with a thousand-dollar bill to show after this is over, I guess Mr. Penrose will wish he had a cast-iron neck!"

Frank entered the little lumber office, followed by his chums, and Mr. Penrose dawned upon him in all his glory.

**The 3rd Chapter.
Mr. Penrose's Busy Day!**

The new and wonderful competition, with its thousand-dollar prize, had taken the town of Thompson by storm, as it were. The stack of "Presses" at Gunten's Store had sold off like hot cakes before noon; and a second stack had sold off in the afternoon.

Since then, Mr. Penrose's office had been besieged for copies—for the editor did a retail as well as a wholesale business.

During office-hours, any galoot could drop in at the office for a single copy of the Thompson Valley paper. But to all requests, for the present, Mr. Penrose had to reply in the negative—he was sold out.

Two editions sold out in a single day, and the cry was still for more! Instead of one edition dragging its weary length over a whole week, and a good proportion of it remaining on the premises unsold!

It was a change, there was no mistake about that. Mr. Penrose's latest advertising stunt was a howling success, so far.

The news of the thousand-dollar prize had already been talked of up and down the valley, from Lone Pine to Silver Creek, and the post-waggon had come in with orders for the "Thompson Press" from the camps down the river.

It was quite a circulation "boom." Such "stunts," though common enough in the more thickly-settled and populated sections, were new and rare in the Thompson Valley, and so "caught on" more completely. It was probable that every inhabitant of the valley would see the paper that week, though whether Mr. Penrose's weird publishing methods would enable him to retain the new readers permanently was another question. In the make-up of the paper there were, as a rule, too many traces of the influence of Mr. Penrose's favourite beverage.

But the enterprising gentleman was extremely busy now. Mr. Penrose hailed originally from New York—which he called Noo Yark. In Noo Yark he had learned to hustle, and he was hustling now.

In his shirt-sleeves, with a pipe sticking out of the corner of his mouth above an unshaven chin, Mr. Penrose laboured with his hand-press—which would have worked more easily if it had been in a state of better repair. But, like most things in the office, and in Mr. Penrose himself, it had rather run to seed.

He gave Frank Richards & Co. a glance and a short nod.

"Sit it out, bub," he said.

"You wanted to see me?"

"Yep; sit it out."

This apparently meant that Frank was to wait. The chums of Cedar Creek sat on a bench and watched the busy gentleman.

He was turning off copies at a great rate, though not perhaps in perfect condition. With a keen eye to business, Mr. Penrose reduced the size of the new editions of his paper. As he reasoned to himself, the galoots were buying the paper for the "competish," not for the advertisements, or even for Frank Richards' story; so he reduced the size by two-thirds, giving the readers the competition page with its coupon, and little besides.

This was a great saving in paper and in labour. But even so, Mr. Penrose had plenty to do. He was not an industrious gentleman, as a rule; but he seemed all industry now in his attempt to meet the huge demand for his publication.

As a matter of fact, that demand had to be met. Buster Bill had looked into the office several times for his copy, and had remarked at length, that if it wasn't ready that evening, he was going to "pull his gun." Mr. Penrose had a strong objection to his office window being turned into a target for sharp-shooting. So he laboured away like a new Hercules, on a new and bigger job.

"Say, bub," he said presently, "I guess I got to talk to you, some, but I'm busy now. Suppose you wedge in and help."

"I don't mind," said Frank.

"Count us in," said Bob Lawless cheerily. "What can we do for you, Mr. Penrose? Like me to write a poem for you?"

Mr. Penrose grunted.

"I guess I've got all the stuff set up long ago, you young jay. You fold the copies on that bench yonder."

"Right-ho!"

"Richards, you know how to handle this press. You stand here and pull the sheets."

"All serene," said Frank.

"You take them from the printer, Beauclerc, and hand them across to the folding-bench."

"Certainly," said Beauclerc.

Having set the chums of Cedar Creek to work, Mr. Penrose was able to relax his own efforts. In fact, there was nothing for him to do now, save to look on and smoke, and occasionally rap out a direction.

The arrival of the three chums had been, in fact, a windfall to the hard-worked editor, printer, and publisher. Frank Richards & Co. piled in cheerily, quite willing to put in an hour or two helping the driven editorial gentleman. "Thompson Presses" multiplied under their busy hands.

When Buster Bill came in again there was a copy ready for him, and he was not under the painful necessity of "pulling his gun."

"I guess I'll take a dozen," said Buster Bill. "I'm going in strong for this hyer prize."

Mr. Penrose handed them out, smiling. Billy Cook was the next man in, and he took six. After that there was a steady stream of purchasers, who took off the copies almost as fast as Frank Richards & Co. turned them out.

When the purchasers were satisfied, however, and the newcomers ceased to trouble, the amateur printers were not allowed to rest. Mr. Penrose wanted a fresh stack for Gunten's Store, and he kept the schoolboys at work till they were done.

In fact, the printing did not cease till Mr. Penrose's supply of paper ran out.

Then it had to stop.

"I guess I'll ride over to Kamloops to-morrow, and borrow some paper there," said Mr. Penrose. "There'll be a noo demand to-morrow—sure. Say, isn't this some stunt, what?"

"Looks like it," said Frank, with a smile. "Must be no end of a circulation—this week, at any rate."

"After this, by gum, I'll give 'em just a single sheet—competition page and coupon," said Mr. Penrose.

"That will see 'em through for the competish—and save trouble, I reckon. I guess this office lays over any other in the North-West, when it comes to hustle. That the last of the paper? Well, you can ease off now. I reckon it will do for to-day. Much obliged. Before you vamoose, you kids can carry this bundle along to Gunten's store, if you like. I've got to drop in at the Occidental."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Frank. "You sent me a message to Cedar

Creek that you wanted to see me; that's why we came over."

"So I do," said Mr. Penrose. "But I'm thirsty—I mean tired. Tote that bundle along to the store, and come back hyer. I've got to see a man at the Occidental on important business for a few minutes."

"We shall be home a bit late—"

"Important business—can't wait!" said Mr. Penrose, and he disappeared without further words; making a bee-line for the Occidental Hotel. His "important business" was with the bar-keeper there.

"We seem to have been let in for jolly nearly making a night of it," said Bob Lawless, laughing. "Anyhow, you'll get your thirty dollars, Franky. Penrose has taken three times that much while we've been here. I guess we'd better tote his bundle along to the store."

The big bundle of "Thompson Presses" was taken along to the store, and duly delivered to Mr. Gunten there. Then the chums of Cedar Creek returned to the newspaper office.

Mr. Penrose had not yet returned. His important business was still keeping him at the Occidental.

"Dash it all, we can't wait much longer," said Frank. "The people at home will be getting alarmed about us."

"Here he comes!"

An unsteady step was heard without.

Mr. Penrose, with a rich complexion, came into the office, and smiled affably at the three chums. He was not intoxicated; but it was clear that he had expended a considerable portion of his late takings on the fiery fluids sold at the Occidental.

"Been to the store?" he asked.

"Yep," answered Bob.

"You made old Gunten sign the note for them—he's sharp, is Gunten."

"Here you are."

"Good! Now I guess I've a few words to say to you, young Richards."

"I've a few to say to you," agreed Frank. "Which is going to begin?"

"Eh! What have you got to say, bub?"

"You owe me thirty dollars," explained Frank. "You asked me to mention it next time I saw you."

"Mention it next time," said Mr. Penrose. "It will be all right. Matter of fact, I've just met Kentuck, the poker man at the Occidental, and he made me square for last night. I had only just enough to settle with the bar-keeper. But your dollars are all right, bub; you can see for yourself how the circulation is going up—leaps and bounds, by hokey."

"Oh, all right," said Frank. "And now, what did you have to say to me, Mr. Penrose? We've got to get home, you know."

"Sure! It's private," said the editorial gentleman, with a glance at Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc.

"You can tell me before my friends, I suppose," said Frank, in surprise.

Mr. Penrose shook his head.

"Business is business," he answered. "I guess I want to whisper in your ear all on its lonesome."

"We'll wait outside, Frank," said Beauclerc, crossing to the door at once.

"Don't be all night, Franky," said Bob Lawless, as he followed Beauclerc out.

Mr. Penrose closed the door after the two schoolboys, and then, to Frank's astonishment, winked at him.

"Can't be too careful!" he remarked.

Frank looked a little impatient. He was inclined to attribute Mr. Penrose's air of mysterious secrecy to his libations at the Occidental.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

Mr. Penrose closed the little window. Then he proceeded to expound, and Frank Richards listened in astonishment.

where we learn business as soon as we breathe," said Mr. Penrose. "Surprises you, what? Chew it over! Simple as ABC. I learned the newspaper business in Noo Yark and Chicago, and I'm putting you up to some valuable wrinkles, Richards; you'll find 'em useful if you're ever in the business for yourself. Fool the public—that's the motto. It's a cinch all the time. The public like being fooled. They cry out to be fooled. They won't be happy unless they're fooled. Well, fool 'em! Catch on?"

And Mr. Penrose smiled, a smile of great good humour and cunning mingled—with also a mingling of semi-intoxication.

Frank Richards simply stared at him.

Mr. Penrose seemed to be quite unaware that he was confessing to a piece of unscrupulous roguery. Such matters had apparently not entered into his considerations. Doubtless, commercial morality was not in the curriculum when he was learning his business in "Noo Yark."

"What—what—" stuttered Frank at last. "Are you potty, Mr. Penrose?"

"Hay?"

"I don't know what may be possible in a big city," said Frank; "but it's not possible to play such tricks here, to say nothing of such a thing being a rotten swindle!"

"Cut it out!"

"It's swindling—"

"Rub it out!" said Mr. Penrose calmly.

"Anyhow, it's not possible!" exclaimed Frank. "Why, if the prize isn't given, you'll have your office pulled down about your ears!"

Mr. Penrose winked.

"Tread soft!" he answered. "You don't tumble. There's going to be a prize-winner all O.K. Name and address in the paper next week—letter of thanks for the thousand-dollar bill. Fixed up, you know."

"But—" stuttered Frank.

"And you're the antelope."

"I!" yelled Frank Richards.

"Don't shout."

"Do you—do you think—" spluttered Frank, almost breathless with indignation.

"Come off. This is business—cold business from the word go. You're my staff, ain't you? I couldn't trust any galoot outside my staff. Your name goes in as prize-winner—first opened—see? Easy as rolling off a log. After, you'll be interviewed by a crowd of galoots. You tell 'em all about the way you worked out the puzzle with a wet towel round your head—what you're going to do with the thousand-dollar bill, and so on. Catch on? Of course, there won't be any thousand-dollar bill. I guess there probably isn't one in the Thompson Valley at all. I know I've not got one, anyway. Have you?"

"Eh? Of course not."

"Well, then, don't argue. I thought I'd just mention it to you that you're going to be the prize-winner, so that you'd be up to snuff—see? That's all. Good-night!"

"But—" howled Frank Richards.

"Good-night! I've got to see a man at the Red Dog about some business. Can't wait."

"I'm afraid the man at the Red Dog will have to wait a few minutes," said Frank Richards grimly. "I've got a few words to say. You're a swindler, Mr. Penrose!"

"Is that all?"

"You're not going to make me a party to a swindle."

"Why, I relied on you—I took it for granted!" exclaimed Mr. Penrose indignantly. "Don't you understand what business is?"

"Better than you do, I think," said Frank. "Swindling isn't business, and it does no good; but if it did I wouldn't have a hand in it. I'm going to keep an eye on this precious competition of yours, and if you try to spoof the folk, I shall show you up. Keep that in mind."

"Why, I—I—I'll—" gasped the unhappy stunt merchant. "I shall be ruined! Look here, young Richards—"

"Go and eat coke!"

Frank strode out of the office, and mounted his horse, which Bob was holding in readiness for him.

"Been having a row with Penrose?" asked Bob curiously.

"Yes. Let's get off."

The three chums rode away in the darkness.

In his office, Mr. Penrose sat, and gasped for breath, the most completely dismayed gentleman that could have been found just then in the whole length of the Thompson Valley.

THE END.

("Set a Thief to Catch a Thief" is a fine, long, complete Frank Richards' yarn in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Make a point of reading it!)

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